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My parents

My ancestors belonged to that part of the Jewry, which came to Bulgaria from Spain - they were Sephardi Jews. The fact that my grandmothers, grandfathers and uncles spoke Ladino was proof of that. My grandparents were probably religious because there were hardly any non-religious people in their generation. I don't know about my grandfathers, but my grandmothers used to wear secular clothes. I remember my mother, Malka Natan [nee Navon], telling me about the Jewish community in Constanta, which differed a lot from the one in Bessarabia 1, where Jews used to wear caftans and payot and had a completely different way of living. My grandfathers were merchants. Both my grandparents and my parents were neither very poor nor very rich.

My father, Jack Natan, was born in Nova Zagora in 1889. He graduated from the University of Law. After World War I his family moved to Sofia, as the male family members had started some trade there. My mother was born in Constanta, Romania. She met my future father at the wedding of her older sister Sharlota, who married a Bulgarian Jew from Ruse. He liked the bride's younger sister. They married in 1923 in Sofia. They had a religious wedding. I was born three years later.

My mother had two sisters, Sharlota and Ernestina Navon, and two brothers, Menaho and Ticko Navon. She was the youngest one. Her sisters were housewives. Ernestina was also married to a Bulgarian. My parents kept in touch with their relatives in Bulgaria more than with those that lived in Israel or in other places. We didn't have enough money, opportunities or desire to visit them. [Editor's note: In totalitarian times continued relations with relatives in Israel would have had a negative impact on the family's situation in Bulgaria. On the other hand, an eventual trip to Israel was beyond their financial capacities.] All of them have already died: Menaho and Ticko in Romania, Sharlota in Israel, and Ernestina in Bulgaria.

My father had two older brothers. Bohor Natan, the eldest, was an extremely intelligent person. Although he didn't have a degree, he spoke German very well, and his French was also fluent. He was a very close friend of Georgi Kirkov 2. Bohor was among the first non-Bulgarians who had a mixed marriage with a Bulgarian woman. As there wasn't a civil marriage service in the country at that time, the couple went to Germany in order to contract their marriage. Bohor got married in the 1910s and died in 1936. His daughter Malvina died in 1967 without having any children, which

actually ended that branch of the family. Our grandmother, Sol Natan, didn't even acknowledge her as a rightful granddaughter because her parents didn't have a religious wedlock. The second brother, Shemtov Natan, was a lawyer. He lived in Varna, later he moved to Israel and then to Australia, where he died in the 1970s. He had two sons. I have vague memories of Bohor, who died when I was 10 years old. I seldom met Shemtov, who lived in another town, but I remember that they were both handsome men.

My father was an extraordinary person. He had a great impact on me when I grew up. He dressed in secular clothes. He was very open to people, extremely witty and the heart of each company. He was very cultured and had various interests. He took me to my first opera, my first exhibition and my first lecture. Even when I was already a grown-up, we still continued to accompany each other on such occasions. I inherited his taste for literature and writing. He strongly hoped that I would take a philology degree and was rather disappointed when I took up medicine.

He was quite musical, had a nice voice and sang wonderfully. When he was young, he was even invited to join the Stephan Makedonski company 3. Yet my grandfather, Shabbat Natan, said that he didn't want his son to be a chalgadjia. [Editor's note: chalgadjia is a word of Turkish origin and means 'performer of popular songs'; it has an ironical connotation in Bulgaria.] Therefore my father chose another career.

He was a brave man - he got two medals for bravery when he served as a military officer in World War I. There are some very interesting letters and memories from his superiors telling about his military service. I remember a letter to my mother describing how once he led off his company to a safe place under constant enemy fire. Later, when the persecutions against Jews began, he showed great courage and didn't allow any despondency to overwhelm us. The atmosphere at home was always calm and nice. My father was extremely communicative and active in terms of social life. He used to collaborate with Jewish magazines as a lawyer. After 9th September 1944 4, he put a lot of efforts into the cooperative movement, as he worked in a bank that financed it, and moreover he was convinced of its future.

