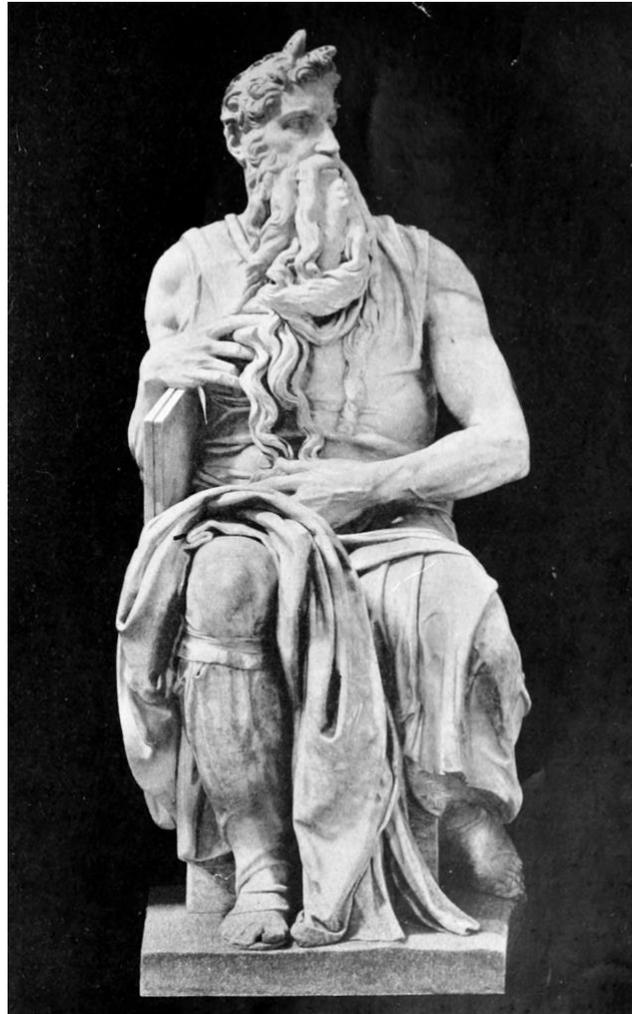


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The Friendly, Jewish Lady of Frankfurt

by

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## The Friendly, Jewish Lady of Frankfurt

The encounter with the friendly, Jewish woman happened in Frankfurt a.M., which had a large Jewish community, in March 1941, almost three years after the *Kristall Nacht*, or the *Night of Broken Glass*, or the *November Pogrom*, from November 9 to 10, 1938. It was carried out by paramilitary SA forces and civilians throughout Germany in the framework of fascist identity philosophy of life, and ideology, and politics, while the German authorities looked on without intervening: ideology understood as false consciousness, masking of particular economic and political interests, shortly the untruth.

### *Kristal Nacht*

When on November 9, 1938, at 5.00 p.m. I came, as an eleven-year-old boy, whose father had just died four months earlier from cancer, out of the central Frankfurt swimming pool, I saw the famous inner-city synagogue nearby burning to the ground. Many police and firemen were present, but nobody even tried to extinguish the fire. Firemen and fire engines only protected the swimming pool, and other buildings nearby, from the flames, but left the old synagogue to its fate. Throughout the decades, this old synagogue had been visited by famous Jewish, mystical thinkers, like Martin Buber, and more recently also the orthodox family of Erich Fromm and the half - Jewish family of Theodor - Wiesengrund Adorno, who lived on the rich Eastside of Frankfurt, at least knew about it. I myself, who was educated in the Westside, Catholic Parish St. Familia, knew nothing about the old synagogue: so high were the interfaith walls. When I walked to my home on the working class Westside of Frankfurt, Falkstrasse 84, and crossed the Zeil, Frankfurt's main street, I saw all kinds of commodities flying out of the windows of large Jewish stores, including crystal lamps, which gave the night from November 8 to 10, 1938 its name. At the time, there was nobody on this otherwise very busy main street of Frankfurt. It all made no sense! Only in the evening, after having returned home, I heard on the *Volksempfänger*, i.e. the small radio, which everybody had in fascist Germany, in my mother's kitchen, of the assassination of the German diplomat, Ernst von Rath, by Herschel Grynszan, a young Jewish refugee, in Paris, on the 9<sup>th</sup> of November 1938, and in retaliation, *eye for eye*, the imprisonment of 30,000 Jewish men, and even the killing of some of them. The persecution of the Jewish people had fully begun in Frankfurt, and all over Germany, on the basis of the *Nürnberg Laws*, as climactic expression of the exclusive fascist identity ideology and politics, which were patterned after the American racial laws, with the exception, that in Germany the Jews were considered to be Semites, and thus as being *colored*, while in the USA they were categorized as being *white*, a fact of which the German fascists were very critical. Fascism is white nationalism, pushed to the extreme. At the time, Jews in America may not have been discriminated in the same way as blacks and Mexicans, but they were openly discriminated against. More so in the South, but socially also in the North. It was only after World War II that Jews really *became white*, as Karen Brodtkin in her book

*How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says About Race in America*, of 2008, put it. That was true of other nominally white groups, like the Italians, or Irish.

