



## The Lodz Ghetto Photographs of Henryk Ross

### A COLLECTION OF HOLOCAUST PHOTOGRAPHS

Henryk Ross (born Poland, 1910; died Israel, 1991) *Evacuation of the sick" (and aged, by horse-drawn cart), 1942* Image printed from original 35mm negative Art Gallery of Ontario, Gift from Archive of Modern Conflict, 2007 © 2015 Art Gallery of Ontario

## Lesson Plan 2: Round-ups and Deportations to Killing Centres

Under the leadership of Mordechai Chaim Rumkowski, chairman of the Jewish Council of the Lodz Ghetto, the ghetto was turned into a working ghetto. Rumkowski believed that if the ghetto provided goods for the Nazi war effort, its residents would be safe and deportations of Jews to killing centres could be averted. Nevertheless, Jews from

the Lodz Ghetto were deported from Lodz via vans and cattle cars. to death camps in Chelmno nad Nerem and Auschwitz-Birkenau.

This lesson will explore Henryk Ross's photographs of the round-ups and deportations of the Jews in the Lodz ghetto. Ross risked his life in order to take some of these images, hiding from the German police to document the sick, elderly, families and children being gathered together and sent away to be murdered. How do Ross's photographs of the round-ups and deportations create a visual record of the process of genocide?

## LEARNING STRATEGIES

**RELATED IMAGES** Visit this link to see the photographs for this lesson: [www.ago.net/ross-lesson-2](http://www.ago.net/ross-lesson-2)

## Discussion

Review the information on Jewish Councils (Judenräte) from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's website with students. Ask students what questions they have about the role of the Judenrat in the Lodz Ghetto.

Introduce Lawrence L. Langer's concept of "choiceless

choice." Ask students to work in pairs to discuss and unpack how the concept of choiceless choice relates to the Lodz Ghetto's Jewish Council (Judenrat) and the role its chairman, Mordechai Chaim Rumkowski, played in the running of the Lodz Ghetto. Ask partner groups to report back to the class for a larger discussion.

## Save the Last Word for Me

Make enough copies of each photograph so that each student can have one. For example, if you have a class of 30 students, make three copies of each image so you have a total of 30. Display the images on a table. At the start of the class, ask students to come to the table and select one image that interests them.

On a piece of paper or an index card, each student

should write responses to the following questions: What stands out for you in this image? What do you think is happening? Why did you choose this image? Once they have completed this exercise, students with different images should get into groups of three and complete a **Save the Last Word for Me** strategy.

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## Journal Writing

After students complete the **Save the Last Word for Me** exercise, transition to a whole-group discussion or journal-entry session. Some questions that you might want to use for this discussion or as a journal prompt are:

1. What new information have you learned about the deportation of Jews from the Lodz Ghetto to the killing centres?
2. How have these images altered or affirmed your knowledge about and understanding of the deportation of Jewish people from the Lodz Ghetto to killing centres?
3. What evidence do you see of the humanity and struggle for survival of the residents of Lodz?
4. How did the process of genocide attempt to strip the Jewish people of Lodz of their humanity? What evidence do you see?
5. What evidence do you see of the leadership of Mordechai Chaim Rumkowski in the photographs of the roundups and deportation to killing centres?
6. What are the moral and ethical implications of the “choiceless choices” the Jewish Council and Rumkowski faced in carrying out the edicts of the Nazis?

## ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

Information on the role of Jewish Councils in ghettos.  
<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005265>

A short piece on the concept of “choiceless choices” by Lawrence L. Langer.  
[http://www.faculty.umb.edu/lawrence\\_blum/courses/290h\\_09/readings/langer.pdf](http://www.faculty.umb.edu/lawrence_blum/courses/290h_09/readings/langer.pdf)

Transcript for “Give Me Your Children”: Voices from the Lodz Ghetto.  
<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007282>

The story of Felix Opatowski in “Gatehouse to Hell” via the Azrieli Foundation.  
<https://vimeo.com/47936118>

This video tells the story of how four German modernist cultural figures managed to survive and create art under the oppressive hand of the Third Reich, living in an area deemed as “the grey zone”: a morally ambiguous environment in which it was necessary to make very difficult decisions.  
<https://www.facinghistory.org/videos/navigating-grey-zone-jonathan-petropoulos>