

Lea Beraha During The Internment To Shumen



This picture was taken in Shumen, in 1943, where we were interned for a second time, after Dupnitsa. I'm the one in the center. We are picking carrots or beetroot with a cousin of mine. In Dupnitsa they took us in a convoy from the railway station to the school gym. We were more than a hundred people, and they separated us in families. I found a job in the candy factory. I stole sweets for my friends in the labor camps. Then we moved to some rich Jews, who accepted us under the condition that I worked as a maid for them. They had three boys aged one to two, three to four, and five to six years. I used to work there so much that my child-like hands became completely rough. My mother was already advanced in years, she was constantly ill and wasn't able to work. I was the breadwinner. My sister was crying for food all the time. The landlords were well-to-do traders in Dupnitsa. They imported curds, butter, etc. as black marketers. My sister cried because she also wanted such things. My mother and I used to 'gag' her and hid her in the little square behind the door, which the rich Jewess had given to us. In this one square meter space we put the sack, the blankets and the clothes that we had brought from Sofia. We used to lie down crosswise like in a sty. The mattress was too short and our bare feet touched the floor. We returned from Dupnitsa to Sofia after the fall of fascism [after the communist takeover on 9th September 1944]. From 9th September 1944 till 1945-46 we lived in the house my mother's brother had on Slivnitsa Blvd.