

# Elkhonen Saks On A Chanukkah Celebration In School



This snapshot shows the pupils and teachers of the Valga Jewish elementary school who participated in a drama performance staged on Chanukkah in 1934. I am standing in the first row, third from the right. I started school in 1934. It was the Valga 6-year elementary Jewish school. The curriculum in our school was the same as in other comprehensive schools, but the teaching was conducted in Yiddish. Besides, we intensively studied Hebrew from the 1st grade, as well as the Torah. We also learned Estonian. The school was sponsored by the state, and the Jewish community helped to rent a gym and supported children from poor families. Besides, the school was under the authority of the Board of the Jewish Cultural Autonomy. The school had no premises of its own, so at first a house was rented and then only a semi-house. I remember that the surname of our director was Bakhmat, and the chairman of the Parents' Board was a very respected resident of our town: Doctor Polyakovsky. Jewish holidays were always cheerfully celebrated at school, especially Chanukkah and Purim. We prepared performances and made suits. And on Pesach we had a vacation: this holiday was celebrated at home. When I entered that school, there were about 60 pupils, and after four years only 25 remained. The school was closed in 1938.