



The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

(total running time: 30 minutes)

A ghetto was established in the Polish capital of Warsaw in mid-November 1940. At one point the ghetto held an estimated 500,000 Jews. During 1942 and 1943 the Germans deported approximately 300,000 Jews from the Warsaw ghetto to the Treblinka death camp with the goal of completely liquidating the ghetto. In response, members of the Jewish underground organized a large-scale resistance effort. They formed the Jewish Fighting Organization (Żydowska Organizacja Bojowa, ŻOB) and the Jewish Military Union (Żydowski Związek Wojskowy, ŻZW) and received some armaments from the Armia Krajowa (AK), a Polish resistance movement. From April 19 to May 16, 1943, some 700 members of the ŻOB and ŻZW used pistols, rifles, and hand grenades against the German forces led by General Jürgen Stroop. After nearly one month of fighting, the German troops overcame the rebellion. Stroop reported that his troops had killed an estimated 7,000 ghetto inhabitants during the uprising. Approximately 7,000 of the remaining Jews in the Warsaw ghetto were deported to the Treblinka death camp, and nearly all of the others were deported to the Poniatowa, Trawniki, and Majdanek concentration camps.

In *The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising* seven interviewees describe their roles in the revolt.

First, Vladka Meed (b. 1922 in Warsaw, Poland) describes her involvement in the ŻOB from 1942 to 1943 in preparation for the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. She passed as a non-Jew outside of the ghetto walls in order to smuggle arms to the resistance fighters.

Second, Anna Heilman (b. 1928 in Warsaw, Poland) recounts the propaganda activities she engaged in as a member of Hashomer Hatzair, a Zionist socialist youth group whose members joined the ŻOB.

Adam Boren (b. 1929 in Warsaw, Poland) describes being a scout and messenger for the ŻOB as the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising began.

Next, David Jakubowski (b. 1911 in Aleksandrów Kujawski, Russia [as of 1918, Poland]) describes the ŻOB's internal structure, efforts to procure armaments, and training exercises. He speaks about the casualties inflicted and received during the first days of fighting.

Benjamin Meed (b. 1922 in Warsaw, Poland), who married survivor Vladka Meed after the war, was living as non-Jew outside of the Warsaw ghetto at the time of the uprising. He relates his experience of attending Catholic mass on Easter Sunday while the uprising transpired within view of the church parishioners.

Then, Joseph Greenblatt (b. 1915 in Warsaw, Russia [as of 1918, Poland]), a leader of the ŻOB, recounts capturing German officers during the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. He later escaped from the ghetto through underground sewers with the help of the Armia Krajowa.

Sol Rosenberg (b. 1926 in Warsaw, Poland) recovered ammunition from incapacitated German troops. He hid in the sewers before being captured by German soldiers and deported to the Treblinka death camp.