

## Henry Landman's Biography

By his friend Gernot Römer Henry is described as an open minded and communicative person, who is "*fröhlich eigentlich immer*." Via telephone I was also able to get to know a talkative, friendly man, who was glad to share his memories with me.

### Experiences With Anti-Semitism



Heinz, Johanna, Regina and Irma, from the left, about 1930

Henry Landman was born on June 12<sup>th</sup> in 1920 in Augsburg as Heinz Landmann. He changed his name in the US; in this text he is also called Heinz until he arrives in the US, in order to point out the departure. His father Joseph Landmann (1895-1964) had a furrier shop, his mother Regina (1891-1955), was a housewife. In 1921(-70) Johanna and in 1923(-85) Irma, Heinz' younger sisters were born.

The siblings grew up in the 1920s in Augsburg, in a time when anti-Semitism involved more and more people. Although neither Heinz nor the other two were aware of that fact then. Heinz could not understand the difference between German Gentiles and German Jews. The only distinction he saw, was that his family went to the Synagogue and other families to the church. One incidence which happened just before starting school [about 1926!], puzzled him:

"I remember my parents telling me on that first day of school I would have to identify myself in class. The teacher would be asking all the children for their names, their addresses and their religion. It was just a formality, and not to be alarmed; but my parents then told me that "we" had to be careful how we identified ourselves. "We" were Jews but we had to be very discreet as to who heard that word. Somehow the sound of the word "Jew" was to be kept quiet outside of the Jewish community. Still, I needed to have some identity when the teacher asked for my name and religion. We would not lie; we were proud to be Jews. A clever solution was found to this dilemma. The few of us who were Jewish were told to call ourselves "Mosaics" or "Israelitic" [...] This made no sense to me, but if my parents wanted this I would comply. Today, I understand that these were code words accepted by all adults." (López, p.28)

But of course these code words could later guard neither him and nor the other Jews.

In the Real gymnasium, which Heinz attended from 1931-35, he had six Jewish classmates. One day a teacher called one of them to the front, branded him as a typical Jew and warned the class against contact with such persons. Due to such discrimination one after another the Jews were frozen out. Heinz left, too, and went to Vocational school from 1935 onwards, where he was apprenticed as a furrier. There was the same anti-Semitic attitude. For example two class pictures were taken, one with everybody on it, the other one without the Jewish classmates.

Heinz has always loved to play sports, especially tennis and soccer, and has won many championships. Nowadays at the age of 84 he still plays tennis a few times a week. In that time of disintegration and isolation, after Hitler's capture of power, the facilities of the *Private Tennisgesellschaft Augsburg*<sup>1</sup> became a focal point for the young Jews especially. Heinz met most of his friends while doing sports in his hometown; with some of these he is in contact even today.

### "Reichskristallnacht" And The Incarceration In The KZ Dachau

Heinz and Joseph were both arrested during "*Reichskristallnacht*". At 5am on the 10<sup>th</sup> of November in 1938 Heinz, his parents and his aunt Minna were woken up by tumultuous ringing. Civilians dressed in green lodencoats arrested Heinz and brought him to the police station and then to prison. Like him, his family did not understand why they had come for him. So his father prepared to consult his lawyer, the famous Mr. Rieser, but he did not get that far, he was apprehended from the streets. Joseph and Heinz met again that night, on the bus to the concentration camp Dachau, along with many other male Jews. They were allowed to smoke on the bus, but no one did. Everybody was too occupied with trying to catch some point of orientation, but "the truth was that each one of us secretly

<sup>1</sup> *Private Tennisgesellschaft Augsburg* = "Private Tennis Association Augsburg"