

The Last Seder in the Warsaw Ghetto

Contributed by [Beth Winters](#)

Source: Yad Vashem



<https://www.youtube.com/embed/I4h5y8bN5y0>

We were slaves in the ghettos of Poland / to Hitler, Führer of Germany, accused by his name / And we were taken from there... to be killed and enslaved / led naked across the snow and ice, / – and even were we all were wise and smart / able to work tenfold our strength, / a downright miracle would it be / if from every community of Jews one or two remained, / And those who tell of the suffering of the Jews of Poland / will live to see the downfall of Hitler and Germany. Aharon Carmi, *From That Inferno*, p. 113

In April the ghetto was rife with rumors of an upcoming deportation. Despite this, the Jews of the ghetto continued with their preparations for Passover. Some even baked matzot, obtained wine, and koshered their dishes in preparation for the holiday. On the 18th of April 1943, news arrived that the Germans had stationed an army in Warsaw and it seemed that the ghetto was to be liquidated. The members of the underground resistance movements went into high alert. That night the ghetto was surrounded. Many people had already heard of this from the reports of lookouts posted as a matter of course on the rooftops.

No one slept that night. Everybody spent the time packing the most necessary articles, linen, bedding, food and taking it down to the bunkers. The moon was full and the night was unusually bright. There was more movement in the courtyards and streets than by day. Tuvia Borzykowski, *Between Tumbling Walls* p.48

It was Passover eve, 1943, and we had arranged everything in the house in preparation for the holiday. We even had *Matzot* (unleavened bread), everything. We had made the beds... The policeman who lived with us always told us everything that was going to happen... He told us, "You should know that the ghetto is surrounded – with Ukrainians. Tonight will not be a good night." He had heard this. We took all our belongings and went into the bunker. Why wait? ... So we took what we still had at home, whatever food we had, everything, and went down into the bunker. And waited. Testimony of Shoshana Baharir, Yad Vashem Archive, O.3/5469

On the 19th of April 1943, Passover eve, the Germans entered the ghetto. Tuvia Borzykowski, a member of

the Jewish Fighting Organization, describes the Seder in [Rabbi Eliezer Meisel's](#) apartment:

Amidst this destruction, the table in the center of the room looked incongruous with glasses filled with wine, with the family seated around, the rabbi reading the Haggadah. His reading was punctuated by explosions and the rattling of machine-guns; the faces of the family around the table were lit by the red light from the burning buildings nearby. Tuvia Borzykowski, *Between Tumbling Walls* p.57