

Sofi Danon-Moshe, Finishing The Third Grade At The Elementary School



This is a picture taken after finishing the third grade at the elementary school. I'm second in the second row from left to right. The photo was taken in the yard of the Jewish school – a favourite place of ours. There is a stamp of a photo shop on the back of the photo – F. Tachev Pazardzhik. There is no other inscription. The photo was taken in 1936. There were only nine pupils in our class at that time. In the back row are Baruh Lillo, on the right, and Fikou Saranta, on the left. In the second row from right to left are: Miko Semo, Roza Tadzher, Shely Beanary, Liska Natan, Rezhina Meshoulam, I and Istrel Behar. Our teachers are sitting in the front row (from right to left). I don't remember the first teacher. The second is our teacher in Bulgarian Genova, next to her is the principal Shoulekov, the man and woman sitting next to him are representatives of the Ministry of Education, who always participated in our final exams. Next to them, the last to the right, is the eminent teacher Giveret [Miss? in Hebrew] Semo. She used to teach us Hebrew and Jewish history. The school and the synagogue were in one and the same yard and there I spent my childhood. We were at school until noon, we usually had four hours a day, and we then quickly went back home to have something to eat, we left our school bags, and ran back to school. Afterwards our real life started, in the big gym and in the yard. We waited at the iron gates to be let in but they wouldn't open them until 3pm and we begged, 'Tanti Rivka, come on, open the door, please?' And then we started playing. The Zionist organizations had already been created by that time. Only very few were members of Hashomer Hatzair, there was also Betar; only boys were accepted in it. My mother was a member of the women's organization WIZO. There was another charity: its members gathered and visited ill people. Its name was Bikur Cholim. Very often they helped poor girls by preparing their dowry or buying a sewing machine so that the girl could prepare the dowry herself. That was the most precious gift, to buy a poor girl a sewing machine; she could prepare her dowry and that also gave her the chance to practice a craft. There's a famous sentence, 'You shouldn't go to bed with a light heart if you are aware that a brother of yours is going to bed hungry.' This was valid for the Jewish community and is still valid today.