

Krinik in Khurbn

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Drawing courtesy of Zdzislaw Nitka

Tai(l)figen Airfield

Mir zitsn tsu zekhtsik man in a vagon. Tsvey SS-mener hitn undz. Yeder bakumt a shtikl broyt mit vursht un mir lozn zikh iber farshneyte, vayse felder. Aroysgeforn zaynen mir farnakht. Vos lenger mir zaynen geforn, alts shtarker hobn mir derfild dem frost. Ale hobn zikh getulyet eyns tsum andern. In der ershter nakht zaynen in undzer vagon opgefroyrn gevorn di fis bay fir perzon. Eyner fun zey-mayner a khaver, a Bialystoker yat.

Itshe Suraski, velkher hot geveynt far veytik. Oyfn tsveytn tog zaynen shoyn geven bay tsvantsik mentshn mit opgefroyrene fis.

There are sixty of us in the wagon, guarded by two SS men. Everyone gets a piece of bread with sausage, and we are leaving snowy, white fields behind us. We set off in the evening, and the longer we drive, the more we feel the frost. Everyone huddled together. On the first night, four people in our wagon froze their feet off. One of them was my comrade, a Bialystok lad, *Itshe Suraski*, who was crying in pain. On the second day, there were already twenty people who had frozen feet.

<p>Azoy zaynen mir geforn fir teg. Yedn tog hobn mir bakumen 200 gram broyt mit a liter vaser. Dem fertn tog zaynen mir ongekumen oyf a kleyner ban-statsye, oyf velkher es iz geven der oyfshrift „Tay(l)fingen“. (1)</p>	<p>So we drove for four days. Every day, we got 200 grams of bread and one liter of water. On the fourth day, we arrived at a small train station with the signage "Tailfingen". (1)</p>
<p>Do zaynen mir shteyn geblibn iber der gantser nakht. Tsu morgns zaynen gekumen di koyfers batrakhtn di ayngehandlte skhoyre. Frishe gezikhter fun merders hobn arumgeringt di ban. Dan iz gekumen a bafel mir zoln aroysgeyn fun di vagones un zikh oyssteln tsu finf in a ray. Di mentshn mit di farfroyrene fos hobn zikh nit gekent rirn fun ort. Bay mir iz oykh opgefroyrn gevorn</p>	<p>There, we stayed for the whole night. The next morning, the „buyers“ came to look at their "purchased goods". New murderer faces surrounded the train. Then, we were ordered to leave the wagons and line up in fives. Those people with frozen feet could not move from the place. I also had a toe frozen off</p>

(1) KZ-Gedenkstätte (memorial) Hailfingen-Tailfingen, see <https://kz-gedenkstaette-hailfingen-tailfingen.de/> see also <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hw-8BSlUvmc>

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<p>eyn finger fun linkn fus, ober ikh hob gekent geyn. Vider hot men undz getseylt. A hoykher, darer SS-ofitsir hot bavizn far undz zayn lange nageyke un mit ir gefokhet in der luftn. Nokh shteyendik in der ray, hot er far undz gehalten a rede. Zikh forgeshtelt als lager-firer, gemakht farantvortlekh tsen far eynem, dos heyst, az ven eyner vet antloyfn, dan vet men dershishn tsen. Er hot oykh geredt vegn der distsiplin, velkhe vet hershn in lager un azoy vayter. Tsum sof hot er undz gefregt tsi mir hobn alts farshtanen.</p>	<p>my left foot, but I was able to walk. Again, we were counted. A tall, skinny SS officer showed us his long "nageike" (<i>whip</i>) and waved it in the air. We were still standing in the row, when he, in front of us, gave a speech. He introduced himself as the camp leader, and made ten of us responsible for one, meaning that for one escapee, ten would be shot. Among other things, he also spoke about the discipline that would prevail in the camp. Finally he asked, if we had understood everything.</p>
<p>Di mit di opgefroyrene fis hot men aroyfgeleygt oyf an oyto. Mir zaynen tsufus avek in lager. Der lager iz geven drey kilometer fun der ban, oyf a fli-feld. Dort zaynen nokh keyn mentshn nisht geven. Mir zaynen di ershte velkhe veln voynen in dem nayem lager. Der lager iz bashtanen fun eyn groyser hale, vu men farikht tsebrokhene avyonen. A tsiter iz undz adurkh ibern kerper ven mir zaynen arayn in a leydiker groyser halye. Mit an erdenem bodn un on betn. Der dakh un di vent-tselekhert fun mashin-gever-koyln, velkhe di Amerikaner un Englender flegn yedn tog bashishn.</p>	<p>Those, whose feet were frozen off, were loaded onto a truck. The rest of us walked to the camp, which was located three kilometers from the railroad line on an airfield. No people were housed there yet; we were the first to live there in the new camp. The camp consisted of a large hall (<i>hangar</i>), where broken aircraft were repaired. When we entered the empty, large hall, we were all shocked: only an earthen floor and no beds; the roof and walls were riddled with machine-gun bullets, being fired every day by the Americans and the English.</p>

