

Mois Saltiel In Front Of His House



This is me in front of my house. The photo was taken in Sofia in 1941.

I had various jobs. I started as a worker in the workshop owned by Nersez Shirinyan, later between 1941 and 1942 I worked as a clerk in the lawyer's office of Yosef Moshev. I did not have any trouble at work for being a Jew. My first boss was an Armenian and the second one a Jew, so there were no problems.

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.

When the Tshavim association was forbidden in 1941/42, I became a member of the Jewish state community center, which had a library on the corner of Stamboliiski Blvd and Opalchenska Street. Various groups formed there and some of them became members of the UYW. We read a lot, we presented various papers, went on excursions etc. At that time the anti-Jewish legislation was adopted – the Law for the Protection of the Nation, together with the fascist legislation – and we became involved in anti-fascist activities.