

## Gavril Marcuson At The Black Sea



This is a photo taken in the 1950's, at the Black Sea, by the Jewish photo artist Hedi Löffler. This is me, Gavril Marcuson [the initial name, Marcusohn, was shortened to Marcuson in 1968]. I was born in Bucharest, on 28th October 1913.

I nurtured Zionist feelings, was a fan of the Zionist idea, had read Herzl, but I never thought it could actually happen. How did I find out about the creation of the State of Israel? I was at the State Central Library, in the Periodicals hall. I was reading 'L'Humanite', the daily newspaper of the French communist party, the only French paper that was available in Romania [in 1948]. So I was reading it, and I suddenly came across the map of Israel. I was utterly amazed. I spent hours and hours looking at the map of the new Israel and I couldn't believe my eyes; we finally had our own country. I felt as if a miracle had happened - something that I never thought it would be possible. Think about it: from 70 A.D. until 1948, Jews from all around the world yearned for, hankered after and dreamt at night of Jerusalem. When two Jews parted, they didn't say 'Good-bye', they said 'Next year in Jerusalem!'

My mother made aliyah in the 1960's. My brother and other relatives were already living in Israel. She stayed in an old age home in Tel Aviv. I visited her there and, when I returned, I got the news of her death. She died after I had visited her. She was 89 when she passed away [in 1981].

I thought of going to Israel, but I couldn't speak the language. I would have found it difficult to live there. Imagine someone living in Romania and not knowing Romanian - how hard would things be for that person? I couldn't practice an intellectual profession there either. I couldn't do what I did in Romania, where I worked as an editor for a publishing house. I thought of leaving for Paris in high school. Had I done it after I graduated, it would have been a mistake. In 1940, the Germans entered France - they would have caught me and gassed me. At least I'm alive now.