

סאנסקי מוסט

SANSKI MOST

DERVENTA דרוונטה

TRAVNIK טראוויניק

BIJELJINA ביילינה

BRČKO זאווידוביצי' ברוציקו

DOBOJ דובוי

ZAVIDOVIC

ואגרב

TUZLA טוזלה

ZAGREB

VLASENICA ולאסניצה

ZENICA זניצה

VISOKO ויסוקו

ŽEPČE ז'פצ'ה

SARAJEVO

VIŠEGRAD

בלגראד

וישגראד

BEOGRAD

WE MOSTAR מוסטאר

SURVIVED...4

YUGOSLAV JEWS ON THE HOLOCAUST

סקופייה

SKOPLJE





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## *Cvi RAAM*

### A LONG WAY TO SALVATION IN ISRAEL



*Cvi was born in Vinkovci in 1928 of father Oto and mother Ružica, née Nojman (Neumann). He was the only one of the family to survive the Holocaust.*

*The family moved from Vinkovci to Zagreb in 1934. In Zagreb Hari attended the Jewish school in Palmotićevea street, and continued in the real grammar school.*

*He left for Palestine in February 1943 and lived in kibbutz Shar Haamakim, where he completed the technical school.*

*Cvi served in the Army and worked until his retirement in the publishing house „Sifrijat ha poalim“ (the Workers’ Bookstore) in Tel Aviv.*

*From his marriage to Belgrade-born Mirjam Jaroši he has three daughters – Nili, Efrat and Karmela, and five grandchildren.*

While in Vinkovci, we lived with the family of my maternal grandfather Adolf Nojman (Neumann). Grandfather was a baker. When the big bakery was to be built in Zagreb in 1934, which could employ all members of our family, we all moved that year to Zagreb. Unfortunately, the business did not take off well. Grandfather’s nostalgia for Vinkovci was so great that he and grandmother returned there. Every year after the school was over for summer, I would go to stay with them for the summer vacation.

At home we spoke Croatian. I think that my parents also spoke German because as a child I went to the German kinder-garten but I did not like

the language. Until the war I knew nothing of anti-Semitism; any fighting among us children was just the usual children's play. I went to the Jewish school in Palmotićeve street, but I do not remember the teacher's name. I remember only the name of the religious teacher – Šamika Romano Samuel. Since age eight I was member of the Hashomer Hatzair, my menahel at that time was Tirca Broclavski, and later Bar Leva. The older members met us at school and we enjoyed being together in the organization.

Father worked for „Unitas“, the first national thread factory. In early 1940's the factory moved to the new premises at the outskirts of the town. Father supervised the construction and was in charge of installing machines so, in order for him to be able to invest more time in his work, we were given an apartment within the factory grounds and we moved out of the town to the Rapska road.

We heard about the beginning of the war on the radio. I remember that it was Sunday and that we were appalled to realize that a war had broken out.

I no longer went to school, I do not know if it was due to school vacations or due to the war. When classes were resumed, there was a notice on the school door saying that Jews could not go back to school. It was the second boys' grammar school. I was already aware that the war had started, that the Independent State of Croatia was proclaimed and that many things would change.

Since the outbreak of the war we had no news from Vinkovci. Until leaving Yugoslavia in 1943 I did not know what was happening with grandmother and grandfather that I was very much attached to.

My family continued to live next to the factory where father worked. He was fooling himself that he was protected, since he was working in a factory producing for the military industry. There were also some of our relatives living in Zagreb, and one of them fled to Dalmatia in a timely manner. From there he sent a man to deliver a letter asking us decisively to pack the essentials and flee. But father reacted to this by stating that that was nonsense and that no one was going to inflict any harm to him. There were three Jews working in „Unitas“: the director, G. Broclavski; the chief textile engineer, Papo, who was later found to be a communist; and my father. Immediately after the well known bomb diversion at the main post office building, retaliation measures were taken. Papo was already on the lists as a communist, and when they came to take him away from the factory they also took my father. I never saw him again. All that I know is that he was among the first inmates in Jasenovac and, as I heard from others, he managed to stay alive until just before the war was over. He was relatively young, strong, he had been physically active all his life ...



He was first detained in the prison on Savska street. I went there with my mother to visit him. We took food and other necessities, but we never actually saw him. We would come to the prison, but were not allowed inside. One day we were told that he was no longer there.

I think that we received on several occasions postcards through the Red Cross – these postcards could contain a maximum of 21 words.

Life was difficult after father was taken away, although the factory treated us fairly. For a while we continued to live in the same apartment, and later we were transferred into room built for factory guests, in the basement. There were shared toilets. We lived there until 1943, until my leaving for Palestine.



*CVI with mother RUŽICA, 1942*

In the meanwhile I was hiding for two or three months in the village Rača or Ruče, I do not remember the exact name, close to Velika Gorica. Namely, my mother had a brother, Šandor Nojman, married to a Catholic, Milica Cajner. Her family lived in the village. They gave me hiding although they were aware that I was a Jew. My uncle survived the war, because he was part of the home-guard units. He played in the fire brigade orchestra and later in the home guard's band. There was, actually, an order coming from authorities that fire brigade orchestras should be transferred to the home guards units. He was very much appreciated by his colleagues although it

was known that he was a Jew, and his fellow musicians agreed to this order and made a condition that this transfer happens „en bloc“, so he too was given home guard uniform and documents. This, however, did not save him from being evicted from his apartment. The Germans liked his apartment and they took it away. Uncle and his wife moved to Savska road.

