

## Mariika Samuil Arditi



This is a photo of my mother Mariika Samuil Arditi, nee Uziel, taken in Sofia in the 1940s. My mother Mariika Samuil Arditi was born in 1906 in Sofia, but her father was from the village of Kalishte, Radomir region. She had only elementary education but was intelligent by nature. She insisted on calling herself a Jew and brought home to us that the Jewish people are clever and that I shouldn't make an exception to this rule. She was tolerant to all nations. She had a gypsy woman for a friend; our house was always crowded with kadin [Turkish for married women] and so on. That's why I think the Balkans are the midpoint of the greatest culture in this world and I am convinced that it is a fortune that so many ethnic communities live in one and the same place. My mother was an extremely beautiful woman. She became a seller in a perfumery as early as the age of 14. Once a wagon with perfumes was arranged outside and my mother was set to sell them. My father passed by chance and bought a bar of soap for shaving. That's how he met her. That happened in 1927. It was raining one the day of their first date. He was waiting for her in front of the Halite trading center and my mother was speeding with the umbrella so much so that she fell over and tore her, as my father used to say, 'veiling' stockings. When they had a quarrel later she used to say: 'Don't think I am nuts on you!' and he would calmly reply: 'You don't say; you nearly died for me, remember the veiling stockings?' They got married the same year in Sofia's [Great] Synagogue. .