

RG-50.120*011

Berger, Tamar

- 1.00 Born Karla Wagenburg in Dessau Anhalt, Germany on December 1, 1923. Educated in Jewish boarding school called Lantshaulheim Kuput (sp?) near Berlin. Her father came from Austria and worked as a tailor and an agent for several films. Her mother's family came from Leipzig. Her parents were divorced in the mid 1930's. Her father had numerous problems with his legal status because he was both Jewish and Austrian and was expelled from Germany in 1936. She had one sister and brothers. Describes education.
- 1.27 On November 9, 1938, her school was torched and she and her sister went to stay at an orphanage for Jewish children. Her mother disappeared shortly after. She managed to get herself and sister into another Jewish school. Describes attempts to continue education etc., involvement with Zionist youth groups under the leadership of ??????
- 2.21 In 1941, the Nazis sent them all to a labor camp near Furstenwald near Berlin where they did agricultural work. Describes experiences there while at labor camp at Neandorf (?????????????). She was invited to visit a wealthy uncle in Wansee and was permitted to do so. She visited him a number of times subsequently.
- 2.49 In April 1943, the prisoners were assembled and told by SS that they were being transferred to another labor camp. They were permitted to carry one suitcase with them. On April 20, they were taken to her old school, where she was reunited with her sister, and then deported in cattle cars.
- 3.06 Describes arrival at Auschwitz. A friend took her sister with them to the camp instead of letting her go with the other children. They passed a selection and were then taken to Birkenau.
- 3.26 A band was founded a number of months later and she joined it. Under the leadership of Alma Ahouzeh (???), the band developed into better musicians. Describes experiences playing for the Germans, especially for the camp director, Ilse, and her guests. Her sister and friends were also in the band.
- 3.50 She became friends with a sympathetic German soldier, who sent a letter on her behalf to her aunt. In the letter she conveyed her situation and the reality of the death camps in a way that censors wouldn't understand. The aunt was Christian and had connections to underground groups.
- 4.05 She became ill, but survived a selection by disguising her illness with talcum powder, and because of the intercession of an SS officer who liked her music, she was spared by Eichman and Mengele.

- 4.22 In November 194???, the band were told that they were leaving the camp and were then taken to Bergen-Belsen. Describes conditions there.
- 4.35 Describes liberation by British April 1945. Thousands of women died of food poisoning after eating the German baked bread the Germans gave them. She, her sister, and friends left Bergen-Belsen and went on to Tzele (????). Her sister became ill and a former prisoner working for the British helped them find lodgings. They hijacked a doctor who saved her life. Both she and her sister went to work for the British and managed to feed her friends.
- 4.55 She was transferred to the American occupied area, and then went to attend a Hebrew course in Frankfurt. They then went to stay with other survivors in a location that was subsequently named Buchenwald (the origin of most of its inhabitants). They were then sent to Belgium secretly to avoid the British.
- 5.07 She wrote to her father (who was now in Palestine) and he sent her and her sister certificates for immigration, but they were appropriated by the Haganah. They, therefore, had to go to Palestine via Aliyah Bet (illegally). Returns to discussion of experiences in Frankfurt.
- 5.30 They were returned to Bergen-Belsen. The Haganah assembled her and others who could swim and put them on a ship for illegal immigration. They were intercepted by the British and taken to an internment camp at Atlit. From Atlit they were transferred to Afikim – a kibbutz. Shortly afterward she was reunited with her father. The sun in Afikim damaged her eyes and she was released on medical grounds. Her sister arrived later in 1946.
- 6.10 She wanted to attend medical school in Switzerland, but was inducted into the army at the beginning of the Israeli War of Independence. After the war, she cared for her ailing father until his death in 1949.

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