

Jewish women in Holocaust

Melita Švob, Ana Hermanović,
Mateja Gospodinović
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Introduction

Why?

- Jewish women and children are consciously and explicitly sentenced to death in Holocaust
- More than 50 % of Nazi victims – women
- Nazi racial policy treated Jewish women as the carriers of the next generation of Jews
- Jewish children – same faith

Anti – Jewish legislation

■ Anti – Jewish legislation – Nueremberg Laws, 1935

In Croatia, in April 1941:

- *The Legal provision on the protection of Aryan blood and Honors of the Croatian People*
- *Legal provision according which all Jews had to move out of certain parts of the cities*
- *Legal provision of changing Jewish surnames*
- *Legal provision according which all Jews had to wear Jewish sign*
- *Legal provision on Mandatory registration of Jews BND Jewish Business Enterprices*
- *Legal provision according which were collectively responsible for “disturbing the population” and therefore measures will be taken against them and they will be sent to prisons and camps ...*
- *Legal provision on conducting Undesirable and dangerous persons to forced Interment in transit and Labor camps*
- **Jews were first taken to transit (assembling) camps and after some time send to concentration camps**
- **Ustashes organized network of concentration camps**
- **Send to Auschwitz (agreement with German)**
- **In Italian Zone I and II - Jewish refugees – in camps**

History – Jewish women's organizations in Croatia

the middle of 19th century

1887. – The Israeli Ladies society of Jelena
Prister – Zagreb

Activities:

support of poor families
help to poor brides
care for the elderly and sick
scholarships for girls
care for the school children
and families with babies
help to refugees

1912. Israeli Youth Holiday Centre in Crikvenica
(The Tilda Deutsch Maceljska foundation)
around 2,300 children participated

1941. During the Holocaust

help prisoners, send packages,
save children, NOB

1951. After Holocaust – Jewish women
organizations (sections) in Jewish communities

After World War I

Zionist women's societies

Zionist girl's societies

Zionist women organizations (WIZO – 1927.

In 1940. – 67 WIZO organizations with 5,000
members

Activities

education and training for Aliya
(Halucin- Hashomer hacair)
Support to Kibbutzim

Collecting money and materials for Palestina
(Keren Kayemet le Israel)

Help for escape of refugees to Palestine

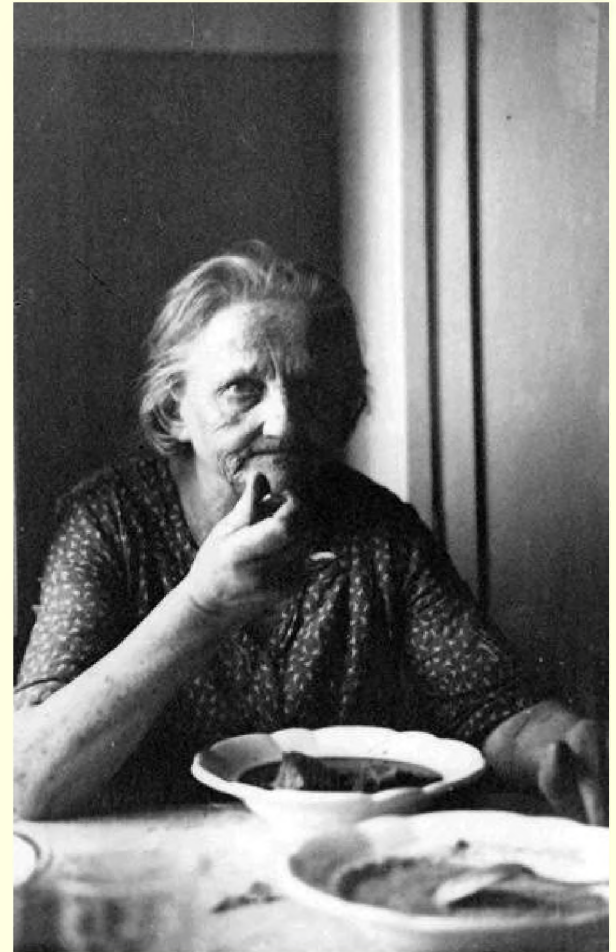
250 refugee children (Alijah hanoar) from
Berlin equipped and sent to Palestine

Jewish girls' organization before Holocaust



Jewish women before...

