

Eshua Mitrani And The Jewish School



This is a photo of our Jewish school, taken in the 1930s in Karnobat. The shammash in the synagogue was Tiu [uncle] Eshua Mitrani. He is standing in the center. He also worked in the school. Ester, our Hebrew teacher, is on the left side, and Belina, our teacher in Bulgarian, is on the right side. Tiu Eshua cleaned and washed the synagogue. When there was a holiday he usually took a pan with oil [in Bulgarian, it is called a chrism] out of the synagogue and everyone looked at himself in it for health, dropping coins as a gift. He built a small wooden house [sukkah] at Sukkot. People gathered there in the evening, they served grapes, cheese and bread and for us, the children. But there wasn't enough space and we usually sat outside waiting impatiently for tiu Eshua to bring us some food. The sukkah was a large shed, covered with tarpaulin from the outside, with a straight roof. They put two big tables and wooden benches in there. They gathered, read the prayer and afterwards they ate. I went to the nursery school and then to the Jewish school where I studied until the 4th grade. I had lessons in Hebrew and Bulgarian, and then we had an exam and transferred to a Bulgarian school - first to an elementary school and then to high school. Our teachers changed very often - in an unfamiliar city, with no company in the Jewish neighborhood, they must have felt bored. Almost every year we had different Hebrew teachers. I suppose they attended courses, perhaps in Sofia, and they came out there to teach us. I remember all of them. In the 4th grade our teacher was Abramovich from Romania. He didn't know a single word in Bulgarian and therefore he was always looking for someone to accompany him. And it was announced that everybody who knew Hebrew should assemble. He chose me. I accompanied him all the time - to the barbershop, the food shop, as though I was 'sewed' to him in order for him to manage. I learned Hebrew quite well, yet so many years have passed since then and I don't remember the words anymore. But I remember him.