

David Kohen With Members Of The 'Poor Student' Club In Varna



This is a photo of the 'Poor Student' Club taken in Varna on 28th May 1939. In the photo we form the Cyrillic letters for 'B' and 'S' - the initials of 'Poor Student' in Bulgarian. In the photo I'm in the utmost left row - the first from the left in the middle of the row.

I enrolled in Varna's Finance University in fall 1938. My father accompanied me to the town to help me find lodgings. I had a meeting with the rector of the university and I went there in my high school uniform. My father asked him if I could become a student in my school uniform. He said I could, but it would be good if he bought me a red hat for my personal self-confidence. This was my first non-school clothing and it was much later that I had a suit made. So I became a university student in my school uniform.

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.