

Anna Danon And Her Sister Klara Levi



This picture was taken on a holiday at Bozhurishte in 1934. Somebody had spread that sheet and we were photographed as though we were sitting in a plane. I am second from left, sitting as a pilot, my eldest sister Klara is first from left. The others are children from next door. I was born on March 5, 1928 in Sofia. I have two sisters: the eldest Klara Levi is 9 years older than me, the younger Ester Rubenova is 5 years older. Our family often moved from one house to another because our parents weren't able to pay the rent regularly, and the contracts were usually suspended. The new house needed to be cleaned up and whitewashed. My mother was a fastidious and very accommodating person. She got along with everybody and we co-existed well with our neighbors. We lived in Luchbunar, which was mostly inhabited by Jews and Macedonians. Jews and Macedonians used to coexist quite well together. My mother's best friend was a neighbor of ours, Donka the Macedonian. I don't remember any special custom observed by Macedonians, but the Jews mostly observed Pesach with boios and matzah. We lived in a yard with at least 4 or 5 small houses that were inhabited by separate families. We had no electricity. At a fixed hour each family's housewife used to go out and light a fire in a charcoal brazier in order to cook dinner. There was the constant smell of roast peppers. The streets were poor and miserable, but not covered in mud. I'm not sure of exactly how many people the Jewish community included. There were two synagogues in Sofia: the central one, which was visited by the people who lived around Hristo Botev Boulevard, and our Luchbunar synagogue, which was the poorer one. I rarely visited the central synagogue. The Luchbunar synagogue doesn't exist any more. The 'large' building of the synagogue was used on Friday evening for the welcoming of Sabbath. And there was an additional small room in that synagogue where old Jews prayed every morning. There was a Jewish charity organization called Keren Kayemet. Schoolgirls from the senior classes went around the community and collected funds in money boxes in order to support the people in need. [Editor's note: The Keren Kayemet was founded with the purpose of buying land in the Land of Israel and not of helping poor community members.] My friends from high school were Maria, Velichka? We were very close then and still are. As a child I visited a colony [children's summer camp]. As I was physically very weak as well as needy, they always included me in those colonies. I have visual memories from St. Konstantin and Elena [a Black Sea resort]. Almost every summer they used to

list me in a colony. I was such a crybaby. From the first day to the last I used to cry for my mummy. My parents didn't have the opportunity to go on vacations and they were happy to send me, at least my food was provided there.