

Herr Mayer-Leonhard, born in Frankfurt, Germany to a Jewish mother and Christian father, presumably around 1910 based on this oral history, though no date was stated; raised with younger brother in maternal grandmother's apartment in Frankfurt, though as a youth had few ties to the Jewish community; in 1933 spent 8 weeks with Jewish relatives in England which dissuaded him from emigration and reinforced his German identity, though his younger brother would later emigrate to England and die soon after; in the mid-1930's studied theology and belonged to the Evangelical Student group; served in WWII in France from 1939-1940 during which time he self-identified as non-Aryan and a theologian and acknowledged the difficulty of killing for a cause in which he and many others, including full-Aryans, did not believe, in contrast to WWI, for which there had been more enthusiasm, including among Jews; during WWII never believed in Nazi victory but felt one could be German without being a Nazi and that the German people would live on; felt fortunate to be discharged in 1940 and not bothered at being judged by others; employed by the Lechler firm in Stuttgart through ties with a pastor in Tübingen; during war was aware of Jews being hidden in countryside near Stuttgart; had two inconsequential encounters with the Gestapo in Stuttgart in 1943 and 1944 but an acquaintance, Herr Gundelfinger, was sent to a camp for 3 weeks; discussed at length the role of "Hilfstellen", assistance points in Berlin, Heidelberg and Stuttgart (where Pastor Müller and Frau Böss were active) among others, organized by the Evangelical Church for politically and racially persecuted Germans and which rendered assistance with food, housing, emigration, legal referrals and employment; a book "Der Bruder" written by Leni Heidemann in 1988 tells of the work of Pastor Fischer at the Stuttgart assistance point; Mayer-Leonhard later worked at the Stuttgart assistance point and discussed difficulty in assistance of Gypsies among others, who were largely illiterate, without papers and did not have an organization to advocate for them; a book was written on this by Herr Speich, "Fremde in Deutschland"; beginning in 1959 assisted Dr. Sauer in documenting the fates of baptized Jews in Baden-Wurtemberg, also working with Frau Selter of the district office which resulted in an exhibit in Eisenach on Jewish-Christian pastors; mentioned the difficulty of continuing research on non-Aryan evangelical pastors due to contemporary privacy laws; reflected that he never felt his Jewish background was noble and that Jews are men like all others, some good, some not; he never dreamed that he would be the only non-Aryan of his family to survive the war; Mayer-Leonhard feels that today (1988) it is inappropriate to focus on who were the guilty in WWII and that one will never have all the answers.