The City in View

Comparative Representations and Historical Memory of the Warsaw Ghetto in Memoir and Film

by

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ABSTRACT

When the Warsaw Ghetto was demolished by German forces towards the end of World War II, there were few physical traces of the Ghetto left standing. As such, both historians and the public must look to other types of sources to understand what life and death were like for the inhabitants of the Ghetto, and how they have remembered their experiences within the Ghetto. These memories and representations of the Warsaw Ghetto can be found in memoir-style written works, and later, in films based on these works. This thesis will examine the ways in which the Warsaw Ghetto was represented by two authors who survived it, Władisław Szpilman and Marcel Reich-Ranicki, and how their memory of the Warsaw Ghetto is represented in the films based on their lives and survival, *The Pianist*, and *Mein Leben: Marcel Reich-Ranicki*.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

It would be a cliché, edging towards an untruth, to say that art saved their lives. Yet at the same time, at pivotal moments near the end of World War II, art played a crucial role in their survival. One young man was asked to play the piano, and for the first time in two and a half years, he played Frédéric Chopin's "Nocturne in C sharp minor."[1] Following this, he was hidden in an attic, and provided with food, up-to-date news, and an eiderdown jacket – admittedly, not much, but something.[2] The other young man was requested to tell a story to keep a small group entertained throughout the night.[3] As the other three members in hiding rolled cigarettes, he retold the stories of novels, plays, and operas that he had read and seen so far in his life.[4] He used the characters of William Tell, Aida, and King Lear to keep them company, and keep himself and his wife in the good graces of their protectors.[5]

These two young men, Władysław Szpilman and Marcel Reich-Ranicki, were both living in Warsaw when the city was invaded by Nazi Germany in 1939. Similar to other cities in Poland, the Nazi officials did not immediately establish a Jewish ghetto within the city. When they did enforce and enclose the Warsaw Ghetto in 1940, approximately 400,000 Jewish residents of Warsaw were squeezed into an area of 307

[1] Władysław Szpilman, *The Pianist: The Extraordinary True Story of One Man's Survival in Warsaw, 1939-1945*, trans. Anthea Bell (New York: Picador, 1999), 177-178.
[2] Ibid., 178-181.
[3] Marcel Reich-Ranicki, *The Author of Himself: The Life of Marcel Reich-Ranicki*, trans. Ewald Osers (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 200.
[4] Ibid., 200-201.
[5] Ibid., 200-201.

hectares, or just over one square mile.[6] Both Szpilman and Reich-Ranicki, along with their families, were forced into the Ghetto. They each survived the Holocaust and wrote memoirs afterwards. These memoirs detailed their survival both inside and outside of the Warsaw Ghetto, and in Reich-Ranicki's case that of his wife, Tosia Reich-Ranicki as well. First published in 1946 under the title *Śmierć Miasta*, Szpilman's memoir was rereleased in 1998 and translated into English as *The Pianist: The Extraordinary Story of One Man's Survival in Warsaw, 1939-45*.[7] Reich-Ranicki published his memoir in 1999, which encompassed his life from his childhood through the 1990s, titling the book *Mein Leben*.[8] Two years later, his memoir was translated into English as *The Author of Himself: The Life of Marcel Reich-Ranicki*.[9] In the 2000s, two films about these men who had lived in the Warsaw Ghetto and survived the Holocaust were released. The first film, *The Pianist*, was released in 2002 from the United States and directed by Roman Polanski, and was based on Szpilman's memoir.[10] The second film, *Mein Leben: Marcel Reich-Ranicki*, was aired on television in Germany in 2009, and was directed by Dror Zahavi.[11] While his memoir covered the entirety of his life up to publication of the book,

[6] Barbara Engelking and Jacek Leociak, *The Warsaw Ghetto: A Guide to the Perished City*, trans. Emma Harris (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 40, 47-48. 307 hectares equals approximately 1.18533 miles. Engelking and Leociak's exhaustively researched work on the Warsaw Ghetto is indispensable as a secondary source. I have also chosen to capitalize the word "Ghetto" when referring to the Warsaw Ghetto throughout this thesis as a proper noun. The translators for both memoirs do not follow this, so direct quotes will include lower case usages; however, most other primary and secondary sources follow the capitalization of the word.
[7] Szpilman. The original title translates to *Death of a City*, which is also one of the chapter titles.
[8] Marcel Reich-Ranicki, *Mein Leben* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1999). This could technically be more properly termed an autobiography perhaps; however, it still works for the analysis of this project.
[9] Reich-Ranicki, *The Author of Himself: The Life of Marcel Reich-Ranicki*.
[10] *The Pianist*, directed by Roman Polanski (2002; Universal City, CA: Universal Studios Home Entertainment, 2003), DVD.
[11] *Mein Leben: Marcel Reich-Ranicki*, directed by Dror Zahavi (2009; Munich: Universum Film GmbH, 2009), DVD.

the film centered on his life with his wife Tosia in the Warsaw Ghetto, and continued through the 1950s.

The Germans demolished much of the Warsaw Ghetto after the last deportations left the city and the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising had been defeated, leaving almost no physical traces of the Ghetto. The remaining "rubble and cinders" of the Ghetto have been referred to as "Warsaw's Dead Sea."[12] Entire streets disappeared, were rerouted, or simply renamed after the war, also helping to change

Ph. 1: Clandestine photograph of the destroyed Warsaw Ghetto[13]

the physical landscape of the former area of the Ghetto as it was rebuilt after the war.[14] While memorials, most notably Natan Rappaport's Monument to the Heroes of the Ghetto, have been built in the current Muranów district, "[t]he area of the Warsaw Ghetto is today almost entirely deprived of physical traces that might aid our memory."[15] Because of this, both historians and the public must look to other types of sources to understand what life was like for the inhabitants of the Ghetto. These include extensive primary sources from both the sides of the victims and the perpetrators, such as the

[12] Engelking and Leociak, 801.
[13] Tad Brezkis, *Clandestine photograph of the destroyed Warsaw Ghetto*, 1943, photograph, digitized, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Tad Brezkis, accessed on March 8, 2020 via https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/pa1157022.
[14] Engelking and Leociak, 807-808.
[15] Ibid., 810.

underground Ghetto archive, Adam Czerniaków's multi-volume diary, the propaganda films of the Ghetto, and the notorious report by Jürgen Stroop of the suppression of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising.[16] The memoirs of Szpilman and Reich-Ranicki not only described what they saw within the Warsaw Ghetto and how they survived there, but showcase how they remembered their lives. These acts of remembrance rather than in-the-moment chronicling are the key contribution of their works. In transforming these men's memoirs into films, their life stories were released to a wider public, offering not solely a portrayal of survival through the eyes of their filmmakers, Polanski and Zahavi, but also a new layer of representation.

Ph. 2: View of All Saints Church amid the ruins of the destroyed Warsaw Ghetto[17]

Although there has been a wealth of filmography and historiography dedicated to the study of Holocaust film, only a few authors have surveyed *The Pianist* and none have included *Mein Leben: Marcel Reich-Ranicki*.[18] Annette Insdorf did not include *The*

[16] "Ringelblum Archive," The Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute, accessed April 18, 2020, http://www.jhi.pl/en/ringelblum-archive; Adam Czerniaków, *The Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniaków: Prelude to Doom*, ed. Raul Hilberg, Stanislaw Staron, and Josef Kermisz, trans. Stanislaw Staron and the staff of Yad Vashem (New York: Stein and Day, 1979); *A Film Unfinished*, directed by Yael Hersonski (2010; New York: Oscilloscope Pictures, 2010), accessed via Canvas; Jürgen Stroop, "The Stroop Report: 'The Warsaw Ghetto Is No More'" (Jewish Virtual Library, 1943), accessed via https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-stroop-report-may-1943.

[17] Tad Brezkis, *View of All Saints Church amid the ruins of the destroyed Warsaw Ghetto*, 1943, photograph, digitized, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Tad Brezkis, accessed on March 8, 2020 via https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/pa1157025.

[18] Lawrence Baron, *Projecting the Holocaust into the Present: The Changing Focus of Contemporary Holocaust Cinema* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005); Jean-Michel Frodon, ed., *Cinema & the Shoah: An Art Confronts the Tragedy of the Twentieth Century*, trans. Anna Harrison and Tom Mes (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010); Annette Insdorf, *Indelible Shadows: Film and the Holocaust*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Aaron Kerner, *Film and the Holocaust: New Perspectives on Dramas, Documentaries, and Experimental Films*, 1st ed. (New York: Continuum, 2011); Oleksandr Kobrynskyy and Gerd Bayer, eds., *Holocaust Cinema in the Twenty-First Century:*

Pianist in the most recent edition of her well-argued and comprehensive *Indelible Shadows: Film and the Holocaust,* while Jean-Michel Frodon included the film only in the annotated list of filmography at the end of his edited volume.[19] Henry Gonshak also did not select *The Pianist* as one of his profiled Holocaust films made in the United States.[20] In *Projecting the Holocaust into the Present*, Lawrence Baron situates *The Pianist* with other post-2000 Holocaust films.[21] He astutely notes that the film centers more on the idea of survival than the destruction of the Warsaw Ghetto and its inhabitants under German occupation. Along with the description of the film's events, he also notes the importance of the film's multinational production status and how the role of Wilm Hosenfeld, a Nazi officer who helped to hide Szpilman, is more ambiguous than is presented in his memoir.[22] Aaron Kerner describes Szpilman's story in the film as one of "transcendental defiance," including it in a chapter that analyzes themes of resistance and defiance.[23] Kerner argues that it is not force of will, rather force of musicality that brings about Szpilman's survival in hiding; that his scene of playing Chopin for Hosenfeld is effectively the climax of the film, securing his survival.[24] *The Pianist* is mentioned solely in passing in two of the essays included in Kobrynskyy and Bayer's edited volume, once in regards to actor Adrien Brody's hands, and then in regards to its almost uplifting

Memory, Images, and the Ethics of Representation (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015). Only Baron, Kerner, and Kobrynskyy & Bayer discuss *The Pianist,* and Frodon includes the film only in the annotated list of filmography.

[19] Insdorf; Frodon, ed., 326.
[20] Gonshak.
[21] Baron, 243-248.
[22] Ibid., 246-247.
[23] Kerner, 9, 59-77.
[24] Ibid., 72-75.

ending.[25] While a number of these works were published after the release of *Mein Leben: Marcel Reich-Ranicki*, none of them chose to include the film in their analyses or in their filmographies.[26] Nor have any of these sources examined how films based on memoir or similar primary sources have portrayed a singular location and the experiences of the people living there.[27]

This then is where my thesis can contribute to the field. In showing the way the Warsaw Ghetto was represented in memoir and film, the personal memories of Szpilman and Reich-Ranicki, and then the cultural and historical memory surrounding their works and the films, can be analyzed. At the heart of this project are the issues of memory and memory studies. The analysis of these four primary sources rests not solely on their value as sources on the Warsaw Ghetto, but on what they can help demonstrate in the realm of personal, cultural and collective, and historical memory. Władysław Szpilman and Marcel Reich-Ranicki's memoirs showcase their personal memories of their survival, while the films based on their memoirs must be analyzed within the framework of the particular cultural and collective memories they were created and received. Historical memory of the Holocaust balances between the bleakness of raw data and the emotional

[25] Martin Modlinger, "The Ethics of Perspective and the Holocaust Archive: *Spielberg's List*, *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* and *Fateless*," in *Holocaust Cinema in the Twenty-First Century: Memory, Images, and the Ethics of Representation*, ed. Oleksandr Kobrynskyy and Gerd Bayer (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 161-180; Erin McGlothlin, "'The Doctor is Different': Ambivalent Ethics, Cinematic Heroics and the Figure of the Jewish Doctor in Tim Blake Nelson's *The Grey Zone*," in *Holocaust Cinema in the Twenty-First Century: Memory, Images, and the Ethics of Representation*, ed. Oleksandr Kobrynskyy and Gerd Bayer (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 183-202.
[26] Frodon, ed.; Kerner; Kobrynskyy & Bayer, eds. Gonshak would not have included *Mein Leben*, as he chose to analyze only American films. It is worth noting that along with being a German film, Reich-Ranicki himself and his work are not widely known outside of Germany. His writings, and thus the film, are very situated within a German context, which could also explain the lack of outside analysis on the film.
[27] The closest is an article written by the screenwriter of *The Pianist*, Ronald Harwood, defending his choice to include what are considered more graphic scenes from Szpilman's memoir. Ronald Harwood, "Truth and Fiction: The Holocaust on Stage and Screen," *European Judaism* 38, no. 2 (2005): 4-16.

weight of personal testimony. Yet the field needs both, and memoirs such as Reich-Ranicki's and Szpilman's offer insight into that necessary emotional weight. These various nodes of memory – personal, cultural/collective, and historical – provide the core for analysis on the representation of life in the Warsaw Ghetto. When and where these sources were produced is of importance also, as these contexts affect the memories produced and observed within the sources. The four primary sources span a variety of translations: linguistic translation, temporal translation, and media translation. Neither Szpilman's nor Reich-Ranicki's memoirs were originally printed in English; rather, Szpilman wrote in Polish, while Reich-Ranicki published in his beloved German. Their memoirs were written across different times and published at different times. Szpilman's own memoir was published twice in two different cultural contexts. The transition from the written medium to the medium of film is arguably the most important translation in this thesis. The varying representations and memories of the Warsaw Ghetto ensconced in these four sources, dependent on their media, are at the center of this project's analysis.

The Warsaw Ghetto is a vast and complex historical topic. Numerous historians have tackled the issues surrounding its establishment, life and death within it, and its eventual destruction. The rest of this chapter is divided into sections that provide context on the historiography of the Warsaw Ghetto, a brief history of the Ghetto itself, and then an overview of the lives and survival of Władysław Szpilman and Marcel Reich-Ranicki during the Holocaust. The second chapter compares the representations of the Warsaw Ghetto between the four primary sources. It is impossible to compare every aspect of the Warsaw Ghetto as is described and shown in the sources in this thesis. Rather, six themes have been selected for analysis. These themes are the establishment of the Ghetto, the

typhus epidemic, artistic life in the Ghetto community, the transportation of goods into the Ghetto, the Jewish Council and the Jewish Police, and the deportations from the Ghetto. All of these topics feature prominently in the two memoirs; however, they are not given the same prominence in the films, especially the typhus epidemic. Moreover, some of the more controversial subjects, such as the transportation of goods, the Jewish Council, and the Jewish Police, are also given significantly less screen time, and are discussed in markedly different ways than in the texts. The third chapter focuses on the various types of memory that are connected with the sources. Along with a brief discussion of the associated theories of memory, the differences between the personal memory of the authors, the cultural and collective memory that the films have engendered, and how these sources can be used for historical memory are the central themes of this chapter. The final chapter offers a conclusion on this research project and some thoughts for future research in this area.

Historiography of the Warsaw Ghetto

The Warsaw Ghetto was one of the largest of the wartime ghettos established by Nazi Germany within Poland in terms of population. It was also home to a diverse population of residents, ranging in class, religion, and language. This population included intellectuals and well-regarded historians, like Emmanuel Ringelblum. Ringelblum's efforts as a historian to document the daily life and the extreme circumstances of the Ghetto led to the production of both written chronicles and a hidden material archive within the Ghetto. Ringelblum along with a dedicated group of historians and archivists established and organized the underground archive, called the Ringelblum Archive or the

Oneg Shabbat Archive after the war, and preserved what they could of the Ghetto for future historians to know the history of the Warsaw Ghetto from the perspective of its inhabitants.[28] While only two of the three buried caches of material from the archive have been recovered as of today, they have informed decades of historical work on the Warsaw Ghetto. Using the archive along with memoirs, diaries, and eyewitness testimonies, historians since 1945 have worked to piece together the history of the Warsaw Ghetto from its establishment through its destruction. With only one notable exception, these histories have remained staunchly focused on the voices and perspectives of the residents of the Ghetto, not those of the perpetrators, despite the span of time in which they were written.

Despite the fact that Ringelblum did not survive the Holocaust, two of his works about the Warsaw Ghetto were published posthumously after the war. The first, *Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto: The Journal of Emmanuel Ringelblum* published in 1958, is unique in that it is a primary source, his personal journal, yet it is a historian's view of the events as they are happening.[29] Ringelblum intended that his writings from the Ghetto would be published afterwards, which was the same intention that fueled his work on the underground archive. The second work, *Polish-Jewish Relations During the Second World War* published in 1974, is a more traditional scholarly work, even though it was also written as the events were taking place.[30] Ringelblum had the foresight to begin

[28] The archive is sometimes spelled Oneg Shabbat and other times Oyneg Shabes depending on the source. Both mean "Joy of the Sabbath," and were the coded name of the archive used by Ringelblum and his compatriots; ibid., 660; Kassow.
[29] Emmanuel Ringelblum, *Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto: The Journal of Emmanuel Ringelblum*, ed. and trans. Jacob Sloan (New York: Schocken Books, 1958).
[30] Emmanuel Ringelblum, *Polish-Jewish Relations During the Second World War*, ed. Joseph Kermish and Shmuel Krakowski, trans. Dafna Allon, Danuta Dabrowska, and Dana Keren (New York: Howard Fertig, 1974).

keeping a record of the events taking place in Warsaw shortly after the German invasion of Poland. The English version of his *Notes* begins in January 1940, and runs until December 1942.[31] With entries often disguised as letters, Ringelblum's journal is a precise record including names, dates, places, and statistics with as much detail as possible. He included information about anything and everything that pertained to the Warsaw Ghetto: addresses of placards posted, laws handed down, events within the community, conversations between people. At the same time, diaries are unfortunately inherently limited by their nature. As they are written simultaneously within their time period, they do not have the advantage of historical hindsight. They may make predictions – or jokes in the case of Ringelblum's *Notes* – that would be unheard of after an event has concluded. Despite these limitations, Ringelblum's quotidian entries are vastly important in showing to the reader and researcher the reality of his life within the Ghetto. His attention to detail as a historian attempting to document a tragedy as it unfolds makes Ringelblum's *Notes* one of the most important books written on the Warsaw Ghetto, and invaluable to future historians researching and writing on the events and people of the Ghetto.

Ringelblum's more traditional work, *Polish-Jewish Relations During the Second World War*, was written to accompany the underground archive, and also as an accurate record of the complexity of interactions between the Poles and Jews of Warsaw. One of the editors for the English edition, Joseph Kermish, explained the text as one

> which covers the whole complex of Polish-Jewish relations in the period of the Hitler occupation, [as] Ringelblum reveals the true countenance of the Polish underground as regards the Jews. He denounces the informers, extortionists and accomplices of the Hitlerite murderers, but of course he did not fail to give their

[31] Ringelblum's original journal is archived in Warsaw, and another copy is held at Yad Vashem in Israel.

> due to those Poles who held out against the prevailing psychosis and who risked their lives to help Jews.[32]

Ringelblum's intent with the Oneg Shabbat Archive was to not only collect and save documentation of the events of the Warsaw Ghetto, but to create "an institute for extensive research, carried on in secret" within the ghetto.[33] Ringelblum and the other archivists were able to collect materials and conduct research from the earliest days of the German invasion of Poland through the deportations and "liquidation" of the Warsaw Ghetto. This book in particular, focused on the range of experiences of interaction amongst the people of the city, to show that the Ghetto did not exist in a vacuum; rather, the Ghetto was a major part of the city of Warsaw, and how the inhabitants of the city interacted with one another affected the history. The loss of Emmanuel Ringelblum in the Holocaust was profound, and a terrible blow to the community of Jewish historians. His works written during the Holocaust provided a springboard for future historians' research of the Warsaw Ghetto, benefitting from his dual role as eyewitness and historian.

