

Transkript des Films: Nachbarn/neighbors: Der Flüchtling aus Lübeck von Ken Aptekar – Februar 2016

<https://kenaptekar.net/die-fluchtling-aus-lubeck-the-refugee-from-lubeck/>

Rodolfo Hofmann was born in Lübeck 1923

Rodolfo and his family fled to Santiago, Chile, in 1936

Before he left Germany forever, Rodolfo celebrated his Bar Mitzvah in the Lübeck Synagogue.

We learned from school that Santa Claus comes to your home and brings you a gift even if you put, I don't know what it is.

>> A wreath.

>> Yeah, outside the house.

It was a nordic custom and it was one of the nicest things, to see a Christmas tree and outside all is covered with snow.

So this feeling, the nice picture of all this makes you feel happy.

I think we get on Christmas some gifts too, it was underneath the tree.

And while in school, you were singing Christmas carols - and those, I had the feeling, were nice things.

We were assimilated to the German system and we liked it. And that time, I think that the jews would have been assimilated, following the customs of everybody there. They should have been at home, jews, and with the lights of Hanukkah.

But they would have two festivities, one Christmas, one Hanukkah.

You cannot explain to our children or today that we had a Christmas tree at home, or that we had a Christmas dinner or New Year's dinner. Rosh Hashanah was a religious day, but I never had the feeling it was the beginning of my year.

We left in '36, and after that, they didn't allow Jewish people to go to public schools. So the Jewish community gave classes in the synagogue. And in that time, it was the reason to leave from Lübeck. And even your best friends from one day to the other disappeared. It didn't tell you that they were leaving. They were afraid that somebody could stop their leaving.

My father was born in a small village, Barschfeld.

He saw an advertising that they were looking for the administrator of this shoe shop. So he applied and he got the job. And he became a partner on this shoe shop. He bought a house where we were living.

I had my Bar Mitzvah on the year we left. I had in june my birthday and we left in December.

My father was in charge of the shoe shop. And in front was a policeman directing the traffic. He had a perfect view to our store. So no people dared to come in. It was our luck that he was there and the sales went down.

I remember my mother asked my father, he needs some money for the household. And my father answered, I have not. I still remember and never will forget that situation.

They were lucky they could sell the store to a man of the name Schümann. The Schümann, after the war, paid a small difference he bought too cheap he knew. And then we wanted to leave, we must pay a fine to the government. And we didn't have the amount. Some relatives of my mother in Hamburg, they gave us the money. That was the reason to contact the sister of my mother here in Chile. So we applied for a visa in Hamburg, the Chilean consulate. And there was a Jewish employee in the consulate. So we got the visa.

In the end, we joined the big family here in Chile.

I remember I was once in St. Annen Museum and it was very dirty, all with dust. This was not for a little boy interesting. Who cares about the church, cares about this picture. They were not interested.

I was playing with the children of the same street. We played at our home, we played on the street. And relation to Jewishness: I nothing knew about difference or liked them or didn't like them.

Then came the moment, it was not allowed for them to play with me or I didn't play with them. We lived very near Denmark. We never traveled overnight to Denmark. We would have changed our mind a little bit. We only knew about Germany. You must understand, we were mostly German. And suddenly, we were separated. That was a surprise. But our feeling was mostly German.

My father, in the year 14, he had to make his service. And the uncle of mine, the brother of my mother, died the first World War.

The Jewishness started with Hitler. "Das Jüdischsein begann mit Hitler. Dadurch, dass die Juden in der Zeitung, in der Presse angegriffen wurden, wurde mir eigentlich erst richtig bewusst, dass wir Juden sind und als Juden zusammenhalten müssen in der ganzen jüdischen Kollektivität. Und das machte eben die Veränderung.

Und wir mussten auch die Konsequenzen zahlen, dass wir als Juden deklariert wurden – denn sonst wären wir Deutsche oder Franzosen oder was sonst auch ist."

We have no Chileans which we invite for dinner or let's say lunch. They don't invite us. We are here in this building, we have one Jewish family underneath which we invited and they invite us. But other people here in the building we don't not even know. Even if you meet them in the elevator, say hello by courtesy, but we don't know who they are. So we live in a Jewish ghetto, which we made ourselves.

Why do you go back to Lübeck? Because you find something of your memory even today.

I remember the show of Hansel and Gretel. When the angels came down and surrounded the sleeping Hansel and Gretel and the other special musicians. "Knusper, knusper Mäuschen, wer klopft an mein Häuschen ... der Wind, der Wind, das himmlische Kind ...", There was a Christmas tree at the end and they throw away Lübeck Marzipan in the public. „Komm tanz mit mir mit mir, rechts herum, links herum, einmal hin, einmal her, rundherum, das ist nicht schwer.