

Excerpts from the Memoirs
of
Werner Mork

“Aus Meiner Sicht (From My View)”
Copyright © 2006 by Werner Mork All rights reserved

Translation by Daniel H. Setzer
Published here by permission of the author
Translation Copyright © 2012 by Daniel H. Setzer

Childhood from 1928 to 1933

Vulkanstraße 20.

[The Vulkan Housing was associated with the Bremer-Vulkan Shipyards. Mork's father was employed there as a Master Ironworker, a very respected position. His mother pushed hard to move the family into the new home on Vulkanstraße, overriding the father's initial resistance.]

The move was completed and we were installed in a truly beautiful and roomy dwelling, much better than the previous house in the Vegesaker Bahnhofstraße. The house at Vulkanstraße 20 was a 4-family construction and suited the Mork family perfectly. I had my own room, it was fantastic and consoled me for the move itself which I had at first worried over. I found my new world to be great! Especially since I now had my very own bed.

Equally great was the garden that came with the house. It was a good size and had plenty of room for vegetables, potatoes and other treats. It also allowed me plenty of room to romp and play in a safe environment. Each family in the Vulkan Housing had the same garden area. Every family had their own piece of land. The importance of that became evident when the Depression broke out and washed over everyone.

The Morks were very pleased with the way things worked out. The somewhat unconventional activities of my mother had turned out to be absolutely correct, which my father now 'willingly' acknowledged.

The house had a large eat-in kitchen, a bedroom, a living room, my child's room and a corridor that gave access to all of the rooms. Each home had its own outhouse which was still far from being a standard feature. A single outhouse for multiple families was quite normal. The path to the outhouse went through the clothes washing area. Part of the yard contained stalls where each family could keep a pig, until the big slaughter party. There was enough storage area for gardening tools and for the logs to be stored before they were split to burning size and stored in the basement. In the basement there was room to store preserves and foodstuffs as well as firewood. My mother was as ecstatic over this house as though she had won the lottery, and the low rent was just icing on the cake. She was happy and pleased that her family could live so well.

The Bremer-Vulkan Shipyards really did an exemplary job with this housing. These homes were a social achievement of Vulkan that the inhabitants truly appreciated. The Vulkan Homes have withstood the test of time and still make a good impression today.



Veogesack.

Anlagen des „Bremer-Vulcan“, Schiffbau.

One of the best things about our new location is that my father was only 10 minutes away from the Lobbendorfer gate into the Vulkan Shipyard. That was good in the mornings and at closing time he was home all the sooner.

My parents took time to carefully consider how they should use this new garden that they now had access to. It was finally decided that I should have my very own role in it. I was given the job of raising rabbits. This would be a good source of meat for us and save us a lot of money. Space was available and I soon had my first rabbit in a cage we built ourselves.

My parents we delighted to have such improved family finances and they planned to get new furniture and gardening tools. Some things were still needed for my room, but that would not involve new purchases. We would compliment my room using an already well known sort of 'home-made' involving the very best orange crates. We used them for many purposes including the rabbit cages.

For my mother it was very important to get to know the neighbors. That is to say, primarily to introduce herself to the local ladies. It wasn't about being nosy, it was quite the normal thing to do when you moved into a new neighborhood. It was a good and useful resource to be able to call upon neighbors in case you needed their help.

My father was already well known to most of the men in the area. He knew them from the shipyard. Even though they came from different departments in the shipyard, they all knew him because he had been elected shop steward and so they knew each other very well.

My mother had some difficulties as she made her 'introductions.' Not all of them went well with the worker's wives. Some saw her as being somewhat snobbish and presenting herself as middle-class, which did not sit well with all of the working-class wives. Her own somewhat 'elevated' background and her Vegesack [*The previous neighborhood.*] ways did not come off very well in the new neighborhood. There were exceptions like the wives of the 'Master Workers' or the salaried employees who also lived in the Vulkan housing development. There was a certain class consciousness among the workers. They weren't all equals, especially in the eyes of the lovely womenfolk who often held their own strong opinions about this or that neighbor.

Nevertheless, my mother did make a number of good contacts and if in the coming months she did not feel comfortable with the 'worker's wives' it would be different on Kirchhofstraße were a different ambiance prevailed.

Well, I was the new kid on the block and now had to make new friends and find new playmates. It was hard because the kids in Vulkanstraße had known each other for a long time and arriving as the 'new kid' was not easy. To begin with I was snubbed just because I came from Vegesack! I was a stranger that they were curious about, but to begin with I was just a hilarious object of scorn. Once again I was known as 'fatty,' 'red' or 'red fox.'

This circle of kids was very different from what I had known. They were real hooligans who could be very coarse and mean-spirited. Here there were no middle-class playmates like in Vegesack. These worker's kids had a different mentality and way about them. The tone was not just hard, but often hateful and common. Their way of interacting was full of conflict that often irrupted into physical confrontation. Brawls and fights were the norm, above all were the 'battles' between the cliques, which were more like gangs, but the kids seemed to feel better when they belonged to one. For these children these were 'normal conditions.'

The 'gangs' each had their own territory which they forcefully defended. They would attack other territories when they took the notion to. Membership in one of these cliques had to be fought for and included tests of courage and, above all, blood-brotherhood.

The ritual for blood-brotherhood called for your skin to be sliced open with a pocket knife and the dripping blood drunk by your new 'brother.' That is the way it was then among the cliques of that time. What has changed since then? Certainly an increase in violence and brutality. However, this does harken back to a sort of tradition among youths who throughout all times have not behaved as 'one' would have liked.

The kids had a very unhealthy relation to the grownups who they mocked and ridiculed. Much in the same way one would mimic the walk of an unfortunate cripple. Not only did they spit on people in the street, the spit on them from behind. You could not call these boys dear, neat and well-behaved children, nor could you say that of the young girls in our milieu. I had a lot to learn as I worked my way into this new circle. However, everything wasn't bad and mean in our surroundings. I found some good friends and after we got used to one another we had our own clique. Naturally every clique has to have its own rules and regulations for relating to one another. It implied a closeness and bonds of friendship which were self-evident. Also, I first had to learn that some of these boys were thoroughly good fellows, but they were very different from the middle-class boys back in Vegesack. Then, I changed, and it wasn't a bad thing for me. I am still convinced of that to this day.

