

Mazal Asael's Family



This is a picture of my family in the 1940s in Sofia. From left to right are my brother Eliezer (from my father's first marriage) and his wife Simona, next to them is my younger brother Samuil, I am next to him and next to me is my other brother Benjamin. My parents Delicia and Menahem Eshkenazi are in front of us, together with Eliezer' son who was named after my father Menahem. Everyone in this picture except me left for Israel in 1948. The photo was taken in 1947. I have three brothers. The oldest one, Eliezer, is from my father's first marriage. He used to live together with my mother and father. After that his maternal grandmother took him to live with her. In 1941 he came back to live with our family. My two other brothers are Benjamin and Samuil. They all graduated from the Jewish school in Sofia. My two older brothers were sent to labour camps during the Holocaust and spent there a couple of years. They left for Israel together with my parents. My home was on Opalchenska Street. It was a run-down, two-floor brick house where we lived together with some other families. We had electricity in the house. All the occupants were Jewish. We had a neighbour who breast-fed me after I was born because my mother couldn't, and our neighbour had a baby at the same time. This house no longer exists. A new one was built in its place and the children of the previous owners live there now. All my maternal and paternal relatives lived in the Jewish neighborhood. I don't know how long I lived in the house on Opalchenska Street for we moved while I was still a very little girl. We lived at many places until 1943 ? on Ovcho Pole, Odrin, Slivnitza and Naicho Tsanov streets. I suppose that my parents were really poor and they had to move very often. We lived on Odrin Street for the longest period of time, in two different houses. These houses no longer exist and there are big blocks at their place now. My brothers and I were already grown up when we lived on that street. My brothers were taken from there to the labor camps in the 1940s. We lived together with Bulgarians in Odrin Street but I never felt a negative attitude towards us though one of them was a member of Brannik. (Brannik was a pro-fascist youth organization. It started functioning after the National Defense Law was passed in 1939 and the Bulgarian government formed its pro-German policy during WWII. Brannik's members regularly maltreated Jews.) In every house we lived we had a little space and it was never enough for our big family.