

Leon Daniel And Avram Moisey Pinkas With Leon's Son, Andrey Daniel



Leon Daniel and I (on the right) with Leon's son, who presently is a prominent Bulgarian artist - professor Andrey Daniel. The picture was taken in Sofia, in 1953.

We graduated in 1953 and we had to fulfill our military duty as candidate-officers at the military school in Kyustendil. When we came back in August, we were called by Slavcho Vasev [a journalist and one of the people in charge of the cultural issues at the Ministry of Culture] - and he sent us to Dimitrovgrad to form a theater there. So I set off for Dimitrovgrad. I married in the summer of 1954. My wife was then studying industrial chemistry in Sofia. We knew each other yet from the Sofia period of the Mayakovsky club. She, Lilyana Kirilova Mandicheva, was one of the singers at the club. In the middle of the theater season (1954-1955) I left Dimitrovgrad and came back to Sofia where I couldn't find a job. Ivan Bashev, who was then Minister of Culture, did not allow Albert Angel to hire me at the Selski [Village] Theater, situated in the Sofia town center opposite the Sofia University, because I had left the Dimitrovgrad Theater.

So I stayed unemployed for a year. After that I was employed with the Selski Theater - we were traveling around the country and I could send money to my wife. It was like that until 1959 when I told her I was not going to play again for the Selski Theater. It happened that Vili Tsankov [famous Bulgarian stage director; at that time director of the Burgas Theater] let me join the Burgas Theater company, where my friend Leon Daniel was the stage director. Leon had assigned me a nice role in 'The Death of Sisyphus', but I came late from Israel where I had gone to visit my mother and brothers. My mother, sister and one of my brothers moved to live there in 1948. In 1949 my eldest brother (who was married and had a child) emigrated there together with my younger brother who was studying here mechanical engineering. He continued his education in Israel.

I myself didn't want to go to Israel because I wanted to become an actor. I couldn't even imagine to go there and be an actor, although later I found in some of the largest Israeli theaters some Bulgarian actors who had been interns in Bulgarian amateur companies. They had neither

graduated from a theater academy as I, nor spoke Ivrit. So most probably I would have been in those theaters, if I had gone there. So be it. I didn't want to go, because all my friends were here, in Bulgaria - Leon Daniel, Dragomir Asenov, some others. We were inseparable yet from our childhood years. Leon was born in Ruse, while Dragomir had been interned to Ruse together with his family.

So, I came late because of my visit to Israel and Leon Daniel had given the part to Leda Tasseva [a famous Bulgarian actress], and I almost didn't play this season. But at the end of it the theater had some problems on ideological reasons and 16 of the actors were hired by other theaters. Nobody took me, though. So one evening we were out to a restaurant in Burgas with the cinema director Nikola Korabov and I asked him: 'Why don't you take me in the cinema?' He said they really needed assistant directors, but the candidates were asked to pass a test. I asked him if he could help me with the preparation for the test, he said 'yes' and did his best after that. I applied for the position and passed the test. I asked the commission to write me a certificate that I had passed the test - and I brought it to Karalambov, the newly appointed director of the Burgas Theater. I needed to show it to him, because as a member of the Bulgarian Communist Party, they were not allowed to let me leave the theater. But the new position was an open one and the test I had passed was a reason enough to let me go.