The thing that I missed the most was that I was not as close to the Weser River and its beaches as I was in Vegesack. But I soon figured out that the way to the river wasn't so far. I could simply go down Lindenstraße to Schulkenstraße and along the Fairground and I was on the water. This part of the river wasn't as nice as the Vegesack part, but it only took me a few minutes to walk to 'my' beach.

Our new neighborhood took some getting used to because the surroundings were not as urban. We were living in a largely rural area. When I looked out of my window across Vulkanstraße I saw mostly fields and meadows. They were fully utilized by the farmers who still lived around there. Foremost was farmer Semken from Lobbendorf who was the most prosperous of them. He had a nice farmhouse near the Lobbendorf gate into the shipyard. I often spent time at the farmhouse since his son was a schoolmate of mine. There were corn fields and potato fields and meadows where the livestock, mostly milk cows, grazed. This was quite novel for us city folk and took some getting used to, but it became commonplace in a very short time. The new impressions were very interesting also because they offered new games to play that often made me forget my playground by the river.

Shopping was less convenient than in Vegesack because the business district was mostly in Lindenstraße and was farther away than in the old neighborhood. My mother managed the distance very well because folks only purchased their needs for that day so it did not amount to a lot to carry by foot. Everything was purchased from little shops, there were no supermarkets back then, and our needs were simple.

My mother did not make as much use of the Vulkan company store as she initially thought she would. It wasn't until the Depression hit that the company store became an essential resource for us.

The area around us changed in the 1930's. Construction companies built more dwellings. In 1933 the SA built the so called SA-Residences. They were well-appointed single family homes. Everyone had to admit that they looked nice.

Of the immediate neighbors in our 4-family dwelling, I particularly remember the Bartels family and the Scheffel's. The Bartels lived on the same floor as us. My mother got on famously with Frau Bartels, but I couldn't stand the son of the family. To my mind he was a repulsive creep. Like I said, children can be so mean!

Things were quite different with the Scheffel family who lived on the lower right of the house. My mother was not so friendly with Frau Scheffel. I, on the other hand, got on great with their kids and was often downstairs with them in their place. My mother was not real thrilled about it, but she did not hinder me from visiting them. The reason for the aversion to the family was that the father was suspected of being a very bad "Leftist." This was the talk. Mind you, this was the talk in a neighborhood where everyone was from the "Left," but apparently not as "left" as Herr Scheffel was supposed to be, if the talk were true.

At the beginning of the 1920's the Scheffel family came to Aumund from Thürigen because Herr Scheffel, was not merely a Communist, but because he was mixed up with the infamous Max Hölz who battled against the army and against the government in Berlin. At that time the Reds, the Spartacists and the Anarchists carried on a bloody civil war that included some truly horrible crimes and atrocities. Max Hölz became a bogeyman for the whole Republic even for the Socialists. It was said that the Scheffel's had to flee to keep from falling into the hands of the army. If they had been caught they would almost certainly have been shot like many of the others were following the 'victory' of the government. The executions were carried out with the consent of 'Bloodhound' Noske, the Social

Democrat War Minister. The family fled German Thuringia and went to Prussia because at this time the laws were different than in Germany itself. In this land within the Republic they were not pursued and they got off unscathed.

There were four children in the family, three boys and a girl. The oldest son was already working at Vulkan as an apprentice. The two other boys, Paul and Kurt, were my best friends. Paul had great success and was a self-made-man. He began working part-time in a food stand in Sedanplatz, worked his way up to partner and took over as full owner when his partner retired. His snack stand survived the war and afterward he parlayed it into a big business and he became a wealthy man.

I know very little about how the other kids turned out. Kurt was killed in the war, fighting for a Germany that his father would not have wanted.

The Lobbendorf Public School

Our move to Lobbendorf also meant that I had to change schools. The school was in Schulstraße. From my time in kindergarten there this was not a totally unknown place for me.

I started in Class VI-b and came to understand that things were quite different in a Prussian school, for example in the composition of the classes. Here we had mixed classes, boys and girls together in one classroom. We had a woman teacher. She was named Fräulein Tiemann. This 'Fräulein' would have a special role to play in my young student life.

I did not like the mixed classes of boys and girls. In Vegesack all of us strapping young boys had everything to ourselves without having a bunch of dumb girls mixing in. There weren't any women as teachers either, they were all men, even though some were like Mr. Iken, but at least he was a man!

Now began the ordeal of getting settled in, but as I mentioned above, some of the faces here were not totally unknown to me. At least from my kindergarten days there were people here and there that I recognized. This was good, I didn't feel so much like a stranger.

One thing that did not make a good impression was the building itself of this old Prussian country school, which is what it was in the olden days. On the outside and on the inside this school looked like a seedy old steamer trunk. It was a rough brick building with crappy classrooms. Compared to this



Weimar Germany was a patchwork of states. Note Thuringia (Thüringen) at lower right.

Even though Mork's family only moved a short distance from Vegesack, the new home was in Prussia (blue) instead of Hanseatic Bremen.

place the public school in Vegesack was quite elegant, both outside and inside. But that was in Bremen and here we were in foreign Prussian territory and it didn't look all that great to the townsfolk of the Hanseatic state, not even when they were 'just' Vegesakers.



Fräulein Tiemann's class at the Lobbendorf Public School

(Frl. Tiemann center, top row)

In the old steamer trunk it always smelled of must and floor wax just like today. Even though the building is still standing it is no longer a school. It has been given over to other uses.

I got used to Fräulein Tiemann very quickly and I did not miss Herr Iken at all. I had no inkling of the painful ordeal to come.

I must admit that a lot of what I went through I brought upon myself to a large extent. I was not a model student. I was always somewhat difficult. I had a bad habit when I did not understand something, or when I did not want to understand it, of withdrawing into my own shell and gazing out of the window with an obviously bored demeanor. This could not have been pleasant for the teachers, and it led to unpleasant consequences for me, and not only in my grades.