### ***The Experiment***

The German fascists made an experiment, in order to prove, that even in America the Jews, in spite of being legally considered to be white, or Europeans, or Aryans, were not really wanted. Adolf Hitler sent a ship full of Jews to Havana, Cuba, which at the time was under US control. As foreseen by the German fascists, the Cuban authorities under US directive, did not allow the ship to disembark in Havana. The old Captain from the German World War I Navy, took his ship up to New York. Here the ship received coal, and water, and food, but the Jewish passengers were not allowed to leave it. Hitler had made his point. There was exclusive identity ideology and politics and anti-Semitism also in the USA, where the Jews were not colored. The old German captain took his ship back to Europe. In order to rescue the Jews from German fascist identity politics and concentration camps, he did not return to Germany, but run his ship against a rock very close to the British coast. All the passengers were rescued. But then the British authorities put the Jews into internment camps. Later on the Jews were sent to Holland and Belgium, where they were captured by the German troops after the invasion of these countries. and put into German concentration camps, labor camps as well as death camps.

### ***Lessing Gymnasium***

It happened on one rainy day in March 1941, that I drove with my bicycle from my new home in the Hugel Strasse 194, in the *Friede* or *Peace* settlement for veterans from World War I, Frankfurt a.M. Ginnheim, to the Lessing Gymnasium. My home was very near to the house of Anna Frank, where she lived in the first three years of her life, before her family had to flee to Holland from fascist persecution, only to be captured there later on. Gottholt, Ephraim Lessing had been the great German enlightener, who wrote the novel *Nathan, the Wise* about the three rings of Judaism, the *Religion of Sublimity*, Christianity, the *Religion of Becoming, Freedom and Manifestation*, and Islam, the *Religion of Law*. *Nathan* did not know any longer, which ring was the true one. My uncle, Dr. Karl Siebert, a judge in Geisa, Thuringia, where in 1945 American and Russian Troops, the post-European American and Slavic Worlds met, had put me into this elite high school shortly before the death of my father Bruno Siebert, his brother, so that I would receive a classical, humanistic education, in including Latin, Greek and Hebrew, as he once did. Since my father was an electrician in the Jewish ICH Schneider Shoe factory in Frankfurt, I became something like a token proletarian in the elite bourgeois high school. There were also token girls in my all-boy school. There were also token Jews in my all-Aryan school, who slowly disappeared without any explanation. On this morning in March, my bicycle malfunctioned. The chain fell off. I had to walk and push my bicycle to my school. When I had walked half way and passed by the huge, very modern IG Farben Administration Building of the largest chemical corporation in Germany, which had sided with Adolf Hitler and his *National Sozialistische Arbeiter*

*Partei*, or *National Socialist German Labor Party*, or *NSDAP*, and his government, and had paid him from the start, as so many other large corporations, like e.g. Krupp and Thyssen, Siemens and Bosch, and Ford, etc., had done, I saw before me an old lady in a black winter coat, who carried on each side two large suitcases. She had a hard time to walk and had to stop after a few steps to put her heavy load down on the wet road, and to rest for a while. When I caught up with the old lady, I noticed a large yellow *Star of David* on her black coat. In the Hitler Youth, which I had to belong to by law, besides being voluntarily a member in the Catholic Youth Movement, and in the humanistic Lessing Gymnasium, we had learned, not to speak to any Jewish person. In contrast, in the Catholic Youth movement, the priests had told us, that what happened to the Jews was immoral and criminal. In spite of centuries of Catholic and Protestant Antisemitism, or rather Anti-Judaism, because the Jews had supposedly killed Christ, and because their refusal to convert, prevented his return, I was neither in my family, nor in my parish, Sta Familia, in Ginnheim, nor in the Lessing Gymnasium, ever taught to hate the Jews, but to the contrary rather to respect them and to love them. Not only did my father Bruno, a Catholic by birth, and my mother Elli, or Elisabeth, a convert to Catholicism from Lutheranism, work for a Jewish owner, the ICH Schneider Shoe factory, called shortly ICAS, but my mother also visited the Jewish wife of her Aryan supervisor weekly throughout the war, in order to console her. She was frightened, whenever the bell was ringing at the door. On the day, when the war ended, in May 1945, she collapsed and died.

