

Henrich F.



This is a photo of me, Henrich F., back then still Fleischmann, in 1942.

Before the war, we had both Jewish and non-Jewish friends. But the anti-Jewish laws had a big influence on mixed friendships. It began with the fact that customers stopped coming to my father's store. They began saying that they wouldn't buy things from Jews. You know, you eventually notice that. Friends turned away. From one hour to the next, they stopped talking to us. It had a big effect on us children. Good thing that my cousin Edita lived nearby, on Dlha Street. We used to go play at their place. But mostly we were at home, because the prohibitions limited us to such a degree that you almost couldn't go out into the street. When we did go out into the street, German boys would start chasing us.

As a native of Bratislava, I knew all the little streets, passages, and nooks and crannies of the city. I knew Zidovska Street, Klariska, Kapucinska... So, I knew that if, in Klariska, I entered a certain building and crossed two courtyard galleries, I'd get to Kapucinska. Or, if I entered in Kapucinska, I'd exit into Zidovska. We knew routes through attics and cellars. Sometimes that saved us from those German boys. So, when the Hitlerjugend [10] would begin chasing us, we'd run into a gateway, through a courtyard gallery, and get to the next street. It basically saved us from a certain beating.

Sometime in 1939, NSDAP [Die Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei, or Nazi Party] and Hitlerjugend headquarters were set up on the corner of Venturska Street, where we were living at the time. The headquarters of the Hlinka Guard were located in the building of today's University Library, not far from the Michalska Gate, and the Hlinka Youth, which regularly met in the evenings,

was also there. Their drums and horns thundered through the streets of Bratislava. All you heard was boom, boom, boom, the Hitlerjugend was marching. Boom, boom, boom, the Hlinka Youth was marching. They sang songs and shouted. For example, they sang Kamarati Na Straz! [Friends, On Guard!]. Just like Slovenska Pospolitost [11] does today. They marched around with their arms in the air. Then they smashed windows and storefronts. They carried daggers with them. After dispersing, it ended with them catching someone and stabbing them with one of those daggers, or beating them to death. That's why we used to run away from them over those courtyard galleries.