

Sonya Lazarova, Her Friend Victoria, Her Mother Berta And Sister Zivi



From left to right in the picture are: I, my friend Victoria, my mother Berta Nusan (nee Goldenberg) and my sister Zivi Varsano (nee Nusan). The photo was taken in 1939-1940 in Sofia. I was three years old when my family decided to leave Ruse and move to Sofia. We settled on the fifth, i.e. last, floor of a building on Maria Luiza Street, as it was the cheapest one. We used to rent it until our internment in 1943. There was a yard in which we, the children used to play draughts, 'people's ball', rope. The neighbors in the block of apartments were mostly Bulgarians, but other Jewish families also lived in the blocks, which surrounded the common backyard. Our family inhabited a kitchen and two rooms. My parents used to sleep in one of the rooms, while we, the girls, slept in the other one. My brother used to sleep in the kitchen. The furniture was very modest. There were beds, tables and a dresser. Instead of a wardrobe we used to hang our clothes on a hat and coat rack, which we covered with a piece of cloth. We used a firewood-burning stove. There was a toilet in the hallway and running water in the kitchen, yet there was no bath. My sisters used to go to the public city bath, and when I was a little girl I used to be washed in a trough with heated water. We used to sleep two in one bed, head to toe. And when my mother woke us in the morning she always confused our names because she could never recognize us in this position. Actually all of us always woke up at the same time. At that time Sofia used to be calm, clean and green. It wasn't crowded with enormous blocks of apartments and there was no terrible deafening noise. Jews were dispersed all over the city, but mostly in Luchbunar, where the poorer ones used to live.