It was altogether different when it came to subjects that inspired me. In those cases I couldn't get enough knowledge to satisfy me. It was also different when I had a teacher who could make the material clear and understandable. Unfortunately, there were many teachers who couldn't manage that and who simply followed the teaching plan to the letter. Really good, exceptional educational efforts in the public schools of those days were a rarity. There was very little of the skill in teaching that motivated the children, that truly sought to not merely dump facts on them, but to instill in them the joy of learning. The teachers who did otherwise were few indeed.

We had all-around good fun under Fräulein Fahrenholz, Herr Torborg and Karl Blume. They were good teachers with empathy for their students, although this was somewhat limited with Karl Blume.

I was difficult not in the least because of my unpredictability. I could show a total lack of interest, then suddenly leap past the average students. This was a phenomenon. Out of nowhere I could comment on critical subjects as though I had zealously studied. Throughout my life this phenomenon has possessed me from time to time to the astonishment, and often to the horror of those who witnessed it.

Whenever I was captured by a subject, when I was full of joy and desire, then I would be fully committed and my enthusiasm knew no bounds. Its just that this tendency to go from boredom to enthusiasm did not fit the model of a perfect student.

I could talk very well off the cuff on a subject, then I could be completely the opposite if something went against the grain, and that could be unfortunate. My disinterest would show and that was not good, not in school and not elsewhere. However, I also learned to listen and to accept the opinions of others, and I had a willingness to change my opinions if I became convinced of the correctness of the other opinion. This was not always easy, but I have learned that lesson well in my life.

The Lobbenforf public school was the beginning of my schooling in Aumund. My first report card from Fräulein Tiemann in the Summer of the 1928/29 school year read:

Behavior:	(still)	Very Good
Diligence and attentiveness		Adequate (!)
Homework and neatness		Good
Biblical history		Adequate
Oral and written expression		Adequate
Reading		Good (!)
Spelling		Good
Arithmetic		Poor – an easy four!
Singing		Poor – not an easy four!
Drawing & Penmanship		Adequate
Gymnastics		Adequate

Added to this was the remark: “Uneven” (!!)

The report card wasn't so bad, I could hold my head up, even under the severe look in my father's eyes.

However, the report card for the spring semester of 1929 was much worse when I got a four in Gymnastics. That was bad enough, what did me in was the remark by Fräulein Tiemann, “Good progress in arithmetic, but must make more progress to be promoted.” That was a true hammer blow. All of the other grades were the same, but in arithmetic I was so bad that my parents panicked. They saw me being left behind at that grade level which would have been very distressing to my parents. My mother would have felt shamed if her son got left behind in class, this was a situation she could not grasp.

Private Lessons

It was quickly decided to meet with Fräulein Tiemann to discuss what was to be done to avoid this shame which would surely ruin the life of this little tyke. There must be some way to avoid this calamity.

My mother was of the opinion that Frl. Tiemann was partly to blame for me having such difficulty with math, but she managed to keep that opinion to herself. The outcome of the meeting was that Frl. Tiemann agreed to tutor me after hours. I could go to her house in the Hafenstrabe in Vegesack in the afternoons, but it would not be for free.

This did not sit well with my mother, but in order to get her son to do better in math she would simply have to take a bite of this bitter fruit. My mother had to give credit to Frl. Tiemann as a woman willing to do tutoring after a long workday. My mother now had a much higher opinion of my teacher.

My ambivalent feelings about this turn of events were softened by the fact that I had the occasion to go back to my old haunts in Vegesack. Frl. Tiemann lived near the KITO packing house in an apartment building in Old-Vegesack. It still stands on the same spot and did not fall to the wrecking ball. Next door was the Sonnen-Apotheke [*Sun Pharmacy*] which was torn down after the war. That was a deed that Vegesack should be made to answer for.

Fräulein Tiemann lived on the 1st floor and three times a week I had the 'pleasure' of visiting with her. I ended up enjoying more than I thought I would. It was not due entirely to the lessons, which I willingly followed, but to the whole ambiance of her apartment. The place was very comfortable, if a little too heavily perfumed, but the sweet fragrances were not unpleasant. She was nicer than at school. She gave me tea and sweets before the lessons and she was quite charming to me. Now, I really wanted to work to become a better student.

She took a lot of effort with me and tried very patiently to make me understand as much as she could. When I failed to understand something right away she would place her hand on my bare knee and sometimes stroke it. I found this 'TLC' very pleasant and also calming. All of this added up to me actually looking forward to going to my tutoring sessions. In school Frl. Tiemann was much more friendly to me and no longer mean. I was starting to feel really good.

My mother was quite surprised that I took so well to my extra lessons and credited Frl. Tiemann for coming up with this solution. After several days she asked me how things were going and if I thought I would need many more lessons. She was thinking about the extra cost of the tutoring. She asked me how Frl. Tiemann ran the sessions and in my naivete I told her all of the things about the lessons that were fun and that I liked.

My mother, however, had other thoughts about it and had a totally different impression of this style of teaching. In her own impulsive way, which was now heightened by an excitement I did not understand, she made a bee-line to Frl. Tiemann's apartment and stormed in with angry and fiery words. She suspected Frl. Tiemann of the seduction of her 'little boy' who was really quite a strapping lad. She made it unmistakably clear that the lessons were over and of right now. It was only much later that I had any idea as to what my mother suspected.

There were absolutely no grounds for her suspicions, but she had her own way of flying off the handle with things sometimes that was far too spontaneous.

It never entered her mind that her kid might have to suffer for her actions. She gave free reign to her anger and flung her unvarnished opinions right into the face of 'that woman.'

I immediately felt the results of all this when I went back to school. Frl. Tiemann was not nearly so friendly to me and our 'relationship' fell to its deepest point. Now I had to deal with a lot of unpleasantness from my teacher. She always worked it so that I never had anything concrete to go home to my parents and complain about. Our antagonistic relations had a very subtle cast to them.

However, I have to give due credit to Frl. Tiemann that my report card for the Winter half of the 1929/30 school year carried the note: "Passable." The grade for arithmetic had transformed itself into a three. What was the reason? I don't know. I did not feel myself to be any better at it. But at least the world was back in order, above all the world of my parent's home. The report card was something of a surprise for me because there had been a very unpleasant incident at school where Frl. Tiemann played an ignominious role.

