

# Leon Altarac In The Zagreb Jewish Community



This is my father Leon Altarac. This photo was taken in the Zagreb Jewish Community around 1960.

After the war, in 1948, we returned to Split, but I went to Zagreb to work in the Central Youth Committee. Because I was still very young, my parents felt that they should be close to me.

My father moved to Zagreb in 1949 whereas my mom, my sister Lea and my grandmother only came in 1950.

At first, my father worked in a Jewish old-age home, which was housed in today's Community Center. He was working as a caretaker and later, when the old-age home was moved from the community building to another building, he became an employee with the Jewish community.

After Dr. Gruner, who was a cantor, died, my father took over his duties. He became a 'non professional' cantor because he wasn't educated in schools.

On the contrary, everything he knew he had learnt in his parents' home. In the community, every holiday was celebrated and it was my father who led the ceremonies. Sometimes even rabbis from abroad came and celebrated holidays with us.

Since we are Sephardim my father read the prayers in Ladino. He didn't only lead the holiday celebrations but did everything else that was required, such as burials and the like.

When Rabbi Menahem Romano from Sarajevo died, he used to go there and help out in the community.

Unfortunately, my parents died very young. My mother died when she was only 60 years old and my father at the age of 69. They were buried in the Jewish cemetery in Zagreb.