

Teodor Kovac



This is me when I was young. My friends and me took the first place at some competition and got this cup I'm holding.

Before the war I attended the school in my birth-place, there were only four grades in elementary school. The 8-year high school I attended here, in Novi Sad. Novi Knezevac is 130 kilometers away from Novi Sad, so it was impossible to travel daily. I lived in Novi Sad at my maternal grandparents'. When the war broke out in Novi Sad [April 1941] I was a graduate; we graduated during the occupation.

I remember Hitler's rise to power very well, especially the beginning of World War II. I even remember the Spanish Civil War, the Japanese invasion of China and the Anschluss. During the

Holocaust I spent a full three years and two months in many camps along with my brother Karlo. Apart from short periods of time we were mainly together. We were arrested together, and released together.

Banat was the first place in Europe where, with the help of the local Germans, Jews were cleared out. They were very proud that Banat was 'judenrein', clear of Jews. Hardly more than four months after German troops entered Banat, there were no more Jews. They had all been deported. Men were killed soon after deportation and women were in Sajmiste in Belgrade. If they didn't die of the cold of winter, they were murdered in gas trucks. The gas was released into trucks, which women were locked in. They suffocated. My parents, Arpad and Olga Kovac, were also killed quite quickly. No one survived. I don't know if my mother was taken to Sajmiste, whether she died in winter, either froze to death or died from a disease, or if she had survived only to be suffocated later; I don't know. [Editor's note: In the Banat the Nazis placed the Jews in camps during the summer and in September 1941 deported them to Belgrade. All Serbian Jews were then deported to various concentration camps and killed. In August 1942 a German report stated that the 'problem of Jews and gypsies had been solved; Serbia is the only country where this problem no longer exists'.].