

Anna Schwartzman With Her Friend



This is a picture of me with my friend from the Maccabi organization, Roza Gutman [nee Kresser]. The photo was taken in Kishinev in 1939. At the age of 7 I became a member of the Romanian Zionist youth sports organization, Maccabi. We had gymnastics, social interaction and attended lectures on Jewish history, traditions and culture. The club also organized events. On Saturdays we had dances and concerts. There were different groups: choir singing, athletics, dancing. The orchestra was superb. Once a year we were taken on a trip and lived in a summer camp by the river for two weeks. We had to wear a Maccabi uniform. The junior group girls wore a blue skirt, white shirt and white tennis shoes. On the left breast we had the Maccabi pin, and we wore a blue tie. At 14 I was moved to a senior group. The uniform differed slightly - the skirt was not blue but white. Every year on 10th May Romania marked the birthday of the Russian tsar with a celebration. [Editor's note: In reality 10th May commemorated the crowning of the first Romanian king and the creation of the Romanian Kingdom, which took place on 10th May 1883.] On that day there was always a parade. The Maccabi girls marched in the parade with their own orchestra. The entire town came to watch us. Perhaps it only seemed so to me, but we marched beautifully, and our

orchestra was exceptional. When I was 12, I finished a 4-year school, the 'primar'['elementary school' in Romanian]. There was no money for me to attend a gymnasium, so I went to work at a leather goods factory. The factory employed close to a hundred people and was considered a large factory. We made bags, belts and suitcases. Moldova didn't have heavy manufacturing plants but mostly private companies. My brother and I worked together. We were organized in teams of 6 or 7 at work, and every member of the team had his own task. I was very happy with my job. I began as an apprentice to a seamstress, cutting thread into equal pieces. Eventually I was promoted to senior trainee and then became an assistant. I was paid 100 lei a month. Of course it was difficult to survive on that little money, but it offered considerable help to my family.