Hunger



From old newspapers



Preporuča se cijenjenim damama
Friseur salon Slavko Schlafhauser
ZAGREB, Praška ulica 10

Marriage



Just married – after 8 days husband was sent to camp



Jewish women in Holocaust in Croatia

- No ghettos in Croatia,
- Provisory collecting place
- Assembling temporary camps
- In many temporary camps suffering was almost the same as in concentration camps:
hard labor, starvation, sickness
- Special camps for women and children
(Đakovo, Loborgrad, Stara Gradiška)
- Main concentration camp Jasenovac
- Sent to Auschwitz
- Italian camps for refugees

Camp Đakovo

- In old mill
- Women and children mostly from Sarajevo and Bosnia
- About 1830 women and children
- In 1942 1200 women from camp Stara Gradiška- typhus and dysentery epidemic
- Cemetery- over 560 victims mainly children
- Survivors transferred to Jasenovac and killed



Camps for women

■ Đakovo camp for women and children

- 1941. - Transports from Sarajevo with 1500 women and children and again with 800 women and children
- 1942. – Transport from camp Stara Gradiška with 1200 women and children suffering from severe typhus
- Those who survived were sent to other camps – Jasenovac and Auschwitz and were killed
- Action for saving children from Đakovo camp – 57 were saved and a few pregnant women were saved in monastery

Today: Cemetery with 569 victims of sickness and
terror, mostly children –
Every year commemoration

Camp for women – Loborgrad

- The order was given to the Jewish community in Zagreb to adapt former castle into camp for about 2.000 women and children
- Many of them died due to hard labor, sickness and starvation
- Survivors was send to Auschwitz where the majority was killed
- In Gornja Reka camp for old women- returned to Loborgrad

Camp Tenje for Jews in Osijek and Slavonia

- Jewish community Osijek built camp for Jews in Tenja-near Osijek
- about 3.000 Jews
- Promise was given that they will be saved
- On 15.October children were sent to Auschwitz and killed upon arrival
- Adults were sent to camps Jablanac and Jasenovac and killed

Women in the ghettos

Jews were forced to move into ghettos prior their sending to concentration camps

- **Women are not official part of Ghetto "leaders"**
- **Important members of the ghetto community**
- **Changing "role" in family**
- **Important role in the struggle for survival**
- **Teaching, cultural activities, working in kitchens, hospital..**
- **Obtain food for their families**
- **Caring and hiding children**
- **Helping children to escape**
- **Women completing outdoor chores (men remain hidden indoors- risk of being deported to forced labor camps)**

Specific problems:

- **Birth control**
- **Pregnancy**
- **Abortion**
- **Birth**
- **Nursing the babies**
- **Hard physical labor**
- **Hiding men and children**
- **Proper hygiene**
- **Food**
- **Humiliation**
- **Potential victims of Nazi sadism**
- **Starvation**
- **Diseases**
- **Girls and women who managed to escape - better chance for survival (hiding) than men (no circumcision)**

Campo di concentramento per internati civili di guerra Arbe

- Jews from Italian Zone II (camps in Dubrovnik, Kraljevica, islands Brač,Hvar,Lopud..were collected in Camp on island Rab in Zone I
- with about 3.600 prisoners
- (47% women and 15% children under 15 years)

Fotografije Elvire Kohn



Elvira Kohn



Elvira Kohn na primanju kod Tita



Konzentracijski logor "Kampor" na Rabu snimljen od Elvire Kohn

“Personal card” from Italian camp

Cognome e nome:
Vajs Gracia

Paternità: *di David*

Maternità: *di Sara*

Anno di nascita: *20.4.1921*

Luogo di nascita: *Sarajevo*

Firma del titolare:
Gracia Vajs

Il Com.te del Campo:
IL COMANDANTE DEL CAMPO
Muss. Piazza di Capograsso
[Signature]



Women in Kraljevica Italian camp



Children hiding under false name

16 COGNOME: *Berger*
NOME: *Anita*
PATERNITÀ: *Giuseppe*
MATERNITÀ: *Heiser Maria*
Luogo e anno di nascita: *Brod 24-6-1937*
No. lasciapas. *171* data arrivo *20-7-42*

PRESIDIO MILITARE DI CIRQUENIZZA
PERMESSO DI SOGGIORNO
No. *222* 1942
scadente il *5 NOV* 1942
Cirquenizza li *4 OTT* 1942
Anno XX
IL GENERALE DI BRIGATA
Comandante del Presidio
(Italo Amato)
Italo Amato

