

## A Wedding Photo Of Merkado Mois Natan And Rebeka Avram Natan (nee Geron)



A wedding photo of my parents - Merkado Mois Natan and Rebeka Avram Natan (nee Geron) - taken in Varna in 1923.

My parents met in Ruse - my father was on a business trip there and a cousin of my mother's and a friend of his introduced them to each other. They engaged, then they had a religious wedding and went to live in Varna. They dressed in clothes typical for the times. My mother says that my father was a dandy and had a Bohemian lifestyle. When they lived in Varna and my father had a job, they were well-off. He had a big salary, but when my brother was born, my mother got sick and at one moment all the money was gone, even their savings. Then they had to move to Ruse, where my uncle offered my father a job. In Ruse we were never well-off, because only my father worked and my mother was often sick. We lived quite frugally.

My parents were part of the Jewish community. My father was in the leadership of the Zionist organization 'General Zionists'. My mother was not interested in politics. They were Zionists, but later under the influence of [their friends] Nikolay and Olga Spasovi they started sympathizing with the communists. After 9th September 1944 [the day of the communist takeover in Bulgaria] my father became a member of the Bulgarian Communist Party and my mother remained 'non-party communist'. My parents got on very well with their neighbors. When the mother of Tosho and

Boianka died, the two children were twins, my mother looked after them. They lived in the house next to ours with their father Bai [uncle] Ivan, who was a tailor. They had an elder brother Lyubo who was the age of my brother, while the twins were one year older than me. We played together. Most of my parents' friends were Jews. There was a family, with whom they were very close and when they gathered together, they laughed all the time.

They were very merry people. They were the ones who sheltered us when we were thrown out of the big house. They had three children. One of them died recently in Israel - he was a famous conductor and composer there - Izhak (Ziko) Gratsiani [there is no further information about him]. I cannot remember a lot about him, because I was five years younger than him and did not go out with him and his friends. But Ziko was the leader of the high school orchestra, he even established a Jewish jazz band in Ruse - he was very talented from an early age. I knew his sister Mati, who was only one year older than me. Their family was very easygoing and when they gathered together with my parents, they never spoke about their problems, but they always tried to cheer the atmosphere, especially after the anti-Jewish laws were adopted.

My father worked all his life without a day off. He took money as a compensation for his entitled holidays so that we would make ends meet. When we were children, we were sent to our grandparents in Varna for the summer. Like my father, my mother also did not go on holiday. When my father retired and came to Sofia, we took him to a vacation home in Bankya. [Bankya is a small town near Sofia, famous for its nice air and healing properties and with its healing mineral water. There are a lot of vacation homes in Bankya. During totalitarian times the state leader at that time Todor Zhivkov had a residency there]. My mother was at a sanatorium at that time. And my father said, 'It turns out it is very nice to have a break'. My mother's sisters kept in touch all the time. Our cousins and we grew up together. My uncle did not have children and looked after all of us. There was even a tradition - on Sundays, our uncle would hire a carriage, pass by all the sisters and take their children for a walk. My father had a sister who was not married and four brothers. Two of them lived in Dobrich and I have visited them. Their names were Aron and Albert and after 9th September 1944 they moved to Israel.