

Vergina Elazar With Relatives



This photo was taken in 1926. First on the left is my mother Vergina Elazar. Next to her is Matilda Kantardjieva, nee Elazar, the sister of my father Solomon Elazar. Beside her is her husband Rufat. I am sitting on the left in the front and I am six years old. Beside me is my cousin - the only son of Rufat and Matilda, Buko. The following is written on the back of the photo: 'To ? Solomon from Borisova Park. For a warm remembrance ? 20.05.1926. For Mr. Solomon. Here' My mother was born in 1887 in Sofia and worked in the textile industry. She worked in a shop for fine women's underwear, in 'Doverie' [Trust]. There was such a shop for fine textiles in the center of Sofia. Because of the wars, there was a big group of women who couldn't marry. My mother was among them. She married relatively late - when she was 30 years old. My aunt Matilda and uncle Rufat had five children - four daughters and one son. They all left for Israel except their daughter Ventura. Before the war two thirds of the Jewish population lived in Sofia. There was hardly a purely Jewish neighborhood in Sofia, but I remember that many of the people living on Pirotska Street were Jews. There were also Bulgarians, Turks and Armenians in the neighborhood. As children we played football and hide-and-seek. We gathered with the other Jews and celebrated the high holidays. We gathered on Pesach, Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashanah. Rosh Hashanah was my favorite holiday, because there were still flowers, green trees, and fruits... We gathered, ate, drank and sang songs in Ladino. We always helped each other. There was a feeling of community and desire to help the other Jews. Because even when there were no persecutions, Jews were regarded as different, alien. We also sensed that feeling.