

Aron Alkalai's Mother Regina Alkalai As A Teacher In The Jewish School In Kyustendil



This is a photo of my mother Regina Alkalai as a teacher in the Jewish school in Kyustendil. She is in the center with the kids. It was taken in 1918 in Kyustendil. My mother is with the children from the third grade in the Jewish school in Kyustendil.

I studied four years in the Jewish school. We studied half a day. We studied everything in Bulgarian except our classes in Ivrit. I cannot say that we learned the language. We had a strict teacher in Ivrit - Monsieur Revakh. Monsieur Revakh made us stand in the corner of the room when we did not know our lesson. I remember that the teachers took us to the synagogue. We had a big gym and a stage in the school. That was the only school in town where there was a stage. We performed theater plays there. We placed chairs in the gym. Our parents came and we performed in front of them. I do not remember the names of the plays.

There were two Jewish organizations in Dupnitsa. One of them was the Zionist's one and the other was bigger and its name was 'Saznanie' [Conscience]. It was a cultural and educational organization with left ideas. It organized operettas and drama plays. The cultural life of Jews was rich. My father's sisters Kalina and Vita took part in the choral groups at 'Saznanie'. They also had a table for ping-pong for the young people. It was a very good organization. There was a fight for the leadership of the bank and the Jewish municipality between the Zionists and 'Saznanie'. People organized debates and made discussions. The organization had a community house and a big library. As far as I remember they did not have ideological discussions. I was a member of 'Saznanie'. We gathered there as youths and took books from the library. The Zionists appeared to be the richer Jews in town. 'Saznanie' was considered more of a left organization, that is, closer to the socialist ideas. That is why my father, who had left beliefs, was a sympathizer of 'Saznanie'.