

Matilda Levi With The Hashomer Hatzair Group



This is the Hashomer Hatzair group. Here I'm standing in the very center, above all. One could think I was tall, but I wasn't. But I rarely sat when they took pictures of us, I don't know why. The year is 1933, already in Sofia.

Of course, I felt pity when we moved to Sofia. I felt nervous that there were no hills in Sofia and there was no place where I could walk around. And the hills in Karnobat were all covered with almond trees. In the spring, the trees bloomed wonderfully. Sofia children weren't better than I was, especially in literature. They all used a pompous style; a fact that made me anxious and I couldn't understand why they spoke like that. I spoke in a different style. They didn't laugh at me for speaking in a different manner because they knew it was the correct way. The Bulgarian teacher always emphasized my good style.

At some point I contacted a Jewish organization that was something like a leftist scout organization. Its name would translate as 'The Young Guardian.' I became friends with some Jewish girls. I also became friends with Bulgarian girls in the high school. There was a Jewish junior high school in Sofia but I wasn't ready for it, since there were only three grades in the Jewish school in Karnobat, and I went to a Bulgarian school. It was in October 1932. Some boys asked me, 'Girl, what are you looking for? 'I would like to enroll.' 'Well, go to the headmaster.' So I was enrolled in the class E. And there I graduated from the junior high school.

After I graduated, I left for Paris. My mother laughed because I didn't know French. I spoke only German; I had studied it in high school. I began learning French in Paris. There was a three-month course called 'Pantheon' where I began learning French. I studied really hard; I had really good written French. When I came back, the fact that I could speak French didn't help me at all.