The Jewish Religious Community was active throughout this time. They opened up a school, but I do not remember how many classes it had. Three, I think, for children of different age. The school was in Trenkova street number 7, on the upper floor, while the Community was on the ground floor. Behind my back, in the classroom was the cupboard where

the Torah was kept. That was where we prayed, but I was not religious and did not attend the prayers. All the teachers were volunteers. My class teacher was Zeev Glik (Glück), a psychologist by profession. We were lectured by dr Emil Švarc, his present name is Šomroni, a veterinary and secretary of dr Frajberger; and Mr. Frajberger himself taught us biology (Freiberger). He was there all the time. We also had calculus, but I no longer remember the teacher.

One day in 1942 we were told in school that Aliyah would be organized for children aged up to 16 and that those who wish to go should register. The transport was to consist of about eighty children, and that was the number registered in the original list. However, we heard nothing about it until the end of the year. Emil Švarc later told us that they tried to intervene via Hungary and inquire about the outcome of our certificates. It turned out that one transport of children had already left Hungary using our names. My subsequent inquiries about this intervention demonstrated that the whole thing was initiated by Mrs. Marija Bauer, who was living in Istanbul, as she wanted to save her family if at all possible.

Marija Bauer was born in Vinkovci, where she had a sister, married Tajtelbaum. They had a son, Hari, born the same year as I, a boy that I played with.

Our parting with our parents and the Rabbi Frajberger, whose son was also leaving with the group, was organized in Trenkova street. The parents were not allowed to see us off at the railway station. We were escorted to it by a nurse who had with her all our documents. I found out later that she was selected to escort us to the Hungarian border, because she was a communist.

When our group of eleven children arrived to Hungary, after travelling for three days, another goodbye ceremony was organized, at which all the names were read out aloud. The name of my friend Hari Tajtelbaum was called out as well. Hearing his name I jumped up, because I knew him. I was very much surprised to see instead of him another boy whom I did not know at all. The group which started from Zagreb included: Vera Alt (presently Dina Maestro), Rahel Atijas (presently Rahel Rotem), Ester Dojč (presently Ester Nir), Šimon Vajs – Šimon Cahor, Ruven Frajberger (died in the army, in Israel, in 1956), Dan Levi (deceased), Cipora Išah, married Hiršl (deceased), Jakica Maestro (deceased), Mira Mecger, living in Haifa, Nomi Štern (presently Nomi Cfoni), and I. Under the name of Hari Dajtelbaum there was Moše Rotem, from Slovakia. On the border between the Independent State of Croatia and Hungary there was a man from the Jewish Community of Budapest to meet us. We were instructed in the Jewish Community of Zagreb not to give anyone any information. I heard later that this

man complained later for this kind of conduct on our side: „What kind of children are they, I could not get a word out of them!“

In Budapest we stayed for three days. We were put up in a building and were not allowed to move freely. We were given some money to buy what we needed. As we moved on, the transport was made up of about one hundred children. We were taken by train to Bucharest, staying in the train all the time, kept warm at night by the engine. In Stara Zagora, Bulgaria, we were guests of members of the Jewish Community. A small section of our trip in Greece was highly problematic because that territory was occupied by the Germans and the SS.

At the border with Palestine we were met by Hilel Livni (Slavko Vajs) who took us under his auspices. We were taken to Haifa, to bet olim, where we stayed for two days, and subsequently we went to Shaar Haamakim, some fifteen kilometers from Haifa. More than fifty percent of Jews in that kibbutz were from Yugoslavia. Nomi Štern had an elder sister there.

We were treated as a youth group – studying half a day and working half a day. That idea was good for those who finished grammar school, but not so much for us younger ones because we did not manage to study enough. Thanks to the efforts of our teachers we were given an extra half year to study.

I was attending occupational education for an electrician, under the mentor Marko Koen, from Belgrade. I was working as electrician, tractor operator and driver. I was in Shaar Haamakimu since 24 February 1943, two weeks after leaving Zagreb. In early 1946 we were all mobilized for a Palmach group, the underground Israeli military. The military service lasted for two years. At end of 1947 most of the group was released, only about 15 percent stayed on as regular troops, including myself. I had the lowest military rank and a date was scheduled for me to go to officers' school, but I was injured and had to leave the army.

I returned to the kibbutz where I married Miriam Jaroši, daughter of the academic painter Anton Jaroši, born in Orahovica in the region of Slavonija. He had studied in Berlin, and fled with his family first to Budapest in 1933 and subsequently to Belgrade. My wife's father was an inmate in Mauthausen concentration camp and he survived thanks to his being a painter and painting portraits of all the Germans in the camp. Miriam and her mother, who were living in Belgrade at the time, had counterfeited documents and fled to the village Vapa, near Čačak, where they lived with a local family which was not aware of them being Jews.

Our two daughters, Nili and Efrat, were born in the kibbutz. In 1957 we left the kibbutz and went to Tivon, a place north of Shaar Haamakim. Our third daughter Karmela was born there. I worked as tractor and bulldozer



operator. After the great crisis in Israel in the 1960's we returned to the kibbutz. My wife died in 1975, after which I left the kibbutz. The daughters were already grown up. I continued to work in Tel Aviv until my retirement in the publishing house „Sifriat hapoalim“ (The Workers' Bookshop).

I wish to say in the end that all of us survivors from the Yugoslav group have maintained close links until the present times. Although we all have our families we also feel that the group is our extended family.