

The Gatlan Family



This family picture was taken in Braila, in the 1940s. In this photo I'm in the middle , on the right is my father, Noe Gatlan and on the left is my mother, Rebeca Gatlan.

My father was a handsome man. My mother was a beautiful woman too, and my sister was extremely beautiful. They used to call me 'the Gypsy girl' at home, because I was darker in complexion as well; but my sister was fair-haired and she was a gorgeous girl. It's a shame she died. I still keep photos of her and my parents in the bedroom, and I kiss them every morning.

We had taken pictures for the passport, because we wanted to go to Israel. I was pretty young at the time when we first thought of emigrating. It was my mother who really wanted to go - my father wasn't too enthusiastic about it. The answer to our application was negative, and we didn't file a new one, because my father had changed his mind - he didn't want to leave anymore. He had reacted to my mother's impulse and had filed the application more or less aware of what it implied.

When the State of Israel was created, in 1948, I was still young. My grandmother left for Israel because her daughter was already there. And, besides, she really wanted to get to Israel. She felt all right here too, but she wanted to go. I wanted to go too. I was 12 or 13 back then and I would have been better off if I had left.

Now it's difficult for me to do that. But I would like to spend a month or so in Israel. Of course, I'd like to go there. What we can see from here is nothing compared to what really is there - and we should see it with our own eyes. Although it's a small country, it's very beautiful, and people work really hard there.

There's a lot of fighting going on there, because Israel is surrounded by enemy states. Naturally, their security forces are unequalled - the Mossad is the best of all the secret services. Life goes on there. But, things have got quite unpleasant lately, because you never know what might happen to you if you get on a bus or enter a club. The situation has worsened these last years, but still, life goes on. I don't think there is one single family who didn't lose someone because of what's going on, because of the Palestinians. I hope it will all end once and for all, in peace.