

Graduation Photo Of Ilona Seifert



My 1939 graduation photo from the Veres Palne Secondary School in Budapest. After elementary school, both my sister and I attended the Veres Palne High School. We had to wear school uniforms: a dark-blue 'bocskai' (the Hungarian national dress) for weekdays, striped linen in the spring, and for holidays, a white blouse. There were more Jews in the class than non-Jews. Out of a class of forty-two, twenty-four of us were Jews. But there was not a single Jew amongst the teachers, except for the religious studies teacher. However, the Jews and non-Jews got along perfectly well with each other, so well in fact, that the class has been meeting almost every three

months or so since graduation right up to the present day. There was only one single anti-Semitic statement made by a student, but she has since protested a million times that it was a misunderstanding. When we wore rosettes of the national colours on March 15, the national holiday of Hungary which marks the anniversary of the Revolution of 1848, the student said, ' It's a good mask for you Jews, that you wear it, too.' Veres Palne was an excellent school. It was the school of the National Woman's Training Association, and the first all-girl high school in the whole of Budapest. During my high school years, from around 1937 to 1938, there were so-called house-parties. I remember that we had Jewish company, and not many Christians attended. After the parties, we were not allowed to go home alone, so our parents would come to fetch us. We went to the theater too, but then as well, the father or mother of one of us always came to collect us afterwards. Later, when we were about 16-17 years old, we were allowed to go on hikes and bike trips, too.