In the 1960s and 1970s, even with the written and archival resources that survived the destruction of the Warsaw Ghetto towards the end of World War II, many historians chose to focus solely on the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, understandably so.[34] The Uprising took place in 1943, towards the ends of the deportations from the Ghetto, and was a valiant, if unfortunately failed, armed attempt to attack German forces as they tried to empty the Ghetto. The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising is not unique in the history of the Holocaust, as there were multiple revolts and armed resistance movements led and

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[32] Ringelblum, *Polish-Jewish Relations*, xxxii-xxxiii.
[33] Ibid., xxxiii.
[34] A quick search through the Arizona State University library system for the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising during these decades yielded over 800 total results, including 36 books; November 17, 2019.

manned by Jews in Europe. Yet, the Uprising occurred in a major city with non-Jewish witnesses to the event. It along with other instances of resistance and rebellion helped to counter the narrative of the Jews of Europe offering no resistance to their destruction that has continued to circulate since the Holocaust. In 1982, the publication of Yisrael Gutman's *The Jews of Warsaw, 1939-1943: Ghetto, Underground, Revolt* helped to contextualize the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising as a culminating moment in the full history of resistance within the Ghetto, rather than a standalone instance of rebellion.[35] Written in three distinct parts, Gutman continues the historical tradition of allowing the residents of the Warsaw Ghetto to tell their own history, using extensive documentation kept by the *Judenrat* or Jewish Council, the Ringelblum Archive, and the Jewish Fighting Organization or ŻOB, which organized and spearheaded the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. By contextualizing the Uprising, Gutman provided a bridge between the works of Emmanuel Ringelblum and the scholarship of the past twenty years on the Warsaw Ghetto.

In the 1990s, between Gutman and the historians writing after 2000, the works on the Holocaust and the Warsaw Ghetto turned away from the tradition of telling the history of the people inside the Ghetto. Instead, the works of the 1990s focused on questions of how the Holocaust happened, how it had been carried out, and how the Germans had been the ones to do so. Christopher R. Browning's 1992 work, *The Path to Genocide: Essays on Launching the Final Solution* is emblematic of this turn away from Judeocentric histories.[36] All eight chapters of Browning's book focus on these questions

[35] Yisrael Gutman, *The Jews of Warsaw, 1939-1940: Ghetto, Underground, Revolt*, trans. Ina Friedman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982).
[36] Christopher R. Browning, *The Path to Genocide: Essays on Launching the Final Solution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

of how Nazi German anti-Semitic policy turned into the genocidal Holocaust. This includes a single chapter on the "Nazi Ghettoization Policy" carried out in Poland in the early stages of World War II.[37] While Browning utilizes similar primary sources as Gutman, and cites Emmanuel Ringelblum and Adam Czerniaków, who was the head of the Jewish Council of the Warsaw Ghetto, these sources are used only to show the often statistical and rarely human effects of Nazi policy. Browning's focus on the installation and execution of policy, while important in the greater field of Holocaust studies, has the effect of placing the lives and voices of the Ghetto residents in the background. In a way, they are reduced from witnesses to fact-checkers, an unintended consequence of Browning's focus.[38] The work done by Browning to try and show the development of Nazi policy is commendable and important, yet it veers away from the established tradition of placing eyewitness testimony at the center.

The deviation from this tradition of centralizing voices was short-lived though, as historians since 2000 have strongly returned to focusing their writing on the lives of the inhabitants of the Ghetto. Two Polish historians, Barbara Engelking and Jacek Leociak, produced the most extensive text-based scholarship on the Warsaw Ghetto during the 2000s. Engelking published *Holocaust and Memory: The Experience of the Holocaust and its Consequences: An Investigation Based on Personal Narratives* in 2001, while Leociak published *Text in the Face of Destruction: Accounts from the Warsaw Ghetto*

[37] Ibid., 28.
[38] This sounds more critical than I truly mean it to be. I have every faith that Browning did not intend to cheapen the voices of the ghetto, and this is an unconscious side effect of his end goal to answer the almost un-answerable "how" questions of the Holocaust. Yet even as an unconscious side effect, it is still one that comes across to the reader, even more strikingly when placed against the pantheon of other works about the Warsaw Ghetto.

Reconsidered in 2004.[39] Working together in 2009, they published the massive compendium *The Warsaw Ghetto: A Guide to the Perished City*.[40] All three of these works are deeply rooted in the primary sources of the Warsaw Ghetto, drawing heavily on the Oneg Shabbat Archive, Ringelblum's journal, the journal of Adam Czerników, and countless others who left behind material records. Engelking's *Holocaust and Memory* also utilizes twenty-two interviews that she conducted with survivors of the Holocaust. The majority of these survivors lived in the Warsaw Ghetto, but others lived in other Polish cities or survived in hiding outside of the ghettos. Through these documents and interviews, Engelking attempts to write a different type of history of the Holocaust in Poland, one that does not discredit "the martyrological trend in writing and thinking about the events of the last war," but that is instead "of 'moral concern.'"[41] Her explanation of "moral concern" is as follows:

> This does not portray the experiences of war in black and white terms, does not evaluate and does not pass judgments. It poses questions that are uncomfortable for all of us: questions about obedience leading to participation, about passivity in the face of the annihilation of the innocent, about moral responsibility. All – executioners, victims, witnesses, whose roles can after all be interchangeable – are drawn into the circle of responsibility, for their actions, for the world, for the future of mankind.[42]

Engelking's work expands past the boundaries of the Warsaw Ghetto, yet it constantly maintains the importance of the words, both written and spoken, of those who lived the experience as the forefront throughout the history.

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[39] Barbara Engelking, *Holocaust and Memory: The Experience of the Holocaust and its Consequences: An Investigation Based on Personal Narratives*, ed. Gunnar S. Paulsson, trans. Emma Harris (London: Leicester University Press, 2001); Jacek Leociak, *Text in the Face of Destruction: Accounts from the Warsaw Ghetto Reconsidered*, trans. Emma Harris (Warsaw: Jewish Historical Institute, 2004).
[40] Engelking and Leociak.
[41] Engelking, 2.
[42] Ibid., 2-3.

Leociak's *Text in the Face of Destruction* mirrors Engelking's work, with the exception that all of his source material is drawn from the historical written record of the Warsaw Ghetto. Using documents in the archives of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw and Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, Leociak limits his primary sources to those that "are part of the literature of personal documentation."[43] In doing so, he crafts a monograph that gives the voices of the residents of the Ghetto center stage to tell their own stories. While he does offer commentary to contextualize the primary sources, the bulk of the book are these stories of the Warsaw Ghetto, which serves to humanize the history.

The Warsaw Ghetto: A Guide to the Perished City, Engelking and Leociak's combined volume, builds on the foundation crafted in their separate monographs, and is a truly exhaustive work of research. Engelking and Leociak's extensively researched work on the Ghetto is indispensable as a secondary source. Covering every conceivable aspect of the Ghetto and life therein, their work integrates primary and secondary sources about the Warsaw Ghetto during the Holocaust. Not limiting themselves to textual evidence, the volume is replete with maps, photographs, charts, and other visual sources to detail the people and places within the Ghetto. *The Warsaw Ghetto* provides necessary context for primary sources about the Ghetto, as well as points the way towards other relevant primary sources. This volume by Engelking and Leociak is not only the arguably most useful single source for information on the Warsaw Ghetto, but it firmly positions the complex lives of the people who lived and died within the Ghetto as the central focus.

[43] Leociak, 11.

Taken together, these three works by Engelking and Leociak continue the tradition of historians privileging the words of those who lived their lives in the Ghetto.

Samuel D. Kassow explicitly follows this tradition in his 2007 monograph, *Who Will Write Our History?: Emanuel Ringelblum, the Warsaw Ghetto, and the Oyneg Shabes Archive*.[44] Kassow compiles a successful monograph built entirely around the history of the Ringelblum Archive, using a truly daunting list of primary sources, including memoirs and the archives themselves, held at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.[45] Included in the history of the archive are profiles of its contributors, discussions of both the practical establishment of the archive and the intellectual rationale for its establishment, and translated excerpts from the archives. Similar to Engelking and Leociak's *The Warsaw Ghetto*, Kassow's *Who Will Write Our History?* provides essential context and broad-base knowledge of life in the Warsaw Ghetto. Kassow also answers the titular question, posed by the contributors to the underground archive, that in telling their history as it was happening, the historians and archivists of the Warsaw Ghetto wrote their way into the historical record, leaving a trail for future historians to follow, and continue to tell their story.[46]

[44] Kassow.
[45] Ibid., 481-486.
[46] For those that read Polish, the annual 15 volume series *Zaglada Żydów: Studia i Materiały* is an essential academic source on the Holocaust in Poland, including the Warsaw Ghetto. Accessible via https://www.zagladazydow.org/?l=a&lang=pl.

The Warsaw Ghetto: A Short History

After the German invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939, it took a full month for the city of Warsaw to surrender and German occupation of the city to begin. [47] During the fall and winter of 1939, the first decrees against Polish Jews living within the *Generalgouvernement* were issued by the occupying Germans. The governor-general, Hans Frank, ran the administrative side of the *Generalgouvernement*.[48] His office oversaw Ludwig Fischer as head of the Warsaw District and Heinz Auerswald as commissar of the Jewish District of Warsaw.[49] The earliest legal decrees included the freezing of monetary assets, the establishment of the *Judenrat*, the closing of Jewish schools, and the mandatory wearing of a white and blue Star of David armband.[50] Ordinances that restricted street commerce and that prohibited the visitation of Jewish-sponsored public libraries followed in January and February 1940.[51] The president of the Jewish community of Warsaw, Adam Czerniaków, became the chairman of the *Judenrat*, which was forced to oversee the establishment of the Warsaw Ghetto and to communicate its establishment to the Jewish inhabitants of Warsaw.[52] From the beginning of his tenure on the Jewish Council, Czerniaków was a divisive figure in the Ghetto. Some residents regarded him as a good man solely trying to fulfill his oftentimes impossible obligations, and not a collaborator. Others firmly believed that he was as

[47] Engelking and Leociak 36-37.
[48] Ibid., 27.
[49] Ibid.,33-34.
[50] Ibid., 37. In Reich-Ranicki's memoir *Judenrat* is translated as the Jews' Council, while in Szpilman's it is translated as the Jewish Council. Emanuel Ringelblum's translator also used Jewish Council, and I have generally chosen to use that as its English version in this thesis.
[51] Ringelblum, *Notes*, 11, 16.
[52] Engelking and Leociak, 37.

much to blame as the Nazi overseers, and deserving of contempt. These disparate views were recorded by Emanuel Ringelblum:

> Heard that the president of the Jewish Council of Warsaw, Adam Czerniakow, was kept standing in a German office for eight hours and not offered a chair. There are some who consider him a martyr who is honestly fulfilling his duty. "He is picking up the smell of the Gestapo," said an elderly community worker. The influence of the environment.[53]

As official decisions were made by men such as Fischer and Auerswald, they were then thrust upon Czerniaków and the Jewish Council to be enacted and communicated to the Jewish community of Warsaw.

The formal establishment of the Ghetto began in April 1940 under the pretense of quarantining the typhus epidemic in the traditionally Jewish section of the city, and the walls enclosing what would become the Ghetto were completed in June 1940.[54] The "reputed purpose" of the walls, referred to as "Frank's Line," were "to serve the Jews as a protection [behind which to fall] in the case of street attack" during the war.[55] In November the same year, the Warsaw Ghetto was sealed off from the rest of the city, forcing 113,000 Poles out of the designated Ghetto area and 138,000 Jews into it.[56] The Ghetto was divided into two sections, a smaller southern area and a larger northern area, separated from each other by Chłodna Street.[57] By March 1941, the Warsaw Ghetto reached its maximum capacity during the war with a population of approximately

[53] Ringelblum, *Notes*, 53.
[54] Engelking and Leociak, 38-39.
[55] Ringelblum, *Notes*, 40.
[56] Engelking and Leociak, 40.
[57] Paweł E. Weszpiński, "The Warsaw Ghetto: Borders before the great liquidation action," trans. Monika Tkaczyk, map included in Engelking and Leociak.

460,000 Jews residing within the walls.[58] Ringelblum described the milieu and the population density:

> Scenes in the streetcar: A Jew wearing a visor and with a red kerchief at his throat cries at a Jewish woman who is speaking Polish to him: "In the Jewish streetcar one must speak Yiddish!" Someone else shouts: "And Hebrew, Hebrew too!"— An old Jew gets off the streetcar and says to the passengers, "Good day, Jews." In a word: People feel perfectly at home. The only trouble is it is just a mite too crowded.[59]

The influx of new residents to the Ghetto, both from other parts of Warsaw and refugees removed from other occupied territories, combined with the fact that the Ghetto was smaller than the traditional Jewish residential area of the city, were the main contributions to the mass rise in population density.[60]

Throughout 1941, the German officials in charge of Warsaw and the Ghetto, Ludwig Fischer and Heinz Auerswald, issued decrees that imposed the death penalty for both Jews and Poles who broke them. The German factories established in the Warsaw Ghetto, called "shops," were opened in April 1941.[61] Throughout the *Generalgouvernement*, "compulsory work for Jews" was legally mandated and enforced through "specified quotas of workers" attained by the Jewish Council of each city.[62] The "shops" were a way for quota fulfillment, with many of the larger manufacturers employing thousands of workers.[63] "Shops" often employed skilled laborers, such as

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[58] Engelking and Leociak, 41.
[59] Ringelblum, *Notes*, 62. Ringelblum's wry and dark humor may at times be a little jarring to some readers, but it is a frequent feature in the *Notes*.
[60] Wespiński, "Borders before."
[61] Engelking and Leociak, 41.
[62] N. Rosen, "The Problem of Work in the Jewish Quarter – July 1942," in *To Live With Honor and Die With Honor!...: Selected Documents from the Warsaw Ghetto Underground Archives "O.S" ["Oneg Shabbath"]*, ed. and ann. Joseph Kermish (Jerusalem: Menachem Press, 1986), 251.
[63] Ibid., 255.

tailors and carpenters, and tended to provide one or two daily bread-and-soup meals.[64] These jobs were also "considered the best safeguard" against later "'resettlement,'" or deportation to the death camp.[65] Instead, the opposite held true, as "the greatest number of victims for Treblinka were furnished precisely by the 'shops because they concentrated within them a greater number of people who did not go into hiding during the 'blockades.'"[66]

Before the large scale deportations though, the first targets were Jewish men who had been imprisoned in the Gęsia Street prison. In the early months of 1942, they were the first to be sent to Treblinka as it began operation as a labor camp, and thereafter as a death camp.[67] As more Jews were forcibly removed from other German-occupied areas and Germany itself into the Warsaw Ghetto, "the first organized terror *Aktion* in the sealed district" took place overnight on April 17-18, 1942.[68] Over the course of the night, 53 individuals, those considered "excellent and talented people, activists engaged in social work, some youth who were members of organizations," and those "who had the potential of leading the masses" were murdered.[69] Emanuel Ringelblum wrote of the counterproductive measures of the Jewish Council after these deaths:

> The Jewish Council people have tried to exploit the bloody Friday [April 18th] for their own purposes; to repress completely the social and political life of the Ghetto. First they spread the rumor that Friday's massacre was attributable to the illegal publications. And then they warned the people of the Ghetto that if these

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[64] Ibid., 255.
[65] "Fragmentary Memoirs of the Work in 'Shops," in *To Live With Honor and Die With Honor!...: Selected Documents from the Warsaw Ghetto Underground Archives "O.S" ["Oneg Shabbath"]*, ed. and ann. Joseph Kermish (Jerusalem: Menachem Press, 1986), 280.
[66] Ibid., 280.
[67] Engelking and Leociak, 43.
[68] Ibid., 43. Italics not included in original text.
[69] Gustawa Jarecka, "The Last Stage of Resettlement is Death," in *To Live With Honor and Die With Honor!...: Selected Documents from the Warsaw Ghetto Underground Archives "O.S" ["Oneg Shabbath"]*, ed. and ann. Joseph Kermish (Jerusalem: Menachem Press, 1986), 705.

> [illegal publications] were to be repeated, the fate of Lublin would be visited on Warsaw—i.e., the deportation of the Jewish population.[70]

This was in fact followed on July 22, 1942 with "the beginning of the great deportation *Aktion*," which continued until the last transport on September 21.[71] During this time, the majority of the inhabitants of the Warsaw Ghetto were rounded up, taken to the *Umschlagplatz* at the north of the Ghetto, and pushed onto trains that took them to Treblinka, which began operating as a death camp on July 23, 1942.[72] Deportations from the Warsaw Ghetto resumed with the January *Aktion*, and while they were met with armed resistance, the deportations continued through February 1943.

When Germans entered the Warsaw Ghetto on April 19, 1943, the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising began, led by the Jewish Fighting Organization (ŻOB). [73] The height of the fighting lasted from April 19 until April 22, and continued until they were defeated on May 8.[74] The ŻOB were aided in their fight by the ŻZW, the Jewish Military Union.[75] When German forces first entered the Ghetto to begin its "liquidation," they were met by resistance forces wielding Molotov cocktails, firearms, and hand grenades.[76] The plan for total "liquidation" of the Ghetto was known by the ŻOB leaders, and they were "aware that the uprising could not last long."[77] Despite only having weaponry ill-suited for urban combat, resistance fighters continued to engage German forces throughout April 20 and 21.[78] The last remaining residents of the Warsaw Ghetto were living within a labyrinthine

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[70] Ringelblum, *Notes*, 270.
[71] Engelking and Leociak, 44-45. Italics not included in original text.
[72] Ibid., 44-45. *Umschlagplatz* can be translated to mean loading or transfer site.
[73] Ibid., xvi. ŻOB stands for *Żydowska Organizacja Bojowa*.
[74] Ibid., xvi, 47.
[75] Ibid., 762, 777. ŻZW stands for *Żydowski Związek Wojskowy*.
[76] Ibid., 777.
[77] Ibid., 778.
[78] Ibid., 778-781.

network of underground bunkers and shelters, which the Germans had discovered by the third day of fighting.[79] In an effort to remove people from their hiding places, the German Army began to set the Ghetto ablaze.[80] Between the fires and subsequent German searches, the majority of the Ghetto's remaining residents were killed, or rounded up and sent to the death camps Treblinka or Majdanek, or to the concentration camps Trawniki or Poniatowa.[81] On May 8, 1943, German forces found the bunker at 18 Miła Street, where the remaining leadership of the ŻOB had been defending from.[82] The majority of those at 18 Miła Street committed suicide rather than be caught by the Germany Army or were killed in the fighting.[83] It is estimated that only perhaps a dozen participants in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising survived the end of the Holocaust.[84]

One of the final destructive actions of the German Army within the Warsaw Ghetto was to explode the Great Synagogue on May 16, 1943.[85] Much of the rest of the Ghetto had been destroyed during the Uprising, turning it into "Warsaw's Dead Sea."[86] The remaining rubble of the city was originally planned to be utilized in construction, and from July 19, 1943 until August 5, 1944, a concentration camp known as Gęsiówka operated within the ruins of the Ghetto.[87] On August 1, 1944, the city-wide Warsaw Uprising began, dividing the post-liquidation history of the Ghetto into two halves.[88] This delineation is important for the two periods of hiding that occurred; during the first, over

[79] Ibid., 781-782.
[80] Ibid., 783-784.
[81] Ibid., 784-786.
[82] Ibid., 786.
[83] Ibid., 787.
[84] Ibid., 787.
[85] Ibid., 787.
[86] Ibid., 801.
[87] Ibid., 801, 809.
[88] Ibid., 802-803.

