

Margarita Kohen In The Orphanage In Sofia



A photo from the orphanage in Sofia. It was taken on 1st March 1929. There is neither a stamp on the back of the photo, nor any other inscription. I am the fourth in the last row from right to left. Our teachers are also in the picture – the principal Mrs Basan, on the left is Mrs. Douda – the housekeeper and Miss Roza who was a tutor. In the top row is the cook whose name I can't remember and I can't remember the names of my classmates. But we were good friends.

I lived in a boarding house in Sofia for four years. The old orphanage was in 'Patriarkh Evtimii' on the way to Aleksandrovska Hospital and then it moved opposite 'Slavia' Playfield, in the building where later ORT was situated. We went to classes in the Jewish school, where now is the Rila Hotel. Every morning a teacher would take us there and we were walking in lines. I remember some of the teachers from the school. For example, Miss Gertsovich who was teaching us History and Geography, Miss Petkova – in Literature and Bulgarian. She was extremely strict but we learned the language well because of that. My favorite subject was Literature. I went there when I was eight and a half years old. I wasn't nostalgic. I was a calm child, much calmer than my sister. I used to be a good student and the teachers were surrounding me with love so I wasn't in need of love and affection.

At the junior high school trips were organized. They used to take us there, for some holiday like 1st May, for example, where now is Ivan Vazov residential quarter. There were lots of brooks and we would go to the first brook, then – to the second, to the third and so on. I managed to make some friends – with Sara Betsarel, she went to live in Israel later, with Victor Mandil.