

Ladislav Roth With Bercsenyi Restaurant Employees



I am with Bercsenyi restaurant employees. This photo was taken by an employee of the restaurant for the memory in Uzhgorod in 1937.

I finished school in 1936. My parents wanted me to continue my studies, but I wanted to be independent. I asked my father to help me become an apprentice waiter in Bercsenyi restaurant. I wanted to work and study in the trade school in Uzhhorod. I studied three years at school. Besides major subjects future waiters had to study confectionery, butcher and cooks' trades.

Bercsenyi restaurant employed me. My father was senior waiter there. Another leading waiter was a Hungarian man whose surname was Lontushyi. They worked in shifts: my father worked from morning till afternoon and then Lontushyi came to work and next week my father came to work in the afternoon. Waiters also worked in shifts. Since I was just an apprentice I only came to work in the morning and stayed at work until afternoon. Only experienced waiters worked in the evening. There were 20 employees in the restaurant and 6-7 of them were Jews. I spent my vacations traveling. In 1938 my friend, my classmate in the trade school, and I spent two weeks in Switzerland. We traveled across Switzerland and spent few days skiing in a resort. This was expensive, but affordable for those who had a job, and an apprentice waiter could well afford it.

Besides learning a profession I also had to do errands for senior waiters. Before lunch I always went to a small kosher store. Chief waiter Lontushyi liked kosher food very much. Although waiters had two free meals per day at the restaurant, Lontushyi liked what they made in this store and I went there every day to buy him cholnt, chicken broth with matzah or goose stew. I liked work and learned fast.