10,000 Jewish people were still hiding amongst the rubble of the Ghetto, while during the second, only a few hundred – including Szpilman – were still hiding within the city (not just the Ghetto).[89] These people in hiding, referred to as the Robinson Crusoes of the Ghetto, witnessed the liberation of Warsaw by the Soviet Army in mid-January 1945.[90] The rebuilding of the area of Warsaw which had been the Ghetto, and is now the Muranów district, took place from 1949 until 1967.[91] The streets of Muranów do not align with the streets of the Ghetto, though many of the buildings were constructed out of its rubble.[92] Memorials and plaques dot the landscape, ranging from the impressive notable Monument to the Heroes of the Ghetto down to a small stone at 18 Miła Street.[93] The majority of what is left of the Warsaw Ghetto lies within the repurposed rubble, and under the homes and streets of Muranów.[94]

The Authors' Survival

Born to a Polish Jewish father and a German Jewish mother, Marcel Reich-Ranicki was 19 years old when World War II began.[95] A year prior, he had been deported from Berlin, where he had attended school, and returned to Warsaw to live with his parents and his brother.[96] Reich-Ranicki's father David was a Polish Jew, who came from a business family, while his mother Helene was a German Jew, who came from a

[89] Ibid., 803-804.
[90] Ibid., 803, 806.
[91] Ibid., 807.
[92] Ibid., 807-808.
[93] Ibid., 808-809.
[94] Ibid., 810.
[95] Reich-Ranicki, *The Author of Himself*, 3-5, 7.
[96] Ibid., 106, 113.

rabbinical family.[97] His father was fairly religious, although his mother was not; his father spoke Polish, Yiddish, German, and Russian, while his mother spoke German and "rather elementary" Polish.[98] Reich-Ranicki described his family as educated and typical of assimilated families, even with a tradition of rabbis within the family.[99] When he arrived in Poland, he worked first as a German language tutor to students, then due to his facility with the language, he was hired to be one of four translators of written correspondence who worked with the *Judenrat*, or Jews' Council.[100] In this position, "the entire correspondence between the Jews' Council and the German authorities passed through [his] hands" giving him "a unique insight into what was happening" within the Warsaw Ghetto.[101] Reich-Ranicki was also approached by historian and archivist Emanuel Ringelblum during this work, and asked if he would supply "documents of historical significance" to the underground archive.[102]

On January 21, 1940, Reich-Ranicki was ordered by his mother to go care for Teofila Langnas of Łodź, whose father had committed suicide that day.[103] Better known as Tosia, the pair remained together from that day until her death in 2011.[104] Marcel and Tosia Reich-Ranicki were married in the Warsaw Ghetto, after it had been decreed that

[97] Ibid., 4-5.
[98] Ibid., 5-6.
[99] Ibid., 5.
[100] Ibid., 113, 140-141.
[101] Ibid., 142.
[102] Ibid., 149.
[103] Ibid., 131.
[104] Reich-Ranicki, *The Author of Himself*, 137; Ulrich Weinzierl, "Reich-Ranickis Ehefrau Teofila ist gestorben," *Welt* (Hamburg), April 29, 2011, https://www.welt.de/kultur/literarischewelt/article13300776/Reich-Ranickis-Ehefrau-Teofila-ist-gestorben.html.

Ph. 3: Marcel and Tosia in 1940[106]

the staff of the Jews' Council and their spouses would not be "resettled" during the first large deportation of the Ghetto.[105] The Reich-Ranickis escaped deportation in January 1943, and hid within the Jews' Council archives until they could bribe the German gendarme and the Polish blue police at the exit gate to escape the Warsaw Ghetto.[107] They survived the duration of the war in hiding, by living in the basement of a Polish couple, named Bolek and Genia Gawin.[108] The Gawins made extra money during the war by rolling cigarettes at night, which Tosia helped with, while Marcel told stories each night based on all of the books and short stories he had read, as well as the plays, operas, and films he had seen.[109] The Reich-Ranickis were liberated at the end of the war by Russian soldiers, and the Gawins were never punished or attacked for hiding them.[110] On February 13, 2005, the Gawins were recognized by Yad Vashem as Righteous Among the Nations for their actions in hiding the Reich-Ranickis.[111]

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[105] Reich-Ranicki, *The Author of Himself*, 165, 168.
[106] Foto Forbert, "My parents Marcel and Teofila (Tosia) Reich-Ranicki, Warsaw Ghetto," 1940, photograph, digitized, accessed March 8, 2020 via https://www.maths.ed.ac.uk/~v1ranick/surgery/biocv.htm.
[107] Ibid., 188-190, 192-193.
[108] Ibid., 197; Andrew Ranicki, "My Mother Teofila Reich-Ranicki" (presentation, Edinburgh German Circle, Edinburgh, UK, February 28, 2012), slide 28, accessed via https://www.maths.ed.ac.uk/~v1ranick/surgery/tosia.pdf.
[109] Reich-Ranicki, *The Author of Himself*, 200.
[110] Ibid., 204-205.
[111] "Gawin Bolesław & Eugenia (Schondelmeier)," *Yad Vashem*, accessed March 5, 2020, https://righteous.yadvashem.org/?search=gawin&searchType=all&language=en&itemId=5224232&ind=0.

When Germany invaded Poland in 1939, Władysław Szpilman was 27 years old, and living in Warsaw with his family, which consisted of his parents, his sisters Regina and Halina, and his brother Henryk.[112] Regina was a lawyer, his father was a violinist, and Halina and his mother were also musicians .[113] Szpilman never says how Henryk worked before the war, but once the occupation of Poland began, he taught English.[114] Szpilman himself spoke German along with Polish. It is unknown what other languages he or the members of his family spoke based on the contents of his memoir. Although it is not stated in his memoir, one can assume his family belonged to the educated, assimilated class in Poland. A pianist for Polish Radio at the outset of the war, Szpilman continued to work as a pianist at a series of cafés within the Warsaw Ghetto: Café Nowoczesna, the Sienna Street café, and the Sztuka.[115] When the deportations began, Szpilman and his family were brought in to work at the collection center at the *Umschlagplatz*.[117] On August 16, 1942, Szpilman, his sister Regina, and their parents did not pass inspection at the collection center, and were selected for deportation to Treblinka.[118] The next day, Henryk and Halina rejoined the

Ph.4: Szpilman in 1942[116]

[112] Szpilman, 28.
[113] Ibid., 28-29, 54.
[114] Ibid., 54.
[115] Ibid., 11, 14-15, 16.
[116] "Władysław Szpilman—photograph taken for his identity card, 1942," photograph, digitized, in Władysław Szpilman, *The Pianist: The Extraordinary True Story of One Man's Survival in Warsaw, 1939-1945*, trans. Anthea Bell (New York: Picador, 1999), 2.
[117] Szpilman, 94-95.
[118] Szpilman, 96-97.

family at the *Umschlagplatz*; however, Szpilman was pulled from the line headed towards the trains by an unidentified member of the Jewish Order Service.[119]

After the deportation of his family, Szpilman found work on a demolition crew that was pulling down the walls of the large ghetto, and later building a housing unit for SS officers.[120] He was transferred to working in the storehouse for the construction site after he had sprained his ankle.[121] Szpilman described this as a "lucky stroke of bad luck," as his reassignment by the engineer Blum to the stores saved his hands from frostbite and heavy manual labor in the winter months which could have destroyed his future as a pianist.[122] It was during this time that he helped hide and transport weapons that were smuggled inside potato sacks brought to the storehouse from the Polish underground to the ŻOB along with a man called Majorek.[123] In early 1943, rumors began to circulate that even these construction workers would be sent to Treblinka. Szpilman was able to contact a trio of Polish artists, friends, and resistance members who helped to hide him with a network of support throughout the city from February 13, 1943 until August 12, 1944. Janina Godlewska-Bogucka, Andrzej Bogucki, and Czesław Lewicki orchestrated his hiding places, and were subsequently recognized as Righteous Among the Nations in 1978.[124] Szpilman stayed in his first apartment hiding place until

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[119] Ibid., 102-103, 105-106. The Jewish Order Service is sometimes also colloquially referred to as the Jewish police.
[120] Ibid., 109, 120.
[121] Ibid., 120. Blum, the engineer and architect in *de facto* charge, was also Jewish, and for this reason, Szpilman was not killed or sent to Treblinka when he was injured. The project was also unique in that it was a mixed Jewish-Polish-German construction project working alongside architects, masons, and artisans, 118-120.
[122] Ibid., 120.
[123] Ibid., 121.
[124] "Bogucki Andrzej & Godlewska Janina," *Yad Vashem*, accessed March 5, 2020, https://righteous.yadvashem.org/?search=Janina%20Godlewska&searchType=righteous_only&language=en&itemId=4014008&ind=1; "Lewicki Czesław," *Yad Vashem*, accessed March 5, 2020,

he was outed by neighbors, and remained in his second until the building as a whole was set on fire by German forces.[125]

Until November 1944, Szpilman hid in various buildings and attics as he could find, until he was found by a German officer, later identified as Wilm Hosenfeld.[126] This officer helped to hide and feed Szpilman in the attic of the fortress commando unit he worked in until December 12, 1944.[127] Once Warsaw was liberated, Szpilman was found and cared for by the Polish army for two weeks' time.[128] Shortly after the war, a colleague from Polish Radio, Zygmunt Lednicki, took Szpilman to the field where Hosenfeld, then a prisoner of war, had been, but the camp was gone; Szpilman did not learn until after the first publication of his memoir that Hosenfeld had died in a Soviet camp near Stalingrad.[129] Hosenfeld was posthumously recognized as Righteous Among the Nations on November 25, 2008 with the support of Szpilman.[130]

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https://righteous.yadvashem.org/?search=Czes%C5%82aw%20Lewicki&searchType=righteous_only&language=en&itemId=4016116&ind=0.

[125] Szpilman, 132-159.

[126] Ibid., 160-176; Wolf Biermann, "Epilogue: A Bridge Between Władysław Szpilman and Wilm Hosenfeld," in *The Pianist: The Extraordinary Story of One Man's Survival in Warsaw, 1939-1945*, trans. Anthea Bell (London: Phoenix, 2002), 214.

[127] Szpilman, 176-181.

[128] Ibid., 185-186.

[129] Ibid., 188-189; Biermann, 215.

[130] "Hosenfeld Wilhelm," *Yad Vashem*, accessed March 5, 2020, https://righteous.yadvashem.org/?search=hosenfeld&searchType=all&language=en&itemId=4015318&ind=0.

CHAPTER 2

REPRESENTATION WITHIN THE MEMOIRS AND FILMS

Within their memoirs, both Marcel Reich-Ranicki and Władysław Szpilman included descriptions of the establishment of the Ghetto, the typhus epidemic, and artistic life within the Ghetto. They also discussed transportation of goods into the Ghetto, the Jewish Council and Jewish Police, and the deportations from the Ghetto. These themes of major turning points and institutions were selected for their broad impact on the lives of the Ghetto's residents, including the authors. Encountering five of these facets of Ghetto life – all except for art – were inescapable for the residents. The sixth, the arts community, could have been avoidable, yet it was so expansive within the Ghetto that it was an inclusion in many people's lives, not solely the assimilated elite. Also, as artists themselves, it would be illogical to not include this part of Szpilman and Reich-Ranicki's lives.

In determining which aspects of Ghetto life would be analyzed in this thesis, some topics were set aside due to limitations. The three most important of these were the lives of children, the experiences of women, and socioeconomic inequalities within the Ghetto. The lives of children have been a focal topic in primary sources, such as Rachel Auerbach's "Yizkor, 1943," and a section topic in secondary sources.[131] David G. Roskies argues that within the Ghetto in fact:

> [m]ost visible were the children. As of January 1942, there were close to fifty thousand school-age children incarcerated in the Warsaw Ghetto, almost evenly

[131] Rachel Auerbach, "Yizkor, 1943," trans. Leonard Wolf, in *Voices from the Warsaw Ghetto: Writing Our History*, ed. David G. Roskies (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019), 234-244, ProQuest Ebook Central, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/asulib-ebooks/detail.action?docID=5742779; Engelking and Leociak, 317-329; Kassow 259-268.

> divided among boys and girls, including about ten thousand children of refugees and deportees.[132]

Despite this, children only ever appear in the background, and barely, in Szpilman and Reich-Ranicki's texts. The child smugglers are the most prominent children in Szpilman's text, and Janusz Korczak's orphans are mentioned once. Children appear even less in the films. Given the lack of evidence about children in Reich-Ranicki's memoir, it makes sense that there was very little screen time dedicated to children in the film of his life. However, with *The Pianist* it is possible that the children only appearing when there was textual evidence may be a filmic choice in relation to audience's perceptions of children after representations such as the girl in the red coat from *Schindler's List*. In any case, it is an unfortunate omittance given the importance of children to the historical Warsaw Ghetto.

Similarly, women in the four primary sources are secondary figures. Oftentimes important secondary characters, such as the female family members of Reich-Ranicki and Szpilman's families. Their lives and experiences are not discussed as distinct or unique from those of the male family members. They are also viewed from the perspective of their male authors, and in the films, their male directors. While this could give the opportunity to read and view against the grain, there is not enough grain to sift through to provide an accurate section on these women's lives. For example, Szpilman remembered, "I understood Halina least….I can't say what she was really like, and now I can never find out any more about her."[133] Generally within the memoirs, the women of the Ghetto

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[132] David G. Roskies, introduction to *Voices from the Warsaw Ghetto: Writing Our History*, ed. David G. Roskies (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019), 10, ProQuest Ebook Central, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/asulib-ebooks/detail.action?docID=5742779.
[133] Szpilman, 73.

are also not discussed in how they are treated differently than the men, with one notable exception. Reich-Ranicki described a roundup of women who were forced to mop the floor of a German office building using their underwear.[134] This scene occurs within the film *Mein Leben* as well.[135] A similar event happened in early February 1940, when "women were seized for labor. And, it just so happened, women in fur coats. They're ordered to wash the pavement with their panties, then put them on again wet."[136] While the events and individuals described in these memoirs and films could provide insight into a gendered analysis, the scope and breath of that theme is also deserving of its own separate, larger research.

The inequalities between people living and dying within the Warsaw Ghetto is evident in virtually every primary and secondary source on the subject, including the four main primary sources focused on in this thesis. This topic is potentially vaster even than any of the selected or discarded themes. It too deserves its own research analysis, separate from this thesis. A dedicated sociocultural history of the economic and societal disparities within the Warsaw Ghetto is a theme deserving of a future project. It is my hope that these three topics could be further studied at a later point in time.

Establishment of the Ghetto

Rumors of the establishment of a ghetto began as early as February 1940, and much of the chaos of the rumors surrounded the decisions on which parts of the city

[134] Reich-Ranicki, *The Author of Himself*, 125.
[135] *Mein Leben: Marcel Reich-Ranicki*, Zahavi.
[136] Ringelblum, *Notes*, 17.

would be included within the boundaries.[137] Some of the earliest rumors included the suburb of Praga within the possible ghetto area, even though it was eventually excluded.[138] By the end of September 1940, rather accurate rumors were circulating that the Warsaw Ghetto was to be smaller than the traditional Jewish residential area.[139] Emanuel Ringelblum wrote on September 27 that "[a] Ghetto [was] imminent."[140] In contrast, "a day before the decree" on October 12 establishing "the division of the city into three parts: a German quarter…; a Polish quarter; and a Jewish quarter," he also noted that "the [Jewish] Council announced that no Ghetto was in prospect."[141] In recounting the establishment of the Ghetto, Reich-Ranicki pointed out that the official terminology for the Warsaw Ghetto was "'the Jewish Residential District.'"[142] In keeping with other purposefully oblique linguistic choices, "[t]he term 'ghetto' was therefore carefully avoided," because "[w]hile this return to the Middle Ages could not be kept a secret, it could be officially embellished and camouflaged."[143] The residents of the Ghetto and those who wrote about it both during and after the Holocaust all eschewed this language, and referred to the location as what it was, the Warsaw Ghetto. This descriptive act was one of resistance against the Nazi regime and of preservation of the truth. In this

[137] Ringelblum, *Notes*, 18, 54-55.
[138] Ibid., 18, 73.
[139] Ibid., 54-55; Weszpiński, "The Warsaw Ghetto: Before." Ringelblum wrote that the rumors included "Zlota, Sienna, Chmielna, as well as Leszno, Elektoralna, and Ogrodowa Streets." Chmielna and Złota were not included in the Ghetto, while Sienna and Elektoralna became border streets. Only part of Ogrodowa was included, and the majority of Leszno was included.
[140] Ringelblum, *Notes*, 55.
[141] Ibid., 72, 74. To add insult to injury, the announcement was made on Yom Kippur; Engelking and Leociak, 66; Nehemia Titelman (Tilem), "Setting Up a Closed Ghetto," in *To Live With Honor and Die With Honor!...: Selected Documents from the Warsaw Ghetto Underground Archives "O.S" ["Oneg Shabbath"]*, ed. and ann. Joseph Kermish (Jerusalem: Menachem Press, 1986), 143.
[142] Reich-Ranicki, *The Author of Himself*, 138; Reich-Ranicki, *Mein Leben*, 199: "*der jüdische Wohnbezirk*."
[143] Ibid., 138.

way, authors have refused to acquiesce to the propagandistic language of the Nazi party, an important choice in historical language and writing.

Both Władysław Szpilman and Marcel Reich-Ranicki were living in Warsaw with their families when the Ghetto was established within the city. Given that they wrote memoirs after the Holocaust, rather than keeping journals during it, their mentions of the establishment of the Warsaw Ghetto occur in happenstance. Neither of the men's families were forced to move into the Ghetto when the boundaries were settled, so the transition was not as great as for families living outside the area.[144] Even though Szpilman and his family did not have to move, as their flat was already within the Ghetto, in the film, the family is shown having to move with thousands of other Jewish families into the Ghetto on October 31, 1940.[145] Szpilman also never mentions in his memoir the closing of the "small ghetto," yet in *The Pianist*, another date is shown across the screen – March 15, 1942 – and the family is forced to move once again.[146] In reality, the Szpilman family did not move from their apartment until late July 1942, when the family was moved into the barracks connected to the *Umschlagplatz* where they worked until August 16.[147] A similar discrepancy occurs between Reich-Ranicki's memoir and the film *Mein Leben*. Within the film, Reich-Ranicki and his family are shown moving into the Ghetto, despite his parents' home and brother's dental practice within the building already being within the area.[148] While neither of the authors' families had to move their homes when the

[144] Szpilman, 59; Reich-Ranicki, *The Author of Himself*, 113, 142-143, 179-180; Ringelblum, *Notes*, 73,77, 81.
[145] *The Pianist*, Polanski.
[146] Ibid.
[147] Szpilman, 94.
[148] *Mein Leben: Marcel Reich-Ranicki*, Zahavi; Reich-Ranicki, *The Author of Himself*, 113.

Ghetto was formally established, Ringelblum estimated that approximately "140,000 Jews from the south of Warsaw and the Praga suburb [would] have to leave their homes and move into the Ghetto."[149] An equal number of "Christians [would] have to leave the Ghetto quarter" in the wake of the Nazi partitioning of the city.[150] This mass transition in the city then is shown in the films, even if it is a liberty taken with the men's stories. The foregrounding of the mass transition is an understandable one all the same. The sudden forced upheaval to the lives of hundreds of thousands is a traumatic rupture that is captured in all four sources. The disparities and factual errors, while worth noting, are not as important in the grand scheme of this life-altering change upon the residents of Warsaw.

