

# “When I get some bread, I’ll send it to you”

by Lital Beer ■ Research and Translation: Miriam Moschytz



■ Siegfried Rapaport, c. 1938. Yad Vashem Photo Archives

■ In 1938, the Rapaport family from Hanover, Germany was deported to Poland, but the Polish authorities refused to take them in and they were immediately returned to Germany. The father, Moritz-Moshe, was sent to jail, and the mother, Miriam, fell ill and was hospitalized. Every day, the four children visited their parents. Moritz-Moshe was finally deported to Poland, and all trace of him was lost. One of the daughters, Resi (now Varda), was sent to England in the hope that her siblings would eventually join her, but the rest of the family was deported to Riga. In 1944, the youngest son, Paul, was sent to Auschwitz. Miriam and her remaining children, Paula and Siegfried, were sent to the Stutthof concentration camp.

In Stutthof, Siegfried was separated from his sister and mother, but they managed to stay in contact by letter. One of these letters survived the war and is located in the Yad Vashem Archives. Siegfried, aged 11, wrote to Miriam: “Dear Mommy, How are you? I got your two letters. I am healthy. You surely don’t have a stomachache anymore. Mommy, I think you need bread. I am going to Block 3. I have enough for myself so please don’t worry about me. [...] I hope we will all be together again soon. When I get some bread, I’ll send it to you, you surely know that, Mommy.”

The childish handwriting on the aging paper reveals a boy sensitive to his mother’s health and needs, a boy who misses his family but also tries to offer them some comfort, a boy who – amidst the horror of a concentration camp – takes on the role both of breadwinner and supporter, mature way before his time. Later on in the letter, he continues: “Mommy, please send me some writing paper, that is why I haven’t written. Our block will be gassed in the next few days, Mommy, that’s why I have this paper. Everything is being pasted over so I stole this piece of paper.”



■ Page of Testimony for Siegfried Rapaport submitted by his sister, Varda

The letter is written on a long, narrow strip of paper. According to his sister Varda, Siegfried was referring to the upcoming fumigation of the block. The building was either sealed or marked by strips of paper glued over the windows and doors. Siegfried took advantage of this opportunity to send a few words to his mother.

The letter ends with the following: “Mommy, I kiss you, give my regards to Paula. Soon we will be cooking potatoes again.” But the young boy’s hopes were never realized. Siegfried died in 1945 during a death march. His mother died of typhus about two weeks after liberation. Paula, who survived, gave the letter to her sister Varda, who later passed it on to Yad Vashem for safekeeping.

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