### ***The Police***

With this background, I had no problem to start to talk to the old Jewish lady, in spite of the *Star of David*, and all the Antisemitic prejudices permeating the German culture at the time, and the authoritarian populism, and the exclusive fascist identity ideology and politics. That was additionally made easy by her looking rather very friendly at me, in spite of the fact, that she was very shy, and first did not want to speak at all, following the fascist, exclusive identity taboo. But then her friendliness overcame her shyness, and all prejudices and taboos, and she told me, that in the last night the police had come to her apartment in my neighborhood, and had told her to take all her possessions, which she could possibly carry, and go to the nearby air shelter of the Lessing Gymnasium, in order to meet other Jews from Frankfurt. From the Lessing Gymnasium she and the other Jews would be transported by bus and train to a village in Eastern Europe, where she would be protected from the hustle and bustle of the big city of Frankfurt and could rest and live out her golden years in peace. The Jewish lady spoke high German with a slight Frankfurt and Hessian accent, like my parents and grandparents did. She never introduced herself, and I never told her my name. We remained anonymous. The Jewish lady believed, what the policemen had told her in the middle of the night, and so did I, in spite of the fact, that we both knew that there were concentration camps in Germany and in Eastern Europe. We did not know yet, that the labor camps were turning into death camps, particularly in the Eastern part of Poland and in Russia. Three times Hitler had shouted in public speeches in Parliament in Berlin, that

if the Jewish high finance, e.g. the Rothschilds from Frankfurt, would once more push the Europeans into a new fratricidal world war, that this would not mean the end of Europe, but rather the end of the Jewish race. That moment came with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Unaware of all this, the Jewish lady followed the command of the police, and was thus on the way to the air shelter of the Lessing Gymnasium. I, motivated by my Catholic conscience, finally asked her, if I could put her heavy suitcases on my otherwise useless bicycle, and drive them down to the Lessing Gymnasium, where I was going anyway. She accepted gladly and was very grateful and happy for this help and support. Thus, together we walked down the hill from the IG Farben Administration Building, where we had met, to the air shelter of the Lessing Gymnasium, along the school's soccer field. We were talking about my experiences as a pupil in a humanistic gymnasium, some of whose teachers still believed in all seriousness in the Olympian Gods of the trinitarian, Greek *Religion of Fate and Beauty*, and in the prosaic Gods of the likewise trinitarian Roman *Religion of Utility*, and still visited them every summer during vacations. At the same time these teachers were forced by the fascist culture minister in Berlin, to teach students about the inferior Gods of the trinitarian Gothic *Religion of Blood and Soil*, which they despised. All this happened in a school, which confessed through its name to be a part of the unitarian, secular, enlightenment, which wanted to make people rational, and to free them from their fears, and to make them into masters of their fate, and to transform what was unconscious into consciousness, and to place *Ego* where *Id* was.

### ***IG Farben***

Ever since my encounter with the friendly Jewish lady, I was throughout my life concerned with the problem, that so often people have to make important, moral decisions, while being completely ignorant of the immediate, or mediate, context, circumstances and consequences of their actions. While I thought on this fateful morning in March 1941, in terms of the Catholic ethics and also of that of Emmanuel Levinas, that I did an act of kindness, and maybe even a heroic deed, when I carried the suitcases of the friendly Jewish lady to the air shelter of the Lessing Gymnasium, in reality I did not make history, and I did not prevent the Shoah. To the contrary, I helped the elderly Jewish lady to walk not only to the air shelter, but beyond it to a labor camp, and maybe even to a death camp, in Eastern Europe. At best, I helped myself and gave my life an anti-Antisemitic direction, and chose the option of an inclusive, Identity philosophy, and theology, and politics: tearing down walls rather than building them; lowering the ingroup-outgroup barriers, as the *Good Samaritan* had done, when he rescued, and healed the Jew, who had fallen among robbers and murderers. We both, the Jewish lady and I, should, of course, have asked ourselves, what an over 70 year old woman, who could hardly carry her suitcases, should do in a concentration camp, which after all was a work camp with the motive *Arbeit macht frei*, or *Work makes free* on the entrance door, in reality providing massive, unpaid surplus labor and profit for the German, private, capitalistic industry? But we did not! What was worse, was, that we did not know and were completely unconscious of what happened in the IG Farben Administration

Building, in front of which we met, and in the IG Farben factories in nearby Frankfurt a.M - Höchst. It was a long story!

