

## IN THE SATELLITE CAMP EIDELSTEDT: HÉDI FRIED & LIVIA FRÄNKEL

The story of two women who came to the Eidelstedt camp in September 1944 puts a face to the fate of 500 Jewish women. The sisters Hédi and Livia Szmuk, born in 1924 and 1927, came from Sighet in northern Romania. Their middle-class Jewish family was expelled from its home by German troops in 1944 and taken to the Sighet ghetto along with 13,000 other Jews. In May 1944, the family was deported to Auschwitz in overcrowded railroad cattle cars.



The Szmuk Family 1934 (private photo)

### From Auschwitz to Eidelstedt

Immediately after their arrival at the Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp, the parents were murdered in the gas chambers. The two daughters were classified as "fit for work", their hair was shaved off and they were given prisoners' clothing. After a few weeks, Hédi and Livia were transported to Hamburg. From September 1944, they worked in Eidelstedt, a satellite camp of Neuengamme main camp. Hédi and Livia were employed in the construction of 140 makeshift homes at *Jarsmoor*, among other places, which were built on behalf of the Reichsbahn for bombed-out railroad employees and their families.

### Liberation and life after the war

On April 4, 1945, the camp was cleared by the SS and the weakened women were driven to the Bergen-Belsen camp. They went without food for several days and arrived half-starved. In Bergen-Belsen they were liberated together with thousands of other prisoners by British troops on April 15, 1945. Through the mediation of the Red Cross, the sisters came to Sweden in July 1945, where they married and started families a few years later. In the 1980s, they felt the need to pass on their experiences to the following generations. Hédi had studied psychology and founded *Café 84* as a drop-in center with therapeutic services for Holocaust survivors. She died in November 2022 at the age of 98. Livia worked for many years in the *Holocaust Survivors Association* and visited schools, including schools in Eidelstedt, to talk about her experiences with young people.



Forced laborers building prefabricated houses in Hamburg. The exact location is unknown. (Concentration camp memorial site Neuengamme)



Livia Fränkel, (\* 1927), 2014  
(Mark Mühlhaus/attenzione)



Hédi Fried (1924 – 2022), 2014  
(Mark Mühlhaus/attenzione)



Left: Livia and Hédi in Stockholm in 1946 (private photo)

Below: A group of Jewish persons from Hungary arriving  
at Auschwitz in the summer of 1944 (Bundesarchiv)



***"Hitler's goal was to kill all Jews.  
But as you can see, Hitler did not  
succeed! I live on in my children and  
grandchildren."***

***– Livia Fränkel, 2017 –***

