

The Wedding Photograph Of Lenka And Leon Pinkas



This is a photo from the wedding of my parents, Lenka Pinkas, nee Beraha, and Leon Pinkas, which took place in Vienna in 1920. The picture was taken in the Foto-Kunst-Salon J. Weitzmann.

I don't know why they got married in Vienna. They were not very rich - a middle class merchant family. My parents met during World War I. My father was mobilized in Serbia and they met there. As far as I know they continued their correspondence and in 1920 they decided to marry. My father's parents are not on the photo, so probably they weren't at the wedding. There were no civil marriages at that time, so I guess it was a religious wedding, but I don't know any details. My maternal grandparents, Daiv and Saraha Beraha were at the wedding as well as one of my father's brothers, Sami Pinkas, who is a bachelor, and one of my aunts, Lika Pinkas, who is the wife of my mother's elder brother Nissim. On this photo the men, my grandfather included, are all wearing top hats.

My grandfather was a very interesting person, behaving like an aristocrat, although they weren't very rich. He always dressed in dark clothes - a dark suit and a white shirt. When we visited them in Skopje, he was always wearing a bowler hat and a cane, not because he needed support, but because it was more aristocratic. I remember that he had very interesting white moustaches, which he curled sideways. They were large, curled and every morning he would comb them, dampen them a little and clip them with pegs to achieve their twist. As far as I remember he was a respected citizen in Skopje, not only in their neighborhood, which was the Turkish quarter in Skopje. Everyone respected him and called him 'Chica David', meaning uncle David in Bulgarian.

My grandmother was a very good housewife; she looked after the whole family, because they all lived together in a big two-floor house.

My mother was a very beautiful and intelligent woman. Although she couldn't graduate from high school because of the war, she was clever and sociable. She loved reading books. She was subscribed to the 'Golden Seeds' book collection. We read mostly novels and my mother was the most avid reader of all. When we, the children, started reading, we read different books in Bulgarian - Western European and Bulgarian literature, for example Gorky, Zola or Dostoevsky. My mother was a WIZO activist [Jewish Zionist Women's Organization]; they were not very much involved in politics. They were more interested in cultural, social and charity activities. They organized parties, holiday celebrations, and fancy-dress balls and raised money for the poor. Meanwhile, my mother also kept the house in a perfect state. She was a very good cook and made very nice embroideries. Since my mother didn't work, she was the one who looked after us the most. She valued discipline and order very much. She insisted that we study, read, be honest and good and respect the elderly people. In this respect, I should say that she achieved a lot, because we all respected the elderly people around us.