My mother always lived in her husband's shadow. When she came to Bulgaria, she didn't know a word of Bulgarian. She started learning the language, but my father used to speak both in Ladino and in Bulgarian with her. He didn't let her speak with me in Romanian, to make sure that I would learn Bulgarian well. Now I feel sorry that I don't know Romanian. As to my mother, she never learned Bulgarian well and regretted that she had no profession. Nevertheless, she was a good housewife and raised my children while I was working, for which I'm very grateful.

Growing up

We always lived in rented lodgings and never owned a house. During the crises at the end of the 1920s, the financial situation of the family wasn't so good. Later, when my father began working as a bank clerk, it improved. He had to pay his debts, accumulated as a result of his unsuccessful trade though, so we never succeeded in obtaining our own house. When he paid back all his debts in 1942, the anti-Jewish laws came into force, and we were compelled to leave Sofia and start from scratch.

We always lived in two rooms: one for my parents and the other one for me. We changed our flats six times - three times before 9th September 1944 and three times after. We were forced to do this

because we didn't have our own place and constantly had to search for cheaper lodging. The flats weren't furnished, and we moved from one to the next with all our household belongings and furniture. (By the way, it isn't common to rent furnished flats in Bulgaria.)

My mother had servants for the heavy housework - they were girls from villages around Sofia. They used to sleep in our house, they were treated as part of the family, and they didn't go home very often. They only did the house cleaning and the washing. Cooking was entirely my mother's responsibility. I remember three or four girls. The girl I remember most clearly was called Giurgia. She was from Sarantsi. We kept very warm relations with those girls afterwards.

We had lots of books, secular books, not religious ones. My father used to read a lot, and so did my mother. There were books by Dostoyevsky 5, Chekhov 6, Balzac, from Bulgarian writers, such as Yovkov 7, and other classics. My father mostly used to read on his days off. He had left-wing convictions and preferred the socially-oriented works, which he also advised me to read. We regularly bought the newspapers Mir [Peace] and Zora [Dawn]. We didn't visit libraries; we preferred to buy books.

My parents weren't religious, we only celebrated the greatest Jewish holidays - Rosh Hashanah, Pesach and Purim. On Pesach, for example, we used to buy matzah, following the tradition. We rarely held a seder. We mostly visited the synagogue on weddings. I have never been to cheders or yeshivot. We didn't study with our father during Sabbath; we didn't even mention it. As a schoolgirl my favorite holiday was that of St. Kiril and Methodii 8 as well as Pesach and Rosh Hashanah. On that holiday we used to gather with our relatives and the time we spent together was full of joy. My mother was the only one who fasted on Yom Kippur when she was young.

Nonetheless, my parents have always felt and considered themselves an integral part of the Jewish community. My father made friends with many Bulgarians, but he considered himself a Jew and actively participated in a number of Jewish social organizations. He was a member of the boards of the Jewish Asylum in Sofia and the Bnei Brith. Being assimilated, he had a very strong feeling of belonging to Bulgaria.

As a banker in a Jewish bank, my father communicated primarily with businessmen and merchants. He had the self-conscience and high self-esteem of a Jew. Recently I found some of his poems dedicated to Pesach, which have been preserved up until now. He kept friendly relations with Jewish authors such as Armand Baruh and Bucha Behar [writers of short stories and novels in the communist period]. They asked him to write reviews of their works.

After 1944, and for quite a long time, he used to be a chairman of the Control Commission of the Jewish community. He also became a member of the Bulgarian Communist Party. [Editor's note: His Jewish identity and his communist ideas were in no contradiction. Most of the Jews, who remained in Bulgaria after 1944, were leftists devoted to the Communist Party and its ideology.] My mother wasn't a party member, although she sympathized with left-wing ideas. Our neighbors were both Bulgarians and Jews, and we kept close relations with all of them.

I don't know exactly how many Jews were in Sofia before World War II. They were quite a consolidated community, although there was a considerable difference between the poorest Jews, the rich ones and the lower middle class, to which our family belonged. Charity organizations have always existed among Jews and formed the basis for their consolidation. There was a Jewish

residential district in Sofia, but there were also many Jews, who lived outside it. I cannot say which were the most typical Jewish professions, but I know which were untypical jobs for Jews: there were hardly any military people, police officers, state clerks and agricultural workers. Jews could be found in commerce, in the industry as industrial employees and in liberal professions such as engineers, doctors, jurists, bankers and merchants. Commerce was a very popular domain among Jews.

