

סאנסקי מוסט

SANSKI MOST

DERVENTA דרוונטה

TRAVNIK טראוויניק

BIJELJINA ביילינה

BRČKO זאווידוביצי' ברוציקו

DOBOJ דובוי

ZAVIDOVIC

ואגרב

TUZLA טוזלה

ZAGREB

VLASENICA ולאסניצה

ZENICA זניצה

VISOKO ויסוקו

ŽEPČE ז'פצ'ה

SARAJEVO

VIŠEGRAD

בלגראד

וישגראד

BEOGRAD

WE MOSTAR מוסטאר

SURVIVED...4

YUGOSLAV JEWS ON THE HOLOCAUST

סקופייה

SKOPLJE

Kornel NEUMANN

REMEMBER?*

Kornel Neuman was born in 1918 in Osijek, of father Arpad and mother Serena, née Ajhner (Eichner). Father owned a business manufacturing cattle salt. He had two elder brothers – Egon and Fredi.

In Osijek he completed his elementary school and real grammar school and in Zagreb he graduated from the Technical Faculty – Civil Engineering Department.

In the Holocaust he lost his parents and many other members of his direct and wider family.

Kornel lives in Switzerland, with his wife.

To this very day, forty-six years after fleeing Osijek and going abroad, whenever I meet any of my “Esker” friends (people from Osijek), practically every sentence begins with „Remember?“

I would not even mention it if it was not for my wife, who is not a Yugoslav, who every time reminds me of it. Equally, she sometimes says that in those moments, the whole of Yugoslavia seems to her to be an extended village where houses are structured along the main street where everybody knows everybody else.

I suppose that there are not many people now in Osijek who remember me. I was the youngest son of the late „Salz-Neumann“ from what used to be the Županijska street number 12, born in 1918. I lived in Osijek until my high school matriculation.

*Text read at the meeting of the Coordinating Board of Women’s Sections and the celebration of 40 years of revival of the Jewish Community of Osijek, 23 – 25 October 1987 in Osijek.

Although it has been half a century since that horrendous time (1941–1945), in my thoughts I often go back to the place where I was born, where I went to the Jewish public school, in the then Kolodvorska street, and then to the grammar school in the Fortress (Tvrđa), and finally the Technical Faculty in Zagreb, from 1937 to 1941. That time has been preserved in my memory as pleasant and harmonious, although even back then many things were not actually such. Yet, that is human nature: the bad and the unpleasant are often suppressed into oblivion ...

Quite a few people smile with a sneer when they see in our apartment the photographs that I made some years ago of the Županijska street, the Fortress, the confluence of the Karašica river, the winter port, the district church. Apart from these, the walls are also decorated by a brick and a small iron door of my parents' home. I, however, am not ashamed of becoming sentimental when the seeds of *Mirabilis jalapa*, the flowers that my wife collected in our former home, come to a fragrant blossom.

I remember: director Zonenšajn (Sonnenschein) of the Jewish public school as he scolds us in his sonorous voice; also the teacher “Šternovica”, as she gave us sometimes poor marks, or Noci (Natan Schwartz), the religious teacher telling us about the creation of the world ...

I remember: the parties that our friend, girl named Mauzike Špicer (Mausike Spitzer), organized in their home in Aleksandrova street.

I remember: my father, somewhere in 1926, taking me one Sunday for a ride on a new electric street car from Zeleno Polje and back.

I remember: the arrival of the new young rabbi, dr Šalom Frajberger (Freiberger) to Osijek, to follow into the steps of dr Ungar.

I remember: how I hopelessly protested in 1931 against having the „Bar Mitzvah“, as I thought that it was unjust, since my two elder brother did not have to do it ...

I remember: how while in high school, apart from some bad marks, I sometimes also got the second rate in religious studies, and once (on 21 February 1934!) I was even formally reprimanded by my class teacher, among other things, for „not observing religious duties, not attending regularly religious classes and the temple ...“

I remember: that the worst punishment for me was when my parents would not allow me to go to the daily promenade in Kapucinska street in the evening, from 6 to 7:30 PM.

I remember: my father, at that same time, going to the inn „Rojal“ to watch others play bridge.

