



THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

IN ZEMUN

Chronicle (1739 - 1945)

2007

# The Jewish community in Zemun

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*To my father Eugen, mother Ida, brothers David  
and Josip and all those who lost their lives in the  
Holocaust*





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# INTRODUCTION

The book before you was written without it having any pretensions to being a scientific-historical document. Its main aim was to save from oblivion that which still could be recovered, as there are very few of those who can bear witness to the life of Jews in Zemun between the World Wars and up to the moment of their deportation to the concentration camps of Jasenovac and Stara Gradiska on July 27, 1942.

The concept of the present book is to serve as a chronicle derived from the historical material collected and published to this day. Its first part is historical and deals with the settlement of Jews. It is a compilation of historical material and documents that the author had access to. This part could be further supplemented and expanded, should any new documents about the Jews of Zemun be found in the archives, although it is the opinion of the author that research work carried out by Dr. Slavko Gavrilovic has been thorough and wholly comprehensive.

In the monthly Jewish cultural edition of "Omanut", issue No.9; dated September 1940, Dr. Gavro Schwartz states in his editorial his assertion that "the Jewish Community in Zemun is one of the oldest in Croatia". The deduction made by Dr. Schwartz was based on the documents extracted by Dr. Urbach from the archives of the Zemun Jewish Community which he never returned. Based on Dr. Gavrilovic's research work it transpired that the Jewish Community was founded in the year 1739. This information became general knowledge to the Zemun Jews only toward the end of 1940, or early in 1941, since access to the Community archives had been a privilege of a few. This gave rise to public censure of certain prominent personages of the Jewish Community. At the same time a general feeling of regret that the bicentenary of the existence of the Community had not been celebrated in 1939 was expressed.

Regardless of the actual year of the establishment of the Jewish Community in this town, the fact remains that it functioned continually, from its founding, except for the years under occupation from 1941 to the fall of 1944. During this period its work was sporadic.

The Director of the Jewish Historical Museum in Belgrade, Ms. Milica Mihailovic, was generously supportive in the use of historical material. It can be safely asserted that everything relevant to the historical part of the chronicle was obtained from documents and publications kept at the Museum.

Former Zemun townsmen now living in Israel have further contributed to the volume of this chronicle by recalling certain people and events. They have also donated some of the photographs used in the book. A photo album with pictures dating between 1930 and 1938 from the heritage of the late Jaakov Jafe (Theo Schön) turned out to be priceless since names of people, organizations or groups, together with the year when the pictures were taken had been written at the bottom of a number of photographs. These valuable photographs were a major contribution in compiling the list of "Hashomer hatzair" membership and illustrating the chapter of the book on Zionism.

Ample consideration and book space has mainly been given to the period between the two wars; second in prominence is the period of occupation and deportation, while the post war period at the end of the book received considerably less attention.

The personal recollections of the author and detailed testimonials of the few Zemun Jews still living made it possible to chronicle the book in this manner. The names of these Zemun citizens have been listed at the end of this book.

The chapter of the book on the Zionist movement in Zemun was partly based on very scarce, written material found on the subject. The greater part of the chapter was written based on author's recollections and personal views and further supplemented with a number of statements obtained from survivors. Unfortunately, it was impossible to draw up a complete list of "Hasomer hatzair" members, while the list of members of its junior organization has been irretrievably lost. There are no survivors from this generation, so there was no one who could supply data on the subject.

Zemun is probably one of the few Jewish Communities that have a basically complete list of its victims of Fascism. For this we are indebted and grateful to the following gentlemen, sadly all deceased now: Mr. Willim Scheer, Mr. Alexander Franck, Mr. Ivan Goldstein and their many assistants. In the early days following the years of war they compiled data about the members of the Jewish Community that had been killed during the war. Thus, it was possible to come to a plausible approximation of members killed in concentration camps, jails and other places of execution. In all probability there are names that have been omitted, but there can be no doubt that those listed had met with a tragic death. We are left with the possibility that this tragic number could even be greater.

Each individual destiny would fill a book of its own, but sadly there are no living relatives or friends that could document the required elementary background for a book. It is impossible to give voice to the sum of foregone personal expectations, smothered joys and desires, severed courtships, hopes extinguished; to the desecrated intellects, knowledge and talent lost in the collective tragic fate of the Zemun Jews.

Nevertheless, data about Jewish families and individuals remains on record since, they too like their non-Jewish townsmen were only ordinary people with all the flaws and virtues of human nature.

During my conversations with survivors it soon became apparent that the majority willingly extended information about everything they could recall from memory. Despite questions raised by some why such endeavours were being made, since nobody cared anyhow, they nevertheless supplied data known to them. Finally, there were those who thought that no names should be mentioned and that it was sufficient to describe the collective tragedy of the Zemun Jews.

Doubtlessly, numerous views could be expressed about the ethics of writing a chronicle about one's hometown. But it is an undisputable fact that with the passing of time there is less and less available information about the Jews of Zemun, both in respect of individuals and families, about the organization of their lives and events important to them, since contemporaries of the collectively massacred Jews are inevitably passing away. Maybe, there will come a time when the young generation of Zemun Jews will want to know more about their ancestors.

## THE SETTLEMENT OF JEWS IN ZEMUN

Zemun (Semlin) is one of the oldest towns in the Balkans. During the reign of the Roman Empire it was called Taurunum, while it is recorded under the name of Zemlen in the XII century. During the period from 1521 to 1717 it was held by the Turks upon which followed the accession to Austria when it became a border town. Up to 1728 Zemun was governed by the Slavonic Chamber Inspection; from then it fell under private feudal rule, with little sympathy for Jews, both where their religion and national entity was concerned.

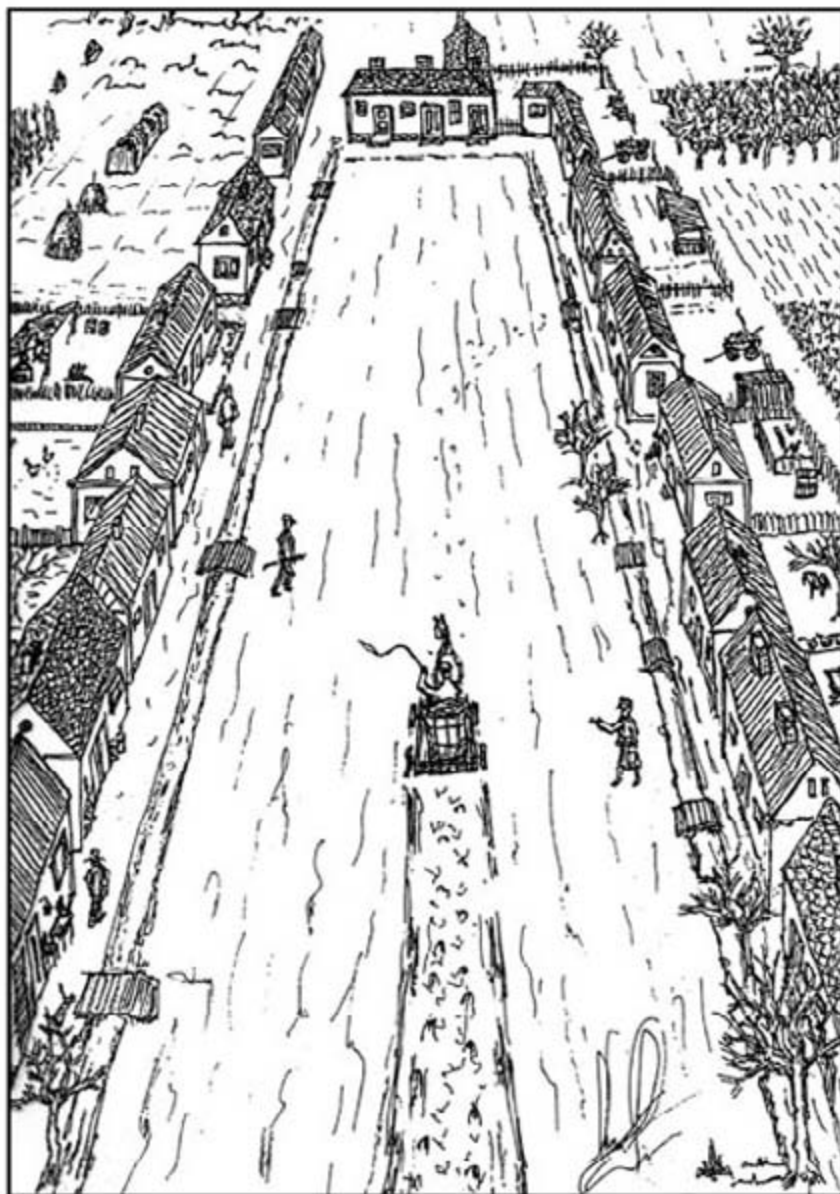
Considering the geographical position and the commercial importance of Zemun, it can be safely concluded that there were individual Jewish families already settled in this town during the middle ages, possibly even earlier than that. However, research of archive material published up to now, has shown that in the year 1726, Josif Isak and Isak Moses, both Jews, were definitely citizens of Zemun.

Once the Austrians took over the government of Zemun, the ethnic structure of Zemun inhabitants changed under the influence of Eugenie of Savoy and the Empress Maria Theresa. Into the then majority of Serbian inhabitants, first came Greek settlers, soon to be followed by Germans.

When Belgrade fell under Austrian authority in 1717, together with a large number of German settlers came a certain number of Ashkenazi Jews mostly tradesmen and craftsmen. When in 1739 the Turks once again established their rule in Belgrade, a group of some twenty, mainly, Ashkenazi families stayed on and finally settled in Zemun. Thus the year 1739 represents the date of the first settlement of Jews in Zemun as a group. From then on Jews have continually been deemed as citizens of Zemun.

Up to 1746, the status of Jews in Zemun as well as their living conditions hardly differed from those of Jews in other parts of Austria. They were equally treated as second rate cit-





JUDENGASSE (Dubrovacka Street) in the XVIII century  
- graphic by Milan Fogel -

izens faced with numerous impediments. One of the major restrictions was the choice of employment which lay open to them. Essentially, Jews were permitted to be craftsmen and tradesmen but only to the extent Christian craftsmen and tradesmen felt comfortable with.

At the time Zemun came within the bounds of the military frontier in the year 1746 the position of the Jews worsened by the imposition of new restrictions. Namely, Jews were forbidden to settle inside the area of military frontiers and were threatened with the prospect of being evicted from Zemun. However, they remained in Zemun following a decree issued on October 8, 1753 by Maria Theresa which granted the privilege to Jews already living in Zemun to remain in Zemun. On the same day the Empress granted to Rafael Salamon a "Turk" Jew and to his family and to the entire household permission to stay in the area of the military frontier for life.

According to the census of 1755 the following Jewish families lived in 15 houses in Zemun:

Rafael Salamon, Mayer Rechnitz, Elias Soret with his son in law Benjamin, Abraham Mayer with his son in law, Koloman Brandeis, Henoh Levi, Moses Koloman, Feischl the Jew (Judt), Moses Jew (Judt), Mandl Kleis, Lazar Keis, the widow of Abraham Lebl, Simon the glazier (Glaser), Salamon the Jew (Jude), Wolf the water carrier: the first four were marked as Turkish, and the remaining as German Jews. The cantor, the ritual slaughterer (shochet) and the school attendant resided in the sixteenth, so called, Jewish house. The records stated that they had all come from Belgrade in 1739.

The census dating from 1756 is more accurate and lists the following Jewish families living in their own houses:

*Rafael Salamon*, tradesman in scrap iron  
*Mandl Kleis*, tradesman in scrap iron  
*Moses Isaac*, wholesaler  
*Majer Rehnicer*, tradesman  
*Abraham Feischl*, distiller of brandy  
*Koloman Brandeis'* widow  
*Salamon Mestic's* widow  
*Markus Izak*, glazier  
*Abraham Lebl*, tanner  
*Wolf Enoh*, water carrier  
*Henoh Levi*, tailor  
*Lazar Keis*, tradesman  
*Hercl Kohen*, glazier  
*Mayer the blind*, tradesman  
*Simon Abraham*, tradesman

Living as tenants in houses owned by others the following are listed:

*Elias Soret*, tradesman  
*Josef Michel*, tradesman  
*Markus Natan*, distiller of brandy  
*Isaac*, rag-and-bone man, mender

In the sixteenth, so called, Jewish house, the cantor, the teacher, the ritual slaughterer (sochet) and the school attendant resided.

It had been recorded that all of them came from Belgrade.

In order to maintain the number of families to the granted thirty, only the first born son was allowed to marry, under the condition that he did not leave the family household. Should the second or any other son in line marry he had to

leave Zemun, i.e. the area of the military frontier. House ownership was allowed only to those privileged families which at the time of the Empress' grant had already owned houses.

The military authority kept a keen eye on the disposition and interests of Christians so that measures and decisions passed were, as a rule, detrimental to Jews. In Zemun Jews were not allowed to perform any public function in the municipal government, while, for example, the same right was given to Serbs and ethnic Romanians (Aromanians).

The animosity of the Germans toward the Jews was mainly biased by questions pertinent to religion. The Serbs and Aromanians saw them as their rivals in trade. Consequently various trade bans and restrictions were imposed. Such impositions mainly referred to craftsmen services which basically comprised the business of Jews.

Setting up of trade and craftsmen shops in the Main Street was obstructed, the tendency being to keep Jewish inhabitants grouped round Dubrovacka Street.

Nevertheless, despite all the problems the Zemun Jews were consistently faced with, there were certain decisions brought by authorities in charge which contributed to the preservation of the sense of community, religion and tradition. By the decision of the Slavonian-Srem military frontier in Osijek dated April 22, 1755 all existing and future Jewish judges and men of religion were granted the right to rule in private law-suits between Jews within the Zemun Jewish Community, and the Zemun Magistrate was instructed to extend official support and assistance to Jewish judges in performing their official duty in the above stated cases. Each year election of judges as well as inspection and reckoning was carried out in the presence of one member of the Town Hall



council. The necessity for more detailed regulation of lawsuits brought before Jewish judges consequently emerged and on May 10, 1799 the Jewish Community proposed the following measures to the Magistrate:

1. In cases where one Jew is suing another he shall primarily address his complaint before the Jewish Community, and only upon finding fault with the decision passed, can he refer his complaint to the Magistrate Court.
2. To extend the right to Jewish judges to sentence Jews to a 48 hour custody, with no interference from the Town Court.
3. No Jew can be entitled to approach the Municipal clerk "with exceptionally trivial matters" without the knowledge and prior consent of a Jewish judge.
4. In cases where two Jewish litigants come to a settlement before the Jewish Community in accordance with Jewish law, the ruling shall remain unaltered.

Regarding the submitted document the Magistrate decided:

1. That no Jew can turn directly to the Magistrate for "trivial matters", except when he has found fault with the ruling of the Jewish Community.
2. That no Jew and in particular bachelors shall be issued a passport, without the prior knowledge of a Jewish judge.

It is important to note that the degree of self-government of the Jewish Community achieved implied the right to self-regulation of all religious issues, the right to maintain a Jewish school etc. The school was later incorporated in the state education program. More will be said on this issue in the chronicle later. As already noted, Jews in Austria were inhab-

itants without civil rights, tolerated in the countries of the Empire by special favour of the ruler. Although they were permitted to engage in trade and crafts, various bans and restrictions were imposed on them even in these economic activities. Thus, for instance, when Christian traders figured out that the purchase and sale of old rags was a profitable business they lodged a complaint with the Austrian authorities. Following the said complaint Jews were forbidden to engage in this activity in entire regions of the empire. Something very similar happened with the purchase and sale of leeches. There were also various complaints against Jews made by Zemun tradesmen. One of their requests put before the authorities was to forbid the Jews of Zemun to deal in textiles, since their low pricing of goods made it impossible for others to sell their wares. Even innkeepers complained and requested that Jews be allowed to sell drinks only to their compatriots. As a rule the authorities conceded to all such requests, which resulted in a highly unfavourable economic environment for the Jewish population. However, Jewish tradesmen always managed to quickly find their footing, and create new sources of income by inventing new marketable items.

Bearing in mind the conditions stated it is clearly evident why in the census of 1756 out of the 19 privileged families, 11 Jewish families were listed as tradesmen, 7 craftsmen and one water carrier. The list does not include the cantor, teacher, sochet (ritual slaughterer) and the school attendant living in the so called Jewish house.

The structure of business activities of the Zemun Jews remained essentially unchanged even at the start of the nineteenth century which is evident from the table shown below:

In own house No.	A tenant in house No.	Name	Job	In Zemun from	No.of family members
151	-	Jakob Folia	tradesman	birth	8
-	440	Josun Amigo	tradesman	birth	6
-	253	David Cohen	tradesman	birth	9
153	-	Rosa Feischl widow	tradesman	birth	6
-	153	Feischel Hannoeh	tradesman	birth	5
-	148	Jacob Bilitz	tradesman	17th year	8
-	226	Jacob Wolf widower	rag tradesman	birth	4
-	248	Moyses Mayer Rechnitz	rag tradesman	birth	6
-	152	Lazar Mayer Rechnitz	tradesman	birth	4
-	248	Berl Mayer Rechnitz	tradesman	birth	6
-	227	Joseph Lobl	tradesman rag	24th year	7
142	-	Leon Abraham	tradesman	20th year	3
-	176	Haym Almoslino	tradesman	20th year	6
-	238	Samuel Wechsler	tradesman	4th year	5
-	160	Abracham Moyses	tradesman	birth	3
149	-	Renedic Moyses	brandy distiller	birth	3
-	152	Lobl Moyses	tradesman	birth	6
-	152	Jacob Moises	tradesman	birth	3
-	220	Hirschl Lobl	tradesman	14th year	5
-	235	Hirschl Ohl	tradesman	23rd year	6
-	151	Joel Isak	tradesman	birth	5
150	-	Abraham Lowy	tradesman	birth	8
221	-	Lobl Sonnenfeld	tradesman	28 year	9
-	154	Jacob Weis	tradesman rag	19th year	7
158	-	Moyses Herzel	glazier	birth	5

In own house No.	A tenant in house No.	Name	Job	In Zemun from	No.of family members
-	158	Jacob Herzel	glazier	birth	3
160	-	Joseph Herzel	tradesman	birth	5
-	222	Lobl Herzel	tradesman	20th year	9
-	227	Hirschl Klopfer	tailor	24th year	6
-	154	Salamon Hirschl	tradesman	birth	1
-	154	Jacob Abraham	musician	20th year	8
154	-	Abraham Frankel	tradesman	birth	4
-	242	Salomon Commando	tradesman	birth	2
-	152	Moyses Bohm	tradesman	30th year	
-	242	Michael Reich	tradesman	18th year	-
-	-	Samuel Freidenfeld	tradesman	9th year	
-	235	David Lobl	tradesman rag	16th year	7
-	152	Samuel Moyses	tradesman rag	9th year	5
-	-	Nachmy	water carrier	30th year	5
-	267	Rosina (widow)	tradesman rag	30th year	4
-	152	Hirschl Bohm	tradesman rag	9th year	8
-	-	Jacob Fridenberger	rabbi	6th year	4
-	-	Baroch Singer	sochet	10th year	5
-	-	Moyses Rosenzweig	teacher	2nd year	3
-	-	Selig Lowy	sexton	3rd year	2
				<b>Total</b>	<b>221</b>

*(The table from the book written by S.Gavrolovic: "Jews in Srem in XVIII and the first half of XIX century" has been translated from German. The data concerning the ownership of the decree on right of residence was not taken into account).*

From this census dating from 1815 we see that out of the 45 Jewish families living at the time in Zemun, 35 were tradesmen, 4 craftsmen and one family each of the rabbi, the teacher, slaughterer, musician, water carrier, and the sexton.

The increased number of families to that of 45 happened during the First Serbian Uprising in 1804 when a great number of Jews fled from Belgrade to Zemun. The problem who was put before the Emperor Franz on January 17, 1816 who resolved that the 30 Jewish families originating from the 19 which in 1753 had been given the privilege of residence in Zemun, were granted continued stay and ownership of 30 houses together with one Community house.

The problem of residence for the remaining 15 families remained unresolved right up to the turbulent events of 1848.

Out of 221 Jewish inhabitants there were 187 Ashkenazi and 37 Sephardim.

As a result of the proscription of settlement of Jews in Zemun and the restriction on their families to split physically upon the marriage of their sons and daughters, their number varied very little through the decades. According to censuses made by the Magistrate, the number of Jews listed through the years is as follows:

1808 - 242  
1831 - 263  
1840 - 285  
1847 - 277  
1863 - 211

As a town on the borderline of Austria and Turkey, Zemun became an important trading point, with a potential for making profit. The fact instigated a wave of relocation of

ethnic Romanians (Aromanians) and Jews. Upon pledging an oath of allegiance Aromanians were permitted to remain in Zemun, while there were instances when unprivileged Jews were ordered to sell their houses and property and leave town within a fortnight period. As early as 1781 Emperor Joseph decided that the State would profit by controlling the progress of educating Jews and their management. This measure prevented the Jewish people to spread and settle extensively inside the territory of the Empire. Further Jews could not be relocated to places where their presence had not been tolerated so far. They were to remain in locations where they had already settled and that only to a measure of toleration that was advantageous for the State.

By the same decision the use of the popular language of the Jews (probably Yiddish) was forbidden in public dealings. Upon a two year period of grace Jews were obliged to submit all their contracts, regulations, wills, invoices, ledgers and testaments, in short everything related to judicial and out-of-court matters in the standard court language of the country in question. The tax imposed for toleration, as well as all other taxes were not to be revoked, thus keeping at bay all Jewish "scum" without personal means of living and board.

Notwithstanding the prohibition of Jew settlement in Zemun, the number of their families rose above the permitted number of the privileged 30. For this reason the Jewish Community lodged an appeal for endorsement of residence for further 14 families, in all 50 individuals. By its decision dated June 16, 1848 the Ministry of War referred the said appeal for settlement to the Superior Municipal Council of Zemun.

However, the Revolutionary Committee, which in 1848, took over the government of the city paid little heed to the enactment of Imperial orders and for the time being left everything in a state of adjournment.

During 1848/49 rumors spread that with the aid of frontier men the Serbian population was preparing to do away with the Jewish and Catholic population. Although the rumors were unfounded, they generated vast anxiety and fear of pogrom.

The order issued by the Military Command in 1849 forbade Hungarian Jews to reside in the area of the Military frontier since they significantly aided the Hungarian uprising. So it came that the Council of Zemun also punished Simon Herzl (grandfather to Theodore Herzl) with a prison sentence of ten days in chains, but released him on bail paid by the Jewish Community for the duration of the Jewish holidays.

On June 16, 1852 the Jewish Community implored the Emperor Franz Joseph to render the same rights to the Jews of Zemun enjoyed by Jews in other Austrian provinces. The request was that, beside the first born son, the remaining sons could also marry without having to leave town. It was further requested that purchase of real estate be permitted. The request was denied by the Magistrate by its adverse ruling. Acting upon the ruling the Emperor also refuted the same request. Thus the restriction of the number of families to thirty remained in force. In the forthcoming years this number was to rise to 33, by obtaining special privileges.

In 1862 the Command of the Troup Brigade in Zemun requested the Magistrate to declare whether it upheld a restricted or unrestrained settlement of Jews. The Magistrate elected unrestrained settlement. Such a governmental standpoint was influenced by events taking place in Serbia at the

time. Mainly the departure of the Turks from Belgrade brought a tide of renewed enthusiasm and trade development. It was assumed that Zemun would become a major trading center instead of Belgrade.

The Austrian-Hungarian treaty of 1876, upheld the constitutional rights of citizens to a life of improved personal liberties, independence and equality of all citizens, Jews included. However, this did not immediately apply to the Jews of Zemun. But soon it became untenable that only in Zemun could a few hundred Jews be denied their citizen rights. On February 27, 1868 the Emperor Franz Joseph acknowledged to the Jews within the Military frontier equal rights to those of other confessions recognized by Austria. This brought to an end all restrictions regarding settlement, purchase of real estate and choice of employment. On March 25, 1868 the Mayor asked the General Command to discontinue any further collection of the protection tax imposed on Jewish families.

The result was that Jews in Austria were given the opportunity to choose professions of interest and personal ability. Despite the protracted transformation of Jewish population organization, Jews eventually penetrated all aspects of social life. Beside the prevailing number of tradesmen and craftsmen, the number of doctors, lawyers, engineers, professors and artists constantly increased. Very soon, certain Jews were acclaimed as leading professionals or widely acclaimed artists.



## RELIGIOUS LIFE

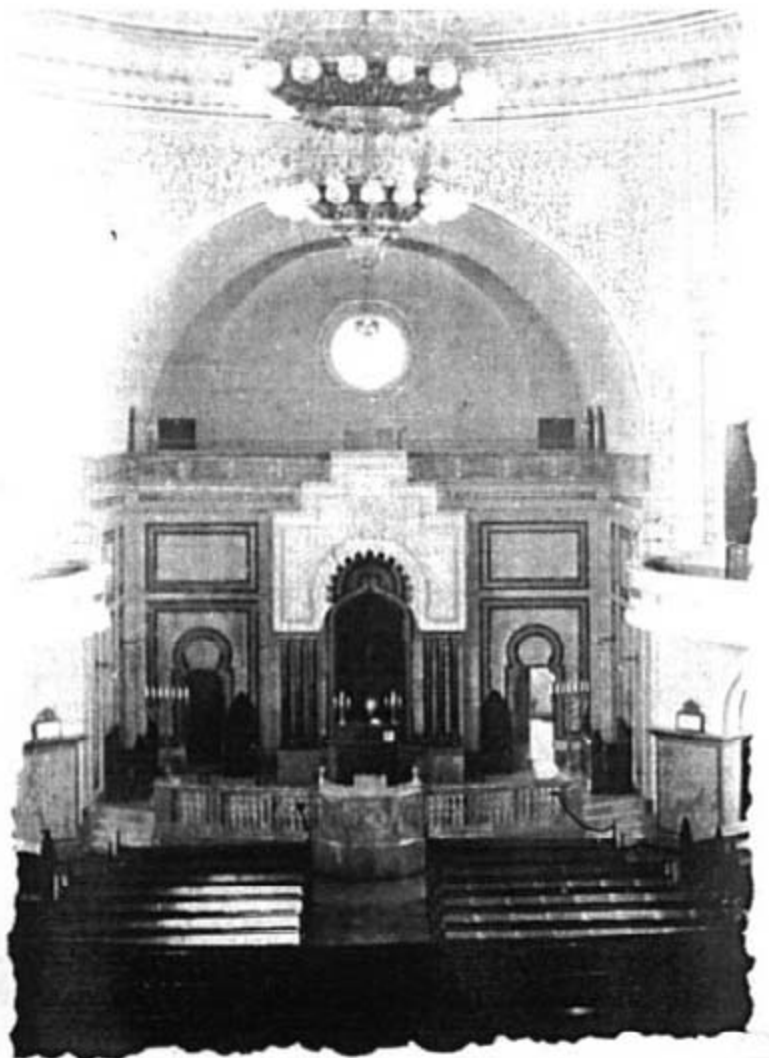
The settlement of Jews in Zemun was met by the opposition of authorities and the resistance and mistrust of the town inhabitants. This must have had a great influence on the organization of Jews into a body struggling more or less, collectively, to remain in this town. A fact supporting this assumption is that a so called Jewish house was built simultaneously with the erection of family homes. The rabbi, cantor, teacher, ritual slaughterer (shochet) and the school attendant lived in this house.

According to data available, a cantor, Rav Jehuda Jeruham, the first rabbi in Zemun, was already a resident of the so called Jewish house as early as 1739. Records state that he was a Turkish citizen, so that it is safe to presume that he was a Sephardim. A characteristic of this Jewish Community is that there was never any segregation between the Ashkenazi, who constituted the majority and the Sephardim. On the contrary, cooperation and mutual understanding were ever present. Among other manifestations of goodwill, marriage unions between the Ashkenazi and the Sephardim were a commonplace affair. The one thing the Jewish community uncompromisingly opposed was the marriage of Jews to gojim (non-Jews, Christians and others).

No record of the actual time when rabbi Jeruham came to Zemun has been found up to now. The only data available is that he died in Zemun in 1763.

The attendance of a rabbi in the mid 18th century documents that religious life of the Zemun Jews was practiced for more than a hundred years before the first synagogue was built.

It must have been very difficult to obtain authorization to erect a Jewish house of prayer. In front of the entire Jewish Community in existence in 1833, Jacob Isaac Albahari submitted an application to the Zemun Magistrate to approve the construction of a Jewish house of prayer. The application



A view of the original interior of the Ashkenazi temple.

was referred to the Slavonic General Command which on June 10, 1833 refuted the request made by Jacob Isaac Albahari, a Turkish subject. It was stated in the commentary that no aspirations to enhance the Jewish population of Zemun would be favoured.



**The interior of the Ashkenazi Temple - 1937**

The Jewish Community of Zemun was not discouraged by this rejection and negative response. Applications for a permit to build a house of prayer were submitted continuously. Such efforts finally brought positive results and the Ashkenazi synagogue was built in the year 1863.

On major Jewish holidays the temple brimmed with parishioners. On these occasions there was talk of the necessity to expand the temple. However, once the holidays were over, all such talk was laid aside.

The Jewish Community generated its revenue from a contribution levied on each household, rated in accordance with its economic wealth. There were also extraordinary revenues from benefaction. However, the construction of the temple required additional funds. So it transpired that seats in the synagogue were to be leased. In 1863, the same year the temple was completed, a charter to this end was issued (a copy of the document is shown).

The original appearance of the Ashkenazi temple is portrayed in the "Charter". In the years to follow no essential alteration was made to its exterior, although the fence to the right was removed because of a substantial enlargement of the synagogue court.

In his book "Arhitektonsko nasledje" (Architectural heritage) Zeljko Skalamera writes that the Ashkenazi synagogue was built in the year 1850 on the site of a former synagogue dating from the XVIII century. The Ashkenazi synagogue became a part of the Jewish cultural center together with the school and community hall. It is possible that the foundation stone was laid in the said year, but the synagogue was consecrated in 1863.



The Charter dating from 1863, which acknowledges that Abraham Leon had paid the rate for the rent of class I seats in the synagogue to the value of 178 florins. The additional text states that the same seat was taken over by *Dr. Leopold Brandeis* in 1910.

When German troops entered Zemun on April 12, 1941 the occupation authorities banned all gatherings in the synagogue.

The fate of this attractive building, built in the spirit of romanticism, was tragic. During the occupation (1941-1944) it was used as storage space, once it had been thoroughly plundered and all of its religious relics destroyed.

After liberation day the synagogue was reinstated to the Jewish Community, but the necessary funds to restore it to its original appearance were scarce. The house of prayer was not in service up to 1962 when it was sold to the Municipality of Zemun for a pittance. From then on it was once again used as storage space, then as a disco club and finally it became a restaurant.

However there are some indications that this temple will eventually receive the cultural recognition it deserves as an urban historical monument existing in the very heart of the old town centre.



The exterior of the Ashkenazi temple today.





Sephardic temple

The founding stone for the Sephardic synagogue was laid in the year 1871. The event received great notice, since the Vice Consul Demeter Ticio was present in the capacity of emissary of Emperor Franz Joseph. He was the one to place the founding stone. That special attention was given to this event was made obvious by the honoraries present: the president of the Magistrate Georg Bek, together with the staff of the Magistrate, the head rabbi S.D. Tauber, L. Alkalai, the president of the regional Sephardic Community, then Messrs. Samuel Israel Russo, Joseph Abinum Russo, Haim Susin, Jacob Farchy, Moses Elias and Israel Albahari. The Board of the Jewish Community was represented by: Bernhard Herzl, Moses J. Herzl, Markus Mayer, Pinkas F. Wolf and others.

This synagogue was built in a beautiful Moorish style designed by Josif Marks.

During the bombing of the Allied forces in 1944, the Sephardic synagogue was substantially damaged. It was never restored; instead a block of flats was erected on its site.

The Jewish cemetery in Zemun dates from the time when the Community was founded. The oldest head stone dating from 1740 is still standing in place. The old Jewish cemetery originally occupied a very narrow space. On October 10, 1802 more than a half century later the Jewish Community presented an application to the Magistrate asking for the extension of the existing graveyard. The request made by the Community was to obtain a grant for a site next to the Catholic cemetery. Evidently the request was approved, since to this day the Zemun Jewish cemetery stands on this site.

**Hevra Kadisha** ( Holy Societies) was one of the institutions of great importance. It profoundly contributed to the up-holding and continuity of religious rites and customs per-



The oldest headstones in the Jewish cemetery, removed in 1978

formed at Jewish burials. The exact date of its founding is not known, although the Statute of the Hevra Kadisha dating from the year 1813 has been preserved.

The Ashkenazi and Sephardic Communities achieved and maintained a lasting amiable co-operation in the management of the Hevra Kadisha, the cemetery and the Jewish school. Following the end of World War I Moric Sasson (Sephardim) was the head of the Hevra Kadisha, and from the early thirties Isidor Grünfeld (Ashkenazi).

The Zemun Jewish Community strove to maintain and develop a collective religious life of lasting quality. To this end, the practice adopted was to engage a suitable clergyman, a rabbi as a rule.

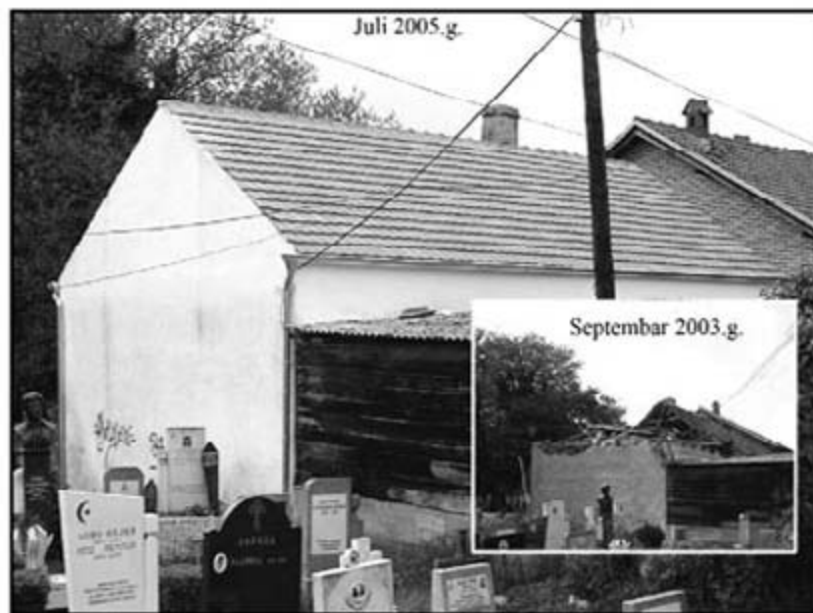
Upon his death the above mentioned first rabbi, R. J. Jeruham was succeeded by rabbi **Israel Alexander**. We find record of him in official Magistrate documents. In 1794 he

was engaged in a lawsuit against his partner Isaac Simon the goldsmith. There is also mention of him in the minutes of the Jewish Community dating from 1803 when he made a request for a higher salary. He died in Zemun in 1808.

Rabbi **Josef Fridensberger** succeeded Israel upon his death and remained in service until 1823.

From 1823 rabbi **Shlomo Hirsh** held religious service in Zemun for a short time.

He was succeeded by rabbi **Yehuda Ben Shlomo Hai Alkalai** in 1825 who was in service up to 1874. He practiced religious service in Zemun for almost half a century. There shall be more mention of him in the chapter on Zionism.



The chapel before and after renovation

Rabbi **S. D. Tauber** was originally established in office in 1874 for a period of three years. However he remained in the post right up to the appointment of Dr. Schwarz in 1895.

As head rabbi **Dr. M. Schwarz** remained in service in Zemun from 1895 to 1909.

As head rabbi **Dr. Hinko Urbach** remained in service in Zemun from 1909 to 1928.

Before the First World War **Gerschon Katschka** came to Zemun to serve in the Ashkenazi synagogue as cantor. He was married to Elsa, and they had two children: Clara and Alfred. Clara married and left Zemun, not to be heard of again. She had most probably met with a fate similar to that of her father, mother and brother who were killed in the holocaust.



*Dr Hinko Urbach – head rabbi*

When Urbach left Zemun, Gerschon Katschka held service alone conducting all religious ceremonies.

In the Sephardic synagogue the number of men of cloth who practiced religious service was fewer. There is mention of **M.B. Aharon, Sabetaj, Moshe Bahar** and **Jichak Musafia**. It should be noted that Musafia was a haham and not a rabbi and that he ended his life with the Jews of Zemun deported to the Jasenovac concentration camp.

Doubtlessly it is to the credit of Jewish priests that Jewish customs have been preserved, that religious norms were observed faithfully during the entire life cycle of the Zemun Jews, from their birth, the **brit-mila** (circumcision of male children), then with the celebration of **bar-micva** (religious coming of age of male children upon their thirteenth birth-



*Haham Jichak Musafia*

day), up to marriages ceremonies held in the synagogue under a canopy, with the mandatory breaking of a porcelain dish for luck (marriage in a synagogue was possible only when both spouses were Jews) and finally in the adherence of burying rites and prayers said in memory of the dead.

One must not conclude that all Jews of Zemun had an identical approach toward religious norms and customs. The attendance of worshippers at the morning and evening prayer held daily in the synagogue would constitute a fair example. Although more than 300 Jewish males of religiously acknowledged age lived in Zemun, - the daily **minjan** (ten males of age acknowledged by the church; without the presence of their number the church service cannot be conducted) - could be gathered only by paying three poor Jews to daily attend the morning and evening prayer. However on the *erev sabat* and the *sabat*, as well as on all major holidays (Rosh Hashana, Jom Kipur, Pesah etc.) the number of worshippers attending holy service was such that both synagogues were full.

In warmer weather, prayers were held in the Ashkenazi synagogue on working days, for a mixed congregation of Sephardim and Ashkenazi. In winter time a chosen classroom in the Jewish school was used for prayer.

Jewish families also held different views on the observance of the **kosher** (*kasher*) religious norm which proscribed their diet. It must be noted from the start that kosher food involves increased expenses which the poorer families could not sustain. There were also Jews who gradually adapted to the prevailing environment and practiced a way of preparing food incompatible with the kosher diet. A certain number of Jews maintained close social relationships with Christians and befriended them; they even paid visits to them during their religious holidays.

There exist no statistics or records on the number of Jews who observed the kosher diet so we must rely on memory and make a personal estimation. According to the recollections and estimates of the author of this book, an absolute majority of all the Zemun Sephardim Jews observed the kosher diet. In the case of the Ashkenazi, just over 50% of the families observed this religious canon, while the remaining families observed it partially or not at all.

In the documents on Jewish Communities in Yugoslavia archived in the Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, it is recorded that there even existed a Jewish community of orthodox Jews. The records show a list of names of those who led this community. Despite all efforts made to obtain any facts about the existence of such a group of Jews in Zemun, none could be found. Of all the names mentioned in these documents there was not one to be found among those deported and killed in Jasenovac, nor among the Zemun Jews who managed to survive. One thing is absolutely certain, not one of the surviving Zemun Jews has any knowledge of the existence of this orthodox Jewish community. It has already been noted that there was never any disagreement between the Sephardim and Ashkenazi in Zemun. This was obvious from the way the religious service was held. The Sephardic haham Musafia or the Ashkenazi cantor Katschka would alternatively lead the prayers. At the same time the **sames** (attendant) in the Ashkenazi house of prayer was Arnold Fekete, and Celebi in the Sephardic synagogue.

On state holidays, benediction was held alternatively in the Ashkenazi and the Sephardic temple. At times when the Ashkenazi had a rabbi, he also performed this duty for the Sephardim.



STARA PAZOVA was part of the Zemun Jewish Community. Officially it was called the Israelite bogostovna Community branch of Stara Pazova. It is a definite fact that 53 Jews from Stara Pazova were deported to the concentration camp Jasenovac and that none returned from there. There is no record that a single Jew from this village survived the holocaust.



*Ana Babinka*, first left in the top row standing in front of the original synagogue doors, 1947.

This small community nurtured the Jewish tradition and observed the customs of the religion. The last cantor was Samuel Herschkowitsch. As a memento of their existence there stands a small synagogue which was sold to the Babinka family upon the war. This family moved from Cacinci in Slavonia to Stara Pazova in 1946. They undertook some masonry work on the synagogue and altered it to meet their needs. The door and windows of the original synagogue were left untouched on the reconstructed building.



Jewish cemetery in Stara Pazova

All that remains today of the once small Jewish settlement is the cemetery which is looked after and cared for by the Public utilities company of Stara Pazova.

## JEWISH SCHOOL

Apart from the cantor and shochet, the census of the population dating from 1755 states that the teacher and school attendant were also among the residents of the so called Jewish house. This clearly indicates that from the year stated there was a Jewish school in Zemun. Furthermore, it is very possible that the school existed even some time before this year.

It is generally known that Jewish religious norms proclaim that every male of age (by religion one comes to age on his 13th birthday) must be literate so that he can read the holy books. This primarily applied to the Hebrew language. In order to be able to observe this norm, Jews were the first to introduce a compulsory education system.

It thus happened that religious education was taught first and foremost in the Zemun Jewish school. However in 1871 the authorities proclaimed that Hebrew, Yiddish and Ladino were banned from all public dealings and that the German language ought to be introduced as compulsory.

Consequently German became the language of teaching in the Zemun Jewish school. The school was included in the state system of education and its work was monitored by the Magistrate. From then on apart from religious education classes the curriculum also included teaching of secular subjects.

Classes were most probably held in the Jewish house, but as the school expanded these premises must have become insufficient, and a better solution had to be found. On October 5, 1813 a group of Zemun Jews including: Jakob Folio, judge, Lebl Sonnenfeld, juror, Joseph Herzl, religion tutor and

Abraham Moyses appealed to the Zemun Magistrate and requested permission to buy tradesman Bukovale's house. The house would be adapted for a Jewish school; at the same time they promised to build an access road to the school which would also be of benefit to other citizens.

This application was passed on to the Slavonska (Slavonic) Military Command with a recommendation that it should be favourably settled, since it would be useful for the entire town. However, on January 15, 1814 the Military Command rejected the application commenting that Jews were allowed residence in Zemun on condition that their current real estate holding remained unaltered, meaning that they were forbidden to purchase further property. The reply to the Magistrate was that if the said road was necessary it should be built by the Magistrate itself.

