

The Natan Family In 1964



On this photo from left to right on the lowest row are: Alfred Mois Natan and Merkado Mois Natan (the sons of Mois and Yanka), Beka Avram Natan and Joseph Avram Natan (Nina's and mine children). On the middle row from left to right are: my brother's wife Yanka Prodanova Natan (nee Ovcharova), my father Merkado Mois Natan and my wife Nina Joseph Natan (nee Perets). On the upper row are my brother Mois Merkado Natan and I (on the right). The photo was taken in Sofia in 1964.

I met my wife in the Vitosha Mountain. I am a tourist and I still go to the mountain. Once my chief in 'Himmetalurgproekt', Marin, his wife Atanaska and I decided to go to Vitosha. It was February 1958 and we went skiing. There we caught up with a group of young people and together with them went to the 'Fonfon' mountain hostel. I got acquainted with my future wife, the next day we went skiing together and then we started on our way back together with Milka, a friend of my wife. I taught them how to ski and helped them, but I fell down and sprained my ankle. When I got home, my leg was swollen. And Nina Perets, my future wife, told Milka, 'Let's go and see him.' Nina is a Jew and Milka - a Bulgarian. But Milka was too shy, so Nina came alone to see me. Then we were living in a rented flat in the Banishora residential district in Sofia. In 1956 my parents and I changed the rented flat in Ruse to one in Sofia. That is how our friendship started. Nina and I married on the same day with my brother - 12th December 1959. At that time my wife's aunt and uncle from Moscow were visiting her. They were political emigrants. Their names were Solomon and Rebeka Goldstein. Rebeka is a sister of Julieta, Nina's mother. The Goldstein family has lived in Moscow since 1918. They also spent some time in Switzerland where they met Lenin, who invited them to the USSR. Julieta and Josef Perets lived in Sofia. They were interned to Montana. That is why, at first we lived for one month at my father's place (my mother had already passed away) - my father was in one of the rooms, my brother and his wife, Yanka, in the other and Nina and I - in the kitchen. When Nina's relatives returned to Moscow we went to live at Nina's parents - we lived in one of the rooms and her parents - in the other.

Next year our daughter Beka was born - on 14th August 1960. My brother's son Merkado was born the same year. Three years later our second children were born - on 28th June 1963 Joze [Josef] was born, and my brother's son Alfred was born the same year. We raised them - my wife was working as a technician in a laboratory measuring electrical appliances, and I worked as a designer. My wife died in 1976. In 1973 she was operated from breast cancer, she lived three more years, but she had metastases and she died. She was born in 1934. Before she got sick, we went trekking every year (a group of tourists start walking from mountain hostel to another, sleeping in different places and following a fixed route usually in Rila, Pirin or Stara Planina [The Balkan] Mountains). We also brought our children with us.

I did not raise my children in the spirit of Jewish traditions because I did not have the time, especially after my wife died and I had to work, do the shopping, cook and look after them. And since one salary was not enough I started working on innovations. In the evenings when the children were asleep, I was writing and calculating in the kitchen. Then I started making inventions and I had no time educating them in that respect. The times were also different. We did not go to synagogues. Moreover, I am not a religious person. Even when I was a child and I was studying the Tannakh in the Jewish school, I was not interested in it. Now, we follow the traditions, not because we believe in them, but because they are traditions.