Besides the main synagogue of the Sephardi Jews there were also other prayer houses in Sofia. There was one for the Ashkenazi Jews, and another Sephardi one in Iuchbunar 9. There was a rabbi, a chazzan and a shochet. I remember my mother going there to have the chicken she bought at the market slaughtered. However, she didn't do it out of religious considerations, just because there was no one else who would do this. In those times only live birds were sold at the market. My mother used to do the shopping because my father was working. We used to buy things from the little shops around our home. She never bought large quantities or the most expensive goods, although she stuck to variety and good quality. We were very economical in terms of shopping. It was always a great event when we went to buy clothes or shoes.

I was born in Sofia in 1926. I don't have any siblings. My mother was looking after me before I went school. I used to play in the yard, and she took me to the cinema or to the market. I remember that I liked cowboy movies, and my mother used to put up with them because of me. I have always been taken good care of. I didn't attend the Jewish school unlike most of my coevals. My husband, for example, who lived in Sliven, spent his first four school years in the Jewish school. I have only studied in Bulgarian schools, therefore I don't know a single word of Hebrew. I haven't studied religion either because I was relieved from the obligation to attend the lessons as a person of a different faith. My favorite subjects were Bulgarian, Latin and Greek.

I remember my high school teacher of literature. She was a very exacting person and everyone was scared of her, except for me, as I knew and loved the subject. I liked my teacher of Latin in Sliven a lot, too. I graduated from high school there after starting it in Sofia. I didn't like my teacher of mathematics, who was also my class teacher, and got wind of the fact that I was related to left-wing organizations. She was chasing and tormenting me because of that. Not because of my Jewish origin - I don't remember a single teacher having offended me because of that. I took private lessons in French. My teacher was Belgian. She didn't know Bulgarian at all, and therefore I learned French well.

I remember my childhood vacations in Gorna Bania and Chamkoria [the former name of the Borovets resort in the Rila Mountain]. Those were great events. The family never parted and we also went on excursions together, usually to the Vitosha Mountain near Sofia. I remember us going skating on Ariana Lake in winter. We also used to go to the movies. Later, in Sliven, where we were interned after 1942, we used to gather in each other's houses so that people wouldn't see us in the street. We used to read books at secret meetings of the UYW 10.

Later, during my university years, we attended cinema and theatre performances and went for picnics. During holidays we organized excursions with our parents. With a few exceptions, I spent all my school vacations in Sofia. Only once did I go to a Red Cross camp, where we learned how to give first aid to victims. Later, as a university student I continued to go to camps with friends.

I remember traveling by car for the first time when my father's friend drove us to some family acquaintances in Borovets. It seemed both interesting and frightening to me because the road was dangerous with lots of curves. And at each curve the driver signalized with his klaxon. I must have been 10-12 years old at the time. I also remember some train trips to my aunt's in Ruse. It was quite an exciting experience - baskets with food were carried, special preparations were made. A trip to Ruse, which is 327 kilometers from Sofia lasted no less than 10-12 hours. We didn't go there very often - there was neither enough time nor money for that. Our family rarely went to restaurants - just from time to time to some modest restaurant, 'for kebapche', as people used to call it.

As a child I felt a mood of anti-Semitism expressed by some of my classmates in elementary school. Those were isolated cases, but they still did exist. They were mostly verbal offences - Jews were called chifuti 11 - and that was it. I remember our Jewish families anxiously gathering in the period between 1931-1934. [Editor's note: People in Bulgaria were well informed about Hitler's coming to power because of the close relations between Bulgaria and Germany at the time.] I remember my father saying in front of our relatives that it already looked like war. The aftermath of Hitler's coming to power, the anti-Jewish laws in Germany and so on - we used to hear about those things on the radio. I accepted them quite perfunctorily, as I was still a child. Moreover, those events seemed to be far away from us, and yet my parents' concerns existed, and I have a very distinct memory of them.

