

A Manifestation Of The Association Of Second-Hand Dealers 'Saglasie' In Sofia



This is a picture of a manifestation of the association of second-hand dealers 'Saglasie' [Agreement] in Sofia. Yakov Levi and my husband David's father, and David were members of that association. The manifestation took place along Maria Luiza Street and in the background you can see the mosque, which is still at the same place. The date of the holiday is 10th May 1936, I can't say what holiday it was though. I don't know whether 'Saglasie' was strictly a Jewish association,

but I now for sure that many Jews were members. I can't say how large the Jewish community in Sofia was during my childhood but I think there were a lot of people. There were two synagogues in Sofia at that time, and the other prayer houses, which were smaller, were called midrashi. There was a rabbi, a shochet and a chazzan. The two synagogues were the Central Synagogue and the Iuchbunar Synagogue. There were two Jewish schools: the central one and the Iuchbunar one. The central one was on Tsar Kaloyan Street where the Rila Hotel is now, or to be more precise, the shop 'Sredets' which is in front of the hotel. I studied at that school, but it was bombed and destroyed during World War II. At seven years of age I was sent to an orphanage, because my father had died and my mother had six daughters and no money. Then she was forced to buy a sewing machine and pay for it by installments. She used to sew some clothes and supported the family in this way. Unfortunately, she couldn't support us all, so firstly she sent my older sister to an orphanage and a few years later, I was sent too. It was a Jewish orphanage 'Tsaritsa Yoanna'. It was located opposite Slavia football ground near the Russian monument in Sofia. I have always felt some kind of anti-Semitism around me. I didn't experience it personally, because I lived mostly in the Jewish neighborhood, but I heard from my elder cousins that they had been called 'chifuti' or other insulting words. While I was in the Jewish orphanage we went on vacation: we went camping to Berkovitsa. Other orphanages were there as well. They were close to ours: one of them was 'Bitolya,' I don't remember the other one, but it was also close. Our orphanage was supported by rich Jews and we were a little bit better off than the others. We went to Berkovitsa, and ate better food. The children from the other orphanages came and beat us if we didn't let them eat our food. And I heard the word 'chifuti' and other words, which I didn't know the meanings of at that time.