

Hello, Who's There?



This is a photograph of me, Ladislav Urban (at left) and my brother Tomas. The picture was taken in 1939 at the Mangold studio in Piestany.

I don't know how my parents met, but before my brother and I were born, they used to go on various outings and vacations. I've for example got a ton of photographs from trips and vacations in Georgia and Italy. Of them bathing, and on a motorboat. My parents had two sons. First I, Ladislav Urban, was born in 1934, and in 1938 my brother Tomas. Our mother tongue is Slovak, but in our family everyone also spoke German and Hungarian. Before the war we didn't have a chance to play much together, as my brother was still little. Here and there, we'd go for a walk in the park. I used to attend Maccabi [7](#) with my older friends. We used to play ping-pong, or go on outings. We used to go into the hills around Piestany, and in the winter there'd be skiing on Cervena Vez [The Red Tower]. We were of various ages. I was still quite small, and there were even 20-year-olds among us.

I attended a Protestant school. Actually first a Catholic one, but they threw me out of there. They didn't allow Jews to attend it. For about two months, I was at home. So that I could continue my studies, my parents had me baptized. I attended this course, where we studied the Bible. The parson's name was Dr. Alexander Barica. I've still got the baptism certificate he gave me, which later was of no use to me after all...

We observed holidays mostly at home. For the high holidays my father would go to synagogue, and as a little boy I used to come see him. As children we didn't last long just sitting there, and so we'd run around and play in the courtyard. We attended the new, Neolog synagogue. The Maccabi clubhouse was close by too. Karol Grünwald and Pavol Blum used to go there too, for example. Pavol was the Czechoslovak cultural attaché in Rome, and Karol was the Israeli ambassador in Prague.