

Sarina Saltiel With Her Grandson Tony



This is a picture of my mother, Sarina Saltiel, nee Venezia, and my son Tony Saltiel. It was taken in the 1960s, but I don't know where exactly.

My mother's life changed a lot after the war. Everything changed. Thessaloniki's physiognomy was very different because so many Jews were lost. Very few of us were left. My mother had five or six friends she knew before the war and she spent her time with them. They were Jewish.

In fact my mother took the initiative and created again a society, an association of Jewish women called WIZO. WIZO was inactive during this time and my mother and some of her friends took initiative and they gathered and decided to continue this work. After the war she was the first president and kept the presidency for six consecutive years. Before the war I don't think she participated. We were not here. She took this initiative because she wanted to contribute. She could feel something ought to be done. But they didn't collect much money, as there simply wasn't any money at the time. The work was mostly social, mainly in Thessaloniki.

Besides WIZO, my mother had no other dealings with the Community. She went to the synagogue because my grandfather was quite religious. Not excessively, but he honored the traditions. But I didn't see any change in my mother after the war. She was a sociable person. She went out very much. And because she was a widow, and, unfortunately, there were many widows who were available for company they went out together. They met in houses, in our house or in some other house. With them she only spoke in French, and also in Greek, but not in Judeo-Spanish.

My mother didn't go on vacation. I don't think she had political beliefs. Not that this was something that didn't preoccupy her. She had a very good relationship with her grandchildren. But she didn't stay with them at night because they had somebody at home permanently.