

## Stela Astrukova With Her Sons Evgeni And Emil



A picture of me with the twins – my sons – from left to right – Evgeni and Emil.

It was made in 1949 – 1950. There is nothing on the back of the photo. It was taken in a studio.

I dressed my sons in the same way because they were twins but later I decided that it had been a mistake because they separated from each other with much difficulty. I did not want them to envy each other.

If one of them tore his shoe, I bought new shoes to both of them.

I am dressed in a suit which was made from an old suit of my husband's. At that time I was still studying medicine.

On 6th July 1946 I gave birth to the twins Evgeni and Emil.

They were one of the first children after 9th September who did not have a Brit and that angered his aunts very much. 'So, you will leave them Bulgarians!' they said.

My parents, especially my mother, were also against our decision.

In any case Evgeni and Emil learned some Ladino from the aunt who raised them.

She knew Bulgarian but spoke mostly Ladino at home. My husband and I were very busy.

We were both studying. His uncle and aunt opened a small shop on Dondukov Str. and started selling things they had collected even before 9th September.

Since they had no children, they helped us financially so that my husband would finish his education.

His other aunt, tanti Ora, also helped us raise our kids. She had remained a widow at 28 years of age.

My children graduated the English language high school. I remember that the students in that high school were the poorest and every year some of them were sent on a free camp.

They both have medical degrees. They applied for positions in the ISUL Hospital [acronym for 'Institute for Specialization and Development of Medics'] and became assistants in the surgery.

When ISUL was closed, one of them went to work in chest surgery and the other in 2nd surgery.

We are a family of medics. There are 27 - 28 medics in the family tree of my family.

Both of my sons are married to Jewish women. I think they met their wives in a Jewish choir in which they sang for some time. Evgeni's wife is Neli Samuilova.

They have two children - Linda and Yosif. Yosif is married to a Bulgarian - Mariana and they have a daughter Sara - my great-granddaughter.

Emil is married to Medi Levi, they have two children - Ines and Yosif.