

David Kohen In The Maccabi Summer Camp



This is a photo of the Maccabi summer camp in Varna in 1940. People from Maccabi's board of trustees are in the picture. Beki Pinkas, secretary, Eliah Shoev, chairman, Viki Basan, secretary, are sitting from the left to right in the first row. Sami Moshonov, treasurer, Izak Roshomo, head, me, vice-chairman, and Nisim Baruh, proprietor, are in the second row. Viki Basan and I got married later. This is where I met my future wife. I met her while studying in Varna. She was from Varna.

I was a member of one of the Zionist organizations, Maccabi, until I became a university student. Other organizations were Betar, our opponents, and Hashomer Hatzair with which we were on friendly terms. There were organizations of the General Zionists in the town, as well as of the Revisionists, and Betar was the youth revisionist organization. They had one common goal: to set up Israel. General Zionists tolerated Maccabi, which wasn't very connected with political parties. On high Jewish holidays we greeted each other with the phrase 'Next year in Jerusalem.' We wanted to incorporate our language in the Jewish organizations: we used to sing songs in Ivrit, danced Jewish dances, spoke Ivrit as much as we could.

I enrolled in Varna's Finance University in fall 1938. In Varna I was a very good student. I found my place in the circle of people attending the Poor Student Canteen. This was an organization of anti-fascist students, while legionaries, who attended a different canteen, were supporters of fascism. On 24th May, when we were out on manifestation and we were formed in different lines, I realized that we outnumbered them four to five-fold. Representatives of the police came to persuade us to unite the two manifestations. We refused and the police scattered us, but we went in front of Varna's cathedral on our own.

The university offered four-year courses, but meanwhile Sofia Open University was formed and ours was closed, so many of us found it convenient to complete our education in Sofia. In the third year of our studies we were already in Sofia. Many of the subjects were comparable and we had most of our exams acknowledged there.