

Cela Miller
Yom Hashoah
April 1996

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My sister Cela + I

By our will and the grace of God ^{Blama}~~we~~ and I worked and survived in the work camps for 3 years. We worked on machines that made ammunition. One day my machine wasn't working properly. I did not know what to do. Not filling the quota would make one subject to unknown punishment, but on the other hand so would a complaint to the supervisor about the German machinery. Finally, I decided to complain to the supervisor. Sure enough I received a whipping, and then still no change in the machinery. I could not continue with a lack of production. I decided to bribe a guard with some money that I had left. I told the guard my story and gave him some cash. He gave no response. A few days later I was transferred to a different machine. This was typical of the chances one had to take ^{in order} ~~if one was~~ going to survive.

start → Eventually the Russians started to close in from the

east. The Germans responded by bringing us west to the dreaded Bergen-Belsen. Bergen-Belsen was not a work camp. It was a death camp. Not that there were crematoria there - there weren't. It was just a place to go ^a to die. Upon arrival there we saw the people with that skeletal look, the ^{out} gaunt look of starvation and death.

After we got through the entrance there, a woman of the camp saw us coming in. She saw that we were in relatively good condition compared to the inmates there. Now it was January in Germany. The ice on the ground didn't melt until May. This woman had a heavy coat. She ^{offer} offered it to us in exchange for our ration of a slice of bread. Being wary- it seemed like such a ridiculous exchange - too good to be true, I turned it down.

Regardless, after ^{pro} processing at Bergen-Belsen, they took all of our remaining possessions. They did give us a real shower and the close haircut that you have seen in the documentaries. We were issued the striped prison

dress. After the shower, they separated those that appeared healthy compared to those that were sick or weak. I do not have to tell you what happened to those that did not pass the test.

My sister + I

~~We~~ We were sent to the barracks which consisted of a cabin with straw on the floor. There was no running water or toilet. Again, only room enough for a body to lie down. Our day consisted of arising before dawn for roll call formation, a breakfast of a piece of bread and lukewarm coffee, moving heavy debris such as tree trunks back and forth all day with no lunch, and then a supper of warm water with a cabbage leaf. The next day we would do it again and again while more and more people dropped and died. There was not much reason to try, ~~except that I felt responsible for my little sister.~~ At the very same time Anne Frank, who was in Bergen-Belsen as well, met her fate. ~~Perhaps if she had had a sister with her she might have survived.~~

Finally the Germans moved us to Burgau, a camp ^{my sister & me} where we helped to build airplanes. Then they moved us again and again until we came to a camp called Kaufering. This was a camp where one's only goal was to have an existence. ^I ~~Bluma~~ had been very sick with Typhus. ^{My sister Celia} ~~I~~ had been able to help ^{me} ~~her~~ some with ~~my~~ food rations. Now ^{she} ~~I~~ had typhoid fever and was gravely ill. ^J Bluma took a terrible chance and sneaked into the kitchen and brought ^{her} ~~me~~ some food. By then the risk really didn't matter. We didn't care. ^{we were} ~~I~~ was barely holding on. Finally, we heard guns. They were coming closer and closer. There was fire in the woods. Our people were just dropping like flies. Then there was no food, not even for the Germans. We were lying there sick, dying. Then we saw an American soldier in the doorway. ^{Lead} This is the man ^{I spoke about earlier} ~~me~~ of whom Bluma spoke. ^{a few girls. I} ~~He called her out and spoke to her.~~ ^{My sister & I} ~~We wish today that we knew his name.~~

-We knew we were free, but it didn't matter. We

weren't even hungry any more. Even those who weren't sick had no change of expression. *We were very thin.* ~~We both weighed about 65 pounds.~~

We were taken to a hospital and began to be nursed back to health. Only then did we cry. Only then did the feelings come. Only then did we find out that we were the only ones in the family that had survived and that our dear father and cherished brother had joined the partisans and were killed just a few months before the war ended.

After our recovery we were placed in a displaced persons camp which was funded by the Red Cross and HIAS. While there , we met our husbands to be ,David and Felix, and we began our trip on a road to normal lives. ~~All along the way we were helped by Jewish agencies. Even our trip to America was made possible by our people, and of course our settlement in Columbia was sponsored by the Hebrew Benevolent Society.~~