

Gyula Foldes With Friends



This is a picture of me with some old classmates. The photo was taken when the class below us in high school had their 50th graduation anniversary, in May 2002. The first person on the left is Miklos Szinetar, the director general of the Hungarian Opera House. Behind me is Tamas Blatt, he was one year below us in high school. We were very close with the boys from the class below us and we often met up with them as well. Usually we meet to have a good talk, as people say, to just hang out together. The high school 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. 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.