

## Adela Hinkova In A Ballet Performance At The Jewish School



In this photo I'm in the Jewish school (the third from left to right) in Vidin in 1925 during a celebration on the occasion of the end of the school year. Such celebrations were traditional. Students from various classes acted out a prepared program, we did various performances in front of our parents, for example, we gave a ballet performance in this one. What is interesting, is that my dress here was made from paper. We did a lot of ballet in the school. The Jewish school had a two-storey building and a gym, which was used, both as a nursery and by the Maccabi sports organization. We had our ballet lessons there. When my parents enrolled me in the Jewish school, it was very hard for me at first, because nobody at home knew Ivrit. My brother knew a word or two, but he wasn't interested in school. In the first grade we had a special teacher, who was also the director and also taught us gymnastics. Learning Ivrit was hard and the teacher, Mr. Koen, always said, 'You have no textbooks, you should pay attention in class to what I say to you and you should repeat to yourself what I'm writing.' At that time we didn't know how to write yet and it was very hard. We studied the letters for a whole year. Mr. Koen would always give us new words. And here's how I tried to learn them: the staircase at home had two big and three small steps. I jumped on the steps and I would say 'I' on the first step, 'You' on the second one, 'He' on the third one, I would go back - 'We,' 'You,' 'They.' I repeated them twenty times. Once my mother shouted, 'Stop jumping on that staircase, you will break it!' and I answered, 'Leave me alone, I'm studying!' When I passed to the second grade, my brother received some cubes as a present - when you rotate them, you make a picture. He asked me to give them back to him. I got very angry and threw them at him and hit him. My parents beat me very hard for that. He got sick. I thought it was because I had hit him, but it turned out that he had mumps. I was also not allowed to go to school for three weeks. After the three weeks, my mother, who had not had mumps as a child, also got sick. So, I had to stay home for another three weeks. Because of that I had to repeat the grade. I was very sad and depressed. I had been separated from my friends. The Jewish school had four grades, and I studied five years. When I was in the second grade my brother went down with mumps. So, I was under quarantine for three weeks. Then my mother also caught it and our teacher in Ivrit, who was also the school headmaster, decided that I should repeat the year. We didn't have any textbooks and I couldn't catch up with the studies at home. I was happy when I received a 'good' [four out of six] as a grade. I studied a lot, because I had to repeat the grade. Once the teacher asked me to read aloud and I said, 'Please, wait for me to take my pencil.' I had the habit of underlining what I read in order to avoid making mistakes. The children laughed at me saying, 'Are you reading with your mouth or with the pencil?'