

Lernen aus der Geschichte e.V.

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Das mehrsprachige Webportal publiziert fortlaufend Informationen zur historisch-politischen Bildung in Schulen, Gedenkstätten und anderen Einrichtungen zur Geschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts. Schwerpunkte bilden der Nationalsozialismus, der Zweite Weltkrieg sowie die Folgegeschichte in den Ländern Europas bis zu den politischen Umbrüchen 1989.

Dabei nimmt es Bildungsangebote in den Fokus, die einen Gegenwartsbezug der Geschichte herausstellen und bietet einen Erfahrungsaustausch über historisch-politische Bildung in Europa an.

A Rendezvous with Consequences

Dr. Werner Best had been Heydrich's representative, jointly responsible for Nazi racial ideology, and responsible for the deportation of the Jews in Denmark. After 1945 he became a manager in industry, also at Mülheim multinationals. He lobbied as a member of the FDP party (Free Democratic Party) in the 1950s for the general amnesty demands of the FDP. Werner Best died peacefully in 1989 in a remote old age home in Hochdahl. It was different for 25-year-old Martha Kodinsky from Mülheim, who was sentenced to seven years imprisonment by the Nazis because of resistance and membership in the Communist party. In 1959, she was again sentenced for sedition to fourteen months in prison and repayment of her pension. She died at the age of 51 of a heart condition shortly after her release from prison.

The following texts are based on a fictional situation. Without suspecting it, someone has an appointment with one of Werner Best's grandchildren ...

Student texts:

It is a sunny Sunday morning. I am seated on the balcony at breakfast. The birds are chirping and it is already relatively warm, although it is only 9 a.m. I open the front page of the newspaper and bite into

my roll. The mouthful sticks in my throat. The newspaper story is about our neighbor, a very serious elderly man. The headline reads: "Judge is responsible for the murder of hundreds of Jews!" In the next line, I see the name and thus learn that it does concern our neighbor. I suddenly lost my appetite. I read on once I regain some semblance of self-control. The newspaper reports that he was an SS officer who had ordered the murder of some Jews in a concentration camp and that this was discovered only yesterday through old documents. As I put the paper down, dark clouds obscure the sun and I develop goose flesh. Preoccupied, I clean the table. I reflect: "I would never have realized it. He was always so nice and friendly. God, he had often watched me when I was a small child and my parents were away." Utterly appalled, I go to my room and sit on my bed, and ask myself "Why him?"

When I opened the newspaper today, I thought I was having a stroke. Honestly, I hoped I had misread it, but it was correct. My neighbor, an elderly man about 60, always well dressed and very friendly, was in the paper. I read that he had a Nazi past and had killed many people. A shiver ran down my spine and I was afraid. My first thought was, how do I behave next time I meet him, above all, because I am a Jewish woman. I also had no idea if he knew this, but I thought if I am always friendly to him nothing would happen. But my feelings toward him had changed abruptly because of his horrible past.