This report card was the last one I got from Frl. Tiemann, because of changes in the school system that put me in another school with new teachers. Due to school and community considerations all of the grades both lower and higher were being reformed. The lines for the political districts and school districts were being redrawn and this placed both Fähr and Lobbenforf in the same area. The students now found themselves in the Shiller School located in Shillerstraße in Fähr. It was a much nicer and bigger public school that was not nearly as old as the ancient steamer trunk in Lobbendorf. I was one of the kids who had to move to this school, making my trek to school much longer.

We kids in the Lobbendorfer school were nearly all children from the Vulkan, either worker's kids or salaried employees. Many also were offspring of the small shopkeepers in Fähr-Lobbendorf. We worker-kids were the majority. There was a raw and rowdy tone among the boys and girls, particularly the boys. During the breaks in the schoolyard there was always a lot of commotion that often led to fights. The teachers who were supposed to be watching us during the breaks often had problems with us, and when they could, they preferred to look the other way so that they could eat their lunch sandwiches in peace.

In the first days of school I had to endure the same things I had to endure in Vegesack. And here, too, the big kids were the meanest. Most of the time I did not feel very good, but I had to endure it, even if it was hard, because no one could help me, not even my mother.

Heinzi Herz

In my class there was a Jewish classmate, Heinz Herz, nicknamed Heinzi. He was the son of a junk collector in the heart of Lobbendorf who plied the same trade as the Jew, Fritz Löwenthal, in Vegesack. Supposedly, they were related. His 'business' was located close to that of the Master Plumber Lendroth, who would be one of the SA's more infamous leaders. Heinzi Herz was a small, frail boy that one could only describe as delicate. He was quite reserved, shy and was regarded as a cowardly Jewish boy. Heinzi was a quiet loner who had no friends or playmates either in school or out. There was no particular reason for his classmates to have a special dislike for him. His big mistake was being a Jewboy. His dear classmates made good use of this and their extensive vocabularies to verbally abuse him. Judenbengel (Jew Brat), Judenlummel (Jew Slob) and Saujude (Pig Jew) were some of the usual names they called him. The dear children had heard these words from the grown-ups and had

appropriated them. These weren't words they only heard in the street, many also heard them uttered in their own homes.

This young Jewish boy invoked a great deal of displeasure in the school because he was a Jewish Brat. This displeasure was intensified by the fact that he was excused from the religious instruction that took place in school. Because of that he did not have to arrive at school until a full hour later than the rest of us. By law Jewish children were excused from the Christian religious instruction. These teachings were tabu to them. In those times Jewish children attended Christian elementary schools, but only the Protestant schools, not the Catholic schools!

The class skipping and the later start time on those days was the strongest reason not to like him, even to hate him. That this Jew could sleep an hour later in the morning sent the Christian children into a rage. Add to that the fact that much of the religious instruction had little good to say about the Jews, since they were guilty of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It was even worse in the days leading up to Christmas when the classrooms were decorated for the season and Christmas stories were recited outside of the formal religious instruction. Heinzl was not excused from that and had to be there and listen to everything, not only the story of Jesus' birth, but also the cheap shots at the Jews. Even if the stories did not meet with historical truth, they did work to demonize the Jews. That carried with it that the Jew Slob would be singled out by his classmates for punishment, common curses and viciously attacked. From the teachers, there was no protection for this little Jew.

Heinzl's rejection by his classmates was augmented by an unpleasant smell, one might say, "stink" that emanated from his clothing. The reason for the penetrating odor was not uncleanness, but rather it was due to the animal skins stored in the family's house. It was the same smell as at the junk collector, Löwenthal, in Vegesack.

What this little kid had to endure in the schoolroom was bad enough, but it was even worse on the schoolyard during recess where he was always the victim of violence.

Almost without complaint, this skinny kid had to submit to everything they dealt him. He couldn't defend himself, it wouldn't make any sense, they outnumbered him and they had greater strength. With an almost fearsome joy they harassed him and pounded on the Jew Pig brutally and without restraint.

They vent their wrath on Heinzl Herz, who was totally defenseless and helpless against them. He could not protect himself but he never cried out. With his eyes filled with tears he just whimpered quietly. And the teachers on the school grounds saw and heard nothing! They ate their sandwiches and made their rounds without taking any notice of the little Jewish boy.

There came a bitter cold day toward the end of November 1929, long after my after-school tutoring sessions had ended, when Heinzl Herz was taking another undeserved beating on the schoolyard during recess. He was standing there without an overcoat. As usual he was just wearing the same thin, shabby clothing he always wore and was freezing in the cold.

It started out with him being hassled by the usual troublemakers, then the first jostling. Then one of the braver Christian boys started beating on him to the point that blood began to shoot from his nose. That did not seem to bother the attacker, who continued his brutal attack. Heinzl must have been really scared because for the first time he began to scream as though this last hour had come. Heinzl was now

a pathetic, bloody, wretched heap of humanity who fell onto the hard ground of the schoolyard writhing in pain. Even that did not stop the attacker who kept hitting him and stomped him with his feet. It was a grisly sight, but no one troubled themselves over the poor little kid.

I was suddenly overtaken with an unbounded anger. I saw red and I pounced on the guy who was dealing out the beating to Heinzl. This happened with a force and strength that I didn't know I had. It was all born of my immeasurable anger.

I pulled Heinzl out of the circle of attackers, took him under my protection and fought back with all my might against those who still wanted to have a go at the Pig Jew. It was as though they were taken over by a blood lust. The more Heinzl bled the more they wanted to pound on him. I got my own share of pounding by the attackers, but I was able to defend myself with more vigor than Heinzl. Meantime this fuss had developed into a regular riot that finally got the attention of the recess monitors. On this day it happened to be dear, sweet Fräulein Tiemann. After taking a moment to carefully place her remaining buttered bread back into its container she turned her attention to reestablishing order on the playground. Whether she even could have done so given the churning mass of angry students is questionable. She was saved by the school bell that sounded marking the end of recess. That bell also saved Heinzl, and me, his defender from the attacking classmates.