<p>On betn on vaser- azoy hot zikh far undz fargeshtelt der nayer lager. Der komendant velkher hot oysgezen vi der „vilder ta(r)zhan“(1), mit groyse glantsike oygn, hot far undz vider gehaltn a rede. Er hot gemoldn, az dos vos mir zeen-iz alts vos zey hobn far undz tsugegreyt. Oyb mir viln betn-zoln mir aleykn makhn. Oyb mir viln vaser- zoln mir aleykn grobn a brunem.</p> <p>Arum der halye iz geven a drotener ployt mit etlekhe hoykhe turems far di postns. Di zaynen shoyn geshtanen mit mashin-gever gevendet tsu der halye. In a zayt iz geshtanen a baydl, velkhes hot zikh gerufn kikh. Arum iz geven a blote biz di kni.</p> <p>Fun tsvishn undz hot men oysgeklibn a lager-eltestn, etlekhe Kapos, fir perzon far der kikh, eyn sanitar. in dem zelbn tog hot men ayngeshtelt di arbet-komandes, tsu dreysik oder fertsik perzon: yede komande hot gehat a nomen. Di stolyers hobn</p>	<p>Without beds, without water - this is how the new camp presented itself to us. The commander, who looked like the "wild Tarzan"(1), with big, shining eyes, gave us a speech again. He informed us that what we could see was all they had prepared for us. If we wanted to have beds, we should build some by ourselves. And if we wanted water, we should build a well ourselves.</p> <p>Around the hangar, there was a wire fence with several high towers for the guards, who were already standing there with rifles pointed at the hangar. A small hut was standing at the side, called the kitchen. All around, there was mud up to the knee.</p> <p>From among us were selected a camp elder and several Kapos, plus four people for the kitchen and a cleaning person. On the same day, the work squads of 30 to 40 people each were formed, and each squad was given a name. The carpenters got ...</p>
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(1) "The camp leader for the subcamp Hailfingen-Tailfingen was SS-Unterscharführer Eugen Witzig, who had been a member of the commandant's staff of the Natzweiler concentration camp since April 1944." (Quote of an information by Volker Mall)

<p>zikh glaykh genumen tsu der arbet. Breter un negl zaynen geven. Der lager-firer velkhn mir hobn glaykh in ershtn tog a nomen gegeben „Ta(r)zhan“, hot ibergelozt di onfirung fun lager far etlekhe perzon. S'iz antshtanen a „yidishe melukhe“. Farnakht iz forgekumen der ershter tseyl-apel oyf der gas. Yeder iz geshtanen biz tsu di kni in blote. Der lager-komendant hot undz opgetseylt, ver es hot bavegt mitn kop hot gekrogn a shmits mit der nageyke. Tsvey sho zaynen mir opgeshtanen baym tseyl-apel. Eynike zaynen gefaln in der blote.</p> <p>Tsvishn undz hobn zikh gefunen yidn fun Poyln, Grikhmland, Holand, Frankreykh, Belgye un fun Daytshland. Di onfirung fun lager iz arayngefaln in poylishe hent. Itst hobn mir zikh gefunen tif in Daytshland, tsvishn Shtuttgart un Tibingen.</p>	<p>to work right away. Boards and nails were available. The camp leader, to whom we gave the name "Tarzan" right at the beginning, left the leadership of the camp to several people, and thus something like a "Jewish government" came into being. In the evening, the first roll call took place on the street. Everyone was up to their knees in mud. The camp commander counted us off, and whoever moved his head, received a blow with the nageike (whip). Standing at roll call for two hours, some of us fell over in the mud.</p> <p>Among us were Jews from Poland, Greece, Holland, France, Belgium and Germany. The leadership of the camp fell into Polish (Jewish) hands. Now, we were deep in Germany, between Stuttgart and Tübingen.</p>
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Di ershte nakht in nayem lager zaynen mir geshlofn oyf der naketer, naser erd. Yeder hot zikh tsugedekt mit zayn eygenem mantl. Der shney hot zikh arayngerisn ineveynik, ober mir zaynen ale geshmak geshlofn, a yeder iz geven toyt-mid fun der shverer, fartogiker(1) reyze.

