

## *A Short Biography - Rosa Hanan Mallel*



*Rosa Hanan, Rhodes 1940*

ROSA HANAN was born in Rhodes, in the Italian Dodecanese, on September 8<sup>th</sup> 1920. Her father, Moses, was a craftsman; her mother, Miriam Leon, was taking care of the family and their eight children by giving them a strong religious education.

The family lived in Juderia, the Jewish quarter of the island. Five synagogues and a Rabbinical College were located on the island. In the home, as in the community, they spoke ladino, the Spanish-Jewish dialect.

Before the war, Rosa's older brothers left for Africa. She, her brother Herzl and her mother, who remained in Rhodes, were arrested and deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau on 23 July 1944, along with the rest of the Jewish community. After almost a month of travelling in terrible conditions, on arrival in Birkenau, Rosa was registered, with the number A-24360, and worked in carrying heavy materials from one side of the field to the other. Before the end of the year she was transferred to Dachau, along with other women including several from Rhodes. From there she was sent to the subfields of Kaufering, Landsberg and Torkheim, where she carried out a very heavy and tiring work.



*Rosa Hanan Mallel, Rhodes/Auschwitz/Rome,  
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In April 1945, with the imminent advance of the Allies, Rosa decided to flee along with three other companions from Rhodes. Under the pretext of bringing milk from the kitchens to the SS quarters, they moved away from the camp and took off into the surrounding forest.

The four managed to hide in a farm in the nearby, where they remained for about a week, until liberation. With the camp now in the hands of the Allies, they returned to Torkheim and remained there until the end of May 1945.

In June they arrived at the former Offenburg camp, under the control of the French armed forces, where the captain, also Jewish, placed them in an apartment near the camp. Due to

the accidental explosion of a bomb in Offenburg's command, the captain lost his life and Rosa got seriously injured. She was then admitted to a hospital for about a month.

In 1946 she went to Italy, to Milan, where she met Giuseppe Mallel, also a Rhodian survivor, who had lost his wife and two children at Auschwitz. She married him in Rhodes in 1947 and in December of the same year their first child, Nissim, was born. After six months he returned to Italy, to Rome.

In 1951 the family moved to Belgian Congo, where their second son was born, to whom they gave the same name as Rosa's brother, Herzl, who died in Mauthausen.

They stayed there for about a year and then moved to Rhodesia, South Africa and then again to Italy, in 1954.

Since then, she was living in Rome surrounded by her family to whom she has handed down her strong identity as a Rodesli Jew.

She died on January 2, 2022.

*\*Source:*

*"La liberazione dei campi nazisti" by AA.VV (author), Marcello Pezzetti (editor), page 136 Translated from Italian to English by the Jewish Community of Rhodes*