I remember: the many Jewish shops and businesses in the main streets of the town: Makso Bihler (Büchler), Šalgo (Szalgo), Rausnic (Rausnitz),

Kraus & Nojman (Kraus & Neumann), Aron Heler (Heller), Steel Works Goldštajn (Goldstein), Brothers Han (Hahn), tailor Mišo Vajs (Weiss), Maler (Mahler), Pharmacy Fuks (Fucks), Binstok (Bienenstock – bicycles), Gereg (Görög – Grand-Hotel), Bela Fišer (Fischer), Adler & Blum, Šajber (Scheiber – grocery store), Fuks (Fucks, grocery store), photographer Sege (Szege), stationery and printing shop Sekler (Szekler), Šternberg (Sternberg), Krešić, Špicer (Spitzer), Auferber (brush factory), Fogel (Vogel – metal worker) and others.



*The house
where Kornel
Neuman was
born in Osijek*

I remember: the numerous doctors and attorneys – Vajsman (Weismann), Herlinger, Kraus, Margulis (Margulies), Oton Fišer (Fischer), Alfred Fišer (Fischer), Lorant ...

I remember: that in the fifth grade of grammar school I had to repeat the year as, apart from other poor marks, I had an unsatisfactory mark in biology, because I could not distinguish between the dandelion and the sun-flower ...

I remember: that at age sixteen I had to go for half a year to attend school in Vukovar because during the summer holidays I went to dance at the Grand, which was strictly forbidden ...

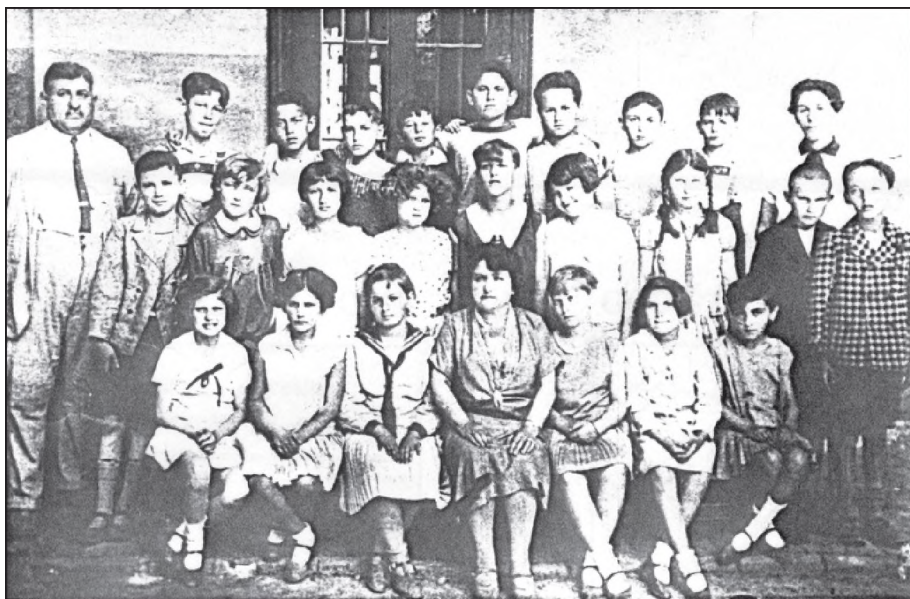
I remember: that for five years I attended the dance school with the teacher that we called Trišlerica ...

I remember: that already at the age of twelve I started courting Mira, the younger sister of my brother Egon's friend ...

I remember: the many „great“ loves that followed, not necessarily just one at a time (!) – Ivanka, Rozina, Blanka, Ada, Maca ...

