

HOLOCAUST TESTIMONY

OF

SUSAN FAULKNER

Transcript of Self-taped Memoir

Date: October 19, 1983

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*SELF-TAPED MEMOIR*<sup>1</sup>

SF - Susan Faulkner<sup>2</sup> [interviewee]

Date: October 19, 1983

*Tape one, side one:*

SF: I was born Susanna Neulaender in Berlin, the West-side, in April, 1921, the first child of Curt and Else Neulaender. My father was then an aspiring banker and growing in prosperity and we were...I was growing up in an upper middle-class environment on the West-side of Berlin, quite over-protected with a nurse in attendance and a rather highly disciplined environment in my home, typical German environment in many ways. My mother was rather compulsive in terms of discipline and I always felt very circumscribed by rules and regulations. My father was a very warm and affectionate man and had many interests. He was a marvelous pianist and whenever he came back from the bank, he would sit in the afternoon and early evening and play the piano and I would sit in a chair and listen to him. They had a rather full social life and, of course, I was very small and was not too aware of too many things except that there was a great deal of tension at home because it very soon developed that my parents were having a very difficult marriage. My father wanted an open marriage, so-called, and my mother could not handle it, but she also had her own outside interests, one might say, and I rarely saw her. I was the typical poor-little-rich-girl syndrome where I was left in the care of a nurse or a maid and rarely saw my mother during the day and in the evening they were usually going out to parties or having people over and I went to bed early.

I was raised rather strict in such matters as, for example, having to eat everything that was on my plate. If I didn't finish what was on my plate it was served to me the next meal. This was, as my mother explained, left over from the days of the First World War when in the last year or two in Germany, when they were near starvation and had to exist on cabbage products, cabbage coffee, cabbage bread, etc., and went nearly hungry many times, and she felt that it was a sin not to finish your food. My father had served in the German Army in the First World War; in fact he was drafted in 1913 and served in the horse-drawn artillery almost the entire four-and-a-half years at the front in combat, except for one time when he contracted a severe infection of some sort and was in the hospital for many months with a very high fever and other illness, and another time when he was almost killed by a grenade splinter which hit near the femoral artery and he recovered from it, but...and he never got beyond Feldwebel [sargent major] rank, which was the equivalent of warrant officer in the German Army. Whether this was because he was Jewish, or because of the fact that he had not gone to college, or because he did not have a higher social rank, I have no way of knowing, because he never mentioned it to us or spoke about it. He told me often about his experiences in the army. He was by nature a gentle person

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<sup>1</sup>Based on question provided by the Gratz College Holocaust Oral History Archive.

<sup>2</sup>née Neulaender.

but seemed rather proud of his service and always...but he did mention one incident when he had been ordered by his superior officer to shoot a young recruit who had defected during his first battle, had gone AWOL during his first battle, a capital offense in the German Army. And my father was supposed to kill him but he refused and even when his senior officer drew his pistol and pointed it at my father and told him to shoot him, he still refused and the matter was then resolved in some other fashion. I am not sure how. My father also mentioned to me how they used to ride their horses for hours and days on end until their legs were covered with sores but, if they came to a village or any kind of rest, the first thing that they had to do was to feed and water their horses and anyone who was found to neglect his horse at his own expense could be shot on sight. He spoke about his days as a recruit in 1913 when quite often sergeants would, could inflict corporal punishment without a second thought for the most minor offenses and yet I had a feeling that in general he was rather proud of the experience of his army service.

Going back to his earlier life, which I think is also material for this whole history, he was born in Beuthem, in Upper Silesia, which is the contested area between Poland and Germany and now in Polish hands, and the city is now called Bytom, I believe. His father and his father had been jewelers and watch makers for a few generations and had been settled there for quite a while and there was a story—I don't know if it's apocryphal or real—that at some point during the Seven Year War an ancestor was rewarded by Frederick the Great for his contribution to the war effort against Austria with a piece of real estate called Neuland, and that is where the family name Neuländer came from.

