

## Victor Baruh And Shulamit Shamir



This is a photo of me and Shulamit Shamir, the spouse of Itzhak Shamir, Israel's Prime Minister. It was taken at the Council of Ministers in Tel Aviv in 1994 by my nephew, Nir Baruh. I went to Israel five times in those years. I liked the country very much - it experienced rapid development and an excellent welfare system. The Bulgarian Jews in Israel are highly regarded for their honesty and diligence, thus the breakdown in diplomatic ties didn't change much. They felt a great nostalgia - they were very excited when they came back to Bulgaria. In Israel they have an organization, some dance clubs, they sew traditional costumes, they dance the horo [traditional Bulgarian dances], sing Bulgarian songs and cry. Bulgaria was the only country from the Eastern Block that permitted the free emigration of Jews to Israel - Georgi Dimitrov had a role in this. 90% of the Bulgarian Jews left by 1949. [Editors note: before the communist take-over Jews emigrated to Israel, the US or Western Europe in great number from most of the Eastern European countries.] In 1967 under the pressure of the Soviet Union Bulgaria broke diplomatic ties with Israel. Only Romania kept them. But the contacts with Israel never ceased, I went to Israel five times in those years. I liked the country very much - it experienced rapid development and an excellent welfare system. The Bulgarian Jews in Israel are highly regarded for their honesty and diligence, thus the breakdown in diplomatic ties didn't change much.