

Isak Koen In His Army Uniform



This is Isak Koen when he was in the Royal Yugoslav Army. The photo was taken in Belgrade in the 1930s. He had some sort of rank. Maybe he was some kind of officer. We called Isak 'Red Isak' because he was a redhead. He was the only redhead among the Kalefs. Imagine this coincidence, he was my grandmother's sister Lenka Koen's son. My sister Breda and I were both brunette but both my sister and I gave birth to redheads. And now Breda's daughter, Simonida, gave birth to a redheaded baby. When the war began my mother told him, 'Isace, you are healthy, innocent, join the Partisans. Run to the forest to save yourself. I will help you. I will go with you to Avala [A 511 meter peak, 18 km south of Belgrade], and you flee to the forest, so that you can save yourself.' The other young people had been taken away for work. And Mother helped him get to the forest. But instead of going further, imagine, he came back. In the end they caught him. None of them

were saved.