

Lona Strauss-Dreissig, Holocaust Survivor

Good morning.

My name is Lona Veronika Strauss, from Höllenreiner's house.

Here in Auschwitz, I do not want to talk about my life, even though I have been victim of discrimination since childhood.

But what has been done here to our brothers and sisters cannot be compared to anything else. I would not like to talk about it in detail, as their fates are known all over the world. I just want to remind the story of my godmother Lona Veronica Sattler, from the house of Höllenreiner, her husband Karl and their five daughters.

Karl Sattler was an Austrian Sinto and fought for Germany in the ranks of the Wehrmacht. His wife was home and the elder girls went to school in Munich. Karl Sattler was released from the Wehrmacht and arrested with his whole family. They were taken to the police station on Ettstrasse in Munich. They were not allowed to take anything with them. They were told that they would be resettled and everything they needed for life would be received there.

After a few days in prison, when almost all of Sinti in Munich were arrested, all - old, young, healthy, ill - were rushed into freight cars and the door were locked from the outside.

There was no place to lay, there was no food, drink, wash or toilet. On this journey to Auschwitz, with complete premeditation, people were denied their dignity so that they could not show any resistance.

My godmother was a strong woman and when the wagon's door opened, she encouraged her family, saying, "Thank God! Now everything will be fine. We will get food and drink. No matter how hard we will have to work after the resettlement, the most important thing is that we are alive and together."

They soon realized they were in hell. In the hell of Auschwitz, where real devils lived in human skin. Here, these devils could impose their sadistic tendencies with impunity.

My godmother, her husband and three daughters aged 9, 10 and 12 were murdered in a gas chamber. Their Sinti names were Ruzi, Kerscha and Kellermädl. The same fate was encountered by the daughters of Konrad's uncle: Musla, Weichslaa and Lolitschei. Their names passed down in my family from generation to generation, we honour them and swear they will never go away into oblivion. We owe them and all the others who were murdered here.

I would like to thank all those who have fought and struggled to be able to commemorate our loved ones here and to make sure their memory does not perish.
Thank you