

Tibor, Miklos And Adalbert Gohman



This is me, Tibor Gohman (standing on the left) with my brothers. My older brother Miklos is standing on my right and my younger brother Adalbert (in the foreground, on the right). My father photographed us during a walk in a Mukacevo park on a sunny day in 1934. We were friends and often took walks together.

There were three children in our family. All of us was born in Mukacevo. Miklos, born in 1924, was the oldest. His Jewish name was Azril-Mayer. I was born in 1928. My Russian name was Tiberiy and Jewish name - Yisrael. My younger brother Adalbert was born in 1934. I don't remember his Jewish name. We were called by our Hungarian names in the family. We all had brit milah according to the Jewish tradition, but perhaps, this was done to please my father's parents. We spoke Hungarian at home and only when our parents didn't want us to understand the subject of their discussion they switched to Yiddish. They didn't teach us Yiddish. Most of my childhood friends were non-Jewish. It was because there were 1-2 Jewish families in our street, but they didn't have children of my age. My paternal grandmother, when she visited us, told my mother that she didn't like it that she

allowed us to play with goy children, but my mother had a strong opinion about it: her children should play where she could watch them from a window. Playing in another street was out of the question. Our family observed many Jewish traditions, but really they didn't accentuate their attention on them. For example, my mother always prepared for Sabbath. She baked challahs on Friday morning and cooked food for Sabbath. On Friday evening she lit candles. So we had candles lit on Sabbath and there was a challah for dinner, but it was a usual dinner: no blessing of the food and no prayers. This was the end of Sabbath. [Editor's note: this was the end of Sabbath in the Gohman family and Orthodox and Hasidic Sabbath ended on the evening of the next day after the Avdallah ritual...] And the following day nobody thought that they shouldn't do any work. We, boys, were happy that we didn't have to do our homework, but that was about it.

When I went to the first form, my father sent me to cheder. I studied there two weeks and decided it was enough for me. Probably this was my first personal decision in my life. My mother insisted that I went back to cheder, but my father said that if I didn't want to study there it was going to be a waste of time anyway. I remember that he said to my mother: 'He can live his life without cheder!' Of course, my grandmother was very angry about it. She blamed my parents that they raised a goy of a boy, but then things smoothed down and I didn't go to cheder again. My older brother Miklos studied in cheder.

I went to a Czech school at the age of 6. My older brother Miklos also went to this school. There were few Jewish children in my class and teachers and other schoolchildren had a good attitude toward them. There was no anti-Semitism during the Czech rule and they supported Jews in every way. I was doing well at school, although I wasn't an industrious pupil. I preferred playing with my friends outside rather than sitting at home with my textbooks. I had Jewish and non-Jewish friends. There was no segregation among us, we were just friends. I sang in our school choir and we sang on all school holidays. I finished three forms in the Czech school.

In 1938 Subcarpathia fell under the Hungarian rule. I went to the 4th form in a Hungarian school. We didn't face any anti-Semitism for about a year after annexation of Subcarpathia to Hungary. In 1939 they began to introduce anti-Jewish laws. There was anti-Semitism on a state level.