

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

Isak-Iso FINCI

I REMEMBER NOT MY PARENTS,
I KNOW NOT MY SAVIORS

Isak Finci was born in Sarajevo on 27 June 1937, of father Cadić-Cezar and mother Tamara-Riki Finci, née Ergas. He was the only child in the family.

During the war he lost his father, mother and many other family members and relatives.

He has been living in Israel since 1951, where he immigrated as an orphan of the Children's Home of the Jewish Community of Belgrade.

He is married and has two sons and a daughter.

I was four years old when the war started. Everything that I know of that period I have heard from those older than me.

I remember that I used to walk with my mother in Đakovo between the fence and I remember that there was a lot of snow. They told me that I slept a lot. I think that I was sick. When I woke up, my mother was not there, and I was in a hospital near Osijek. They told me that my aunt's daughter took me with her when she escaped the Đakovo camp, her name was Cilika Altarac. It was her friend Mihail Atijas who was doing forced labor in Đakovo who persuaded her to flee. They fled together with me. Mihail put me under his army coat and cooled me down with snow as I had a high fever.

According to that story, Mihail was the one who planned this escape. He waited for the moment when it would be snowing so that the new snow would hide our trails once we get out of the Đakovo camp. Near Osijek they put me into a hospital; I do not know which one. Cilika arranged with a nun

at the hospital to hide the data about where I was coming from and who I was. She told me this when we met again later.

I do not remember when I got well again. I remember very few events and images.

All of a sudden I was on a truck, in a refugees place. There were a number of trucks into which we children were loaded and these trucks made up the children's home and that was where they took care of us. Namely, the Partisans had liberated this territory short after I was left at the hospital. So, I was in a children's home housed in trucks. We were all the time given orders from couriers about when to continue moving. I remember that there were many of us refugees.



Children of the Children's Home „Lag baomer“ in Belgrade in 1946, including Isak Finci before immigration to Israel

Cilika told me that many children had already died of typhoid fever in Đakovo before our escape. That was when my mother told her: „Take him! So, he would either die on the road or you will find for him a hospital or a doctor.“ I never again saw my mother; she perished in the Đakovo camp. When I went to visit Đakovo, I did not find her grave.

In Đakovo there was as an inmate my mother's sister Elza, née Ergas, married Altarac; Cilika's mother. She was buried in Đakovo. According to the lists contained in a book, it seems that I also died in the same camp, although it is not so.

We were in fact in a group of refugees with the Partisans. I remember that one of the drivers fled with a truck and we were all moved into another truck, and that it became very crowded in there, there was no space. That was what the nurses who took care of us told us, my memories are more a remnant of their stories.

16. IX. 8.

PRIJAVNIK OTKAZU I ~~IZBIŠT~~

Beograd.

U Beđigi dana 04. Oktobra primljeni su dva otkaziva
 nite novomani u Beđigi, rođeni cirkošak na izdržavanju i izdržavanju
 i to :

- 1/ Finci Isak sin Čedaka i majke Lenke rođjenog engar,
 rođjen 27. VI. 1937. u Beđigi ;
- 2/ Štefan Juda, sin Avraha i majke Anuše rođjenog iz Beđige
 rođjen 11. VII. 1934 u Beđigi ;
- 3/ Vojzda - Boris - Stijak sin Jakova i majke
 Biserke rođjenog iz Beđige, rođjen 23. IX.
 1938 u Beđigi ;
- 4/ Mikijs Štingar sin Hermana i majke Lucije rođjenog
 iz Beđige, rođjen 24. IX. 1936 u Beđigi ;
- 5/ Albešani Albert sin Berjisa i majke Jule rođjenog
 iz Beđige, rođjen 26. IX. 1936 u Beđigi ;
- 6/ Albert Anstije sin Jakova i majke Jevke rođjenog
 iz Beđige, rođjen 20. XI. 1935 u Beđigi ;

Svi se prijave otkazu na izdržavanje i izdržavanje
 li se priloženim dokumentima prijavili.

