

Chasia Spanerflug With Her Friends



Young people from left to right: I don't remember the name of the first guy, next to him is Gulka Jashunska (she was in evacuation during the war; died in Haifa), Deilovich (died in Israel), Masha Nemze, Israel Katz, and I, Chasia Langbord. The picture was taken during a stroll in Vilnius in 1938.

When I was studying in Vilnius I made friends. My bosom friend was Mikhail Brantsovskiy. He was my classmate. His parents were wealthy people – Mikhail's father was involved in manufacturing. I was friends with Mikhail's cousin, Chaya Kushnir, who came from the province and lived in Brantsovskiy's house. Mikhail's mother, Dina Brantsovskaya, was a very kind woman. Her house was always open for her son's friends. There were times when a large company of friends came to Mikhail's and stayed in the house until late. I often went there by myself. Aunt Dina always made sure that I was fed. She understood that I was undernourished. Sometimes I stayed overnight, not to walk around in the street at a late hour.

Masha Nemze was also my friend. Her parents owned a large fur store in the heart of the city. They had a dacha and they invited me to come over there for a couple of weeks during vacation. On Jewish holidays, the lyceum was closed and I went to my home town. I spent summer holidays at home as well. I didn't want to go home as I was afraid of my parents' tiffs, which became more frequent with the years. But still, I loved my town, my school friends and I enjoyed spending time with them.

In the penultimate grade we were to choose between two directions: technical and humanitarian. I chose the humanitarian one. Now I felt more confident in our company. I was loved in any company as I was never in a hurry to go home because I didn't have one. Besides, I was merry and appreciative. After classes we went out to a café, ate ice-cream, called on somebody to have a cup of tea, or sometimes went to the cinema. There were a lot of Zionist organizations in Vilnius, including youth organizations. Boys started wooing me. Usually I went to these organizations with my boyfriend. It was either Betar or Maccabi. They were different in their approaches, but all of them were purely Zionist. So, the years of my adolescence were full of Zionist ideas. During the

meetings we often were told about Palestine, about life in a kibbutz. Youth was called upon to go to Palestine to build the Jewish state.