My father's family were not particularly religious, as far as I know. They did not keep a kosher home and, as far as I could tell by what he told me about his father, there was no religious observance in the family. His mother died in an influenza epidemic when he was six and his father married again. The stepmother was quite an obnoxious woman and he was very unhappy with her. His father was a very strict and very tight-fisted man. He was also given to a great deal of melancholy which affected all the children. There were five of them, three from the first wife and two from the second one. And when my father was 13, his father, because, apparently, a combination of financial setbacks and melancholy and unhappiness over his marriage and family life, shot himself with a rifle. My father was sent then, now orphaned, to relatives in Hamburg, very prosperous, upper-middle-class merchant family in Hamburg and lived there until he completed school at age 14, at which time he was sent to Berlin and there began as an apprentice in the stock market and...I'm not certain if he lived in the household of his uncle Max Liebes, who was also his guardian, or whether he had a room by himself. In any case, he quickly rose in the ranks and showed a genius for finance so that by the age of 19 he had become the manager of a bank branch, and his uncle and guardian was asked to declare him of age, prematurely at the age of 19, so that he could sign the checks of the bank. In the meantime, my father had developed a great affection for one of the daughters of Max Liebes, his first cousin, and my future mother Elsa Liebes. She was a very handsome and imperious looking woman, highly

intelligent as was my father, but by nature very reticent, rather cool. Both shared many interests in music and the theater and politics, philosophy, economy. They belonged to the kind of discussion groups that were then quite common among the upper middle-class intellectuals in Berlin and argued very often for many hours far into the night about all the political theories and so forth and so on.

My father had been born in 1892, so that by the end of the war, he was 25, and my mother had been born in 1895 and by the end of the war she was 23, and they had begun an affair over the violent objections by her father. While my father was in the service, she had gone to Belgium secretly, at one point, to meet him, pretending to be visiting her sister, who had gone to live and marry in Belgium, in Antwerp. Shortly after the war was over, in 1920, they got married and then, as I said, lived in Berlin-West. But, shortly after the marriage, in spite of the great passion for each other in certain ways, there was this cooling because it appeared that my father needed outside sexual interests and my mother could not cope with this. Again, my father never spoke about these matters; my mother did, and I only know one side of the issue.

As I was growing up, I hardly ever heard the word Jewish in our home. We were totally non-observant. My grandfather had been an Orthodox Jew who had immigrated to Berlin from Posen, Kempen, and continued in Berlin to have a kosher household and to observe the holidays and rituals, etc. But, because of his tyranny he made it impossible for his children to appreciate these values. They all, except for the one son who tragically died just before the end of the First World War...all of the daughters came to hate Jewish religious observance with a passion that I have rarely observed anywhere else. They despised anything to do with it and they all agreed that this had to do directly with my grandfather's tyranny, because as I said, he insisted on a kosher household but he wanted the Christian cooks and their family to make kosher meals, but these girls had no idea how to cook kosher meals, and my grandmother who was raised as almost a princess, the youngest of 17 children, very much spoiled by her older brothers and catered to and unable to keep a household at all, was unable to direct the household properly and had no idea how to instruct the cooks on how to cook the kosher meals. Therefore the cooking was usually execrable and the daughters all hated to eat at home and said that, as they came in downstairs at the front door they could tell from the smell that was coming from the upstairs apartment, what day of the week it was, and on certain days they would absent themselves if they possibly could, to avoid having to eat those meals. There was the additional fact that my grandfather insisted on everybody attending the synagogue services, especially on the High Holidays, and fast. My grandmother was a rather delicate woman and suffered from migraine headaches and whenever the Yom Kippur came around and she was obliged to fast and sit in the upstairs balcony of the synagogue, she would get faint, she would get terrible headaches, and she would suffer and her children suffered for her. In addition, the son Billy also had a rather delicate constitution and whenever he had to fast, he would become very ill. He would turn green and frequently faint and, even though, according to

