

Berta Yakova Kalaora



This is my wife Berta Yakova Kalaora, nee Isakova. The photo was taken in 1941 in Sofia. In the Jewish school in Sofia I met and befriended my future wife Berta. Jacques Baruh introduced us to each other. He told us that we were people from a similar kind, with the same views. At first she and I met mostly at the so-called 'meetings of sympathizers.' They included not only members of the Workers' Party, but also of the youth movement of the party, sympathizers and people sharing the same beliefs. For example, Violeta Yakova came. Berta also came often. After the meetings the

whole group went for a walk and if it was Saturday or Sunday, we went to the opera or to a concert. Berta and I were always together. Even as early as then she created the impression of a humble and considerate person who really listened to what the other was talking about. And these qualities were very important for me. My wife Berta Kalaora, nee Isakova, was born on 29th March 1920 in the town of Gorna Dzhumaya, present-day Blagoevgrad. After she finished high school in Gorna Dzhumaya on 24th May 1937 she went to Kyustendil to live with her sister Buka Haravon, nee Isakova, who was seven or eight years older than her. Buka was married to Samuel Haravon, who worked as a tinsmith. Berta could not stay and live with her step-mother, whose name I do not remember, because they did not get along well. Her step-mother was also a Jew, but she treated her very badly. But Berta's father, Yako Sabetay Isakov, was a very nice man. He made quilts at people's houses. He could barely make ends meet. In Kyustendil Berta lived only a couple of months, because the Haravon family was also very poor. Then she came to live in Sofia where she worked as a librarian in the Jewish community house at Lege Street. She lived at the place of Raina Mayer, who now lives in Shumen, since she married in Shumen during her internment there. Berta lived miserably at that time. She weighed hardly 45-46 kilos. She ate lentils, rice and tomatoes in a restaurant. I also went with her to this restaurant on Tsar Kaloyan Street near Stamboliiski Blvd to check if she was eating well. At that time I worked as a press operator, and I had no problems at my work place because of my origin neither before nor after the Holocaust.