Before the students returned to class we would have to line up in good order in front of the doors. Here, I was loudly singled out by Fräulein Tiemann for my bad behavior. It was just me, not the bad kids, who she considered to be the troublemaker. In her view I was the guilty one who disturbed the peaceful school playground. Once we got back to class I got my comeuppance from Fräulein Tiemann for my disruptive behavior. She immediately rearranged the seating in the classroom. The smelly Jewish kid that nobody wanted to sit with was placed on the same bench with me. Fräulein Tiemann remarked that those who feel like they have to defend Jews can sit on the same bench with them. I didn't try to rescue Heinzl because he was a Jew, I just wanted to help a helpless schoolmate who was being ganged up on.

I saw the behavior of my classmates to be so mean and vile that I wanted to help, and I did so without any other thoughts or considerations. It was the same feeling that I would have later whenever I saw some poor suffering creature whether human or animal. I have always been against injustice, against subjugation of any kind and against brutality and violence. Even though I once behaved quite differently toward another classmate because at the time I simply could not help it. I will describe that incident later.

I have never been able to stand it when other people take advantage of the weak and defenseless. Not only does it go against my sentiments, it also goes against my convictions regarding respect and consideration of others. Convictions that I got from my mother early on. My actions regarding Heinzl Herz had nothing to do with his Jewish background, it had everything to do with my aversion to the raw and brutal violence that this weak little kid was being subjected to by his classmates. But they were acting that way because Heinzl was a Jewish kid that they habitually scorned and beat. It was the adults, religion, parents and many of the teachers who hold the whole blame for the hatred of the Jews that led to the beatings in school. It was because of that hatred that my helping the Jewish kid was resented so by my classmates, the teachers and by dear Fräulein Tiemann. She did not see my actions as seemly behavior. She punished me in her own subtle way that was also a sort of revenge against how she was treated by my mother.

Now I had to sit on the same bench with Heinzl in direct contact with the smell attached to his clothes, and I had no choice but to 'take' it. It hit me hard right from the start. It was more of a stink than an

aroma. Nevertheless, we became good friends and I remained his protector right up until the day when our paths separated following the school redistricting. I do not know what happened to Heinzl after that. When the persecution of the Jews began in the Third Reich he may well have been one of those transported by the General Government and killed by the same good Germans who were just as good when they were children.

Several times I was at his home in Lobbendorf because his mother invited children there who had taken care of her children. I was very welcome there and the smell in the house didn't bother me anymore. The family was very clean. Heinzl's father always looked frail and impoverished, he was not by any definition an imposing figure as he pushed his handcart through the streets everyday collecting the trash and rags cast off by the Christian townsfolk.

In those days I protected the little Jewish kid, Heinzl Herz, because I thought it as my duty to do so. Just a few years later I would treat his Uncle very badly. He was the Jewish shoemaker Herz from Vegesack who I treated like a common dog when he came into my showroom looking to buy a radio. By then I was badly infected with Antisemitism and I refused to wait on him. I will talk more about this incident when the time comes.

It was strange that in the time before 1933, Jewish children in Junior High or High school could get along fairly easily like they did in Vegesack. But these were the children of the wealthy Jews who could afford the school fees, or the ones who applied for financial assistance which was gladly granted by the predominantly German directorship. There the children were not as aggressive as in the public schools. All that would change soon enough, but for the moment there were no major problems. Much of the changes had to do with the newly arriving Jews who were very poor and the German Jews distanced themselves from their poorer fellow Jews. The German Jews were considered 'good' Jews whom the good Germans were able to live with fairly well until 1933.

A lot of the friction between the children in the public schools had to do with the fact that the Jewish children weren't workman's children. They were children of merchants, not of fathers who toiled with their hands to earn their pay. This sort of schizophrenia was widespread in spite of the fact that in the Socialist Party, the Communist Party and the trade unions there were many Jews in leadership positions and that both Karl Marx and [Ferdinand] Lassalle were Jews. In contrast, there were no objections among the Socialist workers, but there were irrational prejudices against Jews as merchants and shopkeepers which transferred to the children. This was certainly not an Antisemitism built upon 'another race' it was only an anti-Judaism which came from old traditions where the Jews were seen as exploiters who didn't work, so, they could not be 'workers.' People did not think about reasons and causes for this, they just took it all at face value. The true Antisemites, the ethnic and nationalist parties and groups used these prejudices to get on with their evil anti-Jewish business. It is no wonder that from 1933 Antisemitism gained a stronger foothold in the general population. The seeds for this had been sown long ago under various guises but they all led to Antisemitism and the expulsion, the elimination of the Jews. But it wasn't only in Germany, all of the other countries had their own 'Jewish Problem' their own variety of hate for the Jews. This should and must be stressed. It is no trivialization of the German crime, it is just the undeniable fact that anti-Judaism and Antisemitism did not just suddenly appear in the Nazi era. We should accustom ourselves to look at the complete historical development of the Jews in Europe the way it is even up to today and not just view it from the perspective of the German guilt complex, though that should never be belittled. The Antisemitism in Germany during the Third Reich was a horrible, frightful crime that must never be minimized.

It is important for once to take a realistic look at the history of the Jews. In doing so there is always

the risk of being beaten with the club of Antisemitism. Many qualified and unqualified people from all areas of expertise; historians, literary experts, politicians and other brave souls have attempted this without getting it done. The task is to treat Jewish history objectively and also show how so many of the good and the best Germans have for centuries contributed to what has happened to the Jews in Europe and especially in Germany. It is very easy and comforting to blame everything on the Nazis because it allows one to push the guilt of our ancestors under the rug. No one wants any of our great German forefathers to fall from their pedestal. We would not want to miss our annual pilgrimage to Bayreuth to honor Wagner, who was an outspoken enemy of the Jews. Many other of our great minds would have to be reassessed and judged differently, but that would not fit in very well with our glorious German history.

One does not want to accuse so many great Germans of hating the Jews. Surely they just made a little mistake in espousing Antisemitism, it is a very human thing to make mistakes, we shouldn't hold it over their heads for eternity. German history is full of examples Jew haters, also in Austria. They bear a great deal of the guilt for the spread of Antisemitism throughout all layers of German society which eventually led to the extermination of the Jews through the Nazis. Unfortunately, they were supported by other countries and other men.

