

## Lea Zigelman

Photographed with her husband Victor

Wartime Experience: Hidden

I was born the 6th of April in Paris in the 14th arrondissement. My father, Solomon Stryk, was born February 1, 1898, in Warsaw, Poland. He left Poland and his family after World War I.

For a while he lived in Germany, working in Essen in a factory and then in Belgium in the coal mines. Finally in 1923 he came to Lille in France. Having skills but without a profession, he worked wherever he could. He came to Paris where he was introduced to my mother Anna Buchwald whom he married on March 25, 1926, at the city hall of the 4th arrondissement. They lived in an old building in the Marais where they had a bedroom on the fifth floor without any water. Before they rented the adjacent room, the toilettes were on the fourth floor. My mother, born in Warsaw on August 12, 1902, came to Paris in 1910 with her whole family at the age of 8. They had a hard life, being a poor family with eight children.

My parents worked in small leather goods workshops. Then towards 1938, my father sold hats in the street markets in the suburbs. Non-observant and speaking French and also Yiddish, they were considered assimilated Jews. . My father was very strict and had made my life as a child very hard "for my own good" as he said. Being a good student, I went to the local primary school until I was 14 years old My father who had been naturalized a French citizen was drafted into the army in 1939. He was demobilized in 1940 and worked in a factory.

On August 20, 1941, being without work, he went to the unemployment and was caught up in the middle of a roundup of Jews in the 11st arrondissement. Interned in Drancy, then in Pithiviers and Beaune-la-Rolande, he was deported from Drancy to Auschwitz on September 23, 1942, on convoy #36. The number tattooed on his arm was 117383. He was on the Death March from Auschwitz to Mauthausen, and he died of typhus at Ebensee shortly after the liberation of the camp in May 1945. With a steel will he unbelievably had resisted the Nazi claws for four years. His death and the concentration camps still haunt me today. I have kept an engraved plate and cup that he managed to send us from Drancy

From 1941 I worked as a polisher of costume jewelry. In 1943, I left Paris alone by train for the "Free Zone" with a false baptismal certificate from an unknown person. I presented this document to the German soldier at the border without any problem. That is how I rejoined my mother's family who had taken refuge in Nice and where surviving was very difficult. In September 1943 I left for Montluçon where I worked as a saleswoman. I remained in the Free Zone with my family until the Liberation. In 1945, along with my mother, we returned to our home in Paris.

In 1946, I was married for the first time. I got a divorce and married Victor Zigelman 1949. Married to Victor, I worked as a saleswoman or stock girl and at other difficult and poorly

paying jobs. For a long time, we struggled but when Victor finally found stable work at a newspaper, we were able to live on his salary alone.

Without children Victor and I are the only survivors of the extinguished branches of our family trees.

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Des dossiers du Mémorial de la Shoah–Paris

Léa Charlotte ZIGELMAN

From the files of the Mémorial de la Shoah - Paris

Léa Charlotte ZIGELMAN née le 6/04/1927 à PARIS 14ème de Salomon ou Szlama STRYK et d'Anna BUCHWALD émigrés de POLOGNE.

Enfant de déporté, père déporté à AUSCHWITZ par convoi n° 36 du 23/9/42 et enfant cachée

Mon père est arrivé en France dans les années 1923/25 alors que ma mère est venue en 1910. Mes parents travaillent dans des petits ateliers de maroquinerie, puis vente de chapeaux sur les marchés. Mobilisé dans l'armée en 1939 il est démobilisé en 1940. Le 20/08/1941 il est arrêté au cours de la rafle du 11ème arrondissement de PARIS. Interné à DRANCY, puis PITHIVIERS et BEAUNE LA ROLANDE il est déporté de DRANCY le 23/09/1942 par le convoi n° 36 pour AUSCHWITZ. Il participe à la « marche de la mort » d'AUSCHWITZ à MAUTHAUSEN mais meurt du typhus à EBENSEE en mai 1945. J'ai gardé une assiette et un gobelet gravés venant de DRANCY. Quant à moi, en 1943 je pars seule en zone libre, munie d'un faux certificat de baptême, pour rejoindre la famille de ma mère à NICE. La même année je m'installe à MONTLUCON et y reste jusqu'à la libération. 1945, retour à PARIS. En 1946, premier mariage, divorce suivi d'un deuxième mariage avec Victor ZIGELMAN. Sans enfant, nous sommes Victor et moi les survivants d'une branche éteinte.