

Hedy Epstein, Reel 7.

I was wondering also, and this is going back to your experience in Germany after the war, it seems to me that the job you did during the Nuremberg trials in particular, that perhaps you couldn't have punished yourself more, bearing in mind what had happened to your parents. I'm wondering how much you knew about the camps and when you knew it in the war. You were saying that your protective devices that you had, when did you really-- when were you faced with what had happened?

I think I really didn't know about the camps. I only began to know about the camps after the war was over. Of course, learned a great deal more when I was in Nuremberg. I think, really, that job, and many jobs after that, were part of my search for my parents. Though it wasn't a conscious decision.

But when I look back now with hindsight, I think that's what I was really doing. It was another way of trying to find my parents without actually knowing that I was doing it. Later on, I think I was consciously searching for my parents, but subconsciously took the kinds of jobs that would perhaps expose me to people who might know something.

Because the first job that I had in the United States was for an organization, a Jewish organization called New Yorkers, New York Association for New Americans. It was an organization that was bringing over displaced persons, Jewish displaced persons from Germany to the United States.

After the initial job, which I only had for a very short time, I was transferred within the agency to another job, which then made me be the second person that these people who were brought over would meet after they arrived in the United States. They were met at the boat by somebody from the agency. Then I was the next person that they saw.

So I saw all the people that came in on every boat. I know I would ask these people where were you, hoping that maybe somebody would have been in the camps in France. At that time, I didn't know yet that my parents had been sent to Auschwitz because this was still 1948. I worked in this agency from '48 to 1950.

I never met anybody who was in the camps where my parents were. Never met anybody that knew my parents or knew anything about it. But the other thing was I looked at people thinking maybe my parents are going to walk in. Of course, that didn't happen.

When I was hired for this job, I was told that this is not a lifetime job. Because we're bringing over refugees, and at some point, there will be no more. We are, in fact, already laying off some people, but we do need you right now. We need this job filled.

Then in 1950, they no longer needed me because there were not many people arriving anymore. So they were cutting back on staff. Those who were there longer than I still kept the jobs.

I then decided that I had really not gotten to know America. Living in New York, you don't know America. It's not New York. I mean, it's not America.

I had not really gotten to know Americans because I was mostly traveling in refugee circles. So I said I've been here two years. It's about time I found out. I better leave. I need to find a job anyway, so why not find a job someplace else?

I opened the map, closed my eyes, and put my finger down somewhere. It turned out to be the Twin Cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis, Minnesota. So I moved there.

I worked for a Jewish family and children's service there. They were not bringing over people, but people, refugees, or displaced persons had been located in, or relocated to the Twin Cities and were coming to the agency for assistance.

So, again, I was looking at people and asking where were you. So it's still that search. While I was working at the agency, we were contacted by an organization in New York, the United Restitution Organization. That organization was

assisting people who suffered under the Nazi regime, either personal losses or material losses, and were assisting them in their restitution claims against the German government.

They contacted the agency in Minneapolis that I worked for if they could perhaps find somebody who could help people who live in Minneapolis who have these claims, because it's too difficult to do it from New York. So the agency director asked me if I felt I could do this. I said I have no idea. I don't know the laws. I don't know what the work entails.

So he said, well, why don't you send away for information and see if you can do it? I started doing that. While I lived in Minneapolis, I met the man who became my husband. He then got a job in New Jersey.

So I moved to New Jersey and contacted this agency in New York, the United Restitution Organization, saying, you know, I did this work in Minneapolis, worked with you. Now I'm here and I'm looking for a job. Can I work for you?

So I got a job with them. So now I was exposed to many more people and, still, the same search, looking at faces and asking people where they were. Met one woman who was in the same camp briefly where my father was, but didn't know my father and didn't want to talk about the camp.

While I was at this agency, I became pregnant and then left. So until then, so this was really until 1956, I continued looking. In 1956, I also received that letter, but it was later in 1956, that my parents had been deported to Auschwitz.

I'm not sure where to go right now.

How did you react to that, when you knew that? Can you remember? Was it was it important to know where they had been?

