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History books provide general directions and events which bring countries to changes of government and general trends by the people they govern. It is quite a different personal history to live through changes and trends as we, the Freudenheim founding father and mother, experienced.

We remember the pre-World War I days and the patriotism of our parents as Germans during that war, the financial and personal contributions of family and friends in spite of being Jewish and restricted in a German monarchy that allowed Jews to fight for "their" country below the rank of officer and gave titles to Jews who paid heavily for such in industry....the money to go for church-windows as was the offer made to my father who promptly refused it.

Losing the war, with our runaway Kaiser safe in Holland, Germany changed into the Weimar Republic; many Jews did participate in government. The postwar era loosened the moral, the losses of territories to the victors and the ever decreasing value of the German Mark gave the country an image of drunkenness to avoid facing reality - and the cultural greatness of the 1920s reminds me of the present superb productions by actors, musicians, producers, etc. who are at their best with drugs.

Inflation, unemployment; no money to buy with, no job to pay for a living are the basic conditions for revolutions and/or take-overs from people who hoped for the better but didn't succeed. On ruins of a failing economy was the third Reich, the Nazis' thousand-year Reich built which lasted 12 years and ruined the whole of Europe, a good part of Asia, the north of Africa. The second World War involved almost every country in the world either as participant, neutral arms-supplier, or place of refuge for refugees of all kinds, mostly political and religious.

It is against this brief historical background that I place our personal life-story. I do recall my family's friend, the well-known Berlin-born artist Hermann Struck who was an orthodox Jew and, as a personal friend of Theodor Herzl, an old Zionist. He had his studio in the well integrated apartment house where I was born. In the first floor apartment lived Generalfeldmarschall von Moltke, the Kaiser's war-planner, on the 2nd floor lived Dr. von Ilberg, the Kaiser's personal physician (when the Kaiser visited in our house his ailing physician, my sister and I greeted him and Kaiserin Augusta in the stairway balcony of the house, they shook hands with us and asked our names - if the Jewishness of the name was to their dislike, they didn't show it).