

Haim Navon And His Family



This is a picture of my mother Malka Natan's family from 1898 or 1899, taken in Konstanta, Romania. The woman sitting in the chair is my grandmother Belina Navon. The man standing behind her is my grandfather Haim Navon. Their children, from left to right: Ticko, Sharlota, Menaho and Ernestina. My ancestors belonged to that part of the Jewry, which came to Bulgaria from Spain - they were Sephardi Jews. The fact that my grandmothers, grandfathers and uncles spoke Ladino was proof of that. My grandparents were probably religious because there were hardly any non-religious people in their generation. I don't know about my grandfathers, but my grandmothers used to wear secular clothes. I remember my mother telling me about the Jewish community in Constanta, which differed a lot from the one in Bessarabia, where Jews used to wear caftans and payot and had a completely different way of living. My grandfathers were merchants. Both my grandparents and my parents were neither very poor nor very rich. My mother had two

sisters, Sharlota and Ernestina Navon, and two brothers, Menaho and Ticko Navon. She was the youngest one. Her sisters were housewives. Ernestina was also married to a Bulgarian. My parents kept in touch with their relatives in Bulgaria more than with those that lived in Israel or in other places. We didn't have enough money, opportunities or desire to visit them. [Editor's note: In totalitarian times continued relations with relatives in Israel would have had a negative impact on the family's situation in Bulgaria. On the other hand, an eventual trip to Israel was beyond their financial capacities.] All of them have already died: Menaho and Ticko in Romania, Sharlota in Israel, and Ernestina in Bulgaria.