KLAUS OLIVEN



MY FAMILY HISTORY

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First version

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To my dear wife Seldi

to our children

Judith Vivien

Ruben George

Daniel (in memoriam)

Miguel Roberto

Miriam Frances

Gabriel Fernando

their spouses and descendants

to my sister Susi (in memoriam)

and to all my ancestors, relatives and friends

whose memory I am trying to preserve herewith

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PREFACE

The present family chronicle is the final version of a genealogical study which I began a few years ago. Originally it was not my intention to write a detailed family history. I began by tracing the descendants of *Landrabbiner* (Provincial Rabbi) Dr. Samuel E. Meyer, the brother of my maternal great-grandfather Louis E. Meyer. Rabbi Samuel´s personality and great number of children impressed me greatly. Initially I wrote a few pages only under the title "The descendants (fifteen children) of *Landrabbiner* Samuel E. Meyer and his wife Lina née Sieskind."

After that, I decided to write a more complete family chronicle, starting with Rabbi Samuel's mother, my great-great-grandmother Rebecca Meyer. I called it "The descendants of Rebecca Meyer, née Levi Warburg," but later on I also included my father's ancestors as well as my wife's family.

When I began that version, which was completed in May 1993, I never imagined that the study would consist of over ninety typewritten pages. I was simply following in my mother's footsteps. She was an enthusiastic amateur genealogist. The more I progressed with this fascinating genealogical research, the more involved I became. Small wonder, dealing with so many prominent and outstanding Jewish personalities, especially in the Meyer family.

Tracing the various branches of the Meyer family was not always an easy task due to its proverbial fertility. Rebecca Meyer had nine children, three from her first marriage to Abraham Berend and six from her second one to Ephraim Meyer. My maternal great-grandparents Louis and Rebecca Meyer had eight children, as did my paternal great-grandparents, Heymann and Bertha Oliven. Löbel and Henriette Schottländer, the parents of my paternal grandmother, had eleven children.

A copy of the previous manuscript was sent to the Leo Baeck Institute in New York. I also sent copies to various relatives and other interested persons. As a result I found myself in contact with family members I had not known before. Some of them made a few corrections and provided new information, which I have incorporated in this history. A copy of the present manuscript will also be sent to the Leo Baeck Institute, to be available there as a source of information and reference for Jewish and non-Jewish scholars and genealogists.

In 1997 I decided to buy a computer in order to facilitate the writing of this new and greatly expanded version of my family chronicle, which would be more detailed, descriptive and comprehensive than the previous one. In order to make it livelier, I decided to add photos, pictures and reproductions of genealogical trees as well as other relevant documents.

I also decided to write my own story and add it to this new version. Strictly speaking, it cannot be considered part of a family history, but is more like an autobiography. I believe, however, that it is very important to include in this family history all the events and facts related to Germany in the 1920s and 30s, starting with the Weimar Republic and then the Nazi regime, which came to power in 1933. There are now not too many people left, who remember those times in Germany to which I was an eyewitness. I therefore consider it my duty towards future generations to register on these pages all that I lived through in those eventful years, as well as my experiences in later years.

I wish to mention two people who provided me with very valuable material, some of which I am quoting in this edition. From Peter Schulze, an excellent historian of the Jewish community in Hanover, I received very interesting articles and publications written by him, in connection with the Meyer family. He also sent me copies of files from the Hanover Municipal Archives dated before and during World War I, in connnection with the conferring of the title *Geheimer Kommerzienrat* (Privy councilor of commerce) to my grandfather Emil L. Meyer. Furthermore, Schulze thoroughly researched the history of the old house on Calenberger Strasse, which once belonged to my ancestors and is now a historical heritage site. He also wrote a very interesting report about "The history, significance and decline of the Hanover bank Ephraim Meyer & Sohn."

I am also very much indebted to Lars Menk of Berlin, a young and idealistic genealogical amateur researcher of the Schottländer family. He wrote an extensive paper "The origins of the Schottlaender Families," wherein he deals in detail with every known and traceable member of this family in Europe and elsewhere.

I am very grateful to my good friend, Diane Grosklaus Whitty, who was born in the US but lived in Brazil for more than twenty years. With her literary skill, she did a splendid job editing my family history. We maintained an extensive correspondence about many English terms and expressions. Her excellent knowledge of the English language and its style, structure, and punctuation were most helpful in putting the final touches on my story.

Many thanks also to my friend Jacques Gros, without whose great technical computer skills I would hardly have been able to complete the computer version of this manuscript. I wrote its first, much shorter version on my old German portable typewriter, a 1934 vintage Erika brand. For this final version I found it necessaary to buy a PC. Not having had any previous computer training, at first I often faced exasperating difficulties. Whenever these headaches aroused, Jacques came to my rescue and - sometimes in just a minute or even by phone - overcame all the problems that gave me so much trouble.

Information on my maternal ancestors, while not abundant, is diverse, especially from about 1800 to the 1930s. It includes memoirs, a diary, reports, manuscripts, newspaper clippings, etc. Much less material exists on my paternal ancestors. Scarcely any material or documents are available regarding my wife Seldi's family.

Finally, there remains the question: Why all this exhaustive work, and is it really necessary and worthwhile to know about and research one's ancestors? I definitely believe it is. We certainly should know where we come from and who our ancestors were, what they accomplished and how they lived. We must know about our past and about our forebears of whom we can be really proud. I believe that knowing about them represents an obligation for us to continue their work and honor our tradition.

I felt it my duty towards my and also Seldi's ancestors, as well as towards ourselves and our children, their descendants and all family members wherever they live, to write down all the information I could gather. I believe that the last opportunity to do so was in my hands and in my mind. Our children certainly would not have been able to research and go through all the material written in German that I used for this publication.

As to the genealogical research of the present and recent generations, this of course has become most difficult or nearly impossible, due to the dispersion of the family members throughout the world as a consequence of Nazi persecution and forced emigration.

In this regard I wish to reproduce here part of a letter I received back in 1969 from the amateur genealogist of the Meyer family, Dr. Walther Meyer, who was seventy-nine years old at the time. He wrote: "Yes, you are right, I shared with your mother the enthusiasm for genealogy, especially the one concerning our family. However, I wisely restricted myself to the ancestors and descendants of my grandfather, *Landrabbiner* Dr. Samuel Ephraim Meyer. But the family is so dispersed nowadays, that further collection of data is of no use to anybody. Who still wants to know, after all, about the increase or decrease of the Salomons in South Africa or the Morgans in Australia [great-grandchildren of Rabbi Samuel Meyer and banker Louis Meyer respectively], let alone the American or English branches?"

In the early 1940s, my grandmother, Helene Meyer, wrote a letter from Switzerland to my mother Leonie in Brazil. Helene was over eighty years old at the time. She was responding to my mother's request for some additional information for her genealogical studies. Helene wrote: "But whom do you write the story for? The present generation does not know the previous one and will hardly be interested in it." Aware of the frankness and sometimes sharp tongue of her daughter, Helene cautiously added, "You also must not write anything disagreeable about the people."

Good old Grandma Helene lived with us in our apartment in Berlin until she emigrated to Switzerland shortly before WW II. She as well as my mother certainly did not know that over half a century later I would collect every little bit of material available to record the present family chronicle, which honors both Helene and Leonie as well as all our ancestors.

The oil portraits of my great-great-grandparents Ephraim and Rebecca Meyer, which I recently had restored, are prominently displayed on a wall overlooking our dining room table. Many times, when we celebrate *Kabbalat Shabbat* as well as Passover Seder, Hanukka or Rosh Hashanah there, with our children and grandchildren, I have the feeling that these illustrious ancestors - and through them all our forebears - are looking down on our family from their picture frames. In spite of all the persecution and discrimination, they proudly kept their Judaism alive to pass it on to us.

I believe that they certainly must be very satisfied that no link in our very long genealogical chain has been broken during all those centuries and generations and that we continue the tradition that was so dear to them, even in a country far away from where they lived.

Porto Alegre, September 2001

PART I - THE MEYER FAMILY

THE FAMOUS RABBINICAL ANCESTRY OF REBECCA MEYER

My great-great-grandmother

Fortunately my research about the Meyer family was greatly facilitated by the rare fact that there were three members in this family dedicated to genealogical studies who established family trees.

Dr. Walther Meyer, lawyer and notary in Hanover, grandson of *Landrabbiner* Dr. Samuel Meyer and great-grandson of Rebecca Meyer, was a notable genealogist of the Meyer family. He drew up a genealogical tree of Rebecca's ancestors, beginning with R. Meir ben Isak Katzenellenbogen, reproduced herein.

Adèle Freund, a daughter of Morris (Moritz) Meyer, Rebecca's eldest son, organized various family trees. She developed a large family tree titled *"DIE ASZENDENZ DER REBEKKA MEYER"* in Berlin in 1937.

Leonie Oliven, my mother, a great-granddaughter of Rebecca Meyer, also developed a very interesting illustrated family tree in Berlin in 1937, reproduced in this history. It goes back many generations, beginning with the imperial *Oberhoffaktor* (Court Factor) SAMSON WERTHEIMER, who died in Viena in 1724, and *Oberhoffaktor* HERZ DAVID, of Ballenstedt (1699-1783). Leonie painstakingly collected the many pictures composing this family tree.

From all these genealogical trees it becomes evident that among my great-great-grandmother's ancestors there were many prominent and outstanding Jewish personalities, such as very famous rabbis, scholars, Court Jews, etc.

From Adèle Freund's genealogical tree about Rebecca's ancestry, we can trace various lines of her ancestors, for many centuries, up to RASHI. Rebecca is a descendant of RABBENU JOSEF SCHORR Bechor (the Elder), a *Tosafist* (critical and explanatory Talmud commentator) who lived in Orléans ca. 1200. Another of Rebecca's famous ancestors is SALOMO BEN JEHIEL LURIA, known as MAHARSHAL (ca. 1510-1573), rabbi and codifier who lived in Brest-Litowsk, Ostroy and Lublin. He is a descendant of many rabbinical Luria generations listed in this tree, going back to R. SALOMO SPIRA, rabbi in Landau and Heilbronn in Germany in the 14th century, who in turn is a descendant of the outstanding French Bible and Talmud commentator RASHI, an abbreviation for RABBI SALOMO BEN ISAAC (1040-1105), who lived in Troyes and studied in Worms.

From Dr. Walther Meyer's family tree we note that Rebecca also is a descendant of the famous KATZENELLENBOGEN family. This name comes from a small place in Hessen Nassau (now the Federal State of Rhineland-Palatium), halfway between Koblenz and Wiesbaden, called Katzenellenbogen. MOSES MENDELSSOHN and GABRIEL RIESSER are also descendants of this illustrious family. So is KARL MARX, a descendant of SAUL WAHL KATZENELLENBOGEN, according to the tree "Ancestors and Descendants of Karl Marx." It is contained in the book about the Eger family, published by the Eger Family Association in Israel. Among others, Dr. Meyer lists the following members of the Katzenellenbogen family:

I) MEIR PADUA KATZENELLENBOGEN, known as MAHARAM PADUA (1482-1565). He was the patriarch of the Katzenellenbogen family, a talmudist and great rabbinical authority, as well as an outstanding codifier. He was born in Katzenellenbogen, Germany and died in Venice. He studied in Poland and was a rabbi for forty years. He first served in Padua and in 1525 he became chief rabbi of the Venice Republic.

III) SAUL WAHL KATZENELLENBOGEN, Meir Padua's grandson (1541-1617). He was the Elder of the Jewry in Brisk (Brest Litowsk) and general tax collector. According to legend, in 1587 he became the "King of Poland" for one night. In 1589 he was appointed "Royal Servant."

V) R. JAKOB SCHORR, rabbi in Luzk, author of *"Beth Jakob"* (the house of Jakob). He died in 1655 in Brest Litowsk.

VII) JAKOB KATZENELLENBOGEN *(Hakadosh)*, the martyr who was slain in 1697. He is the author of *"Nahalat Jakob"* (Jakob's heritage). He was the grandson of R. Jakob Schorr.

XI) R. JAKOB BENJAMIN (Fränkel), born after 1720 in Krotoschin. He died on December 3, 1791 in Hanau, Germany. He was a rabbi in Obornik (Posen) and Hanau, Germany. His wife, Esther, was the daughter of R. Joel, who lived in Wronke (Posen). She died on June 29, 1779. R. Jakob Benjamin and Esther are the maternal grandparents of my great-great-grandmother REBECCA MEYER.

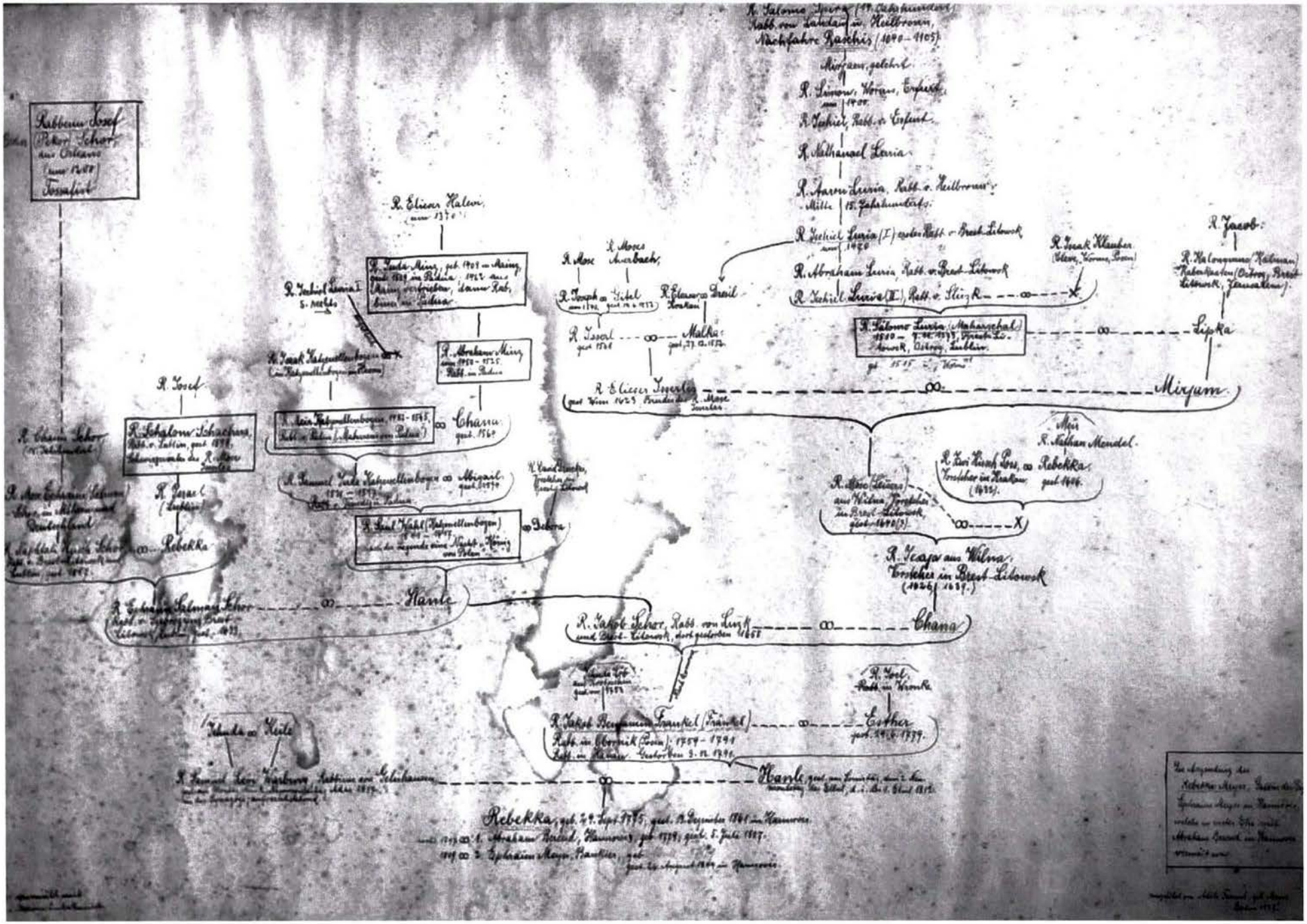
I have in my possession a ten-page manuscript, written by Dr. Walther Meyer and entitled:

R. JAKOB BENJAMIN (Fränkel), Rabbi in Obornik and the dukedom of Hanau, in Hanau, a member of the family Katzenellenbogen-Auerbach-Schorr.

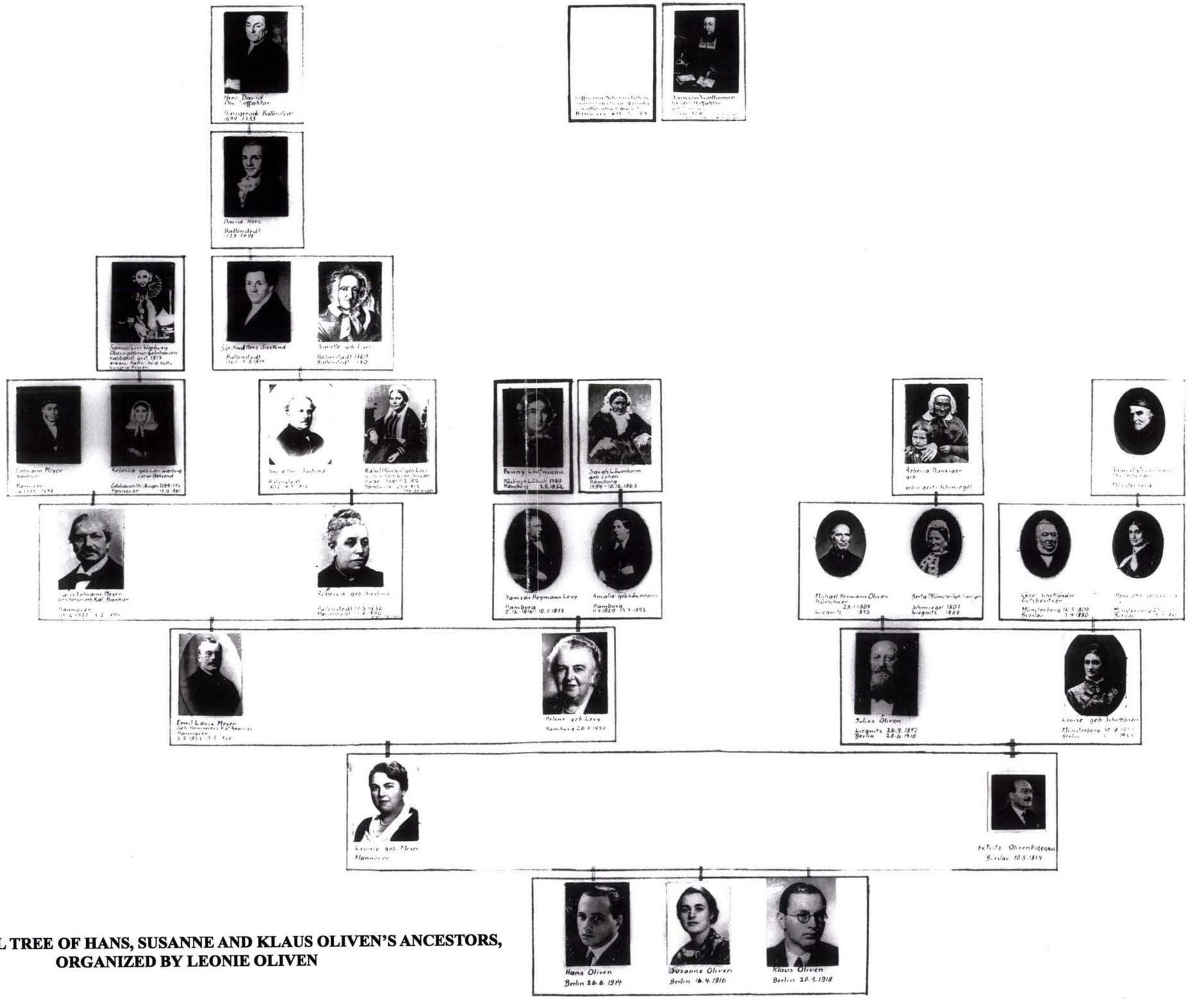
According to this manuscript, R. Jakob Benjamin was the son of the *Morenu* (scholar) Jehuda Löb. The name Fränkel was adopted by his son R. Michael ca. 1809, after his father's death only. In 1752, R. Jakob Benjamin approved the work of his relative, R. Benjamin ben Saul Katzenellenbogen, *"Or Chachamim"* (The light of the wise), Frankfurt a/Oder, 1752, in his quality as rabbi of Obornik.

R. Jakob Benjamin (Fränkel) and his wife Esther had two daughters, Rebekka and Hanle. Rebekka married the Jewish scholar Marcus Adler in Hanover. Their son R. NATHAN MARCUS ADLER, who was born in 1803 in Hanover and died in 1890 in London, became *Landrabbiner* in Hanover in 1829. He was the predecessor of his nephew *Landrabbiner* Dr. Samuel Meyer. In 1845 Adler accepted an honorable call from London to become Chief Rabbi of the British Empire. He was an orthodox rabbi and may be regarded as the creator of the British Chief Rabbinate. He was a leader of the *Hovevei Zion*, an early Zionist movement which arose in Russia in 1882, after the pogroms there one year earlier. Nathan Adler was succeeded as British Chief Rabbi by his son Hermann Adler (1839-1911), who received his secular education in German universities.

The other daughter of Jakob Benjamin and Esther, HANLE, married R. SAMUEL LEVI WARBURG. Hanle and Samuel are the parents of my great-great-grandmother REBECCA MEYER. Through the marriages of R. Jakob Benjamin and Esther's two daughters, Rebekka and Hanle, the Adler and Meyer families became related.



Genealogical tree of Rebecca Meyer's ancestors, organized by Adèle Freund



GENEALOGICAL TREE OF HANS, SUSANNE AND KLAUS OLIVEN'S ANCESTORS, ORGANIZED BY LEONIE OLIVEN

I) R. Meir b. Isak Katzenellenbogen, 1482 - 1565 (Mharam Padua)

40 Jahre Rabbiner in Padua u. Venedig, Schwiegersohn und Amtsnachfolger von R. Abraham b. Juda Minz, Padua (Frau Hannah + 1564)

II) R. Samuel Katzenellenbogen 1521 - 1597

Rabb. von Padua und Venedig (Frau Abigail + 1594)

III) Saul Judycz Katzenellenbogen, gen. Saul Wahl, 1541 - 1617
"königl. Diener" 1589, Generalsteuereinnehmer, Landesältester der Judenschaft in Brest-Litowsk (Brisk); Frau Dabora, Tochter des Vorstehers David Drucker, Brisk.

IV) Henna verh. mit R. Ephraim Salman Schorr, (Schur) Oberrabbiner von Brisk und Lublin, Verf. von "Tebutoth Schorr"

R. Meir Katzenellenbogen 1565 - 1638 Oberrabbiner von Brisk. Frau Hinde, Tochter des R. Pinchas ha-Levi Hurwitz, Rabb. in Krakau, Schwagers von R. Moses Isserles (Rma)

V) R. Jakob Schorr
Verf. v. Beth Jakob,
Rabb. von Luzk (Lodz ?),
Frau Hannah, Tochter von Jessia Moses Lisers (Lisrasch?), Wilna.

R. Moses Katzenellenbogen, 1590-1643
Rabb. in Chelm. Frau Sarah, Tochter des Vorstehers Benj. Beinisch (Beinisch Mendels) in Posen.

VI) Tochter Jente ---------- R. Saul Katzenellenbogen, 1617 - 1691
Rabb. in Brody, Chelm u. Pinczow, verh. in 2. Ehe mit Jente, Tochter von Jakob Schorr.

VII) Jakob Katzenellenbogen (Hakadosch)
erschlagen 1697, Verf. von Nachlath Jakob (wo ?)

VIII) Samuel
Vorsteher von Posen, gest. zu Krotoschin 1708
Frau Reinah gest. 1701.

R. Pinchas
Rabb. in Lemberg
gestorben nach 1741.

Zbi Hirsch Apter
Vorsteher in Kalisch + 1704.

IX) Jakob (Charif) vor seinem Vater gestorben 1703.

Josef gest. 1759.

Isak Eisik (Itzig)
Vorsteher von Posen und Krotoschin, hilft Karl XII. von Schweden 1714, gestorben 1733.

Tochter --- Eliah gest. 1737

X) Jehuda Löb ?

Tochter, Saul (Charif) in Posen verh. mit R. Menachem Mendel b/Mose Auerbach (II), Rabb. in Krotoschin, gest. 1760.

Löb / Tochter Michlah verh. mit Rabb. Senden, Inowrazlew.

XI) R. Jakob Benjamin, Rabb. in Obornik u. Hanau, gest. 1791 in Hanau, verh. mit Esther, Tochter des R. Joel, Wronke.

R. Benjamin Katzenellenbogen
Rabb. in Samter, Krojanke, Gelnhausen u. Krotoschin, verfasst 1752 Or Chachamim, gest. nach 1786.

Genealogical tree of Rebecca Meyer's ancestors, organized by Dr. Walter Meyer.
R. Jakob Benjamin is Rebecca's maternal grandfather

1st GENERATION

RABBI SAMUEL LEVI WARBURG

THE KABBALIST WHO SAVED HIS TOWN FROM THE COSSACKS

My maternal great-great-great-grandfather

died in Gelnhausen on February 17, 1817

married to Hanle (also called Hannele or Hannle)
born in Hanau, died in Gelnhausen on August 9, 1812



Rebecca's father, a Kabbalist and *Gaon* (eminent scholar), Samuel Levi Warburg, also called Samuel ben Jehuda, adopted the name Warburg, the place of his origin in Westphalia, Germany. He was a rabbi for over forty years. He was chief rabbi in Gelnhausen, a very old Jewish community in Hessen, not far from Frankfurt am Main, dating from the 12th century. Rabbi Samuel was a most interesting personality, highly esteemed by Jews and non-Jews alike.

As a Kabbalist and ascetic he had the reputation of a saint, *Zaddik kadosh libracha*. As mentioned in the *Memorbuch* (the record book of the Jewish community) of Gelnhausen: "His eyes found no sleep and his mouth did not stop learning every day." Also, according to a report on his life by the Elders of this community, "He fasted every day of the week except on the holy Shabbat."

He had great wisdom and intelligence, dedicating himself to the study of the Kabbala. He also wrote a commentary on the Talmud tractate *Rosh Hashanah* called *"Sikaron Tov"*, (Good Memory), but as mentioned in the *Memorbuch*, it has not been published. R. Samuel Levi, who in accordance with his daughter Rebecca Meyer's will, gave his money to the poor during the famine in Gelnhausen, probably did not have the necessary means to have his

work published and printed. This of course was a rather expensive matter for a rabbi of a small community.

According to the teacher M. Strauss, historian of the Gelnhausen community, by the end of the 18th century there was a change in the study of Jewish science in Gelnhausen. In an article in a publication of the local beneficial society on the occasion of the celebration of its 200th anniversary in 1911, Strauss writes:

> "Maybe the proximity of 'BARON FRANK,' who resided in nearby Offenbach, with his false Messiah cult, contributed to the inclination to Kabbala in Gelnhausen and found an outstanding representative of this tendency in Rabbi Samuel from Warburg."

The above mentioned report by the Elders of the community also states: "His knowledge of the Kabbala seems to have contributed to his having been offered the Rabbinate of Gelnhausen." Furthermore, the same report mentions that the miraculous deeds he performed were based upon this knowledge of the Kabbala.

It is said that by relying on his magic wand, inscribed with various *Shemot*, or names of God, Rabbi Samuel succeeded in performing several miracles, such as extinguishing a big fire in Gelnhausen. As can be seen from his picture shown in my mother's genealogical tree, reproduced herein, his wand was hanging on the wall. He usually kept it there between his *Tallit* (prayer shawl) and *Tefillin* (phylacteries) bag. It was sixty to seventy cm long, hollow and still covered with tree bark, a leather cap covering the tip.

It is interesting to transcribe herein part of an article entitled *"Der Wunderstab"* (the magic wand), published in the magazine *Jüdischer Volksbote* (Jewish People's Messenger), no. 24, *Tishri* 5673, 1912, regarding the expulsion of the Cossacks from Gelnhausen, which happened in the second decade of the 19th century.

> "Most precious for the people in Gelnhausen is the memory of their rabbi Samuel Warburg, who, as a Kabbalist and ascetic, acquired the name of a saint and a permanent memory.
>
> "It was at the beginning of the last century, when Gelnhausen - as had happened so often before - received the undesired visit of a large army contingent. This time it was the Cossacks who fell upon the small town. They were greatly feared, as they plundered and burned their own land as well as that of the enemy.
>
> "The residents of the *Judengasse* (Jew Lane) in particular dreaded the appearance of the rapacious gang. In the first place the Jewish residences and synagogues were subject to their vicious looting and destructive fury.
>
> "In their dwellings the Jews fearfully awaited the coming events. Only the Rabbi had left his house. He stood in the middle of the courtyard that separated the lane from the synagogue and held a big wand in his hand. At his feet was a pail filled with water.
>
> "It did not take long for the bearded warriors to rush through the lane. They found all

> doors locked. Only the gates of the synagogue courtyard stood open. But as soon as they entered it, the Rabbi dipped the wand into the water and behold! From the top of the wand rose an intense rain of sparks spreading in all directions.
>
> "A terrifying cry of sudden fright — and the dreaded Cossacks dispersed in a wild flight. The synagogue was saved."

Rabbi Samuel died in Gelnhausen on February 17, 1817. His wife Hanle died there on August 9, 1812. It is said that Rabbi Samuel died standing upright, his hand raised high, while he was praying during a religious service in the Gelnhausen synagogue. It is further mentioned that - quite uncommon - he was buried that same way.

Rabbi Samuel and Hanle had three daughters, MY GREAT-GREAT-GRANDMOTHER REBECCA, Esther and Hindche. The latter married her cousin Jakob Rubensohn from Beverungen at the Weser.

In a letter to my mother dated September 3, 1937, Dr. Walther Meyer mentions:

> "Warburg was the seat of the Paderborn *Landrabbinat*. The family of the Gelnhausen Rabbi [Samuel Levi Warburg] no doubt is connected to the Hamburg bankers WARBURG originating from that city. The common ancestor must have lived in the 18th century. The connection between the Rubensohn family and the Warburgs from Hamburg has been established by me beyond any doubt.
>
> "Jakob Rubensohn married his cousin [Hindche] in his second marriage; as is known [she was] a sister of great-grandmother Rebecca. On this basis I am trying to establish our connection with this famous family [Warburg]. Its branch living in Warburg played a very important role among the Jewry there and they even provided a chief rabbi for the region. Presumably it was through his initiative that our ancestor Samuel was appointed a rabbi."

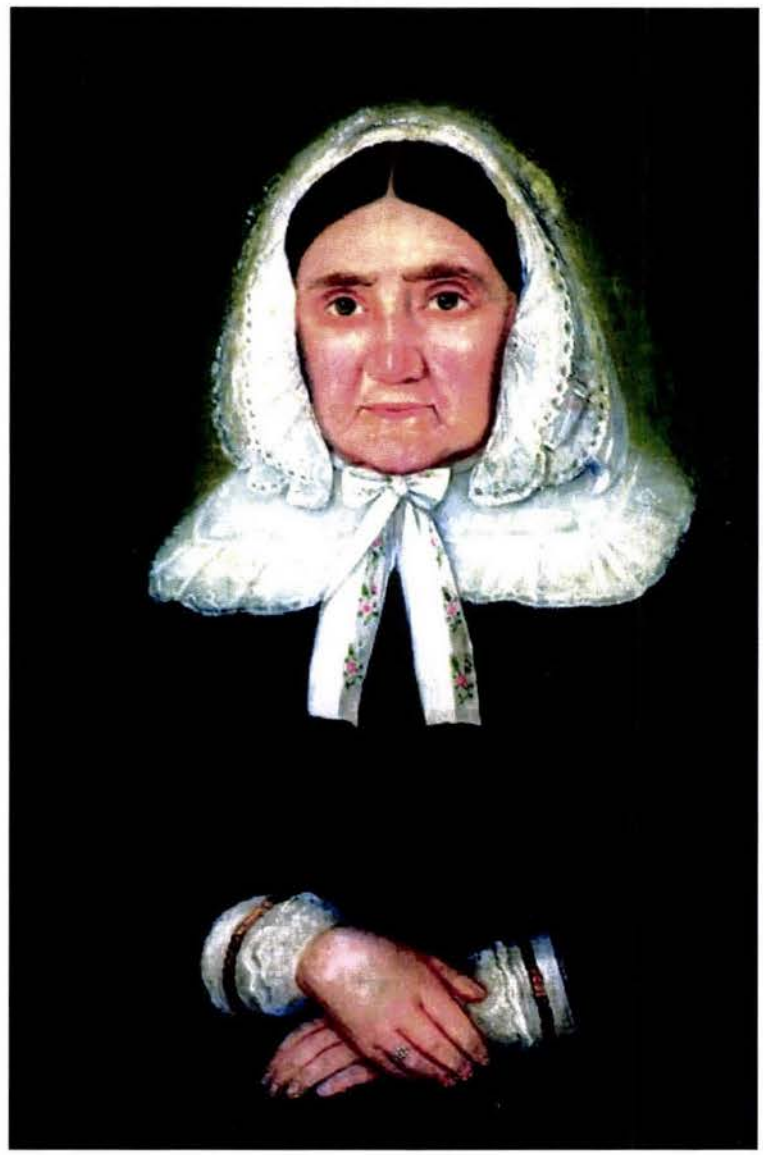
The picture of Rabbi Samuel Levi Warburg, reproduced herein, has been copied by Dr. Walther Meyer from a book "Jewish folkart in Hessen," written by Dr. Rudolf Hallo (published by the Sinai Lodge in Kassel). His widow Gertrude Hallo's maiden name was Rubensohn.

Rabbi Samuel and Hanle's daughter Esther married Wolf Sondheimer, the son of Hillel Wolf Sondheimer, chief rabbi of Aschaffenburg who died in 1812. The young couple lived first in Aschaffenburg where they were plundered during the Napoleonic Wars when the armies passed through at the end of 1813. Rabbi Samuel Levi Warburg succeedeed in obtaining a *Schutzbrief*, a protection letter, and thus the permission of residence, for his daughter and son-in-law in Gelnhausen where Wolf became an esteemed merchant. Both died in Gelnhausen, Esther in 1835 and Wolf in 1864. Their daughters, Hanne Esther and Rebekka, died childless in 1884 and 1894 respectively.

2nd GENERATION

REBECCA NÉE LEVI WARBURG

born in Gelnhausen, September 29, 1775 - died in Hanover, December 14,1861
My maternal great-great-grandmother



HER FIRST MARRIAGE TO ABRAHAM BEREND (ca. 1797)

Rebecca (sometimes also spelled Rebecka or Rebekka), the daughter of Rabbi Samuel Levi Warburg, was first married to ABRAHAM BEREND (Behrens). He was born in 1779 and died on July 5, 1807 in Hanover, at the age of twenty-eight. He had been sickly all his life and had suffered great pain. His illness was mentioned in the wills of both, Ephraim and

Rebecca Meyer. Also, the epitaph on his tombstone no. 256 at the old Jewish cemetery Judenkirchhof in Hanover mentions that he suffered very much and was plagued by great physical pain, but did not deviate from God's commandments and faithfully preserved the fear of God and righteousness. This is mentioned by Dr. S. Gronemann in *"Genealogische Studien über die alten jüdischen Familien Hannovers,"* 1913, pg. 68, and pg. 50 of the Hebrew section. Dr. Selig Gronemann was *Landrabbiner* in Hanover from 1883 to 1918. He was the successor of Dr. Samuel E. Meyer. As Rebecca mentioned in her will, due to her husband's illness, she returned to her parents with her eldest daughter Rahel and stayed there for seven years, "until I was called back." The couple then had two more daughters, Keilche and Reis'che. Five years after the couple was reunited, Abraham died. Reis'che was born threee months after her father's death.

Abraham Berend was the son of Rabbi Isaschar Berisch (Behrend Josua), Hanover, born on July 14, 1747, died on November 25, 1802. Rabbi Berisch, in turn, followed his father R. Levi Josua (Arieh Leibusch, Pne Arieh), 1715-1789, as *Landesrabbiner* (same as *Landrabbiner*) in Hanover. R. Arieh Leibusch was one of the most recognized talmudic scholars among the provincial rabbis of the 18th century. Both R. Leibusch and R. Berisch received their rabbbinical and talmudic education at the yeshiva in Halberstadt.

R. Berisch, according to Dr. S. Gronemann, pg. 65, finished the reading of the whole Talmud twenty-eight times during his lifetime. He died at the age of fifty-five, while his wife Gitel, who died in 1840, reached the age of ninety-eight. They had numerous children. Some of them died before their father. When R. Berisch died, he left nine sons and a daughter. His salary as *Landrabbiner* must not have been sufficient to support such a large family, so his wife Gitel owned a notions shop, according to the first address book of Hanover published in 1798.

Most of Berisch and Gitel's sons became rabbis, in Lemberg, Lissa, Brody, Lublin, Amsterdam, etc. One of their sons, Rabbi Samuel Berenstein, mentioned in Rebecca's will, was chief rabbi in Amsterdam and his son rabbi in the Haag. When on a visit to his sister-in-law Rebecca in Hanover, both, R. Samuel and Rebecca tried unsuccessfully to convince Keilche (Caroline), Rebecca's second daughter, who at the time was twenty years old, to get married, as mentioned in Rebecca's will.



THE EGER FAMILY

R. Berisch and Gitel's very beautiful daughter Rahel was born 1787. She died in 1815, at the birth of her only daughter Röschen. Rahel got married to her cousin Isaac Elias, son of a famous rabbi in Pressburg (Bratislava). The bride was fifteen and the bridegroom twenty years old. After one year only, her husband died in 1802. She then returned to her mother in Hanover. After several years she became the wife of R. SABEL PERETZ EGER (Samuel Levin). This was the second marriage for both of them. R. Sabel (1768-1842), born in Halberstadt, was *Landesrabbiner* in Braunschweig. He was well known through his *halachic* (legal) correspondence with his famous cousin in Posen, R. AKIBA BEN MOSES EGER II. R. Sabel was one of the outstanding scholars of his generation. Rabbinical inquiries were sent to him from many lands.

His sister, one year younger than her brother, was JEANETTE (Schönchen) EGER (1769-1840). She was born in Halberstadt and died in Ballenstedt. She married Sieskind Herz Sieskind (1767-1814). They were the grandparents of my great-grandmother Rebecca Meyer née Sieskind, wife of Louis E. Meyer.

R. Sabel and his sister Jeanette were children of R. JUDA LÖB (Jehuda Leib) EGER (1741-1814), *Landesrabbiner* in Halberstadt and later on of the kingdom of Westphalia. Juda Löb played a leading role among the Prussian rabbis. His father, and Jeanette's grandfather, was R. AKIVA BEN SIMCHA BUNEM EGER I, The Elder (1720-1758). He was born in Halberstadt and died in Pressburg (Bratislava), which at that time was the capital of Hungary. He was a rabbi at Zülz, Upper Silesia, and from 1756 on he headed the yeshiva in Pressburg. Akiva I was the grandfather, on his mother's side, of the Chief Rabbi of Posen, AKIVA BEN MOSES EGER II, the Younger (1761-1837). Akiva Eger the Younger was born in Halberstadt and died in Posen. He received his education in Eisenstadt and Breslau. He was rabbi of

Märkisch-Friedland. In 1814 he became a rabbi in Posen where his yeshiva attracted thousands of students. He published many works and is recognized as one of the foremost rabbinical and talmudic authorities in Europe. He led the opposition to religious reform and secular education.

In his honor and that of the famous rabbinical Eger family, his descendant Akiva Eger, who lived at Kibbutz Netzer Sereni in Israel, reestablished the Eger Family Association in 1990. This Association was originally established in Germany in 1913. Its reestablishment in Israel reunited all the numerous descendants of the Eger family, to whom our Family also belongs through Jeanette Eger. In 1996 the Association headed by Akiva Eger published a book containing the genealogical trees of all the descendants of Rabbi Akiva Eger I and II. Tree BBB (2) Sieskind - Meyer shows how we are related to the famous Eger Family, and includes Seldi's and my name and the name of my ancestors and descendants. Computer Tree 379 at "Dorot", Beit Hatefutzot, Tel Aviv, includes this and the other tables of the book, including tree P - Ancestors and Descendants of Karl Marx. He is a descendant of Saul Katzenellenbogen, "King of Poland" for one night. My relative Dr. Walther Meyer wrote an extensive manuscript *Die Familie Eger aus Halberstadt.* Akiva Eger died at Kibbutz Netzer Sereni in 2001.

THE SIESKIND FAMILY

Jeanette (Schönchen) Eger, granddaughter of R. Akiva Eger I, the Elder, and daughter of his son R. Juda Löb, married Sieskind Herz Sieskind, Ballenstedt (1767-1814). They had two sons, Jakob Herz Sieskind and David Herz Sieskind. Jakob Herz Sieskind, Ballenstedt (1800-1861) married Mathilde Oppé (Oppenheim), born in Mühlhausen, Thüringen, in 1809, died in Ballenstedt, Harz, in 1891. Their daughter Lina (1829-1894), born in Ballenstedt, became the wife of *Landrabbiner* Dr. Samuel Ephraim Meyer (1819-1882), Rebecca Meyer's son and brother of my great-grandfather Louis Ephraim Meyer. Ballenstedt is situated in the Harz Mountains (from 1991 on in the Federal State of Sachsen-Anhalt).

David Herz Sieskind, born in Ballenstedt in 1802, died in Hamburg on September 6, 1872. He married Rahel (Röschen) Levi, daughter of Rabbi Loeb-Dresden halevi. She was born in Halberstadt on February 11, 1812 and died in Hamburg on September 23, 1873, buried in Ballenstedt. Rahel was also known as Rosalie Levy. Her family in Halberstadt was very rich. It is reported that when she got married about 1830, she had her dowry transported from Halberstadt to Ballenstedt in ten large overland coaches. David Herz Sieskind and Rosalie's daughter, Rebecca Sieskind, born in Ballenstedt, married my great-grandfather Louis Ephraim Meyer. Two Meyer brothers married two Sieskind cousins: Dr. Samuel E. Meyer married Lina Sieskind and Louis E. Meyer married Rebecca Sieskind.

The Sieskind family was established in Ballenstedt for many generations. They were a highly esteemed merchant family. The patriarch of the Sieskind dynasty was Herz [ben] David, born in Hoym in 1699, died in Ballenstedt in 1788. He was a court agent and had the title *Oberhoffaktor*. He founded a textile mill in Ballenstedt, which was under the protection of the Duke. His son was David [ben] Herz (1728-1791). His grandson was Sieskind Herz Sieskind, Ballenstedt, born in 1767, died on August 7, 1814. In 1808 he adopted the name Sieskind (Süsskind) which originally was a first name only, as his family name as well. In 1790 he married JEANETTE EGER, who came from Halberstadt, the biggest Jewish community in Prussia at the time, situated at the edge of the Harz Mountains.

Jeanette's husband died young and left her with seven children, not yet grown-up. She seems to have been a very courageous woman. She did not lose her head over not knowing how to continue her husband's business. At one point, Jeanette's nephew, the oldest son of her late husband's older brother, David Herz, tried to extort her. He was a bookkeeper in the business and in charge of the purchases and wanted to be accepted as a partner, whereupon Jeanette simply threw him out. She then sent her oldest son Jakob, who was fourteen years old at the time, to Hanover, as an apprentice in the dry goods shop of Berend & Meyer. The firm belonged to Gitel Berend and her son-in-law EPHRAIM MEYER, who probably was the head of this firm. Dr.Walther Meyer owned the certificate of apprenticeship for Jakob Sieskind, dated 1815, and signed by Ephraim. This document was given to Dr. W. Meyer by Jakob Sieskind, Leipzig, who perished in the Holocaust along with most of his relatives. He was the namesake and grandson of Jakob Sieskind, oldest son of Jeanette Eger and father of Lina, wife of Samuel Meyer.

With the help of her son Jakob, after he had finished his apprenticeship, Jeanette continued to

run the business, until the time she could hand it over to her two adult sons, Jakob and David Herz Sieskind. Probably Jakob's apprenticeship at the firm Berend & Meyer was arranged through Rebecca Meyer's brother-in-law by her first marriage, the famous *Oberlandesrabbiner* Samuel (Sabel) Eger, in Braunschweig, who was Jeanette's brother. Rahel, the sister of Rebecca's first husband, Abraham Berend, was R. Sabel Eger's second wife. Jakob and David were already the fourth generation of Sieskinds living in Ballenstedt. Jakob, a wool merchant, was a city councilor and honorary citizen. A street in Ballenstedt was named after him and renamed during the Nazi period. In 1945 it was named Sieskind Street again.

Jeanette (Schönchen) Eger was the granddaughter of Rabbi Akiva I, the Elder, who was married to Judith Leidesdorfer, in her first marriage, in Halberstadt. Judith had great Jewish knowledge and for that reason she sometimes was called *"melumedet,"* the female form of *melame*d, or teacher. She was the daughter of Samuel Leidesdorfer (1700-1780) and granddaughter of Isaac Leidesdorfer, an army purveyor. In 1719 Isaac obtained the right of domicile in Vienna for himself and his two sons, Samuel and Löb, both also army purveyors.

This was an exceptional permission at the time. In 1758 Samuel and Löb obtained a joint letter of protection, written in Latin, for merits in Maria Theresa's Seven Year War against Frederick the Great of Prussia, having supplied money and provisions. They also obtained the privilege of living outside the Jewish Quarter and building a house of their choice. Maria Theresa was notorious for her hostility toward the Jews, but when it comes to financial support, things apparently look different, even as far as an empress is concerned.

Samuel and Löb both held distinguished positions in the Viennese Jewish community. The letter of protection with Maria Theresa's handwritten signature is in the possession of the Vienna City and County Archives. A copy of the original document was sent to me by Lothar Sieskind, born in Essen in 1907, died in Stockholm on July 30, 1997. He was a great-grandson of Jakob Sieskind, the father of Lina Sieskind, wife of *Landrabbiner* Dr. Samuel E. Meyer. In 1990 Lothar organized and sent me an interesting partial family tree "The relationship Sieskind - Meyer - Herzfeld." Lothar had no children. Lore Zimels, née Sieskind, who lives at Kibbutz Kfar Szold is the last of the Sieskind dynasty.



SÜSSKIND VON TRIMBERG

THE ONLY JEWISH MINSTREL EVER (ca. 1250-1300)

Rebecca (called Becca) Steinthal, one of the daughters of *Landrabbiner* Dr. Samuel Meyer and his wife Lina née Sieskind, says in an addendum to her memories that her uncle Louis Sieskind, Lina's brother, always affirmed that the genealogical tree of the Sieskind family goes back to the only Jewish minstrel in history, SÜSSKIND VON TRIMBERG, who lived in Germany ca. 1250-1300. He was born in the German town Trimberg. The minstrel songs are written in old medieval German (Middle High German). Süsskind's portrait has been preserved in the Manesse Codex in the Heidelberg University Library. Six of his lyrical poems are preserved. My mother Leonie Oliven also told me that our relatives, the Sieskinds, descend from this famous minstrel, though Lothar Sieskind, Becca's nephew, denied this relationship.

Becca Steinthal writes:

> "Living in the 13th century, we know little about his life. He distinguished himself by the great mastery of his few songs which survived. They tell about the land of the oppressed and placed him in high esteem during his lifetime already, but the gentry were not fond of him. Resigned, he decides to live as an old Jew, without any hope

> of recognition for his poetic works, the present value of which is their special sound, their unity of form. [...] He also had critical words: 'Nobility of soul must not necessarily accompany born nobility'."

He is illustrated among famous minstrels with a pointed Jew hat, which the Jews were obliged to wear for centuries, from the late Middle Ages on. An interesting romance about his life has been written in German by Friedrich Torberg "Süsskind von Trimberg." One of Süsskind's most touching poems, in which he bitterly complains about what the nobility did to him, is the following minstrel song:

I have made a fool's journey with my art.
The gentry do not want to give me anything,
That's why I want to flee from their court
And will grow a long beard with gray hair.
Henceforth I will live by the old Jewish customs
And go my way in silence.
A long overcoat shall cover me,
Well below my hat.
My walk shall now be humble,
And never again will I sing courtly songs,
Since the gentry deprived me from their goods.