### *Zyclon B*

Before World War I, the German, Jewish Chemist, Fritz Haber, had received the Nobel Peace Prize in chemistry in Norway in 1918 for his invention of the Haber - Bosch process, a method used in industry to synthesize ammonia from nitrogen and hydrogen gas. This invention was of importance for the large-scale synthesis of fertilizers and explosives. Haber was born in Breslau, Germany, after World War II renamed into Polish Wroclaw, on December 9, 1868, and died in Basel, Switzerland, as refugee from Nazi Germany, on January 29, 1934, one year after Adolf Hitler came into power. Haber's invention doubled the world food supply, and thereby falsified and devaluated the Anglican priest Malthus's food-population calculation, which until today, 2020, does not prevent bourgeois countries to follow Malthus, who had four children himself, in their birth control policies, and even socialist countries, despite of Marx's Darwinian Malthus critique. Before World War I, Haber was a pacifist like his friend, the Jewish quantum physicist Albert Einstein. But when in August 1915 the German army got stuck in the West, Haber, in order to end the war and thus save lives, weaponized gas, and became the father of the gas war. He applied his new weapon the first time in Ypern, in August 1915. Four thousand French and British soldiers died in this first gas attack. While Haber celebrated his victory in Berlin, his first wife, Clara Immerwahr, took his revolver and killed herself in the backyard, as a gesture of protest and warning. She, also being a chemist, was not only a good positivist, but also the better dialectician: the thesis provokes, and elicits, the anti-thesis. She knew, as her name says, the truth, as the opposite of ideology. She knew, that the opponent would counteract. The British invented the gasmask and better forms of poison gas. In the process, Haber responded with developing also a German gasmask as well chlorine and other poisonous gasses, and maybe even mustard gas, which could penetrate French and British gas masks. As late as the first Bush Administration, US Secretary of Defense, Rumsfeld, gave mustard gas to Saddam Hussein for his war against Iran. At the end of World War I, millions of soldiers had been killed and wounded by gas. Hitler was blinded during a British gas attack, and was in a hospital in East Prussia, when three young, Jewish messengers announced to him and his comrades, that there had been an armistice, and that the war was lost, and that the Emperor had fled to Holland. Hitler would never forget these three Jewish messengers. After the successful gas attack of 1915, Haber was promoted to captain, and maybe even to general in the German army. He would not listen to the warning of his wiser wife Clara. Two years after her suicide in 1915, Haber married again another Jewish woman, Charlotte Nathan, in 1927, her last name suggesting Nathan the Wise, the main figure in Lessing's novel of the same name. She died 10 years later, in 1927. After the end of World War II, the Allies wanted to put on trial Haber, the father of the gas war, as a war criminal. Haber fled to Basel in Switzerland, and let his beard grow, so that nobody would recognize him, But in 1918, Haber came out of hiding, nevertheless, in order to receive the Noble Peace Price, not for being the father of chemical warfare, but rather for

the invention of the Haber-Bosch process. The German Parliament in Berlin declared Haber to be a *hero of the nation*. The increase of the food supply brought about an increase of insects. Thus, Haber started a new business and industry in East Germany, producing insecticides, called cyclones. IG Farben produced zyclon B, which since the Wannsee decision of the final solution under SS Leader Heidrich, was used to murder Jews, and others, in Eastern European death camps.

### ***The Adjutant***

The father of my good friend, Gregory Baum, was the adjutant of General Haber in World War I. Gregory was the member of an assimilated Jewish family in Berlin. He converted to Catholicism, and became a priest, and an Augustinian Eremite Monk in Canda. During the revolutionary 1960ties / 1970ties, Gregory finally left monastery and priesthood, and was excommunicated because he married without laization. Gregory devoted his whole life to an inclusive identity theology and politics, and thus to justice and peace. During and after the war, the family Baum was very proud of the father's having been the adjutant of General Haber. Gregory departed from his beloved mother in the Berlin Railroad Station, shortly before World War II, in order to be transported with other Jewish children to England and Canada. Gregory had thought throughout the war, that his mother had been gassed by the fascists. But in realty she had survived, and had been trained as a nurse, and had worked as such in a Jewish hospital in Berlin, up to her death during an epidemic. When after the war Gregory travelled to Berlin and met old fascists, who had produced much suffering to his family, he did not only not hate them, but he tried even to understand with compassion and mercy, what possibly motivated not only General Haber, but also his own father, the latter's adjutant, but also the later Nazis up to his death in 2017: white racist, nationalism, fascism. The Hitler government did not appreciate the Jew Haber's scientific and military accomplishments for the fatherland. His gas was not used in military campaigns during World War II, but only in the Eastern European fascist death camps, and later on in the Iran War and in the Syrian War. Haber disappeared to Switzerland and died lonely and deeply depressed in Basel. After I was drafted to the German Airforce two years after my meeting with the Jewish lady, I participated in the defense of the IG Farben Building and Industry, which produced Zyclon B, which were, however, never bombed. After the end of the war, the military government of the US Occupation Zone in Germany moved into the IG Farben Administration Building. Afterwards it became the home for the humanities of the Johann Wolfgang Goethe Universität. Neither the friendly, Jewish lady, nor I had any knowledge of Fritz Haber, or of his adjutant, or of his life and work, or of what happened in the IG Farben Administration Building , or of Cyclon B , in front of which building we met in March of 1941, or in the IG Farben factories in Frankfurt/ Höchst.

