



Institute of
Translation
and Interpreting

Name:

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Course:

University:

Abstract

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F&V – *Flucht und Vertreibung*

SL – source language

TL – target language

ST – source text

TT – target text

1. Introduction

For this dissertation I will translate an excerpt from the diary of a Czech-German actress interned prior to being deported from Prague after World War Two.

I will first summarise the historical background and the details of the source text. Then in support of my text choice I will look at the contrasting narratives of post-war Germany and the UK and investigate what publications and translations already exist on this theme in the UK.

I will examine what kind of text eye-witness testimonies are and what features they might have, and what translation research has to say about their translation.

I will then present the translation, followed by a commentary.

2. Historical background and choice of text

2.1 Flucht und Vertreibung

Between 1944 and 1947, twelve to fourteen million Germans were displaced from Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Yugoslavia, the majority being women, children and the elderly (Douglas, 2012, chap.1). Many were ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsch*) belonging to communities which had settled in these areas centuries before, while others were *Reichsdeutsch*: German officials and their families who had been stationed in these areas under Nazi occupation.

There were several phases to this displacement. In the last few months of the Second World War, approximately six million ethnic Germans were evacuated by German authorities from the areas east of the Oder-Neiße Line. Others fled the approaching Red Army. In the first months after the war, there were arbitrary “wild” expulsions from Poland and Czechoslovakia, which were at the time lawless states. At the Potsdam Conference in August 1945, Great Britain, the USA and the Soviet Union agreed to the forced but “orderly and humane” expulsion of the remaining German populations of Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. Separately from the Potsdam agreement there were also forced removals from Yugoslavia and Romania.

Between 500,000 and 1.5 million of those either fleeing or being expelled, died, on foot or in cattle trucks on the journey, while interned, or on arrival in Germany. Causes of death included ill-treatment, malnutrition, starvation, hypothermia, disease (Douglas, 2012, p. 12), mob attacks and massacres (Cohen, 2010, p.1).

2.2 Dokumentation der Vertreibung

Compiled by a team of historians led by University of Cologne professor Theodor Schieder and sponsored by the Federal Ministry of Displaced Persons, Refugees and War Victims, the seven volume *Dokumentation der Vertreibung der Deutschen aus Mitteleuropa* (Documents on the Expulsion of the Germans from Central Europe) was a ground-breaking historical project, comprehensively documented by Beer (1998).

Each volume contained, as well as background information and relevant documents, a final section containing a large number of eyewitness reports collated by Schieder’s team. The foreword for the

first volume details the methodology for the collection and selection of these reports and the criteria for judging their authenticity, which for the time was thorough.

It was intended from the beginning that the volumes would be translated into English to reach a wider audience and all but the last volume were published in an abridged format in 1960-1.

Ginsburgs (1960), Lyon (1961) and Knapp (1971) wrote scholarly reviews which were somewhat critical of both the subject matter and the translations. Other reception-side paratexts have not been traceable.

2.3 Margarete Schell's diary

The source text chosen for this task is taken from *Ein Tagebuch aus Prag 1945-46*:

Auszeichnungen von Margarete Schell, which was published in 1957 as the second of three *Beihefte* (Appendices) supplementing the *Dokumentation*. These full-length diaries were “intended to enrich the basic series of austere documents [in the *Dokumentation*] with personal experiences” (Schellova, p. 7).

The three *Beihefte* shared the format of the other volumes of the *Dokumentation*: black cover with gold writing and white dustjacket with black writing, copious footnotes, albeit somewhat slimmer with prefaces written by the editors. They received a mixed reception on publication. Schell's diary was claimed by expellee groups to be the *Tagebuch einer Bevorzugten* [diary of a favoured one], and because she mentions being on the receiving end of kindness as well as cruelty from Czechs, of coming close to communist propaganda (Beer, 1998, p.376), and there were even calls for the book to be withdrawn from bookshops.

Reviews also mocked Schell's oft-repeated worries over the fate of her pet dog, her grief when she found out about its death, and her lamenting her “blue posterior” after being flogged by a Czech commander. Also noted was her apparent skill at gaining sicknotes to avoid work detail (Schellova, 2019, pp. 557-604).

2.4 The author

Margarete Schell was born on 24th May 1911 in Prague. Her South Bohemian father was Jewish and her mother an Austrian Catholic (Schellova, 2019, pp. 618 ff.).

Having attended four years of *Gymnasium*, and having had private acting lessons, Margarete joined *Das Neue Deutsche Theater* in Prague at fifteen. In her acting career she also worked in several theatres in Germany. On returning to Prague she worked for German broadcaster *Radiojournal*, writing and performing in radio productions, and she also wrote short stories.

In 1941 Schell's status as a *Mischling* (the now frowned-upon term indicating that she had had at least one Jewish grandparent) meant that she had to leave radio and remained largely unemployed. She and her mother attempted to prove in court that her biological father was in fact a German soldier with whom her mother had had an affair, rather than her legal, Jewish father. On April 5, 1945, she received an official document stating that she was of "German or related blood". Thirty-four days later, aged thirty-three, she was arrested by the Czech Revolutionary Guard for being German.

2.5 Czech translation

The *Tagebuch* appeared in Czech in 2019 as *Deník z Prahy 1945-1946*, its translation partially funded by the Goethe Institute. The publishers decided that the dearth of similar personal statements written about the immediate post-war period in the region warranted translation and publication. In the preface they describe the diary as a valuable contribution to the history of the post-war period in Czechoslovakia, while it can also be read as a very personal statement regarding her experiences (Schellova, 2019).

The Czech translation has a hard cover with a photograph of Schell on the front, taken in her capacity as actress. It is far thicker than the original, containing a new preface expanding on the original, several (translated) German & Czech reviews of the original publication, an epilogue consisting of research on the camp at Bystřice and on Schell's life, several photographs, a bibliography and an editor's note.

2.6 Rationale behind the choice of text

There have been numerous publications in German on the theme of *F&V* over the years, written by or about survivors of all the regions affected. I selected this text because it was mostly written at the time and was published comparatively shortly after the war. More recent publications may have been subject to greater mediation and influenced by developing narratives in German society in relation to the Second World War, the Cold War, reunification and other politics and world events.

As with all the *Dokumentation*, this text was subject to “a particularly careful ..., procedure of verification and selection appropriate to the unique character of the sources” (Schieder, 1954-61, *Vorwort*, my translation).

We are also told that prior to publication Schell made minor stylistic corrections while staying true to the diary’s original form and contents. Changes made by the editors, seeking not to change the immediacy of the text, consisted of changing names to protect the privacy of those mentioned and omitting a few sentences relating to “the author’s private matters”.

The diary was written “in pencil on individual envelopes and slips of paper, often under the most adverse conditions and in the danger of being discovered in the constantly monitored internment camps, which could have immeasurable consequences for her” (Schell, 1957, p.5, my translation). The German language was strictly forbidden.

The excerpt chosen for this dissertation runs from July 25th – 31st, covering Schell’s transfer from internment in a school building to the Strahov Stadium internment camp and then transportation via cattle truck to the work camp in Bystřice where she remained until her deportation in March 1946.

3. German & British narratives on World War Two and the Expulsions

3.1 Narratives and translation

According to Baker (2006b, p.19) “Narratives ... are public and personal ‘stories’ that we subscribe to and that guide our behaviour. They are the stories we tell ourselves, not just those we explicitly tell other people, about the world in which we live”. Narratives can reflect existing power structures, or they can provide a means of challenging them (Baker, 2006a, p.470). Translators and interpreters are needed if narratives are going to cross linguistic and cultural boundaries (Baker, p. 467), sometimes making an active choice to do so. The translator, or other related agent, makes choices concerning the types of text chosen, the embellishment or framing of texts to allow certain voices to be heard, the omission or addition of material in the main text and the use of paratexts which might sway the reader’s understanding (Baker, p.476). This is illustrated in Winter’s analysis of the from personal to public narratives created by the paratexts of two autobiographies (2014/2018).

3.2 Post-war narratives in Germany and the UK on *Flucht und Vertreibung*

According to MacGregor (2014, p. 477), “Outside Germany, little is known about [the expulsions]. Inside Germany, it is part of almost every family’s history.” A quarter of the post-war German population had experienced either *Flucht* or *Vertreibung*.

The opposing roles played by Germany and the Allies in the Second World War have meant that the members of these cultures hold different memories of them while having actively participated in the same events: in other words, their public narratives diverge. In the context of literature, Freeth (2021, p.116) states that the two nations’ shared experience creates “a transnational frame of reference for readers, in which ... the atrocities committed during the Third Reich are similarly pertinent. Yet the nations’ general opposition within this shared history ... invokes individual, deep-rooted national frames of reference and cultural meaning.”

Post-war narratives in Germany were complex and varied between East and West, between political parties and between public and private spheres.

In the immediate post-war years there was an alleged culture of victimhood in relation to the expulsions (see for example Möller, 2001 & Eley, 2017) as the nation tried to rebuild under occupation while integrating millions of refugees. As the realities of the Holocaust became better known there was a shift towards *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* [coming to terms with the past] – examining Germany's role as the perpetrator and breaking the silence on Nazi crimes (Schmidt, 2007, p.10)

The reunification of Germany in 1989 and the end of the Cold War meant that archive material in the expelling nations was now accessible, allowing for new research into the actualities of the expulsions (Douglas, 2012, p.14), as well as dialogue with the expelling nations. The public narrative then shifted to one emphasising the need to understand recognise German suffering while viewing it within the framework of German perpetration (Eley, 2017).

One persistent narrative has been that *F&V* was a taboo theme (Schmidz & Seidel-Arpaci, 2011, p.4), and that there was a culture of silence surrounding it, but the wealth of literary works, historical scholarship, documentation and commemoration projects as far back as the fifties contradicts this. As Frank says “The amount of scholarly and more popular literature available in the Federal Republic on *die Flucht* and *die Vertreibung* is and always has been huge, irrespective of claims that these are ‘forgotten’, ‘ignored’ or ‘taboo’ subjects” (2007, p. 3).

In fact, “the experiences of the expellees were useful precisely *because* they cast the communist Eastern bloc in a bad light” (Taberner, 2007, p. 234), while in the communist-led East there was a refusal to acknowledge what had been inflicted by the Red Army, coupled with resentment of the burden of the refugees in a state where it was harder to achieve economic and social success. Refugees in the East were known as *Umsiedler* (resettlers), “obscuring the forced nature of the expulsions (Schmitz, 2007, p. 8), and they received less support than in the West.

Meanwhile, in the English -speaking world, while history books have been published on the subject in English: among others Wiskemann (1956), de Zayas (1979 & 2006), Frank (2007) and Douglas (2012), the subject has been little known in British popular culture, and only slightly better known in the US. Douglas' theory is that the theme draws scrutiny to the complicity of US and UK leadership in “one of the largest episodes of mass human rights abuses in modern history”.

[the expulsions] took place without any attempt at concealment, under the eyes of tens of thousands of journalists, diplomats, relief workers, and other observers with access to modern communications, in the middle of the world's most crowded continent. Yet they aroused little attention at the time. Today, outside Germany, they are almost completely unknown. In most English language histories over the period they are at best a footnote, and usually not even that. (pp. 12-13)

3.3 German & English publications on the expulsions

Nearly eighty years on from the events, we have seen the publication of three translated novels featuring the theme of *F&V*: Grass's *Im Krebsgang* (2002) (Crabwalk) featuring the sinking of the *Wilhelm Gustloff* by Russian torpedo in January 1945 as it was carrying refugees and naval personnel away from the Baltic coast, leading to considerable loss of life; Kempowski's *Alles Umsonst* (2008) (All for Nothing) telling the (fictional) story of a noble East Prussian family waiting too long to make the journey west, with tragic consequences, and Hansen's *Altes Land* (2015) (This House is Mine) where the protagonist fled East Prussia as a child along with her mother, her baby brother dying on the trek.

There have also been programmes on BBC Radio on the subject (MacGregor, 2014 & Jones, 2024) and films shown on Amazon Prime (*Verloren in Klessin*, 2018 and *Örök tél* (2018).

3.4 Rationale for English translation/ UK publication

While the rationale for the Czech translation is clearer, as the “action” took place on Czech soil, I believe the translation of this diary would help fill a gap in historical general knowledge in the English-speaking world. While the diary may not have been well-received had it been translated shortly after its original publication, modern British view of Germany might allow stories of German suffering to be received without viewing them as some kind of competition with the Holocaust or as a lack of German *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*.

As the Goethe Institute funded the Czech translation, I foresee some kind of collaboration both with the Goethe Institute and the Czech publishers, as an English translation would be greatly enhanced by the paratexts included in the Czech translation, in particular the photographs and the history of

Schell's life (which would require translation from Czech into English). A translation of the first Beiheft, the diary of Kathe von Normann, is a possible further linked project.

The target audience might include historians, both amateur and professional, descendants of *Vertriebene*, and general readers who are interested in reading true-life material. Potential readers might have good general knowledge of the Second World War, but little of the events in question.

The popularity of such material is underlined by the popularity of the genre of holocaust material and the continued demand for Second World War media.

4. Eyewitness Testimony

4.1 What is eyewitness testimony?

Eyewitness testimony has been recorded in many forms: handwritten and typed, audio and video recordings, as well as in the form of art (Hutchison, 2015). Written testimonies take the form of reports, diaries, memoirs and autobiographies as well as more literary modes.

Bellos defines testimony as “consist[ing] of first-person narratives of events that would count as evidence for the prosecution if they were given as witness statements under oath in a court of law” (2022, p.13); however, the testimonies studied in translation research are rarely actually used in that way, or were intended to be.

Outlining the characteristics of eyewitness testimony, Riffaterre states that the witness’s personal experience should be an example of the catastrophe they are describing, and that the witness should have been a victim of this or have otherwise been exposed to related risks.

Testimony can be seen as a speech act which needs to be heard by others: “testimony must find recognition from others who will register and witness its truth” (Whitlock, 2015, p. 169).

4.2 The therapeutic nature of testimony

Interviews with Holocaust survivors were originally carried out for therapeutic purposes, the interviews only later being recorded, transcribed and seen as historical material (Kuhiwczak, 2007, p.67). The psychoanalyst Laub said that “the survivors did not only need to survive so that they could tell their story; they also needed to tell their story in order to survive” (1991, p. 77).

