

From The Testimony of Lucille Eichengruen on Relations with Neighbors

Lucille Eichengruen was born in Hamburg in 1925. Her parents had emigrated from Poland to Hamburg after the First World War.

Interviewer: Did you have German friends?

Answer: Non-Jewish German friends? No.

Interviewer: Only Jewish?

Answer: Yes. We had some neighbors and the neighbors stopped talking and playing with us after 1933. But real friends, no. I did not have any.

Interviewer: and your parents?

Answer: neither.

Interviewer: Only Jews?

Answer: Only Jews and strangely all the friends of my father's with very few exceptions were Polish Jews. My father was friendly with Martin Buber, with Dr. Paul Holtzer, but those were exceptions.

Interviewer: What happened after 1933?

Answer: In 1933 the climate changed. There were restrictions, there were ugly incidents – we walked to school, children would beat us up. Children would yell at us and make nasty remarks. We were told to be quiet on the streetcar. We were told not to draw attention to ourselves, and slowly and gradually people began to leave. Students, teachers – it was a very unsettled situation. It was constant turmoil and for a child it was not conducive to learning. It was difficult to study under those circumstances.

Interviewer: And what happened?

Answer: My grades were not the best and my parents hired tutors for mathematics, for English, for grammar, and they improved somewhat, but I was not a carefree, happy child. I cried a great deal, I had a lot of nightmares and it was not a good childhood. My parents tried – I had no reason to believe that there was anything short in the house, but the atmosphere from the outside was so strong that it just did not leave, it just was always there.

Interviewer: Your neighbors – how did they react?

Answer: They stopped talking to us and the children would run after us and call us ugly name names, never talk to us. Sometimes they'd throw some stones and the boys, when they were in the mood they would beat us up.

Source : Yad Vashem Archive O3/9556