The Warsaw Ghetto was closed on the evening of November 15, 1940, leading to chaos that night and the next day as "many" residents were unprepared for a closed Ghetto.[151] Nehemia Titelman, a contributor to the Oneg Shabbat, reported that "basically the decree about the establishment of the Jewish quarter left no room for doubt as to the real intentions, as it spoke about a '*geschlossenen Wohnbezirk.*'"[152] Even so, and given the mix of languages within the Jewish population of Warsaw, the closure of the Ghetto "came like a thunderbolt," leading to an immediate rise in prices on food and other goods, as well as a shortage of said items.[153] Between the announcement of the Ghetto

[149] Ringelblum, *Notes*, 73.
[150] Ibid., 73.
[151] Ibid., 86; Szpilman, 59; Titelman, 144, the use of "many" comes from Titelman.
[152] Titelman, 144. This translates to a closed residential quarter.
[153] Ringelblum, *Notes*, 86.

and its closing, some families had not secured housing within the area.[154] Władysław Szpilman described the evening of the closure:

> The dark streets were swarming with figures wearing white armbands. They were all in an agitated state, running back and forth like animals put in a cage and not yet used to it. Women were wailing and children were crying in terror as they perched beside the walls of the buildings, on mounds of bedding gradually getting wet and dirty from the filth in the streets. These were Jewish families who had been forcibly put behind the ghetto walls at the last minute, and had no hope of finding shelter. Half a million people had to find somewhere to lay their heads in an already over-populated part of the city, which scarcely had room for more than a hundred thousand.[155]

From that point forward, the gates were shut to the general populace of the Ghetto, and they were technically separated from the rest of Warsaw.[156] There were special passes that did allow for exit through the original twenty-two gates, or the option to exit the Ghetto through extralegal means.[157]

The Warsaw Ghetto was divided into two sections, one larger to the north referred to as either the "large ghetto" or the "big ghetto," and one smaller to the south referred to as the "small ghetto" or the "little ghetto."[158] These two sections of the Ghetto were separated by Chłodna Street, a wide thoroughfare with "much coming and going of cars, trams and pedestrians."[159] The only intersection where crossing was available was at Chłodna and Żelazna.[160] Due to the high volume of traffic on the street, the German guards were generally less inclined to close Chłodna, and allow the residents of the Ghetto to cross between the two parts.[161] In Szpilman's memoir, as the crowd needing to

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[154] Ibid., 77; Szpilman, 59.
[155] Szpilman, 59.
[156] Ibid., 60.
[157] Engelking and Leociak, 72-74.
[158] Szpilman, 65; Reich-Ranicki, *The Author of Himself*, 146.
[159] Szpilman, 65-66; Weszpiński, "The Warsaw Ghetto: Before."
[160] Szpilman, 65; Titelman, 144.
[161] Szpilman, 66.

cross the street grew, so too "did [their] agitation, nervousness and restlessness, for the German guards were bored at their posts [there], and tried to amuse themselves as best they could."[162] This amusement could be found in forcing mismatched couples to dance along to street musicians' tunes, a scene which then made its way into the film version.[163] Other documents included in the Underground Archive support this scene of dancing as punishment.[164] People waiting at the Żelazna-Chłodna intersection were also forced to perform exercises, heft bricks, "climb walls," or "lie down in mud," all while under threat and actual enaction of violence.[165] Chłodna Street was also the main East-West route through Warsaw, which became of high importance to the German Wehrmacht on its way to declaring war against the Soviet Union in 1941.[167] For this reason, a small wooden overpass bridge was built over Chłodna, and paid for by the Jewish Council.[168] As compared to the abuse meted out at the former intersection, the new bridge provided a relatively easier crossing between the two parts of the Ghetto. The installation

Ph. 5: Chłodna Street Bridge[166]

[162] Ibid., 66.
[163] Ibid., 66-67; *The Pianist*, Polanski.
[164] Titelman, 144-145; "Contents of a Conversation with a Member of the Order Police," in *To Live With Honor and Die With Honor!...: Selected Documents from the Warsaw Ghetto Underground Archives "O.S" ["Oneg Shabbath"]*, ed. and ann. Joseph Kermish (Jerusalem: Menachem Press, 1986), 310-311.
[165] Titelman, 144-145; "Contents of a Conversation," 310-311.
[166] "View of a street that divided the Warsaw ghetto. A bridge that connected the two parts of the ghetto is visible," c.1942, photograph, digitized, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Interpress, Warsaw, accessed March 12, 2020, https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/pa1077856.
[167] Reich-Ranicki, *The Author of Himself*, 146.
[168] Ibid., 146.

of the bridge and new manner of crossing Chłodna were then shown in *The Pianist* through a scene between Szpilman and his father.[169]

The Typhus Epidemic

The threat of an outbreak of typhus within the city of Warsaw, while an actual fear, was used as the ideological argument by the Nazis for establishment of the Warsaw Ghetto.[170] The establishment was predicated on the "necessity of fighting the epidemic of typhus" within the Jewish community of Warsaw.[171] In October 1940, "*Warsaw News* published an item about a conference of doctors who declared there was a pressing need to isolate the Jews from the rest of the populace in a Ghetto for health reasons," citing specifically typhus.[172] This propaganda was targeted at the Polish Christian residents of Warsaw, and meant to convince them that the Jewish community was responsible for the typhus outbreak in the city. However, underground publications reiterated what doctors knew: that the epidemic was caused by German actions of relocation and confinement, as well as unrealistic hygiene measures.[173] These included the fact that the wealthy could bribe officials to skip delousing and disinfection procedures that ruined household materials, as well as the knowledge amongst the "military and health authority" that a Ghetto would drastically increase the density and spread of disease.[174] By December 1940, "[t]yphus [was] widespread in the Aryan part of Warsaw, so They checked all

[169] *The Pianist*, Polanski.
[170] Engelking and Leociak, 25.
[171] Ibid., 25.
[172] Ringelblum, *Notes*, 69.
[173] Engelking and Leociak, 281, 284-285.
[174] Ringelblum, *Notes*, 16, 35, 63.

Jewish apartments for any concealed cases; not a single such was discovered."[175] While tuberculosis caused more deaths than typhus in the Ghetto, it was typhus that became the symbolic deathbringer, mentioned in almost all accounts of Ghetto life, including Szpilman and Reich-Ranicki's memoirs.[176] It is striking then that the typhus epidemic was never mentioned in either film, although the results of the disease are shown.

Barbara Engelking and Jacek Leociak state that

> [t]he typhus epidemic in the Warsaw Ghetto occurred in two great waves. The first swept through the area of the future ghetto in the first half of 1940. The increased inflow of Jewish deportees…caused a rapid deterioration in housing and sanitary conditions and increasing hunger and poverty, especially among the newcomers. The height of the epidemic was in March, April, and May 1940….The second, much worse wave of the epidemic was also connected with an increased inflow of refugees to the ghetto….The sanitary conditions of the sealed district, and above all the conditions in the refugee centers – filled to the brim with starving, poor people deprived of their means of livelihood – were catastrophic.[177]

Both Reich-Ranicki and Szpilman wrote on the second wave of the typhus epidemic rather than the first wave. This secondary wave lasted from April 1941 until the early months of 1942, and affected an estimated 100,000 to 110,000 residents of the Ghetto.[178] The typhus epidemic reached its deadliest month in August 1941, claiming the lives of 5,560 people. [179] To put this in perspective, Ringelblum compared:

> According to the statistics, there were seven times as many deaths in April, 1941, as there were in November, 1940. At this point it is worth noting that even before the war the mortality in Warsaw was high, because critically sick Jews from the provinces came to Warsaw to be cared for in the Jewish Hospital here. And yet, the mortality nowadays is high even compared with prewar days.[180]

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[175] Ibid., 105. Throughout his *Notes*, Ringelblum refers to Nazi German officials as "They."
[176] Engelking and Leociak, 280; Szpilman, 16-17; Reich-Ranicki, 147.
[177] Engelking and Leociak, 282-283.
[178] Ibid., 283-284.
[179] Ibid., 42.
[180] Ringelblum, *Notes*, 172.

Szpilman described the typhus epidemic as "[a] sea of Jewish misery" that the poor could not escape from.[181] The second wave of the epidemic was mainly spread by lice, as Szpilman attested:

> The ghetto swarmed with vermin, and nothing could be done about it. The clothing of people you passed in the street was infested by lice, and so were the interiors of trams and shops. Lice crawled over the pavements, up stairways, and dropped from the ceilings of the public offices that had to be visited on so many different kinds of business. Lice found their way into the folds of your newspaper, into your small change; there were even lice on the crust of the loaf you had just bought. And each of these verminous creatures could carry typhus.[182]

Reich-Ranicki and his friends also avoided the Ghetto tram out of fear for lice, even though the crowded streets offered scant less protection against picking up lice from other pedestrians.[183] Szpilman wrote that during this period, typhus became "[t]he chief subject of conversation among both rich and poor…the poor simply wondered when they would die of it, while the rich wondered how to get hold of Dr. Weigel's vaccine and protect themselves."[184] Despite this worry on the part of the poor, it as actually "the so-called 'better class of people'" who often fared worse when they contracted typhus.[185] In total, by August 1941, "300 of the 1,400 houses in the Ghetto [had] suffered from typhus," with an approximately eight percent mortality rate.[186]

While there was access to Dr Weigel's anti-typhus inoculation within the Warsaw Ghetto, it was expensive, ranging in price from four hundred to "several thousand"

[181] Szpilman, 16.
[182] Ibid., 16-17.
[183] Reich-Ranicki, *The Author of Himself*, 147.
[184] Szpilman, 17.
[185] Ringelblum, *Notes*, 195.
[186] Ibid., 195.

złotys.[187] Each injection could inoculate two individuals.[188] The injected vaccine was manufactured by Professor Rudolf Weigel in Lwów, and was sent to Professor Ludwik Hirszfeld of the Health Council in secret.[189] Szpilman decided not to be inoculated, as he could not afford a vaccine for every member of his family. Instead, his mother took on the task of delousing every member when they first walked into the door of the house with a pair of tweezers to pick out the lice and a bowl of alcohol to kill the lice in.[190] This was not unusual, as the "disinfection columns" often spread typhus more than combatted it, and families chose to take their health into their own hands.[191]

Reich-Ranicki did not detail how he and his family avoided contracting typhus; however, he did describe the effects of the disease on the Ghetto. Those who succumbed to typhus were so numerous that bodies were abandoned to the gutter each morning.[192] Szpilman adds that the burial teams could not keep pace with these bodies, so they were wrapped in newspaper and left until they could be collected for burial.[193] This image of bodies wrapped in paper and lining the streets was the only aspect of the typhus epidemic to be included in *Mein Leben* and *The Pianist*.[194] Both films included scenes of the protagonist walking down body-lined streets in the early morning. Ringelblum also noted the problem of the bodies in the streets, stating that "[t]here is a marked, remarkable indifference to death, which no longer impresses. One walks past corpses with

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[187] Ibid., 195; Engelking and Leociak, 289. Ringelblum quoted 400-500 zlotys per injection in August 1941, while Engelking and Leociak found quotes ranging from 1,000 to multiple thousands per injection throughout the timeline of the epidemic.
[188] Ringelblum, *Notes*, 195.
[189] Ibid., 289.
[190] Szpilman, 18-19.
[191] Ringelblum, *Notes*, 194-197.
[192] Reich-Ranicki, *The Author of Himself*, 147.
[193] Szpilman, 18.
[194] *Mein Leben: Marcel Reich-Ranicki*, Zahavi; *The Pianist*, Polanski.

indifference."[195] The filmmakers would have been hard-pressed to ignore such a pervasive aspect of life in the Warsaw Ghetto. While feature films are not beholden to their source material (nor should they necessarily be so) it is interesting that there existed no dialogue or scenes about the epidemic in these films. The typhus epidemic, and the second wave in particular, was a formative moment in the Ghetto experience. Disease is a major part of the human condition, as current world affairs in the spring of 2020 are proving yet again. There is no evidence as to why the directors chose to exclude the typhus epidemic. The most logical assumption for their exclusion would be to counter the Nazi propaganda and stereotypes of disease that were also so rampant and heavily used during the establishment of the Warsaw Ghetto. It is easier to be nuanced in text than in film sometimes. By including their memories of the typhus epidemic, Reich-Ranicki and Szpilman both offer a glimpse into the tragic and mundane sides of disease. The reader is able to connect their own understanding of how an epidemic or pandemic happens, how people live through it, in a concrete manner to the experiences within the typhus epidemic. Again, this is especially relevant during the current pandemic.

Artistic Life in the Ghetto Community

The Warsaw Ghetto was the forced home to several hundred members of the Jewish arts community.[196] Joseph Kermish also argues that:

> Jewish Warsaw, the largest and most populous of all the communities n Europe, which before the Second World War was not only a gigantic reservoir of Jewish strength but also a center of Jewish literary creativity – whose influence spread to all the Jewish population centers in the entire world, and was instrumental in all

[195] Ringelblum, *Notes*, 194.
[196] Engelking and Leociak, 531.

> the various aspects of the cultural renaissance – this Jewish Warsaw was also, in the Ghetto years, the most important center of Jewish creativity.[197]

These creative individuals, having lost their access to their professions by and large, found ways to participate in their arts throughout the Ghetto, whether by official or communal means.[198] Actors, singers, and musicians worked in theatres and cafés within the Ghetto almost daily.[199] Musicians were limited in their choice of music, often only being allowed to play "the music of those Jews who were Aryans by adoption, i.e., Mendelssohn, Calmann, Bizet, and Meyerbeer."[200] Other venues, such as the Judaic Library, hosted concerts, one of which Ringelblum attended in December 1940, remarking that "Jewish artists appeared and sang in Yiddish for the first time….Perhaps this is the beginning of a return to Yiddish."[201] Within the Ghetto also operated four theatres, with productions in both Yiddish and Polish, as well as revue shows at locations such as the Melody Palace.[202] Other artists were unable to find work within formal performance spaces, and became street buskers instead, "playing music in the streets."[203]

Along with these performance arts, a number of authors, poets, essayists, and diarists kept record of their lives in the Warsaw Ghetto, although the majority of their works have been lost.[204] Another major written work was compiled within the Ghetto, which was the brainchild of historian Emanuel Ringelblum.[205] Working together with a

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[197] Joseph Kermish, introduction to *To Live With Honor and Die With Honor!...: Selected Documents from the Warsaw Ghetto Underground Archives "O.S" ["Oneg Shabbath"]*, ed. and ann. Joseph Kermish (Jerusalem: Menachem Press, 1986), xiii.
[198] Engelking and Leociak, 531-533.
[199] Ibid., 552-580.
[200] Ringelblum, *Notes*, 125.
[201] Ibid., 109.
[202] Ibid., 199, 177.
[203] Ibid., 158.
[204] Engelking and Leociak, 539-552.
[205] Ibid., 659.

number of different men and women of various political backgrounds, the Ringelblum Archive compiled materials and writings about the Warsaw Ghetto under the name Oneg Shabbat.[206] It was within the intellectual arts community of the Warsaw Ghetto that Władysław Szpilman and Marcel and Tosia Reich-Ranicki lived and worked before the deportations began that forced all three into hiding. Their membership within this community afforded them an amount of privilege within the Ghetto, and helped to serve them in their survival through others' actions towards them.

Marcel Reich-Ranicki devoted an entire chapter in his memoir to the music of the Warsaw Ghetto.[207] Within it, he described the formation of the symphony orchestra of the Ghetto, conducted by Simon Pullman.[208] The orchestra was made up of classical, jazz, and dance hall musicians, and when there were no musicians who could play the oboe, bassoon, or horn, the parts were reassigned to other instruments.[209] These musicians played works mostly by German composers, such as Beethoven, Brahms, Schubert, and Mozart, but they were also able to play works by non-German composers, such as Tchaikovsky and Dvořák. The only composer whose works it was illegal to play inside the Ghetto was Fredéric Chopin.[210] To try and combat the negative effects of hunger on

[206] Ibid., 660-662. The Archive is also known as the Underground Archive of the Warsaw Ghetto, the Warsaw Ghetto Underground Archive, the Ghetto Underground Archive or the Oyneg Shabes Archive. For those (like me) who cannot (yet) visit the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, there is an English translation compendium of selected works from the Archive: *To Live With Honor and Die With Honor!...: Selected Documents from the Warsaw Ghetto Underground Archives "O.S" ["Oneg Shabbath"]*, ed. and ann. Joseph Kermish (Jerusalem: Menachem Press, 1986). There is also an anthology of selected texts in their original Polish, Yiddish, and Hebrew: *Archiwum Ringelbluma: Antologia*, ed. Marta Janczewska and Jacek Leociak (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Ossolineum, 2019).
[207] Reich-Ranicki, *The Author of Himself*, 151-160.
[208] Ibid., 153.
[209] Ibid., 153.
[210] Ibid., 155. It is interesting then, that it is Chopin's "Nocturne" that Szpilman chooses to play when Hosenfeld asks him to do so. Perhaps it was done unwittingly, perhaps it was a small moment of resistance?

the musicians, one of the affluent doctors in the Ghetto hosted "the whole orchestra for breakfast…so that the wind players should blow better and the strings be in a better mood."[211] The concerts performed by the symphony orchestra – particularly one where a few uniformed Germans entered, watched the concert until the end of the symphony, and left without any sort of fuss – are the only parts of the artistic life of the Ghetto that was included in the film *Mein Leben*.[212]

Władysław Szpilman wrote about his work at three different cafés within the Warsaw Ghetto, but two of the three were more involved in the arts community. The Sienna Street café was where Szpilman met Roman Kramsztyk, whom he called "highly gifted" and "magnificent," particularly for his drawings of Ghetto life.[213] Kramsztyk was also known for having painted a portrait of Czerniaków.[214] The Sztuka was the largest café in the Ghetto, and the "most popular, most prestigious literary café."[215] Playing as one-half of the duo with Andrzej (Artur) Goldfeder, Szpilman was able to perform regularly both in the standard café and in its garden.[216] Also at the Sztuka, singers, poets, comedians, puppet shows, and cabaret acts performed.[217] One of the most daring performances at the Sztuka was of the cabaret show *Live News(paper)*, which was "a witty chronicle of ghetto life full of sharp, risqué allusions to the Germans."[218] Filled with "a lively, colorful, bitterly satirical, and polished literary text," the show was crafted by a

[211] Ibid., 156.
[212] Ibid., 158; *Mein Leben: Marcel Reich-Ranicki*, Zahavi.
[213] Szpilman, 15.
[214] Engelking and Leociak, 532.
[215] Szpilman, 16; Engelking and Leociak, 585.
[216] Ibid., 16; Ibid., 585. Szpilman referred to him as Andrzej, and Engelking and Leociak have referred to him as Artur.
[217] Ibid., 16; Ibid., 585-586.
[218] Szpilman, 16. In *The Pianist*, the title is translated as *Live Newspaper*, and it is translated as *Live News* in Engelking and Leociak.

group of writers, composers, actors, singers, and directors who each presented a section of the newspaper, while the Master of Ceremonies functioned as the overarching "editor" of the paper.[219]

The other popular and well-received act that Szpilman wrote that he had had occasion to hear was the singer Maria Eisenstadt (Marysia Ajzensztadt).[220] He claimed that she "would have been a famous name to millions now for her wonderful voice if the Germans had not later murdered her."[221] Eisenstadt was known as the "Nightingale of the Ghetto," and gained popularity for her daily performances of both opera arias and cultural songs.[222] Marcel Reich-Ranicki, writing for the *Gazeta Żydowska* under the pen name Wiktor Hart, also saw Eisenstadt perform, and noted that unfortunately her challenging daily performances were wearing on her voice.[223] Despite this, he also wrote that her singing "testified to supreme art, to simplicity and measure: in a short time she has achieved true mastery."[224] While both Szpilman and Reich-Ranicki wrote of Eisenstadt and their memories of the Sztuka, neither the Sztuka nor Eisenstadt appear in either film. Reich-Ranicki's work as a music critic for the *Gazeta Żydowska* does not appear in the film *Mein Leben* either.[225]

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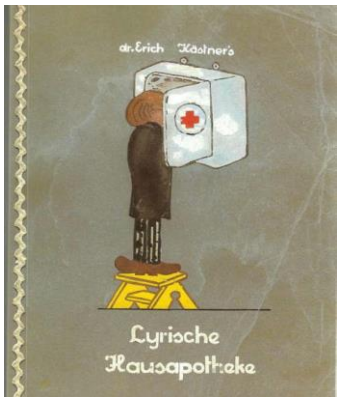
[219] Engelking and Leociak, 587.
[220] Szpilman, 16. Her name was written by Szpilman as Maria Eisenstadt, while Engelking and Leociak and Reich-Ranicki wrote her name as Marysia Ajzensztadt.
[221] Ibid., 16; Engelking and Leociak, 585, 575.
[222] Engelking and Leociak, 575.
[223] Marcel Reich-Ranicki as quoted in Engelking and Leociak, 576.
[224] Reich-Ranicki, *The Author of Himself*, 157.
[225] Ibid., 157-158. Also, given their proximity to each other, it is odd that neither man is mentioned in the other's memoir. I did not expect to read about Reich-Ranicki in Szpilman's memoir since it was written in 1946 before Reich-Ranicki became well-known; however, the publication of Reich-Ranicki's work came after the rerelease of Szpilman's memoir, thus I thought there might be at least a passing mention. Despite this proximity (even given that the Sztuka was the largest café in the Ghetto), they may have never truly met each other while living in the Warsaw Ghetto. It is however likely that Tosia Reich-Ranicki and Szpilman knew each other after the war, as they both worked for Polish Radio, ibid., 235

Other artistic parts of the authors' lives in the Ghetto were featured in their memoirs, but not in the films based on them. These instances were also connected to other people in their lives, such as Andrzej Goldfeder and Tosia Reich-Ranicki. The film *The Pianist* included scenes of Szpilman playing at a café, but never with his duet partner Goldfeder.[226] In his memoir, however, Szpilman wrote not only of the numerous times they played together at the Sztuka, along with other cafés, but also of their plans to host an anniversary concert in one of the garden cafés to celebrate their partnership.[227] Similarly, the film *Mein Leben* does not emphasize the fact that Tosia Reich-Ranicki was a studied and accomplished artist herself, despite it being the subject of one of the couple's first conversations.[228] She had planned to study art history and graphic design in Paris before the war broke out, and throughout their lives in the Ghetto, Tosia created a series of works based on the Warsaw Ghetto using stolen paint.[230] She also illustrated and hand-copied a collection of Erich Kästner's poems, *Lyrische Hausapotheke*, as a gift for Marcel, knowing his love for the German language and German literature.[231] Reich-Ranicki reminisced on this gift:

Img. 6: Tosia's cover art[229]



> Had I ever been given a more beautiful present? I am not sure. I had certainly never received one on which more care had been lavished – or more love. So we sat there together, Tosia and I, in the dark night, with poor light, slowly and thoughtfully reading the German verses she had copied for me. Now and then, we

[226] *The Pianist*, Polanski.
[227] Szpilman, 16, 82, 86.
[228] *Mein Leben: Marcel Reich-Ranicki*, Zahavi; Reich-Ranicki, *The Author of Himself*, 136.
[229] Tosia Reich-Ranicki, *Dr. Erich Kästner's Lyrische Hausapotheke*, 1941, hand-illustrated book, accessed via Ranicki, slide 10.
[230] Reich-Ranicki, *The Author of Himself*, 136; Ranicki, slides 9, 12-25.
[231] Ibid., slide 10.

