

Lilyana Kirilova Pinkas And Her Granddaughter Alexandra Veselinova Sarafova, Visiting Her Daughter In Bethesda, USA



My wife Lilyana Kirilova Pinkas (her maiden name is Mandicheva) and our granddaughter Alexandra Veselinova Sarafova, visiting our daughter in Bethesda, USA, in June 1993.

My Jewish origin was not an obstacle, because I haven't put much emphasis on it. When Bulgaria cancelled its diplomatic relationships with Israel I attended a gathering where a lot of bullshit was said - but what could one do - you had to listen. My daughter was not allowed to go to Israel when she graduated from the high school - they were afraid she was to marry there. But when she got married in Bulgaria she was allowed to go there together with her husband. It happened before 1989. We hardly brought her up in accordance with the Jewish traditions. Now she lives in America together with her two daughters. Her ex-husband is in Sofia and works as a tradesman. They got divorced. She is now looking after her children and he is looking after me. We haven't observed the Jewish traditions. We may have eaten matzah from time to time. I have occasionally visited the synagogue.

My life hasn't changed much after the democratization process that started in 1989 - I don't work any more, so I can't feel the unemployed man's worries. Now I read books and I have a group of friends - we meet with the brother of Dragomir Asenov - he is an expert at the oncology institute in Sofia - we have been friends with him yet from our childhood years in Ruse. Every Friday I have dinner with Leon Daniel, we just have a sip and talk. There is another Jewish family I visit. My wife died at home of cancer. The 'Joint' association used to pay some money for the medicines. My pension is 160 leva [around 80 USD]. I rarely go to the synagogue and Bet Am . I have received aid from the German 'Claims Conference' - they paid around 7,000 EUR in three installments. I still

have from this money and I don't waste it - I bought the land lot of the summer house in Staro Selo village, and I went to America to visit my daughter - and I think I can still count on some of this money for two or three years.