

סאנסקי מוסט

SANSKI MOST

DERVENTA דרוונטה

TRAVNIK טראוויניק

BIJELJINA ביילינה

BRČKO זאווידוביצי' ברוציקו

DOBOJ דובוי

ZAVIDOVIC

ואגרב

TUZLA טוזלה

ZAGRE

VLASENICA ולאסניצה

ZENICA זניצה

VISOKO ויסוקו

ŽEPČE ז'פצ'ה

SARAJEVO

VIŠEGRAD

בלגראד

וישגראד

BEOGRAD

WE MOSTAR מוסטאר

SURVIVED...4

YUGOSLAV JEWS ON THE HOLOCAUST

סקופייה

SKOPLJE

Marta FLATO LADANJ

SAVED FROM THE RAID
AS SIX-MONTHS OLD BABY



*M*arta Flato Ladanj was born on 11 July 1941 in Novi Sad, of father Bela Zemanek and mother Piroška, née Kasovic.

Both her parents were executed in the Novi Sad raid on 23 January 1942. Those who survived the raid were her brother Robi, cousin in Eva (their parent two brothers were married to two sisters), and cousins Olika Šorš and Marta.

After her parents' execution, Martu Flato was legally adopted by the family Ladanj, therefore she was given this family name as well.

Brother Robi and Olika perished in Auschwitz in 1944, along with grandmother Ida and grandfather Maks Kasovic*.

After return from Switzerland, where they ended with the so-called Kastner's transport, Marta lived from 1945 to 1948 in Belgrade, in the city district Senjak, where she finished the first grade of elementary school.

With the first Aliyah, on board of the ship „Kefalos“, in 1948 she arrived to Israel. In Israel she completed the elementary and grammar school, did her military service, and in Jerusalem graduated from the Pharmaceutical Faculty.

Marta has three children and five grandchildren.

*By mistake, the names of Maks and Ida Kasovic are inscribed on the Danube Quay in Novi Sad as victims of the Raid. They perished in Auschwitz (note of editor).

Regretfully, I cannot say anything much about my parents. Nor can I say much about how I stayed alive. I recently read the letter by my grandfather Maks Kasovic from Novi Sad (where he had a private bank), written to his daughter Klara Montani in Zagreb, saying that he had sent me to Budapest to be with his other daughter Sofia Žoka Ladanj, since my parents had already perished. Žoka also wrote to her sister Klara Montani, in February 1942: „Dearest family, Pirika and Margo are no longer with us ...“



PIRI and BELA ZEMANEK, mother and father of MARTA FLATO, were executed during the Novi Sad raid in January 1942

The persecution of Jews, Serbs and others during the Novi Sad raid was recalled in a moving manner by Dušan Mihalek in the Novi Sad daily „Dnevnik“ in January 2005, on the occasion of 63 years of this horrific mass massacre. „The double lines of death at the Strand included among others Marta Flato, which she discovered only in recent days from a video recording of testimony by Žuža Henig, who at the time of the Raid was ten years old. Marta, as a six months old baby was held in the hands of her mother, Piri Zemanek. Pirika was in the line in front of her father Maks Kasovic. Once she realized that there was no escape and that very soon it would be her turn in the execution, in her desperation she handed the baby to those standing behind her, and they to those behind them ... Thus, Piri ended up in the waves of the Danube, and then the black limousine arrived with en-

voys from Budapest, ordering the Raid to stop. Marta stayed with the family Kasovic, as did her five year old brother Robi...“

The brother was given to Ila Kasovic Lampel, mother's oldest sister, a pianist and music professor at the Music Academy in Novi Sad; however, the last letter written by the grandfather on 31 March 1944, which was a coded letter, makes it obvious that Ila returned Robika to grandfather. The cousin Eva Zemanek, Grandfather and grandmother gave the little cousin Eva Zemanek to the family of Marica and Janoš Tirkli in Budapest, while Olika stayed with them. We know that the grandfather ended up in Auschwitz, this was confirmed by cousin Truda Kasovic who saw his suitcase in Auschwitz. They arrived by the last transports which were sent directly to the gas chambers.

We lived in Budapest until 1944. My second father Ladanj was a Zionist and wanted to immigrate to Palestine, but we ended up in Bergen Belsen where, luckily, we stayed only for half a year. They told me later that in the camp I was sick with scarlet fever.

We stayed in Bergen Belsen from July to end of December 1944. My new parents, family Ladanj, already had two children, my sister Žuži, born in 1933, and brother Pavle, born in 1936 in Belgrade. We were all together in the Bergen Belsen camp. According to the agreement made between the Zionist official from Budapest dr Rudolf Kastner and Eichmann, we were transferred



*DENEŠ LADANJ, the second father of
MARTA FLATO, 1944*

from the camp to Switzerland, where we stayed until the end of the war. Namely, now we know that 1,800 Jews were to travel at that time to Palestine. Yet, the plan had changed. A group was made of 1,684 Jews, mostly Zionists, of which many were without any money, while the more affluent Jews, like my adoptive parents, paid for the salvation. The truth is that even while in Bergen Belsen we had different treatment than other inmates. We

were placed in barrack 10, we did not have to wear the yellow armbands and the families were not separated, and labor was not obligatory for parents.**

In Switzerland we were put up in the „Camp de refugees“, and later transferred to Basel, where my father worked, without salary, with the chemist Tadeusz Teodor Reichstein, who later in 1950 received the Nobel Prize for medicine. The Reichsteins came to Switzerland from Poland. Father was a chemist by profession and was later very proud of his work with him.

