

Vera Tomanic, Eleonora Grunwald, Mirjana Tomanic And Elza Bluhm, At A Gathering Of Four Generations



The picture was taken in our apartment in Osijek. I am on the left, next to me is my grandmother Eleonora, holding my daughter in her lap, and next to grandmother is my mother, Elza.

On July 2, 1941 I gave birth to my daughter Mirjana. I was in the hospital when they announced that Slavko Kvaternik (a Croatian politician and nationalist during World War Two, who was declared a war criminal after the war) would arrive in Osijek over the weekend. A decree stated that from 11 on Saturday to 11 on Sunday, Jews and Serbs were not permitted to appear on the streets. A big rally was supposed to be held.

I asked the doctor to let me go home, because I did not want to be separated from my parents. They let me go. At the rally, they carried coffins and burned Jewish books, while yelling anti-Jewish slogans. After a few days, a group of Ustache raided our house with the intent of taking anything they wanted from it. My mother recognized one of them and courageously told him: "Can't you see that this woman just gave birth to a baby? Are you going to take the bed she is lying on, too?" As if she could feel something terrible happening, my baby began to cry with all her might. The one that my mother recognized flew out of the room and screamed to the others: "Can't you hear how that baby is crying? Let's get out of here." And they collected themselves and left. So we were saved, but from the great fear I lost my milk and was no longer able to breastfeed my baby.