4.3 Testimony and history

Testimony, which depends on memory, had previously been seen as an unreliable form of historical evidence “given the reconstructive fallibility of memory and the alleged representational failings of words” (Deane-Cox, 2021, p. 113). However, *Zeitgeschichte* (contemporary history) developed as a new discipline in history departments after the Second World War (Assmann, 2006, p. 271) and “memory that had been discarded by historians as an unreliable and distorting source came to be acknowledged as an important factor in the reconstruction of past events thus advancing from a rival to a partner of historiography” (Assmann, p. 261). The value of testimonies is now seen not so much as a contribution to factual history but in how they tell us how it felt to be caught up in these events. Young (1997) reminds us that

by discounting the understanding an eyewitness had of events at the time they unfolded, historians also ignore the very reasons the witness and other survivors, as well as victims, responded to events as they did. Ultimately, this is to ignore the highly contingent reasons why events actually unfolded as they did. (p.55)

Known as the “era of the witness” or “the birth of the historical eyewitness” this movement is seen to originate in the 1960s, in relation to the use of witness testimony at the Eichmann trial (Davies, 2014a, p.173), although Schieder had seen the value in this material in the early 1950s. The *Dokumentation* used the term *Erlebnisbericht* (experience report) whereas the currently used term is *Zeitzeugenbericht* (contemporary witness report).

4.4 Features of testimony

The fact that testimony is constructed from memory can contribute to features which may be observed in these texts. The features mentioned below are not necessarily deliberate on the part of the witness, or a complete list, and are unlikely to all be present in any one text.

As Bellos (2022) tells us:

No recall is perfect. Memories of traumatic events may be even less reliable than most. Yet, the things not said, the things consciously and unintentionally omitted, the mistaken names, spellings, dates, and events, are themselves part of the authenticity of testimonial ... (p.17).

According to Shirm (2023, p. 5) the language “reflects the wound to the psyche”, containing linguistic anomalies reflecting and expressing traumatic knowledge, which has implications for the editor or translator, as “to reduce testimony to a smooth narrative is to remove a part of the knowledge” (p. 19).

Bassnett (p.14, 2024) tells us that testimony contains linguistic markers such as hesitations and silences, while Deane-Cox refers to partial encodings and gaps (2013, p. 309).

Shifts in tense often feature. Deane-Cox (2021, p. 107) mentions “survivors slipping between and across temporal perspectives”. Meanwhile the use of the present tense is seen as a narrative marker of trauma (Deane-Cox, p. 108) while Shirm says it creates a sense of immediacy and an urgency to communicate (2023, p.11).

Davies (2014a, p.171) notes the role of the witness and the cultural status of the text determine a testimony text rather than the textual features it contains. Instead, extra-textual elements, linking the text to its author and historical context, mark it as testimony. These can include historical documentation, photographs and other evidence. Another common feature is the use of a brief *in media res* vignette which leads the reader directly into the narrative (Eaglestone, 2002, p. 21). This is evident in Schell’s diary, where she begins by telling us that she is in a hospital bed, and having managed to get hold of a pencil and paper, she wants to write down her experiences in the first few days since her arrest.

Another feature often seen is a lack of closure (Eaglestone, 2002, p.131): testimonies are not novels with a neat ending. Again, this is evident in Schell’s diary, where we are left with many unanswered questions.

All the features mentioned above, whether intra- or extratextual, and whether deliberate or not, serve to disrupt the reader’s identification with the witness, which is seen as unethical as it normalises and reduces the witness’s experience (Eaglestone, 2002, p. 117).

4.5 Testimony and translation

The study of eyewitness testimony within Translation Studies has until recently largely referred to Holocaust testimony, focusing on ‘literary’ works, often by untrained translators, and in some cases in the early days, failing to take into account other agents in the publication of these texts.

The use of research on Holocaust testimony to assist with translating testimony from “the other side” represents an ethical dilemma in itself, although new research has also looked at testimony in relation to other conflicts, e.g. Rwanda and Middle Eastern conflicts (Jünke & Schyns, 2024), and even to perpetrator testimony (Spiessens, 2024), as well as Hiroshima memoirs (Nicoll, 2022).

Seidman (2006, p.201) points out that the international reception of the fate of Jewish people under the Nazi regime “depended almost entirely on translation”, with untranslated testimonies being mostly overlooked. The key Holocaust texts, such as those by Anne Frank, Primo Levis and Elie Wiesel as well as numerous lesser-known works are generally read in translation. Moreover, that translation has most frequently been into the English language, the language of countries where many survivors found asylum. This has led to Holocaust studies being conducted primarily in English, with texts read only in translation being used as primary source material (Kuhiwczak, 2007, p.61), often with no acknowledgement of the fact of or the effects of translation (Boase-Beier et al, 2018, p.5). Where it was acknowledged, it was “a problem or a scandal, rather than an achievement ... [and] framed in terms of an opposition between authenticity and falsification” (Davies, 2018a, p.6). Yet without translation, there would be no concept of the Holocaust in terms of the “scholarship, commemoration and political discourse in the decades following the Second World War” (Davies, p. 2).

It has been noted that it was only after the “cultural turn” of the early 1990s in translation research that there began to be an interplay between Holocaust studies and Translation studies (Boase-Beier et al, 2018, p.5). This “cultural turn” was a shift from an earlier emphasis on linguistic equivalence to a focus on the interaction between culture and translation. While this was an improvement on ignoring translation, the two disciplines can conflict on the positions of the witness and the translator. This is shown in the concept of the translator as secondary witness.

4.5.1 Translator as secondary witness

Secondary witnessing as a concept was introduced by the psychoanalyst Laub (1992), in relation to those listening to original recordings of Holocaust testimony. It has widened to those transcribing and otherwise mediating different types of testimony, including translators and readers, and in Translation Studies has been examined by Deane-Cox (2013 & 2021). The secondary witness helps to fulfil the purpose of the testimony in bringing it to a wider audience, and in the case of the translator, across the language barrier. There is a conscious desire to assist the witness and support the dissemination of the testimony (Deane-Cox, 2013, p. 312). “The translator ... who purposely decides that their first and foremost obligation is to the survivor becomes the very embodiment of a translator as an ethically motivated agent (Deane-Cox, 2021 p.98).

The secondary witness “listens to the testimony with empathy and helps record, store and transmit it” (Assmann, 2006, p. 269). Deane-Cox recommends that the translator must “listen perceptively ... strive towards an analogous reconstruction of the original testimony, its choosings and imaginings, its analytical attempts and its communicative intentions” (2013, p. 321).

This implies a source-oriented translation strategy. While many criticisms of the translation of Holocaust material fail to consider the real-world role of the translator, Deane-Cox admits that translators operate within a communicative context where they need to take into account the demands of publishers, editors, readers, etc.: translation decisions can lead to non-publication, poor sales and even censorship (2021, p. 98). The readership and its reception of the testimony is also determined by paratextual framing and publisher decisions.

Another demand on the secondary witness is unobtrusive presence (Laub, 1992, p.71). This risks creating the illusion of transparency warned against by Venuti in his theory of translator invisibility (1995). Is it more unethical for the translator to reveal themselves in the text by making it known that it is a translation, or to conceal the fact that the text is not an original?

Deane-Cox proposes the use of translatorial paratexts as one solution (2021, p.123) where the translator can make their role explicit while not intruding in the text. Similarly, Davies (2018a p. 25) suggests viewing the translation as a textual commentary, whether on the original text or the events it describes. This can mean editorial as well as translatorial paratexts which allow for discussion of translation while creating “an effect of authenticity that reassures the reader that translating, while visible, is not a problem (p.57).

5. Translation Strategy

My source text is a testimony text. It contains many of the features outlined by Eaglestone (2002) and others. However, it is neither a Holocaust testimony nor a literary work.

The author's *skopos* as defined in Reiss & Vermeer (2014) tallies with that of other witnesses – a desire to be heard. The hypothetical *skopos* of this translation is to make the author's message heard in another language. For that message to be well-received, the text itself needs to be easy to read and understand; this might mean giving or sign-posting information which might be outwith the reader's general knowledge.

In terms of Reiss & Vermeer's text-types (2014), the diary could be considered as a hybrid of expressive and informative text-types. It is expressive in that it gives the experiences and opinions of the author in her own language, which in this case is literate and articulate, while not being literary in a stylistic or poetic sense. It is informative in that it relates historical events (i.e. conveys information), even if through the prism of the author's own memory and experiences.

This means attempting to recreate the aesthetic components created by the author's stylistic choices (form) while also trying to give “a correct and complete representation of the source text's content” (Nord, 2018 p. 43)

Fortunately, this is echoed by Deane-Cox (2021, p. 102), who says that “both content and form are fundamental to the transmission of survivor memory; neither can be omitted from the analytical approach”.

Attempting to synthesize functionalism with the theories relating to testimony mentioned above, in particular secondary witnessing, while recognising that “it may well be the case that the all-hearing, non-appropriating figure of the secondary witness is an impossible ideal, but this does not mean that it is not one worth striving for (Deane-Cox, 2021, p. 125), my strategy will be to:

- *Pay close attention to author's choice of vocabulary, syntax and style and only make changes where necessary for the benefit of the reader*
- *Use footnotes as in the original to clarify information for the reader*
- *Retain some aspects of “the foreign”*

- *Retain what can be seen as features of testimony such as tense changes, use of the present, inconsistencies*
- *Avoid the use of “holocaustising” terminology (Hahn &Hahn, 2008, Seidel-Arpaci, 2007)*
- *Avoid omissions, distortions, narrative shifts, “white-washing” of uncomfortable issues, i.e. translation problems criticised in relation to eyewitness accounts.*

While I foresee that a full publication of the diary would require a new preface as well as the translation of the original, to give the historical background, this does not necessarily need to be a translator’s preface, depending on what translation issues occur.

I will use British English while being aware that the text may be of more interest to US publishers, leading to the requirement for localisation for that purpose.

6. TRANSLATION

*Please note: Paragraphs are delineated by ****

SOURCE TEXT PAGE 1

25. Juli

Heute sitze ich bereits in einem anderen Lager! Bei Sonnenschein auf dem Rasenplatz des Strahower Stadions, das 10 000 Menschen faßt, und wo auch meine Mutter interniert war ¹.

Was war das gestern für ein Tag! Vormittags rief mich der „Grüne“ zur Arbeit. Zwei Weiber holten mich und noch eine Frau ab, erzählten, wie gut wir zu essen bekommen würden, wenn wir fleißig wären, und wir fuhren mit der Straßenbahn in ein kleines Gasthaus. Geschunden haben wir uns bis ½ 9 Uhr abends. — Wie dreckig geht es in so einer Gemeinschaftsküche zu! Was und woraus müssen die Gäste essen. Pfui Teufel! Das sechzehnjährige Küchenmädels hatte Herz, rief mich in das untere Gästezimmer und steckte mir am Buffet getrocknete Pflaumen und Zigarettenstummel zu. Auch sie naschte, wo sie nur konnte.

Zur Essenszeit, mittags und abends, mußten wir in einem Hetztempo Geschirr waschen und dauernd das saubere Geschirr in die Gaststube tragen, immer die Treppen hinunter und wieder hinauf. Die Teller durften nur in das fettige Wasser eingetaucht werden, und es kam gleich das Essen für den nächsten Gast darauf, nur schnell mußte alles gehen. Abends mußte noch die dreckige Küche gewaschen werden, mir war schon ganz schwindlig nach dieser Arbeit in der heißen Küche, alles klebte an mir. Doch war das Essen wenigstens gut, es gab Knödel mit Ei.

¹ vgl. o. S. 73, Anm. 1.

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TARGET TEXT PAGE 1

25th July 1945

As of today, I'm in another camp! Sitting in the sunshine on the grass pitch of the Strahower Stadium, which holds 10,000 people, and is also where my mother was interned ¹.

What a day it was yesterday! In the morning, the commander we called the Green Man² summoned me for work duty. Two females collected me along with another woman, telling us how well we would be fed if we worked hard, and we went on the tram to a little inn. We worked like Trojans till 8.30 in the evening. How filthy it can get in these public kitchens!³ The food the guests have to eat, and the crockery they have to eat from! Eugh, it's disgusting! The sixteen-year-old kitchen girl had a heart, she called me into the lower guest room and put some prunes and cigarette ends on the sideboard for me. She had a nibble as well, when she got the chance.

At mealtimes, at noon and in the evening, we had to wash the crockery at breakneck speed, and we had to keep taking the clean crockery to the dining room, down the stairs and back up over and over again. The plates had barely been dunked in the greasy water before having the food for the next guest placed on them; it all just had to happen fast. In the evening, the filthy kitchen had to be scrubbed; I was already quite light-headed after working in the hot kitchen; everything was sticking to me. At least the food was good though, there were dumplings with egg.

¹ In the early months of the German capitulation, the Strahov Stadium near the Strahov Monastery served as a main assembly and transit point for internees in the Prague region. Up to 15,000 prisoners passed through there.

² The mythical figure often seen in church carvings as a human face covered with foliage, believed to have its origins in pagan folklore.

³ During and after the war, rationing and food shortages public kitchens were set up for feeding civilians.

1 **SOURCE TEXT PAGE 2**

2 Als wir um 9 Uhr abends als die letzten in der Schule eintrafen, war schon alles in Auflösung
3 begriffen. Es hieß, wir kämen aufs Stadion, ich solle schleunigst meine Sachen packen.
4 Hundemüde, ohne mich ein wenig waschen zu können nach dieser Dreckarbeit, machte ich aus
5 meinen Sachen schnell ein Bündel. „Zenzi“ hatte mich schon den ganzen Tag gesucht. In dem
6 ganzen Wirbel dachte keiner daran, daß das abgegebene Geld und der Schmuck nicht
7 zurückerstattet wurden. Mir fiel es auch erst heute ein. Damit war natürlich zu rechnen.

8 ***

9 Dann ging ich noch hinauf in den Olymp, zum letzten Mal. Dort erfuhr ich, daß der Doktor und die
10 Sanitäter noch einige Tage hierbleiben und dann in eine andere Schule kommen sollen. Der eine
11 Sanitäter, der bei meiner Operation assistiert hatte, verabschiedete sich von mir mit Tränen in den
12 Augen. „Hirsl“ gab mir seine Heimatanschrift, vorsichtshalber lateinisch geschrieben. Der Doktor
13 meinte, ich solle noch bleiben und eine Weile „klönen“, vor 11 Uhr ginge es doch nicht los. Auch er
14 gab mir seine Anschrift und bat mich um meine.