COMANDO PRESIDIO BILITARE
CIRQUENIZZA



Jewish refugee children- sent to Palestine from Split

- **Small Jewish community**
In Split (300) has been under Italian Fascist- ruin synagogue and Terrorized Jews
- **Community take care (together With Dellasem) for 3.000 refugees**
From European countries and Croatia , Bosnia
- **Help refugees situated on island Korčula**
- **Organized health service, school, collect food and clothing etc**
- **Evacuated Jewish orphans to Italy (Nonantola)**



Children camp Sisak



Women in the Concentration Camps

- **Women and men shared many ghastly events, but each gender has their own experiences**
- **In special women's camp like Ravensbrueck (about 100.000 women from over 20 countries) gas chambers were used (made to look like showers)**
- **In other concentration camps women and men were separated**
- **Upon arrival to concentration camp (Auschwitz) mothers with young children were sent to the left – to the gas chambers**
- **Older women (in their thirties and more) and pregnant women (nude selections) were also sent to the left- to the gas chambers**
- **Some pregnant women in order to pass selection performed abortion**
- **Separation from children**
- **The women who survived the initial selections were mainly young women without children or girls . They are tortured and were victims of extreme violence**

Women who passed the initial selection – mostly young women without children

Problems:

- Constant hunger
- Hard work
- Harassment
- Humiliation – shaving all body hair with rusty razor blades
- Rape
- Beating
- Gas chambers
- Prostitution in order to survive another day
- Menstrual cycle stopped
- Hygiene
- Sterilization with toxic chemicals in food or x-rays
- Brutal medical experiments
- Camp brothels for German troops

Card from camp



Commemoration in Jasenovac concentration camp



Faith, Friendship, Art and Education in Holocaust

- Mutual support in camps – “camp sister” relationships
- Keeping the faith: improvising prayers, lighting “candles”, fasting, keeping Passover despite ceaseless hunger
- Organized clandestine education for children
- Organized cultural activities
- Work in hospital and kitchen (ghettos)
- Care giving

Resistance in Croatia

Jews in anti-fascist movement

NOB

- Yugoslav Jews participated as fighters in great number (2897)
- 720 fell
- 26 received “Spomenica 1941.”
- 4 national heroes

NOP

- 1569 Yugoslav Jews
- 599 perished
- Women and children
- On “Free territory”
- Partisan’s hospital
- School
- Evacuation older and children
- Cultural Board in Topusko

Women as Partisans and Members of the Resistance

Vital role - significant positions

- Couriers
- Underground movements
- Organizing escape from ghettos and camps (especially for children)
- Organized rescue for Jews
- Organizers of uprising
- Resistance fighters in combat and supporting units
- Nurses and doctors in clandestine hospital

Jewish partisan battalion

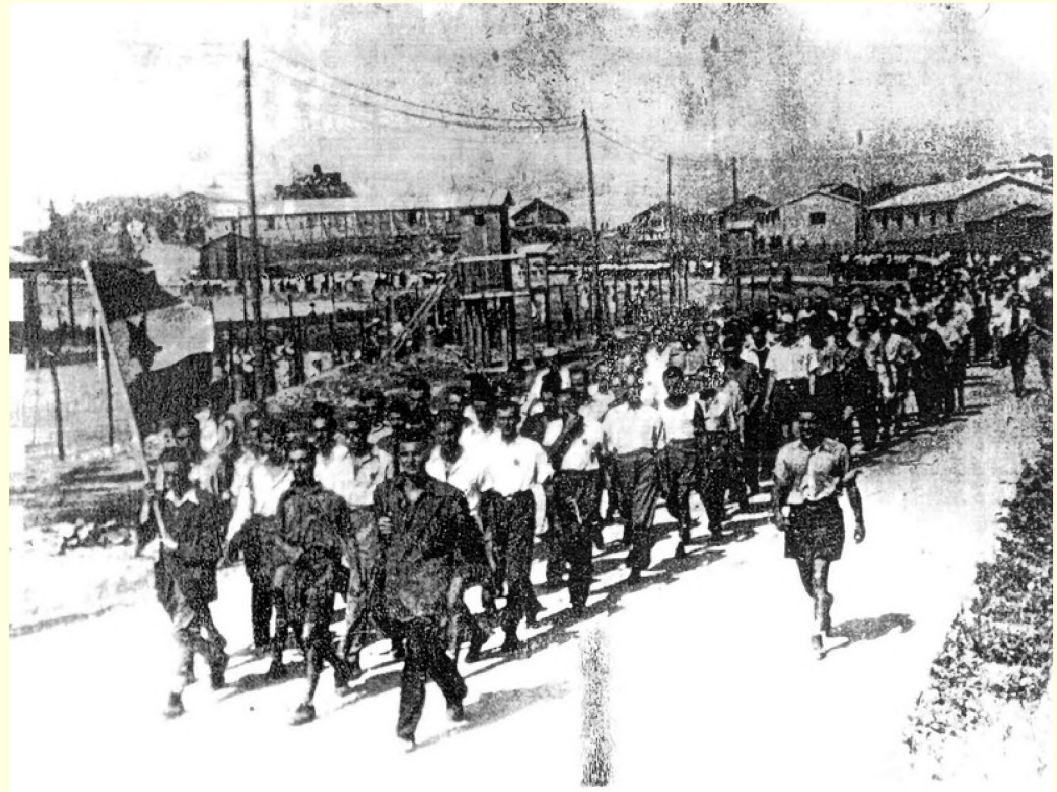
- After capitulation of Italy in September 1943, prisoner in camp Rab disarmed Italian soldiers

