

The Welcoming Ceremony Of Mrs Shulamit Shamir In The Jewish Home



The welcoming ceremony of Mrs Shamir in the Jewish Home.

The year is 1983 – 1984. There is not seal of a studio on the back of the photo or any other writing.

On the photo you can see the leadership of the Jewish Home from left to right:

Lili Ashkenazi – secretary, Miko Semo – member of the board, Beti Danon, Solomon Leviev, David Benvenisti – editor of the Annual Book, Rut Shaul from the Israeli delegation, Mrs Shamir, above her is my husband Yosif Astrukov.

Next to him with the white blouse is another representative of our Foreign Ministry whose name I cannot remember. Next to her are Jacky Melamed and Berto Kalo.

We had a positive attitude towards the state of Israel even during the cold war with the country.

We obeyed the official position, but we believed that our government was not right.

My husband was the first who established contacts after the end of the cold war and invited Mrs Shamir to visit Bulgaria.

The Foreign Minister at that time was Ivan Bashev who was very open-minded.

He had met her at a congress in Washington and she had told him that he was a Jew from Bulgaria.

When he came back, he asked to see my husband who was chairman of the Jewish organization from 1961.

They both decided to invite Shamir but it could not be an official visit because of the Arabs, with whom we kept warm relations.

So, she came as our personal guest. I remember that she came with Ruth Shaul from the president's administration.

During the official welcoming Ruth greeted my husband on behalf of her mother and father. She was also a Bulgarian Jew.

It turned out that her parents had helped my husband when he was underground.

They had had a workshop for wool textile on Pirotzka and Hristo Botev Str.

During the most dangerous period of his illegal activity they locked him with food in the workshop.

That was the only place, which was warm because of the wool there.

We took them on a walk along Vitosha Str. Shamir was very happy to come here.

She gave me a very beautiful mezuzah as a gift and later sent me a letter of thanks.

Later a round table was organized on the topic of the salvation of the Bulgarian Jews and she came with an official invitation.

Later she came with Shamir himself. I remember that we got very close.