So far no record of the first teacher of the Jewish school has been found. The name of Moyses Rosenzweig, teacher first appears in the 1815 census. It is evident from this document that he had already been living in Zemun for two years.

Solomom Rechzeit was the next teacher who remained in this post till 1821. At this time there were 17 pupils in the Jewish school. That year the school was shut down because of the departure of the teacher. Classes were eventually reinstated in 1850.

At the time of the Austrian-Hungarian rule the Jewish school was included in the state school system. Preserved Magistrate documents show that state inspections of the work of this school were made and that it was placed under surveillance as were all other schools within the empire. In reports on the schooling system, regular record of the Israelite elementary school is found. As a rule, in these reports the

school always received recognition for the quality of the teaching and results achieved. A report dating from November 12, 1890 states that on one hand the quality of education was exceptionally good; however, it further comments that compared to all other schools the state of the building of the Jewish school was appalling.

The school curriculum was conducted in three languages: German, Hungarian and Croatian, i.e. Serbian. This was the reason why non-Jewish children also attended class in the school.

These facts are plainly visible from the report the head master of the Zemun Jewish school, forwarded to the Magistrate at the end of school year 1902/3.

The report states that there were 83 pupils in all:

Class	Boys	Girls
I	6	14
II	12	8
III	12	11
IV	14	6
Total	44	39

The mother tongues of the students were:

German	51
Croatian	15
Hungarian	3
Others	14
Total	83

Beside pupils of Jewish faith there were 2 Roman Catholics and 6 of Eastern (Greek) Orthodox faith.

Unfortunately, during the German occupation (1941-1944) almost all documents filed in the archive of the Jewish Community were destroyed. Naturally, all record of teachers who had taught in the Jewish school had been obliterated. Research of archive documentation at disposal on this issue has not been especially profound and there is still a possibility that certain information may yet be recovered. However, for this publication only fragmented data was used. As a result only a few names of Jewish school teachers have been noted.



A view of the current state of the gate to the schoolyard and synagogue

It has been recorded in one document that up to 1912 the teacher in the Zemun Jewish school had been Bernard Kohn, the father of the famous Belgrade publisher and book-

store keeper Geca Kohn. By mere chance a photograph of the pupils and the Jewish school teacher dating from 1911 has been saved and is shown here.



The Jewish elementary school - generation of 1911  
The picture shows the headmaster of the school *Bernard Kohn*



Upon the founding of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians in 1918 the school continued with its work. It remained within the state schooling system. Consequently it was generally recognized and its pupils could enter any secondary school of choice upon graduation. In respect to quality it

maintained its place as one of the best elementary schools. The curriculum was conducted in two languages: Serbian-Croatian, and German. When all other schools turned to holding classes in the Serbian-Croatian language only, children of some local Germans (volksdeutscher) enrolled in the Jewish school.



The Zemun Jewish school in 1931. - teachers Mr. Isidor Grünfeld, Ms. Edita Zentner

All Jewish children of suitable age attended the Jewish elementary school. In the school year 1931/32 there were 45 pupils. Because of the limited number of pupils classes were held jointly for the first and second year and again for the

third and fourth year, in two separate classrooms. The system of working with classes was: one class would be given a problem to solve while the teacher taught a subject unit to the other.



A picture of the last generation of pupils in the Zemun Jewish school. After school year 1932/33 the school was closed down.

Teachers: Messrs. Isidor Grünfeld and Alfred Müller

A new education law was passed in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1932, ending all Jewish school activity. Beside state schools the law only recognized the existence of religious, theological schools. Thus all pupils of the Jewish school enrolled into state schools.

The last teachers were Mr. Isidor Grünfeld for the first and second year and Ms. Edita Zentner and Wechsler for the third and fourth year. Grünfeld was known as a good humoured and gentle teacher, although he too could punish a disobedient pupil. Teacher Zentner was the exact opposite to Mr. Grünfeld. She was very strict and inspired awe, even fear in her pupils. Frequently she would resort to physical punishment of disobedient pupils. Speaking frankly, the punishment in question were a few strikes of the ruler to the fingertips, a painful experience, but soon forgotten. In any case, it did not deter the pupils from engaging in all kinds of pranks. Ms. Edita Zentner was replaced by Mr. Alfred Müller.

When the Jewish school closed down, Mr. Isidor Grünfeld continued to teach religious science to elementary and secondary school pupils. Compared to the number of classes held at the time the Jewish school was active the number of classes devoted to the subject was substantially reduced.

The Jewish elementary school, which had been active for nearly two centuries, had an immense role not only as an institution of education but also as keeper of the Jewish tradition, of Jewish customs and religion.

# THE PERIOD BETWEEN THE TWO WORLD WARS

The founding of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenians also brought new conditions of life to the Zemun Jewish Community. The primary change that affected all was the introduction of a new official language. It was a great impediment since most community members had a poor command of the Serbian language.

However, the change in the economic importance of Zemun, i.e. the demise of its economic activities caused by the mere fact that the town was no longer a border point, resulted in a major relocation of Zemun Jews. A great number of them left for Zagreb, some moved to Belgrade and to various other Yugoslav towns; others emigrated abroad. The data from the year 1912 states the following structure of Zemun population:

Approximately 6.000 Serbs

Approximately 3.500 local Germans

Approximately 1.200 Jews

Over 800 Croats.

Nearly half of the Jewish population of Zemun decided to relocate in the first few years upon the founding of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians. Only 600 Jews remained in Zemun and that number did not vary essentially during the whole period between the two wars.

One January afternoon in 1920 the Chief of police informed the President of the Jewish Community that he was instructed to command the exile of all Turkish subjects to Turkey. The only Turkish subjects living in Zemun were the Sephardim. Since it was almost evening time the Chief of police was asked to defer the implementation of the order. He promised that he would not take action within the next 24 hours. Dr. Brandeis immediately informed the representative of the Sephardim of the preceding events, while he personally got in touch with the Mayor Dr. Svetislav Popovic and Senator Nikola Fuger. That same night Dr. Fuger resolved the problem by granting Zemun citizenship to all Sephardim, based on the fact that they had been living in the town for over thirty years. Early next morning the relevant document

was signed by Mayor Dr. Popovic. Besides signing the said document he also sent an official document to the Zemun police stating that there were no Turkish subjects living in Zemun. As a safeguard from any new exile proclamations, the representatives of the Sephardim, led by Dr. Brandeis, were received in the offices of the current Minister of Interior, Pribicevic. On hearing them out the Minister promptly issued an order by telephone to the police to discontinue any further action in relation to this issue.

This event further strengthened the existing good relations between the Zemun Sephardim and Ashkenazi.

The business of the Jews of Zemun was trade and crafts; there were also Jews of other profession, doctors, lawyers, professors, artists and cultural workers.

There were also a number of engineers among the Zemun Jews. Engineer Orban was a contractor. Among other undertakings he built certain sections of the Belgrade-Novisad road. Then there were also Albert Spindl engineer of architecture, Milan Band the civil works engineer employed in the construction of railway and other types of bridges throughout Yugoslavia. He was killed in 1941 in Smederevo while removing debris caused by a blast of ammunition stored in the fortress of the old town. Mechanical engineer Bela Perenji was employed in the Railways. Each one of the engineers mentioned was a well-known and highly respected professional.

In their attire, hairstyle and outer appearance the Jews of Zemun absolutely blended into the community of the town. A large majority enjoyed the distinction and respect of their fellow townsmen, with whom they kept professional, official and social relations. The annual parties, held at the

“Central” hotel almost every year on the occasion of the Jewish holiday Purim, were attended by the entire elite of Zemun. Present among the guests were representatives of the Magistrate, judges, doctors, lawyers, professors, in all, highly esteemed citizens accompanied by their spouses dressed in elaborate evening gowns.

Purim was also celebrated on an unpretentious, somewhat lesser scale too. As a rule such gatherings proved to be more entertaining events. For one such Purim eve, Albert Semnitz wrote a poem “Strolling through Zemun”. The artistic value of the poem is not the reason for publishing it in whole. The poem, in the form of a rimed narration has historical value. There were only a few Zemunians who had read or heard the entire text of this poem, but Jews young and old were familiar with its refrain. In a way it became a hymn dedicated to their town, Zemun.

Although the general tone of the poem is humorous, it is also critical, with a sting designed to probe the social differences existing among Jewish citizens.

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## *STROLLING THROUGH ZEMUN*

### I

That Zemun is a lovely town all know well  
What you have to do is see it for yourself:  
Now amusement lies ahead for all  
Who sport a youthful spirit and money galore.

### II

Once you're in the marketplace its mayhem  
Everybody seeks to win a chunk of goose  
While demand is great geese are rare, a real mess  
A little money will simply get you nowhere.

### Refrain

Oh Zemun, Zemun, you are a gem to me,  
My score of days I shall spend in thee  
Zemun, Zemun my beloved nest  
Where my life shall pass until I rest.

### III

Aunties, uncles all are present here,  
Since roast and juicy fat is everybody's treat  
Each would munchies pile up before the other  
So help them God wrenching and tearing at one another.

### IV

With much effort uncle Moni aims to band a choir  
But our fellow Israelites seem out of tune  
Each one would give the world to hear a song  
But my dear uncle Moni only if it's on the house.

### Refrain

Oh Zemun, Zemun, you are a gem to me,  
My score of days I shall spend in thee  
Zemun, Zemun my beloved nest  
Where my life shall pass until I rest.

### V

A home we'll build; all you Jews rejoice.  
Though beware of downfalls that may lie in store;  
A coin a brick is little cost you know  
And what Binder-Polgar hands out - profit more.

### VI

Our dear Community so help us God  
I'd stuff it down a goat horn if I could  
Plucking taxes of our back like poultry ;  
But when necks are wrung, it's off for Belgrade.

### Refrain

Oh Zemun, Zemun, you are a gem to me,  
My score of days I shall spend in thee  
Zemun, Zemun my beloved nest  
Where my life shall pass until I rest

### VII

Ever present in our pious, dear community  
Stands our frowning treasurer wrestling with the score  
How to balance a large budget with monies scarce  
This my dear lady cannot do much more.

### VIII

Behold our Zemun still has a Kocherbank  
Let us all together praise the Lord for this  
In it there is always loads of all desired  
Sausages, tasty ham and bacon even.

Refrain

Oh Zemun, Zemun, you are a gem to me,  
My score of days I shall spend in thee  
Zemun, Zemun my beloved nest  
Where my life shall pass until I rest.

IX

When it's time to fund the Keren Hajesod  
God forbid is heard by every voice  
Why seek the Palestine when we have heaven here  
A hug I bestow to you my brother ready to leave.

X

Our precious school children, each one an angel  
Like an expert they read the Torah  
But when High school they encounter  
By God they know not even the Alef Bet.

Refrain

Oh Zemun, Zemun, you are a gem to me,  
My score of days I shall spend in thee  
Zemun, Zemun my beloved nest  
Where my life shall pass until I rest.

XI

Recently I happened on the Hotel Central  
Where our notables were throwing an elite ball  
I tried to enter and share the fun. Alas,  
With no coat-tail to flaunt I was sent away.

XII

Honorable matrons of societies humane  
Take heed of woes that bitter crises bring,  
That, by Deuce, leaves us mere mortals  
Without a hope to buy a black tie.

Refrain

Oh Zemun, Zemun, you are a gem to me,  
My score of days I shall spend in thee  
Zemun, Zemun my beloved nest  
Where my life shall pass until I rest.

XIII

As for you my dear friend of the middle class  
Forgive this party's neglect of you  
With God's grace next year it shall not be thus  
Even without a coat-tail to the elite ball you'll go.

Refrain

Oh Zemun, Zemun, you are a gem to me,  
My score of days I shall spend in thee  
Zemun, Zemun my beloved nest  
Where my life shall pass until I rest.

Author: Trebla Zemunac  
(Trebla back to front Albert)

Between 1918 and 1941 a number of organizations and institutions were active beside the Office of the Jewish Community. They were present in all aspects of life of the Zemun Jews.

Apart from deciding on material and financial issues the Community also kept the civil register of births and deaths. An interesting fact is that the Community kept record books and registers even before the state (Austria) proclaimed that keeping of such registers was mandatory. Among them was the so called "Moel" book where record of all male children was kept, stating the date of brit-mila, the name of the child, its father and mother. Before it was destroyed, the Community archive had such books on file, some dating before the year 1840. Other registers were even of an older date.

One of the oldest institutions founded by the Community was "Hevra Kadisha" - Burial Societies, which in the period between the wars, and upon the independence of the Sephardic Community (1932) continued its activity under joint administration.

The Jewish school was another old institution which continued its activity upon the founding of the state of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians, but the passing of new laws eventually closed it down in 1932 after 186 years of existence.

Various Zionist organizations like the "Hashomer hatzair" (Young Guard), the Jewish Club, the Zionistic-revisionist wing and the WIZO - women's Zionistic organization practiced their activity within the Community Zionist organization.

The Women's gentile society, founded round 1870 continued its activities in the period between the two world wars. The basic program of the society was providing humanitarian relief to deprived children, and also, espousing the betrothal of poor girls.

Its first president was Matilda Russo (for approximately 10 years). Upon her relocation to Vienna, Rosa Sonnenfeld became president and held the post for 40 years up to her death in 1926. Upon her death, Justina Schreiber carried on with this duty for some years and right before the Second World War, Regina Kop became president.

The relief fund for poor children and girls was generated and maintained by donations and a variety of sponsored events.

The program of such events, in content and performance, was not taken lightly and was always of superior class. One of the many programs was found intact. It refers to the performance held by the Jewish charity society on January 18, 1931.

## PROGRAMME

I. a) Haydn: Quartet op.54 Nr.1. Allegro-Allegretto-  
for two violins, viola and cello per-  
formed by members of the Music  
Society Messrs. Dr. A. Schön, G.  
Tagleicht, S. Davidenko, A. Scherer.

b) Mendelsohn: Intermezzo for violin, viola, cello  
and piano from the piano quartet No.2  
Messrs. Dr. A. Schön, S. Davidenko, A.  
Scherer and Mr. Zvonko Rozenberger.

II Ballet: Miss Riki Levi, member of the Belgrade  
National Theater.

### III A SHOT IN THE NIGHT

A modern time 1 Act sketch

By Harland Witch

#### CHARACTERS:

Teddy Wallace..... Mr. Dramski

Dr. Nicholson .....Mr. Gj. Zeremski

Edith ..... Mrs. I. Schön

## DANCING





## THE SYNAGOGUE COURTYARD

The courtyard of the synagogue or Tempelhof certainly merits a separate section in this chronicle, since it was much more than just a piece of fenced-in space. The worshipers saw it as a piece of Jewish land, a sort of an exterrito-

rial enclave surrounded by Christians. It was a meeting place for both the young and old and of its own accord generated a sense of protection. It functioned as a cohesive force and without written rules or argument it radiated a feeling of knowing that one was a Jew, of being part of a group, a nation. Plainly speaking, it appealed to the Jews of Zemun as a place where they could meet and organize gatherings.



Various meetings were also held in the synagogue courtyard. In the picture a group of senior "Ken" youths, in 1935.  
From left: *Hilda Levi, Ervin Pisker, Elisa Samlaics, Adi Neumann, Hugo Samlaics, ?, ?, Srecko (Felix) Bihali, Ruzica Fogel and Jovanka Deutsch*

Alongside the two rows of branching walnut trees there was still space enough for children to play, for shaded spots where one could talk, for lanes where first bicycle riding skills were timidly mastered. There was even enough space for erecting a stage for amateur theater productions usually performed on certain Jewish holidays and finally for the elderly to take refreshing strolls after walking out of the Synagogue building. Bowers primarily intended for worshippers, who had no means to make one in their own house, were erected for the Sukot holidays. In this way they could rest under them for a while.



The courtyard was used for various events. In the picture a rehearsal of the sketch "Revelers".

From left:  
*Hinko Gerschanovitsch, Alfred Katschka and Danilo Fogel*

Right up to the closing down of the school the yard was always filled with the clamour of children. Before and after lessons as well as during break time children made use of the yard for playing games. Even during holiday time it was as if the yard had a force of its own to attract children. For the children and youths it never ceased to be a place of daily gathering even when the school was finally closed down.

With the closing of the school one of the classrooms was transformed into a place of worship, to be used on cold

winter days. The other classroom was placed at the disposal of the "Hashomer hatzair" organization. This group was called the "Ken" (nest). More details about the activities of this organization will be presented in the chapter on the Zionist movement in Zemun. At this point the only thing to be said is that not a day went by without a gathering of Jewish children and youth's ken.

Whenever the weather was favourable, the youths would take the benches and chairs outside and hold discussions on various points; then again there were times when they gathered to see a movie. A new edition published by "Nolit" would also be a reason for meeting. Occasionally philosophic issues were at stake, as was psychoanalysis, pedagogy and many other subjects.

This was a place where one got involved with classical music, the opera for the first time. Alfred Katschka would bring an old record player and records and give the young listeners a chance to enjoy arias from operas such as "Rigolletto", "Masked ball", "The Clown", "The Jewess" and others performed by Enrico Caruso. Namely, Alfred was a virtuoso on the violin. He began practicing in his sixth year. He would play at various formal events; he was also known to have played an entire violin concert for just a handful of his peers. When he played in his own home, he was accompanied by his sister Clara on the piano.

Theo Schön would frequently bring his accordion to the "Ken". He played it solo, but would also accompany either solo or group singers.

Tosa Rosenberg was a Hawaiian guitar player. He deftly played Hawaiian melodies. He performed at a number of events and always received the utmost recognition from the audience.

Josip Beherano frequently brought his guitar to the "Ken", always on excursions or to the mosava. As a rule he was the one to bring the latest song which he interpreted with his melodious tenor. Once heard, these songs would be taken up and sung by his friends. On his guitar he also accompanied and melodiously sang songs in Hebrew which occasionally

came from the Palestine. Gatherings of Jewish youths with comradeship and amusement in mind could not be imagined without him.

There were times when members of the Belgrade "Ken" ("Hashomer hatzair") took part in these events together with



The courtyard was an ideal place for taking group photographs. In the picture members of the "Hashomer hatzair" Standing, from left: *Josip Pisker, Theo Schön, Paci Schwitzer, Hugo Samlaics, Hugo-Haim Hasan, Benko Beherano,* Sitting: *Josip Fogel, Lea Roth, Hilda Roth, Debora Landau and Marko-Icko Semnitz.*

their Zemunian peers. On one occasion a short musical play dedicated to settlers in Palestine was performed. In a sonorous voice Ruben of Belgrade sang a song which began with the line "Down the valley of the Emek there lies a grove..."; and Rahela, also from Belgrade sang old Spanish romantic songs. She made a great impression on the audience when she sang the "Kinneret", a song dedicated to this lake in the Palestine.

At "Ken" gatherings young people gave preference to the hora dance (a national dance). The "Hava" was frequently sung while dancing. However, they also danced to a choice of rally songs, similar to the one below, as recalled from memory:

Mame was ist das fur a' Welt  
die Madchen verkaufen sich fur Geld,  
10 harumba, 10 hatango,  
rak la hora, ve hahora...

The synagogue courtyard was actually the center of life for the Zemun Jewish Community.

Today, there is no music or song to be heard in it, no echo of children's laughter. With the exception of a mere handful of survivors, all those who once sang and danced there or who merely looked on, the playful children, youths brimming with the joy of life, the mature and elderly men and women have disappeared inside Ustashi and other concentration camps, in the holocaust...

Instead of becoming a monument, a reminder to new generations of the life and martyr's death of one segment of the Zemun population, the synagogue courtyard today stands ravaged and disfigured. The alcove of trees has been devastated by partitioning work and concrete slabs. The fate of the Jewish temple has been sacrilegious.

And thus, there is truth in the proverbial saying that life goes on....



A group of young men and women dancing and singing in the courtyard of the "Temple" - picture dating from the year 1936

# THE JEWISH FAMILIES OF ZEMUN

Some 200 Jewish households existed in the town of Zemun. People living on their own were also considered as one household. In the surrounding villages which also belonged to the Zemun Jewish Community there were another 24 Jewish households.

Of the majority of Zemun Jewish families almost all of their members died in the holocaust. One must bear this fact in mind in order to understand why all the families are not mentioned here. For a great many families not even a living friend or acquaintance could be found to supply basic information. To assume that living relatives could be reached was implausible.

In cases where not enough detail could be found about the families of certain individuals there will be mention of them in other chapters of this book. Written record of them shall be left to posterity.

Mainly, only that which could be found, collected or recollected about certain people, families and organizations was put into writing. In cases where there is more text about a family or organization, it should not be interpreted as a sign

of greater importance; it is the direct result of the quantity of references that could be found. Many a detail of the spirit of the life of the Zemun Jewish community in times past has been incorporated herein. The aim was to revive the past, people and events faithfully and as much as possible.

This chapter refers to the period between the two World Wars, but the history of some families and organizations goes further back to the years before the First World War. This was necessary in order to achieve continuity, although the period 1919-1941 is the main focus of attention.

**David Bihali** was the proprietor of a painter's shop in Zemun. He was married to Clara (maiden name?). Their two sons Pavle and Otto were a credit to the family name. Both of them became outstanding public figures.

Pavle was born on August 8, 1898 in Zemun. He attended the Jewish elementary school from 1904 to 1908. In 1918 in his second year of gymnasium he left school in order to learn the family trade in his father's paint shop.



In 1915 the Bihali family moved to Budapest. Together with his father Pavle worked in a factory to help support the family. The following year he was drafted into the Austrian-Hungarian army. He fought on the Galatia and Italian fronts.

In 1918 Pavle returned to Zemun and was immediately called up for national service in the new founded state of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians.

On completing national service he took over the management of his fathers shop together with his father's former worker Cedomir Cabraja and become responsible for the upkeep of the family. In 1923 he established a painter's cum graphics shop, the "Futur", initially with Cabraja, but some time later with his brother Otto, who as a senior undergraduate of the Art's Academy had license to be the front man of



The society "Theodore Hercl", photograph taken in 1920 in Zemun.

From left to right circled in *Otto and Pavle Bihali*

the company. During this period he made his first contacts with the labor movement. He began reading Marxism, and studied natural sciences and world literature.

In 1927 he liquidated the company "Futur". He married Maria-Meri Phingstl and with his wife made preparations for setting up a publishing company. At the time his brother Otto was studying in Berlin. Otto supported his brother's enterprise and sent all necessary information and books.

In 1928, together with his brother Otto, Pavle founded the publishing company "NOLIT" (New Literature). A Literary Board of the Nolit literature association and the Editorial Board of the newspaper "Nova literatura" were formed. The following members were elected to the Board: Graf Georg Arco, professor Ljubo Babic, Henri Barbusse, Dr. Adolf Behne, Dr. Fritz Brupbacher, Johannes R. Becher, August Cesarec, professor Albert Einstein, director S. M. Eisenstein, Maksim Gorki, Dr. Branko Gavella, Dr. Manfred Georg, George Grosz, S. Galogaza, Dr. Carl Grünberg, Panait Istrati, Alexandra Kollontay, professor Käthe Kollwitz, Dr. Kurt Kerston, Egon Erwin Kisch, Kurt Kläber, Leo Lania, Dragisa Mihajlovic, professor Zdenek Nejedly, Gerhard Pohl, Dr. Alfons Paquet, Erwin Piscator, Tarasov Rodionov, Dr. h.c. Freicher von Schönaich, Upton Sinclair, Dr. Helene Stöcker, A. Serafinovic, Dragisa Vasic, Dr. Armin T. Wegener, F.C. Weiskopf.

It was obligatory to list these names since they speak of the importance and significance of the publishing task undertaken. With the help of his brother Otto, Pavle Bihali managed to get together a representative group of intellectuals, leading wits of literature and science both from home and abroad. The names of collaborators who figured in certain "Nova Literatura" magazine editions should be added to the

list. They are: Andre Baillon, Jaroslav Hasek, Theodore Dreiser, Jack London, Otokar Keršovani, Josip Kulundzic, Otto Bihalji, Dr. Hugo Klein, Branko Krefc, Tone Seliskar, Velibor Gligorich, Veselin Maslesa, Janko Djonovic and others.

By 1929 publishing of "Nova Literatura" editions was prohibited, and on February 18, 1930 Pavle Bihali was arrested for violating the State Security Law. He was brutally tortured in the so called Glavnjaca prison and maimed for life. However, his will was not broken, even upon a new arrest in 1931. He continued his publishing activities which, because of his advanced ideas and consequent edition content, were closely scrutinized by censors and always in danger of being proscribed. Editions published by Nolit were of influence in the forming of an awareness of world events for generations of Yugoslav youths, right up to the German occupation in 1941.

Between July 1 and 8, 1941 Pavle Bihali was shot with the first group of anti-fascists and patriots executed in Belgrade.

Otto Bihalji (he acknowledged this surname, since it was thus misspelled by printers from the start) was born in Zemun. We have already written about his collaboration with his brother Pavle, but more should be said of his personality and activity.

In his recollections he writes that his father David Bihali, just like his grandfather, had been, a craftsman of the painter's guild. Both he and his brother had learned their father's trade.

They owed their interest in literature to their father who introduced them to books. In his spare time he would ceaselessly read to his sons the works of Byron, Shiller, Haine, Torquatto Tasso, Ivan Gundulic, Dositej Obradovic and above all his beloved Shakespeare drama.

While his father, and later on Pavle too, progressed from craftsman to intellectual by self imposed study and self tutition, Otto had the privilege to study at the Academy of Arts in Berlin. In this city he met a great number of forward thinking intellectuals of the late twenties and the thirties of the XX century. His ties to these progressive groups resulted in the fact that many a renowned name found its way on the list of collaborators of the Nolit publishing house.

His first book "Juris u vasionu" (Charging into Space) was published in 1937 and within the next two years appeared in London, Paris, Stockholm and Amsterdam.

On returning from the Spanish Civil War he wrote a book "Spain between death and birth", published in Switzerland and England and in Yugoslavia only upon the Second World War.

Otto Bihalji-Merin wrote some thirty monographics, studies and essays, among others: "Naivna slika sveta" (A Naive Picture of the World), 1959, "Prodori moderne umetnosti" (Impacts of modern art) 1962, "Graditelji moderne misli u literaturu i umetnosti" (Architects of modern thought in literature and art) 1965, "Naivni umetnici sveta" (Naive artist of the world) 1971, "Slika i imaginacija" (Paintings and imagination), "Revizija umetnosti" (A Revision of Art) 1979 and other.

Otto Bihalji's theme was revolution and art. He was simultaneously stimulated by Marx and Frojd, Lennin and Picasso, Mann and Brecht.

Some of his books on art were written in collaboration with his wife Lisa.

He maintained a steady correspondence with the great men of world literature and art such as Thomas Mann, Maxim Gorki, Berthold Brecht, Faulkner, Kle, Kandinski, Reed, Moor, Picasso...

A close co-worker of Bihalji's, the writer Jara Ribnikar, wrote on his death in 1993 that he was a man and writer "known for his good taste and universal experience."

He voiced a thought about his brother Pavle which perfectly describes the significance of his life's work:

"There are such writers whose merit equals the value of their written works. Then there are others who have made an impact through their existence. Their books are only fragments of their lives. Not everything that they have written still lives, but their life's activity has left an indelible mark on their contemporaries."

Otto Bihalji-Merin survived the war as he had "fortunately" been imprisoned in a POW camp upon the surrender of the Royal Yugoslav Army. Upon liberation he returned to Zemun with his father David, mother Clara and wife Lisa. They returned to the house of their relatives who had been killed in a concentration camp. The house in Dubrovačka street was a yellow painted ruin, surrounded by a derelict garden.



*Dr Albert Weiss*

**Albert Weiss** was born in 1905 in Zemun. He completed secondary school in Zemun, and graduated from the Faculty of Law in Zagreb.

Prior to World War II he was noted for his activity as a public servant in Jewish organizations. He was a well

received lecturer and organizer in the Ashkenazi Jewish Community and in the Association of Belgrade Jewish Communities. In the years prior to the Second World War he made repeated endeavours to save a large number of Jewish refugees from Hitler's exterminating hell.

During the German occupation he was imprisoned in a POW camp. Throughout his term of imprisonment he was noted for his antifascist activity.

Once back in the country in April 1945, he worked in the commission for determining the atrocities of the occupation forces and that of their collaborators. For one year he was a member of the Yugoslav delegation at the Nuremberg Trial. He became one of the first experts in Yugoslavia in the field of International Criminal Law. He was a teacher and professor at the Internal Affairs College, the Political Sciences College and the Faculty of Law in Belgrade. Among other he took part in elaborating expert studies for the extradition of the war criminal Artukovic, as well as studies on the atrocities of the Ustashi living abroad. He was a member of the Human Rights Committee. His credit as an exceptional expert and man of morals is best spoken for by the fact that he was entrusted with the interrogation of the Nazi villain Eichman.

His contribution as a scientist, one of the first to teach about the evolution of civilization was highly valued. He formulated this field of human study into an academic subject and gave it meaningful content.

Beside his scientific studies and activities he was also engaged in various Yugoslav organizations and institutions. The greater part of his effort and time was dedicated to Jewish public issues, primarily to those of the Jewish community of Yugoslavia, but also to those of Jews as an entity.

On his return to the liberated Yugoslavia, although sadly distressed by the loss of his closest family he found strength to invest all his energy in the well being of the Jewish community. The situation required that priority be given to social-humanitarian activity, i.e. the reception and resettlement of those returning to their homes.

Despite the primacy of social work, Dr. Albert Weiss looked to the future of this Jewish community and with this in mind took part in the revival of cultural, educational and national activity. He initiated the restoration of publishing work, the gathering of historical material and founding of a Jewish history Museum; he also saw to the establishment of a kindergarten, youth clubs, women's groups, the erection of monuments to Jewish victims of Fascism and other anti-Fascism combatants.

Equally important is his contribution to initiating and strengthening of close ties and cooperation with associations of Yugoslav Jews living in other countries, especially those in Israel and the USA.

He was the third President of the Federation of Jewish Communities of Yugoslavia from 1948 up to his death in 1964. As a sign of respect and devotion the Association paid tribute to him by erecting a memorial at the Jewish Cemetery in Belgrade. In Israel, in the Gat

kibbutz a young forest was planted in recognition and remembrance of their President, the kindergarten of the Belgrade Jewish Community was named after Dr. Weiss, as well as the Jewish Home in Skopje and an awarding contest of the Yugoslav Youth Association also bore his name.

The **Beherano family** moved to Zemun at the start of the XX century. What is odd about this is the fact that they came from the Palestine. As a rule, relocation of Jews was mainly



**The Beherano Family**

**Standing from left to right: Ria, Vitalis, Estera Beherano, married Levi, Levi.  
Seated: Beatris, Rina, Benjamin, Uri Levi, Rahela**





*Erna and Vitalis Beherano*

conditioned by economic issues, but in the case of the Beherano family the reason was illness. Actually, as a child Vitalis contracted an eye disease which could have resulted in blindness, there was even reason to believe that it could be fatal. Doctors were of the opinion that the Palestinian climate was detrimental to his health, so the family set off and by way of Bulgaria reached Zemun. Vitalis' father Benjamin and his grandfather were glaziers in Jaffa and owned a flourishing business. An example of their business undertaking could be the glazing of every railway station along the track from Gaza to Beirut.

Vitalis completed elementary school in Istanbul, and secondary school studies in Zemun. It is an interesting fact that the first marriage made upon the First World War

was between Vitalis Beherano and Erna Sasson. Vitalis was a prominent officer of the French-Serbian Bank in Belgrade. He lived in a separate house in Nikolajevska street with his wife and two sons, Josip and Benjamin.

**Boris Farkic** (alias Farchy) was born in Belgrade in 1947. He graduated from the Faculty of medicine in Belgrade.

His great-grandfather Mosha Farchy was born in Zemun in 1837. He married Rachel Russo also born in Zemun in 1841. They had seven children:

- Sara (1862 - 1941), married to Avram Kalderon (1854-1905). They had eight children: Bubi, Moric, Lena, Rachel, Sultana, Matilda, Netika and Sefira.



*Sara with husband Avram Kalderon and 6 children*



- Elisa (1864 - 1930) married to Samuel Vogel (1855 - 1941). They had three children: Mizzi, Hilda and Dr. Frederick.
- Isak ( 1866 - 1937), married to Leontina (1879 - 1928) . They did not have children.



*Leontina and Isak Farchy - photograph taken in 1898*

- Jesa Dr. (1870 - 1941) married to Alice (1882 - 1942). They had three children: Edita, Miroslav and Lilly.
- Regina (1875 - 1942) married to Salamon Elias (1880 - 1945). They did not have any children.



*Alice and Dr. Jesa Farchy - photograph taken in 1901*



*Regina and Salonom Elias - photograph taken in 1905*

- Josef (1877 - 1941). He married Dora (1887 -1942). They had one son, Robert.
- Leon (1879 - 1941) married to Olga (1898 -1941). They had three children: Erich, Lilly and Alfred. Leon also fathered a daughter out of wedlock Josephine (1906)



*Josef Farchy*



*Fritz  
photograph taken in 1928*

According to one version Miroslav (alias Fritz) was born in Austria in 1906. There is also a version claiming that he was born in Smederevo. Naimely Fritz's father Jesa Farchy was a born Zemunian. He completed his secondary school education and studied and graduated from the Faculties of chemistry and technology in Germany (Neurenberg, Recklinghausen). Beside other studies he also



*Dr Jesa Farchy  
photograph taken in 1888*



*Alice Farchy with daughter - photo taken in 1903*

attended classes of physical chemistry held by Wilhelm Roentgen. As a young doctor of chemistry and technology Jesa Farchy held a number of different posts in various towns of the then Austro-Hungaria. For a time he was the director of the cement plant in Popovac, then in Beocin and in Ravnica beside Omis. Plainly speaking the family moved frequently from one place to another. Dr. Jesa died of heart failure in Zemun in 1941.

Fritz (Miroslav) Farchy completed his studies at the College of Commerce in Vienna in the period 1924 to 1927. During this period he lived with his grandmother Paula.

Fritz kept a journal of his travels by boat from Vienna to Zemun and back. He described them as luxurious voyages of the Austrian and Hungarian wealthy classes.

Fritz managed to live through the Second World War as a POW in a German camp. He lost his mother, his first wife Alegra and son Mihajlo in the pogrom. 29 members of the Farchy family were killed in the Holocaust.

On returning from his internment Fritz married Sarika Romano from Sarajevo. They had one child only, their son Boris.

In the aftermath of the war Fritz was posted to the Consular office of Yugoslavia in Berlin. During the Informbiro he refused the proposal of an officer from the Yugoslav Military mission in Berlin to emigrate to London. As a true patriot he returned to Belgrade. He was highly competent in the field of commerce and spoke fluently German, English and French; he travelled frequently abroad (Egypt,



*Alegra and Fritz - photograph taken on 18. 08. 1935*

London, Greece, Pakistan, etc.) He was successively employed in a number of large companies such as Avala film, Filmske Novosti and finally in Hempro. From 1956 to 1959 he worked in Dugi Rt beside Omis. From 1959 he worked in the factory "Viskoza" in Loznica. The Farchy family changed their surname to Farkic due to recurring anti-Semitic harassment.

Fritz died in Loznica in 1983 and his wife Sarika soon after in 1985.

Boris married a Pole, Isabela Ryznyk. They have two children: a daughter Ljiljana married to Slobodan Jevtic and a son Mihajlo. Mihajlo is a physician and was named after his grandfather's first born son who died in the Holocaust.

Today Boris lives and works as a doctor in Loznica.

The author would like to point out that as far as he is aware of, this Farchy family is in no way related to the following Zemunian family of the same family name.

**Albert Farchy**, uncle to Vitalis Beherano, was an extremely wealthy Turkish Jew. He owned a number of enterprises. He moved to the borderline between Turkey and Austria-Hungary expecting to obtain better profits and make his business more prosperous. He reached Zemun some time later and built a large family house in Glavna (Main) street.

It was a numerous family which nurtured prominent intellectuals, successful experts and businessmen living in all parts of the world:

- Djele, the eldest, became a professor at Harvard University.
- Bata was a successful lawyer in Zurich.
- Moni was the proprietor of a number of movie theatres in Beograd.

- Stela married a senator of a Swiss canton.
- Lela became an anchor woman on BBC.
- Soka was the mother of the academic Enrico Josif.
- Silvi married a Cari in Milan.
- Beks made her home beside the lake of Como.

Thus members of the Farchy family were certainly regarded as prominent citizens of Zemun.

**Greta Herzl**, married Laskin, was born in Vienna in 1921. She is a the descendants of Theodore Herzl's family from Zemun. According to her recollections her great grandfather Moshe Herzl was brother to Theodore Herzl's grandfather. In Yad Vashem the name of Greta and her children has been entered in the genealogical map of the Herzl family tree. Each year the day of Theodore Herzl is commemorated in the Knesset in Jerusalem. As a direct descendant of the Herzl family, Greta is invited to be present on the occasion.

Greta's grandfather Jacob married Giselle Goldstein. They had seven children:

- Moris, father to Greta and her sister Neli,
- Richard, remained single,
- Oscar, also remained single,
- Ilona, married to Albert Dragoner. They came to the Palestine in 1943,
- Melanie, married to Speitsch, a non-Jew,
- Charlotte, married to Dr. Band from Zemun. Both were deported from Zemun to Jasenovac,
- Hermina, remained single.



Greta was a member of the Beytar organization (of nationalistic and revisionist orientation) in Belgrade. She was resolved to depart for the Palestine. In 1939 she started off via Varna with illegal means of transport. During the journey out of nowhere five Bulgarian Nazis entered the train and started to interrogate them; where were they from, where were they heading and so on. Greta was terribly frightened but managed to keep calm. She told them that they were travelling for pleasure and that they particularly wished to enjoy the sights of the Black Sea. Thus Greta reached the Palestine in 1939. She married Josef Mordechai but their marriage lasted two weeks only. Josef was arrested and killed. Because of her illegal work Greta spent two years in an English prison. During this time her landlord partly sold, partly threw out her entire belongings. All her pictures and memories from the pre-war period were destroyed. In 1946 Greta married Zeev Laskin. He was Russian by origin. They had two sons. Their son Benjamin (Beni) was killed in battle in 1970. Their second son Rami has two children Niv and Matan and lives in Natania. He is an executive in a Hi Tec company.



*Greta Laskin, nee Herzl,  
a portrait from 1970*

Today Greta lives in Tel Aviv in a resting home for the elderly.

**Jozef Sasson** was a well known stockbroker. His life was marked by a number of successive downfalls and triumphs which were not necessarily a result of misjudged stock-exchange transactions. Actually, it was common knowledge that he was a good man; more precisely his benevolence for his fellowmen knew no boundaries. It was not unusual for him to simply write off a debt owed to him if the person in question, i.e. debtor was heading for a downfall. However, when the tables turned and he was facing trouble, he was mercilessly pursued until beggared. He died before World War II leaving behind his widow Mariana and their children: Blanka, Judita, Alma and Mario. Matilda and Gabrijela had died before their father. Mariana owned two tobacco shops, one in the town center and the other in the market.

She was an honorary citizen of Zemun and was not taken to a concentration camp with the majority of Zemun Jews, though she also met with a tragic fate. Sometime after the massive deportation of Zemun Jews she too was taken to Stara Gradiska. More detail of her death will be given in the chapter on the pogrom.

The **Sasson families** were numerous and well standing. **Moric Sasson**, banker and stockbroker, was a prominent individual among the Sasson families. People said that depending on his winnings and losses on the exchange he would wake up enormously rich one day while the next day he would be beggared. Apart from this, as already mentioned, he was the head of the Hevra Kadisha for many years and an active participant in other dealings of the Jewish Sephardic Community. He was a Zionist by persuasion, who actually had no intention of relocating to the Palestine, but supported the movement both morally and in funds.



**Alexander Franck** was born in 1898 in Subotica. His parents, Maxim Franck and Fani, nee Schreiber came from Segedin. Alexander's older brother Arpad traded in leather in Segedin while his younger brother Dr. Steven was an ophthalmologist in Senta. Both brothers and their families perished in the Holocaust.

Alexander married Magda, nee Schwab before the Second World War. She died after liberations as a victim of vivisection experiments performed in the Dachau concentration camp. Their daughter Jelisaveta managed to survive the Kistarsa camp in Hungary. She lives in Israel today.



*Alexander Franck*

Alexander mastered the crafts of a watchmaker, goldsmith and jeweler in Vienna. He settled in Zemun during the twenties of the XX century. He was known in Zemun as a skilled, honest and respected craftsman. His shop was in the very center of Zemun. Day after day he could be seen through the shop windows and glazed door, either conversing with customers or bent over a watch with a magnifying glass glued to his eye, deeply engrossed in his work.

A workshop stood behind the store. Inside was a bench with a small lathe fixed to it. Various tools for repairing watches were placed beside it. The shelves on the walls were lined with clocks and watches of every make, type and size with the owner's name meticulously written beside it. Each would eventually be brought to the repair bench and once there would be carefully mended. Looking through the workshop window facing the yard a young apprentice could be seen working under lamplight either on the lathe or with tools in hand all day long. The apprenticeship in Franck's shop lasted three to four years.

This young apprentice, whose name has not been recorded, was not a Jew, although two years before the war he made friends with a seventeen year old Jewish lad. This youth was somewhat of a scoundrel who frequently bragged about his small pistol - a Flaubert. No one can say who influenced whom yet one night the young apprentice and the lad went off to rob a house singled out randomly. Not informing themselves about the owner of the house or about its tenants, they banged on the door shouting: "Money or your life!" The door remained unopened, but a man in uniform appeared at a window gun in hand and began shooting at them. They both ran to the first gate too frightened to move any further.

It was here that the police found them trembling with fright. It turned out that they had attempted to rob the house of an infantry captain.

In itself this incident could be of interest, but it was recounted in order to better describe the personality of Alexander Franck. Mainly, the police soon released the perpetrators from prison, and a downcast young apprentice appeared at Franck's shop door. He was certain that after this "escapade" his master would refuse to take him back to work. However, he had to come to the shop to pick up his documents and inquire what to do next. The young man was unaware of the fact that the police had already been at the shop inquiring about his general conduct. He was also unaware that Franck had told the police that never had a single item been missed from the shop, that the apprentice had always been a hard worker and that he regarded the incident as an adolescent imprudence. In a way Franck was prepared to vouch for his apprentice in the belief that no such attempt would be made again. So he employed the youth once again who proved him right and never again got into any trouble. He owed his good fortune to the compassion of Alexander Franck.

