

Oskar Shimon Beer And His Brother Pavel Beer



This photograph was taken in Brno, in 1938 or 1939, and shows my husband, Oskar Shimon Beer (left) and his brother Pavel Beer (right).

Oskar Shimon Beer was born on 27th February 1925 in Brno as the second son of finance councilor JUDr. Julius Beer and Hildegard, née Fried. His older brother Pavel Zvi was born in 1923. The Beers were from Jevicko, the Frieds from Holesov, and the Beers and Frieds also had relatives in Olomouc. Pavel and Shimon, or Ossi, attended Jewish kindergarten, school and high school in Brno that taught modern Hebrew, too. Shimon had been influenced by Professor Kurzweil, so he was not only a Zionist, but also became religious. That's why, despite Shimon being the younger of the siblings, he left in December of 1939 on the last transport from the Protectorate for Palestine.

At first he stayed with relatives, attended school in Haifa, and then transferred to agricultural school in Pardess Chana. Then he left for a kibbutz and as soon as he was old enough, eighteen, he joined the Palestinian brigade in the English army to fight the Nazis, who'd in the meantime imprisoned and then in Auschwitz killed his parents and all his relatives. His brother Pavel by miracle survived, and in 1949 arrived in Israel, got married, and had two children and five grandchildren.

Shimon and Pavel met up in Brno in the summer of 1945; the brigade had given him permission to go look for relatives. Pavel was still a "musulman" and told Shimon of the death of their parents - Shimon collapsed - that haunted him his whole life. He felt that he had to live in a certain disciplined fashion in order to be able to function. Despite that, Shimon graduated; he wanted to be a chalutz and work in agriculture. Neither of us wanted to be in a kibbutz. I mainly because of the children. In the kibbutz the children lived in childrens' houses, separate from their parents. At last we joined the moshav Beit Lehem Hagalilith.