Tsumorgns, fir azeyger inderfri, hot zikh shoyngheert a fayfn fun lager-firer. In finf minut arum zaynen mir ale geshtanen tsu tsen in a ray oyf der gas. Der himl iz geven shvarts. Di levone, a fule, hot tsu undz aropgelakht, vi zi volt tsu undz gezogt:

umzist kinderlekh, ayer ployn zikh, ir vet di frayhayt say vi nisht derlebn.

A shtralndiker shtern hot fun himl aropgevunkn:

halt zikh, kinder! Der morgn fun frayhayt iz shoyngont!

Vider hot men undz ibergetseylt. Yeder iz geshtanen vi farglivert, nisht bavegndik mitn kop, vayl yeder veyst shoyngvos im dervart. Fun di zeks hundert zaynen shoynghaynt zibtsik nisht aroys fun blok. Di merhayt hot opgefroyrene fis. Ale kranke lign in a ray, men zol zey kenen gut tseyln.

Finf azeyger- a geshray fun lager-firer „tarzhan“: arbets-komande, formirn!

Baym toyer zaynen shoyngeshtanen di SS. Di hitlen aropgelozt iber di oyern, klapndik a shtivl on a shtivl.

The first night in the new camp, we slept on bare, wet earth.

Everyone covered himself with his own coat. The snow stormed inside, but we all slept well, because we were all dead tired from the exhausting four-day (1) journey.

At four o'clock in the morning, we already heard the whistle of the camp leader. After five minutes, all of us were standing in rows of ten on the street. The sky was black. The full moon laughed down at us as if to tell us:

"Children, your plagues are all in vain, you will not live to see freedom anyway!"

A shining star beckoned us down from the sky:

"Hold on, kids! Your freedom is dawning already!"

Again, they counted us. Everyone stood there frozen, not moving his head, because we already knew what else awaited us. Of the 600 people, 70 already did not come out of the "block" today. Most of them had frozen feet. The sick were all lying in a row, so that they could be counted (as) well.

At 5 o'clock, the camp leader's shout went up, "Work squad, form up!"

SS men had already been standing at the gate - with their hats pulled down over their ears and knocking one boot against the other.

"fartogik"= early morning; I think, it must be "firtogik" (four- day)



Aerial view of the hangar. Courtesy of USAF Historical Research Center/Archiv KZ Gedenkstätte Hailfingen-Tailfingen.

Zey vartn oyf undz. Tsvishn di velkhe shteyen mit geveer, gefinen zikh Rusn, Ukrainer, Polyakn. Di Ukrainer trogn uniformes fun der organizatsye „tod“ (1) mit a royt bendl oyfn rekhtn orem, oyf velkhn es laykht der haknkreyts.

Der lager-firer Ta(r)zshan, shteyt mit a papir in hant un ruft oys di nemen fun di komandes. Di komande in velkher ikh shtey, heyst „Rasten numer 2“ (2) dos iz der nomen fun shteynbrukh vu mir darfn arbet(n).

di komande bashteyt fun tsvantsik perzon. Ven mir shteyen shoyn fun der anderer zayt toyer, shteln zikh arum undz zeks vakh-postns, mitn geveer oysgeshtrekt tsu undz.

„foroys, marsh!“-git a vildn geshray eyner fun di vakh-postns un di andere shtoyesn unter mit di biksn. Mir marshirn oyf a farshneytn, vaysn veg, tsvishn tsvey velder. Vuhin mir geyen-veyst keyner nisht. Arum iz shtark fintster. Yeder trot skripet op mit an ekho. Mir geyen ayngenyuret, di kep geboygn tsu di akslen, di oygng gevendet in der nakht arayn.

Azoy hobn mir opgemarshirt tsvey sho biz s'iz shoyn gevorn likhtik arum. Itst zeen mir far di oygng hoykhe shteynerne berg. Mir geyen farbay kleyne derfer. Di poyerim varfn oyf undz a kalt n blik un geyen shnel arop fun veg, makhndik far undz a plats. Fun eynike fentster heybt zikh oyf a forhang un a blik falt oyf undz. Der forhang falt shnel tsurik arop.