After Zemun was occupied in 1941, Franck was arrested in April and taken to the concentration camp Sajmiste. He was released against a ransom. He left for Budapest immediately upon his release where he worked illegally in the employ of a Hungarian. Near to the end of the war he was arrested once again and taken to a concentration camp in Hungary. Despite the great danger involved he managed to escape from the camp. He hid right up to the end of the war. He managed to survive the occupation.

In 1945 he returned to Zemun to find all his belongings gone and the flat in Dubrovacka street ransacked, as well as the two storied house in Oracka street and the shop in Gospodska street, later King Alexander street.

From the authorities then in power he was given a single room in a cellar in Kosovska street to live in. Later he obtained a bed, cupboard, table and chairs. For some years he lived there with his daughter Jelisaveta. Finally in 1949 he was given a flat in his house in Oracka street. It took great efforts but in 1948 he obtained a shop in Zmaj Jovina street. He worked in this watch and optical store up to 1976 when he retired.

Immediately upon the end of the war Franck took an active part in the activities of the Zemun Jewish Community, and for a while was its President. He dedicated himself to the well-being of Jewish survivors and remained an active member up to his death.



**A commemoration at the Jewish cemetery in Zemun:  
Daca Kohen, Semaja Avramovic, Djuro Bihali, Alexander Franck,  
Benko Beherano, Saca Kohn and Willim Scheer**

**Moreno Anaf** was the President of the Sephardic Community in Zemun. In Gospodska street (later King Alexander street) he had a shop where he dealt in foreign exchange and sold Yugoslav class lottery tickets. Like the majority of shop owners he too respected the custom of giving charity to the poor once a week. Saturday was the day when beggars went from shop to shop in Zemun. On Saturdays he refused to handle money with his own hands, so his clerk David Fogel had to perform the duty. By status he belonged to the middle classes and lived in a house of his own. Generally speaking he was a good and humane person.

As life would have it, everything could not always run smoothly. Moreno had the misfortune, to have no sense of smell. Naturally, he wanted to keep his secret from the general public and more or less managed to do so. Women usually entered his shop on their way back from the market, nearly each one with a bunch of flowers in hand to buy a lottery ticket. Moreno would pretend to smell the flowers uttering the same words every time: "It smells divinely!" when actually he sensed nothing. It so happened that one day on entering his shop Moreno saw on his writing desk a bottle with the label eau de cologne "4711". His immediate thought was that it was a present from his wife, so he splashed it generously on his face exclaiming: "What a divine smell!" Some half an hour later his wife Helena ventured into the shop, inquiring from the very shop door: "Moreno, did you send my urine to the lab for analysis?" With a start he asked "What? Where?" while she responded by pointing to the bottle of eau de cologne.

**Isak Nachmias**, with a countenance that fairly resembled Sancho Pansa, was a man of high spirits, an incorrigible jester. He was a reasonably efficient real estate agent. He did



*Danilo Nachmias*  
son to Isak

not have an office and would either be on the move or sitting in one of the finer restaurants. On one occasion he was seen sitting in his garden eating olives from a paper bag. His godson, a boy at the time, who had never before tasted an olive, stood watching him. The youngster saw the olive as a sort of sweet, luscious fruit and he asked his god-father whether he was right. Isak nodding his head in response devoured the next olive with renewed zest.

Tempted, the boy asked him if he could try a tasty one. He was given not one, but two olives, which he gobbled up in a second. Biting into the unsavory oily matter instead of the expected sugariness the boy almost threw up, while Isak's round belly rocked with laughter.

He was married to Josefina Erndiner, they had a son Danilo and daughter Lenka. Unfortunately Danilo died very young in 1920. He was 17 years old.

The **Fogel family** is among the oldest settlers in the Zemun Jewish Community. Eugen, the father of the family was born in Romania and was the youngest of nine brothers. In his 11th year he was sent off from home to become an apprentice and master the trade of a baker. After 7 years he became an assistant. So far records show that only Ignjat Semnitz, the Zemun soap maker, had an apprenticeship longer than this. He turned from apprentice to assistant after nine years.



*Ida Fogel - 28. 09. 1909 Osijek*

Following the custom of the time, when he turned eighteen Eugen went off to accomplish the “fremt”. At the time it was considered to be the final practical training and mastering of the skills of the trade. This custom was upheld by all the guilds. Thus Eugen started off on foot for Budapest and ended up in Osijek after a number of resting places on the way. He opened a bakery in Osijek and soon married Ida Erndiner, who came from a tradesman’s

family which had settled in the territory of the Zemun Jewish Community in the middle of the XIX century.

Eugen soon lost his bakery in Osijek because of an insignificant quarrel with the owner of the building. Once again he set off to seek his fortune. On the road he found temporary employment a couple of times, but in 1912 he finally boarded the “Carpathia” and headed for America. He paid his fare by working as the ship’s baker. This ship was to be the first vessel to reach the place of the “Titanic” shipwreck. Later, he used to recount the horrors of this event; the salvaging of the barely living victims of the disaster and the dead. He stayed in New York for almost two years. With the



*The Fogel family: Danilo, Ida, Eugen and Josip*

money he saved he returned home and bought a bakery in Kupinovo. The bakery was hit in the first cannonade assault of the Great War. Once again the family was left with nothing. Of his entire American exploit Eugen was left only with the memories of the Metropolitan Opera to fall back on. There he had heard Enrico Caruso sing.

After the First World War the family relocated to Stara Pazova, only to return once again to Zemun in 1929. It was here that the children grew up and the family finally found financial stability. Even today there are a few Zemun Jews survivors who recall how at the time of certain Jewish holidays Eugen used to bake and sell “Barhes” (a type of pleated white bread sprinkled with poppy seed).

Toward the end of 1939 Eugen was astounded by the decision passed by the government in cabinet concerning the deportation of the Fogel family from the Kingdom of Yugoslavia to Romania. The only one exempted by the deci-





*David and Ruzica Fogel*  
Son and daughter to Eugene and Ida Fogel

sion was son David who had regulated his national service obligation and had received Yugoslav citizenship. A dispute in which David spoke for the family was launched against the decision of the bureaucratic administration. It is difficult to fathom today how he managed to obtain Yugoslav citizenship

for the Fogel family in 1940, but his comment on achieving the goal is still remembered: "Let no man experience such humiliation..."

In 1942 the entire family except Danilo, was deported to a concentration camp. Their names are inscribed on the monument to the victims of fascism in the Zemun Jewish cemetery.

Danilo met his wife Zora (maiden name Rakic) for the first time in 1943. At the time Zora was the leader of the antifascist youth in Banostor. They got married upon liberation in 1946. They have two sons, Milan and Nenad. Together with his wife Verica and their two children Milan settled in Israel while Nenad and his wife Sladjana remained in Serbia. From his first marriage Nenad has two daughters living in Australia. Zora and Danilo are constantly faced with the fact that they have to stretch their parental concerns between Israel and Serbia. In 2006 they celebrated their 60th anniversary of marriage.



*Zora and Danilo Fogel*



**Jakov-Zak Celebi** was born in 1907. Unfortunately, there is no record of his parents, but he is remembered in Zemun as a most energetic envoy of the firefighting service. It would be difficult to record all his credits in this activity. However, at least one fraction of his accomplishments will be mentioned here, of relevance not only to the firefighting unit of Zemun, but to Yugoslavia in whole.

As a youth of seventeen he became a member of the "Matica" - firemen society in Zemun. Originally he enrolled as a volunteer but in time became a professional.

Already by 1933 he was approached and subsequently engaged as an expert in the drawing up of the "Fire Protection Law." He made relentless effort to insert into the law as a separate clause his idea that a certain percentage from insurance payment should be allocated to the Firefighter's fund.



*Jakov-Zak-Celebi*

The sign of firemen - a crisscrossed hatchet and torch, was designed based on his idea and adopted for the entire country.

He was the originator and editor of the only firefighting magazine "Pozarna odbrana" (Fire Defense) in circulation at the time.

He prepared and organized an exhibition - "Firefighting protection in air raids" which was displayed in all major cities of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

His expertise helped in equipping the Zemun firefighting society with technical appliances. To pursue this subject further in the present chronicle by listing the many apparatus, vehicles, etc would be out of place due to its professional nature. However, an interesting point that should be recorded is that he procured, round 1935, the latest and longest firefighting vehicle mechanical ladder in the Balkans. It was an event of some importance as the President of the Senate and the Minister of Interior of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, A.Korosec, were present at the formal ceremony of putting the ladder into operation.



The name of Jakov Celebi is inscribed on the plate to the right, while on the left out of the eleven names of the deceased between 1941-45 five are Zemun Jews:  
*Edvin Goldstein, Josif Elias, Josif Kronstein, Samuel Mayer and Bela Sonneberg.*

He married Beti, nee Reisberg. Both of them were members of the national liberation front.

Upon discharge from the military ranks Jakob was given a responsible duty in the department for firefighting in the Ministry of Interior of Yugoslavia. Notwithstanding his current position he could not forget the organization of his first employment. He contributed to the modernizing of its equipment and also helped to acquire a suitable building for it.

He was always full of new ideas. The beauty was that for each idea he would instantaneously suggest a way and the means to materialize it. Noted among other things for example, is the fact that sometime before the Second World War he had an idea that Zemun should erect a Firemen's House and proposed that the sale of so called: CIGLI (Bricks) should be organized for this purpose. The plan was very successful, and construction work began, only to be cut short by the onset of occupation.

His wife fell ill and ended her life tragically. He died in 1993. The Firefighting Society did not forget him and that same year his name was inscribed in the memorial plate of the deserving members of the Zemun Firefighting Society.

**Jacob Kadmon Levi** was born in Vidin in 1858. The family came from Spain to Turkey in the fifteenth century. It moved to Zemun round the end of the nineteenth century.

Jacob was a wealthy trader in grain. He married Natalia nee Kadmon from Belgrade. Jakob built a house in Dubrovacka Street No.11. Natalia's relative, Solomon Levi from Belgrade also lived together with them in this house for some time. He later married their daughter Blanka. Together they built a house in Kalvarija where they lived and had two daughters, Klara and Aligret.



*Jacob and Natalia Levi*

Jacob died in Zemun in 1940.  
Jacob and Natalia had ten children.

*Their sons*

- Kadmon (1889 - 1927)
- Nisim (1892 -1942)
- Josip (1899 - 1942)



Sitting at the table, *Solomon Levi*

- Isak (1896 - 1958)
- Robert (1907 - 1968)
- Alfred (1905 - 1993)

*and daughters*

- Blanka (? - 1942) eldest daughter
- Sol (1891 - 1942)
- Claire (1899 - 1942)
- Sophia (1902 - 1980)

Prior to World War II Isak had a book and stationery shop in Glavna Ulica in Zemun, opposite the hotel "Central". He married Matilda, nee Sagi from Becej. They had an only son, Jakov born in Zemun in 1935. Jakov has two children, daughter Lea and son Isak. As an officer of the Royal Yugoslav Army he was imprisoned during the occupation as a POW. Upon the war he returned to Zemun and was given a flat in his family house in Dubrovacka Street. He found solace in prayer in the last years of his life blaming himself for the pogrom of his entire family. He died in 1958.



The book and stationery store of *Isak Levi*  
in Glavna (Main) Street in Zemun.



*Robert Levi first from the left - before II World War*

Robert survived the Second World War in the partisans. Namely, his entire military unit joined up with the partisans in 1941. Upon the war he was the director of "Zeta" film. According to the recollections of Ljiljana Nicin, nee Levi, Robert died in Israel in 1968.

Before the war Alfred had a shop in Belgrade where he sold luxury cars. He received information from friends that a raid was planned for rounding up Jews. Through secret channels his friends managed to transfer him to Trieste. He survived the war. In 1954 he left for Caracas, Venezuela, from where he moved to New York later on. He died in New York in 1993. He did not have any children.



*Alfred, Sophia and Robert Levi*

Nisim was married to Clara. They had two daughters: Stella and Mary. All of them perished in concentration camps (Jasenovac - Stara Gradiska).

Josip was married to Julika. Both of them were killed in Jasenovac. Evidently Sol never married, and was killed in Stara Gradiska in 1942.





*Sofija Nicin-Levi and Zoran Nicin - photograph taken in 1935*

Bianka had two daughters: Clara and Aligret. Aligret was married to Farchy. They had a son Mihailo born in 1937. They were all killed in Jasenovac, i.e. Stara Gradiska.

Sophia was called Greta by the family. She was educated in Dresden where her sister Bianca lived. She graduated from the Academy of Trade, spoke six languages and played the piano. She married Zoran Nicin (Serb) and had two children by him, a daughter Ljiljana and son Peter.

Zoran managed to lead his wife Sophia and son Peter off the train that was transporting Zemun Jews to Jasenovac and Stara Gradiska. At the time Ljiljana was sick and staying with her grand mother, i.e. Zoran's mother who lived in Karaburma, Belgrade.

However, some time later Sophia was found and taken to the Sajmiste concentration camp. Zoran managed to bribe a guard and take Sophia out of the camp. Thus they lived through the occupation.

After the war they lived in Sonta near Apatin and when in 1963 the first apartment in the family house in Dubrovacka street became vacant they returned to Zemun.

Ljiljana, married Jovanovski, lives in Zemun today and her brother Petar in Novi Beograd.

**Mariana Leon**, married name Eberle, was born in Berlin on April 24, 1913. Her father was Emil Leon a physician and her mother was Olga, nee Leon. When her father was



*Olga Leon*



*Hermina Leon*



killed in Mostar in the First World War, Mariana was 5 years old and with her mother and sister Rosa moved to Zemun to live with Hermina, Emil's sister. Mariana married Eberle Kristof a naturalized German before the Second World War. In 1940 their son Richard was born.

Mariana was employed in the chocolate factory "La sigogne", today's "Soko-Stark". Immediately at the start of the war she was fired as a Jewess. Up to 1942 she lived with her husband and son in Karadjordje square, but Kristof decided to move the family to Presernova street in the Franzstal, i.e. into the part of Zemun, mostly inhabited by naturalized Germans and where the fact that Mariana was a Jewess was unknown. He would not allow Mariana to register with the police, and she eventually stopped going to the town center.



*Kristof, Mariana  
and Richard Eberle*

Kristof was a watchmaker and jeweler and had a shop in the center of Zemun and therefore a secure means of living. He was able to bring food to Hermina and Rosa daily. They lived in Primorska street and would not move to Franzstal. One day Kristof came to the flat to find it empty. The furniture was scattered around, and Hermina and Rosa taken to the concentration camp in Stara Gradiska where both of them died.

Mariana died on November 8, 2004 in Zemun. Her son Richard and daughter Erna are actively engaged in the work of the Zemun Jewish Community.

The family of **Leo Brandeis**, the long standing president of the Zemun Jewish Community, moved to this town in 1907. Leo was the youngest of the ten children. His father's teaching post was in Calma in the vicinity of Sremska Mitrovica. Naturally his father held a high regard for education, and he made every effort to help Leo graduate from the finest schools. On completing elementary school in Calma, he was sent to Novi Sad where he attended the gymnasium. As he came to this city from the county of Srem, he had no knowledge of Hungarian and could not enter the Hungarian gymnasium, so he attended the Serbian one. An interesting point is that Leo was the first Jew to attend this education establishment.

On graduating from the gymnasium he left for Zagreb where he enrolled and graduated from the Faculty of Law.



*Dr. Leo Brandeis -  
Long standing president of the  
Zemun Jewish Community*



*Hana Brandeis  
nee Binder*

Since he graduated law with honours, he was sent to Zemun in 1907 and given the position of a judge. He held the position right up to the disintegration of Austria-Hungary and the formation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians.

Once in Zemun, he very soon married Hannah nee Binder. They had three children: two sons Ivan and Pavle, and a daughter Hedviga.

In the newly founded state, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians, he didn't continue his career as a judge. He opened a private law office and became one of the most respected attorneys, not only in Zemun, but in the area of the Belgrade city administration.

The whole family survived the occupation. More will be said about this in the chapter on the Jews survivors of Zemun.



*Ivan Brandeis*



*Pavle Brandeis*

The **Binder Family** was one of the wealthiest Jewish families not only in Zemun but well beyond the limits of this town.

Moric-Mavro Binder married Henrieta nee Belak. The Binder family moved from Vienna to Zemun round the end of the nineteenth century. Moric and Henrieta had sixteen children, ten of whom were born in Zemun. Henrieta died in 1927.

The surname of the family was frequently associated with that of Polgar, as Moric Binder and Gabriel Polgar founded a factory for the production of rifle butts. However, it soon became evident that the business was not very lucrative. They shut down



*Moric Binder*



In the picture - the Binder family: standing from left to right - Teodora, Clara, Leo, Paula, Judith, Mariana. Seated: Gretl, Hannah and Carl.

the butt-end production facility and opened a timber yard with a saw-mill line. It grew from a small trade business to an industrial plant. Depending on the season of the year the plant employed 120 to 220 workers.

In Zemun the enterprise was known as the “Binder and Polgar Timber Enterprise”. It was one of the rare companies that cared for the well being of its workers. Among other things the proprietors built a number of four flat houses for their workers.

Binder and Polgar should also be remembered for their humanity toward their town fellowmen. Each year they would give away to the poor of Zemun whole barges of timber.

From 1930 the enterprise “Binder and Polgar” became a shareholding company. Due to mismanagement and flawed proprietorship a winding up procedure was initiated in 1935. Dr. Ivan Ribar was the receiver in the procedure and the winding up of the company dragged on, with the company working right up to 1941.

There is insufficient data about the destiny of the numerous descendants of Moric and Henrieta Binder. What is known is that Klara married Bela Perenji and that Mariana married Ervin Goldstein. All of them perished in Jasenovac and Stara Gradiska.

Ivan Binder survived the war in a German POW camp.



Ivan Brandeis with his uncle Ivan Binder and a group of unidentified POW in Osnabrück.

Moric's daughter Hannah married Leo Brandeis. Both of them survived the occupation, moved to Israel and died there. Another one of Moric's daughters, Judith married Vladimir-Dragutin Badalic a Croat by nationality. They had a daughter, Dana (1922). She attended the first three classes of the Jewish school right up to the closing down of the institution. In 1946 Dana married Momcilo Dimitrijevic, of Serbian nationality.

Dana died in Zemun in 2003.



A picture of *Judith* with her baby *Dana* from the passport dated 1923.

The Rosenberg family emigrated from Poland to Srem round 1760. Lazar Rosenberg was born in 1897 in the village of Divos on Fruska Gora. His parents were peasants, an oddity among the Jews living in Srem.

He married Evgenia-Zeni Brandeis. She was born in 1891 in Calma. They lived in Calma for some time. Their son Theodore - "Tosa" was born there in 1918. In 1922 they settled in Zemun and that same year their second son Ervin - "Silja" was born.

Lazar was in the leather trade and had a shop in the center of Zemun and his own house in Nikolica street No.15. The Beherano family lived in his house for a while.

Lazar was a respected tradesman well known for his honesty. It is a fact that must have been taken into consideration when he was chosen for the treasurer of the Zemun Tradesmen Association. Mother Zeni was a housewife. Beside her domestic chores she managed to find time to actively participate in women's charity organizations.

For a short spell Tosa was in the "Hashomer hatzair" ken, although his preoccupation was music. He played the Hawaiian guitar and the accordion. From his early youth he used to earn money by playing. For example, he would play serenades below the windows of maidens at the request of their beaux in the company of two other guitarists. If the girl acknowledged the courtship she would true to custom light a match so that its glow could be seen in the window. There were times when such courtship was cut short by the appearance of a parent, father or mother.

He was an exceptionally good musician and managed to go on air in the Radio Belgrade program. However, his father was set against his being a "mere performer", as he would condescendingly refer to the profession. He considered it beneath the dignity of a Rosenberg to engage in such profane employment.





1st In the picture from left to right seated: *Lazar Rosenberg, Paja Bruner* (brother to daughter-in-law) and *Ervin - "Silja"* standing: *Elvira nee Bruner* and *Evgenija nee Binder*.  
Photo taken in 1942



*Theodore Rosenberg*

Tosa is not in the family picture taken in 1942, as he was a POW at the time.

After graduating elementary school he enrolled in the Zemun Trade Academy in 1936. There were 39 students in his class. On the 50th anniversary of their graduation from the Academy only ten of them were present, i.e. those that were still alive in 1986.

Upon completing his Academy studies, he intended to continue studying at the University, in the hope that he would enter the diplomatic service. However, after the introduction of the numerus clausus all such ambitions were abandoned.

By way of certain connections Tosa was at that time engaged as a musician in the orchestra on the liner "Kraljica Marija" sailing from Dubrovnik to Venice and back.

Fully aware that his father opposed such employment, Tosa resorted to a somewhat cunning plan. He told his parents that he would be paying a prolonged visit to his uncle, Oscar Brandeis in Cerevic. He persuaded his uncle to send at certain intervals postcards to his family, which he had written in advance in Zemun. Tosa returned to Zemun from his voyage gig with earnings over five thousand dinars, which at the time was "big money" (daily wages in the country were approximately ten dinars). However once his father learned of Tosa's adventures he was extremely angry, although he still had hopes that his son's lifestyle was just a passing whim. In order to avert Tosa from the calling of a musician, he made him an offer to go into business. He bought a small factory for manufacturing thread and entrusted Tosa with its management. Soon after, Tosa married Elvira Bruner, born 1921. Their son was born when he was already a POW. He never saw him since the baby perished together with the Rosenberg family in the concentration camp. The only survivors of the family were Tosa and Ervin.

Lazar's second son Ervin was a precision mechanical engineer. He was among the first members of the "Hashomer hatzair" ken. Later, he would only occasionally visit the ken. More about him will be said in other chapters of this chronicle.



The **Schwitzer family** was one of the oldest and highly respected member of the Jewish Community.

Round 1850 Samuel Schwitzer left Slovakia and settled in Dobanovci, a village integrated in the Zemun Jewish community. He opened a general store in the village. He fathered six children.

Salamon, one of the sons, married Bertha nee Neumann. Up to her marriage she lived in Popinci with her parents.



*Bertha and Salamon Schwitzer - Zemun 1936*

Salsmon was a strict follower of religious norms. He even went to Zemun to learn to be a shohet, so that he could perform ritual slaughter of poultry himself. At the time of major holidays such as the Jom Kipur, Rosh Hashana etc.the whole family would come up to Zemun and stay with Moric Nuemann, Bertha's brother. The children looked forward to staying with their uncle and his children. All such holidays were celebrated with prayers and all appropriate custom.



**In the picture a group of young Jews 1937**

**From left to right: Shani Schwitzer (now Sharon), Hugo Samlaics, Marko Schwitzer Paci, Olga Flesch, Shami Kamhi, Adi Neumann**  
**Seated: Ancika Levi (Avram's wife) and Avram Levi (now Dor)**

In 1918 the Schwitzer family moved to Zemun, except for Salamon's son Willim, who took over the management of the family store. The trade's revenue secured means for decent living conditions.

With the ascendance of Hitler to governmental power in Germany the situation vitally changed. The local Germans boycotted Willim's store. Eventually a German opened another general store which brought on the demise of the Schwitzer trade. In 1941 Willim moved to Zemun.

Only two members of the Schwitzer family suvived the holocaust Marko - "Paci" and Alexander - "Shani". As will be seen in the part of the chronicle on Zionism, in 1939 "Paci" left as a haluc to the Palestine.

In 1941, Shani shared the fate of all Zemun Jews and was driven to forced labour. However, he never fell for the stories that the Jews of Zemun would be spared from deportation to concentration camps. He therefore made plans to escape to the Italian occupational zone. In May 1942, Sani obtained fake documents and managed to leave Zemun. He met up with his relatives Adi and Aki Neumann heading for Metkovic. Initially they departed for Split, and then continued on to Novi Vinodol, Kraljevica, and finally to the island of Rab. By doing so they managed to reach the Italian occupation zone, where they spent some time in a concentration camp.

On Rab they lived to see the capitulation of Italy in 1943. They left the camp and joined the partisans.

Sani was wounded twice as a partisan soldier of the 7th Banija Division. For his merits he was awarded the Medal for Courage and the Medal for Service to the People.



*Alexander-Shani and Marko-Paci Schwitzer - Israel 1966*

Upon demobilization he lived in Zagreb. As a former partisan soldier he was entrusted with high functions in the Ministry of education of the Republic of Croatia.

He earned substantial respect as an expert in the field of education. However, in the turmoil generated by the Inform bureau, he witnessed the downfall of a number of innocent people. Although he could not be accused of any kind of subversive activity, he felt insecure and found his way out by immigrating to Israel.

Together with his wife Truda he settled down in Israel. They had lived together through the concentration camps and occupation. They first met on November 1, 1942 in the Italian camp in Kraljevica. Truda, nee Goldstein, came from Zagreb. In Israel her intellectual capabilities were immediately recognized. She worked as a correspondent-interpreter in the Ministry of Health, since she was proficient in a number of languages. Beside Croatian, she spoke Ivrit, French, English, German and Italian. Truda died in Jerusalem in 1988.

As a professor of chemistry, Shani had no difficulty in mastering work in a laboratory, and since he too spoke a number of languages fluently, he learned Ivrit easily. His interests greatly transcended the work inside his profession. He voiced his opinions publicly in a number of newspapers and publications. He was a critic of the impediments one encountered in many spheres of social life in Israel. He was an ardent advocate of progressive ideas. A characteristic example was his article in which he opposed the idea of building the Third Temple in Jerusalem. After articulating obvious arguments he ended the article by asserting that at the time, the state of Israel had become a temple for the entire body of Judaism and that a better one could never be erected.

Even today, a pensioner, Shani continues to keep track of all events of importance, and occasionally writes an article in Serbo-Croatian, English or Ivrit. He lives in Jerusalem. He has changed his surname, like many other settlers. Today he is known under the name of Alexander Sharon.

**Dr. Arnold Schön** was a doctor not only admired among the Jewish population but appreciated generally. At any time of the day or night he would attend to all sick calls received. He paid no heed to the status or religion of the caller. Notwithstanding the fact that he knew in advance that he would receive no payment he would see to any poor man's sick call.

Dr. Schön's field of interest was never restricted only to his medical profession. More shall be said about him in this book in the chapter on Zionism.

Arnold was born on June 10, 1886 in Vinkovci. From her first marriage his mother had two daughters. With her husband Ignjat she only had Arnold. His younger half-sister died of a stroke in May 1941 at the age of 63, while her elder (age 65) was executed in 1942 in Stara Gradiska together with her husband and daughter.

After he graduated the classical gymnasium (1905) in Vinkovci, Arnold completed his medical studies at the Faculty of Medicine in Vienna. He was a resident in Vienna first and then in Berlin also and finally specialized for an obstetrician in Dresden. He came to Djakovo to work as a general health practitioner.

In 1914 he was already relocated to Zemun to the post of chief practitioner at the County hospice for the ailing. At the same time he started up his own private practice.

He was married to Luisa nee Erenfreind. Their first born was a daughter Heda (1915) and in 1917 they had a son Theodore.

Dr. Schön and his wife very soon became actively engaged in Zemun's social life. Eventually it came to the point when it could be said without exaggeration that the pair of them had a great influence on the design of Zemun's cultural and artistic life.

It was in the house of the Schön's that a chamber quartet was originally initiated. It soon grew into an octet, and finally became the Zemun Philharmonic orchestra. It became a reputed orchestra and famous Belgrade conductors readily agreed to perform at concerts. Proof of recognition and exceptional quality is the undisputed fact that on more than one occasion Radio Belgrade broadcasted concerts played by the orchestra.

Mrs. Schön was the vice-President of the Zemun Red Cross for many years and was an exceptionally active member of the Board of the humanitarian organization "Milosrdje". But she was also a striking amateur actress. She acted in theatric dramatic pieces and performances staged at a series of events for the benefit of humanitarian organizations. It may be interesting to remark that a number of these events were directed by Dr. Schön. He also wrote several theater pieces and dramulettes.

Luisa Schön achieved her greatest success in the role of Laura in "Agonija" the dramatic play by Krleza. She played alongside the Belgrade National Theater drama laureate, Alexander Zlatkovic.

Subsequent daily press articles fully acclaimed the performance and eventually Krleza learnt of its existence and merit. He begged to be introduced to Luisa and they finally met in Zagreb in 1932.

The Education and Charity  
Theatric Society of Zemun

To the benefit of the Queen Marija Home for children

Thursday, April 10, 1930

Grand Hall of the Central Hotel

Guest performance of the leading actor

**Of the Belgrade National Theater**  
**Mr. Aleksandar Zlatkovic**

**IN AGONY**

A play in two acts written by Miroslav Krleža

CHARACTERS

Count Lenbach, former lieutenant .....Mr. Zlatkovic  
colonel of the dragoons  
Laura, his wife owner of .....Mrs. Louise Schön  
"Merkir Galan" fashion shop  
Dr. Krizovec, attorney at law.....Mr. Petar  
Kovacevic  
Madlen Petrovna, Countess Gelcerova .....Miss. Hella  
Milinkovic  
Marija, the maid .....Miss Em. Popovic  
A deaf-mute beggar .....Mr. Gj. Iksmerez

The first act takes place in the "Merkir Galan" fashion goods shop  
between the hours of 6 and 7 p.m. The second act takes place in the  
apartment of the Countess Lenbach between the hours of 2 and 3 a.m.

Furniture furnished by Mr. Karl Albrecht's store. Fashion goods by  
"Renesans" shop Knez Mihajla 26. Hats by M. Sagi salon, Kralja  
Aleks. Street - Record player Edizon Bel Penkala (I. Levi bookstore)  
Stage sets: PETAR HECL.

Seat prices: Ring seats D.40 - I seat D.30, II seat D.20 - Standing D.10 - Box  
seats D.30.

Tickets sold in Mr. I. Pešić's "Venus" drugstore.  
Performance opens at 9 o'clock p.m.

Considering the extent of their activities in the public and cultural sphere, the respect which the Schön family enjoyed was understandable and their place in the Zemun elite deserved.

Their daughter Heda married a marine officer Dusan Banovic in 1935. Their son Theodore left for the Palestine in 1939 as a **haluc** (pioneer). More will be said of him in the chapter on Zionism.

During the First World War Dr. A. Schön had been stationed to the rank of sanitary officer. After the war he held the position of a first class sanitary captain in reserve in the Military Forces of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. On April 4, 1941 he was mobilized as an officer and sent to Nis. There he was captured by the Germans as early as April 9. As a POW he was taken together with other Yugoslav officers by way of Pirot and Caribrod to Dragoman. On May 7, 1941 he managed to escape and passing through Belgrade reached Zemun illegally.

Once in Zemun he was immediately given the yellow band and was taken to a forced labor camp with a group of Jews. He soon contracted typhoid fever. On recovery from the illness he was interned in an army barrack where some 1700 Muslim refugees from Bosnia were kept. He was presumably immune to the disease having already lived through it and his duty was to stifle the outbreak of typhoid.

In the fall of 1942 using false documents he managed to settle in Hrvatska Dubica as a doctor in the village health station. His plan was to flee from there to the Italian occupation zone together with his wife and daughter.

However, an incident that occurred a year later exposed his true identity. As a man of medicine and a true humanitarian he tried to protect the Orthodox population also from the threat of typhoid. So instead of vaccinating an Ustashi village with anti-typhus vaccines supplied to him for this purpose he used them also for Serbs. For this he was arrested in 1944 and taken to the Jasenovac concentration





**The Schön family in the year 1934:  
*Dr. Arnold, Luisa, Theo and Heda***

camp and put in solitary confinement. However due to a shortage of doctors, he was taken to the village of Jasenovac together with six of his colleagues. The hospital was surrounded by barbed wire, so he was still in confinement. The hospital was evacuated on April 8, 1945 together with patients (Ustashi, Domobrans, and a few civilians). The general retreat of fascists had begun and in the resulting chaos Dr. Schön managed to escape and reach Zagreb where he hid at his friend's house for some days. On May 8, 1945 he was alive and celebrating victory day.

During the arrest in Dubica the daughter Heda escaped to Zagreb and together with her daughter survived the war living in a cellar.



**In the picture: *Bilha (Theo's wife), Theo, Luisa, Amira (daughter to Theo and Bilha) and Dr. Schön - in Israel***



His wife, Luisa was arrested after her husband's escape. Fortunately, she had a document issued by a Roman Catholic priest stating she was an Arian, and was released. Naturally after this narrow escape she would not risk exposure of her real identity and fled to a remote village and managed to live there throughout the occupation.

Their daughter left for Messina in Italy to join her husband upon liberation and Dr. Schön returned to Zemun together with his wife. He was once again given the post of chief physician in the County hospice for the ailing.

In December 1948, together with his wife Luisa, Dr. Schön immigrated to Israel. Once in Israel apart from working in his profession he also became socially engaged. He wrote articles, drama pieces and held lectures.

His wife Luisa aided and supported him right up to her death in 1977.

Dr. Schön spent the last years of his life in the Gat kibbutz where he celebrated his 100th birthday in 1986.

Once this exceptional jubilee had passed, Dr. Arnold Schön announced to his son Theo and his family that living through two World Wars and the holocaust was quite enough and that he would abstain from food from then on. Since he strictly abided by his decision he was fed by means of infusion. However, he managed to stop the supply of infusion and died in 1987.

His son Theodore died on October 13, 1995 in the Gat kibbutz and his wife Bilha in 1997.

Their daughter Amira, married Keren, is alive and working in the Mizra kibbutz.

**Sigmund Levi**, a trader in timber, originally came from the Czech state. He is remembered as a charitable and humane person. The following event speaks clearly of the fact:

A Levi family with its five children moved from Belgrade to Zemun. Although the family was no relation of Sigmund's he nevertheless sent them a cart-full of wood free of charge (as recollected by Avram, one of the five children, who once in Israel took the name Dor).

Sigmund had four children, a daughter Luisa and sons Kurt, Otto and Karl. Kurt was a doctor and maintained progressive views. Right at the start of the uprising against the occupation forces he joined the partisans. In the so called Uzicka Republika he was chief of the partisan hospital and the partisan secretary of health. He was apprehended at the end of 1941 and killed in the Belgrade Gestapo. The Germans wrote a propaganda brochure about him headed "Dr. Avram the partisan health secretary". They changed the name of Kurt to Avram to make it sound more Jewish, while the actual content of the brochure deserves no comment. The brochure is kept at the Jewish Museum in Belgrade.

**Pinter Djurka** was an employee of Polgar. He lived with his wife Lenka (there are no closer details about her). At the start of the occupation they fled to Budapest.

They lived there practically up to the end of the war. Then the massive rounding up of Jews in Hungary began. On that critical day Lenka left the house to get some supplies. As fate would have it she decided to pay a visit to her friend and was held up by their conversation. The random decision she made that day saved her from apprehension and so she lived. However, Djurka was caught and deported to a concentration camp. From there on no trace of him has ever been recovered.



*Pinter Djurka with Mihaela Polgar*

**Dr. Hinko Urbach** served as an Archrabbi in Zemun from 1909 to 1928.

Dr Urbach was born in the small village of Moravka in the Moravska province, in 1872. His mother died when he was seven years old. His father was left with four children to provide for. He soon married a widow who in turn had three children from her previous marriage. He consented to the premarital condition that his children would have to leave their parental home. Hinko was the first to leave and became an apprentice with a shoemaker. Later he was educated at the

hedera, then in the jesiva in Bratislava, where he remained as an instructor up to his 26th year. He reached Budapest in 1898 where he tried to enroll in the rabbi High school. The school only accepted candidates who had gymnasium graduation certificates. Hinko had to learn Hungarian and after three years of study he managed to graduate. Simultaneously with the program of the High rabbi school, which he had already mastered while in the jesiva, he became a student of philosophy at the Faculty of Philosophy in Budapest. He chose to read the comparative study of the Hebrew, Aramaic, Arabic and Iranian language. He wrote his thesis in Latin and obtained his Ph.D. in 1904.

He married Sara, the daughter of his professor Moses Feldman and started to look for a post. Very soon he was given the opportunity to become head rabbi of Denmark. He declined the post because he would not consent to one condition that was required. He was requested to give blessing to mixed marriages, which were customary in liberal Denmark.

Thus instead of becoming a state rabbi, in 1906 he set off to the poor Jewish community of Tuzla which in whole numbered 140 people.

From there he was transferred to Zemun where the congregation consisted of 680 followers. During the First World War he was mobilized as an Austrian-Hungarian military chaplain. After the founding of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenians he became its citizen and continued with his service in Zemun up to 1928.

He is remembered as an exceptional erudite and a personage revered and respected both by the non-Jewish elite as well as by the Jewish people. Ivan Brandeis recalls from days when he was a student of the Zemun gymnasium how



*Dr Hinko Urbach.*  
Jerusalem 1949

Dr. Urbach would take regular walks with the Catholic minister Dr. Kraljevic and the Orthodox priest Gliga Konstatinovic. During these walks they had academic discussions every day in a different language: Greek, Hebrew and Latin. Each one of them professed a high degree of religious

tolerance. Later, with the rise of Hitler to power in Germany the relationship in time visibly deteriorated. It reached a degree of unveiled anti-Semitism and in due course an open minded disposition toward the Holocaust conducted during the occupation.

Dr. Urbach left Zemun and settled in Sarajevo where he became Archrabbi and conducted his service with agility up to the occupation in 1941. He managed to save himself by reaching Italy, where he remained up to the country's capitulation. Fleeing before the Germans he found refuge in Switzerland. In Lausanne he conducted service together with the local rabbi Schulmann. In 1946 he was already in Zagreb in the post of rabbi. Once the state of Israel was founded he organized Jewish emigrants and together with them left for their new state.

Dr. Urbach and his wife were placed in a rest home in Jerusalem, where they stayed briefly, since relatives living in Paris had invited them to spend the last years of their lives with them.

Hinko Urbach and Sara Feldmann had four children named: Simon, Tea, Mirjam and Benjamin.

Simon died of Spanish fever in 1916. Their daughter Mirjam died of pneumonia in 1921. At the time both illnesses were fatal.

Tea studied German at the Belgrade University and obtained a MA degree in German. She taught in gymnasiums in Smederevska Palanka and in Sarajevo. In 1937 she married a Polish Jew Ilija Rubin from Vilnius (today the capital of Lithuania). The two of them lived in the ghetto and were taken to German concentration camps in Lithuania, Estonia and Poland. Lea once said: "It was a miracle that we stayed alive."



**Standing:** *Dr. Hinko Urbach, Sara Urbach nee Feldmann (his wife), Jacob Broner (a relative)*

**Seated:** *Benjamin Urbach (son), Josephine Feldmann (mother in law), Moses Feldmann, father in law, rabbi in Budapest, Tea Urbach (daughter)*

Tea died in Warsaw in 2006. The years of her professional life were successful - she became a writer and author of several books.

The son Benjamin lives in Paris. He has two sons and seven grandchildren. One of his sons is a successful businessman in Israel. Benjamin cared for his parents up to their death.

Dr. Hinko Urbach died in Paris in 1960, a year after the death of his wife.

**Gabriel Polgar** came to Zemun in the second half of the XIX century. He was born in 1850 and died in 1916. He married Johanna Katzki (1851-1908).



*Gabriel Polgar*



Once in Zemun he set up a timber yard together with Binder. Their woodworking enterprise was in operation right up to the Second World War.

Gabriel was an active member of the Zemun Jewish population and for a time presided over its Community.

Gabriel and Johanna had three sons:

- Michael was born in 1881 and died in 1923.
- Ivan (Janos) was born in 1885 and was a civil engineer engaged in bridge construction. He spent the years of occupation in a hotel in Budapest. When the rounding up of Jews began in Hungary he managed to escape to the countryside with his wife and daughter. After the war he returned to Belgrade. In 1948 he immigrated to Israel where he died. His daughter Wanda lives in Vienna.
- Zoltan (1883-1958) was a woodworker. He married Ana nee Mührmayer, an Austrian, who converted to the Jewish faith.



*Zoltan Polgar*



*Ana Polgar*

The Polgars owned an estate in the vicinity of Bezanijska kosa. For a time this site was used for training future halucim (pioneers) for agricultural work in preparation for their emigration to the Palestine.



**The Polgar estate in Bezanijska kosa, photograph taken in 1937**

Jewish immigrants fleeing from Germany and Austria before Nazi mass deportations came to Zemun, were they were usually situated on the Polgar estate. There they were provided with board and lodging and other necessities.

Zoltan and Ana had two daughters: Liselote (1924-1957) and Michaela, born in 1925 and living in Belgrade.

Zoltan remained in Zemun during the occupation. He hid in the Upper city. He spent some time in prison. He was released upon the intervention of local Germans.

Throughout the occupation Ana lived freely in her apartment with Michaela and Liselot.





*Michaela Polgar*



*Liselote Polgar*

In 1942 Michaela married Kazimir Wagner in Zagreb. Sometime later he joined the partisans. In 1943 their son Tomislav was born. He lives in Rijeka and is now a pensioner. He was an expert in tourism. He has two sons and two daughters.

**Charlotta Sonnenfeld**, married Djeric was born in Zemun in 1926. Her grandfather Johan Sonnenfeld was born in 1826 and died in Zemun in 1890. Her grandmother Rosa, nee Deutsch was born in 1846 and died in 1926.



*Lazar Sonenfeld and Rosa Sonnenfeld nee Deutsch*

Johan and Rosa had seven children:

- Johanna, married Goldstein who bore eight children: Greta, Johan, Otto, Elsa, Pera, Cornelia, Alexander and Francisca;



*Johana Goldstein's children in Budapest*

- Samuel, married Olga Fisher they had three children: Hilda, Angela and Ivica;
- Heinrich remained a bachelor;
- Paula never married;
- Ludwig remained a bachelor;
- Charlotte married Bernard Goldstein they had three children: Oscar, Ela and Ervin;
- Lazar married Katica Patscharik they had a daughter Charlotte.

Out of the entire family the following members died in the Holocaust: Samuel, Lazar, Charlotte Goldstein, Otto, Francisca, Hilda, Angela, Ivica, Ela and Ervin. Another four of Johan's grand-children perished in the pogrom (the names of two of them were Nadin and Elsa, while the names of one male and one female child could not be found).