15 ***

16 Ich habe keine. Prag ist ja wahrscheinlich für mich verloren. Doch gab ich sie ihm auf jeden Fall
17 und noch eine Adresse meiner Verwandten in Wien. Vom dritten Sanitäter, der nur selten da ist,
18 bekam ich sogar ein Köfferchen geschenkt, das mir sehr zurecht kommt. Und der Doktor schenkte
19 mir einen Scherben von Spiegel, seinen Rasierspiegel. Ich freute mich sehr darüber; denn ich
20 besitze nicht einmal einen dieser hier gebräuchlichen Scherben. Als sich schon alle Sanitäter
21 verabschiedet hatten und gingen, reichte ich zum letztenmal dem Doktor die Hand, auch er war
22 sichtlich gerührt, und aus dieser Abschiedsstimmung heraus gaben wir uns einen Kuß, ganz
23 selbstverständlich und so, als wollten wir einer dem anderen zum Schluß sagen: „Du warst ein
24 netter Kerl, und wir haben aus dieser bösen Zeit doch ein paar gute Stunden herausgeholt!“

25 ***

1 **TARGET TEXT PAGE 2**

2 When we were the last to get back to the school at nine o'clock in the evening, everything was in
3 disarray. It was said we were going to the stadium, and I should get my things together without
4 delay. Dog-tired, unable to have a bit of a wash after all the filthy work, I swiftly bundled up my
5 things. Zenzi had been looking for me all day. In all the commotion nobody noticed that the money
6 and jewellery we'd handed in hadn't been returned to us. It didn't occur to me till today. Of course
7 that was only to be expected.

8 ***

9 Then I went up into the gods for the last time. There I found out that the doctor and the orderlies
10 were going to stay here for a few more days, and then go on to another school. The orderly who had
11 assisted at my operation bid me goodbye to with tears in his eyes. HirsI gave me his home address,
12 written in Latin to be on the safe side. The doctor said I should stay and chat for a while; we
13 wouldn't be setting off before 11 o'clock. He gave me his address too and asked me for mine.

14 ***

15
16 I don't have one. Prague is most likely lost to me now. I gave it to him anyway, just in case, and
17 another address for my relatives in Vienna. I even received a little case from the third orderly, who
18 isn't there very often; this was just what I needed. And the doctor gave me a broken fragment of
19 mirror, his shaving mirror. I was so glad of it, since I don't have so much as one of these fragments,
20 which often get used here. When all the orderlies had said their goodbyes and left, I held out my
21 hand to the doctor for the final time; he was visibly moved as well, and in this spirit of farewell we
22 had a little kiss, quite matter-of-factly and as if we wanted to say one to the other at the end 'You
23 were a good sort, and we managed to grab a few good hours out of this terrible time!'.
24

1 **SOURCE TEXT PAGE 3**

2 Eine Viertelstunde später stand ich schon mit meinem geschenkten Kofferchen mit den anderen am
3 Gang, zum Abmarsch bereit. Wir mußten zimmerweise antreten, doch ich blieb trotz Gekeif und der
4 boshaften Bemerkungen unserer Xanthippen mit „Zenzi“ zusammen. Es herrschte wieder
5 aufgeputschte Stimmung von seiten des „Grünen“ und der Wache, und wie wir nachher erfuhren,
6 haben sich noch einige Posten ausgetobt und die Männer vor dem Abmarsch verprügelt. Dann ging
7 es endlich los.

8 ***

9 Nie werde ich diesen Marsch vergessen. Ein armseliger, langer Zug, links und rechts bewacht, so
10 marschierten wir durch das nächtliche Prag. Es wollte gar nicht vorwärts gehen. Nach kurzen
11 Abständen kommandierte die Wache immer: „Stehenbleiben, absetzen!“, dann wieder: „Los!“ Es
12 ging nicht anders. Schwere Koffer wurden von vielen mühsam getragen, Kinderwagen mit Kindern
13 und Gepäck von den Müttern geschoben, alte Frauen und Männer zogen mit, die kaum sich selbst
14 vorwärtsschleppen konnten, deren kleines Gepäck andere mittrugen; Kranke, die einige Male
15 unterwegs unter Fluchen und Stößen mancher Wachposten zusammenbrachen. Wir waren über vier
16 Stunden unterwegs, und ich hatte diesen langen Arbeitstag hinter mir, selbst mein kleines
17 Kofferchen fiel mir fast aus der Hand. Viele ließen ihre Koffer oder Pakete einfach stehen, ihr
18 letztes Hab und Gut, weil sie es nicht mehr tragen konnten. Kinderwagen brachen unter der
19 aufgeladenen Last zusammen. Dazwischen das Schreien der Wache, weil es nicht schneller
20 vorwärts ging. Um ½ 12 Uhr nachts waren wir losgezogen, und gegen 4 Uhr früh trafen wir hier
21 ein.

22 ***

23 Als wir über die berühmte alte Karlsbrücke gingen, hatte mich mein liebes altes Prag, trotz allem,
24 wieder ganz in seinem Bann. Es war eine wundervolle Mondnacht, in grauen, nebelhaften Schatten
25 erschienen die Umrisse des Hradschins, dunkler Glockenton einer Kirchturmuhdrang durch die
26 Stille, in die nur das monotone Geräusch unserer Schritte drang.

27 ***

28

1 **TARGET TEXT PAGE 3**

2 A quarter of an hour later, I was standing in the corridor with the others, ready to set off, carrying
 3 the little case I'd been given. We were supposed to line up room by room, but I stuck with Zenzi in
 4 spite of the scolding and angry remarks made by our battle-axes. The Green Man and the guards
 5 had whipped up the mood again, and, so we later found out, a few of the sentries ran riot and gave
 6 the men a beating before departure. Then at last we were on our way.

7 ***

8
 9 I am never going to forget this march. A wretched long procession, guarded from the left and the
 10 right, we marched through night-time Prague. There wasn't much progress at all. Every so often the
 11 guards ordered: 'halt, baggage down!', then again 'let's go!'. It was the only way. A good many
 12 struggled to carry their heavy cases; mothers pushed prams laden with children and baggage;
 13 elderly men and women who could barely drag themselves along were travelling along with us,
 14 what little baggage they had being carried by others; there were the sick, who kept collapsing on the
 15 way amidst the curses and blows of some of the sentries. We were on the road for more than four
 16 hours, and I had that long workday behind me. Even I almost dropped my little case. Quite a few
 17 simply left their cases or packages behind, the last of their belongings, because they couldn't carry
 18 them any further. Prams collapsed under their loads. All the while the guards were shouting,
 19 because we weren't making faster progress. We had set off at half past eleven at night and we
 20 arrived at around four in the morning.

21 ***

22
 23 As we walked over the famous, age-old *Karlsbrücke*,¹ my beloved old Prague had me right back
 24 under its spell, despite everything. It was a wonderful moonlit night; the silhouette of the castle
 25 emerged from the grey, foggy shadows, and the gloomy toll from a church clock's bells penetrated
 26 the silence, in which only the steady thud of our footsteps could be heard.

27 ***

¹ Karlův most, or the Charles Bridge.

1 **SOURCE TEXT PAGE 4**

2 Plötzlich fallen Schüsse. Da, dort, dicht neben mir. Die Wache schießt! Mein Herz klopft zum
3 Zerspringen. Schießt man in unsere Reihen? Doch wir marschieren weiter, stur, zu Tode erschöpft.
4 Nachher erfahren wir, daß einer unserer Männer von der Brücke in die Moldau gesprungen war. Er
5 wollte fliehen, hieß es. Ich glaube, es war die Flucht in den Tod. Die Wache rühmte sich, daß sie
6 ihn in der Moldau getroffen hätte. An unserem Ziel angelangt, haben wir dann zwei Stunden unter
7 freiem Himmel wie erschlagen geschlafen, trotzdem uns sehr kalt war. Inzwischen ist ein neuer
8 Menschenstrom aus einem anderen Lager eingetroffen.

9 ***

10 Früh stellt eine Schlange vor dem winzigen Holzhäuschen, das hier als Closett errichtet wurde, für
11 Tausende von Menschen. Will man sich nicht ausstellen, oder bleibt die Zeit vor dem Arbeitsantritt
12 nicht dazu, dann kann man nebenan die Latrine benützen. Hier sitzen Männlein und Weiblein auf
13 der Stange, ein Bild, das trotz der Tragik unserer Lage grotesk wirkt. Jegliche Scham fällt
14 notgedrungen in diesen primitivsten Verhältnissen.
15 Ich bin noch nicht so weit. Lieber stehe ich Schlange. Waschen kann man sich hier nur vor aller
16 Augen, mitten auf dem Sportplatz unter einer Pumpe, aus der spärlich Wasser fließt und wo
17 wiederum eine Schlange von Menschen stellt. Heute nacht, heißt es, sollen wir auf der Tribüne
18 schlafen, auf Zementboden, doch wenn es regnet, hat man wenigstens ein Dach über dem Kopf;
19 allerdings ist auch hier nur ein Teil überdacht.

20 ***

21 Man hört allseits sich widersprechende Gerüchte. Von hier aus sollen die Entlassungen schnell
22 gehen, meinen viele. Andere sagen wiederum, daß von hier aus viele Transporte aufs Land gingen.
23 Einige sprechen von neuerlichen Verhören, was ich aber nicht glaube.

24 ***

1 **TARGET TEXT PAGE 4**

2 Suddenly, there are shots ringing out. Here and there and right next to me! The guards are firing!
3 My heart is beating fit to burst. Are they shooting into our ranks? But still we march on, doggedly,
4 deathly exhausted. We find out later on that one of our men had jumped off the bridge into the
5 *Moldau*¹. He wanted to escape, it was said. I believe he was fleeing to his death. The guards boasted
6 that they had hit him in the *Moldau*. Once we had finally reached our destination, we slept like the
7 dead in the open air for two hours, even though we were so cold. In the meantime, a new stream of
8 people has arrived from another camp.

9 ***

10 Early in the morning there is a queue standing in front of the tiny wooden hut that's been put up
11 here as a privy for thousands of people. If you don't want to stand in line, or if there isn't enough
12 time before leaving for work, then you can use the latrine next to it. There males and females sit on
13 the plank, which is a ludicrous sight even in the face of the tragic nature of our situation. In these
14 most primitive of conditions all sorts of mortification is unavoidable.
15 I am not that far gone yet. I would rather stand in the queue. Here one can only wash in full view of
16 everyone, in the middle of the playing field underneath a pump, from which there is a meagre flow
17 of water and where again there is a queue of people. Tonight, they say, we have to sleep on the
18 grandstand, on the cement floor, but at least there's a roof over our heads if it rains, although only
19 one part is under cover.

20 ***

21 On all sides one hears conflicting rumours. A number reckon that the releases should proceed
22 quickly from here. On the other hand, others say that there are numerous transports going from here
23 into the countryside. Some are talking of fresh interrogations, but I don't believe that.

24 ***

¹ The German name for the Vltava river.

1 **SOURCE TEXT PAGE 5**

2 Was wird bloß meine arme Mutter sagen, wenn sie heute in die Schule kommt und erfährt, daß wir
3 fort sind? Ich bat dort die Wache, ihr auszurichten, wo wir sind. Hoffentlich tut sie es! — So sieht
4 also meine Entlassung aus, ich habe sie nicht mehr in der Schule abwarten können! Ob Mama mich
5 hier besuchen darf, weiß ich noch nicht. Wieder heißt es, abwarten.

6 ***

7 Nachmittags: Auf einmal wird mein Name auf dem Platz aufgerufen, der dauernd falsch gelesen
8 wurde, so daß ich zuerst nicht reagierte. Ich gehe mit „Zenzi“ an den Wagen, wo Pakete verteilt
9 werden, und sehe, daß für mich eine gefüllte Einkaufstasche daliegt. Meine brave Mutti schickte
10 mir Brot, Zucker, Butter, etwas Geld und die gewaschene Wäsche.

11 Wir haben den ganzen Tag nichts zu essen bekommen, und dies kommt wie vom Himmel gesandt.
12 Ich habe mich mit „Zenzi“ gleich auf den Boden gesetzt und gegessen.

13 Ein Zettel lag in der Tasche, meine Mutter war in der Schule anscheinend gleich bei meinem
14 Untersuchungsrichter, als sie mich nicht mehr antraf; denn sie schreibt, daß er mir sagen ließe, ich
15 solle nicht traurig sein, bald würde ich entlassen werden. Auch Herr Freund wäre zweimal wegen
16 der letzten Unterschrift bei der zuständigen Stelle gewesen, aber es hieß: warten. Zum Schluß
17 schreibt sie noch, daß sie am Dienstag, da wäre Besuchstag, herkommen wolle. — Demnach hat
18 mich Mama also heute nicht sprechen dürfen, es wird sie schwer getroffen haben, daß ich nun, statt
19 freizukommen, hierher kam. Ich bedauere sie mehr als mich.

20 ***

21 Wieder gehen neue Gerüchte um, neben schlechten dieses, daß bis zum 9. August das Stadion
22 geräumt sein müsse und bis dahin die Unschuldigen entlassen und die Belasteten der Bestrafung
23 zugeführt werden sollen. Wenn das nur einmal wahr wäre!

24 ***

25

1 **TARGET TEXT PAGE 5**

2 Whatever will my poor mother say, when she arrives at the school today and finds out we've gone?
3 I asked the guards there to let her know where we are. Hopefully they will do so. So that's what my
4 release looks like: I haven't been able to wait it out in the school! I don't know yet if Mama will be
5 allowed to visit me here. Again, they're saying, wait and see.

6 ***

7 Afternoon: suddenly my name is called out on the field; it's always being read out wrong, so I didn't
8 respond at first. With Zenzi I go over to the vehicle where parcels are being handed out and see that
9 there's a full shopping bag for me. My good mother has sent me bread, sugar, butter, a little money
10 and the clean washing. We haven't had anything to eat all day, and this turns up as if sent from
11 heaven. Zenzi and I sat down on the ground straight away and started eating.
12 There was a note in the bag; it seems that when she couldn't find me at the school, my mother went
13 straight to the magistrate who was dealing with my case, since she writes that he wanted her to tell
14 me not to worry as I would be released soon. Also, Herr Freund has twice gone to the relevant
15 office for the final signature but was told: 'wait'. At the end she writes that she wants to come here
16 on Tuesday, as that's visiting day. So, Mama wasn't allowed to speak to me today. It will have hit
17 her hard that I came here instead of being released. I pity her more than I do myself.

18 ***

19

20

21 Once more there are fresh rumours circulating, alongside sinister ones, that the stadium has got to
22 be cleared by the 9th of August, and by then the innocent should have been released and the guilty
23 brought to justice. If only that were true!