During the war

Although there were also fascist organizations in high school, my classmates never offended me like the ones in elementary school had. On the contrary, in 1942, when I was in the 7th grade, we were about to be interned in Sliven. My classmates presented me with a souvenir knife with an inscription saying 'To Linka from VII G class'. They saw me off very cordially. I even had some friends, members of fascist organizations, who had good feelings for me. At school I had quite a lot of friends among Bulgarians. It wasn't until we were interned in Sliven that a Jewish girl became my best friend. I got closer with my Jewish coevals after the anti- Semitic laws were passed in Bulgaria. I wasn't much looking for their company because until then my friends were mainly Bulgarian girls.

The serious manifestations of anti-Semitism began when the anti-Jewish laws were adopted [the so-called Law for the Protection of the Nation] 12 in Bulgaria. That happened in 1940-1941. The first real and tangible shock for us, as laws themselves are something abstract, was the introduction of the yellow stars. It was followed by the prohibition to live in the center of Sofia and the changing of our names. The aim was to restrict us through our specific biblical names. My father was called Jacob instead of Jack, my mother Malkuna instead of Malka, and my name became Delila instead of Linka. Then came the marking of the Jewish houses and finally our internment from Sofia. The most awful thing was that constant feeling of vulnerability - that there was always a chance that a Legionary 13 or Brannik 14 would insult you or do whatever he would want to you, without you being able to protect yourself.

My father was forced to quit his job in the Carmel Bank. Then it was announced that if we leave the city voluntarily, we would obtain the right to choose our new home freely. As my father had many friends in Sliven, where he had grown up, we settled there shortly before the big wave of internment, and were thus able to take things from our household with us. My father remained

unemployed - he was forbidden to work in the banking system. He did some underground work for a couple of friends, although he was formally hired as a laborer so that they could pay him. Again, we had financial problems in Sliven. During vacations I also started working in a factory in order to make both ends meet. I worked on a knitting-frame for socks.

There was no physical repression against us but moral violence in terms of the offences we had to endure from legionnaires and branniks. At the same time I have wonderful memories from my contacts with Bulgarians. We stayed in Sliven until December 1944. We went through the hardest moments there in 1943, when my father received a notice that he should show up with some 50 kilos of luggage at the school. The letter was from 8th March 1943, and the date appointed for showing up was 3pm on 10th March. We all knew that it meant internment or even deportation. We also knew that the lists of women and children were in the municipality, and they were about to be announced. I was a member of the underground UYW. I discussed the possibility of not showing up with my fellow members but finding a connection with the partisans instead and joining them in the Balkan Mountains. But as we were very young and lacked experience - I was only 17 - they weren't very interested to accept us because we might have become a burden to them.

Anyway, nothing happened. In the last moment, at 11am on 10th March, the abrogation of the internment came [on 24th May 1943] 15 and we were informed that no one had to show up. I remember complete strangers who, seeing my yellow star, were warmly embracing and kissing me in the streets of Sliven. The hardest moments were the moments of parting. My father didn't go to labor camps, as he was already too old. But at that time I had a relationship with my future husband, and he was detained in the labor camps for about three years. We used to communicate through letters only. Those were very hard times.

When we came back to Sofia in 1944, we settled on the same estate but in a different apartment. People accepted us very well. They had even kept our stuff, though we had taken almost everything to Sliven with us. I began studying at the university, and my father started working in a Jewish bank. Then our family faced the question of settling in Israel, especially after my father's parents moved there. It was a rather complicated matter, as we had certain ideals of Bulgaria, and we felt that it would be betrayal to leave our homeland. I was a member of the Bulgarian Communist Party, yet I never allowed myself to reproach my friends who were leaving for Israel. I realized that their desire to have their own fatherland and live in a secure place was completely natural. At the same time I thought that it would be also safe in Bulgaria.

