

The Kohen Family Visiting Bulgaria



The photo shows my father Benjamin Shemtov Kohen and my mother Iafa Benjamin Kohen, nee Levi. At that time they visited us in Bulgaria. It was August. I remember that my mother swam very well. She also taught us and our children to swim well. So this picture was made in 1962 in Balchik.

My mother's name is Iafa Benjamin Kohen, nee Levi, and my father's name - Benjamin Shemtov Kohen. They were both born and raised in Samokov. My mother had primary education and my father - secondary high school education. He knew French, because his parents wanted him to go to study in France, which did not happen, because my father was the first born child and his duty was to stay and support the family, who was not very well-off. My father believed in communist ideas, but I did not remember if he was a member of the party or if he was involved in illegal party activities. In this sense my father was more of an idealist and communist in beliefs than an active party member. My mother was apolitical.

I remember that my father worked in a small shop owned by him, but did not earn much money. I also remember that we were constantly short of money and my father had to carry goods on his horse to the nearby villages on Sundays. He carried the villagers' hats, which my mother sowed and knitted at home, as well as cotton, or other things they needed. The Bulgarians bought them and provided us with an income. At first my mother sowed clothes for my father's shop. My father often worked as a travelling salesman to the nearby villages so that his children would have enough food and clothes. My parents also insisted that we further our education. When my parents wanted to go for a walk, they asked us to draw or write something interesting, made up a variety of artistic activities, then they came back and pointed out our best works.

My family dispersed in 1948 when all my relatives except for me emigrated to Israel. In fact, the decision was taken by my brothers and sister and my parents decided that they should follow their children. At that time I was already married. My sister Milka became a social worker in Israel (she had a university education in Bulgaria), my brother Sinto, who was studying medicine in Bulgaria

became a famous doctor and my brother Miko (he is the only one of us with secondary education) became a lab chemist. They still live in Israel today and have good families, children and grandchildren. My sister has two boys, my brother Sinto - a son and a daughter, and my brother Miko - a son. All I know about their families is that Milka married before she left - to Rofat Revah in 1940, who was from Plovdiv and I lived with them in Samokov for a while.