Farn araynmarshirn in dorf, hot der eltster fun di vakhpostns gemoldn, az ver s'vet aroysgeyn fun der ray epes oyftsuhoybn, vet glaykh dershosn vern. In der zayt fun veg zaynen gelegn farfroyrene burakes un kartofl.

Yeder hot gevendet tsu dem di oygng, velndik es aynshlingen. Azoy zaynen mir farbay drey derfer. In yedn dorf khazert zikh iber dos zelbe. Nokhn dritn dorf shteyt a kleyn moyerl mit a hoykher, vayser, hiltserner gebeyde, arum velkher es lign ongeshit berg shteyner, kleyne un groyse. Do blaybn mir shteyn.

They are waiting for us. Among those, standing there with their guns, are Russians, Ukrainians and Poles. The Ukrainians are wearing uniforms of the organization "Todt" (1) with a red ribbon on the right arm, on which a swastika is shining.

Camp leader Tarzan is standing with a paper in his hand, calling out the names of the squads. The work crew I am standing in is called "Rasten (Reusten) Number 2" (2), which is the name of the quarry, where we have to work.

Our crew consists of twenty people. When we are already standing on the other side of the gate, six guards grouped around us with rifles at the ready.

"Ahead, march!" one of the guards yells wildly, and the others are prodding us with their rifles. We are marching on a snowy white path, between two forests. Nobody knows, where we are going. Around us is deep darkness. Every crunch of a step is echoing. We walk cuddled up, the heads lowered between our shoulders, our eyes fixed on the night.

So we have been marching for two hours, until it has become light already. Now, we see high, rocky hills in front of us. We pass small villages. The farmers are casting cold glances at us and quickly get out of the way, making room for us. Behind some windows, a curtain rises, revealing a glimpse of us. Quickly, the curtain falls back down again.

Before marching into the village, the guard elder has announced that whoever left the line to pick something up would be shot immediately. On the side of the road are lying frozen turnips and potatoes.

Fixing this (food) with his eyes, everyone wants to gulp it down. Thus, we have passed three villages; and in each one the same is repeated. Behind the third village, there is a small wall with a tall, white, wooden building, around which are heaped mountains of small and large stones. There we stop.

Tsvey tsivil-maysters batrakhtn undz un shmeykhlen tsu zikh. Di vakh shtelt zikh arum der gebeyde. Tsvey tsivile teyln undz fanander tsu der arbet. Di arbet bashteyt in boyern tife lekher in

Two civilian masters are looking at us, smiling at each other. The guard lines up around the building. Two civilians assign us to work, which consists of drilling deep holes in

- (1) The Nazi Organization Todt (OT), named after its leader Fritz Todt, was a paramilitary construction group for the realization of protection and armament projects. Its workers, often forced laborers or prisoners of war, were uniformed. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organisation_Todt
- (2) Stone pit Reusten, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2bXvHO9SaRk> see also, <https://www.kz-gedenkstaette-hailfingen-tailfingen.de/2010-2020.php> and find a film with the eyewitness Israel Arbeiter here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cULivKHypCo&t=136s>



Reusten Quarry, photo courtesy of Volker Mall, source: Archiv KZ Gedenkstätte Hailfingen-Tailfingen

Barg, velkher iz fun shteyn, In di lekher vet ayngeshotn dinamit un dan oyfgerisn un s'shafn zikh azoy gresere un klenere shteyner. Arum ot di shteyner veln mir arbetn. Di groyse shteyner vern tseklopt mit shvere hamers. Dan lodn mir es on in vagonetkes, di vagonetkes firn es avek tsu a „shteyner-mashin“ velkhe greyt derfun tsu kleyne shteyndelexh tsum boyen shoseyen un fli-pletser.

Di arbet geyt in a shneln tempo. Dem mayster interesirt nit tsi mir zaynen hungerik oder zat. Er fodert zayns. Keyner fun undz hot nokh haynt keyn tropn vaser nisht gehat. Mitik veln mir bakumen do, bay der arbet. Yeder vart shoyn mit groys umgeduld oyfn oyto, velkher darf brengen dos bisl vaser-zup.