> heard German shots and Jewish cries from a nearby ghetto entrance. We started, we trembled. But we continued to read the *Lyrical Medicine Cabinet*.[232]

Adam Czerniaków commissioned from Tosia a photograph album meant to commemorate a child's years growing up.[233] It was to be a gift for the pregnant wife of Heinz Auerswald, in an attempt to intervene on behalf of Jewish children who had been arrested for begging and smuggling.[234] While the album was completed, it was to no avail; Auerswald had been deposed in the interim, and his wife's baby had passed away as well.[235] Tosia and Marcel's own son, Andrew Ranicki, explained that after the war, Tosia never drew or painted again.[236]

Art was intrinsic to Reich-Ranicki and Szpilman's lives, survival, and professions. Their memories and histories cannot be severed from their cultural and artistic experiences. As educated and assimilated members of the Ghetto community, these men had ties to groups that allowed them both to continue to practice their respective art, and to work within the controlled environment of the Ghetto. It is likely impossible to overstate the importance of the artistic community in their lives and in their respective memoirs. That they continued to be able to pursue their artistic careers after the Holocaust is another piece of evidence that proves how intertwined their lives and their art truly were.

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[232] Reich-Ranicki, *The Author of Himself*, 24.
[233] Ibid., 162.
[234] Ibid., 162.
[235] Ibid., 162-163.
[236] Ranicki, slide 9.

Transporting Goods into the Warsaw Ghetto

While transporting, or smuggling, food and other supplies into the Warsaw Ghetto was punishable by death, multiple types of smuggling existed and thrived.[237] Kassow states, "It quickly became apparent that if the ghetto was going to survive, the Jews would have to forget about 'legality' and smuggle in as much food as they could."[238] Numerous writers of the Ghetto viewed those who smuggled, both Jews and Poles, as heroes in the face of starvation.[239] Individuals could be killed for their participation in the movement of goods, or as Ringelblum phrased it: "The mildest punishment for smuggling is death, carried out on the spot."[240] This law applied regardless of whether they were Jewish or not, as on November 19, 1940, when a Polish "Christian was killed…for throwing a sack of bread over the Wall."[241] Yet that same day, Ringelblum also wrote that:

> On the first day after the Ghetto was closed, many Christians brought bread for their Jewish acquaintances and friends. This was a mass phenomenon. Meanwhile, Christian friends are helping Jews bring produce into the Ghetto.[242]

Smuggling was one of the most frequent subjects written about in his *Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto*, wherein he described practically every type of smuggling that happened within the Ghetto. The reason behind this was two-fold: smuggling sustained the Ghetto

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[237] Ringelblum, Szpilman, and Reich-Ranicki all referred to the necessary transportation of food and supplies into the Ghetto that technically were considered illegal under Nazi German law as "smuggling." This terminology is not used in some secondary sources on the Holocaust due to these implications of forced situational illegality; however, in the scholarship on the Warsaw Ghetto, the predominant scholars, such as Kassow, Engelking, and Leociak, do utilize the term smuggling for black market transportation of goods into the Ghetto.. For consistency among the various sources, and brevity of phrasing, I have decided to use the term as well.
[238] Kassow, 108.
[239] Joseph Kermish and Shmuel Krakowski cite Abraham Levin, M. Passenstein, Rachel Auerbach, Henryka Lazowert, and Leon Berensohn in the footnotes to Ringelblum, *Polish-Jewish Relations*, 80-82.
[240] Ringelblum, *Polish-Jewish Relations*, 83.
[241] Ringelblum, *Notes*, 89.
[242] Ibid., 86.

and it was "a significant example of Polish-Jewish cooperation."[243] An estimated "more than 80 percent of all food consumed in the ghetto" was the result of smuggling, and smuggling "provided employment to many thousands of Jews" within the Ghetto.[244] While trade and smuggling between Poles and Jews in Warsaw was uneven, and far more profitable for the Polish citizens of the city, members of the Oneg Shabbat including Peretz Opoczynski and Emanuel Ringelblum agreed that both sides needed each other to survive German occupation.[245] Opoczynski wrote that:

> The bridge that linked Jew and gentile was made of bad material—speculation—but it served a good purpose—to save many Jews from starvation…these Polish smugglers [worried about their own pockets] but still played a national role…by maintaining ties between loyal citizens of Poland and by stretching out a brotherly hand to the persecuted. Thereby they sow the seeds of morality in a time of major moral denigration.[246]

Despite the selfish motives, smugglers "foil[ed] the German plans to isolate the Jews behind ghetto walls and separate the two peoples, [and] they actually kept the ghetto alive."[247]

Smuggled goods entered the Ghetto through a variety of methods: through the formal gates, above the Ghetto walls, under the Ghetto walls, through the sewers and underground tunnels, through bordering houses, or by circumventing the Ghetto walls entirely.[248] Smuggling through the sewers, tunnels, and border houses were never mentioned in *The Pianist* or in *The Author of Himself* . A different, unique type of

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[243] Kassow, 108.
[244] Ibid., 108.
[245] Ibid., 108, 190-191; Peretz Opoczynski, "Gentiles in the Ghetto," trans. Samuel D. Kassow, quoted in *Who Will Write Our History?: Emanuel Ringelblum, the Warsaw Ghetto, and the Oyneg Shabes Archive* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 190-191; Ringelblum, *Polish-Jewish Relations*, 79.
[246] Opoczynski, 190-191.
[247] Kassow, 190.
[248] Ringelblum, *Polish-Jewish Relations*, 85; Ringelblum, *Notes*, 121.

circumvention was never mentioned in the memoirs, but happened throughout the duration of the Ghetto, which was smuggling through the cemetery. Reportedly in a single night, twenty-six live cows were smuggled into the Ghetto via the Jewish graveyard.[249] A variety of basic smuggling through the formal gates was also never written about by Reich-Ranicki or Szpilman. The following midrange smuggling operation was emblematic of the type of ordinary through-the-gate transport that occurred:

> An original way of smuggling into the Ghetto. Two trucks stand on either side of the boundary line near the market; a Jewish truck with empty milk cans and an Aryan truck with full cans. After a while, when both guards are busy, the cans are switched and the trucks drive off.[250]

This simplistic, yet not simple, form of smuggling often worked through the gates via a variety of vehicles, by bribing the guards and police at the gate.[251] The gates Ghetto walls were guarded by the Gendarmerie and the Polish (blue) Police, while the gates were guarded by both of these groups as well as the Jewish Order Service.[252] Oftentimes, the gates would be checked by the Gestapo and the S.S., adding to the combined present force.[253]

At the gates, the professional smugglers, such as smuggling "magnates" Moryc Kohn (Kon) and Zelig Heller, could bribe Jewish Order Service policemen, who in turn bribed the Polish policemen, and then the German policemen, to all look the other way and ignore the illicit goods entering.[254] If the Gestapo or S.S. were present however, the

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[249] Ringelblum, *Notes*, 121.
[250] Ibid., 110.
[251] Ringelblum, *Polish-Jewish Relations*, 85.
[252] Ibid., 83.
[253] Ibid., 83.
[254] Szpilman, 13; Engelking and Leociak, 455. Two different spellings, Kohn and Kon, are used alternately in the sources. Szpilman used Kon, while Ringelblum used Kohn. Engelking and Leociak also use Kohn.

vehicles would be inspected and confiscated, the bribery having failed, and the transport would be "'burnt.'"[255] Kohn and Heller were among the best-known collaborators with the Germans inside the Ghetto, running a department store, smuggling goods, and operating the horse-drawn trams.[256] The trams, or omnibuses, became known colloquially as *kohnhellerki* in connection with Kohn and Heller.[257] Originally members of the group known as "the Thirteen," Kohn and Heller went into business for themselves in April 1941, offering the opportunity that "[f]or 500 zlotys [one could] become one of their middlemen."[258] These professionals "took calculated risks and were not afraid of death," which allowed them "to live in conspicuous luxury: they were the customers of the not very numerous but very expensive restaurants in the ghetto."[259] With the "tacit agreement" of the bribed police, carts owned by Kohn and Heller brought in "food, expensive liquor, the most luxurious of delicacies, tobacco straight from Greece, French fancy goods and cosmetics."[260] Szpilman attested to these goods entering the Ghetto, as he saw them be sold and consumed daily when he played at the Café Nowoczesna.[261] Also at the gates, mainly male teenagers smuggled food in under their clothing as they reentered after conducting transactions outside the Ghetto. These young smugglers were subject to "unpredictable" searches at the entrances, where

> the German gendarmes would [sometimes] brutally strip the smugglers of anything they were carrying on their persons…There was a lot of shooting during

[255] Ringelblum, *Polish-Jewish Relations*, 85.
[256] Engelking and Leociak, 231-232.
[257] Ibid., 41; Szpilman, 67.
[258] Ringelblum, *Notes*, 158. Engelking and Leociak, 218; "The Thirteen" were officially known as the Office to Combat Profiteering and Speculation, and their nickname derived from their address at 13 Leszno Street. They were a fully collaborative agency within the Ghetto, who reported to the German Security Police.
[259] Reich-Ranicki, *The Author of Himself*, 145, 146.
[260] Szpilman, 13.
[261] Ibid., 13.

> these checks and no shortage of casualties. But there were also gendarmes who behaved differently, who did not care what those poor wretches, those amateur smugglers, brought into the ghetto.[262]

Neither the smuggling conducted by Kohn and Heller nor the smuggling done by the teenage boys was depicted in either film; however, the effects of the professional smuggling were depicted in a scene of *The Pianist*. While Szpilman was playing the piano at the Café Nowoczesna, the café audience was shown to be living in comparative luxury, by wearing fancy clothes, smoking cigars, and drinking alcohol. The scene included a moment where Szpilman was asked to stop playing so that a man could test for counterfeit gold coins by dropping them on the table and listening to their ring.[263]

While the smuggling that went through the gates was discussed only in the memoirs, the smuggling that circumvented the walls was depicted in both Szpilman's memoir and the film *The Pianist*. The two ways to smuggle items at the walls were to either go over or under the walls themselves. Smuggling goods over the walls was part of organized group smuggling practiced by "wall jumpers."[264] In order to bring the goods over the wall, someone with a horse cart outside the Ghetto would ride next to the wall and signal to the people inside the Ghetto with a whistle. As the cart passed, "bags and packets flew over the wall. The people lying in wait would run out of the doorways, hastily snatch up the loot, [and] retreat indoors again."[265] This was shown in the film as

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[262] Reich-Ranicki, *The Author of Himself*, 145. There is ample corroboration for this violence against smugglers, particularly concerning a policeman referred to as "Frankenstein," as Ringelblum, Czerniaków, and Auerbach all wrote of his propensity for shooting people (particularly children) at the gates; Ringelblum, *Polish-Jewish Relations*, 84. Ringelblum called him "a bloodthirsty dog who kills one or two smugglers every day" in May 1942, and added, "[h]e just can't eat his breakfast until he has spilled the blood of a Jew;" Ringelblum, *Notes*, 283.
[263] *The Pianist*, Polanski.
[264] Engelking and Leociak, 450.
[265] Szpilman, 12.

Szpilman walks down the street next to the wall, whistles and packages both fly over his head, to be caught by women darting in and out of the buildings.[266] Some wall jumpers did not use carts, but rather ladders or buildings, but still passed or threw packages across the wall, day or night.[267]

The children smugglers were viewed throughout the Ghetto as some of the most heroic and most unfortunate of all the smugglers. They were often the targets of violence, and the smuggling conducted by children that ran under the wall features in a harrowing moment in *The Pianist*. Children would take advantage of small gutter openings underneath the wall by pushing their bags through the openings, and then climbing through. Along with their small stature, children made better smugglers, as those under 12 years of age were not required to wear a Star of David armband.[268] As Szpilman walked along the wall, a child became stuck partway through, as he was being beaten by a policeman from the other side.[269] Szpilman wrote that he "pulled at [the child's] little arms with all [his] might, while his screams became increasingly desperate…When [he] finally managed to pull the child through, he died. His spine had been shattered."[270] The film took a moment to fill in the emotional gap that exists in the memoir immediately after this story, showing Szpilman sitting on the ground next to the wall, cradling the small would-be smuggler in his arms.[271] This scene served to reinforce the knowledge that engaging in any of these four varieties of smuggling, while pervasive and often

[266] *The Pianist*, Polanski.
[267] Adam Czerniaków as cited in Ringelblum, *Polish-Jewish Relations*, 80; Engelking and Leociak, 450, 453-452.
[268] Engelking and Leociak, 447.
[269] *The Pianist*, Polanski.
[270] Szpilman, 13.
[271] *The Pianist*, Polanski.

successful, were dangerous and life-threatening. Henryka Lazowert memorialized the child smugglers, who "had the most extraordinary and fantastic courage"[272] in her poem "The Little Smuggler:"

> Past walls, past guards
> Through holes, ruins, wires, fences
> Impudent, hungry, obstinate
> I slip by, I run like a cat
> At noon, at night, at dawn
> In foul weather, a blizzard, the heat of the sun
> A hundred times I risk my life
> I risk my childish neck.
>
> Under my arm a sack-cloth bag
> On my back a torn ra
> My young feet are nimble
> In my heart constant fear
> But all must be endured
> All must be borne
> So that you, ladies and gentlemen,
> May have your fill of bread tomorrow.
>
> Through walls, through holes, through brick
> At night, at dawn, by day
> Daring hungry, cunning
> I move silently like a shadow
> And if suddenly the hand of fate
> Reaches me at this game
> 'Twill be the usual trap life sets.
>
> You, mother
> Don't wait for me any longer
> I won't come back to you
> My voice won't reach that far
> Dust of the street will cover
> The lost child's fate.
> Only one grim question
> The still face asks—
> Mummy, who will bring you bread / Tomorrow?[273]

[272] Ringelblum, *Polish-Jewish Relations*, 147.
[273] Henryka Lazowert, "The Little Smuggler," c.1941 in Emmanuel Ringelblum, *Polish-Jewish Relations During the Second World War*, ed. Joseph Kermish and Shmuel Krakowski, trans. Dafna Allon, Danuta Dabrowska, and Dana Keren (New York: Howard Fertig, 1974), 148.

The Jewish Council and Jewish Order Service

The Jewish Council and Jewish Order Service in Warsaw were both imposed upon the Jewish residents of the city by the occupying Nazi officials.[274] In 1939, Hans Frank ordered the institution of *Judenräte* throughout the *Generalgouvernement,* which in Warsaw was formed partially out of and to replace the former Second Polish Republic Commune Council that served the Jewish denominations.[275] First named the "Jewish Council of Elders," it was shortened to the Jewish Council, and Adam Czerniaków was confirmed as the chairman of the Council.[276] He held this position until his suicide in 1942. Czerniaków selected twenty-four male community members of different political, denominational, and occupational backgrounds for the Jewish Council, who were all approved in October 1939.[277] Along with taking a census of the Jewish community, one of the earliest jobs forced upon the Jewish Council was to recruit and organize a Jewish militia to patrol the Ghetto.[278] Czerniaków appointed a former Polish police colonel, Józef Andrzej Szeryński, as head of the Jewish Order Service, and "announced the recruitment of 1,000 Jewish policemen, honorary at first."[279] The choice of the word "honorary" did not have implications regarding their actions, but rather the fact "that 1700 men had been engaged [in the police force], while there was no intention of

[274] Engelking and Leociak, 138, 190.
[275] Ibid., 136, 138.
[276] Ibid., 138; Reich-Ranicki, *The Author of Himself*, 140; Reich-Ranicki, *Mein Leben*, 203, "*Ältestenrat der Juden*."
[277] Engelking and Leociak, 138-139.
[278] Reich-Ranicki, *The Author of Himself*, 140; Engelking and Leociak, 190.
[279] Engelking and Leociak, 190; Ringelblum, *Notes*, 74; "The Order Service" in *To Live With Honor and Die With Honor!...: Selected Documents from the Warsaw Ghetto Underground Archives "O.S" ["Oneg Shabbath"]*, ed. and ann. Joseph Kermish (Jerusalem: Menachem Press, 1986), 304. *Ordnungsdienst* was the official title. The quoted portion comes from Ringelblum.

remunerating them."[280] Early on, many of the volunteers came from professional or intelligentsia backgrounds, "who at that time could still afford to perform their duty gratuitously, that is to say honestly."[281] Unfortunately, bribery and corruption did not stay out of either the Jewish police or the Jewish Council.