*Samuel*



*Charlotte Goldstein - Sonnenfeld, sons Oskar and Ervin, daughter Ela married Elek and Bernard Goldstein*



*Lazar Sonnenfeld*



*Lazar Sonnenfeld on his return from the Austro-Hungarian army*

Lazar Sonnenfeld was born on January 25, 1873. He ranked among the wealthiest Jews of Zemun. He was the proprietor of a liquor factory in the part of Zemun known as the Franzstal. He also owned an ice production plant and worked together with the well known brewer Weifert. Among his property was also the entire block of flats from the Danube embankment up to Zitna pijaca (the grain market).

Lazar contracted diabetes. His health deteriorated rapidly and he had to have his leg amputated.

His daughter Charlotte had a carefree childhood. She did not attend the Jewish elementary school since the school had already shut down when she reached the age to begin her education.

As expected, up to the Second World War Charlotte was a child who had everything she wished for. She recalls how she would often ride in her carriage when going out into town or to the synagogue, i.e. the Temple as the Ashkenazi called their house of prayer.

The German occupation cut short this easygoing lifestyle. Charlotte remembers how her father Lazar had once remarked that he had paid a large sum of money to a domestic German, Moser (he was a well known wine producer and merchant) to protect them. He believed that they would not be persecuted.

However on that fateful day, July 27, 1942 when the Zemun Jews were rounded up and deported to the concentration camps Lazar and Charlotte found themselves in the procession of people heading for the railway station. Their housemaid Mica carried Lazar's baggage since he could hardly walk on his one leg. Their progress was slow and they were the last to reach the cattle wagons into which they were hoarded under the

supervision of the domestic Germans clad in black uniforms. Her father was among the last to be pushed into the wagon and when Charlotte threw her suitcase in and went for the wagon door a German policeman grabbed her roughly and pushed her to the ground. Lazar saw what was happening and told her to go. She had only time enough to place a photo of herself into his hand. Then for the first time in her life she heard her father yell at her: Go! Till then she had never seen tears in his eyes.

In a state of deep shock she returned to their house together with the maid. She has no memory of what followed in the next thirty days. Since her mother was Hungarian she was admitted to the gymnasium.

On more than one occasion the police took pupils from her class to the station for interrogation. She was also interrogated a number of times. During the questioning she was beaten for the simple reason that she could not give answers to that which she had no knowledge of. She assumed the interrogations had to be related to the activity of the national-liberation movement. The only thing she was aware of was that a number of youths from her class had been killed.

Since their home was near the cemetery Charlotte knows that corpses from the Sajmiste concentration camp were brought to the Jewish graveyard. Among the corpses were also half dead inmates. On the way to the cemetery many of the slaughtered people fell out of the cart driven by a man generally known as Rodja. He would leave the corpses inside the chapel of the Jewish



The gate to the chapel at the Jewish cemetery in Zemun, 2003

graveyard from where they were later taken and thrown into a common grave. The story went that the neighbouring citizens came to the chapel and out of the heap of dead people took home those who still showed signs of life. They would nurture them in their homes till they felt better and strong enough to run off to a safer place. Because her mother was Hungarian she managed to stay out of the camps and live to see the end of the occupation.

In 1947 Charlotte married Predrag Djeric. They had two sons: Zoran who died in a traffic accident and Dragan who also died. Dragan had two sons: Dejan and Nemanja. Both of them are active participants in the work of the Belgrade Jewish Community.



*Charlotte Djeric- Sonnenfeld*

After the war Charlotte worked as an officer in the Zemun Municipality and for a time was the secretary to the president in office then, Branko Pesic (Pesic is remembered as the Mayor of Belgrade who initiated and built many monumental edifices during his mandate). She later found employment in the defense sector, then in the "Galenika" factory, in "Planum" and Union inženjering. In 1980 she retired from this company and became a pensioner.

She lives with her husband in Zemun.

The **Scheer family** settled in Srem in the first half of the XIX century.

From tales passed down the family, generations of descendants know that Alfred Scheer was their predecessor. He lived in the village of Budjanovci. There is no record of the origins of his wife or the date of their marriage. The only known fact is that they had four sons, Philip, Ferenz, Salamon, and Djula.

Philip Scheer was born in 1856. He was a tradesman and lived in Novi Sad and Zagreb. The onset of the occupation found him living in Novi Sad. He managed to avoid elimination in January 1942 by mere chance, but was later transported together with his entire family to the Auschwitz concentration camp. Of his five children (Bela, Elsa, Nina, Adel, Gesa) only Nina and Adel managed to survive their incarceration. Once free from the camp they spent some time with their uncle Willim in Zemun, from where they departed for Paris.

Philip's grand daughter Gertrude, daughter to Gesa managed to survive. She was interred in Hungarian camps from which she managed to escape. She later joined the partisans.



*From left to right: Philip, Ferenz, Salamon and Djula Scheer*

Ferenz Scheer was born in 1875. He was a tradesman in Novi Sad. He was killed during a raid in 1942. His only son Oscar was an officer of the Yugoslav Royal Army in reserve

and managed to live through the war as a POW. In 1946 he immigrated to Israel where he died during the seventies of the last century.



Djula Scheer was born in 1877. Certain data indicate that he was killed together with his wife and their two children in the raid in Novi Sad on January 21, 1942.

Samuel-Solomon Scheer was born in 1862. He was a tradesman in Zemun. He married Regina Gerber from Zemun. They had eight children: Willim, Marco, Adolf, Philip, Alexander, Margit, Katica, Olga and a foster child Lucia.

Salamon and Regina were rounded up in the morning of July 27, 1942 with other Zemun Jews. Because of their advanced age they were separated from the group and sent to the concentration camp Sajmiste. Regina died on the way to

the camp and Salamon was killed at Staro Sajmiste- Old Fair. There is no knowledge of the places of their burial.

Except for Willim, all their children met with a tragic death.

Marco Scheer, born 1895 in Kupinovo, was a clerk, employed by his brother Willim. He was a bachelor. He was killed in January 1944 in the Jasenovac concentration camp.

Lucia Scheer was born in 1897 in Bonn, Germany. She was adopted by Salamon and Regina, who cared for her as if she were one of their own. Lucia was the daughter of Bernard Mayer and Amalia nee Kaufmann. She never married. She was killed in November 1942 in Jajinci.

Philip Scheer was born in 1901 in Kupinovo. He was a tradesman. He had a gentlemen's haberdashery shop in Gospodska ulica (later King Alexander



*Family of Salamon and Regina Scheer*

*Upper row left to right: Alexander, Lucia, Adolf, Philip, Olga, Marco*

*Lower row left to right: Salamon Mayer (husband to Margite), Margite, Salamon, Regina, Willim, Katica Mirko Mayer (son of Salamon Mayer)*



*Philip and Malvina Scheer*

street). He was married to Malvina who came from a country village. She was killed in 1942 in Jajinci and Philip perished in Jasenovac in January 1944.

Margit Scheer was born in 1903 in Kupinovo. She married Samuel-Salomon Mayer from Zemun. He was a clerk and she a housewife. They had two children: Mirko and Dragan. Samuel and his son Dragan were killed in Jasenovac while Margit was killed immediately upon her arrival at the Staro Sajmiste camp in August 1942.

Mirko left for the Italian Occupation Zone. Once there he joined the partisans and at the end of the war left the military as a captain. He died in 1946.

Adolph Scheer was born in 1905 in Kupinovo. He worked as a clerk in Zemun. He never married. He had an affinity for sports and for some time was the goalie for the football team "Yugoslavia". He was killed in Jasenovac in November 1942.



*Mirko Mayer*

Olga Scheer was born in 1908 in Kupinovo and was a housewife married to Tibor Moises from Novi Sad. They had a daughter Judite. The whole family was killed in the January 1942 raid in Novi Sad.

Katica Scheer was born in 1912. She married Mika Danti, a civil engineer. They did not have any children. Katica was killed in Jajinci in 1942. Mika and his two brothers perished in Jasenovac.

Alexander Scheer was born in 1919 in Kupinovo. His nickname was Sandor. He worked as a clerk in Zemun. Alexander was also a professional athlete. He was killed in Jasenovac in November 1942.



*Olga Moises-Scheer with her husband Tibor Moises*



*Willim and Jelisaveta Scheer*

Willim Scheer was born in 1893 in Kupinovo. He studied in Zemun and Novi Sad. Like all the other children of Salamon and Regina he too spoke German, Hungarian and Serbo-Croatian. He was brought up in the tradition of the Jewish people, so that he also spoke Yiddish.

As the eldest son Willim inherited the trading shop in Bezanijska ulica in Zemun. He sold cloth by the meter. The supplies came from Greece, Pest, Vienna, London and Italy too. He was known as a trader who sold his goods on credit. He aspired to have goods of the highest quality, and was loath to see a customer walk out from his shop without buying anything.

He married Jelisaveta Kovar a stylist from Novi Sad. Jelisaveta converted to the Jewish faith and the marriage was conducted in the Jewish tradition. They had four children: Vladimir, Alfonse, Philip, and Zdenka. Zdenka died as a baby.



*Willim Scheer (second on the right) in front of his store in Bezanijska kosa*



*From left to right: Vladimir, Alfonse and Philip*

The family was prosperous and could afford a comfortable city life for the children.

During the thirties of the XX century Willim built a family house on the Kavalrija in Zemun. Also around that time he bought a car, an "Opel". In those days there were only a few cars in Zemun and their presence in the streets was always acknowledged with keen interest by passers by.

The comfort of their family life was shattered by the occupation in 1941. Willim was stripped of his shop, car and house on Kalvariija. One of the German head quarters was set up in the house. Jelisaveta managed to keep the family together in the cellar premises.

She found her birth certificate witnessing that she was a born Catholic, which to some extent protected her and her children. However, Willim had to hide in neighbouring attics and cellars.

In the dawn of July 27, 1942 when the Ustashi rounded up the Zemun Jews they did not enter Willim's house since the German headquarters was stationed there. And thus the family was spared.

From the very first day, once the war was over, Willim set out to renew the activity of the Zemun Jewish Community. Willim Scheer and Alexander Franck were the ones who contributed mostly to drawing up lists of Jews deported and killed for the entire Jewish Community including the villages in Srem that were also under the jurisdiction of this Community. For a certain period Willim also presided over the Community.

Willim's hobby was beekeeping. In 1934 he had already won a silver medal at the Pan-Slavic Fair for quality honey.

After the war he again returned to his hobby in 1945. However apiculture was now the only source of income for him and his family.

His son Philip born in 1931 in Zemun was educated in Belgrade and the USA. He is a Doctor of technical sciences. Once he completed his studies he worked in Kosovo, in the Institute of Mining in Belgrade and in the "Energoprojekt" company. During the sixties of the XX century he went to earn his living abroad. He worked in Zambia, Nigeria and a few other African countries. From there he crossed the Mediterranean to Spain, where he finally settled down. Philip has two sons: Willim is a graduated mining engineer, married with three children (Sasha, Lea and Adam). He lives in the Republic of South Africa; David is pursuing his studies in Spain and Italy.

Willim's second son Alfonse was educated in Zemun and Beograd. He became a shipbuilding technician and was sent to the Netherlands for further specialization. He worked in the shipbuilding yard of Belgrade. He lives with his wife and family in the house in Kalvariija in Zemun. His daughter Milica (1952) is a mechanical engineer; son Marco (1957) is a veterinary surgeon. Marco is an active member in the Jewish Community of Zemun as well as in the Federation of Jewish Communities.

Willim's third son Vladimir was born in 1936 in Zemun. He studied in his native town and in Belgrade. He is an engineer of metallurgy. As a successful man of his profession he worked in IMT, FOB, MINEL and PKB. He lives in the family house in Kalvariija. His only son Philip (1965) lives and works in Belgrade. Philip is a doctor.

Vladimir was the President of the Zemun Jewish Community for a long term.

**Margareta-Greta Koristka** was born in Zemun in 1918.

Her great-grandfather **Isak Schreiber** moved to Zemun in the second half of the XIX century. Her grandfather **Adolf Schreiber** was born in Zemun and married the daughter of **Jacob Benvenisti**, Josephine from Vienna.



*Jakob Benvenisti, Margareta Koristka's great grand-father, photograph taken in Vienna 1898*



*Fani Schreiber*

Adolf was a trader in grain. His daughter **Francisca - Fani Schreiber** was born in 1882.

Francisca made regular visits to **Benko Streim's** pharmacy. This is where she met **Franz**, a student of pharmacy, one of the **Koristka** family. They decided to get married. When they approached the Catholic Church with their wish to get married there they were turned down. They declared themselves as evangelists and entered into a civilian marriage in **Pancevo**. Right before the end of the First World War **Franz** was reassigned to the Austro-Hungarian army. Sometime later

**Francisca** received information of his status; missing, presumed killed in battle. From that time on there was no further record of him.

They had three daughters:

- **Valerie** was born in Zemun in 1912. She married **Miodrag Popovic - Mile**. Their son **Vladica Popovic** was a well known football player and later on became a coach. Their daughter **Vukica** married the film director **Bata Stojanovic** who died in a car crash. Their son is **Radomir Stojanovic**.



*Valeria Koristka*



*Vukica and Bata Stojanovic photograph taken in 1955*

- **Feodora** was married in Zemun in 1915. She married the engineer **Raca Kamenko**. They had two sons: **Branko** who lives in Belgrade and **Nenad** who lives in Paris. **Feodora** died in 1998.
- **Margareta - Greta** was born in Zemun in 1918. She went to the Jewish elementary school and remembers both her teachers, **Isidor Grünfeld** and **Edita Zentner**. She can still recall how strict mistress **Zentner** could be and how she frequently undertook disciplinary measures (taking the ruler to the palm of the hand). **Greta** was once dealt a spanking





*Feodora Koristka (1915-1997) married Raca with children Branko and Nenad*



*Margareta Koristka  
photograph taken in 1939 in Zagreb*

although she had done nothing wrong. From this period of her life she recalls a Polish girl named Marekova. She would follow Greta on her way back from school and shout after her "Cifutka" (a derogatory word for Jews). No mention of this incident would have been made had not Marekova resurfaced later on in the role of an informer.

After leaving elementary school Greta graduated from the State Trade Academy in Zemun. Before the Second World War Greta was employed as an accountant in the branch office of Svilara, (silk factory), in Osijek. Svilara stopped working at the onset of the occupation. The entire staff received severance payment equal to six months salary. Greta was struck out from the list and received nothing. She was left with no means of living. Apart from this an evidence card had been opened at the police station both for her and her mother and they had to make regular check-ins with the police.

She can still recall the occasion when in the company of her friend Mariana Leon (married Eberle) she sat in the patisserie "Glumac". At the table right next to them sat Retl, the chief of Zemun police and Marekova, the Polish lady already mentioned. It was evident that Retl was inquiring about the persons sitting next to them. She leaned closer to him and whisper into his ear. There is no doubt that she was informing on Greta since she frequently looked her way. Minutes later Greta and Mariana left the patisserie and made an end to the unpleasant incident.

A few days later her neighbour came to visit her and brought a form for her to fill in. She persuaded her to enter into the relevant box that she was a full blooded Arian. She immediately obtained a job at the aircraft factory "Ikarus". Half of the factory belonged to the Germans and the other half to the Croats. Her direct head of department was Spitz and ranking above Spitz was a man named Gludovac. After working at "Ikarus" for nine months Greta was told to bring documents about her father. This went fairly well since her father came from the Czeck state, i.e. he was not a Jew. Very soon she was asked to bring her mother's documents too. The lady in charge of the procedure who was mistress to a family friend told her that she

didn't have to bring anything. Thus Greta continued to work at "Ikarus" up to the moment when she was picked up in a raid and brought to the Ortskommandatur. She was asked where she worked and when she replied at "Ikarus" the Germans immediately called the factory. On receiving information that she was telling the truth, they let her go. However, the incident triggered in "Ikarus" an inspection into her origin and it soon became evident that she was of Jewish descent. The following day she was called to the office of chief Gludovac and fired on the spot.

That same evening Spitz came to Greta's apartment and told her that on no account should she stay there any longer and that she should find somewhere to hide permanently. It was then that Spitz told her that he had once worked at some Jew's establishment in Banat. The Jew was a generous employer not only to him but to all his workers. He would bail them out if they came to harm or had any difficulties. What stuck to his memory most was that the master would always invite them at the time of Jewish holidays to sit down and partake of the family meal. Spitz also told her that he had been fully aware of her origins but had pretended not to know. Thus she was indebted to the generosity of his old employer that he had come to give her warning that night.

That same evening Greta went to the Nedic family who owned a soda water production plant. She was well received there but stayed for a few days only. Her sister Feodora came and told her to ask for a pass for Belgrade so that she could go to her sister Valeria. She managed to obtain a pass for Belgrade but without the right to return to Zemun. She later learned that the clerk who had issued the pass was a member of the National liberation movement. He did not want to jeopardize his position and safety if she was to return to Zemun.

She stayed with her sister for some time and then went to live with Milena who was married to Rudi Stein. It was a rough period since they had nothing to live on. Then Milena managed to find a man willing to pay for the meals she prepared. Milena and Greta lived in this way right up to the end of the war. As a soldier of the Royal Yugoslav Army Rudi was held in a German POW camp and managed to survive the war. He returned to Belgrade in 1945 and in 1948 Rudi and Milena left for Israel. Rudi fell ill to cancer had an operation in the USA but died soon after. Milena lived in Israel up to her death.

Greta remained in the Stein apartment in Belgrade. She soon had to share it with cohabitants who had been allocated to the flat. Some time later she got a flat of her own where she has been living to this day.

In 1946 Greta married Dobrica - Vido Milosavljevic. The marriage lasted for six months only. They mutually consented to a divorce. After the failure of her marriage Greta decided to relocate to Israel. In order to do so she entered into



*Danilo Fogel and Margareta Koristka during the interview in 2006*

a formal marriage with Isak Levi from Sarajevo. He was a coworker in the Power Supply Company. Just before her departure for Israel she had a change of heart and divorced her second husband too.

Greta was a long standing activist of the Red Cross. Up to the time she retired she had worked in Statistika, Elektroprivreda, the Arbitrage Court and in the Second municipal court. For over twenty years she was jury judge in the Court of Justice.

She lives in Belgrade today.

**Isidor Schweizer**, settled in the Zemun Jewish Community in the early twenties of the last century (XX). He was born in 1891 in the village of Matra Sele, county of Lerinz in Hungary. He had a number of brothers and sisters.

Isidor had mastered the craft of wood-carving. He was an expert in his trade. Since his works were literally works of art, the carpenters of Zemun having absolute faith in his skills readily employed him. His exceptional skills saved his life, as the high ranking Fascists kept him in Zemun in their private



*Maria and Isidor Schweizer*

employ. Producing extraordinary carved wood pieces for them he managed to stay alive throughout the occupation.

In his early years as a wood carver in Kula he met Maria nee Rebstock (born in Kula 1892) and married her. Their only child was Margita, a daughter, born in Kula in 1919.

Margita grew up in Zemun. In 1938 she married a naval officer, Zvonimir Horvat. They had two children. Nikola, the younger child was born in 1941 and Alexandra in 1940 in Zemun.

Alexandra Horvat married Ivan Klein. Ivan's grandfather, Samuel Klein was by birth from Ungvar in Hungary. There he held lessons in Hebrew in the Jewish school. Round 1890 he moved to Vukovar and opened a store for cotton made products. He married Sophia, nee Grin, who was a native from Slavonia. They had two sons and three daughters. The elder son Richard was killed in the First World War.

The younger son Hugo Klein, was born in Vukovar in 1894. He studied and graduated medicine in Vienna. In 1919 he settled in Belgrade, and was one of the first psychoanalysts in Serbia. He wrote professional and popular publications on the subject of psychoanalysis and was acknowledged as a top expert in this field of science.

During the period of the Second World War he hid in Belgrade under an alias and managed to survive the occupation. His father and three sisters were killed in Jasenovac, i.e. Stara Gradiska.

After the war Hugo Klein devoted himself to the theater scene. He had always shown true interest and admiration for it.

In 1936 Hugo married Stana Djuric, a pianist and musicologist. Their only son Ivan was born in 1937. He is a

full time professor at the Faculty of Philology and is a member of SANU (Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts). He has a son with Alexandra Horvat, called Oliver born in 1976.

The **Semnitz family** settled in Zemun at the end of the nineteenth century.

Herman and Hermina Semnitz came from Almas. They had six sons. Their sons Zigmund - "Ziga" and Ignjac - "Naci" were well known soap manufacturers in Zemun. Albert also lived in Zemun, while two of the brothers went to Zagreb and one to Subotica.

Albert, one of the sons was born in 1877 in Almas. He finished school in Zemun and for a time worked as a bank clerk; he later became an agent for a big printing house.



**The Semnitz family: Gideon, Greta, Judith, Albert-Aca, Danilo, Dane, Irma, Lea and Richard**  
Picture taken in 1932 on the 25th wedding anniversary

Albert married a girl from Zemun, Irma Bilic, daughter to Bernard and Elsa.

They had six children: Greta, Judith, Lea, Richard, Gideon and Danilo.

Greta was born in 1909 in Zemun. She was an active member of the sport's society "Hakoah" (hazena). When in 1928 the entire family moved to Belgrade, she entered the sport's club "Jugoslavija" and as an exceptional player of hazena became a member of the national team. She managed to survive the occupation owing to the fact that she lived in a mixed marriage. She changed her name to Mira; her husband's family name was Popovic. It goes without saying that she lived in constant fear of the quisling authorities. If caught she would have been deported to a concentration camp. From that time she remembers the following event:

Some time near the end of 1941 she went out to buy a few things. She was dressed in a suit and over it she put on a mackintosh. In the street she met Anton Jung, a friend of the family and colleague from work. This "great" friend asked her immediately, "Do you know that you must register?" and even went on to tell her of the building where the mandatory registration of Jews was carried out. Hearing him out Greta replied: "I know, I already have a yellow band!"

Fortunately, there were those who were true humanitarians. Thus, Lea who worked as a secretary in the company "Pokorny" (liqueurs) married Milan Stepanovic in the fall of 1941. The marriage was conducted by a priest in the Vaznesenjska church, although such acts were prohibited and punished by the authorities. Milan took Lea to Donje Crnuce, his native village where she managed to live through the war.



The family of Radovan Djokovic took in Danilo Semnitz and he managed to survive the war under an alias, Danilo Simic. He never forgot his benefactors and in 1985 he brought Radovan to Jerusalem where he was awarded an honorary medal for worthy conduct at a ceremony held in "Yad Vashem". Danilo immigrated to Israel as early as 1948 with his brother Richard. Richard survived the war in a German POW camp. He died in 1976. Danilo is a pensioner and lives in Jerusalem.

Gideon Semnitz mastered the joinery craft in Zagreb. At the onset of the war he fled from Zagreb. On his way to the Italian occupational zone he changed his mind as he had no knowledge of the fate of his family in Belgrade. He planned to return to Zagreb and head on for Belgrade. He was caught and killed near Nova Gradiska.

Judith was an active Zionist and with enthusiasm prepared herself for the move to the Palestine. Some time round the end of 1940 and at the onset of 1941 she left for the Palestine by way of Turkey and reached the "Sar Hamakim" kibbutz.

While living in Zemun, Albert Semnitz was highly regarded not only by Jews, but by other citizens as well. He was a genial man and well appreciated in society. He is remembered for his song "Strolling through Zemun", which is cited in the chapter "The Period between the Two World Wars" of this chronicle.

It was more or less a typical Zemun Jewish family in which traditional customs of Judaism were observed. This meant that they celebrated the traditional holidays by going to the synagogue, the children attended Jewish school; at the same time they were not over zealous in their faith. Proof of this is an event recalled by Greta:

Her mother, Irma Semnitz rarely went to the synagogue. Once when an acquaintance asked her why she made only occasional visits to the temple, Irma replied:

"My dear, to any honest family its home is its temple. A family can pray inside the sanctuary of its home the same way it would in the Synagogue."

In 1941 Albert Semnitz was among the first to be hauled into a truck which the Nedic authorities used for rounding up Belgrade Jews destined for concentration camps. Albert was able to jump off the truck and managed to stay free for a short time. However, he was soon caught again and killed.



# THE ZIONIST MOVEMENT

It would be no exaggeration to say that Zemun was a town where one of the cornerstones of the Zionist movement was laid. One of the leading forerunners of the Zionist movement, rabbi **Yehuda Ben Shlomo Hai Alkalai** lived and worked in this town for half a century (1825-1874).

Yehuda's father, **Shlomo Hai Ben Moshe Alkalai** had moved from Thessalonica to Sarajevo where Yehuda was born in 1793. In Zemun he served as rabbi both for the Sephardim and the Ashkenazi as the Jewish Community was united at the time.

His influence reached beyond the borders of Austria-Hungary since his work was never limited only to religious service. He collaborated with the forerunners of Zionism Kaliser and Nataneck.

The works he wrote ceaselessly through his life are a testimony to his insight and positive realism. He was fully aware of the intricate spirit of his people and spoke frankly both of the good and flawed side of the Jewish character.



*Ester and Yehuda Ben Shlomo Hai Alkalai*

Yehuda Hai Alkalai published 53 books and notes. He wrote his first two books in Ladin and the others in Hebrew. Some of his first editions were printed at the Prince's printing house in Belgrade; the rest were printed in Budapest, Vienna, Leipzig, London, Amsterdam, and some even in Bombay. He collaborated with all major contemporary Jewish magazines. He was well known far beyond the countries we lived in, as a visionary of the new tendencies of Judaism. He was the actual originator of the Zionist idea that Jews must organize a movement to reinstate their homeland in Erec Israel. He wrote of the political resurrection of Judaism, which would bring a renewal of the faith, economy, morale and language. He petitioned that Hebrew ought to be the language of Jews. His major works were translated to English and have been revised and reprinted a number of times.

In 1864 Alkalai wrote among other things:

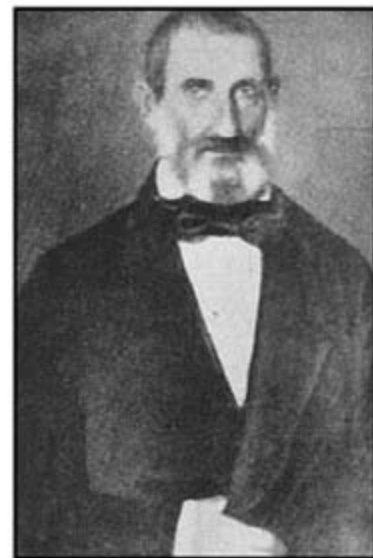
“Our holy country shall be a land of freedom; all citizens shall be free regardless of their religious beliefs or nationality.”

He was well aware that peace could not be attained easily. He pointed out that many nations had striven to change the world and bring everlasting peace to it, and that their efforts had gone unrewarded. However, he believed that it was destined that Zion would once again herald this idea.

He predicted that in the new state political parties propagating diverse secular tendencies would coexist and that it was impossible to assume that all Jews would harbour identical opinions. He opted for the unison of the people but never had implausible illusions. He wrote: “It is easier to appease two states than to reconcile two Jews!” This was the reason why he made it a point to primarily achieve peace and brotherhood among Jews, and to make them refrain from declaring themselves as Ashkenazi, Sephardim, Poles, Westerners or Hungarians.

He was also the founder of the A.I.U. organization in Paris (Alliance Israelite Universelle) which was actually short lived, although he never gave up on his idea that Jews should return to their old fatherland. He undertook a series of propaganda tours round Europe and declared himself against the departure of Jews to America, always giving preference to a move to the Palestine. After many years of working as an advocate of his concept which gave little result, he decided that he would set an example and prove the value of his ideas; he moved to Jerusalem. However, he continued with his campaigner travels and on one such occasion paid a visit to Zemun.

Although it is hard to make a direct connection of the influence of rabbi Alkalai on the later activity of the founder of the Zionist movement, **Theodore Herzl**, an interesting fact that should be mentioned is that Theodore's family comes from Zemun. In his short study Zoran Markus reveals the following data:



*Regina and Simon, Teodor Herzl's grand-mother and grand-father*

The genealogical line of Theodore Herzl is:

- Naftali Herzl - great great grandfather
- Leopold - Jehuda Leob Herzl - great grandfather
- Simon Herzl - grandfather
- Jakov Herzl - father

Theodore's father was born on 26, adar 5595 (beginning of April 1835) in the family house in Apostelgasse 253 in Zemun. Today in its place stands a building erected in 1910, and the name of the street is Gunduliceva, the house number 17. He later moved to Budapest where his son Theodore was born.

There can be no doubt that the idea of returning to the Palestine and the founding of an Israeli state was advocated, spread and acknowledged solely on the reputation that rabbi Yehuda Alkalai had among the Jews. Proof enough is that after the founding of the AIU in Paris a subsidiary counting 24 members was established in Zemun already in 1868. This was a decisive moment for the development of the Zionist movement which ensued later on. The ideas of Theodore Herzl that followed had a breeding ground to fall back on.

We find it necessary to bring to life and pay due respect to a citizen of Zemun who with youthful zest accepted the ideas of Zionism and spread them through his prose and poetry. A few words below are dedicated to him.

**Aladar Polak**, pen name Radala, was born in Zemun in 1890. His parents were Philip Polak and Fani Herzl. Her father was brother to Theodore Herzl's father. Aladar graduated from the Zemun gymnasium, and completed his law studies in Zagreb. Early on while still in gymnasium he began to write in his 16th year under the pen name Radala. Under the same

pseudonym he wrote articles for the Vienna press. He wrote stories and poetry, translated the works of Max Nordaun, a well known philosopher of socialism and a Zionist.

As an admirer of Zionism he believed that Jews should have an active and challenging standpoint. He opposed the fatalistic view that no matter what, fate would take its course. He felt deeply for the tragedies Jews were experiencing at the time. Embittered evidently by the consequences of the holocaust in Russia he wrote a poem from which we here quote the last two stanzas.

Thus, my people behold the encompassing danger  
That threatens you day in, day out  
YOU ALONE can save yourself  
Once you find your strength again  
Wait not for the "white mule" (*Messiah*)  
Stand up on your feet, do not be frail  
Theodore has once already shown you the way  
That leads you from darkness to daylight  
Wake up my people and brace yourself  
Remember the boldness of your predecessors  
Do not bend yourselves,  
Never again crawl before a foe  
Who dare strikes to topple you with a blow  
Wake up my people. To swords.  
Never again succumb to injustice without a fight.



**Aladar Polak the first president of the Zionist society "Esperanca"**

Unfortunately, the studious activity of this great intellectual was cut short by his early death. He died at the age of 25.

At the time there were religious people who believed in the prophetic fulfillment of their design to return to the "Holy land". Such belief was mostly associated with the expected arrival of the messiah. A greater number of them were much more realistic and knew that they had to take a proactive role if they were going to make the dream of the Palestine, i.e. the future of a Jewish state come true.

The small number of antagonists of the Zionist movement could not hinder its organized operation; the movement also manifested itself through cultural institutions and later in the forming of sports clubs.

In 1911 the Zionist society "Theodore Herzl" was established and "Esperanca" came under its wings.



**Zionist society- Zemun, foto: 1906**

The Jewish reading room was opened in 1910. Its first president and sponsor was Gabriel Polgar. The reading room was in Dubrovacka street No.15 on the first floor.

After Polgar next in line at the head of the reading room was the arch rabbi Hinko Urbach. At some moment during this period the reading room was renamed to "Jewish reading room". Occasionally tea parties were held in the room and



A group of Zionist Zemun youths round the year 1910

From left to right - first row from the top: 1 - ?, 2. *Elemir Fekete*, 3. *Josip Fekete*, 4. *Meof*?

Second row from the top: 1. *Ruben Levi*, 2. *Iso Neumann*, 3. *Andjelko Farchy*, 4. *Benko Darsa*, 5. *Pavle Bihali*, 6. *Tilu Kohen*,

Third row from the top: 1. *Moni Farchy*, 2. *Vitalis Beherano*, 3. *Josip Elijas*, 4. and 5. ?,

Seated: 1. *Josip Darsa*, 2. *Kadmon Isak Levi*, 3. *Willi Schwitzer*

Dr. Urbach would also conduct lectures there from time to time. His affinities tended toward Zionism, since his personal standpoint was that of a Jewish nationalist. Sometimes while preaching he would voice his Zionistic ideas. However, he did not have many contacts with the Zemun Jewish youths.

The "Esperanca" tambourine assembly was founded in 1908. After the First World War the group was renamed "David".

At the onset of the twentieth century Jewish youths turned to the Zionist movement in ever growing numbers. Unfortunately, most of the documents dating from the time have been destroyed. Some fragments that have been found were recounted in later publications. From the text on the exhibition "Half a century of Zemun Jews organized life" held in 1939 we learn that the Jewish delegation from Zemun was among the larger ones at the First Congress of Zionist Youth in Osijek. We also learn that the Congress of Yugoslav Zionists (in all probability the second) was held in 1907 and that a Zionist organization named "Esperanca" already existed at that time. Aladar Polak - Radala was its first president.

Within the practice of the Zionist movement Aladar Polak opposed an active, organized effort to the Messianic idea. This concept was first adopted by followers from the rank of youths, while the support of the elderly members of the Zemun Jewish Community gradually came later on. The acceptance of Zionist ideas in most cases did not immediately coincide with the desire to immigrate to the Palestine. However, even such an alliance was suitable for the burgeoning of the Zemun Zionist movement.

The spreading of Zionist ideas did have its opponents. Some youths had to hide their attachment to the Zionist organization. One person they feared was the gymnasium professor, Bernard Kohn (father of the bookkeeper and publisher Geca Kohn).





The Zionist youths photograph taken in 1918; first from the left *Vitalis Beherano*

Thus, Sime Spitzer, an active member of "Theodore Herzl" and "Esperanca" at the time, was persecuted as a Zionist. Kohn went so far as to fail him in his graduation exams. Desperate, Sime attempted suicide but luckily all ended well. He survived and managed to pass his exams in Zagreb without any problems. It was a twist of fate that Spizer attained the position of General Secretary of the Association of Yugoslav Jewish Communities after professor Kohn had been removed from the post.

In 1914 a doctor Arnold Schön moved to Zemun. He came to Zemun from Djakovo where he had already been President of the Zionist organization branch office. As a youth of the gymnasium he had attended the First Congress of the Yugoslav Zionist Youth in Osijek in 1904.

Once in Zemun Schön immediately took an active role in the Zionist organization. However the onset of the First World War practically terminated all social activities of this venue.

Upon World War I and the founding of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians the Jewish Community of Zemun underwent substantial changes. First, the number of Jewish inhabitants was reduced to half of that before the war. Regarding the Zemun Zionist movement two circumstances had a positive effect on its continuation. The first was Balfour's declaration of 1917 and the second the election of a new Board of the Jewish Community where Zionists were in majority.

Keeping to the idea of founding an egalitarian Jewish state in the Palestine, Dr. Fran Herzog, a Zionist of substantial experience, Dr. Jakov Stanic-Schlesinger, judge, young Josip Elias and the above mentioned Dr. Jakov Schön decided to establish a local Zionist organization. Their aim was to attract the youths that were as yet only undecided by-standers.

The question of electing the president of the LZO was raised. Ivan Kohn, professor of chemistry in the Zemun gymnasium, who later became the director of the Academy of Trade, was considered. The initiators took into account that he was a man of great status which certainly had bearing on the opinion of the Zemun Jewish youths and that of the older people too, toward the Zionist organization.

However, at the time not only was Dr. Ivan Kohn indifferent to the Zionist idea, but his thoughts were completely dominated by the idea of integration. He believed that he was accepted as an equal in Serbo-Croatian circles.

His disappointment at not being elected into the People's Council of the Town of Zemun was considerable and came as a shock. He had felt the sting of discrimination for being a Jew.

It was an opportunity to propose to Kohn to accept the leadership of the Local Zionist Organization. Kohn was a man of integrity, firm character, an exceptional pedagogue and a person greatly esteemed. His decision to accept the offer was not made hastily. He had evidently reached a turning point in his life and needed time to consider the steps he would take in his life from then on. He gave his consent a few days later and was elected president of LZO. Professor Kohn would later become the General Secretary of the Association of Yugoslav Jewish Communities. He died of starvation in the concentration camp Beogradsko sajliste in 1942.

Dr. Fran Herzog succeeded Dr. Kohn in the position of LZO president; next came Moriz Sasson who resigned from the position due to the exacting nature of his business engagements. In 1931, following Sasson, Dr. Arnold Schön became president of LZO and remained in the position up to the beginning of the war in 1941.



*Pri konanjs maslavske cion. omladine u Osijeku a. 1904.*

The First Congress of the Yugoslav Zionist Youths held in Osijek in 1904.

The WIZO (Women International Zionist Organization) never faltered in its activity. During the entire period between the First and Second World War the Zemun WIZO had its representative in the Belgrade Central Committee of the organization. The women held various events and performances each year and the proceeds collected would be distributed to KKL and KH. The last president of this organization right up to the Second World War was Helena Anaf, the wife of the president of the Sephardic Community.

From 1920 it became a practice for Jewish youths to gather in various sports societies. The concept of the sport club "Makabi" was to engage in different sports, but gymnastics became the club's priority. The sport club "Hakoah" (Strength) was another gathering place for male and female Jewish youths. They played football and hazena (a predecessor of handball). Although the club achieved some outstanding results, its activity came to an end already in 1923. due to a lack of resources and staff problems.

A plausible result of the activity of Zionists in Zemun was the departure of the first **halucim** (pioneer settlers) to the Palestine in 1921. They were Ruben Levi, Rahel Beherano and Josip Darsa. Josip Darsa became grievously ill, returned to Zemun and died there round 1930. All that is known of Ruben Levi was that he had only spent a short time as haluc. A record of Rahela Beherano's destiny has never been found.

The newspaper "Jew" published in Zagreb greatly influenced the activity and expansion of Zemun Zionist organizations.

It can be said that the period between the two world wars (1919-1941) was a period of the burgeoning and spreading of Zionist ideas and organized activity.

The Jewish Youth Society became a highly active organization from 1929. It was open to youths of all ages. Excursions and camping outings were organized. The Scout's Organization was adopted as a role model. Up to 1931. the involvement and education of members was based on the concept of the Scout movement augmented with a certain dose of Zionism and nationalism. The meeting place for youths was named "Ken" (Nest).

The first head of the "Ken" was Alfred Müller a student from Ruma. Once his studies of philosophy and the German language were accomplished he married the daughter of Salamon Schwitzer (sister to Shani and Paci). In 1932. he was given the position of teacher in the Jewish school which closed down that same year.

Avram Levi (Dor) succeeded Müller as ros (head) of "Ken". He remained in the post up to 1935.

An important year is 1931. when the "Ken" disassociated itself from the Scout movement and joined the "Hashomer hatzair" (Young keeper) organization.

During this period Marko Schweitzer "Paci", Hugo Samlaics "Jair" and Theodore Schön "Teo" stood out from the rest and demonstrated their zest and organizational skills. The three of them practically took over the organization and operation of the Zemun "Hashomer hatzair".

They gathered round them a number of activists who headed groups of members of varying age engaged in particular kinds of "Ken" activity.

The program of activities was adapted to the age of the members. The most talented male and female youths were delegated to work with children. Frequently, their comrades from



the eldest rank of members would participate in the training of children. Through a choice of suitable entertainment and games the children learnt about the most important events in the history of the Jewish people and some details about the Palestine, as their once original homeland. There was also talk of resettlement and the life of a halucim (pioneer settlers), of their dedication and strife in the new homeland.

However the educational effort was not only limited to teaching Judaism, but also included sciences and human activity in general. It was carried out in an elementary and simpli-



The Jewish Youth Society at Moshava, Gozd in Slovenia 1931

In the picture from left to right *David and Ruzica Fogel*, next are three unidentified girls, then *Anci Flesch* from Ruma, with his shirt unbuttoned *Alfred Müller*, and second from him *Josip Pisker*, *Alexander Schwitzer* - the others are unknown.

fied form allowing children of a certain age group to grasp each subject. The aim of all endeavours made was not a set of randomly chosen themes, an erratic acquisition of knowledge, rather a fostering of a scientific understanding of the world.

The same concept was applied to adolescents, adapted to their intellectual level. Fiction books treating social matters were given preference, especially editions published by "Nolit". There was great interest for psychoanalysis, for certain philosophical works and Marxist literature, which was somewhat harder to obtain. Marx and a number of other authors became the subject of study. The aim of such studies was not blind acceptance of sacred dogma. To the contrary, in frequent and comprehensive discussions, facts were scrutinized and debates



The Jewish Youth Society at Moshava, Gozd in Slovenia 1931  
In the picture first from the left *Ruzica Fogel*, *Lici Ungar*, sitting on the ground *Lenka Nachmijas*, we were unable to identify the other girls.





The entire membership of "Ken" - Hashomer hatzair in 1931

From left to right top row: 1. Elisa Samlaics, 2. Ervin Pisker, 3. Ruzica Fogel, 4. Hilda Levi, 5-?, 6. Adi Neumann, 7.-?, 8. Avram Levi, 9. Alexander Schwitzer

Second row from the top: 1. Hugo Samlaics, 2. Josip Pisker, 3. Benjamin Beherano, 4. Boas Boskovic, 5. Josip Fogel, 6. Icko Semnitz

Third row from the top: 1. Theo Schön, 2. Klara Kacka, 3.-?, 4. Hilda Roth, 5. Lici Ungar, 6. Fina Klopfer, 7.-?, 8. Else Klopfer, 9. Debora Landau

Fourth row from the top: 1. Marco Schwitzer "Paci", 2,3-?, 4. David Tägleicht "Doli", 5. Ervin Rosenberg, 6. Eci Ungar, 7.-?, 8. Josip Beherano, 9. Sami Fischer, 10.-?

Fifth row from the top: 1. Roderik Levi, 2. Danilo Fogel, 3.-?, 4. Alfred Katschka, 5.-?, 6. Hinko Gerschanovitsch, 7,8,9,10-?

encouraged. The main task was to learn to acquire a studied insight of world matters and accept the principle of open-mindedness and tolerance.

In order to understand this principle it should be stressed that the "Hashomer hatzair" was on the left wing of the Zionist movement. This meant that the awareness of the necessity of founding a Jewish state was based on the ideas of Theodore Herzl. However, the issue of the kind of state it would be was simultaneously discussed. Within the Hashomer hatzair the prevailing idea was that from the very beginning the status of the new state should be a republic striving for social justice.

