

# The Family Of Adela Hinkova At The Danube Port



This photo was taken in Vidin in the 1930s. The Danube port can be seen in the photo. We are waiting for the ship, by which my brother is returning on as director of a factory. He was probably coming from some exhibition abroad. We are wearing our special clothes to meet him. My father Leon Illel is first from left to right, next to him is my brother Santo Illel with his wife Eti. I'm the first from right to left, next to me is my mother, Matilda Illel, nee Mitrani, wearing a hat and next to her is Eti's aunt Zelma. Next to Zelma is Sophie, who is a niece of my father. She was the most famous seamstress in Vidin. My father is wearing a bowler hat and a specially designed costume. I still keep the walking stick he is holding on this photo. My father was responsible for our moral upbringing. I don't know how many brothers he had, I know that he had a lot of cousins. He didn't go to school. As a child, he worked as a servant. He knew very little: to sign his name in Latin letters and to use some Jewish alphabet, consisting of pothooks. He had a big notebook for the accounts. He was a naturally intelligent man, able to understand and learn much about people. He knew a lot of short stories and proverbs. He was very eloquent and everyone loved listening to him. My father was a very nice man. He loved people very much and they loved him, too. They called him Bai [uncle] Aslan the 'Mangal Komuru' [Turkish for 'charcoal vendor']. Aslan means 'lion' in Turkish. He knew many languages for his times. He knew five languages. We spoke only Spanish at home. We spoke Bulgarian very rarely. When he went to work, he spoke Turkish and Wallachian. If he hadn't known Wallachian, he wouldn't have been able to do his job. Fifty percent of the people at the market, where he had a shop, were Wallachians. He also spoke the Gypsy [Roma] language, because there were a lot of gypsies in Vidin. With his first wife, Duda, my father had four children: two sons and two daughters. My mother, his second wife, arrived in Bulgaria from Greece with her parents, probably in 1912 or 1913. My mother's family lived in a number of places. My mother told me that they lived in Xanthi and Dedeagac. They lived in Turkey and after the First Balkan War they lived in Greece. My mother could speak Greek and Turkish very well. She also knew Bulgarian, but not very well. She learned it when they moved to Vidin. Her father was a chazzan. Her parents educated their children well. Their son Solomon and their daughter with her husband Bentsion

remained in Greece, while they came to Bulgaria with my mother, who was already 25 years old. They married her to my father, who was 25 years older than her. Santo and I are both from my father's second marriage. They always paid more attention to him, because he was a son, a man. The boy in our family was always much respected. He had privileges, for example, when he became 13 years old, he got more food, because he was a boy and so on.