

Anonymous Girl Lodz Ghetto, Lodz Poland

Background Information:

At the time this diary was written, the girl who wrote it was living in the Lodz Ghetto. Lodz was in a region of Poland that was fully occupied and incorporated into the German "Reich". It was cut off from the communities nearby and there was little trade or contact with the outside world, and little opportunity to smuggle in food or for a black market to develop. The diarist's family included her mother, who worked as a machine operator in the ghetto, her father, who was a painter in ghetto construction, a sister aged 17 and a 16-year-old brother. The age of the diarist is unknown, but she was most likely the youngest as she was not sent out on work detail. The family spoke Polish, as evidenced by the language of the diary, and it is presumed she was from Poland. The first entry of the diary was undated and began mid-sentence indicating that the pages recovered might not have been the diary in its entirety.

Major Events in Anonymous Girl's Life:

- September 1, 1939- Invasion of Poland by Germany
- Summer 1940 - Deportations of Jews to the Lodz Ghetto
- Dec. 7, 1941- Chelmno Death Camp begins operations 35 miles from Lodz
- January to May, 1942- 54,900 residents of Lodz Ghetto were gassed to death at Chelmno
- February 27 - March 18, 1942 - Daily diary entries by Anonymous Girl

It is not clear how long the diarist had been living in Lodz, but the conditions were very arduous. In many of the entries, she wrote extensively about her daily struggles related to food: searching for food, being in queues for food rations, measuring and weighing food, tracking her personal consumption of food and the condition of food.

February 27, 1942 (NOTE: 1 kg. = 2.2 lb)

Today's kitchen ration (that included sugar): 1.5kg pickled beets, .5 kg sauerkraut, 10 dg vegetable salad, 60 dg rye flour, 20 dg egg noodles, 50 dg sugar, 15 dg margarine, 10 dg coffee. How can you survive on this for two weeks? We cook once a day, only in the evening, but it's not enough because the beets are frozen, and when they thaw what's left is only water.

March 5, 1942

My ration booklet number is 21, so I always get it first. Today they were distributing food for the highest numbers. I have nothing for dinner. All day long I was looking for something. In the evening, at last, I bought a kilogram of rye flour for twenty reichmarks. You need thousands, millions, to buy anything. Life is impossible.

March 10, 1942

Miraculously, I got the rations: 1.25 kg zacierki[noodles], 60 g margarine instead of 50 dg of oil, 1 kg of chocolate-colored honey. I lit the fire and cooked 20 dg of zacierki on the stove. Mom came back a little earlier and brought some beets. We are lucky.

Everyone is home, except my father. He came back at seven in the evening. We could hardly wait for him. He showed up with two of his co-workers. They put two rutabagas on the table and divided each of them into three. It worked out at seventy decagrams each. When they left, my father took out [a few] pieces of rutabaga from his pocket. Two rutabagas had been swiped from the kitchen, but some of the other scraps were given to my father by the women working there. He knew that there was nothing to eat at home, so he didn't eat them on the spot, although he was very hungry. The soup had been thrown out by one of the apprentices. I can't write anymore, because my eyes are filled with tears.

Starvation both within her family and faced by others in the Ghetto were topics revisited by Anonymous Girl in a number of entries.

February 27, 1942

Starvation is terrifying. People die like poisoned flies. Today I got one kilogram [4 ounces] of parsley. My father, brother and I ate it raw. O fate! O irony! Will it ever end? I'm sick of life. We live worse than animals. Human life is so miserable but one still fights for it.

March 10, 1942

The hunger is getting worse.

March 11, 1942

There is only vinegar and ice in the beets. There is no food, we are going to starve to death. All my teeth ache and I am very hungry. My left leg is frostbitten. I ate almost all the honey. What have I done? I'm so selfish.

Anonymous Girl was a keen observer of the other people in her environment. She expressed her thoughts on the starving residents, the other children, her own family and a family close to her whose existence was very fragile.

First entry (undated)

I'm very upset about the whole situation, because how can you be indifferent to so much suffering? How can you watch indifferently when they deport people you know, the sick, the elderly, and the children?

February 28, 1942

At twelve-thirty a little girl brought a note that said, "Dear Esterka and Minia, please come as soon as possible, because we're being deported and I would like to say good-bye to you." It was written by my sister's friend. I'm completely broken. How much she has suffered, how much she has wrestled with difficulties....Nine months ago she lost a brother, a first-grader in the lyceum. He was a genius. He died from tuberculosis of the pharynx. Her older sister lives in the Soviet Union. She was left alone with her deaf-and-dumb parents....It's like a slow death. A week ago her mother died, so she was left with her sick father who hadn't a shirt on his back.

March 11, 1942

Today I had a fight with my father. I swore at him, even cursed him...yesterday I weighed twenty decagrams of zacierki and then sneaked a spoonful. When my father came back, he

immediately noticed that some zacierki were missing. He started yelling at me and he was right. What have I done? I regret it so much, but it can't be undone. My father is never going to forgive me. How will I ever look him in the eyes? He stood by the window and cried like a baby. Not even a stranger has ever insulted him before.

None of the Lodz Ghetto inhabitants really knew where the deportees were being sent. There was hope of work camps, but nothing was known with certainty.

March 4, 1942

There is no end to the deportations; starvation grows and grows.....The whole ghetto is confused. There are rumors. Some people say everybody is going to be deported, others maintain that only people on welfare will be and that an *Arbeit Lager* [Arbeitslager or work camp] will be built there. It's really crazy.

March 18, 1942

.....they are deporting people all the time. Right now they are deporting families. Sixty husbands or children [end of text]

Anonymous Girl's Diary ended abruptly, midsentence. Her fate is unknown but she is presumed to have died with her family and the other occupants of the Lodz Ghetto. The diary itself was found in an abandoned apartment in July 1945.