

## Sultana Yulzari With Classmates And Teachers From The French Girls' High School 'Santa Maria'



This is a studio picture with classmates from the French Girls' Half-Classic High School 'Santa Maria' together with their teachers. The photo was taken in 1935 in Ruse.

I am in the front row, on the right, between the man with the white hair and the woman that had put up her hair in a bun. The strict man with the white hair is our Maths teacher, Mr. Philipov. The first woman on the right is Mrs. Gendzheva, our teacher in Chemistry. The woman that is sitting on Mr. Philipov's other side is the state representative that came to monitor our school-leaving examination. As a matter of fact most of us on this picture were excellent pupils but despite that we were not freed from the school-leaving examination. We sat the so-called 'Russian school-leaving examination' - I don't know why it was called like that - in all the basic general educational subjects.

From right to left - next to the state representative, our teacher in Physics, Mr. Mihaylov is sitting. Next to him, the first woman on the left is Mrs. Mihaylova, our teacher in Physical Training.

I can recognize only two of my classmates. Frida Eshkenazi is the second from right to left at the back, standing right next to me. The only thing I know about her is that she died in Israel. There is a view of Viki Mashiah above the head of the third woman from the left. I still keep in touch with Viki. She is the one who calls me on the phone from Israel, because it is cheaper for her. We communicate only in Bulgarian. Viki has a daughter, married in Ramat Hasharon. She often tells me stories about her. But I know nothing more about what happened to my friend in Israel.

We had nuns for teachers at the French Girls' Half-Classic High School. 'Half-classic' means that we studied a little Latin, but no languages such as Ancient Greek or Old Bulgarian. However they didn't divide us in 'Jews' and 'Bulgarians.' Only when they taught us the gospel we, the Jews, had to go out. Before that I had studied up to the fourth grade in the local Jewish school. My favourite subjects were Latin and Chemistry. I was satisfied with the attitude of my teachers and my classmates to me there. We loved each other like sisters.