

David Yako Cohen



This is my father David Yako Cohen. The picture was taken in Sliven in 1940. My father was born in Aytos in 1898. I don't know what kind of education he had. He started working at a very early age. He was a very strict man and I was afraid of him. He never beat me, but every time he raised his voice, I was dying of fear. Actually I didn't know him. Now I realize that at the time of his death he was in fact quite a young man - only 44 years old. His friends were mostly Bulgarians: a watchmaker, a factory-owner, and a furniture manufacturer. My father was a very worldly person. He wasn't religious, but he insisted on all of us being at home for dinner. He never stayed in the

tavern like most Bulgarians used to do. There were several Bulgarian families, with whom we kept very close friendly relations. We even taught them several Spanish words. My father had a shop in Sliven, which he actually rented. We never owned anything. He used to sell maize and flour. He was a representative of the Big Bulgarian Mills [co-operation]. We were neither poor, nor rich. My father didn't work alone in that shop. I remember, for example, that there was a Turk, a carter, who used to help him. There were other representatives of the Bulgarian Mills in the town too; he wasn't the only one. My father was the soul of all the Jewish holidays we celebrated at home. He wasn't religious and we didn't even speak Ladino at home.