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Summary

(Robert) Merz, born March 1898 in Munich, discusses growing up in Stuttgart; his mother had never married his father, whom he met for the first time by chance in 1920 in Stuttgart along with his half-brother, born in 1900, whose Aryan mother was from a wealthy Munich family; his father's second marriage, in 1908, was to a Jewish woman 16 years younger, with whom the two brothers got along well; discusses attending primary and secondary school in Stuttgart, where classes were mixed boys and girls, followed by university in Tübingen, where he lived on Karlstrasse; discusses memories of inequities and the poor post-WWI behavior of the French and Poles; did not view the beginning of the Third Reich in 1933 with concern, though maintained things would have been different had the Social Democrats and Communist been united before Hitler; father died in 1933 and his non-observant Jewish step-mother, Frau Haas, lived with his mother; spoke of cowardice at high levels which emboldened Hitler at the beginning with the annexation of Czechoslovakia; went to dental school with the uncle of Rommel; worked as dentist throughout WWII, first in Königstrasse 40, which was bombed in 1944, then in his mother's house; his stepmother's life began to change in 1938 as her Aryan husband had passed, they had no children and she opted to give her emigration affidavit away to a Jewish friend, thinking she was not in danger; spoke of a friend, Bütto, who began organizing emigration of Jews to Palestine in the 30's and who himself emigrated in 1939; tells of Stuttgart Jews being concentrated in Seestrass starting in 1939; witnessed the attack on Stuttgart from his balcony in 1940; both Merz and his wife spoke of coping with shortages during the war of shoes and repair materials such as glass and gold for fillings, but Merz said he had been accustomed to this from WWI; stepmother was sent to Riga along with 300 Stuttgarters on a work detail in 1941 and not heard from again; considers that WWII was lost not after Stalingrad but with the defeat in Moscow in 1941; spoke of lack of goods in spite of authorization cards for purchase; gave example of currency devaluation during course of war: 100,000 Deutschmarks was worth 5,000 at war's end; knew of deportations and annihilation of Jews through local rumors and returning soldiers, though his wife disputed that; knew General Buhle, who inadvertently thwarted the July 20, 1944 attempted assassination of Hitler by von Stauffenberg, which resulted in the death of the uncle of Dr. Friederich, an acquaintance; in 1945 was asked to screen 1000 men 60 and younger for possible engagement with the French though found it foolish to recruit so close to the inevitable end; learned of war's end on radio when it was broadcast that Hitler had died at the front; found the Americans the worst of the post-war occupiers as they confiscated not just goods but entire buildings.