

The Saltiel Family Before Deportation



This is my family with the children of the landlady of the house in a village near Varna where we were interned waiting for the boat, which had to take us to Israel [then Palestine]. From left to right are: my mother Rebecca, I, my father Solomon and my brother Yako. At that time my other brothers Haim and Albert were sent to labor camps. The photo was taken in 1941.

In 1941 the government ordered that all Jews, who had foreign citizenship and who were not protected by the relevant country should leave Bulgaria. Since my father was a Serbian subject, we had to leave for Varna. Our whole family, that is, my parents, my younger brother and I – because we still did not have Bulgarian passports and were regarded as Serbian nationals – were ordered to go to Varna and wait for transport to Israel.

So we went to Varna, but before that we took pictures with our friends, relatives, and of our house. We settled in a village near Varna waiting for the ship. Meanwhile, some Bulgarian friends of ours started looking for ways to cancel our deportation order. One of them was Nesho Draganov, former officer of the reserve, who had connections with the police. While we were there, he managed to arrange an order allowing us to remain in Bulgaria and return home. One of the ships, which we probably would have boarded, sank at sea and all passengers drowned.