REBECCA'S SECOND MARRIAGE TO EPHRAIM MEYER IN 1809

My maternal great-great-grandfather



EPHRAIM MEYER

born November 16, 1779 - died August 26, 1849 - Hanover
My maternal great-great-grandfather

Two years after Rebecca became a widow in 1807, left with three small daughters, she married my great-great-grandfather EPHRAIM MEYER. In her will, Rebecca says that her second husband, Ephraim, treated her daughters from her first marriage as if they were his own. This is also confirmed by Dr. S. Gronemann in his previously mentioned book.

In her second marriage to Ephraim Meyer, Rebecca had six children, three boys and three girls: Henriette (Jette), Moritz (Morris), Johanna (Hannchen), Betty, Samuel and Levi (Louis).

According to Gronemann, Ephraim Meyer adopted the surname of Schiff in 1812 and later on that of Meyer. In the protocol book of the Charity Society of the Jewish Community of Hanover, dated 1828, his name was still listed as Schneitich (derived from Schnaittach, the place where his father was born), but in civil life his name was already Schiff. Gronemann further mentions that Ephraim engaged actively in communal affairs of the Jewish community of Hanover and that he belonged to the elders and directors who in 1828 made a petition to the government, asking to improve the civil conditions of the Jews. Both, his and Rebecca's epitaphs, mention that they educated their children in the fear of God and Torah.

Ephraim Meyer had at least three sisters. One was Minna (Mindel) Rosenthal. She died on November 2, 1859 in Hanover. She reached the biblical age of one hundred years, as mentioned in Gronemann, page 155 of the German section and on page 127 of the Hebrew section. She was the wife of David Selig Rosenthal, called David Prag, son of Selig. David died on July 30, 1836. Minna's son, Meier Rosenthal and her grandson, Henry Rosenthal, lived abroad, possibly in England or Holland. Both of them remitted money, always in pound sterling, first to Ephraim and later to his son Louis, for Minna's subsistence.

Betty Michaelis, another sister of Ephraim Meyer, was born in Schnaittach on October 3, 1772. She died in Braunschweig on December 26, 1813. Her husband Simon Michaelis was a *shochet* (ritual slaughterer). He was born on January 22, 1766 in Szarnikau and died on June 6, 1822 in Braunschweig. Simon and Betty had seven children, four daughters and three sons. The daughters were Karoline, Marianne, Hanchen and Therese. The eldest one, Karoline, married Adolf Markus in Braunschweig. Marianne did not marry. Hanchen, born in 1807, married Lion in Hamburg. Therese married Albert Priest, of New York, originally Adolf Cohn, in 1850. They went to Jamaica. Simon and Betty's son were: Michael and twin boys, Meier and Moses, the latter born on September 30, 1804. The twins died very young: Meier in 1816 and Moses in 1817.

A third sister of Ephraim was Sara Meyer, married to Abraham Salomon Reimann. Their daughter Karoline married Markus Löwenstein in Münster.

EPHRAIM'S FATHER, MEYER MOSES BEN LÖB SCHNAITTACH

my maternal great-great-great-grandfather

Ephraim Meyer was the son of Meyer Moses (Meir Moshe) ben Löb (Leib), also surnamed Schnaittach, after the place where he was born. Schnaittach, near Fürth in Bavaria, was a place of refuge for the Jews, with a synagogue, school and cemetery, under the protection of the tolerant Wittelsbacher electors *(Kurfürsten)*. The Jews in the nearby *Freie Reichsstadt* Nuremberg, however, were expelled in 1499.

On page 146 of his book of genealogical studies on old Jewish families in Hanover, Rabbi Dr. Gronemann mentions the name of Ephraim's father as being Meyer Löb Schnaittach, but in the Hebrew section of the same book (page 116), the Hebrew name in the epitaph, tomb no. 478A, at the old Jewish cemetery, at Judenkirchhof, is stated as Meir Moshe. The same name also appears in the epitaph of Ephraim's sister, Minna Rosenthal, tomb no. 491B, as shown on page 127 of the Hebrew section of Gronemann's book; it also appears this way in Rebecca's will. Certainly Ephraim's epitaph was written by his son, the *Landrabbiner* Dr. Samuel E. Meyer, who of course knew his father's correct name precisely.

There was a lengthy discussion as to why in Gronemann's book Ephraim's father was called Meyer Löb, but in his epitaph Meir Moshe, between Rabbi M. Weinberg, Würzburg, a great specialist on the origin of Bavarian Jews, and the genealogist Dr. Walther Meyer, Ephraim's great-grandson. The conclusion to which Rabbi Weinberg came in his exchange of correspondence with Dr. Walther Meyer back in 1937 was that Ephraim's father had a double name, that is, Meyer Moses, and that he was the son of Löb (Meir Moshe ben Löb).

Meyer Moses was a tradesman in Schnaittach. Later on he moved to Hanover. There he practiced the honorable profession of *shochet*, a ritual slaughterer, from 1788 until his death at an advanced age on May 9, 1797. Gronemann mentions that he was a pious man, studying daily and doing charitable work.

THE BEGINNINGS OF EPHRAIM'S BANKING BUSINESS

Ephraim Meyer had a money changing business in Hanover, established in 1799, according to Julius Blanck's *The banking and stock exchange system in the city of Hannover*, Hanover, 1926. Other sources mention 1796 as the year Ephraim established his firm. Peter Schulze informs that Ephraim's firm is mentioned in the Hanover address book from 1809 on, in the beginning under the name Ephraim Meyer - money changing business. That year must be considered as the beginning of the banking establishment, because it is mentioned in a propaganda page published in a magazine ca. 1895, on the occasion of the inauguration of the bank's new main office on Luisenstrasse. In a circular letter reproduced herein, dated September 3, 1849, which Ephraim's son Louis sent to the bank's customers upon his father's death on August 26, 1849, Louis mentioned that his father conducted his banking and money changing business for over forty years.

Hannover, den 3. Septbr. 1849.

Herr

In der Nacht vom 25. auf den 26. v. M. endete der Tod plötzlich das redliche und thätige Leben meines theuren, innig geliebten Vaters, des Banquiers **Ephraim Meyer.** Sanft wie sein Leben, war sein Ende. —

Indem ich die Pflicht erfülle, Ihnen diesen Trauerfall hiedurch mitzutheilen, verbinde ich damit zugleich die ergebenste Anzeige, dass ich das von dem Verstorbenen seit länger als 40 Jahren mit Redlichkeit und Umsicht geführte Banquier- und Geldwechsel-Geschäft, unverändert unter der bisherigen Firma und mit denselben Mitteln fortsetzen werde.

Das Vertrauen, das der Selige in so seltenem Masse besessen, werde auch ich durch Eifer und strenge Reellität zu verdienen streben; und indem ich Sie um die Fortdauer Ihres geneigten Wohlwollens bitte, ersuche ich Sie zugleich von nebenstehender Unterschrift gefälligst Nota nehmen zu wollen.

Hochachtungsvoll und ergebenst

Louis E. Meyer.

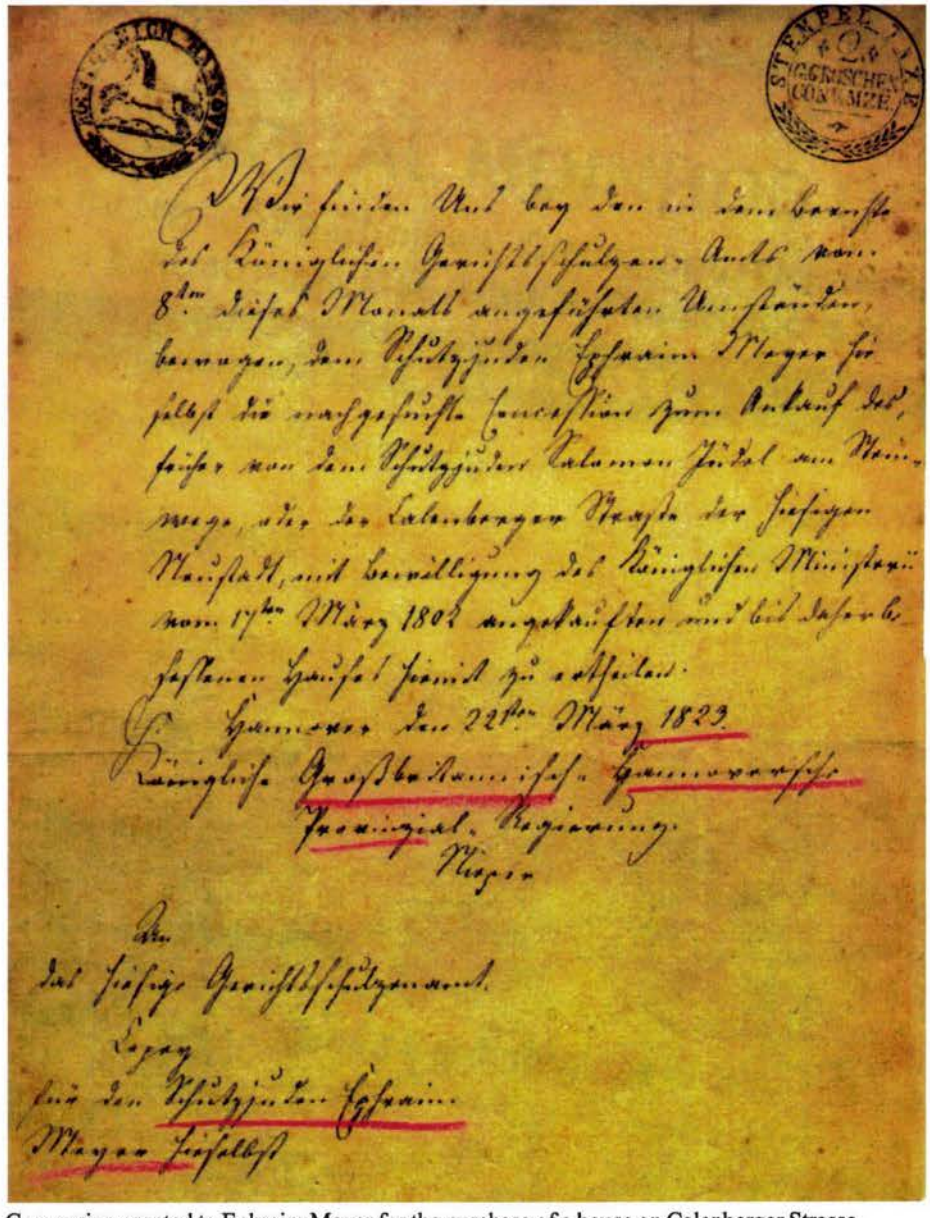
Louis E. Meyer fährt fort zu zeichnen:



Circular letter sent by Louis E. Meyer to the bank's clients on the death of his father Ephraim

Walther Meyer mentions that in 1815 Ephraim was a partner and probably head of the dry goods and notions store Meyer & Berend, owning this business together with its founder, his mother-in-law from his first marriage, the widow Gitel Berend. This is evidence that Ephraim at that time did not dedicate himself exclusively to money changing, lending and banking business.

I have in my possession a document dated March 22, 1823, in which "the Royal Provincial Government of Great Britain and Hanover hereby grants the requested concession to the *Schutzjude* (protected Jew) Ephraim Meyer for the purchase of a house on Calenberger Strasse, bought in 1802 by the *Schutzjude* Salomon Jüdel after the same had obtained the permission from the Royal Minister." Soon after having bought this house, Ephraim, Rebecca and their children moved in.



Concession granted to Ephraim Meyer for the purchase of a house on Calenberger Strasse

Rebecca helped her husband in his business from the first day of their marriage, in addition to raising her nine children, three from her first and six from her second marriage, born between 1798 and 1821.

Rebecca's granddaughter, Rebecca Steinthal, tells a story in her memories about her grandmother, who sometimes was called *"Die Wechsel Rifke"* (Rivkah of the bills of exchange), because she got so involved in this business. She must have been very beautiful. Once when she went to the Royal Castle to collect a bill, an officer at the staircase told her how well the bonnet *(Häubchen)* she was wearing - as all married Jewish women did - suited her, and from that day on she never wore it again.

EPHRAIM'S CORRESPONDENCE WITH HIS CLIENTS

I have in my possession various quite interesting, very old bound collections of letters by banker Ephraim Meyer to his clients, written in his own handwriting. These unique documents are dated from 1811 until 1849, the year of his death. The copies of letters also contain accounts and deal with financial transactions, money exchange, loans, requests for payment of overdue bills of exchange and sometimes, when sent to a relative, also include family business.

The letters are addressed to many different clients, written in perfect German when sent to Ephraim's German clients, using Gothic letters, except for proper names, currencies and accounting. The letters addressed to his Jewish clients are in Judeo-German, *(Judendeutsch)*, written in Hebrew characters, which at that time were quite ornamented. They are difficult to read nowadays. Judeo-German was the language spoken and written by the Jews in Germany among themselves until the end of the first half of the 19th century. It is made up largely of German but interspersed with many Hebrew words.

Ephraim sometimes had a very hard time collecting the bills of exchange or bonds from some of his clients when they fell due, and he suffered heavy losses from insolvent debtors. Just to illustrate this point and for a better understanding of the difficulties he encountered, the following are a few samples of letters or excerpts which Ephraim was obliged to write to some of his clients, as well as a letter he received from one of his debtors.

March 9, 1821

To Mr. Blumenfeld in Osnabrück,

As so far all my offers have been unsuccessful, notwithstanding the fact that I always endeavored to quote you low rates, I am almost obliged to believe that you use my prices for the purpose only of enabling you to sell your bonds there safely to another friend. Therefore, in reply to your letter of March 7, I will abstain from making you an offer, but wish to ask you, if you really trust me, to send me your bond in the amount of 200 Reichsthaler [1 Reichsthaler = 3 deutsche marks], whereupon I will dispose of it to your content.

December 12, 1823

To Mr. M. S. Michaelis in Hitzacker,

I am at a loss to understand your silence. Immediately upon receipt of your esteemed letter of December 17, I sent you the bonds and expected rightfully, in accordance with your letter, the prompt remittance of 158 Reichsthaler 20/m gold. Instead, I am receiving a letter of excuse and no money. I did not give you the bonds in consignation, but I sold them to you. Therefore I should have received the money promptly or the return of my papers and not have to wait until it pleases your friend to accept them. Accordingly, I am expecting by return the amount of the bonds plus interest, as from the first of this month. I reckon on this firmly now.

May 16, 1824

To Mr. Lemmel Fehr in Peine,

You are putting me off with the remittance of the bond from one day to the next. I do not know why this payment has not been made yet. If you have difficulties settling accounts, simply disregard this transaction. In return, I expect my money back, because I need it for my business.

July 21 [1824]

To Mr. Lemmel Fehr in Peine,

I really do not know what to think of you in the long run. Today it will be three weeks that you wrote me that I would receive the bond by return, but I have not received it, nor have I seen you. What does this silence mean?

September 1826

To. Mr. Lemmel Fehr in Peine,

It seems to me that you are testing my patience, or in other words, making a fool out of me. You show yourself now in a way I would not like to see you. However, I must tell you that I will not play this game patiently any longer. I finally wish to know where I stand. If you are interested in maintaining your credit with me and your good reputation, I want to see you here on Sunday or Monday the 24th or 25th, so that you can explain your actions so far. Should you fail to show up, you will be in trouble.

November 28, 1826

To Mr. Lemmel Fehr in Peine,

According to your promise at the last market, I promptly should receive detailed news how and when I would receive payment. However, so far I have waited for this letter in vain. Besides, I finally have to know where I stand. Therefore I have to ask you to urgently let me have detailed information about this matter by return mail. If you fail to do so, I will be obliged, against my will, to get in touch with some friends there to take care of my interests. But as I am afraid that this might be very harmful to your credit, I wish to ask you very strongly once again to relieve me from the trouble of harming your reputation, by sending me a prompt letter. However, I ask you not to give me an evasive answer, but let me have a positive one and, if possible, part payment.

October 16, 1840

To Mr. N. Reiss in Braunschweig, [a relative or friend]

From the letter of our dear Frederike, I was pleased to receive the confirmation that you won the big prize [of the lottery] and I send my heartiest congratulations regarding this happy event, in which we all participate.

I now also hope that you will take prompt steps to pay me back the 100 Reichsthaler I lent you a long time ago, because I need it, since in addition to the many losses I have suffered lately, my son, who studies in Bonn, costs me a lot of money and I reserved the 100 Rt for this purpose.

As long as your means were limited, I let this matter be, but as the Almighty has helped you now, you certainly will consider it your first duty to let me have what is due to me.

August 26, 1841

To Mr. B. Gotthelf in Hameln,

Whereas I congratulate you cordially on your wedding, I seriously have to ask you to finally pay back the 98 Reichsthaler I lent you at the Braunschweig fair in 1824. I believe that my credit of seventeen years fully entitles me to ask for my money, insofar as the interest nearly equals the principal. I expect your esteemed reply within eight days, because otherwise you will be in trouble, against my wishes.

July 28, [1842]

To Dr. Johannsen in Göttingen,

It occurs to me that maybe you own a Brazil bond in the amount of £100 and in this case can return it, as part payment towards the £200 pounds you owe me.

The rascals from Mexico again made a fool of all of us, because so far no interest can be seen. It is unbelievable how a government can act this way toward its creditors.

August 23, 1842

To Lieutenant von Cramm, [near Immenhof]

You neither replied to my first letter nor did you make the promised payment. I have been to your residence several times but unfortunately did not find you at home. However, the shortage of money makes the matter urgent. Therefore I am respectfully asking you to liquidate the account. Very much against my will I see myself obliged to advise you that if I do not receive the greatest part of my credit within eight days, I will be obliged to cause you trouble. I ask you to excuse this.

Excerpts from a letter sent to Ephraim Meyer by a humble officer asking for an increase in the amount to be lent to him:

Hanover, June 3, 1824

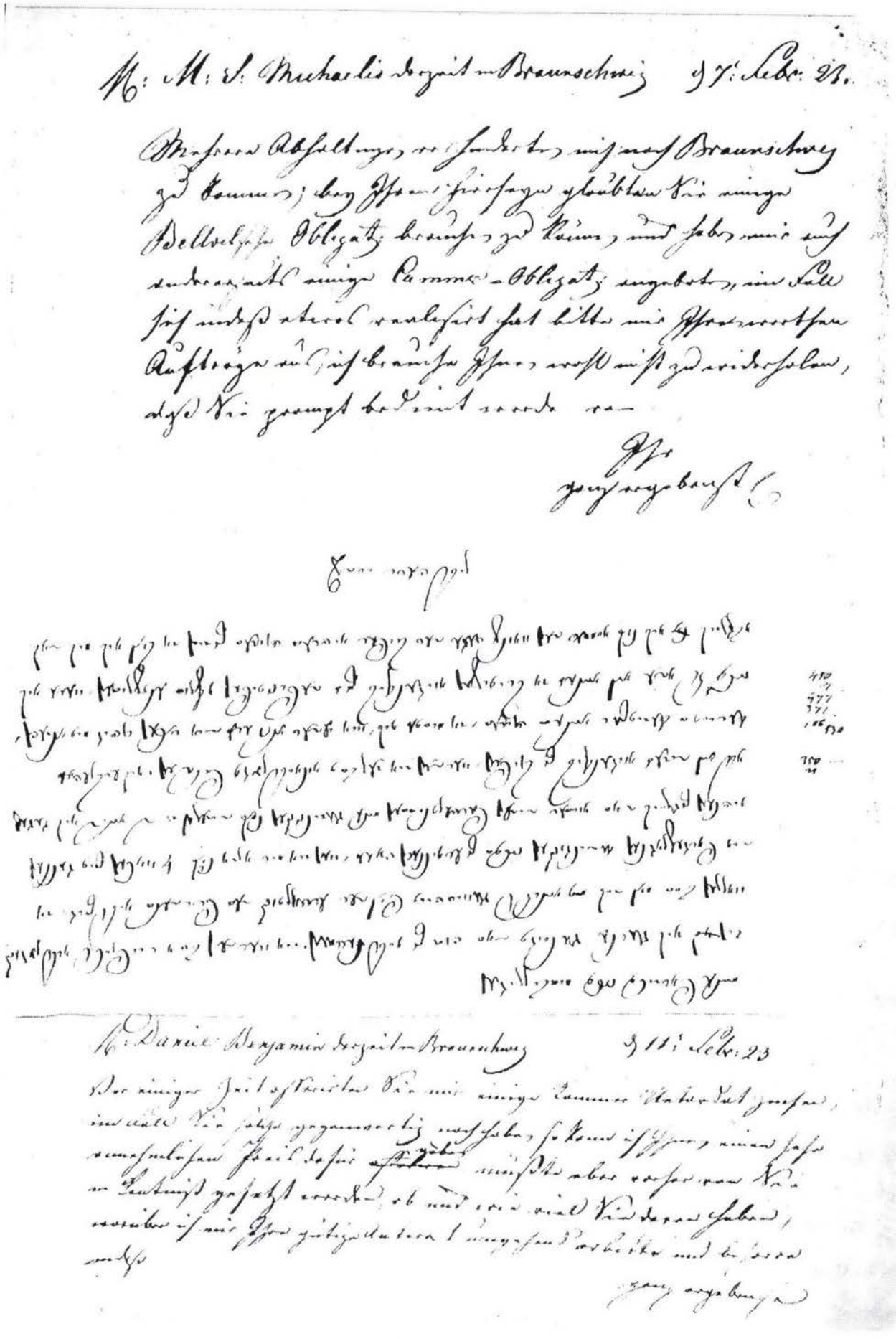
Esteemed Mr. Meyer,

A new embarrassing situation has come up, from which only you can save me. Today I am expected to pay the amount of 55 Reichsthaler in pistols [...] and this is the last date. Now, to my dismay, I have been told that my parents will stay at their estate another ten days. This places me at this moment in a difficult situation from which I cannot save myself if - as impertinent as it may sound - you will not increase the amount you will pay me tomorrow by another 50 Reichsthaler, because I have to pay this amount on Saturday afternoon, otherwise I would be in great financial trouble. I will receive other amounts just after Pentecost. [...] Therefore I can solemnly promise you that the 50 Rt will be in your hands again within eight days.

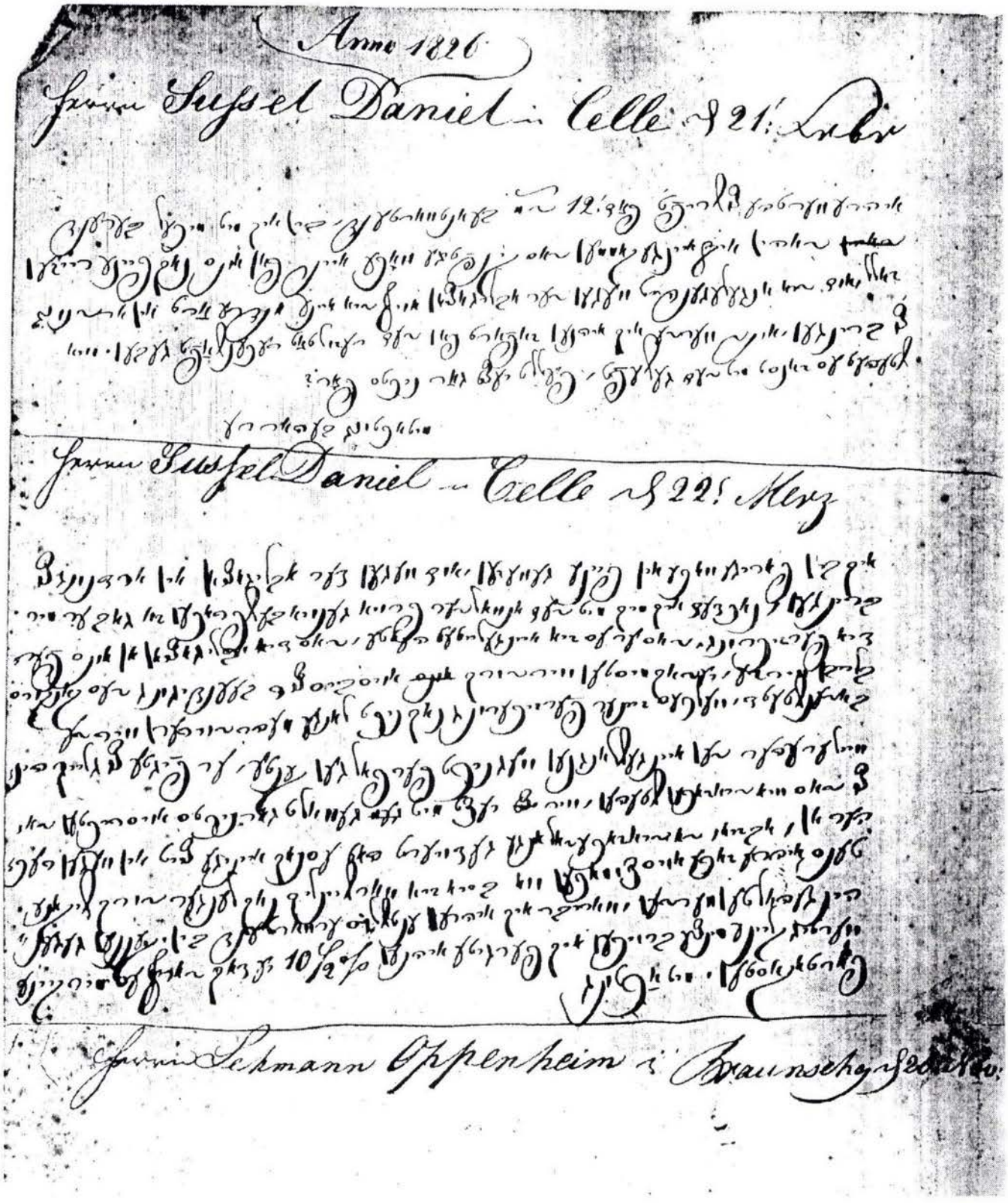
Please do not let me down at this moment; my gratitude will know no limits. [...] As greater security, I also will give you the receipt of my soldier's pay, which will fall due on January 1st, 1825. [...] You promised not to abandon me and I trust your words like an oracle.You also will see the effect and be convinced that you did not waste your kindness on an unworthy person. At eight o'clock on Friday morning, I will come to your place and await my fate from your hands. My confidence in your kindness is unlimited. I remain always grateful,

Ever yours,

[signed] Rothmeyer



Business letters written by Ephraim to his clients in February 1823 in German and Judeo-German



Transliteration of part of the first sentence of the letter dated March 22, 1826 in Judeo-German, sent to Süssel Daniel in Celle:
Ich bin vorige Woche in Peine gewesen um wegen der Obligation in Ordnung zu brigen, nachdem ich mit dem Anwalter...
Translation: I have been to Peine [small town near Hanover] last week, to put the obligation in order, after I [contacted] the lawyer...

Herrn Lemmel Fehr z Seine

Ich ersuche dich Dir meine Gedanken über die Probe
sätzen, oder mit wenigen Worten, meine
Herrenpeil, herumgiehen wollen, die zeigen sich jetzt
bey mir in einem Lichte, worin ich Dir nicht gerne sehen
möchte, indem ich Ihnen gegen den Spiel
nicht länger gedulden werden, ich will nun
endlich einmahl einsehen wenn ich bin, wann Ihnen
also an Fortsetzung meiner Freundschaft & Ihres guten
Rufes gelegen ist, so ersuche Dir Sonntag oder Mon-
tag den 24 oder 25: hier, um einen bey Ihr bis
gänzl Endlung zu erklären, ich Fall Ihres Aus-
bleibens werden Dir sich Unannehmlichkeiten
zuziehen.

Bestens empfohlen

September 1826

Herrn Lehman Oppenheim z Braunschweig

d 22: October

In Beantwortung Ihres gesch: Zuschrift vom 20: d:
habe ich seit kurzem mehreres Polen Court, von
H: Levi Heinemann darüber willig zu 14 5/6 % erhalten
wozu ich etwas das Ihrige beitragen will, & sey Sie
ihnen so weniger dass Sie diesen Preis gerne be-
willigen, da Sie durch grossere Commissionen

Letters written by Ephraim in German dated September and October 1826

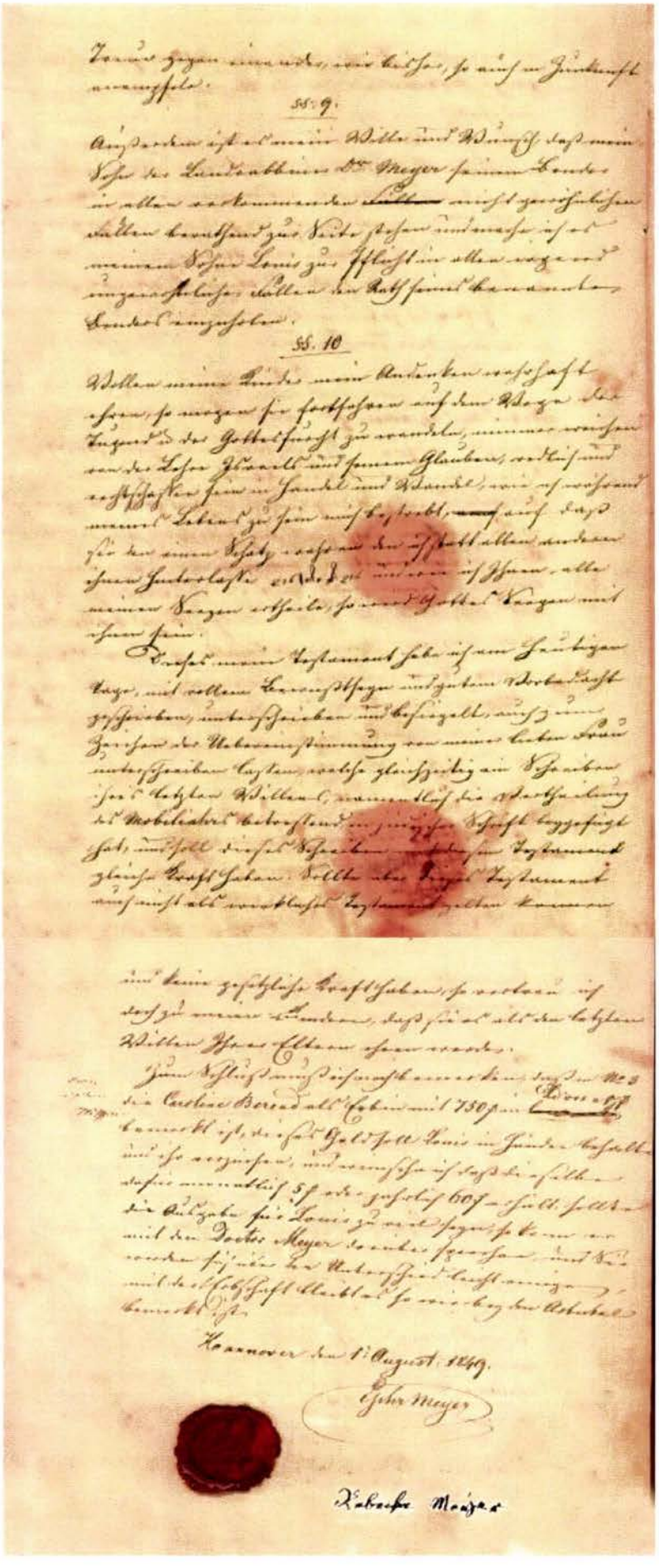
EPHRAIM MEYER'S WILL

Both Ephraim and Rebecca knew Hebrew well. Ephraim's last will, dated August 1, 1849, written shortly before his death, contains only one opening sentence in Hebrew, as well as four Hebrew words, written with Hebrew characters, in § 10, in which he gives the following advice to his children:

> "If my children truly want to honor my memory, let them continue to walk the path of virtue and fear of God, never deviate from the teachings and faith of Israel, be upright and honest in business and the way of life, as I tried to do all my life, so that they will preserve the one treasure which I leave them above all else **טוב שם משמן טוב** - *tov shem mishemen tov* - and as I give my blessings to all of them, God's blessing will accompany them."

"*Tov shem mishemen tov*" is a word play in Hebrew and means: it is better to have a good name than good [precious] oil. The same Hebrew words are mentioned in the epitaph of Ephraim's son Louis E. Meyer.

In his will Ephraim mentions that from her first husband Abraham Berend, who died very young and was constantly sick, his wife did not receive anything. Ephraim bequeathed his house, his whole fortune and his business to his wife and his youngest son Louis, who had already worked with his father at the bank for ten years and was not married yet. The other children had already received their part. Ephraim also recommended strongly to Louis to consult his older brother, the *Landrabbiner* Dr. Samuel Meyer, in all important matters.



Part of Ephraim Meyer's will

REBECCA MEYER'S WILL

Rebecca's will, written in 1849, 12 years before her death, gives a touching and most interesting report of her life and family affairs. I believe it is a unique document and deserves to be reproduced here in full. It is interesting to note that the German text is constantly interspersed with Hebrew words or abbreviations of the same, such as ע"ה *Alav hashalom* (peace be with him), or when referring to a person, she always adds ל"א"י"ט *learuchim yamim tovim* - (may his days be long and good), ב"ה *baruch hashem* - (may God be praised), or ז"ל *sichrono l'berachah* - (may his memory be blessed), etc. The transcription of these Hebrew words and abbreviations are underlined in the following English translation in order to characterize them. They reveal Rebecca's good knowledge of Hebrew as well as her religiosity. I have tried to maintain Rebecca's original style in the following translation.

May 25, 1849

"I find it necessary [to write this will], as both of us are getting frail. I have asked my dear husband, I wish him long and good days, to write a note urgently to inform all my beloved children, men of their generation, but I cannot move him to make his will, due to our conditions. He always promises, but has not done it so far. The years pass by, I am over seventy [years old] with God's help, heaven forbid that I do not live longer than my beloved husband, I wish him long and good days, Ephraim Meyer.

About my early youth we will not report anything. After the death of my [first] husband *Morenu* [meaning literally "our teacher," title given to scholars or distinguished rabbis] Abraham of blessed memory, which occurred forty-two years ago on the Eve of New Moon *Tamus*, he left two daughters, one my daughter Rahel, peace be with her, another one Keilche, the third one was born three months after the death of her father, of blessed memory, named Reis'che. My deceased husband was frequently ill, and I lived with my daughter Rahel, peace be with her, at my dear parents of blessed memory, with one child, for seven years. When my husband's health improved, I was called back. Five years after my stay here, the blessed one entered eternal life. He was the son of Morenu Berisch, Chief Rabbi of Hanover.

The dowry was kept by my mother-in-law, peace be with her. She wanted to keep it for the children. I did not want to annoy her, because she lost her fortune in the French times [during the Napoleonic wars]. My mother-in-law, the *Rebbetzin*, peace be with her, [Gitel], nearly reached the age of one hundred years and as two of my daughters got married during her lifetime, she said to her granddaughters several times "you will have your money," but she never gave anything to the children. After the death of my mother-in-law, peace be with her, my brother-in-law Morenu Josef gave them 50 Reichsthaler in settlement. This amount was given to my son-in-law Gerson [Treuenfels] of blessed memory. Also for [the purchase of] 100 [holy] books my grandson [the rabbi] Abraham Treuenfels received [money], because the

two children Keilche, may she live and Reis'che, may she live, had desisted [of their part]. Nothing else I received for the three children. We have nothing in our hands of the property of my father-in-law, the Rav, the great Gaon [eminent scholar], of blessed memory, and from my mother-in-law, the Rebbetzin.

The possessions left by my good, highly esteemed parents of blessed memory [R. Samuel and Hanle], were given to one of my sisters [Esther Sondheimer], because her property was looted in Aschaffenburg during the French unrest [the Napoleonic Wars]. We two sisters thereupon gave her everything. The money had been given to the poor by my pious, dignified father of blessed memory [Rabbi Samuel Levi Warburg], except for the part of my sister Esther. This was the wish of this godly father during the famine in Gelnhausen. His merit will assist all of his children. Amen!

Now we have to start with our way of life. In our marriage God the Almighty gave us good health, good income פרנסה טובה - *parnassa tovah*, and we had six children for good long days. Five of them got married already with God's help. Three daughters got their dowry with God's help and their trousseau with God's help. One son, our dear Moritz [Morris] Meyer, lives in America. My son Morenu Shemuel [Samuel], is Chief Rabbi here, another son Levi [Louis] Meyer. We had our nine children - for long good days - learn everything, we spared no effort and no money. As an evidence, our beloved son the Rabbi, may his light shine. My beloved husband - for good long days - loved the three children from the first marriage as much as his own. Because of the merit of the children, the Holy one, may he be praised, gave us happiness and blessings מזל and ברכה - *masal* and *berachah* in our business.

We gave the eldest daughter [of her first matrimony] in marriage to Gerson Treuenfels in Detmold, the third daughter is Röschen [Reis'che] Spanier, the second one did not want to get married. Her uncle Morenu Shemuel [Samuel Berenstein], chief rabbi in Amsterdam, was here 23 years ago, but could not convince her to get married. Her grandmother [Gitel Berend] made every effort possible, but could not convince her either, because of her obstinate head. My dear [second] husband would have liked at that time to give her a dowry.

For fourteen years our business flourished, with God's help. We bought Hanover bonds, we did not waste any time, no help, one maid only with this large business. Heaven presented us with good health. Twenty-six years ago [1823] we lost a large sum to Wolf Berend, to Römeling many thousands, to *Rittmeister* [captain of cavalry] Blumenhagen, to *Rittmeister* Schulze a lot of money, to Kaufmann, then to Helmke (last year he died) 3000 Reichsthaler and interest for twenty years, totaling 600. Such severe losses we suffered in six years. My good husband started to get ill, my tears overflowed, we began to grow fearful that our honest reputation could not be maintained, to give a Jew what is due to him, to borrow and not pay back, this was too hard for my honest husband, for good long days. I decided that I never would want to get anything from the money I brought into the marriage until all debts were

paid. So the year 1830 was very bad for our finances, the children were small, they needed very much for lessons; my son and my grandson had to study [Samuel Meyer and Abraham Treuenfels, who were of about the same age, both becoming rabbbis later on]. Thank heavens our honest ways prevailed.

Caroline [Keilche] Berend is entitled to 500 Reichsthaler in Louis d'Or cash. As long as she lives, my son Louis has to give her 25 Rth in Louis d'Or out of each 100, 5 Rth in Louis d'Or cash. After the death of my daughter Caroline, the children of Rahel, peace be with her, will get 250 Rth in Louis d'Or, the remaining 250 Rth in Louis d'Or are to be given to Röschen for good long days, the present [married] Spanier. As my deceased son-in-law Gerson Treuenfels has several debts in our office, Louis Meyer [her son, the banker] must not deduct anything from the orphans. He must pay out the 250 Rth in gold, and so my dear husband will give the hundred that are shown in the books as a present to the children of my Rahel, peace be with her, and nothing must be deducted from Gershon [Gerson Treuenfels].

It would also be our wish that Caroline née Abraham Berend may get five Rth a month [later, in 1858, increased to fifteen Rth a month after Rebecca's death]. Should it be too much for Levi [Louis] to afford all this, in this event my beloved son the Rabbi will take care that she never will become a burden to strangers may God forbid. Furthermore, after my death, as she did not get a dowry, [she shall receive] my shirts, stockings, handkerchiefs, nightcaps. The silk dresses [are to be given] to my Henriette Spiegelberg [her daughter], my black silken cloak, laces, caps to Spiegelberg, the woolen dresses - whatever Caroline wants to get of same. The rest to our little children in Detmold [her grandchildren, from her deceased daughter Rahel and deceased son-in-law Gerson Treuenfels]. For Caroline a bed, namely the visitors' bed, 4 bed covers, 12 sheets, 12 napkins and 2 tablecloths, a dozen towels, a dozen kitchen towels, just do not quarrel *(mishpeten)*. The rest they will divide in peace שלום - *Shalo*m, all the dear children, for good long days.

My beloved son Levi has already [conducted] our business with God's help for 12 years, diligently and tirelessly. All his efforts go to pay to each person his rightful claim. As the Almighty is blessing him in business to support his parents and family in honor כבוד - *bekavo*d, it would be my wish to ask the Almighty to assist my dear son for good long days in his own beginnings with the merit to support himself in honor. It is he who saved our honest name with God's help. So may the Almighty in his kindness bring happiness to all my children, that they will become God fearing and remain honest people. Amen!

The silver is to be divided among all my children. The furniture belongs to my dear son Louis for good long days. Caroline will get the sofa from the small room, 6 cane-bottomed chairs and a small table. Our much beloved son the Rabbi, may his light shine, for good long days, shall look into the books, so that Levi will not have to pay too many debts, because I am not supposed to know our situation. If we had not lost our fortune, each of our nine children would have received 1000 [Reichsthaler]. Everything comes from heaven. It would be desirable, however, that you, my dear children, will not blot out our memory in your hearts because of

the money. We gave you beyond our strength and have lost everything except our honest reputation. May God preserve all of you in prosperity and bless you with good health.

Written with full consciousness, read with God's help, by my own signature רבקה מאיר - Rivkah Meir, the daughter of the *Rav*, the great *Gaon Morenu* Shemuel Warburg, Rabbi in Gelnhausen.

May heaven preserve you from all afflictions, all of you. Amen! May you keep your Father in honor, when I am not here anymore.

Your mother Rivkah Meir

My prayerbooks for the high holidays (מחזורים - *Machsori*m) to my daughter Spiegelberg.

[C O D I C I L]

My dearest children for good long days! I beg you, my dear children, who live here for good long days and sons-in-law for good long days to treat my beloved husband with attention as if I were still alive, looking for clean linen and bestowing great care, so that my dearest husband may not have to worry about his livelihood through his highest age. This is your mother's wish. The Almighty will reward you, Amen!

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My beloved highly appreciated mother-in-law [Gitel Berend, from her first marriage] the pious *Rabbanit* הרבנית - [the rabbi's wife, in Yiddish: *Rebbetzin*], peace be with her, would have liked to give the children something, but she must not have had anything. Heaven made the children [from her first marriage] grow up, so that we could give them a dowry with God's help.Their good father, my beloved husband, did everything for them as if they were his own.

Now it would be my wish after my death that my three married daughters living here, may they live until hundred and twenty years עמ"ש (ad meah veessrim shanim) share the furniture in friendship; the silver is to be shared, [also] beds, linen, toweling. Caroline's belongings are kept in the trunk. For [her part of] the silver she must receive money. The wardrobe where the hats are kept is for her linen. She must rent another apartment. If she wants to live with her sister Jettchen [Jette Spiegelberg] for good long days, you must pay [to Jette] fifty Rth a year and her pocket money. My dear Röschen will gladly give, so that she [Caroline] will not become a burden to some stranger. From my clothing give her whatever she wants, the rest to Detmold [the place of residence of Rebecca's grandchildren Treuenfels]. If heaven gives me my health, I will gladly write down all these things in the book and deposit the will of my beloved husband, peace be with him. For his merit you all will fare nicely, my dear children. God preserve all of you healthy, my sons and daughters, sons-in-law, daughters-in-law, all the little grandchildren until hundred and twenty good years. I do not know yet about the estate and our situation, otherwise I would write [about it].

On the eve of the new moon of [the month] *Tamus*, written on June 9, 1850, Rivkah Meir.

Should the Spanish [bonds] improve, I will write again.

[C O D I C I L]

My dear son Louis for good long days sold the Spanish [bonds] and bought other papers instead; this is to be divided into eight parts [her eight remaining children]. God willing, after my death. The Almighty, may he be praised, ה"הקב - *Hakadosh baruch hu* blessed *(gebensch*t) my son within a few years time. My dear Louis gives up [his part], [it will be] only for Caroline, so that she will not be in need.

Hanover, June 12, 1856
Widow Rebekka Meyer

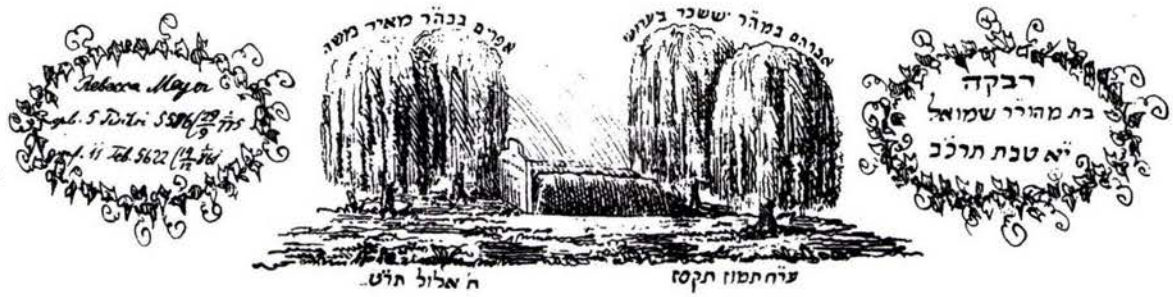
With full judgment after eighty years, [do] not forget my soul after my death."

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The great losses due to outstanding debts suffered by Ephraim's banking business in the year 1823 which Rebecca mentions in her will and laments so much are quite in accordance with the great agrarian crisis and price collapse of that year and the following ones. The greatest part of Ephraim's clients was made up of people engaged in agriculture.

Rebecca, Ephraim and his father Meyer Moses are buried at Hanover's oldest Jewish cemetery, at Judenkirchhof, opened in 1600 and closed in 1865. It is situated on a hill, in the center of the city. The street is now called Oberstrasse, but known as Judenkirchhof. This cemetery is protected as a historical monument.

In 1996 our good friend, Dr. Gerhard Gönner, drove us from Berlin to Hanover. We met him first a few years earlier on the Jewish cemetery at Schönhauser Allee in Berlin, when we visited my paternal grandparents' graves. In Hanover we met Dr. Peter Schulze, who during our stay was our very competent guide to Hanover's Jewish landmarks. Besides visiting the Jewish cemetery An der Strangriede, the house on Calenbergerstrasse and other interesting places, he took us to the old cemetery at Judenkirchhof. It is always locked and a special permission is necessary to visit it. Schulze had obtained the keys and so we could visit this most interesting place. He had a booklet, showing the location of the tombs and therefore we had the rare opportunity to visit the very old graves of my maternal great-great-grandparents, Rebecca and Ephraim, which are still preserved.



Mai den 25 ten 1849.

Ich finde nöthig, die mehreren Verfügungen von meinem Vater aufzuheben – Da ich meinem Einzigen Theuren Gatten Meyer 6 Kinder schon eine Reihe von Jahren Vermögen gehabt habe, um Abschreiben zu besorgen, denen ich aber nicht Lage beizugehen, wegen öfters Vorfallenheiten seine Zeit zu widmen – gibt mir die Vorsehung, seit ab bis dato nicht gelaichtet; die Jahre schlagen sie, die 70 sind vorüber, das Fünfmal Sechste muss Tage ich nicht länger habe mein geliebtes Mann 6 Kinder Ehemann Meyer – meine theuerstliche liebe Kinder zu besorgen.

Von meiner früher Jugend wollen wir nichts melden. Nach Ableben meines vorgeliebten Mannes 43 Jahre alt, dieser 42 Jahre mehr ist dieser, sind es 2 Töchter mein, die eine 19 Jahre, die zweite 17 Jahre, die dritte Tochter verheirathet 3 Monate nach Ableben ihres Vaters geboren, mit Namen Joseph. Der selige Mann war öfters krank und ich war mit meiner Tochter Rachel 8 bei meinem lieben Ehemann 3 Jahre mit einem Kind. Wir Ehepaar seine Gesundheit so ziemlich gute, mehr ich seine besorgen, nach 5 Jahren meinem Gemahl ging der Selige nicht recht. Dieser war der Brief von Herrn Isaac Meyer Joseph. Die Ursache seiner Krankheit war, sie wollte sie für die Kinder bestellen, ich wollte sie nicht für, da sie in den französischen Zeiten ihr Vermögen verloren hat. Meine Mutter hat beinahe 100 jährigen Alter erreicht und war zwei meiner Töchter schon bei ihrer Zeit, so sagte sie nach mehrmals zu ihrer Tochter: mein Geld will ich haben, aber sie hat nie den Kindern etwas gegeben. Nach Ableben meines Ehegatten hat ihnen meine Schwager Isaac Meyer 50 Rthl. gegeben zum Anzug. Die 50 Rthl hat meine Schwiegermutter Jochen 2 bekommen und auf die 100 Rthl hat mein Onkel Abraham Frankenthal bekommen, wo die beiden Kinder und Joseph Anzug gekauft, weiter habe ich nichts bekommen für die 3 Kinder; wie haben nicht in Gedanken von dem Vermögen etwas 2 Rthl. Die Frau, der verstorbene meines guten seligen Ehemann 3 hat meinen eine Schwester Lea gewiss Testament bekommen, da Rafalke in Offenbach zugleich wurden die französischen Zeiten, da haben wie 2 Schwestern ihr Theil gespendet. Das baare Geld hat mein verstorbener Ehemann Vater 3 an Armen gegeben, hat nun Testamentlich bei seinen Kindern angestellt, meine mir, nur Schwester Esther ihr Theil gegeben, diesen gütlichen Verlust Abschied, in der Zeitgeschäft in

Rebecca Meyer's will

Gehalten. Der Herr wird weiter unsere Kinder behüten! Amen!

