

Marim Haller And Reghina Smilovici



This is I, Marim Haller, the one on the right, with Reghina Smilovici, a friend of mine from here, from Botosani, in the 1930's.

I was born in Harlau in 1915. Officially, my name is Marim, but people call me Maly. I was named after a neighbor whom my mother knew. I never knew my father, for he went to war when I was a few months old, and he didn't return. I lived with my mother. My mother administered a business in the house, in the very room where we lived - half the room was occupied by the store. She sold tobacco, cigarettes, and she also received a pension after my father - that was our livelihood.

I believe we lived in Harlau until I was about 10. And afterwards we moved to Botosani, my mother and I. We lived in a rented house on Dragos Voda St., which had 2 rooms and a kitchen, and mother would rent one of the rooms to tenants - she rented one of the rooms, and we lived in the other room - so that we could get by, she rented the room to pupils - that's how life was in those days!

I entered a job when I was 13, and I was already earning money by then. Little as it was, but it helped to support the household. If my mother was unemployed... [I would go to] School during half of the day, [and go to] work during the remaining half.

There were youth organizations, Zionist organizations. Such as the Hashomer Hatair, I don't remember any other. But I couldn't attend the meetings as I was at work, and I didn't enter that organization. I didn't have that much spare time, since I was working for my subsistence. I was working very hard. I even put in extra hours until late into the night, and I was tired. Both school and work at the same time. Do your homework, this and that - I had no spare time.

I used to go to the cinema every now and then, and the odd ball. There were balls organized by Jews. The ballroom was rented. There were several ballrooms. One was located where the cinema still stands nowadays - the Popovici hall. It housed a movie theatre. And the cinema was suspended when a ball was organized, and it became a ballroom. Usually, it was Gypsies who played at balls,

they were the ones who provided the music. But they could play Jewish music very well and they played it at balls. I wasn't too keen on dancing. I couldn't dance very well, I only knew a couple of dances. Well, when the partner would lead during the tango, I would dance, but when it came to other dances... I never waltzed. I didn't know how to waltz. There were also meetings of the Jewish youth, and I used to attend those. Several activities were performed there... There was also a Jewish library, and they conducted reviews of the books in the library, they would discuss a specific book, analyze it, everyone offered their opinion. We used to meet at a classmate's place on many occasions and began discussing books, authors.