

Cadik Danon



A photo of me, shortly before I was arrested in Tuzla (1941). When the bombing of Belgrade by the Germans began in March 1941, we were on Jovanov Street, in Dorcol. It seems the Germans bombed that Jewish neighborhood especially hard. We fled from Belgrade to a village. When the bombing was over we returned home, took the necessary things and we naively headed towards Thessaloniki on foot. However, we did not even manage to reach Mladenovac, 50km south of Belgrade, before Yugoslavia capitulated, and the army disintegrated. I saw with my own eyes how the army fell apart, gave over their weapons and went into captivity. When we arrived in Belgrade the Germans were already there and immediately began a census of the Jews in the Pozarna command, they made lists, and everyone had to wear a yellow band and go to work cleaning the

city which was destroyed by the German bombing. It was clear what was going to happen here so we decided to go to our uncle's in Tuzla, thinking that it would be better there because it was part of the Independent State of Croatia. We arrived in Tuzla, our uncle welcomed us and the first few months were relatively calm. Then they started to make us register as well, they took us into forced labor in German garrisons, a distant village where there was a sawmill and we loaded planks and the like. When the partisan movement began only then did the repression begin in earnest. Every day we read announcements about which Serbian partisan villages had been burned down and who had been killed. At the end of 1941 my younger sister, Sida, and me (our older sister, Ina, remained in Serbia with her husband) participated in the uprising, and the two of us received permission from the anti-fascist organization to join the partisans. We made this request much earlier but were denied admission because our house was a shelter for messengers traveling from Sarajevo to Zagreb. Before leaving, we went to our mother and father and simply told them that we were joining the partisans. Before that we asked someone from our family who had escaped from Sarajevo to Mostar to send someone to take our parents with documents to Mostar. We said our good-byes and we left into the pitch-dark night. I remember there was a curfew until 7AM and my sister and I left at 6AM, the streets were empty except for the mounds of snow which squeaked under our feet. In the middle of the street a three man Ustache patrol passed by us. In order to not appear suspicious I hugged my sister so they would think that we were lovers. We reached an illegal apartment in Krek and waited there for 4 days. However, the messenger that should have come to pick us up never arrived. On the fourth day, a comrade came who was our connection in Tuzla, to tell us that we cannot go to the partisans but would not say why. We returned home and only later learned the reason: On Majevisa, a mountain above Tuzla where the partisan movement had a presence, Chetniks attacked the partisan headquarters. There were many dead, including the messenger who was supposed to come for us. They captured him and slaughtered him. We were in Tuzla a few more days. One day, as I was finishing lunch and my father was out, two Ustache came with knives on their bayonets. They took me and when I came to the prison there were already a lot of Jews there, including my father. This was the first round and they only took Jewish adult males. We were all sentenced to Jasenovac. In fact there was no trial; we only received the sentence stating that we had been condemned to Jasenovac. The 130 of us were taken to the camp. Of these 130 men I am the only one that survived that dreadful golgotha known as Jasenovac.