24 ***

25

1 **SOURCE TEXT PAGE 6**

2 „Zenzi“ und ich haben einen verheerenden Platz auf der Tribüne zugewiesen bekommen, wohin
3 dauernd der Rauch durch das Ofenrohr der darunterliegenden offenen Küche in dicken Schwaden
4 heraufzieht; darum haben wir uns wieder einmal selbständig gemacht und bei netten, älteren Leuten
5 auf der oberen Tribüne noch zwei Plätze auf der Treppe ergattert, vielbegehrte Plätze; denn dies
6 Stück hier ist überdacht, und von hier aus haben wir einen schönen Ausblick auf Prag. — Ein
7 Problem scheint es mir allerdings zu sein, wie man von hier aus nachts zum „Häuschen“ kommt.
8 Da muß man reinste Kletterkunststücke vollbringen. Erst von der oberen zur unteren Tribüne, über
9 alle Schlafenden hinweg, von da aus über eine schmale Holzleiter, die hier angebracht wurde, auf
10 den oberen Teil des Sportplatzes, dann über den ganzen großen Platz hinüber, sicher äußerst
11 zeitraubend und unangenehm. Wie lange währt wohl noch dieser Zauber?

12
13 ***
14

1 **TARGET TEXT PAGE 6**

2 Zenzi and I have been assigned a ghastly place on the grandstand, where all the time there are thick
3 plumes of smoke billowing up from the stovepipes of the open kitchen down below. That's why
4 we've struck out on our own again and managed to get two places alongside some pleasant older
5 people on the steps on the upper stand. These places are much sought-after, as this part here is
6 covered, and we've got a lovely view of Prague from here.

7 Although it does occur to me there might be a problem: how are we going to get from here to the
8 privy at night?

9 We're going to have to perform some veritable climbing feats. First from the upper to the lower
10 stand, across all the sleeping people, from there to the upper part of the sports field via a narrow
11 wooden ladder, that's been put up there, then across the whole huge pitch. Definitely very time-
12 consuming and unpleasant. How long is this this rigmarole going to carry on?

13 ***

1 **SOURCE TEXT PAGE 7**2 **26. Juli**

3 Mit viel Schwierigkeiten, aber dennoch erfolgreich, habe ich mich heute mit „Zenzi“ vor der Arbeit
4 gedrückt. Mit der Zeit erlangt man auch hierin die nötige Routine. Morgens um ½ 6 Uhr wird auch
5 hier geweckt, das liebliche „Vstávejte!“ erklingt, durch die Posten ausgerufen. Tausende von
6 Menschen stehen dann in Gruppen auf dem Sportfeld und warten, wohin sie eingeteilt werden. Ein
7 Sklavenmarkt im großen Stil.

8 ***

9 Unserer Tribüne gegenüber befinden sich die Räume der Untersuchungskommission, auch davor
10 steht die Wache, und nur bestellte Leute werden vorgelassen.

11
12 Unser Plan, unbedingt mit dem hiesigen Untersuchungsrichter zu sprechen, gelang trotzdem mit
13 viel List und Geschicklichkeit. Wir haben mit zwei Herren gesprochen. Beide meinten, daß jeden
14 Tag der Entlassungsbescheid kommen könne; der eine wunderte sich, daß ich bereits seit 14 Tagen
15 auf die letzte Unterschrift warte und sagte, von hier aus wäre es in 3 — 4 Tagen erledigt gewesen.
16 „Zenzi“ will mit einem Transport nach Deutschland zu ihrem Kind, und es wurde ihr gesagt, daß
17 jede Woche ein solcher ginge¹. Hoffentlich wird jetzt endlich mit ein wenig mehr Druck gearbeitet.

18 ***

¹ Tatsächlich wurden einige Male in den Monaten Juni/Juli 1945 verwundete deutsche Soldaten, Wehrmachtshelferinnen und auch reichsdeutsche Zivilisten nach Sachsen transportiert, vgl. z. B. Dokumentation der Vertreibung, Bd. IV/2, Bericht Nr. 26, S. 140.

1 **TARGET TEXT PAGE 7**2 **26th July**

3 With considerable difficulty, Zenzi and I managed to get out of work today. Over time you get to
4 know the required routine in this regard as well. Here too we're woken up at half past five in the
5 morning: the dulcet tones of '*vstávejte*' resound, the sentries hollering at us to get up. Thousands of
6 people are standing in groups on the playing field and waiting to find out where they will be
7 assigned. A slave market on a grand scale.

8 ***

9 Opposite our stand are the offices of the Commission of Inquiry. There are guards there as well,
10 standing in front of it, and only people with appointments are allowed in.

11
12 Nonetheless, our plan – to speak to the local magistrate at all costs – was, with considerable
13 cunning and ingenuity, successful. We spoke with two gentlemen. They both thought that the order
14 for release could be here any day; one of them was surprised I'd already been waiting 14 days for
15 the final signature and said that here it would have been settled in three or four days. Zenzi wants to
16 go on a transport to Germany, where her child is, and she was told that one of these left every
17 week.¹ Let's hope that with a little more pressure things will get sorted at last.

18 ***

¹ It was the case that, on a number of occasions in the months of June/July 1945, wounded German soldiers, female auxiliary volunteers and Reich German civilians were transported to Saxony. See also Schieder, 1960, report no. 26, p. 388.

1 **SOURCE TEXT PAGE 8**

2 Mittags traf ich den Bruder Adels bei der Pumpe. Er ist seit Anfang Mai mit seiner Frau hier
3 interniert und fragte mich nach seinen Schwestern; in dieser Beziehung konnte ich ihn wenigstens
4 beruhigen. Er wußte nur, daß seine Mutter gestorben sei. — Von ihm und anderen, die seit Mai hier
5 sind, erfahre ich, wie furchtbar es hier in den ersten Wochen zugegangen ist. Vor aller Augen
6 wurden Leute erschossen, Männer und Frauen, oft nur auf Anzeige eines rachsüchtigen RG-Mannes
7 wegen irgendwelcher Nichtigkeiten.

8
9 Burschen der SS wurden mit nacktem Oberkörper im Kreis herumgetrieben und ausgepeitscht, bis
10 sie zusammenbrachen, dann mit kaltem Wasser begossen, hochgerissen, wieder ausgepeitscht¹. Dies
11 wurde einige Male wiederholt, bis die Körper pflaumenblau waren, dann bekamen sie den
12 Genickschuß. Sogar gerädert wurde einer, bei lebendigem Leibe in Stücke gerissen.
13 Wieder erwachte finsterstes Mittelalter. Und haben auch die Deutschen in den letzten Jahren
14 furchtbare Schuld auf sich geladen, so daß man sich schämen mußte, dieser Nation anzugehören,
15 mußte darum ein anderes Volk ebenso handeln? Wie furchtbar ist doch diese Welt! Meine arme
16 Mutter, sie hat das alles miterleben müssen, wie ich jetzt erfahre.

17 ***

18
19 Auch hier gibt es Ärzte und ein sogenanntes Krankenzimmer in einem stickigen Raum unterhalb
20 der Tribüne. Ein ehemaliger Zahnarzt von mir ist hier, wie ich hörte. Ich ging gleich hin; denn ich
21 hoffte, daß er meinen Zahn noch retten könnte, da ich die Gußfüllung, die mir herausbrach, noch
22 aufgehoben habe. Einige Male versuchte ich, ihn anzutreffen, doch vergebens, er war nie da.
23 Anscheinend drückte er sich auch vor der Arbeit. Dagegen gelang es mir, mit dem hiesigen,
24 natürlich auch internierten Arzt zu sprechen und ihn um Rat zu fragen, wie ich mich am Dienstag
25 vor der Arbeit drücken könne, da mich an diesem Tage meine Mutter besuchen wolle. Er sagte:
26 „Stellen Sie sich hier vor dem Ärztezimmer an, wie lange Sie stehen, ist mir egal!“ — Wird
27 gemacht!

28 ***

29

¹ Diese Vorgänge werden in den Berichten vieler Augenzeugen erwähnt, vgl. z. B. Dokumentation der Vertreibung, Bd. IV/2, Bericht Nr. 29, S. 161 ff-

1 **TARGET TEXT PAGE 8**

2 At midday I met my friend Adel's brother at the pump. He has been interned here with his wife
3 since the beginning of May, and he asked me for news of his sisters; I could at least reassure him in
4 this respect. All he knew was that his mother had died. From him and others who had been here
5 since May, I find out how terrible things had been here in the early weeks. People were shot in plain
6 sight, both men and women, often only after being reported for some triviality or other by vengeful
7 Revolutionary Guard.

8
9 Young men from the SS were stripped to the waist and driven in circles and flogged until they
10 collapsed. Then they had cold water poured over them, were dragged back up, flogged again¹. This
11 was repeated several times till their bodies were bruised and bloodied, then they were shot in the
12 back of the neck. One was actually broken on the wheel² and torn to pieces while he was still alive.
13 It's a renaissance of the darkest Middle Ages. Even if the Germans have brought terrible guilt upon
14 themselves in recent years, meaning one must be ashamed to belong to this nation, does that mean
15 that another people have to behave like this? What a terrible world this is! My poor mother, she had
16 to witness all of that, so I'm now finding out.

17 ***

18 There are doctors here as well, and a so-called sickroom in a stuffy space underneath the
19 grandstand. A former dentist of mine is there, so I heard. I went there straight away, hoping that he
20 could save my tooth, since I have held onto the filling that fell out. I made a few attempts to meet
21 up with him, but in vain, he was never there. He was skipping work as well, so it seems. On the
22 other hand, I managed to speak to the resident doctor, who was also an internee of course, and ask
23 him for advice how I could get out of work on Tuesday, since my mother wants to visit that day. He
24 said, 'Stand here in front of the doctor's office; how long you stand here doesn't matter to me!'
25 That's what I'll do, then!

26 ***

¹ These events were mentioned in the reports of many eyewitnesses, for example, Schieder, 1960, report no. 29, p. 399.

² The breaking wheel, also known as the execution wheel or St Catherine wheel, was a method of torture and execution used in Europe supposedly only until the nineteenth century.

1 **SOURCE TEXT PAGE 9**

2 Nachmittags lag ich mit „Zenzi“, beide nur im Unterkleid, auf dem Rasen in der Sonne. Für uns ist
3 die Luft und diese durch den Riesenplatz bedingte Ahnung von Freiheit etwas Köstliches. Es ist
4 aber auch das einzige Köstliche hier. Die Suppe ist noch wässriger als in der Schule — gut, daß ich
5 jetzt Muttis Päckchen habe —, und in der Nacht frieren wir ganz fürchterlich auf den kalten
6 Zementstufen im Freien; denn das Stückchen Dach schützt nur vor Regen. — Ein ungestörtes
7 Vergnügen ist dieses Sonnen natürlich nicht, wir müssen dauernd nach umherstreifender Wache
8 Ausschau halten; denn wir haben ja keinen Krankenschein wie die anderen, die sich hier aufhalten
9 dürfen; doch gibt es auch unter diesen manche Drückeberger, und die Größe dieses Lagers kommt
10 uns zugute. Es gelang mir heute auch, einen Eimer zu borgen und mich darin zu waschen.
11 Gesundheit und Reinlichkeit gehen vor Schamgefühl. Einige Männer haben sich hier schon vor
12 allen splitternackt gewaschen.

13 ***

14 Morgen wollen „Zenzi“ und ich doch arbeiten gehen, der kleine Eßvorrat geht dem Ende zu. Wie
15 wird wohl unsere Arbeitsstätte in diesem neuen Umkreis sein?

16 ***

17

1 **TARGET TEXT PAGE 9**

2 In the afternoon I lay on the grass in the sun with Zenzi, both of us just in our petticoats. For us the
3 fresh air and the feeling of freedom brought about by the huge space is blissful. It's the only blissful
4 thing here, though. The soup is even more watery than in the school – just as well that I've got Ma's
5 parcel now – and in the night we are terribly frozen on the cold cement steps in the open air, since
6 the little bit of roof only provides shelter from the rain.

7 Of course, sunning ourselves isn't a pleasure free of interruption, as we need to keep a constant
8 watch for the guards roaming around, as unlike the others who've been allowed to stay behind we
9 haven't got a sick note; still, there are some malingerers there too, and the size of this camp serves
10 us well. I also managed to borrow a bucket today and use it to have a wash. Health and cleanliness
11 go before modesty. A few of the men here have even had a wash stark naked in front of everyone.

12 ***

13
14 In the morning Zenzi and I want to go to work; our little supply of food is running out. What on
15 earth will our workplace be like in these new surroundings?

16 ***

17

18

1 **SOURCE TEXT PAGE 10**2 **27. Juli**

3 Eine kleine Gruppe, darunter „Zenzi“ und ich, wurde mit einem Lastauto zu verschiedenen
4 Arbeitsstätten gefahren und aufgeteilt. Die Fahrt allein war schon schön. Die warme Sommerluft
5 durchwehte unsere Kleider, fuhr durch unsere Haare, und ich redete mir ein, einen Ausflug zu
6 machen. Prag, meine trotz allem geliebte Heimatstadt, prangte in hellem Sonnenschein. „Zenzi“ und
7 ich landeten in einem Gasthaus, das des Essens wegen immer ein begehrter Arbeitsplatz ist.
8 Wir mußten Zimmer aufräumen und den großen Speisesaal mit der Bürste reiben, wir haben ihn
9 aber mehr „gestreichelt“. Trotzdem schwitzten wir, viel Kraft haben wir nicht, und der Tag war
10 heiß. Doch das Essen entschädigte uns. Die Chefin gab uns zwei Portionen und auf meine Bitte
11 sogar noch meine Leibspeise, Pflaumenknödel, die sie für sich privat gekocht hatte.
12 Alles war sauber zubereitet, und vom Chef erhielt ich nachher noch eine Zigarette; denn ich
13 verstehe es schon überall anzubringen, wie gerne ich rauche. Doppelte Freude bringt jetzt eine
14 Zigarette in unser kümmerliches Leben. Warum sollte ich nicht darum bitten? Vieles ist möglich
15 geworden, was früher unmöglich schien.

16 ***

17 „Zenzi“ erhielt von dem netten Herrn, der uns die Plätze auf der Tribüne verschaffte und der von
18 uns seiner sorgenden Behütternatur wegen „Pappi“ genannt wird, 100 Kronen, für die sie ihm, falls
19 sich Gelegenheit biete, etwas einkaufen sollte, den Rest könnten wir uns behalten. Diese
20 Gelegenheit bot sich heute. Der Chef erlaubte uns, einkaufen zu gehen, und wartete vor den
21 Geschäften auf uns. „Zenzi“ machte die Besorgung für „Pappi“, und ich ging in die Drogerie, einige
22 notwendige Toilettensachen zu besorgen. Das erstemal durfte ich wieder allein in einem Geschäft
23 einkaufen. Man merkte nicht, daß ich Deutsche bin, und bediente mich höflich. Ach, wissen die
24 Menschen, was sie haben, wenn sie die Freiheit besitzen? Wußte ich es früher, wie wundervoll es
25 war, in einem Geschäft zu stehen und bedient zu werden? Nein, wir wissen erst immer das
26 Verlorene zu schätzen.