Fotografirano - izložba u Beđigi

[Signature]

Two documents showing that Isak Finci was a protégé of the Children's Home of the Jewish Community of Belgrade (up) and that his name was included on the list of children who made Aliyah in 1951 to Israel

Broj	Ime	Ime otca	Ime majke	Godina rođenja	Mesto rođenja	Opis
100	48	Finci Isak	Čedak	1937	Beograd	Prevedeno: Prijavio se na izdržavanje u Beđigi
101	49	Finci Štefan	Juda	1934	Beograd	Prijavio se na izdržavanje u Beđigi
102	50	Vojzda Boris	Stijak	1938	Beograd	Prijavio se na izdržavanje u Beđigi
103	51	Štingar Mikijs	Herman	1936	Beograd	Prijavio se na izdržavanje u Beđigi
104	52	Albešani Albert	Berjisa	1936	Beograd	Prijavio se na izdržavanje u Beđigi
105	53	Albert Anstije	Jakov	1935	Beograd	Prijavio se na izdržavanje u Beđigi
106	54	Finci Isak	Čedak	1937	Beograd	Prijavio se na izdržavanje u Beđigi

I do not know how long it lasted, but I do remember that I started moving from one war orphans' home to another to finally arrive to a home in Banja Luka. Later we moved to the region of Lika. We were to get to the airport and be transferred to Italy. But, that failed. I was transferred to Venice. There were many Yugoslav refugees there. I suppose that Venice was un-

der occupation and we were put into a convent. We were cared for by nuns. One of them became very attached to me, her name was Sebastiana. She told me: „You are not a religion, you are a people.“ In the convent there was plenty of food and clothes. After all the fleeing, that was heaven. She told me that she had been educated in Jerusalem and that there our brothers were waging a war and getting our country ready for us. She „inflicted“ me with the Zionist ideas, although at the time I was only five years old. When I was just six, I came up with a conclusion that I must be a refugee because I was a Jew. It was normal that I should move around children's homes in which the treatment was rough, because in them there were children of different religions, who often remained orphans after bombing. But, getting to know nun Sebastijana, who gave me love, painted everything differently. There, in the Venice home, they started teaching us the Hebrew alef-bet.

When the war was over, Yugoslavia requested that the orphan children be returned home. That was how I got to the children's home in Banja Luka, and there were children there of all nationalities and minorities. That was when I made contacts with relatives from Sarajevo. It was my uncle Josip Ergas, one of my mother's sisters Dora Ergas Matko, and the grandmother who survived – Rahel Ergas. She was also in refugee with Cilika, and they both survived. Cilika had lived in Israel until her death in 1999.

My family took me from the home and took me to Sarajevo, where I lived in my parent's home, in Hadži-Durakova street 8. My family in 1948 learned about the Children's Home in Belgrade. I moved there and from 1948 to 1951 I lived in the home in Visokog Stevana street 2. My family was in a financially very dire situation and that was why they put me up in the Home. Anka Štajn, the manager, planned to take me to Israel. She had found a family which cared for me since my arrival there. It was people from Sarajevo, dr Mojše Alkalaj, his wife Reni and their son David, two years older than me.

In Israel I was right away received by them through the organization Aliat hanoar in the Hama Apil kibbutz, near Hedera. Of all the children from Yugoslavia it was only two children who got there, I and a girl named Zdenka. Half a day I worked and half a day I learned, although I was very young. That was the system of education in a kibbutz.

I understood that I had come to a country surrounded by enemies. Under an accelerated program I graduated from an agricultural school consisting of a ten year program. After graduation I moved to another kibbutz, where I became a full member, the kibbutz Ein Dor, meaning the Source of Generations.

In 1956 I joined the Army, the parachuting units. After the Six Days War I left the kibbutz and since then I have been living in Kiriat Ata. I worked for

27 years for the telephone company „Bezek“. In 1973 I married Lili Halali, a Jew born in Iraq. We have two sons and a daughter.

Many people from my family perished in the war. My father was taken to forced labor right away in 1941. He was accused along with others of being a communist and was executed in Kovačići, near Sarajevo. I do not remember my father, I do not even have a photograph of him, and even if I were to find one I would not recognize it. Grandmother used to tell me that he was sentenced in the Sarajevo Council building. I remember that my mother took me there in her arms and said: „Say hello to daddy.“ I was surprised, I did not like the image of the man with a beard behind the bars. I wanted to leave the place, and that was the last that we saw each other.