Nun, wir hatten wir nun unsere Lebensmittel empfangen. Zu unserer Hochzeit schenkte uns der Allgütige Gesundheit, [illegible] und zeugten 6 Kinder Gott, wovon jetzt 5 [illegible] zu sehen haben; 3 Töchter haben [illegible] und Ehegatten [illegible], wie Rose, unsere Lea, der Moritz Wagner wohnt in Amerika, wie Rebekka [illegible], wie Rose Levi Wagner. Wir haben unsere 9 Kinder Gott selbst lernen lassen, keinen Stolz Ehre Geld gepflanzt, zum Lernen unsere geliebten Rose [illegible]. Mein lieber Mann Gott hat die 3 Kinder nun wieder so viel gesegnet wie die jüngere. [illegible] Der Kinder gab uns [illegible], [illegible] wie unserem Geschäft. Wir haben die älteste Tochter mit [illegible], die 3 Töchter Rebekka Spanier, die 2 Töchter wollte keinen [illegible] thun. Der Onkel [illegible] Gott [illegible] in Amsterdam war nur 23 Jahre hier, konnte sie nicht bewegen einen [illegible] zu thun, der Grossmutter sah sich alle möglichen Mühe gegeben, sie konnte sie nicht bewegen, trotz ihrer eigensinnigen Hoff. Mein lieber Mann hätte ihr gern Schaden viel [illegible] gegeben. 19 Jahre blieb unser Handel da, wie Käufleer [illegible] Allegretiaren, selbst geliebte mal, wie haben drei Jahr verschwendet, drei Schulden, wir wie Mädchen bei drei grossen Geschäft, der Handel schenkte und Geschäft. Vor 26 Jahren verlassen wir an Adolf Lazarus nun bedeutende Summen, an Römeling viele 1000, an Rittmeister Blumenfeger, Rittmeister Schultze viel Geld, drei Buchhalter, zuletzt an Hebraka (die wenigen Jahre sterb Schulden) 3000 Rth und seinen 20 Jahr sind 600, blieb starke Verluste Leiden wir in 6 Jahren, mein guter Mann fing an zu kränkeln, ich verging vor Thränen, wie fingen an Angst zu warten, dass unser schönes Buch nicht vollen warten könnte, wenn Jahre sah Einige zu geben, bisher und nicht bezahlen, sah war zu fest für unseren schönen Mann Gott. Ich Geschäft, dass ich wie viel haben wollte von meinen einzelnen Summen bei alle Schulden bezahlt sind. Also 1830 war ich schlecht mit unsere Finanzen, die Kinder waren klein, die brauchten sehr viel zum Unterricht, mein Rose, mein Gabriel mussten studieren, dann Hermann die Musik, dann schönen Studenten gelernt ab und Kaufmannschaften. Caroline Lazarus gab 500 Rth Cour zu fordern, ja einige die bald muss ich mein Theil 125 Rth Cour geben von jetzt 100 5 Rth Cour. mit Ableben meines Tochter Caroline bekommen die Kinder von Rest da 250 Rth Cour, die andern 250 Rth Cour bekommt Rebecca Gott, die jetzige Hermann. Da mein jetziger Schwiegersohn [illegible] mehrmal schuldig ist in unserem Leichtsinn, so kann dann Mayer nicht abziehen den Rabbiner, muss die 4.50 Rth in Gold zurückgeben, so schenkt mein lieber Mann die 100 die in Bücher stehen von die Kinder von meinem Rest da und kann den Kindern nun [illegible] nicht entgegen werden. Auf mein unser Wunsch, dass Caroline jetzigen Abwesenheit Barcad um, selbst 5 Rth *) bekommen möchte; sollte sie Levi zu viel sein, sind Abel zu bezahlen, so wird meine ja.

(*) Später, 1858, schon auf 15 Rth vermehrt. mit Ableben.)

gegeben, aber sie muß nicht gestellt leben. Der Himmel sei die Kinder lassen sonst müssen, daß wir sie so leben können erhalten. Ich gütiger Vater, mein liebes Herzensbruder sei Alles gelassen wie es Dir gefällig. Nun mein Wunsch, was meinem Ableben, meine liebe 3 verheirathete Töchter bis das Mobilien theilen sollen in Freundschaft, das Silber wird gestellt, Leffel, Gabel, Messer, Theelöffel; Tischtücher liegen im Kasten, das Silber geht ihr Gold dazu, der Schmuck, was die Kinder sein sollen, sein ihre Theile; wie andern Bestimmung muß sie machen; wenn sie bei ihre Verheirathen zusetzen will, nämlich bei mein Jüngsten Child, so bezahlt 50 Pf jährlich und ihr Zinsengeld, wenn Kinder sind wird gaar geben, damit sie keinen Sonntag zur Last fällt. Von meinen Kleidung geht ihr nach sie will, das übrige was Schmutz wie meinen Kleidungsstücken. Wenn wir der Himmel meine Gesundheit will, will ich die Reise alle ins Lust schreiben, bei meinen Herzensbruder Bs sein 2 Kinder. Die seinen 4 Jungs wünsche nur meine geliebte Kinder alle wohl gehen. Gott erhalte euch alle gesund meine Töchter und Söhne, Schwiegersöhne, Schwiegertöchter, alle Enkelchen 12 Urenkel. Ich bin noch nicht bekannt mit dem Kaufhaus. Unser Verhältniß, Dann mehr schreiben.

Mein Wille wünschlich den 9 ten Januar 1850 geschrieben von Adam.
Wollen die Kinder besser machen, mache nochmals schreiben.

Mein liebes Bruder Louis hat die Kinder mehrmalig dasier andere Kleider gemacht, das geht in 8 Theile die nach meinem Ableben. Adam hat meinen Bruder Christ in meinigen Jahren, mein liebes Louis thut Vorsicht brauch, wo Lawelle dass sie keinen Mangel hat.

Germantown den 12 ten Januar 1856 Adam Rebekka Mayer
mit willige Übereinkunft von 80 Jahren, meine Kinder nicht zu vergessen nach meinem Ableben.



Ephraim Meyer's tomb



Rebecca Meyer's tomb - front view



Rebecca Meyer's tomb - rear view

3rd GENERATION

THE DESCENDANTS OF ABRAHAM BEREND AND HIS WIFE REBECCA

My great-great-grandmother Rebecca and her first husband Abraham Berend had three daughters in their short marriage: Rahel, Caroline (Keilche) and Röschen (Reis'che).

1. RAHEL, 1798-1841, married Gerson Treuenfels, who lived in Detmold. She died long before her mother Rebecca, who in her will, dated 1849, always refers to Rahel with ע"ה *(aleha hashalom)*, peace be with her. Gerson also died before his mother-in-law.

The couple had eight children. The eldest was Dr. Abraham Treuenfels, born in Hanover in 1818 and died in Stettin in 1879. He was married to Bertha Budge. He was the Chief Rabbi and *Av Beth Din,* head of the religious court, in Stettin from 1860 until his death. During his tenure, the new synagogue was built. Dr. Abraham laid the cornerstone at its groundbreaking in 1873.

Rabbi Abraham's sister was Jeanette Treuenfels (1822-1915). She lived in Hamburg. In 1912, at the age of ninety, she wrote a two-page family chronicle about her maternal forebears "at the request of several dear ancestors."

Rahel and Gerson Treuenfels' other children were Johanna (1824-44); Bertha (1826-1891); Rosa, born 1828; Henriette, called Jette (1831-1882); Regina (1834-1887); and Lina (1837-1922). Henriette married Fassbender in Detmold. They emigated to the United States. Lina married S. Strauss.

2. CAROLINE (also called Keilche in Rebecca's will) (1806-1866). To her mother's great sorrow, she never married.

3. RÖSCHEN, a diminutive form of Rosa (also called Reis'che in Rebecca's will). She was born in Hanover in 1807, three months after her father Abraham Berend's death, and died there on May 28, 1895. She married Levy (Louis) Spanier, a businessman born in Wunstorf, near Hanover, on December 17, 1803. Röschen and Louis emigrated to the United States and lived in Albany, New York. Louis died there in 1864. They had four children, all born in the United States: Emil (1836-1872); Leah (1843-1905), married to S. Hamm, who died in 1881; Julia (Julie) who was born on October 22, 1847 in Albany and died on May 28, 1919 in Dresden; and Ella who married J. Prinz. About 1870 Leah Hamm and her family, who lived in the United States, visited my great-grandparents Rebecca and Louis in Hanover. Rebeccca was very fond of them.

Julia married Michael Mitchel Allen, born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on November 23, 1830 and died in Hanover on May 16, 1907. In 1861 Michael was a regimental military chaplain for two months during the American Civil War. He was an erstwhile rabbinical student, teaching classes for the Philadelphia Hebrew Education Society and he officiated as substitute *Hazan* (cantor) at various synagogues. During his short term in the army, he was

not a chaplain for Jewish soldiers only, but the regimental chaplain for soldiers of all faiths. However, as he was a layman and not a regularly ordained clergyman, and, besides, not belonging to a Christian faith - which was a requirement at that time - he had to resign from his post.

Michael Allen and his brother were liquor dealers. They went bankrupt at the Wall Street stock exchange on Black Friday in 1871. About two years later, Röschen Spanier, who had become a widow, went back to Hanover where her relatives lived. She was accompanied by her daughter Julia and son-in-law Michael and their two children at the time, Grace and Louis. Julia and Michael had two more children in Hanover, Clarence and Anna Florence. Grace, born in Albany in 1867, died in Dresden in 1929. She married Dr. Jakob Winter, born in Sandorf, Hungary, in 1857. He died in Berlin around 1940 and was buried in Dresden, where he was a rabbi for over forty-five years.

Grace and Jakob Winter's daughter Annie, after her first husband's death, married Ernst Landsberger. Their son Henry A. Landsberger, born in Dresden, is a professor of sociology at the university of Chapel Hill, N.C. He is very interested in the genealogy of his family. We are related through Rebecca Meyer's first marriage to Abraham Berend. Henry helped to raise funds for the construction of a new synagogue in Dresden, at exactly the same place where the beautiful old synagogue once stood before it was razed in the so-called Kristallnacht in November 1938. On November 9, 1998, exactly 60 years later, the reconstruction of the new synagogue began. The effort was headed by Jews and non-Jews alike in Dresden's American sister city Columbus, Ohio, in addition, of course, to receiving official subventions from the German city and state authorities.

Julia and Michael Allen's youngest daughter was Anna Florence, called Nana, born in Hanover on February 17, 1882. She died in São Paulo, Brazil on July 12, 1960. She married Emil Levy, born in Stargard, Pomerania, on April 3, 1868. He died in São Paulo on January 12, 1944. The couple had five children, all born in Germany. Ernst Moritz Levy, called Emo, was born in 1908 and died in São Paulo in July 1999; Peter, born 1909, died in Rolandia, Brazil, in 1955; Eva, born in 1910, died in São Paulo in 1997; Edgar, born in 1911, lives in São Paulo; Wolfgang, called Wolfi, born in 1915, left Brazil for Israel. He lives at Kfar Maccabiah, in Ramat Gan. We are also related through Rebecca Meyer, widowed Berend. Henry Landsberger, Wolfi Allen Levy and I met for the first time in Tel Aviv in 1995, having an animated talk about our common ancestor Rebecca. Wolfi visited us here in Porto Alegre in 1998.

Nana Levy owned oil portraits of Ephraim and Rebecca Meyer exactly as those that now hang at my home. Photos of the portraits belonging to Nana were sent to me by Käthe Saul in 1960. Käthe, with whom I had correspondence about family history, and Nana Levy were both great-granddaughters of Rebecca, Nana from Rebecca's first and Käthe from her second marriage. Wolfi got the portraits from his mother and passed them on to his son Michael Levy, who lives with his family in Mill Valley, California. In 1994, Seldi and I, together with my son Ruben and family, visited Michael there, and we photographed these pictures. They look exactly the same as the ones I own. It seems that at that time it was usual to order several copies of the same family portrait from the painter in order to give them to the various descendants.

THE DESCENDANTS OF EPHRAIM AND REBECCA MEYER

1. **JETTE** (Henriette), 1810-1865, married Josef Spiegelberg, veterinarian in Hameln.

2. **MORITZ**, called Morris, in Hebrew Meir (1812-1886), was born in Hanover. He married Sarah Gertrude Oppenheim, born in Charleston, South Carolina in 1825, died on March 18, 1911 in Berlin, buried in Hanover.

3. **JOHANNA** (Hannchen), born October 25, 1814, died 1880, in Hanover. On July 8, 1835, she married Bendix (Bernhard) Magnus, born in Bovenden in 1804, died 1885. He was a tax collector. They had six children, Emilie, Moritz, Caroline, Samuel, Julius and Therese, born between 1836 and 1846, in regular intervals of two years. Emilie married M. Neufeld; Moritz married Emma Gans; Caroline, called Lina, married Bernhard Salfeld. Samuel called himself Eduard later on. He married Anna Gans; Julius married Grete Mossner. Bernhard Magnus was a member of the Board of Directors of the Beneficial Society of the Jewish Community in Hanover for many years.

4. **BETTY** (1817-1889), Hanover, married Wilhelm Seelig, cantor *(chasan)* at the old synagogue in Hanover until the inauguration of the new one in 1870. They had five children, Arnold, Mathilde, Clara, Hermine and Anna. Arnold (1849-1919) married Anna Lamm; Mathilde, born in 1852, married A. Rewald; Clara, born in 1853, married G. Rewald; Hermine, born in 1857, married D. David. It was Arnold Seelig who first drew up the big Ephraim and Rebecca Meyer Family Tree in 1872, which later was continued by his cousin Adèle Meyer married Freund, daughter of Moritz (Morris) Meyer.

5. **SAMUEL EPHRAIM**, Hanover, born on March 2, 1819, died July 6, 1882, *Landrabbiner* (provincial rabbi) in Hanover from 1845 to 1882. On May 21, 1849 he married Lina Sieskind, born in Ballenstedt on April 26, 1829, died on April 25, 1894 in Hanover.

6. **LOUIS (LEVY) EPHRAIM**, Hanover, born on October 12, 1821, died on February 2, 1894. He was my great-grandfather. He married Rebecca Sieskind (cousin of Lina Sieskind), born in Ballenstedt on May 17, 1832, died in Marienbad on August 17, 1890, buried in Hanover.

Rebecca Meyer was already forty-six years old when her youngest son Louis was born in 1821. It is interesting to note that the birth dates of the generation of Rebecca's grandchildren from her first and second marriage extended over a period of fifty-five years (1818-1873). When Georg Meyer, the youngest of the fifteen children of her son *Landrabbiner* Dr. Samuel Meyer, was born in 1873, his cousin Dr. Abraham Treuenfels, born 1818, son of Rebecca's eldest daughter Rahel Berend from her first marriage, was already fifty-five years old.

HENRIETTE AND JOSEF SPIEGELBERG & THEIR DESCENDANTS

Ephraim and Rebecca's eldest child Henriette (Jette - 1810-1865), married Josef Spiegelberg, veterinarian in Hameln. They had five children: Emilie (1833-1861), married L. Neuberg; Lina, born in 1835, married A. Meyerhof; Eduard (1837-1910); Moritz born in 1839 married Henriette; and Louis (1842-1883). Josef Spiegelberg died young. Ephraim mentions in his will, dated 1849:

"I also recommend to the love of my children their sister Jette, widowed Spiegelberg, and her children, especially her eldest son Eduard who shall remain in my house. I hope he will become a capable person (*"tüchtiger Mensch"*) and that my son Louis will take care of him, the same way I am doing. In general I recommend my children mutual love and faithfulness as hitherto, and also in the future."

Jette Spiegelberg's oldest son, Eduard, born in 1837, died on January 1, 1910, grew up in his grandfather's house, because of his father's early death. He married Antonie Dux, who died in 1902. He later established the Eduard and Antonie Spiegelberg family foundation. He entered his uncle Louis' bank Ephraim Meyer & Sohn and in 1865 he became a partner. He was a very capable collaborator and remained at the bank until his death.

Eduard and Antonie's son John Spiegelberg, born 1868, became a junior partner at the bank after Eduard's death in 1910. He was married to Julie Schönbaum, born in Aachen, in his first marriage and to Irmgard Otto in his second one. He had two children from his first marriage: Kurt, who died as a child, and Antonie, born in 1902 in Hanover, a physician. She committed suicide in 1941. John died in New York after 1939. It was John who, according to what my mother Leonie told me and as she also mentioned in her diaries, caused the ultimate collapse of the bank in the 1920s. I will deal with this matter later on, when further referring to the banking establishment Ephraim Meyer und Sohn.

MORITZ AND SARAH MEYER & THEIR DESCENDANTS

Moritz, called Morris (1812-1886), was the eldest son of Ephraim and Rebecca. He was rather a ne'er-do-well as a young man. There was an unconfirmed rumor in the family that he was sent to America, because he appropriated a small amount of money from the cash box intended for buying postage stamps, while working at his father's bank. At that time, it seems, this would have been reason enough to send a son overseas, away from home. He went to Charleston, South Carolina, where he married Sarah Gertrude Oppenheim. Morris and Sarah had two daughters, Rebecca and Adèle.

Morris' relationship to his brother Louis and sister-in-law Rebecca seemed to have been very good, as evidenced by a letter in my possession, written about 1870, in which Louis and Rebecca inform Morris about family and other news.

Morris' wife Sarah Gertrude Oppenheim is a direct descendant of the famous Court Jew and philantropist SAMUEL OPPENHEIM (or OPPENHEIMER), 1630-1703, who financed Prince Eugen of Savoy's Turkish wars. He was the first Jew to settle in Vienna after the expulsion of the Jews in 1670. Sarah's grandfather was Wolf Jakob Oppenheim, who died in 1797. As a young man, around 1765, MEYER AMSCHEL ROTHSCHILD (1743-1812), founder of the famous Rothschild dynasty, entered the banking-house of Wolf Jakob Oppenheim in Hanover as an employee. He acquired experience there in foreign commerce and exchange business, as well as a great knowledge of old coins and medals. Sarah's father was Herz Wolf (Fritz) Oppenheim. He emigrated to America and transplanted his family to the New Continent. Herz Wolf Oppenheim died in 1853. In 1913, there were already 118 Oppenheim family members living in America, according to Rabbi Gronemann.

Morris and Sarah later returned to Germany during the boom there, living in Hanover. My aunt Edith Straus, granddaughter of Morris' brother Louis, mentioned in a letter to me that Sarah was very ugly, "like a white negress." Käthe Saul, granddaughter of Morris' brother Samuel, also mentions in a letter to me that Sarah and her older daughter were as ugly as she had ever seen in her life. Therefore her nickname was "the last slave." Edith writes that Sarah never learned the German language and misunderstood everything. Käthe tells a funny story about "Szeire," as Sarah was called. On Friday nights - *Kabbalat Shabbat* - the whole large family used to meet after dinner at the home of *Landrabbiner* Dr. Samuel E. Meyer. One night "Aunt Szeire" took a WHOLE orange from the fruit bowl and ate it all by herself, to the great surprise of the whole family. At that time oranges were a very rare and expensive imported fruit in Germany and were usually shared, one slice only for each person.

After Morris died, Sarah moved to Berlin where her two daughters lived. She died there on March 18, 1911 and was buried in Hanover beside her husband. Sarah's older daughter, Rebecca, married Moritz Meyer. They had two daughters, Alice, born in 1889 and Käthe, born in 1891. Sarah's younger daughter, Adèle, born in Berlin in 1867, married Gustav Freund. The couple had a son, Erich. A few years after the Nazis came to power, Adèle emigrated to the United States, which must not have been very difficult for her, as her mother Sarah was born there. Adèle was very close to my grandmother Helene Meyer. She often visited her in our apartment in Berlin, where my grandmother lived during the last years before her emigration to Switzerland. Adèle organized many *Stammbäume*, genealogical trees, which are in my possession, such as "The Ascendance of Rebekka Meyer," "Connections between Heinrich Heine - Helene Meyer - Oppenheim, etc.," and "Connections of the *Oberhoffaktoren* (the court factors) among themselves." Adèle explained that the great financial agents, the Court Jews of the 17th and 18th century, such as the Oppenheims, Samson Wertheimer, etc., were nearly all interrelated.



Landrabbiner Samuel E. Meyer
Hebrew inscription: *Shalom shalom, lerachok ulekarov*
German inscription: *Friede, Friede, dem Fernen wie dem Nahen* (Peace, peace, to the Far as to the Near)



Lina Meyer née Sieskind

LANDRABBINER SAMUEL E. MEYER - (1819-1882)

Ephraim and Rebecca's son Samuel Ephraim was *Landrabbiner* for the city and province of Hanover for nearly 37 years, from 1845 until his death. He was named after his maternal grandfather, Rabbi Samuel Levi Warburg, to whom he bore a great physical resemblance, as mentioned by Dr. Walther Meyer. Though only twenty-six years old and not yet married, he was chosen in 1845, among three candidates, in an election for the rabbinate of Hanover. He was the successor of Dr. Nathan Marcus Adler, *Landrabbiner* in Hanover from 1830-45, who had received a call from London to become Chief Rabbi of Great Britain.

Regarding Samuel's rabbinical activities, an excellent, very interesting brochure was written by Peter Schulze in 1987: "That the Jews of our lands may choose a rabbi", or in the original old German: *"dass die Juden in unsern Landen einen Rabbinen erwehlen."* Its subtitle is "Contributions to the 300th anniversary of the *Landrabbinat* Hanover, March 10, 1987." In this brochure Schulze describes and analyzes the activities and accomplishments of the provincial rabbis in Hanover, from the foundation of the *Landrabbinat* in 1687 until its forced extinction by the Nazis in 1938.

He also relates the many problems the various *Landrabbiner* had to face, both within the community, as well as with regard to the government authorities to whom they were subordinated. The *Landrabbinat* Hanover included many principalities, dukedoms and counties

and extended over a large territory. Of the *Landrabbiner's* many duties, one was to travel to all the small Jewish communities, to supervise the religious services and school systems, even having to examine the pupils personally. The *Landrabbinat* stood under the authority of the provincial government and the *Landrabbiner* stood between the authorities, on one side, and the Jewish communities, on the other.

Samuel Meyer was an important personality, as a preacher and a spiritual leader. He fought for the full emancipation and honor of the Jews. He was mainly responsible for the development of the synagogue, school and welfare systems of the many Jewish communitities in the province of Hanover. After the defeat of the Kingdom of Hanover in the war of 1866, fought by Prussia against Hanover and Austria, Hanover lost its independence and became a province of Prussia. I have in my possession a copy of a sermon given by Samuel Meyer. The heading (obviously not written by Rabbi Samuel himself), reads: "Sermon held in the synagogue by *Landrabbiner* Dr. Samuel E. Meyer. This sermon was read simultaneously in the 72 Jewish communities of Hanover, after the Prussians attacked and annexed the kingdom of Hanover and chased away the blind King." In this sermon Rabbi Samuel says:

> "We have been directed not to pray anymore in the public religious service for our Royal Family [who ruled] until now, but for THE king [of Prussia] and his family, to whom we are now obliged to obey by God's providence. Serious is the moment and difficult the obligation for many hearts. We have to say farewell to the independence of our more restricted and much-beloved fatherland and learn to feel as a member of a new one. We have to tear off from our hearts the faithfulness practiced until now and sever the connection with our old Kingdom, sanctified throughout centuries. We remember all the good things that were bestowed upon the whole population and also upon us, the children of Israel."

On May 21, 1848, Samuel married LINA SIESKIND, born in Ballenstedt on April 26, 1829, died in Hanover on April 25, 1894. Lina was ten years younger than her husband. She was the daughter of Jakob Herz Siekind and his wife Mathilde, whom I referred to already when writing about the Sieskind family. Lina and Samuel had fifteen children in a period of twenty three years, from 1850 to 1873, ten girls and five boys. Except for a boy and a girl who both died in childhood, all the others married and had children. Lina married at the age of nineteen. She was forty-four years old when her youngest son, Georg, was born in 1873. By then two of Lina's daughters already had children of their own, one and two years old respectively.

Edith Straus informed that Lina was a very good-looking and energetic person. A beautiful portrait of Lina as a bride of eighteeen, holding a rose in her hand, was painted by Wilhelm von Kügelgen, a famous painter and writer, who lived in Ballenstedt am Harz. In the background of the painting is Burg Ballenstedt. The original of this painting was in the possession of Lina's grandson, Klaus Ulrich Meyer, the son of her youngest child Georg. After Klaus Ulrich's death, the painting passed to his son Ronaldo, who lives in São Paulo.

Edith Straus also owned a small copy of this painting which hung in the house of her daughter Ilse Feiger in Berkeley, California. A long time ago I received a Xerox copy of the same painting from Käthe Saul who lived in Petropolis, near Rio de Janeiro. A short time ago Ronaldo Meyer sent me a very well done colored copy of the beautiful original painting which is reproduced on the previous page.

REBECCA STEINTHAL'S CHILDHOOD MEMORIES

"MEMORIES OF THE ESCHERSTRASSE"

(home of her parents *Landrabbiner* Samuel E. Meyer and his wife Lina)

REBECCA STEINTHAL (1862-1954), Samuel and Lina's sixth daughter, wrote down very touching memories of her childhood in her parents' home. These fifteen pages, called "Memories of the Escherstrasse," the street where the Meyers lived and Rebecca was raised, were written between 1917 and 1927 for her favorite nephew, Dr. Walther Meyer, the family genealogist. They illustrate the warm family atmosphere at the *Landrabbiner's* home crowded with so many children, and called, somewhat ironically, *"Die grosse Meierei."* Rebeccca' memories provide a deep personal insight into the domestic and sometimes also professional life of the *Landrabbiner.* Rebecca was named after her grandmother Rebecca Meyer, in keeping with an old Jewish tradition.

Samuel did not like his children to be away from home. Once when "Becca," as Rebecca was called, stayed with relatives for a week, Samuel said "I don't have my children for other people." "Woe Israel for losing your Shabbat!" Becca writes, and mentions how Friday nights and Shabbat in her home were a festive oasis in the desert of an ordinary week. The rabbi's children did not go to school on Shabbat. On Friday nights, *Kabbalat Shabbat,* the rabbi always had guests at his home, according to the Jewish tradition, besides the married daughters and their husbands. The table was festively set. After dinner, Becca's various uncles, aunts and other guests came for "fruit." The first words of Rebecca's uncle Wilhelm Seelig, the *chasan,* were "Linna [as she was called, also by her husband], what do you have here?" followed by a fast reach for the fruit bowl. The children were not allowed to even look with desire at the fruit before the relatives arrived. "Before some decent person has arrived, you ruined the fruit bowl already," Lina would scold.

Preparations and cooking for the Shabbat were beautiful. The old Jewish cook Berta even let the small children put their noses into the pots. On Friday afternoon the rabbi would shout from his ground floor office downstairs to the kitchen, which was in the basement, "Berta, it is *Shabbes*," meaning that everything had to be prepared and ready in the kitchen and could only be kept warm for the evening meal. Usually Berta, who got scared when the rabbi called too early, could make it in time. During the winter, when it would get dark as early as four p.m., everything had to be prepared and ready by sundown. "If secretly something did go on broiling, I will not acknowledge it now any more," says Rebecca. Friday evening was always festive. Everything in the house was - in a natural way - subordinated to religious requirements.

The smaller children, wearing festive dresses and white aprons, waited for the Rabbi to return from the synagogue. Lina and her daughters did not go to the evening service. The married daughters, in keeping with the Jewish tradition, wore bonnets. Samuel blessed everyone and then, followed by all the children, would walk around the table and sing the song of the "Woman of Valor." Only then would the meal begin. It always was a special one, with soup, roast or often a goose, which Samuel would carve skillfully. "I don't hurt it," he laughed, "so that there will be enough to be served cold for Saturday's luncheon." Then the dessert was served.

Guests sometimes were surprised by the Meyers' talkativeness. "Yes, my dear Gottschalk, if you want someone here to listen to you, you should have brought him with you from Berlin," the rabbi once consoled one of his guests.

Rebecca writes that her parents' home gave the children and grandchildren lifelong values. Samuel once told his daughter Rebecca he regretted that he would die without glory, unlike his son-in-law's father, Rabbi Dr. Levi Herzfeld, because his ministry, encompassing half the Hanover province, did not leave him time to write about Jewish issues. Rabbi Levi Herzfeld (1810-1884) was a moderate Reform Rabbi who published various works. He succeeded Rabbi Samuel (Sabel) Eger as *Landrabbiner* in the Braunschweig province. His grandson was Adolf Herzfeld, who emigrated with his family to Rio de Janeiro. Adolf's two daughters, Edith Löw-Beer and Renate Herzfeld-Modern, live in São Paulo.

Rabbi Samuel was enormously popular and highly esteemed among his congregants in the whole province of Hanover. He gave them good advice in various situations. Once, on one of his Shabbat afternoon walks in the Herrenhauser Allee, he was accompanied by the well-known politician Windhorst. When everybody was greeting the *Landrabbiner,* Windholz asked him, "By the way, how many Jews live in Hanover?" When Dr. Meyer replied "Five thousand," Windhorst exclaimed, "What! I thought there were five million." Samuel always wore a top hat during these afternoon walks. He was proud of his credit in the garden restaurants where he took his family on Shabbat, since on that day he would not carry money.

Rebecca mentions that the present-day terms of familiarity between parents and children, like 'Dad and Mom' - *Vati und Mutti* - were unthinkable in her parents' home. "We received a kiss only on our birthdays, on Rosh Hashanah - the Jewish New Year - and other special occasions. But our respect and admiration for our parents were unlimited, especially for our father." The children sometimes rebelled against their mother's strict rules. "As a young woman I dared to alter, on my own, the first hat that I was allowed to buy at 'Hofgrefe' for 21 marks. I received a slap in the face as a consequence." Rebecca states that her father loved her mother "like a bridegroom" until his death.

She says that Samuel did not think much of education for women. On the occasion of a feminist congress in Hanover in 1879 - when Rebecca was sixteen - Samuel talked with the famous Jewish feminist leader, writer and educator Lina Morgenstern and told her "What a girl did not learn by the age of sixteen, she never will learn." Samuel had invited the feminist leaders to his *Sukkah*, the booth erected for *Sukkot*, the feast of Tabernacles. "Like a tale of a thousand and one nights" commented one of the feminists as they entered the *Sukkah* ornamented with flowers and lanterns.

At Becca's insistent request, Lina pleaded on her behalf - without success - to obtain the rabbi's consent and permission to become a teacher. Beccca was almost inseparable from her books and felt very sad at being "condemned, at the age of sixteen, to play the role of governess *(Kinderfräulein)* for my six younger siblings." Samuel did not imagine that one day, at the age of forty, his daughter finally would begin her studies, making her final school examination, *Abitur*, in order to be able to study at the university, not only history of art, but also general history. Becca eventually became an art historian. To take care of the big house and the many children, Lina only had a cook and a housemaid who had to mend the children's clothes in the afternoon. Whenever Rabbi Samuel had a problem, he would walk up two flights of stairs from his office to ask his wife's advice.

Rebecca writes that once she was present when Samuel asked Lina if he could sacrifice a thousand Reichsthaler to pay a debt. He wanted to avoid an unfavorable image that dishonorable conduct on the part of a Jewish city councilman would cause for the Jewish community in Hanover. But could he do it, on account of his children? "If your heart tells you to do it, then do it, Meyer," Lina replied. Satisfied, Samuel returned to his work.

All the children, including the boys, had to wear smocks while doing their homework. Sometimes as many as six children were sitting around the round table, studying at the same time. Naturally, a lot of fighting would take place among the children, and the rabbi would be called to intervene. "It is always Becca and Siegmund - they are like cats and dogs," he would say, and would punish them both. Samuel's favorite maxim was "Never feel sorry for yourself." He had an aversion against medical science.

Rebecca says that the standard of living at Samuel's home was quite modest compared to that at the home of his brother, Louis Meyer, the rich banker. She describes in detail the modest meals the children ate on weekdays. Although Samuel and Lina did not save on health care for the children and on entertaining their guests, they were otherwise very thrifty, because of the many children they had to raise. The adolescent Becca and her eternally anemic sister Leah were once sent to Bad Pyrmont for a cure. They had lunch at the kosher restaurant. A few days later, Lina wrote them to ask the restaurant to send one portion of food home, to be shared, and, she added, certainly something would be left over for dinner. Becca comments: "So this was done, and we were satisfied, and came home with red cheeks."

Becca writes that she, her brother Siegmund and the younger siblings liked to go to their uncle Louis' house on Calenbergerstrasse, because there they could play with the younger generation, children their own age - their cousins Anna, Ella, Max and Adolf. For Becca these Saturday afternoons and evenings were unforgettable. There were always guests in the cardplaying room and enormous plates of sandwiches were served. Louis' Jewish cook, Betty Mond, was known all over Hanover.

Rebecca, Louis' wife, was very affectionate with the noisy children, but they did not return her affection "because the aunt was so ugly. Cruel children's hearts." Becca then mentions Louis' beautiful big garden with many fruit trees and "a garden house which was transformed into a *Sukkah* at the time of *Sukkot*, many chicken and dogs and thousands of other joyous things."

Berta, Samuel's Jewish maid, got time off on Saturday afternoons, but returned at the end of *Shabbes*, to wash the dishes which could not be done during Shabbat. Rebecca writes that Berta Hahn was as ugly as she was honest and faithful. She eventually married a Jewish cattle dealer. "He does not talk very much," Berta said - and indeed the bridegroom never opened his mouth. She wanted only Rabbi Samuel to officiate, so he and Lina gave the couple a big wedding meal at famous Spanier's Hotel, where the religious ceremony had also taken place.

The children were overjoyed whenever Samuel took one of them along in a horse carriage on his yearly inspection trips to nearby towns. A picture of the Rabbi hung "in every good room." These rooms were placed at his disposal by the grateful congregants on these occasions. In these small Jewish communities belonging to the province of Hanover, Rabbi Samuel was adored by everybody. The religious affairs there were taken care of by teachers examined at the Jewish teachers' seminary in Hanover.

On their annual vacations, Samuel and Lina traveled mainly to areas where there was a kosher restaurant. In small places in Switzerland, famous for their natural beauty, but where such restaurants did not exist, they had to be satisfied with kosher canned food they brought along from home. They did not take their children with them on vacations, because, obviously, they needed rest and privacy, after being tied down all year long with children, social obligations and, last but not least, caring for the Jewish community.

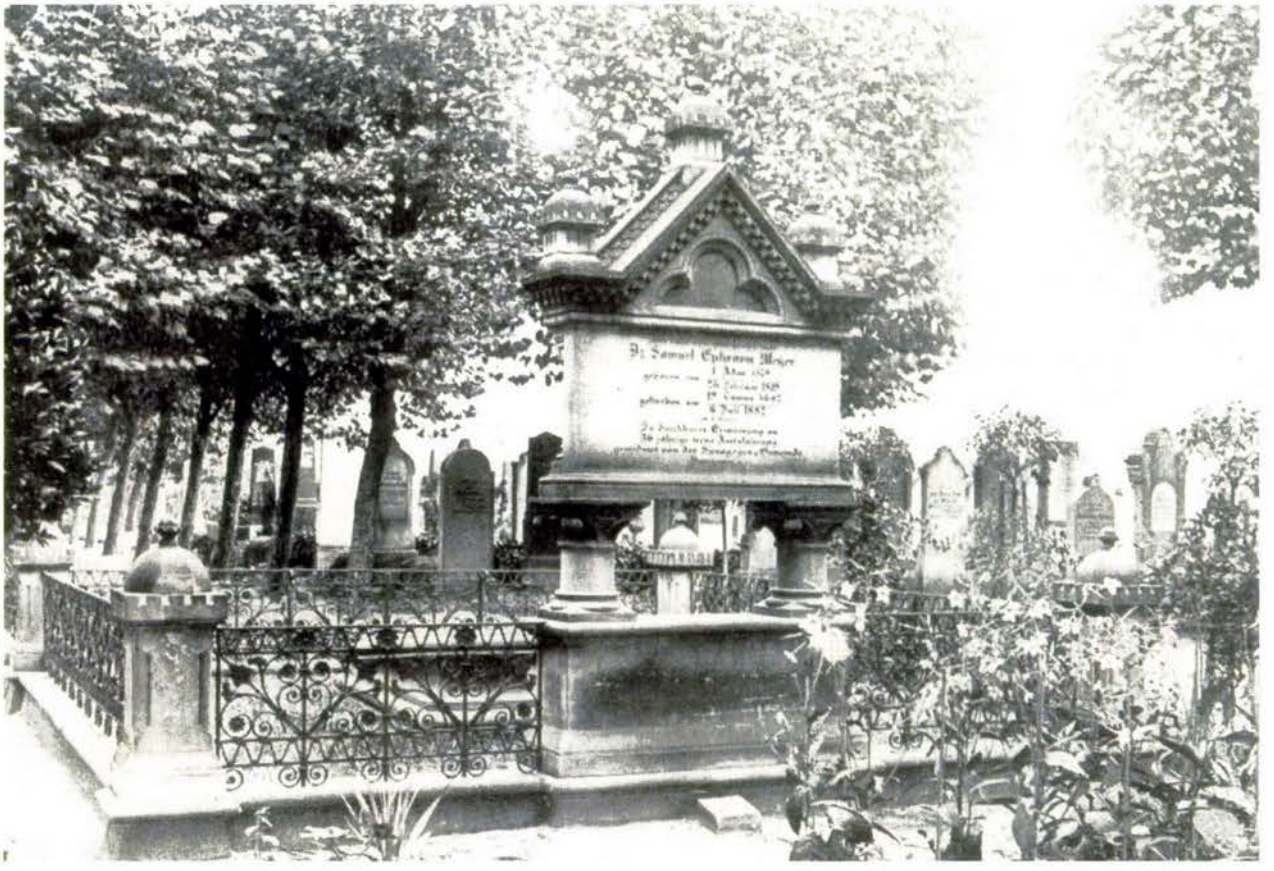
Becca reports that her maternal relatives remained more in the background, as they did not live in Hanover. "From the distance, they were more feared than loved, by us children. Grandmother Sieskind was a proud and haughty woman who looked down somewhat contemptuously at the Meyers' profusion of children. She and her sons reproached my mother for this and they never pardoned her." Later on, Becca once met the owner of a bookstore in Ballenstedt, the Sieskinds' hometown, who assured her that never in the world had he met such an aristocratic merchant family as the Sieskinds.

Finally, Becca gives good advice to future generations, saying that she always advised parents to write down the nice sayings of their children. Vice versa, she writes, it would be very recommendable that the children would also collect the good words of their parents. In this way, even the second and third generation would still know about the personalities of their ancestors.

Dr. Samuel E. Meyer died relatively young, in 1882, at the age of sixty-three. His grave has a place of honor at the Jewish cemetery, An der Strangriede, in Hanover. There is a Hebrew inscription on the front of the tombstone. Life dates, according to the civil and Hebrew calendars, are inscribed on the back, along with the inscription "In grateful memory of thirty six years of faithful office administration, dedicated by the Synagogue Community Hannover." This imposing monument was completed in 1895 only after Samuel's wife Lina had been interred beside her husband, one year earlier, according to a resolution of the Jewish community. Although the fences and columns surrounding the graves have disappeared, the tombstone and graves survived World War II. The Hebrew inscriptions are still legible, although the lifedates in German are somewhat weatherbeaten.

An old photograph of the graves and tombstone appears in Peter Schulze's very interesting booklet *"Juden in Hannover,"* written in 1989. The photograph had been taken in 1899, when the graves and tombstone were recently inaugurated. Samuel's birthdate on the tombstone is 26 (?) February 1819, while Schulze and also Rebecca Steinthal in her memories mention March 2. *"Juden in Hannover"* contains an illustration with the following description of the graves: "The imposing honor tombstone is located in the center of the cemetery and indicates Meyer's distinguished ancestry and his authority as a spiritual leader of the Hanover Jewry."

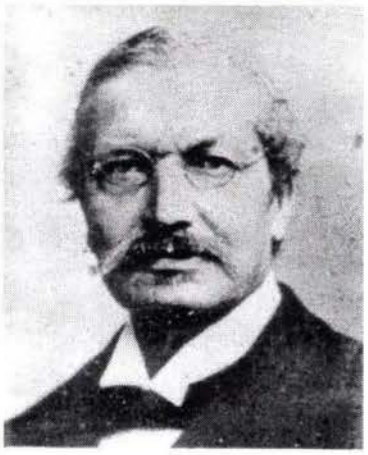
In the autumn of 1882, after Samuel's death, there was an election among the Hanover Jewry for the vacant post of *Landrabbiner.* There were three candidates, one of them Dr. Abraham Wedell, rabbi in Düsseldorf, Samuel's son-in-law. The candidate that was elected was the orthodox rabbi Dr. Selig Gronemann, who published genealogical studies about the old Jewish families in Hanover. Gronemann was *Landrabbiner* in Hanover from 1883 until his death in 1918.



Honor tomb of Samuel E. Meyer
Photo dated 1899 showing rear of tombstone



Photo dated 1996 showing
front of tombstone and
Samuel and Lina's graves



Louis E. Meyer



Rebecca Meyer

LOUIS E. MEYER (1821-1894) - THE DYNAMIC BANKER

My maternal great-grandfather

Louis E. Meyer, Ephraim and Rebecca's youngest son, was born in Hanover on October 12, 1821. His real name on his birth certificate was Levy, but in 1847 he was already calling himself Louis. Rebecca refers to him as 'Levi' in her will. Apparently she could not get used to his French name and only once refers to him in her will as 'Louis'. He was the one who really saved the bank and was able to pay off all debts

He entered his father's bank at the age of fifteen. In 1847 he became a partner. He succeeded his father after Ephraim's death in 1849. He worked at the bank for fifty-seven years, from 1837 until his death in 1894, at the age of seventy-two.

On March 19, 1852, Louis married REBECCA SIESKIND. She was born on May 17, 1832 in Ballenstedt and died on August 17, 1890, while at the spa in Marienbad. She was buried in Hanover. Rebecca's parents were David Herz Sieskind, Ballenstedt (1802-1872), and Rahel (Rosalie) Levi, born in Halberstadt in 1812, died in Hamburg in 1873, buried in Ballenstedt. Rebecca was a cousin of *Landrabbiner* Samuel Meyer's wife, Lina Sieskind.

My grandmother Helene Meyer, the wife of Louis' oldest son Emil, once wrote to my mother Leonie Oliven that Louis always had an open house and invited many guests, without advising his wife first. He served enormous roasts that Helene thought were half a calf or ox.

It is due to Louis E. Meyer that the establishment under his direction developed from a small bank and loan institution into one of the leading banks in the Hanover province. He recognized early on that industry and banking should go hand in hand. Under Louis' efficient management, the bank reached its zenith. As a matter of fact, Louis encountered a very favorable economic situation when he took over the bank, after his father's death.

The kingdom of Hanover had been annexed by Prussia in 1866, after Prussia won the war against Austria and Hanover. Five years later, after Germany won the war against France (1870-71), the country experienced a boom and a lot of French money flowed into the German economy, as France was obliged to pay five billion gold francs as war reparations.

In a letter in my possession, written about 1870 to his older brother Morris (Moritz) in Charleston, South Carolina, about family and other news, Louis mentions:

> "Just now I am busy enlarging the office, because it has become too small for nine persons. Business has reached bigger dimensions and keeps me fully occupied from morning till night. It is my pride that thanks God the business enjoys a good reputation everywhere. I believe that I cannot honor the memory of our beloved parents in any better way than by transmitting to my children as well the good name they left us. I hope my good intentions will realize in every way. Amen!"

After Germany's victorious war of 1870/71, trade, industry and banking expanded considerably and consequently the standard of living was rising at the same time. Germany was transforming from a purely agrarian country into a central European industrial power. The importance of the German banking establishments and stock exchange was growing simultaneously. It was the German private banker who stood at the forefront of this development.

Peter Schulze recently wrote a manuscript: "History, significance and end of the Hanover banking establishment Ephraim Meyer & Sohn." Therein he points out:

> "After the death of the founder of the firm, Ephraim Meyer, in the year 1849, Louis in the beginning was the sole owner of the bank that disposed, at that time, of 'modest means' only. Later on, Louis admitted junior partners out of the family circle: in 1865 his nephew Eduard Spiegelberg; in 1883 his eldest son Emil Louis Meyer; and in 1886 his second son Siegmund Louis Meyer. After Louis' death in 1894, they became the directors of the bank.
>
> "The change from an agrarian to an industrial society offered a unique chance to 'Ephraim Meyer & Sohn', as well as to many other comparable firms, for expansion of the business. The small money exchange and loan business developed into a modern banking establishment.
>
> "Gradually the bank increased the number of its clients. As mentioned in a propaganda publication dated 1922, 'by hiring efficient employees [...] as well as by consolidating the internal organization, [Meyer and Spiegelberg created] a sound basis for the ever increasing volume of business. First of all, with a keen view, they realized the great significance that close cooperation between a money institution and commerce and industry must have in the future.'
>
> "Already in 1857, the bank participated in the financing of the rolling mill Peiner Hüttenwerke (later on Ilseder Hütte), in the foundation of the sugar-factory Actien Zuckerfabrik Neuwerk, as well as in the Hannover Iron Foundry, and in the following decades, in a great number of recently established industrial enterprises, mainly in the Hanover region. Likewise, the bank cooperated in the foundation of the mortgage bank Braunschweig-Hannoversche Hypothekenbank."

As a consequence of this development, Louis belonged to the supervisory board *(Aufsichtsrat)* of the Lindener share brewery, the Ilseder rolling mill, the Hannover Iron Foundry, the Georg Egestorff's Salt-Works, the Neuwerk Sugar-Factory, the Braunschweig-Hannover Mortgage Bank, the Bank of Hannover and others. He was a member of the Central Committee for Inland Navigation and was engaged in the construction of the Midland Rhein-Weser-Elbe Channel. He was a member of the Hanover Chamber of Commerce from 1867 to 1886. During his tenure as treasurer of the organization, he proposed the establishment of a stock exchange in Hanover in 1872. He also belonged to the Committee of the Reichsbank for the

province of Hanover. Louis was appointed *Kommerzienrat* in 1871 and *Geheimer Kommerzienrat* in 1886 by Wilhelm, King of Prussia. Both appointments are in my possession.

Louis, like his parents before him, was an observant Jew. This also can be noted from an undated letter he wrote to Joseph Heymann, a client, which begins "I opened your letter only today, on account of *Shabbes."* Like his father Ephraim before him in the 1830s, during twenty-five years Louis was a member of the board *(Vorstandsmitglied)* of the Jewish community in Hanover and belonged to many of its committees. As a young man he was a member of the synagogue choir. Rabbi Dr. Gronemann said of Louis in his funeral speech: "The synagogue was his second home." The synagogue also had a special significance for Louis, as his beloved brother Dr. Samuel, to whom he was so much attached, was its rabbi for over thirty-six years. Louis accompanied very closely the construction of the new synagogue, built between 1864 and 1870 at the initiative of his brother Samuel. In the mentioned letter to his brother Morris, Louis writes:

> "The [construction of the] new synagogue here will be concluded within a few months. It will be a magnificent building *(ein Prachtbau)*, one of the most beautiful in Germany."

The synagogue built from 1864 to 1870, at the initiative of Louis' and Morris' brother, Rabbi Dr. Samuel E. Meyer, had no organ, because the Hanover community contended itself with a large synagogue choir. Rabbi Dr. Meyer personally directed the building commission. The synagogue built in Neo-Romanesque style with a huge cupola had four beautiful façades and seated 1100 people. In 1862, Hanover's Jewish community had 1100 members. The synagogue was inaugurated on Sepetember 15, 1870. It was destroyed in the pogrom of November 9, 1938. Today only a tablet reminds one that on this place on Bergstrasse there once stood a majestic synagogue for nearly seventy years.

