

Lea Beraha With A School Friend



This is me (on the left) with a friend of mine. I remember her vaguely. I remember only that she left for Israel with the mass aliyah in 1947-1949. We must be 2nd or 3rd grade junior high school students here. We were photographed in Sofia, but I don't remember where exactly. We were already members of the Hashomer Hatzair Jewish youth organization; the badge on our clothes is the organization's symbol. I was a lousy student till the 4th grade of elementary school. I almost failed. It was thanks to the birth of Simeon II that I was able to pass from the 3rd to the 4th grade. I studied in the Jewish junior high school till the 3rd grade. We studied the usual subjects plus Jewish history. We studied everything in Bulgarian. Only the Torah did we read and write in Hebrew, and we also had Hebrew as a separate school subject. All teachers loved us very much. There was only

one teacher, who hated the poor children. She used to call us 'lousy kids'. Her daughter was in our class. That teacher used to tell us, 'My daughter will become somebody, whereas you will always be nothing but servants.' Years passed, I had already become a doctor, when I met her daughter in Israel and she complained that she was very badly off. The education in this school was excellent; I took a turn for the better and became an advanced student very quickly. I didn't have any special talents, yet I achieved everything through enormous efforts, constant visits to the library and sleepless nights. I don't remember anything special about my classmates. I was quite ambitious and the informal leader of the class, so to speak. In the 1st grade of the Jewish junior high school I became a member of Hashomer Hatzair. Hashomer Hatzair aimed at the establishment of socialism in Israel. It was a 'progressive' organization with a strong national aspect. I organized a very big company there. We often visited the Aura community center on Opalchenska and Klementina Streets, which was regularly attended by Jews and 'progressive' Bulgarians.