

Lyubomir And Yanita Punchevi



These are my grandchildren Lyubomir Punchev (1970, first from right on the picture) and Yanita Puncheva (1973). Their age difference is 1 year and 8 months, so he is 5 years old here and she is three years old. Both of them are children of my daughter Streya Mayer Puncheva (nee Alhalel). This picture was taken in 1975 in Vidin [port city on the right bank of the Danube in Bulgaria, 220 km. away from Sofia].

My daughter Streya Mayer Puncheva was born in 1949. She graduated from the chemical technical school in Vidin. She has been working as a chemist in the local meat processing plant for some years. His younger sister Sheli was born in 1954 and is a construction engineer. I have grandchildren only from Streya, who also worked in the municipality in Vidin. My grandson Lyubomir, who is director of Bulbank in Sofia, also has children. Their names are Konstantin and Mihaela.

My granddaughter Yanita lives in a kibbutz now. She has a daughter Viara, who is married, but I do not know her new family name. My husband has a sister, with whom I have always got on very well. Her name is Lea Yosef Halfon (nee Alhalel). She was also born in Vidin in 1915. She has always been a housewife and she lives in Beit-Avot (Israel) with her family. Her husband's name is Yosef Halfon. Their son is Simanto Yosef Halfon. I went to Israel twice with my husband before 10th November 1989 [on this date after 35 years of rule, Communist Party leader Todor Zhivkov was replaced by the hitherto Prime Minister Peter Mladenov who changed the Bulgarian Communist Party's name to Socialist Party]. The first was in 1964 and the second in 1973. The third time was in 1993. I see the remarkable difference between the early and late Israel, in a positive sense, of course. What is important is that we liked Bulgaria more. That is why I stayed here. And we do not regret that at all, neither my husband nor I. My family and I followed emotionally the development of Israel, the positive and negative changes. We are worried about the constant war there. I remember well how the UN decided to decree the foundation of the Jewish State in 1948. The Jews in Bulgaria worried a lot about the events in Israel after 1950. I remember that in the 1950s

Zionism was declared a form of fascism. Then people in Bulgaria discussed secretly whether citizens of Jewish origin should be appointed to leadership positions in the communist party. In fact, at the time of the Warsaw Pact, for example, Bulgaria was forced to renounce diplomatic relations with Israel. The other countries from the former Soviet bloc did the same. Yet, despite the weak relations and the distance, we were able to follow the events in Israel and discussed them.