The Ladanj family had lived in Belgrade, in the district of Senjak, Pet-

ra Mrkonjića street number 4. On the day of bombing of Belgrade, 6 April 1941, a bomb directly hit their home. Father had a chemical factory „Oksid“ in the then Brijanova street (presently Drago-slava Jovanovića street), where he produced liquid glass, and he had a patent office and a bank account in Switzerland. That was the reason they allowed us to stay in Switzerland.



ROBI, the minor brother of MARTA, perished in Auschwitz in 1944 with some other family members

From Switzerland we all went back to Belgrade. At the end of 1945 my parents renovated the house. Right after our return, my parents filed an application for my formal adoption, in Novi Sad. Already in Bergen Belsen I was registered in the records under the family name Ladanj. I learned about this later, because our group, as I said earlier, had certain privileges.

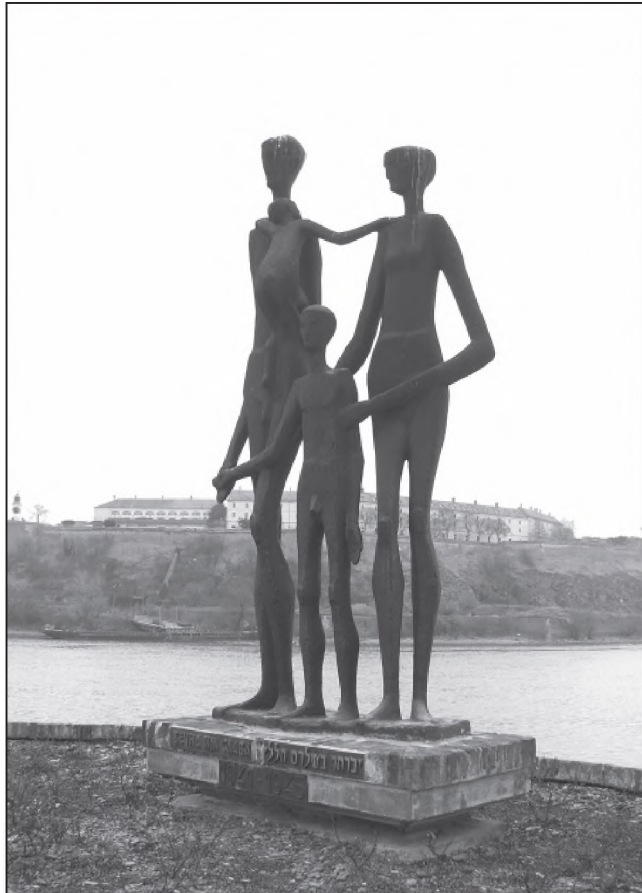
The prisoners themselves compiled the list and my father, who spoke foreign languages, in compiling the list put me in with his family name. Father was

*The work by historian Eberhard Kolb „Bergen Belsen 1943–1945“ which states: „The so-called Ungarnlager – the Hungarian camp – received on 8 July 1944 the first group of residents of the 1684 predominantly prominent Hungarian Jews of the legendary Berber-Kastner action, who started from Budapest by special train on 30 June 1944. While in Bergen Belsen, they enjoyed better treatment than other inmates. The first group of about 318 persons was given a permit already on 8 August by Himmler to leave for Switzerland, and the remaining about 1360 after long negotiations left Bergen Belsen for Switzerland on 6 December 1944.“

a very good man, he assisted inmates who were sick. Until I became of age, I lived convinced that the Ladanj couple were my true parents.

First, my father's factory was returned and we started life anew. But, after the factory was subsequently nationalized, things took a turn for the worse.

The monument by JOVAN SOLDATOVIĆ in Novi Sad, commemorating the atrocities during the Novi Sad Raid in January 1942 by the Hungarian Fascists executing more than 1300 innocent women, children and men, Jews and Serbs, throwing them under the ice of the frozen river Danube



That was when we heard that we could go to Israel, to our country. Father said that if we were to start anew for the third time we would do it in Israel.

After immigration to Israel, we initially lived in Lod, the place where the Tel Aviv Airport is presently situated. Father first opened up a drugstore, and subsequently a pharmacy. At the age of 52 he went to Jerusalem to study pharmacy, as he felt that being a chemical engineer was not sufficient for the business that he was running. He successfully graduated, had his pharmacy „Sanitas“, where mother also worked. Regretfully, father died young, in De-

ember 1963, and mother continued to work until 1978. She died in 1987, aged almost 85. Her name is written in the *Keren Kayemeth* Golden Book.



*MARTA FLATO'S
family at present*

My true father had a company in Novi Sad „Ergas“ and he provided the financial support for the medical studies of his brother dr Dezider Zemanek, married to Margo Kasovic. They were the parents of my sister Eva.