27 ***

TARGET TEXT PAGE 10**27th July**

A small group, including Zenzi and I, were driven by truck and assigned to various workplaces. The journey itself was actually quite beautiful. The warm summer air wafted through our clothes and ruffled our hair, and I talked myself into believing we were on an excursion. Prague, my beloved home city in spite of everything, was resplendent in the bright sunshine. Zenzi and I ended up in an inn, which is always a coveted workplace on account of the food.

We had to clean rooms and scour the large dining room with scrubbing brushes; we gave it more of a stroke, though. Even so, we were sweating, we don't have much strength, and it was a hot day.

But the food made up for it. The lady in charge gave us two portions, and when I asked, she even gave me my favourite food, plum dumplings, which she had made for herself on the quiet.

Everything was nicely cooked, and afterwards the boss gave me a cigarette, since I know how to put it about how much I like to smoke. A cigarette brings twice the pleasure now in our troubled life.

Why shouldn't I ask for one? Much has become possible, which in the past seemed impossible.

Zenzi was given 100 Czech crowns by the nice man who arranged the places on the stand for us; we called him 'Pappi' because of his caring, protective nature; she was to use it to buy something for him, if she got the opportunity; the rest we could keep for ourselves.

That opportunity arose today. The boss let us go shopping and waited for us in front of the shops.

Zenzi got what Pappi needed, and I went into the pharmacy to get a few essential toiletries. The first time I've been allowed into a shop on my own.

They didn't notice I'm German and served me politely. Oh, do people know what they have, when they have freedom?

If only I'd understood before, how marvellous it was to stand in a shop and be served. No, we never appreciate things till they are lost.

1 **SOURCE TEXT PAGE 11**

2 Nach der Arbeit durften wir uns auf unsere Bitte warmes Wasser in einem Eimer holen. Wir haben
3 uns ganz gewaschen, für uns ein großes Geschenk.

4 ***

5 Im Stadion gelandet, erfahren wir, daß morgen ein großer Transport ins Reich gehen soll und
6 deswegen niemand zur Arbeit gehen wird. Nur wir armen Prager und Sudetendeutschen sitzen
7 anscheinend hier fest; denn der Transport wird ja wohl in erster Linie Reichsdeutsche betreffen.
8 Wenn ich meine Mutter nicht hier hätte, wäre ich jetzt bereits froh, in einen solchen Transport zu
9 kommen. Nur nicht mehr länger diese Gefangenschaft!

10 ***

11 So viel denke ich wieder an Jupp, und immer in der jetzigen Zeit, ob auf der Barrikade oder als
12 Waschweib, begleiten mich die Anfangszeilen seines von mir so geliebten Gedichtes über jene
13 Könige des Herzens und des Geistes, die, am Schandpfahl bespien, dennoch Könige bleiben.
14 Niemals vergesse ich die Augenblicke auf der Barrikade, als ich mitten in der Hölle plötzlich im
15 Geiste diese Verse wiederholte. — Jupp, wann, wann sehen wir uns wieder?

16 ***

1 **TARGET TEXT PAGE 11**

2 After work we were allowed, on our request, to fetch warm water in a bucket. We have had a
3 thorough wash, which was a big treat for us.

4 ***

5 On arrival back at the stadium, we find out that a large transport is to leave for Germany tomorrow,
6 and because of that nobody will be going to work. Only us poor Praguers and Sudeten Germans are
7 staying put apparently, since this transport is mainly for the Reich Germans. If my mother weren't
8 still in this country, I'd be more than happy now to leave on a transport like this. Just not too much
9 more of this incarceration!

10 ***

11 Once more I'm thinking such a lot about Jupp, and here and now, just as when I was at the
12 barricade and being a washerwoman, the first lines of his poem are always with me, the one I loved
13 so much, about those kings of hearts and minds who remain kings, even when being spat on at the
14 stake. I will never forget those moments at the barricade, when in the midst of hell, all of a sudden I
15 repeated those lines in my head. Jupp, when oh when will we meet again?

16 ***

1 **SOURCE TEXT PAGE 12**2 **28. Juli**

3 Es ging ein Transport, ich kam sogar mit, aber nicht ins Reich, nein, uns scheint es die Hölle, dieses
4 neue, furchterliche Lager. Kein Ende dieses trostlosen Lebens, kein Ausweg daraus, nur immer
5 neue, immer größere Leidensstationen! Doch will ich mich bemühen, wenigstens das Wichtigste
6 dieser letzten 24 Stunden niederzuschreiben.

7 ***

8 Bei einbrechender Dunkelheit mußten wir uns alle auf der Wiese versammeln. Die Namen
9 derjenigen wurden aufgerufen, die mit dem großen Transport wegkommen sollten. Wohin, erfuhren
10 wir nicht, man munkelte wieder, ins Reich. Zitternd stand ich neben „Zenzi“, wenn nur mein Name
11 nicht aufgerufen würde, ich wollte nicht mit, ich konnte nicht mit, meine Mutter war noch da.
12 Und, da fiel auch schon mein Name. Ich stand wie erstarrt, konnte es nicht fassen. Ohne meine
13 Mutter noch einmal gesprochen zu haben, fort? Also doch fort. Wir mußten in der Dunkelheit sofort
14 unsere Sachen zusammenpacken, und denjenigen, die etwa heimlich zurückbleiben wollten, wurde
15 die ärgste Bestrafung angedroht.

16 Von „Zenzi“ konnte ich mich gar nicht mehr verabschieden, ich konnte sie in der Dunkelheit nicht
17 finden, und sie war nicht mit eingeteilt. Die Wache war, wie immer bei solchen Gelegenheiten, in
18 aufgeputschter Stimmung. Sie höhnte, brüllte, stieß fluchend in die Leute und schoß in die Luft.

19
20 Als wir mit unseren Sachen angetreten waren, mischten sich unter die Schüsse Donnerschläge und
21 ein gewaltiger Regenguß setzte ein. Einige von uns preßten sich eng an zwei Wagen, in denen
22 anscheinend Maschinen standen, fanden aber auch hier keinen Schutz. In tiefen Wasserpfützen
23 stehend, wurden wir klatschnaß, das Wasser rann an uns herunter.

24 ***

TARGET TEXT PAGE 12**28th July**

A transport left, in fact I was on it, but it wasn't going to Germany, no, to us it seems like hell, this new, terrible camp. There is no end to this miserable life, no way out, only ever new, ever more grievous stations of suffering! But I will attempt to put down in writing at least the most important parts of the last twenty-four hours.

As dusk fell, we all had to assemble on the grass. The names of the people who were to leave on the large transport were called out. Where to, we didn't find out: it was rumoured again that it was to Germany. I was standing shivering next to Zenzi; if only my name were not called out, I didn't want to leave, I couldn't leave, my mother was still here.

And yet there was my name. I stood there as if paralysed, couldn't take it in. To leave, without speaking to my mother one more time? Well yes, we were off. We had to pack up our things at once in the dark, and anybody who secretly wanted to stay behind was threatened with the harshest punishment.

I couldn't even say goodbye to Zenzi. I couldn't find her in the dark, and she wasn't allocated with us. The guards were all riled up, as they always were on this sort of occasion. They sneered, roared, shoved and swore at people and fired shots in the air.

When we reported with our things, thunderclaps mingled with the shots and a tremendous rainstorm set in. A few of us huddled up close to two vehicles in which there seemed to be some machines, but we didn't find any shelter there.

Standing in deep puddles of water, we were soaking wet, the water running down us.

1 **SOURCE TEXT PAGE 13**

2 Neben mir stand ein Posten, mit dem es sich reden ließ. Er sagte, wir kämen nicht ins Reich,
3 sondern aufs Land nach Bystritz¹), 1 ½ Stunden von Prag entfernt, dorthin kämen nur die „leichten
4 Fälle“ und die Unschuldigen. In einigen Tagen würden alle von hier in das dortige Lager kommen,
5 die Entlassungen würden auch nach dort nachgeschickt werden, es könne sich höchstens um drei
6 Wochen handeln. — Frierend und völlig durchnäßt stand ich da, den Schreck noch in allen
7 Gliedern, doch schon atmete ich bei dieser Nachricht wieder auf und schöpfte Hoffnung in meiner
8 Verzweiflung. Vielleicht, vielleicht stimmte es doch endlich einmal, was dieser Mann sagte, obwohl
9 mir drei Wochen endlos lang erschienen.

10 ***

11 Endlich, nach Mitternacht, zogen wir los; mit unserem Gepäck gingen wir 4 ½ Stunden, zeitweise
12 unter Regenschauern, bis zum Bahnhof [Wysočan], der zweite nächtliche Marsch innerhalb einer
13 Woche. Nur war er diesmal noch bedeutend schlimmer. Die Wache ließ uns kaum rasten und
14 eignete sich unterwegs Koffer und einzelne Kleidungsstücke an. Hier wurde einem Mann der
15 Regenmantel entrissen, dort mußte ein Mann seinen Mantel ausziehen, den dann der Posten anzog,
16 um sich selbst vor dem Regen zu schützen.
17 Gegen Morgen kam unser Elendszug mit den Kranken, Kindern und Säuglingen am Bahnhof an. Da
18 wir wieder warten mußten, setzte ich mich einfach auf den Rand des Gehsteigs. Endlich hier
19 angelangt, glaubte ich, keine Minute mehr stehen zu können. Mir unbegreiflich, wie die Kranken
20 und Schwerekriegsversehrten diesen Marsch durchhalten konnten!

21 ***

¹) ein kleiner Ort südlich der Stadt.

1 **TARGET TEXT PAGE 13**

2 There was a sentry standing next to me, who we were able to talk to. He told us we were not going
3 to Germany, but to Bystritz¹ in the countryside, one-and-a-half hours away from Prague, which is
4 where only the 'minor cases' and the innocent go. In a few days everyone from here will be going
5 there, he told us, and the release papers will also be sent there, it could take three weeks at the most.
6 I was standing there freezing and completely wet through, still shocked to the core; nevertheless, I
7 heaved a sigh of relief at this news, and in my desperation I was able to summon up some hope.
8 Maybe, just maybe, it was finally true, what this man was saying, although three weeks seemed like
9 an eternity.

10 ***

11 At last, after midnight, we set off; we walked with our baggage for four-and-a-half hours,
12 sometimes through rain showers, to the railway station at Wysočan², our second night-time march
13 within a week. Only this time it was considerably worse. The guards barely let us rest and on the
14 way they took cases and the odd piece of clothing for themselves. One man had his raincoat ripped
15 off him, while another man had to take off his coat, which the sentry then put on himself, to protect
16 himself from the rain.
17 As morning came, our miserable procession, including the sick, children and infants, arrived at the
18 station. Since we had to wait again, I just sat myself down at the edge of the pavement. We'd
19 arrived here at last; I didn't think I would be able to stand for one more minute. I cannot
20 comprehend how the sick and the severely war-disabled could have endured this march!

21 ***

¹ A small place south-east of Prague, now known as Bystřice u Benešova, which under German occupation was the location of several internment camps, including Stalag IV-C for prisoners-of-war and a Sonderlager for mixed-race Jews.

² Now known as Vysočany in the eastern part of Prague. The German name was Wissotschan.

1 **SOURCE TEXT PAGE 14**

2 Nach zweistündigem Warten wurden wir in Viehwagen verfrachtet. Wir saßen, eng
3 aneinandergepreßt, auf dem Boden im Regenwasser, im Schmutz, es war uns gleichgültig, wir
4 waren zum Umfallen müde, abgestumpft, keines Gedankens fähig. Auf der Waggonwand sitzend¹),
5 die Beine ins Wageninnere baumeln lassend, saßen jeweils zwei Wachposten.
6 Sie nahmen sich wieder, was ihnen paßte, durchstöberten bei vielen das Gepäck, ließen die Männer,
7 welche noch gute Schuhe anhatten, dieselben ausziehen und gaben bestenfalls ein Paar zerlumppte
8 dafür her, die sie wahrscheinlich wieder bei anderen mitgehen ließen.

9 ***

10 Nach drei Stunden fuhren wir endlich ab. Obwohl ich in den nassen Kleidern furchtbar fror, nickte
11 ich zwischendurch immer wieder ein. Trotz der geringen Entfernung, denn immer wieder standen
12 wir auf der Strecke, kamen wir erst nachmittags total verrußt und verregnet in Bystritz an.

13
14 Vom Zug aus sahen wir schon die Holzbaracken auf einem großen Platz stehen, in einer ziemlich
15 einsamen Gegend, wie uns schien, in einiger Entfernung ein kleiner See und Wald. „Die Gegend ist
16 schön!“ bemerkte ich zu meiner Nachbarin, nur um etwas Gutes zu sagen; denn trotz der
17 Erschöpfung erwachte wieder dumpf und schwer die Angst in mir vor dem Neuen und die Angst
18 vor dem: Wie lange noch?

19 ***
20

¹) Die Internierten wurden meist in offenen Kohlenwagen transportiert.

1 **TARGET TEXT PAGE 14**

2 After a two hour wait, we were loaded into cattle wagons. We sat huddled together on the floor, in
3 the rainwater, in the dirt, we were past caring, we were dead on our feet, numb, incapable of
4 thought. Legs dangling inside, two guards sat on each side of the wagon.¹

5
6 Again, they took what they pleased, rummaging through the baggage belonging to quite a few of the
7 prisoners, making the men who still had good shoes on take them off, and in return giving them a
8 pair of at best tattered ones, which they had probably taken from someone else.

9 ***

10 After three hours we set off at last. Even though I was terribly cold in my wet clothes, I kept dozing
11 off. Despite the short distance, we kept stopping along the way, so we didn't arrive in Bystritz² till
12 the afternoon, thoroughly sooty and soaked through.

13
14 From the train we could already see the wooden barracks on a large site, in what seemed to us a
15 rather secluded spot, with a small lake and a forest some distance away. 'This is a beautiful area!' I
16 remarked to my neighbour, just for something positive to say, since in spite of my exhaustion the
17 fear inside me was returning, dull and heavy: fear of the new, and fear of just how much longer
18 would it be?

19 ***

¹ The internees were for the most part transported in open coal trucks.

² Bystřice in the district of Benešov.

