

Izia Antipka



This is me photographed in 1939 in Bucharest, when I was a student of a vocational gymnasium. I sent this photo to my parents, who were missing me very much.

After I finished the elementary school I went to the vocational school of the Jewish association Tarbut where students were trained in crafts. I studied in the Tarbut school for a year before I went to Bucharest to continue my studies. I entered the Jewish vocational gymnasium to study a vocation along with other subjects. This gymnasium also belonged to the Tarbut. Its main purpose was to train professionals for Israel. It was free of charge. It was a boarding school where Jewish guys from different Romanian villages and towns came to study. We had uniforms, were provided meals and had classes.

Of course, I missed home, the warm weather and delicious food. On Friday evenings I visited Aunt Feiga and we celebrated Sabbath. My aunt's husband Marcello was a real dandy. He had posh clothes and shoes to match each suit he had. Aunt Feiga also enjoyed life. She always treated me to delicious food, even more delicious than my Mama or grandmother Yenta made. I also joined the Bucharest division of Hashomer Hatzair, participated in competitions organized by the Maccabi and played football. There was a small stadium with just two stands for football fans: one for Moldovan and another one for Jewish fans. There were no confrontations between them, but the atmosphere was tense at times.

I took an interest in politics from an early age. I read a lot and followed all events. I knew about the situation in Fascist Germany and was interested in any bit of information about the Soviet Union. Many young Jewish people of Bessarabia were fond of Communist ideas and dreamt of living in the Soviet Union. In 1938 the Cuzist and legionary Fascist parties appeared in Romania. This affected Orgeyev immediately. Fascists with swastikas marched along our streets breaking windows in Jewish stores. Fortunately, this march never developed into a pogrom. In Bucharest where I spent two years I often saw young Fascist people and knew that they would cause much trouble to Jews.