

## Prewar Jewish Life in Warsaw (June 1939)

### Abstract

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The capital of the Polish Republic, Warsaw, was a vibrant and diverse city in the interwar period. With 35 million people on the eve of World War II, Jews made up about 7.7% of the total national population. In the commercial districts of Warsaw's old city center, however, Jews had a much greater presence. This amateur footage was shot by Dr. Benjamin Gasul, a Latvian-born Jewish pediatrician who had emigrated to the United States and visited Europe in the summer of 1939 with his family. In the excerpts shown here, we see everyday scenes in Warsaw's Polish quarter. While many of its residents are clearly excited about being filmed, some older Orthodox Jews are seen covering their faces. This footage was filmed just a few months before the German invasion of Poland and the subsequent establishment of a ghetto.

### Source

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Source: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, gift of the Gasul Family  
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