

Testament of a Nazi Soldier

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Word Count: 1000

Ich hieße Leberecht Gewidmet. My name is Leberecht Gewidmet. I am a man. And I have pale blue eyes, pale skin, light chestnut hair, and a short, stocky figure. When I was young, the the only thing I thought of my physical appearance was that my thick fingers made helping my father in his tailor shop quite difficult. I never thought it would make me worse, or better, than anyone else. In a world full of color, where I, for one, could not tell, nor really ever cared, what color another person's eyes were or how fair their hair was.

I was born January 30, 1909. I was too young at the time to remember the actual war itself, but when I was ten years old, I remember my father yelling out curses and profanity, saying things like "some treaty" and "how dare they treat our great country with such disrespect.." while my mother rubbed his shoulders in an attempt to calm him. I remember how my father made me drop out of school, how he said that he needed me to learn to work to help support us. Prices on the most basic necessities seemed to rise beyond what we could afford.

Medicine was especially expensive. I still remember my mother's face. Pale eyes, like mine. Fair skin. Dark hair, and always a warm smile. She fell ill during that time. We could not afford the medicine she needed to get better.

I threw myself into my work. It was all I could do. My father drowned his anguish in alcohol. I'd always seen my father as a strong man. He was stocky and muscled, with blonde hair and fierce blue eyes that reflected his fiery German personality. But in his many drunken stupors I came to see how hateful he was. How Germany is a gem surrounded dirty commies in the east and disgusting Brits to the west. Not to mention the vicious, greedy Jews that tarnished the once lustrous glow of our country.

I said nothing, continuing to pleat a piece of cloth. My mother would have reprimanded him. But it wasn't my place to say such things to my father. Time passed. My father sobered up-slowly-and began going out more.

I will never forget the day. July 12, 1927. The day my father changed my life. And it all started with a simple pamphlet labeled "*Der Nazi-Sozi*", and a thin red book called "*Mein Kampf*".

My father explained he had heard this man speaking, the man who had written the small red book, and how he had totally enraptured my father with his words. I skimmed the pamphlet, the words "*Volksgemeinschaft*", "racially desirable" and "Jewish conspiracy" Feeling slightly disgusted, I set it down gingerly, picking up the red book. "*Mein Kampf*". My Struggle. By Adolf Hitler.

I'd never heard the name before.

My father convinced me to witness one of the man's speeches. I couldn't understand it then, and I still have trouble explaining it now. There was just something about Hitler's words. They made you angry, yet totally calm. In control. Wanting to act on his words, like they were the end all and be all. We needed to unite as a country. The strongest of us needed to stand up and fight for our people. The inferior people-the capitalists, the communists, the mentally handicapped, and especially the Jews-needed to stay out of our way and stop inhibiting the German way of life.

I found myself cheering, my right arm stiffly reaching toward Hitler in a passionate salute. It sounded more like a warcry than a cheer.

The National Socialist German Workers Party was growing exponentially in response. It wasn't long before the party announced their intention to run in the

Reichstag elections-which they effortlessly won. Under their administration, Hitler was elected Chancellor of Germany through his promises to revive the economy, to destroy communism, and to restore German prominence and purging the *Untermenschen*.

On January 30, 1933, Hitler was sworn in as chancellor. It was my 24th birthday.

It all happened so fast.

Legislation passed that split people into groups: Aryan and non-Aryan.

Thankfully, I was Aryan, albeit Alpine Aryan, a lower tier than my father, who was Nordic. But at least I wasn't a filthy Jew, who were, genetically, less than human. Jews and other non-Aryans were also removed from political organizations, so we could begin to build our perfect German world free of their disgusting influence.

Then Jewish artists were no longer allowed to create plays or art pieces, for fear of spreading their influence. Jewish children were removed from schools so they could not poison young Aryan minds. Jews were no longer admitted to hospitals. Licences were revoked. Workers were fired or quietly dismissed. They had to add "Israel" and "Sara" to their names to make them easier to identify. Yellow stars had to be put on their clothes. Their homes were taken from them.

It all happened so fast. I only realize it now when I think back on it.

When World War II came I quickly joined the army draft, eager to prove my loyalty to my country. The rest is a blur. I was put on the front lines and was shot in the shoulder almost immediately, and was captured by Russian soldiers. I remained a prisoner of war until October of 1947, well after the war was over.

I found out about the Holocaust soon after I returned to Germany. I had no idea what had been happening under the guise of uniting my people. I don't ask for

forgiveness. I don't think I deserve it. I let this travesty happen. I was a part of it. I had become a monster without even knowing it. *Ich hieße Leberecht Gewidmet.* I am a man who made grave mistakes. I hope that those that read this try to understand my thoughts and how this terrible loss of life occurred. And I hope you ensure it never happens again.

Citations

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