Ikh arbet bay a shvere hamer, velkher iz bald azoy shver vi ikh. Keyn koyekh im oyftsuheybn hob ikh shoyn nisht mer. Nor di moyre far a klap fun vakh-postn helft mir oyftsuheybn dem hamer. Yeder fun undz falt fun di fis. Nor dem tsivil-mayster geyt dos nisht on. Er kimert zikh vegn dem zeyer veynik. Der iker vil er az mir zoln arbet un vos mer opton. Ven er zet, az eyner fun undz shteyt shoyn op, meldet er es dem vakh-postn un er „tsolt“ shoyn mit a kolbe ibern rukn.

Azoy hobn mir opgearbet biz eyns azeyger batog.dan iz gekumen der mitik. Far tsvantsik mentshn-fufts liter vaserdike zup, velkhe iz bashtanen fun ribn mit vaser un bitere grozn. Mitik-poyze hot gedoyert eyn sho. Dan- vider tsu der arbet.

Itst hot der tsivil-mayster aley n genumen a shtekn in hant un er treybt di arbet mit a shnelern tempo, shrayendik, az mir hobn gegesn muzn mir arbetn-fardinin dos es(n)!

„ir shmutsike, foyle yuden!- dos iz geven der eyntsiker geshray fun mayster. Nor nisht zayn shrayen hot undz geart vi zayn grober shtekn, velkhn er flegt banutsn tsu yedn vort.

-Akh, di tsayt fun nekome! Vi derlebt men es?! Khotsh eyn minut! Dan veln mir,

the rock of the hill, into which dynamite is then poured to cause a blast, which would create larger and smaller stones. And these stones we have to work with. The large stones are pounded with heavy hammers and loaded into small wagons, which we take away to the "stone machine" to prepare small rock for the building of highways and airfields.

Work is proceeding at a rapid pace. The master is not interested in whether we are hungry or full. He demands what is due to him. None of us has drunk a single drop of water today. We will get lunch at the workplace. Everyone is already waiting with great impatience for the truck to bring us a little watery soup.

I am working with the heavy hammer, which is almost as heavy as I am. I no longer have the strength to pick it up, but the fear of blows from the guards helps me to lift the hammer. All of us can barely keep on our feet. But that is none of the civilian master's business; he cares little. For him, the only thing that matters, is that we work and still get more done. As soon as he realizes that one of us is lagging behind, he reports it to the guard, who then "pays" us for it immediately with butt blows over the back.

So, we have worked until one o'clock; then we had lunch. For 20 people, there were 15 liters of watery soup, consisting of beets with water and bitter grasses. The lunch break has lasted an hour; then - back to work.

Now, the civilian master himself takes a stick in his hand, driving the work to a faster pace and yelling that we had eaten, so now we would have to earn our food with work!

"You dirty, lazy Jews", that has been the only shouting of the master. But his yelling did not annoy us as much as his rough stick, which he has used to accompany every word.

"Ah, may the time of reckoning come! But how are we to experience it? Even if

di shklavn, velkhe geyen itst mit di kep geboygt tsu der erd, redn mit a revolver in hant tsu dem altn yeke, velkher iz itst a held iber tsvatsik mentshlekhe shotns

it is only for a minute! Then we, the slaves, who now walk with heads bowed to the earth, will, with revolvers in our hands, speak to the old 'Jekke', who now feels himself a hero over 20 human shadows".

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פארנאמע טשעכישע יידן אין טויטן-וואגאן פון מינכען → 40 וואגאנעס מיט מענטשן זיינען אנגע-קומען אין טאג פון דער באפרייאונג.

caption: Gassed Czech Jews in the death wagon of Munich - 40 wagons with people arrived on the day of liberation.

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-kumen vet di oysgebenkte minut. Ober keyner veyst nisht tsi eyner fun undz vet dos khotsh derlebn. Mir zaynen ale baym vildn tiger in di tseyen, shoyn nont aropgeshlungen tsu vern yeder fun undz vi mit di letste koykhes kemfn farn tog, far yeder sho. Efsher haynt un efsher morgn, vet kumen di oysgebenkte frayhayt.

Bay andere fun undz zet es oys nisht mer vi a puster kholem. Mir veysn gornisht tsi es ekzistirt nokh beklal a velt hintern drot, fun yener zayt biks. Vos es kumt

And the longed-for minute will come! But none of us knows whether at least one of us will live to see it. All of us are between the teeth of the wild tiger, and, close to the moment of being gobbled down, each of us is fighting with his last strength for every day, for every hour. Maybe today, maybe tomorrow, the longed-for freedom will come!

