

Ruben Fridman, Faivel Fridman And Juliet Saltiel



This is me with my dearly loved brothers Ruben and Faivel Fridman (Shraga was his nick-name, used by his friends.). The photo was taken in the late 1930s in Sofia.

I was born in the village of Slatina, near Sofia, on 17th December 1925. Our family was often forced to move from one place to another, because it was difficult for our father to find a permanent job. That is why my brothers and I were born in different places in Bulgaria. All this, however, didn't mean that my childhood wasn't good. But I should mention I never attended a Jewish school. All the schools I studied at were Bulgarian, except for the first one. I started my primary education in Ruse. There I studied up to first grade only. It was the local Catholic school, and I don't know why my parents decided to choose exactly this one, but it was perhaps because of the better education it seemed to provide. In my second grade I was already at the Sofia's school 'Father Paisii'. In fact, I studied there up to my fourth grade.

My elder brother's name was Ruben. He was born in Sofia in 1923 and died in Israel in 1999. He was an electrician. From his wife Ester (nee Sachi), he had three children: Yosif, Sima and Dafna. They live in Haifa in Israel. His wife was a housewife and now she is a pensioner. As far as I know it was Ruben who took care of our mother until she died.

My younger brother Shraga (his name used in the family was Faivel, after our paternal grandfather, Faivel Fridman) was born in the village of Karamanovo, Svishtov region, in 1928. He also emigrated

to Israel with his family. He is a constructor. They have three children with his wife Shoshana: Pnina, Hanita and David. Their children also live in Israel. Before she retired, Shoshana worked as a host at the Bulgarian old people's home in Rishon Lezion, while she was living in Yagur with her family, near my mother.

How did we earn our living during the Law for Protection of the Nation? My brother was an electrician and he often went to the nearby villages to practice his profession, although it was forbidden; he used to take off his yellow star before that. Of course, the villagers could give him away to the authorities, because his activity was against the law [Jews could work only in the field of manual labor, thanks to which they could earn something for their living.] But they didn't do that. Moreover, my brother often brought home wires. In these cases, all the family gathered, including the children, enthusiastic for the work - we made of the wires elements (some kind of insulators) - that we painted after that. These wires were again for the villagers, when there was a place to be supplied with electric current. Sometimes my father made walnut oil. We all gathered for such cases again, opened the walnuts, then we milled them, heated them to a certain temperature in a big pot or a 'paila' [dialect Bulgarian word meaning big flat baking dish] we put the substance in a press and it was only after that that walnut oil was produced. My father used to sell this oil to Bulgarians. But not at the market (because the authorities would have immediately caught him) - he sold it directly to individuals. That is how we earned our living.