

Jacquelen Behar With Fellow Soldiers



This is my husband Jacquelen Behar as a participant in the Fatherland War, photographed somewhere in Hungary in 1945. I don't know who the other soldiers are. (Editor's note: After the communist takeover on 9th September 1944, Bulgaria declared war on Nazi Germany and participated in the liberation of Southern Europe.) Jacquelen was born on 3rd February 1926 in Sofia. His family wasn't rich - they were workers. They weren't religious. His father entered the socialist movement right after World War I. When Jacquelen was young, he was a member of the communist youth movement. During the Holocaust his family was interned to Vratsa. While I was a student in the upper classes, I often met on my way to the college a tall, slightly swarthy soldier, who was always smiling at me. This also happened when I was with my sisters or friends and they noticed it. My parents somehow learned about it and they told me that I could have for an intimate friend, and later for a husband, only a Jew and I should have no illusions about this soldier. Particularly after his Holocaust experience, my father had told me that he wanted no Bulgarian for a son-in-law. And my sister was telling me all the time how this tall and swarthy soldier was staring at me. I started thinking that he was Armenian or Turkish; he didn't look like a Bulgarian to me. Then, one day, some relatives and friends from Dupnitsa came to Sofia and we met some other friends of theirs outside the cinema. My wooer from a distance was among them. We were introduced to each other and it turned out that he was also a Jew. His name was Jacquelen Jacob Behar. We started going to his Workers' Youth Union club together. He was an active member of the UYW. After two years we got married. I never looked at him until I found out that he was a Jew and then I fell in love with him.