Notwithstanding the fact that there was a marked tendency toward installing socialism in the future Jewish state, the original standpoint was that an evolution of the state of mind had to take place before any social changes could be embarked



Picture taken in 1938  
From left to right: Theo Schön, Hugo Samlaics and  
"Paci" Schwitzer



In the picture taken on September 1, 1935: Menahelim ("Ken" leaders)

From left to right: *Hugo Samlaics, Streja Medina, Paci Schwitzer, Heda Brandeis, Adi Neumann and Theo Schön.*

In the picture taken in 1938: the "Ken" youths with their menahel *Boas Boskovic*

All the children in the picture perished in concentration camps.





The members of "Hashomer hatzair" 1935

on. Within this context the kibbutz was designed as a form of a socialist-collectivist habitat which would simultaneously serve as breeding ground for socialist models beyond the scope of agriculture. Time proved the concept utopian, but regardless of present developments, the concept of the kibbutz contributed to the immigration to the Palestine and created the elementary conditions for founding the state of Israel.

Within this theoretical project there was no tendency toward a combatant revolution to overthrow the capitalist way of life. It was actually a movement of social-democratic orientation, which was in many ways consistent with today's Western concept of social-democracy. The social democratic maxim that employers and employees share the same boat and if they want to go forward they have to row in the same direction is well known.

Even at that time it was evident: in order to instate social justice in the future country a highly developed economy would have to be attained. Only then could it be possible to achieve a high standard of living, modern education, comprehensive medical and social services, etc. Once such conditions were reached the redistribution of social wealth could be carried out. It would be up to the newly bred working class to strive for the implementation of such redistribution in the new Jewish state.

As a chronicle of historic facts we find it necessary to mention here the views of the "Hashomer hatzair" (at least that of Zemun) on the role of religious institutions in the future Jewish state. Although the "Hashomer hatzair" was of atheist persuasion, it was evident that religious institutions must subsist in the new country. The prevailing opinion was that religion with its institutions



The opening of the "Ken" in 1930



should be separated from the state and that religious persuasion should be an individual right and be rated among other personal and collective freedoms.

During discussions on the subject it was frequently highlighted that religion was a main factor for the preservation of the entity of the Jewish people, its history, tradition and language. As a movement that had no inclination toward a militant change of the social system it likewise denounced any enforced and single minded opinions on world affairs. It was considered that religious beliefs would live on in the future and that they would only be subdued in the long process of edifying the conscious mind based on truths which could be attested scientifically.

The present solutions applied in Israel concerning this issue shall not be noted here since they are not the subject of this chronicle.

A lot of time and close thought were spent in discussions on the necessity of founding a Jewish state in the territory of the Palestine. In these discussions critical assessments of Stalin's current experiment to found a Jewish state in Birobidzan were made. The decisive factor were historical, traditional and religious arguments which supported the idea that the Jewish state should be founded in the place where in had existed two thousand years ago.

Understanding of the goals of the movement gradually developed in the minds of the members together with the method of achieving the primary task: the return to the Palestine, the land of the forefathers.

There was no misleading talk of the conditions that had to be met for the relocation to the Palestine or the conditions under which life would be led in the Promised Land.

Each year moshava was organized as practical preparation for living in tents. They were conceived as camping excursions of Jewish youths from various parts of the former Yugoslavia. The



The members of the "Hashomer hatzair" Ken in 1937



youths would put up the tents, dig small trenches round them for draining rainfall, erect a camp kitchen, outdoor hygiene utilities, etc., all by themselves. New acquaintances were struck there and friendships kindled, in the belief they would be perpetuated within the kibbutz in Palestine. Literally, it was a school for teaching how to live together, to share everything (e.g. packages received from parents, the food individually brought to the camp and other little things), to learn about discipline and mutual respect. It went without saying that no smoking or use of alcohol of any kind was permitted. As a principle these camps cultivated the highest moral values both between men and women and in general interrelations.



One of the many meetings. The picture is of adolescent youths  
Clockwise: *Hugo Samlaics, Fina Klopfer, Vlada Sonnenberg, Benko Beherano, Jichak Semnitz, Klara Katschka, Josip Fogel, Josip Pisker, Boas Boskovic, David Tagleicht, Else Klopfer?? and Theo Schön*

The moshava cultivated cultural and educational contents; however, there was always time enough for socializing. The moshava campers were the creators and the participants of all social events. As a rule they would gather round the camp fire and sing together; sometimes small concerts were held since many brought an instrument to the moshava and short jovial dramatic pieces, monologues and sketches were performed.

In the years before the Second World War the moshava were held under the frightening onset of fascism. Apart from analytical discussions there were even attempts at jocular imitations of Hitler and Mussolini. Imitations of vast public gatherings were a background for replicating speeches interjected with humorous comments. Appropriate repartees were made by the audience.

In 1939 a Jew from Zagreb (name unknown) came to visit and talk to the mosava campers camping in Selce. He was evidently a member of the Yugoslav Communist Party. The conversation was led beside the camp fire. He gave his introductory speech, pointing out that there was an immediate threat of fascism and that Yugoslavia itself was heading toward fascism. He believed that "Hashomer hatzair" should participate with the communists in the struggle against fascism. He spoke of the activity of the National Front which had already been approached by many non-party individuals.

Nearly everyone present took part in the discussion. The majority was against the idea of joining up with the communists. The general belief was that in the prevailing situation the only true option was to prepare for departure to the Palestine. It can be presumed that such a stance was taken mostly because of the fact that Stalin's purges in the USSR had already become



**The older youngsters of "Ken" in 1938**

**In the picture from left to right: Haim Hasan, Hinko Gerschanovitsch, Danilo Fogel, Alfred Katschka, Eci Ungar, ?, Squatting: Josip Pisker, manahel, ?, Gavra Kohen, Mordehai from Skopje, Adi Neumann, manahel, Holding the flag: Hinko Izahar - "Mika"**

apparent. This was reflected in considerable bias toward the Yugoslav communists, who at the time acclaimed and followed Stalin as the leader of the international proletariat. The Hashomer hatzair would maintain this standpoint right up to the capitulation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and the advent of the German fascist armed forces.

Gradually the leadership of "Ken" was replaced by the next generation of youths.

As the first halucim of the "Hashomer hatzair" "Ken", Theo Schön and Marko Schwitzer "Paci" left for the Palestine in 1939. They stayed for a short time in the kibbutz "Bet" in Sarid. Very soon they moved to the "Gat" kibbutz, where they spent the rest of their lives.

Before he left Yugoslavia for the Palestine Theo married Bilha Hornig. He had met her during the Hahsari (training for migration). Their daughter Amira still lives and works in the "Gat" kibbutz.

Theo took the name Jakov Jafe. He died in the kibbutz in 1995. His wife Bilha died in 1997.

Only married couples could obtain an immigration certificate. Many future halucim officially married young women from the Zionist movement. For this reason "Paci" married a Lithuanian girl and divorced her after a brief time spent in the Palestine. In the kibbutz he married Ester Nadler from Poland. They had two children Bruri and Nadav. Paci took the name Mordehai Ben Shlomo. He died and was buried in the "Gat" kibbutz in 1996.

Hugo Samlaics was called up for National service during 1938-9. Streja Medina had departed from Zemun already in 1935. Out of the old members Heda Brandeis too, suspended her activities a few years before World War II and absented herself from the "Ken".



The moshava menaholim in 1933 near Lake Bohinj in Slovenia

From left to right: *Elisa Samlaics*, ?, *Theo Schön*, *Hugo Samlaics*, "*Paci*" *Schwitzer*

Moshava in Mozirje - Slovenia 1935

From left to right: *Jakov Schön "Teo"*, *Debora Landau*, *Oti Zlegel*, *Josip Pisker*, *Marko Schwitzer "Paci"*, *Icko Semnitz*, *Josip Fogel*, *Fina Gross*, in the background behind *Icko*, *Boas Boskovic*





**Menahelim of the moshava in Radalj 1938**  
**From left to right: Josip Fogel, menahel, Bele, Malka and Simon**  
 (unfortunately surnames unknown since they were not from Zemun)

Out of the old generation the only one who was still active was Adi Neumann. Apart from him, the newly elected menahelim came from the members of the next generation: Josip Pisker, Josip Fogel, Vlada Sonnenberg, Icko Semnitz.

At the end of 1938 Boas Boskovic was exiled from Yugoslavia to Poland together with his parents. All others above listed were killed in the concentration camps Jasenovac - Stara Gradiska except Teo Scoen, Paci Schwitzer and Adi Neumann.

In the autumn of 1938 Hugo Samlaics paid a visit to the "Ken" as a soldier of the Royal Yugoslav army when he got his first leave. It coincided with the time when Mordehai Schwitzer-"Paci" and Jakov Schön - "Teo" were in the stage of final preparations for their departure for the Palestine.

Such was the occasion when this photo was taken. In the picture are the menahelim leaving the Zemun "Hashomer hatzair" and the new recruits.

**At the moshava in Selce, near Skofja Loka in 1939**  
*Alfred Katschka reporting to the menahel Josip Fogel*  
*Beside Alfred is Danilo Fogel, then Sami Fischer, Izahar Hinko-Miki and a settler from Banat?*





The "Ken" continued to be a gathering place for the majority of Jewish children and youths. Despite the departure of the experienced leaders the activities of the "Ken" did not falter.

The ever growing threat of fascism became a reality. The arrival of a larger group of immigrants from Germany and Austria had a disturbing effect on the Jewish population of Zemun. At the same time it gave emphasis to the reality of resettlement in the Palestine.

Within the framework of activity of the "Hashomer hatzair" everything relating to decisions regarding the possibility of immigration, such as the politics of the English in the Palestine



We received this picture of the Sadir kibbutz taken in June 1939 from *Theo Schön's* daughter *Amira*. In the first row from the top, the first on the right is *Marko Schwitzer "Paci"*  
In the second row from the top, the first on the right is *Theo Schön*



In the picture from left to right: *Vlada Sonnenberg, Icko Semnitz, Teo Schön, Adi Neumann, Hugo Samlaics, Josip Pisker, Paci Schwitzer, Doli Tagleicht and Josip Fogel*



In the picture *Mordehai Ben Shlomo* (alias *Marko Schwitzer "Paci"*) as a National Service recruit in the Royal Yugoslav Army in 1937.





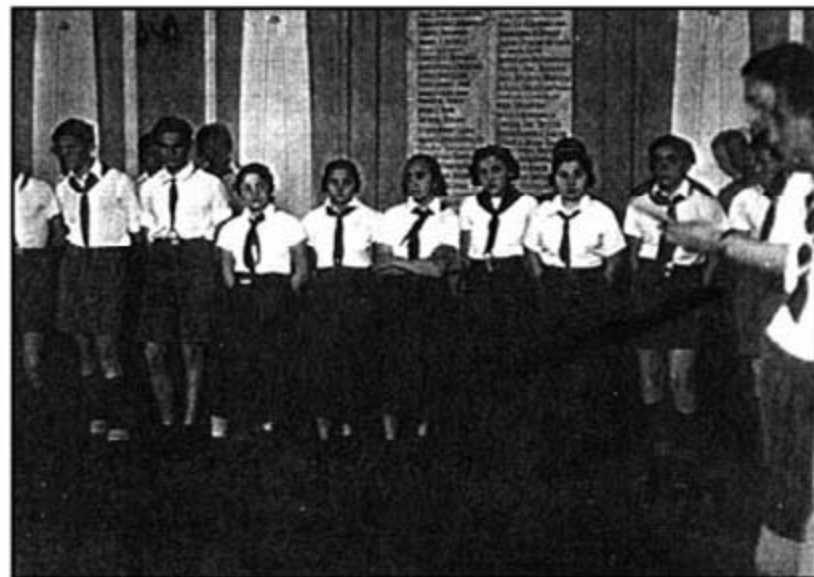
**In the picture from left to right: 1. ?, 2. Josip Fogel, Fina Klopfer, Teo Schön, Vlada Sonnenberg, Else Klopfer, Josip Pisker, Icko Semnitz and Boas Boskovic**

was fervently observed. The tune of this policy was viewed with criticism, and generated discontent and disdain. Every indication of relenting to the Arabs was taken as a sign that Great Britain was tending to its direct interests as regards oil, which had already become the main source of energy of the age.

The consequence of the introduction of a very restricted quota for Jews relocating to the Palestine was an influx of illegal settlers. This was the reason why there was serious talk about the possible routes of illegal immigration, as well as of the risks that had to be taken into account. At the time the older members of the "Hashomer hatzair" received information of the brutality of repercussions against such immigration, there was even talk of armed conflict.

At the time the threat of the Arabs seemed slighter than that coming from the English. This atmosphere was endorsed by the belief that cohabitation with the Arabs should be peaceful and cooperative. A point constantly emphasized was the abundance of mutual interest. The Arabs were to be accepted as brothers willing to embrace shared social, economic and cultural progress.

The prevailing logic at the time was that the interests of both Jews and Arabs against foreign domination were identical. It is not the intention of this chronicle to review in retrospect the reasons why relations between the Arabs and Jews failed to take the course desired and considered by "Hashomer hatzair" prior to World War II.



**In the picture: The opening of the celebration of the 10th anniversary of the kibbutz Arcija (?) held on February 7, 1937 in the "Oneg sabat" in Belgrade. A large delegation from the Zemun ken participated in the event.**



*Hulda Schor* a member of the "Hashomer hatzair" killed in the concentration camp Stara Gradiska. Standing next to *Hulda* is *Dana Badalic*

From its founding in 1931 and right up to the onset of the war in 1941 the Zemun ken maintained constant cooperation with the Belgrade ken. There were shared cultural events and outings; there was camaraderie and true friendship.

Documents concerning this cooperation are scarce, a picture or two might still be found in the possession of those ken members who had managed to survive the ordeals of the Holocaust, just like the one found in the legacy of Teo Schön.

Unfortunately, documents relating to the operation of the Zemun "Hashomer hatzair" could not be preserved. Because of this the author has made a list of its members relying solely on his memory. Pictures from the private album of the late Teo Schön were of great help in completing the list. Beside some photos Teo had written the names of the individuals in the pictures. However the author could not identify every individual in many photographs.

It is quite possible that some members may have been omitted, but it must be taken into account that nearly half a century has passed and that our memories have limitations. Bearing this in mind, I list the following individuals as members of the Hashomer hatzair:

Beherano Benjamin  
Beherano Josip  
Binder Anica  
Boskovic Boas  
Boskovic Mirko  
Boskovic Magda  
Brandeis Heda  
Fekete Greta  
Fekete Lea  
Fischer Sami  
Fogel Josip  
Fogel Danilo  
Gerschanowitsch Hinko  
Gross Fina  
Hasan Hugo Haim  
Izahar Alfred  
Izahar Hinko - Miki  
Katschka Alfred  
Katschka Klara  
Klopfer Jozefine  
Klopfer Elsa  
Kohen Gavra  
Landau Debora  
Levi Avraham - Dor  
Levi Hilda  
Medina Streja  
Mayer Mirko  
Müller Alfred  
Mordehai-surname unknown  
arrived from Skopje just before  
the war  
Neumann Adi

Pisker Ervin  
Pisker Josip  
Pisker Klara  
Pisker Mira  
Rot Erna (Lea)  
Rosenberg Toša  
Rosenberg Ervin "Silja"  
Samlaics Hugo  
Samlaics Erik - Eliša  
Sasson Stela  
Sasson Mimi  
Semnitz Marko - Icko  
Sonnenberg Cvi  
Sonnenberg Vlada  
Sonnenfeld Hilda  
Schalgo Judita  
Schön Teo  
Schor Hulda  
Spiegel Inge  
Schwitzer Šani  
Schwitzer Marko Paci  
(Mordeha)  
Tagleicht David-Doli  
Tagleicht Edita  
Ungar Lici  
Ungar Tibor  
Youth from Banat, *a dedicated activist, who also went to the mosava. He had been in a traffic accident and consequently his speech was sadly impaired by it.*

The "Hashomer hatzair" had a generation of youngsters. More than ten children used to gather for meetings, but unfortunately their names have been forgotten.

The activities of the organization were cut short by the Second World War. However, already in June 1941 the operation of the ken continued within the National liberation movement. A more detailed account on this point will be given in the relevant chapter of the chronicle.

Out of the listed members it can be said with certainty that the following members managed to survive the war: Benjamin Beherano, Josip Beherano, Heda Brandeis, Danilo Fogel, Ervin and Tosa Rosenberg, Shani and Marko Schwitzer, Levi Avraham - Dor and Theo Schön.

In 1938. a Jewish club was established. A group of young people joined the club; the "Ken" also collaborated with it as the program goals of both organizations were based on Zionist ideas.

From extensive material obtained at the Yad Vashem - Jerusalem (translator E.Werber) relevant to Jewish Communities in the former Yugoslavia, in the part that relates to Zemun we state below what has been recorded. The note is minor and shows no insight into the directions and relations existing within the movement in Zemun.

" - the Zionist from the town (referring to Zemun) consecrated the Jewish home in 1938. where the library was also housed. The founder was Rudolf Klopfer, and his deputy David Fogel. The institution had the task to acquaint its members and visitors with Jewish culture and to be a deterrent for all outside influence more often than not infiltrated by communist youth circles..".

This statement requires some comment. First of all it was not the reading room that was established in 1938. but, as already stated, the Jewish club of unambiguous Zionist orientation. As regards the names of the president and his deputy the account is accurate. However the question of “fighting off communist influence”, was in all probability a goal attributed to the club in the years following the war. This report shows little knowledge of the orientation of the Jewish youth of Zemun.

Mainly, the influence of communists on the absolute majority of Zemun Jewish youths was minimal. The prevailing feeling toward communists has already been described in the text relating to the mosava in Selce.

Furthermore, the hall of the Jewish home was ceremoniously opened on December 1, 1939. The author of the chronicle is indebted to Alexander Sharon (alias Shani Schwitzer) for helping him to get in touch with Mr.Cvi Loker, the Chief of the “Eventov” Archive at the University of Jerusalem who placed at disposal all documents relating to the Zemun Jewish Community. Among the existing documents a detailed description of the exhibition: “ A photographic review of the life of Jews in Zemun in the past 50 years” has bearing on the history of Zemun Jews.

This written document is presented in its entirety for the following reasons:

- it states the names of Zemun Jewish Community membership activists, remembered by Zemun inhabitants who managed to survive, and presents a written testimony available for young generations;
- the names of the Zionist organizations and of their leaders are stated;

- there are listed descriptions of photographs of the life of Zemun Jews; the majority of pictures have sadly been destroyed during the years of 1941-1945 occupation;
- there is information on some of the questions raised by certain individuals opposed to the idea of Zionism; the presumption being that they had little understanding for the younger generation.

The report on the exhibition was written at the time it was held, and can be accepted as authentic historic material.

According to the recollections of some survivors, the following text was written by David Fogel, the Deputy President of the Jewish club at the time. A hand written supplement to the text indicates that it was doubtlessly written by David's hand.

At the time it was held the exhibition was an exceptional event generating great interest among Zemun Jews. Invitations were printed for the occasion. Bellow we show a facsimile of the invitation and the description of the exhibition as stated in the original report.



# INVITATION

For the official opening of the Jewish Home Hall

The event will take place on Friday 1st December 1939 before benefaction at 10 o'clock, followed by a brief religious ceremony and an introductory speech.

On this occasion an exhibition shall also be opened organized by the Jewish Club. The exhibition shall be open to the public for viewing from 9 to 18 hours on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, the 1st, 2nd and 3rd December.

Attendance free, no entrance charge.

## A PRESENTATION

OF THE LIFE OF JEWS IN ZEMUN

As shown in photographs  
taken over the last 30 year period

The recently established new Jewish Club in Zemun is the organizer of the present exhibition which will be open for public viewing for a period of three days. The aim of the organizer was to depict the development of organized Jewish Community life in Zemun during the last fifty years by a display of photographs. A segment of the show commemorates the life of Dr. Theodor Herzl with an assortment of photographs of the Herzl family, of Zemun origin.

The material collected for the present exhibition has partly been proffered by old distinguished Jewish families of Zemun. The majority of the remaining photographs come from the Community archives as well as from other sources.

Here, once again you will come face to face with a myriad of former Jewish societies as well as those present to this day. You will inevitably recapture a shred of your past too immortalized by the camera lens.

Shalom!

## "A PHOTOGRAPHIC REVIEW OF THE LIFE OF JEWS IN ZEMUN IN THE LAST 50 YEARS"

December 1, 2 and 3, 1939

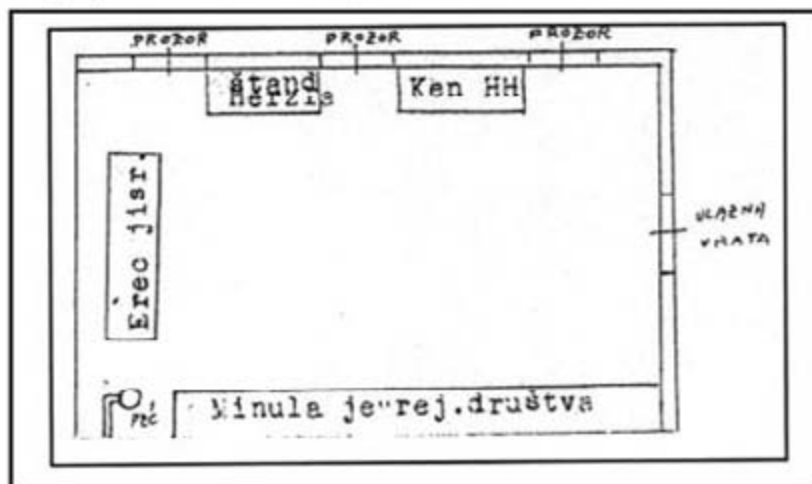
Within the "Jewish club" the feeling prevailed that an official public ceremony of the opening of its hall would be appropriate in order to allow the citizens of Zemun to acquaint themselves with the initial results of the effort of the Jewish club to renovate the hall. There were a few people within the club management (among them the deputy president David Fogel) who were of the opinion that this would not bring the anticipated results. However accepting the view of the majority Fogel proposed that the event should be an occasion for organizing a cultural manifestation in the club with photographs and documents displayed as exhibits. A Board of only a few members was elected for implementing the idea. The following individuals were willing to see it through: Avram Sasson, Rudi Klopfer, Hugo Samlaics and David and Josip Fogel. Once the photographs had been collected in a bout of joined effort, Samlaics and D. Fogel began work on the selection and sorting of photos. Finally a division of tasks was agreed upon with Samlaics erecting all stand wooden elements and necessary glazed panes; he also provided cloth for covering the stands. Fogel worked on annotations for the selected material which were both typed and calligraphically written. An effort was made throughout Zemun to gather genuine and accurate details. First and foremost Mr. Josip Elias, followed by Gasa Tagleicht, Vitalis Beherano and Benko Dasa (living in Belgrade) were deemed as individuals most reliable for deciphering the names and societies in the pictures. Each one of the named personages falls in the category of diligent veterans who had actively worked in nearly



all Jewish societies which have existed from 1907 to 1924. Most of them are also active today in almost all contemporary Jewish societies. They could recount many details of the aspirations of these foregone societies starting from 30 years ago and up to the present day.

### THE LAYOUT OF THE EXHIBIT MATERIAL

The plan shown bellow depicts the exhibited material displayed on stands with glazed covers:



#### 1) Pictures of former societies, 1907-1932

At the front end of the stand the following text written on white paper is affixed:

“THE AVANTGARDE SHOWN HERE REPRESENTS THE JEWISH ELITE. MANY OF THEM HAVE PASSED AWAY. HOWEVER THEIR ATTENTIVE IMAGES TOUCH THE VIEWER WITH A GENTLE RADIANCE. FROM THIS PRE WAR GENERATION OF DIGNITARIES EMERGED THE SUM OF THOSE WORTHY JEWS WHO TO THIS DAY ARE

PILLARS SUPPORTING THE EXTENSIVE ZIONIST EFFORT. SUCH ARRAY OF BEAUTIFUL AND SAD MEMORIES! THE PROFUSION OF WORK AND SACRIFICE, HOPES AND DISAPOINTMENTS!

A procession of photographs follows with information on the name of the society, the year it was taken and the names of the persons in it. They were exhibited in the following order:

1907: Congress of Yugoslav Zionists in Zemun, 1907: “Esperanca”, 1908: “Esperanca”, 1908: The tambourine musical group “Esperance”, 1909: “Esperanca” - Management, 1910: A portrait of Gabriel Polgar, President and sponsor of the Jewish reading room, which existed from 1910. up to World War I in Dubrovacka Street No. 15/I, 1911: A portrait and book of poems of the late Aladar Polak, first president of “Esperanca”, 1911: The Zionist society “Dr. Teodore Herzl” which became home to “Esperanca”, 1912 and 1913: another 4 pictures of the Zionist society “Dr. Teodore Herzl”, 1920: The tambourine group “David”, 1920: The Zionist society “Dr. T. Herzl”, 1921: The sport's club “Hakoah” two pictures (first team and reserves) 1921: S.C “Hakoah” - the hazena team, 1920: A portrait of Eugen Serenij today who in his time was a popular young man (today his name is Eugen Sarin), 1921: A picture of the first Zemun halucim; Ruben Levi, Rahel Beherano, Josip Darsa, 1921: Memories of the worthy Zionist veteran Isac Darsa and his son Josipa Darsa, who by a tragic twist of fate lost his life then (Comprising two contemporary issues of the “Židova” (“Jew”) with the obituaries, one written acknowledgement to Isak Darsa from M.C.O. Zemun and 6 small pictures showing Josip Darsa in the company of halucim during agricultural training in Djurdjevac, 1922: Small pictures from the trip to the youth rally in Osijek, 1926: The Synagogue singing society, a

large framed tableau of the choir, 1932: The Jewish youth club, under the leadership of Josip Elias, President, 1934: The management of the Sephardic Community which obtained full religious autonomy that year and evolved from the Ashkhenazi Community led by Jakov K. Levi, President, 1932: The last class of pupils of the Jewish elementary school which ceased to exist that same year, the teachers: Isidor Grünfeld and Alfred Müller.

Here the chronological part of the exhibition ends and the stand is completed with an original copy of "David" rules; then there is a picture of the "Beli medved" restaurant in Cetinjska street which had served as the Sephardic place of worship up to 1850. Next in line is an enlarged photo of the elaborately decorated interior of today's Sephardic temple. The stand ends with a tableau size 47x68 cm "A survey of Jewish institutions in Zemun in 1939", stating the number of members in each institution, the goals of the institutions, the year of founding and pictures of their presidents, as follows:

- 1) the Jewish religious community (Dr. Leo Brandeis, President and Cantor Gerschon Katschka, priest)
- 2) the Jewish religious community of Sephardic ritual (Moreno Anaf, President and Haham Isak Musafia, (priest)
- 3) Hevra Kadisha (Samuel Scheer , gabaj and treasurer)
- 4) the Zionist organization branch office (Dr. Arnold Schön, President)
- 5) the Jewish women's charity society (Justina Schreiber, President)
- 6) W.I.Z.O., Zemun group (Helena Anaf, President)
- 7) the Refugee committee (Bela Sonnenberg, foundation manager)

- 8) Kupat Ros-hodes (Zimbul Levi, President)
- 9) the Hashomer hatzair Ken (group: Marko Semnitz, Josip Pisker, Josip Fogel, and Vlada Sonnenberg, leadership of "Hanhaga")
- 10) the Jewish club (Rudolf Klopfer, President)

## II STAND OF EREZ JISRAEL (LAND OF ISRAEL)

The stand is covered with five tableaus of photographic reproductions carefully selected to represent details from five fields of activity: agriculture, craftsmanship, defense, fishery and shipbuilding. There are also copies, one each, of the "David" and "Palestine Post" newspapers and some insignificant postcards.

## III THE ZEMUNIAN ORIGIN OF THEODORE HERZL'S ANCESTORS

Among other there is a photograph of three headstones in the Zemun cemetery where Herzl's ancestors were buried, among them his grandfather Simon Lejb Herzl and his wife, next there is a picture of the first Zionist congress of Yugoslav youths held in Osijek in the fateful year of 1904, the year of Herzl's death (at the Congress the delegation from Zemun was among the largest in number), a book published by the "Zidov" library; rabbi Yehuda Hai Alkalai, a book about the Zemun rabbi by Jichak Gur Ari, with the rabbi's picture from the book and the inscription "A renowned contemporary of Herzl's grandfather Simon Loeb": rabbi Y.H. Alkalai, the forefather of Zionism; Jiskor memorial in the Zemun Ashkenazi temple opened on the side of the temple where prior to the

world war the name of Theodore Herzl was inscribed as one of the worthy deceased citizen of Zemun, the purpose being that he be mentioned in each "Maskir" on important holidays. The inscription was made following the proposal of a respectable contemporary member of the Community board, Moric Binder. The remaining part of the stand is covered with picture cuttings of Herzl's as a youth taken from his biography published by "Jevrejski narodni calendar" (Jewish popular calendar), Belgrade. Exhibited also is the introductory text from the same book about the Zemunian origin of the Herzl family. A very good framed portarait of Herzl made in Vienna in 1913 hangs above the stand. Beside it are two of his sayings framed in gold: "IT WON'T BE FAIRY TALE IF THERE IS RESOLVE" and "IF EVER I FORGET YOU JERUSALEM, LET MY RIGHT HAND WITHER AWAY". There is also a money-box belonging to Keren Kajemet. Beside it is a flower pot with some greenery.

#### IV PHOTOS OF HASHOMER HATZAIR KEN

In the middle of the stand two enlarged photo exhibits are placed: one of Mordehai Schwitzer and the other of Jaakov Schön with their names and a sentence: "OUR VENERABLE PAIR, THE FIRST TO ATTAIN THEIR IDEALS." The remaining part of the stand is covered with photos of "Ken" treks (holidays) and various groups of this youth organization.

Next to the stand a picture in oil is displayed in a glazed case. It depicts the Hon. President of the Community, Dr.Weiss who held the post from 1870 to 1903.

#### HOLDERS OF PICTURES

All the above photographs were lent by enthusiastic individuals and were duly returned. The following persons are in possession of the said pictures:

JOSIP IZAHAR: 5 photos dated 1907-1920, ALFRED LEVI: 6 photos dated 1920-22, JOSIP ELIAS: 7 photos dated 1907-1913, BELA SONENBERG: 3 photos dated 1907-1909, ISAK LEVI: 3 photos dated 1907-1912, DAVID LEVI-DALE, BEOGRAD: 1 photo of the grave headstones of Herzl's Zemun ancestors, BENKO DARSA, BEOGRAD: 6 photos dated 1921. (there are a few dating from an earlier period) GASA TAGLEICHT: 8 photos dated 1907-1913, VITALIS BEHERANO: 3 photos dated 1908-1912, Dr. ARNOLD Schön: 1 photo dated 1904. (the congress in Osijek), Dr. ALEXANDER BAND: a few photos dated 1920/21. from Eugena Serenja. Although it has not been established for certain, in all probability there are more pictures in other homes.

#### FAULTS FOUND WITH PICTURES:

A few persons among the visitors expressed justified remarks regarding the omission of data and photographs concerning: RUBEN LEVI-TIJU RUBEN, the long standing gabaj of the Zemun Sephardic Community; the one storey house built for renting on the communal lot in Dubrovacka street No.21. is his merit. EUGEN SERENJI with a group of teenagers, at the time members of the youth society (1919-1922). THE JEWISH YOUTH SOCIETY of 1930, initially headed by Alfred Müller and followed by others. MORIC SASSON, the first President of the Local branch of the Zionist organization, picture dated 1919. Mrs. ETA PISKER, of Bezanijske street,

remembered by prewar generations of youths for the hospitality of her comforting home, at the time a haven for the tambourine group "ESPERANCA" and later the "DAVID" group, where practice could be conducted in security and away from the persecution of the ill-famed professor Kohn. KOHN the elementary school teacher - "LERER KOHN" a well known figure among prewar generations who attended the Jewish elementary school (he was father to the renowned Belgrade publisher Geca Kohn). These omissions were noted, however, there were probably more that could be pointed out too. Although of less importance, the possibility of obtaining the original text of the once popular poem "ZEMUN, OH ZEMUN MY JEWEL OWN - IN THEE I SHALL SPEND MY WHOLE LIFE LONG....." written and composed by Semnitz should be noted. It would be interesting to know the circumstances under which Semnitz inaugurated the poem.

Documents about the family of T. Herzl of Zemun should have been obtained from Dr. Lavoslav Schick, a barrister from Zagreb, who borrowed five documents handwritten by Simon Leob Herzl from Mr. Josip Elias. Furthermore, as yet an unknown number of documents had been taken from the Community archive by the same person. It seems that he consciously proclaimed himself their owner. Dr. Hinko Urbach of Sarajevo, previously holding a post in Zemun also willfully acquired a large number of documents.

### GENERAL IMPRESSIONS

Looking at those yellowish old photographs we come upon names that are known not only in Zemun but throughout Yugoslavia, even among the non Jews. Among them is Pavle Bihali the proprietor and editor of today's respected

publishing house "NOLIT" of Belgrade. For a time, in 1920 Bihali was the President of the Zionist movement "Dr. Theodore Herzl" and the tambourine group "David". Further on we come across Sime Spicer an agile activist of the "Esperanca" and its tambourine section from 1907 up to the war. It is interesting to note that his friends from "Esperanca" remember how Spicer had to run from Zemun because of professor Kohn's harassment. The professor failed him in his gymnasium (high school) final exam. Kohn had an open negative approach to all adolescents of Zionist orientation, in his wish to please the existing K.u.K. authorities. The story goes that at the time Spicer, desperate and low spirited attempted suicide by jumping into a well. Ironically, fate would have it that a few years ago Spicer replaced professor Kohn in the position of General Secretary of Jewish Confessional Communities, after Kohn had been dismissed as unsuitable for the post. Eugen Serenji, today Eugen Sharin was in his time, in 1919 a favourite among Jewish children and adolescents for his apparent talent and eagerness to work with them. He is now in America employed at Fox Film as Chief of advertising for South-East Europe, after successively abandoning the post of Chief Executive of Fox European branches in Berlin, Vienna and finally Zagreb upon the Annexation. Unfortunately, today, his interest for typical Jewish issues has practically disappeared.- Apart from this it has become evident that a great many individuals of certain importance to Zionism and new Judaism have acquired their present conviction and understanding for contemporary Jewish ideals precisely in these pre-war societies.

Of the exhibition visitors the only thing one can say is that the attendance was noteworthy. As the exhibition has been a pioneer attempt the turnout should be considered a





Stand - Erec Jisrael



Stand - "Hashomer hatzair"

triumph; counting club members and members of the youth society "Hashomer hatzair" there were 300 visitors! This is indeed an impressive number for Zemun Jews since there are some 600 souls (counting the feeble and children) in both Communities. Individuals who had never in their lives entered the building after finishing the "common mass school" were noticed. Present among the public were even those of the "exclusive" conformist circles. Also seen rubbing shoulders with the worthy Zionist who would not miss out on a single Jewish event were those who for purely profitable reasons tended toward assimilation. There were women with families, old people and those who could barely venture outside even on holidays. It was evident that the exhibited material had left no one indifferent. People could either find themselves in certain pictures of their youth or someone dear to them, a family member or teenage friend. The underlying message implied by the entire occasion to today's youths could be that idealism was not invented by their generation and that its "heritage" is substantial; on the other hand the older generations could recall their youthful idealism and recognize the creative impact it has had on the contemporary generation of youths. In short, the exhibition has earned the young people a level of respect they deserve ensuring that teenage endeavours would not in future be treated as negligent idleness and indulgence.

The wave of publicity created by the exhibition outside Zemun could only be presumed. There were some visitors from other towns, but the only evidence that has reached us is an article published in the Zagreb edition of "The Jew". A photocopy of the article is shown here.



ZAGREB, FRIDAY, 22ND DECEMBER 1939

"ZIDOV"

ZEMUN

The formal opening of the Hall of the Jewish Home took place on the 1st of December. At the same time as part of the above event an exhibition of photographs portraying the last five decades of organized Jewish life in Zemun was also staged. After the solemn religious service conducted by Hon. haham Isak Musafija, the mezuzah was hammered in by Hon. Dr. Leo Brendais the President of the Jewish confessional community and the Hon. haham. In his opening speech the Hon. Dr. Arnold Schön, Mco President, stressed the importance and significance of the Home. "This old room of ours, through which generations have passed one upon another, has never ceased to be the place of assembly of Jewish scientific and academic thought and endeavor. Our Jewish youth brimming with energy in its national endeavors has faithfully observed the tradition of the Jewish population of Zemun and has kept faith with the spirit of the Hon. Dr. Teodore Herzl whose origins are rooted in this our town," said the Hon. Dr. Arnold Schön. These words characterize the entire Zionist effort and essence which has always existed within the walls of these rooms. At the very end of his speech the Hon. Dr. Schön hailed the youths wishing them success in their future undertakings. As the Hon. Dr. Schön concluded his speech he was applauded by all present. Next to address the audience was h. Hugo (Jair) Samlaich in front of the recently established Mco's Cultural-Academic section. He noted that with the closing of the Jewish reading room in Zemun in service right up to the Great War the Jews of Zemun had been left without a decent hall for assembly.

The young people gathered round the Jewish Club saw this as a major shortcoming and decided to make every effort to restore the present hall and thus bring the Jewish Home into existence. Their endeavor has been the first one aimed at reinstating the hall during the lifespan of this community council. Despite great difficulties imposed by the council the hall was restored and redecorated to the delight of every community member. With chosen words he stressed the importance and goals of the Academic-Cultural section. He specifically hailed certain institutions and Mr. Moreno Anaf also, for their contributions to the restoration of the hall. With great emotion, at the end of his speech, he bade us remember the first two halucim of our city h.h. Jakov Schön and Mordehai Schwitzer which have made their haluc ideals come true. With this speech the official part of the opening was brought to an end. The opening of the exhibition followed right away. The public viewed it with great interest. It inevitably stirred in each viewer an old cherished memory. The exhibition was dedicated to the history of Zemun Jewish societies, the Erec Jisrael, the Zemun origins of Dr. Teodore Herzl's family and the life of the youths within the Hashomer hacair ken. With this exhibition the youths of today have shown that they had not forgotten the merits of the older generations. Out of that pre-war generation sprung a myriad of distinguished Jews which even today are the pillars on which the ongoing Zionist efforts lean on. The exhibition which was opened for three days was visited by approximately 250 individuals. Among the viewers, visitors from Belgrade were noted. This exhibition shall be remembered for a long time by its public for, both, its originality and its content.

# THE OMINOUS YEARS

From the founding of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians and up to the moment Milan Stojadinovic became Prime Minister in 1937, the authorities practiced a policy of equality for all citizen including Jews. The first government to abandon the pro-French and pro-British policies was that of Stojadinovic. Endorsed by local Germans who were soon to become Hitler's collaborators - the fifth column, anti-Semitism spread. Doubtlessly there were forward-thinking and civilized people among the local Germans, but that did not alter the fact that an absolute majority embraced Fascism. Emigrant circles led by Pavelic and some other influential groups from abroad were also active. The growing concern of the Jewish population was all the more understandable in view of the fact that a great number of immigrants had relocated to Yugoslavia already in 1933 fleeing persecution in Germany. Others arrived sometime later from Austria just before or upon the county's annexation i.e. its inclusion into the German Reich. Such circumstances justifiably had a great impact on the lives of the Zemun Jews since a large number of immigrants had fled to their town in need of help.

A committee for assisting refugees was established in Zemun. Its main task was to collect funds for helping immigrants. The Head of the Refugee Fund was Bela Sonnenberg.

The next act that raised anxiety was the exile of Jews who had not obtained Yugoslav citizenship. Sometime by the end of 1938 and beginning of 1939 Boskovic, the shochet of the Jewish Community together with his entire family was exiled to Poland. His son Boas, discussed in the chapter on Zionism, sent a picture of the gymnastics club "Makabi" from Poland which is enclosed in this chapter. Unfortunately, there is no record of his fate or that of his family.

The status of Jews in Yugoslavia was further aggravated in the year 1940. Such circumstances were inevitably felt by the Jews of Zemun too.

Principally, on October 5, 1940 two decrees restricting the rights of Jews living in Yugoslavia were adopted. Their headings are (translation of original heading): "Decree on measures to be taken regarding Jews and their dealings with foodstuff business procedures and human nutrient items"



In the picture: The 25th Anniversary of the "ZIGS Makabi" society from the "Akademija"  
Fourth from the left Boas Boskovic

and "Decree on enrolling persons of Jewish origin as students in universities, colleges, secondary schools, teaching and other professional schools."

The first decree prohibited Jews to produce and sell foodstuff in any manner and to invest capital in this field of economy. It was stated in Art.2 of the decree that:

"No legal remedy or administrative, judicial action can be taken against the decision adopted nor will any claim for compensation of loss be considered."

By the second decree the "numerus clausus" was adopted for Jewish pupils. This was a very rigorous measure since it prescribed that the percentage of Jewish pupils and students allowed to enroll in secondary schools, colleges and universities should be equal to the percentage of Jewish citizens of the gross population.

Although the decrees were adopted some six months before the occupation of Yugoslavia, they nevertheless proved detrimental for the Jewish population. The period of their enforcement was reduced i.e. they were already effective two months later.

Naturally the Zemun Jews felt the consequences of these measures. There were many non-Jewish citizens who also looked on the measures with abhorrence. Pupils protested, the apprehension of the people grew. However this had little bearing on the course of events and could not lessen the extent of mounting racism.

## UNFOUNDED OPTIMISM

It is highly interesting to note that a mood of general optimism prevailed only 43 days before the bombing of Belgrade and the attack of Hitler's German troops on Yugoslavia. Mainly, on February 22, 1941 a reception was held in the Jewish home and an amusing journal which is reproduced in its entirety in the following pages was published.

A few of the survivors who are still alive recall that the majority of texts of the "The Merry Zemunian Jewish Annual Journal" (*Zemunski Veseli Jevrejski Godisnjak*) had been written by the deputy president of the Jewish Club, David - Deze Fogel.

Since sixty years have passed from the publication of this journal there are many allusions which are difficult to understand without the author's comment. Even the author of this chronicle could not determine in a number of cases the identity of individuals or the events implied.

Zemunski veseli

# JEUREJSKI GODIŠNJAK

Izdavac: Omladinska zabava u  
Jevrejskom domu 22 febr. 1941 g.



