

## Jack Natan's Family



This is a photo of my father Jack Natan's family, taken around 1907. These are, from left to right, my grandmother Sol Natan, my cousin Malvina Natan, my father and my grandfather Shabbat Natan. My ancestors belonged to that part of the Jewry, which came to Bulgaria from Spain - they were Sephardi Jews. The fact that my grandmothers, grandfathers and uncles spoke Ladino was proof of that. My grandparents were probably religious because there were hardly any non-religious people in their generation. I don't know about my grandfathers, but my grandmothers used to wear secular clothes. My father had two older brothers. Bohor Natan, the eldest, was an extremely intelligent person. Although he didn't have a degree, he spoke German very well, and his French was also fluent. He was a very close friend of Georgi Kirkov. Bohor was among the first non-Bulgarians who had a mixed marriage with a Bulgarian woman. As there wasn't a civil marriage service in the country at that time, the couple went to Germany in order to contract their marriage. Bohor got married in the 1910s and died in 1936. His daughter Malvina died in 1967 without having

any children, which actually ended that branch of the family. Our grandmother, Sol Natan, didn't even acknowledge her as a rightful granddaughter because her parents didn't have a religious wedlock. My father was born in Nova Zagora in 1889. He graduated from the University of Law. After World War I his family moved to Sofia, as the male family members had started some trade there. My mother was born in Constanta, Romania. She met my future father at the wedding of her older sister Sharlota, who married a Bulgarian Jew from Ruse. He liked the bride's younger sister. They married in 1923 in Sofia. They had a religious wedding. I was born three years later.