

Rebeca Assa



This is me in 1943. I am wearing the yellow badge that we had to wear to show our Jewish origin. I couldn't go without it because I would have been arrested if they had known I was Jewish. I was already married to Moritz Assa at the time and we lived on 16 Bratia Miladinovi Street in Plovdiv. I remember that I had a dress with big pockets and when I went out of the quarter where we lived and people knew me, I used to turn the pockets over so that the badge, which I put on them, remained hidden. I worked illegally outside my quarter then, and I had to hide my Jewish origin. I met with the leaders of the Revolutionary Youth Union. After the Nation Defense Law was accepted in 1939 the situation got worse. We could feel the first anti-Semitic sentiments. The Jews in Plovdiv were not interned, only the rich people were moved to ghettos. Many of them used their money to ransom their chance to run abroad. So the richer Jews in Plovdiv left for Western Europe or

America. The situation was quite tense - there were 'brannici' who didn't allow us to go out on the streets freely. Anyway there weren't the extreme fascist moods like there were in Germany, but our merchants were afraid to open their shops because they used to break the shop windows. These were [just] hooligans - they didn't express the Bulgarian society's attitude towards Jews. I can say in this regard that the Bulgarian people are the wisest and the best.