

Sophie Pinkas With Her Husband And Acquaintances



This photo was taken in the 1970s in Vidin in front of the monument of Boyan Chonos. Boyan Chonos is a hero of Vidin, a UYW leader much involved in the anti-fascist fight. He was in fact the ideological leader of young people in Vidin. Every time we visited Vidin, we went to place flowers in front of his monument. Boyan Chonos was hanged in the Vidin prison on 13th October 1943. He was in prison with my husband Nissim Kohenov and two other comrades - also political prisoners - Lyuben and Vasko Perchinski, who were brothers. The man in uniform is General Markov, who was a partisan. All the four were friends with Boyan Chonos. I don't remember if we had Jewish friends. Most of our friends were Bulgarians and we got along very well with them. It so happened that when we came to Sofia, we didn't know any Jewish families here. Most of my husband's colleagues at the Central Committee were Bulgarians as well as those in the army. Most of the people with whom we had worked during our youth in Sofia were still here and we went out with them. Of course, at some point there was some general attitude of mistrust towards us Jews during the trial against the army doctors in the Soviet Union, in Leningrad [the infamous Doctor's Plot]. The authorities were reluctant to have Jews working at responsible positions, although this attitude was not expressed officially. My husband had to leave the army, because he felt that he was treated differently for being a Jew. This happened in 1951. This general mistrust meant that Jews had very slim opportunities to make a career. My brother also had problems, because he was a military doctor in the Military Medical Academy. It wasn't a secret that during that period my husband and I experienced some disappointments. My husband was very active politically and true to his ideals. We were disappointed by the policy of the party, which deviated from the path, which had been designed earlier. There were a lot of digressions in the interior and foreign policy. We disapproved of the totalitarianism, which was imposed, and of some economic issues. We were also very critical of the Revival Process in Bulgaria. So, we were in favor of the democratic changes, which unfortunately also disappointed us later on.