

Janina Wiener At The Age Of 17



This is me. I think this picture was taken in 1939 when I passed my high school finals. It must have been taken for some ID...

In my high school days, I never wore anything but a navy blue uniform or a navy blue skirt with a white blouse. Oh yes. I didn't have any other clothes, I mean, I did, in the summer, have various summer dresses, for the vacations, but during the school year - the uniform. I don't mean a single uniform. There was a woolen one, a georgette one, but it was always the same cut; moreover, the

woolen ones had an inset, which in gymnasium was blue, and in high school it was maroon. The berets were the same, with a blue or maroon inset. I also wore a badge with the school's number on my coat. And at some point, it must have been late 1938, or early 1939, I rebelled against that. And even my grandparents intervened that perhaps it would make sense to... and so on... And my parents somehow consented to that. I remember that Mother said then, 'It'll be better if you go with Father.' And indeed, when I went with Father, I got material for a coat, I got material for a dress - because in those times clothes were made by tailors. I also got a handbag and a pair of shoes. I got much more than I would have if I had gone with Mother.

At high school, we went to the theater every month, and it was chiefly with school that I went to the theater. My parents never refused me money for school or the movies. I remember my first film, it was a nature documentary. I remember the movies from 1937, 1938, 1939, because I used to go to the movies a lot then. I remember French films, which I very much liked. My favorite actress was Michèle Morgan, who acted with Jean Gabin in 'People in the Fog'. I also liked those musicals with Jeanette MacDonald, such as 'Rose-Marie'. I somehow wasn't one of those girls who fall in love with movie actors, get crazy about them, collect their photos - nothing of the sort.