

## Klara Kohen With Her Parents Santo Solomonov And Zhana Santo Solomonova



Here are my father Santo Avramov Solomonov, my mother Zhana Santo Solomonova, nee Almalech, and I, photographed during a walk in Stara Zagora. The picture was taken on 1st May 1940. My father was quite strict. He was devoted to his family, but he was a very tough man indeed. Even if I fell down he would scold me. On the other hand he was very kind-hearted. He was educated but he couldn't spare much time on reading unlike my mother. She was very well read and musical. She could speak about operas and operettas, and I still keep wondering - how come this woman was so well informed in her young years? It remains a mystery to me. She read a lot. I learned from her about the literature classics - the Russians like Tolstoy, Dostoevsky as well as

Western European ones ... My mother wasn't highly educated, but she was clever. I studied in the Jewish school the first four years, where I also learned Ivrit. Later, in the three years before the Holocaust, when Bulgarian children had religious classes, we went to the Jewish school, which was very close in order to continue studying Ivrit. I understand a little of it even now. My sister also studied in a Jewish school, then in a high school, and as soon as she graduated from it, we were interned to Targovishte. After the four grades in the Jewish school I attended the Bulgarian junior high school. Of all school subjects I loved languages most, but since I didn't want to study German, I studied Italian. German sounded rather harsh to me, and it even became more unpleasant to me because of the events that took place at that time. I liked the 'music' of Italian and Spanish. I also took private lessons in French. My mother influenced my choice to study French as her father had connections in France. She also insisted that I should learn to play the piano but my time was preoccupied with languages and I couldn't pay attention to it, for which I felt sorry for the rest of my life. I was deeply attracted to music and I had a nice voice. Sometimes we had vacations at the Stara Zagora spa and in Bankya, close to Sofia. I cannot remember my family going to any restaurant in Stara Zagora. We did go to a confectioner's shop though when we went out for a walk on the main street.