

THE HOLOCAUST: FROM THOSE WHO LIVED IT

MOTHER AND I WERE HUDDLED IN OUR ROOM AS WE COULD HEAR THE COMMOTION IN THE HALLWAYS AND IN THE STREET BELOW. FATHER, FRANTIC, QUICKLY GATHERED OUR BELONGINGS FROM THE NEARLY BARREN ROOM AND BEGAN TO STUFF THE TWO SUITCASES WE HAD. WE DIDN'T HAVE MANY THINGS ANYMORE AS WE HAD TO LEAVE MOST OF IT AT OUR HOME IN MUNICH WHEN WE WERE SENT HERE BY THE SOLDIERS. FATHER

HANDED MOTHER THE FEW VALUABLES WE HAD, A FEW OLD PHOTOS AND BITS OF JEWELRY, AND TOLD HER TO HIDE THEM IN HER CLOTHING. SHE DID.



THERE WAS A LOUD BANG AT OUR DOOR JUST BEFORE A SOLDIER CHARGED INTO OUR ROOM AND BEGAN DEMANDING WE LEAVE THE APARTMENT BUILDING IMMEDIATELY. I WAS TERRIFIED AND GRASPED A HOLD OF MOTHER AS TIGHT AS I COULD. FATHER GRABBED THE SUITCASES AND AS WE LEFT OUR TINY APARTMENT WE WERE HERDED INTO THE HALLWAY WITH THE OTHERS FROM OUR FLOOR. IT WAS

CHAOS. SOLDIERS WERE YELLING FOR US TO HURRY AND GO TO THE STREET. THEIR GERMAN SHEPPARD'S WERE ANGRILY BARKING AT US AND THE SMELL OF SMOKE WAS FILLING THE HALLWAY. AN OLD MAN HAD FALLEN IN THE HALLWAY AND PEOPLE WERE STEPPING ON AND OVER HIM TO GET PAST. NO ONE HELPED HIM. THE GERMAN SHEPPARD'S BARKED LOUDLY AND ANGRILY AT US AS THOUGH WE WERE CRIMINALS.

THERE WERE MANY LARGE CARRIER TRUCKS LINED ALONG THE STREET AT THE OPENING TO THE COURTYARD OF OUR APARTMENT BUILDING. IT REMINDED ME OF WHEN WE WERE BROUGHT HERE FROM OUR HOME IN MUNICH EARLY IN THE YEAR. THE SOLDIER'S YELLED FOR US TO GET IN THE BACK OF THE TRUCK AND FATHER SEEMED ANXIOUS FOR US TO GET OUT OF THE STREET. THE STREET WAS FILLED WITH HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE AND SOLDIERS. I COULD HEAR THE OCCASIONAL GUNSHOT IN THE DISTANCE. MY MOTHER LIFTED ME ONTO THE BED OF THE TRUCK AS ANOTHER MAN HELPED PULL ME UP. MY MOTHER CAME UP NEXT, BUT AS FATHER TRIED TO PASS HER THE SUITCASES A SOLDIER GRABBED THEM FROM HIM AND THREW THEM BACK INTO THE STREET. HE HIT FATHER IN THE HEAD WITH HIS GUN AND YELLED FOR HIM TO "MOVE". FATHER PUT HIS HEAD DOWN AND CLIMBED INTO THE BACK OF THE TRUCK WITH THE REST OF US.

THE TRUCK ARRIVED AT A TRAIN STATION JUST OUTSIDE OF WARSAW AFTER A THIRTY OF FORTY MINUTE TRIP THROUGH THE CITY. THERE WERE CATTLE CARS AS FAR AS I COULD SEE DOWN THE TRAIN LINES NEXT TO THE STATION. WE WERE ORDERED OFF OF THE TRUCK AND BEGAN TO HEAD TO THE TRAINS WITH THE REST OF THE GROUP. THERE WERE SO MANY PEOPLE THAT I COULDN'T SEE MORE THAN A FEW FEET IN FRONT OF ME AND HUNG ONTO MY MOTHER'S WAIST SO I WOULD NOT LOSE HER IN THE CROWD. I COULD



HEAR SCREAMS, CRYING, AND SOLDIERS YELLING FOR US TO "MOVE". FATHER STOOD BEHIND MOTHER AND ME AND KEPT HIS HANDS ON MY SHOULDERS AS WE SHIFTED WITH THE CROWD. IT WAS REASSURING.

EVENTUALLY WE REACHED A POINT WHERE WE WERE FORCED INTO A LINE WITH OTHERS AND THE SOLDIERS SEEMED TO BE ORDERING PEOPLE INTO DIFFERENT TRAINS. I ASKED MOTHER IF THEY WERE REALLY GOING TO MAKE US GO ON THE

TRAIN AND SHE SAID SHE WASN'T SURE. AN OLDER WOMAN BESIDE ME, WHO HAD A TATTERED BLACK OVERCOAT, LEANED OVER AND TOLD ME THEY WOULDN'T MAKE US GO ON THE TRAINS, BECAUSE THEY WERE FOR ANIMALS, NOT FOR PEOPLE.