Both groups were seen and written about by contemporaries like Szpilman in a contemptuous and critical manner.[282] The few mentions of the Jewish Order Service in Reich-Ranicki's memoir are likewise less than positive, yet not as virulent.[283] He described them as "contemptible" and "unpopular," although his only personal interactions with the Jewish police were decent and humane.[284] Szpilman, and his brother Henryk, had stronger opinions about the Jewish Order Service.[285] When friends of theirs had suggested Henryk might "join the Jewish police, as most young men from the intelligentsia did," Henryk strongly refused, and Władysław supported.[286] When a familial relation of "dubious" morality "joined the police it merely confirmed his bad reputation" with the Szpilmans.[287] The men in the Jewish police were viewed as "fearfully corrupt," both in their poor discipline and in their connection to smuggling.[288] Mr. G., a member of the Order Service, explained to his interviewer that due to the lack of pay within the organization, as soon as the opportunity arose for men to make money

[280] "The Order Service," 304-305.
[281] Ibid., 305.
[282] Szpilman, 55, 71.
[283] Reich-Ranicki, 145.
[284] Ibid., 145, 177, 182, 186.
[285] Szpilman, 71.
[286] Ibid., 71.
[287] Ibid., 108-109. That being said, this relation also helped get Szpilman off the street after he was pulled out of the deportation line the day he lost his family, and fed and housed him for the night.
[288] Ringelblum, 154: "There have been 700 disciplinary trials for a force of 1,700" in April 1941; "Contents of a Conversation," 311-313.

through smuggling, they often took the opportunity.[289] In April 1941, the Jewish police were forced to seize people from the streets via "press gangs" for the work camps, and then again in May 1942.[290] This "human-hunting" led to Henryk's arrest, and some of Szpilman's strongest criticism in his memoir:

> We were all the more horrified when we saw that men with whom we used to shake hands, whom we had treated as friends, men who had still been decent people not long ago, were now so despicable. You could have said, perhaps, that they had caught the Gestapo spirit. As soon as they put on their uniforms and police caps and picked up their rubber truncheons, their natures changed. Now their ultimate ambition was to be in close touch with the Gestapo, to be useful to the Gestapo officers, parade down the street with them, show off their knowledge of the German language and vie with their masters in the harshness of their dealings with the Jewish population.[291]

This vitriol does not come across as strongly in the film version of *The Pianist*. The members of the Jewish Order Service on screen are often background characters, given little dialogue and little screen time.[292] They are present in the proscenium though, which is far more than in *Mein Leben*, where the Jewish police are virtually nonexistent.[293]

The Jewish Council never appears in *The Pianist*, which aligns with the fact that Szpilman wrote of the Jewish Council only four times in his memoir.[294] Only one of those times did he write in a manner that could be described best as detached; otherwise the descriptions of the Council are not kind.[295] The Council members are described as corrupt and self-serving, with a lack of understanding personal morals.[296] When they

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[289] "Contents of a Conversation," 311-313.
[290] Ringelblum, 154; Szpilman, 77.
[291] Szpilman, 77. As a means of perhaps softening his tone, Szpilman ends the paragraph with the following observation, "That did not prevent them from forming a police jazz band which, incidentally, was excellent."
[292] *The Pianist*, Polanski.
[293] *Mein Leben: Marcel Reich-Ranicki*, Zahavi.
[294] *The Pianist*, Polanski; Szpilman, 55, 87-90, 109, 122.
[295] Ibid., 55, 87-90, 109, 122.
[296] Ibid., 55, 109.

were expected to distribute money to working class surrogates in the face of a potential deportation, Szpilman commented:

> Of course not all the money ended up in the hands of the poor surrogates themselves: the Council officials had to live, and they lived well, with vodka and a few little delicacies.[297]

The final mention is celebratory, as Szpilman recounted the death of First, a "liaison between the Gestapo and the Jewish Council, [who] died at the hands of Jewish assassins."[298] Despite this, Szpilman did attempt to visit the Jewish Council twice.[299] The first time on July 21, 1942 was unsuccessful, and he met with no one from the office, as it was the same day in which many Council members and other leaders of the Ghetto were arrested prior to the beginning of the major deportations.[300] The second time, in August 1942, he met with Mieczysław Lichtenbaum, the son of Marek Lichtenbaum who was Czerniaków's successor.[301] The younger Lichtenbaum:

> suggested that [Szpilman] could play [piano] in the German extermination commando's casino, where the Gestapo and SS officers relaxed in the evening after a tiring day spent murdering Jews. They were served by Jews who would sooner or later be murdered too. Of course [he] did not want to accept such an offer, although Lichtenbaum couldn't understand why it did not appeal to [him], and was hurt when [he] declined.[302]

Szpilman had no further contact or commentary about the Council after this, except for his report on the assassination of First.

Disdain such as Szpilman held for the Jewish Council was prevalent in the Warsaw Ghetto, with its members referred to as "[a] gang of operators and swindlers,"

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[297] Ibid., 55.
[298] Ibid., 122.
[299] Ibid., 87, 109.
[300] Ibid., 87-88; Reich-Ranicki, *The Author of Himself*, 163; Jarecka, 707-708.
[301] Szpilman, 109; Engelking and Leociak, 165.
[302] Szpilman, 109.

and "[r]uffians, nice boys all of them."[303] Ringelblum wrote that one of the Council members, Kupcziker, was "known in popular parlance as chap-zucker—because he takes a large part of every sugar ration for his own confectionery factory."[304] The harshest criticism that Ringelblum levied at the Jewish Council was in regards to its financial policies, wherein the poor were heavily taxed to fund Council operations, while the rich were taxed little to nothing.[305] So vehement was the Ghetto's dislike of the Council that following the death of Benjamin Zabludowski, "Czerniaków's right-hand man," from over-indulgence at a winter party, the city reacted with "joy."[306] Adam Czerniaków himself was viewed variably as "'a nincompoop among nincompoops'" or as a despotic leader, who did not allow for discussion or questions.[307] Czerniaków for his part acknowledged that some of the men surrounding him were collaborators and swindlers, but he also recognized when it was useful to have access to the less than savory people around himself.[308] Until the publication of his own Ghetto diary first in 1968, public opinion surrounding Czerniaków and the Jewish Council of Warsaw was generally unchanged.[309]

Unlike Szpilman and contemporaries, Reich-Ranicki was able to temper some of his criticism of the Jewish Council in his memoir in part due to the years that had passed,

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[303] Ringelblum, *Notes*, 107, 106. Ringelblum's sarcasm in his choice of the words "nice boys" should be noted here.
[304] Ibid., 144. *Chap-zucker* in Yiddish means "grab-sugar."
[305] Ibid., 245-246.
[306] Ibid., 254-255.
[307] Chaim Aron Kaplan, *Scroll of Agony: The Warsaw Diary of Chaim A. Kaplan*, trans. and ed. Abraham I. Katsh (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 215; Ringelblum, *Notes*, 164.
[308] Engelking and Leociak, 163.
[309] Ibid., 160-161; Czerniaków, *The Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniaków: Prelude to Doom*. Czerniaków's diary was first published in Israel.

but in greater part due to the fact that he worked for them.[310] Reich-Ranicki became the head of the "Translation and Correspondence Bureau" for the Jewish Council, after first working as office staff during the census-taking.[311] With this job, he was in direct contact with multiple members of the Jewish Council, including Czerniaków. Reich-Ranicki wrote favorably of the chairman, both for having "generously supported the many intellectuals of the ghetto who had no job" otherwise and for his honesty and integrity in the face of disaster and devastation.[312] Reich-Ranicki depicted Czerniaków as fully human: a man of faults, prone to "ostentation" and vanity, a possibly naïve and "weak-willed" man, yet also one who did what he could for the people of the Ghetto.[313] When Czerniaków committed suicide with potassium cyanide, Reich-Ranicki recalled that "[i]t was understood as a desperate appeal for action," as "the situation of the Warsaw Jews was hopeless."[314] Czerniaków left behind two notes, which were included in part in Reich-Ranicki's *The Author of Himself*:

> One, intended for Czerniaków's wife, read: '*They demand that I should, with my own hands, kill the children of my people. I have no other way out but to die.*' The other letter was addressed to the Jew's Council. It said: '*I have decided to resign. Don't regard this as an act of cowardice or an escape. I am powerless, my heart breaks with sadness and compassion, I cannot bear it any longer. My action will make everyone see the truth and perhaps guide them towards the right path to take…*'[315]

In reminiscing about Adam Czerniaków, his life and his death, Reich-Ranicki went so far as to name him both a martyr and a hero, for "[h]e had tried to remain loyal to [his] ideals

[310] Reich-Ranicki, *The Author of Himself*, 170.
[311] Ibid., 140-141.
[312] Ibid., 167, 173.
[313] Ibid., 171-173.
[314] Ibid., 175.
[315] Ibid., 175. Italics in original text.

even in an inhuman era and under scarcely imaginable circumstances."[316] The portrayal of Czerniaków in *Mein Leben* aligns with Reich-Ranicki's descriptions and esteem for the man.[317] His death is a somber moment, as parts of his suicide notes are read in a voiceover, and the film treats him with the respect Reich-Ranicki so clearly believed Czerniaków deserved.[318]

The Deportations

In a particularly striking scene of *Mein Leben*, German officers parked their car, pulled out a gramophone, and began to play a famous Viennese waltz while they ran into a building to round residents of the Ghetto up for deportation.[319] This scene came directly from Reich-Ranicki's memoir, and similarly, the scenes of both films that align most closely to the events of the memoirs are those involving the deportations of the residents of the Warsaw Ghetto. Władysław Szpilman and Marcel and Tosia Reich-Ranicki were all at one point selected for deportation from the Ghetto to the death camp Treblinka.[320] Their experiences, and other deportations witnessed by Szpilman and Marcel Reich-Ranicki, contribute to compelling portions of the men's memoirs, and subsequently, the films based on them.

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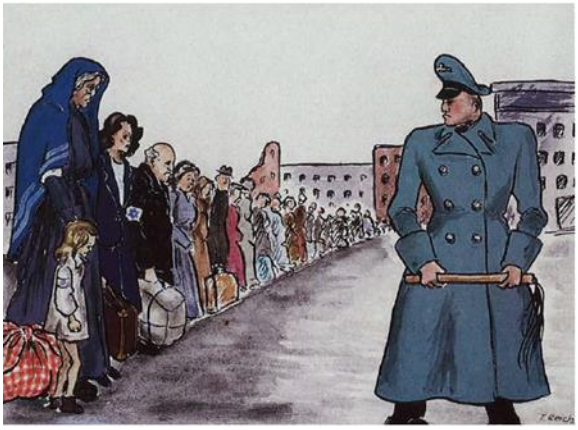
[316] Ibid., 175.
[317] *Mein Leben: Marcel Reich-Ranicki*, Zahavi.
[318] Ibid.
[319] Ibid.; Reich-Ranicki, *The Author of Himself*, 163-165. Reich-Ranicki did not list all of the waltzes which were played on the record, only that they were by the composer Johann Strauss. He later names one, "The Blue Danube Waltz," which is the one played in the film.
[320] Szpilman, 96-107. His escape is described later in this section; Reich-Ranicki, *The Author of Himself*, 186, 188. Tosia had been taken to the *Umschlagplatz* in the fall of 1942, despite the couple having "life numbers," given Reich-Ranicki's job as a translator, 181. Reich-Ranicki does not explain more about how he secured Tosia's retrieval from there, except to say that the "brutal commander of the Jewish militia" had previously been a neighbor. The couple was then again selected for deportation on January 18, 1943, 188. Their escape is described later in this section.

The rumors of mass deportation from the Warsaw Ghetto to Treblinka began in April 1942.[321] During the late spring, Ringelblum wrote that the residents of the Ghetto:

> lived in terror of deportation. Where this rumor emanated from no one knows….There were rumors emanating from the Kitchen Department of the Jewish Council that 'non-productive' elements would be deported, and only workers would be able to enjoy the benefits of the kitchen. This was regarded as a grave omen. However, Council circles have assured us that the danger of deportation that has been hanging over our heads has been avoided, thanks to the presences of factories in the Ghetto that are supplying the needs of the German Army. This is a tragic paradox. Only those Jews have the right to live who work to supply the German Army.[322]

By this point in the Holocaust, it was known that the deportation, or "'resettlement,'" transports to camps such as Belzec were death sentences for those sent there.[323] There was no reason for the Jews of the Warsaw Ghetto to believe that Treblinka in 1942 would be any different. They received confirmation of mass killing and mass disposal of bodies in July of that year after Frydryck Zygmunt, a member of the Oneg Shabbat, met with Esrael Wallach, an escaped prisoner from Treblinka.[324] *Img. 7: Selection for Treblinka*[325]



The first major deportation began on July 22, 1942, which was noted by both Reich-Ranicki and Szpilman.[326] Szpilman learned of the deportation when he and a friend saw Ukrainian soldiers take up positions around the Ghetto walls from

[321] Ringelblum, *Notes*, 263.
[322] Ibid., 263.
[323] Ibid., 291-292.
[324] Ibid., 320-321.
[325] Tosia Reich-Ranicki, *Selection for Treblinka*, c.1942, painting, digitized in Andrew Ranicki, "My Mother Teofila Reich-Ranicki" (presentation, Edinburgh German Circle, Edinburgh, UK, February 28, 2012), slide 25, accessed via https://www.maths.ed.ac.uk/~v1ranick/surgery/tosia.pdf.
[326] Engelking and Leociak, 698.

their vantage point on the Chłodna Street bridge.[327] Reich-Ranicki learned of the deportation first hand, as he was called into Adam Czerniaków's office to type up the direct orders for the deportation as Hermann Höfle dictated them to the remaining members of the Jewish Council.[328] Gustawa Jarecka reported on this meeting for Oneg Shabbat:

> An answer was not given to the questions that had been worrying the Jewish population for three months. The ominous whiff of this reply seemed to be blowing across the room. One was suspecting a deportation, or was thinking of labor-camps, but at that time the word deportation did not mean anything yet. The meeting began with the following words: You ought to know that the number of Jews in Warsaw is too big. The deportation will be carried out by the Jewish Council. If the orders regarding the deportation are strictly carried out, the hostages whom we have taken to assure order, will be released. Otherwise, you will be hanged, he said, pointing with his hand at the window. Behind this window was a playground for children attending the Community schools…. After this introduction, the reading began.[329]

The notices from this meeting, typed by Reich-Ranicki and his coworkers and signed by Czerniaków before his suicide, were then seen by the residents of the Warsaw Ghetto, including Szpilman, by the afternoon of July 22.[330] The first groups of people who were selected for deportation were those in need of care: the elderly, the sick, and the orphans.[331] When Szpilman and his family were working at the *Umschlagplatz*, he was present and witnessed the day that Janusz Korczak and his children from the orphanage were deported.[332] Szpilman described their departure from the city:

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[327] Szpilman, 88-89.
[328] Reich-Ranicki, *The Author of Himself*, 164-165
[329] Jarecka, 708. Gustawa Jarecka also worked as a translator with Reich-Ranicki in the Jewish Council and regularly supplied documents and writings to the Underground Archive. She and her two children died en route to Treblinka, after having been deported in the same column the Reich-Ranickis fled from on January 18, 1943; Reich-Ranicki, *The Author of Himself*, 141, 189.
[330] Reich-Ranicki, *The Author of Himself*, 173-175; Szpilman, 89.
[331] Reich-Ranicki, *The Author of Himself*, 176.
[332] Szpilman, 95-96.

> [Korczak] wanted to ease things for them. He told the orphans they were going out into the country, so they ought to be cheerful. At last they would be able to exchange the horrible, suffocating city walls for meadows of flowers, streams where they could bathe, woods full of berries and mushrooms. He told them to wear their best clothes, and so they came out into the yard, two by two, nicely dressed and in a happy mood.
> The little column was led by an SS man who loved children, as Germans do, even those he was about to see on their way into the next world. He took a special liking to a boy of twelve, a violinist who had his instrument under his arm. The SS man told him to go to the head of the procession of children and play – and so they set off.
> When I met them in Gęsia Street the smiling children were singing in chorus, the little violinist was playing for them and Korczak was carrying two of the smallest infants, who were beaming too, and telling them some amusing story.[333]

Emanuel Ringelblum also commended Korczak's heroism, along with the directors of the orphanage home, that "they could not let the children go alone and must go to their death with them," knowing that this fate awaited them.[334] After these populations, the Germans attempted to convince people to volunteer for deportation, promising a loaf of bread, a kilogram of jam to each person; they also promised that families would not be split up.[335] It should go without saying that these promises were not kept.

Both authors attested that the vicious and merciless executors of the orders for deportation were Lithuanian and Ukrainian soldiers. Szpilman noted that they were fascist soldiers in particular, while Reich-Ranicki stated that roundups were conducted by Latvians too.[336] Ringelblum also wrote of the Ukrainian and Latvian forces that aided the S.S. in deportation roundups.[337] Engelking and Leociak corroborate that beginning on July 22, Latvian, Lithuanian, and Ukrainian auxiliary units to the German forces along

[333] Ibid., 96
[334] Ringelblum, *Notes*, 322.
[335] Szpilman, 94.
[336] Ibid., 92-93; Reich-Ranicki, *The Author of Himself*, 174.
[337] Ringelblum, *Notes*, 310. Ringelblum referred to the Latvian guards as "Letts."

with “special units of the blue police” all engaged in the roundups that led to deportation from the Ghetto.[338] The auxiliary units did not honor the certificates of employment or any other German documentation that was meant to protect a person from deportation.[339] The number of people required to be deported each day increased from 6,000 to 10,000 and then lowered back to 7,000; these numbers were based on load capacities for the cattle cars that were to be used in the daily deportation trains to Treblinka.[340] The use of auxiliary units and Polish blue police and the statistical numbers of residents deported are the only two aspects of the major deportation that did not feature in either film.

Other than those two aspects, the rest of the events chronicled about the major deportation in *The Pianist* and *The Author of Himself* were shown in the films, and with more attention to detail than almost any other parts of the films. Despite the fact that Szpilman and his family were working at the *Umschlagplatz,* either in the collections area or in the barracks, all of them except for Halina and Henryk were selected for deportation on August 16, 1942.[341] The full scene of Szpilman and his family at the *Umschlagplatz* after their selection is exactly as described in his memoir, and is the most faithful recreation of a single chapter in the memoir.[342] The conversations had between Szpilman’s father, the businessman, and the dentist are recited verbatim from the English translation of the memoir, and the young mother crying, “Why did I do it?” repeatedly is shown as well.[343] When Halina and Henryk are reunited with the family, the actor who

[338] Engelking and Leociak, 704.
[339] Szpilman, 93.
[340] Reich-Ranicki, *The Author of Himself,* 174. Ringelblum also wrote that this increase was what led Czerniaków to commit suicide, which he called “a sign of weakness,” when he “should have called for resistance,” *Notes,* 316.
[341] Szpilman, 96.
[342] *The Pianist,* Polanski; Szpilman, 98-107.
[343] Ibid.; Ibid., 100-104.

plays Henryk begins to read the same "small Oxford edition of Shakespeare" that Szpilman recounted him pulling out of his pocket.[344] Even the family's final meal together, "a single cream caramel [that] Father divided…into six parts with his penknife," is shown in the film.[345] The one difference between the memoir and the film occurs when Szpilman is being pulled out of line as his family boards the train in the film.[346] In his memoir, Szpilman could not recognize or recall the policeman (policemen?) who grabbed him and removed him from the line headed to the train, only that he called him out by name.[347] In the film however, it is a Jewish Order Service policeman whom the audience has met previously and has at least a passing familiarity with.[349] The following scene of Szpilman crying while walking through the streets again reconnects with the memoir.[350]

Ph. 8: Umschlagplatz in the Ghetto[348]

Marcel and Tosia Reich-Ranicki had been "given yellow 'life numbers' to be worn on the chest" to indicate that they were "'useful Jews' employed in German enterprises of in the Jews' Council."[351] These numbers enabled them to survive the "Big

[344] Ibid.; Ibid., 102.
[345] Ibid.; Ibid., 104.
[346] Ibid.; Ibid., 105-106.
[347] Szpilman, 105-106. It is unclear in the memoir whether one or two individuals pull Szpilman from the line.
[348] "Assembly point in the Warsaw ghetto," *Holocaust Encyclopedia*, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of the Yad Vashem Photo Archives, accessed March 8, 2020, https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/deportations-to-and-from-the-warsaw-ghetto?series=18024.
[349] *The Pianist*, Polanski.
[350] Ibid.; Szpilman, 107.
[351] Reich-Ranicki, *The Author of Himself*, 181.

