

Anna Danon At A Summer Camp



This is a colony [summer school camp] in Bankya in 1938. We are dressed in sports uniforms, white T-shirts and black shorts. We used to wear uniforms once upon a time. With my sisters we attended elementary and high school at the Bulgarian schools, even though most of our Jewish coevals attended the Jewish school. My father had never been a slave to those things. Generally he had progressive views and didn't have concrete political convictions. I can definitely say that there was no anti-Semitism in school. I even remember that we studied religion at school and our teacher Miss Antonova used to say before the beginning of the lesson: 'Children, if there are any Jewish kids, they are allowed to play outside, it is not obligatory for them.' But I was a real 'grinder', striving for her attention, and when she asked questions about the different proverbs of the Bible, I fell over myself to participate. Once she said: 'Shame on you, children! Anna is an Israelite and look how assiduous she is in our classes!' I was a good student and because of that I took part in the ceremony for the opening of the school year reciting 'I Am a Child of Bulgaria' every year. [This is a famous poem by Ivan Vazov, a doyen of Bulgarian literature.] And I recited it with such pathos! My favorite subject in high school was Bulgarian, and even now I help my granddaughter with learning it. My friends from high school were Maria, Velichka? We were very close then and still are. As a child I visited a colony [children's summer camp]. As I was physically very weak as well as needy, they always included me in those colonies. I have visual memories from St. Konstantin and Elena [a Black Sea resort]. Almost every summer they used to list me in a colony. I was such a crybaby. From the first day to the last I used to cry for my mummy. My parents didn't have the opportunity to go on vacations and they were happy to send me, at least my food was provided there.