

Emilia Ratz And Schoolmates



This is a picture of my class, taken in the grammar school in Warsaw in 1938. I'm the third from left. The photo was taken a hundred days before our 'small' final exams. It was like that then: a hundred days before the exam the first school ball at which boys also participated took place. So we were allowed to celebrate the end of our time at school with boys. There was a drama theater at our school. I was a member and worked on plays under the direction of the teachers. We also created the sets ourselves. Each year a subject that we wanted to adapt for the stage was discussed and agreed on. I remember one of them, which was 'My favorite book'. This way the reading matter for children was supposed to be influenced. We performed a fragment of a historical novel and a fragment of a thriller, and of course children were advised against the thriller. I was also part of a literary circle and very good at writing. As a child I was interested in many different things. During my school years I also attended courses in biology and astronomy. I don't mean to say that I was born an intellectual, but I was always a little bit more mature than many other children and I was interested in social issues from an early age on. Theoretically, studying at the grammar school was very expensive. In practice it was different though because the teachers were very committed. So the families of the richer girls paid almost everything and most of the other children got a fairly good discount. However, after I finished the 10th grade and got my 'small' final exam my father said, 'You have your small final exam. That will do. You aren't crooked, you are quite pretty, you're ready to get married.' Well, I created an enormous scandal, and with success.