

From the Testimony of Olga Albogen about a Death March from Neustadt to Bergen-Belsen

A: So when the Russian front was advancing we started to march by foot in the snow - it was so cold. And we were marching and rushing - they were rushing us. It must have been very far from Bergen-Belsen because it took a lot of days.....yes, that march in the snow, we saw bodies along the side, on the snow, freshly killed people. The blood was running into the snow - it was horrible. Whomever didn't want to march fast enough, or couldn't, they shot them, right away shot them.

Q: They were cruel, the soldiers?

A: Very cruel. They were shot one after the other and they threw them on the side for the rest of them to see. In the white snow, the fresh red blood and we could tell when we were marching that these are our people, with the shaven heads. We had a little a kerchief to put on our heads. And we were very worried and we tried with every ounce of our strength to march. So finally they got us into a train, but in Hannover it was bombed by the Allies and a lot of people died there, and it took a few days until we could move on from there. Without food, without anything. And then they got us open wagons, you know, cattle cars, whatever they were, but open-topped. Just half. So it was crowded and going for days, it seemed like forever. The snow was falling on us. We had hardly any clothes on. Daytime the sun came out and the snow was melting on us, into our clothes, body. And as evening came, the night came, it was freezing again and froze on us. So it was a miracle that...alright, I did get TB, but that was the best of it. When we were marching, sometimes for the night they took us into a farm, somewhere, into the place where the animals were sleeping - cows, pigs, whatever - and it was nice and warm and we were so happy to sleep on the straw with pigs and the animals and we took away the food from them. Whatever they got food we took away from them.

Q: Did it happen to you that through these marches people on the way tried to help you or to....?

A: No, no way, no way. They didn't come near us.

Q: You did not see anyway people?

A: Even if we saw them - from the curtains they were peeking out and watching and looking, but nobody came near us, no. And then they said to them, to the village people, that we are criminals, you know? They didn't know that we were there for no reason at all, just because we were Jews. They are criminals, so why should they give anything for criminals. So where was I? The open wagons where the snow froze on us and every morning we threw out the dead, the bodies. Everyday somebody, a few of them died from every car. And then they stopped somewhere for the night. There were camps, concentration camps nearby. Once, in Gross Rosen, we stopped for a night. I think it was a men's camp only, but they let us stay there for the night and they gave us some coffee to drink, coffee, whatever that was. And then there was another place - what was the name? I can't even remember. I made some notes for myself, about other camps. Gross Rosen, Mauthausen also we stopped for a night, and we were just marching and going until...it took long, weeks.

Q: Did you eat something?

A: When we slept in barns and the animals we took that, but there was no food, no drink, nothing at all. And then they said we're nearing Bergen-Belsen and we were happy that finally we're going to have someplace to sit down at least.

Yad Vashem Archives O.3-10335