



## **Rudi's Story, Chapter 2**

### **And did you start a local school, was it a Jewish school?**

No it was a local school about a kilometre, two kilometres away, the Dreizehnte Volksschule, that's the thirteenth primary school which is not Jewish at all, it was a local one where I went for 4 years and in fact I have a photograph of the first class when I was about 6 which I can show you where I was very happy and I can tell you straight away that I had no anti-Semitism in that school either from children or from any of the teachers, with one exception. There was one boy in my class who would have classed as an Aryan, very blond and blue eyes, a bit outspoken, but quite a pleasant boy. I wasn't particularly close to him but we were on talking terms. And one day when I was about 7 or 8 perhaps I'd gone home by myself and as soon as I got home my mother sent me out to fetch some mincemeat from the local butcher and as I went from home to the butcher he, this other boy and two or three others were still coming from school and we met. And we stopped to exchange a few pleasantries and this fair-haired boy said "Where are you going?" and I said "I'm fetching some mincemeat for my mother". Now the German for mincemeat is hackefleisch. And he promptly plastered me one on my cheek and he said "There is your backefleisch". Backe is the cheek. And he was very quick I must admit but he thought he'd swipe me one across the face. And it hurt, but it hurt me more to think that for no reason whatsoever, and I assume it's because I was Jewish and he'd heard his parents talk about the Jews, that he thought he'd get his penn'orth in and do that. That was the only bit of anti-Semitism during those four years at my school. Indeed the masters, the teachers sometimes went out of their way to be kind to me I must say. Even up to the time that I left when I was 10.

### **Were you aware at all of listening to Hitler on the radio or seeing any raids in the streets?**

I didn't hear anybody on the radio, in fact we got a radio fairly late on when we lived in Berlin, it was a new thing and when we eventually did get a radio I was probably 8 or 9 but I certainly wasn't interested in politics. But what frightened me were the occasional marches of SS and SA men along the main road near where we lived who were marching along sometimes singing ferocious songs. They frightened me no end although they were marching in the street and didn't attack anybody on the pavement, but that was a frightening experience.

Another slightly – well I'm jumping ahead a bit now – frightening, slightly frightening experience was when I went to the Jewish school after the primary school when I had to catch a train, the local train and as it was a Jewish school there were no lessons on Saturday but there were lessons on Sunday. And as I went through the ticket barrier with my satchel on my back having gone through the ticket collector asked me to come back and "Hey just a minute, where are you going?" he said. And I knew immediately what was going to happen next. I said "I'm going to school" so he said "Only Jews go to school on a Sunday" but then he didn't do anything else and let me go as it were. But that was, that was the beginning of the overt anti-Semitism of the times.

**So we'll be talking there about '35?**

'35, '36, yes.

**Did you hear your parents or did you feel any atmosphere in the house, disquiet from your parents?**

Not at all. The, my parents continued their visits to concerts, to the theatre, to the cinema – well cinema was in its infancy, they didn't go that frequently to the cinema. But life continued. Their best friends were in fact non-Jewish. The lady of this couple taught me to play the piano, that's where the piano came in. her husband was a judge in the finance department of the income tax authorities so a very high animal and they were certainly not Nazis. They were my parents' best friends. They had 3 sons of whom 2 died fairly young but the third one still lives in Munich today and I'm in, I wouldn't say constant touch but certainly in touch with him.