

Mario Modiano With Dario Gabbai And Friends



This photo was taken in Athens in the 1940s. On the right that's me, Mario Modiano, next to me is a girlfriend, whose name I can't remember, and on the left is Dario Gabbai, and his girlfriend Swilda. After I left the army I worked for the Joint, the American Joint Distribution Committee, in their offices on Mitropoleos Street in Athens. I made many friends there. One of the very dear ones is Dario Gabbai who had returned from Auschwitz-Birkenau. He was in the Sonderkommando and had some very frightening experiences to tell. He had put into the oven of the crematoria his own family. Only one of his brothers survived. His testimony figured prominently in Spielberg's

documentary about the Hungarian Jews [The Last Days, 1998]. Dario, who was captured in Athens in 1943, served in the crematoria towards the end of the war and this saved him. The Germans used young Jews to shove the bodies of the gassed Jews into the ovens, but they would shoot them every three months so there would be no witnesses. Dario managed to flee by mixing with the other survivors from Auschwitz when the Germans evacuated the camp and led the survivors to a death march westwards. We were great friends, and we still are; he lives in Los Angeles now.