

The Mizrahys Before Dan Mizrahy's Departure For Palestine



Here is my family before my departure for Palestine, in 1941. Front row, right to left: me, Dan Mizrahy, my mother, Henriette Mizrahy [nee Schonfeld], my sister, Mira Cotin [nee Mizrahy]. In the back row, you can see my father, Moscu Mizrahy.

Right before I was about to begin the 5th secondary grade at the 'Spiru Haret' High School and the 6th year at the Academy, in September 1940, the anti-Jewish laws were passed. With them, the wings of my childhood's smooth flight were broken. I was eliminated from the Academy and from the 'Spiru Haret' High School. My sister, in her turn, was about to enter the 7th grade at the 'Regina Maria' High School. She was left outside too. In order to continue our education, we were registered at the high schools that belonged to the Jewish community in Bucharest: it was 'Focsaneanu' for my sister and 'Cultura' for me. Several scores of children were crammed into a 20-square-meter room and had to sit three at a desk, in an inadequate building, first on Zborului Street, then on Sf. Ioan Nou Street. The teachers, who were all Jewish, did their best to make classes look professional.

At the 'Cultura' Jewish High School, where I was in the 5th grade, I found out from my former desk mate from the 'Spiru Haret', Osias Rolling, about a Palestinian Office. He told me it was in charge of the emigration of the youth to Palestine. But the information was vague, nebulous even. The idea to leave began to yield in my head. In February 1941 things became clear. Two groups of young Jews, 200-300 each, were set to leave one week apart from each other, accompanied by a few clerks of the Palestinian Office. They were to travel by boat to Istanbul, then by train. The two ships were scheduled to leave on 21st March - the 'Dacia' - and on 29th March the 'Regele Carol I'.

29th March was my mother's birthday and a holiday for the Mizrahy household... So the day of 29th March 1941 came. It was a late winter morning with clouds and thaw. We woke up at dawn. We wished our mother 'Happy birthday!' with voices drowned in tears. She thanked us with the same emotions. My father, who had been discharged recently and had had his dignity of being a good

Romanian citizen offended, sought to encourage us and to inspire us with a minimum of optimism. 'Trust me' - these were the last words which he told me on the platform of the North Railroad Station, as I was leaving towards the unknown, towards Palestine.