AS WE APPROACHED THE FRONT OF THE LINE I COULD SEE THE SOLDIERS WERE ORDERING THE MEN AND WOMEN ONTO DIFFERENT TRAINS. THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN WERE BEING ORDERED TO THE TRAIN CARS ON THE LEFT WHILE THE MEN WERE BEING ORDERED TO THE TRAIN ON THE RIGHT. FATHER LEANED OVER AND HUGGED ME AND SAID HE'D SEE US SOON WHEN THE TRAINS REACHED THE NEXT STATION. HE KISSED MOTHER. THE SOLDIER AT THE FRONT OF THE LINE GRABBED FATHER AND SHOVED HIM TO THE RIGHT AND YELLED FOR MOTHER AND ME TO GET ONTO THE TRAIN CAR. MOTHER HELD MY HAND AS WE HEADED UP THE RAMP. IT WAS SLIPPERY FROM THE RAIN. I COULD HEAR FATHER YELLING THAT HE'D SEE US SOON, BUT I COULD NOT SEE HIM. HE WAS GONE INTO THE TRAIN CAR. WE CRAMMED INTO THE TRAIN CAR WITH THE REST OF THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN AS MOTHER HELD ME CLOSE AND I HELD AS TIGHT AS I COULD. THERE WAS VERY LITTLE ROOM IN THE TRAIN CAR AFTER THE SOLDIER'S CLOSED THE DOOR. WE COULDN'T EVEN SIT.



IT WAS TWO DAYS BEFORE WE STOPPED AND WERE LET OFF OF THE TRAIN CAR. SEVERAL OF THE PEOPLE IN OUR TRAIN CAR HAD FALLEN AND DIED DURING THE TRIP. WE NEVER STOPPED FOR FOOD OR WATER AND THE HEAT INSIDE THE TRAIN CAR WAS UNBEARABLE AT TIMES WITH SO MANY PEOPLE. MOTHER SAID THE SOLDIER'S MUST HAVE MADE A MISTAKE AND FORGOT TO STOP AT SOME OF THE STATIONS. BY THE TIME WE WERE LET OFF OF THE TRAIN THE SMELL INSIDE THE TRAIN WAS HORRIBLE. ALL OF US IN THE TRAIN CAR HAD BEEN USING A BUCKET TO GO TO THE BATHROOM AS THERE WAS NOWHERE ELSE.

IT WAS COLD AND GREY AT THE NEW TRAIN STATION. I COULD ONLY SEE WOMEN AND CHILDREN. THE MEN'S TRAIN HADN'T ARRIVED YET. THE SOLDIER'S ORDERED US TO MARCH FORWARD. THE GROUND WAS MUDDY. I STRUGGLED, LIKE MANY OTHERS, TO KEEP MOVING AS MY LEGS SEEMED HEAVY AFTER THE LONG TRIP ON THE TRAIN. WE WERE ALL SO THIRSTY AND HUNGRY. MOTHER SAID THEY'D FEED US SOON. WE WERE LED THROUGH A LARGE BARB-WIRE GATE AND INSIDE WERE LARGE WOODEN BUILDINGS BEING BUILT BY OTHERS.



I NEVER SAW MY FATHER AGAIN.

VOCABULARY

DIRECTIONS: USING A DICTIONARY, FIND THE DEFINITIONS FOR THE WORDS BELOW THAT WERE IN THE STORY. USE THE BLANK SPACES TO ADD ANY OTHER WORDS YOU HAD DIFFICULTY WITH.

- COMMOTION
- FRANTIC
- GRASPED
- CHAOS
- ANXIOUS
- REASSURING
- TATTERED
- _____
- _____
- _____

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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

DIRECTIONS: COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS AFTER COMPLETING THE READING FOR "FROM THOSE WHO LIVED IT".

1. WHAT DID "FATHER" ASK "MOTHER" TO HIDE?
 - A. PASSPORTS AND PHOTOS
 - B. THEIR CHILD
 - C. MONEY AND TRAIN TICKETS
 - D. PHOTOS AND JEWELRY

2. WHERE DID THE SPEAKER LIVE BEFORE BEING AT THE "TINY APARTMENT"?
 - A. BERLIN
 - B. LONDON
 - C. MUNICH
 - D. WARSAW

3. WHERE DID THE CARRIER TRUCK TAKE HER AND HER PARENTS?
 - A. TRAIN STATION OUTSIDE OF WARSAW
 - B. TRAIN STATION OUTSIDE OF BERLIN
 - C. BUS TERMINAL NEAR MUNICH
 - D. BUS TERMINAL NEAR LONDON

4. WHICH WORDS COULD YOU USE TO BEST DESCRIBE HOW THE SPEAKER FELT WHEN THE SOLDIER "CHARGED IN" TO HER APARTMENT AND HER FAMILY WAS LED OUT OF THE BUILDING? EXPLAIN YOUR REASONING.

5. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING WOULD MAKE FOR THE BEST TITLE OF THE STORY?
 - A. "THE FURNACE"
 - B. "FROM THE GHETTOES TO THE CAMPS"
 - C. "FATHER'S FAILURE"
 - D. "BERLIN TO MUNICH"

6. DESCRIBE HOW THE GERMAN SHEPPARD'S MADE THE SPEAKER FEEL IN THE APARTMENT BUILDING.
7. WHY DOES THE ELDERLY LADY IN THE "BLACK OVERCOAT" SUGGEST TO THE SPEAKER THAT THE TRAIN IS NOT FOR THEM?
8. WHAT WAS LIKELY THE FINAL DESTINATION OF THE TRAIN?
- A. A HOLOCAUST GHETTO
 - B. BERLIN
 - C. THE SOVIET UNION
 - D. A CONCENTRATION CAMP
9. HOW MIGHT THE SPEAKER HAVE DESCRIBED THE SOLDIERS IN THE STORY? USE DESCRIPTIVE WORDS IN YOUR RESPONSE AND EXPLAIN WHY YOU THINK EACH IS A GOOD CHOICE USING REFERENCES TO THE STORY.
10. LIST AT LEAST TWO THINGS THE SPEAKER "COMPLAINED" ABOUT REGARDING THE TRIP IN THE TRAIN CAR.

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ANALYSIS QUESTIONS

DIRECTIONS: COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS AFTER COMPLETING THE READING FOR “FROM THOSE WHO LIVED IT”.

1. WHY DO YOU THINK “FATHER” WOULD WANT “MOTHER” TO HIDE THE VALUABLES?
2. WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT IN TERMS OF HOW THE SPEAKER AND HER FAMILY WERE VIEWED BY THE SOLDIERS?

I ASKED MOTHER IF THEY WERE REALLY GOING TO MAKE US GO ON THE TRAIN AND SHE SAID SHE WASN'T SURE. AN OLDER WOMAN BESIDE ME, WHO HAD A TATTERED BLACK OVERCOAT, LEANED OVER AND TOLD ME THEY WOULDN'T MAKE US GO ON THE TRAINS, BECAUSE THEY WERE FOR ANIMALS, NOT FOR PEOPLE.

3. WHAT HISTORICAL EVENT IS BEING DESCRIBED ON THE FIRST PAGE OF THE READING? HOW DO YOU KNOW? REFERENCE DETAILS FROM THE STORY.

4. AS THE FAMILY, IN THE STORY, IS BEING LOADED ONTO THE TRUCKS A SOLDIER TAKES AND THROWS THE TWO SUITCASES BACK INTO THE STREET. WHY DO YOU SUPPOSE THE SOLDIER'S DIDN'T ALLOW THEM TO TAKE THEIR BELONGINGS?
5. CONSIDERING WHAT YOU'VE ALREADY LEARNED ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST, WHY WERE THE MEN AND WOMEN SEPARATED BEFORE GOING ON THE TRAINS?
6. THE SPEAKER TELLS US THAT THE TRAIN THEY WERE RIDING ON NEVER STOPPED AT ANY OF THE STATIONS ALONG THE WAY TO THE FINAL DESTINATION, AND THAT THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN ON THE TRAIN WENT WITHOUT FOOD AND WATER FOR TWO DAYS. WHY DO YOU SUPPOSE THIS WAS ALLOWED TO HAPPEN?
7. WHAT DOES THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT TELL US ABOUT THE AWARENESS OF THE SPEAKER IN RELATION TO THE SITUATION THEY FIND THEMSELVES IN?

"IT WAS COLD AND GREY AT THE NEW TRAIN STATION. I COULD ONLY SEE WOMEN AND CHILDREN. THE MEN'S TRAIN HADN'T ARRIVED YET."

DIRECTIONS: USING THE SPACE BELOW, CONTINUE WRITING THE STORY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE “MOTHER” CHARACTER, FROM THE POINT THAT THE STORY LEFT OFF AT. IN YOUR RESPONSE, CONSIDER:

- WHAT MAY HAVE HAPPENED TO THE MOTHER AND HER CHILD (THE SPEAKER)
- WHAT EXPERIENCES SHE MAY HAVE ENDURED OR SEEN
- HOW SHE MAY HAVE FELT IN THE SITUATIONS AT THE CAMP

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