### ***The SS Man***

When the Jewish lady and I arrived at the entrance of the air shelter of the Lessing Gymnasium with my bicycle and her suitcases on it, we heard from below the voices of

many people, Jews from all over Frankfurt. Soon a young SS man, from the *Schutzstaffel*, a major paramilitary organization under Adolf Hitler, and the Nazi Party, and Heinrich Himmler, came running up the staircase from the air shelter basement below. The SS was recruited from the German bourgeoisie. Its members had often the same classical, humanistic education, which I received in the Lessing Gymnasium. After a bloody Jewish pogrom, initiated by the SS, e. g., in Warsaw, or elsewhere, they could easily play on the next leftover piano Beethoven's or Mozart's bourgeois-revolutionary symphonies, in the midst of the ruins they themselves had caused. The competing, opposite of the SS was the SA, the *Sturmabteilung*, or assault division, bynamed stormtroopers or braun shirts, part of the Nazi Party, also a paramilitary organization. Their methods of violent intimidation played a large role in Adolf Hitler's rise to power, The SA was recruited from the German proletariat, and was much less educated. Not the SA, but part of the SS, besides the SS elite tank divisions, was in charge of the concentration camps, first as labor, and finally as death camps. When the young SS man in his attractive, black uniform with its skulls on the collar, approached us, with a list of names under his arm, and looked us over for a while, as if he could not comprehend, what he saw. As a matter of fact, he was so shocked by what he saw, that he could not speak for some time. Then, he composed himself and started to shout with his loudest commando voice, so that all the teachers and students in the classrooms of the Lessing Gymnasium could hear him:

*How can you as an Aryan boy carry the suitcases of a Jewish pig.  
It is a scandal!*

I answered him, that the old Jewish woman did not look like a pig, but rather like my grandmother at home. That response made the SS man even angrier, as if he suspected, that I had a Jewish grandmother, but that was not the case. My father Bruno Siebert's bourgeois family tree was totally Aryan, down to the 16th century. Admittedly my mother Ellie and her brother Adolf Bopp looked Jewish and were often suspected of being Jewish. Adolf, working in the Dresdener Bank in Frankfurt throughout his life, became a member of the NSDAP early on, because he hoped thereby to protect himself against racist, Antisemitic suspicions as part of the exclusive, Rightwing identity ideology and politics. But nobody could prove my mother's or uncle's Jewishness, since there existed no written, proletarian family tree in the working-class Bopp family. But through my research and investigations in Protestant church archives throughout Upper-Hessia after the war, I found out, that my mother's family were Protestant Huguenots, who fled from France after the Catholic Bartholomy massacre in Paris in the 16th century, and were accepted by the Prince of Hessen, and were thus Aryans, but that a Jew had indeed entered the family around 1700. That was more than seven generations ago, and was therefore no longer valid, not even for the mistaken, perverted fascist anthropology of race, and exclusive identity ideology and politics, and the Nürnberg Race Laws. However, in March 1941, the SS man remained, nevertheless, so angry, that he pushed the Jewish lady down the staircase into the air shelter basement, and her two suitcases after her, after I had taken them from my bicycle. I did not even have time to say goodbye to the friendly, old Jewish lady from Frankfurt in the general turmoil

around. I would never see the Jewish lady again after our short meeting and friendship. Her last look at me, when she descended the staircase and entered the door of the air shelter, was still friendly, but also very frightened.

### ***The Director***

In his anger, the SS man took me and my bicycle to the Director of the Lessing Gymnasium, Dr. Silomon, who was one of the so called noble nazis, who had written a book on the Indo-Germanic language community. The SS man shouted at him as well:

*What kind of students do you educate here? They help Jewish pigs carrying their suitcases. It is a shame!*

