

Matilda Ninyo's Family



This photo was taken in Sofia in the mid 1950s. This is the whole family, my husband, I and the two children - my son Zhak on the right and Silvia.

When we had our children, my husband had not graduated the university yet. We lived with the help of my father-in-law. My husband had a small scholarship from the Jewish municipality. We lived humbly. Our house was a small one. There were two rooms and a living room. It wasn't easy to make both ends meet. My children used to sleep in their carriages, while they were little babies. After my son grew up, he went to sleep on something similar to a sofa in the room of his grandmother. When he turned 13 years old he was already taller and he had to sleep on that couch diagonally. Then we decided to move to another place. That was the hardest period we had. We had no money, yet we lived happily and calmly. On this picture my husband looks very well, although he hasn't started work yet. My mother Solchi Levi, who lived in Israel, used to send us some money from time to time.

I have been a little bit superstitious ever since I was young, because there were many lovely things that happened to me. I am an optimist and believe that everything will be just fine at the end. I think there is a power that rules everyone's fate. For instance, when I first started looking for a job I relied mainly on the acquaintances I had. There was no success at the beginning. One day, by accident, I met a classmate from the school in Kyustendil. She worked at the human resources department of a Center for ceramics and porcelain research. She told me she could offer me a job there. There was a laboratory so I took the position of a chemist. My task was to make researches in ceramics. At first, my contract was for a limited period because I was supposed to take the place

of a person who went abroad for a while. But he didn't come back so I took his place permanently. Later, he decided to return and I was forced to leave. His experience was considered grater than mine because he had worked abroad. Just by a lucky coincidence, one colleague of my husband helped me, so I got the job again after a while.

Later on, this department changed its status and it became an Institute for Glass and Fine Ceramics, part of the Ministry of Light Industry. We moved to another building and I was promoted to a technical assistant. That was the start of my career in science. I took an exam for a science assistant. It was around 1960 when I decided to go for a higher degree. There were some vacant positions in Czechoslovakia. I was approved for an aspirant in Bratislava.

My husband graduated from the Institute of Machine Electrical Engineering. Right after that, he received an invitation to work in the country's Air Forces. He was an engineer there until he retired. He had a successful career. He was promoted to colonel. He had the reputation of a man who initiated many changes and reforms.

We had hard times while both of us were at the university. But soon after that we graduated and started working - then we could afford to go on holydays twice a year - in the summer and in the winter. We used to go on excursions with our friends. I may not have had the opportunity to travel wherever I wanted like today's young people, but still my husband and I had a beautiful and interesting life.

After 9th September 1944 [the day of the communist takeover in Bulgaria] I have never had any problems related to my origin, regardless of the fact I was the only Jew in the lab. Everybody there did his job well and there was no reason for conflicts.