

Klara Kohen And Her Sister Suzi Eshkenazi



This is a picture of my sister Suzi Eshkenazi, nee Solomonova and I, taken around 1940 in Stara Zagora. I was born in 1930 in Stara Zagora. My childhood was wonderful. I studied in the Jewish school the first four years, where I also learned Ivrit. Later, in the three years before the Holocaust, when Bulgarian children had religious classes, we went to the Jewish school, which was very close in order to continue studying Ivrit. I understand a little of it even now. My sister also studied in a Jewish school, then in a high school, and as soon as she graduated from it, we were interned to Targovishte. After the four grades in the Jewish school I attended the Bulgarian junior high school. Of all school subjects I loved languages most, but since I didn't want to study German, I studied Italian. German sounded rather harsh to me, and it even became more unpleasant to me because of the events that took place at that time. I liked the 'music' of Italian and Spanish. I also took private lessons in French. My mother influenced my choice to study French as her father had connections in France. She also insisted that I should learn to play the piano but my time was preoccupied with languages and I couldn't pay attention to it, for which I felt sorry for the rest of my life. I was deeply attracted to music and I had a nice voice. I used to read a lot in my spare time. I used to ask my mother to give me money and immediately ran to a little bookshop in order to buy books. During the holidays we used to go out for a walk, and on slides if there was snow in Stara Zagora. We often went to Aiazmoto, which was close to town. We brought the accordion with us, played and sang songs with our classmates or parents. I didn't have many Jewish classmates. Most of them were Bulgarians. Outside school we stuck to our Jewish circle [especially] when the anti-Jewish persecutions began. I was a schoolgirl then. The Bulgarian children started avoiding us at that time. I made friends with Jews then.