

## Stela Astrukova



A picture of me at work in District Hospital – Sofia.

It was taken in 1974. I am 50 years old. There is nothing on the back of the photo.

It was made on the occasion of a laudatory article about me by Friz Oliver in the newspaper 'Sofiiska Pravda' [Sofia Justice].

In 1951 I graduated medicine with the second highest marks. I was a mother of two children [the twins Evgeni and Emil] at that time.

That was why I was not sent to work in the countryside and had the right to choose my workplace.

I started work in the infections department of the district hospital in Sofia.

My first specialty is in gastroenterology and my second, which I finished in 1956 – in infectious diseases. I retired there as chief of the department.

When Traycho Kostov was rehabilitated, so was my husband. He was elected a deputy.

He became a chairman of the Jewish cultural and educational organization in 1961. For about 30 years we lived for the first time a calm and financially stable life.

Life was very hard during the first years after 9th September [The day of the communist takeover in Bulgaria].

In September 1944 the Soviet Union declared war on Bulgaria.

On 9th September 1944 the Fatherland Front, a broad left-wing coalition, deposed the government.]. We did not go on any vacations.

Afterwards in the 1970s we often went to the seaside in the summer staying in the resting homes of the war veterans together with our children.

We often went to the Hisar mineral baths. We gathered with our Bulgarian and Jewish friends.

For example, Avram and Ester Kalo, Solomon and Rashka Bali, Beti Danon, Apostol Pashev, Gen. Marko Markov, prof. Gancho Savov, Ivan Sugarev etc.

Those evenings were very nice because we talked, had fun, sang songs.

My husband had a very nice voice and we carried with himself his own songbook.

It was known as the Herz' notebook. On Sundays we often went on excursions. We educated our children to be honest, brave and loyal.