

Ida Alkalai In Junior High School



I'm a student in junior high school on the photo. It was taken in Dupnitsa in the 1930s. I'm the second from the left in the middle row, the girl with braids.

I studied in the Jewish school until the fourth grade. I think that there was also a nursery [cheder] at the Jewish school. It was for children up to pre-school age. We had a teacher at the Jewish school called Monsieur Revakh, who was very strict. He taught us Ivrit. When we didn't know our work, he hit us with a small pencil and made us stand in the corner facing the wall. I wasn't very good at Ivrit. Monsieur Revakh did his best to teach us the language, but I think we weren't very hard working. There were also female teachers in the school who were Jewish. There was a stage at the Jewish school. We gathered in a big hall there to dance and party. The Jewish school was the only school in town which had a stage. On that stage I sang in the school choir.

There were Jewish organizations in the town. The most popular were Maccabi and 'Saznanie.' I was a member of Maccabi. I don't remember doing gymnastics or any other sports. The association 'Saznanie' was a cultural and educational organization. There was a choir, library and theater group. They were all housed in the building of the Jewish municipality in the center of town. I also saw Bulgarians visit the 'Saznanie' community house. I don't remember Maccabi having some concrete activities. We just gathered to see each other. Most of the Jews were members of 'Saznanie.' They had a rich cultural program. They put on opera performances, concerts and theater plays. They were much visited by the Jewish community in the town. You can say that the 'Saznanie' community house organized the cultural life of the whole town. My family also went to opera and theater performances.

After three classes in a junior high school I enrolled in the vocational school in Dupnitsa. When I graduated from the junior high school, I wanted to study in a high school. Then my mother told me that I had to learn a craft and enrolled me in the vocational school. There I learned sewing and worked with my mother for some time. Sewing was what we did for a living.