

Ruzena R. With Friends



This photograph from Topolcany was taken around 1936. The three girls standing in the back are 'Kinderfräulein' [nannies], who took care of us children. I, Ruzena, am the first one sitting on the left, second is Adela Friedmanova, third Eva Sternova, fourth Melania Simkova, the fifth of those sitting is Dezko Simko, he's since died in Israel. The boy standing on the left is my brother Rudolf. I don't know the little girl standing on the right. Our nanny is the first one on the left, beside her is Eva Sternova's, and the last one was from the Simko family.

The city that I grew up in was very anti-Semitic. Many residents behaved horribly towards Jews. For example, on the way to Jewish school we had to walk through a narrow little street. We would walk in double file all the way to the end of the street under our teacher's watchful eye. Non-Jewish children, from the lumpenproletariat of course, would be waiting in ambush there, to beat us up. Waiting at the end of the street would be our parents, some other adults, or the 'Kinderfräulein.' Often children who had no one waiting for them would also walk under their protection. So the teacher would then hand over the children to the protection of other adults. As far as the attitude of the population towards Jews goes, Topolcany was the worst city in Slovakia. Where else were they still beating Jews after the war? Only in Topolcany, in the today already notorious pogrom right after the war.