To others of us, this just seems like an empty dream. We don't even know, if there is a world at all beyond the fence, on the other side of the guns. We don't

<p>for oyf der velt-veysn mir gornisht, vi mir voltn ergets oyf a farvorfn, vildn indzl gelebt, tsvishn vilde mentshn. Nor eyns derfreyt undzere farpeynikte hertser- di zilberne avyonen, velkhe flien iber undzere kep un di zunen-shtroln bagleytn zey makhnesvayz tsu di groyse daytshishe shtet un fabrikn. Ven mir derhern dem bakantn roysh- bentshn mir di, velkhe shvebn in der luftn (1); di velkhe viln undz brengen frayhayt.</p>	<p>know what's happening in the world - as if we were living somewhere on a discarded, wild island, among savage people. Only one thing gladdens our tortured hearts: the silver airplanes flying in large groups over our heads, accompanied by sunrays to the big German cities and factories. When we hear the familiar sound, we bless those, who are gliding across the skies, (1) determined to bring us freedom.</p>
<p>Mir zeen vi blas es vern di ponimer fun di groyse „heldn“, ven zey shrayen: „fliger! Fliger-alarm!“ vi zeyere hent tsitern tsuzamen mit di biksn.</p>	<p>We see, how the faces of the great "heroes" are turning pale, as they shout, "Airmen! Airman alert! " And, how their hands are trembling together with their guns!</p>
<p>Di eyntsike poyze bay der arbet vert dan, ven der himl vert badekt mit avyonen. Gearbet hobn mir biz zeks azeyger. S'iz shoyn geven gut fintster ven mir hobn zikh ayngeshtelt tsu finf in a ray. Fir finftlekh arum mit gever. Azoy hobn mir vider ongehoynbn marshirn tsurik. Bay keynem iz shoyn nishto mer keyn koyekh oystsuhalten aza leben. Hungerike, tsebrokhene, mit shvere hiltserne shikh tsu velkhe es klept zikh der shney un shtert dem gang.</p>	<p>Only when the sky is covered with airplanes, we pause from work. We worked until 6 o'clock, and it had been really dark, when we lined up five to a row. Four rows of five under rifle. So, we have been starting the march back again. No one of us has the strength anymore to endure this life. We are hungry and broken, with heavy wooden shoes, to which the snow is sticking, hindering walking.</p>
<p>Bay yedn veynt dos harts. Keyn vort redt nit keyner tsvishn zikh, vi shtume leben mir. Bay yedn arbet di fantazye bloyz eyns: a shtikl broyt. Ale tsvantsik trakhtn dos zelbe. Keyner trakht mer nisht vegn der frayhayt. Alts iz toyt. Bloyz eyns lebt nokh oyf der velt. Eyns nokh. Dos iz a shtikl broyt.</p>	<p>Our hearts are crying. We do not speak a word to each other, as if we were mute. Our imagination reflects to us only one single thing: a piece of bread! The whole twenty of us think the same. No one thinks about freedom anymore. Everything has died off. Only one thing is still alive in the world. Just one: That is a piece of bread!</p>
<p>Azoy marshirn mir mit langzame trit. Keyner hert nisht di geshrayen fun di halbshikere vakh-layt, velkhe zidlen un shrayen mir zoln geyn shneler. Mir hern itst keynem nisht. Afile ven eyner krigt a shturkh mitn priklad in der zayt, filt er oykh nisht di veytikn.</p>	<p>So, we march with slow steps. No one is listening to the shouting of the drunken guards, who scold and shout that we should go faster. We no longer hear anyone. Not even when one gets a butt in the side does he feel the pain.</p>

(1) lit.: "who hover in the air "

<p>s'iz shoyn keyn zaft nishto in moyl. Di lipn mitn gumen zaynen fartriknt di tsung iz hart farkvoln fun kelt.</p>	<p>There is no more spit in our mouths. Our lips and palates are dried up, and our tongues are swollen from the cold.</p>
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„akh a shtikl broyt, vi gliklekh iz a mentsh vos est a shtikl broyt!“...

eyner fun undz iz gefaln khaloshes. Vayter ken er shoyn nisht geyn. Di oygn zaynen bay im halb ofn. Der kop farvorfn oyf hintn. Ale blaybn shteyn. Der vakh-postn git dem farkhaleshtn a zets mitn shtivl:

oyfshteyn, farflukhter shvey-n-yude!- ober der farkhaleshter hert nisht mer di vilde geshrayen. Fir man nemen im oyf di akslen un mir marshirn vayter.

