

-TITLE-IRENA SZALEK

-I_DATE-

-SOURCE-BMG - NEW YORK

-RESTRICTIONS-

-SOUND_QUALITY-

-IMAGE_QUALITY-

-DURATION-

-LANGUAGES-

-KEY_SEGMENT-

-GEOGRAPHIC_NAME-

-PERSONAL_NAME-

-CORPORATE_NAME-

-KEY_WORDS-

-NOTES-

-CONTENTS- SZALEK, IRENA

0015 Was born in 1913 in Posnan, Poland. She worked in Posnan until her arrest on January 27, 1941. She was tried with a group of Poles by a Nazi court in Olesnica near Wroclaw and sentenced to six years in prison. Some got death sentences. She served her sentence in the Fordon prison.

0254 A group of thirty young Polish women with lighter sentences were picked out to be sent to Munich munitions factory and Szalek was among them. They were promised better living conditions in a factory. Once the Polish women refused to eat their food portions which always consisted of half-cooked cabbage. Three months later, as retribution, the whole group was sent to Auschwitz.

0522 In Auschwitz she was assigned to carry heavy rocks. She got sick with typhus. While recovering, she got work in a sick ward thanks to the help of a woman from Posnan, who was a barrack chief. That's how she survived.

0687 Later on, she was confined in Birkenau and worked in an office. In January of 1945 the camp prisoners were transferred to Ravensbruck, partially on foot and partially in open cattle cars. Despite below freezing temperatures and deep snow, they had to camp in the open air and many died. From January to May 1945 Szalek and other prisoners were driven from place to place. She was liberated by the Russians on May 9, 1945.

0930 She saw all kinds of horrors in Auschwitz. Once, she was brutally beaten on the head by another barrack chief who was a Slovak Jewess. She heard moans and wails of Jews herded to crematoria. She witnessed "selections" of weak and sick people in the sick ward. She refused to talk about those horrors. She could not find words to describe what was happening there.