

The Pando Family



The Pando family – I am on the left. My grandson Mois is next to me. My husband Haim is next to him and our granddaughter Alberta is in his lap. Our daughter Stela Benaroy (on the right) and our son-in-law Isak Benaroy (on the left) are behind us. There is neither a stamp of a photo studio, nor any other inscription on the back of the photo. The year was 1991 and the picture was taken in Yambol.

On the following day the young people – our daughter, son-in-law and their children were leaving for Israel, they were emigrating. And we were on the brink of tears.

In 1991 my daughter Stela, her husband, his brother and his sister-in-law left for Israel to make an aliyah. They took my grandson – Moischo [diminutive from Mois] – along. At that time he was six. Our granddaughter, who was two years old, stayed with us. We moved to Yambol to look after her and started living with my sister. My grandson, Moischo, couldn't get used to Israel. He had to start school but couldn't learn the language for two or three months so they got him on the plane and returned him here. He started school here in Yambol. My daughter and son-in-law spent 11 months in Israel but nostalgia returned them to Bulgaria – they even had to pay a refund of 10, 000 dollars. The money they had earned was used to pay the loans back. Now they live in Yambol.

I have leftist beliefs. The changes of 1989 [on 10th November, 1989 after 35 years of rule, Communist Party leader Todor Zhivkov was replaced by the hitherto Prime Minister Peter Mladenov who changed the Bulgarian Communist Party's name to Socialist Party] brought a lot of difficulties for me. My life was changed entirely. We became very poor. In 1991 I was taking the biggest working pension of 185 leva [around 90 euro], during the Kostov government [1997-2001] it became 61 leva [around 30 euro].