

## Matilda Levi With Her Friend Bonka Shipman



This is me with my best friend Bonka Shipman in 1939, walking in the streets of Sofia.

In Sofia I had a good company of girls, friends of mine. They were all Jews. All of them were university graduates: engineers, dentists, etc., and we had all been friends since our high school years. I met my husband, Nisim Levi, in that company. He was the only one in that circle who had graduated in medicine, and who was sent to different villages all the time. We used to write to each other regularly. It was like that for three or four years; we were always separated, up and down the country. He was a Komsomol worker in the villages of Kesarevo, Kilifarevo, and Dobromirka. He

was enthusiastic about the Komsomol work. He continued his work in the villages after 9th September 1944 and then he was sent to Sofia. He started working here. We got married in 1945. Civil marriages before the registrar were introduced then.

I didn't get married according to the Jewish tradition and my husband and I even decided to have a wedding without any ceremonies. There were no clothes, nothing. There are Jewish women who know the Jewish rituals but I'm not acquainted with it. Our wedding was very simple. I borrowed a dress of my mother, which was red and a little bit nicer than the others I had, and we went to the registrar. We couldn't even do it on Sunday; it was Monday then. We went to a pastry shop with two friends, and then in the evening my mother killed a couple of chickens and cooked them and some people helped with the cooking. There was no other meat in those days. We ate chicken with rice and some cake; it was a very simple party. We gathered right here in this apartment but there was a door and the space was turned into a big hall.