the Torah, he could have been exempt from fasting because of his illnesses, he insisted on it and so did his father. And the girls, who all adored their brother and felt for their mother, came to hate their father for what they saw as a very ruthless attitude. He also...Max Liebes also had a terrible temper and would bellow at the girls and they were terrified of that. Nevertheless, to the outside world Max Liebes became almost a hallowed name. He was a merchant who built up a business of skins and furs and traveled widely and was known as an extremely philanthropic man. There were always poor relatives sitting down at table with them, some of them often stayed for weeks on end if they were down on their luck. People were always visiting. He always had an open hand for helping young people coming up and, in fact, one man whom he helped when he was a young man trying to establish a business in Central America, much, much later, came and gave me a needed hand when I came to Guatemala after escaping from Germany in late '38 and I needed a job in '39. This man had then become the owner of a large department store in Guatemala City and I called and asked him for a job and I told him that I was the granddaughter of Max Liebes and he said promptly over the phone that any descendant of Max Liebes will always have a job with me because he set me up in business. So we have the typical pater familias in Max Liebes who was, as I say, pious and generous and a philanthropic man, yet who, to his children in many ways, an extremely difficult person who, furthermore, forced at least three of his daughters into unhappy marriages against their will and really caused a great deal of general unhappiness.

Coming back also to my mother's only brother Willy, whom I have spoken about before, he was a year-and-a-half her senior and a young man of extreme intellectual promise. Bright, studying, wanting to become a doctor and deeply interested in philosophy, a person of sterling character, as everyone agreed. He had many friends. He was a very beloved man and had many friends and he had been rejected by the German Army draft because of a problem. I don't recall what it was, some medical problem, and he insisted in 1918 at the time when Germany was having a harder time fighting the last battle, and he felt it was incumbent on him—a Jew—to show his patriotism and he insisted on enlisting as a medic. Went into the field in the summer of 1918, was seriously hurt during battle in July of 19-...and finally succumbed to his wounds in late August of 1918, shortly before the armistice. He knew that he was dying. He left a will and testament that was extremely touching, in which he said that what little money he had should go to repay his debts, which were debts for some books that he had bought from a bookstore. He further said that he wanted to...he would have loved to live, but if he had to die, he preferred to die for his country, and that he hoped that in the future and after his death, his dearest wish was for his people to be settled one day in Eretz Israel and he was, I might add, the only Zionist in the family. None of his daughters became Zionists. He had been, at the time before his death, he had a correspondence with a rabbi with whom he was learning Torah and who had participated in his correspondence about Zionism with him. That correspondence was never published here. He would not allow it to have those letters shown and his death was

a tremendous shock to his family. His father never recovered from losing his only son. My mother had been extremely close to him. They were more than just brother and sister; they were almost like alter-egos to each other, they felt. They were quite similar in certain ways. My mother did not get over that loss for many years and the bitterness of it. There was a further loss when just a short while later, an older sister died while in child birth with her second child during the influenza epidemic of 1919, and the father, Max Liebes, then had already sustained a heart ailment from which he never recovered. I might also add that in those last couple of years of the war, when there had been bond drives, my grandfather, even though he was a very shrewd businessman, deliberately used money that had been intended for the dowry of his youngest daughters, to invest in bonds, war bonds for Germany, because he felt that he had to do this as a patriotic Jew and a patriotic German, even though he knew that the money would be lost and it was. My grandfather lived until...he died in 1923, shortly before I was two years old. I remember sitting on his lap when I must have been less than 20 months old, sitting on his lap and pulling on his beard. And I understand he loved me very much and he taught me to sing a little ditty which he was delighted to find I picked up at a very early age.

