

Matilda Kalef



Here is my paternal grandmother, Matilda Kalef, dressed in a traditional Jewish costume. She only wore this for the picture. I never noticed that she owned such a dress. The photo was taken in the S. Alkalaj studio in Belgrade. Despite all the tragedies that she encountered in life - a paralyzed son, the loss of two sons and a husband - my grandmother fought. She was the pillar of the family. She rented out the family apartments and maintained the stores. Grandmother always opened the store at four and was there until seven. On her way home she went by Pelivan, a pastry shop on Kralja Petra Street, right near the Jewish community building, close to Gospodar Jovanova Street, on the left side where the Jewish community is. There she always bought us some sweets. She never came home without something for her granddaughters. She ate her dinner. Then her friends

from the neighborhood came to play cards. They stayed until ten. It was a mixed group of men and women. Then she got things ready for the next day's lunch until midnight or one in the morning. Her work day was about 20 hours long. Maybe she slept for four hours. She was a phenomenal woman. Saturdays she opened the store, but she didn't work. Instead she took me to the theater. She loved comedies. The two of us watched all the plays by Nusica, Stevana Sremca, etc. She only took me. She didn't take my sister because she was too wild and mischievous. Sunday mornings we always went to the movie matinee. We went to the Kolarac movie house. There was also a pastry shop there where we would have a cake after the movie.