## THE MERRY ZEMUNIAN JEWISH ANNUAL JOURNAL

Issued at the Youth festivity  
held in the Jewish Home  
on 22nd February 1941

Published once every 202 years  
Edited by the Board

### THE KEY TO THE SITUATION

Old Salamon Kon was greatly worried how to marry off his only daughter Rebeka. The girl had already reached the marrying years and Salamon had prepared her and her dowry fittingly; an even 50 thousand for the event. But alas there was no sign of prospective suitors except for one fifty year old tradesman of dubious credit, one underfed devious student (who would have to be subsidized for another 8 schooling years) and one drunkard who hoped to "make good" his financial credit and debts by the match. Plainly speaking each one led a shady lifestyle which promised no marriage security for the girl; evidently their sole interest was to get their hands on the dowry... "Thank God there is still time for making decisions," thought Salamon. In fact there wasn't, between the three treasure hunters and scavengers no choice could be made and he turned them down one by one never allowing them to come near his girl. "Not a chance" spoke Salamon (thus making use of our president Rudika's favored adage). However, there passed a certain amount of time with no new suitors in sight. Salamon had uneasy thoughts about his girl's future. "The years are slipping by, there is little time to waste!" he kept repeating. He started a man hunt through the services of some well known matchmakers. Very soon the first positive results of this endeavor were brought into being. Aunt Kefete introduced a shy, provincial young man of "status". He professed that he liked the young lady and that the time had come to discuss the dowry. The old man declared: dowry and 50 thousand in cash on the wedding day. With icy politeness the candidate replied that due to present "global" matters he had to withdraw. At the same time his mind was adding up: at current prices the price of one kilo of knitting wool was 450 Dinars (before the war it had been 80 Dinars), and he would get as dowry money some 100 kilos of knitting wool! ... That was no deal! If there was only some real estate on offer, but alas there being none - then nothing of it! Anty Salika "accidentally" brought her sister-in law's nephew to tea. He was young, tall and lean, sporting black horn glasses, a student of philosophy who always sat with his back straight. He found the young lady to be a romantic and was ready to ask her father for her hand. Old Salamon gave his consent to the young man and immediately passed on to the business side of the marriage. He said: "You'll receive a dowry and 50 thousand in cash." "Whoever mentioned money Mr. Salamon," declared the perplexed candidate. "Our marriage will be based on ideals." "But you must have something to start your life with" mused Salamon. "Oh no, we shall live with you and thus will need neither dowry nor money. We marry for ideals and mixing money would stain the relationship..." Salamon spent some time deep in thought; he could see that something was amiss. "And what happens when I die. What then?" "That too is irrelevant. We love each

other..." Salamon's strict reasoning told him something was very wrong about this idealist, since everybody knew that it was impossible to live from love with the current state of prices! So he sent this suitor away too. He did want a level headed man for his son-in-law. The matchmakers at first tried to arrange "accidental" meetings but once they realized that there was no serious candidate they simply gave up the quest. As time passed Salamon's apprehension grew. By God, he simply had to do something! But the situation was grave and not to be trifled with. Some found fault with the value of the dowry. Others, God forbid, were either drunkards or idealists. It came to pass that the matchmakers could only produce goods categorized as "out of the question." So something else had to be done with no time to lose! And off he went to old Tija-Sara for advice. "This is all witchcraft and curses". Following her advice, smoldering lumps of coal were doused on their threshold and Rebeka was instructed to wear a clove of garlic hanging on a red thread round her neck. A mouse-trap was buried under the front door threshold... The garlic had a ghastly smell so they drenched her in toilet water and other perfumes but it was all in vain... So Salomon's grievances grew with each day. What more could he do since everything he had undertaken had given no results! His thoughts were in a mess (even graver than the one in Grinfeld's office)... However, all this came to an end when one day he learnt of the great hajj (Moslem priest) Ali-kadera Ben-Burazer from Dobo. So off to Dobo he went. Alikader had universal recognition for his insight and prophecies. Within a hair's breadth he prophesied that war would break out in 1926; as it actually had in Grand Chaka between Bolivia and Uruguay. He told Karneri the great boxer with great accuracy that he would take up Suvorinov's methods in 1940. His prophesy that Rodika and Alfred Levi would pay double church tax as long as they upheld the opposition was also very precise. There was also a faultless prophecy for Lord Linlinton, the Viceroy of India ... and so on ... and so forth. The sage Alikader Ben-Burazer deep in thought stroked his white beard as he heard out Salamon's sad story, never averting his probing, steely eyes from the old man. "Well you have done the right thing to address your problem to me. Here is my infallible and trustworthy advice. But you must abide by it strictly. When the young moon is in the sky take a new ten dinar coin which must be one hundred percent counterfeit proof, pass it through your trouser leg, and throw it high up into the air. If it lands "tails" instantly take your daughter by the hand and board a train with the ten dinar coin safely lodged in her bosom. Ride the train up to Belgrade. Once there head for Terazije and take the No.14 tram. Don't get off until the very last stop. Descend and walk up to the second street to the left. If no black cat accidentally crosses your path take the ten dinar coin from the girl's bosom and enlist her into the Jewish club there. From then on things will somehow take their own course...



It happened that this jubilee fell exactly in 1939. On the 1st of December that same year the recently restored Jewish Home had been opened, but not to celebrate the said occasion since it appeared that at the time nobody had remembered the year in question. What happened was that a group of young people had that same year accidentally brought to light an idea of theirs with great effort and enterprise. However, we doubt that even if the celebration of the said anniversary had been planned, it could not have been more ceremonious. The reverend Mr. Musafi performed the religious service and upon that the formal opening speeches were delivered. Our honorable uncle - Leo Brandajs (who had some years prior to this just celebrated his 35 years in office as the president of the Community) hammered the mezuzah??? Dr Arnold Schön made a speech, followed by Hugo Samlaic who fervently delivering his speech revealed to us the future importance of the Jewish Home to all, since we had had none up to then. He piously brought to mind our "heroic pair" who were the first to fulfill their ideals. With the opening of the Hall the exhibition "30 years of Jewish life in Zemun in photographs" was opened too. The photo exhibition will certainly stay in our memory. What a pity that we had no thought for the above jubilee at the time? How could this be?

We strongly recommend that in future too the Community archives are placed at the disposal of Mr. Lavoslav Sik and Dr. Urbach so that they can continue taking documents from it at their choice; maybe we shall yet learn something new from newspapers of the history of our kehila through the courtesy of press releases and ensuing debates.

### DO YOU KNOW?

- Why is the Wize??? the best Zemun society?
- Because it is free of charge.
- Why has Avram Levi missed a few recent tea parties?
- We have no reliable information at disposal, but wish to refer our readers to the meaning of the 3rd question in our crossword (vertical).
- Why our annual journal is published once every 202 years?
- Because the Zemun Jewish Community was established in 1739.
- Why is there no talk about the Women's society?
- Because it irritates the ladies.
- Who takes on the bulk of duties and wears himself down working for the club?
- Poldika Kohn.
- Why is the Ken in mourning?
- Because Vlada Sonnenberg, Eci Ungar and Adi Neumann are taking dancing lessons at Valter's.

Today was market day in our town and there I heard that a celebration will take place on the 20th February. I am grieved that I cannot be in Zemun that day so I decided to squander some money to the postal service in order to write a few words to you.

I am, with God's grace, live and well which I hope, God willing you are too. I've a cold and cough from time to time but nothing to worry about. Only when I start thinking of you I become somewhat miserable as I've come to look upon you as my next of kin. I tell you from the time I set of into the great big world I keep thinking about you all the time exactly like Hugo mused about his bride to be when she stayed in Plavno.

Though I cannot see you, in my mind's eye you are having fun, laughing and sporting with the smartest girls of Zemun, Pazova and the haplessly named village of Mokrin and of other great towns too all round you. I can hear both the Deze making jokes and see all of you holding fast to your bellies shaking with laughter. I see you dazed by the Doctor's per'ty singing, there's Robert nibbling pumpkin seeds and the "Fabrikanti" charming you away with chivalry. There you all are drinking and drinking again and again one of the select Sonenfeld beer, so fine that once you've drunk it you feel as gooey as a bar of chocolate left out in the sun.

I can only envy you your bliss and nothing more!... But ... I'm glad that I am still a Zemunian, especially so, since I've not forgotten our gentile Zemun language and speak flawlessly as you can see for yourselves. Heaven forbid that you should hear the pitiable way they speak here. It is not a language but something... I know not what. If Vuk were accidentally to stray into this part of the world he would soon forsake that part of his golden rule that says "Write as you speak".

"You would certainly like to know what it's like here. You cannot say that it is bad but it isn't good either. It's all this strange folk not a Jew to be found even with a candlestick.

And do you know why there are no Jews here? Way back when the times were good a Jew named Mosa Alfandari came to Leskovac. In order to see what kind of people he happened upon, he went up to his first door neighbor and asked if he could borrow two eggs. The neighbor took two eggs and before handing them over placed them on the scales to see how much they weigh. "My dear neighbor why are you weighing the eggs?" asked Mosa. "You'll get your two eggs back from me." "Well I know I'll get them back But, the ones you return may be of the tiny sort!" Mosa stood agape and turning to his wife Sara yelled: "Sara get packing right away. There can be no place for us here where even eggs are measured." From then on to this day not one Jew has ever dared to settle down in Leskovac.

And now I leave you, pray in good health! I have haggard you enough, since I know well how young married couples become restless once the eleventh hour strikes at night. Well... that too will pass.  
I fare thee well and remain forever yours,

Sanji



## TOWN NEWS

We inform Uncle Moreno's friends that beside the fair kvite for kvartol, sound receipts for Hevra Kadisha, first class Zionist receipts and similar which are sold in his shop he also has an auxiliary business: the sale of Class lottery tickets.

Mr. Alexander Franck declares that the wedding ring business has finally taken off.

When our raffle collectors came to see our Mr. Engler of "Jugobrazil" he wanted to give them beside a bundle of very nice articles a birch boom too. "Oh no, no, that will not do!" they professed trying to keep out of harm's way. "That must never enter the Community building. For the love of God please give us something else instead."

We asked uncle Bela Sonnengberg and uncle Laza Rosenberg what they thought about the shortage of leather, especially that of shoe soles. "Do not worry your-selves on the issue. There are still a lot of thick skinned individuals to go round."

"In order to be great, a nation must revere the cult of its great men," Fredi Miler declared.

## PERSONAL AND FAMILY NEWS

Greetings: Both Jewish Communities wished their members a Happy New calendar year as follows: The Ashkenazi with at least 120 and the Sephardim with a minimum of 60 dinars annually (plus 60% for the Association). Community members are grateful for the kindness shown.

Berit Mila: Joca and Klara Eskenazi send invitations for their son's Berit Mila which will take place on 29th February 1941 at 10 o'clock a.m.

Cancellation of the Berit Mila: Fritz known as "The Big one" is renouncing his Berit Mila since he has been rejected as a Lambros type. Instead he shall go to a certain old woman to get the small tendon under his tongue clipped; maybe he shall yet learn how to speak wisely.

Birthday: Isidor Grünfeld will be having a formal celebration of his 75th birthday and invites his many grateful pupils to send their greetings and presents to the cable address: Gizika.

Private announcements: Hugo Samlaics and Alfred Levi wish to inform all Jolly mail card vendors that this time they can absolutely forget about them since they have no intention to participate any longer in "Miss" contests having lost all interest in them.

## MARKET REPORT

Geese both fat and lean are highly prized. Particularly since the Club has become a major buyer in the market place.

Grincajg: due to excess supply prices have plummeted.

Potato: frequently also acquired in the form of apples (that the semblance is fool-proof is vouched for by Andor).

## NEWS

The President of the Belgrade Community issued a command that all streets must be hosed down with water as it is vital for the health of the citizens.

Reading newspapers clears the mind out.

Borgele lachele - zahlele wancle.

## A NEW ROSTER FOR TEA PARTY HOSTESSES

29th February 1941: Miss Anci A. Levi

30th February 1941: Messrs. Poldi Kohn and Leo Klopfer

31st February 1941: Misses Magda Fischer and Iluska Flajsman.

## OFF THE LIST

A group of young man and ladies from the club have recently with heavy heart been erases from the list: Hugo Samlaic, Hilda Rot, Alfred Levi, Anica Dajc, Lici Ungar, Klara Kacka and Fini Lande. The unofficial president of Zemun bachelors, their Doyen, is still believed to be Mr. Matija Hani, while the ladies have no such doyen since there is no unmarried young lady in Zemun above 16 years.

## CERTIFICATION

Mr. Flajer and Mr. Jozi Elias kindly ask of the raffle owner who wins the keg with sauerkraut, which they presented, to invite them when he cooks stuffed sauerkraut for the first time and thus enable them to personally verify the quality of their batch of pickles made this year.

## HYGENE

If you want a good nights sleep (san) it is wise to avoid any mention of words beginning with san such as: Sandala, Sandolina, Santalovina, Sanderson, Santo, Santiago, Sandomingo, Sandi-Veksler...

Some medical advice It is advisable for the good health of single men to avoid as far as possible mouse traps and honey cakes. For those already married it is considered as exceedingly healthy to avoid shops selling slippers when in the company of their wives. While we recommend to all young ladies to - but they already know what is best for them to do.

Dr. A. Sen

## EPIGRAM

How I wish I never met you  
What bliss would that be now!  
Socika will for his visits  
Leave me penniless anyhow.

## AT THE SEPHARDI ELECTION

The elections held in the Sephardic Community that took place the year before last were highly emotional. The opposition was extremely active - but alas did not win. Here is a gem taken from the opposition election campaign about a "complaint" lodged in reference to church tax.

While sipping my coffee  
A complaint I wrote  
In great haste to meet  
The due date set for it.  
Uncle M ... my dear pal  
Why impose the Kvarot on me  
When I can barely make ends meet?  
With my scarce means  
Where do I get the eight coins you seek?  
With no money and less trade  
You have little chance to gain yourself  
What you should do is grab a chalk  
And one by one strike all off.  
I hail you with Shalom  
Your humble servant, K the tailor

## A REPORT FROM THE NEAR PAST

It happened some 18-20 years before Sanika Svicer started growing a beard...In that pre-war time there used to live and work in Zemun a worthy K u K. professor, fearsome and feared by the Jewish youths of the time. They had to run and hide from him in murky alleys and private homes in order to indulge in some Zionism and some music. Due to his youthful endeavors Sime Spicer, an active member of "Theodore Hertzl" and "Esperanca" at the time, caught the professor's eye. He dully failed him in his final High school examination. Desperate, Sime attempted to kill himself. However, the irony of life is boundless: that same youth Spicer some 20 years later ascended to the position of general secretary of the Council of Jewish Communities, at the time held by the worthy professor K. who, left with no option, was forced to resign. Oh Fate, how fickle thou are...

## THE SECOND RAID OF THE TEMPLE

Last month our winter temple was robbed twice in row. Offenders, yet unknown took the entire stock of silver valued at 10.000 Dinars. It is a serious matter and generally not a subject to be reported in these pages. What compelled us to write about it is the fact that the secretary Grinfeld has placed the entire blame at the door of us youths (!!) while failing to take any reasonable precaution in the aftermath of the first burglary. Was not he the one who lacking heart made it possible for the offender to effortlessly walk through the untended gaping door passing by the broken gate lock first. Or was he just unforgivably careless.

## MONEY NOT WANTED

As concluded by the vice director of the "Sava" factory Leon Kohen after the Club mailed back his two Dinar contribution.

## NEWS FROM K.K.L.

The Central Curate in London cannot forgo the opportunity to extend its profoundest gratitude to Mr. Isidor Grünfeld of Zemun for his immensely charitable donation for the berit of E. Katschka in 1924 to the value of 1 (one) Dinar which being the only contribution to this extent was duly entered in his own hand into the Zemun memorial book of donations.

## THE RESTORATION OF THE CLUB HALL

Andor: The record "Oj javore, javore" has to be played incessantly.  
Rudika: 32 missing and coffee ...  
Hugo: ...and now just throw the curtains on the netting.  
Ken: This cleanliness is disturbing.  
Tosa: Leave out the rolling pins and everything goes.  
Avram: Personally, I dislike corn cobs.  
Alfred: Down with the elections  
Benko: Is it technical?  
Rodika: Why throw me out? I was going anyway.  
All together: When will the all-embracing and ever sweet dibaldura be instated?

## SOME NEW PROVERBS

As lucky as Rafajlo's lottery ticket.  
Tattered as the Community office.  
Forward as the 60% Association levy.  
As airy-fairy as the Club's stove.  
As suspect as Katka the caretaker.  
As loath to bestow as a temple tax payer.

## CROSSWORD

Across: 1. The dearest old man in the Community. 2. A high ideal. 3. A Hungarian film actor ardently admired by a Club member.

Vertical: 1. Our dancing star and living evidence that the Serbian language has no declinations. 2. The sole offender for everything amiss in our Community. 3. A device as yet unknown to the author of this crossword owing to his single marriage status. 4. The happy-go-lucky society. - That which uncle Sonnenfeld distributes in abundance. 5. An object harder to extract from certain people than a tooth. 6. The favorite benefactor of the Zemun youths.

Resenja: uspravno: 3. Slipper  
4. Club - Beer

## A NOTE BY THE EDITORIAL BOARD

The Board begs that no guns are drawn because of these passages since everything has been reported in a spirit of goodwill. In evidence to the above we profess that there has been no mention of, eg: Francika Semnic, Eitelka Fiser, Vera Sonenberg, Gasla Taglaht, Stela Sason, Markus Fiser Hela Fuks, Rahela Belah, Marko Kraus, Fina and Elza Klopfer who wished to be left out but none the less professed that "we know that desecret allusions will be made anyway..."

## THE NEW ROSTER OF LECTURES TO BE HELD AT THE JEWISH CLUB

In answer to the explicit wish of the entire public:  
Monday: speaker Aki Neumann  
Tuesday: speaker Aki Neumann  
Wednesday: speaker Aki Neumann  
Thursday: speaker Aki Neumann  
Friday: speaker Aki Neumann  
Saturday: speaker Aki Neumann  
Sunday: vocal concert ; Aki Neumann

## Comments on THE MERRY ANNUAL OF ZEMUN JEWS

### On page 1.

In the inscription immediately under the heading: "Published every once 202 years" - reference is made to the fact that the Jewish Community was founded in 1739.

### On page 2.

In the article "How the bicentenary of the JCZ was inadvertently celebrated.." an allusion is made to case of the missing documents i.e. the fact that Dr. Urbach and Dr. Schick had withdrawn some documents from the Community's archive which were never returned.

"A letter written by a Zemun citizen from the town of Leskovac" - the comical article was written by Alexander Sharon (alias Shani Schwitzer).

The two Deze mentioned are David Fogel and Dezider Fischer, both nicknamed Deze.

The noted "The doctor's "per'ty" singing" refers to Aki Neumann, who merited the title of doctor as he wore glasses and was practically tone deaf.

"Do you know?" - Questions the woes prompting the Ken's proclamation that only the hora (Jewish dance) should be danced.

### On page 3.

The column "town news" - "uncle man Moreno" is Moreno Anaf, the president of the Sephardic Community at the time.

Alexander Franck was a jeweler and watchmaker.

Bela Sonnenberg and Lazar Rosenberg were leather dealers. The column "Personal and family news", "Birthday" - Gizika was a mock nick name for teacher Grünfeld.

"Private announcements", - Round this time both Hugo Samlaics and Alfred Levi got married.

"News" - a reference to the Ladino of Zemun which was noticeably cluttered with Serbian phrases.

Borgele lachele - zahlele wanele, in Yiddish: Borrowing time - laughing time, Payback time - crying time.

"A new roster for tea party" - the names mentioned are of those who would not accept the obligation and were therefore scheduled for the non-existing days of February.

"Epigram" - the "Schötzika" mentioned is Dr. Arnold Schön.

### On page 4.

"Notes from the recent past" - the professor mentioned is Bernard Kohn.

"Crossword" - the word "dibaldis" means free.

The Schpiegel mentioned was an immigrant from Germany.

"The restoration of the club hall":

Andor - surname Weiss persistently requested Tosa Rosenberg to play on his accordion one and the same song over and over again.

Rudika is Klopfer.

Hugo is Samlaics.

Avram is Sasson.

Alfred - ?

Benko is Beherano

Rodika is Levi.

The Jewish Community in Zemun could be compared to a living organism, showing signs of its vitality each day anew. It was a turbulent life with day to day worries, births, marriages, deaths and the usual joys and sorrows of human kind. Within this closely knitted society everybody knew each other, many families were betrothed, others quarreled and made up. They made jokes at their own and at the expense of others without malice or second thoughts. Among them were a number of extremely witty individuals who gave life a sense of deep beauty and joy.

And then all at once the common paths of everyday life were severed. The onslaught of German troops was the opening to a tragic outcome, the beginning of destruction, torture and slaughter.

## *THE POGROM OF ZEMUN JEWS*

The German occupation army entered Zemun on April 12, 1941. Although Zemun was part of the Independent state of Croatia up to October 1941, the Germans took complete charge of the town. The German troops and the Gestapo (GeheimeStaatspolizei) made a binding relationship with the local Germans (Volksdeutscher), mainly living in the part of

Zemun known as the Franzstal. The majority of local Germans, some 10.000 of them in Zemun had actively and systematically prepared themselves for the arrival of the German army, and when they finally came saluted them as their saviors.

The majority of the Zemun population, specially the Serbs, but other nationalities too, including the Jews watched the German soldiers march through their town with grave apprehension.

This was the beginning of the ordeal and destruction of the Jewish community.

By the notorious Nazi "Bekanntmachung" (proclamations) the law practically ceased to apply to the Zemun Jews. They were outlawed. Proclamations in the form of bans and obligations regarding Jews followed one upon another.

Already on April 14, 1941 notices were placed ordering Jews (men from 15 to 60 years old, women from 15 to 40 years) under the threat of death penalty, to report to Police headquarters (Polizeiamt) by April 16, for the purpose of determining their ability for physical labour.

Simultaneously, a Proclamation (Bekanntmachung) stating the bans and obligations imposed on Jews in Zemun, point by point was plastered in public places all over the town.

Based on the recollections of surviving Jews the measures proscribed were as follows:

- Jews must wear a yellow band on their sleeves with the word "Jude" stamped on it;
- Jews are banned from approaching and entering all public places (parks, cinema, public baths, restaurants, public transportation, etc.);

- attending school is prohibited;
- they are banned from the streets on Sundays;
- they are forbidden to leave their houses from 8 o'clock p.m. to 5 o'clock a.m.;
- they are forbidden to gather in groups larger than 5 persons (meaning that a minjan for payer could not be legally gathered since religious norms required the presence of ten men of age);
- mandatory forced labour is instituted for Jews;
- all economic activities are proscribed to Jews.

Although no public proclamation was made the systematic eviction of Jews from their houses and apartments was in process.

All the above measures were implemented swiftly and efficiently owing to the keenness of the local Germans to be cooperative. They had prepared in advance records containing all necessary details for every Jew in Zemun. As part of Zemun's population they were well acquainted with the town and readily served as town guides. Their police in black uniforms together with the German police and troops evicted Jews from their houses and flats, made arrests and did whatever was required of them.

Very soon factories, trade shops, craftsmen workshops, bureaux and offices owned by Zemun Jews were confiscated.

In Zemun Jews were not crammed and fenced-in in one particular part of the town but nevertheless they practically lived in ghetto conditions. Their financial standing was completely undermined and each day presented a struggle to survive and preserve elementary biological survival.

The daily exertion of forced or better said slave labour made it practically impossible to earn elsewhere any money that could be used to feed one's family. As a rule forced labour work lasted 12 hours a day. Food had to be provided for by the labourer's themselves. Jews worked in a number of locations, mostly for the German army (Deutsche Wehrmacht). According to accounts disclosed by survivors, of forced labour the sites were:

**The Danube embankment**, the site where cargo was loaded into barges. Barrels with oil were first unloaded from trucks and then loaded into barge hulls using steel rope. Since there was no mention of any means of protection, like gloves, all Jews forced to work here suffered from blisters which broke over and over again leaving their hands bloodied and constantly sore. They were relentlessly spurred on by German soldiers who ordered them to work faster, brutally striking random blows as they passed by. The soldiers cursed them persistently shouting profanities such as: "Du Saujude!" or "Stinkende Saujuden!" and so on.

**The Zemun Magistrate** was taken over by the Command of one of the divisions of the German army. A group of Jews delegated to work in this building had to carry furniture from one office to another, from one floor to another. It was strenuous work since the German guards would allow only two Jews to carry an item of furniture. There was an abundance of bulky pieces of furniture made of solid oak wood which would test the strength of even four men. This work was also hurried on and accompanied by curses. However, the toughest duty was scrubbing floors. The wooden floors of the Magistrate had for decades been coated with machine oil and were black as coal. A group of Jews was





*In the picture from left to right: Celebi Jakov, Vitalis Beherano, Danilo Fogel, ?, Shani Schwitzer, Hranilovic from Zagreb, Josip Fogel, Icko Semnitz, a German soldier, ?, Ervin Pisker, standing in front Nandor Weiss, and furthest Alfred Katschka.*

ordered by the German sentries to scrub them clean to their natural yellow floorboard colour. The boards were first scrubbed with water and a kind of soapy solution, but with little result. The next step was to force the workers to scrub them again with pure caustic soda. The colour of the floors turned to a shade of grey while the hands and knees of those employed were raw to the bone.

The picture was taken at the time the Jews were rounded up for forced labour in June 1941. It is evident from the expression on the faces that this was taken in the early days of persecution when it seemed that the situation would pass quickly. Nobody thought that tragedy could ensue from forced labour. At first regular German soldiers guarded the Jews during forced labour shifts. There were even some among them who had sympathy for the Jews.

**The building of the Agricultural faculty** was taken by German engineer troops for their barracks. This army unit was engaged in the repair of the railway bridge over the river Sava. The group of Jews sent to the site had to clean the building, scrub the floors in the corridors and rooms. Here again the brutality of the German sentries was apparent. In order to clean the clogged toilet bowls they made the group dig up feces with bare hands yelling degrading remarks at the expense of Jews.

The premises of the former Yugoslav army for **storing cannon grenades** were also taken over by the Germans. The group of Jews sent to labour in the site was to some extent exposed to less degradation than Jews at the other sites. However the physical labour was exceedingly strenuous. The stocking area was situated in the large field near the Laudon trench. Lying in the field was a large quantity of crates each containing three grenades. One crate weighed over 50 kilos. Three meter high crate piles had to be erected. Apart from the enormous physical strain, a further disadvantage was that this storage space was on open ground, so that in rainy weather work was carried out in muddy terrain and wet clothes. Once the long and high lines of crate stacks were in place, German army trucks arrived at the site. The entire quantity of grenades was loaded on to them and driven away.

**At the railway station Zemun-Novi Grad** a group of Jews was ordered to unload bales of hay and straw from wagons and to reload the bales into German trucks which then transported the cargo to a certain division stationed in Dedinje, Belgrade. Supervision of the site was given to soldiers from the Suddeten and this was probably the reason why there was no manhandling, derisive talk or any form of

humiliation. When the Jews working in the site of the railway station Zemun-Novi Grad spoke of the decent treatment of German soldiers, Jews working at other sites could not believe that such conditions existed in those hard, war ridden days.

**The Main Sanitary warehouse** of the Royal Yugoslav army with its complete sanitary material and medical apparatus and equipment was taken over by the German army. Here again as in all other locations where forced labour was induced the daily work shift lasted 12 hours. A larger group of Jews worked here since the stockpile was enormous, and a way had to be found to sort out the material. Once sorted it was loaded into trucks and as far as the workers could make out was transported to Greece and later on to Cyprus. In the aftermath of the plot carried out in Smederevo, an exception was made. From then on the loading of trucks was carried out by night as well since large quantities went to Smederevo. The work was supervised by German soldiers. There were a number of civilized individuals among them who tried to slow down the strenuous pace of work. The survivors remember that among them was a German soldier named Jager who stood out from the others. He told them himself that he was from Frankfurt. However there were a number of sadists among the guards who made good of every opportunity to abuse the Jews or hit them with rifle-butts at random. Making ample use of degrading names the majority of the guards just hastened the workers to work harder.

**Loading operations in the Zemun railway station** were considered as less strenuous work assigned to Jews working under forced labour conditions. German soldiers were known for their disposition to buy everything they could get hold of and send the goods back to Germany.

Among other things one time large wicker baskets containing horse hair (Rosshaar) were loaded into trains. However, on certain days this group also tackled difficult jobs. At one time

airplane engines weighing over one hundred kilos were brought in German trucks from the "Ikarus" motor factory. Since the circumference of the engine was relatively small

only a few persons could be engaged in lifting this heavy load, as there was no lifting equipment at disposal. The German guards took no heed of the situation and remorselessly urged the workers to carry on with the work shouting humiliating remarks at them. It took great physical and mental exertion to load the motors in place.

One day a group of six Jews was selected and ordered to get on a German military truck, and lower the canopy. The location to which they were sent was a secret and they were forbidden to look outside. However, some of them dared to look outside and to their



Sl.Str. 103 - Another picture connected to forced labour, originating from the time and miraculously saved to this day. The picture was taken in 1941. In the picture there are even two German guards who were disposed to take a photo with the group of Jews rounded up for forced labour.

From left to right:

Squatting: Sami Fischer, Nandor Weiss, Künstler

Standing: German soldier, ?, Paul ?, Shani Schwitzer, Lustig Armin, German soldier

horror saw that they were heading for the concentration camp "Staro sajmistie". When the truck drove past the camp gate a few of the older Jews started to pray aloud from sheer horror. But the truck only drove through the camp and continued down the road to Belgrade. Once there they loaded on some goods, and the group returned to the Zemun railway station. For days they could not recover from the sights they had seen on their short journey through the "Staro sajmistie" camp and the fear that they could have been left there.

The Army bakery in the former police school was also a storage space for various kinds of food stuff for the troops. A group of Jews worked here loading food into army trucks. Tense relations, cursing and derisive remarks were ever present during the strenuous forced labour. The hardest task was carrying big sacks of flour weighing up to 85 kilos. The guards insisted that each sack was carried by one person. Almost everybody carrying the sacks was lighter in weight than the load they carried. A specialty of the guards was to hurry on a labourer climbing up the stairs with a sack on his back fully aware that the person in question was strained to the limits. At one time a group of labourers was selected to clean frozen cabbage, which came in wagon loads. Each one of the group had frost bitten hands and suffered wounds for weeks on end.

The petrol warehouse of the former Yugoslav air force buried deep under ground near the Laudon trench in Zemun was also taken by the German army. A daily 12 hour forced labour shift was also allotted to the group of Jews assigned to the site. Their daily task was to take petrol drums and drums containing similar fuels and load them on to German military trucks. Here again the toil of the workers was accompanied by derogative remarks. The workers were subjected to



Forced labour in the Cavalry school. Dispensing assignments.  
 From left to right in the first row: ?, Nandor Weiss, Manfred Krauss, ?, ?, ?, Celebi Jakov  
 Second row: ?, Vitalis Beherano



meticulous stripping checks. Considering the nature of goods stored in this warehouse it was normal that cigarette lighters and matchboxes were prohibited. The disrobing was a sign of the soldier's anxiety that this group of Jews could stir up a commotion. However, the same German soldiers took little heed of safety precautions as they stood smoking with ease at the very entrance to the warehouse.

This petrol warehouse, the Zemun airport and a few other facilities were taken over by the local Germans even before the Eighth German Tank Division entered Zemun. Under the leadership of Fritz Runicki some two hundred Zemun Germans organized themselves to prevent units of the former Yugoslav army to place mines and blow up the airport and other adjoining facilities. The group dressed in black uniforms with the insignia of the Nazi cross on their sleeves when setting out on such exploits. Among other things they managed to save some 750 tanks of petrol for the Wehrmacht.

**The Cavalry school** of the Royal Yugoslav army was adapted and became the German army sickbay for horses (Pferdelazarett). A larger group of Jews was assigned to forced labour in this facility. Supervision was carried out solely by German soldiers.

Constant shipments of requisitioned horses were brought to the former school and barracks. The horses were mainly separated into three groups: horses selected in the first group met the needs of the German army, the second group of horses were used for agricultural purposes while horses in the third group were destined for the slaughterhouse. There were also sick horses, with wounds embedded with pus. The group working in this stable had to see to the infected wounds and wash off the filth from the horses with bare hands.

The cleaning of the stables was another abominable job. The German guards forbid the use of shovels and hay-forks for scooping up horse dung and wet straw. This work was also carried out with bare hands. Persistent in their demand that no tools or protection was used the soldiers supervising the work vastly enjoyed the sight before them; people wearing yellow bands and the Star of David piling up dung and horse piss saturated straw.

Conditions were equally difficult at the smithy. The forging was done by German workers who took pleasure in harassing the Jews assigned to them. A scene endlessly repeated was that of a Jewish worker holding up a horse's leg ready for shoeing while the blacksmith approached him tossing and waving the red hot horseshoe malevolently in his face shouting: "Wie gefällt dir das? Du verfluchtes Schwein!" (How do you like this? You damned swine?) Frequently used was also "Du Saujude!" (You Jewish sow!) as well as other derogatory words.

The German blacksmiths particularly favoured a certain prank which they performed with each newcomer to this group of forced labour workers. The worker would be ordered to lift a mule's leg which apparently was to be shod. But the moment the worker lifted the mule's leg the mule would kick so hard that the worker was thrown right up against the wall. The smiths would then order the worker to repeat the process which once again ended in the same way. After a number of unsuccessful attempts the smiths would request that the mule's leg be tied with rope and the rope thrown over a boulder. The mule was then lowered to the ground and the rope tightened so that the shoe could be placed. The smiths knew that there was no other way to shoe a mule, but by the time they got to it the new worker-Jew was doomed to spend the next days in bruising.



es, sometimes even with a few broken ribs. The entire hoax was accompanied by German soldiers laughing their heads off as if a good joke had just been told.

A group of workers in which Imre Weiss worked had to tend to the pigs. The sties were some distance from the stables but they too were within the boundary of the former Cavalry school. The group had to keep the pigsties clean and to feed and water the pigs. Apart from this strenuous and filthy job, fleas presented their gravest problem. They thrived inside and all around the pigsties. Each night the workers left the site in blisters. Naturally their homes were also flea infested. At the time there were no chemical products they could apply to protect themselves from flea bite.

Very soon after the German army entered Zemun the arrests of Jews began. According to Josip Beherano who spent some time in prison the conditions in the prison cells were abominable. More than 40 individuals were packed in a relatively small room. It was impossible to move in any way; one had barely enough room to breathe. The foul evaporations coming from the bucket for excretions made it all the more harder to breathe. One day one of the prisoners (as far as Beherano can recall he thinks his name was Nahmias) died sitting on this bucket. The behaviour of the sentries was cruel; the culmination of sadistic indulgence came when the "Hitlerjugend" youths from Frenztal were brought in. These boys, the eldest barely fifteen years old were let inside the cells to beat the prisoners. One cannot begin to describe the ensuing commotion, as the prisoners tried to back away from the front rows, which bore the full intensity of the blows. As far as it is known the majority of these Jews were released and sent home after spending more than a month in prison.

## **DEPORTATION TO JASENOVAC AND STARA GRADISKA**

In October 1941 the Ustashi took over the administration of Zemun from the Germans. This inevitably led to far worse conditions for the Jews. From then on the Ustashi troops, the NDH police, the Gestapo, Feldgendarmerie (local Germans in black uniforms), the German army and the Croatian fifth column were all present and active. Zemun was literally infested with Fascist of all colours. Bearing in mind the fact that Jews were literally placed beyond the law, one can only imagine how they must have felt inside their homes and in the streets.

In April 1941 when part of the Zemun Jews were imprisoned and the remaining assigned to forced labour, when their stores had been expropriated and many of them evicted from their homes and apartments, the activity of the Jewish Community was officially prohibited.

At the time the Germans handed over the administration to the Ustashi i.e. the NDH (the so called Independent State of Croatia) in October 1941, meetings of the Board of the Jewish Community were allowed but only for the purpose of raising funds to buy furniture and flats for the Ustashi, particularly the police force.

The opportunity to meet was used for exchanging information, especially for collecting clothes, linen and consumables, sewing machines, fold-up beds and money. Everything that could be collected was sent to the Jewish Community in Osijek which had been chosen to supply Jews already interned in Djakovo, Lobograd and elsewhere.

In the spring of 1942, the month of April, the Chief of the Zemun police called in Dr. Brandeis. Present at the meeting were Chief Retl, his deputies Betelhaim and Ivkovic. Brandeis was asked whether the Zemun Jews would agree to moving to barracks which would be built outside the town. In this way a ghetto for all Jews of the town would be set up. Approval was immediately given believing that this could be the least of the miseries that could befall this Jewish community. However, in order to implement the proposal the authorities demanded that the Jews provide the necessary funds themselves. Some 250.000 kuna was raised which at the time was a pretty large sum of money. The money was handed over but had no bearing on the tragic fate that would soon befall almost every Zemun Jew.

Two more or less identical versions of this event have been recorded. In the letter to the Jewish Community of Zemun Dr. Brandeis wrote on November 27, 1958:

“- a catastrophe commenced, which as I was later to learn surprised even the authorities of Zemun in office at the time. Tolj, the notorious Chief of the Ustashi Supervising Service in Vinkovci was given universal approval to “solve” the Jewish issue in those towns where Jews still managed to survive somehow, (Osijek, Sremska Mitrovica, Vinkovci, Ruma, Stara Pazova and Zemun).”

In a letter written by Dr. Arnold Schön in Gat (Israel) on March 13, 1962 the following was said about the event:

“The issue presented actually had to do with a very important plan - the Chief of police, Rudolf Retl, posted by the Ustashi, and some other leading Ustashi men proposed to save the Zemun Jews from concentration camps, on condition that barracks were erected outside the town, behind the

Cavalry school, where all Zemun Jews would live together. In other words the intention was to form a ghetto. Separated from Arian citizens, Jews would be assigned to forced labour but would live. To this end the raising of funds began, a substantial amount... However the Chief of police Retl was playing both sides - in appearance to the Ustashi troops and German Gestapo he was a true Fascist, while he discreetly issued passes for Dalmatia to certain Jews at the same time... The plan of the ghetto was never realized... Retl had to yield to the higher influence and pressure of the Gestapo, which recognized nothing else but total extermination. After the war Retl was arrested, placed before the National Tribune, sentenced to death and shot. The trial was open to the public, loud speakers were placed in all public places...”

Both accounts suggest that the Chief of Police Retl might have been inclined to make good his promise to build a ghetto in Zemun. However, it must also be recorded here that in fact the Fascist persistently gave false promises to Jews. Not a single promise was ever honoured, either by the German Nazis or their allies throughout Europe. An exception would be the one single promise they meticulously fulfilled and that was that they would find a “final solution” for the Jewish issue - i.e. they would see to it that all Jews were extinct. However, the following alternative should be accepted as their prime intention: in agreement with his deputies Retl had devised a way to lay hands on that part of Jewish property which the Fascists had not yet managed to plunder. Their plan worked.

As the arrests of Jews became fewer and forced labour grew to be an everyday duty, the Fascists managed to delude the Jews that this was the worst that could happen to them.

However, the worst came at dawn on July 27, 1942. An order was proclaimed that all Jews must report to the police. In fact the rounding up of Jews had already begun in the night between July 26 and 27.

A procession of Jews was hastened to the railway station and packed into cattle wagons which quickly left Zemun railway station heading for Stara Gradiska and Jasenovac.

The men were separated to one side and deported to Jasenovac while the women and children were taken to Stara Gradiska. Jasenovac and Stara Gradiska had one management - it was known as the Jasenovac concentration camp.

Much has been written and documented in films about the horrors of the Jasenovac slaughterhouse so that everyone who wanted to learn about the extent of daily pain, torture and slaughter the inmates were exposed to had ample opportunity to do so.

In Yad Vashem we found Ervin Rosenberg statement. Of all the Zemun Jews who had been deported from Zemun and interred in Jasenovac Ervin was the only survivor.

This account of his recollections reveals the daily horrific events that took place in Jasenovac. It tells of how with each so called "performance", when all the inmates were lined up, came the uncertainty of not knowing who would live through it. Very often the Ustashi would fabricate a story that an attempt at escape had been made or something similar

and would take out every tenth prisoner from the line and kill each one of them on the spot. In order to heighten the prisoners' sense of insecurity the counting of prisoners was done randomly, never starting from the same position in the line twice.

At one time a false accusation of an attempt at escape was made and the commander of the camp Dinko Sakic ordered the hanging of five inmates. Among the five was the Zemun Jew Boskovic. Sometime in 1944, another similar event took place when a group of inmates was falsely accused of trying to escape. Ignjat Semnitz the soap maker from Zemun and a number of other Jews were singled out and executed.



**The old Zemun Railway Station - the Jews of Zemun were transported in such freight wagons to Jasenovac and Stara Gradiska.**

It was a set rule that all inmates in the line had to watch the executions. Those who averted their eyes were shot on the spot.

Apart from the daily slaughter of inmates under the supervision of Ljuba Milos and Majstorovic, at the end of 1942 and the onset of 1943 a typhoid epidemic killed off a large number of prisoners. There were a few physicians, mostly Jews and among them was doctor Lender. They tried to help their ailing inmates and did as much as could be done without the aid of medicines and sanitary equipment.

The daily slave labour inside the camp started at five thirty in the morning. The inmates were assigned to various strenuous jobs. But this was not enough for the Ustashi. They concocted all sorts of punishments, shackled feet and chains being just one of them. For a time even Ervin Rosenberg had to toil bound in chains. Many could simply not endure it. Later, Ervin worked in the so called "chain house" where arms, mostly rifles were repaired in one part of the plant. Parts for the power supply plant which supplied the camp and the nearby villages with electricity were also made here.

Those who worked in the plant were fully aware of the fact that their days were numbered and that they would be killed the moment they were not needed or were replaced.

According to Ervin Rosenberg's recollections the inmates were primarily preoccupied with the thought of food and how to obtain it. This fact fully emphasizes the importance of the packages that arrived from the Zagreb Jewish Community as they were crucial for survival.

Thought was also given to finding ways for brief respites and anything else that would help keep them alive. The one thing that was rarely discussed was the daily killing that took place.

In order to better perceive the inferno of Jasenovac where the Jews of Zemun spent the last days of their life, we cite parts of the statement of Ervin Müller from Vinkovci. He spent almost four years in this concentration camp and took part in the final charge from Jasenovac and thus survived. After the war he went to Israel where he died some years ago in the Maabarot kibbutz.

Lying on the table in front of me are the notes I made listening to the audio statement of Ervin Müller. What should be recounted from this statement today, after more than half a century has gone by? Which details should be made known? Why bring into today's pretence of normal life such horrors, pain and death?