- formed Jewish battalion with 244 partisan' fighter

- and one medical unit with 4 doctors, 23 nurse, 3 pharmacist, students etc

- They joined regular partisan army.

- Old persons, women, children has been evacuated to the "free territory" and about 90% survived



Jewish women as partisans



Dr. Zora Goldschmidt, dr. Stjepan Steiner and dr. Frida Gutman

Dr. Roza Papo- partisan general



Jewish doctors in Bosnia

- Jewish doctors was send to Bosnia in action “Endemic syphilis”
- In action has been included 76 medical doctors (12 women) from Zagreb and several doctors from Bosnia
- Their families stay “protected” in Zagreb, but this was only promise
- Doctors join Partizan’s unit (64) and 7 of them has been killed

VII Partisans division- responsible for “propaganda”



Illegal print in partisans



Displaced persons camps (DPs)

- DPs –camps as self – administrative communities with familiar, cultural and religious life
- Around 200 000 Jews- camp survivors were waiting in DPs in Germany for transport to USA and Palestine
- mostly aged between 18 & 45
- without members of family
- Jews in DPs camps married and has children

After the Holocaust

- **Before** the WW2 – around **75,000 Jews** in Yugoslavia
- Around **35,000 women**
- **In Holocaust** – around **80 %** of Jews were **murdered**
- **Only** around **7,500** Jewish women **survived**
- After Great Aliya (1948. – 1952.) only **2,500 women** remained in Yu.
- 1958. – **Coordination of Jewish women sections of Yugoslavia (Belgrade)**
- 1991. – **Union of Jewish women in Croatia**
- Jewish women's organization – vital role in humanitarian action and in preserving Jewish tradition during the communist regime

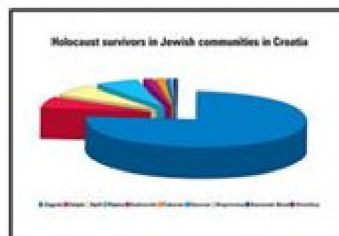
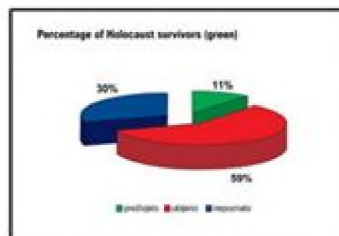
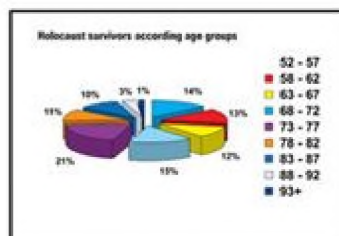
Old survivors moving from the hiding place

- Old age home build in Zagreb (1912) by donation of merchant Lavoslav Schwarz
- When Holocaust started in Croatia, 1941 in Old age home was 100 old persons (78 %women)
- They must immediately live and hardly save their lives
- They were hiding (organized by community) on different places, survived on estate of cardinal Stepinac in Brezovica
- Survived 52 old persons who moved to Zagreb ,and later build new “Old age home Lavoslav Schwarz”
- In Zagreb return many old survivors who has no more family, property, home etc and community take care



Holocaust survivors in Croatia

Židovi u Hrvatskoj koji su preživjeli Holokaust 1999



Jewish women conference after the Holocaust



Union of Jewish women in Croatia



Computer lessons for seniors



Social club with rabbi



Jewish choir in Old age home



Winter gathering in Opatija



Gymnastic adapted to needs of older women



And dancing

