

My Sister Jolana



This is a picture of my sister Jolana Laufer, nee Singer. I don't know where and on what occasion it was taken.

My sister Jolana was the only one of my siblings to survive. Jolana was in Auschwitz, and then in other camps, but ended up in Bergen-Belsen.

When I returned home, I met one girl from Mliecno that told me about her. Two days before the liberation she was walking along in Bergen-Belsen, and some girl was lying there, under a tree.

She heard her calling her name. She didn't even recognize her. It was my sister Jolana. She'd caught typhus there, and her hair had fallen out. She caught all sorts of diseases, and was close to dying.

The Swedish Red Cross picked them up. Back then that girl told me that she likely wouldn't live, because thousands there had died, mainly of typhus, and before that she'd had other diseases from Auschwitz.

In the end she survived. Jolana didn't even return home. For one there wasn't where [to return to], and then she married a fellow prisoner. He was from Hungary. His name was Laufer. Then left for New York together.

In New York they ended up in the company of extremely Orthodox Jews, and they became ultra-Orthodox as well.

Their son is a rabbi and at the same time a lawyer in New York. I've never gone to visit them, but we used to meet, they came to see me in Canada.

Unfortunately I don't know if my sister is still alive, because already five years ago she had a stroke, and I didn't know absolutely anything about her.

I maintained contact with her through one nephew who was from Zelizovce.

They took care of her, which means that she had a nurse and all. I've got this impression that she must have died long ago, but that they're keeping it a secret from me.

I still write her during the holidays. She was the only one from our family who remained alive.