

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why did the Wajcblum family attempt to flee Poland? Were there alternatives to this course of action they should have considered?
2. Why did Tadeusz Pankiewicz and the rest of the pharmacy staff remain in the ghetto? Would you have the courage to make the same decision if you were faced with it?
3. Why did the Polish population of Krakow not rise up and tear down the ghetto walls? Why did this not occur with any of the ghettos throughout Poland during the war?
4. Why was it so difficult for the population of the Krakow ghetto to accept the information that they received about the horrors of Belżec and Auschwitz, even when there were first-person eyewitnesses who managed to make their way back to the Jewish District?
5. The members of the Judenrat and the Jewish Police force both attempted to work for and with the Jewish population in the ghetto *and* also with the German authorities to protect themselves and their families. What were the moral and ethical elements of this situation?
6. If you were Elsa Baumann, what would you have done differently?
7. Did Natalia conduct herself correctly throughout the book? Is there anything she should have done differently?
8. Oskar Schindler and Julius Madritsch were industrialists in Krakow profiting from slave labor. However, they also took steps, often at considerable risk, to properly feed

and protect their Jewish workforce. Were they heroes or criminals?

9. After the war there continued to be rampant anti-Semitism against the Jews in Poland. Why is this the case?
10. The world in 2026 is heading back toward authoritarian governments. How is today's time different from what existed in the 1930s? If America becomes an authoritarian state (either liberal or conservative), how would you act differently from the people in Europe during World War II?