

Victor Baruh And His Friends



This is a photograph of me and my friends as teenagers, taken on 5th September 1937 in Sofia. In the first row from left to right are: Yosif Beraha, Haim Mevorah and Zhak Danon and in the second row from left to right are: Edi Arueti, myself and Solomon Mevorah. Yosif Beraha is a friend of mine from Kjustendil. Edi Arueti left for Israel where he became a well-known poet. He wrote poetry in Hebrew. Haim and Solomon Mevorah were twin brothers. They lived in the neighborhood and I knew them from the time when we were kids. They had Spanish passports and this allowed them to leave for Spain during World War II and then later for Israel. When one of them came from Israel as my guest, he wanted to see his father's shop along Pirotzka Street and a dead-end street - I think it's called Bulgaria - and the Commercial High School in Lozenetz. I brought him there and he burst into tears - there was a balcony at the back of the building and he said, 'Our headmaster talked to us here.' And when the other one came to Sofia we went to see the place where they had lived - we went upstairs, we rang the bell, but the current owners weren't very kind and we didn't go inside. But they felt a great nostalgia - they were very excited when they came back to Bulgaria. In Israel they have an organization, some dance clubs, they sew traditional costumes, they dance the horo [traditional Bulgarian dances], sing Bulgarian songs and cry. After 9th September 1944 almost all my friends left for Israel, where I have visited them several times. I have very fond memories of this. I had studied with some of them till the 4th grade. They warmly welcomed my wife and me. Yet I stayed in Bulgaria because at that time I was a leftist like my elder brother Armand and I thought that the Jewish question would be resolved along with the social problems. But political differences did not trouble our friendship.