The beastly brutality against the poor, weak Jewish kid, Heinz Herz, was not a spontaneous, so-called ordinary and typically childish(!) brutality, nearly harmless because it is so normal(!). What irrupted here was the mindset, that even the little children absorbed, saying that Jews were not like normal people. We were imbued with this attitude in the street, at home, in church and not least of all in the schools. We were all so 'infected' that it just seemed 'right' to be energetically and enthusiastically against Jews. I know whereof I speak. I myself experienced such an outbreak of hate where even the 'best young men' took part. I will be describing some of those instances, for example my experience in Oldenburg in 1938.

Another vile act was the children calling out to Heinz to show them 'his little, short thingy,' which of course alluded to his circumcision. Where did these little kids even hear about such a thing? Who taught them about that? It did not come out of nowhere!. It did not come out of the gutter! We kids did not live in the gutter, we learned everything from our dear adults who naturally thought nothing ill of it, why would they? And later, when nearly all Germans proudly donned the uniforms of the NSDAP and their affiliates, nearly bursting their buttons with German pride, they were not notorious criminals, murderers and brutal thugs. They were quite normal German men and women who felt themselves superior to all others in their magnificent uniforms and who saw the Jews as an inferior race that should be eliminated if possible. These Germans were not the dregs of society, they came from all social classes and vented the pent up hate that had been instilled in them for generations. It only took a change in the wind. One only had to let the genie out of the bottle for a flood of villainy, criminality and murder to wash over the defenseless Jews. Jews who were just as defenseless as little Heinz was when they ganged up on him. And once again people looked on and again offered no help to these defenseless creatures who committed no other crime than being Jewish. The unholy spirit of the old Antisemitism now saw its heyday approaching. A time when, finally, this spawn could be eliminated. The Christian churches saw it also, but this was the same spirit had been nurtured by them. This is no polemic, this is unfortunately the real history, a fact that many people want to shut their eyes to, then and also today.

The Jews were always the ones that you could hang everything bad and evil in the world on. They were considered to be ritual murderers and the Christians saw them as inhuman fornicators. They were known to be tricky merchants, slick stockbrokers and foul shysters. They were implicated in every

scandal as well as the revolution of 1918. In short, common pests that needed to be eliminated.

Antisemitism

The evil, Nazi hate-propaganda flier, “Stürmer” was not the first to spread Antisemitic opinions. They were already in the air for a long, long time. However, when they appeared in “Stürmer” they appeared so 'right' to people. It crystallized the disgusting anti-Jewish representations, the supposedly typical Jewish faces that every good member of the German race could recognize as the destroyer of the Nation.

Even as a kid I thought it surprising that we had to learn not only biblical history, but also the Ten Commandments that were announced to the world by the Jew, Moses. For me something was not quite right. On the one hand were the evil Jews, on the other hand teachings of the highest morality that came from the Jews. We kids had to learn about religion in school and later in Confirmation class not only the New Testament, but also the Old Testament which was basically the history of the Jewish people.

Who were Adam and Eve? Were they Aryans, or maybe Jews? What was with Abraham? He was a true Jew, but also seen the forefather of not only the Jews, but also the Christians and even the Muslims. How was I to make sense of this especially since according to the Christian religions, the Jews were damned. For me that was all incomprehensible. I couldn't work my way through it. I couldn't ask anyone, certainly not a pastor or a teacher, they had no answers for such stupid questions, even my mother didn't want to hear it. She said quite simply that I had to believe in God and Jesus, be true to the Ten Commandments and I would become a respectable person who, with these beliefs, would eventually get into Heaven. This was the simple response to my stupid questions. But the dear Lord Jesus was a Jew, right? The God himself, the Jehovah of the Old Testament, wasn't he also Jew, the father of his son Jesus? My questions were truly not very good.

But these questions continued to nag at me, even during the Third Reich and in the years after that.

What caused the 'loving God' to make the Jews a 'Chosen People,' as the Jews identify themselves in the name of their God? He is also the God of the Christians, why didn't he chose them? Why did the Christians see the Jews as enemies? Was it just because of their guilt in the death of Jesus? Or, was it due to their alleged inequality before the one God? God had split himself and now the Christians had the one true God. How did God actually manage this move from one camp to another? Who decided that? Did God change his mind after he sent his only son to earth? God should have informed the Jews as well as the Christians like he did their forefather, the good Abraham, to lead him from the belief in many gods to the righteous path of Monotheism, to the belief in one God. This God would be the only God responsible for everything that happened to a man in his life and death, but only for those men



who believed in him. Supposedly, this God had made the entire world and all of the people and animals in it. But there must have been a error somewhere because the Christians made it their highest priority to bring their beliefs to the poor pagans and the godless. The implication being that these 'other' people could not have been created by God, or there was some flaw in them that must be corrected with the help of baptism in order to make good men out of them.

So, the bad Jews could also become good Christians if they were baptized in the name of the now Christian God who used to be called Jehovah in the Old Testament. Only the Jews never tried to convert non-Jews to their religion. Why should they? Their God was also the God of the Christians. These stories about God were damned complicated about the true religion, the true faith and the right path to get to the kingdom of heaven. To make matters worse, Mohamed joined in with his "Allah" but it was still fairly close to God. The forefather, holy Abraham, was incorporated by Mohamed for his religion also, for Islam. But now Mohamed wanted to bring all other peoples into his religion with the result that over time millions of people became Muslim. The purportedly one true God let all of this happen. He, the Creator of All Things, let it come to pass that there were people both for and against Him. He did not come out strong for his Christians who had so suddenly discovered Him as if He had just now become their Creator. But He did not let His Christians fall apart either. They would finally be able to enter heaven where a place for all eternity would be reserved for those who lived their life on earth as devout Christians. The bliss of heaven would be there for them after their earthly life was ended. Their undying soul would fly to heaven to beg entry through the pearly gates. Saint Peter would be there to decide who would enter and who would not.

Either the kingdom of heaven, or the fires of purgatory, that was the question at heaven's door. Am I being sarcastic? In the usual sense, yes, but I can't deal with these contradictions with anything but sarcasm. Irrationality and superstition leave me no other option. I am an unbeliever, a heretic, a foul Atheist. I am without religion and never a believer.