Well, then the question was did they really get there? Did they really? Then I thought about that list that I found with my father's name on it. Is there a connection?

And if so, what? If not, why not? And what does it mean?

Weren't there, maybe, people who were supposedly sent and they weren't sent? Probably they're still alive. Probably they're still somewhere and I just haven't waited long enough.

Then, the other thing was I was working for an agency that was filing claims against the German government, restitution claims. I had several opportunities to file, several different claims that I could file. One, for the death of my parents. But I couldn't admit that they had died. How can I file for that?

For the time that they spent in the concentration camps, they paid so much for each month. For the interruption of my education. And that I was able to do without any difficulty, because that happened to me and I'm here and so I can do that. It took me quite a bit longer to request, or to file, for the time they spent in the concentration camps.

Ultimately, my husband pushed me. I think he saw dollars. I think that was his motivation to apply for that also and I did. When that money came, I didn't know what to do with that money, because it was a pitiful amount. And even if they'd given me all the money in the world, it doesn't replace my parents.

My husband knew how he wanted to spend that money and made me spend that money that way. It still bothers me to this day how that money was spent. We bought our first car with it.

It just really has always deeply troubled me. That car is long gone. Thank goodness.

Do you accept now that your parents won't come back?

No. I mean, simply, if nothing else, by virtue of their age. My father would be 102 years old, my mother would be 97 years old, so simply by virtue of their age. But in 1980, which is 11 years ago, when I was in Auschwitz on that ramp,

that's all of a sudden-- There was nothing there on that ramp that could even remotely remind me of my parents.

But that's when all of a sudden I realized there is just no way that they could have survived. But I think it wasn't so much the ramp, although that's when I suddenly came to that realization. I had been in the camp the better part of the day already and saw the dismal conditions. I had also been, before that, to Dachau and to Gurs. Gurs doesn't really exist anymore.

So I just knew then I had to accept it that they are no longer alive. It's not possible. I mean, that they did not survive. Interesting slip of the tongue that I just made. I'm still having, apparently, some difficulties with that. I mean, that to witness filling out that application or that questionnaire last year in 1990 about information that the Russians, the Soviet Union released about people who were in Auschwitz.

So I've accepted it. And there's still a lingering. I mean, I know they're no longer alive.

But it's very important, I think. We have these rituals where we view the dead body. We bury the people. We go to the cemetery. We visit the grave.

I think it's a very important ritual that we do. We need to see the deceased. We need to have a place where we can go and visit.

I have never seen my parents dead. There is no place where I can visit their grave. There is no one who can tell me I saw your parents when they died, or I know where they are buried.

The only person of my entire family who went through the camps, who is buried is my grandfather, who died two months after he arrived in Gurs. People in Gurs were buried. They were very primitive markers there.

After the war, a German-Jewish organization developed that cemetery and put identical tombstones there, rectangular tombstones there with the Jewish or Hebrew inscription that says "Here lies" and then the name of the person, the year of their birth, the year of their death, and the community from where they came from if that information was available. When I was in Gurs, I visited that cemetery and found my grandfather's grave.

So there is his death. Well, my mother also told me that he died. So I had that, plus-- or she wrote to me, I should say, that he died. So I have that, plus I was able to visit the grave.

It was a very unique experience when I visited that grave. The sun was shining brightly. As soon as I saw the grave, the clouds covered the sun and remained that way the entire time that I was there.

There are approximately 1,250 graves in that cemetery. I visited each and every grave because I don't know if all of them are ever going to be visited. I felt each one should have at least one visitor once.

So I spent a whole day there. Before I left, I went back to my grandfather's grave one more time. Then when I finally left, the clouds disappeared, and the sun was shining again.

I'm a very tactile person. When I found my grandfather's grave, I sort of ran my fingers over the grave. All kinds of recollections from my childhood came back that I had not thought about in many, many years.

Like, I remembered my grandfather used to be able to wiggle his ears. I asked him to do that. He wore a pocket watch in his vest. It had a lid on it.