Halb tsen in ovnt zaynen mir ongekumen leben toyer fun lager. Di andere velkhe zaynen gekumen frier, shteyen oyf der gas, ayngeshtelt tsu tsen, baym tseyl-apel. Der gantser lager vart oyf undz. Der lager-firer kritst mit di tseyen, vi a vilder volf, shrayt, zidlt mit di ergste shmutsikste verter. Dem halb toytn leygn mir avek oyf der erd. Mir shteln zikh ale in der ray tsum apel.

-„shtilshtand! Mitsn op!“

mir shteyen vi farshteynert. Ibergetseylt. Der lager shtimt. itst shteln zikh ale in der ray nokh der portsye broyt.

Mide zaynen mir arayn in der groyser, kalter halye, vu s'iz nisht geven keyn oyvn, nisht keyn betn. Bloyz nase, shvartse erd un tsum tsudekn zikh- bloyz eyn koldre far finf perzon. Der shney iz arayn ineveynik durkh di lekher. In a vinkl lign shoyn etlekhe toyte, velkhe men hot bashit mit vaysn khlor.

Der velkher iz gefaln in veg fun undzer komande- iz shoyn oykh tsvishn di toyte. Der merderisher „Ta(r)zhan“ hot im mitn shpits fun shtivl di lungen opgeshlogn, rufndik im „foyer hunt“ un „az er makht zikh un vil nisht oyfshteyn“.

Mir zaynen gevorn shtark antoysht fargleykhndik dem lager mit di frierdike. Zayendik in Oyshvits hot yeder fun undz getrakht, az ergers ken shoyn nit zayn. Dos zelbe iz oykh forgekumen in Shtuthof. Nor itst, kumendik aher, tsvishn felder, in a groyser halye vu men hot arayngetribn 600 mentshn zey zoln boyen shoseyen, nisht gebndik zey keyn vaser, keyn betn tsum shlofn, 200 gram broyt mit a bisl kalter zup fun ribn mit vaser,

"Oh, a piece of bread! How happy a man is, who has a piece of bread to eat!"...

One of us has fainted; he cannot go on. His eyes are half-open, his head tilted back. Everyone stops. The guard is giving the fainter a kick with his boot:

"Get up, damned pig-Jew!" But the fainter no longer hears the wild shouting. Four men take him on their shoulders, and we are marching on.

In the evening at half past nine, we arrived next to the gate of the camp. The others, who came earlier, are standing in the street, in rows of ten, at roll call. The whole camp is waiting for us. The camp leader is gnashing his teeth like a wild wolf, shouting and scolding with the dirtiest words. We lay the half-dead on the ground, and all are lining up for roll call.

"Stand still! Caps down!"

We stand transfixed. Recounted. The camp is in order. Now, everyone is lining up for his portion of bread.

Tired, we return to the large, cold hall where there are no stove and no beds. Only wet, black earth, and for covering only one blanket for five people. Through the holes, the snow is falling in. In a corner, there are already several dead bodies, over which white chlorine has been poured.

The one of our squad who fell over, is also already lying among the dead. The murderous "Tarzan" had smashed his lungs with the tip of his boot, shouting: "Lazy dog, you're only pretending that you can't get up!"

Comparing this camp with the previous ones, we were very disillusioned. In Auschwitz, each of us thought that things could not get any worse. It was the same at Stutthof. But now, when we came here between fields, into this big hangar, where 600 people were herded to build highways, but were not given any water and no beds to sleep in, with just 200 grams of bread to eat with a little cold watery beet soup...

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dos iz shoyn umeglekh ibertsutrogn. Shoyn dem ershtn tog lign azoyfil toyte un halb toyte.

Azoy hobn mir opgearbet tsvey vokhn un fun di zeks hundert zaynen gevorn fir hundert. Dan hot der lager-firer, Tazhan, abisl farbesert undzer lage. Er hot gebrakht betn un shtroy, far yedn a koldre. Dos esn hot zikh oykh farbesert. S'iz shoyn ober geven tsu shpet. Di merhayt fun lager zaynen shoyn geven halb tsum shtarbn. Yedn tog flegt zikh mern di shterblekhkeyt. Nokh zeks vokhn zaynen geblibn drey hundert farmaterte, oysgeloshene arestantn.

