

From the Testimony of Miriam Steiner: “We Began to Take In the Enormous Loss”

From the testimony of Miriam Steiner, born in 1929 in Hungary. Deported to the Auschwitz and Ravensbruck camps. Liberated by the Red Army in the middle of a death march to Germany. Immigrated to Palestine in 1946.

"In fact, we were supposed to begin normalization, the great crisis had not yet hit us. It began when my cousin came home a few days later. I barely recognized him, because that kid, that big slob, had two big ears, a big nose and two cavities for eyes. He began to recover from his "Musselman" condition. For the first time I cried, I fell on him and I cried at how he looked, because then I suddenly woke up. He was the start of my crisis, of the crisis of ours as a whole... He embraced me and said only this: "You should know one thing, don't wait for your father and your brother". He repeated that many times... My mother and I received a small flat, a one-room flat in grandmother's house, and mentally speaking things began to get worse and worse, because people started to come back with all kinds of stories, and we knew that only we two were left. The second thing was the possibility of making a living. Besides the soup and food and the meager clothing we received from the Joint, you could deal in the black market, if you knew how. My mother and I didn't know how to do such things. We knew for certain that others had found the gold which my father had hidden in the garden, we even knew who, but for the time being the grief was so great that this did not affect us, because that was not our real loss.

"Now we began to realize the enormity of the loss, we began to understand that Grandfather and Grandmother and hardly any of our relatives had returned, only that one cousin, and his father also returned later on. People said we shouldn't wait for them, but the truth is that we waited all the time for my father. And I only want to say that I often look around, as though I am still searching... not for Father, it is my brother for whom I am still looking all the

time. I know it is completely unrealistic, because formally I am not searching, I, I cast about with my eyes..."

Source: Kleiman, Yehudit and Shpringer-Aharoni, Nina (eds.), *The Pain of Liberation*, Yad Vashem, Jerusalem, 1995, p. 47.