

Josef Baruhovic's Grandfather, Josef Izrael, With His Two Daughters, Simha Baruhovic And Erna Kohen, And Josef As A Baby



This is my maternal grandfather, Jozef Izrael, with me in his lap, my Aunt Erna (center) and my mother Simha Baruhovic (right). The picture was taken somewhere near Sarajevo in the summer of 1936.

My mati, as we called my mother, Simha (Sida) Baruhovic (maiden name - Izrael), was born in 1906 to a large Sarajevo family. She had three brothers and three sisters, and they all lived comfortably in Sarajevo where my grandfather, Josef Izrael, made a good living off the shares he owned in various companies.

He indulged his children and catered to their interests. For instance, he sent my mother to Vienna for voice lessons when she was a young woman. She had a wonderful voice and she tried to encourage us to appreciate music as much as she did.

My aunt Erna and her husband David Kohen were introduced by a matchmaker. I think that Erna was the one responsible for my parents' match.

During WWI my grandfather was a supplier for the Austro-Hungarian army. I do not know what he supplied, but I imagine it was food products. After the war he began collecting shares in companies and then lived off the dividends.

He had shares in a factory that produced matches, soda water and in the Kljuc factory, which was an apparel company. He was a very smart and capable man, and that was probably why he was given the nickname Bismark.

His friends and family must have believed that he exhibited the wisdom and intelligence of the renowned statesman. Despite his knowledge, he suffered from bad health and the Sarajevo climate only exacerbated it. To avoid health problems, he spent winters in a hotel in Herceg Novi, on the Adriatic coast.

He died in 1935 in Mostar at my mother's sister Erna's house. His body was transported back to Sarajevo where he was buried. He was lucky to have died "in bed" and not in a Nazi crematorium, as was the fate of many of my family members and so many other Jews here.