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Summary of Oral History Interview with Giselle Wertzbergher Rückkehr (ENGLISH)

Giselle (Gisela) Wertzbergher Rückkehr, one of seven children recalling her younger brother; speaking of her childhood in Spinka (in the heart of the Maramures region); her family; Galicia; anti-semitism in Hungary; Romania; her work in a factory; speaking of Jews as victims; Jews in Italy; Polish Jews speaking Yiddish; Auschwitz—an SS guard who couldn't understand Yiddish, but understood Hungarian; the SS with their dogs shouting "Schnell, schnell"; speaking of an SS from Vichau, a village near Sighet, and his kindness; one time when they worked during the night in Auschwitz, an SS gave each person a piece of bread; deportation of children; remembering Jewish children wearing small hats, not kippahs; assimilated Jews in Hungary; speaking of the Federns (in Yiddish)—the Feathers; her work in Budapest; speaking of her father; life in Auschwitz—evacuation of the camps; children hidden or denounced in France; in Hungary, everyone was deported; being liberated—one only wanted food, that's all; sadness; Yiddish music; Sighet and the three rivers; Giselle's husband returning from Russia in 1948; nostalgia for Hungary; the propaganda; "all peoples, there are good people and bad people"; the Germans were very afraid of typhus; speaking of Hungarian cuisine; the suffering; the Germans loved taking pictures; only five survivors from her village; [beginning part 2] leaving for Paris in 1960; war documents; speaking of Jews that didn't want the Germans' money—you can't pay for suffering; she has nothing—not even a photo of her parents; after the camps, one wanted to forget; for Giselle, it was enough to be liberated; the recurring nightmares; in the country, it was easier than in Budapest; remembering her life in Budapest; the Germans were helped by the people; speaking of Dr. Mengele—he wanted to make selections in the morning—when there was someone very weak, he would take them to be gassed, even pregnant women; if someone said they were pregnant, they left by the chimneys; speaking of people in the camps; no children left in the village, no one running, no more Jewish day schools; speaking of the madness; [beginning part 3] 1943 was pretty normal; her father was from Czechoslovakia; her grandparents had a small house; her grandfather was deported at age 62; her father had two sisters and a brother in Belgium; "I cannot count in my family the number of people who disappeared in this....it's impossible to count..."; speaking of her family and relatives—some in Budapest, some in Prague; having a picture of her relatives in Prague; speaking of her cousin and her uncle in Prague; never seeing her grandmother; many in her family worked in the furniture industry; non-Jewish friends in her village; going to a school with non-Jews in Sighet; arrival of Germans in Hungary—March 4th; writing whether at her home or in Auschwitz; when she was very afraid, she wrote; remembering a girl who found her mother in Auschwitz; the beginning of deportation in the cattle cars, and then in trucks; being outfitted in striped prison garb; Germans shouting, "March, march...."; one took a suitcase as if going on vacation; people being gassed; doing housework at an SS house; "Impossible for people not to have known..."; her work in Auschwitz—break rocks, carry rocks, dig holes, fill boxes; the thirst was the worst; very difficult during the evening; "It was war"; her life and work in Auschwitz; the crematoriums; speaking Hungarian at the end of the interview