On the occasion of his 70th birthday, Louis dedicated a huge genealogical tree to the family members of Ephraim and Rebecca Meyer. This majestic tree was first elaborated in 1872 by Louis' nephew Arnold Seelig, son of his sister Betty. In 1891, nearly twenty years later, Louis' niece Adèle Meyer, daughter of his brother Moritz (Morris), completed this tree. Again in 1936, forty-five years later, Adèle, who meanwhile had married Gustav Freund, again completed the genealogical tree, adding another generation. That is the reason why my brother Hans, my sister Suse and I, as well as my Straus cousins, now appear in the latest version of the tree on top of its highest branch. This tree is "dedicated in love to the family members of Ephraim and Rebecca Meyer by *Geheimrat* Louis E. Meyer, Hannover, September 4, 1891."

A copy of Arnold Seelig's original family tree was sent to me by Hete Langenbach, Rio de Janeiro, a great-granddaughter of *Landrabbiner* Dr. Samuel E. Meyer. In August 2000, when Seldi and I were in San Francisco visiting the Straus family, I received a copy of the 1936 version of this genealogical tree from Harold Feiger, son of my late cousin Ilse Linker née Straus. To my greatest pleasure Harold handed me this enlarged much bigger tree, very well reproduced, on the occasion of a family meeting at the house of my cousin Eva Linker née Straus and her husband Henry, in El Cerrito, California, near San Francisco. I had the tree framed and it is now prominently displayed at our home. The tree literally contains hundreds of branches, names and dates, evidencing the proverbial fertility of the Meyer family. The dates are not complete (mostly the birth years only are mentioned) and they show a few divergencies, but the organization of such a large, detailed genealogical tree represents a remarkable undertaking, as well as an artistic masterpiece.

Im Namen Gottes!

Am heutigen Tage, dem [illegible] in der Woche, dem [illegible]
des Monats Sivan im Jahre Fünftausend sechshundert und zwölf nach Erschaffung
der Welt, d. i. am 19ten May 1852 nach der gewöhnlichen Zeitrechnung, ist der Ehecontract
zwischen dem Brautpaare, nämlich dem Bräutigam
Herrn Louis E. Meyer aus Hannover
und der Braut Jungfrau Rebecca, Tochter des Herrn David Sieskind
allhier zu Ballenstedt unter dem Beistande Gottes vollzogen worden, wie folgt:

Es hat der erwähnte Bräutigam zu seiner Braut gesagt: „Sei meine Ehefrau nach dem Rechte Moseh's und Israel's; ich will Dir als Ehemann treu sein, Dich achten und ehren, unterhalten, kleiden und schützen, so wie überhaupt alle Pflichten eines jüdischen Ehemannes redlich gegen Dich erfüllen; auch will ich Dir die Morgengabe nach der Vorschrift des heiligen Gesetzes nebst der üblichen Vermehrung vollständig gewähren und für Alles haften, was Dir gebührt, mit meinem gesammten Vermögen."

Sie, die Braut, aber hat eingewilligt, seine Ehefrau zu werden, hat ihm Liebe und Treue angelobt und versprochen, alle Pflichten einer jüdischen Ehefrau gewissenhaft gegen ihn zu erfüllen.

Zur Begründung und Befestigung der von beiden Theilen eingegangenen Verpflichtungen ist der Mantelgriff nach jüdischem Gebrauch in gehöriger Form geleistet worden.

Darauf haben die Brautleute ihren Ehebund vor Gott, nach Vorschrift der jüdischen Religion, geschlossen und wollen von nun an als Gatten zusammenleben, in Frieden und Eintracht, ohne Falsch und Fehl, in guten wie in bösen Tagen; bis es dem Herrn über Leben und Tod gefallen wird, ihren Bund zu lösen. —

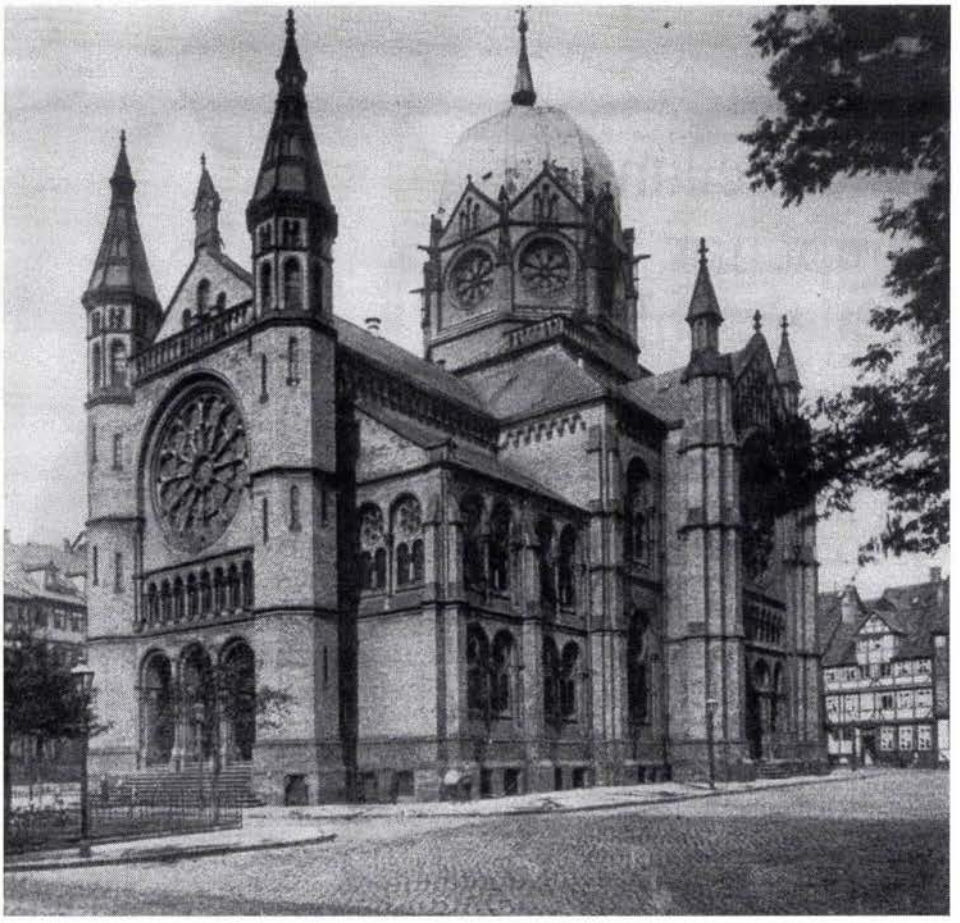
Zur Beurkundung dieser feierlichen Verhandlung ist solche von zwei Zeugen eigenhändig unterschrieben und, wie hiermit geschehen, öffentlich vorgelesen worden.

Geschehen Ballenstedt wie oben.

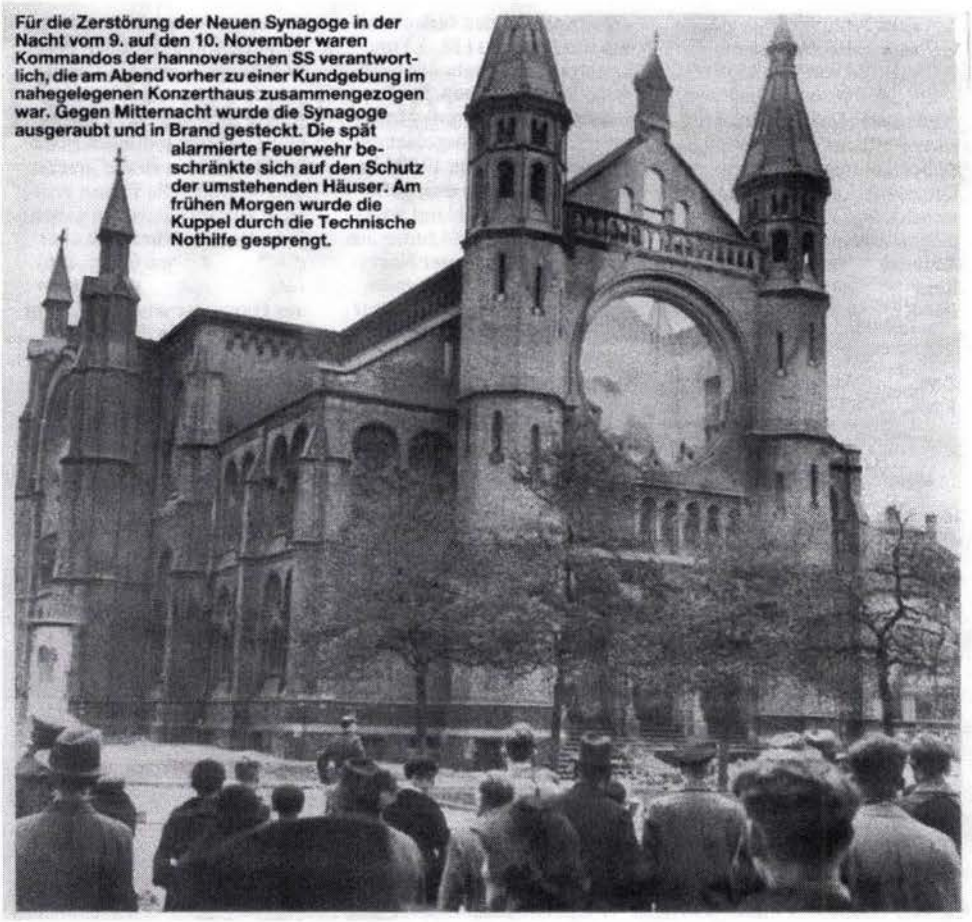
M. L. Rosenthal als Zeuge.

H. Elkan als Zeuge.

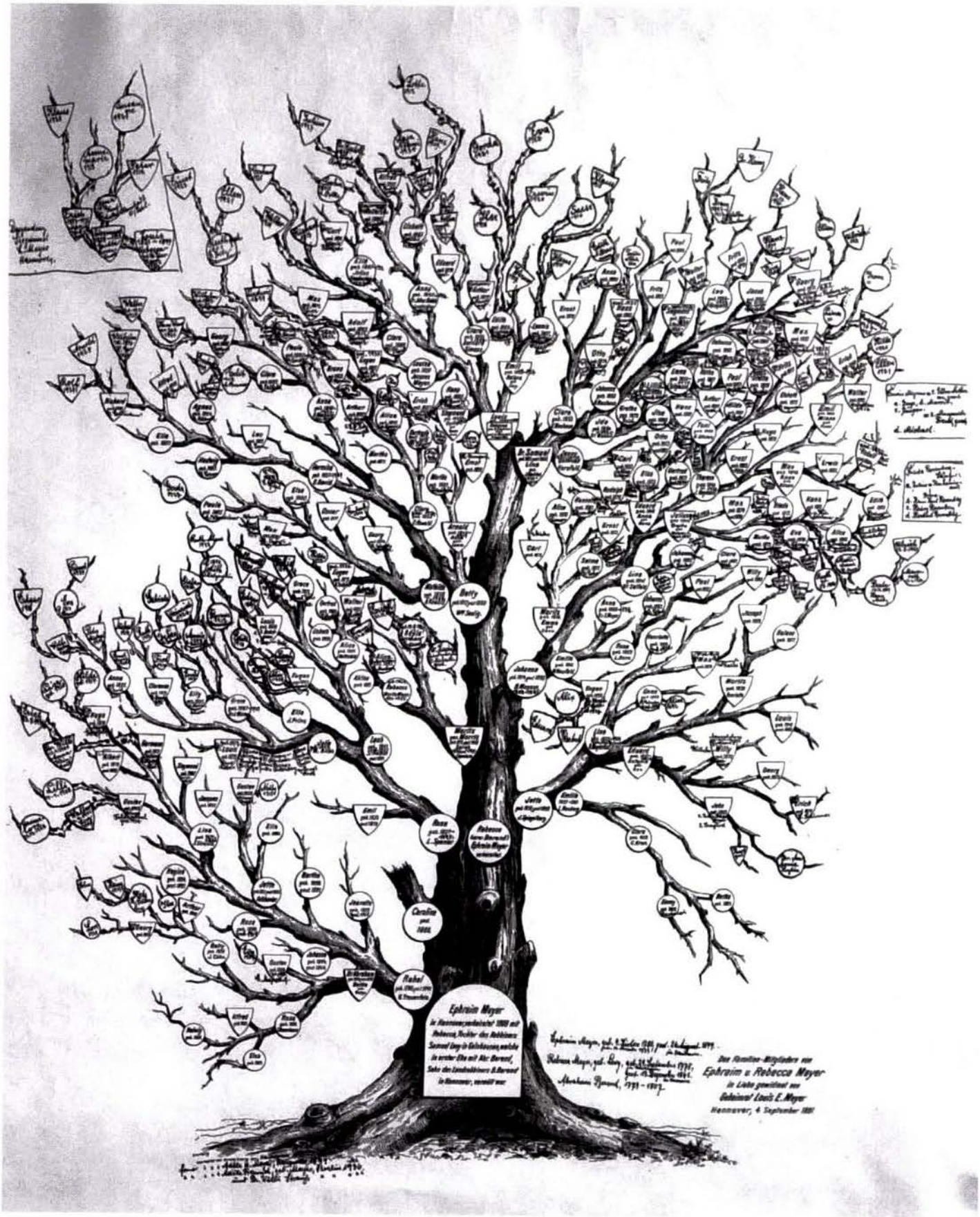
Louis E. Meyer and Rebecca Sieskind's marriage contract



The Hanover synagogue, inaugurated in 1870



The synagogue destroyed during Kristallnacht on November 9/10, 1938



Genealogical tree commissioned by Louis E. Meyer on his 70th birthday in 1891

THE HOUSE AT CALENBERGERSTRASSE 45

still in existence - declared a historic monument - former seat of the bank and Louis Meyer's residence

In 1856 Louis bought a house, built before 1798, at Calenbergerstrasse 45. The house number later changed to 43. It was situated beside the house on the same street that Louis' father Ephraim bought in 1823, which was Louis and his family's residence at the time. I have in my possession the purchase contract for this new property, dated December 9, 1855, between the former owner, daughter of the *Landdrost* (state governor) of Hanover, Marie von Beck née von Dachenhausen, and the new owner, Louis Ephraim Meyer, for an amount of 18,000 Thaler gold.

Louis moved the bank Ephraim Meyer & Sohn to the ground floor of his new property in 1856. At the same time his brother, *Landrabbiner* Dr. Samuel E. Meyer, also moved to the new house. It then became the seat of the *Landrabbinat* as well, until 1862, when Rabbi Samuel moved to his own house on Escherstrasse. In 1861, after his mother Rebecka's death, Louis and his family moved to the upper floor of his new, big property and later sold the neighboring house purchased by his father.

The same house at Calenbergerstrasse 43 still exists, with exactly the same 200-year-old façade. It is one of the oldest buildings still standing in the old part of Hanover and has been declared a historic monument.The house belonged to the Frederikenstift, before being completely renovated by the city of Hanover from 1991 to 1993, at a cost of DM 600,000. A library has been installed and the building is now open to the public.

Before the renovation, there was a plaque on the façade, mentioning only one of the former owners, the *Landdrost* von Dachenhausen, and not a word about the Meyers and the bank Ephraim Meyer & Sohn, established there for nearly forty years, from 1856 to 1895. This greatly worried me, while on a visit to Hanover several years ago. Therefore I started a campaign to have this plaque removed and replaced by another one mentioning my ancestors as well.

I petitioned the mayor of Hanover and got in touch with the Municipal Archives and the Hanover Historical Museum. With the assistance of Peter Schulze, I finally succeeded. In 1994 a new plaque was placed to the renovated building, stating, among other facts, that "this house once was the seat of the important banking establishment Ephraim Meyer & Sohn from 1856 to 1895 and also of the *Landrabbinat* from 1856-1862."

At this point it is interesting to reproduce part of a commemorative article published in the 1920s, on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the date Ephraim Meyer established his bank:

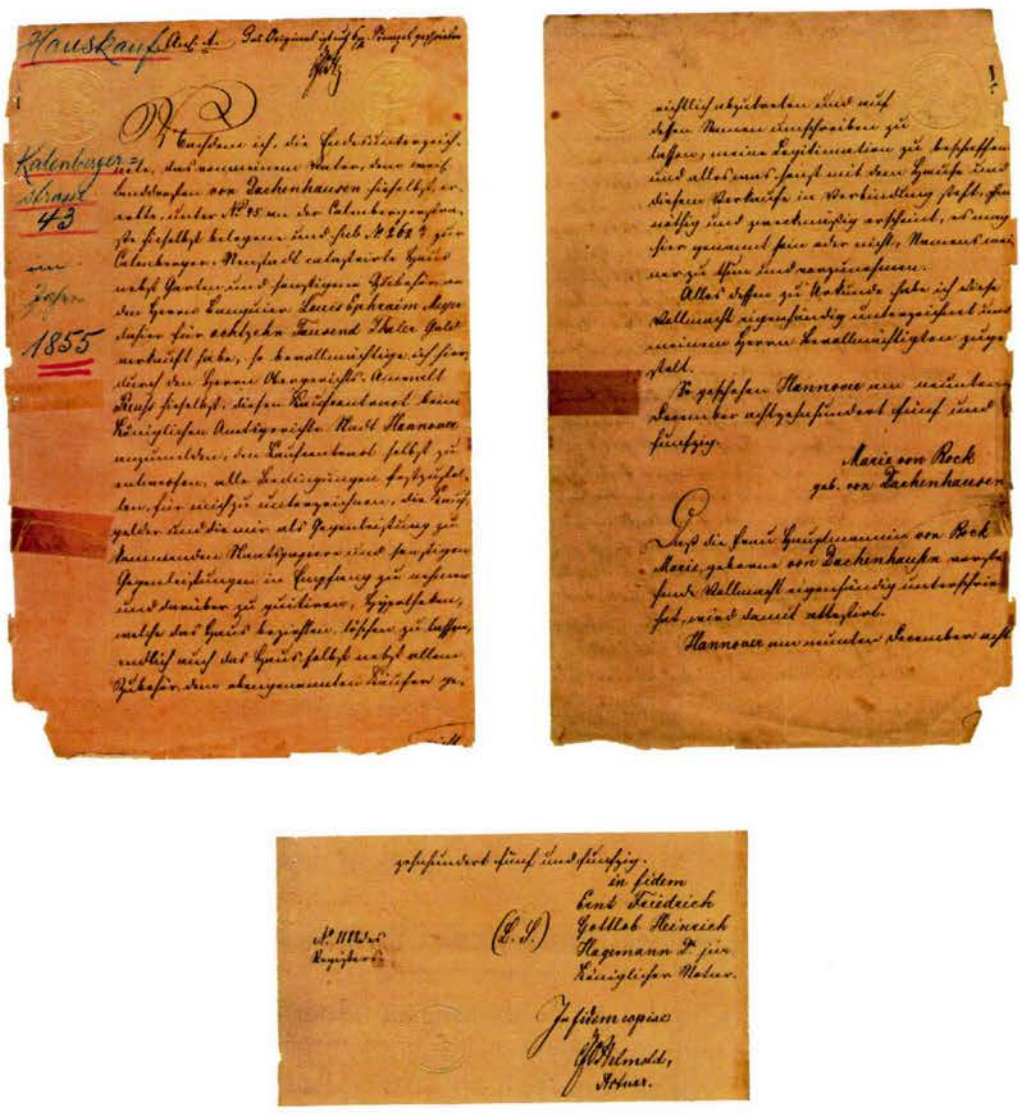
> "A century - that means nothing in the course of time, but it is an important period for a firm. [...] The house [on Calenberger Strasse], which belongs today to the Frederikenstift, has its history; it is the old *Landdrosten* house, the seat of the former state governor. [...] For forty-five years this building was the seat of the banking

house Ephraim Meyer & Sohn, from 1850 to 1895. The firm itself, however, is much older. Ephraim Meyer, born in Hanover, established a money-changing business on Grossen Duvenstrasse in 1799. In 1847 his son Louis, who later became Prussian *Geheimer Kommerzienrat*, became a partner. As from that date, the name of the firm became Ephraim Meyer & Sohn. Then the firm moved to Calenberger Strasse and from there, in 1895, to Luisenstrasse 8/9, where it continues today."

A picturesque event regarding this house has to be mentioned, transcribed from a letter I received many years ago from my aunt Edith Straus, Louis' granddaughter:

"The house at Calenbergerstrasse 43, in its simple symmetric forms, is now a historic monument. It was always well maintained.

"My grandfather bought it from *Freiherrn* von Dachenhausen. Downstairs was the business. The W.C.'s were in the courtyard with a signboard 'Pissoir'. My grandparents lived upstairs, in a large apartment with a nice bathroom and W.C., into which my grandfather threw all his calling cards stating his title *Kommerzienrat* (Councilor of Commerce), on the occasion of receiving the superior 'royal' title *Königlicher Geheimer Kommerzienrat* (Privy Councilor of Commerce). As a consequence, the plumber had a lot of work."



Purchase contract of the house on Calenbergerstrasse dated 1855



The house on Calenbergerstrasse 1872



The completely renovated house 1993



The plaque placed at the renovated building by the Hanover Municipality

Louis had acquired considerable wealth as head of the bank Ephram Meyer & Sohn. Following the Meyer Family tradition, Louis and his wife Rebecca had eight children. He left his entire estate to his four sons, who in turn had to pay each of his four daughters an amount of 300,000 marks. This was in addition to the amount of 35,000 marks each daughter had already received for purchasing her trousseau, which was not to be deducted from her dowry. The part of the dowry that each daughter had already received, and that varied between 100,000 and 150,000 marks, was to be deducted from the amount of 300,000 marks.

Louis also established three family foundations in his will - to help needy descendants pay for their education, dowries, trousseaus and other expenses. This only applied to members of the family who had not converted from the Jewish religion. The first foundation, which was in Louis' name, provided for an amount of 100,000 marks to his descendants. The second foundation provided for 25,000 marks, in memory of his deceased brother, the *Landrabbiner* Samuel E. Meyer, for the rabbi's descendants. The third foundation provided 50,000 marks in the name of his wife Rebecca Meyer née Sieskind, for the descendants of her brothers and sisters.

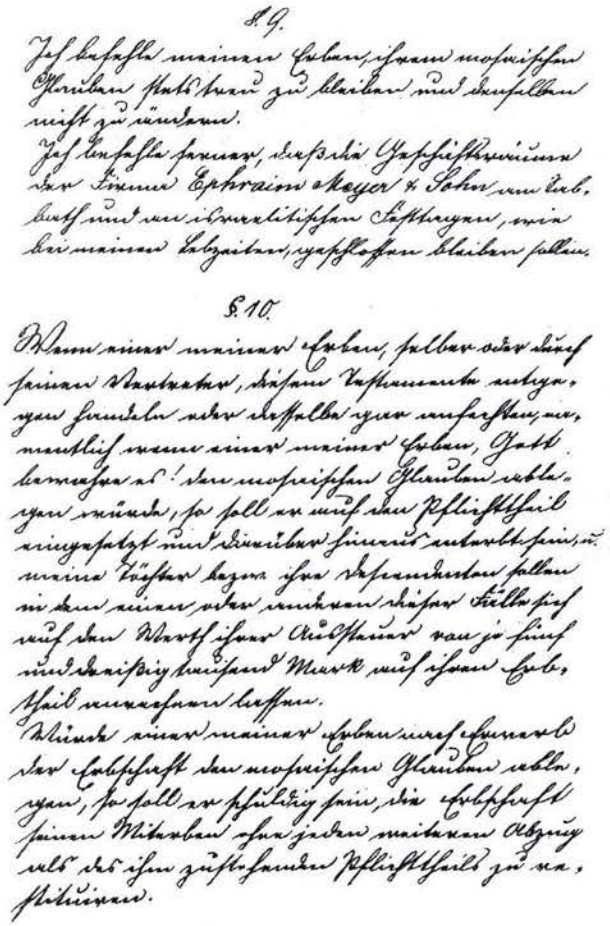
Louis drew up his will in 1891.

§ 9 reads:

"I require that my heirs be ever faithful to their Mosaic religion and not change the same. I also require that the business premises of the firm Ephraim Meyer & Sohn be closed on Shabbat and Jewish holidays, as they were during my lifetime."

§ 10 reads:

"If one of my heirs, in person or through his representative, should act against this will or even contest it, especially if one of my heirs - God forbid! - should change his Mosaic religion, his share shall be reduced to the mandatory part and beyond this he shall be disinherited. My daughters or their descendants shall [also] have the value of their trousseau, in the amount of 35,000 marks, deducted from their part of the inheritance."



Part of Louis E. Meyer's will

This will reflects Louis' great concern over the ever increasing assimilation and the wave of conversions among German Jews during the nineteenth century. It is estimated, for instance, that at least half of the Berlin Jewry was baptized during the first decades of the nineteenth century. The reason was the desire for careers and social acceptance. Full emancipation and equal rights - at least legally - were granted to the German Jews only in 1871.

LOUIS MEYER'S FUNERAL

Louis Meyer died in Hanover on February 2, 1894. His funeral was attended by a very large crowd. State and local authorities, the police president, senators, city councilmen and other dignataries assembled at Louis' residence. Over 1500 people accompanied the hearse on foot through the streets, on its way to the Jewish cemetery. Louis was a great benefactor of various organizations, including non-Jewish ones, such as the Workers Committee, the Committee for Public Recreation *(Ferienkolonien)* and the Patriotic Veteran Association, which were represented at the burial by flag-bearing delegations, as reported in the local newspaper. On this occasion Louis' family made donations to various organizations, including 3000 marks to the Hanover Municipality.

Käthe Saul, in a two-page report on her family, mentions one of her very early childhood memories. It was Louis Meyer's funeral. "I stand at the corner window and count the carriages in the funeral procession, 108! An enormous number, demonstrating the significance of this man. My grandmother [Lina Meyer, wife of Louis' brother Samuel] - who was already very ill at the time, she died six weeks later - was satisfied by this. And soon after [...] I see another funeral procession, this time my grandmother's and I weep bitterly."

Landrabbiner Dr. S. Gronemann conducted Louis' funeral service and did the eulogy at the cemetery. He mentioned the שִׂמְחָה שֶׁל מִצְוָה - *simcha shel mitzva* - the happiness of fulfilling God's commandments, which irradiated from Louis.

A richly decorated burial site for Louis and Rebecca was erected by their children at the Jewish cemetery at An der Strangriede. All inscriptions, however, have disappeared and therefore the place has become anonymous. Peter Schulze, with the help of the original drawing that was preserved, was able to identify the place. The printed epitaphs for Louis and Rebecca, both in German and Hebrew, are in my possession.

This cemetery was inaugurated in 1864 when the old Judenkirchhof was closed. It was used for burials until 1924. In the cemetery hall there is a memorial for the 124 Jewish soldiers belonging to Hanover's Jewish Community who fell in World War I. From September 4, 1941, the Nazis used this Hall as one of the *Judenhäuser.* It became the last stop for over hundred people before they were deported to the Nazi extermination camps.

Hannover, Düsseldorf, Frankfurt a. M., Essen, Berlin,
den 3. Februar 1894.

Vom tiefsten Schmerze erfüllt bringen wir zur Anzeige, dass es Gott dem Allmächtigen gefallen hat, unsern inniggeliebten Vater, Schwiegervater und Grossvater, den

Königlichen Geheimen Commerzienrath

Louis Ephraim Meyer

gestern Abend 9 ½ Uhr im 72. Lebensjahre nach wenigen Stunden des Leidens aus der Fülle seines unablässigen Schaffens und gesegneten Wirkens abzuberufen.

Die tiefgebeugten Hinterbliebenen:

Emil L. Meyer
Siegmund L. Meyer
Clara Simons geb. Meyer
Louise Mayer geb. Meyer
Anna Rinteln geb. Meyer
Ella Freudenstein geb. Meyer
Adolph L. Meyer
Max L. Meyer

Helene Meyer geb. Levy
Gutta Meyer geb. Rosenbusch
Bernard Simons
Jac. D. Mayer
Landgerichtsrath Dr. **Jul. Rinteln**
Jul. J. Freudenstein

und **Enkelkinder.**

Die Beerdigung findet am Montag, den 5. Februar, 3 Uhr Nachmittags vom Trauerhause, Calenberger strasse Nr. 43 aus statt.

Ephraim Meyer & Sohn.

Hannover, den 15. Februar 1894.

P. P.

Durch den am 2. d. M. erfolgten Heimgang unseres geliebten Vaters und Onkels des

Königlichen Geheimen Commerzienraths

Louis Ephraim Meyer

Senior-Chefs unserer Firma, hat unser Haus einen tief schmerzlichen Verlust erlitten.

Wir beehren uns, Ihnen mitzutheilen, dass nach testamentarischer Bestimmung des Verewigten und gegenseitiger Uebereinkunft die Verhältnisse unserer Firma keinerlei Veränderung erfahren.

Die Unterzeichneten, welche schon seit einer langen Reihe von Jahren der offenen Handelsgesellschaft als Mitinhaber angehören, werden dieselbe unter unveränderter Firma und mit unvermindertem Geschäfts-Kapital fortführen.

Wir bitten das Vertrauen, welches dem theuren Dahingeschiedenen und unserer Firma in so reichem Maasse von allen Seiten entgegengebracht worden ist, auch uns für die Folge zu erhalten.

Hochachtungsvoll!

Ephraim Meyer & Sohn.

Die Geschäftsinhaber:

Eduard Spiegelberg. Emil L. Meyer. Siegmund L. Meyer.

Notice of Louis E. Meyer's decease

Erbbegräbnis der Familie Meyer. Errichtet um 1900 nach dem Entwurf des Architekten Börgemann. Durch Wegnahme der Inschrifttafeln anonymisiert.



Louis Meyer's family grave erected about 1900



The same grave today, photo dated 1996

4th GENERATION

THE CHILDREN OF LOUIS E. MEYER AND REBECCA NÉE SIESKIND

1. EMIL LOUIS MEYER, Hanover, born on May 5, 1853, died on May 9, 1926. He was my grandfather. He married Helene Levy, born on July 26, 1859 in Hamburg, died on May 10, 1942 in Basel, Switzerland.

2. SIEGMUND LOUIS MEYER, Hanover, born in 1855, died in 1922. He married Gutta Rosenbusch, born in Nuremberg. Siegmund, according to his niece Edith Straus, had a tendency for mischief. His mother Rebecca was shy and restrained and could not cope with her four sons. She sent them away from home to a *shochet* (a ritual slaughterer) for their education, except for the youngest son, Max, who suffered from asthma. Siegmund was sent to the nearby town of Hildesheim. Once he took along his father's diamond ring and used it to cut several windowpanes, which his father consequently had to pay for.

Siegmund became a partner at the bank Ephraim Meyer & Sohn in 1886, three years after my grandfather Emil, the oldest son, had become a partner. In 1913, Siegmund obtained the title *Kommerzienrat* (Councilor of Commerce).

Siegmund's wife Gutta was very close to her sister-in-law, my grandmother Helene Meyer. Gutta often critized her husband in public. Once at a party she repeatedly told him to close his fly. He told her that he did not have to, because it actually was closed. When she nevertheless repeated her request, he walked up to a lady guest and asked her to see if his fly was open or not. Once at another party - so it is told - when it was too much for Siegmund to stand his wife, he simply locked her up in the bathroom from the outside, when she went in to put powder on, and he threw the key out of the window. Since nobody could find the key and Siegmund feigned innocence, the firemen had to be called to get her out.

Gutta and her daughter Rena emigrated to Belgium. Gutta was deported by the Nazis who occupied Belgium, when she was very old already. She left her apartment in Brussels one day during World War II to do some shopping or just go for a walk and was never seen again. Nothing is known about her ultimate fate.

3. CLARA MEYER, born in 1856 in Hanover, died on April 8, 1907 in Düsseldorf. She married banker Bernhard Simons, Düsseldorf. He died on November 7, 1906.

4. LOUISE MEYER, born in 1858 in Hanover, married Jacob (Jacques) D. Mayer, born in 1849. He was a leather factory owner in Frankfurt a.M. When she was already in her eighties, Louise was deported by the Nazis. Nothing is known about her fate.

5. ANNA MEYER (1860-1936) was born in Hanover. She married Dr. Julius Rinteln, a provincial judge in Cassel, who died in 1937.

6. ADOLF MEYER (1863-1912) was born in Hanover. He was a factory owner in Berlin. He married Hortense Joseph, born in Frankfurt a.M. Adolf was the "enfant terrible" of the family. At my parents' wedding, which took place in Hanover in 1912, at the renowned Hotel Kasten, Adolf was again "in high spirits," as his nephew Dr. Walther Meyer relates:

> "He danced a cancan for his friends and relatives, who encircled him to prevent the approach of strangers. At this performance, he not only shot his legs towards the ceiling, but his glass eye as well, which he then skillfully caught again in midair. He then mocked a wedding guest of the Oliven family from Posen, who became quite disconcerted while witnessing this scene. Suddenly his stout sister, Anna Rinteln, rushed up and hissed at him, 'You are the black sheep of the family.' This did not disturb Adolf at all. He went on chanting, pointing at her with an outstretched finger: 'I am the black sheep, you are the black sheep,' and so on, to the great amusement of his audience."

7. ELLA MEYER (1867-1933) was born in Hanover. She married Julius Freudenstein, a manufacturer in Berlin. He frequently asked his relatives, especially his rich brother-in-law Louis, for financial support. He finally went bankrupt and shot himself in 1910.

8. MAX MEYER, Louis' youngest son, born in 1871 in Hanover, died in London in 1942. He married Liesel (Elise) Cahn, born ca. 1887. They had no children. Max was sickly all his life. His niece Käthe Saul mentions that he was a hypochondriac. He and his charming wife Liesel, who adored her husband, lived in Frankfurt a.M., until they emigrated to London. Max was about sixteen years older than his wife. Though Liesel was my mother's aunt by marriage, both were of about the same age. Max was the last of Louis Meyer's children to pass away. Liesel survived him in London, for many years.

I met Liesel in Frankfurt a.M. in 1938, where I gave her English lessons. She spoke excellent English, maybe better than I did at the time. Liesel emigrated to London, where she lived in an apartment house that belonged to her rich relative Amy Haas. Amy's husband Hans Neuhaus, *Landrabbiner* Samuel's grandson, worked with gold mines and lived in South Africa. He died in a plane crash in 1935. His widow Amy Haas bought a big house in London and converted it into apartments - "flats" as they are called in England - for the use of her relatives. Seldi and I visited Liesel at her apartment in London in 1963. She was a very nice and affectionate person. When she opened her apartment door and saw me again, after 25 years had elapsed, she exclaimed spontaneously *"Das Kläuschen!"* - little Klaus.

THE DESCENDANTS OF LOUIS AND REBECCA'S CHILDREN

1. EMIL AND HELENE MEYER, my maternal grandparents, had two daughters, LEONIE, my mother, and EDITH. I will write more about them further on.

2. SIEGMUND AND GUTTA MEYER had two children:

a) ERICH MEYER, Hanover (1887-1935), my mother's cousin, was apparently addicted to morphine and died young. In 1922 Erich became a junior partner at the bank Ephraim Meyer & Sohn, after the death of his father Siegmund. Erich was also an honorary commercial judge. Erich married Margot Wallach. They had two children, Annemarie (Anna), born in 1918 and Klaus, born in 1920, who both emigrated to Australia. Klaus changed his family name from Meyer to Morgan. Anna married Charles Philipp Jacobs, Master of the Supreme Court of Victoria, in Melbourne, Australia. Jacobs, in his second marriage, married Susanne Fränkel, Anna's cousin, daughter of Kurt and Rena Fränkel.

b) RENA MEYER, born on November 29, 1890 in Hanover, died in 1970 in Charleroi (?), Belgium. Rena was Dr. Walther Meyer's partner at a dancing school in Hanover, as well as his tennis partner. Walther, Rena's s second cousin, mentioned in a letter to me that he often played tennis with Rena, sometimes at the tennis court which Emil L. Meyer built at Calenbergerstrasse 43. Rena married Dr. Kurt Fränkel, born February 20, 1876, died November 30, 1927, Neustadt. His early death was a consequence of having been mustard-gassed in World War I, during which he served as a captain. He was one of the owners of the biggest linen manufacture in Germany, S. Fränkel Textile Works. This establishment was located in Neustadt, Upper Silesia (known now by its Polish name Prudnik). The firm was founded in 1855 by Kurt's grandfather, Samuel Fränkel, born in 1802 in Zülz, Upper Silesia, died in 1881 in Neustadt. In 1880 Samuel donated a synagogue to the Jewish community of Neustadt. It was burned down in the so-called Kristallnacht, on November 9, 1938

Kurt and Rena Fränkel had two children, Peter and Susanne. Rena and her children emigrated to Belgium. In her second marriage Rena married Temple McHugh, who saved her life during World War II, thanks to his American passport. They lived in Brussels where Rena's second husband died. Her mother Gutta was deported from Brussels during the war.

aa) Peter Fränkel, Rena's son, a physician, was a lieutenant in the British invasion army during WW II. He was born on June 6, 1914, in Neustadt and died on April 14, 1948 in London. He committed suicide, poisoning himself. He gruesomely recorded the effects of the poison as his life gradually expired. There was some thinking, at the time, that the cause of this desperate act may have been a love affair.

bb) Susanne Fränkel, Rena's daughter, was born August 26, 1921 in Neustadt. She died September 20, 1992 in Mount Barker, Western Australia, in a car accident. She married Albert de Jonghe in Brussels. He was born August 26, 1907 in Antwerp and died March 22, 1975 in Brussels. In 1984 Susanne married barrister Charles Philipp Jacobs, both their second marriages, when he was 72 and she, 62 years old. She worked for many years as a dog groomer and later on as a dog sculptress. Susanne and Albert de Jonghe's son Patrick was born on May 18, 1955, and his wife Fabienne Dumont on July 19, 1961, both in Brussels. Patrick is in very bad health.

3. CLARA MEYER married Bernard Simons. They had three sons: ARTHUR, born in 1877, who became a professor; EDUARD, born in 1879; and HELMUT born in 1893.

4. LOUISE MEYER married Jacques Mayer. They had two children:

a) EUGEN MAYER, born in Frankfurt a.M. in 1882, died 1930, married Mathilde. Their daughter Ilse, born 1912, was a very good photographer. She emigrated to Argentina where, among others, she photographed Evita Peron. She later married Dr. Hans Gehrken, a German physician who works at a sanatorium in Davos, Switzerland. Seldi and I once visited them there. Ilse converted and became a Protestant. She died in Davos in July 1986.

b) CLARA MAYER, born in 1886 in Frankfurt a.M., married Dr. Plaut. The couple had three sons: Richard, born 1913; Walter born 1914; and Gerhard born 1921. Clara, just as her mother Louise, was deported by the Nazis. She was deported to Lodz, Poland, in 1942, and was never again heard of.

5. ANNA MEYER married provincial judge Julius Rinteln. They had four children, all born in Cassel: LISBETH, born in 1885; WALTER, born in 1888; ALFRED (Fredi), born in 1891, killed by the Nazis; and RUDOLF, born 1898. Lisbeth married Willi Viktor. They had three children: Kurt born 1908, was a landscape architect in Tel Aviv; Hans born 1909; and Lotte born 1912, who married in Israel. Kurt, who married Käte Brüh, had a daughter Raya Noemi, born in 1934. In 1933 Lisbeth and Willi and their children emigrated to Palestine.

6. ADOLF MEYER married Hortense Joseph. They had two children, a son LUDWIG, born in 1899, and a daughter RUTH, born in 1901. My mother mentions in her diary that her grandfather Louis E. Meyer had eight children, but two grandsons only by the name of Meyer, "one of them, Ludwig, is retarded, due to the sins of his father Adolf, and will Erich's son [Klaus] turn out intelligent?"

7. ELLA MEYER married Julius Freudenstein. They had two children, a son Dr. CURT, born in 1891, and a daughter SOPHIE, born in 1893.

8. MAX MEYER married Liesel (Elise) Cahn. They had no children.

A "ZIONIST" WEDDING IN 1907
LISBETH RINTELN AND WILLY VICTOR

On March 14, 1907 there occurred a noteworthy wedding. My mother's cousin Lisbeth, daughter of the provincial judge *Landgerichtsrat* Julius Rinteln and his wife Anna (a daughter of Louis Meyer), who lived in Cassel, married Willy Victor, a lawyer and notary public in Wandsbeck near Hamburg. The bridegroom was a devoted Zionist, something quite unusal in Germany at the beginning of the 20th century. He belonged to a Zionist organization. Edith Straus mentioned that many of the congratulation telegrams came in the form of a donation to a Zionist fund (I suppose it was the *Keren Kayemet)*. She says that it was quite an "unusual wedding", at which several Zionist speeches were given.

My grandfather Emil came to his niece's wedding with his wife Helene and their two daughters, Edith and my mother Leonie. Emil became very upset at the banquet, because he had not expected to hear such speeches. Edith relates that she never saw her father as irate as at that party. Politically, he was a *National Liberaler,* and although a good Jew, he was rather assimilated like most German Jews of the time. Dr. Walther Meyer mentioned that Emil, who was the head of the Hanover Synagogue Community *(erster Vorsteher der* Synagogen *Gemeinde in Hannove*r) for many years, was a declared opponent of Zionism. Theodor Herzl had organized the Zionist movement for the first time in the 1890s, though of course Zionist ideas and ideals always had existed throughout Jewish history from the beginning of the exile. Emil, as well as most other assimilated Jews in Germany at the time, feared that the Zionist movement could endanger the position the assimilated Jews in Germany had fought for so hard since the emancipation.

Nothing better to describe this wedding and its atmosphere than my mother's candid diary, volume no. 6, extending from 1906 to 1910. It evidences a strong prejudice against the *Ostjuden*, Jews of Eastern European origin, something quite common at the time, on the part of the more assimilated *Westjuden*. Most of the *Ostjuden* were religious, orthodox Jews.

> "May l4 [1907] - Lisbeth's wedding in Cassel. The Rintelns certainly had not expected us a single day before the wedding. The Meyer family, who showed up in its entirety, amused themselves in Cassel during three days, all on their own.This was quite alright, though the hotel was dirty and the food was bad. At the eve of the wedding we met the seven siblings of the bridegroom, genuine people from Posen [Jews from Eastern Europe], who liked being at a West German wedding. They wondered how a wedding would be celebrated in the so highly praised and cultivated West and they gloated over this event, of which we really could not be proud.
>
> "This wedding would better have taken place in Inowroclaw [small town in Poland], because in the East people are delighted when they can show off their opulence and serve such big quantities of food, whatever the table can stand. Not so the Rintelns. They had no experience, they were indifferent, and we nearly were starving. It rather did not matter to my aunt that the owner of the hotel forgot to serve breakfast and she also did not notice that at 11 p.m. people started to fight for a piece of dry bread, because after supper, consisting of two miserable courses, we only had mineral water, beer and - - prayers!

"There was a pious uncle, Jeremias, who inspected the kitchen and spiced the food with prayers, looking every 10 minutes for people to form a *minyan* [minimum of 10 adult males required for a communal prayer], more so as it was precisely the day of the New Moon, which requires twice as many prayers. It was hilarious to see, every ten minutes, people with black scull caps running through the hall. There were only very few young men, because the fanatical bridegroom had not permitted friends of the bride to be invited, as nearly all of them were non-Jewish and he wanted to stay among his own. All the six young men present came from Posen. They were particularly ugly, they lisped and they had other 'delightful' qualities. All of them were fervent Zionists.

"Suddenly at the wedding banquet, a fanatic stands up and starts to speak. 'As a Zionist - ('silence' my father yells) - I express my congratulations to the bridegroom. We are not Germans, but in the first place Jews,' (pronounced with aplomb!). Now it became too much for my father, he got so angry that he turned purple-red, shouting through the room 'you hypocrite, go to Zion, we would be glad, this is not a rowdy get-together *(Radauversammlung)* here.' Uncle Siegmund starts meddling, and the rest of us start feeling bad. The fanatic, inspite of all the cat calls, calmly goes on. Father is yelling, he noisily throws the silverware on the table, we are shocked, Mother is nearly sitting under the table, in short - it was 'marvelous'."

As soon as the Nazis came to power in Germany in 1933, Willy Victor and family left Germany and emigrated to Israel, called Palestine at the time. They lived in Ramataim near Tel Aviv. Willy never learned to speak Hebrew.

THE CHILDREN OF *LANDRABBINER* SAMUEL E. MEYER AND LINA NÉE SIESKIND

1. JENNY MEYER, born July 29, 1851, died December 30, 1934, Hanover. She married banker Gottfried Herzfeld, born August 17, 1846 in Braunschweig, died October 25, 1902 in Hanover. He was the son of the well known moderate Reform Rabbi Levi Herzfeld (1810-1884), born in Ellrich am Harz, whose works include a history of the Second Temple and an economic history of the Jews in antiquity. Levi Herzfeld was *Landrabbiner* of the Braunschweig region for forty-two years, from 1842 until his death. He was the successor of Rabbi Sabel Peretz Eger.

2. CLARA MEYER, born February 18, 1853, died January 16, 1929, Hanover. She married Eduard Neuhaus, born October 12, 1849, died February 3, 1926, Hanover.

3. IDA MEYER, December 13, 1854, Hanover, died November 9, 1921, Düsseldorf. She married Rabbi Dr. Abraham Wedell, born June 1, 1844 in Posen, died September 2, 1891 in Düsseldorf. He was the provincial rabbi of Düsseldorf. He wrote a book in 1890 about the Jewish community of that city. Dr. Walther Meyer mentions that, intellectually, his aunt Ida was the most important among his father's nine sisters (not included the daughter that died in infancy). Ida was the founder of the first association for the protection of motherhood in Germany. Her husband died young of tuberculosis, at the age of 47, and left her with four young children, a son and three daughters.

4. JOHANNE (ANNA) MEYER, born March 6, 1855 in Hanover. She died in London. She married Albert Neuhaus, born in Hanover. He died in Düsseldorf before World War I. Johanne's second marriage was to Albert's brother, Dr. Carl Neuhaus, in London. It so happens that in this family two sisters married three brothers. Clara Meyer married Eduard Neuhaus and her younger sister Johanne (Anna) married Eduard Neuhaus' brothers: in her first marriage, Albert Neuhaus and in her second, Dr. Carl Neuhaus.

5. EMMA (EDEL) MEYER, born November 18, 1857 in Hanover, died July 3, 1934 in Aachen, buried in Hanover. She married Abraham Seligmann, born July 1, 1850 in Ronnenberg, died January 15, 1907 in Hanover.

6. EPHRAIM, born about 1859, died at the age of ten.

7. SIEGMUND MEYER, born May 15, 1861, died February 28, 1927, Hanover. He married Anna Neufeld, born December 8, 1867 in Berlin, died April 28, 1916 in Hanover. Siegmund was a lawyer and a senator and had the title of *Justizrat.* He always was called **Doctor** Siegmund Meyer to differentiate him from his cousin Siegmund Meyer, Louis' son, who was a partner at the bank.

8. REBECCA MEYER, called Becca, or also "Aunt Bex" by her nephews and nieces, born October 3, 1862 in Hanover, died in 1954 in England. She was the last of Samuel and Lina's children to die. She was the author of the aforementioned "Memories of the Escherstrasse." Her first marriage was to Alfred Marks, Berlin. He died after a long illness. Her second marriage was to Theodor Steinthal, born October 3, 1860, died in 1935, Berlin.

Her niece Käthe Saul mentions that Steinthal was a very rich, distinguished person. There were no children of either marriage. Becca is the author of *Memoiren aus der Escherstrasse.* (The Escherstrasse was Samuel and Lina's residence). After her first husband's death, when she was over forty already, before getting married for the second time, Becca started to study. She studied art history in Rome and eventually became an art historian.

9. LEAH MEYER, born June 28, 1865, died November 1, 1938, Hanover). She married Hermann Gompertz, born January 4, 1848 Rheinberg, died September 28, 1911. He was much older than his wife. Hermann was a rich grain merchant. Edith Straus writes that he had asthma and a big blue mark on his cheek. Leah had said, "Why do I have to marry the ugliest man in Hanover?"

10. RÖSCHEN, born about 1866, died at the age of one and a half.

11. ELSE MEYER, born February 5, 1868 in Hanover, died in August 1930 in London. She married Siegfried Heilbut, born in Hamburg, died June 8, 1930 in London.

12. GRETE MEYER, Else's twin sister, born February 5, 1868 in Hanover, died January 19, 1912 in Berlin. She married Hermann Jaffé, died in 1920 in Berlin. Grete divorced her husband. A divorce was quite unusual at the time.

