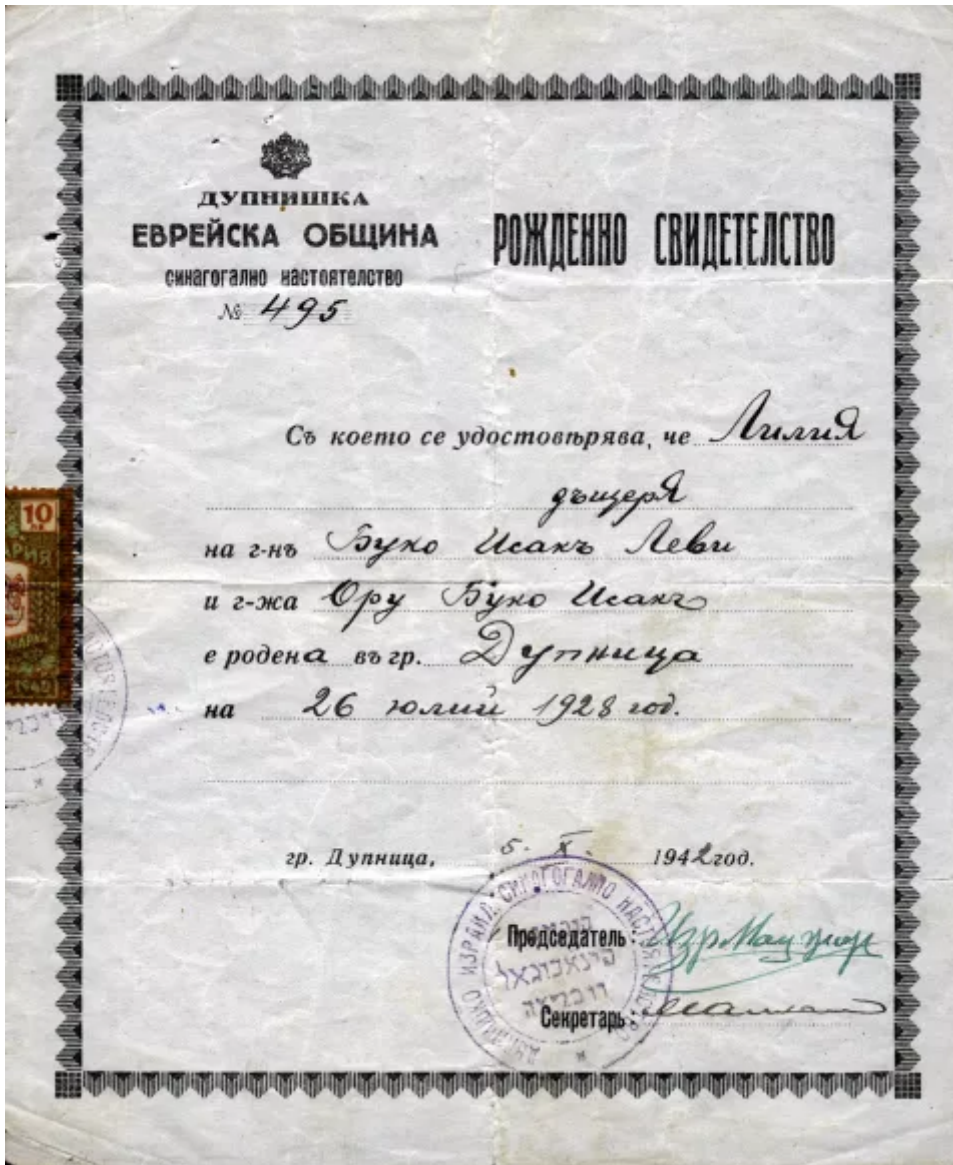


Birth Certificate



This is my birth certificate.

I was born in Dupnitsa. My father's parents were from there. They used to live together with us and I spent my childhood with them. My grandfather died in 1942 and my grandmother survived the war. I learned much about our Jewish traditions from them.

My grandfather was a deeply religious man and he used to observe all our traditions. I know our holidays thanks to him. In the Jewish school, we used to give performances on our holidays. I have nice memories of all the holidays from those years, because we used to meet very close people then. We, children, liked Rosh Hashanah [New Year's day] very much, because then we received new clothes, shoes, etc. Children used to gather and play. We liked Purim as well. On that day, we used to put on different masks, and, gathered in small groups, we visited our relatives. Our parents usually made some small bags in which they put money. I cannot explain why they did that. Relatives, whom we visited, also put money in our bags. And there is another holiday, the Hanukkah. This is the holiday of Light, as we call it. In the course of eight consecutive days, eight

candles are burned (a candle a day). In the Jewish school, they usually gave us small loafs with bun and halvah - a traditional food on that holiday. For the Pessah, our Easter, we gathered together the evening before the holiday, which is called Erev-Pessah, and we had diner with our close relatives. A prayer was said and after the ritual, we sang traditional songs till late in the night. In those evenings, neighbors without relatives came to celebrate with us. Quite often, people took the table and the dishes and thus they went to their neighbors. Nobody was alone, or only with his own family, that night.

[The atmosphere at home] wasn't always calm, especially when my uncles were there, but... One of my uncles was a little bit strange. When my mother's relatives visited us, he was irritated and was trying to cause some little troubles. Apart from that, there weren't conflicts at home, despite the fact we were a big family. Nowadays children want to have separate rooms for them; everyone wants to have his own desk to write on, etc. My brother and I used to study in the kitchen, because there was no heating in the other rooms. That was the kind of life we lived until we graduated. Thanks God, we both did it well and became physicians.

There were some girls coming from the nearby villages to take care of us when we were children. My parents had to hire these girls, because our house was really big. My father had a consulting office in the house, my grandfather's shop was downstairs and there was a lot of housework as well. These girls used to come and work for food and clothes. Many of them wore their traditional dresses, as you'll see on the pictures. When my brother was born, there was a maid, who was extremely clean and tiny. Her dress was always shining white as the snow. People were turning round to look at her on the street. Later she got married but she stayed close to my parents. Her daughter came to Dupnitza to study years after that and she stayed at my mother's. She kept on visiting them. She was like a member of our family. There was always a girl helping with the housework. And we used to hire a woman for the bigger cleansing. It was impossible for a single person to maintain such a big house. At present, my daughter-in-law [who lives in the same house] hires a woman when she wants to do a big cleansing.