

Berta Kamhi



This is a photo of my mother Berta Kamhi, nee Koren, during the internment in Kyustendil in 1943. In the beginning of June 1944 our whole family was interned to Pleven, the Kailuka area, where a concentration camp had been built. We were shut in a wooden shed. They put it on fire during the night and my mother was burned alive. My mother had a long dress which got stuck between the boards of the house and she could not get out. I tried to pull her out, but I could not. My mother worked from home. She had a sewing machine and made handkerchiefs and singlets. We, the children, helped her. My brother Perets Albert Kamhi and I went to the central market and sold the so-called 'ikonomia' – very fine sand, which was used in dish washing. We offered it packed. We also sold toothpicks, paint and shoelaces. We sold them by going from house to house, and we got the goods from the merchants who owned shops. My mother had three brothers and three sisters.

The eldest was Bohor Koen, who was a merchant and had six children. Next were Nissim Koen, whom I already mentioned, Miriam, Liza, who had an ironware store with her husband David, Matilda and David, who left for Palestine in 1926. They all had families and children but I have met only David's son Yoske, whom I met during my visit to Israel in 1985. At the beginning of June 1944 our whole family was interned to Pleven, the Kailuka area, where a concentration camp had been built. We were shut in a wooden shed. They put it on fire during the night and my mother was burned alive. My mother had a long dress which got stuck between the boards of the house and she could not get out. I tried to pull her out, but I could not.