

Bernard and Salomon Zajdner

Bernard and Salomon Zajdner were 14 years old when they arrived at Auschwitz with their father, older brother, and sister. Only the sister survived.



The Zajdner family lived in the Marais district of Paris, an area where many Jews from Central Europe settled. The parents, Elias and Szejna, arrived there in 1922 from Poland. Elias ran an antiques shop. Over the years their family grew to include nine children.

In the early 1940s, under the Nazi occupation of France, Jews were banned from owning property in Marais. Elias and Szejna heard rumors that Jews were being rounded up and taken away. Szejna left Paris, and the younger Zajdner children were placed with Catholic families in the countryside. Elias joined the Resistance and was caught in 1944. He was deported to Auschwitz with his sons Albert (age 21), Bernard and Salomon (age 14), and daughter Sarah "Micheline" (age 15). The twins died as a result of the medical experiments conducted on them at the camp. Sarah survived.

For fifty years, Sarah worked to have a memorial constructed in Paris in her father's honor. Finally, in 1995 she was granted permission to hang a plaque to honor her father and brothers on a wall in the garden of her father's old antiques shop in Marais. The plaque reads:

"Here lived Elias Zajdner, who died for France at the age of 41.
A resistance fighter, he was deported to Auschwitz by the Nazis
in May 1944 with his three sons, Albert age 21,
and Salomon and Bernard aged 15 who died in the experiments wing.
We shall never forget."