13. JACOB MEYER (known as Jim). He called himself Jacques, born April 1, 1869 Hanover, died in March 1947. He married his niece Lilli Wedell, his sister Ida's daughter, who was twenty years younger than her husband (and uncle). Lilly, born February 4, 1889 in Düsseldorf, died in 1942 in London. She was a pediatrician. Jacques became a director of the firm Dreyfus in Paris.

14. MAX MEYER, born December 13, 1870 in Hanover, died in March 1947 in Florence. He married his cousin Felice Sieskind, born October 10, 1877 in Berlin, died June 21, 1926 in Alfeld/Leine. Max studied art in Florence. Dr. Walther Meyer reports that Max wrote about Jesus and was protected by the church in Italy during the war.

15. Dr. GEORG MEYER was born in Hanover on May 9, 1873. He was killed during World War I at the battle of Verdun, on December 15, 1916. He and his horse were hit by a shell. He was first buried in France and on December 31, 1916, he was reburied at the Jewish cemetery An der Strangriede in Hanover. His name is shown there on an honor tablet for the ninety-two Jews from Hanover who fell in WW I. This tablet still hangs in the cemetery hall. Georg, a mechanical engineer, was a head clerk at Siemens-Schuckert Works in Berlin. He was very good looking. My mother was very fond of him even though she was much younger. Whenever she was in Berlin, as a young girl, she visited him. On such a visit in 1904, when my mother was 16 years old, she noted in her diary, "Such a man I would like to get." And then she describes how - after a visit to a museum - they had lunch together at a good restaurant on Unter den Linden, Berlin's most elegant avenue, and that Georg even ordered caviar. Georg married Flora (called Lore) Rothe, born August 3, 1887 in Peitz, a little German town near the Spreewald. She was very lucky to be able to leave Berlin at the very last moment in 1941, to join her son and daughter-in-law in Rio de Janeiro. She died in 1965 in Petropolis, near Rio de Janeiro.



Dr. GEORG MEYER - HE SACRIFICED HIS LIFE FOR THE GERMAN FATHERLAND - AND WHAT WAS HIS RECOGNITION?

Georg was a captain in a Bavarian field artillery regiment. He was called to arms and active front service immediately upon the outbreak of World War I. Georg was killed at the battle of Verdun at the end of 1916, one day after having received the Iron Cross - First Class, for bravery. He kept a war diary until the very last day of his life. The diary consists of twenty-two small volumes, handwritten in Gothic letters. These volumes were transcribed and typewritten by Peter Schulze in Hanover. I am in the possession of a copy of volume number twelve.

Following are a few selected pages from this volume of Georg's war diary. They seem to me quite typical of the German mentality and the reaction of an assimilated German Jew of that time. As is known, most of the German Jews then were quite assimilated.

"Lordon [France], July 13, 1915

"At 9 a.m. Colonel Zimpelmann called me. [...] Then he touches for the first time the question of my religious faith, first uncomfortably and then more openly. The cause is the question whether Sergeant Bing should be promoted to the rank of officer. I am in favor, Colonel Z. is against it. It is said that B. once was tactless in his behavior toward the colonel. As he was not promoted already in peace time, in spite of evident good military qualities, this kind of tactlessness must have been the reason.

I have to admit that B. sometimes is lax in his conduct, but otherwise he is quite modest and judicious. Z. will obtain information at B.'s peace regiment.

"Z. is admonishing me expressly as a *Mensch*, not as a superior, to avoid gathering around me, in my regimental staff, too many Jewish sergeants. (In question are Bing, Regensburger and Hofmann). This is calling the attention of other people and his own. He says he is far from having any antisemitic sentiment. He makes compliments to me and is very cordial, but I certainly ought to know that people often say 'where one Jew is making progress, he attracts other ones.' My battery staff is causing such comments. As a friend, he wishes to advise me about that. Z. admits that all three of them are very efficient and that they are especially capable for the battery staff, but just because of my person he recommends caution.

"All this he expresses in such a friendly, warm way that, as a matter of fact, I feel some kind of gratitude in spite of the delicacy of the subject. He evidently was satisfied that I was not offended and he was glad 'that the only cloud between him and me had been dispelled.'

"I know from year-long experience how many people are thinking like Z. A change can come slowly only on the part of the Jews and their foes. Forcing the issue would annul the result of long-time efforts [to overcome antisemitic prejudices]. In the long run, the opinion of those who have to be convinced must be the decisive one. If the concentration [of Jews in the regiment] is calling attention - and often it does - it then has to be avoided.

"Regensburger and Hofmann, both dashing but without good manners, have to moderate. I have placed a limit on them, but as to Bing, I do not give him up so easily and have talked to Z. about it. He will see what can be done."

"JEW COUNTING" IN THE GERMAN ARMY IN WW I

As incredible as it seems, in the middle of the First World War, on October 11, 1916, the Prussian War Ministry - following a parliamentary motion, due to antisemitic pressure - ordered a census of the number of Jews serving in the army, *Nachweisung der beim Heer befindlichen wehrpflichtigen Juden*, called in short *Judenzählung*, the counting of Jews at the front. The purpose of this survey was to verify the percentage of Jews among the fighting troops. As a result of this discriminatory measure, the hope of the German Jews of ever being considered as citizens enjoying the same rights in the *Kaiserreich*, the German Empire, was definitely shattered.

At the end of 1916 Georg Meyer notes in his diary: "This is happening after two years of important events and total dedication to our fatherland! I feel as if I just got a terrible slap in the face (*'Mir ist, als hätte ich eben eine furchtbare Ohrfeige erhalten.')* In peacetime I would quit the army, but now, of course, I have to persist even more." A short time after, Georg's life was sacrificed at the murderous battle of Verdun.

Most of the 550,000 Jews living in Germany at the outbreak of the First World War had hoped to eliminate the last obstacles to being fully accepted into German society, by declaring their patriotic conviction.They had not the least doubt - just as the rest of the population - about the skillfully propagated lie of the German chancellor that Germany had become the victim of a hostile attack and therefore had to carrry out a just war of defense. More than ten thousand German Jews followed the appeal and enlisted as war volunteers, at the beginning of the war. Out of a total of 80,000 Jewish front soldiers 12,000 sacrificed their life for Germany in World War I, amounting to over two per cent of the Jewish population in Germany at the time.

An interesting article, dated November 1996, which appeared in the magazine *Die Zeit*, published in Hamburg, deals with this episode. During the war, antisemitism, always prevalent in German history, increased even more, at home as well as on the front. The Jews were accused of being *Drückeberger*, of shirking their patriotic duty in wartime.

A paradoxical fact to illustrate this affirmation was mentioned by Walter Rathenau, who was Jewish. He was the chief of the important AEG electric company founded by his father. During the war he was in charge of raw material supply in the War Ministry. Rathenau said in 1916: "The greater the number of Jews who fall in the war, the more stubbornly their foes will [try to] prove that they all sit behind the front. The hate will double or triple." Rathenau, after the war, became Foreign Minister and was assassinated in Berlin in 1922 by ultra nationalist circles.

Prophetically, the organ of the *Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens,* the Central Association of German Citizens of Jewish Faith, *"Im deutschen Reich,"* wrote in 1917: "We [Jews] have before us a war after this war."

It was the Catholic *Zentrum* party, through their deputy Mathias Erzberger, that put forward the proposal in the German parliament, the *Reichstag*, to undertake a census of the army soldiers, separated by religion. The result of this census, however, was never published, so that the antisemitic agitators could go on propagating the lie of the 'Jewish war shirkers'.

Senator *Justizrat* Dr. Siegmund Meyer, son of *Landrabbiner* Dr. Samuel E. Meyer, sent the death anouncement of his brother, Dr. Georg Meyer, to the leader of the *Zentrum* party Peter Spahn with the question: "Are you and your friends not scared of the accusations that these heroes, defamed even in their death struggle, will raise as silent blood witnesses, before the Eternal?"

REICHSPÄSIDENT HINDENBURG'S LETTER TO DR. SIEGMUND MEYER

Dr. Siegmund Meyer not only had to lament the death of his brother, Dr. Georg, but less than three months later, on March 9, 1917, he also lost his son, Lieutenant Franz Meyer. Both were killed on the Western front. Upon the death of his brother Georg, Dr. Siegmund wrote an indignated letter to the commander-in-chief of the German army, Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg.

In peacetime Hindenburg lived in Hanover. The Meyer family gratuitously satisfied his cigar needs and during the war my grandfather Emil also made a shipment of liquor to him at the headquarters, for which Hindenburg thanked him in a letter dated March 8, 1915. Hindenburg's wife also thanked Emil in a separate letter. Hindenburg belonged to the political right. In 1925 and again in 1932 he became the elected *Reichspräsident* of the Weimar republic. It was Hindenburg who, on the fatal day of January 30, 1933, appointed Adolf Hitler to become *Reichskanzler*, chancellor of the German *Reich*, and form a new government. Regrettably I do not have Dr. Siegmund's letter, but only Hindenburg's reply. Most certainly the reply was not drafted by Hindenburg himself, an ordinary military man, but by some assistant, as Hindenburg certainly did not have the intellectual capacity to write such a letter, twisting the facts and telling lies. Following is the translation of Hindenburg's letter to Dr. Siegmund Meyer:

Central Headquarters, December 28, 1916

Confidential!

"Dear Mr. *Justizrat*,

"Many thanks for your trustful letter of December 21.

"The question dealt with by you is of the competence of the Prussian War Ministry, which you also addressed. I myself know this case, which resulted in the census of religious faiths within the army, from the newspapers only.

"In accordance with same - if I am not mistaken - the affirmation was made in the budgetary committee of the Parliament that a considerable part of the Jewish population tries to shirk the dangers of war, by looking for jobs behind the fighting troops, or at war societies. For this reason, some deputies, belonging to different parties, proposed a census of the distribution of the members of the various religious faiths among the fighting troops, behind the front and in the war societies. This investigation furthermore should be extended to the number of fallen soldiers, the wounded and the ones that were promoted. The parliamentary committee approved this motion and the Minister of War declared his agreement, 'in order to confront unjustified attacks against the Jewish population.' Therefore the census is not meant to be an evidence of guilt, but a justification toward our Jewish fellow-citizens.

"The bitterness of your fellow-believers consequently could be directed against a false suspicion only, but not against a measure through which the accusation shall be refuted and all of you shall obtain satisfaction. Least of all by this census the memory of your brother, who fell so bravely for the Emperor, the King and the Fatherland, should be stained. Indeed, by his heroic death he is beyond any suspicion. Honor to his memory!

"It would be quite welcome to me should this letter contribute to your considering the measure in question in a more objective way and my intervention in the same as unjustified.

"With the greatest esteem, dear Mr. *Justizrat*, I am,

Yours faithfully,

[signed] von Hindenburg"

THE DESCENDANTS OF SAMUEL & LINA MEYER'S CHILDREN

1. JENNY MEYER married Gottfried Herzfeld. They had three sons: Rudolf, Otto and Karl.

a) RUDOLF HERZFELD, born September 19, 1872 in Hanover, died March 5, 1939 in London, married Fanny Lewisohn (1882-1974). They had three children, Edgar, Nora and Irene.

Edgar Herzfeld was born in 1909 in London and died in Ramat Hasharon, Israel, on December 19, 2000. He married Charlotte (Lotte) Werner, born 1907, a chemist by profession. They lived in London until some time ago when they moved to Ramat Hasharon to be near their daughter Ann. Seldi and I always visited these extremely nice people when we were in London. Their two children are Ann Naomi and Michael.

Ann Naomi, born December 25, 1940 in London, married David Ussishkin, born in 1935. He is the grandson of the famous Zionist leader Menahem Mendel Ussishkin, born in 1863 in Dubrovno, Russia, died in 1941 in Jerusalem. Ussishkin was one of the founders of the first modern Zionist pioneering movement *Bilu* in 1882 and a vehement opponent of the Uganda Project. He was a delegate to the first Zionist Congress and following ones and chairman of the *Keren Kayemet Le'Israel* until his death.

Ann and David live in Ramat Hasharon. We always visit them when we are in Israel.. David is a professor of archaeology. For several years, from 1990 on, he and the British archaeologist John Woodhead excavated the site of the biblical city of Yezreel, Tel Yezreel, near Mount Gilboa, which was King Ahab and his wicked wife Jezebel's winter residence. It was in Yezreel that the biblical story of Nabot's vineyard, involving Ahab, Jezebel and the prophet Elijah, took place. David was also excavating in Megiddo.

Ann and David have three sons, Iddo, Yoav and Daniel. Iddo, born August 29, 1968 married Michal Rokni, born December 30, 1968. They have a son, Yuval, born December 22, 1996. Yoav, born August 29, 1970, married Yfat, born December 11, 1970. Daniel was born on December 5, 1973.

Michael Herzfeld, Edgar and Lotte's son, is a professor of anthropology at Harvard University. Incidentally, Michael got in touch on work related matters with my son Ruben George Oliven, who also is a professor of anthropology, even though he did not know for sure that they were related.

Edgar Herzfeld's sister Nora, born August 17, 1919 married Fry. Edgar's second sister Irene, born November 25, 1924 maried Baxandall.

b) OTTO HERZFELD was born in Hanover in 1873 and died there as a boy on July 29, 1887.

c) KARL HERZFELD was born February 9, 1883 in Hanover and died on June 13, 1970 in Munich. He was married to Alice Pinkus, born February 6, 1889 in Neustadt, died November 13, 1974 in Munich. They and their two daughters emigrated to London in 1939. Karl and his wife returned to Germany about 1950. They lived then in Munich. Alice was a very good friend of my mother Leonie. We visited Karl and Alice in Munich in 1963.

Karl and Alice's elder daughter Ruth, born July 1, 1913 in Hanover, died of cancer on May 15, 1963 in Munich. She changed her name to Heartfield. The younger daughter Lilly, born December 22, 1917 in Hanover, died in 1981 in a mysterious fire in her apartment in London.

Alice's family, the Pinkus, were very wealthy linen manufacturers in Neustadt (now called Prudnik), Upper Silesia. The factory S. Fränkel Textile Works, the biggest linen factory in Germany, was established in 1855 in Neustadt by Samuel Fränkel. In 1934 the factory changed its name to Schlesische Feinweberei A.G., a name chosen to retain the traditional logo "S.F." Samuel had eleven children. His son Aron, called Albert, was the father of Kurt Fränkel, husband of Rena Meyer. Samuel's youngest child Auguste married Josef Pinkus. He and his descendants then also became partners of the textile works.

Alice's brother was Hans Hubert Pinkus, born July 2, 1891 in Neustadt, died February 8, 1977 in Crowborough, Sussex, England. Hans was an amateur genealogist like my mother. Both maintained correspondence about the Meyer family in 1936. As a grandson of Josef Pinkus, Hans became one of the owners, in the third generation, of the big linen factory. He was married to Elfriede Hess. She was non-Jewish, the daughter of the president of the tribunal in Sachsen-Anhalt. They were divorced. She died in the Philippines in 1933. In his second marriage Hans married Lili Fischel. Her ambitious father turned Roman Catholic in order to become a member of the Austrian Parliament and to make it easier for him to receive the title of nobility *von*. In her first marriage Lili was the wife of Felix Schottländer, my father's cousin on his mother's side. When Felix died, Lili married Hans Pinkus. The marriage was the second for both. Lili, daughter of converted Jewish parents, became a fanatical catholic. Hans and Lili had twin daughters, Johanna (Jonnie) Hedwig and Freda Maria Pinkus. Freda was epileptic and suffered from Down's syndrome. She died in 1940 in Essen, and her twin sister Jonnie died on January 10, 1995, in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

Hans, Lili and Hans' son from his first marriage, Hans-Josef, emigrated to Northern Ireland via London in 1939. Jonnie arrrived in the UK in 1940. Her sick twin sister Freda had to be left back in Germany in the care of her nanny. After the war, Hans went back to Germany and opened a small linen enterprise in Augsburg, but he was not very successful. In 1947 Hans left Lili and went to live in London. He then moved to Munich and to Crowbrough, Sussex. He lived at these places with Charlotte Margules née Aschinger. She was born in Berlin and died in New York. As Hans' son John informed me, "he never divorced Lili, because he did not want to offend her fervent Catholic belief, which forbade divorce." He married Charlotte only after Lili's death in 1967.

I recently discovered the son of his first marriage, Hans-Josef, who changed his name during WW II to Howard John Peters. We are now corresponding with each other. He, like his father, has become the amateur genealogist of his family. John was born on May 17, 1922 in Neustadt. He was interned by the British in 1940 and then served in the British army during and after World War II and ended with the rank of major. His mother was Hans Pinkus' first wife Elfriede. John was married to Marianne D. Pollack, born on July 6, 1921 in Czechoslovakia, died on January 6, 1983 in Lugano. They had three children, Dinah Margret, 1945-1953; Helen Judith, born 1951; and Anthony David Max, born 1954. John now lives with his companion Peggy Plinius, née Taylor, born on June19, 1919 in Vladivostok, in their homes in Verbier and Lugano, Switzerland.

2. CLARA MEYER and her husband Eduard Neuhaus had three children: Otto, Ernst and Anna.

OTTO was born in 1874 in Hanover. He married Lotte Caspari, born in Berlin.
ERNST was born on June 4, 1876. He died young, on October 15, 1898.
ANNA, born January 13, 1880 in Hanover, emigrated in 1935 to Palestine and in 1936 to Johannesburg. She married Arthur Salomon. He died in 1932.

OTTO NEUHAUS and Lotte Caspary had three children: Margarete, died ca. 1935, Herbert and Karl Theodor.

a) Herbert Neuhaus, 1908-1970, changed his name to Newhouse. He married Ilse Frank. He came to London in the 1930s, before his father Otto. He started a business, but later on had other business interests and left his firm to his father.

Herbert and Ilse Newhouse had two sons, Ernest George and Anthony. Anthony committed suicide about 1982.

b) Karl Theodor married Dorothy. Like his brother Herbert, he changed his name to Newhouse.

ANNA NEUHAUS and her husband Arthur Salomon had five children:

Minni, born March 5, 1905, died 1930 in Hanover.
Edith, born January 15, 1907, married Alex Bravmann. She emigrated to Haifa.
Heinz, married 1939 in Capetown. His son Michael Andrew Salomon was born there on February 28, 1945.
Werner and Franz.

3. IDA MEYER and her husband Rabbi Dr. Abraham Wedell had four children, all born in Düsseldorf: Grete, Hans, Ilse and Lilly.

GRETE WEDELL was born in 1877. She lived in Berlin and was very close to my mother. She emigrated to London in 1934 and in the fifties moved to Chicago, where she died. She was married to Dr. Gustav Feist, born in Solingen, died in Wuppertal-Elberfeld. The couple had two children, Dr. Hans Feist, who became a lawyer (solicitor) in London, and Dr. Lore Feist, a sculptress. Lore married Henselmann, a successful artist. They lived in Switzerland. They had two daughters, the younger one born in August 1940.

ILSE WEDELL, born March 15, 1886. She was a good friend of my mother's. She married Dr. Arthur Oppenheimer, born 1869 in Mönchen-Gladbach, died November 2, 1942 in New York. He was a lawyer in Düsseldorf and later in New York. They emigrated to the USA in 1936. They had four children: Gerd, Fritz, Walter and Irene. Gerd changed his name from Oppenheimer to Opton. He died in the 1980s.

LILLY WEDELL, born 1889, died 1942 in London. She married her uncle Jacob Meyer, called Jim, born April 1, 1869 in Hanover, died March 1947. Lilly married Jim "against her will," as Dr. Walther Meyer mentioned. Jacob was the 13th child of *Landrabbiner* Dr. Samuel Meyer. He was twenty years older than his wife (and niece). Lilly was among the first ten women in Germany to study medicine. She became a successful pediatrician in Düsseldorf and later in London. The couple emigrated to London in 1936. Lilly and Jim had two sons, Peter and Klaus.

a) Peter Meyer, born July 28, 1907 in Hamburg, emigrated to London in 1934 and died there on February 6, 1958.

b) Klaus Meyer, born July 18, 1913. He married Barbara. He lives in London. He went to India and came to London after World War II.

HANS WEDELL, THE GRANDSON OF LANDRABBINER SAMUEL E. MEYER AND SON OF RABBI ABRAHAM WEDELL, A LAWYER BY PROFESSION, WHO CONVERTED AND BECAME A CHRISTIAN MINISTER

Ida Wedell's only son and favorite child was Hans Wedell, born on June 19, 188l, died April 1, 1964, in Düsseldorf. He married Gertrud Bonhöffer, born March 18, 1895, died April 1, 1974. She belonged to a well-known Protestant family in the Rhineland. Their most prominent member was Dietrich Bonhöffer, a theologian. He was hanged by the Nazis during World War II, in connection with the failed attempt on Hitler's life on July 20, 1944.

Hans and Gertrud had four children, all born in Düsseldorf:

a) Renate Wedell, born March 19, 1920. She married minister Ernst Rocholl, born August 10, 1916, died April 22,1985. They have four children.
b) Ursula Wedell married Harald Lockley, born July 16, 1916. They have three children.
c) Eberhard George Wedell, born April 4, 1927. He married Rosemarie Winkler, born January 23, 1920. He lives in England. They have four children.
d) Klaus Wedell, born November 13, 1931. He married Nina Weaver, born August 22, 1933. They have two children.

Hans, who originally was a lawyer, later on studied theology. During World War II he became a Christian minister, ordained in the U.S.A. After the war he returned to Europe, working for the evangelical church, first in England and later in his hometown Düsseldorf.

Dr. Walther Meyer informed me that Hans converted during the First World War, probably to become an officer in the German Army. Walther mentions that Hans' mother Ida only became aware of his conversion when she visited him in a military hospital after he had been wounded. She noted from a sign bearing his identification, attached to his bed, that he was a Protestant.

Much earlier, however, in 1905, my mother already mentions in her diary that she met her second cousin Hans Wedell. She was told that Hans was lacking moral principles, because he wanted to convert on account of his professional career - regardless of being the son and grandson of a rabbi. Leonie asked him directly about this matter and "he denied it." In any case, it certainly was a fortunate circumstance that Rabbi Wedell, who died young, did not live to see his son convert and become a Christian minister.

In 1995 a book was published by the Protestant church in the Rhineland about Hans and Gertrud Wedell. The book is called *Vom Segen des Glaubens* (The blessing of the faith). Reading it is a regrettable loss of time. Not one word is written by Hans Wedell himself, but some chapters are written by Gertrud, in a very amateurish way.

Right in the first chapter, about the origin of Wedell's family, the editors commit some crass errors. Among others, when referring to Wedell's ancestors, they mention that Louis Meyer was a son of Samuel Meyer and that the name of the bank was Louis Meyer and Sons. They further mention on page 18:

> "The question he [Wedell] was facing more and more was if the continuing obligation toward the Jewish wing of the Jewish-Christian tradition should go on being an essential attribute of the Jews in Germany in the integration-friendly atmosphere of the turn of the century."

This obscure statement (to say the least) dispenses any comments.

Disgusting is the personality of Gertrud Bonnhöffer's mother, Hedwig, as depicted in this booklet. Gertrud says about her mother: "She was afraid of endangering her career. Therefore she did not dare to support us [during the Nazi regime]." On page 77, Gertrud relates the events of November 9, 1938. Hans was already in the United States. The Nazis did not care at all about Hans' conversion and Christian faith; they just were aware of his Jewish origins.

They had come to Gertrud's house in Düsseldorf and had smashed up part of the furniture. She wanted to seek refuge for herself and the children at her mother's, who lived in a small place. When they arrived there, her mother opened the door. "Suddenly she stretched out her hand and shouted: 'Out, out!' [...] She became outraged. I stared at her and said to the children, 'Let's go!' From the beginning of the Nazi regime, Hedwig did not want to be disturbed in her way of living and had broken off all family ties."

The culminating point of this brochure can be found on page 182:

"Hans Wedell died on April 1, 1964. [...] The trauma of anti-Jewish propaganda was still too deeply imbued in the psyche of the people [to make it feasible] to mention his Jewish origin [at the funeral]."

It is a shame indeed that the evangelical church of the Rhineland, nearly twenty years after the fall of the "Third Reich," did not dare to mention at the funeral that their minister Hans Wedell was born a Jew and was the son and grandson of a rabbi!

4. JOHANNE MEYER and her first husband Albert Neuhaus had three sons, Hans, Fritz and Paul.

HANS NEUHAUS was born in 1880 in St. Petersburg. He married Amy Haas. He died in a plane crash in 1935. He lived in South Africa and worked with gold mines. He was very rich. Hans and Amy had two daughters, Marjorie and Molly (Muriel), and a son John. The name of Marjorie's daughter is Penelope. John married Eleanor Hestreth. He died in the 1980s.

FRITZ NEUHAUS was born in 1883 in St. Petersburg. He changed his name to Frederic Newhouse and converted. He was an electrical engineer. He worked with power plants in Africa. Edith Straus mentions that he was called "His Excellency of the Nile."

PAUL NEUHAUS, born May 8, 1886 in Riga, died in 1933 in London. He also changed his name to Newhouse. He had a daughter from his first marriage and two sons.

4a. JOHANNE MEYER and her second husband Carl Neuhaus had no children.

5. EMMA (EDEL) MEYER and her husband Abraham Seligmann had five children: Arthur, Paul, Leo, Käthe and Lotte.

ARTHUR SELIGMANN, born November 12, 1881 in Hanover, died in the 1960s in Rio de Janeiro. He emigrated to Pará in Brazil as early as 1908. In 1916 he moved from there to Rio de Janeiro, where he had an import-export business. He was divorced from his first wife Lily Marlé, who refused to follow him to Brazil. He later married Anita Zoch in Brazil, who dominated him. He had a big farm near Rio de Janeiro.

When our family emigrated to Brazil on the SS Monte Paschoal in March 1939, he came to the pier in Rio to see my mother and the rest of the family. The Brazilian maritime police, however, did not permit him to come on board, and they also refused to let us go down. I met Arthur in Rio in 1940, when I went there to obtain an immigration visa for my future wife Seldi. When she arrived in Rio de Janeiro from London in 1941, she was received by Adolf Herzfeld, a grandson of Rabbi Levi Herzfeld, who worked at Arthur Seligmann's firm and helped her around, as she did not speak a word of Portuguese. She stayed a day at Arthur's farm during her short stay in Rio until leaving for Porto Alegre on a coastal steamer.

PAUL SELIGMANN was born February 11, 1883. He was killed between March 28 and 30, 1915 in Poland during World War I. He married Anna Schmidt, born April 28, 1888 in Bernburg. Paul and Anna had two daughters, Irene, born January 18, 1912 in Bernburg and Irmgard, born January 9, 1914. Irene married Hans Sick, born April 21, 1898 in Thorn.

LEO SELIGMANN, born February 4, 1892, died October 28, 1938. He went to Brazil in 1922 to join his brother Arthur. He was a lawyer by profession, practicing both in Germany and later in Brazil. He belonged to the board of directors of the local B'nai B'rith chapter in Rio. He was shot in Rio de Janeiro. My aunt Edith Straus mentioned that he was gay.

KÄTHE (KATHERINE) SELIGMANN, born May 8, 1887 in Hanover married Sally Saul. She died in Petropolis near Rio de Janeiro in the 1960s. She was a good friend of my mother's. Käthe and her husband operated a boardinghouse in Petropolis near Rio. They organized five identical family albums with pictures, genealogical data, etc. for each of their five children. Käthe gathered very valuable genealogical information, which I obtained from her and later from her daughter Hete Langenbach, Rio de Janeiro.

Käthe Saul had five children: Gerda, Hilde, Elisabeth, Hedwig Sophie (called Hete) and Werner Paul, all born in Aachen, Germany.

a) Gerda, born in 1912, died in São Paulo. She married Rudolf Kahn. She had no children.
b) Hilde, born in 1914, married Edmund Bruch. She has two children, Myriam and Marcello. Hilde and both her children live in Beer Sheva, Israel.
c) Elisabeth, born 1915, married Arnold Neufeld. They live in São Gonzalo, Brazil.
d) Hete (Hedwig Sophie), born 1919, married Fritz Langenbach, who is deceased. Hete lives in Rio de Janeiro.
Hete has two children, Miguel and Suzana.
Miguel, born in 1945, married Elsa Maria de Castro. They have a daughter Raquel, born in 1978.
Suzana, born in 1947, is not married.
e) Werner Paul, born in 1921, is an architect. He lives in Niteroi near Rio de Janeiro. He married Gioconda. They have a daughter Gabriela and two grandchildren: Stephanie and Frederic.

LOTTE (LINA CHARLOTTE), born March 29, 1898 in Hanover, married Dr. Helmut Bacherer, born September 19, 1895 in Pforzheim, died March 25, 1931 in Rostock. Lotte emigrated to Rio de Janeiro in 1933. She lives in Theresopolis near Rio. She is a dentist by profession. Her 103rd birthday occurred in March 2001.

7. Dr. SIEGMUND MEYER and his wife Anna Neufeld had four sons, Walther, Franz, Fritz and Heinz, all born in Hanover.

Dr. WALTHER MEYER, born April 15, 1890 in Hanover, died Feburary 7, 1974 in Bad Pyrmont. He was a lawyer and notary in Hanover. He was married to Lotte Wilke, non-Jewish, whom he divorced. He then married Anni, also non-Jewish, who survived him. Walther had no children. During WW II he sought refuge in Luxembourg.

He researched the Meyer family and their ancestors for many centuries back. A copy of his manuscript, *DIE FAMILIE EGER AUS HALBERSTADT*, Luxembourg 1940 - Bad Pyrmont 1957, second edition, is deposited at the Leo Baeck Institute, New York. It has 150 pages of text and 30 pages of sources and names.

He also wrote a manuscript about RABBI JAKOB BENJAMIN FRÄNKEL, which is in my possession. Rabbi Jakob Benjamin was a member of the famous rabbinical families Katzenellenbogen-Auerbach-Schorr. He was the grandfather of Rebecca Meyer, wife of Ephraim Meyer, my great-great-grandparents.

My mother maintained intensive genealogical correspondence with Dr. Walther Meyer back in 1937/38 about the Meyer family, just as I did much later, from 1969 until Walther's death in 1974. He gave me a great deal of information about the Meyers and our common ancestors.

FRANZ MEYER was born on January 15, 1883. He was a lieutenant during World War I. He was killed at the Western Front on March 9, 1917.

FRITZ MEYER was born on April 19, 1885. He emigrated to Switzerland.

HEINZ MEYER, born March 9, 1898, died 1966. He was paralyzed, from the age of fourteen. He emigrated to England and returned to Hanover after the end of World War II.

9. LEAH MEYER and her husband Hermann Gompertz had two sons, Fritz and Hans, both born in Hanover.

FRITZ GOMPERTZ, born in 1889, died August 27, 1892 at the age of three.
HANS GOMPERTZ was born on September 26, 1892. He married Olga Schwarzmann, born in Russia. She converted from the Jewish faith and became a Christian. Hans emigrated to Holland in 1936 and later, in 1940, to Rio de Janeiro.

11. ELSE MEYER and her husband Siegfried Heilbut had four children, all born in London. All Heilbuts are deceased now.

LINA HEILBUT. She died in London in 1917.
FREDDY HEILBUT.
MAX HEILBUT. He married Winnie Fontheim.
LESLIE HEILBUT, born in 1908, died about 1960.

12. GRETE MEYER and her husband Hermann Jaffe had two children:
ELSE JAFFE, born in 1892 in Berlin. She died in London after World War II.
LUDWIG JAFFE was born April 18, 1898 in Berlin. He committed suicide.

13. JACOB MEYER (called Jim) married his niece Lilli Wedell, daughter of Ida Meyer.

For information regarding the couple's offspring, see Lilly Wedell, under no. 3 of this list: Ida Meyer.

14. MAX MEYER married his cousin Felice Sieskind. The couple had three children: Lina Frederika, Ruprecht and Irene, all born in Alfeld/Leine.

LINA FREDERIKA MEYER married Hermann Prinz, whom she divorced. She emigrated to New Zealand. She died in 1972 or 1973.
RUPRECHT MEYER, born July 26, 1902, died August 27, 1925 in Alfeld/Leine. He committed suicide.
IRENE MEYER (called Reni) was born about 1907. She married John McLean of Coll, a small island in Scotland. The couple had three daughters:

a) Felice, born November 4, 1930 in Alfeld/Leine.
b) Janet, born April 29, 1932 in Hanover.
c) Evelyne, born November 11, 1937 in Berlin.

15. Dr. GEORG MEYER and his wife Flora (called Lore) Rothe had two children: Ellen and Klaus Ulrich.

ELLEN MEYER was born on November 8, 1908 in Berlin and died in 1965 in Rio de Janeiro. She did not marry. She emigrated first to England and after the war she joined her family in Brazil.

KLAUS ULRICH MEYER (called Ulrich only) was born on February 13, 1912 in Berlin. He died on July 2, 1997 in São Paulo, Brazil. He married Ruth Irene Pick, born 1915 in Hamburg, died in 1990 in São Paulo. Ulrich was a mechanical engineer. At the end of 1939 he and his wife emigrated to Brazil. They lived first in Rio de Janeiro where their two children were born. Later they moved to Petropolis near Rio, situated high up in the mountains, which has a better climate. A few years ago, Ulrich and his wife moved to São Paulo where their son Ronaldo lives. Ulrich lived in São Paulo at the German Home for the Aged *(Sociedade Beneficente Alemã)* until his death. Ulrich and Irene had two children:

a) Georgina Meyer, born August 6, 1943 in Rio de Janeiro. She is a graphic designer and art educator. She married Michael Düllmann, a German who converted to Judaism and whom she later divorced. The family resided in Bonn, Germany, where their daughter was born on December 7, 1979. Her name is Rebekka, in honor of her ancestor Rebecca Meyer, wife of Ephraim Meyer, as well as her grandfather's sister Rebecca Steinthal née Meyer. Georgina and Rebekka live in Israel since 1994. Georgina lives in Beer Sheva. Rebekka, who is specialized in the care of horses, works at a horse-breeding farm. Seldi and I visited them in 1995. Georgina had various group and individual exhibitions in Israel, including a recent one in Tel Aviv. In August 2000 she published a short manuscript, her memories illustrated by her woodcuts, called *Zurück zu den jüdischen Wurzeln*, or "Back to the Jewish roots."

b) Ronaldo Meyer (called Ronny), born January 7, 1947 in Rio de Janeiro), lives in São Paulo. He is married to Alice K. Comparato. They have two daughters, both born in São Paulo: Joana, born November 26, 1975 and Rita, born October 16, 1979.

Except for Klaus Meyer, Samuel's grandson, who lives in London, Samuel's great-grandson, Ronaldo - as his father Ulrich told me once - is the last male descendant by the name of Meyer of *Landrabbiner* Samuel E. Meyer, who had ten daughters but "only" five sons. Neither Klaus nor Ronaldo have any male heirs. It seems that there also is no male descendant left by the name of Meyer of my great-grandfather Louis E. Meyer, who had four sons and four daughters.



EMIL LOUIS MEYER - (1853-1926)

My maternal grandfather

Emil Louis Meyer, Louis Ephraim's oldest son, was born in Hanover on May 5, 1853 and died there on May 9, 1926. On June 17, 1883, in Hamburg, he married my grandmother HELENE LEVY, born in Hamburg on July 26, 1859. Helene died on May 10, 1942 in Basel, Switzerland. My grandparents had two children, both born in Hanover: my mother Leonie, born in 1887 and my aunt Edith, born in 1888.

My mother writes that at the age of twelve Emil had been sent to board with a *shochet*, a ritual slaughterer, in Frankfurt a.M. The *shochet*, who was a very strong man, occasionally hung Emil outside the window by one arm, as a punishment, saying, "I will drop you, if you don't behave."

At the age of fourteen or fifteen Emil started a banking apprenticeship in Frankfurt a.M. He was very intelligent and continued his studies while an apprentice. His father Louis could hardly wait to take him into his bank. This happened in 1871. Emil worked at the bank for over fify years, just as his father Louis did before him.

In 1873/74 Emil did voluntary military service in the artillery. My grandmother Helene stated that Emil was an excellent equestrian and a good soldier. He was to become a commissioned officer in the army, but this did not happen due to *"rische*s" (antisemitism), according to Helene. Later on Emil bought a horse and then a carriage, which he sold before his marriage "because both a wife and a carriage were too expensive."

Emil always had a hobby, whether bicyling, photography or automobiles. He was an impetuous man, as his father had been, but he was also kind and charitable. He always had an open house, full of guests, as his parents' house had been. Sometimes it happened that at the last moment a guest advised that for one reason or another he could not come for dinner. Many times it turned out that without this invited guest there would be thirteen people at the dinnertable. My grandparents must have been quite superstitious, because Käthe Saul, *Landrabbiner* Samuel's granddaughter who lived with her parents nearby and was exactly my mother's age, once told me that as a young girl she was called at the last moment to come over quickly, when this happened, so that there would be fourteen people at the table.

In 1895, after his father Louis' death, Emil, his wife Helene and their two daughters, Leonie and Edith, moved to the old house at Calenbergerstrasse 43, which Emil had inherited from his father. At the same time, the bank moved from there to larger quarters, at Luisenstrasse 9. On the ground floor of the old house on Calenbergerstrasse remained only a branch office of the bank.

TENNIS WITH WHALEBONES

Concerning the domestic atmosphere at Emil and Helene's home, my mother Leonie, who had a literary talent, wrote various funny, true short stories. One of them is called "Tennis with whalebones." Helene was very fond of new things. "One has to accompany modern times," she said. In 1895 Emil and Helene had inherited the house on Calenbergerstrasse with a large garden that had belonged to Emil's father Louis. Then one day Helene proposed something quite extravagant. She wanted to build a tennis court in this large garden. She had seen people playing tennis at Ostende in the summer and it had impressed her very much. However, as Leonie said, "none of the gardeners in Hanover had the least experience in building such a tennis court."

Finally Helene called an expert from Berlin, four hours away by train. The expert made his calculations and took measurements. The court would extend to the street wall in the southern part of the garden. Helene said, "The street wall? But that's where the big pear tree is." "Yes, the pear tree has to be removed. Otherwise there will not be enough room," replied the expert. Helene did not want to sacrifice the old tree, and proposed to reduce the lateral margin of the tennis court.

"That's not feasible at all," said the expert from Berlin."The British Lawn Tennis Association has established strict rules as to the minimum court size for a proper game." In the light of this argument, Helene was willing to consent. But at this moment, her old cook and house factotum Minna, who was respected by the entire family, interrupted. As always during important discussions, she had been listening behind the door. She protested vehemently against the proposed felling of the pear tree. "Every year I make more than fifty pounds of *Herr Geheimrats* favorite pear compote. This kind of pear does not exist any more. The removal of the tree is completely out of the question."

Helene trembled whenever her cook got angry and the expert wanted to catch his night train, so a compromise was made. The tree remained and the margin of one side of the court was not much more than half a meter. Now the construction could start. The expert sent wagonloads of special earth and gravel from Berlin. Emil complained about the high cost and the workmen laughed and said that the same material could be easily obtained at any construction site in Hanover.

At long last the court was completed and the game could start. On that great day Helene and her sister-in-law Gutta appeared, fashionably dressed in long blue skirts, white blouses with stiff whalebone collars, whalebone corsets, various petticoats, and brown gymnastic shoes. "The whales did not have a good time," my mother remarks. Two neighborhood youngsters were hired as ball boys. Helene's daughters, my mother Leonie and her sister Edith, one of their cousins, and a tennis teacher who was the solo ballet dancer of the local opera also showed up. The teacher had seen the game at Interlaken and had held a racket in her hands there, so she felt wholly competent. Emil commented that "being a dancer, she certainly must understand something about running and jumping."

Twelve red balls were taken out of a box and the teacher said, "Now you have to try to hit the ball in order to get it to the other side." But she did not explain how to do that. She left this up

to the ladies. The teacher watched for awhile, as the ladies tried in vain to follow her instructions. She then collected six marks for the lesson and left. This went on for a few weeks. The teacher came, told the ladies whereto to hit the ball, collected her fee and then was gone. The sisters-in-law patiently threw the balls at one another. Some balls nearly hit the sky but seldom the opposite field.

Gradually all the neighborhood youngsters gathered to watch "the old ladies playing with toy balls," as one of the brats once shouted. The "old ladies" were only thirty-five years old, but this was considered "old" by the children, and the two ladies were quite offended. The teacher also taught them how to keep score, and after she left, Helene and Gutta spent part of the afternoon discussing the score, if one of them occasionally hit the ball to the other side of the court. Sometimes the ball boys also had to be the referees.

One day Helene ran into the mentioned pear tree and sprained her ankle. When she recovered she confessed to Emil that she would rather quit playing tennis, saying "I can quarrel with Gutta without running and sweating." After that, the tennis court stood idle for ten years, until my mother Leonie started to play.

I have in my possession a photo of my grandfather Emil, sitting on a chair on the tennis court, fully dressed up, wearing a tie, waistcoat, long-tailed jacket and leather shoes. Both his arms are raised and he is holding a tennis racket in his right hand and a tennis ball in his left.



Emil "playing tennis" at the court on Calenberger Strasse in 1909

HOW HELENE MEYER LEARNED TO RIDE A BICYCLE

Another short story my mother tells is called "How my mother was finally converted to sports." Leonie reports that when Helene and her two daughters came back from vacation in Norderney, Germany, in the summer of 1896, they did not find Emil at the station as usual. When they arrived at home, Helene shouted at her husband, "For heaven's sake, Emil, what happened to you?" Emil, feeling guilty, replied hesitantly, "I learned to ride a bicycle." Everyone gasped. Bicycling was quite new then; it was an act for circus acrobats, who rode on two-meter-high wheels. After the chain transmission was invented, bicycles were built in factories.

When Helene heard that some other ladies had also started bicycling, she made a decision - while moaning and looking at Emil's lumps and bruises - "I have to learn this, too." The first step was to arrange for a dressmaker to make her a pair of decent slacks. To avoid getting lumps like her husband's, she hired two bicycle teachers - one to run on the left side of her bike and the other on the right. Later on, the two teachers cycled beside her - one on each side - to keep her from falling. Thus, the worst that could happen to her was to fall on one of her teachers' shoulders, rather than on the ground.

Emil and Helene had a horse carriage with a coachman until 1909. From that year on they owned a convertible car with a uniformed chauffeur, which was the fashion then. My aunt Edith was one of the first women in Hanover, if not the first one, to drive a car, while my mother Leonie preferred horseriding.



Emil's car with chauffeur Buhrmann, ca. 1909

EMIL L. MEYER AND HIS FAMILY'S TRIP TO PARIS

My grandparents and their two daughters used to travel frequently to Marienbad, a popular spa, as was customary then. Once in 1905 my grandfather wanted to take his family to Paris. Someone must have told him that it was difficult to find accomodations at a first-class hotel at that time of year. So my grandfather sent a *Depesche* or telegram, to the first- class Grand Hotel at the Place de l'Opéra in Paris, requesting a reservation for himself and his family, in the following terms: *Réservez deux chambres à deux lits, donnant sur Boulevard des Capucines, même à prix élévé*, meaning "reserve two double bedrooms, with a view on Boulevard des Capucines, even at a high price." By the time Emil and his family arrived at the hotel, the doorman quickly donned gloves and installed the family in two splendid apartments on the first floor with enormous rooms, bathrooms, etc., very high priced, of course.

On the way to Paris the train stopped at Cologne for two hours in the evening. It was carnival time. My mother, who was a girl of seventeen at the time, writes in her diary that she never thought it would be possible that people would run around in the streets in fancy costumes. She would have liked to mingle with the people, but "Papa returned to the railway station as fast as possible. He is always scared of the *Pöbel*, [the simple folks] - he calls all the merry people *Pöbel*, just like Wagner in [Goethe's] Faust. Instead of having dinner at one of the popular, bustling restaurants, where there was a lot of excitement this evening, he dragged us to the monotonous railway station. I nearly cried out of anger. I would have liked so much to watch this commotion."

Describing one of the family outings in Paris, my mother mentions, "Soon my father became fed up with the busy movement on the streets. He is always afraid of contact with common people, so that's why we returned to our hotel."

EMIL AND HELENE'S DOMESTIC ATMOSPHERE

There is a story about a garden restaurant in a little forest on the outskirts of Hanover. The restaurant owner was a notorious antisemite. He had attached a sign to a tree in the restaurant garden: *Juden unerwünscht* (Jews not wanted). Upon hearing of this, Emil and his family decided to teach the owner a lesson. Emil gathered his family and several relatives and all of them went to the restaurant on Sunday at noon. Emil ordered the best food and the most expensive drinks for all of his guests.

But after the waiters brought the food and drinks, Emil - as had been previously arranged - turned around and read the sign aloud and shouted, "Helene, we cannot stay here any longer - Jews are not wanted." And promptly the whole party stood up and left without having touched any of the food and beverages. When the restaurant owner saw the whole party leaving, he ran after them, afraid of a substantial loss, since the food had been prepared and the wine bottles opened. He asked Emil and the family what had happened and why they were leaving. When Emil explained the reason, the owner said that the sign was not meant for Emil and his party and begged him to stay. But all his efforts were in vain and the entire party left. The next day the story appeared in the local newspaper.

Later on Emil and his family moved to Lange Laube 23. I can still remember this patrician house with the kitchen in the basement, a ground floor with a dining room and a living room,

a second floor with a sitting room and bedrooms, and a third floor with maids' rooms and an attic. The living room was furnished with a large white polar bear pelt, complete with a stuffed head.

The white marble staircase was covered with a red plush carpet, held in place with shiny brass rods. The banisters were also covered with red plush velvet. On the landing was an oak chest and a toilet with a white urinal, just like the ones in public pissoirs. This impressed me very much whenever I visited my grandparents in Hanover as a small boy. Once I locked myself in this toilet and could not get out by myself. The entire family and servants gathered at the door, giving me instructions from the outside as to what to do and how to turn the key in order to open the door.

The food was prepared in the kitchen, which was in the basement. It was carried to the upper floors at mealtimes by means of a dumbwaiter, with several shelves on which food and dishes were placed in the kitchen. The food was then lifted up, taken out hot and served by the housemaid. I had never seen such a thing before and I was quite impressed.

After breakfast, my grandmother would sit in an armchair standing on an elevated platform in the sitting room, looking out the window by means of a "spy", which was a mirror attached to the outside wall of the house. The mirror was positioned at such an angle that my grandmother could view the entire long street without being seen. Thus she always was aware of everything that happened in the neighborhood. Such devices were common in the houses of the rich, who could in this way avoid hanging out the window, as poor people use to do, who often place a pillow under their elbows to watch the passersby more comfortably.

Then the cook Minna Salomon, called Mienchen, would come up from the kitchen to discuss the daily menu with my grandmother. Minna was a Jewish orphan. She was my grandparents' cook for over forty years. My mother wrote of her, "She ruled the kitchen and part of the household." Minna was short and not too beautiful, but she was very loyal. When Helene later auctioned off the household in 1934 and moved to our apartment in Berlin, Minna moved to the Jewish Home for the Aged in Hanover at Helene's lifelong expense. Later on, during the war, the Nazis deported all the residents in the home, and the poor old cook Minna perished in the Holocaust.

EMIL L. MEYER - A THIRD-GENERATION BANKER

One of my first memories dates back to 1923 when I was five years old. It was Emil's seventieth birthday, for which our family traveled from Berlin to Hanover. At the birthday party - at which there were many guests - my sister Suse (Susanne) and I appeared in burlap bags. Suse said *Ich bin der Zucker*. I said *Ich bin das Salz*. Suse went on: *Ich gratuliere*. I said *Ich ebenfalls*. (I am the sugar—I am the salt—Congratulations—The same). In German this rhymes, of course. The reason for this skit was that Ephraim Meyer & Sohn had big investments in the Neuwerk Sugar-Factory in Gehrden near Hanover as well as in the Egestorff Salt-Works (later Kalichemie A.G.), in Nienburg. Emil, like his father Louis before him, belonged to the supervisory board of both companies.

On the same date, May 5, 1923, a separate celebration of Emil's seventieth birthday took place at the bank, attended by government officials, business friends and bank employees. The thirteen industrial firms of which Emil was a supervisory board member, presented him with "an oak chest of great artistic value with views of these factories." Emil placed this chest on the landing of his residence, replacing a red plush sofa that stood there before, about which my mother has written a funny short story.

