

Fridric Iavet With His Father Leon Jawetz



This is a photo taken in Cernauti on the Herrnstrasse in 1940, on the day of my high school admittance. I went to a German kindergarten. When I was there I learnt to play the piano, and I also learnt to play the violin in private, but I didn't go on with any of them. I only studied piano for a year, when I was six or seven years old. I studied the violin for about seven months as well. I went to school in Adancata. I liked mathematics the best. I studied well, in general. I was in the first year of high school in 1940, in Cernauti. I was at Mihai Eminescu High School. Lusia, my sister, also graduated from the Fine Arts High School in Cernauti. Cernauti was a very beautiful town. It was Romania's second most important city, a multi-national city, with universities recognized all over Europe, newspapers in different languages: German, Romanian, Ukrainian, Polish. There was the

Neue Zeit [New Times] in German. When I visited Cernauti in 1968-69 it looked terrible. The population had also changed about 95 percent. When I was there it was a very clean town. Some time ago it was called 'small Vienna.' Downtown there was a very beautiful street for walking: Herrenstrasse - the 'gentlemen's street,' with all sorts of shops. There were also trolleybuses and trams. The city was on top of a hill, and the surroundings were beautiful. The university had, and it still does, a splendid building, of the kind I haven't seen in Romania yet. It was an industrial city, with a lot of textile industries. The change of the population was because of the fact that about 80 percent of the Jews, Poles, Germans, and Romanians had left, and Russians and Ukrainians came instead. In 1940, right before the war, the Germans left. I remember that German officers came to solve the problems of those who were leaving. These officers were invited into Cernauti at the Russian military parade in 1941, two or three weeks before the war started. It was a blitzkrieg; nobody expected it, especially because the Germans had a friendship and non-aggression treaty with the Russians. 99 percent of the Jews were taken to Transnistria. However, in Cernauti many of them stayed behind [escaped] thanks to Mayor Popovici, who saved thousands of Jewish citizens. He has a monument in Israel, at Yad Vashem. I also have relatives who escaped, thanks to him.