Suddenly, some contemporary events come to my mind.

After the founding of today's State of Croatia, among the many immigrants returning to the country were a number of war criminals - Ustashi. Some of them even rose to high state functions and all had the right to speak in public. A former Ustashi officer in the Jasenovac concentration camp gave a statement on the radio which in effect amounted to the following: "Everything that we did in the Jasenovac concentration camp was correct. Today I would once again do the same!" And why should the lower ranks of officials refrain from such statements when the head of the state Franjo Tudjman publicly expressed the following:

- the stated number of victims of Jasenovac is out of proportion, insisting that instead of the seven hundred thousand victims generally cited, there had been no more than thirty thousand;



- normal conditions prevailed in the concentration camp; strict but fair, the hygiene was tolerable etc. (he cited the report of the Swiss Red Cross commission, for whose benefit a special scenario had been staged in Jasenovac);
- if there had been any atrocities then the Jews themselves were responsible for them, as they participated in the management of the camp...

Without any trace of remorse, in today's State of Croatia names of the most despicable Ustashi have been allocated to certain streets. There was even a request to name one of Zagreb's main squares after the quisling and war criminal Ante Pavelic.

From the highest ranks of government officials (prior to Tadjman's death) a monstrous proposal was made to the effect that Jasenovac should be turned into a mutual monument to the Ustashi and their victims.

History is in the process of being rewritten. The new history will portray the Ustashi as patriotic sons of their homeland, Croatia.

The new state of Croatia has reinstated some of the insignia of the Fascist so called Independent State of Croatia seemingly as an expression of nostalgia and regret for the demise of this once "proud" land!

In order to prevent any misconceptions or false interpretation of the above text an explanation must be given at this point.

In the many conversations that I have had during my life I have never said that the Croats had killed my entire family, relatives, friends and acquaintances. I was always precise in my accusations and professed that the Ustashi and Croatian

Fascists had been responsible. Not once did I connect the people of Croatia with Fascists of Croatian nationality. I believe that it is the only right thing to do. It is up to the people of Croatia to decide whether they will distinctly distance themselves from Fascists and Neo Fascists present in their midst.

Speaking for myself the final shattering event was the trial of Sakic, the former Commander of Jasenovac concentration camp.

It nearly came to "that due to lack of evidence" he be released!

Such reflections brought me to the assumption that to speak of the life of prisoners in Jasenovac in general terms would be insufficient. One should not refrain from describing even the most horrific scenes as long as there are those who blatantly deny the existence of such atrocities.

This is the reason why I have decided to describe some of the events that took place in Jasenovac, fully aware of the fact that it is only a small portion of the horrors the Jews of Zemun as well as Jews from other parts of former Yugoslavia went through in this concentration camp.

Prisoners were beaten on the very entrance into Jasenovac in the fall of 1941. One was beaten because he was deaf, another because he was fat, another for having red hair and another because he was a hunchback and so forth. It later emerged that the Ustashi readily beat everyone for no reason whatsoever.

At the time Ervin Müller was working in the brick making plant some twenty Jews were brought to Jasenovac from some provisional concentration camp. They remained in the plant about half an hour to warm up and were taken by the Ustashi, apparently, to rest from the strain of the journey.



That night together with a group of twenty young prisoners Ervin was assigned to dig a large pit. They worked in silence, tense and full of apprehension. They had no way of knowing whether they were digging up their own grave. When a pit of sufficient depth was dug up, the Ustashi took the group to a large pile of corpses and ordered them to throw the bodies into the pit and cover them up. All the corpses had the back of their heads smashed in. Among them he recognized the men that had warmed themselves in the brick plant that day.

It was winter time with biting frost. The Ustashi needed wood for their fires. A group of prisoners was selected to fall trees. The prisoners picked up axes out of a wooden box. The Ustashi cautiously distanced themselves from the group. A warning was proclaimed; anyone who approached with an axe would be killed.

A small break was given and one of the prisoners carrying his axe moved closer to the fire. When he was some ten meters away from the Ustashi, they opened up a ferocious fire which went on right up to their last bullet. The poor prisoner was dead after the first shots had been fired.

The Ustashi killing sprees were an everyday event. At times the Ustashi would state the reason for killing, but there was much killing just for the fun of it, from arrogance and sheer sadism.

There were a number of work groups in the concentration camp assigned to the "brick plant", the "chain plant", the "tannery", kitchen etc.

During winter the inmates appreciated working in the brick plant or the kitchen because those were the only places where they could warm up. It was strictly forbidden that any other prisoner should approach or be found near the brick

plant. However, a number of inmates could not resist the wish to warm up just a little so they would stop for a minute outside the brick plant.

On one occasion an Ustashi officer caught two inmates near the brick plant. He brought them inside and to punish them he ordered that they be bricked in with the fresh bricks and led into the kiln to be burnt alive with the batch. Their screams were heard for some time and then everything was quiet. It appeared that the Ustashi enjoyed the show very much so that it was played more frequently from that day on.

The Christmas of 1941 was celebrated by the Ustashi in their own special way. Once they had gorged themselves with food and drink they reached the peak of their merriment in the course of the night when in passing through the camp they got down to shooting and slitting throats. The inmates assigned to the duty of digging up a grave and covering up the dead counted 165 corpses.

A large group of inmates worked on the embankment. It was to become a large burial ground for the prisoners. They worked in mud and even for healthier and better fed men the task of extracting mud from morning to night would be a challenge. Naturally, a great number of the famished, frost bitten and physically weak prisoners could not hide their fatigue. Anyone who fell down or couldn't hold a shovel due to exhaustion was killed by the Ustashi on the spot. The order was that they be immediately buried in the embankment.

Among all the events recounted by Ervin Müller one stands out which I truly cannot leave untold nor wish to do so. The camp was chronically infested with dysentery and diarrhea. The latrine could not meet the necessity ... but I will not recount Ervin's statement, rather cite it:

“Passing by the big latrine I went inside to pee. I was sickened to the heart by the sight before me. Some might think that I was oversensitive to human suffering, that everything I saw appalled me. However this was too much.

I saw an inmate trying to pull out of the latrine pit another one who had fallen inside. Two other inmates who had just relieved themselves stood by waving their hands in vain. There was simply nothing one could do to help the poor souls. Very soon there was no trace of the two inmates who had struggled for their lives. When I looked into the pit the only thing I could see was a slushy mass. There was nothing else to be seen. A sick and worn out inmate was helpless in such situations and could do nothing on his own. However there was talk that a few of the inmates had been spared from such a destiny with the help of a pole.”

One night, just before Ervin Müller's eighteenth birthday he was taken out with a group of fifty inmates placed beside the barbed wire and shot. Ervin felt the sting of the bullet in his chest and fell; he was covered up with other bloodied corpses. Ervin woke up. It was night. He could not move. Relying on the last ounces of his strength he managed to pull through the dead mass of bodies all the time pushing upward. Finally he was free and fell on the snow completely exhausted. For a time he lay there. Eventually he managed to go back to his barrack and lie next to his father and brother. He had no recollection of what had happened to him. They took off his blood stained clothes and hid them inside the hay. They managed to collect a few dry garments and before dressing him they detected that he was not wounded but had some sort of red mark on his chest. They presumed that it had been made by a wooden maneuver bullet. Since the exe-

cution had not been carried out by a roll call he managed to continue his inmate life and live to give a full account of the truth of Jasenovac.

The events told by Ervin Müller follow one another in a sort of film sequence.

Next to the barrack where he had been placed with a group of Jews stood the barrack of the orthodox inmates. One night a loud racket came from this barrack and lasted over half an hour. The next morning they saw a pile of slaughtered people beside the barrack. The story went that the dead men were Chetniks and had been the subject of negotiations completed by the Germans for being their collaborators. To avoid releasing them the Ustashi simply butchered them the night before.

In July 1942 a large group of Zemun Jews was brought to the camp. They were submitted to the regular procedure of requisitioning of valuables, harassment and terrorizing. One detail deserves to be singled out. An Ustashi ordered a young man with glasses from Zemun to bring a bucket of water. The man answered that he didn't know how this was done. The Ustashi was furious and after brutally beating up the youth he placed him inside a concentration camp - separate compound surrounded with barbed wire. Another Ustashi ordered the youth to bring fire wood. The youth again replied that he didn't know how it was done. The Ustashi then asked him what he could do. It is presumed that the answer was “For you nothing!” since the Ustashi drew out his pistol and shot him on the spot.

The young man who had vowed to himself that he would do nothing for the Ustashi was Hinko Gersanovic. He had been one of the leading activists of the “Hashomer hatzair”, where he had resolutely trained for his move to the Palestine as a haluc.

One night the Ustashi barged into the barrack requiring twenty strong young men to follow them. The mere mention of the word "strong" always had the same effect on the inmates, it was seen as a sadistic Ustashi remark. Who could ever stay strong on one hundred grams of half baked, unsalted corn bread and some murky water with a few pieces of floating turnips?

Among the group chosen was Ervin Müller. They were taken to the other side of the concentration camp. So far they had never been there. The hole that had to be dug was already marked out. Apprehension and fear simply permeated the night. Always one and the same question: were they digging their own grave?

When the job was nearly done the sound of voices could be heard. The Ustashi ordered them to turn the other way, threatening that anyone who looked back would be shot. Behind them voices could be heard. It sounded both like singing and crying. Still the loudest sound was the blunt thud of the mallet... one heard the beginning of "live" ..., someone had just managed to utter "mother" ... and then in a moment everything was quiet and the Ustashi ordered them to bury the fifty corpses with bashed in skulls into the unfinished pit saying that the earth would settle and finish the work itself.

The "performance" - i.e. the line-up of the camp inmates always ended with a selection of inmates to be shot, slaughtered, bashed in by the mallet or taken away to be disciplined - meaning killed.

Fear gnawed to the bone of the inmates at the mere mention of the word "performance". There was no way of knowing whether one would live through the line-up. It was a day out, day in living nightmare for all the inmates.

Of the many "performances" only two shall be recounted here. Facing the line with their rifles drawn stood the Ustashi. Between the two lines in the mid space stood an inmate and one Ustashi officer.

According to Ervin's memory the officer made a speech:

"Observe well, you sons of dogs, this one here dared to steal a goose and eat it up. It seems like the food he gets here is not enough, so he wants more." Taking out his gun he went on: "Anyone caught stealing shall end this way" ... he fired off seven bullets into the poor man who tumbled over, but only when he walked up to him and fired a shot directly to the inmate's head all signs of life were gone.

The youth in question was Isidor Levi from Sarajevo with whom Ervin had enjoyed a couple of moshavas (camping) organized by the "Hashomer hatzair".

The goose in question was one of the dead geese that had been thrown out on the garbage heap. Levi was caught because he had tried to roast it. After this execution the inmates went on stealing the dead geese, but they ate them raw.

Ervin recalls that he had cried bitterly in his bunk that night, while others found comfort in praying. His thoughts turned to faith: "Can I go on believing in divinity? Where is the just and almighty one? Does he not see this infamy of slaughtered innocent women, husbands, children and old people? Is there anyone who can give me an answer to these questions?"

It was the middle of 1943. The notorious "performance" was on! The Ustashi officer strode in front of the line-up of inmates. A retard with an idiotic grin on his face walked beside

him. Whoever he pointed to was taken out of the line to be killed. Everyone was filled with fear and apprehension standing there waiting for the death sentence or prolongation of life.

Eyes rolling uncontrollably the retard stopped and the blood froze inside the poor man standing in the line facing him... who would he point his finger to? However bizarre it might have seemed the finger of the poor idiot became the finger of fate!

Finally the finger of the retard pointed at Josip Fogel, nicknamed "Joska", from Zemun. In the same instant Joska ridden with fear panicked and made a run for it. Shots were fired and a bullet hit him in the head. Although wounded he continued to run. For a time he even managed to hide inside the camp with a cloth pressed to his wounded head. To those he encountered in the days that followed he would say: "I am still young to die..." At the time he was 23 years old.

Eventually the Ustashi found him and slashed his throat instantly.

One could go on with such horrific events and scenes for a long, long time. However the few events told are sufficient to give one a feeling of how the inmates of Jasenovac had lived and died. Among them were all the Zemun Jews transported on to the death camp in cattle waggons in July 1942. (Except for the one Zemun citizen).

According to Ervin Rosenberg's recollections a visit of Red Cross representatives took place in 1944. It was a grand travesty. For the occasion the prisoners were ordered to scrub clean the barracks so that everything regarding cleanliness and hygiene seemed in order. Prior to the visit the execution of the old and feeble was taken care of. Ostensibly the remaining prisoners left an impression of a labour force capable of work. The

prisoners were forbidden to speak in front of Red Cross delegates. The order was that if asked a question their reply should be: "I am prisoner so and so. Ask the person in charge about me." As stated by Ervin Rosenberg the general impression was that the representatives were aware of the existence of Gradina and the killings that went on there and in other places too, but refrained from making thorough inquiries.

In relation to the above mentioned visit a story was construed that Jews managed the affairs of the camp and that consequently they were the ones responsible for their own tragic fate. Ervin Rosenberg was aware of the fact that a few Jews were employed in the administration but only as forced labourers. They were generally disliked by the prisoners but played no part in the atrocities that took place inside the camp. At the end they too were killed by the Ustashi.

The Ustashi became apprehensive and in March 1945 operations on eradicating evidence of transgressions committed inside the camp began. They excavated corpses and burnt them in order to obliterate all evidence of crimes committed.

In April 1945, when tanks and soldiers of the liberation forces were approaching the camp, aircrafts began circling over Jasenovac.

On April 20, 1945 the Ustashi gathered some two thousand people, among them round eight hundred women from Stara Gradiska. All of them were stacked into camp barracks. Mines were set in place and the barracks blown up together with the people inside them.

However, the Ustashi simultaneously continued with the process of obliterating crime related evidence. On April 21, 1945 they brought a group of Romanies to excavate and burn corpses. Once the job was over, they were killed off too.



Ervin Rosenberg recounts how on seeing everything that was happening round them the prisoners decided that their options were limited. Freedom was very close, just over the fence, and yet they were still locked inside the inferno. It was finally resolved that something had to be done if they were to avoid death by knife.

They organized themselves into a group of 1.200 camp prisoners and prepared themselves for a breakthrough. No one expected to live through it but to die from a bullet was better than having one's throat slit. The organization of the breakthrough was mainly the achievement of Moskovic and a few others.

On checking the gates one of the prisoners found an open gate. Actually, an Ustashi lay in waiting there aiming his sniper at the escapees. For a moment the sniper fire stopped and the group couldn't tell whether the sniper had been killed or his rifle had broken down. The group ran and at that moment a rain of bullets showered down on them from the watch tower. Those still alive ran on treading over dead bodies sprawled over the ground like a carpet. The only alternative left to the living was to keep on running, opting that at least some of them might actually make it...

Ervin deemed that there must have been some hundred prisoners who managed to survive the breakthrough, while data published in various editions mostly quotes the number of survivors as approximately 70 prisoners.

They ran all the way to a forest and hid there. Very soon the Ustashi stopped looking for them as they were forced to begin their retreat. A man called Mile was among the group of survivors. He came from that part of the country. He led

the group on, avoiding pro-Ustashi villages where they would have certainly been killed by the inhabitants. With this statement Ervin concludes his testimonial.

Ervin Rosenberg professed that he had joined the partisans in the hope that he might have some vengeance for the atrocities suffered at the hands of the Ustashi. He arrived in Israel in the vessel "Kefalos" in 1948. His decision to get marriage en route to Israel was something of a sensation. He is presently living in Nathania.

It is common knowledge that in April 1945 approximately one thousand and two hundred bare handed inmates ran down the gate of the camp under Ustashi ferocious fire. Out of this vast number only some seventy people survived. Among them was the only Zemun Jew survivor Ervin Rosenberg. In April 1945 the Ustashi slaughtered all the inmates who were still miraculously alive. Among them was also a group of Jews who would not take part in the breakthrough.

The Jewish women and children of Zemun were separated from the men and taken to Stara Gradiska.

One Jasenovac inmate, a textile expert, sent to the camp Stara Gradiska to organize the tearing of old rags was present at the arrival of the Jewish women from Zemun to the camp. On returning to Jasenovac he told a number of inmates what he had witnessed and so the following event was remembered.

Women and children were entering through the open gate. Among the women was Mariana Sasson. The people of Zemun remember her as she was a honourable citizen of Zemun and the owner of two tobacco shops: in the marketplace and in the center of the town.



*Mariana Sasson*

Passing through the gate Mariana began to cry. A woman Ustashi, Maria Burzan came up to her instantly and in front of the stunned women slit her throat shouting: "Oh, you snivelling old hag." Seeing her mother slaughtered right

in front of her Mariana's daughter Judita Sasson burst into tears. "Well now", Maria Burzan shouted. "You dare to cry too!" and momentarily slit Judita's throat.

Unfortunately, this is all that we know of the "welcome" that the Zemun Jewish women and children received on arrival to the camp. One other thing that we know for certain is that not one of these women or children survived the concentration camp.

There are some written recollections about this death house from which one can clearly discern that Dante's hell was kindergarten to the conditions in Stara Gradiska. However there is no one who could recount the individual fates of our mothers, sisters and relatives, because as already stated not one of them survived.

We can only mourn them and try to pass on the memory of them to our descendants.

## ***THE OLD FAIR (STARO SAJMISTE) - JUDENLAGER SEMLIN***

Although there were only a few Zemun Jews interred and killed at the old Fair - Sajmiste it is the belief of the author that this book about Zemun Jews should recount some details about this death camp. Among other, the fact that the camp was situated in the territory of the Zemun municipality is justification enough. One episode, the story of the train transporting women and children from Sabac that

had stopped at the Zemun station on its way to Sajmiste has been recounted on page 161. Although the concentration camp was within the bounds of the Zemun community, the Jews of Zemun had only a vague intimation of what was happening inside the camp. Frequently at night a horse drawn cart passed along the main street heading for the cemetery. At the cemetery large collective graves were already dug up waiting for the cart load of slaughtered camp inmates to be buried inside them. Many similar events point to the fact that the true character of the Sajmiste concentration camp could not have left any doubt as to its true nature.

According to the account written by Zeni Lebl, the Germans abandoned the idea to build a concentration camp on the islet near Zasavica as the river Sava was known to flood it completely at certain times of the year. So on October 23, 1941 it was decided that the transitory concentration camp for Jewish women and children would be in Zemun in the pavilions of the Fair.

It was Dr. Harald Turner, the Chief of the administrative headquarters of the German Commander in Chief for Serbia who issued the order to all feld and kreiss commands regarding the imminent capture of women and children and their imprisonment in the concentration camp.

In the period December 8-12, 1941 it was the gendarmerie of the Nedic government that made a round of Jewish flats handing out summons for registering with the Special police for Jews. It was stated in the text of the summons that they each should take with them only as much hand luggage as one could carry. Apart from this all Jews summoned to the station were obliged to hand over to the police the keys to their apartments with a tag attached stating the address.

The summoned groups of Jews were thrown into open trucks which took them over the pontoon bridge to the Sajmiste.

The Fair pavilions and its central dome were damaged during the German bombardment of 1941 so that snow fell in through the dilapidated roof.

The prisoners were initially brought to pavilion 3 where each one of them searched for a bunk among the three tiered wooden beds. The beds were lined only with wet, rotting straw. The younger children were hungry and cold. The conditions inside the Sajmiste were inhuman. At the very beginning of its operation some 600 Gypsies had been interred inside the camp out of which 10% had died within the first



**Sajmiste in 1937 - later to become the Judenlager Semlin**

three months of imprisonment. However, the rest had gradually been released from the concentration camp from January to March, 1942.

The commander of the Jewish camp at Sajmiste was SS Untersturmfuehrer Herbet Andofer, born in Linz (Austria) in 1911. His deputy was Edgar Enge who had prior to attaining the post, overseen the executions of Jews at the Topovske barracks in Belgrade on October 9 and 11, 1941.

The number of imprisoned Jews in the Sajmiste concentration camp was never established. Some sources state that on January 31, 1942 there were some 6.500 souls inside the camp. However the number of those killed must be much greater than the stated number. It is a fact that before the April war of 1941 over 12.000 Jews had been living in Belgrade. Out of this number two thirds were women and children. Apart from this statistic, it has also been established that women and children had been brought to the Sajmiste camp from Banat (the total number of Jews living in Banat was approximately 2.500).

Women and children from other towns in Serbia - Nis, Kragujevac, Smederevo, Pozarevac etc. were also brought to the Sajmiste camp. Furthermore it is a fact that on January 26, 1942 800 women and children were brought from Sabac, then 50 from Pristina and round 500 from Kosovska Mitrovica and Novi Pazar. To these numbers one must also add the hundreds of refugees from Central Europe who were interred in the health spas of Kursumlija and Nis.

The commander of the intelligence service of the German Reich in Serbia, Dr. Emanuel Schefer received information that under special assignment a specific vehicle had been constructed and was heading for its destination. Later

during his interrogation Schefer declared that he had known that the vehicle was relevant to the extermination of Jews in the Sajmiste concentration camp.

In her book "Until the "FINAL SOLUTION"" Zeni Lebl states that the death truck-vehicle had been designed by engineers Becker and Walter Rauf under direct orders from Himmler and that it had been manufactured in the "Sauer" factory.

It was an enormous dark grey vehicle, 6 meters long, 2 wide and 1.70 high. By means of a specific device poisonous gases emitted by the running engine could be lead into the truck cargo compartment. Victims inside the air tight truck compartment would die of suffocation caused by carbon monoxide poisoning within approximately 15 minutes.

This truck was driven by Wilhem Getz and Ervin Meyer, SS non-commissioned officers of the Special command. The fact later became the theme for David Albahari's book Getz and Meyer.

The first victims of death by suffocation inside this chamber were the patients and medical staff of Jewish hospitals.

The execution of all Jews imprisoned in the Sajmiste concentration camp was carried out in the same way.

In his statement, a grave digger from Jajinci, recounts how he had worked for two full months on the excavation of graves. The graves were actually long trenches. The number of trenches he had dug up was 81 or 82. Inside each trench round 100 Jews who had died from suffocation had been buried. From this fact it can reasonably be deducted that approximately 8.000 Jews, mostly women and children, had been suffocated inside the truck.

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The list that follows was made according to individual poll lists filed in the archives of the Zemun Jewish Community. In the list among those that perished in Jasenovac and its subsidiary Stara Gradiska, are also those killed in other concentration camps, police stations and other places.

**List of members of the Zemun Jewish Community, victims of Fascism**

1. Adanja Rafael
2. Ljerka
3. Mathilde
4. Rosa
5. Adler Leo
6. Paula
7. Robert
8. Rosa
9. Adler Paula Sr.
10. Alischer Franciska
11. Juci
12. Alkuzer Avram
13. Regina
14. baby
15. child
16. child
17. child
18. child
19. child
20. Altarac Josip
21. Raschel
22. Amodaj Haim
23. Anaf Moreno
24. Helena
25. Ausspitz Julio
26. Gita
27. Ibolka
28. Balazs Iso
29. Regina
30. Selma
31. Band Dr. Alexander
32. Charlotte
33. Milan
34. Beherano Vitalis
35. Erna
36. Belah Ofsej
37. Rifka
38. Rachel
39. Böhm Zsiga
40. Fani
41. Gisela
42. Bihali Herman
43. Binder Bertold
44. Rosa
45. Anica
46. Pavle
47. Blau Jakob
48. Matilda
49. Rosa
50. Bondi Jakob
51. Grete
52. Robert
53. Boskovic Eugen
54. Margit
55. Erna
56. Magda
57. Mirko
58. child
59. Brandeis Zsiga
60. Berta
61. Brüll Josip
62. Hugo
63. Bruner Pavle
64. Cevic Avram
65. Clara
66. Haim
67. Mariana
68. Clara
69. Robert
70. Tschapov Jovan
71. Charlotte
72. Pirosh
73. Stevan
74. Dezsma Richard
75. Stefania
76. Josef

77. **Daniti Lenka**  
78. Aca  
79. Haim  
80. Mika  
81. Katica  
82. **Elek Ela**  
83. **Elias Lika**  
84. Josef  
85. **Elias Regina**  
86. **Engel Andria**  
87. Rosa  
88. **Engel Tea**  
89. **Engler Anton**  
90. Desider  
91. Jelisaveta  
92. **Ehrenfreund Zdenko**  
93. Emmi  
94. **Farchy Alisa**  
95. **Farchy Allegra**  
96. Mihailo  
97. **Farchy Josef - 1941.**  
98. Dora  
99. Robert  
100. **Farchy Leon - 1941.**  
101. Olga  
102. Erih - 1941.  
103. Lili  
104. Alfred - 1941.  
105. **Farkasch Sophie**  
106. **Fekete Arnold**  
107. **Fekete Elemer-killed**  
in Aushvic 1944.  
108. Olga - killed in Aushvic 1944.  
109. Mirjana - killed in Aushvic 1944.  
110. **Fekete Frida**  
111. **Fekete Kornel**  
112. **Fekete Regina**  
113. Grete  
114. Lea  
115. **Förster Alexander**  
116. Juliana  
117. Zoltan  
118. **Fischer David**  
119. Hermine  
120. Leo  
121. **Fischer Desider**  
122. Etel  
123. Judit  
124. Jovan  
125. **Fischer Wili**  
126. Malvine  
127. Samuel  
128. **Flesch Mariane**  
129. **Fodor Bianka**  
130. **Fogel Eugen**  
131. Ida (Gisela)  
132. David  
133. Josip  
134. **Freudenfeld Alexander**  
135. Magda  
136. Mathilde  
137. **Franckl Melania**  
138. **Friedmann Lazar**  
139. Serena  
140. **Friedmann Leo**  
141. **Friedmann Leopold**  
142. Irene  
143. Rene  
144. **Geduldig Sima**  
145. Rosa  
146. **Gerschanovitsch Rosa**  
147. Hinko  
148. **Gärtner Dr. Leo**  
149. **Goldstein Ani**  
150. Nadine  
151. **Goldstein Hermine**  
152. **Goldstein Erwin**  
153. Mariane  
154. Erika  
155. **Goldstein Charlotte**  
156. Erwin  
157. **Greiner Leopold**  
158. Erna  
159. Ilka  
160. **Gräber Paul**  
161. Serena  
162. **Grünfeld Isidor**

163. Gross Josefina  
 164. Grossman Hermina  
 165. Gusmann Josip  
 166. Heitler Adolf  
 167. wife  
 168. Gisela  
 169. Mirjana  
 170. Halmosch Olga  
 171. Ditica  
 172. Herzl Emil  
 173. Mariana  
 174. Josip  
 175. Leo  
 176. Herzl Adele  
 177. Hugo  
 178. Jakob  
 179. Herzl Ida  
 180. Herzl Malvina  
 181. Matilda  
 182. Antoneta  
 183. Herzl Hasan  
 184. Gisele  
 185. Herzl Richard  
 186. Hirschfeld Frieda  
 187. Gisela  
 188. Hirschl Alexander  
 189. Bukica  
 190. child  
 191. Honig David  
 192. Selena  
 193. Mira  
 194. Hecht Etel  
 195. Iric Nandor  
 196. Jovanka  
 197. Erika  
 198. Olga  
 199. Isachar Josip  
 200. Regina  
 201. Anna  
 202. Alfred  
 203. Hinko - Haim  
 204. Kalderon Sarah - 1941.  
 205. Rahela - 1941.  
 206. Sultana - 1941.  
 207. Matilda - 1941.  
 208. Netika - 1941.  
 209. Sefira - 1941.  
 210. Katschka Gerschon  
 211. Elsa  
 212. Alfred  
 213. Kampos Salamon  
 214. Karpat Ela  
 215. Kaufmann Regina  
 216. Kases Natan  
 217. Sabina  
 218. Keser Sophia  
 219. Künstler Artur  
 220. Valerie  
 221. Josip  
 222. Rudi  
 223. Alexander  
 224. Nina  
 225. Klauber Gaus  
 226. Klein Bernard  
 227. Olga  
 228. Djuro  
 229. Kleinmann Edmund  
 230. Klopfer Heinrich  
 231. Klopfer Isidor  
 232. Hanny  
 233. Josefina  
 234. Else  
 235. Klopfer H. Rudolf  
 236. Kohen Juda  
 237. Mirjana  
 238. Gavra  
 239. Avram  
 240. Kohen David  
 241. Rifka  
 242. Kohn Andor  
 243. wife  
 244. Ela  
 245. Kohn Dragutin  
 246. Katica  
 247. Kohn Hugo  
 248. Regina  
 249. Kohn Imre

250. Ethel  
 251. Olga  
 252. **Kohn Salamon**  
 253. Ester  
 254. **Kohn Ivan**  
 255. wife  
 256. Hilda  
 257. Nada  
 258. Vera  
 259. **Kovach Pavle**  
 260. **Kraus Manfred**  
 261. Mancini nee Grossman  
 262. Edita  
 263. **Kriehaber Karlo**  
 264. Ela  
 265. **Kronstein Frieda**  
 266. **Kronstein Josip**  
 267. Hedwiga  
 268. Alexander  
 269. Rut  
 270. **Kronstein Fritz**  
 271. Olga  
 272. Ivan  
 273. **Landau Berta**  
 274. **Leon Else**  
 275. **Leon Hermine**  
 276. **Leon Rosa**  
 277. **Levi Cadik**  
 278. **Levi Blanka**
279. Clara  
 280. **Levi Josip**  
 281. Julia  
 282. **Levi Laura**  
 283. Roderik  
 284. **Levi Kadmon**  
 285. Sumbul  
 286. Alfred  
 287. Josefina  
 288. Ruben  
 289. Salamon  
 290. **Levi Nisim**  
 291. Clara  
 292. Mery  
 293. Stela  
 294. **Levi Sigmund**  
 295. Gisela  
 296. Ilse  
 297. Karlo  
 298. Dr. Kurt  
 299. Otto  
 300. **Levi Sol**  
 301. **Levi Kalman**  
 302. **Lustig Armin**  
 303. Jelisaveta  
 304. Katica  
 305. Clara  
 306. Olga  
 307. **Matschoro David**
308. Lili  
 309. Ester  
 310. Josip  
 311. Juda  
 312. Nisim  
 313. Sopić  
 314. **Mayer Berta**  
 315. **Mayer Malvina**  
 316. Samuel  
 317. Margita  
 318. Drago  
 319. **Mayer Ezra**  
 320. Ernesta  
 321. Viktoria  
 322. Lidia  
 323. **Mandel Jovan**  
 324. **Mandil Menahem**  
 325. Soka  
 326. **Menahem Lika**  
 327. **Melamed Alfred**  
 328. Rachel  
 329. **Mordehai - surname n/a**  
 330. **Müller Frieda**  
 331. Uriel  
 332. **Musafia Jichak**  
 333. Blanka  
 334. Azriel  
 335. Jakob  
 336. Mosche



337. Rafael  
338. **Nachmias Isak**  
339. Josefina  
340. **Neubauer Rosa**  
341. Zsuzsi  
342. **Orban Martin**  
343. Jelisaveta  
344. **Papo Elise**  
345. Josefina  
346. Rachel  
347. **Papo Samuel**  
348. Sarah  
349. Jasha  
350. Sasha  
351. **Perenji Bela**  
352. Maria  
353. Clara  
354. **Pinter Djurka**  
355. **Pisker Adolf**  
356. Janka  
357. Ervin  
358. Josip  
359. **Pisker Estel**  
360. Mira  
361. **Pisker Josip**  
362. Regina  
363. Clara  
364. **Pisker Manfred**  
365. Oskar

366. **Placko Frieda**  
367. **Polak Ema**  
368. Vera  
369. **Polizer Eugenia**  
370. Pavle  
371. Gabriela  
372. **Reizer Herman**  
373. **Reis Jakob**  
374. Gita  
375. **Rechnizer Jolan**  
376. **Ronaj Charlotte**  
377. **Rosenberg Lazar**  
378. Rosa  
379. Eugenia  
380. Elvira  
381. **Rosenfeld Malvina**  
382. **Roth Leo**  
383. Johanna  
384. Erna  
385. Hedwiga  
386. **Rubenowitsch Felix**  
387. Marsel  
388. **Samlaics Maria**  
389. Rosa  
390. Erik  
391. Ljerka  
392. Hugo  
393. Schari  
394. **Santo Djuro**

395. Stefanie  
396. **Sasson Blanka**  
397. **Sasson Josip**  
398. Bukica  
399. Stela  
400. Mimi  
401. **Sasson Mariana**  
402. Judith  
403. **Sasson Moritz**  
404. **Semnitz Ignjat**  
405. Fanny  
406. Marko  
407. **Semnitz Zsiga**  
408. Rosa  
409. Franziska  
410. **Sidl Amalia**  
411. Edith  
412. Lili  
413. **Sidwerz Makso**  
414. **Sigmund Alexander**  
415. **Sigmund Clara**  
416. **Sonnenberg Bela**  
417. Heni  
418. Vera  
419. Vlado  
420. **Sonnenfeld son of Elsa**  
421. **Sonnenfeld Lazar**  
422. **Sonnenfeld Dr. Samuel**  
423. Olga

424. Hilda  
 425. Angelina  
 426. Ivica  
 427. **Sonnenfeld Otto**  
 428. **Schalgo Makso**  
 429. Maria  
 430. Jelisaveta  
 431. Judith  
 432. Zsuzsi  
 433. **Scheer Samuel**  
 434. Regina  
 435. Adolf  
 436. Alexander  
 437. Filip  
 438. Malvine  
 439. Marko  
 440. Lucia  
 441. **Schor Leo**  
 442. Gisela  
 443. Hulda  
 444. **Schossberger Dr. Franz**  
 445. Erika  
 446. Mira  
 447. **Spiegel Ingelore**  
 448. Walter  
 449. **Spindl Paula**  
 450. Albert  
 451. Herrman  
 452. **Stein Makso**
453. Else  
 454. Robert  
 455. **Steiner Herrman**  
 456. Talina  
 457. Makso  
 458. Rosa  
 459. Gita  
 460. **Schreiber Bernard**  
 461. **Schreiber Gavro** killed in Aushvic  
 462. **Schugar Gesa**  
 463. **Schwab Albert**  
 464. Irma  
 465. **Schwitzer Hinko**  
 466. Wilma  
 467. **Schwitzer Berta**  
 468. **Schwitzer Ignjac**  
 469. **Schwitzer Leo**  
 470. wife  
 471. **Schwitzer Julije**  
 472. Zsaneta  
 473. **Schwitzer S. Willie**  
 474. Erna  
 475. Katica  
 476. Mira  
 477. **Schwitzer I. Willie**  
 478. Antonia  
 479. Edith  
 480. **Schwitzer Herrman**  
 481. **Tagleicht Emanuel**
482. Ester  
 483. David  
 484. Edith  
 485. **Tagleicht Juliska**  
 486. Gavra  
 487. **Tajtacak Andjelko**  
 488. Bojana  
 489. child  
 490. child  
 491. **Tauss Zsiga**  
 492. Olga  
 493. Samuel  
 494. **Weinberg Juliska**  
 495. **Weizenhofer Eng.**  
 496. **Weiss Alexander**  
 497. Andor  
 498. Lenka  
 499. **Weiss Polak**  
 500. Regina  
 501. **Wechsler Moric**  
 502. **Wechsler Simon**  
 503. Stefhanie  
 504. **Wieder Regina**  
 505. **Wigenfeld Adolf**  
 506. **Wigenfeld Julio**  
 507. Lela  
 508. Zsanka  
 509. Stefhanie  
 510. **Zuckermann Serena**

**I. STARA PAZOVA**

511. Berger Bela  
512. Rosa  
513. Blau Jakob  
514. Olga  
515. Gesa  
516. Deutsch Salamon  
517. Berta  
518. Freund David  
519. Selma  
520. Freund Jani  
521. wife  
522. son  
523. Olga  
524. Fucks Laci  
525. Liki  
526. Janji  
527. Gesa  
528. Tomislav  
529. Pali  
530. Gere Andor  
531. Goldberg Dr. Geza  
532. Heisler Adolf  
533. Beni  
534. Branko  
535. David  
536. Ethel  
537. Jelka  
538. Mirko

539. Herschkowitsch Samuel (cantor)  
540. Sopfie  
541. Kessler Bela  
542. Alisa  
543. Maria  
544. Kain Malci  
545. Kohn Karlo  
546. Andor  
547. Etelka  
548. Katica  
549. Köningsberg Ema  
550. Müller Gerschon  
551. Terezia  
552. Pimus Manus  
553. wife  
554. Olag  
555. Pisker Jochana  
556. Seringa  
557. Dragutin  
558. Roth Jakob  
559. Frieda  
560. Weiss Luise (teacher)

**2. GOLUBINCI**

561. Kohn Sigmund  
562. Clara  
563. Anica  
564. Ema  
565. Kohn Vladislav  
566. Magda  
567. Ivan  
568. Rosa  
569. Remmer Pavle  
570. Ethel

**3. NOVI KARLOVCI**

571. Kohn Arnold

**4. NOVI SLANKAMEN**

572. Kardelj Edvard  
573. wife

*Total: 207 households in the town of Zemun*

*24 households in villages in the area of Zemun Jewish Community*

## ***THE PARTICIPATION OF ZEMUN JEWS IN THE BATTLE AGAINST FASCISM***

Edita Pisker and Jelisaveta-Suzana Schalgo stand among the most prominent participants of the Anti-Fascist liberation movement. Both women were members of the Communist movement prior to World War II. In Zemun they were in the group of organizers of the National liberation movement. The pre-war police already knew that Edita was a dedicated communist and when the Kingdom of Yugoslavia capitulated she almost immediately had to go undercover. She joined the partisan units later. However, she was assigned to organize political rallies in the area of Srem. She was an active political agitator and one of the first activists of AFZ (Anti Fascist Women's Front). Working on such assignments made her vulnerable to a multitude of dangers which she bravely managed to overcome. Once the war was over she returned to Zemun after experiencing personal disappointments. Her contribution to the cause and battle had been forgotten and there was nothing left to keep her in Yugoslavia. She left for Israel in 1949. It is an injustice that she is mentioned in the documents in Yad Vasham in Jerusalem as a marginal person among the participants of the National Liberation Battle (NOB).

Suzana-Jelisaveta Schalgo was instructed by the branch organization of the Zemun Yugoslav Communist Party to organize and recruit Zemun Jewish youths to join the National liberation movement (NOP). Upon the assault of Germany on the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941 the leadership of the "Hashomer hatzair" of Zemun decided that the mem-

bers of this organization should collectively enter the NOP. All members were dispersed into a number of groups as members of the USAOJ (United association of anti fascist youths of Yugoslavia). Both groups and individuals were assigned tasks such as writing anti fascist graffiti in various parts of the town, distribution of leaflets, disruption of phone lines, acquisition of sanitary material, ammunition and other. Almost all groups held their meetings in the home of Josip-Joska and Danilo-Danko Fogel situated in downtown Zemun.

Sometime at the beginning of September a certain number of youths both male and female became members of the SKOJ (Yugoslav Association of Communist Youths). By joining this organization they received recognition for their active and responsible approach to and completion of assigned tasks. The following were admitted to the SKOJ at the time:

Josip Beherano (he joined the SKOJ while still a pupil of the Belgrade school of technics)

Danilo and Josip Fogel  
Ervin Rosenberg  
Mirjana and Josip Pisker  
Alfred Izahar  
Alfred Katchka  
Magda and Mirko Boskovic  
Marko Semnitz  
Vladimir Sonnenberg  
David and Edita Tagleicht  
Mirko Meyer  
Gavra Kohen

The following remained in the status of USAOJ membership:

Benko Beherano

Hinko Gerschanowitsch

Samuel Fischer

Anica Binder

Selma Balasch

Hulda Schor

Stela and Mariana Sasson and others.

There were participants in the anti fascist movement who had not belonged to "Hashomer hatzair". They were:

Beza Albahari, as a member of the Yugoslav Communist Party she was a campaigner and organizer of the anti fascist movement. She was killed in the Zemun prison at the beginning of 1942;

Dr. Kurt Levi, as a doctor in the partisan troops was assigned the duty of commanding medical officer of the Liberated territory of Uzice in 1941. He was captured and shot the same year.

Feier Ladislav, joined the partisans in 1943. He was a captain of the JNA (Yugoslav National Army) in 1945 when he was killed near Sonta.

Schalgo Jelisaveta-Suzana was responsible for maintaining communication between five groups of the SKOJ organization. In keeping with the rules of illegal operations the groups had no knowledge of each other. Groups of Jewish male and female youths were an exception. They would all frequently meet in the home of the Fogel family. Frequently certain actions were embarked on directly from this flat. The material ("Proleter", various proclamations, and other)

Suzana brought was read aloud to the assembly. Discussions were held and they frequently turned into fierce debates.

Sometime in October 1941 some ten members of the SKOJ and USAOJ gathered in the Fogel flat. They were waiting for Suzana to bring the material that would be used in the action planned for that evening. Someone in the group put forward the question whether tasks concerning slogans and leaflets were a greater risk than gain. A fierce debate ensued from the question and diverse arguments were pronounced. Suzana arrived in the midst of the upheaval and tried to put a stop to the discussion but nobody would listen. Standing beside Suzana at the very door was the host. He asked what activity was planned for that night and she showed him a bundle of slogans written on paper strips. The back of the strips had to be sponged with water and then stuck to walls. He suggested to Suzana that the two of them undertake the complete activity. They went out and in a record time made a round of all the necessary streets. Finally, only one parole with the words: "Death to Ante Pavelic" had to be dispensed with. As a light autumn rain began to fall, under the shelter of an umbrella they went up to the shoe store "Bata" in the very center of Zemun and stuck the slogan to its window. They had only just managed to walk a few paces from the window when a crowd of people almost instantly gathered in front of the shop window.

When they returned to the flat they cut short the discussion that was still in full force and told the group that the assignment had been completed and that they should all hurry back to their homes before the police curfew.

This discussion was an isolated event. As time went by individual engagement in tasks that had to be carried out became bolder and more dangerous.



The assignment that went wrong happened at the end of November 1941. A very large amount of leaflets was brought to the meeting. In the leaflets the citizens of Zemun were addressed in Serbo-Croatian and German and asked to resist and fight the German occupational forces. The task was very precise: the leaflets had to be distributed to each home from 19.30 to 19.45. The members of the groups were divided into pairs each pair was responsible for particular streets. Working in pairs allowed one person to insert the leaflets in houses on the left while the other worked on the right side of the street.