On this occasion Emil donated five million marks to the bank employees' benefit fund. He also donated one million marks each to the Ruhr assistance, the small pensioners' fund, the fund for the Hanover Poor and to the Jewish Community. In addition, he donated half a million marks to the Jewish Hospital. This happened during Germany's period of hyperinflation and these amounts represented inflated money. Inflation, however, had not reached its peak yet. This would only happen several months later, on November 20, 1923, when one mark reached the incredible value of 100,000,000,000 (100 [U.S.] billion) Papiermark and one dollar 4,200,000,000,000 (4200 [U.S.] billion) Papiermark.

Another of my childhood memories was an event some time later, shortly before the peak of inflation. In October 1923 my grandfather came to visit us in Berlin and my mother and I went to see him at his hotel. As my mother tells it in her diary, on this occasion Emil gave me a present of ten million marks. He thought that this was a very generous gift to his grandson. I, a five-year-old, told him, however, "Grandpa, this money is worth half a *pfennig* only, not enough to buy me a bonbon." Emil could not cope any more with the terrible economic situation caused by the galopping inflation. He was already quite frail at the end of that year and shortly after, in March 1924, he had a stroke. He suffered for weeks and the family was not sure he would survive. But then he gradually recovered.

Emil was a member of the Chamber of Commerce from 1897 on. In 1910 he became an honorary treasurer of this institution; in 1910, its second vice president; and its first one in 1914. He played a leading role in the economic life of Hanover, since Ephraim Meyer & Sohn was one of the most distinguished banks in town. He was a member of both the Central Committee of the *Reichsbank* for the province of Hanover and the Central Association of German Banks and Banking Trade, in Berlin. In 1897 he was appointed by the king of Prussia, etc., honorary deputy commercial judge and in 1900, honorary commercial judge. He remained at this post until 1915. On his seventieth birthday he also became an honorary member of the Polytechnic of Hanover.

Emil Meyer was the chairman of the supervisory board *(Vorsitzender des Aufsichtsrat)* of the

Hannoversche Waggonfabrik A.G. (makers of railway cars); of the Egestorff Salt-Works and Chemical Factories; the Neuwerk Sugar-Factory A.G.; the Continental Asphalt A.G.; the Hanover Real Estate A.G.; and the Breitenburg Portland Cement Works. He also belonged to the supervisory board of the Lindener Brewery A.G.; Mechanical Textile A.G.; German Plate Glass Works; Bennigsen Sugar-Factory A.G.; Braunschweig Machine Construction Works; Braunschweig-Hanover Mortgage Bank; and the Prussian Central Land A.G. He had already inherited some of these positions from his father Louis, who started the financing of, and close cooperation with, these enterprises.

In 1895, shortly after Louis' death, the bank moved into its new premises, which had just been built, centrally located downtown, at Luisenstrasse 9, in the developing center of town, near the central railway station, "in consideration of our clients and the changed traffic conditions." It was a beautiful bank building with modern burglar- and fireproof steel vaults and safe-deposits rented out for keeping valuables. Peter Schulze mentions in his manuscript "History, significance and end of the Hanover banking establishment Ephraim Meyer & Sohn" that in 1912, besides its partners, the bank had five head clerks, three managers, fifty clerks and, in addition, eight messengers and office boys. The building was destroyed during World War II. The ground floor of the old house at Calenbergerstrasse 43 remained as a branch office of the bank only.

According to Julius Blanck in "The banking and stock exchange system in the city of Hanover", Hanover 1926 - as cited by Peter Schulze - in the 1920s, "the banking establishment Ephraim Meyer & Sohn was the first bank of the province of Hanover."



The bank's new main office at Luisenstrasse 9

EMIL L. MEYER'S FIGHT TO OBTAIN THE TITLE *"GEHEIMER KOMMERZIENRAT"*

In 1907 during the visit to Hanover of Emperor Wilhelm II, who was also king of Prussia, Emil obtained the title *Kommerzienrat* (Councilor of Commerce). However, his great ambition was to become *Geheimer Kommerzienrat* (Privy Councilor of Commerce), or short, *Geheimrat* (Privy Councilor), a much superior title, the same one his father Louis held before him. According to the prevailing regulations, a person could obtain the title *Geheimer Kommerzienrat* only after at least ten years had elapsed since he had obtained the title *Kommerzienrat*. Emil, however, did not want to wait so long and he did everything possible to shorten the waiting time.

In Germany's hierarchical society, and especially in Prussia, nothing counted more than a title. Jews in Germany could not obtain the hereditary nobility (the title *"von"*). Therefore the prominent Jewish bankers and businessmen coveted the non-hereditary titles *Kommerzienrat* and the much superior one, *Geheimer Kommerzienrat*. These titles gave the bearer much status and recognition. They were a great honor and a sign of achieved wealth. Undoubtedly this must have been the reason why my grandfather Emil pursued the title *Geheimer Kommerzienrat* with such energy and tenacity, willing to pay for its obtention considerable amounts of money in the form of donations and subventions.

From the historian of the Jewish community in Hanover, Peter Schulze, I obtained copies from Hanover's Municipal Archives (formerly State Archives) of the whole voluminous secret documentation dating back from 1912 to 1918, regarding Emil's obtention of the coveted title. It was not an easy enterprise indeed, but a long and difficult process. First the police president had to submit a report to the governor of the province of Hanover regarding the personality of Emil L. Meyer and his business situation. The governor then had to submit the petition to the minister of commerce and trade in Berlin, etc.

From one of these detailed reports made by Hanover's state governor *(Regierungspräsident)* in 1914, we learn that Emil's bank was among the most important establishments in Hanover and that its yearly turnover amounted to 1,000,000,000 (one billion marks). The governor further mentions in his report in 1914 that Emil was paying taxes on a personal fortune of 5,876,000 marks and that his yearly income amounted to 332,400 marks.

The governor's report also states that Emil was a member of the Kaiser Wilhelm Society for the Development of Sciences and of the Crown Princess Caecilie Foundation, as well as treasurer of the Viktoria-Luise Foundation, and that he made a donation of 150,000 marks to this foundation, and placing at its disposal a yearly contribution of 5000 marks during ten years. The report further mentions that Emil contributed 3000 marks to the Crown Princess Caecilie Foundation and 5000 marks to the Patriotic Warrior Association Hanover-Linden, to which Emil belonged since 1874. Furthermore, according to the same report Emil contributed yearly amounts of 1200 marks to the Poor People's Administration and 1800 marks to the Synagogue Community. Regarding Emil's political convictions, the state governor remarks, "Meyer belongs to the National-Liberal Party; however, politically, he does not declare himself *(hat sich indes politisch nicht bemerkbar gemacht)*."

Actually, Emil was one of the biggest taxpayers in Hanover. This is mentioned by the Hanover Chamber of Commerce in its petition to the Royal Government of Hanover, dated 1917,

supporting Emil's renewed request to obtain the title. Emil was a very rich man indeed. This certainly was the reason why some of the government authorities tried to - or in a way actually did - extort him in connection with granting him the so much desired title. With a promise of abbreviating the required ten-year waiting period, they made him pay dearly. He had to grant substantial economic help to the financially ruined president of the Chamber of Trade *(Handwerkskammer)* Plate and also to another official person, *Geheimrat* Michaelis. Furthermore, he promised to pay a yearly contribution of 5000 marks, during ten years, in addition to the 150,000 marks he had paid already, to the Viktoria-Luise Foundation (Viktoria Luise was the wife of Emperor Wilhelm II).

High government officials had promised Emil that the waiting time for his obtaining the title would exceptionally be shortened; first they promised by two years, then by just one year only, but the Minister of Commerce and Trade in Berlin, Sydow, who was the highest authority regarding this matter, was adamant. The minimum waiting time, he insisted, was ten years. Emil was quite disappointed and wanted to stop the yearly donation to the Viktoria-Luise Foundation and the financial support of Plate and Michaelis. The ministry director thereupon threatened him, in a veiled way, writing him that he would have to report such a step "to his Majesty," as well as to the minister, the state governor and other high authorities.

Some time later, the First World War broke out, during which Emil contributed, among other donations, an amount of 50,000 marks to the Red Cross and to other war purposes, besides an amount of 15,000 marks for poor war widows and orphans. The minister, receiving new and insistent requests from the state governor and also from the Chamber of Commerce, again denied the concession of the title, informing that during the war such titles could not be granted.

Finally, after a long fight and after more than ten years had elapsed since Emil had obtained the title *Kommerzienrat*, in May 1918 the title *Geheimer Kommerzienrat,* which he had longed for so much, was bestowed on him by "The King of Prussia, etc." Wilhelm II. Consequently, from May 1918 on, my grandfather Emil was addressed *"Herr Geheimrat,"* just as his father Louis before him, and my grandmother Helene *"Frau Geheimrat"* (as usual in Germany, where the wives are also addressed by the rank or title of their husbands). The official document with the king's signature was sent by the Minister of Commerce and Trade to the state governor of Hanover with the request to hand it over to Emil "with my compliments, after the amount of 5000 marks, necessary for the issuance of the document and affixing the due stamp, has been collected from same."

My grandfather Emil died on May 9, 1926, after having suffered very much since his stroke in 1924. He was buried at the Jewish cemetery An der Strangriede in Hanover. His tomb and tombstone are well preserved. The empty space next to his grave had been reserved for his dear wife, Helene, to whom he had been happily married for over forty years. But destiny - or more precisely the murderous Nazi regime - separated them in death. Helene died sixteen years later, on May 10, 1942, in Basel, Switzerland, and is buried there at the Jewish cemetery.



Wir Wilhelm,

von Gottes Gnaden

König von Preußen ꝛc.,

tun kund und fügen hiermit zu wissen, daß Wir Allergnädigst geruht haben, dem Kommerzienrat Emil L. Meyer in Hannover den Charakter als Geheimer Kommerzienrat zu verleihen.

Es ist Uns in den bisherigen Geschäften, daß der nunmehrige Geheime Kommerzien-rat Meyer Uns und Unserem Königlichen Hause in unverbrüchlicher Treue ergeben bleiben und tätigen Anteil an allen Unseren Interessen nehmen wird, sowie auch zum allgemeinen Besten beizutragen, sowie es sich Unserer Allerhöchsten Fürsorge für Ihn und seinen gegenwärtigen Charakter verbündeten Rechten zu erfreuen haben soll.

Zu Urkund Allerhöchsten Auftrages vollzogen und mit dem Königlichen Insiegel versehen.

Berlin, den 17 März 98.

Das Staatsministerium

Patent granting Emil L. Meyer the title *"Geheimer Kommerzienrat"*
(Privy Councilor of Commerce)



Emil L. Meyer's tomb in Hanover



Helene Meyer's tomb in Basel, Switzerland

THE COLLAPSE OF THE BANK EPHRAIM MEYER & SOHN

When Emil's father Louis died in 1894, the partners of the bank at that time were Louis' nephew, Eduard Spiegelberg, a very capable person, and Louis' sons Emil and Siegmund. In 1910, Eduard, the senior partner at the time, died and his son John succeeded him, becoming a junior partner. Emil then became the senior partner. In 1922 Siegmund died and his son Erich Meyer entered the bank as a junior partner. In March 1924 Emil suffered a stroke and, unfortunately, he then was obliged to withdraw more and more from active participation in the business and administration of the bank.

My mother Leonie, Emil's daughter, was very gifted in business. It was her strong wish to join the bank. She writes in her diary from hindsight, in her typical candid way: "Erich [Meyer] was always dumb. They never should have entrusted him with a banking establishment. But when I, the only capable one, wanted to enter the bank, I was told 'Girls don't belong there - play piano or tennis.' (Dusting and housework at that time, in 1905, fortunately belonged to an even earlier period)." Perhaps if Leonie had become a partner of the bank, it would have taken a different direction. Incidentally, after Leonie emigrated to Brazil, she got into business when she was over fifty-five years of age, exporting neckties to a relative on my paternal side, Victor Schottländer, in Chile.

The founder of the bank, Ephraim Meyer, Emil's grandfather, underwent a very difficult period during the agrarian crisis in the 1820s and 30s, as his wife Rebecca mentioned in her will. Ephraim's son, Louis, however, directed the bank during a very favorable economic situation, after the annnexation of the kingdom of Hanover by Prussia and the Prussian victory in the war against France in 1870/71. On the other hand, Louis' son, Emil, faced a very difficult period again, in the years following Germany's defeat in the First World War. There was a severe economic crisis and tremendous inflation, reaching its peak in the autumn of 1923, which wiped out many fortunes and destroyed the German economy. Germany could not pay the heavy war reparations determined in 1919 by the Treaty of Versailles. As a consequence, from 1923 to 1925 France and Belgium occupied the German Ruhr territory, rich in coal and industry.

On May 5, 1923, when Emil celebrated his seventieth birthday with big public festivities, the bank still held strong to its leading economic position. Emil was the senior partner at the time and the junior partners were John Spiegelberg and Erich Meyer. In early 1924, while on vacation, Emil suffered a stroke. For weeks he remained in critical conditions and from thereon, until his death two years later, he had to stay away from the bank and business most of the time.

The direction of the bank consequently was in the hands of the two remaining partners, John Spiegelberg and Erich Meyer. As Erich was "dumb," according to my mother's diary, he could not be counted on, and John apparently acted without any restrictions, all on his own. My mother mentions that John was irascible and on bad terms with the director of the Disconto-Gesellschaft, with whom Ephraim Meyer & Sohn did important business. John granted - apparently without consulting anyone - a bank guarantee (*"del credere"*) in the name of Ephraim Meyer & Sohn for a loan of 750,000 marks, to the Hannoversche Waggonfabrik (Hawa), makers of railroad cars. Ephraim Meyer & Sohn maintained a close business relationship with Hawa, and Emil Meyer was the chairman of the supervisory board of that big manufacturer.

Until 1922 the government railroad administration had placed large orders for the supply of locomotives and railroad cars, to a large extent in connection with war reparation payments. When this material was finally delivered, it was paid for with inflated money. Following the end of hyperinflation, when the new Rentenmark was introduced in late 1923 - and later the Reichsmark, in 1924 - the government railroad administration placed hardly any new orders. Due to the German government's "passive Ruhr fighting," it suddenly canceled all existing orders, based on which Hawa had obtained the sizable loan. As a consequence of this situation and of the heavy losses incurred, Hawa - as well as other railroad equipment manufacturers - became insolvent and could not repay the loan when it fell due. Therefore, Ephraim Meyer & Sohn, who had signed the guarantee, should have made good on the loan, but the large sum involved exceeded the bank's liquidity and placed it in serious payment difficulties.

My mother also mentions in her diary another bank guarantee given by John Spiegelberg, in the name of Ephraim Meyer & Sohn, to an American bank, for a large loan this bank granted to a German lard importer, in the amount of three million marks. The importer could not repay the loan when it fell due, "on account of heavy losses." My mother remarks that John knew, when he granted "this crazy bank guarantee," that, if push came to shove, the bank could never repay it. John, when granting such bank guarantees, apparently had acted in a most irresponsible and careless way, without any due risk assessment, tempted only by the high interest.

Leonie describes these most difficult times in her diary. When on a visit to her parents in Hanover, she met John Spiegelberg. My mother writes:

> "In autumn [1924] John said, 'I believe the bank is going to go broke. I will kill myself.' Erich, who was of no use anyhow, was in Italy; *Papa* [her father Emil], too weak; John, incompetent, also disliked. [...] Fritz Straus [Leonie's brother-in-law, who owned an important bank in Karlsruhe] arranged everything, but I said [to John]: 'One day you will be ruined on account of your stupidity!' I was attached to this business, grandfather [Ephraim] founded it in ca. 1796."

About one year later, on August 25, 1925, in her diary my mother reports a phone call she made to her family in Hanover. She was informed that everybody there was most worried and that intervention in the business was probable. She immediately phoned her brother-in-law, the banker Fritz Straus, in Karlsruhe, who did not know anything at all about this new situation. My mother writes:

> "I was told that the railroad car manufacturers could not pay the draft for about 750,000 marks to fall due tomorrow, guaranteed by Ephraim Meyer & Sohn, because the government had cancelled the big reparation orders on account of the passive Ruhr fighting.
>
> "The next day Mr. Mangold shows up, a person of repugnant appearance, son-in-law of butcher Wolf, to which the bank lost so much money a year ago. He says he cannot pay the draft for three million marks for which Ephraim Meyer & Sohn guarantees at the American bank. (He is a lard importer and for the three million guarantee he pays high interest, but John knew when he granted this crazy guarantee that, if things

were to become serious, Ephraim Meyer & Sohn could never pay this amount). He [the importer] says he had sudden great losses, but certainly he has transferred the money to a safe haven abroad."

My mother then describes how her brother-in-law, Fritz Straus, ran for ten days from Pontius to Pilatus, to the various banks who initially refused to help and to the president of the *Reichsbank*, Schacht (responsible for finally overcoming the disastrous inflation crisis in 1924). When at last the *Reichsbank* agreed to advance the needed amount, everything leaked to the press. My mother writes:

"Now it was necessary to sign over all the private fortune, whether it was *Mama's* [her mother Helene's] private fortune from her dowry, the inheritance she received from her parents, the residence on Lange Laube, the house on Calenbergerstrasse, bought nearly hundred years ago, everything was signed over to the *Reichsbank.* Only John [Spiegelberg] secretly put something aside. We dismissed a servant. *Mama*, who had lived in opulence since her earliest childhood *(Papa* had declared an income of four million marks in 1911), behaved admirably.

"Then Fritz Straus found buyers for the business, the ill-famed potash people Gumpels, unscrupulous and unfair persons, who - for a piece of bread - made the best deal of their life. They did not pay anything. One still was glad that they took it at all. And today - 1927 - it is again a business of millions, but they still have their bad business manners. And no successors on my side who could reconquer it. I carried away the pictures of the founders [Ephraim and Rebecca Meyer] one day before the handing over [of the bank building] and brought it here by railway, third class. Neither Hans [my brother] nor Klaus [myself] look as if they are apt [one day] to be a businessman. Neither of them has my quick business wit. What a pity, I would have liked so much to recover it [the bank] from them [the Gumpels]. How beautiful it was to have had behind oneself the safety of a big fortune."

Of course, at that time back in 1927 when I was only nine years old, my mother Leonie, when underestimating my future commercial capability, could not have foreseen that one day, many years later, I would run a sucessful import business during half a century. I regret very much that she did not live long enough to see it.

In his previously mentioned manuscript "History, significance and end of the Hanover banking establishment Ephraim Meyer & Sohn," the result of thorough research conducted in 1996, Peter Schulze writes:

"The immediate liquidation of the bank could only be avoided with the financial help of a consortium of several private banks formed at the initiative of the Reichsbank [the Central Bank]. The leading banks who jumped in with financial help 'of below one million marks' were the Diskonto-Gesellschaft; the Darmstädter und National Bank; the Hanover bank Z.H. Gumpel; and the banking establishment Straus in Karlsruhe, connected by family relationship.

"In the beginning the press mentioned, 'there will be no changes in the direction of the bank.' However, after the bank lost its economic independence, a change of owners became unavoidable. The owners, all of them individually liable, i.e., Emil L. Meyer, John Spiegelberg and Erich Meyer, were obliged, in accordance with an agreement

made in September 1925, between the board of directors of the Reichsbank and the bank Ephraim Meyer & Sohn, to transfer their existing assets to a liquidation society, the *'Hannoversche Gesellschaft für Industrie und Bankwesen Aktiengesellschaft.'* [...]

"The building at the Calenbergerstrasse 43, owned by the family since 1856, was also sold. It became the property of the holding company of the Frederikenstift [an evangelical hospital]. In their report for the year 1926 it is mentioned, 'In the spring of 1926 a favorable opportunity arose for acquiring the building at Calenbergerstrasse 43, situated beside the present location of the Frederikenstift, for a price of 120,000 Reichsmark. [...] The large plot of land will be used for the planned enlargement of the premises.'

"In place of the former owners, the Hanover bankers Gumpel, a Jewish family originating from Schaumburg, took over. The Gumpel family documents contain a statement in connection with the possible causes of the collapse of 'Ephraim Meyer & Sohn', saying that the bank Z.H. Gumpel [withstood] 'not only in the war, but especially in the time of inflation, all temptations to do the so-called war and inflation business and in this way to procure profits in areas beyond its previous [...] sphere of action.' Therefore, it was possible for the firm Z.H. Gumpel, 'in view of this precaution, to support and take over the shaky traditional banking establishment Ephraim Meyer & Sohn, at the honorable request of the Reichsbank.' Then there follows the proud addendum, 'here successful work has been done, in a generous way, for the prestige of the German nation and German credit abroad.'

"While in 1925 the commercial register for Ephraim Meyer & Sohn still showed the previous personally liable partners Emil L. Meyer, John Spiegelberg and Erich Meyer, in 1926 the partners *Kommerzienrat* Hermann Gumpel, *Kommerzienrat* Julius Gumpel and again Erich Meyer are shown. [...] The amount of the purchase price paid by the Gumpels for the takeover of the banking establishment Ephraim Meyer & Sohn is not known; but it is said that all assets which were taken over, the business building on Luisenstrasse together with its inventory, receivables of the bank, etc. were paid for.

"After the settlement of the financial matters of Ephraim Meyer & Sohn, the new owners of the bank were *Kommerzienrat* Julius Gumpel and his son consul Kurt Gumpel, who took over the part of his uncle Hermann Gumpel. Julius Gumpel, after nearly forty years of partnership at the firm Z.H. Gumpel, left that firm. The two brothers, Hermann and Julius Gumpel, from then on went different economic ways. [Julius Gumpel, born in 1866 in Lindhorst, participated - while a partner of Z.H. Gumpel - in the foundation of the potash industry and the Gumpel concern.] The new partners, Julius and Kurt Gumpel, continued the activities of the bank Ephraim Meyer & Sohn under its traditional name. The third partner was Erich Meyer, from the founding family. However, he was a partner without personal liability, not participating in the profits and losses of the bank, receiving instead a fixed salary. He had no voting right and had to follow the instructions of the Gumpels. The effective directors of the bank were father and son Julius and Kurt Gumpel, who shared the partnership participation in a proportion of 70 to 30.

"Erich Meyer also obtained some posts of member of the supervisory board *(Aufsichtsrat)* at shareholder companies, which either were controlled by Ephraim Meyer & Sohn or with which they maintained a close business relationship.

> "Altogether the three partners of the bank kept over fifty mandates of supervisory board members, which evidences the great amount of business connections, the financial power and the re-established prestige of the bank. [...] The former third partner, Erich Meyer [a great-grandson of the founder of the bank, Ephraim Meyer], died as early as 1935 in Hanover [at the age of 48]. As he was completely penniless at the end, his widow had to ask permission from the creditors to sell his clothes, in order to pay the burial cost from the sales amount. Because of his heavy indebtedness, Meyer's inheritance was refused by over thirty relatives."

Emil Meyer's inheritance was also judicially refused in 1926 by both his daughters, my mother Leonie, also in the name of her three children Hans, Susanne and myself, all minors at the time, as well as by my aunt Edith Straus, likewise in the name of her five children Werner, Ilse, Erwin, Gerda and Eva, minors as well. The reason, of course, was that Emil, after the collapse of the bank, as a personally liable partner of the bank, had no assets left at all. If his heirs had accepted the inheritance, they would not have received anything, but Emil's liability still would have passed on to them.

The former partner John Spiegelberg still lived in Hanover in March 1937. He emigrated later to the United States and lived in New York.

Schulze reports further:

> "After 1926, success and failure seem to have alternated in the commercial activities of Ephraim Meyer & Sohn, under its new ownership. In the beginning, until 1930, there was an average yearly profit of 750,000 RM (Reichsmark), according to the former head clerk Paul Katzenstein. The world economic crisis that followed plunged Ephraim Meyer & Sohn, as so many other banks too, into great difficulties. In the beginning of 1933 there was a deficit of five million RM. An undated newspaper clipping, probably from the end of 1933, mentions 'a chain of serious failures.' Therefore, the *Hannoversche Industrie A.G.* in which the companies that had caused a deficit to the bank were incorporated, was obliged to propose its liquidation. A few days later, Ephraim Meyer & Sohn also asked for liquidation, which was published on December 14, 1933.
>
> "The appointed liquidators were bank director Otto Bollmann and Paul Katzenstein. Mainly under the supervision and direction of Katzenstein, chief clerk of the bank for many years, still at the time of Emil L. Meyer, the bank was liquidated in the following years. Already in the beginning of 1934 many of the forty employees of the bank at that time were dismissed. It is remarkable that all savings deposits plus interest were fully paid out to the depositors. According to an agreement, the bank building on Luisenstrasse was handed over to the Railway Treasury on July 26, 1938, for an amount of 330,000 Reichsmark. The inventory had been delivered previously, at symbolic prices, to the Hanover Labor Department. The final liquidation of the bank took place in 1941."

Just as in 1925, there were negotiations with various banks, trying to save the finances of Ephraim Meyer & Sohn again. The same reasons for doing so still held true, namely the commercial connections of the bank, its large circle of clients and its traditional name and

reputation. Of course, the creditors also had an interest, among them the Dresdener Bank, which in 1932 had granted a credit of 400,000 Reichsmark, guaranteed by a mortgage on the bank building.

However, all efforts to save the bank failed, due not so much to economic reasons but to political ones. Peter Schulze writes:

> "The potential creditors could not be sure any longer, after the Nazis had taken power, that the bank Ephraim Meyer & Sohn, as a 'Jewish' enterprise, could still do business unimpaired in the future. On June 16, 1933 the Hanover municipality decided not to consider 'Jewish' firms any more when placing out public orders. The time when the Hanover municipality used to deposit their liquid assets with Ephraim Meyer & Sohn and used this bank to obtain funds and place loans were over.
>
> "Since antisemitism had become the government program, the bank's 'good name' had now become a 'Jewish name' and precluded any effort to save the bank. The bank's 'good will', which, regardless of its weak liquidity, should have been attractive to potential buyers, in economic terms, had suddenly become worthless, due to political developments. The bank could have been saved, but not the 'Jewish' enterprise.
>
> "The weakness of the bank was caused by the general crisis and, in addition, by its own mistakes. The collapse occurred when the possible economic reorganization turned out to be politically unfeasible. The end of Ephraim Meyer had become the intention of the new rulers."



HELENE MEYER NÉE LEVY - (1859-1942)

My maternal grandmother

My grandmother Helene was born in Hamburg on July 26, 1859. She married my grandfather Emil in Hamburg on June 17, 1883. Their marriage contract, according to which Helene received a dowry of 150,000 marks, is in my possession. She, like my mother Leonie, was a talented painter. Three beautiful white porcelain plates with colored flower motifs, handpainted by Helene, hang in our breakfast room. A fourth plate was broken when my youngest son, Gabriel, was playing soccer in the house with an adult friend, who hit the plate accidentally.

Helene was a very kindhearted and sweet person. She was what my mother called a *"Lebenskünstlerin,"* literally an artist in the way of living, a person who knew how to live her life happily. Emil and Helene, who both descended from very wealthy families, had a very high standard of living in their household in Hanover. Due to the collapse of the bank in 1925, they lost their whole fortune. Emil died soon afterwards, while Helene (whom my mother also called Mama Lene) went on living in Hanover. In March 1934 there was a private auction in her residence at Lange Laube 23, where her entire household was auctioned off - furniture, art objects, silver, crystal, glassware, chinaware, etc. Helene then moved to our big apartment in Berlin where she stayed with us until her emigration to Switzerland in the beginning of 1939, shortly before our emigration.

When my parents, my sister and I left Germany in 1939 to emigrate to South America, Helene did not want to leave with us. She was already seventy-nine years old and was afraid of the long ship voyage - which lasted three weeks in those days. But the main reason, I believe, must have been that she did not want to become a burden to my parents, who were facing a completely uncertain future in a new country. Her son-in-law, Fritz Straus, arranged for her to emigrate to Switzerland. Helene eventually went to Yverdon. She lived there in a rented room in a private home, where she was well taken care of. Her biggest joy until her death was receiving letters, principally from her daughters (Leonie in Porto Alegre, Brazil and Edith in Berkeley, Ca.), as well as from her relatives and friends. In 1942 she fell and broke her hipbone and had to be transferred to the Jewish hospital in Basel. A short time later, she died there, on May 10, 1942. She is buried at the Jewish cemetery in Basel. Helene bore her fate stoically - the loss of her home and fortune in Hanover, the separation from her family in 1939, knowing that she probably would never see her daughters and their families again. She never complained and always was well humored, until the end of her life.

HELENE MEYER'S FAMOUS ANCESTRY

Just as my maternal grandfather Emil L. Meyer is a descendant of many distinguished rabbinical families through his grandmother Rebecca Meyer née Levy Warburg, my maternal grandmother Helene Meyer neé Levy also was a descendant of many illustrious Jewish families on her mother's side, through MIRIAM SARAH JENTE HAMELN, eight generations removed from Helene. Jente was the daughter of JOSEPH HAMELN and the sister-in-law of GLÜCKEL OF HAMELN. Jente's first marriage was to SALMAN (SALOMON) GANS, son of the rich Sussmannn Gans from Minden. A descendant of Jente and Salman, five generations removed, is MADEL (MATHILDE, also called Marta) GANS.

Jente's second marriage was to the famous *Oberhoffaktor* (Court Jew) ELIESER LEFFMANN BEHRENS COHEN. The blood of Jente's father Joseph Hameln was carried into most of the distinguished Jewish families in Hanover. Jente died on July 25, 1695. Jente and Elieser Leffmann Behren's son HERZ LEFFMANN BEHRENS married SERCHEN, the daughter of the famous Court Jew SAMSON WERTHEIMER. A descendant of Herz Leffmann Behrens and Serchen Wertheimer is ABRAHAM HERZ COHEN, who co-founded the bank Leffmann & Abraham Herz Cohen.

Madel Gans and Abraham Herz Cohen were married in Hanover. Thus the distinguished old families GANS and LEFFMANN BEHRENS, who were first united through Jente Hameln's two marriages, became united again after many generations. Madel died in Hanover on November 13, 1822. Abraham died there on March 11, 1825. MADEL GANS and ABRAHAM HERZ COHEN were the maternal great-grandparents of my grandmother, Helene Meyer née Levy. Madel and Abraham's daughter, SARA COHEN, married JACOBY LÖWENHEIM, Helene Meyer's grandparents.

In my possession are three genealogical charts compiled by Adèle Freund. The first chart shows the descendants of Jente Hameln and Salman Gans and the second one the descendants of Jente Hameln and Leffmann Behrens Cohen. Both of these demonstrate the relationship between Jente Hameln and Helene Meyer. The third chart shows the connection between my grandmother Helene Meyer, the Oppenheim family (Adèle Freund's ancestors) and the famous poet and writer HEINRICH HEINE (1797-1856), also a descendant of Jente Hameln.

The genealogical charts of the Gans family's relationship to Heinrich Heine, and of the Leffmann Behrens Cohen family's relationship to Helene Meyer, are also contained in the appendix of Dr. S. Gronemann' *Genealogische Studien über die alten jüdischen Familien Hannovers*. Heinrich Heine converted to Protestantism in 1825, saying, "The conversion certificate is the entrance ticket to European culture." He returned to Judaism in 1848, however, when he could no longer leave his bed due to a grave illness which he called *Matratzengruft* (mattress grave). Prior to his death in 1856, Heine wrote:

No mass will be sung
No *Kaddish* will be said
Nothing will be said
On the day of my death.

JOSEPH HAMELN - THE FATHER OF HANOVER'S JEWISH COMMUNITY - AND HIS DAUGHTER MIRIAM SARA JENTE

JOSEPH HAMELN (1597-1677) was the father of Hanover's Jewish community. He, his wife Freude, and his daughter Jente are all highly praised in the famous memoirs of Joseph's daughter-in-law GLÜCKEL OF HAMELN. The *Memorbuch* of the Hanover Jewish community describes Joseph:

> "The pious, modest, highly esteemed old man, the leader of his generation - always dedicated to the study of the law, the religious service, and charity - was one of the great benefactors whose names are well known. His house was open to scholars, teachers and pupils; poor and rich. He educated his children to religious service and he contributed greatly to the dowries of the brides. Every year he sent lavish gifts to the Holy Land, encouraging his children to do the same."

Joseph Hameln had nine children. One of his sons, Samuel, was the Rabbi of Hildesheim. Samuel's daughter Malka married Judah Berlin, who later changed his name to JOST LIEBMANN. Liebmann was his father Elieser Liebmann's name. He started to work for his uncle, Hayim Hameln, Glückel's husband, who sent the young man to Danzig to buy for him pearls from the East. Later Judah became Hayim's partner. Eventually Hayim and Judah's partnership came to an end and there arose a dispute between them which Judah argued before the rabbis in Hildesheim, near Hanover, the place where he lived. Hayim lost the case and it cost him one third of his wealth. Glückel in her memoirs mentions the whole affair and laments her husband's misfortune. Later, however, Glückel and Hayim became reconciled with Jost Liebmann, who became a famous court jeweler and agent of the Great Elector *(Grosse Kurfürst)* of Berlin and the richest and most powerful Jew in that city. He often used his great influence at the Prussian court in favor of his coreligionists.

Joseph Hameln's daughter, Miriam Sara Jente, first married Salman Gans, patriarch of the distinguished Gans family, and son of the very rich Sussmann Gans of Minden, with whom she had six children. Jente and Salman were betrothed in childhood by their fathers during a drinking party. Glückel writes about this event:

> "My father-in-law [Jente's father Joseph Hameln] was drinking with him [Sussmann Gans] and while drinking, they agreed upon the marriage. When Sussmann became sober the next day, he regretted this arrangement. But my father-in-law was such a distinguished man that what had been agreed upon [with him] could not be undone. So the deal prevailed."

As both the bridegroom and the bride were very young, Sussmann sent his son Salman to Poland to acquire talmudic knowledge at the famous houses of learning *(yeshivot)* there. After an absence of several years, he returned to Germany to find his father dead, his fortune gone and his mother remarried to a relative, Phoebus Gans. Salman felt that his part of the fortune had been appropriated by his stepfather, and he entered into a litigation that was conducted with great passion by both parties during several years. Glückel writes:

> "The lawsuits cost my father-in-law [Joseph Hameln, who had been involved in this litigation] and Phoebus more than two thousand Reichsthaler each, because

> they quarreled for many years. [...] This lasted so long that neither of them had any money left, but my father-in-law could stand it longer. Finally, other people intervened by calling rabbis and assistants from Frankfurt a.M. to settle this matter. They came, and it took them a long time, but they did not decide anything, they just took a lot of money away."

Thereafter, Joseph Hameln sent for his daughter and son-in-law, who were living in Minden, and settled them in Hanover. Salman was very pleased about this arrangement, and after a short time, he acquired a great fortune, but this happiness did not last long. Salman died in his prime on April 6, 1654. Gronemann says that perhaps his sorrow led to his premature death.

ELIESER LEFFMANN BEHRENS COHEN
COURT JEW AND PHILANTROPIST

Jente's second marriage was to Elieser Leffmann Behrens Cohen (1634-1714), with whom she had three children. At the time of his marriage to Jente, Leffmann was living in modest conditions. Later he achieved a brilliant and influential position and acquired a large fortune. Gronemann states that all the distinguished families which formed the heart of Hanover's Jewish community were overshadowed by the house of Elieser Leffmann Behrens, also called Lippmann Cohen. Leffmann was well known and highly esteemed by the Jews of Hanover and far beyond.

He had the trust of his sovereign, who appointed him *Hoffaktor*, as well as of foreign dignitaries. Leffmann, together with the famous Court Jew Samson Wertheimer, succeeded in Vienna to obtain from Emperor Leopold the title Elector *(Kurfürst)* for the Hanover Duke Ernst August. Leffmann was a great benefactor of Jewish causes, using his high court position in the service of his fellow Jews whenever they got into trouble or needed his help. He encouraged the study of Torah, installed a *Beth Hamidrash* (House of Study) in his home, subsidized Jewish scholars and their studies, and sponsored the publishing of their works. He also helped and defended "foreign" Jews who did not have the right of residence and were not "privileged" Jews in Hanover.

In 1673 Leffmann Behrens petitioned the Duke Johann Friedrich and obtained the protection of the old Jewish Cemetery of Hanover at Judenkirchhof, called Oberstrasse today. The cemetery had been established in the middle of the 16th century, when the Jews acquired a sandy hill far from the city gates. As the draymen used to carry off sand from the hill, the mayor - at the request of the Jewish community - had a stone tablet attached to the cemetery gate. On the tablet is a warning not to *fiolieren* (violate) or *turbieren* (disturb) the Jewish graveyard. This tablet has been preserved at the same place until today and is still readable.

This very old cemetery is the place where my maternal great-great-grandparents Ephraim and Rebecca Meyer are buried. Their tombstones are preserved. The cemetery is closed to the public nowadays and can be visited with a special permit only. Seldi and I visited this place in 1996.

In 1687 Leffmann Behrens obtained permission from Duke Ernst August to engage a *Landrabbiner* (provincial rabbi), creating the Hanover *Landrabbinat*, which lasted over 250 years, until 1938. In 1703 Leffmann and his son Herz built a new synagogue in Hanover to replace the old one, which had been destroyed in 1613, because "the Jews should look only to churches for their enlightenment."

DAVID OPPENHEIM - RABBI AND BIBLIOPHILE
HE CREATED THE WORLD'S LARGEST JEWISH LIBRARY

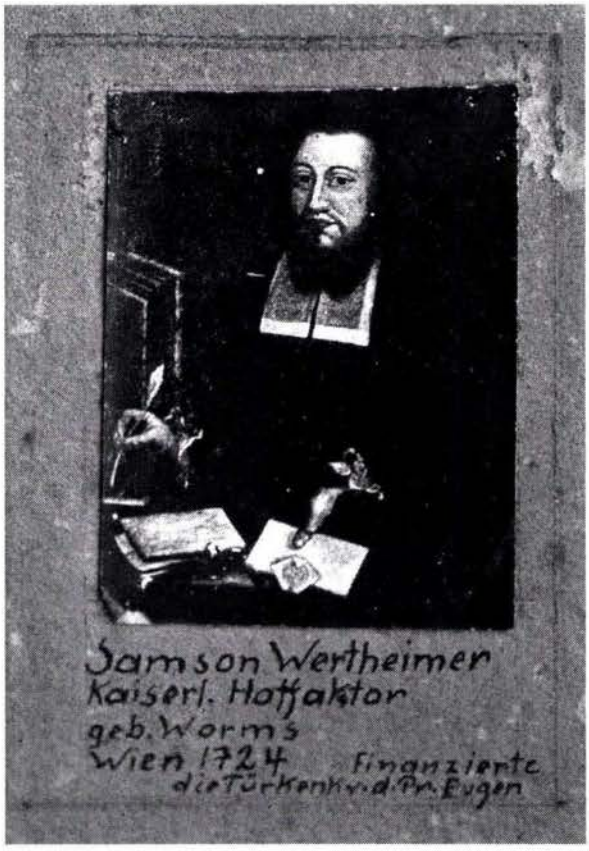
Leffmann Behrens and Jente had one daughter, Gnendel, who became the first wife of David Oppenheim (1664-1736). David was the nephew of the philanthropist and Court Jew Samuel Oppenheim, or Oppenheimer, of Vienna (1630-1703), who was the first Jew to settle in Vienna after the expulsion of 1670. David Oppenheim was the provincial rabbi for Moravia and Bohemia. David is buried at the Old Jewish Cemetery in Prague. His tombstone is preserved there. David spent enormous sums to acquire and build the largest, world-renowned library of Jewish books and manuscripts, the core of which derived from a gift from Prince Eugen of Savoy to David's uncle Samuel Oppenheimer, who financed Eugen's Turkish wars. Samuel had asked Prince Eugen to bring valuable Jewish books from the Orient. Eugen presented these books to Samuel who gave them to his nephew David.

However, due to the censorship in Prague, David had to keep this collection at his father-in-law Leffmann Behrens' house in Hanover, and later it was moved to Hamburg. But the large Jewish communities in Germany during the first half of the 19th century apparently were not able or willing to hold fast to this unique treasure - and thus, in 1829, this incomparably valuable collection was sold for very little money to the Bodleian Library at Oxford University. It consisted of 780 manuscripts and 5,421 books, which formed the basis for the Bodleian Library's Hebrew section.

Hanover's Jewish community once had the honor of possessing the two largest Jewish libraries in the world, one after the other. The second largest of the two, known as Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana, belonged to the scholar Leeser Rosenthal (1794-1868). Leeser was a Talmudist and a bibliophile of Polish origin who taught at Paderborn and later moved to Hanover. His famous library of Hebrew books, consisting of over 52,000 volumes and hundreds of manuscripts, was donated by his son, Baron George von Rosenthal, to the university of Amsterdam in 1880.

Gnendel, who died before her father Leffmann Behrens, on June 13, 1712, is buried in Hanover. Leffmann, who died at the age of eighty, also outlived all his other children. The *Memorbuch* of the Hanover Jewish community and Leffmann Behrens' epitaph describe him:

> "A devoted and gentle leader of his time; he gave generously to the poor; helped the scholars; supported orphans at marriage with appropriate dowries; dedicated himself to study in the evening and in the morning - before and after prayers. He sent money everywhere for the maintenance of houses of learning and support of orphans and poor children, especially for the associations and poor of the Holy Land; and he himself established houses of learning."



SAMSON WERTHEIMER
RABBI - COURT JEW - FINANCIER - PHILANTHROPIST

Leffmann Behrens and Jente's oldest son, Herz Leffmann Behrens, was appointed a court and chamber agent, just as his father. He married Serchen, the daughter of the Viennese financier *Oberhoffaktor* (court factor) SAMSON WERTHEIMER (born 1658 in Worms, died 1724 in Vienna). Wertheimer had come to Vienna in 1684 to join the bank of his uncle, the court factor and philanthropist SAMUEL OPPENHEIMER (1630-1703) and soon became court banker and one of the chief purveyors to the Imperial forces under Emperors Leopold I and Joseph I. Together with his son Wolf, Samson Wertheimer lent large sums to the emperor. Samuel Oppenheimer and Samson Wertheimer, both Court Jews and financial agents, supplied the money for Prince Eugen of Savoy's campaigns against the Turks. They worked indefatigably for the protection of threatened Jewish interests. Later Samson Wertheimer was appointed Chief Rabbi of Hungary and had judicial authority. He was acclaimed by all of Jewry, a man representing brilliantly both talmudic erudition and commercial talents. He used his connections to assist Jewish communities and obtained an order from the Emperor Leopold prohibiting the publication of Eisenmenger's anti-Jewish work *Entdecktes Judentum*. ("Judaism Revealed"). He established a fund to assist paupers in the Holy Land, which existed until 1914.

Herz Leffmannn Behrens died on February 23, 1709 and his wife Serchen Wertheimer, Samson's daughter, on March 9, 1739. Through them, we are related to *Oberhoffaktor* Samson Wertheimer, whose picture appears at the top of the illustrated genealogical chart organized by my mother Leonie Oliven née Meyer. The great financial agents and distinguished Jewish families of the 17th and 18th centuries kept close together and frequently became in-laws through marriage.



THE MEMOIRS OF GLÜCKEL OF HAMELN - (1646-1724)

Joseph Hameln's son Hayim Hameln married Glikl bat Judah Leib (Glikl daughter of Judah Leib), whose memoirs were published last century under the name of Glückel of Hameln. By this marriage Glückel became the sister-in-law of Leffmann Behrens, who in his second marriage married Jente, Joseph Hameln's daughter. Glückel owes her name to the fact that her husband came from the city of Hameln. She was born in Hamburg in 1646 and died in Metz in 1724. In 1649 the German Jews of Hamburg were expelled from the city and had to go to Altona, fifteen minutes from Hamburg. The Portuguese Jews *(Sephardim)* who had contractual rights of residence in Hamburg were not affected by the expulsion. Altona belonged to the King of Denmark at that time and the Jews residing there had letters of protection.

After great effort, the Jews of Altona succeeded in obtaining passports which were valid for four weeks, upon payment of one dukaten. The passports authorized them to enter Hamburg during the day to do business there. In 1657 King Karl X, Gustav of Sweden, after the victory against Poland, waged war against Denmark, which had made an alliance with his enemies and occupied Altona. The Jews of Altona had to flee immediately and take refuge with Portuguese Jews and other citizens of Hamburg. The Hamburg authorities then revised their policy and Glückel's father became the first German Jew to obtain permission to reside in Hamburg again.

At the age of twelve, Glückel was betrothed to Hayim Hameln by their fathers. She was married when barely fourteen. The couple obtained *Köst* (free lodging and board) for two years with Glückel's father-in-law in Hameln. They stayed there for only a year, because Hameln was a very small town with a Jewish community consisting of two families only and little business to transact. The couple then moved to Hamburg to the house of Glückel's parents. She became pregnant for the first time at a very young age - at the same time her mother became pregnant again. Glückel's daughter was born one week earlier than her mother's

daughter. In her memoirs Glückel vividly describes how she and her mother lay in the same room and breast-fed their babies at the same time.

Hayim became a successful merchant in Hamburg, dealing in gold, silver, jewels, pearls, precious stones, etc. Glückel always helped her husband in business. Glückel and Hayim had thirteen children. Their son Moses became the rabbi of Baiersdorf. When Glückel's husband died in 1689, after nearly thirty years of marriage, he left his 43-year-old widow with eight young children. She carried on his extensive business - buying and selling precious stones, gold and cloth. She dealt with promissory notes, obtaining high profits but sometimes also suffered losses. She traveled to Berlin, Leipzig and Amsterdam, while at the same time raising the children who were still at home. In spite of these intense activities, Glückel was still able to find the necessary time to write her memoirs.

Glückel begins her memoirs as follows:

> "In the year 5451 (1690/91) I begin writing greatly distressed and with a heavy heart - may God send us joy and send our Redeemer soon. [...] My dear children, I started to write this book after the death of your pious father, in order to calm myelf a little bit, when melancholic thoughts and heavy sorrow came upon me."

One interesting section of Glückel's memoirs describes Sabbatai Tzevi's messianic movement, which had a very strong repercussion among the Jews of Hamburg - especially the *Sephardim* - around 1665 to 1667. She writes about this period:

> "Our happiness when letters [with news about Sabbatai Tzevi] arrived cannot be described. Most of the letters were received by the Portuguese. They always took them to the synagogue and read them there in public. Also Germans [German Jews], old and young, went to the Portuguese synagogue. The young Portuguese lads put on their best clothes [...] and read the letters aloud with great joy. Some people sold their houses, land and everything they owned, because they hoped to be redeemed at any moment. My blessed father-in-law, who lived in Hameln, left his home, land and everything in his house, and moved to Hildesheim.
>
> "From there he sent to us in Hamburg two big barrels filled with linen and various foodstuffs, such as peas, beans, dried meat, dried plums, and other things - anything that could be preserved. The old man thought it would be possible to travel immediately to the Holy Land. These barrels were stored in my house for over a year. Finally they [my in-laws] became afraid that the meat and other things would spoil. Then they wrote us, directing us to open the barrels and take out the foodstuffs, so that the linen would not get ruined. The barrels stood there for about three years, and my father-in-law always thought he would need them for his travel. But the Almighty had not yet decided [to redeem us]."

Ten years after her husband's death, Glückel, at the insistence of her son-in-law, decided to marry again. Her second husband was the esteemed banker Cerf (Hirsch) Levy, who lived in Metz. Not long after their marriage, Cerf lost his entire fortune, as well as Glückel's. He died a few years later, leaving Glückel destitute. She later moved in with her daughter Esther and son-in law, who also lived in Metz. Glückel died there in 1724.

Glückel's memoirs are divided into seven books. The first five were written in the 1690s in Hamburg and the last two between 1715 and 1719 in Metz. These memoirs, which she left for her children, provide excellent insights into the Jewish communities of Hamburg, Altona, and many other ones in Germany. They form a unique document - not only of Glückel's own life - but also of the history, religion, culture, social conditions, and life in general of the German Jews in Glückel's time.

In one passage of her memoirs Glückel writes:

> "We have our holy Torah in which we may find and learn all that we need for our journey through this world to the world to come."

Glückel wrote her autobiography in Hebrew characters in Judeo-German *(Judendeutsch)*, which is somewhat different from Yiddish, as far as the construction of the sentences, etc. is concerned. Glückel's text is interspersed with Hebrew words and sentences. These memoirs were eventually translated into German under the name *Denkwürdigkeiten der Glückel von Hameln* and were published by Jüdischer Verlag, Berlin, in 1923; and a new edition came out in 1980. They were also translated into English and published by Schocken, New York, in 1977. These remarkable memoirs make a fascinating and highly recommended reading.