Selection" or "Cauldron on Miła Street" in September 1942.[352] By January 1943, the "life numbers" were worthless, and the Reich-Ranickis were selected for deportation on January 18.[353] Mid-march to the *Umschlagplatz*, Marcel whispered to Tosia to "[t]hink of the Dostoevsky anecdote," meaning to "never to give up hope," and they ran from the line.[354] Similar to others who tried to break away from the column, they were fired upon while escaping, yet neither of them were hit.[355] This scene was recaptured in the film *Mein Leben* precisely as it was recounted in Reich-Ranicki's writing.[356] From here, the film compounds their story. Between January 18 and February 3, Marcel and Tosia Reich-Ranicki hid themselves in the archives of the Jewish Council, barricaded behind a wall of books.[357] It was only in February that they acquired enough money – a reward from the ŻOB for suggesting they "raid the safe of the Jews' Council" – to bribe the police at the Ghetto gate.[358] In the film, the Reich-Ranickis run straight from their escape from the column to the gate, and into the Polish sector of Warsaw. While neither Reich-Ranicki nor Szpilman were ever deported from the Warsaw Ghetto to Treblinka, the looming specter of deportation hung heavy over their memoirs.

[352] Ibid., 184; Engelking and Leociak, 727. Reich-Ranicki refers to the deportations on September 6-11 as the "Big Selection." Engelking and Leociak use the term "The Cauldron of Miła Street." This term was also used in some other primary sources, interchangeably translated as "pot" in Ringelblum, *Notes*, 312-313.
[353] Reich-Ranicki, 188.
[354] Ibid., 188-189. During their courtship, Marcel and Tosia had read Stefan Zweig's *Sternstunden der Menschheit* together. Within this text, Zweig writes of a moment in Fyodor Dostoevsky's life where at the last moment, his death penalty was commuted. This possible idea of hope in the worst moment is what Marcel hoped to impart upon his wife.
[355] Ibid., 189.
[356] *Mein Leben: Marcel Reich-Ranicki,* Zahavi.
[357] Reich-Ranicki, *The Author of Himself,* 189-192.
[358] Ibid., 190-192.

CHAPTER 3

MEMORY WITHIN AND AROUND THE SOURCES

Memoirs and films carry different modes of memory within them. The memory ensconced in a memoir is highly personal and individualized, while filmic memory holds both the individual and collective memories of the entire creative team, which could include the director, the screenwriter(s), the original author(s) of the work the film is based on, and even the actors. This interplay between the different types of memory inherent to both memoir and film lies at the heart of understanding these four different representations of the Warsaw Ghetto. Each entity was produced from within its own unique temporal and geographical frame, which also had an effect on the memories that were presented within the memoirs and the films. The three cultural landscapes of immediate postwar Poland and the 2000s in both Germany and the United States are different in their interpretations of memory. These differing interpretations affect the reception and understanding of the memoirs and films. The four primary sources – two memoirs and two films – served as filters for the Holocaust memories of Szpilman and Reich-Ranicki. Each of these different sources provides a layer of understanding to the reader and viewer about life and death within the Warsaw Ghetto through the lenses of personal memory, cultural and collective memory, and historical memory.

Personal Memory in Memoir

Władysław Szpilman and Marcel Reich-Ranicki wrote their memoirs from two different historical perspectives, and a gap of almost 45 years. These differences in time are apparent, as Reich-Ranicki condensed time, and included postwar conclusions to

events that occurred during the war, while Szpilman wrote mainly chronologically, without the benefit of decades of hindsight. The difference in tone between the authors can also be explained by this temporal difference. In *The Pianist*, Szpilman was direct and plain in his writing. The reader is shown what is happening around Szpilman with unflinching candor. Reich-Ranicki's *The Author of Himself* was more lyrical, and events occur with more commentary and references to literature, theatre, and music. While it is possible that this may also be due to the different professions of the men – albeit within the same artistic community of the Ghetto – their differences in writing style are far more ascribable to the different time periods in which they wrote.

Theodor W. Adorno argues in his essay, "The Meaning of Working Through the Past," that there are three different types of ways to address the past of the Holocaust, and each of these ways differs in approach and in results.[359] In Adorno's understanding, *Vergangenheitsaufarbeitung*, or working through the past, is a process where the individual in question is attempting to come to a conclusion of their memories, possibly to forget them at the end as well, when forgiveness is possible. Paul Ricœur complicates this idea by arguing that there is a paradox inherent in memory, which is that forgetting is a necessary part of remembrance.[360] Adorno's second type, *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, or mastering the past, could mask itself as a helpful means of processing and understanding the past, but in Adorno's view, it is something done only to neatly package

[359] Theodor W. Adorno, "The Meaning of Working Through the Past," in *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords*, trans. Henry W. Pickford (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).
[360] Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), e-book accessible via https://www.google.com/books/edition/Memory_History_Forgetting/RoVbjzBQXTUC?hl=en&gbpv=0. See especially 412-456.

the past onto a shelf, where again it can be forgotten. *Vergangenheitsverarbeitung*, or working upon the past, then is the only one of the three to not result in forgetting; working upon the past is a continuous and infinite process of understanding and re-understanding the past, which preserves remembrance, rather than forgetfulness. As a historian, it is tempting to try and assign one of these modes of address to each of the written memoirs, yet without concrete evidence as to their motivations for writing their memoirs, it is impossible. Reich-Ranicki offered fear as the reason why he did not write about his experiences when suggested by his wife Tosia in 1943 or by his son Andrew in later decades.[361] He stated that he decided to write about his life in 1993, but gave no indication as to what he did with his fears.[362] Szpilman did not include any commentary about why he wrote his memoir; however, his son Andrzej suspected that he wrote it "for himself rather than humanity in general."[363] He continued that writing the book "enabled him to work through his shattering wartime experiences and free his mind and emotions to continue with his life."[364] These still are not Władysław Szpilman's own words on the subject. As such, rather than assigning categories onto the memoirs, it is more prudent to analyze how they exhibit their author's personal memories of the Warsaw Ghetto.

Personal memory is far from infallible. For as much as the human brain is capable of remembering, it is equally capable of forgetting, or misplacing, memories. Szpilman explained the condensing of time in his memory as follows:

> Today, as I look back on other, more terrible memories, my experiences of the Warsaw ghetto from November 1940 to July 1942, a period of almost two years,

[361] Reich-Ranicki, *The Author of Himself*, 393.
[362] Ibid., 393.
[363] Andrzej Szpilman, foreword to *The Pianist: The Extraordinary Story of One Man's Survival in Warsaw, 1939-1945*, trans. Anthea Bell (London: Phoenix, 2002), 8.
[364] Ibid., 8.

> merge into a single image as if they had lasted only a single day. Hard as I try, I cannot break it up into smaller sections that would impose some chronological order on it, as you usually do when writing a journal.[365]

In spite of this, and because of it, Szpilman's memoir is succinct and uncompromising. This straightforward and factual manner is also due to its early writing in 1945, and first publication in 1946. Szpilman did not shy away from the horrors of the Warsaw Ghetto and his survival in hiding in the city of Warsaw. His writing did not embellish the situation, and he used clear, concise prose to convey his testimony. This can be seen in instances such as Szpilman's description of his friend, Roman Kramsztyk, who

> was one of the first to die when they began taking a hand in the resettlement action. The building where he lived was surrounded, but he did not go down to the yard when he heard the whistle. He preferred to be shot at home among his pictures.[366]

It is this type of unflinching honesty in his writing that most clearly shows that this memoir was written shortly after the traumatic events of the Holocaust. Similar to other early survivor accounts, their stories have not been told multiple times, and thus have not acquired the polish of repetition.[367] Memoirs and other immediate postwar recollections also did not have the access to the wealth of Holocaust scholarship and memory that is now available. Immediately after the war, Szpilman had not spent years wrestling with his memories of the Warsaw Ghetto and its residents, rather he laid his story bare for the reader. This blunt, unfiltered trauma narration is most indicative of the personal memory of the book.

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[365] Szpilman, 61.
[366] Ibid., 93.
[367] For example, see David Boder. *I Did Not Interview the Dead* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1949). Boder interviewed survivors in displaced persons camps in 1946; Alan Rosen, "David Boder," Voices of the Holocaust, 2009, accessed April 18, 2020. http://voices.iit.edu/david_boder.

The first version of Szpilman's memoir was written before the collective memory of the Holocaust could coalesce, which allowed Szpilman to write the events as they had happened to him. He did not have to include certain symbolic images and imagery. Instead, Szpilman includes the scenes of life in the ghetto as he saw them, which helped to recreate images of the Warsaw Ghetto for readers who never saw it before its destruction. These include the descriptions of the crossing over Chłodna Street between the large ghetto and the small ghetto. Szpilman writes about the crossing:

> If you walked down Żelazna Street, you could see a crowd of people on the corner of Chłodna Street at quite a distance. Those with urgent business were treading nervously from foot to foot on the spot, waiting for the policeman to be kind enough to stop traffic. It was up to them to decide whether Chłodna Street was empty enough and Żelazna Street crammed enough to let the Jews over. When the moment came the guards moved apart, and an impatient, close-packed crowd of people surged towards each other from both sides, colliding, flinging one another to the ground, treading other people underfoot to get away from the dangerous vicinity of the Germans as quickly as possible and back inside the two ghettos. Then the chain of guards closed again, and the waiting began once more.[368]

He also details a moment where a man, whom he calls a "grabber," and a woman fight for her can of soup, only for the soup to spill onto the ground, where the grabber tries to eat it before it spills away while the woman cries and beats him.[369] The moments and scenes that Szpilman included in his memoir help to shape the perception of the Warsaw Ghetto, and aid in the formulation of our cultural memory of it.

Władysław Szpilman also did not have to adhere to "accepted" official memory or cultural memory of the roles different groups of people played during the Holocaust. Rather, he wrote of the various groups he encountered in his survival as they appeared to him. This is notable in three particular instances: with the Ukrainian and Lithuanian

[368] Ibid., 66.
[369] Ibid., 74.

Fascists who worked the roundup actions in the ghetto, with the Polish underground activist Szałas, and with the German Nazi officer Wilm Hosenfeld.[370] Szpilman describes the Ukrainian and Lithuanian Fascists as a depraved group that enjoyed their morbid work. He explains that

> [t]hey took bribes, but as soon as they had received them they killed the people whose money they had taken. They liked killing anyway: killing for sport, or to make their work easier, as target practice or simply for fun. They killed children before their mothers' eyes an found the women's despair amusing. They shot people in the stomach to watch their torments. Sometimes several of them would line their victims up in a row and throw hand grenades at them from a distance to see who had the best aim.[371]

Oftentimes in cultural memory, it is easier to picture the atrocities of the Holocaust as perpetrated by German Nazis as the epitome of all that is embodied evil. At the same time, fascist auxiliaries – no matter how willing – were acting within a situation both created and controlled by Nazi Germany, and working under Nazi personnel. Personal memory, such as Szpilman's, reveals that this history of atrocity is more complicated.

The personal memories of Szałas and Wilm Hosenfeld are by and large the reasons for the censorship and halt of publication of *The Pianist* in the late 1940s. Michael Steinlauf argues that while the Polish state between 1945 and 1948 supported Jewish activity and Jewish remembrance, this support led to a backlash of anti-Semitism

[370] This analysis is contingent on the assumption that much, if not all, of the original text in Szpilman's first publication is retained as close as linguistically possible in subsequent printings. However, his first version in Polish was suppressed, and copies of it are not readily available. Attempts to republish it in the 1960s were thwarted; Andrzej Szpilman, foreword, 9. When Szpilman republished with the help of his son in 1998 – first in Polish, then in English, German, and French – it was not made clear how closely the new publication hew to the old one, with the exception of the newly added material on Wilm Hosenfeld (discussed later in this section). An analysis comparing the new Polish edition to the English version was also not undertaken, as I do not yet read Polish.

[371] Ibid., 92-93.

amongst the general non-Jewish Polish populace.[372] The Polish Home Army, which had fought the Nazi Army, and helped as it could in both the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising and the Warsaw Uprising, was seen instead in postwar propaganda as fascist collaborators.[373] Playing into this mostly false stereotype with Szałas, or depicting Hosenfeld as a decent human being, were not themes welcome amongst Polish readership in general. Yet within Szpilman's memoir, Szałas, a member of the Polish resistance, is depicted as a self-serving traitor, while Hosenfeld, a member of the German Wehrmacht, is shown as a compassionate aide. This role reversal stands in contrast to the cultural and official memories of resistance members as the "good guys" who fought against the Nazis, and of Nazis as the "bad guys" who orchestrated and carried out the Holocaust, according to American cinema. However, both the 1993 German and 2013 Russian *Stalingrad* films feature a "good German," in the character also portrayed by Thomas Kretschmann.[374] Szałas had been assigned to care for Szpilman while he was in hiding after escaping the ghetto. Szałas never arrived with enough food for the amount of time in between visits to Szpilman, because he insisted that the money and possessions that were supposed to buy food were always "stolen" from him.[375] Szpilman finally learned "that Szałas had been collecting money for [him] all over Warsaw, and since no one would grudge it when a man's life was to be saved, he had amassed a handsome sum."[376] All of this sum of

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[372] Michael C. Steinlauf, *Bondage to the Dead: Poland and the Memory of the Holocaust* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1997), e-book accessible via https://www.google.com/books/edition/Bondage_to_the_Dead/PbKbXvQDYQMC?hl=en&gbpv=0. See especially 48-51.
[373] Ibid., 49.
[374] *Stalingrad*, directed by Joseph Vilsmaier (1993; Munich: EuroVideo Medien GmbH, 1997), DVD; *Stalingrad*, directed by Fedor Bondarchuk (2013; Culver City, CA: Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, 2014), DVD, also accessible via Amazon Prime.
[375] Ibid., 142-143.
[376] Ibid., 143.

course, disappeared with Szałas and never made it to Szpilman, in either monetary or edible form.

In contrast, Hosenfeld risked his position in the Wehrmacht and his life to help feed and shelter Szpilman. After encountering Szpilman and learning that he was Jewish, Hosenfeld helped to keep him hidden in the attic of a building that the Germans were using, and brought him bread, jam, newspapers, and later an eiderdown blanket against the Polish winter.[377] Wilm Hosenfeld fits into the relatively newer trope in Holocaust literature of the "good German," yet his actions and Szpilman's description of him predate this literary trope. When *The Pianist* was republished in 1998, the book included excerpts from Hosenfeld's diary and an epilogue written by Wolf Biermann examining this part of Szpilman's memoir further.[378] His diary entries show a man questioning the leadership of the Nazi party, and Biermann details multiple other instances where Hosenfeld helped to save the life of other people who would have been victims of the Holocaust. The historical, real Wilm Hosenfeld then embodies the trope of the "good German," so much so that he is remembered at Yad Vashem as one of the Righteous Among the Nations, where his tree was planted by Władysław Szpilman, and his son, Andrzej Szpilman in 2008.[379]

Unlike Władysław Szpilman, Marcel Reich-Ranicki wrote his memoir decades after his experiences in the Holocaust. This gives Reich-Ranicki the benefit of hindsight

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[377] Ibid., 178-181.
[378] Wilm Hosenfeld, "Extracts from the Diary of Captain Wilm Hosenfeld," in *The Pianist: The Extraordinary Story of One Man's Survival in Warsaw, 1939-1945*, trans. Anthea Bell (London: Phoenix, 2002): 193-208; Biermann, 211-222.
[379] Biermann, 222; "Wilhelm (Wilm) Hosenfeld," *Yad Vashem*, 2019, accessed April 29, 2019 via https://www.yadvashem.org/righteous/stories/hosenfeld.html.

in his composition, but complicates his story with a sometimes meandering chronology as he ties various temporal memories together. Still, despite the exposure to years of cultural and official memory living first in postwar Poland, and then returning to West Germany, Reich-Ranicki writes his own memories as he wants them presented. In this way, even though his work is temporally removed from Szpilman's, the two works are similar in their disregard for keeping close to "appropriate" forms of memory. Unlike Ruth Klüger's memoirs, which were tailored in their translations to their respective German and American audiences, the English translation of Reich-Ranicki's memoir holds no readily apparent major differences from the original German.[380] The only differences seem to stem from linguistic necessity, rather than authorial intent or audience reception. Covering his life from childhood through the 1990s, *The Author of Himself* holds to a semi-chronological telling of his life. Oftentimes, chapters jump backwards and forwards in time to include other parts that Reich-Ranicki deemed important to include in that particular section of the telling. This is most evident in the chapters about his life in the Warsaw Ghetto.[381]

Reich-Ranicki punctuates the continuation of his personal memory with flashbacks to moments he had previously skipped over, and fast forwards to moments that offer a postscript to the current memory. While these incongruities are often moments that he himself experienced, sometimes they are not. They are still included as important information to help the reader understand a past history or to close the story of

[380] Ruth Klüger, *weiter leben: Eine Jugend* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag GmbH, 1994); Ruth Kluger, *Still Alive: A Holocaust Girlhood Remembered* (New York City: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 2001).
[381] Reich-Ranicki, 113-205.

an individual Reich-Ranicki knew or met. The two most notable flashback stories both occur in the book on the day that he met his wife, Tosia. The first of these concerns the relationship he had been in with a woman named Tatiana prior to meeting Tosia.[382] He describes this relationship as commonplace and cliché, and presents it as a counterpoint to what he views as a more appropriate relationship with Tosia. The second flashback covers the life of Tosia's father, as Reich-Ranicki met his wife on the day her father committed suicide.[383] The personal history of Tosia's father, Mr. Langnas, is offered up to the reader as a means of context for his death. The stories which give the reader a type of closure on an individual's fate are far more common throughout these chapters. Reich-Ranicki writes of meeting the conductor and musicologist Kurt Pahlen when he first returned to Warsaw from his deportation in 1938, and then again meeting him in 1995.[384] At the second meeting, Reich-Ranicki stopped Pahlen from thanking him, saying, "'*If anyone has to thank anyone, then it is me. Your concerts helped me then and I have never forgotten you*.'"[385] Some of these other short moments involve Reich-Ranicki merely happening upon an acquaintance by chance years later in his life, and the majority are other Jewish individuals who had survived the Warsaw Ghetto. Far more common are the statements made by the author of how and when someone died during the Holocaust. The rare fast forward occurrence that does not fit within these categories is Reich-Ranicki's commentary on Hermann Höfle.[386] It was Höfle's responsibility to carry out the deportations from Warsaw to Treblinka, and Reich-Ranicki was one of the survivors

[382] Ibid., 132-134.
[383] Ibid., 135-136.
[384] Ibid., 113-114.
[385] Ibid., 114; italics in the original.
[386] Ibid., 168-169.

called upon to give testimony against him in 1962.[387] The postscript concludes that "there was no trial. After his transfer to Vienna, Hermann Höfle committed suicide in his detention cell."[388]

Marcel Reich-Ranicki earned a reputation as a literary critic who made his opinion known, regardless of how unpopular it may have been. This style of critical and literary writing carries over into his memoir, where he applies it to his own personal memories. Within the portion of the memoir regarding the Warsaw Ghetto, Reich-Ranicki was most critical of himself. This is especially evident when he reconsidered his role as a music critic for the *Gazeta Żydowska* within the Ghetto:

> But who was I to pass judgement on artists, many of whom had long been recognized? I was aware that this was not just bold but also impertinent, but I did it nevertheless. Reading my articles of that time, I feel ashamed to this day….But why did I have to be so critical of this or that player? Why did I have to hurt musicians who were doing their very best?...when I consider what these Jewish musicians suffered shortly after giving those concerts, I regret to this day any critical or negative remarks that I made.[389]

It would be a virtual impossibility to untangle the references, quotations, and allusions to works of literature, theatre, opera, and music that are throughout Reich-Ranicki's memoir. In just two pages, writing of his earliest days with Tosia, he mentioned seven different literary phrases, verses, and authors.[390] Multiple chapter titles are quotes from different literary works.[391] Reich-Ranicki concluded his memoir with a couplet from Hugo von Hofmannsthal, the same one he clung to in his early days with his wife:

Ist ein Traum, kann nicht wirklich sein,	*'Tis a dream, cannot really be true*
daß wir zwei beieinander sein.	*That we are here together, we two.*[392]

[387] Ibid., 168-169.
[388] Ibid., 169.
[389] Ibid., 157-158.
[390] Ibid., 151-152.
[391] Ibid., 14, 21, 151, 391.
[392] Ibid., 152, 392; Reich-Ranicki, *Mein Leben*, 553. Original couplet from *Der Rosenkavalier*.

