

Gyula Foldes And Classmates



This is a class photo taken at the end of the 1948-49 school year in Madach Imre High School. We are 15 on this photo, this is class 6/a. There are several illustrious personalities in this picture. The first on the left in the second row from the top is Karoly Nemeth who is a Kossuth award winning writer publishing under the penname of Karoly Szakonyi. In the same row, fifth from the left, is Laszlo Endrenyi, professor at the University of Toronto. He was dean of the medical faculty some years ago, he is a chemist. Still in the same row, third from right, is George Roman, director in a theater in London. He was called Gyuri Kisfalvy originally. The seventh from left in the third row from the top is Miklos Szinetar, the director general of the Hungarian Opera House. In the last row from the top, sixth from left, is Pal Hollander, university professor at the University of Massachusetts. Next to him is the writer Gyorgy [George] Konrad from the Pen Club and I am the seventh from right in the top row. A lot of people from this class emigrated. This high school where I went to from 1943, had more than a third Jewish boys in class. Originally it had a Jewish class, and because of the anti-Jewish laws only Jewish children were taken. During the German invasion, we were in the 1st grade until April 1944, then the Jews dropped out. I still went to school with a yellow star. After the war from May until mid-June 1945 we underwent a very condensed school year. In the 5th year we were given the choice of learning Russian or Greek. As believers in left-wing ideas we thought that Latin was enough of classical languages, it was anyway taught in the upper years of high school, so of course we chose Russian. The class was split: the majority chose Russian as they thought they didn't need Greek as well as Latin. But there were a proportionally high number of Jews in the class, as Jews chose this language rather, and came over from other classes because of the Russian. In fact there was nothing anti-Semitic, at least not in those days. Before there had been; Mr Monoki, the gym teacher hit the Jewish class mainly, by making the children stand up and bashing their heads together. Apart from rabbi Schmeltzer I can't remember any other Jewish teachers. I didn't have a favorite teacher. I got into the Medical Faculty because of my mother.