

Magda Erdelyiova's Graduation Tableau



My sister and I attended high school together in Nove Mesto nad Vahom. This is a photo of the graduation tableau of my sister, Magda Erdelyiova, from 1938. My sister is in the second row from the bottom, fourth from the left.

Because we lived in Piestany, we commuted to school every day. On school days we'd get up at 5.30am. We'd walk to the train station, because our father was a very strict teacher. There we'd get on the train. We'd arrive at Nove Mesto at 7am. That was a huge problem, because for some unknown reason, the principal didn't want to let us in the school before a quarter to eight. There were more of us. He requested that from 7 to 7.45am we be with some family. It's very hard to find a family that would let strangers' children into their homes at 7am. Otherwise the school was tolerant, because Jewish children from devout families didn't have to write on Saturdays. Many misused this, but we didn't. Because we then had to finish it at home. We were also traveling, which is why it seemed ridiculous to us to not write.

We had religion class, taught by some Dr. Weiss. We were relatively ignorant of religion. We read the Old Testament. One column was in Hebrew, and one in Czech, because we mostly had Czech textbooks. We mainly read Czech translations, but we also knew how to read Hebrew with punctuation. We were all great friends. About 100 of us commuted, and the high school's capacity was 500. Students from villages also commuted. Back then there were no buses running, so we had classmates that walked five or six kilometers to the nearest train station. In general they belonged amongst the best students.