

## The Kohen Family With Friends In Israel



This family picture was taken in 1965 in Israel. From left to right are: Franklina (daughter of my sister Suzi Sami Eshkenazi, nee Solomonova), Mordo (the grandson of Solomon Avramov Solomonov, my father's brother), my husband Ezra Samuil Kohen, my mother Zhana Santo Solomonova, nee Almalech, my father Santo Avramov Solomonov and my sister Suzi. The others are friends, whom I don't know. I'm not in the picture because I wasn't in Israel at that time. My husband Ezra Samuil Kohen and I met in Sofia - we were both students at Sofia University. Ezra studied chemistry and later he started working in Himkombinat [Chemical plant] in Dimitrovgrad. He had a first cousin in Stara Zagora. His first cousin brought him to Stara Zagora in order to introduce us to one another and it occurred that we actually knew each other already. Thus our relationship began. We went for walks and chatted. We were fiancés for two or three years before we got married - he used to come to Stara Zagora in order to meet his cousin and me. We used to write to each other. My parents didn't oppose to our wedding. The reason was that before that I had had a love affair with a young Jewish man, who graduated in medicine. He insisted on leaving for Israel because the graduates were immediately distributed to work [in Bulgaria]. I would have needed to marry him and leave with him. At that time my mother wrote a letter, which read: 'My heart would start bleeding if you also move there just like your sister did...' And then that boy and I split up because of my mother. The second time I decided to get married she didn't interfere. She and my father decided that since they had already stopped me once, they wouldn't tell me what to do again. And so she didn't withhold me from doing it. My mother had a really strong desire to move to Israel and be with her children there. To the very last moment she thought that I would also leave. She didn't expect me to say 'no'. Finally my parents left for Israel as my mother's desire to leave and join my sister and her family there got the upper hand of it. The fact that many of their friends had already left was also of importance.