

The Students Of The Jewish School In Karnobat



This is a photo of all students and our teachers in the Jewish school in Karnobat, where I studied until the 4th grade. It was taken in 1933. We had some kind of exam and a party. I am sitting in the photo on a chair on the right side. When I was seven years old and it was time for me to go to school, they enrolled me in the Jewish school in the town. There was one class in each grade - from first to fourth grade. We studied in two rooms, two classes in a room. We were around ten children in a class, the boys and the girls studied together, but in high school the boys studied separately from the girls. While the teacher taught one of the classes, the other students did written exercises. Our teacher was a young woman of Jewish origin from Kazanlak. Several years later, I don't remember when exactly, the school was closed because there weren't enough children there. This was also the time when the laws against us were adopted. All of us, the children who had studied in that school, had excellent marks later in high school. I remember many of my friends then - Sarah Konfino, Nora Konfino, who was my 'milk sister', because my mother suckled her too; Rashelina, Mari Behar, Benji, Miko and many others. Both the girls and the boys played together. We, the girls, played boys' games too. My father would often scold me for that. In the winter we went sledding and I put on baggy trousers, so that I wouldn't have to wear a skirt - all the girls wore skirts then. We often organized something like 'evening parties' in the schoolyard and I played folk dances until late with my Jewish friends and with my Bulgarian friends too when I was in high school. I know all kinds of Bulgarian folk dances and I love them very much. We also organized plays in an improvised theatre. Once we acted out some script in which the beloved of a young man was shot and was all covered in blood. The man was carrying her in his hands and cursing the murderer. But since I, in the role of the woman, was all covered with red paint, the older women who knew me thought that something bad had happened to me and started crying out loud and lamenting my death: 'Negra dea de Matika la matoron. Esta entera en sangre.' [In Ladino: Poor Matika, she is dead. She is all covered in blood.] And I was saying to them, 'Keep quiet, I am alright' and couldn't stop laughing. So the play was a comedy for some and a tragedy for others. I also very much loved the celebrations of 24th May, when we performed Bulgarian folk dances on the square

until late.