

The Agudat Jisrael Orphanage In Smeralova Street In Bratislava



In the photo you can see the former orphanage [the low building on the right-hand side] on Smeralova Street [currently the Bratislava Jewish community is located in the space occupied by the former Agudat Israel orphanage. Smeralova Street was renamed to Kozia Street]. The photograph could have been taken at the end of the 1940s. From 1946 I lived in an orphanage in Bratislava, as my father couldn't take care of such a small child on top of work, and my mother was ill. There I was taken care of. I felt good there. In the aguda it looked like in military barracks. When a person isn't spoiled and goes through a concentration camp, which he doesn't remember much, but despite that, when he saw those plank-beds in a museum... I remember getting a case of the mumps in the concentration camp, that swollen neck. And those plank-beds, those I remember. Well, and then in that aguda there were about thirty of us in one room. I don't know how many beds a given water basin was for, I think six steps away, for ritual washing. You'd pour it over your hands, because they say that the soul leaves the body, so a person has to wash like this in the morning. There was a large set of glass doors. Behind them was a dining hall where there was this big trough, I saw similar ones as late as the 1970s in a Sokol lodge. We washed in that trough, there was no hot water. On the floor below we also had showers. It was all only girls. One floor above were 15-year-old ones, back then they seemed old to me. They were learning to sew, but there wasn't anything to learn on, because we didn't even have proper food, so they made dresses from newspaper, to at least learn the patterns. Most of them were orphans and left in the aliyah to

Israel.