The SS man demanded, that I had to be punished for my treacherous non-German deed. Dr Silomon remained silent. He just looked at me sadly, as if he wanted to say: why did you have to do this to us? I must admit to the honor of the Lessing Gymnasium, that I was never punished for my helping the Jewish lady. Four years later, after the end of the war, I witnessed to that in my teachers' denazification procedures in their favor, and they were grateful for this, since most of them had been at least formally members of the NDAP, without conviction, and only in order to save their jobs. I saw Dr, Silomon the last time after I had been drafted with my whole class into the Air Force, and was stationed in Mannheim, in order to defend the city against daily American and British saturation bombings. Dr Silomon came to our flak-position, in order to teach us history, in the Indo-Germanic perspective. During an American attack, I was lying beside Dr Silomon in an earth hole for protection against the bombs. As the pathfinder ahead of 500 liberty bombers, produced in Detroit, posited his smoke signals right above us, I asked the very pale, old Dr Silomon:

*Where are the Indo-Germanic tribesmen now? Where is Henry Ford now?*

The bombardment started, and I never received an answer from my teacher. In any case, the Aryan race solidarity had not worked in World War I, when England was allied with Japan against Germany, nor in World War II, when Germany was allied with Japan against the USA and England.

### ***Moses, Socrate, Jesus***

Two years earlier, in 1941, after the SS man had been done with his shouting at the Jewish lady, and me, and even Dr. Silomon, I was allowed to return belatedly to my classroom. When I walked through the halls of the Lessing Gymnasium, which 4 years later would be bombed out by allied bombers, while the nearby IG Farben Administration Building was saved, I passed by a class room, in which a Catholic priest, called lovingly *frog* by the students, taught in Hebrew from the book Exodus of the Hebrew Bible about

the Mosaic *Ten Commandments*, while all of them were violated against the Jews down in the air shelter basement, including the friendly and frightened Jewish lady from Frankfurt, whose nation had once produced them: the *second and third Commandment* anticipating the image - and name - prohibition of Immanuel Kant, the greatest bourgeois enlightener, a colleague of Lessing. The priest could teach religion in a public school in Nazi Germany on the basis of the Empire Concordat, concluded between Adolf Hitler and the Vatican, which treaty is still valid today, in 2020, in the German Federal Republic. On the second floor of the Lessing Gymnasium, I passed by a class room, in which a teacher taught in Greek about the dialogues of Socrates, as reported by Plato, and all what they had to say about truth and justice, while the greatest untruth and injustice was committed against the Jews down in the air shelter basement, including the friendly Jewish lady from Frankfurt. When I finally arrived at my own class room, and sat down in my seat, I found Dr. Schumann teaching in Latin out of Ovid , Publius, Ovidius Naso, (43 BC - 17/18 AD), a Roman poet from the reign of Emperor Augustus, and from the time of Jesus of Nazareth. Ovid was noted especially for his *Ars Amatoria* and *Metamorphoses*. Dr. Schuhmann belonged to the Swiss theologian Karl Barth's movement of *Confessing Christians*, which opposed and resisted the fascist, exclusive identity ideology and politics, and Antisemitism, and the Lutheran Empire Bishop Müller's community of *German Christians*, who followed and supported Adolf Hitler. The great Calvinistic, dialectical theologian Barth thought that the great philosopher and theologian ,Georg W F Hegel, should become the Thomas of Aquinas of the modern Protestants, and maybe also of the modern Catholics,, so that both may be rescued from the secular, bourgeois, Marxian and Freudian enlightenment, emphasizing *mimesis* rather than *cult*, as also did the theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer in his *religionless Christianity*, and paid for this witness with his martyr death through being nakedly hanged in the concentration camp Flössenburg in Bavaria in 1945, in the last months of World War II. Barth and Bonhoeffer applied radically Jesus' teachings against the pagan, idolatrist, fascists , who besides being *Gott-gläubig*, or *God-believing*, and talking about the Almighty, the Lord, the Providence, were also petite bourgeois enlighteners, as such denying the fear of God, as the Germanic tribesmen had once denied the fear of the Gods at the time of Tacitus, as well as miracles, angels, and Satan. and believed, that man was good by nature, and that there were no sins or guilt, but at best only mistakes, and that love should always be without pain. Most Nazi leaders never felt guilty about or repented, what was done to the Jews in the air shelter of the Lessing Gymnasium in 1941, and to the friendly Jewish woman among them, and to all the other Jewish victims: they only regretted that they had not murdered more, or all of them. Many other Germans thought the same. When after the war one of my cousins participated as judge in the *Auschwitz Trial* in Frankfurt , he got white hairs in a short time, not only because of the terrible crimes he heard about, but also because of the pressure from the population, that he should not stand against and judge his own German countrymen , who had only done their duty for the fatherland in great danger. Already before the war, some fascists had tried to revert back behind the *Abrahamic Religions* to the Gothic *Religion of Blood and Soil*, and the believes in Thor, Wotan, Odin, Freya, and in Walhalla. The confessing Christian and humanist, Dr. Schuhmann compared the present fascist age with the late

