

Jakob Finci

Jakob Finci was born into a Jewish Sephardic family and became a prominent figure in the Bosnian Jewish Community.

Jakob helped found and became the first Vice-President of the Jewish cultural, educational and humanitarian society, La Benevolencija.



La Benevolencija acted as a relief agency for all ethnic groups in Sarajevo, refusing to take sides during the conflict and supplied much needed medical supplies to the population. Additionally, the organisation opened a soup kitchen in Sarajevo, which served 300 hot meals every day to the city, irrespective of their religious or ethnic background. In a time of such huge ethnic divisions, it was incredible to see such a lack of prejudice in the work Finci did.

“As we had always lived with the other communities, we decided to share everything with them.”

Alongside the soup kitchen, Finci set up a school for the children of Sarajevo, as a way to create some normality for children living through a siege. “One boy would ask if he could bring along his best friend, and we soon ended up with 50 ‘best friends’ from all the different communities. We taught them about living together.”

Finci assisted many Jews in leaving Sarajevo but extended his support to the other communities who needed to escape. Finci recalled helping one Muslim couple who had come to him for help. He found old documents belonging to his parents and gave them to the Muslim couple as their ticket out.

Finci went above and beyond for every community in Sarajevo. He had no question over helping those who were different from him.