

Dan Mizrahy As A Young Man



This is a photograph of me, Dan Mizrahy, in Jerusalem in 1945. The photograph was taken for my family in Romania, whom I hadn't seen in four years.

In Palestine, once the European war had ended, the problem of receiving the refugees - especially the Holocaust survivors - was becoming more and more acute. Hundreds of thousands of Jews who were refugees or had been liberated from camps or discharged from the allied armies were in search of a shelter. 'Jidanii to Palestine!' Generations of children had been born and raised with this slogan in many corners of Europe. This was not typical for Bucharest only, as I had imagined in my childhood. But the English wouldn't have them in Palestine. The way they saw it in 1945, nothing had happened since 1939, when they had issued the famous 'white book' with the 'numerus clausus,' limiting the number of the Jews in Palestine to 500,000 and not one single more! The Jewish dissatisfaction with the 'closed borders' began to be expressed in ways that were more radical ways than verbal or written protests. An anti-English campaign was born. In a short while, there were overt acts of violence - more or less organized. Of course, the police didn't just wait. There were house searches, arrests, and 'emergency statuses.'

Like any other rational being, I was horrified by the atrocities that kept being revealed about the systematic extermination of six million Jews whose only fault had been their ethnic origin. I understood the urgent need of the refugees to find a home in Palestine. I think it was on 27th October 1945 that Gaby, my first-degree cousin, received a telegram from his parents. They told him they had managed to get his repatriation approved and secured him a ticket aboard the 'Transilvania.' The ship, which was carrying Jewish emigrants from Romania, was to lay anchor in

Haifa on Wednesday, 28th October. Gaby was tremendously happy. I've already mentioned that I felt devastated. In that moment I realized that this is what I wanted for myself too. A few hours later I went to work, to Rina's, and I found her with a long face. She gave me a hug and... told me that my uncle in Tel Aviv had called. He asked her to tell me to contact him as soon as possible, because... there was a telegram from my parents! He had also told her what it read: 'Transilvania arrive jeudi Haifa. Passage retour paye, t'attendons!' [French: '[The] Transilvania arriving Haifa Thursday. Return ticket paid. Waiting for you!'] My feet became numb with excitement. I started to cry. I was crying because I was happy, but also because I had to part with people I loved...