When I was little, he used to have me sit on his lap and ask me to blow on the lid. Then when I blow on the lid, the lid would open up. I knew then that that's not what makes the lid open up. But it was a game we played again and again and again.

I remembered when he lived with us, every morning he had two hard-boiled eggs-- two soft-boiled eggs. I used to stand

next to him and watch him cut with a knife the top off the egg. Then he would give me the top of the egg. That was the best part of the egg that I ever ate. When I ate a soft-boiled egg and cut mine off, it wasn't as good as his.

So things like that were flooding my mind while I was there. It's the camp is in such a beautiful setting. In the distance, you see the snow-capped Pyrenean mountains. I'm thinking, you know, here people were living such miserable-- leading such miserable lives, waiting to be sent off to their death in such a beautiful setting.

Something-- two very mystical things happened. I'm not a mystical person. I'd like to think of myself as a pragmatist with both feet solidly on the ground. When I first got to Gurs, prior to going there I had written to this German-Jewish organization asking when can one visit, are there certain hours, is it open or is it closed, who has the key.

They wrote back that it's open at all times. There is no key because it's open and you can go any time. I get there, and there is a fence all around the camp with a gate. The gate has a chain with a padlock on it, and it's closed. Who has the key?

The gate was only probably waist high. I could have very easily climbed over it. But I couldn't do that because this is almost, to me, was like a holy place. And you don't do that. Somehow, it desecrates it.

So I turned away with my back towards the gate. This camp is on the outskirts of the village of Gurs. There was a road, a perfectly straight road going either direction alongside the camp. Across the street was a field of something, I don't know, corn or wheat or something.

When I arrived there, there was nobody there. I see this gate is closed, and so I turned around, like, I'm going to say to the road, you know, what I do? Who has the key?

There is this man standing there. Where did he come from? I mean, he wasn't there before. There was no car, or bicycle, or anything.

He was shaking, visibly shaking. And tears are streaming down his face. So I want to communicate with him. Who are you? Why are you here? We can't get in. Do you know how to get in?

I'm in France. So I ask him, parlez vous Francais? He shakes his head, indicating no. So I said to him do you speak English? Again, he shakes his head, indicating no.

Do you speak German? I ask him that in German. And, again, he indicates no. Then I ask him in Yiddish if he speaks Yiddish. He, again, indicates no.

Now I've exhausted my language skills. I could have asked him in Spanish if he spoke Spanish. But if he did, I wouldn't understand.

So I want to tell him we can't get in here. So I go back to the gate, and I rattle the chain and turn around. He's gone. I don't know did he really exist or am I imagining it.

But after I left the camp-- so this will forever be a mystery to me, and if he was there, who was he, and if he wasn't there, what does this mean. After I left the camp, I mean, this was at the beginning of the day. Now I'm talking about the end of the day. And I did find the person who had the key, who let me go in. It was a farm lady.

When I left at the end of the day to return the key to her, I'm walking with my eyes downcast on the ground. There were a lot of rocks and stones on the side of the road. All of a sudden, I had the feeling that this one stone saying to me-- I mean, I didn't hear voices, it was just a feeling kind of thing-- pick me up. Take me with you.

So I bent down and I picked up the stone. And I dusted it off. That's a pretty stone.

I then suddenly remembered that I had some correspondence prior to that that the following year, in 1981, there was

going to be an international gathering of Holocaust survivors in Israel. The survivors were asked to bring stones from the area where they live engraved with the names of their loved ones. And that those stones were going to be used for the construction of a monument in Israel in memory of those who didn't survive. So I thought, oh, I'm going to pick up stones from the camps where I go to and bring those stones to Israel and thought no further about this particular stone, put it, and wrapped it up in tissue paper, and put it in my pocket book.

About 10 weeks after I was back in the United States, and I'm talking about my experience and showing the things that I had from there, including this stone, the person that I showed it to is a person who was mildly retarded suddenly started to cry. I said, oh, I don't need to talk about this anymore if it's upsetting you.

She said, no. Don't you know what's on this stone? I said, what is on the stone? She said there's a Star of David on the stone. It's not perfect, but there is.

