

## Victoria Behar



This is a recent picture of me, taken in Sofia in 2001. I've never been a member of the Communist Party. But I lived in such a family and after the changes in 1989, I think that despite all that was said then and is being said now about these 45 years, we lived better then. We lived better because we had a secure job, there weren't so many beggars, no prostitution; no such crimes. Well, there were maybe a few hundred people who lived better than us then, but the rest as a whole lived better than now. To take my family as an example: I could always afford to bring my grandchildren some present then, and I can't afford it now. Nowadays, there are some attitudes towards us, Jews, that worry me. Even during the Holocaust in Bulgaria, the anti-Jewish laws didn't make the Bulgarians anti-Semites. On the contrary, they sympathized with us, helped us. I told you what wonderful people the family of my father's employer were. And now, I hear all the time, that we, the Jews, are ruling the world, that we are the most well-off nowadays. Let's not talk about the Holocaust any more. I feel bad when I hear such things. I feel particularly bad when I hear them talk about Solomon Passy, the present foreign minister of Bulgaria, complaining that a Jew is leading the Bulgarian diplomacy. He is a Bulgarian citizen, after all! My parents' families weren't

deeply religious, but all Jewish holidays were observed mostly by all relatives getting together. My father went to the synagogue twice a year - on Rosh Hashanah and on Pesach. I also continued this tradition, and so does my family. Especially after my husband died in 1995, my peers and the older Jews from Bet Am became my family. At home I keep some things to remind me of the past - photos and albums, the videotape sent to me by the Steven Spielberg Foundation after my participation in the Shoah project. The people at Bet Am take good care about us and help us, and we receive aid from various international Jewish organizations. I wouldn't want to bother my sons, their families, my grandchildren. Such are the times nowadays?