



**Slzama Zajderman, Jenny Zajderman
Léo Zajderman, Herman Zajderman
Charlotte Zajderman
Jacques Zajderman**
Holocaust Victims

After fleeing Germany for France, Slzama and his family were deported by the Nazis. Slzama survived the war, but would never see his family again.



This photograph of the Zajderman family was taken in Paris in 1942. Their clothes bear the yellow Star of David that Jewish people in German-occupied France were forced to wear starting in June 1942. George Metcalf Archival Collection, Canadian War Museum 20090009-004

Fleeing Persecution

In 1938, the Zajderman family fled Germany for France, as Nazi persecution of Jewish people grew worse. Szlama Zajderman had been born in Lodz, Poland, while his wife Jenny Schleier was from Cologne, Germany.

The couple had three children – Herman, Leo and Charlotte. Their fourth child, Jacques, was born after they settled in France. Their safety was short-lived.

Shattered Lives

The Second World War had begun on 1 September 1939 and, by May 1940, Germany had invaded France. Szlama joined a Régiment de Marche de Volontaires Étrangers. These units were part of the French Foreign Legion, intended to defend the country against the invasion.

It was a doomed effort as France soon fell to the Germans. The Zajderman family was once more in danger.

Supported by collaborating French officials and some members of the public, the Nazis began persecuting the Jewish population in France. Jews were forced to wear yellow stars, and were ultimately arrested and sent to concentration camps.

The Zajderman family was initially sent to the internment and transit camp at Drancy, north of Paris.

In 1942, the Zajdermans were deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau, a Nazi death camp in Poland. Szlama was taken first, then Jenny, and then the children.

Of the approximately 65,000 Jews deported from Drancy, fewer than 2,000 survived the Holocaust. Szlama Zajderman was among the survivors. He was liberated from Tutzing, a subcamp of Dachau in April 1945.

After he was liberated, Szlama searched desperately for his family, but he never saw them again. They had been murdered by the Nazis.

Aftermath

Szlama Zajderman returned to France in 1945. All he had left of his family were official documents issued after the war, and a photograph from 1942.

He tried to start again. He became a French citizen, remarried and had two more children. But the unspeakable horrors he had gone through left him in poor health, and he died in 1958, at the age of 54. Some of his descendants later came to Canada.