



## **Rudi's Story, Chapter 8**

I think it's extremely important for children or adults for that matter should learn about the Holocaust. Unfortunately I'm not given to speaking to groups of children or adults for that matter on the subject, not because I don't cherish talking about the subject as such but because I'm not given to talking at all unless I have a speech in front of me. But I have given talks to children both in England and in Berlin, I went to my old school, both primary schools and the Jewish school to give talks and of course I was introduced as being an old boy of those schools so there was certainly a connection. In England I only talk to one set of classes at a school near Skipton at special invitation. But of course it's terribly important and in a way I'm sorry that I'm not given to doing this like many of the other members of HSFA have done but it is important, very important.

### **And I wondered how you felt about the Holocaust being considered of worldwide significance.**

Well the Holocaust is something that has never happened before and hopefully will never happen again although people say that the Crusades were terrible but I think the Holocaust beats them all in cruelty and in unprovoked cruelty. So it's important that the world knows but unfortunately there are some heads of government for instance who happen to be good speakers and get re-elected as presidents of their respective country who think otherwise. And this brings me back to Hitler incidentally, that the question is why, how could it have happened, how could the Holocaust have happened? And this maniac, I can only call him that, found Germany in the 1920s on its knees, there had been inflation, the victorious powers from the First World War imposed terrible sanctions on Germany which they were hard put to repay, there was unemployment, there were shortages of everything. The only things that flourished were in fact the cultural system in Germany which seemed to be unaffected by these disadvantages, the theatre, music, talks, Lodges. But Hitler although his book already described what he would do including bad things, when he became chancellor he decided to build motorways and create employment for people in order to build the Volkswagen motor car. Now those were brilliant things and if he kept to that kind of structure he would have been a great statesman. But superimposed on these two good things that he instituted was his mania for expansion of Germany, which was big enough as it

was, and his terrible hatred of the Jews. And that was eventually his undoing. He annexed Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland; and of course his dreadful treatment of the Jews. The big question is how could he have infected so many thousands of Germans – and Austrians, Ukrainians – into perpetrating these terrible deeds. And this is the eternal question. I like to give this metaphor that if you take a spark to a haystack it's only a small thing but within a matter of minutes it can be turned into a raging inferno. Now I should think that anti-Semitism had always been latent in Germany but under the surface. It wasn't overt at all. But then he came along and started raving and got one of his henchmen to produce a paper, Der Sturmer, which preached open anti-Semitism and this latent anti-Semitism was fanned into flames and people latched on. Now Hitler was a good orator and he carried the people along with him. And that's what's happening today as well. People become presidents of their countries because they make a good speech. People liked to listen to Hitler, he was a good speaker, and he fanned the flames and people latched on and that's how it started, that's how it became a big inferno.