

## Mazal Asael With Friends In Sofia



This is a photo of some friends of mine and me in Sofia. My friend Ida is on the right and next to her is our friend Krustiu. The photo was taken in the center of Sofia in 1941. The three of us were in the same group in the Revolutionary Youth Union. On May 24, 1943, Slavic Script and Bulgarian Culture Day, there were sudden protests among Jewish youth against the authorities' decision to forcibly move our families out of Sofia. Many of our families had already received notices for a forced internment. In 1943 the removal of the Jews from their homes started in order to organize their deportation to concentration camps abroad. Because of the sharp reaction of the Bulgarian population and of some of the members of Parliament, the deportation was stopped at the last moment. I was a member of the Revolutionary Youth Union by then. Both Jews and Bulgarians were members of the RYU, a pro-Communist and anti-fascist youth organization. My parents couldn't prevent me from taking part in the RYU's activities during WWII, as I did not let them know exactly what I was doing. My father was a liberal man but he didn't take part in politics. My brothers didn't have a particular political orientation either. I was the only one in the family who participated actively in anti-fascist activities. That was all due to the environment which I had entered when I started working. I was working at a bazaar on Klementina Street where there were many workers ? cooks, tailors and others - and that is how I came into contact with left-wing youth who were members of the RYU. .