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Das mehrsprachige Webportal publiziert fortlaufend Informationen zur historisch-politischen Bildung in Schulen, Gedenkstätten und anderen Einrichtungen zur Geschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts. Schwerpunkte bilden der Nationalsozialismus, der Zweite Weltkrieg sowie die Folgegeschichte in den Ländern Europas bis zu den politischen Umbrüchen 1989.

Dabei nimmt es Bildungsangebote in den Fokus, die einen Gegenwartsbezug der Geschichte herausstellen und bietet einen Erfahrungsaustausch über historisch-politische Bildung in Europa an.

Irena Liebman: Lice were the only "animals" that were worth less than the Jews

Wolfram Wiedemann in Dresden was one of the people who, from the very start, supported the search for survivors of the concentration camp Freia attentively and with dedication. It is him and the staff of the "Dresdner Bildungs- und Begegnungsstätte für jüdische Geschichte und Kultur HATiKVA" that we have to thank for our encounter with Irena Liebmann -unfortunately only in written form. She is a popular author of children's books in Israel - and a survivor of the Freiburger concentration camp. [...] Here are the memories of Irena Liebmann, compiled from letters to Freiberg: "I come from the town Lodz in Poland. At that time Lodz was a part of the "Reich" and was named "Litzmannstadt". We were deported on the second last transport before the liquidation of the ghetto on August 27th 1944 and came to Auschwitz - Birkenau. We only spent 24 hours there. We were selected by Mengele and his colleagues. After that we were shaved and forced to march naked until we got a shred of clothes. On this day we understood for the first time what went on in Auschwitz. Luckily we were sent to Freiberg straight away. Our transport was the first to go straight from Birkenau to Freiberg. That was on August 31st 1944. At the time we were 250 Jewish girls and women. We were the first Jewish women who arrived for work in the Freia commando and the Hildebrand commando. This camp was not a extermination camp, but a labour camp. Out of our group only a few died during the eight and a half months we spent there. They died from consumption, weakness and hunger. I don't know whether they were buried or cremated in a normal crematorium¹. I know that after us, about a month or six weeks later, a further 250 women came to Freiberg, who had also been deported from Lodz ghetto to Auschwitz². I knew nothing about the Czech women and never saw them at the time. My older

sister, who arrived with me, worked in the Freia commando and I worked at milling, turning and drilling machines in the Hildebrand commando. There were also Ukrainians working for Max Hildebrand. They almost all came from the countryside, only spoke Ukrainian and hardly understood anything. They lived under different, much better conditions than us. They were "free", not in the concentration camp. When we arrived the German foremen were thrilled that we understood what we were told (Yiddish is somewhat similar to German). Also, each of us had at least had a primary education. One foreman called me "you little witch" because I knew straight away what a

1

See "Die Toten von Freiberg und Oederan", S. XXX

2

This transport arrived in Freiberg on September 22nd 1944

calliper rule or a micrometer were. At the time I was already 19 years old, but looked 14 or 15 at the most. Some of the girls that arrived with me were 2 or 3 years younger than me. Amongst us in the camp - as my friend told me only now - there was also a young mother with a 13 year-old daughter, who later died in Mauthausen. My life consisted of 12 hours of daily work day and night. Then clean as much as possible and follow all the SS guards' orders - there was not much time to rest. I came from the ghetto already half starved. I particularly remember my day-to-day battle with the lice. I was a champion at it. They were body lice that could carry typhus. Now, when I think about it, I find that at the time, lice were the only "animals" in the zoological dictionary that had less worth than Jews, because even I was allowed to kill them. That was my revenge. Oh, good God, where were you? When we stood to attention, the SS "*Unterscharführer*" (staff sergeant) punished every little thing, sometimes even when we were innocent. He called the number that was sewed to our clothes and slapped us with his left hand. He said: "my right hand will not touch Jewish flesh." I am not sure whether he also used a whip. Naturally there were also some humane Germans that worked with us. When I was freed from Mauthausen, lying on a foul-smelling sack of straw with two other children that seemed devoid of age and gender, I said to myself: "If I stay alive, then I will go to Palestine to build a fatherland for the Jewish Folk and I promise myself to do everything I can to tell later generations about the terrible time that I had named the "Nazi murder industry". I will never let it be forgotten!"

from:

Düsing, Michael (Hg. im CJD Chemnitz): Wir waren zum Tode bestimmt – Lodz – Theresienstadt – Auschwitz – Freiberg – Oederan – Mauthausen: Jüdische Zwangsarbeiterinnen erinnern sich. Leipzig 2002: S. 147-151.