

Sofi Danon-Moshe In Plovdiv



This is me. The photo was taken in Plovdiv during my stay with my mother's relatives. The year was probably 1924 or 1926. There's no stamp of a photo shop on the back of the photo. I have written with big letters in color pencils: "SOFI DANON?". I was born in Pazardzhik on 28th July 1923. My grandparents used to speak Ladino. I think that their food was kosher and they kept all the holidays and rituals, much more than we did later in Pazardzhik. I remember there was a church

next to our house. It was called 'Sveti Georgi.'? And when the local people came out of their houses during Easter with burning candles in their hands I was very curious and used to lift the curtain a little so that I could see them. Their silhouettes were extremely beautiful. My grandmother didn't allow me to look at them; she used to tell me that they were in fact looking for a Jewish child. So she instilled negative feelings in me while I was still a child. As a matter of fact, my grandmother's main task was to instill fear in me because she was the one who was afraid. She was afraid that the Christians would harm me because they had condemned the Jews for crucifying Jesus Christ. Actually, I started feeling somehow different at that time. There was a patriarchal order in my kin's home in Plovdiv. I remember that there were two families living in the house: Grandfather Nissim's and his brother Yako's. They were 'dzhamdzhii' [glaziers]: they delivered the 'dzhams' [window-glass] but didn't have their own shop. I remember that they lived in one enormous living room. I can't describe how big it was: in one part of it slept Grandfather Nissim's family, in another Yako's. The families followed a particular order depending on superiority: my grandfather was first, then my grandmother, their children and so on. There wasn't a screen of any kind in the living room. There were some rather big closets in which the mattresses, the quilts and the pillows were put. They were hidden there during the day and in the evenings they were arranged on the floor.