Out of the group, a pair known only to Suzana, was selected to distribute leaflets in the Prilaz (the name of the street which led into the part of town where local Germans lived, the Franzstal). It would seem that this pair had not taken their task seriously, since at 20.00 hours when the assignment had been completed in all other parts of the town they had not even started to distribute their lot of leaflets. They were stopped by the police in black uniforms (Volksdeutscher) and asked where they had been. Noticing that the two were visibly shaken they were brought to the nearest police station where they were searched. Naturally, the leaflets were found and they were submitted to interrogation. It was revealed much later that the two of them had not been beaten or otherwise physically abused; however they were soon persuaded that as Croats they only faced the blame for letting themselves be misled. So they confessed that the leader of their group was Suzana.-Jelisaveta Schalgo and that they had received the leaflets from her.

That same night Suzana was arrested. On entering the police station her arms and legs were bound, a handle of a broom was placed under her knees; the handle was propped

on two chairs so that her head hung down toward the floor. The beating started. Only after did they question her who the other members of SKOJ were and who her liaison was. She would admit to nothing, and the gory beating went on. When she passed out they would throw water on her to revive her. She was beaten and tortured for hours; she began to bleed profusely but would still disclose no one. As they still needed her alive they took her to the hospital. She was brought there unconscious, her body black and blue from the beating. Once she came to and started to mend she met by accident three youths (one of them is the author of this chronicle). The youths were returning from forced labour and passing by the hospital they heard someone calling to them from the top floor. They recognized Suzana. They bought flowers and fruit at the entrance, as if they were paying a visit to a patient. Upstairs Suzana was already waiting in the corridor, with her guard's approval; the guard was in a uniform resembling the gendarmerie. There was little time to talk. She swiftly recounted the torture she had undergone at the police station, and then she said that she had revealed no one and that she would not do so no matter what.

She was small in height, with a slight figure and beautiful, soft features. It was amazing how she had withstood so stoically such physical abuse. She kept her word. No one suffered because of her.

Since they could not beat out any statement disclosing other members of the anti fascist movement once she was back at the police station and tortured again, they finally shot her. Some reports say that this happened on the banks of the river Sava, other sources say that it happened in the Zemun prison, at the beginning of 1942.

## ZEMUN JEWS SURVIVORS OF THE HOLOCAUST

Out of the participants of the anti fascist struggle Mirko Mayer should be singled out. He was a mere boy when he was admitted to the Mosor partisan unit in 1943. His partisan name was "Grga" and he sustained wounds to the chest and arm in battle. He died in 1946 in Zemun as a captain of the JNA.

Of all the members of the "Hashomer hatzair" only Josip Beherano and Danilo Fogel joined the partisans. At first they were in the Podunavski unit active in the south of Srem, from where they were transferred to Bosnia to the Podunavski "G" battalion, which was incorporated into the Second Vojvodina brigade. On their return from Bosnia they were delegated political work in the territory of the county of Ilok.

The third member of the "Hashomer hatzair", Ervin Rosenberg, was the only survivor of all the Zemun Jews deported to the Jasenovac concentration camp in 1942. Once he escaped from the camp he fought bravely in the ranks of the National liberation army.

Beside Josip Beherano, Danilo Fogel and Edita Pisker were decorated for their valor with the "Partisan 1941 medal". Others fighting in partisan units were: Alexander Schwitzer-Shani, Zak Celebi, Beti Celebi, Estera Demajo-Celebi, Sofia Arandjelovic-Celebi, Jacob Neumann, Ervin Rosenberg, Mirko Mayer.

To our knowledge they were the only Zemun Jews who had survived the war within the ranks of the National liberation battle the NOB.

It should be stated from the start that there are no orderly records or documents on Zemun Jewish survivors. It follows that not all war survivors shall be listed in this chronicle. The names stated here were obtained from the few survivors the author has managed to get in touch with.

Each one of them has a remarkable survival story. However it was impossible to go into all the details, since there is an abundance of data on some and very scarce information about others and it would be unjust to chronicle disproportionate accounts. I shall of course make use of all pertinent facts.

The fates of the survivors differ in many ways too. Some had left Zemun prior to or immediately at the onset of the occupation, some had been in POW camps as members of the Royal Yugoslav Army, there were others who had managed to go into hiding in the wake of the deportation to concentration camps and some families were spared owing to the law on mixed marriages.

It can only be concluded that a reconstruction of a full list of survivors would be very hard to accomplish after more than half a century from the Second World War. However, it seems appropriate to publish the sum of material collected about survivors despite its eventual flaws in respect of comprehensiveness and certification.

It became evident that this chronicle required a separate chapter about the citizens of Zemun, non-Jews who gave

their support and assistance to their Jew town folk. We have touched on this issue in same instances but a methodical record is evidently missing. Hopefully there will be some from the younger generations who will tackle this subject and research and write about this very important aspect of the life of Zemun Jews. A detailed account of each individual case would in a way be a token of gratitude to all those citizens, who risking their lives helped the persecuted Jews of whom



**The Israeli Ambassador *Yoram Shani* decorating *Martina Markovic nee Levec* with the Medal of the Righteousness among the nations**

some even managed to survive. It was an act of boundless humanity and deserves to be recorded and remembered. For those citizens who were not awarded the “Megila” (certificate of gratitude) or the Medal of Righteousness among nations, such a book would be the only way to express respect, admiration and everlasting gratitude.

It must not be forgotten that a number of Zemun Jews were saved with the help of their non-Jewish town folk. Anton

Benic was the man who best knew details about these humane and generous people being one of them himself. Unfortunately he died by the end of 1983. Benic had been decorated with the Medal of the Righteousness among nations awarded by the state of Israel. Another citizen of Zemun received the same Medal, Martina Markovic nee Levec.

It is a great pity that we cannot include in this chronicle the names of all the families and individuals who had in any way possible helped their Jewish neighbours in those hard times.

Of the humanness of the citizens of Zemun of non-Jewish origin a veritable example is an event dating from 1942. According to the writing of Dr. Leo Brandeis the president of the Jewish Community at the time, one day at the end of January a Deutsch man, a person of some importance at the “Sajmiste” (death camp) came to his flat to tell him that the same morning a number of wagons with Jews from Sabac had arrived at the Zemun railway station. They were heading for Sajmiste. He asked

Brandeis whether any means of transport could be organized for these people within an hour or two.

The prisoners in question had already been traveling for some days and there were even a few dead people among them. The weather was bitterly cold and out of the deportees among whom there were women and children, only a few had any chance to reach Sajmiste on foot alive. In this hour of need Brandeis had only enough time to directly approach two cart transporters whom he knew. Not only did they themselves fulfill his request but found another 6-7 hire carts in the Gornja Varos who ceaselessly transported the frost bitten men, women and children from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. that day.

Late in the evening they came to Dr. Brandeis to tell him that they had transported all the prisoners to Sajmiste and that among them there had been three dead people. Brandeis asked how much he owed them for the service rendered. Rather resentfully and with indignation they replied that they had not worked for the money.

The fate of each Zemun Jew and Jewess survivor recounted here is based on the statements made by family, friends and acquaintances. The author did not question the authenticity of each detail relevant to the rescue of a life. Should there be any deviation from the actual events then it is a result of a fault of memory, or slight partiality contained in the statement. There were cases in which the author had more than one version, but judged that such ambiguities should not be the matter of this chronicle since they might be interpreted as insinuation.

**Alma Sasson** is a person who rightfully deserves a book of her own; even then one wonders whether due respect could be repaid to this exceptional woman.



*Alma Koncan - Sasson*



In the midst of the three Zemun markets at a certain angle from the police station stood the tobacco shop of the Sasson's where Alma worked each day. Throughout the entire morning it was very lively in the markets and thus they were the place of many incidents. In some cases even the police had to intervene. When there were no customers in the store Alma would stand in the doorway and keep a keen eye on events. The instant she noticed a group gathering up, a sign that could lead to an incident, Alma would press a dinar into the hand of a nearby urchin and ask him to run over, see what was happening and hurry back to tell her about it. It was a well known fact that she was a highly inquisitive person. It could be said of Alma that she was a woman of many virtues but she had some shortcomings too. Frankly speaking she blended into her surroundings never attempting to raise herself above others in any way.

All that knew her could never fathom the magnitude of challenge this woman could face up to, the selflessness of her soul and the enormous inborn humanity of her personality.

She had married a Slovenian, Mirko-Fritz Koncan before the Second World War. They were a happy couple although it was a childless marriage.

The occupation in 1941 caught up with Alma in Zemun, with her husband away in Zagreb at the time. She wanted to join her husband at any cost, but as a Jewess was forbidden to leave Zemun. With unwavering resolve she managed to find a sympathetic clerk willing to grant her a traveling pass. And then at that same moment an incident occurred which could have sealed Alma's fate forever. While the pass was being processed, another officer, a neighbour of Alma's sister Erna, Bata Nastic, appeared and opposed the issuing of

the pass since the person in question was a Jew. However the first clerk silenced him uttering: "Keep quiet you fool!" And so Alma managed to depart for Zagreb early on in 1941.

She met up with her husband in Zagreb and owing to the fact that they had a mixed marriage she was not deported to a concentration camp.

The tragic news of the deportation of Zemun Jews to the concentration camps of Jasenovac and Stara Gradiska, among whom were many of her relatives, friends and acquaintances, filled her with deep sorrow, apprehension and fear for their lives. However after the initial shock Alma would not let herself become discouraged. She began to think of ways how she could be of help and make life easier for her compatriots in the fascist hell they had found themselves in. She began to send packages to the interned Zemun Jews. She vowed to herself that she would send a package to all prisoners who approached her, or for whom she could obtain a card allowing the prisoner to receive packages.

She soon learnt that the first packages to reach the prisoners contained much less than she had sent. Anything of worth whether clothes or food was taken out of them. Some packages, those most valuable were never handed over. She quickly became aware of the fact that she would have to adapt to the actual circumstances and send packages that would be uninteresting to the Ustashi, but of crucial value to the prisoners for their survival.

And so Alma began collecting old, worn out, even torn clothes which she was certain the Ustashi would not keep for themselves.

When it came to food she realized that she must not send products made from meat: salami, bacon and the like as



the prisoners never received them. She started making greasy, thick gravy which she poured into sausages. She worked selflessly to invent ways to send things that would have high calorie value and still be uninteresting to the guards.

One can only imagine the time and effort needed to prepare and send one such package. Considering the shortages which come with war it was a feat to obtain even a handful of flour or a spoonful of grease. Despite all obstacles Alma managed to send some 450 packages to Jasenovac and Stara Gradiska. Only in the light of the obstacles she had to tackle with can one fathom the degree of Alma's contribution to her fellow citizens - the Zemun Jews.

As we know that the agony of the Zemun Jews in the concentration camps lasted round 990 days it becomes evident that Alma sent one package to the camp almost every other day. It is hard to imagine that even an entire professional organization could have achieved this. One must never forget the strained circumstances under which she worked. Beside the difficulties that had to be overcome, there was always the danger of sending packages under one and the same names. Thus Alma had to invent a whole series of names under which she sent the packages. She even managed to overcome the difficulty of restrained communication with prisoners, the limited number of words allowed to both prisoner and sender, and inform herself of life in the camp. She would receive word from the prisoners that so and so had gone to Blanka. Blanka was Alma's sister who had been murdered by the fascist in a Belgrade hospital. The meaning behind the message was that the person mentioned had been killed and that there was no reason to go on sending packages to that name.

It is evident that Alma could never have managed such a noble act without the constant support and assistance of her husband Mirko-Fritz, although this in no way lessens the merits of Alma Koncan nee Sasson. She died in Zagreb in 1962 and was buried in the family tomb of the Koncan's in Maribor.

**Leo Brandeis** was a well known figure among the Jewish population since he was a long standing president of the Zemun Ashkenazi Community. He was also a respected attorney and maintained very good relations with the heads of virtually all city institutions, as well as with the clergymen of all other religions. This tolerant attitude was probably crucial for the rescue of his wife Hana and himself. Namely the Catholic parish priest Prohaska obtained false documents stating that Dr. Brandeis and his wife came from Split. With the help of these documents they left Zemun by train without any problem.

On reaching Karlovac the Brandeis spouses were very disturbed by the news that awaited them there - the train could go no further. This meant that Karlovac was their last station. As they walked nervously down the platform a young man approached them and surprisingly asked them what they were doing there. At first they did not recognize him. He then introduced himself as a friend of their son Ivan. Ivan was already interned in a German POW camp. After a brief conversation he proposed that they remain in Karlovac and that he would take care of their stay there. And so Ivan's friend managed to obtain documents from Split in the false name of Djura Bayer through his contacts. In Karlovac Djura Bayer, alias Leo Brandeis became the director of the Bank of Karlovac. Under this false name he not only managed to live through the war but also regularly communicated with his son Ivan during his time in prison.

After the war Dr. Brandeis with his wife, left for Israel where he died.

**Heda Brandeis**, Dr. Brandeis's daughter, in an attempt to escape persecution left for Zrenjanin, heading for Petrovgrad or Veliki Beckerek. Here she found shelter with her friend. Faced with the curiosity of the neighbours she introduced herself as her friend's relative brought to the status of a refugee. At the time there were refugees everywhere, so that her story was accepted as something quite normal. She managed to live through the occupation staying with her friend.

Shortly after the end of the war she immigrated to Israel and lives in Naharia today.

**Ivan Brandeis**, Dr. Leo Brandeis's son was a soldier of the Yugoslav Royal Army at the beginning of the war. After the capitulation of Yugoslavia he was interned and became a POW. The Germans made a number of attempts to separate Jewish prisoners from the other POWs. For a time they were ordered to wear a band with the word JUDE on it. However due to a protest made by the Red Cross and other prisoners they had to relinquish their attempt. And so Ivan Brandeis survived the war and holocaust.

Immediately upon his return to the liberated country he took an active role in the reinstated operation of the Zemun Jewish Community, where his first position was secretary and then president of the Community. He died in Zemun in 2004.

**Avram Sasson** was also a soldier of the Yugoslav Royal Army when it capitulated before the German onslaught. He was interned in the territory which was occupied by the

Italians and ended up in their POW camp. After some time he managed to escape from the camp and enter Switzerland illegally. Once there he was placed in a refugee camp. It is a well known fact that conditions in Swiss camps were strenuous. However, Avram had a knowledge of languages and being fluent in all the three languages in use in Switzerland helped him to get acquainted with a Swiss woman, a fact that substantially eased his position and improved living conditions.

Immediately upon liberation he was transferred to Paris where he worked at the Yugoslav Embassy. After his term there he returned to Zemun where he first became a judge and then the President of the County Court. From this position he was promoted to the post of advisor in the Serbian Ministry of Justice. In 1951 he left for Israel and died there.

**Jakov-Zak Celebi** was not only a stout pragmatic in his trade - that of a firefighter but also very resourceful in overcoming the trials of wartime life.

Immediately upon the arrival of German troops into Zemun in 1941 he was assigned to forced labour just like the rest of his Jewish town folk. At the time he had contacts with the National liberation movement. Among other he took part in planning the arson of the German army horse sickbay (Pferdlazzarett) where enormous piles of hay and straw were stored. He even managed to obtain certain self igniting chemicals. However the action was never carried out because the entire Jewish population was deported to concentration camps including those who had laboured in the "Horse sickbay".

Jakov did not sit and wait to be transported to a concentration camp, but obtained documents under the name of Josip Milinkovic - a friend of his from the ranks of the fire brigade.

From the data we managed to acquire it is evident that Celebi was later a fighter in the partisans and that he had managed to survive the war and occupation in this way.

**Dragutin Brandeis** was born in Calma near Sremska Mitrovica in 1912, but had moved together with his parents to Zemun as an infant. Here he attended both elementary school and gymnasium. He married Nina whose mother was Russian.

When the April 1941 war broke out he was mobilized. At the end of the brief war he found himself in Podgorica. Had he stayed in the territory under Italian occupation he would have had a chance to live relatively safely through the occupation. However he decided to return to his parents and family in Zemun although he had already heard of the deportation of Jews, the forced labour, yellow bands and other.

At the end of December 1941 Dragutin was released from the obligation to wear the yellow band as he was married to a woman of Arian descent. This is why he was not deported to Jasenovac with the other Zemun Jews. At the end of July 1942 arrests of Jews married to people of Orthodox religion started. Dragutin managed to obtain a pass for Belgrade. His wife's relatives lived in constant fear for their lives and refused to take him in. He found his friend Dusko Stefanovic with whom he used to hang out in his youth and stayed with him till morning when he left for Zajecar. His sister's in-laws received him in the same way the Belgrade relatives of his wife had done. However he managed to get a job in a German firm in Metovnica half way between Bor and Zajecar. Dragutin had a false identity card in the name of a Croat colleague, Domink Krsnik. Dragutin changed the name to Danilo to make it sound Serbian.

In October 1943 at the end of the warehouse working hours, a German officer in the company of a soldier appeared before Dragutin and arrested him. The officer told him that he could be shot on the spot for owning false papers. Dragutin decided right there that he would take the first opportunity he had to escape. It is best if we cite Dragutin's statement of what happened next:

“There I was walking two paces in front of the officer and soldier. We had to cover four kilometers before we reached Bor. We were nearing the first buildings of the New Colony and some heavy duty trucks were heading towards us... The two in charge must have averted their eyes for a moment to have a look at the trucks and I took the opportunity to run off to the right heading for some buildings. I thought that they would shoot and that everything would come to an end. However they started chasing me shouting: “Halt, halt!” - Stop, stop! The distance between me and my persecutors was constantly increasing. I thought that I may get away from them if I mingled with other people. I came upon a kind of field, actually a football field to my left. A game was on and there was a large crowd. The distance was increasing, my chasers were firing at me both from rifle and gun; bullet shots were flying to my left and right. There was a commotion and the people at the playing field began running in all directions too. To my left some hundred meters away was a bunker with Russian soldiers, Vlasovci. They too started shooting... I was nearing some barracks and since I was unacquainted with Bor I saw German soldiers coming out of them to late. Some of them turned to me asking what the shooting was about and I replied in German that we were chasing a certain person so they began running after me. They must have mistaken me for a police agent. The officer behind me was

shouting - get him! The soldiers next to me seemed a little perplexed and asked what was going on and I persisted in my answer that we were after an escaped prisoner. We kept on running but a German soldier got hold of my sleeve just in case; my persecutors were shouting that I must be stopped. Other soldiers were now grabbing me and we stood waiting for the first two to catch up. I was drenched in sweat, the officer even more. With a face red as a lobster he yelled: "Das ist ein Jude!" - He is a Jew who has tried to escape. They started hitting me with their fists and I thought they would beat me to death on the spot. They took me to the Gestapo and threw me into a cell. They seated me on the crude-cut edge of a wooden plank so that my feet could not reach the floor. My hands were tied behind my back and my feet tied to the arms. The officer that had chased me beat me the most and hardest with others assisting him. They placed guards inside and outside the cell. That night the same officer came to the cell four times to beat me...

I escaped on December 21, 1943 the winter Solstice - the shortest day of the year - when dusk set in early. The entire German SS unit was in Banat field training. Only three SS men remained in the camp. One was positioned at one end of the corridor with the other soldier on its opposite end; right beside them was the key holder. The key holder was responsible for the group in my room. He took us first to the toilet which was behind the prison building and then around the building to the water tap which stood in front. I ran with the group to the toilet but remained inside. I came out while the key holder was overseeing the group which was now standing by the water tap. I knew that my escape could not be observed from this position. I headed straight for the five meter high barbed wire and managed to climb over it with bloodied hands."

After his escape from prison Dragutin joined up with the Chetniks. He admitted to them that he was a fugitive Jew. They would not accept him into the unit because of his flat feet. Anyway that was what they told him. However they gave him references for a job in one of the mines. In the recommendation they wrote: "Was not accepted for army service due to his origin."

Living in the village of Leskovac with his wife Nina he met up with the partisans in September 1944 and joined up as a volunteer.

Dragutin died in 2006. in Belgrade.

**Hasan Hugo** was born in Zemun on January 18, 1920. Due to certain family circumstances his mother Gizela Herzl, moved to Bosna to live there. Hugo was left with his aunt Hilda. He completed the elementary Jewish school in Zemun.



*Hasan Hugo*



He was a student of medicine when the Germans occupied the country. He managed to survive the war and the deportation of Jews with the help of Dr. Kovacevic from the Zemun Hospital. Dr. Kovacevic admitted him into the hospital as a patient. When it was necessary he would also assume the role of a hospital employee. Once the war was over he continued with his studies of medicine and graduated as one of the best in his class. As a young practitioner he first worked in Mionica. Sometime later he moved to Subotica. He was highly praised by his peers. He died of leukemia in 1968.

**Rosenberg Todor - Tosa** was mobilized and became prisoner during the brief 1941 April war. He was deported to Germany and spent the war in a number of POW camps.



*Todor Rosenberg in Lotrigen POW camp in 1943*

He escaped from the camp in Osnabrik but was caught again a few days later by a group of Hitlerjugend (Fascist youth organization).

He was returned to an ordinary prison camp - Stalag. Here he met an old friend of his, Andria Atanackovic. He helped Tosa to remove the yellow band from his sleeve and become Todor Bolic. Atanackovic sent him to work in a small French village where he stayed up to the end of the war.

For a short time he worked as an interpreter in a prison camp for Germans. He returned to Yugoslavia but already in 1948 left for Israel. He now lives with his second wife in Naharia.

In all probability the list of Zemun Jews survivors that follows has its shortcomings. The issue is that documentation that could have given a more accurate insight of all the members of this community before World War Two has unfortunately disappeared from the files kept in the Zemun Jewish Community. Near the end of this chronicle there is a list of members of the Community dating from 1945. However many who are on this list came to Zemun upon liberation i.e. once the occupation 1941-1945 was over. Only a limited classification of prewar and post war community members could be made.



**A LIST OF JEWS SURVIVORS  
OF THE ZEMUN JEWISH  
COMMUNITY**

Beherano Benko

Beherano Josip

Berger Karlo

Berger Zlata, nee Mayer

Berger Margot

Bihalji Lisa

Bihalji Merin-Otto

Bihali Djuro

Bihali Srecko

Bihali Maria nee. Berger

Brandeis Dr. Leo

Brandeis Hana, nee Binder

Brandeis Pavle

Brandeis Hedviga

Brandeis Ivan

Brandeis Jovan

Brandeis Dragutin

Binder Ivan

Cevic Jasa

Celebi Jakov

Celebi Beti, nee Raisberg

Eberle Mariana, nee Leon

Eberle Richard

Farchy Fritz

Fekete Dr. Bruno

Fischer Andor

Fischer Roso

Fogel Danilo

Franck Alexander

Franck Magda, nee Schwab

Franck Jelisaveta

Gero Piroška, nee Politzer

Goldstein Ivan

Goldstein Jolan, nee Jung

Hasan Hugo

Herzl Bertold

Herzl Josip

Kohn Alfred

Kohn Herman

Kohn Alexander - Saca

Koristka Margareta

Koristka Valeria

Koristka Feodora

Klopfer Leo

Klopfer Rudolf

Levi Isak

Levi Robert

Levi Jakov

Levi Matilda, nee Shagi

Mayer Mirko

Neumann Regina, nee Stern

Neumann Jakob

Neumann Adi

Nicin Sophia, nee Levi

Nicin Ljiljana

Nicin Petar

Pinter Lenka

Pisker Edit

Polgar Ivan

Polgar Zoltan

Polgar Ana

Polgar Liselote

Rein Jelisaveta

Roth Hilda

Rosenberg Ervin

Rosenberg Todor-Tosa

Samlaics Lenka, nee Ungar

Samuel Karlo

Samuel Gabriela, nee Hauska

Samuel Hedi

Samuel Karlo

Samuel Gabi Luise

Santo Zsiga

Sekelji Flora, nee Kohn

Sasson Alma

Sasson Avram

Scheer Willim

Scheer Philip

Scheer Alfons

Scheer Vladimir

Sonnenfeld Charlotte

Shön Dr. Arnold

Schön Luise, nee Erenfreund

Schwitzer Alexander (today Sharon)

Schwitzer Marko - "Paci"

Topalovic Maria, nee Capo

Ungar Tibor - Eci

Wagner Michaela, nee Polgar

Weiss Mirko

Weiss Nikola

# RENEWAL OF ZEMUN JEWISH COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

To state that the activities of the Zemun Jewish Community had completely ceased in the years 1941-1945 would be incorrect. In the Chapter describing the occupation period there has been mention of the endeavours and efforts made by the management of the Jewish Community. After the deportation of the Zemun Jews to concentration camps a few Jews still lived in Zemun, mostly those in mixed marriages, and a few that went into hiding during occupation and thus managed to survive.

Johan Goldstein recalls the following names: Zoltan Polgar, Willim Scheer, Hugo Hasan, Bertold Herzl, Herzl Hermina (died in 1942) and her daughter, Meuhaus and Landau.

Apart from these we know that Kohn Alfred was also in Zemun.

Johan Goldstein managed to get employment in the machine belt factory of Hofer and Paler. Up to the time of occupation the proprietor of the plant was Ervin Goldstein.

The Ustashi from the so called Tanning plant in Jasenovac came to the factory to pick up goods. As Ervin Goldstein worked in this so called Tannery, Johan somehow managed to communicate with his cousin through those who came to the belt factory. He started to send him packages containing mostly food, on his own. Soon after the sending of packages to Jasenovac was organized on a larger scale, so that others too could send them via Johan to the concentration camp.

Despite the fear of being found out, some five to six Jews would meet at the time of holidays and secretly perform religious rites.

Thus a spark of life still flickered within the Zemun Jewish Community right up to October 22, 1944 when Zemun was finally liberated.

The flat that had once belonged to the Sephardic haham had been the living quarters of a certain Fascist who fled from Zemun before the National liberation army. The moment the flat was vacant Johan Goldstein took possession

of it for the requirements of the Zemun Jewish Community.

The Community immediately began functioning. At the beginning it had only nine members. One month later this number already rose to 40.

Johan Goldstein was elected as the first post-war president of the Community.

From the very start the management had to deal with numerous welfare issues: accommodation, elementary subsistence, relief for Jews in transit, etc. The salvaging of the meager remains of the Jewish Community archives, the registries of birth, marriages and death and other documents began immediately. Questionnaire forms for pogrom victims were drawn up and filled based on statements and recollections of survivors. Religious life was observed as far as possible. Speaking plainly the life of this Jewish Community was once again revived.

In June 1945 Dr. Leo Brandeis returned to Zemun and once again took the position of President.

Listed chronologically, covering only the period from the end of the XIX century till today the following individuals have held the post of president of the Zemun Jewish Community:

MOSES I. HERZEL

DR. ISIDOR WEISS

MORIC BINDER

GABRIEL POLGAR

DR. LEO BRANDEIS

JOHAN GOLDSTEIN

DR. LEO BRANDEIS

WILLIM SCHEER

ALEXANDER FRANCK

ISAK LEVI

IVAN BRANDEIS

VLADIMIR SCHEER

NENAD FOGEL

Sometime round the year 1870 and right up to the beginning of the XX century the president of the regional Sephardic Community was elected within the organization of the Jewish Confession Community of Zemun.

On March 18, 1910 the Austrian-Hungarian authorities approved the "Regulations on the membership of the Board of Israelites in Zemun, the selection of members, their election and activities". By these rules the Sephardim were given their autonomy. However, ties with the Ashkenazi still existed.

Full emancipation of the Sephardic Jewish Community was effected in 1932.

From 1932 up till the occupation in 1941 the Sephardic Community had three presidents.

JAKOV K. LEVI

MORIC SASSON

MORENO ANAF

Recorded in the documents of the Zemun Jewish Community is a list of members as at October 15, 1945. Here we give the list in its entirety.

No.	Name & Surname	Date & place of birth	profession	marriage st.
1.	Beherano Benko	Zemun, 20.V 1920.	clerk	married
2.	Belah Hone	Bjalistok, 18.III 1921.	weaver	bachelor
3.	Berger Karlo	Munich, 28.-.1910.	painter	married
4.	Berger Zlata nee Mayer	Irig, 27.X 1906.	housewife	married w.
5.	Berger Margot	Zemun, 10.I 1942.	child	
6.	Berger Jelena	Zemun, 5.VII 1945.	child	
7.	Bihaly Djuro	Budapest,12.IV 1882.	clerk	married
8.	Bihaly Srecko	Zemun, 26.IV 1909.	clerk	bachelor
9.	Bihaly Maria nee Berger	Budapest,15.X 1892.	housewife	married w.
10.	Blat Frida nee Deutsch	St.Stivac,6.X 1894.	dressmaker	married w.
11.	Blau Elsa nee Stern	Djuleves,26.VIII 1906.	housewife	married w.
12.	Blau Helga	Zagreb, 9.VII 1929.	pupil	
13.	Brandeis Dr Leo	Calma,17.X 1881.	lawyer	
14.	Brandeis Hana nee Binder	Wiena, 26.IV 1883.	housewife	married w.
15.	Brandeis Pavle	Zemun,18.X 1910.	lawyer	married
16.	Brandeis Hedviga	Zemun, 18.VI 1916.	clerk	unmarried
17.	Brandeis Ivan	Zemun,10.II 1913.	lawyer	bachelor
18.	Brandeis Jovan	Zemun,2.VIII 1941.	child	
19.	Binder Ivan	Zemun,10.II 1900.	clerk	married
20.	Babo Erna nee Kohn	Zemun,10.II 1897.	housewife	married w.
21.	Baurose Elsa nee Bergl	Olmutz, 28. VII 1898.	housewife	married w.
22.	Baurose Herta	Wiena, 23.II 1914.	composer	unmarried
23.	Cerkovski Ela	Osijek,4.II 1916.	housewife	married w.
24.	Cerkovski Vladimir	Osijek,13.XI 1940.	child	

No.	Name & Surname	Date & place of birth	profession	marriage st.
25.	Celebi Jakob	Zemun,20.XI 1907.	clerk	married
26.	Celebi Beti born Reisberg	22.XII.1915.	housewife	married w.
27.	Ercegovic Irma nee Freudenfeld	Beograd, 1901.	clerk	married w.
28.	Feuer Klara nee Adler	B.Petrovo Selo 20.III 1906.	housewife	married w.
29.	Feuer Robert	Novi Sad, 9.3.1933.	pupil	
30.	Feuer Andrija	B. Petrovo Selo 13.I 1935.	pupil	
31.	Feuer Simo	Beograd, 3.I 1938.	pupil	
32.	Farchy Fritz	Smederevo, 29.9.1906.	clerk	married
33.	Fekete Dr Bruno	Zemun,6.7.1894.	doctor	married
34.	Fischer Andor	Zabalj, 5.X 1919.	mechanic	bachelor
35.	Fischer Rosa	Obrez, 1894.	worker	unmarried
36.	Franck Alexander	Subotica,14.3.1898.	watchmaker	married
37.	Franck Magda nee Schwab	Arad, 30.VI 1910.	housewife	married w.
38.	Franck Jelisaveta	Zemun,18.III 1932.	pupil	
39.	Freudenfeld Serena nee Deutsch	St.Sivac,21.I 1871.	housewife	married w.
40.	Freudenfeld Serafina nee Schantal	Banovci, 11.II 1905.	housewife	married w.
41.	Freudenfeld Karola	Beograd,27.4.1939.	pupil	
42.	Gero Piroška nee Politzer	St.Pazova,15.2.1915.	housewife	married w.
43.	Goldstain Ivan	Zemun,13.8.1890.	businessman	married
44.	Goldstain Jolen nee Jung	Novo Mesto,22.XI 1897.	housewife	married w.
45.	Gorup Katarina nee Reihensfeld	Ravazd,24.III 1907.	housewife	married w.
46.	Hahamovic Dr Julijo	Sarajevo, 24.V 1897.	I.colonel	married
47.	Hahamovic Helena nee Singer	Votice, 6.XI 1904.	housewife	married w.
48.	Haim Leon	Beograd,27.3.1887.	clerk	married
49.	Hasan Hugo	Zemun, 18.I 1920.	stud.med.	bachelor
50.	Herzl Bertold	Zemun,30.III 1862.	old man	married



No.	Name & Surname	Date & place of birth	profession	marriage st.
51.	Herzl Josip	Zemun,1.VI 1901.	businessman	married
52.	Jamnik Vera nee Klein	Sombor,5.I 1909.	housewife	married w.
53.	Kohn Alfred	Zemun,2.IV 1873.	businessman	married
54.	Kolm Hormen	Zemun,28.III 1912.	clerk	married
55.	Klein Livia	Senta, 20.II 1929.	pupil	unmarried
56.	Klopfer Leo	Nova Pazova,1.6.1913.	businessman	bachelor
57.	Landau Ervin	Ljubljana,4.XI 1892.	engineer	married
58.	Landau Alexander	Maribor,22.VI 1925.	clerk	bachelor
59.	Levi Isak	Zemun, 7.IV 1896.	businessman	married
60.	Levi Robert	Zemun,27.IX 1907.	clerk	married
61.	Levi Jakov	Zemun,14.IX 1935.	pupil	
62.	Levi Matilda nee Schagi	St.Becej, 2.III 1904.	milliner	married w.
63.	Lihtner Josip	Foca, 6.V 1914.	machinist	married
64.	Mayer Mirko	Zemun,16.IV 1928.	pupil	
65.	Nagy Alexander	Budapest,15.IX 1884.	clerk	married
66.	Neuhaus Josip	Itebej,12.XII 1895.	businessman	married
67.	Neuhaus Rudolf	Itebej,17.X 1894.	clerk	married
68.	Neuhaus Ladislav	Pancevo, 25.VII 1923.	tehnician	bachelor
69.	Neuhaus Tomislav	Pancevo,26.XII 1935.	pupil	
70.	Neuhaus Terezija nee Sarvas	Segedin,15.X 1875.	housewife	widow
71.	Neuhsug Klara nee Adler	Kovacica,1.IV 1910.	housewife	married w.
72.	Neuman Regina nee Stern	Ilok, 10.IV 1872.	housewife	widow
73.	Neuman Jakob	Zemun,20.XI 1912.	dentist	bachelor
74.	Pisker Edita	Zemun,2.XI 1920.	clerk	divorced
75.	Polgar Zoltan	Novi Becej,31.X 1883.	businessman	widower

No.	Name & Surname	Date & place of birth	profession	marriage st.
76.	Reihenfeld Scharlota	Gyor,St.Harton,24.V 1913.	housewife	unmarried
77.	Riper Rosa	Biald,17.XII 1899.	housewife	married w.
78.	Rosenberg Erwin	Zemun,3.V 1922.	mechanic	bachelor
79.	Ruso Rirfke	Sabac,15.IX 1864.	housewife	widow
80.	Samlaics Lenka nee Unger	Vajska,18.XI 1919.	housewife	married w.
81.	Samuel Karlo	Mihalup,31.V 1900.	businessman	married
82.	Samuel Gabriela nee Hauska	Curahona,24.VII 1918	housewife	married w.
83.	Samuel Hedi	Budapest,4.I 1939.	pupil	
84.	Samuel Karlo yuonior	Zemun,8.XI 1941.	child	
85.	Samuel Gabi Lujza	Zemun,17.V 1943.	child	
86.	Santo Sziga	Zemun,27.XI 1924.	electrician	bachelor
87.	Sekely Flora nee Kohn	Zemun,10.XI 1881.	housewife	married w.
88.	Schateles Leo	N.Vrbas,14.XII 1895.	worker	widower
89.	Scheer Wilim	Kupinovo,15.III 1893.	businessman	married
90.	Scheer Filip	Zemun,10.8.1931.	pupil	
91.	Scheer Alfons	Zemun,24.XI 1932.	pupil	
92.	Scheer Vladimir	Zemun,26.VII 1936.	pupil	
93.	Schoen Dr.Arnold	Vinkovci,10.06.1886.	doctor	married
94.	Schoen Luiza nee Eherenfreund	Sisak,25.XI 1889.	housewife	married w.
95.	Steiner Amalia nee Klein	Komorno,20.V 1913.	housewife	married w.
96.	Steiner Hedviga	Budapest,16.II 1937.	pupil	
97.	Steiner Hinko	Budapest,7.3.1940.	child	
98.	Schenfeld Bertalan	B.Topola,3.IX 1909.	tailor	married
99.	Schenfeld Brigita nee Gruenbaum	Sielc,31.V 1909.	dressmaker	married w.

No.	Name & Surname	Date & place of birth	profession	marriage st.
100.	Stern Mira nee Weinberger	Virovitica,22.XI 1911.	housewife	married w.
101.	Stern Lea	Virovitica,15.2.1933.	pupil	
102.	Stern Berta nee Freund	Djulaves,25.X 1882.	housewife	widow
103.	Stern Mariana nee Levit	Praga,31.VI 1913.	housewife	married w.
104.	Stern Dane	Beograd,6.III 1940.	child	
105.	Stern Dragan	Djulaves,19.V 1904.	clerk	married
106.	Schweizer Isidor	Marta Iglo,21.8.1891.	carpenter	married
107.	Schwarc Hilda nee Rot	Indjija,30.I 1920.	clerk	married w.
108.	Schwarc Gordana	Visegrad,25.I 1942.	child	
109.	Weiss Mirko	Pocuh,6.II 1919.	jeweler	bachelor
110.	Weiss Nikola	Pocuh,6.VI 1920.	jeweler	bachelor
111.	Topalovic Maria nee Tschapo	Zemun,30.IX 1906.	housewife	married w.
112.	Rein Jelisaveta nee Kohn	Stara Pazova,23.VI 1917.	housewife	married w.
113.	Sasson Avram	Beograd,7.IV 1916.	clerk	bachelor
114.	Mondschein Laura nee Eherenfreund	Sisak,10.XII 1892.	housewife	married w.
115.	Mondschein Dora	Zagreb,9.II 1926.	student	unmarried

In order to avoid any misunderstandings a few remarks must be made concerning the above list. This list does not contain only surviving members of the Jewish Community that were on record before the Second World War. According to certain information a large number of immigrants came to Zemun before the war, fleeing Germany and Austria. Most of them were deported to concentration camps as early as 1941 and killed. Fortunately, some of them managed to escape and survive. Apart from this, a number of Jews from other parts of Yugoslavia came to Zemun after the war. Finally, the list does not contain Zemun Jews survivors who were not in Zemun at the time the list was made.

The present chronicle deals with the activity of the Zemun Jewish Community and the lives of the Zemun Jewish population from the first settlers in 1739 up to the year 1945.

The presumption is that there will be those among the younger generations of the Zemun Jewish Community willing to chronicle the life of the Community in the former SFR of Yugoslavia and its successor, i.e. Serbia.

The chronicle remains open for possible inclusions of relevant documented material.

## AFTERWORD

*At the 45th anonymous Award winning competition of the Association of Jewish Communities of Yugoslavia the document Zemun Jewish Community received the second award in the section of memoirs and chronicle editions. Members of the panel of judges were: academic Predrag Palavestra, professor Dr. Milan Ristic, the writer Filip David and M.A. Simha Kabiljo-Sutic. This panel decided that the present chronicle deserved due recognition. From the statement issued by the panel and delivered by Simha Kabiljo-Sutic we quote the part relevant to the final decision made:*

*The manuscript "The Zemun Jewish Community" for which Danilo Fogel has been awarded with an equally ranking II award at the 45th Award winning competition of the Federation of the Jewish Communities of Yugoslavia represents a chronicle of the Jewish Community of Zemun from the first Jewish settlers in 1739 up to the year 1945. Without any pretensions to being a scientific-historical book, the chronicle's basic objective was to "save whatever could be torn away from oblivion" bearing in mind that only a few who could give testimony to the life of Jews in Zemun were still alive. There are two basic characteristics of the present chronicle that give it value: first, a detailed description of the life of the Zemun Jewish Community between the two World Wars,*

*the activities of the Community, of all social and cultural societies, family life, pogroms and persecution of the Jews in the Second World War leading up to the post-war renewal of the Zemun Jewish Community. Secondly, the chronicle contains valuable documentary material - many photographs, documents of various content, lists of pre war members, lists of victims of Nacism and lists of Jews from the first post war year (1945). Apart from published literature the author used material from the Archives of the Jewish Historical Museum in Belgrade as well as recollections of Zemun survivors, living in different parts of the world today. In this compilation of historical facts and recollections lies the true value of the Zemun "chronicle" by which the author has paid tribute to his birthplace.*

*Simha Kabiljo-Sutic.*

# L I T E R A T U R E

Dr. Slavko Gavrilovic

Writings for the history of Jews in Zemun and on the Slavonic-Srem border (XVIII-XIX century)

Jews in Srem in the XVIII and the first half of the XIX century

Jews on the Slavonic military frontier in the first half of the XIX century

Dr. Nebojsa Popovic

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Medal of Commemoration 1919 - 1969 - published by the Federation of Jewish Communities of Yugoslavia

Celap Lazar

Jews in Zemun during the military frontier - The Jewish Almanac 1958-59.

Miodrag A. Dabizic

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Vojimir Sobajic

Judaism and Israel - published by the Institute for the improvement of "stopanstvo SRM Samoupravna praktika" - Skopje 1982.

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Zoran Pejasinovic

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Zeni Lebl

Until the "final solution" the Jews in Belgrade 1521 - 1942  
Published by "Cigoja stampa" 2001



INSTITUTIONS AND EDITIONS FROM WHICH  
DOCUMENTS HAVE BEEN USED

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The "Eventov" archives - at the University of Jerusalem  
Jews in the territory of Yugoslavia - published by Muzejski  
prostor - Zagreb 1988  
Collection of works No.6 - The Jewish historical Museum in  
Belgrade, 1982  
Recollections of Jews of the Jasenovac concentration camp -  
published by the Federation of Jewish Communities in  
Yugoslavia, 1985.  
Yad Vashem - Jerusalem

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS MADE BY:

Alexander Sharon (Shani Schwitzer) - Jerusalem  
Amira Keren (Theo Schön's daughter) - Mirsa kibbutz  
Benjamin Urbach - Paris  
Dragutin Brandeis - Beograd  
Hadasa Vardi nee Brandeis - Naharia  
Josip Beherano - Novi Sad  
Tea Kubinov nee Urbach - Warsaw  
Todor Rosenberg - Tosa - Naharia  
Ivan Brandeis - Zemun  
Mira Popovic - Greta Semnitz - Zemun  
Alfons and Milica Scheer - Zemun  
Ljiljana Jovanoski - nee Levi - Zemun  
Michaela Wagner - nee Polgar - Beograd  
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