

Leon Lazarov's Family



The picture was taken in Kyustendil in 1922 or 1923. This is the whole family. In the bottom row are: My paternal grandpa Aron Solomon Lazar (first from right), my granny Sara Lazar, nee Mevorah (third from right) and I am sitting between them. My cousin - the son of Oro Bohor Samokovliiska, nee Lazar, my father's sister, is sitting on the ground, and David Samokovliiski, her husband, is standing above him (first from left). My father's elder sister Oro is also here and furthermore there are his brother Dr Mordehai Lazar (second row, second from right) as well as his wife Bliumeta Lazar, who spoke many languages.

My uncle Efraim Lazar, my father's younger brother, is pictured first from left, in the second row from the top, and next to him is Bikush with his wife. Viza, one of his three sisters is here in the top row, first from left. Next to her are Albert and Buka.

My paternal grandfather Aron Solomon Lazar was born in 1860 in Kyustendil. I don't know if he ever attended school, but he was very talented and was a very respected man. He had a small shop in Kyustendil, in which he used to work with my father and his other son. At home he used to speak with granny and us only in Ladino. He had three brothers - Yosef, Ruben and Yako - but I remember anything about them. I don't even recall having met them. I remember one of them coming to visit, but for what reason and from where - I don't know. I was very young at that time.

My paternal grandmother's name was Sara Lazar, nee Mevorah. She was born in Kyustendil, too. I hardly remember her. In my memories I see her with a checkered dress. My maternal grandparent's family was an example of a good family. I think she had an older sister called Lialu. My granny and my mom took care of the house. When I moved to Sofia along with my mother, my father and my brother, my paternal grandparents remained in Kyustendil.

My father Nissim Bohor Lazar was born in June 1888 in Kyustendil. He had two brothers - Mordehai and Efraim - and three sisters - Oro, Sofi and Viza. They were all born in Kyustendil. My father was a very strict and just man. I had respect for him. I remember when I was a child he used to give me two levs in order to buy some sweets. Although, instead of buying sweets I used the money to gamble. There was a special place where one could play roulette, and I usually laid down all the money I had. It was a smallish sum but it often happened that I lost all of it. When my father realized this, he became angry about it and made me promise him that I would never ever gamble again. I did promise him this and so it remained. Even today I wouldn't play cards and I have never regretted that.