

Victor Baruh With School Friends



This photograph was taken in the 1936/1937 academic year during a picnic on the Vitosha Mountain, near Sofia. I'm the second from right. The other boys on this photo are my school friends. When we came back to Sofia from Kjustendil I enrolled in the Men's High School No. 3. I graduated in 1937 and I enrolled in the Sofia University to study law and history but I didn't finish due to the Law for the Protection of the Nation. In December 1940 the Law for the Protection of the Nation was adopted by the National Assembly and on 23rd January 1941 it was promulgated. Pursuant to the provisions of this Law, Jews were deprived of all civil rights. One of the articles of the Law for the Protection of the Nation stated that you couldn't write - you had no right to be an author. My first short story during our internment to Parazdjik was published in the newspaper Gorsky Kooperator [literally - 'a forest guard']. I can't remember how I got in touch with the editors but they got it published under the name V. Beshkov. I couldn't be published because I was a Jew.

Another article stated that you couldn't be in matrimonial or non-matrimonial relationships with non-Jews. Thus, I couldn't love Bulgarian women. In 1941, apart from the yellow star, we had to put a note on our front door - a Jewish Dwelling - which consisted of a white sheet of paper with black writing and the star of David. At the time when the Law for the Protection of the Nation was enforced I worked at a Jewish commercial company called Bratya Mizrahi [Mizrahi Brothers] but they had to decrease the number of Jewish employees because the law required that Jews employed by such companies should not exceed 50% of the total work force. I was employed in a company that was engaged in fabric trading when I went to work for the first time with the star. When my boss, Boris Zhelev, who was one of the republican officers fired from the army as a republican, saw it, he said, 'Take it off, I'll vouch for you!' There was sympathy for us everywhere.