

Mazal Asael With Friends In 1939



I am with some friends of mine in 1939. The photo was taken in Sofia. Mati is on the left, and Ida, Beka and I are next to her. Only Mati and Beka are alive now and they live in Israel. We lived in the Jewish neighbourhood and we were very close to one another. We were members of the Jewish Youth organisation Hashomer Hatzair then. The Jewish school organised excursions and summer camps. There was a Jewish summer camp in the town of Berkovitsa where we used to go on holiday. Children from the poorer families were accepted in that camp. My mother went to this camp to work as a cook so that my brother Benjamin and I could both go on holiday there. I remember that one summer I fell into a deep pool and had to be rescued. I have very pleasant memories from those vacations and also many good friends with whom I keep in touch even today. We had various organizations in the Jewish school: Maccabi, Akiva, Hashomer Hatzair. Maccabi was a sports organization that organised international competitions and Hashomer Hatzair was a scout organization and we used to learn Hebrew there. We used to stay after school and play different games or learn Jewish dances; we would try to speak only in Hebrew. These organizations had a very positive educational influence on us, teaching us to be very well organised. While I was studying in the Jewish school all my friends were Jews. They were mostly my classmates and we were all members of Hashomer Hatzair. The Jewish organizations existed until 1943 when internments from Sofia began.