

Isak And Rashel Baruh



This is my mother's elder brother, uncle Isak, together with his wife, auntie Rashel. The picture was taken in 1945 in Sofia.

I first met my future husband when our family lived in a rented flat on the attic floor in Struma Str., just opposite to the home of my uncle Isak and auntie Rashel Baruh. That happened before 9th September 1944 [the day of the communist takeover in Bulgaria]. Their sons' names were Tiko, Rozhe and Jacque. After that they emigrated to Israel and I have no information about them (they must have died most probably). We lived so close to each other that we used to communicate from our windows. Well, Mois worked at his father's cobbler workshop near there. I used to go there wearing a short dress, and, of course, he would gaze at me. Later, we met in the Jewish crowd I mentioned. One of the crowd was also my cousin Dori, who was interned to Kyustendil during the Law for Protection of the Nation [anti-Jewish law]. Afterwards, she married Rafael Kalev from Plovdiv, where she lives up to the present day (they have two sons: Izidor and Solomon). Our crowd included also Becca Koen (today her family name is Bidjerano and she lives in Israel) as well as other people. There was also a violinist, Rudolf Benvenisti, (born in 1924) who got a 15-year sentence and was imprisoned together with my future husband Mois Saltiel from September 1942 to September 1944. He loved playing 'A Little Night Music' for us. Unfortunately, our crowd split at the point when the so called 'progressive ideas' started to increasingly creep into it [i.e. the communist ideas] and the Law for Protection of the Nation was the other thing that split us, obviously.

After 9th September 1944 [the day of the communist takeover in Bulgaria] my family came back to Sofia convinced that we all must emigrate to Israel [Palestine] after two years - in 1946. My brother Faivel, however, emigrated ahead of all yet in 1945 together with some friends of his. In the meantime my relatives lodged their documents in the police so that their emigration might be legally organised. I ran away from home for everybody's surprise. The reason for my flight was that I wanted to stay in Bulgaria. For a certain period I lived with a friend of mine who hid me. Eventually, I plucked up courage and decided to meet with the head of the police office to tell him in person I didn't want to leave. I still remember him finding my passport in the file with all other

ready documents of my family that were required for our departure, he opened the page with my picture and crossed it out. That meant he practically had nothing against my remaining in my country. That is how I remained here despite my parents' opinion. As it happens in life, my relatives found me several days later and I got a thrashing for what I did. But what's done can't be undone. They left and I stayed here.