Coming back to the whole business of the Jewishness and Germanness, I cannot recall going to a Passover Seder until I was, I believe, seven years old. My grandmother did not keep any Jewish customs after my grandfather died. She had never been in favor and she really had no interest in it. My mother was so passionately anti-religious and so militantly atheist, that I recall many years later, she could not even listen to organ music or to any choral music on radio, regardless of what this choral music might be, because she associated it with synagogue services and with religious services. My father was, I guess, you might call a humanistic Jew. He had a generalized sense of Jewish ethics but they were basically humanistic ethics with Jewish overlay and I did not...I never, he never went to the synagogue and it was not until I was maybe 6 or 7, possibly 8 years old, when I went to the synagogue once...he took me to Yom Kippur services one time. I did not personally, as I said, experience any problems in regard to this whole Jewish question, because the Jewish maids we had...the Christian maids were, of course, very careful not to say anything about this whole business, but I do know that what prayers we were taught to say at night, they were just little innocuous prayers that were you might call non-secular, in a sense, and we did celebrate Christmas at home with Christmas tree and all, and I thoroughly enjoyed the Christmas songs and we had Christmas celebrations were very long established and happy tradition in our family and it never occurred to me to question any of this. There was no discussion about Chanukah and I don't think that I was aware that there was such a thing. The friends we had also had that same kind of totally assimilated attitude and so there was no note of incongruity as I was growing up. I do remember, somehow though, that when I was in perhaps second grade, during the Advent season in public school, that each day prior to Christmas, one girl from the class would be chosen to open another window in a little Advent card that was placed in the...on the window sill off the classroom

that we were sitting in, and I remember thinking at the time that there was something for me unhappy about the fact that I could not participate in this, that I was not chosen to participate in opening these windows and I somehow resented being forced...



*Tape one, side two:*

I wanted to add a couple of things, in listening to the first tape that I had left out. Number one, my father was awarded the Iron Cross, second grade, for his war service and his wounds and he kept that ribbon in a paperweight on his desk for many years. Secondly, he was 26 years old at the end of the First World War and, finally, I want to correct when I talked about prayer that I was taught as a small child. It was a very general prayer and of course it was not non-secular, it was non-denominational, just a general something to Dear God. I don't recall the exact wording. Now, as I said, to continue, I was forced...I resented the fact in the class that I was forced to sit there and participate in a majority ritual without actually being a part of it and being excluded. I was by nature a shy child, to begin with. I had...my mother being terribly critical with me, I was very...I grew up rather afraid in many, in social situations. On the other hand, I had begun as a very small child, less than two years old, in a gymnastics class with a retired major and I quickly became the star of this class and, when he was asked to participate in a famous health cult movie, and for a moment, I cannot remember the title, but it was a well-known movie that was made in 1925, something like, oh, I remember now, "Ways to Strength and Beauty," our class participated in that movie and I was the only one of whom a close-up shot was made, and my father took me to every performance and I remember seeing myself up there on the screen at age four running into the camera with an extremely happy face. It was truly...the only time I felt happy when I was in the gymnastics class partly because I knew that the major loved me and I adored him. In fact, I might say, that in my childhood years, my experiences with men was a much happier one than that with women. Certainly the nurses and the maids I had, for the most part, were either extremely negligent or cruel or both, and I had one maid for quite a while who instilled the most horrendous fears in me about being washed down the drain of the bathtub and that the boogie-man is going to get me and that she was going to throw me into the yard with a large shepherd dog who was doing to bite me and all these horrible things, and it was not until much later that my mother finally managed to find out about it and discharged her. But, in any case, my experience with these women was an unhappy one and, in general, with women around me. Coming back to the gymnastics class, this went on, I went once or twice a week, I don't recall, and the major was a tall erect man, typical Prussian Junker but, in the best sense, a man of great integrity, and, as I said, he loved me very much and he was very kind to me for many years after. I continued in this class and when I came to school at the time my father had become quite prosperous by the time I was five or six. We had, I recall, we had a Mercedes-Benz and we had even a chauffeur because my father had turned out to be such a terrible driver that my mother refused to ride in the car with him and insisted on a chauffeur and my father very happily got a chauffeur because he always liked to spend money and the chauffeur would bring me, was supposed to pick me up after school to take me to the gym class, but I was so embarrassed about being so singled out from the other girls in the class, that I pleaded

with him to...for the chauffeur to wait for me two blocks away from the school so that the other girls wouldn't see him.

