

## Leon Anzhel With Schoolmates From The Jewish School



Here I am in the right column second from the top, with my schoolmates from the Jewish school. I don't remember their names. Among us, in the center is our Bulgarian teacher, Miss Rashel. The photo was taken between 1927 and 1933 in Yambol. I was friends mainly with Jews from the Jewish school but had some Bulgarian contacts as well, mainly from our neighborhood. At that time, after World War I, and after the establishment of fascism in Italy at the time of Mussolini, there existed an organization called 'Homeland Protection' and in that organization there were some fascist

ideas. It was the predecessor of the organizations Brannik and Otets Paisii. It existed until 1934 after the coup on 19th May and after that it wasn't on the agenda. I can't say what happened to it. I remember we had a neighbor who was its member. They used to wear black shirts and were under the strong influence of Mussolini. Their slogan was 'Bulgaria, Liberate Yourself!' I received my elementary education at a Jewish school. We studied different subjects and Hebrew. I used to love Mathematics and Geography. I recall two of my teachers: Leo Cohen and Miss Rashel. After the fourth grade there came a commission from the Ministry of Education and they tested our knowledge. There was a sports organization as well called Maccabi and I was a member. I remember the exercises we did and the pyramids we built by stepping on each other's shoulders. I can't remember anything else. The only other thing I can recall is that there was one more organization: Hashomer Hatzair, but I can't say exactly what it was about. We kept the Jewish high holidays at school and synagogue. Very often specialists from Sofia would come here to deliver speeches and read lectures. And every Friday my mother and father met with one or two other Jewish families. Neither my mother nor father was religious but the whole family gathered for some of the traditional holidays and kept some of the rituals.