

Interviewee: NIEMÖLLER, Sybil von Sell  
Interviewer: Edith Millman  
No. of audiotapes: 1 English  
No restrictions

Date: November 21, 1986  
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## SUMMARY

Sybil Niemöller (maiden name von Sell) was born in 1923 in Potsdam into an aristocratic Prussian family. Both her grandfathers were Prussian generals. After World War I her father was appointed by Kaiser Wilhelm to be his financial advisor and administrator. She grew up in Berlin-Dahlem where she had several Jewish friends. Her parents were strongly anti-Nazi. The family attended the Confessing Church which was led by their friend Pastor Niemöller. This church was founded as counterpart against the Christian German Church which had embraced Nazi ideology. Because she did not belong to the Hitler Youth she was prevented from graduating from high school and became an actress. During the war her parents sheltered several Jews, disguised as seamstresses and gardeners. Two of her cousins, Werner von Haeften (who was adjutant to Count von Stauffenberg) and Hans Bernd von Haeften were involved in the attempt on Hitler's life in 1944 and were executed. Both Sybil and her father were also arrested and interrogated at that time, but released. She arrived in the United States in 1952, became a U.S. citizen in 1957, and married Pastor Martin Niemöller. She accompanied him on his lecture tours but made their home in Wiesbaden, Germany. She describes his suffering as "Hitler's special prisoner" when he was incarcerated in Sachsenhausen and later in Dachau.

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#### SUBJECT HEADINGS

Germans - Christian  
Christians - Bekennende Kirche (Confessing Church)  
Anti-Nazi movement (Germany)  
Attempt on Hitler's life  
World War, 1939-1945 - Jews Rescue  
Pastor Martin Niemöller