Post-war

I met my husband, Albert Behar, in Sliven during the war. We got married in 1948 in Sofia. He was born on 8th November 1923 in Sliven. His mother tongue is Bulgarian. His father was a bank clerk, and, after 9th September 1944, his family left for Israel. My husband has a degree from the Agricultural University. He worked as a soil expert in the Institute of Soils. We have two children: a son, Valeri, and a daughter, Lidya, who both have families of their own. My son is a doctor, and my daughter is an economist. I have three grandchildren: Lidya's Roumen and Yassen Nikolov, and Valeri's Svilen Isaev.

After finishing university I worked in the People's Army of Bulgaria as a doctor for five years. I was discharged from the Military Institute I used to work at in 1956 because of my Jewish origin. Although the common explanation was a general lay-off, the real reason was the fact that I was a

Jew. Many other Jewish friends of mine who worked in the army were also discharged. That's how we realized what the actual reason was. For me it was indicative of the fact that anti-Semitism was still alive. This hurt us but we blamed everything on human errors that accompanied the practical realization of the party program. Moreover, in 1956 the April Plenum [of the Bulgarian Communist Party] was held, at which the cult of Stalin was deposed. Much later we realized that it wasn't only the people's fault, the totalitarian system itself was to blame.

We didn't feel any dictatorship after the 1950s. At that time we lived with the conscience that we, the communists, would make history. As long as a dictatorship existed and certain classes were oppressed, we justified its existence. [Editor's note: Linka is referring to the doctrine of 'the dictatorship of the proletariat'.] Materially, and in terms of the technical progress, the first years after 9th September 1944 were extremely difficult. We gradually improved our social position, starting from the end of the 1960s and during the 1970s, when we had already turned into a middle- class family. We never owned a flat, neither a villa, nor a car. Yet we could cover our needs for food, clothes, holidays, and so on, fairly well.

Our attitude towards the wars in Israel in 1967 [during the Six-Day-War] 16 and 1973 [during the Yom Kippur War] 17 was divided. On the one hand there was care and concern for our relatives there and the understanding that the people of this country had the right to live their own life. On the other hand, due to the aggressive propaganda and the ideological brainwash, it occurred to us at certain moments that those were actually unfair wars. That was one of the most crucial moments in our lives - we could neither entirely share the position of the Bulgarian government at that time, nor could we fully take Israel's side. Our greatest concern was that we wouldn't be able to contact our relatives in Israel.

I didn't visit Israel before the collapse of communism in 1989. I went there once afterwards. My husband didn't join me. Nobody forced us to terminate our relations with our closest relatives there, yet a certain self-restriction existed for sure. I rarely kept in touch with my relatives in the West, and they also avoided contact with us. Except for that one discharge in 1956, I never had the feeling that I was refused promotion because of my Jewish origin. My husband even had a leading position at the Institute of Soils. He became director.

My children were raised as Jews, but they are married to Bulgarians. They know everything about the war and what happened during the Holocaust. We celebrate Rosh Hashanah and Pesach. I celebrate Christmas with my son's family. We don't celebrate Easter. We keep the 'gastronomical' side of the Jewish traditions, and I have even handed them over to my daughter, who is also a master of Jewish specialties. Perhaps 70 % of my circle of friends are Jews, but I have always had friends among Bulgarians, too. I keep good relations with my cousins in Bulgaria, especially in Sofia. We meet at least once a week with some of them.

After 1989 we felt great relief. In the years after that many things concerning political rights and freedom, democracy as a whole and our way of living, became quite clear to us. It can't be simply be said that this change was only for the better. The feeling of spiritual liberation was later followed by economic difficulties.

As to our Jewishness, our life has definitely changed because there are more and more varied activities organized by the Jewish organizations in Sofia. We are pensioners and have a lot of spare time that needs to be filled. We found the resources for that within the Jewish community. We often

visit the Jewish People's House in Sofia, where we meet our friends. A lot of people from abroad have also recalled that we are Jews. All our relatives in the West, who have never thought of keeping close relations with us, contacted us after 1989. Every summer they come here from all over the world, and it makes us remember that we are Jews.

