

My Father With His Brother Leo And My Uncle Henrich



In this photograph, my father is on the left, and beside him - in the middle, is his brother Leo, and on the right is my uncle Henrich. The photograph was taken in Bratislava in front of the Carlton Hotel, and is from the end of the 1930s or the beginning of the 1940s. My father and his brothers are already wearing the yellow star that had to be worn in a visible location.

In 1939 our father had to give up his clothing store. After that he was unemployed. My father's sister Gizela and her husband, who had a store, then supported us financially, and helped us however they could. In 1939 I was 16 years old. I'd finished fourth year of council school, and couldn't find a job. So I worked as a helper in Richard Weinhandel's clothing store. I helped out there, and earned a few crowns. Then I went to help build a war memorial, and for that I earned ten crowns in one night [The value of one Slovak crown during the era of the Slovak State (1939 - 1945) was equal to 31.21 mg of pure gold. The rate of exchange of the German mark to the Slovak crown was artificially set at 1:11 - Editor's note]. In this fashion I managed to muddle through. I earned money here and there, wherever I could. Finally, in that year of 1941, they dragged both my parents away from Bratislava to Zilina, to a collection camp. They came to our place and told them to pack up and bring only the bare necessities. They were supposed to report in Zilina.