

Israel Aroyo's Wedding



This is the wedding photo of my uncle Israel Aroyo, my mother Berta Cohen's brother. My other uncle Elia Aroyo is on the stairs with my aunt Matilda Danon, nee Aroyo, her husband Salvador Danon and her son Mois Danon. My grandfather Meshulam Aroyo is sitting, next to him is my great-grandmother Mazaltov Behar and Blanka Aroyo's father Aron Chaldeti. The bridesmaids are my sister Greta Mairova, nee Cohen (the child first from right) and I (second from left). The bride, my aunt Blanka is fourth from left standing, next to her are my uncle Israel and my grandmother Evgenia Aroyo, nee Behar. First from left is my mother, second from left is my father David Cohen. The picture was taken in Sliven in 1939. My mother's kin is from Odrin. My grandfather Meshulam comes from there. My maternal grandmother's parents were Solomon and Mazaltov Behar. Solomon was born in 1860 and my great-grandmother in 1866. I know only that she was a little girl during the Ottoman yoke and her family had already come to Bulgaria, but I have no idea when exactly. My mother was born in Sliven in 1907. She studied in the Jewish school, which existed back then in Sliven, till the secondary school. Later she went to study in Rousse, in a Catholic college. She studied there for two years, and after that she returned to Sliven where she finished a Bulgarian school. She spoke French. She had learned it very quickly. Her father obliged her to write letters to him only in French, when she was a schoolgirl in Rousse. I have even seen such letters, written by mother in a very impressive handwriting. She spoke the language so brilliantly that almost 40 years later, in 1964, it happened so that some friends of ours from France visited us and they were really very impressed by her perfect French, which she hadn't spoken for many years. She was very clever, very studious. Sometimes she translated some articles for WIZO, but otherwise she wasn't an activist in such organizations. She was a good housewife and a good mother. My father was quite a harsh man and my mother never had access to money. He used to buy everything, and the money he gave to her was always under control. Actually I didn't know my mother well as a child. I got to know her only when my father died in 1942. My mother had two brothers, Israel and Elia, and a sister, Matilda. Matilda had a twin brother who died very young. They were all born in Sliven. Israel was a trader - a carter. He had graduated from Robert College [a famous college in Istanbul]. His wife's name was Blanka. They had two children: Evgenia and Misho. Evgenia was named after our granny, my mother's mother, as well as after her father, and

she resembled her in the courage she showed in everything. After the war [WWII] the family left for Israel. My uncle Israel died there in 1968.