I took it afterwards to a geologist because I wanted to know is it man made or nature made. It's nature made.

I did not leave that stone in Israel. I took it with me. I collected stones from the other camps and left those there. That stone I couldn't leave. I still have it. I can show it to you.

What does it mean? Why? Why this stone of all the many stones?

Do you still hate the Germans?

I'm glad you're asking that, because that's a very important thing I need to talk about. I continued to hate the Germans across the board, with the exception of those who would have been too young at that time. I was able to make that allowance. I didn't buy any products made in Germany. I didn't want to have anything to do with anything that was German.

If I met somebody in this country who was German, where were you? What did you do, very aggressively asking them. In 1970, in late April, early May 1970, it became public knowledge for the first time in the United States that, as part of the Vietnam War-- which I had opposed vigorously, since before there was an anti-Vietnam war movement-- but it was learned for the first time in late April, early May 1970, that as part of this war the United States had carpet bombed Cambodia. I became really angry that we had done this. Why had we done this to this country? Why have we killed so many people needlessly?

All of a sudden, this triggered something in my head. And my thoughts traveled back across the ocean and back across the years. I was saying, if the Germans had done the kinds of things that I had done here and I had picketed and marched and sent telegrams to my president and sent letters to my congressional representatives opposing this war, and if the Germans had done that-- and nothing happened to me here-- but if the Germans had done this, they would have ended up in a concentration camp. They would have lost their lives. Or they would have really been severely punished.

How can I condemn a whole nation for not being heroes? I don't know that I would be a hero. My life wasn't at stake. My family's life wasn't at stake.

At best, the FBI or the CIA has a record of mine. And so what? And with that, suddenly this hatred that I had carried for all too long really totally disappeared.

I was able to really verify that it truly disappeared. Because earlier that year my husband and I had planned to go back to Germany so I could show him where I grew up and show my son where I grew up, where I went to school, et cetera.

When we were in Kippenheim, we were in a restaurant. I talked to the proprietress, talked German to her, but English to my family. She wanted to know who I was. I was reluctant to tell her.

Finally, I told her who I was and who my family was. So she said yes. Those were terrible times. My sister's son was a prisoner of war in Russia.

I said to her, did he come back? Did he have a bad experience there? How is he doing? I was able to relate to her as one human being to another, a person who probably has had some bad experiences.

But it also reminded me of something else that happened in 1947 when I was in Kippenheim the first time. I suddenly realized that after I talked to this woman this way. Because in 1947, I was approached by somebody who told me my brother is a POW in Russia. Can you do something to get him out?

There's nothing I could have done. That's what I should have said. But I was so full of hatred, and I didn't know who this man was, I said to her, I hope they've killed him. If they haven't, I hope he'll never come back alive. So here were two similar situations, and I was responding very differently. So I knew I had overcome that hatred.

When I was in Germany in this year, in 1991, in June 1991 on my speaking tour, the one place where I spoke, and it was when I spoke about my experience at the Nuremberg trials, afterwards I got together with the moderator and one of the people in the audience who was a historian who happened to have done her work for her PhD at the Document Center in Berlin where I worked. Both of them said to me, you are much too forgiving of Germans.

I thought about it. And I said, but that's really how I am and how I want to be. I'm glad that I'm rid of this hatred. Because hatred is not only bad for the person you hate, it's very self-destructive. It's just not a good position to be in.

So I'd much rather be accused of being too forgiving. It's a much more comfortable situation to be in. Yes, there were Germans, there are Germans--

Epstein, Reel 8.

In October 1990, the village of Kippenheim invited all the survivors to come back for a reunion. I went back. Before I went back, and by the way, I was accompanied by my son part of the time, not the entire time.

But before we went back to Kippenheim, we went to France and visited two camps that I had not previously visited, the camp where my father was in Les Milles. And before I went to Le Milles, I learned that Lion Feuchtwanger, a German-Jewish writer, had been interned in Le Milles right after the war started. In his book, *The Devil in France*, the first 80 or so pages he describes the conditions in Le Milles. I read that before I left.

