

Adela Hinkova's Yellow Star



This is the yellow star I wore during the Holocaust, between 1941 and 1944. After my father's death we came to Sofia, and my mother sold everything, even our water pump. It was very hard for me after my father died. I loved him very much. And we didn't have any money, not even my brother. There was help from nowhere. We sold everything we had: clothes, the sewing machine, whatever dowry we had. I didn't even have money to pay for my diploma. My sister Zhaneta gave me money for that and that's how I graduated. We rented a room. I applied for a job. I worked in an attorney's office for a whole year. I still have some knowledge in this field. He was dealing with claims against people in debt and I assisted him with the accountants. This was an insurance company named OREL, which is still in that same building, it was then outside the town. I walked on foot for two hours to get to work. It was very cold. I arrived at work freezing, wanted to drink some tea, but my boss was looking at the clock. My salary was 2,000 leva, and a bottle of vegetable oil was worth 1,000 leva. We lived in the house of good people, but we had no money. After some time I found out that my mother went to various houses to do the washing so that we had enough bread. Our bread was a bit sour, made of maize and something else. When we cut it, it stuck to the knife, but I had to eat it, because I was working. It was a very hard year. After a year, we were forced to move to Haskovo [in 1943, as a result of the anti-Jewish laws]. We weren't allowed to work in Haskovo. We lived in a small corridor. We put a mattress there every evening and slept on the floor. People passed by there to get to their rooms. We didn't have a man to take

care of us. Men went and bought food in the black-market for their families, and we were given tomatoes to eat. I can't eat tomatoes since then. It was already in 1943, and the fascists were going to lose the war and the regime wasn't so rigid in some towns. So, my mother made me go to my sister [Zhaneta], and she herself went to Ruse, to a friend of hers. I went to my sister's village [Stezherevo]. There several other girls like me and I were taking care of the grape vines. We were paid for that. And my sister helped me and that's how I got through this. I tried to make shoes out of rope at a certain point, since I was without a job, but it was extremely hard. That was in 1944. Then I went to Pleven to work for the [Communist] Party, because I had already been involved in anti-fascist activities. But my mother and I wanted to get together, that's why we both moved to Sofia. They didn't want to let me go, because I had higher education.