

21 June 1941

To the District President

Litzmannstadt

The efforts of the Health Department in the ghetto during the period from May 1940 to the present day have prevented a typhus—respectively abdominal typhus—epidemic from breaking out. The relevant figures of isolated cases from the preceding year are at a low level.

The dysentery epidemic, of which there were 235 cases already on 20 June 1940 and which reached 280 by July 1 1940, is non-existent today. The daily reports sent by the hospitals to the Municipal Health Office show that the ghetto is *free of epidemics* at present.

This assessment of the situation, which can be explained by the sanitary measures taken, can naturally change at a single stroke should an influx of some 8,000 people eventuate.

The typhus, abdominal typhus and dysentery diseases most certainly occurring now in the smaller towns represent a grave sanitary danger given that a certain part of the people living there are infested with lice. Should an influx of these people to the ghetto occur, then an outbreak of a typhus, dysentery and abdominal typhus epidemic is inevitable and dangerous, whereby it has to be considered that living conditions in the ghetto are cramped. Nevertheless, I had to recently take into the ghetto a number of persons due to having to cede some streets.

I would like to stress that the ghetto does not have any canalisation and this further heightens the risk of epidemics.

No more than 13% of the factories and workshops are located in former industrial buildings, whereas the overwhelming remaining number of workshops are set up in private residential buildings.

As a result of the large orders I have moved a large number of people from private flats so as to set up the workshops there, meaning that living conditions have become even more cramped. Many of these workshops are even in buildings where the adjacent flats are crammed full of private residents.

Besides the workers in the factories and workshops, many of the workers in the flats are employed as *homeworkers*.

Despite the cramped living conditions I am forced to now resettle more people within the ghetto in order to increase the size of even more workshops and set up new factories so as to ensure that not only the present but also newly placed orders can continue to be filled to perfect satisfaction.

For example, the leather and saddler division needs to be enlarged considerably because we have orders for engineer combat packs, backpacks, haversacks, clothes bags for the artillery, clothes bags for the Navy, etc. to the effect of 250,000 articles.

Given this enormous amount of work it would be impossible to check and determine if the workers are not from flats in which persons with contagious diseases live. This places the Wehrmacht orders at great risk, because some of the articles cannot be disinfected, for example military boots, engineer combat packs, haversacks, etc. In addition, the upholstery, furs etc. to be delivered.

The implementation of quarantine measures for such a large mass of persons who are to be potentially sent to the ghetto is impossible to carry out, because we definitely lack the necessary premises and technical means.

To take in such a mass of persons without quarantine and without housing would undoubtedly result in an outbreak of epidemic diseases, which would disturb the entire working apparatus in the ghetto and bring it to a halt.

In addition, the planned work programme, to put at least 20,000 persons in work, would be ruined.

I thus venture to politely request that you refrain from sending any further persons to the ghetto.

Respectfully,

Ch. Rumkowski
Elder of the Jews
in Litzmannstadt

Translated by Paul Bowman