And when I came to Le Milles, it was like a place that I had been to because he describes it so vividly. From his description, I know exactly where my father was within the camp. Because he talked about where these people who came. So he was probably there at the same time as when my father was there.

I remember my father wrote in some of the letters about some of the things, these cultural activities that were going on there, and that he participated in, either passively as a receiver, or sometimes he also gave lectures. For instance, he lectured on photography without cameras.

The other camp that we visited was Drancy, which is near Paris, which was this transit camp where all the Jews from France, whether they were in camps or caught in the streets, were sent there, stayed there for a few days, and then went on, were sent on to their extermination. My parents, according to this 1956 letter I have, were there at different times.

After that, my son and I went to Germany and went to Kippenheim. I purposely arranged it so that we would get there before all the activities started and all the people arrived. Because I wanted to do some of the things that my parents and I did together. Like, we used to hike in the woods together. Or on Sunday mornings, if my parents, if we didn't do something jointly, my father and I, on Sunday mornings, would take a hike into the nearby woods.

Every week, every Sunday, I would be given a topic to discuss the following week. I would have to do some reading or thinking about it so that I could discuss it the next week. I wanted to retrace some of those steps with my son. And so we did some of that, although part of the woods is gone and are now vineyards, which totally disoriented me then. I didn't know where I was because these vineyards go on forever.

I had never been able to, or never had wanted to go back inside the house where I lived and made that as a conscious decision the two times that I was there in 1947 and 1970 and had no intention to go back this time. The last day that my son was there, he said don't you want to go in the house. And I said no. I said but if you want to go in, I'll ring the doorbell and arrange it.

He said, well, you know, my camera is better than yours. And if you want some pictures, I could take some pictures before I leave today. I said OK. Let's go in.

I rang the doorbell. This woman opened up the door. The first thing that I saw was this magnificent inner staircase looking more beautiful than I remembered it because it was really well-maintained. It looked like it had just been newly stained.

The house, outside as well as inside, has been renovated, or modernized. But when I went into the bedroom, which it's their bedroom, it used to be my parents' bedroom, the same light fixture was still there.

Then, in the course of our visit there, I encountered, of course, lots of people that I knew. Some of the kids that-- I mean, now adults-- but that I went to grade school with. And had some of the things confirmed, the feeling that I had that we were different was confirmed.

Because you and your parents were always different. Your parents used to go to concerts when it was still permitted. Your parents always had books. Children that came to the house and played with me said I remember, there was always music in your house. Your mother would play the piano, or your father the violin, or you had the record player on, or the radio was on to music.

You had toys like nobody else had toys. And then she said probably today you would call them educational toys. So that sort of confirmed what I really knew.

But it was nice to have it confirmed. Because I sometimes wonder what I remember. Is it really so? Or did I create it because I want it to be that way?

When I was there, everybody was very warm. I really felt loved and wanted and welcomed. I had a very good feeling. I mean, I felt very positive when I left.

With one exception, there were-- some asylum seekers live in the village. There was a lot of negative feeling about these people and about the man who was housing them. The last night that we were there, there was a gathering, and speeches, and so on.

When the mayor was through speaking, I went over to him and I said I would really like to say some things that are on my mind, that I don't want to leave without saying them. Is it possible? And he said sure.

So he called on me. I thanked everybody and expressed my appreciation for everything that I experienced that week, and that I'm going away with some very positive feelings. However, it has bothered me to have heard these negative feelings about the asylum seekers.

I said, you know, at one time, those of us who are here today, whom you've invited back, and I have heard from some people that they were bothered by how much money was spent on us, I said at one point, we were almost in the position of the asylum seekers. We were not wanted. Look how much money and effort and time you've had to spend to bring us back.

And think about it and your feelings about these asylum seekers. Maybe someday you're going to have to bring them back. Maybe now is the time to do the right thing and to welcome them.

