

# Avram Merkado Natan Graduating From The High School In Ruse



I am the sixth from left to right on the third row from the bottom graduating from the high school in Ruse in 1947.

On 8th September 1944 the Soviet forces entered Ruse and we welcomed them. It was great joy. Firstly, we saw one car and communications troops installing a cable. Then we went to watch how they made a pontoon bridge over the Danube. And the first car - an open jeep with an officer inside - suddenly flew in the air - the people lifted it and carried it. The officer got embarrassed. 'Tovarishti, pozhaluista!' [From Russian: Comrades, please!] Then we went on a demonstration singing and the policemen hid away. The Germans had withdrawn their troops. After ten days Mois and his friends also returned from the prison in Pleven - they had stayed in the town in order to overthrow the fascist authorities. At that time the power in Ruse was also taken by the people - some of the policemen from State Security were arrested, others killed. I was already a member of an illegal UYW [Union of Young Workers] group - four boys and I had formed it in 1944. We collected money for the prisoners, for the people underground - we stole, we did everything we could to help. We were still boys - 14-15 years old.

We founded our own UYW club. We shouted on the streets - songs, agitation. We started courses in Marxism-Leninism. I enrolled in the high school in Ruse. I had one grade officially recognized as a person affected by the Law for Protection of the Nation - I enrolled in the fifth grade but I had to catch up with the material. We helped the Soviet troops in Ruse. The high school turned into a Soviet military hospital. We studied in the cinemas - as well as one could study there. We were only taught and not examined. Those were revolutionary times. We were asked to guard and to look for fascists. Once they gave me a gun. We were gluing posters all night and since one girl had been shot by fascist recently, they gave us one gun when we were working. When we finished the job, we returned it. We did agitation, propaganda, we did not feel like studying. It was not a time for studies. We were full of enthusiasm and we mixed with the Bulgarian youths. That lasted 5-6 months. Then we realized that we had to study and I graduated from the high school in 1947. I was

a secretary of the UYW in the high school and deputy chairman of the United Youth School Union. We tried to attract more of our classmates. In my class all students were UYW members, except two boys who were sons of rich villagers. They did not mingle with us. We were friends with all the rest even after we graduated.

When we finished high school we went on a brigade to build the Hainboaz pass - this is one of the national construction sites, in which the socialist youth contributed to the construction of the road - digging, etc. In the evenings we gathered around the camping fire and sang songs. We slept in tents. In 1947 I started studying in the Higher Technical School in Ruse. At first I did not want to go to university, because my brother was already studying and my father had a small salary - he was an accountant in the commissariat. Then he became chief accountant in the company 'Clothes and Shoes'. I wanted to become a worker, because I shared those ideas and wanted to help the family. But one day my father and brother persuaded me that the country needed not only workers, but also engineers. So, they convinced me to continue my education. I spent two years in Ruse. Then the Higher Technical School was closed and I was transferred to Sofia where I graduated the Higher Machine Electrical and Technical Institute in 1952.