

Adela Hinkova With Schoolmates



That photo was taken when I was a high school student in the 1930s in Vidin. From left to right are Mati, Sarika and I. I don't remember the exact occasion. I went to junior high school close to Kaleto. I was happy that now we had a different teacher for every subject. One very nice teacher in mathematics said that I was very good at calculations. I remember her, Miss Vasileva. There were a lot of Wallachian students in the town. They wore bowler hats. They teased me a lot and called me Duda [short for Adela]. They would twist my arms and pull my hair. Once the Bulgarian teacher met me and I was crying because they had teased me. He asked me what my name was. I told him my name was Adela and he said that my name was very nice. He sent me to the teachers' room to take a sheet of paper and a pen. He wrote down on the paper that there was no Duda at the school, but Adela. Then they stopped calling me Duda and I passed the three junior high school grades as Adela. This man was an idol for me, he taught me Bulgarian, taught me to read, to write and to think. One third of the junior high school students were Jews. We were the best students in the school. I was a good student, studied a lot and was very good at mathematics. There was also a subject in religious studies at the school, but we, the Jews, were forbidden to take that class. In the winter when we had that subject, we had nowhere to go but out in the cold. We felt very offended and sad. In the summer we went into the yard, but there was nowhere for us to go in the winter. Wherever we went, they banished us. We were five or six students: three girls and two or three boys. I would sing all the time. I had a very strong voice. Every day my father gave me money for breakfast. Once I decided to learn to play the violin. I bought a violin and I saved the five levs he gave me daily to pay for my violin lessons. But at one point I had no money to pay my tuition fee. I was in the second grade in the high school. Then I sold my violin; I realized that I had no interest in music. I paid my tuition fee with the money.