

The Inside Of Antonie Militka's Work Passbook

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Working in the 'Transportleitung' [German for 'transport coordination'] was one young woman, a student, who came over to me: 'You're Tonicka Michalova, remember me, I used to exercise at Maccabi. Where are your parents?' I answered that for the time being I was alone. 'Well, you know what, if they ask you whether you've already found accommodations, tell them that you're going to the girls' home at L410, to No. 24, I know there's room there. After all you know how to work in gardens and fields, so apply for that. Apply for everything right away, voluntarily and on your own.' When my turn came, they wrote us all down. Then we were searched, which was performed by female Gestapo members. That girl I knew kept an eye on me, and also brought me to the 'Mädchenheim' [German for 'girls' home'], where there were 32 girls living. There were three-story bunks built in the room.

I was weeping profusely. One girl came over to me, later she became my best friend, and said to me, 'I don't know why you're crying. I'm here three months, and I haven't cried yet. And yet, when I look out the window, I can almost see Litomerice, where I was born and grew up. I can't go there, but despite that I didn't cry.' At that point I was a bit ashamed. 'You're lucky, once a week we get better food for going to the garden. You'll get some. You're very lucky to have gotten in here, and that you've got extra food rations.'

In the end we became such good friends that we shared everything. We got along very well. We helped each other, but unfortunately things were constantly changing. They were selecting for the transports, and girls were leaving with their parents. When I arrived there, they were already opening the barracks. Before that, children were separate, men separate, women separate. When I arrived we were able to get together, before that they couldn't even see each other. Not long after, mass transports began.

There were certain people in Terezin that died of hunger. But young people that worked had a chance of surviving. In the morning we'd go to work; two girls would stay in the room, as they were

on duty. At lunchtime they'd go for food, which they'd then distribute in the evening. In one bucket they'd bring soup, in another potatoes, or whatever there was. Half of it would be rotten. The food there was horrible. They'd for example cook turnips for us. The turnips were woody, you had the feeling it would stick you in the throat, all wood. They used to feed it to cows, and it was grown there. The Gestapo also had farms in Terezin. When they were writing people down for a transport, and the Gestapo was deciding on who'd be put on it, the head gardener would sit there too, and save people who worked out in the fields, because he didn't want to change workers that already had experience.