

Ernest Galpert With His Jewish Schoolmates



This is a picture of me and my Jewish schoolmates. I am on the right in the lower row. The photo was taken in Mukachevo in 1939. We studied in elementary school for four years and then had to complete four years in the so-called middle school. After finishing this school we could go to a grammar school. I finished a middle school. I turned 15 in 1938 and had to go to work. I became an apprentice to a mechanic, the Jewish owner of an equipment repair and maintenance shop. I learned to fix bicycles, sewing machines, gramophones and prams. My training was to last for two years. I actually started work a year later, but my master didn't pay me a salary. I did repairs and he received all money. He only gave me small allowances. In 1938 the Germans occupied Czechoslovakia and gave the former Hungarian territory including Subcarpathia back to Hungarians. [Editor's note: The Germans only occupied the Czech lands, Slovakia became an independent state but that part of it, which was mostly populated by Hungarians, was in fact ceded to Hungary in accordance with the first Vienna Decision of 1938.] In the course of time it became clear that this was a fascist Hungary and the authorities began to introduce anti-Jewish laws. My father lost his trade license. My master also lost the license for his shop. In 1940 his shop was closed. My father and I had to look for a job. We went to work at Mr. Rot's stationery factory, which was still operating at the time. I became a mechanic and my father was hired as a worker.