- I remember: how enthusiastic I was about my membership both in the sports society Sokol and in the scouts (I was a group leader) and the rowing club „Neptun“...
- I remember: our picnics that we went to: Milan Kolar, Tito Vajs (Weiss) and I, on foot or by bicycles, to Kiš-Darda, Valpovo, Čepin, Našice, the confluence of the river Karašica, the town park and to other places, usually taking with us a tent and supplies.
- I remember: how in summer we would go and spend time at the Regiment swimming facility, and in winter we would skate at the “tennis-platz” in Regeš ... (Švaner bathing facility was not to our liking!).
- I remember: how we rowed on the river Drava, in kayaks while still younger and in an assembly boat that we built on our own and that my brother Egon and I were terribly proud of ...
- I remember: the many tea-parties in the Officers' Club, at the Commercial Academy and the Sokol Hall.
- I remember: my father, after one such tea-party, waiting for me in front of our house with a policeman next to him and a carpet beater in his hand, because I came home half an hour later than usual (!), the reason being that I, enamored, walked home a girl named Cana ...
- I remember: my parents' friends: the family of Bela Fišer (Fischer), trader of metal screw goods, and the family of Karlo Kolar, wholetrader of miscellaneous goods and toys, later a co-owner of knitting factory „Mara“.
- I remember: my uncle Aron Heler (Heller) who had a vinegar factory in the Desatičina street, while his family lived in Kolodvorska street (later renamed to Braće Radić).
- I remember: my closest friends – Milan Kolar, Tito Vajs (Weiss), Đuro Rajnić (Reinitz), Vlado Ginzberg, Branko Krešić, brothers Kockar, Miro Matijević, Ivica Franjić, Zdenko Bihler (Büchler) and others.
- I remember: that my parents let me go and study civil engineering in Zagreb although in high school I was always a poor student.
- I remember: that initially father gave me 750 dinars per months but later, when he had less, I started earning money by making drawings and designs for other students.
- I remember: that as a student in Zagreb I ate at the Jewish mess, in Kraljice Marije street.
- I remember: how self-conscious I was when I went “to study” and “prepare for exams” at the coffee shop „Minjon“.
- I remember: that everywhere I lived there were always bed bugs!

I remember: yes, I remember a lot of things, but then, at the beginning of April 1941 the bombing of Belgrade began and we, students from Osijek, went back to our homes.



*Teachers and pupils of the Jewish School, 3rd and 4th grade, 1928:
Upper row: Principal Sonnenschein, Pišta Kraus, Ripp, Turi Ferber, Lippert,
Fischer, Kornel Neumann, Hugo Zuckerberg, Paul Moret, Tirca Rotbart, teacher.
Middle row: Milan Kolar, Boriška Szege, Hela Mismar, Mausika Spitzer, Zlata
Stein, Mira Mahler, ?, Boskovitz, Feri Kohn.
Front row: Suzi Šalgo, Edita Szilard, Luli Kramer, Šternovica, teacher, Lederer,
Lang, Krakauer.*

I remember: the days when we with suspense anticipated the attack of Germany against Yugoslavia, listening to the news and discussing among friends all the possible options, what was going to happen and what is in store for us, Jews ...

I remember: that my brother Fredi (Fredy), our niece Gerda Švarc (Schwartz) and I wanted on 10 April 1941 to go as volunteers to the army barracks at Gaj Square but, apart from the guards, there was no longer anyone there ...

I remember: that many of those who until then were my friends from the scouts and the Sokol athletic and rowing club „Neptun“ were now suddenly walking the streets armed and wearing uniforms of Ustaša or the German Kulturbund...

- I remember: that upon seeing this, Fredi and I decided to flee „to the south“, hoping that we would succeed somewhere to join the Yugoslav Army, if not in the territory of Yugoslavia, then possibly in Greece, Palestine or Egypt. We did not get further than Sarajevo, where the German troops overtook us and some days later we returned to Osijek.
- I remember: that we, meaning Tito Vajs, Đuri Rajnic, Bandi Kan (Kahn), Tibor Rausnic (Rausnitz) and I, after that, started breeding rabbits in order to get some work and earn some money.
- I remember: how about thirty of us young boys went at that time every day to the barracks to do forced labor for the German command, arranging the German war prey which was then to be sent to the Eastern front.
- I remember: that Milan Kolar and some other Jews were detained as hostages by the Ustaša, to be executed in case that there is an assassination somewhere that would call for it.
- I remember: that at the beginning of August the Ustaša on three occasions arrested a greater number of Jews – Zdenko Bihler (Büchler), Kornel Lorant, Pali Cimerman (Zimmermann), Buki Finci, Ernest Dirnbah (Dirnbach), Oto Rotman (Otto Rottman) – and deported them to the camp in Gospić, and that some of them did not get out of there.

