

Eli Perahya And His Friends Visiting The St Joseph High School



This one is from the year 1931: a souvenir photo taken in the garden of the Saint Joseph High School, which I visited with my friends. I am the first from left. The others are: Henri Rosa (who later moved to Israel and worked as a speaker at the Kol Israel broadcasting station in Jerusalem), Elsa Angel, Robert Sarfati, Claire Pardo, Serkis Kalebcayan, a young girl whose name I don't remember and Maurice Barbut. I started my education in the elementary school of the Jewish community in Haydarpasha. Being a very good student I was able to skip certain classes. I attended elementary school for only three years instead of five. Thanks to the private French lessons with Ms. Ojeni Bivas, after taking a special examination I skipped certain classes and went directly to the 5th grade at Saint Louis High School and studied three more years there. After that, I finished my last three years of education in the commercial department of the Saint Joseph High School before I started earning my living. I like to nick-name my educational life as a '3+3+3 educational system,' as I attended three classes at each level. Both Saint Louis and Saint Joseph were French schools founded by Les Freres des Ecoles Chrétiennes. They were prestigious educational institutions and numerous were the Muslim or Jewish parents who used to send their children to those Christian schools, so that they be well educated with a deep knowledge of the French language. I was a member of the Social Benevolence Association of Haydarpasha in my youth. From 1931 to 1936 I served as the president of the literature division of this association, 'Cercle Litteraire,' as we used to call it. We used to gather in the Cercle's locale twice a week, usually after 8pm, organizing conferences, debates, concerts, meetings and the like. We went to the famous hotel of the time, the Belvu in Fenerbahce to dance. Naturally, many love affairs blossomed during these gatherings. I also got to know my first wife, Elsa, in this organization.