

**Jutta Preuss**

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### **Abstract**

Jutta Preuss was born April 11, 1923 in Berlin, Germany as Jutta Popover. Her father came from Eastern Poland where he ran away from the Russian Army. Her parents married and had a baby boy in Russia. After Jutta was born, her parents divorced and she was raised first by caretakers, then by her father and later by her stepmother. The family lived behind her father's menswear store. In 1934 Jutta's father remarried a Catholic lady. Jutta only saw her mother occasionally and did not see her father after she was 16 and he went underground. He died in a concentration camp. Jutta started elementary school at age six. She was not close to her stepmother but was close to the stepmother's sister who kept the money that Jutta saved from bookkeeping, sewing, and soldering. Jutta was grateful to her mother for sponsoring her so she was able to leave Germany in '41. She went by ship to Uruguay. Her brother had left at age 18, joined the British Army and he and his wife met Jutta in Israel in 1950. Jutta's mother had a son and daughter in Argentina. Jutta often takes her son on visits to Germany.

### **Summary**

00:00 Jutta Preuss was born April 11, 1923 in Berlin, Germany as Jutta Popover. Her father came to Germany in the early 20s. He had been drafted in the Russian Army and did not like killing people who did not do anything to him so he escaped. He was caught and taken to prison and later came to Germany. Previously he was living in Warsaw that was part of Russia at the time. His family came from Krakow. Her mother was Polish, Ruchlar Berlinsky (?) and her father was Avraham Popover. She does not know where they met. Her brother was born in Russia and died at 17. He was four years older than her. The parents divorced after she was born as her father did not accept her as his child. They paid a couple to take care of her. Her mother liked men. As Jutta grew older, she looked more like her father as had his nose. They both had a "Catholic" nose.

05:00 Her mother disappeared to Brazil and had a son. One day the son looked at the garbage as he was hungry. The judge said the father had rights to the children so Jutta and the brother were raised by him. Jutta is grateful that her mother helped her leave Germany. Her father loved his children. The children had various caretakers. They spoke German at home. Jutta liked some caretakers and some she did not care for. Some caretakers wanted her to convert to Christian. They were not religious at home. There was a synagogue nearby. When she was three or four, Jutta's father took her brother to the synagogue and she cried as she wanted to go so they took her. The father had a brother in Berlin. They had neighbors who had children her age.

- 10:00 Her father had a partner in his men's store. The partner had three children and lived near them. The partner said that Jutta was "sweet as sugar but bitter as garlic." They had a daughter her age who was mentally handicapped though later got married in France and Jutta attended the wedding. Jutta saw her half-sister, Joanna, in Buenos Aires and she had a daughter. Jutta's father's friend took her to school and back at age six but did not marry her father. He remarried in 1934 to a Catholic lady. They had twins and one died. They lived in a mixed neighborhood and everyone was friendly. Their apartment was behind their store. They sold men's goods. They had a live-in housekeeper who cooked and cared for them. Her childhood was a bit lonely and quiet. She would look at other people's activities. She loved children. Jutta was four or five when she met her mother for the first time and her brother introduced her. A few years later she saw her again but she was more interested in her brother.
- 15:00 Her mother had a brother, Schneider, in Berlin. Jutta started school in 1929 when she was six. It was a public elementary school where she was good at math. Her report card indicated that she was quiet. Her father was very good and liked people. They would come on Friday and asked for food and he gave it to them. One day they said they would prefer money for drink so he told them to go elsewhere. Her father took her to a silent film. Her brother had to read the subtitles to her as she could not read yet. She felt closer to her brother than he was to her. He left at 18 as the stepmother criticized him too much. Her brother would defend her.
- 20:00 When she was 10 or 11, her stepmother told her to clean the house if she wants to have friends over. Her stepmother was German but she converted to Judaism. Jutta was not close to her but was close to the stepmother's sister. When she earned some money from doing bookkeeping, she would give it to the sister. The stepmother's sister was married without children. Jutta wanted to move in with her. Her stepmother scolded Jutta for giving her sister the money instead of to her. The sister saved the money for Jutta so she had money to leave Germany. Jutta needed money to go to Hamburg for a visa, for a taxicab and for her luggage. Her father had gone underground to Frankfurt so was not there when Jutta left. Jutta had both Jewish and non-Jewish friends. Later they did not like Jews. Jutta did not know the difference. Her father was not religious.
- 25:00 When Jutta was eight or nine, she was interested in friends. She lived in a working class neighborhood. Her father married in December '34. Jew were not supposed to marry Christians so the new wife got papers in Prague where their wedding took place. Jutta's stepmother's name was Erma Shelna (?). Jutta met her mother in Argentina, who had remarried, and had a son and daughter. Jutta had lived in Zetterberg (?) on 40 Market Street. Once she left Germany, no one sent money. She would always take her son on vacation to Zetterberg (?). Jutta called her mother Tanta Yohava Sachenhath (?). Her father left his store in Germany and went to France. Jutta met her mother in Buenos Aires where the oldest daughter, who was her age, had died. After Kristallnacht, Jutta's

father no longer opened his store. Her father went into hiding. He looked for Jewish men to take him to Sachsenhausen. Others disappeared like he disappeared. He went to Belgium and then to Berlin where he had to register with the police every week for a few months.