Broj bloka: 21 Broj stranice:

G. Kornel Neumann **Potvrda**, na poziv Zapovjedništva
 za vojničku prednabrazbu i radnu službu omladine, prijavio se je.

Škola: / Razred: / Fakultet: tehn. Odsjek: građev

U Osijeku, dne 27. srpnja 1941.

Upisao: [Signature]

ISPOSTAVA
 Zapovjedništvo za vojničku prednabrazbu
 i radnu službu omladine
 C. S. JER

Confirmation that Kornel Neuman responded to the invitation for military preparation and labor service by youth

- I remember: that a clerk of the Jewish unit of the Osijek Ustaša police came to our house one day in August and warned us that the three of us

were now on the list of hostages, so the following day he got passes for us (without passes at that time one could not travel anywhere) for holidays in Makarska. That clerk was Krunoslav Đurić. I knew him from the scouts' organization. Later I heard that he was executed in 1945.

I remember: that we played bridge in order to somehow shorten the time to fleeing.

I remember: our parents telling us that we, the younger ones, have to flee, and hide somewhere whereas nothing is going to happen to them, the elderly ones ...

Predstojništvo redarstva
u Osijeku

Propustnica 410

Vrijedi _____ dana

za _____ rođen _____ u _____

zavičajan u _____ kojom se dopušta putovanje iz
Osijeka u _____ radi _____

s pravom povratka – bez prava povratka. Putuje u civilu – u uni-
formi _____

Ova propustnica vrijedi za _____ putovanje uz pre-
dočenje lične legitimacije providena sa fotografijom imenovan _____

PREDSTOJNIŠTVO GRADSKOG REDARSTVA.

Osijek, dne _____ 1941.

Predstojnik gradskog redarstva:

The pass allowing Neuman to travel from Osijek for vacations

I remember: my uncle Heler (Heller), giving each one of us individually 1,000 dinars for the road, since father no longer had any money.

I remember: the three of us before eve on 12 August 1941 driving in a carriage to the railway station and taking the night train to Zagreb. There were about ten of us in the train – including Tito Vajs, Milan Kolar, Djuri Rajnic, Bela and Vili Han (Willy Hahn), Lulu Rozenberg (Rosenberg) with wife, Leo Mismar with wife, and Hela Mismar.

I remember: some boys from Osijek at the Zagreb railway station telling us that it is not possible to go via Plaso, which was the demarcation line, towards Sušak, which was occupied by the Italian troops. Namely, the Italians had established strict control of pas-

sage which was the reason that most of them decided to travel to Makarska via Sarajevo and Split. Nevertheless, we decided to try to get through to Sušak via Plaso. At that time there was no knowing which was a better decision, but subsequently it turned out that the three of us were incredibly lucky as we managed to get away from the Ustaša!

I remember: how, by mere coincidence, we fooled the carabinieri in Pleso, by jumping over the fence by the railway station unnoticed, after which partly on foot and partly by bus we arrived to Sušak.

I remember: us hiding for months on Trsat above Sušak, sustaining ourselves on help that we asked from Osijek Jews who, like us, managed to save themselves by coming to Sušak or Rijeka.

I remember: one day being arrested by the Italians in the street, being detained in a cell of the Rijeka prison where there were also two persons from Osijek*: Kornel Bauer and Fredi Štajner. Two days after the arrest we were transferred to Bakarac, the boundary line of the occupied territory and the Independent State of Croatia, where we were taken over by an old member of the home-guard, who told us: „Gentlemen, consider that I had never seen you. Good-bye!“ Upon hearing this we went back in the evening to Sušak, after we bought some meat in Kraljevica, since there was no meat in Sušak.

I remember: that at the beginning of December 1941 we illegally crossed from Sušak to Rijeka and continued by train to Trieste, and two days later we moved on by train to Milan and a week later to Como, where for several days we were hiding in a villa of a senior Fascist officer. Without his knowledge, of course.

I remember: that we first tried to get into Switzerland, I think, on 20 December, but after 25 hours of marching and two days spent in prison the Swiss once again returned us to the border: we were to go back to Italy, where we came from! Three years ago at that place I came across a sign reading: *Benvenuti nel Valle di Muggio*. That sign was not there in 1941!

I remember: we returned to Switzerland, this time via Monte Generosa after thirty-two hours of walking. This time the Swiss kept us in prison for two months – however, the key was that we saved our lives.