My personal convictions about the so-called Jewish problem, and how we could possibly solve it, have also evolved. While in the 1950s and 1960s, and even at the beginning of the 1970s, I used to think that the solution lay in assimilation, today I share a completely different view. Until recently I wasn't much interested in my roots, but as time goes by I indulge deeper and deeper into history. I used to think that assimilation was the only way to solve the Jewish problem in Bulgaria. I believed that assimilation would save me and my children from a new persecution against Jews. Now I don't think so any more because I see that assimilation hasn't been very helpful to the Jews. Yet I don't consider the pure fanatic isolation of the Jewry to be our way either. I don't see why religiosity should be related to the idea of belonging to the Jewry. One should recognize himself as a Jew even without being religious. I understand that the Jewry has survived thanks to its religion, yet I don't understand why I shouldn't be considered a Jew if I don't obey each law of the Jewish religious tradition.

Even during the communist era I didn't break my relations with the Jewish community and identified myself as a Jew. We have lived a more intensive Jewish life in recent years though. Maybe that's because we are already pensioners and the community somehow effectively replaces our relatives that we miss. We have definitely received support from the Jewish community in the years financially hardest for us: 1992-1995. Now we don't receive support to such an extent any more because our pensions are quite good for Bulgarian standards. Yet, until recently these funds helped us to survive. We received a financial support of 1,400 USD from Switzerland.

There were many important events after World War II, but in my opinion the most important thing for the future of the Jewry is a strong Jewish state recognized by the whole world and the existence of a real democracy in all the countries where Jewish communities exist. The recognition of the minorities' rights is also necessary. And I'm referring to the attitude of the different countries towards Jews and vice versa. Sometimes Jews are also responsible for unsuccessful relations. Jews have to comply with the life and the traditions of a country, and to integrate in its society, without ever forgetting that they are Jews. Extreme nationalism is not only rooted among anti-Semites and Israel's enemies but also among Jews themselves.

Glossary

1 Bessarabia
Historical area between the Prut and Dnestr rivers, in the southern part of Odessa region. Bessarabia was part of Russia until the Revolution of 1917. In 1918 it declared itself an independent republic, and later it united with Romania. The Treaty of Paris (1920) recognized the union but the Soviet Union never accepted this. In 1940 Romania was forced to cede Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina to the USSR. The two provinces had almost 4 million inhabitants, mostly Romanians. Although Romania reoccupied part of the territory during World War II the Romanian peace treaty of 1947 confirmed their belonging to the Soviet Union. Today it is part of Moldavia.

2 Kirkov, Georgi Yordanov (1867-1919)
Bulgarian journalist, poet. One of the founders of the Bulgarian Socialist Party, which was established in 1903.

3 Makedonski, Stephan
One of the founders of the Bulgarian operetta.

4 9th September 1944
The day of the communist takeover in Bulgaria. In September 1944 the Soviet Union unexpectedly declared war on Bulgaria. On 9th September 1944 the Fatherland Front, a broad left-wing coalition, deposed the government. Although the communists were in the minority in the Fatherland Front, they were the driving force in forming the coalition, and their position was strengthened by the presence of the Red Army in Bulgaria.

5 Dostoevsky, Fyodor (1821-1881)
Russian novelist, journalist and short-story writer whose psychological penetration into the human soul had a profound influence on the 20th century novel. His novels anticipated many of the ideas of Nietzsche and Freud. Dostoevsky's novels contain many autobiographical elements, but ultimately they deal with moral and philosophical issues. He presented interacting characters with contrasting views or ideas about freedom of choice, socialism, atheisms, good and evil, happiness and so forth.

6 Chekhov, Anton Pavlovich (1860-1904)
Russian short-story writer and dramatist. Chekhov's hundreds of stories concern human folly, the tragedy of triviality, and the oppression of banality. His characters are drawn with compassion and humor in a clear, simple style noted for its realistic detail. His focus on internal drama was an innovation that had enormous influence on both Russian and foreign literature. His success as a dramatist was assured when the Moscow Art Theater took his works and staged great productions of his masterpieces, such as Uncle Vanya or The Three Sisters.

