

Interviewee: HALLO, Dr. Gertrude
Interviewer: Fred Stamm
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Date: February 11, 1981
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SUMMARY

Gertrude Hallo was a personal friend of Franz Rosenzweig. She talks about her and her husband's association and personal relationship with Franz Rosenzweig, starting in 1910 through his final illness, when she learned to take dictation from Franz Rosenzweig who could only move part of one little finger. She explains why Franz Rosenzweig decided not to convert to Christianity but to devote his life to personal Jewish learning, and to improving Jewish education for children and adults. He strove to combine orthodox practice with liberal thought. She explains why one should focus on the man and his life, not on his philosophical system and his theological teachings.

Dr. Hallo talks about Rosenzweig's life, work, major accomplishments, publications, and some of the well-known persons who studied with him. She describes how he was able to live and to teach after he was stricken with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis. Franz Rosenzweig kept up an enormous correspondence, continued to write, publish and to translate Hebrew books into German until his death in December 9, 1929.

Dr. Hallo uses the historical background in Germany, the Jewish youth movement, Zionism, and the beginning of the racist Teutonic movement to explain why young Jews had to fight for their Jewish identity in Germany in the 1920's. She briefly talks about the *Freikorps*, the *Kapp Putsch*, and the economic, social, and political situation in Germany leading up to the rise of Hitler.

She reflects on Jewish participation in German art and culture and her own early experiences of anti-Semitism. Her husband died shortly before Hitler came to power, and she talks about her memories of the time just before and after Hitler's rise to power and the basis of Hitler's charisma and success.

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SUBJECT HEADINGS

Personal narrative: Jewish
Franz Rosenzweig, 1886 – 1929
Germany, History 1920 – 1933
Jews - Germany

HOLOCAUST TESTIMONY

OF

DR. GERTRUDE HALLO

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