Jesus was a Jew. That is a fact and all of the whitewashing on the part of the Aryans could not change that fact no matter how much they wanted to. The Evangelists? All Jews. Peter? A Jew. Mary? A Jewess. Mary Magdalene? A Jewish whore. All of the good and the bad people in both Testaments were Jews. All of the bloodthirsty stories in the Bible were about Jews. The non-bloody stories were about them too. The beloved God of the Christians is identical to Jehovah, that is to say, Yahweh, the God of the Jews. We children learned many stories in both Testaments, but we also taught that the Jews were bad people because they had the death of Lord Jesus, God's son, on their conscience. One should have dug deeper into these issues, but nothing really helped but to simply believe what we were told. That is somewhat naive, but naivete was a sure path to heaven, and this was better than to be an unbeliever using real reasoning because that could lead to a bad end involving torture, murder and death in the name of God and Jesus, but also in the name of the Holy Virgin Mary. Yahweh, the vengeful God of the Jews became to the Christians an (apparently) more loving God, a God of murder in the name of Christians of all denominations with the Catholics at the forefront.

The Jews were the declared enemies of the Christians. The Popes built their church into a great power which easily incorporated an enemy. The Jews were that enemy and remained so into modern times. Then it was largely eliminated as an embarrassment throughout the Christian world. Up there in heaven there was the one God, the God of the Christians, who, just to be on the safe side, created an earthly representative for the Catholics in the Vatican, who in 1871 awarded himself infallibility.

Throughout all ages there were bloody pogroms. Behind each stood good Christians like the violent murders in Toledo and all of the pogroms in East Europe where orthodox Christians sanctioned them. Hundreds of examples could be mentioned to show how long-standing the practice was. The Nazis

were the first to sanction these crimes on behalf of the State and to formalize the goal of eliminating all the Jews in Europe. This was something new in the history of Jewish persecution. The church in this case did not declare itself opposed to the extermination, it simply stood by and did nothing. It wasn't until after the war that they expressed their objections to this horrifying event. These Christians worked it so as to eliminate their culpability. Their faith made this possible, their faith in the infallibility of the Pope.

It is not only in the history of the churches in all denominations that is filled with examples of offenses against the Jews, the unique source of Monotheism. Also the collective histories of all nations and states are full of atrocities perpetrated on the Jews. This did not only occur in Germany and Austria, even though these lands did exhibit a particular quality of hate, intolerance and the desire for extermination. The idol of the Reformation, Martin Luther, was a declared Jew-hater.

The question as to why this spirit is so prevalent in these lands is one I can answer. It is because the church has such a strong power over the faithful. It uses this power to to turn the faithful into slaves of their beliefs. This can still be felt today not the least in God's own country within Germany, Bavaria. Since I live there now, I can report to you from the spot. It is not for nothing that Antisemitism reached such high-points in Bavaria and Austria, rivaling that found in pagan Berlin!

I refer you to a book I have in my possession called, "Gottes erste Diener" [Vicars of Christ] by Irish author, Peter de Rosa, published by Verlag Droemer Knauer in Munich. Among other topics the book addresses the role of the church in the persecution of the Jews:

"Up to the 19th century the Popes were the instigators of the inhumanity against the Jews" According to de Rosa the Popes published over 100 antisemitic documents. With this body of documentation in 1939 the Bishop of Osnabrück could rightly say that in regards to the 'Jewish Question' he was only doing what the church had already been doing for 1500 years. Hitler wasn't entirely wrong!

Already according to a Papal order, Jews had to wear a mark of shame, were not allowed contact with Christians, were not allowed any position of power, were required to live in Ghettos, were expelled when it was felt warranted and during the Crusades were massacred by the thousands. In the middle of the 19th century Pope Pius IX allowed a Jew to be thrown into prison because he dared to allow a Christian to wash his laundry. This occurred during a time when most nations left the Jews free to live their lives. The Nazis had very good models to follow for all of their 'measures.'

Pope Pius X complained still in 1904(!): "The Jews have not recognized our Lord. We can not accept the Jews."

It was Pope John XXIII who broke this inhuman tradition. Right during the Nazi era while Pius XII kept his diplomatic silence about the murder of the Jews, John, the Pope's envoy to Turkey and Greece, distributed a massive number of falsified baptismal certificates.

The long-standing hatred of the Jews in German lands grew after 1918 in Germany as well as Austria and it manifested itself in all social levels. Once again it was the Jews who were made responsible for any and all unfortunate political or social situations. The majority of people believed that whenever there was a scandal, a bankruptcy or negative political event that somehow Jews were not just involved, but usually had a major role in it. People chattered on about the "Jewish World Conspiracy" which was apparently just against Germany, the nation of the 'pure' Aryans. But above all it was the drivel about the Jewish-Bolshevik threat to Germany and Austria that found the most sympathetic ears. The Jews

were seen as the 'puppet masters' behind the “dastardly knife thrust” in the backs of the brave combatants of the German front in WWI, who otherwise would certainly have won. The general decline in all areas of German life was blamed on the Jews with ever greater 'success.' The words of Hitler and his companions struck ears that were already open and ready to view the Jews as being Germany's true misfortune. They were even more ready to sweep this misfortune clean out of Germany. There was already had a good model to follow in the German historian [Heinrich] von Treitschke who long ago [in 1879] had coined the slogan, “The Jews are our misfortune.” The Nazis did not have to invent this stupid saying, they only had to pluck it from the treasure chest of German history.

Hitler and his consorts were not the only ones who spread this venom, even the bourgeois political parties tooted the same horn. The Deutschnationale Volkspartei, DNVP [German National People's Party] used the mass media power of the Hugenberg Corporations to spread the word through their many national and nationalistic gazettes.

Herr Streicher in his publication, “Stürmer,” had many precursors in earlier times. He did not have to invent Antisemitism, he only had to rummage through the relics of the past and repackage them for the new age.



Antisemitic DNVP slogan during the elections in 1930

Now, in this new age the national ethnic 'culture' could remark on the shameless behavior of the Jewish film industry not only in America but also in Germany that sought to trash and besmirch the Aryan-German world.