We went on in this fashion, and, as I said to... This what seemed like an idyllic life, however, came to a very abrupt end in 1927. My father showed first signs of what was going to become a major mental illness. He was becoming manic and my mother saw some of the signs and then, in late 1927, just at the time when my little sister was born, he had a total breakdown and was sent to a sanitarium. I was not told about his illness. In those days people did not believe in telling children what was going on in the world or even in their own families and I only knew that he was sick and, of course, having him leave—the only person in my immediate environment that I really loved—was a tremendous shock for me and I sank into what I now think was quite an extended period of depression. In the meantime, my sister had been born, as I said, and I at first resented her to no end, because I felt that my father had been taken away from me and instead here was this little red screaming bundle that I had no contact with and I could not understand what she was doing there, plus she was taking an awful lot of attention away from me, because, after all, I was already six-and-a-half at that time so I had been the only child in the family for a long time and... In any case, eventually my father got better but, by that time, there was the crash, he had lost all his money, as did almost everyone else in Germany at the time, and unfortunately, he had also lost quite a bit of the savings of some of the relatives whom he had talked into investing their money. They never forgave him for this even though, it would seem that since everyone else lost his money and so did he, there was no reason why they should blame him for it but, nevertheless, they did and it created a great animosity toward him and the family. And it was now...suddenly, life changed drastically. If I remember correctly, the chauffeur left, and, I believe, the car left and a few other things, and my mother began to work at...about when I was eight, she got a job in Kempinski, which was a rather fine chain restaurant and also something akin to perhaps Schraffts, but on a better level. They also operated a number of high class delicatessen stores, they had their own wines and so forth, and at first she was on...I don't know exactly what her position was, but she showed her very real genius for efficiency and organization and a grasp of management and by 1930, she had worked herself up to the head of the internal control of Kempinski and had a large department of women under her. In the meantime, my father had not been able to get back to his former position. Just before his breakdown—he had been a partner in a bank, but they, of course, would not take him back after the breakdown and I am not certain just what happened. Maybe he did have some kind of precarious income for a while, but, in any case, I was myself in a state of depression and I was really not quite aware of what was happening around me. I only knew that my whole world had sort of fallen apart. We moved to a smaller apartment. My father was suddenly no longer with us and I was given some nonsense story which I swallowed, only, I guess, because I wanted to believe it and eventually I found out a year after, when I was just nine years old, that my parents had gotten a divorce in 1929. And we now had a housekeeper,

Polly, who had been the maid in our former household and she was a young woman, on the surface quite hard, and, in fact, I almost called her Spartan in her approach to life, extremely hard worker, not a very good cook, but very handy with sewing and she loved us very much, which was a wonderful thing for us, because we had not had that much affection at home, and she was, I might add, a very convinced Social Democrat. She came from a small town in Silesia near Breslau, Goerlitz, from a working class family and she was...she, of course, brought the same discipline to my daily routine that my mother prescribed, but still I always felt that she was in our corner and I always knew that I could trust her and, as I said, we were very close to her, very attached to her. We saw my father...he came over to say goodnight to us two or three times a week, and we spent every second Sunday with him and I should have mentioned earlier, that he was also a passionate tennis player, and that somehow, I don't know how he ever managed, but he continued to play at a club, a tennis club, in Berlin, and in spite of the fact that he was of rather stocky build and, in fact, a lot of...short legs, he was an extremely fast runner, had very strong arms and body build in general, was an excellent athlete, and I would very often spend Sunday watching him play tennis at the club, and we... So somehow or other, life, in fact, for me became a little better now because for the first time I felt that I was useful. I was called upon to make my own bed and I had to help with dishes and I had to help with marketing and I had to take my little sister to the dentist or to the nursery school and sometimes travel half across the city with her, and I was just not quite 10 years old then and I was extremely proud of this new found authority and of the fact that I was being trusted to be able to accomplish these things.

