

Linka Isaeva's Family



This is me, my husband, Albert Behar, and our two children, Lidya and Valeri. The photo was taken in Sofia in the 1960s. I met my husband in Sliven during the war. We got married in 1948 in Sofia. He was born on 8th November 1923 in Sliven. His mother tongue is Bulgarian. His father was a bank clerk, and, after 9th September 1944, his family left for Israel. My husband has a degree from the Agricultural University. He worked as a soil expert in the Institute of Soils. We have two children: a son, Valeri, and a daughter, Lidya, who both have families of their own. My son is a doctor, and my daughter is an economist. I have three grandchildren: Lidya's Roumen and Yassen Nikolov, and Valeri's Svilen Isaev. After finishing university I worked in the People's Army of Bulgaria as a doctor for five years. I was discharged from the Military Institute I used to work at in 1956 because of my Jewish origin. Although the common explanation was a general lay-off, the real reason was the fact that I was a Jew. Many other Jewish friends of mine who worked in the army were also discharged. That's how we realized what the actual reason was. For me it was indicative of the fact that anti-Semitism was still alive. This hurt us but we blamed everything on human errors that accompanied the practical realization of the party program. Moreover, in 1956 the April Plenum [of the Bulgarian Communist Party] was held, at which the cult of Stalin was deposed. Much later we realized that it wasn't only the people's fault, the totalitarian system itself was to blame. We didn't feel any dictatorship after the 1950s. At that time we lived with the conscience that we, the communists, would make history. As long as a dictatorship existed and certain classes were oppressed, we justified its existence. [Editor's note: Linka is referring to the doctrine of 'the dictatorship of the proletariat'.] Materially, and in terms of the technical progress, the first years after 9th September 1944 were extremely difficult. We gradually improved our social position, starting from the end of the 1960s and during the 1970s, when we had already turned into a middle-class family. We never owned a flat, neither a villa, nor a car. Yet we could cover our needs for food, clothes, holidays, and so on, fairly well.