

Lernen aus der Geschichte e.V.

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<http://www.lernen-aus-der-geschichte.de> veröffentlicht.

Das mehrsprachige Webportal publiziert fortlaufend Informationen zur historisch-politischen Bildung in Schulen, Gedenkstätten und anderen Einrichtungen zur Geschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts. Schwerpunkte bilden der Nationalsozialismus, der Zweite Weltkrieg sowie die Folgegeschichte in den Ländern Europas bis zu den politischen Umbrüchen 1989.

Dabei nimmt es Bildungsangebote in den Fokus, die einen Gegenwartsbezug der Geschichte herausstellen und bietet einen Erfahrungsaustausch über historisch-politische Bildung in Europa an.

Lesson 2

Teacher's material:

September 1, 1939: German invasion of Poland; the Second World War begins

November 1939: The German city commissioner Leister appoints Chaim Rumkowski as the "Senior Jew" in Lodz. Rumkowski was ordered by the Germans to establish a *Judenrat* [Jewish Council]. The Jewish Council was organized by the Germans in all ghettos. The members of the Jewish Council attempted to protect their communities from the harsh levies and injunctions and to "normalize" the horrific conditions as much as possible. The Senior Jew was the direct contact person for the German ghetto administration and had to guarantee that German orders would be implemented. This role was controversial, especially in the case of Rumkowski: it appeared to many ghetto inhabitants that the "Senior Jew" collaborated with the German authorities, as, for example, when he was ordered to assemble 5,000 people for deportation.

December 11, 1939: All Jews are ordered to wear a yellow Star of David on their clothing "on the right side in front and back."

February 8, 1940: All Jews in Lodz are ordered to move with only a few days notice to a distinctly poorer district of the city, where there are no sewers and few homes with running water.

April 3, 1940: The ghetto is sealed, and the German ghetto administration confiscates all Jewish

property. Only thirty *pfennige* per person per day are allotted for the subsistence of the ghetto inhabitants (for prison inmates the subsistence level was then set at forty to fifty *pfennige* per person per day). From this date on, only one thought dominates the minds of the ghetto inhabitants: hunger.

October 18 to November 3, 1941: Arrival of twenty transports in the Lodz ghetto with 20,000 Jews from Berlin, Frankfurt, Vienna, Prague, Hamburg, Cologne, Düsseldorf, and Luxembourg.

The Lodz Ghetto

Miriam Harel was a fourteen-year-old girl in the Lodz ghetto when she wrote this song in Yiddish. She lives in Israel today. (Translation by Sybil Milton and Ananta K. Hans)

"Vinter 1942 — Geto Lodz" [Winter 1942 — Lodz Ghetto]

Father and mother are in the cemetery
The brother was deported
The sister, ill, is crippled
I am weak from hunger

At home, there isn't even a spoonful of food
No bread, no carrots can be seen
I have already forgotten how to chew
The table is empty

It is cold, my fingers frozen
I only have slippers on my feet
Nights I weep from starvation
Life is ghastly and miserable

Heaven has no mercy
Satan stands there and laughs
At the orphans and widows
Imprisoned in the Lodz Ghetto

I move like the aged
Eyes wet and red
The gloomy sky is cold
And tomorrow death will come.

Assignments:

- 1 What is learned about the living conditions in the ghetto?
- 2 Explain the fourth verse of this song.
- 3 Describe the instrumental accompaniment. [see Audio/Video]

Ghetto Order Number 355

Re: Resettlement from the Litzmannstadt Ghetto

I hereby command all persons who have been selected for resettlement to report promptly to the

assembly center.

Those who do not report voluntarily will be brought there by force. Even if they are not in their own homes, they will be found wherever they are.

On this occasion, I wish to refer to my order no. 347 of December 20, 1941, and warn the ghetto population for the last time that no one is allowed to permit any person not registered at their address into their homes to stay overnight.

Should any person listed for resettlement stay in the homes of other families, not only the persons designated for evacuation, but also the families who gave them shelter, as well as the watchmen of the houses concerned, will be resettled by force.

THIS IS MY LAST WARNING!

Litzmannstadt Ghetto

January 14, 1942

Ch. Rumkowski

Classroom assignment or homework:

1. Analyze this order from the following criteria:
 - a. Who issued this order and who is responsible for it?
 - b. At whom is this order directed?
 - c. What are the contents of the order?

- 1 What is the meaning of "resettlement" and "evacuation"?
- 2 Why is Rumkowski demanding "resettlement"? Attempt to evaluate his behavior.