

Hana Gasic's Mother, Flora Montiljo At A Seder In The Sarajevo Jewish Community



My mother and Sano Altarac at the Jewish community in Sarajevo. Since there is a matzo on the table, I believe this must have been one of the many seders that we celebrated in the community. Mr. Altarac was a wonderful person and a great personality in the Sarajevo Jewish community. During the war, Sani and his young son, Mose, were in several camps in Italy. I remember hearing stories about how Sani managed to carry his small son on his shoulders for long distances. Sani had trouble with his eyes before the war and afterwards things only got worse. He spent much of his life almost blind or maybe even entirely blind. After the war I think he worked as a professor of music. However, life's hardships did not dampen his spirit. He played the violin, and was a master at creating humorous rhyming verses and sketches. He published them in a periodical called Vrabas. One verse that I remember, and there were many gems, was about a famous photographer in Sarajevo (many of the pictures in this album were taken in his studio): 'Svaki lisac laze laze. Samo Foto Lisac ne.' 'Every fox lies and lies. Only Foto Fox doesn't.' Maybe it does not sound so humorous to you, but to us back then, this was one of the many rhymes that filled the halls of our Sarajevo community and filled our world. His son, Mose, inherited his father's good humor and spirit. Mose and I grew up together and remain good friends. I look forward to seeing him in Israel, where he now lives. Sani is wearing a hat in the picture. This was a custom among the men in the Sarajevo Jewish community both before and after the war. They always came to the El Kal (Ladino for synagogue) and to the community in a hat. In the winter the hats were made from felt and in the summer it was something lighter, like straw. Regardless of the season, our men always had their hats.