

Josif Kamhi As A Leader Of A Union Of Young Workers Group In Sofia



After 9th September 1944 I was the leader of a UYW group (The Union of Young Workers, also called Revolutionary Youth Union, a communist youth organization). On this photo I am the fourth from right to left in the last row, because a classmate of mine from the Jewish school was a photographer. He had arranged us in this way. My future wife, Venezia Kamhi (nee Konorti), is also on the photo, sixth from right to left in the last row, and all the others are friends of ours. We gathered in a room in the center of Sofia on Ekzarh Josif Street. After 9th September the UYW gathered to organize discussions and political propaganda. We also took part in the football club. I was a member of the UYW in high school. We gathered and talked about fascism in Bulgaria. We spread leaflets against fascism. That was dangerous and we hid from the police. We also made a demonstration. That happened on 24th May 1943. The UYW organization decided to organize a protest against the internment of Jews and the Law for the Protection of the Nation. At the time of the demonstration it had already been decided to intern us. A lot of people gathered in front of the Jewish school. There were also speakers. Then we headed for Klementina Blvd [present-day Stamboliiski Blvd.]. We marched towards the center, but when we reached Opalchenska Street policemen on horses surrounded us and dispersed us. A young man and I managed to escape by telling a policeman that we lived in the area. And my friend really lived on Stamboliiski Blvd. We went to his place. Many people were arrested at the demonstration. At the same time my father worked in a leather processing factory and was on his way back home from work. The police detained him for a while in the afternoon, but when they realized that he was not directly involved in the protest, they released him. They had also arrested some colleagues of his. Their work involved working with chemicals and the smell about them proved that they had been at work. Previously my father had worked for a short time in the leather processing factory owned by my mother's brother. But at the time of the protest he was working in another one.