Because they're not here because they want to be here and create problems. They're here because wherever they're

coming from, there were problems, and that's why they're here seeking asylum, seeking your help, your receptivity. I said but I don't want to leave on a negative tone, I said. Let's all join hands in friendship.

Then after I left there, I went to Hanau, where my grandfather and my where my mother came from, and the city that my grandfather had to leave. I visited the cemetery there and found my grandmother's grave there. I also found my grandparents' home, which had been badly bombed but was restored almost the way it was before.

I wanted to go in and see the place. It's now the office of a psychologist. The man opened the door and didn't want to let me in. I explained to him why I am there and that I'm only here today and why it's important for me to be there, gave him the whole background. He said these are offices, and you can't come in here.

I'm thinking, this man is a psychologist. He's trying to help. But I did something and I did not intentionally, but it worked. I all of a sudden realized what I was doing And that it was working.

I moved closer to him, and as I moved closer to him, he backed off. I moved still closer to him. Very soon, I was inside.

Then once I was inside, he showed me around. Then I thanked him. And as I walked out and I started to take photographs on the outside, I was approached by a man. He wanted to know why I'm taking pictures and who am I. So I explained to him who I was.

He said when your grandfather had to sell the house, he sold it to my father. My father is dead, and I now live in this house. I live on the second floor. He started to tell me a lot of things about that happened at that time that I didn't know and sort of filled me in.

Then from there, I went to Cologne. Because I had been told that in a library in Cologne, there are lots of information about German Jews and former German-Jewish communities. Since my daughter-in-law and I are interested in genealogy, I thought maybe there's some things that I can find out.

Well, the information that I was looking for wasn't there. So I didn't spend much time in that library, although I had allotted three days to spend there. That's when I then contacted my friend Werner, which I talked about earlier.

While I was in Cologne, I contacted a German peace organization who had contacted me about a year before and had asked me to come and speak about my experiences as a Holocaust survivor in Germany to different organizations in January and February, or February of 1991. But I hadn't heard any more from them. So I thought since I'm in Cologne and this organization is here, I might as well stop in.

They said, well, the reason you haven't heard further is because we don't know what's happening with the situation in the Middle East right now and with Iraq. I think it might be better if we postpone this until the summer. We may not even be able to do it then. So how about if we plan this for June? And so it was planned for June.

But after meeting my friend Werner in November for that one day and corresponding for a while, we decided that I would come over there. And in January and most of February, I was over there. Well, before I left, here in St. Louis, and shortly after Iraq invaded Kuwait, a peace forum was founded. We were objecting to what our government was doing from the very beginning and increasingly more so as we sent more and more troops over there.

Shortly after I got to Germany, war broke out. There was an active peace movement in the community there. There were daily vigils. I participated in the daily vigils.

There was a big gathering in Bonn on January 26 at the same time as on January 26 there was a big gathering in Washington, DC in opposition to this war. I participated in that. I wore a big sign at all times when I was at these vigils or gatherings saying, in German, saying as an American citizen, I'm opposed to this war and talked about the consequences of this war. I publicly spoke, addressed people at these public vigils on several occasions.

I frequently heard some Germans say that the Germans shouldn't oppose this war, because it will seem to be anti-



American. We Germans must remember what America has done for Germany. So we got into long discussions about that.

But all over Germany, and as I was leaving to come back to the United States, I was on the train from Cologne to Frankfurt, where I caught the plane, along the train I saw in the windows signs against the war. Some of them just saying nein or no. When I came to St. Louis, I drove or I took a taxi from the airport. It was all the way from the airport to my house, I saw nothing in opposition of the war, which really troubled me.

It wasn't until I got to my own house where I had left a sign before I left in my window in opposition to the war, that was the first thing that I saw that was in opposition to the war. The only other things that I saw were yellow ribbons and American flags everywhere, a great proliferation of them, which deeply troubled me because what we did was just all wrong. The war is not over.

We're talking as though it were over. It is not over. Thousands of people, children, innocent children are dying because there is no medicine. The hospitals have no medicine. There's no sanitation because we bombed all the supportive systems. We bombed the electric, the power systems.

