

## Margarita Kohen Wearing A Traditional National Costume



I in a Bulgarian traditional national costume in Bankya resort [near Sofia] in 1939. I was at a sanatorium with my mother-in-law because she had apoplexy and I had to look after her. Our servant Moushana gave me the national costume. There is neither a stamp on the back of the photo, nor any other inscription.

After the wedding we were living in my husband's house with my mother-in-law, father-in-law, my brother-in-law Zhak who a year and a half later married the Jew Dora. We, the whole family Kohen, were living on the second floor and the first and the second were rented out. On the ground floor there was a shop which was also rented out. My mother-in-law was quite a dame and very house-proud. As a young bride she used to wake me up at five in the morning: 'Come on, come on, let's start cleaning!' Mum would say: 'My God, are you wearing aprons on Saturday?' My mother liked cleanliness too but not as much as my mother-in-law. My mother-in-law's behavior wasn't very normal. She liked doing the same things every single day, and that turns into a routine, becomes very boring, but I couldn't do anything. In fact, that cleaning was mainly my task because she couldn't do it – she was paralyzed.

My son Samuil Kohen was born in 1940 on my mother's insistence. We didn't yet want children at that time but she had written in a letter to my sister that I had to give birth because anything could happen. She used to even come to our house to dare me to get pregnant. 'Marga, how is the

family, dear?' She was asking about this and that. 'I'm fine, mama.' 'Do you know that there are a lot of childless families? A lot of them bathe in the warm waters.' And she described the situation to me. 'And what about you?' 'Mama, I say, I'm still very tired of all the arrangements around the wedding, let us have some rest...' 'Come on, if you have a child, you'll have a rest afterwards...' After that when my son was born in 1940 mum used to help us a lot in his bringing up.