

Accessories in the Ghetto

Categories: Phenomena

The ban on private possession of jewelry in the ghetto (the oft-repeated orders to sell such items to the Bank of the Eldest of the Jews and the confiscation of various items of value discovered in private possession by the Kripo or Special Unit officers) caused residents of the ghetto to stop openly wearing decorative accessories made of more precious metals and stones. They were replaced by decorative items made in the ghetto and featuring ghetto themes.

In 1940, silver brooches and badges appeared in the shape of the Star of David engraved with the inscription: "Litzmannstadt-Getto 1940." Brooches made in 1941 featured a troubling image: a section of Kościelny Sq. (a wooden bridge with several passers-by, barbed wire, and a German guard standing by a sentry box against the gothic Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary) cut in silver or silver-plated, usually clumsily made and poorly designed.

Subsequent years saw the appearance of brooches in the shape of a ghetto 1 Mk banknote or bread cards with coupons missing and with personal details of the owner engraved on a silver plaque. Also made were massive silver signet rings with a gold-plated Star of David. Year 1943 brings miniature canteens as pendants or brooches.

Less popular items include decorative accessories featuring other themes from the life of the ghetto, for example a line in front of a distribution point, feces removal (so-called "fekaliarze") pulling a loaded cart, mostly on lighters and cigarette cases.

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References

Encyclopedia, p. 76.

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