

TZIVIA LUBETKIN:
BETWEEN "PRIVATE" AND "PUBLIC"; BODY AND SYMBOL

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Tzivia Lubetkin was one of the leaders of the underground in the Warsaw ghetto and a founding member of the Jewish Fighting Organization. Through her activities in the ghetto she became a national symbol in Israel. This paper examines the tension between Tzivia Lubetkin - the private persona and the public figure. This paper is based on four testimonies given by Lubetkin; two of which remained unknown for a long time. The first one was given in early June 1946, at Kibbutz Beit Oren, soon after her arrival in then Palestine. This account was revealed only after her death. The second, a well known account, was given a few days later at the United Kibbutz Movement conference in Kibbutz Yagur. The third account, also unknown, was given at a meeting of the Working Women Movement's assembly on June 1946, where Lubetkin gave an account of the history of the women fighters in the Warsaw ghetto and elsewhere. The fourth account, her "formal" and most famous testimony was given during the Eichmann trial, on May 1961. Through an examination of these testimonies, this paper discusses how Lubetkin negotiated her public and private selves. These testimonies reveal that whilst she displayed a strict adherence to the sharp ideological division between the public and private sphere, she was also able to share experiences that conveyed her private deliberations and thoughts. This paper argues that the context in which the testimony is given plays an important role in determining what is said – both on a private and public level.