It's not over. We are the killers. As a pacifist or a peace loving person, this deeply troubles me, shames me. It shames me also what is going on in the Middle East in Israel vis-a-vis the Palestinians.

Very often, unfortunately, people don't see the difference between Israel, or Israelis and Jews, or the Israeli government and Jews. I find myself being in a defensive position, saying I'm not like that. It's not comfortable to be in that kind of position, but for lack of anything better, that's what I need to do to explain myself.

I'm involved in an organization called New Jewish Agenda, which is a progressive political organization and has since its inception, and I think it came into existence about 1980, been for a two state solution as the only way to bring about peace in that area.

Talking of your German trip, your most recent one, did you notice any signs of anti-Semitism, and really, signs of a resurgence of fascism?

I didn't observe it firsthand. But I read about it. I heard about it and continue to hear about it, because I'm still in touch with people that I met on this speaking tour. So periodically I'm sent leaflets that Nazi groups over there are giving out. In fact, I wrote to one Nazi group, using my German name, and giving my work address, because I did not want to give-- being paranoid enough, not wanting to give my home address-- and asked to be put on their mailing list and asked for some of their literature.

But I never got a response. To date, I've received nothing. I think I wrote at least three months ago. So I doubt that I will get anything. Maybe the organization has disbanded, but that's wishful thinking, I think, on my part.

You know, I think a lot of it, perhaps, there were quote, unquote, "neo-Nazis" in what was West Germany all along. But since the wall is down, in East Germany, there's been a real resurgence of fascism. I think it's because a lot of people, particularly young people, are at loose ends. There's no one telling them specifically what to do and how to do.

But then came along some fascists, some Nazis, and have lured them and given them a reason for existence, given them something to work towards. That has spread now also into West Germany. It's not only in Germany. It is happening in this country also.

Given the economic conditions in this country, which are very bad, given what's happening in Russia right now, which is very frightening, all you need is some fanatical person like a Hitler to come along. I'm sure they exist. Who knows what's going to happen? It's really frightening me. I think these are the worst of times, the worst of times that I've known for a long, long time, very frightening times.

I'm less fearful for myself because I'm getting on in age. But I have grandchildren. It's not only my grandchildren. I

mean, there are young people all over the world. And what's ahead for them?

I wonder how you relate this to your own history and what happened to your parents. Could you have believed that this would have happened again after the Second World War?

After the Second World War, I didn't think so. I thought, really, I think the First World War was the war to end all wars, or it was called that. But I really thought after World War II, many lessons have been learned by many people, and we're going to all be vigilant, and we're never going to let this happen again.

Those of us who've suffered, who've known what it is, are really going to be actively involved in letting others know what can happen if one doesn't stand up. It didn't go that way. This particularly troubles me when I talk to Holocaust survivors who we all remember, and there isn't a day that I don't remember. There isn't a day that I don't think about my parents.

But many of the Holocaust survivors that I have encountered, it's only remembering and only the past. But remembering, to me, also has to have a present and a future perspective. That seems to be lacking with them. They only think in terms of is this good for Jews, and if it isn't good for Jews, we got to do something about it.

They never think of is this good for humanity. They don't know and don't want to know. If you tell them, they still don't want to know and don't care if it involves people who are not Jewish.

I'm reminded of Pastor Niemoller's saying. He said first they came for the trade unionists. I wasn't a trade unionist, and so I said nothing and did nothing.

Then they came for the Catholics. And I wasn't Catholic, and I did nothing. They came for the Jews. And I wasn't Jewish, and I did nothing.

Then they finally came for me. Then there was nobody here to do anything or to say anything anymore. You know, that's an important lesson, really, to be learned.

I feel I owe it to those who aren't here anymore to be involved. Not that I can change the world, but I firmly believe that each and every one of us can and must do whatever it is possible to do, no matter how minuscule it is, and that each and every one of us does indeed make a difference. We may never know what that difference is, but we do make a difference and must make a difference.

Well, Hedy, thank you very much indeed for telling me about your experience and your reflections on it. Thank you very much.

I thank you very much.