

Leon Anzhel Whith Izidor Benbasat And Niso Chetkarya



In this photo you can see me in the middle with my closest friend Izidor Benbasat, on the left, in the labor camp in the village of Rudnik, Varna district. Next to me, on the other side, is Niso Chetkarya. Behind us you can see the rooms where we used to sleep. On the back of the photo there is an inscription in pen: '1942, the village of Rudnik, Varna district. Jewish labor camps with Izi Benbasat and Niso Chetkarya. Leon Anzhel.' There is a stamp of a photo shop: D. M. PESACH

PHOTOGRAPHER, Sofia, 15 Opalchenska Street.

The first mobilization of Jews took place in 1941 along the Iskar River from Kurilo to Lukatnik. They were building the railway tracks. At every railway station there were Jewish groups, they were given labor uniforms, and military officers were appointed. And in every labor group there were one or two Bulgarian military officers. Another labor group was created that same year. They weren't a military group; they were like us and worked in a place called Trunska Klisura.

I left in 1942. Before that I was called upon to appear before a military commission to decide whether I was fit for military service. And when they decided that you were fit for military service, you received a call-up order and they mobilized you. You took only the most necessary clothes.

I was in the labor camps from 1942 until 1944. I received four call-up orders. I was in the village of Rudnik, the village of Chuchuligovo near our border with Greece, Belitsa, Vratsa, Svishtov. We were working during the summer; in November they would let us go home for the winter period and in January would mobilize us again. We would sleep in tents and cabins. We worked hard everywhere. We mainly built roads and railroad tracks. In Varna district our group was taking out and crashing rocks in a quarry in the forest. We loaded the stones on a cart drawn by oxen. The mobilized Bulgarians would take the cart to the road Varna - Burgas. The other laborers from other groups covered the road with the broken stones.