

Mayer Moisey Pinkas, Avram Moisey Pinkas, Yakov Moisey Pinkas And Marko Moisey Pinkas



From left to right are standing: Mayer Moisey Pinkas, I and Yakov Moisey Pinkas. My little brother Marko Moisey Pinkas is sitting. The picture was taken in the town of Ruse, around 1933.

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. When she married in Israel her mother-in-law and father-in-law changed her name to Elana - so that she would have a Jewish name.

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.

There was an Itzko Aizner who later made of us members of the Union of Young Workers - he was in charge of looking after children at the gym hall on Sundays. He had an amateur cine-projector, and managed to find from somewhere silent films and showed them to us. He explained them and as a whole he made fabulous performances. I liked Ivrit at the Jewish school, although I didn't understand everything. I also liked Bulgarian language, grammar and the novels from the readers. I got an especially strong impression from the novels about Levski. We used to study Ivrit and Jewish history, which was called Toldot. There are some people who think that the name of the Spanish town of Toledo comes from Toldot - and that it had been a Jewish town. We used to study the Old Testament in Ivrit, and we studied Ivrit from the Old Testament. There was a teacher who had taught my uncle, too. His name was Bucco Delarubisa and he used many Turkish and Ladino sayings while speaking. There was one Jewish school in the town - with between 20 and 25 pupils in a class. It was a four-year primary school and a three-year junior high school, after which the pupils had to attend the Bulgarian high school.

In Ruse there was a big synagogue, and another one, smaller, midrash. There was another one - Ashkenazi synagogue - it is a club of the Shalom organization now ; it had been transformed into a sports hall after 9th September 1944 [the day of the communist takeover in Bulgaria]. The walls of the old synagogue were one meter wide, there was also a huge chandelier - brought perhaps from Austria - it was a luxurious one. I don't know if the synagogue is still functioning now because it is all laths and plaster already. The small one was destroyed so that a street to the river might pass - it was before 1944. The club Bnai Brith was next to this synagogue - it was a very elegant house where weddings, balls and other celebrations were organized - it had a nice huge ballroom. Opposite to it, there was another big house, whose ground floor was hired by 'Malbish Arumim' organization (which means 'provides clothes to the poor'). Middle class people - traders for example - used to gather there on Sundays to play cards; they entertained themselves. In the yard of the Jewish school there was a small building made of bricks - we used to hang the birds for Yom Kippur that had been stuck with a thin knife by the shochet. He hung them on these hooks so that the blood may drain off them. The school was destroyed in 1940 or in 1941 during the earthquake in Vranca, Romania, and no access to these buildings was allowed for a certain period. The 'Hashomer Hatzair' organization was also situated there.