

Vera Tomanic's Father Pavao Bluhm With Granddaughter And Zuza, Small Protégées



The picture was taken in Osijek in 1942. My father Pavao is pictured holding my daughter's hand with his right hand, and with his left, the hand of a girl named Zuza. Next to her is a boy whose name I cannot remember.

In the meantime the camp in Djakovo was constructed, especially for women and children. The women from Vinkovac, Slavonski Brod and Vukovar were taken there. The first two months the Osijek Jewish community provided food for the camp. The Ustache government allowed each family to take one child from the camp and take care of him. My family took care of a 12-year-old boy whose name I cannot remember, and a 4-year-old girl named Zuza from Vinkovac, whose mother remained in the Djakovo camp and whose father was killed in Auschwitz. It was clear to everyone that there was no future for Jews, and many tried to flee to Dalmatia. My father wanted us to try and reach Hungary, but my mother Elza began to panic because she feared we would not have anything to live on there. Grandmother Eleonora said that she was too old and could not run, and Aunt Berta did not want to go without her mother.

The boy was with my parents almost 5 months, until my parents were taken away, my father to Jasenovac camp and my mother to Stara Gradiska camp.

Little Zuza's grandmother sent a man to smuggle her granddaughter and my sister across the Danube on a small boat to Subotica, Hungary, where she herself lived. The escape succeeded. My sister awaited liberation in Budapest, living under the name Magda Sipos.