



Facing the Lion - Memoirs of a Young Girl in Nazi Europe

Simone Arnold-Liebster

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FACING THE LION is the autobiographical account of a young girl's faith and courage. In the years immediately preceding World War II, Simone Arnold is a young girl who delights in life – her doting parents, her loving aunts and uncles, and her grandparents at their mountain farm in the Alsace-Lorraine region of France. As Simone grows into her preteen years, her parents turn from the Catholic Church and become devout Jehovah's Witnesses. Simone, too, embraces the faith. The Nazi party (the "Lion") takes over Alsace-Lorraine, and Simone's schools become Nazi propaganda machines. Simone refuses to accept the Nazi party as being above God. Her simple acts of defiance lead her to be persecuted by the school staff and local officials, and ignored by friends. With her father already taken away to a German concentration camp, Simone is wrested away from her mother and sent to a reform school to be "reeducated." There, Simone learns that her mother has also been put in a camp. Simone remains in the harsh reform school until the end of the war. She emerges feeling detached from life, but the faith that sustains her through her ordeals helps her rebuild her world. Facing the Lion provides an interesting and detailed view of ordinary country and town life in the pre-war years and during Hitler's regime. This inspiring story of a young girl standing up for her beliefs in the face of society's overwhelming pressure to conform is a potent reminder of the power of remaining true to one's beliefs.

"...a compelling read. As Simone's daily life changes from the simplicity of her earliest days, we see, with her, the corrupting impact of German occupation. With her, and through her story, we come to put new pictures to the familiar story of the Nazi regime. This is a book to read from cover to cover. It is hard not to be transported into Simone's world and impossible not to understand, through her, something more about the terrible years of the Third Reich. Thank you, Simone, for telling us your story."

Christine E. King, President Staffordshire University, United Kingdom.

SIMONE ARNOLD LIEBSTER, born on August 17, 1930, spent her childhood years in the region of Alsace, France. After surviving the period of Nazi terror described in this book, Simone attended art school for fabric design in Mulhouse, following in the footsteps of her father Adolphe, an art consultant for the Schaefer fabric printery. In 1952, she attended the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead and has since served full-time as a Bible educator in France. She married Max Liebster in 1956. In 1989, Simone Liebster became a member of the founding board for the Cercle Européen des Témoins de Jéhovah Anciens Déportés et Internés (CETJAD), a European association of Jehovah's Witness survivors of Nazi persecution. Her activities with the CETJAD include frequent public appearances. Liebster has spoken in a session about human rights held by the European Parliament, as well as one held by the Council of Europe in Brussels. She has visited over 50 cities in France, Germany, Belgium, Spain, Switzerland, England, Canada and the United States, relating her experiences to educators, students, and the public.

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