

## Tinka Kohen With Family And Friends



This is a family photo: I am sitting on the left with my children Leah Kohen-Ausburger in the middle and Valeri Kohen sitting on the right. On the upper left is Rashel, Valeri's wife and top right is Ruth, a friend visiting from Israel. She is a daughter of friends of mine from Israel. The photo was taken in our home in Sofia, but it is not dated. Leah is a music critic, former Bulgarian ambassador to NATO in Brussels, Belgium and Luxemburg, then ambassador to Switzerland and Liechtenstein. In 1963 Leah married Nikola Zidarov, who is now first violinist in the Swedish Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in Stockholm. She has a son, Ivan, born in 1964, from this marriage, but she had a divorce and in 1983 she married Dr Alexander Bojkov, who died in 1996. In 2001 she married a Swiss man and she lives now in Switzerland. The wars in Israel in 1967 and 1973 brought us to marry our son Valeri to a Jewish girl. At that time our daughter Leah was married to a Bulgarian from a family who did not have any feelings for the problems of the Jews. At this point I told my son that only a Jew who experienced and understood the problems of Israel, could understand the Jewish tragedy. And so if he would marry a Jew, I told him, she would have a different view on the events there. Valeri is an engineer. He has a son, Josif, born in 1969 and a daughter, Diana, born in 1981. After 1989 democracy did a lot of good for me. You could breathe now, speak, tell jokes - but nowadays I don't hear jokes any more. 10th November 1989 brought greater freedom, but I was in a way ostracized by the Jewish community in Sofia. They called me a traitor, because my daughter, Leah, signed up with the opposition party called Union of Democratic Forces.