1 **SOURCE TEXT PAGE 15**

2 Unsere Wache führte uns noch bis zum Lager. Dann kam das Furchtbarste! Kaum hatten wir das
3 Tor durchschritten und standen in dem mit Stacheldraht umzäunten Lager, fiel die dortige Wache
4 mit Gebrüll über uns her. Wir mußten uns kerzengerade in Reih und Glied stellen. Paßte einem
5 Posten ein Gesicht nicht, ohrfeigte er den Betreffenden. Willkürlich wurden Leute aus den Reihen
6 gezerrt und geprügelt. Immer wieder wurden wir abgezählt, und der jeweils mit Namen
7 Aufgerufene mußte nach vor gehen.
8 Hatte einer einen akademischen Grad, wurde er laut verhöhnt und mit Stiefeltritten und oftmals
9 Ohrfeigen in Empfang genommen.
10 Der Mann von Frau Fried, dieser mir so sympathischen Frau aus der Schule, bekam einen Schlag
11 ins Gesicht, daß ihm gleich das Blut aus der Nase schoß. Er war Dozent, Doktor und Ingenieur. Das
12 war zuviel für diese Leute. Dazwischen fielen, oft knapp neben uns, in die Luft gefeuerte Schüsse.
13 Es dauerte endlos lange, sicher zwei Stunden, ehe wir alle aufgerufen waren und auf dem Platz vor
14 den Baracken standen¹⁾.
15
16 Da schoß plötzlich eine Frau auf uns los, nein, eine Megäre, mit wutverzerrtem Gesicht,
17 hervorquellenden Augen. Mit einer wahren Sturzflut der ordinärsten Beschimpfungen überschüttete
18 sie uns, derart brüllend, daß ihre Stimme krächzend überschlug. —
19 So mußte ein Konzentrationslager ausgesehen haben. Wir kommen hier nicht mehr heraus, das ist
20 unsere Endstation. Dies waren die einzigen Gedanken, die ich überhaupt noch fassen konnte. Und
21 es ging allen so, wie mir später versichert wurde. Jenes Weib hielten wir für eine Jüdin aus einem
22 ehemaligen KZ, die sich jetzt an uns austoben wollte — — — und es war nur eine Internierte, die mit
23 einigen anderen mit dem ersten Transport gekommen und hier zur Barackenkommandantin
24 ausersehen war! Waren wir in ein Tollhaus gekommen?
25 ***

¹⁾) Derartige Empfangsszenen werden aus vielen Lagern berichtet. Diesen Transport sowie die Aufnahme im Lager Bystritz schildert übereinstimmend der unveröffentlichte Bericht des Prokuristen Reinhold Keup, der ebenfalls am 28. Juli 1945 aus dem Stadion Strahov ins Lager Bystritz transportiert wurde und dort bis April 1946 interniert blieb.

1 **TARGET TEXT PAGE 15**

2 Our guards took us on to the camp. Then came the most dreadful part of all! We had barely stepped
 3 through the gate and were standing inside the camp, fenced with barbed wire, when the local guards
 4 fell on us with a roar. We had to line up ramrod straight.

5 If a sentry didn't like the look of someone's face, he clouted them. People were randomly dragged
 6 out of the line and beaten. We were counted over and over, and those whose names were called out
 7 had to step forward.

8 Anyone with an academic degree was mocked raucously and met with kicks and frequently slaps
 9 across the face.

10 The husband of Frau Fried, the lady from the school who I liked so much, got a blow to his face,
 11 causing blood to gush from his nose. He was a lecturer, a doctor and an engineer. That was too
 12 much for these people. In the meantime, shots were fired into the air, frequently falling right next to
 13 us. It went on for a long time, certainly two hours, before all our names had been called out and we
 14 were standing on the square in front of the barracks.¹

15

16 Suddenly a woman was firing at us, no, a *megaera*², her face distorted with anger, her eyes bulging.
 17 She unleashed a torrent of the most vulgar taunts upon us, yelling so much that she made herself
 18 hoarse. This must be what a concentration camp looked like. We're not getting out of here; this is
 19 the end of the line for us. These were the only thoughts that I could manage to muster. And it was
 20 the same for everyone, so I was later assured. We thought this woman who was ranting and raving
 21 at us was a Jewish woman from a former concentration camp – and she was just an internee, who
 22 had arrived on the first transport with a few others and chosen to be barrack commander here! Had
 23 we arrived in a madhouse?

24

¹ Arrival scenes such as this were reported from many camps. Prokurist Reinhold Keup, who was also transported from the Strahov stadium to the camp at Bystritz on 28 July 1945, and remained interned there until April 1946, described this transport and its intake into the camp at Bystritz in an unpublished report consistent with the above.

² Megaera was one of the three Furies in Greek mythology, and not to be confused with Megara, the wife of Hercules.

1 **SOURCE TEXT PAGE 16**

2 Doch weiter ging es, wir mußten unser Gepäck stehen lassen und wurden auf dem Platz, vor den
3 tschechischen Lagerkommandanten und der Wache, auf Läuse untersucht. Diejenigen, bei denen
4 sich welche zeigten, kamen in die „Lausbaracke“. Endlich konnten auch wir in unsere Baracken
5 gehen, in die wir eingeteilt wurden, und unser Gepäck holen, das durch den Regen ganz
6 durchweicht war. Zum Glück fand die beabsichtigte Gepäckkontrolle nicht statt, ich schwebte schon
7 in tausend Ängsten wegen meines Tagebuches. Als wir noch draußen standen, gelang es mir, mich
8 zu meinem Kofferchen zu schleichen und Tagebuch, Ring und Armband schnell in meine
9 Einkaufstasche zu stecken, die ich dann unter dem Mantel versteckte.

10 ***

11 Die Baracke, in der wir jetzt sind, ist langgezogen, riesengroß und sehr dunkel. Immer zwei
12 Holzbetten übereinander. Ich habe meinen Platz auf einem oberen Bett. Wir liegen wieder nur auf
13 den Brettern, doch haben wir uns daran ja schon gewöhnt. Die Toilette, die diesen Namen nicht
14 verdient, besteht aus einem Holzhaus, in dem sich ganz primitiv, durch eine lange Holzwand geteilt,
15 auf jeder Seite sieben Löcher in einem Brett befinden. So etwas habe ich noch nie gesehen, ich
16 finde es schrecklich, aber noch immer besser als eine Latrine, denn für Männer gibt es ein separates
17 „Häuschen“. In unserer Baracke befindet sich ein sogenannter Waschraum, worin sich ein langes
18 Zementbecken mit einem darüber angebrachten Rohr befindet, aus dem beim Aufdrehen des
19 Hahnes ganz spärlich Wasser sickert.

20 ***

21 Diesen Bericht schreibe ich mit häufigen Unterbrechungen; denn immer wieder taucht unsere
22 brüllende Kommandantin auf, uns Anweisungen gebend oder uns roh beschimpfend, eine Gestalt,
23 wie aus einem Alptraum. Ab und zu hört man draußen Schüsse fallen. Und es regnet, regnet. Wie
24 trostlos, wie unendlich trostlos ist das alles. Seit gestern abend haben wir nichts gegessen, nun ist es
25 schon 5 Uhr nachmittags, abends soll es jedoch etwas geben.

26 ***

27 Allmählich hat es sich hier im Raum nach diesem furchtbaren Empfang ein wenig beruhigt. Das
28 heißt, die Frauen sitzen total erschöpft und verzweifelt auf ihren Holzbetten. Ich muß viele aus
29 unserer Klasse beruhigen, die immer wieder sagen: „Hier kommen wir nicht mehr heraus!“
30 Trotzdem mir selbst elend zumute ist, bäume ich mich gegen diesen Gedanken auf, ich will es, ich
31 darf es nicht glauben, trotzdem wir einen Empfang wie Schwerverbrecher, nicht wie „leichte Fälle“
32 oder gar Unschuldige hinter uns haben.***

33

TARGET TEXT PAGE 16

But still it carried on; we had to put our baggage down and there on the square, in front of the Czech camp commanders and the guards, we were examined for lice. Those showing signs of lice went into the 'lice barracks'. At last, we too were able to go into the barracks we'd been assigned to, and fetch our baggage, which was wet through from the rain. Luckily the planned baggage inspection didn't happen: I was out of my mind with worry on account of my diary. When we were still standing outside, I managed to sneak over to my little case and quickly put my diary, ring and bracelet in my shopping bag, which I then hid under my coat.

The barrack in which we are now is long, vast and very dark. Throughout there are pairs of wooden bunks, on top of each other. I'm on one of the top bunks. Once more we're just lying on the slats, but we've already got used to that. The lavatory, which doesn't deserve the name, consists of a wooden hut, in which somewhat crudely there are seven holes in each side of a board, separated by a long wooden partition. I've never seen such a thing, I think it's dreadful, but it's still better than a latrine, since there is a separate privy for the men. In our barrack there is a so-called washroom, where there is a long cement basin above which a pipe is fixed, out of which comes a rather feeble trickle of water when you turn the tap on.

I'm writing this account with frequent interruptions, since our bellowing commander keeps making an appearance, either to give us instructions or to rudely insult us, like something out of a nightmare. Now and again, gunshots can be heard outside. And it rains and rains. How desolate, how infinitely desolate it all is. We haven't eaten since yesterday evening; it's already five o'clock in the afternoon, but there should be something for us in the evening.

It has gradually calmed down a little in here in the barrack, after that terrible reception. That is to say, the women are sitting completely exhausted and distraught on their wooden bunks. I have to pacify plenty of our group, who keep saying, 'We're not getting out of here!' In spite of my own misery, I resist that thought. I do not want to believe it, I must not believe it, despite having been received as if we were hardened criminals instead of 'minor cases' or even innocents.

1 SOURCE TEXT PAGE 17

2 Im Stadion sprach ich gestern doch noch kurz mit meinem ehemaligen Zahnarzt. Er wartet seit dem
3 17. Mai auf die sogenannte „letzte Unterschrift“. Ich war entsetzt. Mit meinem Zahn konnte er gar
4 nichts anfangen, er besaß überhaupt kein Material, nicht einmal Zement, um die Füllung einsetzen
5 zu können.

6 ***

7 Jetzt ist es fast völlig dunkel in der Baracke. Hoffentlich kommt „Zenzi“ bald nach. Ich habe nachts,
8 vor unserem Abmarsch, obwohl ich nichts sah, schnell die Adresse meiner Mutter auf einen Zettel
9 gekritzelt und in ihre Tasche gelegt, damit sie ihr schreiben kann, wo ich bin. Meine arme Mutter!
10 Wieder wird sie mich bei ihrem nächsten Besuch nicht mehr vorfinden, und ich weiß noch nicht,
11 wie ich ihr von hier aus schreiben soll. — Die Frauen, die mit dem ersten Transport hierherkamen
12 — wir sind der zweite —, trösten uns, daß die Behandlung nicht so brutal bleibe, das wäre nur beim
13 Eintreffen eines Transportes so. Nur müsse man sich vor Vergewaltigungen der Russen und der
14 Wache in acht nehmen.

15 ***

16 Trotzdem ich mich bemühe, ganz vernünftig zu bleiben und mich durch kein dummes
17 Frauengewäsch beeinflussen zu lassen, möchte ich fort, nur fort!

18 ***

19 29. Juli

20 Geschlafen habe ich, trotz Flöhen und Russengefahr, wie erschlagen. Einige Male erwachte ich nur
21 kurz; denn ich fror entsetzlich. Die Armen am Stadion werden auch eine schlimme Nacht gehabt
22 haben im Freien, bei dem Regen und dieser kühlen Nacht! Wie wir heute erfahren, kommen seit
23 zwei Tagen keine Russen mehr, aber die Frauen des ersten Transportes wurden, nachdem sie die
24 ganzen Tage das Lager reinigen und alte Strohsäcke verbrennen mußten, wobei ihre Beine braun
25 waren vor lauter Flöhen, noch nachts aus den Baracken getrieben und den Russen zum
26 „Aussuchen“ hingestellt.

27 ***

28

1 TARGET TEXT PAGE 17

2 Yesterday, in the stadium, I spoke with my former dentist, albeit briefly. He's been waiting since
3 May 17th for the so-called 'last signature'. I was horrified. He couldn't do anything at all for my
4 tooth; he didn't have anything at all for putting the filling back in, not even any cement.

5 ***

6

7 Now it is almost completely dark in the barrack. Hopefully Zenzi will arrive soon. Last night,
8 before we set off, although I couldn't see anything, I quickly scribbled my mother's address on a
9 scrap of paper and put it in her bag, so that she can write to her and tell her where I am. My poor
10 mother! Once again, she won't be able to find me on her next visit, and I still don't know how I'm
11 going to be able to write to her from here. The women who came here on the first transport – we are
12 the second – console us that the treatment doesn't remain so brutal, it's only like that when the
13 transport arrives. One just needs to beware being raped by the Russians and the guards.

14 ***

15

16 Although I try to remain quite cheerful and not allow myself to be influenced by those women's
17 daft drivel, I want to get away from here, just get right away!

18 ***

19

29th July

20 I slept like the dead, despite the fleas and the danger from the Russians. I woke up a few times just
21 briefly, as I was dreadfully cold. Those poor people at the stadium will have had a bad night in the
22 open air as well, with the rain and this cool night! As we find out today, no more Russians have
23 come for two days, but the women from the first transport were forced out of the barracks at night
24 and presented to the Russians for 'selection', even after they had had to spend the whole day
25 cleaning the camp and burning the old straw sacks, so that their legs were brown with all the fleas.

26 ***

27

1 **SOURCE TEXT PAGE 18**

2 Gestern abend heulte dreimal die Sirene, ein durchdringender, dabei aber winselnder Ton, wie eine
3 Parodie auf den Fliegeralarm. Das hieß: Zum Appell antreten! Wir froren eine Stunde lang ganz
4 fürchterlich auf dem Platz, kein Wunder, hungrig und übermüdet, wie wir waren, noch dazu hatte
5 niemand von uns etwas Wärmeres zum Anziehen, wir Frauen hatte alle keine Strümpfe mehr.
6 Einige Male wurden wir abgezählt, nie wollte die Zahl stimmen. Dann wurde uns von einem Velitel
7 ein Vortrag gehalten, was wir alles nicht tun dürfen. Dabei wurden wir mit den ordinärsten
8 Schimpfnamen belegt, die man gar nicht wiedergeben kann.

9 ***

10 Heute habe ich bereits in der Ärztebaracke das Doktorzimmer aufgeräumt, dann in der Küche, die
11 sich auch in einer Baracke befindet, Waschtröge gereinigt. Natürlich ließ ich mir nach alter
12 Methode Zeit. Dann wurde es Mittag, wieder heulte die Sirene: Antreten zum Essenholen. Wir
13 standen in langen Schlangen mit unseren Eßgefäßen, meist alten Konservendosen, in dem großen
14 Vorraum, der zur Küche führt, und erhielten dann am Schalter eine elende Suppe. Und doch können
15 wir die Mittagszeit kaum erwarten.