7 Yovkov, Yordan (1880-1937)
Writer, playwright and poet - one of the classic writers of Bulgarian literature. He was born in Zheravna and spent a long time as a teacher in Dobrudja region. He also worked as a journalist and a librarian. He participated in the Balkan Wars and World War I. From 1921 to 1927 Yovkov worked in the Bulgarian legation in Bucharest, later he was removed to the Seal Department in Sofia. Yovkov's artistic world, transforming suffering into craving for beauty and ethics, is marked with a deep humanistic pathos. His works were translated into more than 37 languages.

8 St
Kiril and Methodii: The creators of the Slavic alphabet.

9 Iuchbunar
The poorest residential district in Sofia; the word is of Turkish origin and means 'the three wells'.

10 UYW
The Union of Young Workers. A communist youth organization, which was legally established in 1928 as a sub-organization of the Bulgarian Communist Youth Union. After the coup d'etat in 1934, when the parties in Bulgaria were banned, it went underground and became the strongest wing of the BCYU. Some 70% of the partisans in Bulgaria were members of it. In 1947 it was renamed Dimitrov's Communist Youth Union, after Georgi Dimitrov, the leader of the Bulgarian Communist Party at the time.

11 Chifuti
Derogatory nickname for Jews in Bulgarian.

12 Law for the Protection of the Nation
A comprehensive anti-Jewish legislation in Bulgaria was introduced after the outbreak of World War II. The 'Law for the Protection of the Nation' was officially promulgated in January 1941. According to this law, Jews did not have the right to own shops and factories. Jews had to wear the yellow star; Jewish houses had to display a special sign identifying it as being Jewish; Jews were dismissed from all posts in schools and universities. The internment of Jews in certain designated towns was legalized and all Jews were expulsed from Sofia in 1943. Jews were only allowed to go out into the streets for one or two hours a day. They were prohibited from using the main streets, from entering certain business establishments, and from attending places of entertainment. Their radios, automobiles, bicycles and other valuables were confiscated. From 1941 on Jewish males were sent to forced labor battalions and ordered to do extremely hard work in mountains, forests and road construction. In occupied Macedonia and Thrace the Bulgarians treated the Jews with exceptional cruelty. The Jews from these areas were deported to concentration camps, while the plans for the deportation of Jews from Bulgaria was halted by a protest movement launched by the vice-chairman of the Bulgarian Parliament.

13 Legionaries
Members of the Union of the Bulgarian National Legions. The UBNL was a pro-fascist non-governmental organization, established in 1930. It aimed at building a corporate totalitarian state on the basis of military centralism, following the model of Hitler's Germany and Mussolini's Italy. It existed until 1944.

14 Brannik
Pro-fascist youth organization. It started functioning after the Defence of the Nation Act was passed in 1939 and the Bulgarian government forged its pro-German policy. The Branniks regularly maltreated Jews.

15 **24th May 1943**

Protest by a group of members of parliament, led by the chairman of the National Assembly, Dimitar Peshev, as well by a large section of Bulgarian society, against the deportation of the Jews, which culminated in a great demonstration on 24 May 1943, when thousands of people, led by members of parliament, the Eastern Orthodox Church, political parties and non-governmental organizations, stood out against the deportation of Bulgarian Jews. Although there was no official document banning deportation, Bulgarian Jews were saved, unlike ones from Aegean Thrace and Macedonia.

16 **Six-Day-War**

The first strikes of the Six-Day-War happened on June 5th, 1967 by the Israeli Air Force. The entire war only lasted 132 hours and 30 minutes. The fighting on the Egyptian side only lasted four days, while fighting on the Jordanian side lasted three. Despite the short length of the war, this was one of the most dramatic and devastating wars ever fought between Israel and all of the Arab nations. This war resulted in a depression that lasted for many years after it ended. The Six-Day-War increased tension between the Arab nations and the Western World because of the change in mentalities and political orientations of the Arab nations.

17 **Yom Kippur War**

The Arab-Israeli War of 1973, also known as the Yom Kippur War or the Ramadan War, was a war between Israel on one side and Egypt and Syria on the other side. It was the fourth major military confrontation between Israel and the Arab states. The war lasted for three weeks: it started on 6th October, 1973 and ended on 22nd October on the Syrian front and on 26th October on the Egyptian front.