

**"The Secret of the Movement's Strength":
The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising and its Driving Forces**

Dr. Tom Navon
tomnavon@mishol.org.il

Course Description:

This seminar will focus on the women and men behind the symbol of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, as a major test case of Jewish armed resistance in the ghettos in Poland. Its leading question will be: What were the driving forces behind the uprising? In the historical aspect, we will study the social composition of rebels as a reflection of "Modern Jewish Politics." In the theoretical aspect, we will examine the uprising as a manifestation of a distinct social formation, the "Jewish youth movement." In the methodological aspect, we will practice the reading of Holocaust memoirs, written from different perspectives, in terms of place, language, political affiliation and gender.

Course Requirements:

1. Weekly reading assignments.
2. Presentation of one text (primary or secondary) in class (7-8 minutes), including: background, summary of the text and posing an opening question for discussion.
3. Final paper -2 options:
 - a. Short paper – analysis of one primary source, using secondary literature (10-12 pages).
 - b. Seminar paper – analysis of one theme relevant for the topic of the course, based on primary and secondary sources (20-25).

Submission deadline – the start of the following semester.

Final Grade:

Active participation in class – 20%

Weekly reading assignments – 20%

Text presentation – 20%

Final paper – 40%

Course Program:

	Date	Title	Reading in Advance
1	3.7.2024	Introduction: Jewish modern politics and Poland	Gutman (1994) Mendelsohn
2	10.7	The Judenrats and Jewish youth movements in Polish ghettos	Lubetkin, 11-15, 35-46 Gutman (1995)
3	17.7	Reading Holocaust memoirs: text and context	Geva Patt
4	24.7	Women as Liaisons between ghettos	Lubetkin, 73-82 Ronen
5	31.7	The Jewish Labor Bund in Poland in Underground and Revolt	Edelman
6	7.8	The Jewish Fighting Organization (JFO) in Warsaw and other ghettos	Lubetkin, 83-97, 106-124
7	14.8	The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising	Lubetkin, 145-159, 164-168, 178-189, 229-234, 236-237
8	21.8	The Communists in the Ghettos and in the JFO	Goldkorn
9	28.8	Conclusion	Einwohner Dreifuss

Reading List:

* = additional reading

1. Primary sources – memoirs:

Marek Edelman, *The Ghetto Fights: Warsaw 1941-1943* [Polish, 1945], London: Bookmarks, 1990 (German translation: *Das Ghetto kämpft*, Berlin: Harald-Kater-Verlag, 1993).

Zivia Lubetkin, *In the Days of Destruction and Revolt* [Hebrew, 1946-7], Ghetto Fighters' House, 1981.

Dorka Goldkorn, 'My Memories from the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising' [Yiddish, 1948], *Moreshet Journal for the Study of the Holocaust and Antisemitism*, 21 (2023).

2. Secondary literature:

a. Introduction and Jewish politics:

Yisrael Gutman, *Resistance: The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1994, pp. xi-xx.

Ezra Mendelsohn, 'Varieties', *On Modern Jewish Politics*, New York, Oxford: Oxford university Press, 1993, pp. 3-36.

* Jack Jacobs, 'Introduction', in: idem. (ed.), *Jews and Leftist Politics: Judaism, Israel, Antisemitism and Gender*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017, pp. 1-17.

b. Jewish and Zionist youth movement:

Israel Gutman, 'The Youth Movement as an Alternative Leadership in Eastern Europe', in: Asher Cohen and Yehoyakim Cochavi (eds.), *Zionist Youth Movements during the Shoah*, New York, Peter Lang, 1995, pp. 7-18.

* Chaim Schatzker, 'The Special Character of the Jewish Youth Movement', in: Asher Cohen and Yehoyakim Cochavi (eds.), *Zionist Youth Movements during the Shoah*, New York, Peter Lang, 1995, pp. 19-31.

* Zvi Lamm, *Youth takes the lead: the inception of Jewish youth movements in Europe*, Givat Haviva: Yad Ya'ari, 2004, pp. 15-46.

* Erica Nadelhaft, 'Resistance through Education', *Polin*, 9 (1996), pp. 212-231

c. Women in the resistance:

Avihu Ronen, 'Poland: Women Leaders in the Jewish Underground During the Holocaust', *The Shalvi/Hyman Encyclopedia of Jewish Women*,

<https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/poland-women-leaders-in-jewish-underground-during-holocaust>

* Judy Batalion, *The Light of Days: the untold story of women resistance fighters in Hitler's ghettos*, New York: William Morrow, 2020, esp. pp. 405-407.

d. Reading Holocaust memoirs:

- Theory:

Zoë Waxman, 'Transcending History? Methodological problems in Holocaust testimony', in: Dan Stone (ed.). *The Holocaust and Historical Methodology*, New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2012, pp.143-157.

Ruthellen Josselson, "The Hermeneutics of Faith and the Hermeneutics of Suspicion," *Narrative Inquiry*, 14, 1 (2004), pp. 1-28.

Dominick LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2014, pp. 1-42.

- Examples:

Sharon Geva, "'With and Despite the Burden of the Past': 1946 in the Life Story of Zivia Lubetkin", *Moreshet*, 14 (2017), pp. 220-259.

Avinoam Patt, *The Jewish Heroes of Warsaw: The Afterlife of the Revolt*, Wayne State University Press, 2021, pp. 305-331.

Amos Goldberg, 'Introduction: "If That Is a Man",', *Trauma in First Person: Diary Writing During the Holocaust*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017, pp. 1-29.

Noam Liebman, 'Indeed "merely a description of the events?": The Memoirs of Jewish Warsaw Ghetto Police Officer Stanisław Gombiński as a Model for Hermeneutic Analysis', *Moreshet*, 18 (2021), pp. 160-193.

e. Driving forces (conclusions):

Rachel L. Einwohner, 'Opportunity, Honor, and Action in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising', *American Journal of Sociology*, 109. 3 (November 2003), pp. 650-675.

Havi Dreifuss, 'The Leadership of the Jewish Combat Organization during the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising: A Reassessment', *Holocaust Genocide Studies*, 31, 1 (2017), pp. 24-60.

f. General background literature:

* Yisrael Gutman, *The Jews of Warsaw, 1939-1943: Ghetto, Underground, Revolt*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989.

* Belah Guterman, *Fighting for Her People: Zivia Lubetkin, 1914-1978*, Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2014.

* Bella Gutterman, "'We, the Jews of the ghetto, inflicted casualties upon the Germans and even drove them off": Zivia Lubetkin and the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising', *Moreshet*, 10 (2013), pp. 45-80.

* Daniel Blatman, *For Our Freedom and Yours: the Jewish Labour Bund in Poland 1939-1949*, London; Portland: Vallentine Mitchell, 2003.

* Samuel D. Kassow, *Who will write our history? Emanuel Ringelblum, the Warsaw Ghetto, and the Oyneg Shabes Archive*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007.