

Vladislav Rothbart



Vladislav in Novi Sad in the 1940s.

He became a member of the SKOJ [8](#) in September 1940, at the age of 15, though he has never got engaged in politics. About Marxism, about proletariat he knew nothing. He only knew that in the SKOJ organization he was not a Jew but a comrade. And it seemed to him that this motive prevailed at many others.

On 13th April 1941, when Hungarians entered Novi Sad [Hungarian Occupation of Yugoslavia] [9](#), a Jew was killed, some Lacika Cerni, a very wealthy man and a drawing-room communist. He was killed because Hungarians claimed that he had been a Chetnik [10](#) activist.

During the massacre [Novi Sad massacre] [11](#) they were very lucky since the military police didn't come to them, only a police patrol came the third day. They were not that notorious as the military police. Brother Paja told him that their mother had kept, since the first day of the massacre, a huge pot with hot water on the fire. When the police entered the house, she immediately asked them, 'Would you gentlemen, drink a hot tea'? The temperature outside was minus 32 degrees centigrade. The policemen happily accepted it, drank themselves fill with tea, stood up and left.

However the police was not bloodthirsty. The most bloodthirsty was the military police, then the soldiers who were drunk, but the police was mainly fair. It was a professional force. Maybe they were even traffic policemen.

In the Novi Sad massacre nobody, from Vlada's relatives, was killed even though he had only few relatives. After the massacre Vlada's family fled to Pest, more exactly to Ujpest where they rented an apartment. Paja there didn't continue the school but stayed at a locksmith where he studied locksmith trade.

About the Novi Sad massacre Vlada didn't have anything else to tell me since then he was in the Csillag prison [12](#) in Szeged at that time. He could only tell me that on that day when the massacre had ended, or a few days later, a jail teacher visited them. The teacher told the guard that they had been lucky for not being there because they would have been all killed.

Vlada got to the jail because in 1941 he had been a member of some regional SKOJ leadership. The secretary of the leadership was Franjo Kardos, a Jew. Another member of the leadership was Ilza Zeilinger, a Jew. The third member was some Lacika Kuzmanovic, also a Jew, then it was Vlada and there was some Nada Kuzmanovic.

In Novi Sad there was a planned action for smashing Pifat's store window. It also went down in history. Pifat was a Croat from Petrovaradin [a town in Srem, across the Danube, with considerable Croatian population]. In Novi Sad he had a tavern, that was full of anti-Soviet and mostly anti-Semitic elements. The SKOJ organization decided to break it. Vlada was also anticipated for that team however he got sick and could not be present. In that action among others took part: Pavle Katic, a Jew, Nikola Timar, a Jew, Ivan Haker, a Jew, in addition two more people who were not Jewish. Kardos, as a regional chief, circled the place in order to see what was happening and according to him this company got afraid. They, in fact, delayed the action, because they had realized that an officer was coming, Kardos didn't see that, he grabbed from the ground a half brick, hit the window. That officer ran after him. Kardos started to run and ran into a café bar. The officer follows him in, approaches a waiter and asks him who entered the last. The waiter points and Kardos together with a friend get arrested.