

From the Testimony of Marlot Wandel on Hiding in the Radom Ghetto

...It was during one of the Radom ghetto sorting times where they were looking for children and older people. They were always assorting us. It's just like you have in the refrigerator fruit and vegetables and they're rotten - the rotten you throw out and the unripe ones you can't use sometimes either. So they were doing continuously almost, on a daily basis through the years because they were using us as slaves like in Egypt. They were using us for very productive work, all the able-bodied people and the Jews, they tried to be able-bodied because this was, they knew if they couldn't work one day or one minute they would be sent to death. So the children and the older people were always vulnerable. My mother wasn't older at the time so she was not vulnerable, but I had a brother three years younger than I who was eventually killed through a children's transport in one of the camps. And we had to flee from the ghetto in order not to be sent away with the children's transport to death. So my mother arranged with somebody who had a factory of leather goods - in Radom they had a lot of factories. The Poles had factories and a lot of them were owned by Jewish people, prominent Jewish people - that we would be hiding in the leather factory, my brother and I. So we smuggled ourselves out of the ghetto. We spoke German. We didn't look Jewish. I was at the time - this must have been 1940, probably at least 1940 - so I was not even ten. I was born December '30. And he was seven. We went to the place where we were supposed to go and then the Nazis came in there too and we couldn't stay there and so we went on a "boydem" - what is it called in English? Under the rooftop and we hid there for awhile and we were in hiding for almost a week on and off in different places.

Q: Just the two of you?

A: Just the two of us. And nobody knew where we were and nobody knew if we were caught, sent with the children's transport. They cleaned out the ghetto and when we appeared a week later it was just an incredible story. My sister mentioned it today and it sort of slipped my memory. But the fact that

we appeared and that we survived it, it was just a miracle. I don't even think that people helped us as much as just HaShem.

Q: Do you remember any details? If you were there a week, what was there to eat and to drink?

A: We were laying flat because there was no room under the roof for us to even sit up. We were laying flat for the most part. We probably....about eating, in the winter snow was nourishment. Snow was like water and snow keeps us alive. At times, on a march, you know, we eat vegetables in the field, whether they were "borrekes", whether they were onions, whatever - plants and vegetations can sustain you.

Q: But at that age to realize it.

A: It was a matter of survival. In other words, we constantly...the point of it was also that we were never long enough in one place to be able to feel secure enough in one place. It's a terrible situation where you know you're being sent from room to room in a ghetto. In other words, always smaller and smaller, from apartment to a room to sharing a room to a "pritchke" which is the bed in the concentration... the room around you, the breathing space was always being shrunk and it was a very insecure existence because you didn't know from one day to another what would be. It also, in the time of the "shoppen", so we came back to the ghetto and they were just grateful we were alive through a miracle. We survived a week outside without anyone knowing we were Jewish. We somehow got back in. Being children and I think, speaking German and looking non-Jewish might have helped. My brother was blond, blue-eyed.

Source: Yad Vashem Archives 0.3- 9416