

Yakov Moisey Pinkas, Mayer Moisey Pinkas And Avram Moisey Pinkas



In this picture from left to right are my brothers Yakov Moisey Pinkas, Mayer Moisey Pinkas and I. It was taken in the town of Ruse in 1928.

I was born on 24th March in Ruse in 1927. My father's first wife got ill and died in hospital in Bucharest. Her sons, Yakov and Mayer, were five and six years old when dad married my mother. I am my mother's eldest son - a year and a half after me my brother Marko was born and much later, in 1934 - my sister Suzana, as we used to call her, but her birth name was Sultana. I have always wondered how my mother decided to marry a widower with two kids and my aunt told me: 'She was in love with him.' They didn't make difference between the children from his first marriage and us - we were equal and we felt each other as real brothers.

In my childhood years, Ruse had around 3,000 Jews out of some 50,000 inhabitants. But now I remember a lot of Jewish shops in the town's main street. Next to my father's one was the shop of the brothers Aladjem, next to which was the bookstore Beniesh. It was very special because the owner was receiving German and Italian editions. During the Abyssinian War there were illustrated books with pictures of Abyssinia there. Next to it there were also some other Jewish shops - Khalef who was selling hats, opposite to it there was a glassware shop, another Jew was selling shoes in the same street - and I remember his sons continued their studies in the German school even after all other Jews withdrew their children from there after 1933.

The Jewish community was very united. There was a Jewish municipality that collected certain taxes according to the financial status of the respective family. There was a rich Jew who was probably the only one to have a private steamship - tugboat as well as barges. His name was Lazar B. Aron. He was a big shot and didn't want to pay taxes to the Jewish municipality. He even bribed journalists to write articles against our municipality. He used to wear an exquisite, nicely designed light grey suit with a black belt and a bowler hat.

I attended a kindergarten a year before I became a schoolboy - the kindergarten was at the Jewish school. I started studying Ivrit there. We had a teacher who couldn't speak Bulgarian, because she had come from abroad. At home, my mother and the maidservant looked after us. We had a big yard where we used to play. The 'Maccabi' organization also had a big yard and we used to play football there. On Sundays, we used to go the gym hall. We had a sports community and we had plans for building a gym hall. It was almost constructed, but never finished, so it had neither baths nor changing rooms. However, the gym hall had all the required equipment - parallel bars, horizontal bars, wall bars and we used to go there to play from an early age.