

Adela Nissimova Levi In The Yard Of The House In Ferdinand



This is me in the yard of the house in Ferdinand (now Montana) where our family was interned in 1943. We rented a room in the ghetto which they had prepared for us. This was a residential district with specific borders. We weren't allowed to leave it, but the Bulgarians could enter it, because some Bulgarians also lived there. Our landlady was Dafinka, a widow with two sons. One

of them was Mitko and the other, Goshko. Mitko was in the military police and fought against the partisans and terrorists. Goshko hadn't done his military service yet. We lived in the basement: a room with a small corridor. The landlady gave us an iron stove and we used it to warm the room. She was also a poor woman, but helped us with what she could. She even found a bed, although it wasn't big enough for everybody and the others slept on the ground. We paid her some rent just like we did in Stara Zagora where we were interned before. We didn't receive rations, everything was rationed then, and we had no more money. That happened in autumn 1943. My sister Raina, who was a hairdresser, found a job at a salon. It was on a street on the border between the ghetto and the rest of the city. The border passed along the middle of the street, and the salon was on the other side: outside the ghetto. But she took the risk, because if you were caught, you could be arrested as I had been at least ten times. So, my sister went to work and didn't go out the whole day. She was paid very little, but it was something. The owner of the salon was a Bulgarian, but kept her because she worked very well and a lot of people from Sofia were interned to Ferdinand and they wanted good service. My other sister Sofka also found a job, but as a bookbinder. The bookstore she worked for was exactly on the border. The owner of the bookstore was Panaiot: a Bulgarian. It was also a publishing house and issued the newspaper 'Nov Zhivot'. He also liked her work and looked after her. One day she told him, 'Listen, Panaiote, I'll keep coming, but I would also like you to employ my sister, who was me. 'What will she do?' he asked. 'When necessary, she will help me and the rest of time she will be a shop assistant in the bookstore' she said. The bookstore sold not only notebooks, pencils and books, but also clarinet caps and such small items which were bought by people from the nearby villages. Every Monday the bookstore was crowded with customers, because it was the market day in Ferdinand. Panaiot agreed to employ me.