Roman Empire, and its dramatic decline into barbarism. He liked to present to his class the Latin Church songs of the Catholic Middle Ages. He was very ecumenical. Dr. Schuhmann did not shy away from criticizing bravely the fascist news of the last night, when he came into the classroom in the morning. His fearless standard statement after a short news analysis was always:

*They have bloodily, awfully, lousily cheated us again!*

Dr. Schuhmann made skeptical and cynical remarks and jokes after mentally and intellectually somewhat limited Nazi leaders had addressed the faculty and student body over the radio, e.g. Dr. Ley, the often-drunk Minister of Labor in the fascist empire. As Dr. Schuhmann was teaching in class, he always used to walk up and down the room, continually holding his handkerchief to his nose. At this morning, after he had heard the SS man's shouting at the Jewish lady, and me, and even at Director Dr. Silomon through the open windows some time before, he came to my seat, and bent down, and looked at me through his very thick glasses, and he was not angry at all because of my being late, but there was a great smile in his eyes, which seemed to say, that he was proud of me and the help I had given to the Jewish lady. After the SS man's shouting, my status as a token proletarian was greatly lifted among students and faculty, and soon afterwards I was elevated to the leader and speaker of the class, which I remained through the years and decades to come.

### ***Hitler Youth***

My position in the humanistic Lessing Gymnasium was even more elevated through an event, which took place in 1942, a year after my encounter with the friendly, Jewish lady from Frankfurt, and in her remembrance. After my father Bruno's cancer death, I had to take care of my over two years younger brother Karl, since my mother Elli had to return to the formerly Jewish ICH Schneider Shoe factory, which in the meantime had been expropriated by the fascist state from the Jewish owners, in order to feed her two children. My brother was also a student in the Lessing Gymnasium, only two classes lower, One Wednesday afternoon in August 1942, I told my brother, not to go to the obligatory Hitler Youth meeting in the *Roten Block*, the *Red Block*, a former communist settlement in Frankfurt, Ginnheim, but rather to do his homework in Latin, so that he would become somebody some day: the Hitler Youth would not last very long!. At the time, things began to go badly in Stalingrad, and in Kursk, and at the Eastern front in general. But my brother became very stubborn, and went to the Hitler Youth meeting, nevertheless, and told the leaders there, that he was late, because his brother did not let him go, since he was to do his homework for the Lessing Gymnasium, and since the Hitler Youth would not last very long anyway. The leaders denounced me to the local NSDAP, and they went to the *Gauleiter*, the Governor, of the State of Hessen, and he took my scholarship for the Lessing Gymnasium away from me, because I was not worthy to go to an elite high school in the thousand year German Reich. That meant the end of my humanistic education, since my mother could not pay the tuition from her

small salary as a typist and stenographer in the former Jewish and now Aryan ICH Shoe factory. However, totalitarian states, based on authoritarian families, are often more contradictory in themselves, than it appears on the surface. During a *Power through Joy* boat trip for all the employees of the ICH Schneider Shoe factory on the Rhein River, my mother approached bravely the state-appointed fascist Director of the ICH Schneider Shoe factory, and told him what had happened: that I had lost my scholarship at the Lessing Gymnasium, and that she was not able to pay the tuition. The Director simply and draconically said: we shall pay for it, and so they did. Thus, the fascist Director contradicted the Nazi- Gauleiter. To be sure, fascism was extreme white, racist nationalism, but it had also some socialist elements in itself. My anti-fascist friends, Walter Dirks and Gregory Baum, nevertheless, always reminded me of that, and thought it was a good element in a bad movement. My class in the Lessing Gymnasium was very happy, when I returned, and so was I.

### ***Prisoner of War***

One year later, in August 1943, I and all my class comrades were drafted to the Airforce and to the Army. After in March 1945 I had been fighting against the army of General Patton north of Frankfurt in the Spessart Mountains, I surrendered to American and Canadian officers after the Battle of Aschaffenburg: after my whole company had been destroyed in a tank attack on the Hahnenkamp. I was transported to the Prisoner of War Camp Allen in Norfolk, Virginia, USA. There I was categorized by Jewish secret service officers as anti-Nazi, because of my membership and leadership in the Catholic Youth Movement in Frankfurt, which had helped Jewish people and had spread Bishop von Galen's letter against the concentration and death camps, as well as against the Allied saturation bombing against civilians, and had been persecuted by the Gestapo. All the Jewish secret service officers had come from Germany and knew Frankfurt and German better than I did. One of the Jewish secret service officers took me as the youngest prisoner in the camp under his wings. He gave me a secure job in the camp library, after I had been fired making hamburgers and then driving a truck in Norfolk, because I took a few hamburgers and other commodities back to the camp at night, in order to feed my comrades. Many years later this secret service officer had become a civilian and a sweater salesman, living in a well to do section of Chicago, found my life story in a journal in the waiting room of his dentist in Detroit. He right away contacted me, and we met in my home in Kalamazoo, Michigan. We remained good friends for many years, until his death through a heart attack. In Camp Allen, I was educated and trained by liberal American, economy and sociology, and political science professors, sometimes motivated by the critical theory of society of the Institute for Social Research, the later Frankfurt School, which had fled from Frankfurt to the Columbia University in New York, or by the New School in New York, in order to return to Germany and to help to replace the fascist state by a liberal state.

