

In Front Of The Hungarian Memorial In Ravensbruck



Two or three years ago, the MAZSIHISZ [Hungarian Jewish Congregational Union] organized a memorial tour for me to where we suffered, where my mother and grandmother died. There's a memorial wall for all the nations who died there. We took wreaths there. In the picture, the short, white-haired woman in the foreground is Katoka Gyulai, who was the saviour, organizer, and mentor of the Ravensbruck group. It was a very beautiful ceremony, you can't see it here, but the local young people from there, arranged our trip. There's a museum functioning at the gate of the camp.

They put us in train cars in Komarom and took us to Ravensbruck. My father was taken by another train, we can only guess that he went straight to Dachau, but maybe from Dachau he ended up in Auschwitz. The two trains went parallel. After a long freight train ride, we arrived in the village of Furstenberg on December 24th, where there was a concentration camp, Ravensbruck. They took us in to the camp when we arrived, we had a night of freedom, we slept on the ground. The next morning they took away every last little trinket we had. After a cold shower, we had to remove all our clothes, we got a kind of rag in place of them, and they took us to Barrack 31. We were there for two months. Every day, there were constant appeals for mercy, it was very difficult to bear, it was very cold. It's close to the Baltic Sea. My mother got very sick, either with kidney stones or cancer. A prisoner doctor examined her, talked to her. My 75 year old grandmother was in better condition. They sometimes took me out of the camp to do all kinds of nasty work, sometimes they didn't. When I could, I tried to conserve energy so I'd stay strong, it was frightening.

They were unnecessary jobs. They only took me to a place where I had to shovel sand, earth. Around and around, on top of the other, for no reason. I had a clever excuse. We were put in lines when they gave out the work, and once, when we started to go, I just did a 180 degree spin. They asked me how I got to go back. I said they didn't need me, and I came back. So I didn't have to do

too much of such terrible work, but stayed in the barrack. That was my occupation for the day.

One night, my mother said that they're only collecting young people, taking them, and they hid me under the bed. They went out and never came back. We never saw each other again. I was left there all alone. I was already in a terrible state, then they disappeared and I was worse. They put me in a different block, there I got some kind of skirt I had to throw away because it was so full of lice. In minus ? I don't know ? 10 or 15 degrees, I would wrap myself in a plaid blanket instead of having some clothes on me. Then I wound up in another block. Then they took everybody to ditch digging work, everybody left inside. One time, I fell down on the way to work, and I couldn't get myself up. The ?Aufseherin? (overseer woman) set a dog after me, it grabbed my arm and pulled me after. The prisoners at these times always stepped in to help, lifted me up and carried me to the worksite. There, they stuck me in the corner of a ditch, then took me home, supporting me on either side. But I don't have to say, that when we got back in the evening, at the roll call they discharged me from service. What they told us was that the sick and weak were taken to the so-called ?kinderlager?. We didn't really know then what it was, we just guessed everything. We smelled the stink of burnt flesh. We just couldn't accept these monstrosities, plus I always hoped that I might get to go where my mother and grandmother were. The next morning they collected this group, I was one of them, to take them to the ?kinderlager?. I guess my lust for life was too great, I knew German, I went over to the German SS Head Supervisor woman and I told her that I'm sixteen years old, and I feel I'm capable of working, and to let me go back. She did. Well, I didn't work after that, because by evening I was even worse.

How I ended up in the 10th block, the ?revier? [hospital], I can't say, surely somebody helped me. The fact is, I woke up in the hospital. There was a kind of sham hospital. The mentally ill were there, the wretched who screamed hideously, occasionally they were taken away. And my great luck was, that I met Gracia Kerenyi there. She was a very religious Christian girl, who went from one prison to the next, eventually from Auschwitz to Ravensbruck, because at University she put up anti-German posters. Gracia was a language talent, who knew German and English. In the hospital there, she got a position of trust. She deloused and took temperatures. She was a year older than I was, we came from the same family background, and we became really good friends, and she helped me a lot. I had a fever once, I had banged my leg, they put me in an elimination group again, she came in, and got me out. It was a sham hospital, and they did experimentations. They x-rayed me, and the doctor said I had tuberculosis, so they immediately pumped my lungs full of air. It was pretty painful. The doctor checked me, gave me everything. He did quite a lot of examining and watching us. Once he ordered me into the surgery. Surgery?! There was a small table, and a female soldier brought something red in on a tray, that looked like some kind of meat. They told me later it was a calf gland (thymus gland). But I couldn't tell what it was. They cut my thigh open and sewed it into me. The International Red Cross examined it and said they had performed medical experiments on me. I had a lot of medical certifications about it, but I never understood a word of it. I was there in the hospital, laying on a bed with a gypsy woman, who died there next to me. That was about the middle to the end of April. And all at once, the Germans left. We stayed there for one or two days in complete stasis. The people who could walk broke into the warehouse, and found an incredible amount of Red Cross packages. They dumped the boxes into the main road; food, chocolate, milk powder, sardines, canned meats, and we ate that. I remember that I only ate chocolate, very carefully, so I didn't get sick. Two days later the Russians arrived.