

Bedrich Hecht



This is a photograph of me in 1943.

We used to spend our vacations at home. My brother used to often go to Hungary to Aunt Janka's. He was there mostly during the summer. I was at home. We attended school all year round, I attended school in Nitra, where I also lived. During vacations we would come home, and our father would always wake us up around 4:00, 4:30 a.m. Our mother would often reproach him for not letting us sleep, but he used to say: "Let them learn what life is like." We had to get up, go to the stables, and take care of the animals. We had to learn how to work. In this sense, our father raised us quite strictly. I also had to help out on the farm quite early on. When the time of persecutions arrived, the poor guy fell ill. He had a hard time dealing with the time when they were confiscating property [3], the arrival of the Guardists [4] and so on. He got a brain hemorrhage, and at the age of 19 I had to take care of the whole farm. I also had to end my high school studies. Finally the *numerus nulus* [the complete expulsion of Jews from schools - Editor's note] also came, and they threw us Jews out of school. I didn't finish school until after the war, by correspondence, when I survived and returned home. Then I did a four year agricultural high school diploma. During summer vacation I used to ride my bicycle to the river to go swimming with other young people. During the fall and spring we used to play marbles. Back then there weren't any camps. In the city there were clubs, there they maybe went to camp, that's possible, but not in the villages.