Cultural and Collective Memory in Film

Jan Assmann explains the differences between "communicative memory" and cultural memory in his essay, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity."[393] Both "communicative memory" and cultural memory are aspects of collective memory, Assmann argues. "Communicative memory" however is "collective memory that [is] based exclusively on everyday communications."[394] Cultural memory then is comprised of "fixed points [that] are fateful events of the past, whose memory is maintained through cultural formation (texts, rites, monuments) and institutional communication (recitation, practice, observance)."[395] Assmann stresses the importance of cultural memory's use in the formation of group identity, in the reconstruction of the collective past, and in the formation of a cultural heritage.[396] While *The Pianist* was released internationally, it was marketed as a predominantly U.S. film, entering it into the American cultural memory.

Transferring the words and memories of Władysław Szpilman into a filmic representation by nature alters the memories. How they are presented has been changed, and the memories themselves have been filtered through the crew involved in the film, especially the director, screenwriter, and actors. Roman Polanski's vision for *The Pianist* is no longer the direct personal memory of Szpilman, rather it is the transmitted, altered memory of Szpilman. This is not carried out through a sense of malice, but rather an effort to make the story accessible to an audience, to incorporate expected cultural memory of the Holocaust.

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[393] Jan Assmann, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity," trans. John Czaplicka, *New German Critique* 65 (1995): 125-133, accessed February 5, 2019, https://www.jstor.org/stable/488538.
[394] Ibid., 126.
[395] Ibid., 129.
[396] Ibid., 130.

The accessibility of Szpilman's story and the larger destruction of the Warsaw Ghetto is achieved in a way which seems counterintuitive at first. Rather than present a story that centers itself around sentimentality, the screenwriter of *The Pianist*, Ronald Harwood, argues that what drew him to the story was Szpilman's lack of sentimentality in his writing.[397] He contends that sentimentality and "'the feel good' factor" render a film incapable of "present[ing] a genuine tragic experience," which denies the audience their ability to feel theatrical catharsis.[399] Comparing Szpilman's *The Pianist* to Solzhenitsyn's *A Day In the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, Harwood worked to keep the script for the film as unsentimental as the original text. This lack of sentimentality is what makes the film accessible to the audience; instead of being drawn in by the sentimentality, which Harwood derisively refers to as "schmaltz," they are drawn in by the presentation of Szpilman's straightforward, uncomplaining nature.[400] Of course, the screenwriter does not have final say, and some sentimentality was added into the film in the form of the character Dorota.[401] Based on the real woman who helped save Szpilman from Szałas and jaundice, Dorota is presented in the first act of the film as a possible love interest, if only she was

Img. 9: Adrien Brody as Szpilman[398]

[397] Ronald Harwood, "Truth and Fiction: The Holocaust on Stage and Screen," *European Judaism* 38, no. 2, (2005): 4-16; discussion of Szpilman's lack of sentimentality on 11.
[398] *The Pianist*, Polanski.
[399] Harwood, 11.
[400] Ibid., 11.
[401] *The Pianist*, Polanski.

not a Gentile.[402] This too though serves to humanize Szpilman the character, furthering the accessibility of the film to the audience.

By the time that *The Pianist* was filmed and released, audiences had an expectation of what sorts of symbols and tropes belong in a film about the Holocaust, and what does not. The film opens with historical footage of the Warsaw Ghetto, which establishes the setting and the authenticity of the film as based on a true story for the audience.[403] Moviegoers expect to see this sort of situating of history in their biopics and dramatic retellings of history. The black-and-white historical footage then serves as an entry point into the believability of the film. *The Pianist* also highlights at its most brutal moments that the perpetrators of these events are German Nazis, no others, unlike what is shown in the memoir. This includes arguably the most violent scene of the film prior to the beginning of the deportation of the Ghetto, when the Szpilman family witnessed through their window another family being massacred by uniformed Germans. First, the patriarch in the wheelchair was thrown bodily from the balcony to the pavement below.[404] Then, the family members were told to run down the street, whereupon they were all shot. Last, the Germans got back into their car, and purposefully drove over the bodies to ensure their deaths.[405] This scene was taken directly from Szpilman's memoir, where the events were described in nearly identical fashion.[406] The other brutal scene of a young boy being beaten to death does not show who killer is, leaving the identity to be

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[402] Ibid.
[403] Ibid.; *A Film Unfinished*, Hersonski. The footage that is used at the beginning of the film originally comes from a Nazi propaganda film of the Warsaw Ghetto, which is the subject of Yael Hersonski's documentary. This is a historical problem, which is discussed in the following section.
[404] Ringelblum recounted a similar event in May 1942 when a sick man named Wilner was thrown along with his chair out of the upper story window; Ringelblum, *Notes*, 284.
[405] *The Pianist*, Polanski.
[406] Szpilman, 78-81.

guessed at by the audience.[407] In all likelihood the general audience member will guess they are a Nazi German guard. The complexity of the author's personal memory and the historical record are thus flattened for the general audience.

Jeffrey K. Olick's work revolves around the differences and overlaps between the ideas of official memory and collective memory.[408] He argues that both official memory and collective memory are contestable, although collective memory is far more variable.[409] Official memory according to Olick "is a very particular kind of remembering that may affect other forms but never dominates them completely."[410] Thus, while official memory in West Germany and later Germany was normalized through ritualization and relativization, it did not overpower all other forms of cultural memory or supplant them. The expectations of cultural memory and official memory are relatively uncontested in Dror Zahavi's film of *Mein Leben*. Instead, the movie widely conforms to a standardized interpretation of the Holocaust.

Zahavi's goal with the film, *Mein Leben: Marcel Reich-Ranicki,* was not to challenge cultural memory, but rather it was to present the story of a man who in the public eye was renowned, yet also viewed as "'stern, arrogant, [and] not very personable.'"[411] After reading his memoir, Zahavi began to view him "'as pleasant and very warm, open, and with a great sense of humor and criticism, including of himself.'"[412] Given artistic license on the film, Zahavi, an Israeli director working in

[407] Ibid.
[408] Jeffrey K. Olick, "What Does It Mean to Normalize the Past? Official Memory in German Politics since 1989," *Social Science History* 22, no. 4, Special Issue: Memory and the Nation (1998): 547-571.
[409] Ibid., 555.
[410] Ibid., 555.
[411] Zahavi, quoted in Shapira.
[412] Ibid.

Img. 10: Schweighöfer and Schüttler as Marcel and Tosia Reich-Ranicki[413]

Germany, took on the task of presenting this second, softer version of Reich-Ranicki and his wife Tosia and their survival amid the destruction of the Warsaw Ghetto. *Mein Leben: Marcel Reich-Ranicki* originally aired in Germany on April 19, 2009 to coincide with the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising.[414]

Zahavi chose to direct the film in such a way that memory still plays a key role. Similar to Reich-Ranicki's memoir, the film is non-chronological. Scenes of Reich-Ranicki being interrogated in communist Poland are used as the framework around the story he tells of his and his wife's survival of the Holocaust.[415] He had been recalled from his diplomatic job in London, and was arrested for two weeks.[416] His interrogation interviews – which did not occur in his memoir – work as a filmic storytelling device for the character of Reich-Ranicki to be the narrator of the life of the real Reich-Ranicki, as acted out in the film. *Mein Leben: Marcel Reich-Ranicki* is also the one source out of these four that sits the closest to accepted cultural memory of the Holocaust from the perspective of 2000s Germany.[417] It is not a film that makes the audience question its

[413] *Mein Leben: Marcel Reich-Ranicki*, Zahavi.
[414] Shapira. While the film does not address the Uprising directly, it does take place in Warsaw for the majority of the time.
[415] *Mein Leben: Marcel Reich-Ranicki*, Zahavi.
[416] Reich-Ranicki, *The Author of Himself*, 232-233.
[417] This film also aligns quite nicely with expected, unquestioning representations of the Holocaust from the American 2000s perspective: Nazis were bad, all individuals identified as Jewish whether assimilated or not were targeted, and non-Jewish Poles were complicated in an undiscussed way. Without the cultural attachment to Reich-Ranicki the literary critic, this film reads to an American audience as rather simple and straightforward in its portrayal of Holocaust survival.

assumptions of the Warsaw Ghetto or the Holocaust, rather it concerns itself with helping the audience question its understanding of the prickly public persona of Marcel Reich-Ranicki.

Historical Memory

An aspect of historical memory that is enabled through works such as memoirs is the possibility of a reconnection with historical place. The seminal work of Pierre Nora on memory and place bears weight even when the original place where the memories were created has been destroyed and built over, such as the Warsaw Ghetto.[418] Nora's argument is that there are "*lieux de mémoire*," or "sites of memory," where events of history have coalesced into the space, and the site itself becomes the embodiment of the memory.[419] The lived memory of a site, particularly a site of traumatic historical importance, expands past the conceived historical boundaries of the event, so that the absolute, eternal memory can be carried on in the site through the generations. The fixedness of the "site of memory" is so powerful, that even after the destruction of a traumatic location, its memory still clings to the space, regardless of the presence or absence of the original buildings.

As the ghetto itself largely no longer exists, it has to be represented in the documents produced in it during the war and those produced about it after the war. Writing cannot capture the feeling of the place the same way photographs or documentary film can, yet it acknowledges that it can convey the feelings of the people

[418] Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*," trans. Marc Roudebush, *Representations* 26 (Spring 1989): 7-24.
[419] Ibid., 7.

who once lived in that same place. In this way, the words of Reich-Ranicki and Szpilman evoke the places and people of the Warsaw Ghetto, but within the limitations of their prose. Similarly, while sets can be designed to mimic the landscape of a real place from well-researched photos, footage, and documents, they are not the same as the original place. The actors in a film too, are moving through the representation of the historical world, not through the actual space and time, thus limiting the form.

Saul Friedländer argues that there are two approaches to the historian's role as presenter of the destruction of the Holocaust and its catastrophic effects on the European Jewish community: one where the history can be described in dispassionate, statistical facts, and the other where the history can be described in emotionally fraught individual tales of horror and grief.[420] These "two poles" of "memory of the Shoah" are necessary for a full picture of the Holocaust to be presented, and successful historians and artists merge these disparate pieces together.[421] Friedländer argues that historians of the Holocaust must balance their ability to relate an objective history with the demand for the inclusion of the individual, personal stories of the victims of the Holocaust. This is only possible through

> the integration of the individual fate within the historical narration…enabl[ing] the historian to overcome the dichotomy between the unfathomable abstraction of the millions of dead and the tragedy of individual life and death.[422]

By using both memoir and film as evidentiary tools, it becomes possible to add in the human, emotional element to history that Friedländer calls for. Primary sources such as

[420] Saul Friedländer, "History, Memory, and the Historian: Dilemmas and Responsibilities," *New German Critique* Special Issue on the Holocaust, no. 80 (Spring-Summer 2000): 3-15, accessed January 10, 2019, https://www.jstor.org/stable/488629.
[421] Ibid., 4.
[422] Ibid., 14.

these, along with journals and other archival records, help to flesh out the history of catastrophe. Without them, historical writing of the Holocaust would be resigned to the bleak statistical data alone.

Historians must also be cautious of distortions of the past, which can easily happen in films meant for mass consumption. A notable example of this is the problem of using documentary footage from the Warsaw Ghetto in a feature film. Polanski included footage of the city of Warsaw and the "early days" of the Ghetto as the opening shots of *The Pianist*.[423] Similarly, Zahavi included documentary footage of the German invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939, as well as footage of mothers, children, and bodies within the Warsaw Ghetto later in his film.[424] In both instances, the footage originally comes from a Nazi propaganda film of the Warsaw Ghetto, which is the subject of Yael Hersonski's documentary, *A Film Unfinished*.[425] The original propaganda footage, over time, became "black and white images…engraved as historical truth."[426] This is a dangerous usage of images that were known in the Warsaw Ghetto to be staged and falsified to suit the propagandistic whims of the film's original creators. Ringelblum, Reich-Ranicki, and Szpilman all wrote of the filming and staging that the film crews conducted within the Ghetto.[427] The scenes described by these writers by and large appear in Hersonski's documentary, including forcing the Jewish police to disperse a crowd, ordering feasts to be served at restaurants and parties thrown for the Jewish

[423] *The Pianist*, Polanski.
[424] *Mein Leben: Marcel Reich-Ranicki*, Zahavi.
[425] *A Film Unfinished*, Hersonski.
[426] Ibid.
[427] Ringelblum, *Notes*, 265-266, 268-269; Reich-Ranicki, *The Author of Himself*, 148, 161-162; Szpilman, 81.

Council, and forcing men and women to bathe together in the public baths.[428] While the propaganda footage used in *The Pianist* and *Mein Leben: Marcel Reich-Ranicki* do not appear as staged or purposeful as others in *A Film Unfinished,* the viewer of the feature films has no way of knowing that for certain. In using this footage to ground their films in a sense of historical truth, they instead open up a larger problem of what is historical truth in film? Hersonski's documentary persuasively argues that none of the original propaganda footage is without reproach, and no matter how innocuous the image may seem, it should be questioned. The use of these scenes in the feature films must then also be questioned and discussed for public awareness of what they are viewing in their media.

[428] Ibid., 265; Ibid., 148; Ibid., 81; *A Film Unfinished*.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

On February 28, 1941, while living in the Warsaw Ghetto, Emanuel Ringelblum wrote of the impulse to record history as it happened:

> The drive to write down one's memoirs is powerful: Even young people in labor camps do it. The manuscripts are discovered, torn up, and their authors beaten.[429]

He also commented that with in the Jewish community of Warsaw there had "been the growth of a strong sense of historical consciousness" as the Ghetto was being established.[430] He continued, "We tie fact after fact from our daily experience with the events of history."[431] Władysław Szpilman and Marcel Reich-Ranicki wrote their memoirs in ways that held true to their personal memories – how they remembered what happened – and as such, contributed to the historical record of the Warsaw Ghetto. This does not always coincide, and in fact sometimes rebukes, cultural, collective, and official memories of the Holocaust. Despite the fifty-year difference in the original publication dates, Szpilman and Reich-Ranicki both managed to write memoirs that add nuanced layers of representation and memory to the history of the Warsaw Ghetto. Their representations of life within the Ghetto, in its multiple facets, provided the baseline for the filmic representations of their stories, adding to the cultural memory of the Holocaust in the United States and Germany. These sources, like the men who produced them, are complex and at times frustrating in what they choose to reveal and what they choose to keep hidden. However, when analyzed in conjunction with other primary sources of the

[429] Ringelblum, *Notes*, 133.
[430] Ibid., 82.
[431] Ibid., 82.

Warsaw Ghetto, they help to add to the greater knowledge and understanding of the people, place, and time.

Through the analysis of six themes of the Warsaw Ghetto – the establishment of the Ghetto, the typhus epidemic, artistic life, smuggling, the Jewish Council and the Jewish Police, and the deportations to Treblinka – these two memoirs lay bare the personal memories of Marcel Reich-Ranicki and Władysław Szpilman. Their authorship at times called into question accepted collective and cultural memory, and opened themselves up to criticism. The translation from their original languages of publication broadened the audience for their stories, and the translation to film engaged yet another audience. As a historian, these thematic memories are an analytical backdrop for the discussion of the harsh realities and the intensely personal emotions of Holocaust history. These men held a privileged view of the Ghetto from their membership in the assimilated, educated class of Warsaw, and their artistic talents in the end helped both of them to live. Their histories in all their complexity show both the multiple facets of life within the Warsaw Ghetto and the various memories surrounding it.

The stories of the Warsaw Ghetto are not finished being told, and as sources are read and translated and re-read, these other histories will continue to be studied. Almost a half million people lived in the Ghetto, some of whom may never be known as more than statistical data in the historical record. Roughly half of these individuals were women, yet women have not previously been equivalent in historical study on the Ghetto. During my research, Roberta Grossman's film *Who Will Write Our History?*, was released in the

spring of 2019.[432] This documentary film draws from the scholarly work of Samuel D. Kassow's monograph, *Who Will Write Our History?: Emanuel Ringelblum, the Waraw Ghetto, and the Oyneg Shabes Archive*.[433] One of the major historical figures of these works was a woman named Rachel Auerbach, who survived the Warsaw Ghetto, and wrote three memoirs of her experiences within the Ghetto after the Holocaust as well: *Bi'hutsot Varsha* in 1953, then *Varshever tsavoes* in 1974, and lastly *Baym letstn veg: in geto Varshe un oyf der Arisher zayt* in 1977.[434] All three of these memoirs are published in Yiddish and have never been translated to another language.[435] Truly, Rachel Auerbach's works deserve their own scholarly attention, separate from the better-known and better-remembered men of the Warsaw Ghetto. Women like Rachel Auerbach are known, and included in major works, but they still share that space with the men. Women should not be solely side pieces in men's histories, nor should the way to write about women's contributions be simply additive.[436] Doris L. Bergen argues that "since the first path-breaking studies in the 1980s" on women's histories in the Holocaust, it is still largely non-mainstream work in Holocaust studies.[437] Ringelblum wrote that:

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[432] *Who Will Write Our History?*, directed by Roberta Grossman (2018; Berkeley: Katahdin Productions, 2019), theatrical screening, May 1, 2019. The film is available on iTunes, Amazon Prime, and Hulu as of March 6, 2020.
[433] Samuel D. Kassow, *Who Will Write Our History?: Emanuel Ringelblum, the Warsaw Ghetto, and the Oyneg Shabes Archive* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007).
[434] Rachel Auerbach, *Bi'hutsot Varsha* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1953); Rachel Auerbach, *Varshever tsavoes* (Tel Aviv: Farlag Yisroel-bukh, 1974); Rachel Auerbach, *Baym letstn veg: in geto Varshe un oyf der Arisher zayt* (Tel Aviv: Farlag Yisroel-bukh, 1977). Auerbach published two other memoirs during her life, one about the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, and one about her survival in Treblinka.
[435] Earlier on in the research process I was eager to add Auerbach's memoirs and Grossman's films to this project. Given the wealth of information included in her memoirs and the turtle's pace with which I read Yiddish however, it became unfeasible to complete within the confines of this thesis.
[436] This is a self-criticism as well. I am well aware of the fact that I have written a thesis focusing rather entirely on men.
[437] Doris L. Bergen, "What Do Studies of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Contribute to Understanding the Holocaust?" in *Different Horrors / Same Hell: Gender and the Holocaust*, ed. and intro. by Myrna

> [t]he historian of the future will have to devote a fitting chapter to the role of the Jewish woman during the war. It is thanks to the courage and endurance of our women that thousands of families have been able to endure these bitter times.[438]

Even better than a chapter would be a far lengthier project to allow the women of the Warsaw Ghetto to tell their own stories. There were female writers, memoirists, poets, and artists in the Ghetto – such as Gustawa Jarecka, Rachel Auerbach, Henryka Lazowert, and Tosia Reich-Ranicki – just as there were the "heroic girls" and women who played an active role in resistance.[439] Ringelblum predicted that "[t]he story of the Jewish woman will be a glorious page in the history of Jewry during the present war."[440] It is now time as historians to help his prediction come to fruition, and add their memory and representation to the historical record.

Goldenberg and Amy H. Shapiro (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2013), 17, ProQuest Ebook Central, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/asulib-ebooks/detail.action?docID=3444515.

[438] Ringelblum, *Notes*, 294.

[439] Ibid., 273. The "heroic girls," known only as Chajke and Frumke, were Jewish women who embarked on dangerous missions to deliver messages and goods from city to city as late as the spring of 1942 bearing "Aryan" papers. They deserve so much more than a footnote, and hopefully will have that in the future.

[440] Ibid., 274.

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