

Matilda Albuhaire With Her Students



This photo was taken in Bourgas in the 1940s. Here I am with the eldest pupils from the 4th grade of the Jewish elementary school. Next to me is Flor Angel. She and I are holding hands because she was taller compared to the others. There is Sabeto, who became a doctor-neurologist, lives and works in Bourgas. The boy next to him is Moriz, who became a great pianist. He played the piano beautifully, and his sister played the piano, too. I think they emigrated to Israel and live there. There is a tiny girl next to me on the left. She is called Simhaika. Between 1938 and 1943, I was employed as a teacher in Bourgas - actually it was until 1941, but on record it says until 1943, because the time I was unemployed was recognized as working experience. I was a Hebrew teacher at the Jewish elementary school and I was paid by the Jewish community. The children loved me very much. I loved them, too, because I was very young, 21 years old. We celebrated all the holidays. We had a very intensive Jewish life before the war. During the war the Jewish school was closed in 1941. After we were driven out of our school, we went to an old building and continued to work there as a Jewish school for some time. It was later transformed into gendarme's barracks. At the beginning of the war we Jews in Bourgas were not interned. The Jewish school was closed in 1941 and until September 9 1944 I was unemployed. I worked in a candy factory, because I had to do something to make ends meet. Everything then was done by hand - candies were wrapped by hand. I worked in that factory for some time, but when the labor camps were organized and my elder brother who used to work for a mill was drafted, I went to keep his position absolutely illegally. That mill used to supply wheat for the gendarme and whenever they came to load wheat, I had to go upstairs to hide. I used to wear a yellow star. We had worn them since 1941. If you didn't wear one, and if you got caught: prison. We could not go out after 9 p.m., because we had a curfew. In some towns Jews weren't even allowed to go shopping during the day. There was no such thing in Bourgas.