

Robert, Elvira And Leon Pizanti - Neighbors And Friends From Vidin



These are neighbors and friends of my mother's – Robert Pizanti (on the left), Elvira and Leon Pizanti (two brothers and a sister). The brothers used to be merchants. They used to live in a house next to ours in Vidin [port city on the right bank of the Danube in Bulgaria, 220 km. away from Sofia]. They moved to Israel in 1948. The back of the photo is made like a postcard. There is no stamp of a photo studio. There is an inscription in ink that says 'The Sason Pinkas Family, here, photographed on 04th March 1923 in Vidin. May this photo always remind you of the happy days we've spent together and for your neighbors – Leon, Elvira and Robert.'

In the beginning we had only Jewish neighbors. Gradually Bulgarian families would move to the Jewish neighborhood. This process started before 9th September 1944 [The day of the communist

takeover in Bulgaria. In September 1944 the Soviet Union declared war on Bulgaria. On 9th September 1944 the Fatherland Front, a broad left-wing coalition, deposed the government.]

Most of the Jews were merchants. There were also exceptions – a sandal-maker named Bouko Farhi, a pharmacist – Izidor Lidzhi, two or three professional dressmakers whose workshops were in their houses.

We were on good terms with our neighbors. We used to boil tomato puree or some kind of jam – from plums or apricots in our yard. Usually we would make at least 50kg. My mother, my sister and I weren't able to deal with all the stuff for one day by ourselves. So we would ask our neighbors for help. On the next day the brigade would move to their yard and would start cooking there, too. For instance I had never seen neighbors arguing for something or being on bad terms. I don't have such a memory from my childhood even if people were dealing with one and the same trade, no matter what the competition theory claims. Now people would kill each other for nothing. I don't remember such things. We were often visited by different people, but mostly relatives. For instance, on a big holiday everybody would come to our house after the synagogue, because we lived right in front of the temple.