

The Jewish Organizations In Vidin



This is a photo of the Jewish organizations in Vidin in the 1930s. There were 1,000 Jews among the 18,000 people in Vidin. First on the right are Betar, followed by Maccabi and Hashomer Hatzair. I'm one of the three children near the flag of Hashomer Hatzair, the top of the flag's stick (the first one from left) hides my face. I was a high school student then and Hashomer Hatzair taught me a lot. School wasn't the most important thing for me. I didn't take part in school life. My attention was directed towards the Hashomer Hatzair organization. I became a member at the age of 13. In the last grade of the junior high school I was given a leaflet proclaiming the establishment of a Jewish state. A committee was organized and we went to the meetings. One of the requirements was that if the Jewish state was founded, we had to go and live there. My family didn't approve of those meetings and forbade me to go there. I went there every evening, although my mother didn't allow me. We loved singing and danced folklore dances there. We were divided into groups. There were people two years older than me studying in high school and two years younger than me in elementary school. We had lectures on different topics, for example, what religion was, we talked much about emancipation. There was no television in those times and we passed the time reading and discussing the books. But we had different views on what we had read and we argued. For example, we argued about 'Nora,' by Ibsen. We argued about the emancipation of women, whether it was right, what its limits should be and so on. These were our everyday activities. In Hashomer Hatzair, we tried to build our personalities so that we would be able to lead the others and make decisions. We, the Jews, were a bit like sectarians; we had to be, because we weren't preparing to live in peaceful conditions, we were preparing to go to Israel. There was no Israel at that time, but Palestine, which had a negative attitude towards us.