

## Jiri Munk In Elementary School



In this photo is our elementary school class during the 1939/1940 school year. It was the last year I was allowed to attend school. Lying on the ground in the first row am I, and on the right is my friend, who was named Homolac.

I didn't make friends with this boy by complete chance. Because in the beginning I didn't have any closer friends at the school. From childhood I'd had a nanny, who was always spending time with me, and even later, when I was already attending school, I spent lots of time with her. As soon as school let out, I went straight home to my nanny. I guess she was afraid for me and that's why she wanted to always be with me. But it didn't bother me.

Then I met Homolac. His family had moved there from someplace in Moravia. His father began working in Brandys at the new Bata branch office, which by the way is still standing, it's a modern, functionalist building on the way down to the bridge. When they moved to town, that little Homolac didn't have any friends in Brandys, and my father arranged me for him somehow, because he probably realized that it wasn't good for me to not have any friends. So then I was friends with this Homolac kid.

Most often we'd play at our place in the garden. This was because my parents wouldn't let me go away from the house by myself, and so he'd always come to our place. We had a ping-pong table in the garden, so we often played ping-pong. Even during the time when I'd already been thrown out of school, his parents allowed him to come to our place for some time, which was in those days slowly becoming dangerous.

Standing in the second row, second from the right, is a boy named Bocanek. He sat beside me in class. His father was a government official and before the war he used to bow before my father all the way to the ground, but later, already during the occupation in 1939, that boy's parents must have said something to him, and that Bocanek simply raised his hand one day in school, and said, 'Sir, I'm not going to sit next to this kid.' And when our teacher asked him why, he answered, 'He

stinks.'

There were no Jewish children in my class. At school there was only Honza Lustig, who was some distant relative of ours. He was a year younger, and was in Grade 1. I didn't talk to him much. Once in a while the Lustigs would come over for a visit, but that was all. There were two Lustig families in Brandys. One had a textile store, and the others had a beverage plant.