HELENE MEYER'S FAMILY

SARA COHEN, Helene Meyer's maternal grandmother, was born in Hanover in 1794 and died in Hamburg on December 10, 1863. Her husband, JACOBY LÖWENHEIM, a merchant, was born in 1790 in Sandersleben and died in Hamburg on May 31, 1858. Jacoby's parents were David Levin, called Löwenheim, and Taubchen née Hirsch. In my possession is the marriage contract between "Jacoby Löwenheim and the Virgin Sara Abraham Cohen, daughter of the Chamber Agent Abraham Cohen." The contract is dated Hanover, May 27, 1825, and sealed with three red seals. The Jewish wedding took place in Burgdorf/Celle two days after the date of the contract.

The bride brought the bridegroom a cash dowry of 15,000 Reichsthaler in Louis d'ors (one Louis d'or is equal to five Reichsthaler). The parties agreed to deduct 400 Reichsthaler from that amount as a tithe for the poor. The marriage contract established detailed restitution clauses in the event of a spouse's death in the first year, in the second year and in the third year after the marriage, mentioning how much could be kept of the dowry and the bridegroom's capital, respectively, and how much was to be returned by the family of the deceased spouse in each case.

Since Sara's parents were deceased at the time of her wedding, she had already received her inheritance of 10,700 Reichsthaler in pistols (one pistol was equal to five Reichsthaler). However, she did not hand this amount over to her bridegroom, but expressly reserved it for herself in the marriage contract.

Sara and Jacoby's daughter, AMALIE LÖWENHEIM, my grandmother Helene Meyer's mother, was born on July 11, 1829 in Hamburg and died there on July 13, 1892. She married my maternal great-grandfather SAMSON HEYMANN LEVY, a prosperous merchant in Hamburg. He was born on February 5, 1816 in Hamburg and died there on January 10, 1877. Samson's father was HEYMANN PHILIP LEVY, a glassware merchant, born about 1786, died on March 26, 1845. My mother writes about him in her diary:

> "While [Ephraim Meyer] in his little bank ledgers of 1804 was already writing in correct German, the glassware merchant Heymann [Philip] Levy, Hamburg, the father of Mama's [Helene's] father, in 1803 wrote his business ledgers in Hebrew [letters]."

Samson Heymann Levy's mother was FANNY LEVY NÉE LIEFMANN, wife of HEYMANN PHILIP LEVY. They are my maternal great-great-grandparents. Fanny was born in 1789 in Moisling near Lübeck and died on May 3, 1852 in Hamburg. Since Jews were not permitted to live in Lübeck at that time, Fanny and Heyman Philip Levy settled in nearby Moisling, where the Jewish cemetery was located. Fanny Levy née Liefmann's oil painting which I recently had restored, hangs in our dining room.

Fanny Levy née Liefmann's parents were HEYMANN LIEFMANN and EMMA née POPERT. Heymann Liefmann, a merchant, was born in Moisling near Lübeck about 1755 and died on July 22, 1831. He is buried at the cemetery of the Jewish community of Hamburg, in Altona. The parents of Fanny's husband, Heymann Philip Levy, were PHILIP HEYMANN LEVY and HITZEL née POPERT. Philip Heymann Levy, was born in Hamburg about 1757 and died on May 12, 1827. Hitzel was born about 1754 and died in Hamburg on March 24, 1833.

Both Philip Heymann Levy and his wife Hitzel are buried - as all the other relatives who died in Hamburg - at the Jewish cemetery of the Hamburg community, at Ottensen. Emma Popert and Hitzel Popert were sisters. Their parents were Samson and Zippora Popert. Heymann Philip Levy and his wife Fanny née Liefmann were cousins.

Samson Heymann Levy, my grandmother Helene's father, was president of the Jewish community in Hamburg. In his will, dated May 24, 1876, he donated 6,000 marks to the Jewish community of Hamburg, creating a foundation in his wife's name for poor brides, just as he had done for an identical amount in his own name in 1870.. He also donated 2,400 marks to the Jewish orphanage; 1,200 marks to the Talmud-Torah school; 900 marks to the Paulinen Foundation; and 600 marks each to the girls' school, the Jewish tenant association, the clothing association for pupils of the Talmud-Torah school, the Jewish institution for the needy, the Jewish association for the aid of poor old men, and the women's association for the care of the poor. He further donated 750 marks each to the municipal institution for the poor, the Jewish institution for the poor or poor families, and the same amount to be used for charity purposes, by his wife or the executors of his will. He also left his Jewish cook, Clara Jacobsen, 1,800 marks "for many years of faithful service."

Samson stipulated in his will that his son Theodor be given 150,000 marks to be invested in the Hamburg firm B.M. Berendt and Company, of which Samson was a partner, in the event that Theodor should enter the firm as a partner.

Samson's daughter, my grandmother Helene, received a dowry of 150,000 marks and an appropriate trousseau when she married my grandfather Emil L. Meyer in Hamburg in 1883, according to the marriage contract which is in my possession.

Helene had two brothers; the elder one was Theodor Levy and the younger one, Julius Levy. According to his relative Margreth Dreifuss, Theodor was a gambler and committed suicide in July 1911, because he could not pay his gambling debts any more. Julius died on December 12, 1912 in Hamburg. Helene also had two sisters, Fanny and Mathilde. There was another sister, Sara. She died at the dinner table when she swallowed a fishbone that nobody could remove.

FANNY BERNHARD - MY GREAT-AUNT - SHE HAD AN AFFAIR, WHEREUPON HER HUSBAND COMMITTED SUICIDE

Fanny Levy, my grandmother Helene Meyer's sister, married Martin Bernhard. They had twins, Olga and Oscar. Margreth Dreifuss, the granddaughter of Helene's other sister, Mathilde, mentions in a letter to me, "She [Fanny] had an affair with another man. When her husband, Mr. Bernhard, found her in bed with him, he was so devastated that he committed suicide." Fanny's second husband, Theo, assisted her in raising the twins from her previous marriage. Fanny died in her house in Hamburg about 1942, in the middle of the war, shortly before her sister Mathilde.

The three sisters, Fanny, Mathilde and Helene, inherited a house from their parents Samson and Amalie Levy, at Rothenbaumchaussee 95, one of the most fashionable boulevards in Hamburg. This had been the residence of Fanny Bernhardt. In 1954 the house was sold by the heirs, Fanny and Helene's children and Mathilde's grandchildren, for a very low price, DM 21,000. The house was in run-down condition, but the property measured 769 square meters. When we visited it several years ago, the renovated house was occupied by offices and the Zaire Consulate.

At the time the authorized lawyers negotiated the sale of this house, another heir showed up - a half sister of Fanny's daughter Olga that nobody had known about previously. Her name was Felicia Herrlein, adopted Claasen, née Levy. She must have been an illegitimate child of Fanny Bernhard, either born before, during or after the time she had the affair "with another man." It also cannot be known for sure whether the child's father was the same lover, because of whom Mr. Bernhard committed suicide, or may be another one. An illegitimate child, born last century - this was indeed something quite rare in the circles of "high society."

Fanny's daughter Olga, called Olly, though several years older, was a good friend and confidant of her cousin, my mother Leonie. When she was a young woman, Olga ran away from home and her hometown of Hamburg to Bad Ems with her great love, a poor Jewish violinist, Heinrich Bandler, who later on became quite rich and famous. After some time, they separated and Olga came home again. This was a great scandal at the time. Everybody in the family, except my mother, a young girl then, condemned Olga, including my grandmother Helene.

In 1903 Olga married Hermann Guttmann, who was a crook, according to Margreth Dreifuss' information. My mother also mentioned in her diary at a much later date that he committed frauds in Belgium and fled to Argentina. In Buenos Aires, Guttmann furnished a beautiful house for the family and did not pay for anything. He spent money freely and made debts. He and Olga had three children, Michael (Miguel Martin), born in Argentina; Liesel (Elisabeth); and Walter. Later on the family returned to Hamburg. Hermann Guttmann then abandoned Olga and the children, and the couple divorced.

As Margreth Dreifuss mentioned, Michael Guttmann, the oldest son, was a difficult person: "nobody could handle him." He got in trouble with the German police and therefore returned to his native Argentina, where he became a police officer at a small city, Pilcaniyen, in the Rio Negro province, in the south of Argentina. Liesel Guttmann, once a beauty queen in Hamburg, married a physician, Dr. Walter Neubauer, at the age of 21. They had a daughter named Susi. When the Nazis came to power, the family emigrated to Shanghai. Liesel got

involved with another man. The couple then divorced and Liesel married again, a well-to-do businessman with whom she and her daughter Susi then left for Argentina. Susi died young of meningitis. Liesel's first husband, Dr. Neubauer, went to the U.S.A. and remarried. He had a good medical practice there. Walter Guttmann, Olga's youngest son, first emigrated to Holland and later to California. His wife was of Asian descent. When arriving in California, in the 1950s, he first worked as a driver for my aunt Edith Straus.

Olga then married again, this time Mr. Peppi Bandler, who was in the banking business. He was the brother of the violinist Heinrich Bandler, whom she had run away with when she was young. Peppi and Olga had a son Kurt, who was a gardener. When Hitler came to power, Olga and Kurt went to Argentina, where her son from her first marriage, Michael Guttmann, lived. Kurt got good jobs, enabling him to support his mother and himself.

Olga's brother Oscar, called Ossy, never married. My mother did not write very favorably about him in her diary. When Hitler came to power, Oscar emigrated to the Netherlands. From there he was later deported by the Nazis to a concentration camp, where he was murdered.

PROFESSOR SIEGFRIED KORACH - (1855-1943)
MY GREAT-AUNT MATHILDE'S HUSBAND - HE WAS DEPORTED TO THERESIENSTADT AT THE AGE OF EIGHTY-EIGHT

Helene Meyer's second sister Mathilde, called Tilly, married Professor Dr. Siegfried Korach. He was born on June 30, 1855. He became a professor in Hamburg around 1912. For decades Dr. Korach was the chief physician of internal medicine at the Jewish Hospital of Hamburg. He also belonged to the board of directors of the Jewish home for the aged, and of the nursing home and the orphanage of the Hamburg Jewish community. After retiring, he went on working voluntarily for these institutions. For many years he also was the President of the Board of Health of the city of Hamburg.

On June 23, 1943, Dr. Korach was deported to Theresienstadt when he was almost eighty-eight years old. He died there a few days later, on July 1, 1943. Mathilde died around 1942 in her home in Hamburg at the age of about eighty.

When I was a young boy, I traveled to Hamburg with my mother, to visit this great-uncle, his wife and other relatives. My mother wanted to show me the city and took me to beautiful City Hall. There I saw for the first time an elevator called a 'paternoster'. It is a special type of non-stop elevator without doors that moves very slowly, so that on each floor people can get in and out easily. Used in public buildings only, it consists of two cabins. One elevator runs alongside the other, one going up and the other going down. When one elevator reaches the top floor, it shifts to the left and then goes down again. The elevator is called a 'paternoster' because faithful Catholics use a rosary when saying this prayer, never stopping the turning of the beads, just as the Muslims do with their beads when praying to Allah.

I was fascinated by this type of elevator, which I never had seen before. I could not resist my curiosity and jumped in, all by myself. When I was nearing the top floor, I was the only passenger. I looked up and saw the ceiling of the building just a short distance above me, while the elevator continued to move up slowly. I thought my last hour had arrived and my skull would be crushed by the cement ceiling within the next few seconds. I was quite relieved indeed when at the last moment on the top floor the elevator shifted to the left and started going back down.

Though about seventy years have passed since then, I never will forget this frightening event. Nowadays people who have undergone such a dreadful experience most probably will need years of psychotherapy to overcome it, but fortunately I was able to cope very well without any such treatment.

Siegfried and Tilly's daughter, Alice, married Dr. Albert Dreifuss, a surgeon and orthopedist in Hamburg. Dr. Albert, bearer of the Iron Cross, first class, which was bestowed on him two weeks after the beginning of World War I, in August 1914, died or was killed at the age of about 66, in the Nazi concentration camp Theresienstadt, a few days after he arrived there in 1943. He had been previously jailed for what the Nazis called *Rassenschande* ("race defilement"), a crime, according to the Nazi Nuremberg race laws, against the preservation of the so-called "pure Aryan race." He had an affair with his housekeeper, after his wife Alice died young at the age of forty, in January 1927. Albert and Alice had three children, Margreth, Richard and Curt.

Margreth Dreifuss is single and lives in New York. Depite her age, she is very active. She works as a manager in an export firm. She also goes swimming in the ocean on weekends, and plays tennis daily, weather permitting. She has a very good memory and supplied me with valuable information on the Korach and Bernhard families.. When Seldi and I are in New York, we always get together with her and her brother Curt and his wife Elaine.

Richard Dreifuss was a pediatrician. He practiced in England. He married an English nurse, Sheila. After World War II, Richard, Sheila and their son Anthony left for New York. Anthony, a teacher, died suddenly in 1998, at the age of 55. Richard had a pediatric practice in New York. He divorced Sheila and married Lydia, who comes from Puerto Rico. Lydia, previously married to a Jewish man as well, had a daughter from her first marriage, Jacqueline, whom Richard legally adopted.

Jacqueline married a Sephardic Jew, Adam Gershuni, whom she knew for eight years before getting married. In 1993, after two years of marriage, the couple divorced. Jacqueline is again married now to Barry Assadi. They live in Redondo Beach, California. Their son Asher Reza was born on December 27, 2000. Jacqueline has acquired a degree in occupational therapy at the university in Auckland, New Zealand. Richard and Lydia's son, René, who lived in Japan for some time, works now for a financial firm in New York. Richard died in New York in late 1988. Lydia is a specialized nurse. She worked at the oncology unit of the Montefiore Hospital in New York. She retired some time ago. In 1999, she moved to Orlando, Florida, where her mother lives.

Richard owned the same family oil portrait, somewhat larger in size, of our common maternal great-great-grandmother Fanny Liefmann (1789-1852), married to Heymann Philip Levy, a duplicate of which hangs in our dining room. I recently had it restored. It is also shown in my mother's illustrated genealogical tree. The picture was painted in 1840 by the painter Popert who was Fanny's relative. In a letter Richard wrote me in 1981, he mentions this picture:

> "The prize possession is the oil portrait of our great-great-grandmother Levy, [née Fanny Liefmann], which is of such quality that a Hamburg museum was bidding for it when the Nazis auctioned our great-aunt Fanny Bernhard's household, even though the museum knew that it was the portrait of a Jewish lady. Only through the efforts of our faithful old Helene Jens (my grandparents' [Siegfried and Mathilde Korach's non-Jewish] housekeeper for over fifty years until their end), who bid against the museum, was this picture retained in the family and reached me after the war.
>
> "We also had at home in Hamburg two splendid large oil portraits of our great-grandparents Levy (her son and her daughter-in-law) [Samson Heymann Levy and Amalie, née Löwenheim, the parents of my grandmother Helene Levy, who are also shown in my mother's illustrated genealogical tree], but they were lost. [...] That great-great-grandmother Levy [née Fanny Liefmann] was supposed to have been the best business brain in the family."

Curt Dreifuss, Albert and Alice's youngest son, lives in New York. He has a firm that sells fishing equipment. He is married to Elaine. Their son Rodney, born March 20, 1953, has a master's degree in business and hospital administration. He married Carol in 1993 and has a daughter, Elizabeth Margreth, born in 1996, as well as a son Peter Benjamin, born in 1998. They live in Saint Louis, Missouri.



Fanny Levy née Liefmann, my maternal great-great-grandmother

5th GENERATION

EMIL AND HELENE MEYER'S CHILDREN

Before my mother Leonie was born in 1887, my grandparents had twin boys, who both died soon after birth. There was yet another boy, born in 1890, who also died soon after birth. Emil and Helene had two daughters: my mother, LEONIE, who was born on May 2, 1887, and my aunt EDITH, born on September 18, 1888, both in Hanover.

THE STRAUS FAMILY

Edith, called Tiede, married the banker Friedrich A. Straus from Karlsruhe, Baden. Fritz, as he was called, was born on September 29, 1889 in Karlsruhe and died in Berkeley, California, in 1950 at the age of only sixty. He was one year younger than Edith. They knew each other for several years, when both still went to school, before getting married at the outbreak of Word War I.

My mother wrote a funny short story about her sister's wedding party, called "The Ducks." The party was scheduled for August 4, 1914. My grandmother had arranged a large banquet for 130 to 140 guests at the first-class Hotel Kasten in Hanover. However, the banquet had to be cancelled shortly before the party was to take place, because most of the guests, who came from other cities, cabled that due to the fact that war was imminent, they were unable to attend the wedding. Some of the food, such as the special order for ducks and lobsters, could not be cancelled with the hotel manageement any more. A small party consisting of sixteen people only, as well as the religious ceremony, took place at my grandparents' house. The cook, Minna, had to prepare the fifty ducks supplied by the hotel. Most of them, along with dozens of lobsters, had to be distributed to some officers and soldiers that had just been quartered at Emil's house or at nearby barracks. The morning after the wedding, the young husband, Fritz, had to catch the early morning train to Karlsruhe at 6:03 a.m. to enlist. A very short honeymoon indeed!

Fritz Straus was one of the partners of the traditional old family bank Straus & Company. The bank was established in 1870 by his grandfather Abraham Straus. Fritz Straus' son, Irwin Y. Straus, wrote a ten-page manuscript, "Straus & Company - the history of the Karlsruhe banking enterprise." In addition, Fritz Straus' son Werner (Vernon) Stroud, together with Werner's sister Eva B. Linker, wrote a one-page summary, "The history of the Straus Family and the Straus Bank." The following information about the Straus Bank is based on these manuscripts. Abraham Straus, his wife and six children came to the "metropolis" Karlsruhe in 1860 from a small nearby village, Diedelsheim. In Karlsruhe he first began a business with scrap metal. He was assisted in this enterprise by his wife Babette, who - as happened so often in Jewish families - possessed great business acumen. Later on he entered a partnership, which led to the founding of the banking firm Straus and Company, at the same place where he previously operated his scrap metal business. When Abraham died suddenly in 1875, his son Meier Abraham (1856-1934) replaced him and commenced his enormously successful career as a banker. Meier had been an apprentice at his father's bank starting in 1871 and was studying

in Berlin at the time of Abraham's death. He was called back to Karlsruhe and became the general manager of the bank, though not quite nineteen years old. At the age of twelve, Meier had run away from home to go to America. However, in Bremen, where he wanted to take the ship, he was found by searchers, who brought him back to his home town.

From the very beginning, he pushed business with foreign countries and their currencies. He also traveled extensively in these countries, particularly imperial Austria and the countries of the Balkan area, and in this way built a solid reputation as an international banker. A few years later, after one of the partners resigned, Meier Abraham and his associates took full charge of the fortunes of the bank.

Under Meier Abraham's management, the bank participated in various industrial enterprises and even took over a railroad company on behalf of the bank, later sold to the Baden Railway Company. Meier was very enterprising and had a brilliant mind and great inventiveness. Under his direction, the bank's current account business grew to large dimensions. During World War I he obtained the coveted title of *Kommerzienrat*, Councilor of Commerce, which was bestowed on him by the Grand Duke Friedrich of Baden, the same duke that had warmly supported Theodor Herzl and the Zionist movement at the turn of the century.

Meier gradually enlisted the participation of the younger generation, his two sons-in-law and his son Friedrich A. Straus, who entered the bank in 1914. Fritz learned the banking business through practical experience at important firms abroad - in Paris, London and New York. During World War I, Fritz did military service in the artillery at the Russian and French front lines. During the post-war years, the connections abroad cultivated by Fritz bore good fruit when it became vital to protect the bank against the ravages of inflation through the purchase of value-stable foreign currencies and credits. The bank played an important role channeling foreign credit into the South German economy.

While the Straus bank was protected against inflation and its disastrous consequences by its clever way of investing in foreign currency, mainly dollar bonds, the same did not happen - as we have seen previously - to the bank Ephraim Meyer & Sohn, belonging to the family of Fritz Straus' father-in-law, Emil L. Meyer. The Meyers always had - very patriotically - invested the bank's capital in German marks only. Straus & Co. conducted its affairs in a solid and realistic manner, following a conservative accounting policy, maintaining adequate balance sheet reserves, writing off any doubtful debit balances. On the other hand, John Spiegelberg, who was in charge of the direction of Ephraim Meyer & Sohn, after Emil had suffered a stroke in 1924, undertook sizable loan guarantees on behalf of the bank in an irresponsible and careless way. When the loans could not be repaid by the debtors, the bank faced payment difficulties. Straus & Company and other banks then came to its rescue, but finally Ephraim Meyer & Sohn had to be taken over by another bank, and my grandfather Emil L. Meyer and his wife Helene, my grandparents, lost their whole fortune.

In 1930, German banking suffered a heavy disaster linked to the American economic crisis. The Darmstädter Bank, one of the leading nationally established banks, collapsed financially. Other banks could be saved only through immediate intervention of the Reichsbank, the Central Bank, which granted crisis credits. In these difficult times Straus & Company remained one of the few banks that did not need any emergency credits whatsoever. During the period of the worst depression, Straus & Company was able to punctually meet every one of its

payment obligations abroad. In this way, valuable and profitable business connections remained intact. Later on Hitler rose to power, and eventually the Nazis succeeded in coercing business managers of non-Jewish enterprises to close their accounts at Jewish banks. Between 1933 and 1937, which was the last full year of existence of the bank, the current account business suffered a decline of 50-75%.

The bank was under the direction of the Straus family until 1938, the year Fritz Straus and part of the family emigrated to the United States. That same year, Fritz and his partner at the bank had finalized a contract with a small savings bank, the Badische Bank, which then took over the business and employees of Straus & Company. Later on, the name of the bank was changed to Baden-Württembergische Bank A.G., which is now a large bank. It is still located at the same place where Straus & Company was operating.

Fritz Straus was a philanthropist. He was known in Karlsruhe as "the father of the poor." He also was very active in Jewish affairs, coming from a very traditional orthodox Jewish banking family. He was a member of the Council of Jews in the province of Baden. Fritz and Edith always supported the needy. They were very kind and generous to my brother, my sister and me - both in Germany and later in the United States. They cared for us and presented us with gifts.

After her schooling, which included a stay at a Swiss boarding school, Edith engaged in social work at an institution for sick orphans in Hanover. She liked horseback riding and obtained her driver's license as early as 1908, one of the first or maybe the first woman in Hanover to do so. Her home in Karlsruhe was a meeting point for intellectuals, sculptors, painters and scientists. She had various hobbies, such as textile painting, leather work, wood carving, photography and bookbinding.

Her greatest interest, however, was gardening. She had a large garden in Karlsruhe. It was there that in the 1930s young people preparing to go to Palestine made their *hachsharah,* a mostly agricultural training for a future pioneer life in a kibbutz. Anita S. Linker, Edith's granddaughter, said about her grandmother: "Edith continued her passion of gardening in Berkeley, where she tended peach and apricot trees in the backyard and made jams from them as well. Her home was always a place of celebration. Her big Passover and Hanukkah dinners kept our family - uncles, aunts, cousins - united." Edith's children Werner and Ilse further mention, "When my mother Edith Meyer Straus first came to Karlsruhe after her marriage, she had a hard time getting used to the orthodoxy of her new parents-in-law. She had been accustomed to a much more liberal, relaxed attitude toward Judaism in her own youth."

Fritz and Edith and four of their five children emigrated to Berkeley, California in 1938. Fritz was again active in the banking field as an associate of the Bank of America in San Francisco. Seldi and I visited Aunt Edith twice in Berkeley in the 1950s after Uncle Fritz's death in 1950. She was a wonderful person - as kind and sweet as her mother Helene. Edith died on August 22, 1966 at the age of seventy-eight.

Fritz and Edith had five children in the span of five and a half years: Werner, Ilse, Gerda, Erwin and Eva, all born in Karlsruhe.

WERNER (Vernon) was born on August 7, 1917. Since he was a soldier in the British Army during World War II, he changed his name from Straus to Stroud. This was the general practice in the British army, in order to protect Jewish immigrant soldiers, in the event that they would fall into the hands of the Nazis, becoming prisoners of war. Werner married Flora, born in Scotland, of Eastern Jewish descent. They lived in Palo Alto, California, where Werner worked as an engineer. They had four children: David, Dennis, Ruth and Michael. Werner's wife, Flora, born in 1916, died at her home in November 1999, at the age of eighty-three.

ILSE was born on October 25, 1918. She married Philip (Phil) Feiger, a dentist, born in 1918. They lived in Berkeley, California. Their three children are Allan, born in 1944, Harold, born in 1948 and Bettina, born in 1952. Ilse died of an asthma attack in Berkeley on June 27, 1999. Phil died on February 28, 2001..

ERWIN (Irwin), born on February 2, 1920, served in the U.S. army during World War II and after the war served in the U.S. occupation army in Germany for a time. He lived in New York, where he owned an import-export business. His first marriage was to Lotte Gerson, who worked together with him at his business. They had two children - Howard, who lives in California, and Peggy, who married an Italian and lives in Italy. After Irwin divorced Lotte, he married Maxene. Irwin who had business in Brazil, came to visit us once in Porto Alegre. He died in New York in 1980.

GERDA, born on January 31,1921, married Haim Barki, an Israeli. Haim died young and Gerda married another Israeli, David Mathan, from whom she is divorced. Gerda has three children, a son Dan from her first marriage, and two daughters from her second one, Dalia and Margalit. Margalit married in 1991 and has two sons. Dalia also married recently. Gerda is a photographer in Berkeley, Ca. She published a photographic book. She is a very enterprising person, who likes to travel abroad. We once met her incidentally on a crowded street in London.

EVA was born on December 22, 1922. She is married to Henry Linker, a retired optometrist, born in 1923. They live in El Cerrito, California and have three sons and three daughters: Anita, born on October 16, 1950; Fred, born on March 25, 1952; Sharon, born on April 21, 1953; Debby, born on December 25, 1954; Larry, born on September 20, 1956; and Joel, born on September 27, 1962. Eva and Anita undertook the editing of the first version of my manuscript, "My Family History." Anita received her B.A. from the University of California, majoring in English. She is now training people on various computer software applications. Fred and his wife recently adopted a little Chinese girl, Amy.



LEONIE OLIVEN NÉE MEYER - (1887-1948) - My Mother

My mother Leonie, sometimes also called Loni, was born in Hanover on May 2, 1887. She died at the age of sixty in New York, on February 16, 1948. She was a very intelligent, energetic and outspoken person. She did not hold back her judgment and opinions about other people who were not to her liking, and told them frankly what she thought of them. She had the same impetuous temperament as her father Emil, shouting loudly when she was angry. Despite her temperament, my mother was very kind-hearted. She liked to play tennis and ride horseback. As a young girl, after finishing school, she did social work with small children, in a daycare nursery. Leonie had many interests and hobbies, such as painting, music, writing, history, art history, literature, and later on family genealogy, etc. As a young girl she also dedicated herself to her mother's very valuable autograph collection.

She started to write a diary in 1901, when she was fourteen years old. She filled seven volumes over a period of twenty-seven years. These volumes give an interesting insight into her life, from an early age until the late 1920s, when she was a married woman with three children. They illustrate her personality much better than anything else. The following quotations are a few samples from Leonie's earliest diaries:

1901 (at the age of 14):

> "They say I was very pretty as a child, but this has decreased, as time has gone by."
> "I could write perfectly well at the age of five and make calculations extraordinarily well."
> "For lunch I got a napkin which consisted of nothing but holes."
> "Olly [her cousin]is beautiful, except for her slanted nose and a few freckles."
> "When she keeps her mouth shut, she looks intelligent."
> "Mama and Papa went to the horse races [...] but they only lost."

"The train stopped for twenty minutes. [...] I believe that the conductor has not had his breakfast yet."

"In the evening there was a social gathering. The music started with a song - more wrong notes than correct ones. Two opera singers shouted their songs, nobody understood them. A theater play, too long, spoken miserably. One could understand the prompter better than the actor. [...] At the end the curtain went down too early, so that the end was missing."

"Then there was dancing. The men - all peasants. The gentlemen were more fit for a pigsty than for a dancing party."

"She [one of the guests] was very ugly, danced miserably; when she danced a waltz, she hopped as if it were a polka. Everybody asked her ironically for a dance - one only - to take leave then right away. On her giant flat feet she wore size forty-two peasant shoes."

"Mr. Netzer is a bachelor, the biggest thing he got is his bald head. Very bad manners."

"A fat pharmacist, big merchant, who has everything and thinks he is very cultured, just because he knows four words of French."

"The Rempens, ordinary peasants, he a butcher, she a cook. Their daughter, a terribly cross-eyed prima donna."

"Dr. Kaufman, my governess' friend, an American engineer, a fool, moon-faced, but supposed to be clever. He is the last in the list of dignified hotel guests analyzed by me."

"In Hildesheim the 1000-year-old rose-bush which we visited keeps its age forever."

"Frising danced with me, breaking all my rips."

"In Marienbad, [a world-renowned spa, mainly for weight-reducing, known as Marianske Lazne today, to which people flocked from many countries, including many *hassidic* Rebbes in their typical garb], the geisha sang English only and wore an indecent low-necked dress. A Russian lady who was sitting in front of us wore about one and a half million worth of jewelry."

"In the afternoon, people usually go to the fountain from 6 to 7 o'clock, to be admired and to envy other people that are still more elegant than oneself. All the nationalities are represented here, chic Parisians, American ladies with buck teeth, loaded with a lot of jewels, English ladies, extremely slim. I am at a loss in understanding the reason for their staying here. Berlin is represented with its haute volée, [...] one being fatter than the other. Poles can be seen with long cloaks and black beards."

"In the train on my way back I met young Mr. Dahlheim. He is very dumb, had to repeat classes in school several times. 'Do you play tennis?' I replied, 'Yes, but not

very well.' He, 'Usually those who do not play tennis well are good at school.' I, after a while, 'You play tennis very well, don't you?' 'Why?' 'I just thought so'."

1902 (at the age of 15)

[My dancing partner] Elias not only danced horribly, but also smelled of bad hair oil. He would either run into the column [of the dance hall] or run into Miss Ötling [the dancing teacher]."

"Carl sat very close to me in a corner. I gave his chair such a strong push that he and the chair glided over the polished parquet and landed in the middle of the room."

"All the girls in my school class belong to the lower-middle class. When I simply tell them about our life at home, they believe I am exaggerating and boasting. They just cannot imagine such a way of life as ours."

"Undoubtedly, I am the most gifted one and have the greatest universal culture, which is very useful for my life, but I never study for school. That's why I am never the best [in my class]."

From April 1904 to January 1905, at the age of seventeen, my mother was sent to a Jewish boarding-school for girls in Wiesbaden. Among the girls, many were *höhere Töchter*, as the daughters of the upper-class were called at that time. The girls came from many different countries. The time she spent at the boarding-school was quite an experience for my mother. Her dormitory was located on the first floor. She mentions in her diary, "This was our dear first floor where such a nice, funny and friendly atmosphere prevailed and seldom were there quarrels or gossip. On the second floor there was the dormitory for children from parents not belonging to the upper-class *(Kinder einfacherer Eltern)*, but among them there were also very nice ones who in part were greatly attached to me." (These class differences were typical at that time).

Leonie and Edith had either a Mademoiselle or an English governess, who lived with them to further their knowledge of French and English. My grandparents Emil and Helene, together with their daughters Leonie and Edith, used to travel a lot. They went to many places in Germany and abroad, and nearly every year they went to the famous spa Marienbad (now Marianske Lazne in Czechoslovakia). Many people went there for weight reducing, drinking mineral water from the springs.

The Meyer family was very large. Their social life centered around the family. Leonie had a great number of first and second cousins, aunts, great-aunts, uncles and great-uncles, not only in Hanover but also in various other German cities. She traveled frequently, visiting some of these relatives, accompanied sometimes by her parents.

When my mother was twenty-two, she spent some time in Berlin staying with her uncle Julius and aunt Ella Freudenstein and their children. Leonie loved to travel to Berlin, to get out of provincial Hanover and to stay in the more cosmopolitan capital. One evening she was invited to a party there, which took place at a private home. As a special honor, the thirty five-year-old Mr. Rudolf Ullstein, the rich newspaper heir, was seated next to her at the dinner table. As my mother mentions, "he was unpleasant, blasé, as only a person from

Berlin can be, and talked to other guests across the table. [...] When he looked at the menu, I said snappily 'Unfortunately the menu is quite long and I am not yet rid of you.' - He was dumbfounded."

It was during one of her travels to Marienbad, in 1909, that my mother met my father, Dr. Fritz Oliven. He was introduced to her by Mrs. Feige, a relative of my father's who also knew my mother's family. She was one of those ladies who rightly consider it a great commandment, a *mitzvah*, to arrange Jewish marriages. She also arrranged the marriage of my mother's cousin, Rena Meyer, daughter of Siegmund Meyer, with Kurt Fränkel. At the time, my father was already a well-known librettist and author of successful satirical verse books. My father, born in 1874, was thirteen years older than my mother.

Leonie writes about their first meeting in her diary:

> "Dr. Oliven is the author of the well-known Rideamus verse books, which are as audacious as they are witty. In Berlin I already had heard about his renowned audaciousness, considered unsuitable for young girls, but I also had heard the contrary and that it depends very much on the young girls. Therefore I was quite surprised to now find the nicest guy *(das feinste Kerlchen)* I ever met. We had a wonderful conversation - never have I seen anybody who was so restrained in his conversation, first-class upbringing *(allerbeste Kinderstube)*, [...] excluding from the conversation everything of an erotic nature, never an insinuation, an ambiguity.
>
> "I did not mention his books during the first days - and he was too modest to do so. He was a lawyer but had neglected this completely because of his verses. [...] In general, I thought his talents were not so phenomenal, a nice capacity to make rhymes, to observe, to make points - but later, as a main profession, not worthy of a serious man. I liked to have conversations with him frequently - and he wanted to marry me."

But Leonie could not make up her mind and was sorry to have to disappoint him in their last conversation before he had to leave the spa. My mother writes:

> "At the end, as he had to travel, he said, 'So you stay until the 15th?' 'Yes.' 'So when I come on the 12th, will I still see you?' 'I don't think so.' He lowered his head and understood. He bade adieu quite shortly. I was so dismayed that I forgot to wish him a nice trip. Then he left. My answer was as illogical as stupid, but it expressed what I wanted to say."

In Hanover, meanwhile, many young Jewish marriage candidates were presented to Leonie, by her father and other people. Her parents became somewhat uneasy, because so far Leonie had not accepted any of the possible candidates. She was not in such a hurry as her parents, especially her father, who was pressuring her. She preferred to wait for the ideal husband, who would share her interests and have the same intellectual level, a man she really could fall in love with. This, of course, worried her impatient father very much.

After two years had elapsed since Leonie and Fritz met in Marienbad for the first time, they met again in Berlin in 1911. Mr. and Mrs. Feige had invited her to have lunch at a restaurant and Leonie came to that place.

"Suddenly Fritz Oliven was standing beside the Feiges. At once we were good friends again. On the way back, we discussed issues about the way of living, and we always had quite different opinions. He always said that he was not doing anything, lying on the sofa [making verses], and I explained to him that I had a different nature."

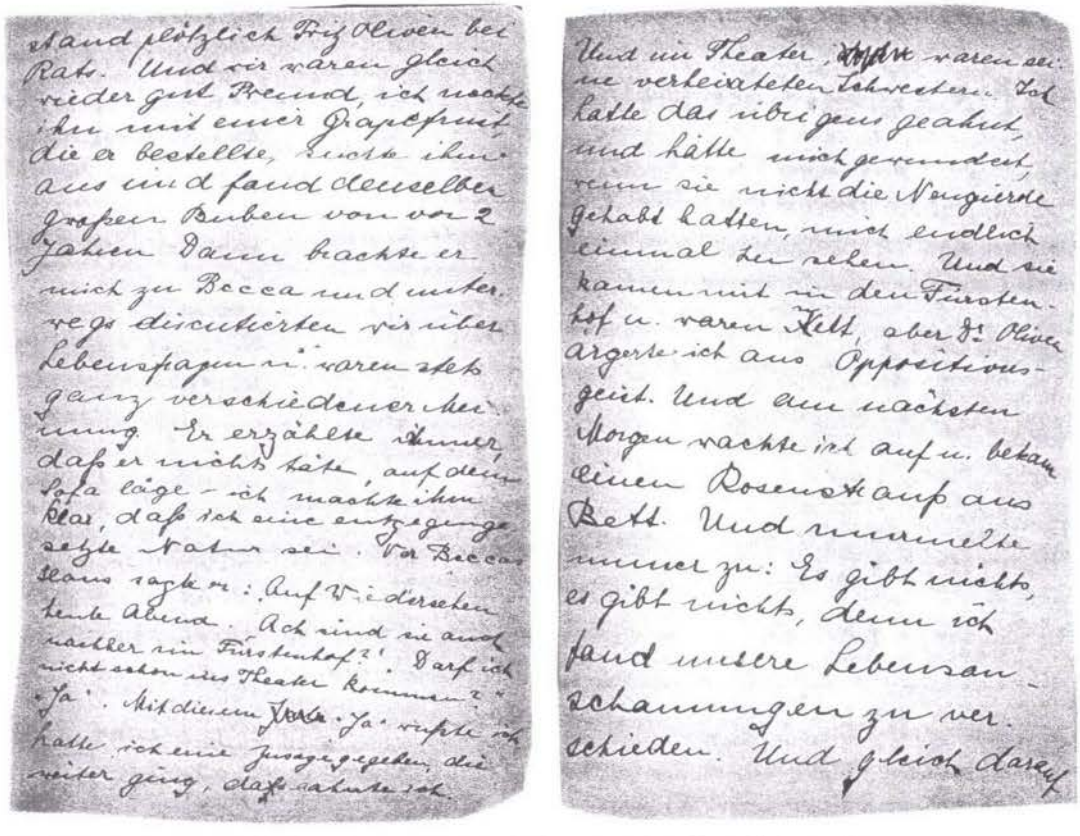
In the evening they went to the theater and had dinner afterwards. Fritz's two married sisters came along that evening, out of curiosity to meet Leonie.

"I annoyed Fritz, just on account of my contrary spirit. Next morning I woke up and a rose bouquet was brought to my bed. I murmured all the time, 'Nothing will come out of it. Our ways of living are too different.'

"Just then the phone rang. Mrs. Feige wanted to see me. When I came to her place, she and her husband scolded me very much, because I was treating the *Doktor* [Fritz] in such a nasty way, telling me that he was too good for me and that after the way I treated him last evening, I should now stay away from him, he would be through with me. When I told her he wanted to meet me at 12 o'clock, she was quite surprised and said he was too good for me and that I would altogether spoil his good humor [which he needed very much to write satirical verses]."

[During one of the next encounters], "He tried to give me a kiss on my cheek, but it got stuck midway in the air. [...] We did not mention with one word the two years that had passed since we met for the first time."

Finally Fritz and Leonie decided to get married. My father mentioned in one of their talks that he intended to give up his law practice, and that he would dedicate himself exclusively to writing, at home. My mother, as a banker's daughter, felt very uneasy about it. She did not at all like the idea of having to depend financially on the broad public's opinion.



Page from Leonie's diary, dated 1911 about meeting her future husband Fritz Oliven again



The young couple at Emil and Helene Meyer's home in Hanover October 1912

On January 16, 1912, my parents got married in Hanover. As per the marriage contract in my possession, Leonie received a dowry from her father, Emil, in the amount of 300,000 marks, and an additional 12,500 marks for "help to her father in commercial matters." In addition, Emil opened an account at his bank in Leonie's name, into which he deposited 25,000 marks as 'pin money'. The income from this account was to be paid to his daughter for small expenditures.

Emil also arranged for my father to be appointed *Aufsichtsrat*, member of the supervisory board of several industrial firms, such as the Breitenburger Portlandcement A.G. and other ones. Ephraim Meyer & Sohn had large investments in these firms and thus Emil was entitled to obtain these profitable positions for his sons-in-law and other relatives. In return, all my father had to do was to travel to the factories once a year, listen to and sign the annual report and balance sheet, take an inspection stroll through the plant together with the other members of the supervisory board and one of the directors (after having been duly supplied with a dust-cloak in order not to soil his elegant clothes, in the case of the Portland cement factory), and cash his annual check. The event concluded with a festive lunch or dinner. When I became aware of this later on, my sense of social justice rebelled against the fact that a member of the supervisory board earned more in one day than a plant worker in an entire year.

My father was a member of the supervisory board of the Breitenburger Portlandcement A.G. for about 25 years and had the best relations with the directors of the firm as well as with the other board members. It was only in 1938 that he was finally obliged to resign from this position due to Nazi pressure. That year he participated in the board meeting for the last time, but did not attend the banquet that followed later on. He handed to one of the board members witty verses about his activities while on the board and about the firm's directors, which were to be read confidentially during the banquet. In his verses, he hinted in a veiled way that maybe one day things would change for the better. Three of the participants at the banquet replied with a few verses, thanking my father for his activities on behalf of the firm. Their verses were signed "We, the ones that have remained." I still have in my possession my father's verses and the reply.

After the wedding, my mother moved to Berlin where a fully furnished, very large apartment, including a Bechstein grand piano, waited for her. Perfect maids relieved her from all household work, so that she could dedicate herself to social work. Many years later, in 1925, when her father's bank ran into difficulties, she wrote in her diary longingly, "How beautiful it was, when one could depend on the security of big capital![...] When we got married in 1912, we had a [yearly] income of 55,000 marks without Fritz having to earn one cent. We could afford

to have the enormously big, magnificent [rented] apartment and buying everything that pleased us, but we never splurged, we were always conscious of money. We had no money worries during the war either. One day [theater director] Haller showed up and asked Fritz to write [the operetta] *'Die drei alten Schachteln'* and the money flew in."

As she liked to ride on horseback, she had a horse in Hanover called Lady and after her marriage she owned a horse in Berlin called Panther, which was ridden at official horse jumping tournaments by a professional horseman and won various prizes. As my mother liked to play tennis, she entered the tennis club *"Blau Weiss"* in Berlin. Leonie also liked to play the piano and engaged a lady violinist to accompany her.



Leonie riding her horse Lady in Hanover in 1911

In early 1918, my parents took an option for the purchase of a house, but at the end of that year, during the revolution, my mother wrote in her diary, "We gave up the purchase of the house - what will remain of our money at all? - Our beautiful apartment. Maybe we will all be expropriated as in Russia. Who knows what will happen tomorrow or in a year?"

My mother took all economic and practical matters into her own hands, as my father, a writer, was not suited for these things. Leonie controlled the investments, bank accounts, etc., as well as my father's income, such as royalties from his operettas, songs and literary production. Leonie was very efficient in the administration of the family's wealth. To supplement the family income, though there was no need at all, my mother later on even rented out a room in our big apartment in Berlin. Once her tenant was Mrs. Schwarz, a Jewish marriage broker *(Shadchen)*. When in the absence of Mrs. Schwarz some marriage candidate phoned, my mother, unsolicited, managed her affairs, telling the suitor to be more generous when taking out his prospective bride, or telling the girl to behave a little bit more liberally, if she really wanted a marriage to occur. From time to time Leonie sold one or two of my father's many expensive tailor-made little-used suits, without his knowledge, to a

teacher's wife who once complained that *Herr Doktor* had put on too much weight, so that the suits would not fit any more, hanging too loose on her husband.

When our emigration was approaching in 1938/39, Leonie arranged everything all by herself. In order to have a professsion in the new country, she took a nutrition and diet course at the cooking school of the Jewish community on Grosse Hamburgerstrasse. She took care of the payment of the many taxes and consequent obtention of the necessary emigration permits from the German authorities, as well as of the application for visas, etc. She arranged the auctioning of our furniture, books, household goods, part of the valuable autograph collection, etc. and the sale of many other objects. She also took care of the packing of the wooden cases for steamer shipment and of the hand baggage, which all had to be previously inspected by a German custom-house offical before being officially sealed.

It was really remarkable how well Leonie managed in the emigration process under extremely difficult and different conditions from those she was used to. Brought up in a rich banker's home, well-off in Berlin after her marriage, she was able to manage the household in Porto Alegre, Brazil, consisting of my father, my mother, my sister and (during the first two years) of me. She had very little money at her disposal. In order to obtain a little extra income, she rented out one of the rooms in the house we lived in in Porto Alegre. Though she never had done so before, she took up all kind of household chores, such as cooking, darning socks. etc., without ever complaining. It was really admirable how courageously she faced the adverse conditions of emigration during the short time she still lived in Brazil.

In 1947 my mother Leonie became seriously ill. We, her children - John, Susi and myself - decided that it would be best for her to fly to New York, as medical treatment was more advanced there. John and my sister-in-law, Charlotte, took care of Leonie in News York. First she stayed with them, but soon she was moved to a hospital, where she was operated on. She died in a nursing home in New York shortly after, on February 16, 1948, at the age of sixty.

My parents had three children, after the first one, a girl which should have received the name Marianne but was stillborn. All children were born in Berlin. Hans (John F.), born on June 26, 1914, died in New York on January 6, 1975; Susanne (Susi), born on April 16, 1916, died in Lake Oswego, Oregon, on October 24, 1999; and Klaus (myself), born on January 20, 1918.

PART II - THE OLIVEN FAMILY

While diverse documentation is available for researching the family history on my mother's side, much less material exists on the Schottländers, my paternal grandmother's family, and very little only on the Olivens.

There were, for example, three competent amateur genealogists in the Meyer Family, Walther Meyer, Adèle Freund and my mother Leonie Oliven, who all drew up *Stammbäume* (genealogical trees) going back many centuries. There also exist diaries of the period, written by members of the family, all kinds of reports, newspaper clippings, etc., of which I could avail myself. All this documentation was most useful for the first part of my family history.

One of the few documents available on the Oliven Family is an eleven-page report (of which two pages are missing), probably commissioned from a rabbi living in the region, who researched the *memor* books (facsimile records) and tombstones of the Jewish communities of Lissa and Schmiegel in Posen. The *memor* books of the Jewish communities in Germany were written exclusively in Hebrew until around 1830 and from then on in German. In addition, there exists a thirty-page "Special Report" on my father, Dr. Fritz Oliven, and his family, commissioned by my grandfather, Emil L. Meyer, in 1909, in order to obtain as much information as possible about my father, a prospective son-in-law, as well as about the Oliven and Schottländer families.

The Oliven family, according to old documents, originates from the old Jewish community of Lissa, now known as Leszno, about seventy miles north-east of Breslau and about ten miles north of the border between Silesia and the province of Posen. Lissa was one of the largest Jewish communities in the province of Posen in Prussia. It became Polish after 1919. The Jewish community of Lissa existed from 1534, many of its members engaging in handicrafts and being organized in guilds. The Jews held key positions in trade and maintained commercial links with other countries. They suffered severely in the Swedish Wars in the seventeenth century. Their number dwindled from five thousand in 1790 to a few hundred before World War II.

The Oliven family is a Levite family, as evidenced by the Levite jugs shown on the oldest preserved tombstones of this family at Lissa's old Jewish cemetery. The jugs were used by the Levites for laving the priest's hands before the latter blessed the people. The Levites are the descendants of the tribe of Levi, consecrated by Moses to serve in the worship that took place at the Tabernacle and to instruct the people. The family name Oliven was already in use before 1800. It is mentioned for the first time in the lists of the Jews of Lissa around 1795, after the Prussian occupation of that part of Poland. Therein the name Oliven is written in Hebrew as follows:

אלי ו ו ע ן

On the older tombstones the family name is not mentioned. The family is identified thereon as a Levite family only. On later tombstones the name is spelled:

אלי פ ע ן

The oldest ancestor of the Lissa Levite family Oliven who could be traced was **JONATHAN (JONAS) HA-LEV**I, of whom we know only his name. He must have lived in the first half of the eighteenth century (in Lissa ?).

1st GENERATION

JAKOB [BEN] JONATHAN OLIVEN - (ca. 1730-1801)

my great-great-great-grandfather

Jakob Jonathan was the son of Jonathan (Jonas) ha-levi. He was born around 1730 and died in 1801. He was a commission agent and settled in Lissa. Around 1760 he married Sarel, a diminutive form of Sara. She was born around 1740 and died in 1807. Jakob Jonathan Oliven had several children who, as far as is known, were merchants or agents. In 1796/97 there were already two Oliven families in Lissa. The family of Jakob Oliven is mentioned under number 711 of the record book of the Jewish community in Lissa. It then consisted of three members only, in accordance with the following reproduction of the Hebrew original, because the other children by then were either married or had left the paternal home:

Family # 711: Commission agent	Jakob Jonathan Oliven	65 years old
	Sarel	56 years old
	Michael Löb	25 years old

Jakob Oliven died on Tammuz 27, 5561 - July 8, 1801 - and is buried at the Jewish cemetery in Lissa. The Hebrew inscription on his tombstone, row I no. 357, mentions his piety and righteousness. His wife Sarel died on Tammuz 28, 5567 - August 2, 1807 - and is buried at the same cemetery, row VI no. 1022. On both tombstones the name Oliven was not mentioned. I have no information whether these and the other old tombstones of the Oliven family, as well as the cemetery in Lissa (now Leszno) itself, survived World War II.

