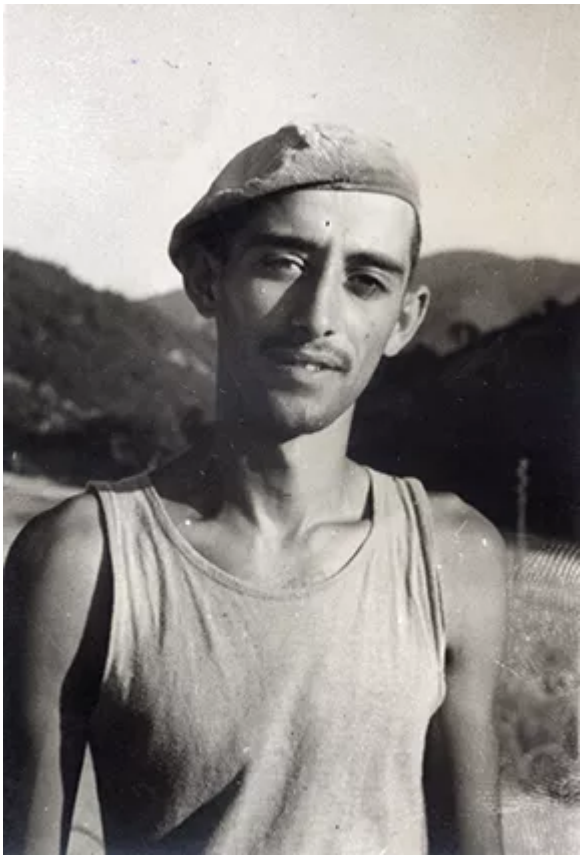
Avram Moisei Pinkas As A Brigade Leader On The Railway Route From Samuil To The



Here I am a brigade leader on the railway route from Samuil to the town of Silistra . The picture was taken in 1948.

[After 9th September 1944] when I graduated from the high school I tried to start working something, but I was an amateur. I changed many jobs when I finally decided to apply for the theater school in Sofia - there was still no VITIZ (Higher Institute of Theatrical Art) these days. [In 1947 The Theater School, following a decree of the National Assembly, was transformed into DVTU (Public Higher School of Theater), later known as VITIZ (Higher Institute of Theatrical Art) during the communist regime and as NATFIZ (National Academy of Theater and Film Arts) after 10th November 1989.]. I used to prepare myself for admission together with Leon Daniel with whom we were friends from Ruse - we had lived in neighboring houses there. I applied for the school in 1947 and I was admitted to enroll in the first master class of Philip Philipov [a famous Bulgarian theater director]. I did not receive scholarship, because D.B. Mitov (journalist and intellectualist) had called the Jewish boys and told us (we were 12 of us) 'Turn your scholarships down, so that more students may get scholarships, the Consistory will give you money anyway.' So we agreed with him, but later the Consistory stopped our money - the other students could afford to buy watches and we lived in poverty - I have had tea with bread for supper. My friends and I were living in a nice rented flat - but we couldn't pay the rent - actually we bilked the owners with the rent for three or four months. After that, I failed my exams and I had to go back to Ruse, because there were no make-up exams these days. I took up amateur artistic activities with a company in Ruse. After a while, it

became a paid position with the Dimitrov's Youth's Union.

That's how I spent 1948 and in 1949 I applied anew, this time to study staging. I was admitted again. And I failed my first-year exams again. The class tutor was Georgi Kostov. One day I met Philip Philipov in the street in Sofia and he told me: 'Oh, Mois - that's how he used to call me - you have 'poor' (2) [out of 6] in staging, but you have 'good' (4) in acting. You know, I will let you in the acting class again.' The same day I met Georgi Kostov: 'Oh, Pinkas, he said, the first year in staging is really difficult - sketches, things. I will write 'satisfactory' (3) to you - next we'll have parts from plays - it's easier.' I told him of what Philipov had told me just before minutes, and Kostov seemed satisfied: 'Oh, really, very good, very, very good.' So I continued my studies in the class taught by Philipov. The last year of my studies Radoi Ralin [Radoi Ralin (1923-2004), penname of Dimitar Stoyanov, was one of the greatest Bulgarian satirists during the totalitarian period] came to VITIZ to search for young students. I turned up immediately at the editorial office of the 'Starshel' ['Hornet'] satiric weekly where he was working then. Then he told me that the newspaper celebrated its anniversary every year - in the form of public reading usually - but he asked if we could think of something more theatrical. 'Of course, we could', I said. Then Zahari Petrov and Vasil Aprilov joined us with the question: 'Where should we start from?' I told them they already had it in the newspaper and suggested to start from the foreign policy articles. The newspaper then had a regular Friday material 'Ridgeway in Europe' - Ridgeway was the General Secretary of NATO then. So we made up several sketches - Ridgeway in the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Turkey. And that was how we started.