16 ***

17 Es gibt hier drei Velitels, lauter junge Burschen. Einen davon, der mir noch der beste schien, bat ich
18 um die Erlaubnis, mir aus der Küche einen Eimer warmen Wassers holen zu dürfen; er gab sie mir.
19 Ich wollte mich endlich ordentlich waschen nach den Strapazen des vorangegangenen Tages.
20 Gerade, als ich mit dem Eimer zur Küche wollte, tauchte der ärgste der drei auf, schrie mich an, und
21 als er erfuhr, was ich wollte, schlug er mir mit dem Gummiknüppel über den Rücken. Es brennt
22 jetzt noch wie Feuer. Nach der Barrikade wieder die ersten Schläge! Alles macht hier verdammt den
23 Eindruck eines Konzentrationslagers.

24 ***

1 **TARGET TEXT PAGE 18**

2 Yesterday evening the siren blared out three times, a piercing yet plaintive sound, like a parody of
3 an air raid warning. It means: line up for roll call! For a whole hour we froze quite dreadfully on the
4 square. No wonder, we were so hungry and overtired, not to mention that nobody had anything
5 warmer to wear, we women all had no more stockings. We were counted a few times, but the
6 numbers wouldn't tally. Then we were given a lecture by a *Velitel*¹. Everything we were not
7 allowed to do. We were treated to the crudest nicknames, which just cannot be recounted.

8 ***

9
10 Today, I've already cleaned up the doctor's room in the medical barrack, then I scrubbed wash
11 troughs in the kitchen, which is also in a barrack. Of course, I took my time just like before. Then it
12 was midday, the siren blared again: report to collect food. In the large hallway leading to the
13 kitchen we stood in long queues with whatever we had to eat out of, mostly old jam jars, and once
14 at the counter we received a miserable soup. And yet we can hardly wait for lunchtime.

15 ***

16
17 There are three *Velitels* here, all young men. I asked one of them, who seemed to me to be the best
18 of the bunch, for permission to be allowed to fetch a bucket of warm water, and he granted it. I
19 wanted to give myself a proper wash at long last, after the ordeal of the previous day. As soon as I
20 headed to the kitchen with the bucket, the angriest of the three appeared, shouted at me, and when
21 he found out what I was up to, hit me on the back with his rubber truncheon. Even now it's still
22 burning like fire. The first beating since we were at the barricade. Damnation, everything here gives
23 the impression of a concentration camp.

¹ Czech word meaning 'commander'.

1 **SOURCE TEXT PAGE 19**

2 Eine zerlumppte Gestalt, total heruntergekommen, kommt auf mich zu. Eine ehemalige Kollegin von
3 mir, die kurze Zeit bei der Bühne tätig war, 10 Jahre gealtert. Sie war erst in einem Prager
4 Gefängnis interniert, so erzählte sie mir, wurde dort schwerkrank und dachte kaum mehr, daß sie
5 mit dem Leben davonkommen würde. Die Arme hat etwas mitgemacht! Sie hatte Tränen in den
6 Augen vor Freude darüber, endlich ein bekanntes Gesicht zu sehen.

7 ***

8 Das Elend der kleinen Kinder hier ist kaum mit anzusehen. Viele sind krank, manches stirbt, ebenso
9 wie die alten Leute.

10 ***

11 Wenn ich bloß meiner Mutter schreiben könnte, aber es wurde noch keine Erlaubnis dazu gegeben.
12 Und dauernd muß man hier zum Appell, wenn man nicht auswärts auf Arbeit ist. Ich finde kaum
13 Zeit, mein Tagebuch zu führen. Immer nur zeilenweise. Außerdem verstecke ich es jede Weile
14 woanders hin, weil die Gefahr einer Kontrolle besteht.

15 ***

16 Unsere Vorgängerinnen erzählen, daß hauptsächlich bei Bauern gearbeitet werden soll. Weite
17 Wege, wenig Essen und die schwere Arbeit. Na, ich werde es wohl auch erleben!

18 ***

19 Wie schrecklich ist doch dieses Leben hier. Gestern, während des Appells, sah ich die
20 sonnendurchleuchteten Wolken am Abendhimmel, unten den See, Felder, Wälder. Wie schön wäre
21 es, jetzt frei zu sein! Doch wir stehen hinter Stacheldraht in Reih und Glied, zitternd dem brüllenden
22 Kommandanten zugewandt, zitternd vor Kälte, denn gegen alles andere sind wir allmählich
23 abgestumpft.

24 ***

1 **TARGET TEXT PAGE 19**

2 A tattered figure, utterly bedraggled, approaches me. A former colleague of mine, who was active
3 on the stage for a short time, aged by ten years. She had been interned in a prison in Prague to begin
4 with, so she told me, and was gravely ill there and was hardly able to keep believing that she would
5 get out alive. The poor woman has been through the mill! She had tears of joy in her eyes at seeing
6 a familiar face at last.

7 ***

8 It's so hard to witness the misery of the infants here. A good many are ill, and some die, as do the
9 elderly.

10 ***

11 If only I could write to my mother, but we still haven't had permission. And you have to keep going
12 to roll call if you're not working on the outside. I hardly find time to keep my diary. Only ever a
13 few lines. What's more, every now and then I hide it somewhere different, because there is still the
14 threat of an inspection.

15 ***

16 The women who arrived here before us tell us that the work is mainly with farmers. Long journeys,
17 not much to eat, and heavy work. Well, I'll get to experience that too!

18 ***

19 How terrible life is here! Yesterday, during roll call, I saw the evening sky with the sun shining
20 through the clouds, the lake, fields, and woods beneath. How beautiful it would be, to be free now!
21 But we are lined up behind barbed wire, trembling in the face of the bellowing commander,
22 trembling with cold, since little by little we've become numb to everything else.

23 ***

1 **SOURCE TEXT PAGE 20**2 **30. Juli**

3 Wir wurden gestern alle herausgerufen und froren 1 ½ Stunden vor der Baracke. Es war kein
4 Appell, dafür wurde unser Gepäck durchsucht. Ich war nicht darauf vorbereitet, sonst hätte ich mein
5 Tagebuch mitgenommen. Fand man es, war ich verloren. Es war ein qualvolles Warten. Doch ich
6 hatte Glück! Mein armseliges kleines Kofferchen lockte wohl nicht, es blieb verschont. Aber bei
7 den meisten anderen lag alles durcheinandergeworfen auf den Betten oder auf dem Boden, Wäsche
8 und Dokumente fehlten größtenteils. Es besteht die Möglichkeit, daß heute abend wieder
9 kontrolliert wird. Ich werde meine Papiere zu mir nehmen!

10 ***

11 Ab 5 Uhr früh standen wir heute 3 Stunden draußen. Natürlich keine Möglichkeit, sich vorher zu
12 waschen. Wir wurden in Arbeitsfähige und -unfähige eingeteilt. Es wurden natürlich fast alle für
13 fähig erklärt. Der Morgen war wieder kalt, und wir froren jämmerlich. Einige wurden zur Arbeit bei
14 Bauern eingeteilt, davon wurden wiederum einige zum Essen ins Lager zurückgeführt; bei dieser
15 schweren Arbeit nur die Lagersuppe! Da heute wenig Bauern kamen, konnten die
16 Zurückbleibenden hier arbeiten, Holz tragen, Baracken säubern usw. Das Lager wird richtig
17 ausgebaut. Manchmal packt mich das Grauen, wenn ich an einen längeren Aufenthalt hier denke. Es
18 wimmelt von Flöhen. Viele Kinder sind ganz zerstoehen. Die Behandlung ist schlimm.

19 ***

20
21 Beim Abendappell sollen wir Näheres über die Schreiberlaubnis erfahren. Man soll in tschechischer
22 Sprache schreiben dürfen. Zum Waschen kommt man kaum. Das tröpfchenweise fließende Wasser
23 im Waschraum versiegt oft ganz, und Zeit dazu hat man auch fast nie.

24

25 **31. Juli**

26 Die Karte an Mama ist geschrieben, tschechisch. Beim Appell gestern erhielt jeder eine Postkarte.
27 Zu ihrem Privatvergnügen schossen die Kommandanten dabei über unsere Köpfe hinweg.

28 ***

29

TARGET TEXT PAGE 20**30th July**

We were all summoned outside yesterday and froze for an hour and a half in front of the barrack. It wasn't for roll call: it was so that our belongings could be searched. I wasn't prepared for it, otherwise I would have kept my diary with me. I would have been done for, if it were discovered. It was an agonising wait. But I was lucky! My wretched little case probably didn't attract attention, it remained untouched. But for most of the others, everything was lying jumbled on the beds or on the floor, with the clothes and documents missing for the large part. There is still a possibility that there'll be another inspection this evening. I will keep all my jottings with me!

From five o'clock in the morning we were standing outside for three hours. Of course, we didn't have a chance to have a wash first. We were divided up into those able to and those unable to work. Of course, nearly everyone was declared able. It was a cold morning again, and we were miserably cold. A few people were assigned to work with farmers, and in turn a few of those were taken back for something to eat in the camp; despite this heavy work there is only camp soup! Since only a few farmers came today, those remaining behind were able to work here, carrying wood, cleaning barracks, and so on. The camp is being built back up.¹ Sometimes, when I think of a longer stay here, the horror takes hold of me. It's teeming with fleas. Lots of the children have been bitten all over. The treatment is dire.

At the evening roll call we should find out more about permission to write. We should be allowed to write in Czech. We can barely have a wash. The water in the washroom, which is usually just a trickle, often dries up altogether, and there is almost never enough time for that either.

31st July

I've written the card to Mama, in Czech. At roll call yesterday we were all given a postcard. The commanders entertained themselves by firing bullets into the air over our heads.

¹ Many of the barracks and other camp buildings had been looted and vandalised in the months immediately after the war.

1 **SOURCE TEXT PAGE 21**

2 Der blonde Velitel nennt uns Frauen „Petrolinky“, ein unübersetzbares Wort, das ich noch nie
3 gehört habe, aber so etwas ähnliches wie „Öllämpchen“ bedeutet. Irgendeine Bemerkung macht er
4 übrigens immer, wenn er mich sieht.

5 ***

6 Heute früh wieder das übliche: um 5 Uhr der nervenzermürende Sirenenton, aufstehen und in die
7 Kälte hinaus. Wir frieren doppelt, weil wir übermüdet und unausgeschlafen sind, aber
8 1 ½ Stunden müssen wir stehen, bis alles zur Arbeit eingeteilt ist. Ich kam wieder nicht zur Arbeit
9 hinaus. Der Hunger ist schlimm.

10 ***

11 Abends: Mit zwei anderen Frauen wurde ich doch mittags geholt, und wir haben auf dem Feld
12 Garben gebunden. Die Bäuerin war nett, es gab auch ein Stück Weißbrot am Nachmittag, und
13 abends führte sie uns durchs Dorf; ich sah es das erstemal, und mit einiger Phantasie verwandelte es
14 sich in N., wo Jupp eingezogen war, wo ich ihn besuchte, mit ihm durch die Straßen ging, jede
15 Minute des Zusammenseins genießend, Stunden voller Glück und tiefen Verbundenseins, und die
16 doch schon leise die Wehmut des Abschieds in sich trugen, erfüllte Stunden! Wie weit zurück
17 scheint mir diese Zeit zu liegen.

18 ***

19 Die Bäuerin führte uns bis zu ihrem Gut, und jede von uns bekam noch ein Stück Brot, und einige
20 alte, rohe Kartoffeln konnten wir uns mitnehmen. Es war gewiß nicht viel, aber wir waren in der
21 Sonne draußen, und niemand brüllte uns an.

22 ***

23 Ein Arzt soll heute entlassen worden sein, seine tschechische Frau holte ihn ab. Für mich wieder ein
24 Lichtblick, daß es auch hier so etwas gibt! Als ewige Optimistin werde ich von manchen bei uns
25 ewig unkenden Menschen verspottet; dennoch, ich gebe trotz trübster Stunden, trotzdem viele
26 glauben, es nicht überleben zu können, die Hoffnung nicht auf!

27 ***

28

29 *(5,491 words)*

30

1 **TARGET TEXT PAGE 21**

2 The fair-haired *Velitel* calls us women 'Petrolinky' - a word I've never heard before, it's
3 untranslatable but means something like 'little oil-lamp'. In fact, he always makes some kind of
4 comment whenever he sees me.

5 ***

6 Bright and early today we had the usual routine once more: the nerve-shattering sound of the siren
7 at five o'clock, then up and out into the cold. We're doubly cold, because we're overtired and
8 haven't slept, but we have to stand for an hour and a half, till all the work has been assigned. Again,
9 I did not go to work outside the camp. I am terribly hungry.

10 ***

11 Evening: At midday I was collected along with two other women, and we bundled sheaves on the
12 field. The farmer was pleasant, she even gave us a piece of white bread in the afternoon, and in the
13 evening she took us on a tour of the village; it was the first time I'd seen it, and with a little bit of
14 imagination it transformed into N., where Jupp was called up, where I visited him, walked through
15 the streets with him, enjoying every minute of being together, hours full of happiness and profound
16 connection, hours which were already tinged with the melancholy of parting! How long ago that
17 time seems to me now.

18 ***

19 The farmer took us to her estate, and we received a piece of bread each, and we were able to take a
20 few old raw potatoes with us. It might not have been much, but we were outside in the sunshine,
21 and nobody was yelling at us.

22 ***

23 A doctor is said to have been released today; his Czech wife came for him. Another ray of light for
24 me, that this is even possible here! As an eternal optimist I am ridiculed by the eternally ignorant
25 among us; nevertheless, despite the bleakest of times, despite the belief of quite a number that they
26 can't survive this, I will not give up hope.

27 ***

28

29

30

6. Translation Commentary

(All page numbers refer to the translation - X:X – page number : line number)

The translation of this excerpt provided a range of translation issues; it is to be expected that the rest of the diary would hold more challenges, particularly in relation to vocabulary which could be seen as “Holocaustising”.

It was not always possible to ascertain whether the author’s language – e.g. word order, sentence length – was simply typical German, a stylistic decision, or a product of diary writing. In some genres it might be appropriate to split typically longer German sentences into smaller chunks for ease of reading. In this text, however, these longer sentences may have been caused by the author’s thought process, writing hurriedly and often in secret, creating a breathless effect. Therefore, these were retained, and conjunctions were not introduced in sentences where they might be expected in a different genre. Contractions were used (I’ll, wasn’t, etc), which while giving a more colloquial feel fits in with the idea of writing quickly.

6.1 Modulation

Modulation is justified, according to Vinay and Darbelnet (2004, p. 133) “when, although a literal, or even transposed, translation results in a grammatically correct utterance, it is considered unsuitable, unidiomatic awkward in the TL.”

