

Nissim Kohen In The Jewish School



This is a photo from the second primary grade in the Jewish school in the Jewish neighborhood Luchbunar in Sofia. The photo was taken in 1932. It shows the teacher Mr Ashrieli, next to him is the teacher Mrs Syurjon, who taught us Bulgarian. Next to her is the teacher David Pilosof who taught us maths. Above on the left is one of the school attendants.

I am the third on the right on the first row below. Next to me is the famous anti-fascist fighter Menahem Papo. At that age - until third primary grade - most of the class were members of Maccabi. Later we joined Hashomer Hatzair and only Menahem Papo joined Betar. He was a member of a fighting group in the UYW [The Union of Young Workers, a communist youth organization]. He tried to take part in the assassination of Kolcho Yanakiev, who was a fascist and jammed radio Moscow and radio London. That assassination attempt was not successful. Menahem was caught and shot dead at the age of 19. On the second row first on the right and behind the teacher is Morits and Fifi. They were cousins and came from Georgia. I do not know why. First on the left on the first row is Leon Levi, who became a famous architect in Israel. Next to the teacher Pilosof is Zelma Haimova, who now lives in Ruse. First on the left on the second row is Isak Ninyo, who became an engineer in the air force. Zhak Levi became a professor in philosophy, but he killed himself.

The Jewish school was between Osogovo Str, Bregalnitsa Str and Pozitano Str. There was a synagogue complex on a part of Pozitano Str. There were two yards. The Jewish school had two buildings - a new one and an old one. The nursery school, first and second primary grade were in the new one and the other classes were in the old one. The new building was opened in my time - approximately around 1930. I was among the first students who entered it. What was typical for the times was that the children living in the center of Sofia near Hristo Botev Blvd studied in the central Jewish school. The other children studied in the Luchbunar school. The classes consisted of 35 to 37 children. But gradually that changed and children from Luchbunar went to study in the central school, because the number of children there was declining. Some of my classmates had to move to the central school in the last grades. There were three classes in the nursery school, and there were 35 - 40 children in each one. There were at least three classes in the first grade. The

number of students in the classes declined throughout the years and in the last junior high school grade there was only one class of 35 students.