### ***Truth, Justice, Mercy***

I arrived from Camp Allen in Frankfurt in February 1946. After having visited the American military govern met in the former IG Farben Administration Building, I started my political work toward a new, more reconciled society in the new Christian Democratic Party, with the anti-fascist, Catholic journalist Walter Dirks, who had returned from prison and internal exile, and with his friend Eugen Kogon, an Austrian Jew, who had converted to Catholicism, and who had returned from the Concentration Camp Buchenwald after seven years of imprisonment, and who became the author of the famous book, the *SS State*, in which he as political scientist described scientifically the structure of Hitler's labor and death camps, and on the basis of their newly founded *Frankfurter Hefte*, a Left-Catholic journal for culture and politics. At the same time, I returned to the Lessing Gymnasium, in order to complete my abitur, which I needed for my study of philosophy, theology, history, sociology and psychology at the Universities of Frankfurt, Mainz, Münster, and at the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC, USA. Since the building of the Lessing Gymnasium, including the air shelter, into which the friendly and frightened Jewish lady had disappeared four years earlier, had completely been destroyed by allied bombs, students and faculty had moved to a building near the Frankfurt Zoo. The confessing Christian, Dr. Schuhmann, had replaced the fascist Director Dr. Silomon. On arrival, I became right away class leader and speaker again. During our abitur procedure, the most truthful, and anti-ideological, and just, confessional Christian, Dr. Schuhmann, discovered that some of the students had cheated in their Latin exams. He was very upset and angry, and wanted to fail them. As class speaker, I went to him. He remembered my encounter with the SS man, because of the Jewish lady. I presented to him the case of the students, who had cheated. I argued, that the students had returned from the most criminal Russian campaign *Barbarossa*, in which four million, mostly baptized Germans and Europeans murdered twenty six million Russians, supposedly atheistic bolshevists, and, according to SS leader Adolf Eichmann, six million believing and assimilated Jews, and in which the murderers had justly been beaten, and only a few returned home. I agreed with Dr. Schuhmann, that there had to be truth and justice, for which he had stood up so bravely as confessing Christian and humanist under fascism. But I reminded him also, that there had to be room for compassion and mercy as well. Dr Schuhmann struggled most seriously with himself about this issue of compassion and mercy. But finally, he agreed and showed compassion and mercy, and rescued the students. I was sure, that the friendly Jewish lady of Frankfurt, the victim, whose great suffering started in the basement of the Lessing Gymnasium, if not already long before, would have agreed with the confessing Christian Dr. Schuhmann concerning truth and justice, without, however, denying in any way the compassion and mercy, which had not been granted to her, and to all the others in the air shelter of the Lessing Gymnasium in 1941, and in all the work and death camps of Eastern Europe.

### ***Regret and Repentance***

My very assimilated, Jewish friend at Western Michigan University, Professor Georg Klein, was as a twelve-year-old boy imprisoned in a German concentration camp.

One day an SS man came out of the barracks of the camp. He gave Georg some chocolate, and then showed him a picture of his own son, and told him, that his son was of the same age as he, Georg, and then went back into the barracks, and shot himself. There was some regret and repentance. Georg never forgot this event. It left him passionately truthful and just as man and teacher. But up to his death, Georg was also merciful and compassionate toward the enemy, after he was beaten, and regretted and repented his crimes. When after the war Georg was stationed as an American occupation soldier in Frankfurt, he was once sitting in a restaurant, in which old Germans made Antisemitic remarks and jokes on the next table, which they thought he could not understand. Georg remained silent and did not interfere: he, so to speak held up the other cheek. For a long time, I could not understand his attitude toward the Germans, who had made him, and his family suffer so much at such a young age. But now I think, that Georg was merciful and compassionate toward the conquered enemy, even if he unfortunately did not regret and repent his most horrendous crimes, without in the least ceasing to be emphatically truthful and just as a man and a Jew, and as a political scientist, and as a humanist. I also think, that the friendly, Jewish lady of Frankfurt would have agreed with Georg, and acted likewise, if she had been allowed to survive.