

Yosif Sabitai's Tombstone



This is a photo of my family at my father's grave: my mother Sarina Sabitai, her step-mother Esther and my husband Haim Blumenfeld. On the left are my sister Ziumbiula, myself, behind me is my sister Rebecca and in front of me is my elder daughter Herzelina. The photo was taken in the 1960s. My father, Josif Sabitai, was born in Sofia in 1900. He was a tinsmith and plumber. In 1928, a year before I was born, the winter was severely cold. Many water pipes and taps had cracked. That created plenty of work for my father and, putting a lot of efforts into it, he managed to make his fortune. And in the place of the one-roomed house, he built a house with two rooms, kitchen

and a toilet inside, which was a great rarity at that time. We had hot water from a coal-heated boiler, too, which my father, being a very skilled craftsman, had connected to the stove. Four children were born in that house - one boy and three girls (including me). All the children used to sleep in the same room. My parents occupied the smaller room. Our family was comparatively well off because my father had succeeded in changing his fortune through his work as a tinsmith and plumber, and had even managed to open a scrap warehouse. The house he had built was at the corner of Pernik and Positano and for that time, it was one of the best in the quarter. In 1943 we were interned to the town of Ferdinand [today Montana]. We were isolated there in a Jewish quarter and were permitted to go out for only two hours a day. Something funny happened there. My father had an employee from Ferdinand in his tinsmith workshop in Sofia - he was called Peno. This man Peno had a tinsmith workshop in Ferdinand. My father got in touch with him and he became Peno's worker. We were not allowed to work then, but my father used to sneak into his workshop to help him. During the internment, Jewish men endured an incredible stress and it was their shoulders, which were overburdened with worries to provide for their families. Many young men died due to the huge torment they were subjected to. These include my father, too, who died at the age of 47. The fathers of a number of my relatives and friends passed away young as a result of what they had lived through.