

Adela Hinkova And Her Brother Santo Illel



This is a photo of my brother Santo Illel and me, shortly before my hair was cut. The photo was taken in 1922 in Vidin. Santo and I are both from my father's second marriage. They always paid more attention to him, because he was a son, a man. The boy in our family was always much respected. He had privileges, for example, when he became 13 years old, he got more food, because he was a boy and so on. Santo was born on 6th July 1913. That was during the war, and for greater safety my father sent his wife to Silistra, which wasn't a military zone. My father worked as a chazzan there. They called their child Santo, which means blessed and health at the same time. He didn't like his name much and wanted to be called Sinto, not Santo. Ever since his childhood he had more limited interests, he wasn't attracted to science. At home he would play with the football and he often broke the windows with the ragged ball. Once my father gave him a

hard beating, because he had swum in the Danube and the Danube took a number of victims every year. Soon he went to a small shop to work. He decided to marry early. Relatives of ours, married to the Paparo family, introduced him to an unmarried woman from Sofia, Eti Grinberg. Her father was a German Jew. She had big blue eyes and she was a bit older than him, very neat and hard-working, but she didn't want to live with us and so they lived on their own. I was born on 17th September 1917 on New Year's Eve, on Erev Rosh Hashanah. That's why I love this holiday so much. I had long hair when I was a girl and I asked my mother to cut it, because it was bothering me. And she did it. I don't know how old I was then. My most vivid memory is from when I was seven years old. I dreamed of going to a children's preschool, because I was the youngest one, everyone was going to school and I was left at home alone. So, the time finally came when I could go to a preschool in the Jewish school there, in the hall on the ground floor. My mother bought cotton print and sewed me a dress, of which I was very proud. A small piece of material remained and they made me a sack. They put a wooden slate, not a notebook, a small pencil as chalk and a sponge in there. I used it to draw pictures at home. I loved that.