

Young People From 'Gordonia' In Krasnik



This picture was taken in the 1930s of young people from 'Gordonia,' union of Jewish Zionist youth, in Krasnik. In the middle, from left: somebody I don't remember, Szajndaly Zylberman, Mojszaly Zylberman (with drum). Mojszaly and Szajndaly are siblings of my wife Rachela.

When I was 14, maybe 16, my brother Wigde got me involved in SKIF. And when we organized a 1st May strike for the first time in 1933, I think I was already in KZMP. I had gone over to that at the encouragement of my friends, especially by my future a, Rachela Zylberman.

Rachela was born on 8th September 1910 in the village of Lisznik, between Krasnik and Annopol. So she was six years older than me. She came from a progressive family: evidence of that was the fact that she went to grammar school, because you had to go there on Saturdays too. Her father walked around the house with his head uncovered, which was unthinkable among religious Jews. That was a large Jewish family, too, they lived near us, and we were neighbors. In material terms they lived quite well, because they had a restaurant at home where not only Jews but also Poles ate, technicians and engineers hired to build a ball-bearing factory.

We were in the same gang, that's what we called it, eight or ten young people, girls and boys. Rachela was going out with Chaim Feldhendler at first, but in 1934 he was arrested. It was then that we became close. Feldhendler himself, I remember, was born in 1914, so at the time he was arrested he was exactly 20. I remember the other people from our gang too. Jankiel Goldfarb, a year younger than Feldhendler, after the war moved to New York. Izrael Wolman, a cobbler from Chelm, we used to call him 'Srulkale Tar-Head,' because he had tar-black hair. Tauba Fisz died not long ago in Tel Aviv. Joel Kopytko, born in 1917, lives to this day in Poznan. And then Goldfarb's girl, the daughter of a 'Jewish peasant,' as we used to call him, because her father had a farm in the country. We tried to speak Polish in our gang. We had mixed success, because some of us could speak Polish better, some worse. Tauba had done her school-leaving exam in Polish, so she spoke Polish well. But Srul Wolman was illiterate; he couldn't even count to five in Polish. He called the navy 'the war coat' [the same word - 'marynarka' - means both 'navy' and 'jacket/coat' in

Polish]. I didn't speak it grammatically either. Even some time after the war I still couldn't speak Polish well. At one time I thought I was speaking Polish but I was actually speaking Russian.