In the meantime, the gymnastics class was continued for me, even though I knew my parents could no longer afford it, because the major had said that he would let me come for free because he was so...he loved me so much and because I had been there for so many years and he felt that I could be useful to him and the class also, because I would always demonstrate the exercises to the other children. So I continued in that. So, it seemed that on the surface, things were pretty much unchanged and, as I said, the whole question of Jewishness somehow began in some fashion that I am not quite sure how, began to intrude in a way I'm not certain how exactly, but there must have been something in the air. Political developments began around 1929, in Berlin, began to turn ugly in certain ways. There was a more reactionary atmosphere around us and, in fact, many years later my mother told my sister—she never said it to me, but—she told my sister that my father had predicted a Hitler in 1928. Now, again, I don't know if she meant that Hitler that would come to power later or that there was going to be a dictator. I can't say, because certainly no one had ever heard of Hitler in those days. He may have had some followers at some point but, certainly as far as I could see and as far as I could tell from the conversation at home and so forth, which was politically extremely untrammled and far reaching, I never heard the name of Hitler mentioned until the early '30s.

Now, as I said, I do recall that there was this beginning of a consciousness of Jewish identity and, apparently, if I remember correctly, it came through relatives in Hamburg who were many of them, quite Zionist. My father's sister was Ruth Pardo. Her husband was a prominent lawyer in Hamburg, Helmut Pardo. They were all ardent Zionists and their children passionate Zionists, and, in fact, the oldest son, Ernst who is now Benjamin Pardo, was one of the very prominent leaders in the aliyahs, in the early '30s in smuggling young Jews into Palestine past the British guns and so forth, and they came to Berlin at some point, and one of my cousins, who was also Zionist, began to argue with me and we would somehow, I don't recall how, but somehow there was this beginning of consciousness that we were Jews and that there was something different about Jews, and that, in some way, I should be aware of this. But I was always, in a sense, I always was reluctant to talk about this to my parents. I'm not sure how. Certainly, I was reluctant to talk about it to my mother. I was reluctant to talk to my mother about anything, because she didn't want to be bothered. When she came home from work, she wanted to lie on the couch and put her feet up and have everybody wait on her and did not want to be bothered by any discussions about any problems that any of us might have and the last thing in the world that she would want was for us to tell her about our troubles. As far as my father was concerned, I could see that he was involved in just keeping his head above water in many ways. Financially, he was not really that well...he was having, I had a feeling, he was extremely unhappy over the divorce and over being separated from us on a regular basis and he also was...and he had his girlfriends and we would go on picnics and somehow or other, we would just not discuss things of that sort.

I now began, when I was about ten, I began to develop more of an interest of my own. I was reading enormously much. I read every night until all hours of the morning and I even at a very young age, and I don't know how I could have existed without my flashlight under the blanket. I had, by the time I was 12, I had read every book in my mother's library and there were several hundred of rather good, mostly novels, among them German translations of English and Russian and French literature and, then, I went over to my father's literature and library and read many of his books, but he tended to go more for philosophy, which was a little too difficult for me to cope with at that early age. But, in any case, I began to...my horizons began to widen and I began to be more aware of my surroundings and because...and, I guess, because of the environment at home, which was a very open, intellectual one, in the sense that we had an open house every Sunday afternoon where everybody came to visit and we talked about every conceivable subject, literature, psychology, philosophy, politics, art, and so forth, I had become aware already of these topics and I had gotten into a habit of intellectual curiosity. I now began to look at newspaper headlines and especially looked at the kiosks, in German it would be called Litfassäulen, the round columns at the corner of the streets where the announcements were made for the cultural events, where the various bulletins were posted for political meetings, where all kinds of proclamations were posted, and it was, really, in a sense, looking at a

