

Handout 1.4: Three survivor accounts

Ruth Foster, German Jewish schoolgirl

When Hitler came to power things changed. We had teachers at school who were very pro-Nazi – they went to the Nuremberg rally each year – and I was the only Jewish girl in this high school. One particular teacher made my life a misery; she told the girls not to talk to me, and the girls with whom I used to go to school in the mornings and met afterwards, suddenly ignored me because of fear of this one teacher. And she arranged that I would sit right at the back of the class, two rows were left vacant and I sat against the wall. Then came a law, more or less at the same time as the Nuremberg Laws came out – that all the Jewish children had to leave German schools and universities.

(Smith, *Forgotten Voices of the Holocaust*, p. 27)

Maria Ossowski, Polish (non-Jewish) schoolgirl, Warsaw

I must stress very strongly that we had friends from Jewish families, nobody really knew any difference. The people who did not belong to our religion just didn't come into the classroom for prayers. That was the only difference. We played with each other, visited each other in our homes.

(Smith, *Forgotten Voices of the Holocaust*, p. 27)

Tomi Reichental, Jewish schoolboy, Slovakia

[T]hings began to change [...] From now on anyone passing by the impromptu football matches would still hear Miki [Tomi's brother] and me being called on excitedly by our friends to pass the ball or whatever, only now we were more baldly addressed. No longer did Miki score goals; from now on it was, 'Hey, the Jew scored!', and no longer was a player urged to kick the ball to Tomi, it was, 'Give the ball to the Jew.'

(Reichental, *I Was a Boy in Belsen*, p. 35)