

Avram, Dona And Matilda Kalef And Friends



This is a picture of my mother and father, Avram and Dona Kalef, and my grandmother Matilda Kalef with some other people out in the nature. The photo was taken in Belgrade. Grandmother always opened the store at four and was there until seven. On her way home she went by Pelivan, a pastry shop on Kralja Petra Street, right near the Jewish community building, close to Gospodar Jovanova Street, on the left side where the Jewish community is. There she always bought us some sweets. She never came home without something for her granddaughters. She ate her dinner. Then her friends from the neighborhood came to play cards. They stayed until ten. It was a mixed group of men and women. Then she got things ready for the next day's lunch until midnight or one in the morning. Her work day was about 20 hours long. Maybe she slept for four hours. She was a phenomenal woman. My father was a diabetic and had to pay a lot of attention to what he ate. It

was real trouble with Father. He was the first person to have a wheelchair in Belgrade. It was made especially for him. I don't know who made it or where it came from. There was a young man who pushed the chair, dressed him and put him in bed. Despite all of that he was incredible: full of energy, full of humor, he didn't give up, he wanted to go everywhere. He educated himself. All kids from Jewish families, they all took great care about educating themselves: to learn languages, etc. It was very important. My father didn't wear a kippah nor did he put on a tallit. He couldn't go to the synagogue because of the wheelchair. My mother was born in Ljubljana, Slovenia, in 1909. Her name at birth was Antonija Ograjensek. Her mother died when she was very young and her siblings were scattered all around. When she was 18 or 19 she came to Belgrade to visit her sister who was living here. That is when she met my father. I don't know how my parents met. I never asked. My mother was very pretty and young and my father fell in love with her. She met him when she was about 20. They married very soon after they met. I don't know exactly when, maybe it was 1928.