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New Book Takes Different Approach to Horrors of Lodz Ghetto

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — In their campaign to spread the Third Reich throughout the world, the Nazis envisioned remaking cities into gleaming examples of German ingenuity, replete with a pristine German population, and devoid of Jews, according to Gordon Horwitz, associate professor of history at Illinois Wesleyan University, whose new book *Ghettostadt: Lodz and the Making of a Nazi City* (Harvard University Press, 2008) examines the chilling evolution of the Holocaust as it came to Lodz, Poland.

One of the first cities to be annexed into the Third Reich, Lodz possessed the second-largest Jewish population in Poland, with more than 200,000 Jews. Horwitz explores the creation of the Lodz ghetto district as a temporary solution to the “Jewish problem,” and how it exemplified the larger, horrifying picture of what the Nazi dreamed for Europe and the world.

Delving into newly released diaries and resources, Horwitz has assembled a stark and startling look at the business of building a Nazi city, while simultaneously destroying hundreds of thousands of lives. Unlike other studies of the time period, Horwitz’s book shines light on the dynamic interaction between the new city fathers and the leaders of the ghetto, using eyewitness accounts, German documentation and a study of life inside both the city and the ghetto.

Publisher’s Weekly calls the book a “historical tour de force,” and notes Horwitz employs “a graceful style rare in academic history.” (May, 2008)

With Illinois Wesleyan since 1989, Horwitz has been researching the topic of Lodz for more than a decade. This is his second book on the Holocaust. His first, *In the Shadow of Death: Living Outside the Gates of Mauthausen*, was published in 1990 (The Free Press).

Fellow Holocaust scholars praise Horwitz’s new book. Jeffrey Herf, author of *The Jewish Enemy: Nazi Propaganda During World War II and the Holocaust* declared “this powerful book takes a prominent place in the ongoing discussion of what the Jews could and could not do to save themselves.” Charles S. Maier, author of *The Unmasterable Past: History, Holocaust and German National Identity*, said, “even after so many accounts and interpretations of the Holocaust, we owe Horwitz a great debt as he dispassionately examines the most contentious of issues.”

To speak with Horwitz, please call Rachel Hatch at the Office of University Communications at Illinois Wesleyan University at (309) 556-3960.
