

Avram Moisey Pinkas Dressed Up For The Holiday Of Purim



Here I am dressed up for the holiday of Purim. There is a seal on the photo stating "Photo T. Stavrev". It was taken in the town of Ruse around 1933/34.

My parents were relatively religious. We marked the holidays. On Chanukkah I would kindle the chanukkiyahs and read a prayer in Ivrit - I was good at Ivrit and when I first went to Israel, the people were surprised I could speak it. When I became 13 I was asked to say my prayer in the synagogue, because I was good at it. So I was reading: 'A present for the school canteen, a present for somebody else...', while the rabbi was whispering in my ear: 'Ten eggs for the rabbi' and I said it aloud: 'Ten eggs for the rabbi'. After which, at noon, Dad asked me: 'What have you said: What ten eggs for the rabbi? He came immediately to take them!?' On the high holidays, all the family used to go to synagogue.

Bar mitzvah was a great holiday. My elder brother had his bar mitzvah in the club for the middle-class people - he had many guests and received many presents. At that day, I was introduced to a maritime captain who had saved my brother's life in a trip to the isle, when my brother had dropped in the water and could have drowned. On bar mitzvah the boy who was celebrating had to read something as a promise.

As a young boy, I didn't feel any anti-Semitism. There were several jokes of course - you go to the cinema and somebody would banter with you. Among the Jewish organizations, 'Hashomer Hatzair' was very active and every year they used to organize 'hashara' - they went camping, where they

were marching and getting prepared for emigration to Israel, to cultivate the land there. They would usually go to Obratzov Chiflik ['model farm'] near Ruse. Some of the poorest people and more educated intellectuals used to attend their gatherings. Most of us, however, were members of 'Maccabi'. On 6th May, St George's day, the day celebrated by the Bulgarian Army, every time we had representatives of the Jewish school, or 'Maccabi'. We marched in white shirts and blue trousers. Everybody marched this day - Ukrainians, scouts, Armenian organizations, even legionnaires in their brown uniforms. We were all together on St George's day. There was also a Spanish ambassador, Aftalion was his name, who appeared in a three-angle hat, white feathers and a rapier. The Italian one also attended the ceremony. The teacher in gymnastics at school used to start a patriotic song and he made us marching while singing. I was seven years old during the putsch of 1934 . Ruse was all blocked - that I remember very clearly.

I had some books at home, but not many. My elder brother Yakov (Jacques) had more books because he had got influenced by the leftist ideas during his study at the high school. I remember he had books by Maxim Gorky. I had looked through Yakov's 'Brown Book' for the persecution of Jews when I was still a teenager. He used to receive the newspaper of the Youth's Union. When he graduated from the high school, Dad sent him to Romania to study industrial chemistry, because my uncle (my father's brother Chelebi) lived in Constanta, Romania. I remember that my father used to read something before going to bed, but I can't remember what exactly. Our family received the 'Utro' daily and some other newspapers. I learnt to read and write from the newspapers - I loved reading them. When once I found newspapers from 1927, the year I was born, I read them to see what had happened this year.