

Franny's Story

Frau Fanny Mikus was sterilized against her will in 1936. When she later became pregnant, she was forced to have an abortion and then undergo a second sterilization procedure. The following statement was made by Frau Mikus during the filming of the television program "Nazi Injustice Toward the Deaf" in Munich. The scriptwriters had originally planned a programmed interview with Frau Mikus. While the camera was running, a spontaneous outburst arose from her painful memories, and we chose not to interrupt. The result was the following statement, here in transcription. It is a witness to the times.

For being what I am, I too was sterilized by the Nazis. [In 1935], my parents received a letter from the health authorities, that I was unconditionally to be sterilized. But my parents and relatives were against it, and formally rejected it in a letter to the district court. Then there was a legal summons. We all went, and there I was sentenced to sterilization despite our objections. My mother was also supposed to be sterilized. But she was already in menopause. She had to sign a statement that she would not have a fourth child. We signed it. But I didn't want to be sterilized. I cried a lot. Then I received a summons for the operation. I went there as requested. If I hadn't gone, they would have taken me in a police car. My parents wanted to avoid that. So [in 1936] we had to go. The nurse had to force me in a room I was brought to because I kept trying to get away. I just didn't want to go through with it. There were also two other deaf women in the other beds, and they cried too. The next night the nurse gave me four shots, because I was restless. After I fell asleep, I was taken from the room. I felt that I was being moved. I was only partially anesthetized. After the sterilization operation, I was in the intensive care ward and the nurses came to me and they cried too. Pointing to the picture of Hitler, they said "not good, but we have to keep quiet." After the operation, I went to the health insurance office and applied for medical benefits. There they told me, "What do you want medical benefits for? Now you'll have a lot of fun, you don't need to be careful any more that you'll get pregnant." I was worried that my fiance would leave me, because I had been sterilized. He said, "No."

Then in 1938, we wanted to go to the registry office and give notice that we planned to get married. The registry official opened a book and looked in it and said that I was to be sterilized again. Well, when I was released from the hospital after the sterilization, they told me that I would not have any children. I didn't believe it. I still didn't have much of a clue. Then in 1938, I got pregnant. I didn't believe that I could have a child. My mother wasn't there; she was away. When she got back she was horrified that I was pregnant. She said, "You have to go to the gynecologist." Then we went to the gynecologist and had me examined. The doctor was friendly and he congratulated me. He said that I really was pregnant. I told him that I had been sterilized and my mother told him the same thing. Then the doctor got scared and stopped treating me.

My stomach continued to swell. Then I got a letter from the gynecology clinic; it was a summons. I went there. The nurses took my stockings, my panties and all my clothes. They examined me. Then I left the examination room. I wanted to get dressed again, but all my clothes were gone. So then I asked the doctor, "Where are my clothes?" The doctor said, "No. You're staying here." They wanted to test my urine for three days. I said, "I don't believe it. I want to go home. I can also be examined at home." The doctor said, "No, you are to stay here." So I stayed there. I was locked up again in my room on the fourth floor.

I kept waiting for the moment when the nurse would come and open up, and then I ran down the hall. But they grabbed me and pushed me back in the room. I cried so much. During those three days I was not able to pass any urine. This was never investigated. After three days the doctors came on their rounds and simply said "Out with it." I asked, "What do you mean?" They said, "It has to come out." I said "No!" I wanted to run to the window. But they caught me. Then I had to be moved to another room, where the windows had bars. I can't forget it. I was desperate. The nurses and the doctor went away. Then I quickly wrote a postcard and ran quickly down the hall, then down the stairs. Then I saw my friend. She was just making a visit. Quickly I gave her the card. But I had been seen. The card was confiscated. I wanted to write to my friend that I'd had to have an abortion. Then I went back into the hospital room. That night I cried a lot, an awful lot. I got a shot to tranquilize me. The next day I was rolled away. I saw the operation room in the half-light-basins, instruments, the table. I cried out again and then I passed out. After the operation, I woke up in the intensive care ward. I felt that my stomach was still swollen. I asked the nurse whether the baby was still in there. "No, it's already gone." The

nurses cried too. They felt sorry for me. They said, "It was a boy; he was normal." "Hitler is crazy," the nurse said. But she had to keep quiet. Then I cried and told the doctor that it burned and burned down below. I wanted to pee, but the doctor said "No, the dressing is still in there." On the third day the dressing was taken out. A whole mountain of blood. I asked the nurse whether I could have visits. The nurse said I could. My baby's father had already been there but he had his working clothes on. The nurse asked me, "Who is Christian?" I said, "My boyfriend, we're engaged." "What's his last name?" "Mikus." "Good."

That afternoon my boyfriend came to the intensive care ward. He had received special permission from the nurse. He was in total shock. He let his presents drop because I was so pale. I was worried that he wouldn't want me anymore because I no longer had the baby. But he said, "We're in the hands of the state. We can't do anything, but we'll stay with one another."

In 1938, after the abortion, I went to the registry office. Now we wanted to get married without any more fuss. The registry official took out a paper from the health authorities where it said that I had to be sterilized again-I forgot to tell you. From the clinic that performed the abortion I got a paper that said that I was to come back again in weeks. But I didn't go back. I just couldn't. I put it off for a long time. Until when? 1938. Then the registry official said, "I'm sorry." Then I went home and told my parents about it and asked them what I should do. I said then that I would rather enter a convent to wait until Hitler had lost the war. But my boyfriend said that they did the same things to people in church homes: sterilizations, abortions, and so on. What was I to do? So I said, "Then we won't get married." But my boyfriend wanted to marry me. Then, with a heavy heart, I let myself be sterilized again. But this was much worse than the first time. My stomach was cut up horribly. For the first sterilization, the incision was horizontal but the second time they made a long vertical cut in my belly. I've often had a rupture when I got up during the night when I was upset. It just bursts. I was out of my mind. And again I didn't get any sick benefits. My uncle cursed a lot about Hitler. Then he was summoned by the Nazis to Berlin, then Munich, Berlin, Munich. It was really bad. Then in 1940 or 1941, he was arrested because he had said so much about Hitler and he had wanted to help the deaf and do everything he could. It was a bad time. Then we went to the registry office in 1941. We got the marriage papers because I had been sterilized. But afterwards, our marriage was so unhappy, no children and our lovemaking was not as complete as before. It was really bad.