6.1.2 Impersonal pronouns

One German-English contrast – especially today – is the use of the impersonal pronoun: *man* [one], which avoids specifying the subject or agent (Fox, 2008, p. 210). While today its use in English is considered as “of more upper-class and intellectual usage” Swan (2016, p. 267), it was more common in the 1940s, and also does not seem out of place in the context of the educated diary writer. Therefore, each example was only changed if retaining *one* resulted in a particularly unwieldy or jarring sentence, and each was handled on a case-by-case basis.

17:13 Nur müsse man sich vor ... in acht nehmen. > One just needs to beware ... (impersonal pronoun retained.)

16:23 hört man draußen Schüsse fallen [one hears shots fall outside] > gunshots can be heard outside. (passive sentence created).

19:12 dauernd muß man ... zum Appell, wenn man nicht auswärts auf Arbeit ist. [one must constantly go to roll call, if one is not at work on the outside] > if you're not working on the outside, you have to keep going to roll call. (impersonal pronoun replaced by second person).

18:21-22 Man soll in tschechischer Sprache schreiben dürfen. Zum Waschen kommt man kaum. [one should be allowed to write in the Czech language. One barely gets to wash] > We should be allowed to write in Czech. We can barely have a wash. (Impersonal pronoun replaced by first person plural.)

6.1.3 Passive voice

Another method of avoiding the specification of the agent is the use of the passive voice (Fox, 2005, p.210). While according to Fox, German tends to avoid the passive (p.209), this is not true of this diary. This could be an indication of the lack of autonomy experienced by the prisoners, where they are subject to the decisions and actions of others.

In another genre it might be expedient to translate passive constructions into active ones, but for this text I only changed those sentences to active which otherwise would be too clumsy, respecting the author's choice of the voice where possible.

20:26 Die Karte an Mama ist geschrieben [the card to Mama is written] > I've written the card to Mama. (An active, first person construction is used where the lack of an agent is jarring in English).

In the next example the clauses were made active, avoiding clumsy constructions, and they then match the next two sentences.

3:12 Schwere Koffer wurden von vielen mühsam getragen, Kinderwagen ... von den Müttern geschoben ... [Heavy cases were carried arduously by many, prams were pushed by the

mothers with children and luggage ...] > A good many struggled to carry their heavy cases;
mothers pushed prams ...

In the final example, the passive was changed to active as this helped to define the sex of the agent (the female farmer), as there is no English equivalent of *Bäuerin*.

21:12 Die Bäuerin war nett, es gab auch ein Stück Weißbrot. > The farmer was pleasant, she even gave us a piece of white bread.

6.1.4 Parts of speech

Macey (2000, p.7) tells us that “parts of speech do not always remain the same when they cross the linguistic Channel”. As this does not represent a change in meaning, rather a German-English contrast, modulation was used in several instances.

As nominalisations are more common in German than English, it was necessary to change some noun phrases to verb phrases to form more natural sentences.

For example:

Noun to verb

2:4 machte ich ... ein Bündel [I made a bundle] > I bundled up my things

20:27 Zu ihrem Privatvergnügen schossen die Kommandanten [for their private pleasure the commanders fired] > The commanders entertained themselves by firing

Adjective to verb

1:9 wenn wir fleißig wären [if we were industrious] > if we worked hard

19:12 wenn man nicht auswärts auf Arbeit ist [if one is not at work on the outside] > And if you're not working on the outside

6.2 Repetition

Repetition of words is discouraged stylistically in English but not German. Paul (2009, p.63) reminds us, discussing literary translation, that “in English we don’t like using the same word too often; we’ve got a wide vocabulary and we like to exercise it”.

The author sometimes uses the repetition of words in what appears to be a stylistic manner – synonyms were available to her – therefore as this is a testimonial rather than a literary text I have retained the repetition.

21:24-25. Als ewige Optimistin werde ich von manchen bei uns ewig unkenden Menschen verspottet >. As an eternal optimist I am mocked by the eternally ignorant among us

10:21-22 zitternd dem brüllenden Kommandanten zugewandt, zitternd vor Kälte > trembling in the face of the bellowing commander, trembling with cold

The following examples were translated retaining the repetition but using an interjection, adverb and conjunction respectively to create a more natural sentence.

11:15 wann, wann > when, oh when

13:8 Vielleicht, vielleicht > Maybe, just maybe

16:23 es regnet, regnet > it rains and rains

6.3 Tense

One characteristic of testimony is shifts in tense, and this is evident in this diary (see particularly pp. 4-5) No attempt was made to regularise these shifts, as they represent the author’s narrative where she is recalling events as if they were happening at the moment of writing. According to Tegla (2018, p. 265) “the present tense allows the reader to experience how the writer’s life was *as it was lived by him at the moment of the experience*, with all the confusion, misunderstanding, and disorientation that characterize it, that is, without later wisdom to impose upon it.” The use of the present tense is also a narrative marker of trauma (Deane-Cox, 2021, p.108) typical of testimony, “giving the narration both an immediacy, but also the sense of an ‘urgency to communicate’ (Shirm, 2022, p.11).

6.4 Culture specific indicators

Rogers et al (2020, p.64) define cultural issues as “translation problems which occur because there is a relationship between the source language and the source culture which does not have a direct parallel in the target language and culture”, i.e. they do not exist of themselves but arise from an absent or different value in the target culture (Aixelá, 1997, p.57) creating a translation crisis point (Pedersen, 2005, p.113), where the translator must make an active decision.

6.4.1 Place names

This text has an added complexity in that while written in German, the place of action is a third country with a third language. Schell uses the German names; there are Czech and English alternatives. Pedersen points out that “Official Equivalents” are not in fact translation crisis points “as there is a pre-fabricated solution to the problem” (2005, p. 115).

However, automatically using the English version, i.e. domesticating, loses the sense of the foreign. According to Bellos (2022, p.14), “the kinds of narratives that constitute historical testimony only rarely ... refer to events that take place within a single language community”, meaning that it is important to retain something of all languages involved. “By reducing the polyglossia of the texts, the obliterations of [the third language] make the diary a less interesting testimony of the cultural world of which it speaks” (Bellos, p.19).

My strategy outlined above (chap. 5), where I see the text as primarily a historical document, led to me conserving (using Aixelá’s terminology (1997, p. 61)) the German, with an extratextual gloss, referencing English and Czech alternatives, therefore underlining the linguistic situation.

Therefore, the bridge name *Karlsbrücke* (3.23) and the river name *Moldau* (4:4-6) were conserved with footnotes referencing the Czech and/or English names.

The Czech noun for “commander” was also conserved with a footnote (18.6).

The Czech sentries’ wake-up call (7:5) *Vstávejte!* was also conserved but with an intratextual gloss.

das liebliche „Vstávejte!“ erklingt, durch die Posten ausgerufen [the dulcet „Get up!“ resounds, hollered by the sentries] > *the dulcet tones of ‘vstávejte’ resound, the sentries hollering at us to get up*

The professional title *Untersuchungsrichter* does not have a direct equivalent in the English-speaking world; the Czech and German may also differ. Dictionary definitions include “examining magistrate” and “investigating judge” and “inquisitor”. Here I used another intratextual gloss, which also clarifies the position in relation to Schell.

5:14 *mein[er] Untersuchungsrichter* [my examining magistrate] > the magistrate who was dealing with my case. (It is important to note here that this person has had previous mentions in the diary.)

6.4.2 Pflaumenblau

The adjective *pflaumenblau* [plum] or plum-blue] is used to describe the bodies of men who have been beaten, presumably leading to bruising and broken skin (8:11). The options are to translate literally, substitute a different colour (perhaps purple), or use wording giving the intended meaning. Using a fruit-based analogy is jarring in English; the actual colour intended is difficult to determine because of the many different varieties of plum and cultural and personal differences in the perception of colour. Just as when we use the colour “orange” we may not have the actual fruit in our minds, it is possible that the witness to this scene was not actually thinking of plums. The Czech translation uses *fialové jakako švestka* [purple as plums], but I made the decision to describe what I think the author is intending the reader to picture (she is reporting someone else’s experience): “bruised and bloodied”.

6.5 Allusions

Schell uses proper-name allusions (Leppihalme, 1997, p. 3) to Greek mythology throughout the diary, which probably reflects both her education and her theatrical background. Again, this refers to a third culture, but this time these references would probably have been equally familiar to classically educated German *and* English speakers at the time of the diary’s first publication, i.e. they were transcultural. Over sixty years on, however, these present a translation crisis point or culture-bump (Leppihalme, p. 3).

2.9 *Olymp* > the gods

This could be seen as both a classical and a theatrical allusion, with *der Olymp* meaning Mount Olympus but also used to refer to the upper balconies of a theatre. I used the English translation of its idiomatic usage.

15:16 *Megäre* – Megaera

Here I retained the allusion, with English orthography, but also added a footnote.

3.4 *unserer Xanthippen* > our /battleaxes

Here I omitted the name but “transfer[red] the sense by other means” (Leppihalme, 1997, p. 79). A plural of Xanthippe is particularly clumsy in English, so although a footnote could have been used, I decided it would be better translated as *battleaxe*, which gives the connotation alluded to by the original.

Having omitted *Xanthippen*, I used Aixela’s strategy of autonomous creation (1996, p.64) to insert a classical reference. *Geschunden haben wir uns* (1:9) [we slogged] > we worked like Trojans.

There is also an allusion to folk mythology with the nickname given to a commander:

der „Grüne“ (1.7) > the Green Man, where I used the English language equivalent for the mythical figure, and included a footnote, and a religious allusion: *Leidensstationen* (12.5) > stations of suffering, where the Catholic-raised author seems to be alluding to the Stations of the Cross.

6.6 Themes, alliteration and idiom

Taking note of Deane-Cox’s statement: “it is fundamental that any act of secondary witnessing listens attentively to each and every textual sign which the survivor has chosen” (2013, p. 317), I paid particular attention to the themes which reoccur in the diary, including cold, exhaustion, and the lack of sanitation.

There are several mentions of being cold or frozen. The German verb *frieren* can mean to be cold as well as to freeze. In the following examples, I was tempted to recreate the alliteration of the original with “fearfully” or “frightfully” frozen, which is correct English, but quite old-fashioned, and while possibly appropriate for the period, could come across as parodic.

9.5-6 frieren ... fürchterlich [are terribly frozen]

14.10 furchtbar frof [terribly cold]

I was however able to use alliteration to translate the phrase *verrußt und verregnet* (14:12) as “sooty and soaked”, and compensated for the lack of alliteration above by introducing it for the following phrase:

18:2 durchdringender, dabei aber winselnder > piercing yet plaintive

Schell uses idioms relating to tiredness which allude to death: *geschlafen wie erschlagen* (4:7, 17:20), *zu Tode erschöpft* (4:3), *zum Umfallen müde* (14:4), and I was careful to retain these allusions by translating as, respectively, “slept like the dead”, “deathly exhausted”, and “dead on our feet”.

Another idiom was *ich schwebte schon in tausend Ängsten* (16:6) [I was floating in a thousand fears]. While the only dictionary definition I found was “frantic” (Dict.cc), I used the idiom “out of my mind with worry”.

The first line (1:5) of this excerpt is ambiguous. While the basic meaning of the verb *sitzen* is “to sit”, idiomatically it can mean “to be inside” / “to be in jail”. While not inappropriate here, within the context of “another camp”, in the next sentence, which does not have its own verb, the author is *Bei Sonnenschein auf dem Rasenplatz* perhaps indicating that *sitzen* pertains to that sentence, which is how I translated it.

The phrase *in Auflösung begriffen (sein)* (2:2) is a military idiom meaning “(to be) in disarray” which again is apt for the location of an internment camp.

6.7 Weiber and Frauen

The author uses the archaic term *Weib(er)* in contrast to *Frau(en)* (pp.1:8 & 15:21). The use of *Weib* is now pejorative, and the author's use of contrasting terms in the same sentence indicates she does see a difference in rank. These terms do not strictly correlate with the English *woman* vs. *lady*. The term lady comes across as too formal for some of the mentions of *Frau(en)*.

If avoiding terms referencing marital status, modern dictionary definitions show *Frau* as woman; *Weib* is marked as “veraltet”; there may also be regional variation in its use. In fact, there are few alternatives to my chosen “female”. This issue is not hugely significant in the context of the narrative, although it indicates some snobbishness on Schell's part, which I do not intend to ameliorate in the diary as a whole.

In 4:13 *Männlein und Weiblein* includes the -lein suffix indicating a diminutive, leading to the literal translation “little men and little women”. (Today it is used to denote gender (male or female).) There is no UK English equivalent for the pejorative or the diminutive meaning, therefore I used *males and females* as a least-worst alternative.

The author is not always a particularly sympathetic character, which may be an issue for a publisher, while some of her traits are understandable in the context of her career.

6.8 Editorial issues

In common with all the volumes of the *Dokumentation*, there are copious footnotes in the diary of two main types: referring the reader to elsewhere in the diary or in the *Dokumentation*, or giving geographical or other explanatory information. Footnotes were retained and additional inserted, either to explain allusions (see above) or to add extra information useful to the reader. (The Czech translation omits some of the original footnotes, corrects others, and has added many more referring to recently discovered archive material.) My choice in this strategy was informed by what I saw as the informative function of the text as a historical document.

Where necessary punctuation was altered to British English conventions, and numbers written out in full.

7. Conclusion

Translation studies research on testimony has focused on literary works, while there are a great number of non-literary texts being translated for purposes other than publication, for example by Wiener Holocaust Library volunteers, and it would be interesting to discover more about strategies and competing demands in these contexts.

While affect in translation (Robinson, 1991 & Koskinen, 2022) has been the subject of research, I have not found studies of affect in the translation of testimony texts, e.g. the somatics which may be involved in secondary witnessing, whether for the translator or the reader.

Analyses of the translations of Hansen and Kempowski would be welcome, whether focussing on the body of the text and/or the paratexts.

This translation has been somewhat conservative; Kohn & Weissbrod (2020) and Klein (2022) examine the adaptation of Éva Heyman's diary into Instagram posts and it would be interesting to see similarly innovative and creative translations other testimony material.

Finally, in seeking the appropriate strategies for translating *F&V* material, ultimately research into Holocaust translation led to the same strategy as the use of functionalist theory, leading to a text where a balance needed to be taken between attempting to transfer the style and meaning of the author and also paying attention to the needs of the reader.

WORD COUNT 13,190

Declaration

I hereby declare that the text of this dissertation is substantially my own work.

Signature: *Kirstie Davidson* Date: 10/01/2025

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APPENDIX: Covers of the original and the Czech translation