Litfassäulen, it really gave you a very good overview of the cultural and political situation of the day. And I began to watch these various proclamations and headlines and so forth, and I began to see in around 1931 that the political situation was heating up. Of course in Berlin West, we were totally unaware of the economic hardships that were so current in other parts of Berlin and, really, we were totally insulated, and even in the public school that I was going to where there were a few working class girls, still, we somehow...it was very much a middle-class atmosphere and I was totally unaware of what was happening in other parts of the city, and I, in some way, however, I began to, I guess, get the drift of these problems in regard to inflation and so forth, and especially the growing unemployment in the early '30s. I got this from conversations with my father especially, who was an extremely, as I said, a politically conscious and socially conscious man, and had a great sense of political sympathies with working class people, even though admittedly, at first, at far remove, because after all, he was still living a very much upper middle-class life, at least as far as I could tell, and I do recall our maid saying to us, Polly, our housekeeper as I guess I should call her, saying to us that when she was 14, she had gone into service as a maid and had saved and scrimped for several years to put a little bit of money into a savings account and that, one day during the terrible ravages of the inflationary period in the early '20s, she had taken the entire savings and had bought one loaf of bread with it. And this certainly brought home to me the tremendous problems that had then existed and I had a sense from a certain bitter tone on her part that she still had much resentment, going back to that period and going back and even up to the present, I also know or, at least I know this from later on, that she had great bitterness against my father. She felt that my father had been a Social Democrat, as had been everyone else in the family, but that somehow or other, as he had been becoming more prosperous, he supposedly had abandoned his earlier principles and was now a typical nouveau riche and they felt that he had abandoned the democratic principles and I cannot ever say that Polly was anti-Semitic. It would be ridiculous to say that. She was nothing of the kind. But, I do feel that there was a certain sense on her part that she associated the excesses or the prodigal living of my father with the fact that he was Jewish. There was that connection made on her part as, of course, it was everywhere and I began to get the drift of this general propaganda. It was beginning to appear on the Litfassäulen and, on occasion, I would see posters and the beginnings of some horrendous caricatures and I...at first, when I saw it filled me with real loathing and also tremendous anxiety. I was not quite sure how to cope with it and, as I said, I began to see this propaganda. But I did not really know how to cope with it and this was one of the major problems I had during those years, the fact that I did not know how to counter the growing anti-Semitic propaganda and the caricatures and the attacks made on Jews on many fronts, because I had so little positive identification as a Jew from my own background and experience.

I continued to go to public school and I always did extremely well in school. I had...and I never had one moment's problem with any of my teachers. I do recall one

unpleasant incident, but that had nothing to do with the fact that I was Jewish. It was just that I believe that when I was eight, a teacher...we had an arithmetic drill in class and she had said she would not allow any coaching and I was always the quickest in giving the answers and, apparently, I had whispered the answer, thinking that I had merely whispered it to myself, but it was audible to the other girl and to the teacher, and the teacher came over and said, "You coached her." And I said, "No, I didn't," and she slapped me very hard and called me a liar, and it turned out later that I had had a very serious ear infection to which I was very prone throughout my childhood, and my hearing was very bad in those days because of it, and I had not been aware of how loudly I had whispered, and my father came that night and told me that he had gone to school that day and had talked to the principal and he made the principal fire the teacher for doing what she did to me. Well, it made me feel very good, but I was quite doubtful as to whether my father could actually get a principal to fire a teacher but, in any case, I liked the fact that he stood up for me. But, as I said, I never heard the word "Jew" in class, nobody ever mentioned it and there was no difficulty about it whatever and, except for the Advent cards that I had mentioned earlier, I don't even believe that there were Christmas parties held at school. I don't recall. I may be wrong but I don't think there were.

And I now came to high school in Germany. The high school starts in the 5th grade and I went to another school. I had gone to two elementary schools and now I went to the first high school, and I was there only a short time but then we had to change. We had to move again to another apartment, a cheaper one, and I had to leave that school and go to another one and, at this point, I made friends with a young girl named Krista, and Krista was blonde and blue-eyed with blonde braids and porcelain blue eyes and a rather stupid expression and, really, not a very nice person, but for some unknown reason, she had taken a liking to me and I am not sure why...I have my suspicions but, in any case, I was so thrilled...