- 30:00 He disappeared about four or five months before the war. Her father made a living as he sold to other stores. He had non-Jewish friends. His wife stayed home while he went out and played cards at a café before he married the stepmother. She organized the home and her father learned to play chess. He came home for dinner and when Hitler came to power they thought they would each receive a new car. Though the Nazis were in power, they were not afraid to go out but they usually stayed home and read. Her stepmother's mother came daily and washed the dishes and ironed.
- 35:00 During Kristallnacht, her father was working at a wholesale store and the boss' wife wanted to help Jutta and her father would not permit it. When Jutta lost her job with Schermerhorn in the building, she said that she liked to sew and worked for five or six months. The Labor Office sent another girl and Jutta was told to be careful of the Jew. She inquired how do you know who is Jewish and they replied that Jews had horns. When she married, people thought her Italian. She had a boyfriend her age but his father was not Jewish. She felt bad when she left Germany and took her luggage to the train station but her stepmother was happy. Her boyfriend was Jewish as he was raised by his mother and she was divorced. He left Berlin by bicycle and she was worried about him as he might have perished. This happened in '40 and she left in '41. She never saw her father again after age 16 as he went underground to France. They delivered Jews to the Germans and he was killed in a concentration camp. After the war, her brother was in the English Army and neighbors told him about their father. The father went underground in '39 and Jutta left in January '41.
- 40:00 Her stepmother had a hard time. While cleaning the library, she found a letter in a book from Jutta's mother from '38 asking her to visit. Her father had said that she should not write her mother since she did not know her. When Jutta saw the letter, she asked her mother to sponsor her and she did. Jutta took a ship to the mother. Her brother had left at age 18. He went to a Belgium Jewish school for two years studying engineering. Then Germany started the war. At Dunkirk, her brother went to England and applied to be a soldier in the English Army to fix tanks. Her brother was considered Polish as he was born in the Russian part of Poland. He was not German so he could enlist in the English Army. He was required to make a will so made Jutta his heir if anything happened to him.
- 45:00 Jutta saw her brother in 1950 in Israel. He had a Jewish girlfriend who was ten years older than him. He liked to go on trips and said he was visiting his mother but it was not true. They were married and the wife hated Jutta. They went to Argentina and the wife

told Jutta's father-in-law that her brother gave her all the money. Actually, the brother bought things and hid them. Jutta's mother was in Uruguay in '38 and sent her money and papers. Jutta did soldering work with 100 Jews at Siemens. In December she told the manager that she was leaving for the US. The stepmother's sister held \$200 of her money that she used for a visa.

- 50:00 The twins went to the hospital to get injections and be isolated. One died and the other recovered and remained in Germany. People were not working and sat around the city. They had lice and the children sat on a bench next to them and got lice. Her stepmother yelled at Jutta on the phone that she did not send food packages. She had two children and no money. She sold the jewelry that Jutta's father had given her at age 13. When Jutta went to Germany, she did not see her stepmother who was not Jewish and remained in Germany and survived the war. On January 21, 1941, Jutta took a train from Berlin where she was placed in the Jewish section for five days to Spain. There they stayed a night in a hotel and asked for a bath but fell asleep in the tub as was so tired.
- 55:00 Two girls came in and found her. Her father waited for her in Paris but did not tell her the meeting place so they did not find each other. JOINT arranged her ship to Uruguay. There she met Erma who was nice. Lane came from Switzerland. It was cool so she was given a blanket. Her mother was good-looking but spoke badly about her father. Her mother had two husbands. One was from Hungary.
- 60:00 He was nice and Jutta liked him. The second was from Argentina and they both had the same name, Goldstein. The first one lost his job and went to Buenos Aires and died. The second one from Argentina went to Israel. Jutta and her daughter visited him two years ago in the hospital. She told him she was going to Israel but did not speak to her mother. When her daughter was born, her mother came to the hospital as she wanted to move in with her. Her cousin went to Paris and died in '95. Jutta's parents divorced. The first time Jutta returned to Germany, she went with her husband. Then Jutta took groups from Argentina to Germany. She did not tell them that she was Jewish. Her street in Germany no longer exists.
- 65:00 Jutta feels she led a simple life. She is a happy person and said people should be happy and healthy. She does not understand why people are angry. She was happy when she had nothing and now she does not need anything. You should not worry but be happy. She is not money hungry. Jutta has nice, good children. She shows a photo of her father, her brother (Henoff or Henry Popover born in 1919) at 5 and herself at 3, around 1924. Her father was 22 and her mother 24 in 1919. Second photo is of her father in 1897. The third photo is of her brother at age 17. Fourth photo is her father and his brother-in-law. Next photo is her father's parents (Gitel (Jutta was named after her) Useroff and Joyet Popover (?).

70:00 Next photo is of a German farming town near Berlin in 1939. Jutta worked for the local horse farm. The photo is of male workers. The next photo is of men at a camp where her father is in the last row. An Auschwitz survivor saw this photo and met his wife and went to Israel. In 1939 her father learned agriculture. Next is Convent Agnone in San Bernardino, an open prison where she lived. Next is a professional photo of a group of prisoners and their guard outside Camp Agnone. Her father and brother (in sunglasses) on right viewing soccer. This is in Uruguay.

75:00