

Rebeka Avram Natan (nee Geron)



This is my mother, Rebeka Avram Natan (nee Geron) in Ruse in 1920.

My mother Rebeka Natan was a housewife. She was born in Razgrad in 1896 or in 1897. She had primary education and she was a dressmaker. During World War I she was the one to earn the living of the family because my uncle was mobilized. She used to make clothes and earn money for the family. She went to live in Ruse before the war. They moved to Ruse because the family business declined. Mum had two sisters, Ester and Rashel, and a brother - Yosif. Rashel had a high school education and Ester - primary. Both of them were housewives and lived in Ruse. Ester has a son, Rashel - two sons and a daughter, as well as two step-children because she married a widower.

My maternal grandfather Avram Geron was a tradesman of animals and very religious. As the eldest grandson I had to attend services at the synagogue on Friday evenings. That was in Ruse because my mother's family had moved to live there in the 1910s because their business dwindled. All the Jews from that generation were very religious, but not orthodox. On Rosh Hashanah and the high holidays they used to close their shops and go to synagogue. My grandfather Avram used to go to synagogue every day. They used to buy only kosher meat. They observed that. At home, all holidays were observed when the whole family gathered. They lived well. I know that my grandfather Avram Geron was a very good man. He used to carry 10-lev bank notes in his pockets so that he could give them if he happened to meet a poor man. [This sum was equal to the money one needs for food for a day, it is also comparable to two and a half tickets for cinema.] He had a purse full with white bonbons for the children. My grandfather used to wear bowler hat and all others were dressed in the way normal citizens did - in Western style. They spoke broken Bulgarian, Turkish and Spaniol, which is Ladino, while my grandfather in Dobrich spoke also

Romanian. [Dobrich is located in the region of Southern Dobrudzha that belonged to Romania from the Second Balkan War (1913) until World War II.] They had nice houses in both Ruse [maternal grandparents] and Varna [paternal grandparents] - they had running water, electricity and toilet inside the houses. My granny in Varna had a housemaid, and my grandpa and granny in Ruse hired a housemaid for the winters.

My [paternal] grandmother Sultana had two sisters - the first of them, Roza, was married to the tradesman Pinkas who had a trading company jointly owned by my grandmother's brother, Yosif; after that they went to Istanbul. I don't know exactly when but the reason was he had relatives in Istanbul. Roza had two daughters, Becca and Lily, and a son Fredi - they moved to live in Turkey, and Lily went to Israel after that. The second sister was called Luna who had two sons. The sisters died long ago. My grandmother had five sons and a daughter. Three of them, Aron, Albert and David went to Israel where they died; my father stayed in Bulgaria, while the fifth son, Marko, moved to Ecuador together with his family. The name of the daughter was Belina and she also went to Israel, where she died.

I remember one of my grandfather Avram Geron's sisters, but I have forgotten her name. Her husband's name was Prezenetti, while their children (four sons and a daughter) were owners of the 'Fazan' [Pheasant] textile company in Ruse. I know a story about my grandpa Avram. Once he went on business to Varna, but he missed the train back and when he was told that there was a train at the same time only the next day, he set off on foot for Razgrad (where he lived then) and came home one hour before the arrival of the train in question (the distance between the two cities is 137 kilometers).