For all of the Antisemites, whether they be Nazis or good burghers, there were many opportunities for the German people to see the Jews as an alien race. This view succeeded in all levels of society because for centuries they had been prepared to view the Jews as foreigners.

The worst hatchery for the nefarious plans of the Jews was still the 'fully Jewified Wall Street.' This is where international Jewry used criminal financing techniques to turn the power of Jewish capital into world domination. This was the sole source of Germany's economic problems, all because the Jews had set themselves the task of wrecking the country. So said and wrote all the German nationalists circles who claimed to know everything and who claimed to be the only ones to know what the international Jewry were up to. What the Jews had failed to accomplish with our brave German soldiers in the First World War, they would try to accomplish by other means. This was the milieu of these times where it was not only the lunatics who talked rubbish. It was also the majority of 'enlightened' individuals who took this nonsense to heart and believed it.

However, it should also be said that the behavior of many Jews around the world contributed to the

Antisemitism everywhere, not just in the German-speaking world. It was the French, after all, at the international conference in Evian who proposed that the European Jews should be 'relocated' to Madagascar. This plan did not originate with the Nazis. It had already been bruited about by Ritter von Schönerer, an enthusiastic Antisemite of the Hapsburg Empire. The French brought the idea back into play at the Evian conference. They also mentioned a few other places where one might put the Jews after they were shooed out of Europe. This proposal was made by the French Colonial Minister on behalf of his government as a possible solution for the “Jewish Problem.”

In the 1920's in Germany and especially in Berlin a very unpleasant situation was developing due to an influx of East-European Jews. Many of them migrated to the Scheunenviertel [*Scheunen Quarter of Berlin*] This quarter became a sort of Ghetto filled with Eastern Jews. Rather unsympathetic photos of them showed up in the bourgeois newspapers and illustrated magazines. They took care to give the impression in their own subtle way of a kind of foreign infiltration by these racially inferior “sleazy Eastern Jews.” It also turned out that the so-called assimilated Jews wanted to distance themselves, too, from these 'dirty Eastern Jews' even though they were fellow believers. This was in spite of the fact that many of the assimilated Jews' families had also immigrated from the East. Jews were not only hated or looked down upon by non-Jews. Jews were not always friends of other Jews. Even here there was plenty of



Scheunen Quarter in Berlin 1933

hatred, envy and resentment.



JÖDISCHE AUSWANDERER IN DEN AUSWANDERERHALLEN

East-European Jewish Immigrants

Naturally, there were many attempts to gain social equality for the Jews, even in Germany, and to make them into respectable citizens. In particular it was writers and artists who tried to change perceptions, but it was nearly impossible to break down the entrenched resentments that would obtain real equality for them. This was the case even though many had earned great respect for their achievements in government, politics, business, finance, art, theater and literature. There was always this anti-Jewish thorn present in the 'other people.' This thorn could and did cause painful pricks in word, print and deeds.

When the so-called “Protocols of the Elders of Zion” came into circulation, this caused yet another renewal of Antisemitism in spite of the fact that the 'Protocols' were a clearly proven fraud.

The Eastern Jews had a very different way of dressing, with their long caftans, strange head coverings, long curly forelocks and black beards. This helped give non-Jews the impression that these people came from another place and time and in every respect did not belong in the Western world. For non-Jews these Jews were foreign matter. They came from the Orient where their ancestors originated. After they were driven out of Israel they wandered the world restlessly and would never be a stable nation again. They were not welcome anywhere because, apparently, they infiltrated other nations but always remained strangers. They isolated themselves to protect their religion and practice it everywhere. The Jews also endeavored to keep their own race 'pure' and not intermarry. Many converted Jews no longer paid attention to this prohibition and did not feel bound by it.

People were disconcerted by the way Jews practiced their religion. Those practices were incomprehensible to non-Jews, especially the mysterious and secret workings of Jewish ritual and the way it all tied in with the Talmud and the Torah. Add to that the evil, devilish, mystical teachings of the Cabala. Taken all together it made the Jews strange and frightening. There was



Chassidic Jews

something sinister about how the Jews were strewn all over the world, yet they maintained a unity; held together by their ancient traditions and the belief that one day they would be reunited as a people. Because people could not understand this, it engendered not only an aversion to the Jews but in many cases a hatred that has not entirely disappeared today. This has especially been the case in the countries of Western Christian culture and values where the hatred has been expressed in the most bloody manner. The many pogroms even in the coming era, supposedly of Reason, testify to the delusion. There was never any question of dealing with the Jews humanely.

So, it was no wonder that in 1929 the Christian children, and also the children of not so Christian families, so mercilessly beat the poor, little Jewish boy, Heinz Herz, without concern that they could have killed him. It is also no wonder that during the Third Reich crimes were committed against the Jews and the people stood by and watched it happen and that many good good Germans took an active part in it. Unfortunately, it was not a minority, it was the majority of the people not only in Germany but in other nations also. Convinced Antisemites were willing helpers in all of the civilized nations espousing Western Christian values.

The meanness and violence suffered by Heinz Herz at this point gave me cause to address the topics of Anti-Judaism and Antisemitism at this point my memoir, "Aus meiner Sicht." I am not finished with my description of the themes related to the Jews. I will be expanding upon them using my life experiences as the starting point. I do not intend to present a narrow point of view, but rather to

demonstrate that mankind is still not fit to live together. On the contrary they only demonstrate a talent for hate and mutual killing, in spite of the Christian religion and in spite of the common origins of both the Christians and the Jews. Unfortunately, it is also true that Jewish history in modern times is no glorious chapter for the Jews. They have indeed created their own state, but make use of violence and terror just like all the rest of mankind. They are truly not a 'Chosen People.'

As a part of humanity, I am ashamed of all the misdeeds, outrages, atrocities, crimes and murders committed by man on his fellow man. I am ashamed of all of the leaders, the priests of all of the religions, all rulers of any kind, the politicians and military leaders throughout the world who have seen it as their goal to destroy their fellow men or to stand by and let it happen. I am also ashamed of those who enabled others to instill vicious propaganda into the minds of the masses promoting hate. In addition, I am ashamed of all of the 'great minds' of our civilization who have approved of and supported the crime of inhumanity to others.