

## Sofi Uziel With Her Husband And Friends



This is a photo of me and friends. I'm the one wearing a dark blouse and a white skirt. My husband Nissim Uziel is next to me. The other people are friends from Hakoah. The picture was taken in the 1940s. I joined the progressive organization Hakoah, a sports organization. I met my husband through Hakoah. I married him in January 1943 in the synagogue in Sofia. We celebrated all Jewish holidays, but we celebrated them more progressively. As far as celebrating the different holidays the difference between us - the progressive ones - and the more conservative Jews was that we didn't go to the synagogue. We were members of the UYW. We dreamed of establishing a state. We dreamed of peace and love between people, but not in the way it was later distorted - RMC and everything. We thought everything was going to happen like in the fairy-tales. But life showed its

true face. I remember all events - particularly the handing back of Dobrudzha [after WWII the previously Romanian Southern Dobrudzha was given to Bulgaria.], the Czar's death. We closely followed all events at the front. We used to hold our meetings for discussing those events at Vitosha mountain. Usually we spent the night there. We used to leave for the mountain in the afternoon and held our meetings in the evenings in order to avoid being heard or seen by anybody, particularly when we started hearing about certain things. We used to get on the tram after 11pm to go to Vitosha for our meetings. I met my husband through Hakoah, in the sports club. I married him in January 1943 in the synagogue in Sofia. Nissim was unemployed. When he was interned to a camp in Gigen in 1943, I was interned to Pleven. Gigen was a camp for Jews. Jewish men used to be taken there from February to December; then they let them go home because they were all ill. My husband was taken to Zvanichevo first, then to Mihalkovo, then somewhere along the Struma River and finally to Gigen. He spent four years in forced labor camps altogether. They worked hard there; they constructed bridges. They had to wade in water up to here [pointing at the height of her chest]. Different locations, different rivers... There were only Jews. A boy even drowned in the Iskar River.