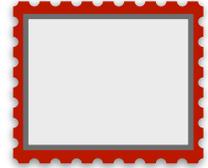

Sending for Help | Letter 7



This letter was posted seven years after the Nazis come to power
... two years after Kristallnacht
... five months after the outbreak of the war.

My dear relatives! Dear Fanny!

I want to tell you that we are healthy and live here in Chrzanow. We were expelled from Berlin in August 1939 and landed here in Chrzanow. We are very sad that we couldn't come to you from Berlin, my dears, but unfortunately it didn't go the way we wanted. Materially, things are very bad for us here. We have lost all our belongings and there is no place for us here as we have no means of living. My husband has been unemployed since he came here and hasn't earned a cent yet.



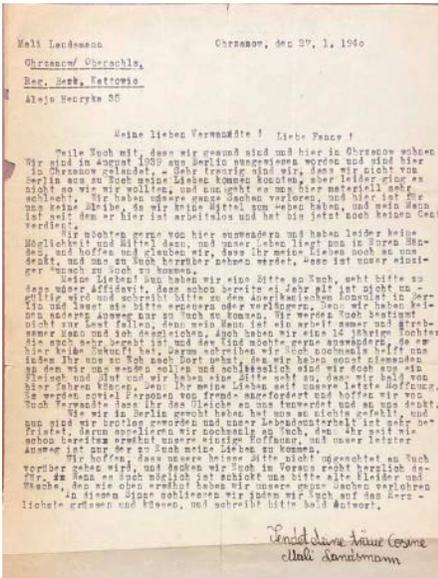
We would like to emigrate from here, but unfortunately we have no way or means to do so, and our lives are now in your hands. We hope and believe that you, my dears, are still thinking of us and will take us over to your house. That's our only inconvenience to come to you.

My dear! Now we have a request for you, please see that our affidavit, which is already a year old, is not invalid and please write to the American Consulate in Berlin. Please have them renewed or extended. Because we have no other way out but to come to you. We will certainly not be a burden to you, because my husband is a hardworking and ambitious man and so am I. We also have a 14-year-old daughter who is also very talented and the child would like to emigrate there because she has no future here. That's why we're writing to you again, help us who we should turn to and after all, we're made of flesh and blood. We have a request see that we can drive from here soon. Because you my dears are our last hope. So many people are requested by strangers and we hope that you relatives will do the same to us and think of us. [...]

We hope that our request will not go unnoticed by you. Thank you very much in advance. If it is possible for you, please send us old clothes and linen, because as mentioned above we have lost all our belongings.

With this in mind, we close with our warmest greetings and kisses, and please write an answer as soon as possible.

Discussing the Letter



Malie's letter to Minnie, dated January 27, 1940

After approximately a year of no contact, Malie writes to her cousin Minnie, informing her that she and the children have been deported to Chrzanow, Poland—a small town east of Krakow and 12 miles from Auschwitz. Malie has been trying to contact her cousins since their deportation in August of the previous year, but to no avail.

Living conditions in Chrzanow worsen every day. Because of this, Malie is as desperate as ever to ensure her family's ability to emigrate. She requests that Minnie undertakes every effort to make sure that the affidavits sent on her family's behalf maintain their validity. She follows this appeal by emphasizing her children's humanity and reminding Minnie that, should they successfully immigrate to America, they would do their best to support themselves. Malie also requests that Minnie send parcels with clothes and linen, as the Nazis forced the Landsmanns to forfeit all their possessions when they were deported.

Key Themes:

Polenaktion, Expulsion from Berlin, Privation, Chrzanow (ghetto), Desperation, Urgency



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Discussion Questions:

1. What can you find about explosion of the Jews from Berlin in 1939?
2. What can we find about Chrzanow, Poland at this time?
3. What does Malie ask that Minnie send and what might this tell us about their conditions at this time?
4. Please pause and think about this question. How would Minnie feel reading the passages of this letter that say “our lives are now in your hands” and call her “you are our only hope?”