

## Ida Alkalai With A Friend



This photo was taken in Dupnitsa in the 1940s. I'm with Vitka, who was also a Jew, interned from Sofia. We were good friends. I don't know where she is now.

After three classes in a junior high school I enrolled in the vocational school in Dupnitsa. When I graduated from the junior high school, I wanted to study in a high school. Then my mother told me that I had to learn a craft and enrolled me in the vocational school. There I learned sewing and worked with my mother for some time. Sewing was what we did for a living. My mother sewed dresses and when I graduated from the vocational school I started giving her some advice. There were Jews and Bulgarians among my mother's clients. I graduated with a master's certificate in

sewing. That was shortly before 1939. In school I didn't have problems because of my origin. I remember that during the war some Germans, civilians and military, were accommodated in the vocational school. I don't know why. But they didn't treat us badly.

At the beginning of the 1940s, when the anti-Jewish laws were adopted, we were very worried. My father continued working. He was close to a lot of villagers, who kept on buying goods from him. Otherwise, all the Jewish workshops, bank and organizations were closed. During the internment of Jews in 1943 in Sofia, a family of four came to live with us. That was the Kohen family. They were my mother's relatives. We had a kitchen, living-room and one more room. We gave them the living-room. They stayed with us for some months.

From my father's brothers only Uncle Daniel had a radio, a 'Telefunken.' During fascist times they hid it so that no one would see it. There was an order to confiscate all Jewish radio sets. We listened to the news on the war. During World War II, Uncle Rahamim, my mother's brother, was interned from Sofia to Dupnitsa and lived at our place. I remember that he was with us during the bombardments. He watched the planes passing through the sky and told me in Ladino that those were stars up there.