From the Testimony of Laura Varon about the Fate of her Family in Auschwitz

My Uncle Rachamim one day was coming from work and he saw a line of men going toward the gas chamber and my father was there among them. And the last thing my father said to my Uncle Rachamim was, “Take care of the children.” Me and my brothers and my sister. This is the last thing that my father said before he went to the gas chamber.

Q: Your father went to the gas chamber in Auschwitz?
A: In Birkenau.

Q And your mother?
A: My mother went the first day. I didn’t see her anymore. So now my brothers, every morning after the Zählappell [roll call] we went talk to the men. My father was crying already. He didn’t have anymore will. He was depressed and he contracted diarrhea, dysentery and he was selected for the gas chamber. And then we used to go there and I used to ask Salvo Cohen, my friend, “Where are my brothers?” “Oh, they are working.” “Where is my uncle?” “He is working.” One day they were not there anymore. They all were gone, all gone. And I found out after that my brother, Asher, with my Uncle Rachamim, went to Buchenwald. My brother Joseph and my Uncle Shmuel went to Mauthausen, and my friends Jacko and Salvo went to Dachau. So in the meantime, Maruska saved my life because I developed here “boilers”, big things, red here. When you have that, some prisoners have here, they cut the arm from the prisoner. So if there is a selection and you have to pass naked, you could see that and they put you in a small room and one side it’s for the gas chamber. Maruska told me - I was crying - Maruska told me, “Don’t worry.” Maruska, the Russian woman. “Don’t worry. I will bring you some flour and honey and you mix it. You put it here for a few days and then the pus is going to come out and you will feel better. In fact, she saved my life. And then I didn’t see her one day. I always believed that Maruska was an angel.

Q: How old was she, do you know?
A: She was twenty. She was so nice, so gentle woman. And she was from Moscow.
Q: She was Jewish?
A: No. Political prisoner.

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