

Eugenia Berger



This is me. The picture was taken in Wilno in the 1930s.

I was born in Wilno in 1918, the third child in our family. I belonged to Hashomer Hatzair.

In our organization we often had lectures about Israel. All the young people were preparing to immigrate to Palestine.

We would go on hakhsharah, too. We were very involved young people. We all wore uniforms. Gray blouses and navy blue skirts and gray panama hats.

Our group was co-educational. Both students and grammar-school children belonged to it.

I went to a Jewish school, where the language of instruction was Yiddish, and after that to a training college run by YIVO. I often performed at school - I recited poems.

When I was in the third grade we held a celebration in honor of Sholem Aleichem, Peretz and An-ski, our Jewish writers. I was very fond of poetry, so if ever there was anything to be recited the teachers always came to me.

When I was still in the third grade they invited the sixth-graders in to see me reciting. I'll never forget that. I got so many ovations, and my teacher came up to me and kissed me on the forehead.

Then she went to my parents and praised me. She said that I was bound to become an actress.

I have to admit that I was always a 'naughty' girl. I really didn't like potatoes. If I even saw a potato in my soup that was it - I couldn't eat it. One day I knew that it was going to be vegetable soup with potatoes for lunch.

When I was setting the table I took one plate from the dairy cupboard on purpose and put it in front of my chair. Mama didn't notice until she had served us all with soup.

At once she took the plate, poured my portion away, smashed the plate and threw it in the garbage. And I had to be punished: I didn't get another portion of soup.

I must say that I was very pleased with that punishment, because I couldn't look at that soup. That's what a rogue I was. It was unthinkable that anyone should play such pranks on Mama in our house. They were more traditional and obedient than me.