Di kelt un di shneyen hobn tsugeholfn der farnikhtung fun lager. Nokh tsvey monatn zaynen mir shoyn geven nisht mer vi 150 arbets-feike mentshn. Yedn tog flegn mir hobn di amerikaner un englishe avyonen, velkhe flegn bashisn dem lager. Fun eyn bashisung in der nakht, ven mir hobn nisht getort aroys oyf der gas, zaynen gefaln zekhtsik mentshn. Di avyonen hobn nisht gevust, az do iz a lager vu es gefinen zikh yidn. Far zey iz dos geven a militerisher punkt un zey flegn im yedn tog bashisn.

Ven mir zaynen shoyn geblibn nisht mer vi hundert arbetsfeike, hot men oysgeklibn tsen mentshn tsvishn velkhe ikh bin oykh arayngfaln tsum arbetn baym oysgrob'n bombes. Dos hot zikh gerufn „bombn-komande“. Di arbet iz bashtanen in arumforn iber shtet un derfer oyftsugrob'n di bombes velkhe hobn nit oyfgerisn.

Mir zaynen geven zeyer tsufridn fun der arbet. Ershtns flegt yeder bakumen mer tsum esn un tsveytns flegn mir aleyn kenen epes „organizirn“. Di arbet iz geven zeyer a rizikalische. Yede sekunde zaynen mir geshtanen farn toyt. Nor a kleynem rir mitn ridl in der bombe, ven zi hot nokh dem tsinder un es kumt for an oyfrays. Di Daytshn flegn nisht tsugeyn nont tsum plats vu mir hobn gearbet. Derfar flegn mir arbetn vi mir hobn farshtanen.

Ikh hob gearbet baym aroysdreyen dem tsinder. Di hant hot mir keyn tsiter nisht gegebn vayl vos tsu farlirn it shoyn nisht geven.

this is really unbearable now. On the very first day, there are already so many dead and half-dead people lying there!

So we worked for two weeks, and out of the 600, 400 of us remained. Thus, the camp leader Tarzan somewhat improved our situation. He brought beds and straw, and a blanket for each. The food also improved. But it was already too late; the majority of the camp was dead sick. Every day, the mortality increased. After six weeks, 300 tortured, debilitated prisoners remained.

Both the cold and the snowfalls contributed to the destruction of the camp. After two months, we were no more than 150 people fit for work. Every day, the American and British planes flew and strafed the camp. During a night shelling, when we were not allowed to go out on the street, 60 people fell. The pilots did not know that this was a camp with Jews inside. For them, it was a military point that they used to bombard daily.

When there were no more than a hundred of us left being able to work, ten people were selected, among whom was myself. We were to work in the "bomb crew", digging bombs. The work consisted of driving over the towns and villages and digging out the bombs that had not exploded.

We were very content with this work. First, we were given more to eat and second, we were able to "organize" something on our own. The work was very dangerous. Every second, we risked death. Just a small movement with the shovel in the bomb, and it would explode, if it still had a detonator. The Germans usually did not approach the places where we were working. Therefore, we used to work as we liked.

My work involved unscrewing the igniters. My hand wasn't even shaking, because I had nothing left to lose.

Der lager in Tayf(l)ingen hot zikh likvidirt. Di gezintere hot men ibergefirt in a tsveytn lager. A kleyner arbets-lager- Shteynberg-Doytmergen.

Then the camp in Tailfingen was disbanded. The healthier persons were transferred to another camp, that is, a small labor camp: Steinberg (Schömberg)-Dautmergen.

An excerpt of the extensive listing of all prisoners of the subcamp Hailfingen-Tailfingen, see https://www.academia.edu/45015778/Die_H%C3%A4ftlinge_des_KZ_Au%C3%9Fenlagers_Hailfingen_Tailfingen

Alex Sofer wurde am 5.5.1924/1922 in Krynki (Polen) geboren (Mutter Brocha Schuster). Er wurde am 26.1.1943 mit „einem Transport des RSHA aus den Ghettos in Sokolka und Jasionowka“ nach Auschwitz deportiert (93 886; Czech S. 393). Am 28.10.1944 wurde er nach Stutthof (100 073) und von dort im November 1944 nach Hailfingen (40 889) gebracht. Er kam nach Dautmergen und war im DP-Lager Gailingen und Stuttgart.

Q:

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Author: Volker Mall, KZ Gedenkstätte Hailfingen-Tailfingen. A note: In the meantime, we learned that the author, Abraham Soifer, alias Alex Sofer, was born on May 5, 1922.