

Ester And Eshua Danon In Pazardzhik



My mother Ester and my father Eshua in our house in Pazardzhik. The year was probably 1939 or 1940. My parents are holding the 'Zarya' [Fireworks] newspaper in their hands. They used to buy it regularly at that time. My mother liked the supplement very much – a novel series. My father, Eshua Shimon Danon, was born in Odrin in 1885. He had finished his elementary education in Alliance Francaise and, apart from Ladino, he spoke French. He wasn't very tall but was quite slim and very agile. My son bears a great resemblance to him. He didn't wear a beard or mustache. Those weren't fashionable at the time. He liked to wear smart clothes, and had nice ties. At that time a tie was a symbol of elegance. He not only wanted to dress smartly but he also insisted on having beauty around himself. He wanted us, the children: Sofi, Shimon and my mother, to look good. I even remember that he used to buy her Epsom salts so that she could lose weight because

she was pretty plump and he was ready to set the example by drinking it with her but my mother didn't care that much about her appearance or about her attire and she often refused to support him in such initiatives. He was also a merchant: he used to sell textiles to the peasants, kerchiefs to the harvesters and had rice-fields on a sharecrop basis. He took me for rice harvest on many occasions. Some Bulgarian peasant women used to work there. He used to buy kerchiefs and mastic for them. First he used to take a large quantity of mastic from somewhere, mastic in grains - 'sakus.' After that he used to separate it into portions and give a portion to each of them. It was such a joy for the girls who were gathering the crops. Later, when they got married he used to sell them kerchiefs and gold coins. The peasant women liked him very much. Afterwards, during the Holocaust, those same peasants would bring us grapes, cheese, lumps of butter, pullets. They would sneak them in secretly and bring us supplies. My mother, Ester Nissim Assa, was born in Plovdiv in 1898. She had elementary education; she spoke Ladino, was quite religious and was a wonderful housewife. What did it mean to be a good housewife at that time? It meant complete lack of free time, no free day, not even a free hour. She cooked, did the washing, and the shopping. My father used to help her with the shopping from time to time. Additionally, she knitted whole curtains with applications of peacocks on them. Firstly, a kind of network was done: she used to leave some holes that later were embroidered by hand with the help of a framework. I know that she used to have a lot of such curtains. She embroidered with white Japanese silk that was known as DMC. She used a model; our lady neighbors gave her some pictures but there were some magazines as well.