I remember: that subsequently I was interned with my brothers in a hotel, and later in different camps, until the autumn of 1943, when we received support and I continued my studies at Lausanne.

*Eseker = person from Osijek

I remember: spending two months in remand prison in 1944, because I was advocating Tito's Partisans among the Yugoslav civilian and military refugees ...

Fol. 3103-98. 2.
194.....
Obavješćujete se ovim da je danas kod Vas obavljena pljenidba vrhu duga na javnim daćama od Din 6141.-
para..... Ako u roku od 8 dana tu svotu ne platite prodat će se stvari javnom dražbom.

Gradski porezni ured

U Osijeku, dne 1. IX 1941. Orhovoditelj:

Ime dužnika:
Arpad Šajman.

Confirmation of seizure of assets for debt purposes, with possibility of sale thereof in case of failure to enforce the order of the tax authorities

I remember: how many dear and good people I met during this long calvary of mine, people that I will be thankful to for the rest of my life, because at that time they made me know that life is worth living ...

I remember: that in many critical situations I was always repeatedly lucky, and it is luck that I should be thankful to for having survived.

I remember: that my dear parents did not survive, because they were taken by the Ustaša in the autumn of 1942 to the camp on the Tenja Road, after which I never heard anything about them (except for an information by the Red Cross of Slesia, from a person called Jan Michalik, that the „Nojmans are no longer staying with him“).

I remember: all the other relatives and friends who, just like my parents, perished in the camps in Poland, in Jasenovac or Stara Gradiška, or who had, like my niece Gerda Švarc (Schwartz), lost their lives while with the Partisans in autumn of 1941.

I remember: the disappointment after the war every time that I came to Osijek finding not a single relative or friend there. My wife kept saying: „When in the streets, look at the people of your own age, not at those who are in their twenties!“ only once I met Janči Kraus, Laci Šajber (Scheibera), the gardener Goldštajn (Goldstein), the photographer Sege (Szege), Lilika Gereg (Gereg), Maks Rogar.

I remember: the joy I felt every time when, once in two or three years, since 1967 until the present time, I would meet in Israel people who used to live in Osijek: Mira and Olga Auferber (née Heler), Milan and Hanzika Kolar Pšerhof (Pscherhof), Branko and Slavka Krešić, Eško and Agika Labunjec (née Sternberg), Turik and Marika Fer-

ber (née Štajnberg), Bandi and Margita Han, Kornel and Mira Lorant (née Rajs), Zlatko and Zlata Vamošer, Šandor and Rožika Lang, Miša and Zlata Tabori (née Bihler), Luj and Mina Montag, Lacika and Lea Sternberg (née Frojndlih) and many others.

I remember: other people from Osijek, living in Osijek and outside of Israel, whom I meet or used to meet from time to time, such as the dear Ljerka Komplita (née Adler), Emil Kiš, the late Edita Vajzner (née Artmann) and others.

I remember: thankfully how we have always been heartily welcomed every time we went to Israel by the families Kolar, Auferber, Krešić, Labanjecov, Ferber, Lang, Lorant, and others.

I remember: the excitement and the joyous shouting by our people from Osijek living in Israel when I, many years ago, showed them the two films about Osijek: „Look at that, that is Desatičina street, and Kapucinska street, that is Henglovac, and the Fortress, the boys' and the girls' grammar school, the Officers' Club, Kišdarda, Čingilingičarda, Golibar, Ružina street, the Francensgase, di Anagase...“

I remember: how once Rožika Lang, „the honorary consul of Osijek to Jerusalem“ full of pride, treated us to beans soup, made with beans that she got from the gardener Goldštajn from Retfala ...

I remember, again and again, with gratitude, my wife and my family, who accepted me and made me a part of their circle, and all of our Swiss and Yugoslav friends who showed me that my homeland is now here.

Even today, forty years after the disaster that we were all caught in, I remember with sadness all those who have in the meantime left us forever. Here I will mention only a few from my own generation: my brother Egon, Branko Krešić, Agika Labunjec (née Šternberg), Kornel Lorant, Luj Montag, Lacika Šternberg, Edita Vizner (née Artman).

Sic transit gloria mundi!