2nd GENERATION

MICHAEL LÖB OLIVEN - (ca. 1768-1848)

my great-great-grandfather

Michael Löb (also called Michael Löbel) was the son of Jakob Jonathan. He was born in Lissa around 1768 and died there on March 3, 1848. He is listed in the family register of the Jewish community of Lissa, written in Hebrew, as *szocher*, or merchant. In 1797 or 1798 he married Hanna (Channa), also spelled Hanne (Channe), born around 1780 in Lissa. She died there on December 24, 1846.

Until the first decades of the nineteenth century, Jewish family registers in Germany and elsewhere, including the province of Posen, which belonged to Prussia from 1772 until 1919, with brief interruptions, always used the Jewish calendar only, which is a lunar type and differs from the Gregorian solar calendar, 365 1/4 days long. The Jewish year contains only 354 days (six months that are 30 days long and six months 29 days long). To compensate the difference between the solar and lunar year the Sanhedrin added a thirteenth lunar month every so often. The month so added is called *Adar Sheni* ("Second Adar") and the year, a leap year.

Therefore, as in the present case for instance, where only the Jewish year was indicated in the Hebrew family register, it cannot be determined if the corresponding year of Michael and Hanna's marriage was 1797 or 1798. Indications of the year, month or day thus may differ slightly in these cases. Even when the Jewish day and month are known, there often exists a difference of one day in the corresponding date on the common calendar. This is due to the fact that the days of the Jewish calendar start in the evening of the previous day of the solar calendar, with the rising of the first star.

It was also common use for Jews who were born on a Jewish holiday to celebrate their birthday not by the Gregorian calendar, but by the Jewish holiday on which they were born. In this way, of course, every year their birthday fell on different days of our common calendar. I did not know my grandfather, Julius Oliven, who died long before I was born, but my father told me that every year he celebrated his birthday on *Shemini Atzeret*, the final day of *Succot.* His brother-in-law, Julius Schottländer, celebrated his birthday on *Shushan Purim*, the second day of *Purim*. These were the Jewish dates on which they were born.

When around 1830 the situation of the Jews in Posen was regulated, Michael Löbel obtained a *"Duldungszertifikat"* - the certificate of tolerance no. 418. Michael Löb and Hanna had five children, all born in Lissa:

1. Nehemias, born in 1797
2. Jonathan, born in 1801, died in 1804
3. Jakob, born around 1802
4. Israel Chajim, born on January 28, 1804, died on July 20, 1873, at the spa Bad Warmbrunn. He was my paternal great-grandfather.
5. Sara, born about 1817

The second son was named after his grandfather Jonathan. He died at the age of three, in 1804. In the same year my great-grandfather Israel Chajim was born.

In the first Jewish family register of Lissa, written in German, dated about 1833, with later supplements, Michael Löbel's family is registered under no. 695. His family at that time consisted of three persons only: he, his wife and his daughter, as shown in the reproduction from the original. His sons had already left the paternal home.

Family no. 695	Michel Löbel	68 years old	commercial employee
	Channa	55 years old	
	Sara	19 years old	

Channa died on Tevet 5, 5607 - December 24, 1846 - in Lissa. She is buried at the Jewish cemetery in Lissa, row VI, no. 537. On her tombstone the family name Oliven is shown in Hebrew writing for the first time. Michael Löbel died in Lissa a short time after, on Adar I 28, 5608 - March 3, 1848, buried in row VI - no. 972. On his death certificate, issued by the Jewish community of Lissa, his name is shown as Michael Leib Oliven.

3rd GENERATION



Heymann Michael Oliven



Berta (Blümchen) Oliven née Danziger

ISRAEL CHAJIM BEN MICHAEL ARIE LÖB HA-LEVI OLIVEN - USUALLY CALLED HEYMANN MICHAEL OLIVEN - (1804-1873)

my paternal great-grandfather

Israel Chajim is first mentioned in the register of the Jewish families of Lissa of the year 5564 - 1804, written in Hebrew, which was organized 3 months after his birth, listing his father's family:

Family no. 439	Michel Löbel Oliven	36 years old
	Channa	23 years old
	Nehemias	7 years old
	Jakob	2 years old
	Israel Chajim	3 months old

Israel Chajim was born in Lissa on January 28, 1804. He was a furrier, a popular profession among the Jews of Lissa at that time. There was even a Jewish furrier guild in Lissa, to which he certainly must have belonged. Later on he established a retail fabric and dry goods shop there.

On December 24, 1829 Israel Chajim (usually called Heymann Michael or Heimann Michel or just Heimann, or Michael Heymann on my mother's illustrated genealogical tree) marrried Blümche (also spelled Blümchen or Blimche) Danziger. She usually was called Berta. The marriage took place in Lissa. Berta was born in Schmiegel (Smigiel), Posen, in 1804 and died in Liegnitz (now Legnica) in 1886. Her mother, Rebecca, lived in Schmiegel.

The Danziger family, originating from Schmiegel, is also a Levite family. Mose Jehuda Löbel Danziger ha-levi was born around 1756 and died on March 6, 1824. His wife Edel (Adele) was born around 1760 and died in 1823. Both died in Schmiegel. Mose Jehuda and Edel had a son Leiser (Elieser) Danziger, born around 1783, died on February 14, 1827 in Schmiegel. Leiser married Rebecca, of whom we know only her first name. Leiser and Rebecca's daughter, Blümche (Berta), who became the wife of Heymann Michael Oliven, was my paternal great-grandmother.

Heymann was naturalized in his home town Lissa on June 23, 1837. On March 3, 1842, he obtained the citizenship for the old Prussian provinces. In the same year he moved from Lissa to Bolkenhain and a short time later to nearby Liegnitz, now known as Legnica. Heymann died while at the spa Warmbrunn on July 20, 1873. His wife Berta died in Liegnitz on November 16, 1886, at the house of her son-in-law David Wiener.

4th GENERATION

THE CHILDREN OF HEYMANN MICHAEL AND BERTA OLIVEN

my paternal great-grandparents

My great-grandparents had seven children:

1. **Leiser** [Eliezer] **(Louis)**, born in Lissa on December 27, 1830 - died in 1896.
2. **Jacob**, born in Lissa on January 30, 1833 - died on March 13, 1908 in Berlin.
3. **Schaul (Salusch)**, born in Lissa on July 2, 1835 - died on November 12, 1885.
4. **Elijahu (Adolph)**, born in Lissa on June 22, 1837 - died on October 26, 1904 in Berlin.
5. **Mindel (Minna)**, born in Lissa on September 12, 1840 *(yom shabbat godel)* - died on July 12, 1915 in Liegnitz.
6. **Jonah**, also Jonas **(Julius)**, born in Liegnitz on September 26, 1842 *(beshemini atzeret betevet)*, died on June 21, 1910 in Berlin. He was my paternal grandfather.
7. **Elchana (Heinrich)**, born in Liegnitz on February 21, 1848 - died around 1930 in Berlin.

I have a little notebook, written by either Heymann or Berta, wherein the names and birthdates of their children are registered. Entries are written in Hebrew, with the dates of the Jewish calendar. Later on, the corresponding dates of the common era were added. After the name of each child the following Hebrew words are written:

בני (ביתי) נולד (נולדה) למזל טוב - *"beni (biti) nolad (noledah) lemasal tov,"* meaning "my son (or daughter) - born to be happy." Then the Hebrew birthdate of each child is shown. Mindel was born on *Shabbat Godel (gadol)* and my grandfather Jonah on the Jewish holiday *Shemini Atzeret*, and this too was mentioned in the little notebook.

Between the names of Jonah and Elchanan, a daughter is also registered, by the name of Perel (Pearl), born between 1843 and 1847, but for reasons unknown to me, her name and birth date have been crossed out. The only feasible explanation I have is that she probably married a *goy* (non-Jew), and therefore no longer existed, as far as her parents, as well as all strictly orthodox Jews, were concerned.

It is very interesting to note that from the beginning of the nineteenth century - with assimilation progressing in Germany - the young Jewish generation started to change their Hebrew (or, in the case of women, sometimes Yiddish) first names. They had been registered by their parents with these names in the family record books of the Jewish communities, but adapted them later on to German first names or changed them altogether. This was also the period when the Jews were forced by the government to adopt family names instead of the patronymics alone, as used up until then.

My maternal great-grandfather Meyer changed his first name from Levy to Louis, while my paternal great-grandfather Oliven changed his from Israel Chajim to Heymann Michael or just Heimann. His wife changed her name from Blümche (Blimche) to Berta. All their children, except Jacob, also changed their first names. Leiser became Louis, Shaul became Salusch or Salo, Elijahu became Adolf, Mindel changed her name to Minna, my grandfather Jonah or Jonas changed his name to Julius (Oliven), and his brother Elchana became Heinrich.

The descendants of Klaus Oliven's great-grandparents

HEYMANN MICHAEL OLIVEN ∞ BERTA (BLÜMCHEN) DANZIGER
(1804-1873) (1804-1886)

LOUIS (Leiser) 1830-1896	JACOB 1833-1908	SALUSCH (Schaul/Salo) 1835-1885	ADOLPH (Elijahu) 1837-1904	MINNA 1840-1915	JULIUS (Jonah) 1842-1910	HEINRICH (Elchana) 1848-1930
∞	∞	∞	∞	∞	∞ Luise Schottländer 1852-1935	(unmarried)
Johanna	Auguste Schottländer	Ida Kind	Klara Buchholz (no offspring)	David Wiener		
1. Jenny ∞ Hirschberg | a daughter and a son	(see Schottländer family tree)	3 daughters: 1. Martha ∞ Dr. Max Troplowitz | a) Käthe ∞ Dr. Martin Wagner b) Erna		1. Cäcilie ∞ Berthold Kohn | Walter ∞ Minetta Kremsky | a) Inge ∞ B. Waller	**1. Fritz Oliven** ∞ **Leonie Meyer** | **a)John Oliven** (Hans) ∞ Charlotte Bauchwitz | aa)Constance ∞ Robert Cambreleng | 2 daughters: Rebecca Courtney	2. Elly ∞ Georg Abelsdorff (no offspring)
2. another daughter		2. Elisa ∞ Wachsmann		b) Gaston ∞ Joanne Newman | Marjory Richard Steven	bb) Thomas ∞ Josephine Valenza | twins: Andy & John	3. Malwine (Mietze) ∞ Fritz Abelsdorff | Walter ∞ Ruth (no offspring)
		3. Rosa ∞ Wagner		2.Max 3. Anna 4 Paula 5. Else 6. Lina ∞ Brann | Franz 7. Fritz	**b) Susanne** ∞ HerbertSchall **c)Klaus Oliven** ∞ Seldi Reifen (6 children)	

1. LOUIS OLIVEN, born on December 27, 1830 in Lissa, died in 1896 in Breslau. He married Johanna. Louis was the owner of a store that sold ladies' coats in Breslau; later on he sold dry goods, but he was not successful in his business. He was temporarily employed by his brother Jacob and later on he was a bookkeeper in the printing shop of his relative Salo Schottländer. Louis and Johanna had two daughters: one of them married Hirschberg, the owner of a bookstore. The couple had a daughter and a son.

2. JACOB OLIVEN, born on January 30, 1833 in Lissa - died on March 13, 1908 in Berlin. In 1857 he married Auguste (Gustel) Schottländer, a daughter of Löbel Schottländer. She was born on November 5, 1836 in Münsterberg, Lower Silesia. Jacob was established in Breslau with a wholesale textile firm. Later on he closed his firm and moved to Berlin. He and his wife Auguste are both buried at the Jewish cemetery in Berlin Weissensee. It was opened in 1880 and is the largest Jewish cemetery in Europe, containing 115,000 graves. During World War II the Weissensee cemetery served as a refuge for some of the surviving "illegal" Jews, who were hiding in mausoleums or found asylum under one of the tombstones. Jacob Oliven established a large family grave at this cemetery, with eleven headstones. The number of Jacob's family tomb is 33196.

Jacob and Auguste had seven children:

a) ALBERT OLIVEN
b) MAX OLIVEN
c) PAULA OLIVEN
d) LUDWIG OLIVEN
e) HULDA OLIVEN
f) OSCAR OLIVEN
g) MALWINE OLIVEN

a) Dr. ALBERT OLIVEN was a neurologist who owned a sanitarium in Berlin-Lankwitz. He married Clara (Clärchen) Levy. The couple had no children. Albert died in Berlin in 1921 and is buried at the Jewish cemetery in Berlin Weissensee. Clärchen died in Zürich in the 1940s.

b) Dr. MAX OLIVEN was born in Breslau in 1860 and died in Berlin in 1929. He is buried at the Jewish cemetery in Berlin Weissensee. He was an ear, nose and throat specialist. He married Paula Gernsheim (1887-1967), from the very rich and famous Jewish Gernsheim family from Worms, Rhineland. It is said that Paula's dowry amounted to one million marks.

Max did not exercise his profession, probably, I suppose, due to the fact that he did not have to, on account of the big dowry Paula brought to the marriage. Max and Paula's son had the same name as my father, Fritz Oliven. He was born on August 21, 1898 and died on December 21, 1980, in Vineland, N.J. On September 16, 1925, he marrried Hilda (originally Hilde) Böhm, born on January 22, 1905, in Beuthen, Upper Silesia. He bought the estate Buselwitz (its Polish name is Boguslawice) from his cousins, the Pacully family. This estate had a large garden park and was situated on the east side of Oels, Upper Silesia.

When Hitler came to power, Fritz and Hilda emigrated to Vineland, New Jersey, where they had a chicken farm. Hilda, who is over ninety-five years old, lives in Lakewood, N.J. Fritz and Hilda Oliven had two children, Eleanor and Conrad. Eleanor, born on August 23, 1926, married Donald Rosenthal, born on July 16, 1926. They have four children, Deborah, born on October 3, 1957; and Daniel, born on March 12, 1960, both in Chicago, Ill..; Susan, born on September 27, 1962; and Marion, born on August 18, 1965, both in Canton, N.Y.

Fritz and Hilda's son, Conrad Oliven, was born on October 21, 1927. He married Roberta Bonnema, who is non-Jewish. He died very young on December 20, 1966. Conrad and Roberta had three children, Catherine, born around 1958; Laura Anne, born around 1963; and Gregory (Greg), born around 1965.

Laura Anne Oliven married Stephen Silberfarb on May 31, 1993. They live in Washington, D.C. and have a little daughter. Laura is a health and welfare analyst for the Office of Management and Budget, which is part of the Executive Office of the U.S. President. Stephen also holds a government job. In 1997 my wife Seldi was in Washington, as the Brazilian delegate for the convention of Na'amat Pioneer Women. She then had a chance to meet Laura and Stephen personally. Seldi spent a pleasant evening at the home of this nice young couple.

I 'discovered' Laura incidentally in 1994 while Seldi and I were in Washington, D.C., on a trip to the U.S.A. As is my habit on our trips abroad, I look in the telephone directory of major cities to find out if by chance any Olivens, Schottländers or Reifens (Seldi's family) live there. Of course, I do not look up the Meyers, because this name is much too common and is not a Jewish name only. I found Laura's name listed under Oliven (at that time, since she had just recently married, she was still listed under her maiden name). I called her up and we immediately discovered our common ancestry.

Catherine, Laura's sister, lives in Chicago and is an executive for an investment firm. She married Costa. The couple has a daughter called Elsa. Laura's brother, Greg Oliven, lives in Los Angeles, working for a large law firm. He is married to Heather and has three Oliven boys - Benjamin, Caleb and Daniel.

c) PAULA OLIVEN was mentally retarded and lived in an institution. She died in 1923 and is buried at the Jewish cemetery in Berlin Weissensee.

d) LUDWIG OLIVEN married Else Morawetz in 1902. Else was born on July 16, 1879. She came from a rich Jewish family in Bohemia (after 1918 part of Czechoslovakia). Ludwig had an import-export business in Berlin. Later on he became the administrator of the Karlsbad mineral water distribution in Berlin. He died in 1936 and is buried at the Jewish cemetery in Berlin Weissensee. His wife Else returned to Czechoslovakia after her husland's death. She committed suicide on June 10, 1942, upon being informed that she was to be transported to an extermination camp in Poland. On a visit to Prague in 1999 I found her name mentioned in the Czech form - Olivenova, Eliska - as well as the dates of her birth and death, at one of the walls of the old Pinkas synagogue in Prague.

This synagogue was built in 1535 and is situated next to the famous Old Jewish Cemetery. The names and personal data of the nearly 80,000 Bohemian and Moravian Jews who perished in the Holocaust are painted on the walls of this synagogue. It also contains the exhibition "Children's drawings from Terezin [the Theresienstadt concentration camp] 1942-44." Of the 141,000 Jews who were imprisoned there at one time or another, there were over 10,000 children who were under the age of fifteen at the time of their imprisonment. Of the 8,000 children that were again deported later on, from Terezin to the East, a mere 242 survived. The collection contains over 4,000 original drawings by these children.

Ludwig and Else had two children, Robert and Lotte. Robert Oliven, born in 1903, emigrated first to Czechoslovakia, where he worked for the Karlsbader Mineralwasser Versand and later moved from there to the United States. In the beginning he worked for the same firm there. The invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Nazis in 1939 and the outbreak of World War II brought this business to an end. Robert was married several times but had no children. Later, after the end of the war, he moved from New York to California, where his cousin Gerald Oliven lived. Robert died in Los Angeles in 1960.

Lotte Oliven, born in 1906, married the banker Henry (Heinrich) Grünfeld, born in Neisse, Upper Silesia in 1904. In 1934, Lotte and Henry emigrated to London. Henry met there Siegfried Warburg, with whom he teamed up to create what has become London's leading investment bank, S. G. Warburg. After Warburg's death, Henry became its president. He worked at the bank for over sixty years until the age of ninety-one. In 1995, he finally gave

up the presidency of the bank. That same year the bank was sold to the Schweizer Bank Verein, which, after uniting with the Union Bank of Switzerland, is today called the United Bank of Switzerland. Henry died in 1999, at the age of ninety-five.

Henry and Lotte had two children, Thomas and Luisa. Thomas, born 1933, was twice married and has five children. Luisa was born in 1937 and died in 1985. She married Oscar Lewisohn and had three sons: Mark, born in 1963; Richard, born in 1965; and James, born in 1970. Luisa and Oscar's daughter, Anita, born in 1967, married on April 29, 2000.

e) HULDA OLIVEN, born on May 16, 1859, died in 1930. In 1879 she married consul Theodor Ehrlich, born on November 17, 1849, died in 1930. He was the honorary royal consul of Spain for the province Silesia in Breslau. He worked honorarily for many Jewish and non-Jewish beneficial institutions. Hulda and Theodor Ehrlich had three children, Lisbeth, Alice and Käthe.

Lisbeth Ehrlich, born on February 14, 1880, married Georg Ledermann, born on April 6, 1871. Lisbeth was very interested in family genealogy and wrote an interesting short manuscript "The Family David Schottländer." (Israel David was Löbel Schottländer's father). It contains very valuable information on the Schottländer Family. Lisbeth and Georg succeeded in emigrating at the very last moment, in 1941. They arrived in the United States in October 1942. They lived in New Rochelle, N.Y. They had two children, Elli and Ernst.

Elli Ledermann lived in New York where she was employed by the city as a social worker. She did not marry. She died at the age of ninety-six on June 3, 1999. Elli's brother Ernst also lives in New York. He married twice and has three children from his second marriage.

Alice Ehrlich, Hulda and Theodor's second daughter and Ludwig Oliven's niece, born on January 22, 1884, married Moritz Morawetz, from Bohemia, which became part of Czechoslovakia after WW I. Moritz was born in 1872 and died on May 11, 1922. He was a brother of Ludwig Oliven's wife Else, née Morawetz. Alice refused to leave Prague after the Nazis invaded the country, possibly because she felt responsible for her sister-in-law Else (who at the same time was also her aunt). Once she was asked to report to the Gestapo. When she identified herself as Alice Morawetz only - omitting the name Sara, which was the mandatory additional name that the Nazis obliged all Jewish females to use - she was struck in her face so hard that she lost some teeth. Later, Alice was deported to Lodz, Poland. As some survivors reported, she worked as a nurse there and was quite heroic. Later she was deported to Auschwitz, where she perished in 1944. Alice and Moritz had three children, Ludwig, Franz and Hella.

Their oldest son, Ludwig Morawetz, born in 1904, died of leukemia in 1929. Their second son, Franz Morawetz, changed his name to Frank Morton. He was born in 1907 and died in 1990. He lived in Montreal and married Lida Mach. They had a son, George, born in 1944, who was married twice and has five children. Alice and Moritz' daughter, Hella, was born in 1910 and died in 1995. She was twice married, first to Charles Sachs, later to Julian Street. They lived in Connecticut. Hella had no children. Käthe Ehrlich, Hulda and Theodor Ehrlich's youngest daughter, died at the age of nine.

f) OSCAR OLIVEN, an engineer, married Sonnie Löwe. Her father was Isidor Löwe who, together with his brother Ludwig, owned the large well-known company Ludwig Löwe A.G. They manufactured tool machines, electrical appliances, arms, ammunition, etc. The firm became the biggest arms supplier in the world, selling arms to Prussia, Turkey, Russia, China and many countries in South America. The firm was established by Ludwig Löwe in 1869. It started with the mass production of sewing machines, but soon switched to the more lucrative production of arms. In 1875, Ludwig, who was quite gifted technically, appointed his brother Isidor, a financial and organizational genius, as head of the commercial department. In 1886, Ludwig, who also was a member of the German Parliament, died prematurely, at the age of forty-nine. Isidor then became head of the firm and conducted its affairs very successfully. He founded the Society for Electrical Enterprises Gesfürel, one of the largest financial institutions in the electrotechnical industry. Early in the century Oscar was sent to Buenos Aires by Gesfürel to supervise the electrification of the Argentine capital, of which Gesfürel was in charge. The Löwe concern still exists in Germany today and maintains the name Löwe.

Oscar Oliven became a director of the Ludwig Löwe A.G. and, after his father-in-law Isidor's death, succeeded him as chairman of the company. Oscar became very rich, mainly because of his marriage to Sonnie, the wealthy Löwe heiress. They had a very elegant villa in Berlin-Tiergarten, one of the most exclusive quarters of Berlin before the war. When Oscar emigrated to Switzerland in 1935, he succeeded in transporting out of Germany an original oil painting by Frans Hals. All baggage and cases belonging to Jews who were emigrating had to be officially inspected by German customs officials before being sealed and taken out of the country. Oscar told the customs agent in charge of the inspection that the Frans Hals painting was a family portrait, and thus was able to get away with it. Later on, Oscar's only son, Gerald (Gerhard), sold this painting in the United States for about one million dollars.

Gerald lived in England during World War II and served in the British Army and Royal Air Force. Later on he went to the United States. He owned a nice house in Beverly Hills, California. He married Hedy Fischer (who is not Jewish). She had been a film actress in Germany in the early 1930s. Seldi and I visited Gerald several times in Beverly Hills and he and Hedy visited us here once. He was a good tennis player and a great fan of this sport. Gerald and Hedy had no children.

g) MALWINE OLIVEN married Edmund Heller in 1898. He was the director of the A.E.G. branch in Vienna. He died there in 1921. Malwine emigrated to London. She wanted to join her married son, Walter, who lived in New York. She was so proud of her Oliven family name that she called herself Malwine Heller Oliven. This cost her her life, since the American immigration office had her erroneously listed as Malwine H. Oliven. As a result, her departure to the United States was delayed until the war broke out. She then took a ship, but on the way it was sunk by a German submarine and Malwine drowned. Edmund and Malwine's son, Walter, died childless.

3. SALUSCH (SALOMON OR SALO) OLIVEN, originally Schaul, born on July 2, 1835 in Lissa, died on November 12, 1885. He married Ida Kind. He had a textile store in Liegnitz. Salusch and Ida had three daughters. The eldest one, Martha, was raised in my grandparent Oliven's home in Breslau. She married the physician Dr. Max Troplowitz in

Oppeln. Martha and Max had two daughters. The older one, Käte, married the physician Dr. Martin Wagner, who emigrated to New York. He was my brother John's family doctor in New York. The younger daughter, Erna, and her husband could not emigrate in time from Berlin.

Salusch and Ida's second daughter, Elisa, married Wachsmann, who had a textile store in Gleiwitz. The third daughter, Rosa, married the merchant Wagner in Breslau. Their son Martin Wagner was the above-mentioned physician, who married his cousin Käte Troplowitz.

4. ADOLPH OLIVEN was born in Lissa on June 22, 1837 and died in Berlin on October 26, 1904. He and his wife are both buried at the Jewish cemetery on Schönhauser Allee. He married Klara Buchholz, born in Unruhstadt, Germany, on April 15, 1844, died on June 16, 1914. Adolf and Klara had no children. Originally Adolph had a store selling ready-made clothing, but he did not prosper. Later on he established a banking firm in Berlin, dealing with mortages and real estate. His firm also was the agent for the Swiss Life Insurance Company and the Zürich Pension Institute. After his death, the firm was taken over by Adolf's younger brother, Heinrich, who was already a partner during Adolf's lifetime.

5. MINNA OLIVEN was born in Lissa on September 12, 1840 and died in Liegnitz on July 12, 1915. She married David Wiener in Liegnitz. He had a stationery store there. Minna and David had seven children, Cäcilie, Max, Anna, Paula, Else, Lina and Fritz.

Cäcilie Wiener was born in 1863 in Liegnitz and died in the concentration camp Theresienstadt in 1943, at the age of eighty. She married Berthold Kohn, who died in Breslau in 1921. Their son, Walter, was born in Breslau in 1892. He, his wife and their two children emigrated to Santiago, Chile, in 1936, where Walter died in 1938. Walter's wife, Minetta Kremski, was born in Cracow in 1899. She died in Santiago in 1973. Walter and Minetta's daughter Inge was born in 1922 and their son Günter in 1924, both in Breslau. Inge married Bernhart Waller. They had two children, René born in 1944 and Alicia, born in 1945, both in Santiago. They and their children now live in the United States.

Günter (now Gaston) Kohn is an agricultural engineer. He graduated in food technology, earning a Ph.D. at the University of Massachusetts in 1953. Gaston moved from Chile to the United States in 1949. He married Joanne Newman, a school teacher. She is Jewish and a third-generation American. They live in Prides Crossing, Massachussets and have three children, Marjory, Richard and Steven. All of them married outside the Jewish faith. Richard has three children and Steven has two. Gaston recently discovered my address through the German-Jewish biweekly *Aufbau*, published in New York, and got in touch with me by correspondence.

David and Minna Wiener's daughter Lina married Brann. They lived in Breslau. Lina Brann had correspondence with my parents back in 1936/37 about Oliven and Schottländer family genealogy. Through the indication of Lina Brann, my mother was able to get a copy of the old Daguerrotype showing Rebecca Danziger, the maternal grandmother of my paternal grandfather, Julius Oliven, wearing a bonnet and holding her small daughter, Charlotte, who later on married Moritz Buckwitz. This picture is shown in my mother's illustrated genealogical tree, which is in my possession. Lina and her husband, Brann, had a son, Franz.

David and Minna Wiener's's youngest son, Fritz, was a physician and lived near Breslau. Fritz first married Hella Goldenring. Hella died when their son Hans was born. Hans moved to Israel, got married and died there at the age of fifty. His father, Dr. Fritz Wiener, remarried a widow, Ella Sachs, née Schall, who also had a son from her first marriage.That son lived in England. Fritz and Ella also emigrated to England.

6. JULIUS OLIVEN, my grandfather, was born in 1842 and died in 1910. In 1872 he married my grandmother Luise née Schottländer, born in 1851 and died in 1935. I will write more about them further on.

07. HEINRICH OLIVEN was born in Liegnitz on February 21, 1848 and died in Berlin around 1930. He is buried at the Jewish cemetery in Berlin Weissensee. He was the only one of my grandfather's siblings whom I knew personally, when I was a young boy. I also did not know my paternal grandfather, Julius, who died some years before I was born. Heinrich was a bachelor. We lived near his apartment in Berlin. My sister Suse and I visited him sometimes when we were youngsters and once he came to see us. Heinrich was a partner in his older brother Adolf's mortgage and real estate banking establishment in Berlin. After his brother's death, Heinrich took over this business.



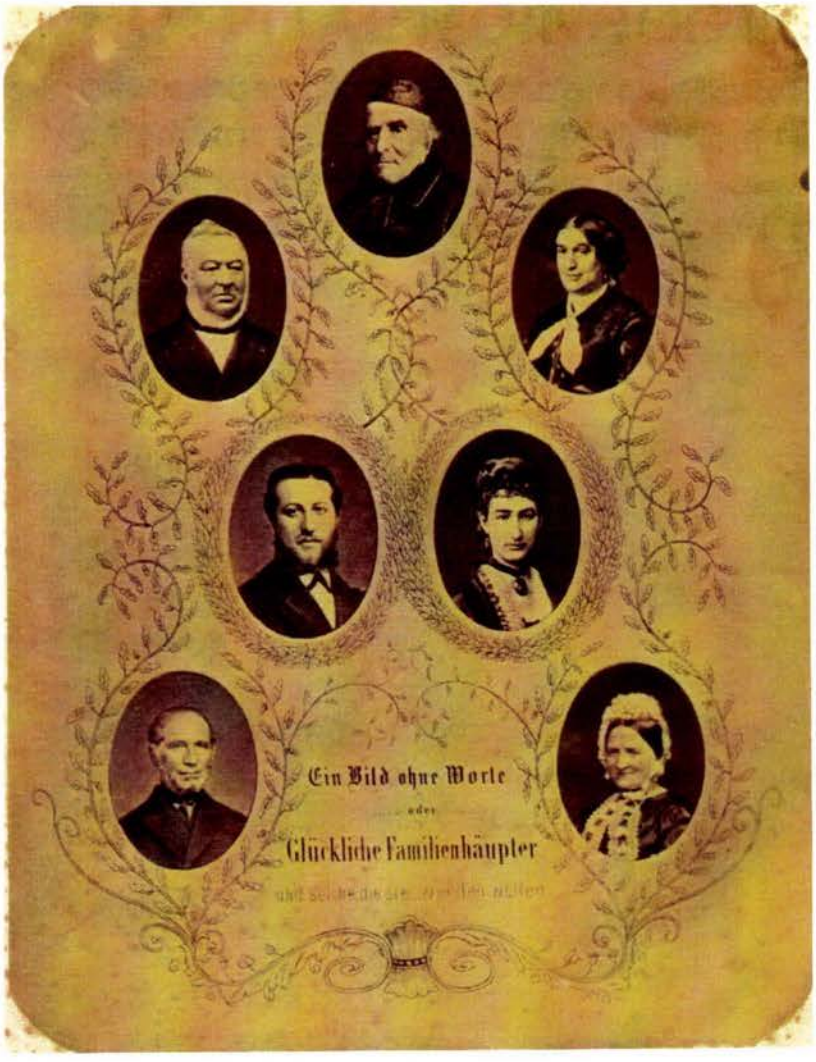
JULIUS (ORIGINALLY JONAH OR JONAS) OLIVEN - (1842-1910)

my paternal grandfather

Julius was born in Liegnitz (now Legnica), Silesia, on September 26, 1842, on the Jewish holiday *Shemini Atzeret*, the conclusion (the eighth and final day) of *Succot*, the festival of the Tabernacles, which is followed by *Simhat Torah*, the rejoicing of the law, after the annual conclusion of the reading of the Torah. Julius died in Berlin on June 21, 1910.

He was a very handsome man, a jovial, respectable and kind person. He was a partner and traveling salesman at J. Oliven & Co. This wholesale textile company, established in Breslau, belonged to Julius' older brother Jacob. For some time Julius was a partner at his brother's firm. Julius and a brother-in-law also owned an oil factory in Breslau (now Wroclaw, Poland), which they sold later on.

On May 26, 1872 Julius married Luise Schottländer, Löbel Schottländer's youngest daughter, in Breslau. Many years before, Julius' eldest brother, Jacob, had already married Luise's eldest sister Auguste. The Olivens were very honorable and respected people. In general they belonged to the upper-middle class, but were far from being as rich as the Schottländers. In various instances the Olivens ended up marrying very wealthy women. Löbel Schottländer, as we will see further on, was a very rich man and his daughters certainly received large dowries and, later on, inheritances. In the next generation, for instance, Oscar Oliven, Jacob's son, married Sonnie Löwe, daughter of the very wealthy manufacturer Isidor Löwe. My grandparents, Julius and Luise, had three children: Fritz (my father), born in 1874, Malwine (Mietze), born 1875 and Elly, born in 1882.



Happy families - A picture without words.
The wedding of Julius Oliven and Luise Schottländer 1872.
Top row: Samuel Grossmann, the bride's maternal grandfather
2nd row: Löbel and Henriette Schottländer, the bride's parents
3rd row: Bride and bridegroom Julius Oliven and Luise Schottländer
4th row: Heymann Michael and Berta Oliven, the bridegroom's parents

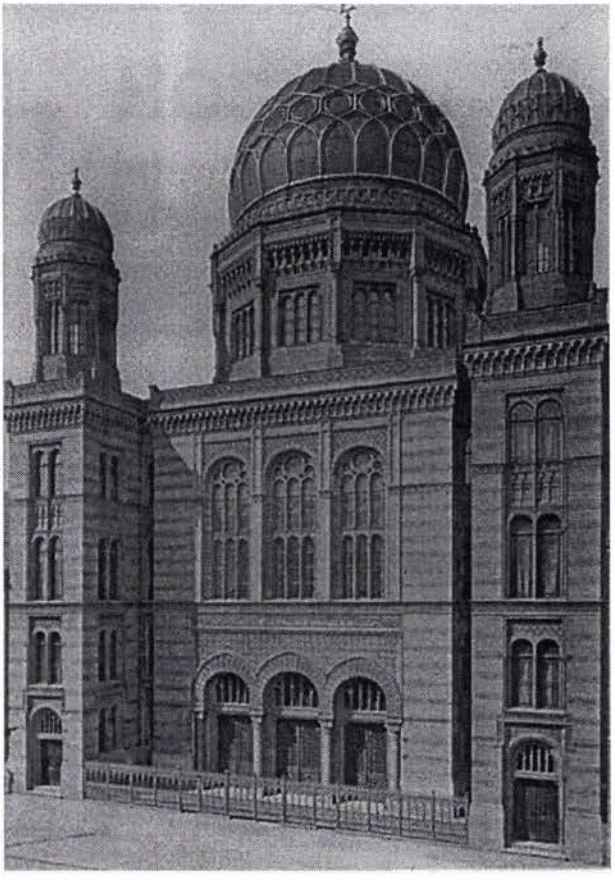
Eventually, Julius' father-in-law, Löbel Schottländer, appointed him manager of the distribution of the famous Karlsbad mineral water, of which Löbel was a lessee. Julius held this position for about ten years and then moved from Breslau to Berlin, where he lived as a pensioner *(Rentier)*.

Julius was an intelligent man. He invested his capital well - partly in real estate - and he knew how to increase his money. He became a wealthy man. He owned several houses in Berlin, his own residence (a patrician house at Alsenstrasse 11), and some large apartment houses, such as the one at Müllerstrasse 1, which survived World War II. When I went to see it after the war, many years ago, it was an old run-down apartment house, in East Berlin, a typical so-called *Mietskaserne* (rent barrack) with several workshops in the various *Hinterhöfe* (backyards), inhabitated by *Proletarier* (poor working class people).

In 1909, when my father Fritz met my mother Leonie for the first time, in Marienbad, my grandfather Emil L. Meyer lost no time and commissioned a special confidential report to obtain detailed information about my father and his family. This report, written by the firm Salomonski & Co. in Berlin, two and a half years before my parents' actual wedding, is thirty pages long. It contains very valuable information about the Oliven and Schottländer families, of which I partly availed myself for this family chronicle. In this report my grandfather Julius' capital was estimated in 1909 to be over two million marks.

Julius Oliven was a member of the board of directors of the liberal *Neue Synagoge* on Oranienburger Strasse, the largest and most beautiful synagogue in Berlin and one of the most magnificent in Europe. Seating three thousand worshippers, it was a majestic building, in Moorish style, with golden cupolas, inaugurated in 1866. This liberal synagogue had an organ. As a young boy, I often prayed there on the High Holy Days, sometimes going together with my mother. On November 9, 1938, during the Kristallnacht, the entrance room of this beautiful synagogue was torched and the building slightly damaged. A very courageous local district police officer, Wilhelm Krützfeld, saved the synagogue which stood under monument protection from burning down and complete destruction.

During World War II, in 1943, the synagogue was heavily damaged during British air attacks. After the end of the war, the building, situated in the Eastern sector of Berlin, lay in ruins for many years. It was partially demolished by the authorities of the German Democratic Republic at the end of the 1950s. Seldi and I visited the place various times, being able to see it from the outside only. It was a pity to see this synagogue, once so beautiful, laying devastated and decaying. Finally, in 1988 a foundation was established, *Neue Synagoge Berlin - Centrum Judaicum* - a center for the care and conservation of Jewish culture. After the fall of the infamous wall that separated West and East Berlin for many years, the front part of the synagogue was restored to its original former beauty. What used to be the synagogue itself is now a large field of stones with a stick to mark the spot where the *aron hakodesh*, the Torah ark, once stood. On May 8, 1995, exactly fifty years after the end of World War II and the Nazi regime, the restored front part of this former synagogue was festively reinaugurated. Today the *Centrum Judaicum* contains a museum, archives, expositions and a library.



Berlin's majestic synagogue on Oranienburger Strasse, inaugurated 1866



LUISE OLIVEN NÉE SCHOTTLÄNDER - (1851-1935)

my paternal grandmother

My grandmother Luise (also sometimes spelled Louise), called "Lieschen", was born on October 30, 1851 in Münsterberg, Lower Silesia. She was the daughter of Löbel and Henriette Schottländer. She married my grandfather Julius Oliven in Breslau in 1872. Luise died on May 30, 1935 in Berlin, twenty-five years after her husband Julius.

In the 1930s Luise moved to her sister Paula Heymann's house at Lessingstrasse 49 in the Tiergarten district of Berlin. The part of this street where my grandmother lived has disapppeared from the map now. Luise lived on the upper floor of that old house. When we were children, my sister Suse and I often visited our grandmother, accompanied by our governess.

Her bathroom was about the size of the living room. Probably the toilet was built in later on. This bathroom contained the family library. I remember that, as a boy, I spent some time there browsing through the books. Once I came across the *Volkstümliche Geschichte der Juden* (Popular history of the Jews), by Heinrich Graetz (1817-1891), the 3-volume abbreviated edition. Graetz's complete *History of the Jews* consists of eleven volumes. I got so interested in this work, starting to read it in the bathroom, that Luise gave it to me as a present, to my great satisfaction.

I also remember very well that in the living room the sofa and easy chairs were always covered with white linen sheets, either to avoid being washed out by the sun or getting dusty. The shutters and curtains always remained closed, only to be opened when some guests were coming, and then, of course, the linen covers were removed. Even the white porcelain cage of the canary, called *Piepmatz*, was covered with a white linen sheet at night, so that next morning the canary's sleep would not be disturbed by the daylight.

During the summer Luise often took us to Charlottenhof, a nearby garden restaurant in the Tiergarten district. She was easily frightened, like my father Fritz. From her house to our apartment we had to ride through three stations of the S-Bahn (a city train in Berlin), accompanied by our governess. Before we even returned home, she had already phoned to inquire whether we had arrived safely.

Luise was very kind-hearted. On Sunday mornings while she and her husband Julius were having breakfast, a worker - a tenant from their tenement house - might show up, complaining about a leaky roof and telling them he could not pay the rent because his wife was in the hospital and his child was sick. Luise would always insist that her husband Julius agree to postpone payment.

Luise was a very religious woman. Every morning and evening she would turn east towards Jerusalem to recite the *Shema* prayer ("*Keriat Shema leinen*"). On Pesach and Hanukkah, the family would gather in her home, for a festive dinner. After the Hanukkah prayers, Luise used to distribute gifts to each member of the Family.

On Shabbat Luise used to go to the religious service at the nearby liberal synagogue on Levetzowstrasse, in the Moabit district. This synagogue, which seated over two thousand worshippers, was inaugurated in 1914. In the pogrom night of November 9, 1938 and later on with the war bombardments the synagogue was badly damaged. In the early 1940s this ravaged building became one of the concentration points where the Berlin Jews were taken to from their homes in Berlin, usually in the late evening hours. From there they were then deported in mass transports to the extermination camps in the East. Today a tall memorial stands at the place of the former synagogue, in honor of the Jews deported from this place to Auschwitz and other extermination camps.

Julius and Luise are buried at the Jewish cemetery at Schönhauser Allee 23-25, which is situated in former East Berlin. This cemetery contained about 22,500 individual and 750 family graves in 1880. It was inaugurated in 1827 and officially closed in 1880, but burials still took place sometimes, especially in family graves, until the 1970s. The cemetery was badly damaged by the Nazis and by bombs, but a lot of restoration work has been done. In 1975 it was classified as a historical monument.

This same cemetery also contains a small monument for "illegal" Berlin Jews who hid under one of these graves during World War II. They were discovered by the SS at the end of 1944 and were hanged from trees in this old cemetery.

The cemetery is not being properly maintained; it is crowded with large trees and vegetation, making it difficult to find the tombs. The tombs of Julius and Luise Oliven, my grandparents, are characterized by two high obelisks of black Swedish granite. Luise's obelisk had fallen over and I had it put back in place some years ago by an East Berlin stonemason. The number of this *Erbbegräbnis* (family grave) is no. 623. It is located in division "L" in the third row from the path running between divisions "A" and "L". A map of the cemetery is published on page 311 of the *Wegweiser durch das Jüdische Berlin.*

The inscriptions on my grandparents' graves are very significant. Julius Oliven's headstone bears the following inscription:

> *Wer im Gedächtnis seiner Lieben lebt, der ist nicht tot*
> (He who lives on in the memory of his loved ones is not truly dead)

> On Luise's tombstone is written:

> *Ich bin nicht tot, in höheren Sphären leb ich weiter*
> (I am not dead, I live on in higher spheres)

Whenever Seldi and I are in Berlin, we visit my grandparents' graves. On one of these visits we met Dr. Gerhard Gönner, a high-school teacher, and his friend Alice, both non-Jews, who had come to know this cemetery. Since then Gerhard has become a good friend of ours and also of our daughter Miriam, who lives in Berlin at present. We have traveled together in Europe, and Miriam has visited Gerhard in his hometown of Bietigheim, near Stuttgart.



Tombs of Julius and Luise Oliven

PART III - THE SCHOTTLÄNDER FAMILY

Regarding the Schottländer genealogy, there are various sources of which I could avail myself. First there is the fifty-nine-page manuscript "THE ORIGINS OF THE FAMILIES SCHOTTLAENDER." (The title page is in English, the remainder in German). It contains genealogical tables of six generations of all known persons by the name of Schottländer (also spelled Schottlaender), in Germany and throughout the world, compiled by my friend, Lars Menk, in Berlin. Lars Menk is a young amateur genealogist, who undertook the research of the Schottländer Family. Seldi and I met Lars in Berlin when staying there.

Lars' genealogical research on the various Schottländer families represents an arduous effort and enormous work which enabled him to trace the hundreds of Schottländers listed by him and obtain the data reproduced in his manuscript. A great deal of valuable information and data on the Schottländers, related to our family, was obtained from this important source.

Then there is the report I mentioned previously, on the Oliven and Schottländer Families, commissioned by my maternal grandfather, Emil L. Meyer, in 1909. There are also two rudimentary incomplete genealogical trees of the Schottländer family, not showing any dates, one made by Leo Schottländer and a very similar one made by my father, Fritz Oliven, who also drew up a genealogical tree of the same kind for the Oliven family. Both Leo as well as my father were grandsons of Löbel Schottländer.

Another up-to-date but not yet completed computerized genealogical tree of the Schottländer Family is presently being organized by Hans Schottlaender, Munich, a great-great-grandson of Löbel Schottländer. He is very interested in the Schottländer family genealogy.

There is also a fourteen-page manuscript, *"Familie David Schottländer"* [referring to Löbel's father Israel David Schottländer], no date mentioned, probably written in the 1940s, by Löbel Schottländer's great-granddaughter, Lisbeth Ledermann, a granddaughter of Auguste Oliven née Schottländer. A copy of this manuscript is deposited at the Leo Baeck Institute in New York. It deals with the rise of Löbel Schottländer and his family, and also with the Schottländer Family Foundation, and gives other relevant information. Lisbeth, at the end of her interesting report, points out:

> "After having changed from an orthodox to a liberal Judaism, the family went on preserving its faith and remained united. Only in the younger generation there occurred secessions from the Jewish community, conversions to the Christian religion and mixed marriages. This resulted in certain divisions and estrangements. Only when Hitler came to power, they remembered their Jewish descent again."

It is interesting to note that while conversions of members of the Oliven family were practically non-existent and very rare in the Meyer family, conversions in the younger generation of Schottländers were much more frequent and were quite a shock for the older generation. Nowadays, many of the Schottländers or their descendants are no longer Jewish, but either Protestants or Catholics or belong to no religion.

1st GENERATION

ISRAEL [BEN] DAVID SCHOTTLÄNDER - (1775-1827)

my great-great-grandfather

About the origins of the Families Schottländer, Lars Menk points out:

> "Different families have chosen the family name Schottlaender after the small town where they or their ancestors once had lived, Alt-Schottland, a suburb of Danzig, in West Prussia. Jews were not allowed to settle in Danzig, the important commercial center, from the 16th to the 19th century. So they moved to the nearest possible places, the outlying districts. Alt-Schottland - named after the Scottish sailors who had founded it in the Middle Ages - became the largest Jewish community [in the region around Danzig]. Until the 19th century it was generally called Schottland.
>
> "This community was presumably founded by Jews who were expelled from the [province] Mark Brandenburg (Germany) in 1573 - the legend tells that there had been three brothers. An important part of the population might have been made up of survivors of the Chmielnicki pogroms (1648-1656). During the 17th century many merchants also recognized the growing importance of Danzig for Baltic sea trade. So they moved to Alt-Schottland and the other ghetto-villages around Danzig. Not a few of these merchants might have been *Sephardim*, the Jews who had been expelled from the Iberian Peninsula after 1492 and had settled in the trade centers of that area, like Amsterdam and Hamburg.
>
> "In 1710 the Jews were expelled from Alt-Schottland by the bishop of Kujawia, but the *Hevra Kaddisha*, the funeral society, of Alt-Schottland has kept their protocol book since 1724 - which indicates a larger, organized *Kehillah*, or community, at that time. In 1772, Alt-Schottland came under Prussian rule. A census conducted at that time showed a number of 1257 Jewish persons dwelling in the suburbs of Danzig.
>
> "The size of the population had become a problem for the poorer Jews - competition was overwhelming - so that there were many who tried to find their luck away from the place of their birth. Often, the only 'thing' they were able to take with them was the name of the place where they had been born or where their families had lived for a while."

Glückel of Hameln (1646-1724), my maternal distant relative, to whom I referred previously already, mentioned the place "Schottland very near Danzig" in her famous memoirs. In footnote no. 18 of this book Rabbi Dr. Freudenthal points out:

> "In the suburb Alt-Schottland, which was founded by Scottish sailors, there was a sizable Jewish community before Prussian times, when no Jews were allowed to reside in Danzig. Even later on, when the Jews had moved into the city, the Alt-Schottland community was also the most important of the city's five separate [Jewish] communities. These were only recently joined into one united community of Danzig."

The great competition among the poorer Jews of Alt-Schottland probably was the reason why David Israel Schottländer (who was born in Alt-Schottland about 1735 and lived there until 1772) and his family moved to Zülz in Upper Silesia. David Israel Schottländer presumably was Israel David Schottländer's father. The Schottländers in Alt-Schottland were not wealthy but highly esteemed.

Lars Menk, in his latest, 1998 version of the "Families Schottlaender" mentions, however, that it is not certain that David Israel Schottländer, who dealt in second-hand clothes, was the father of Israel David Schottländer. Israel David's father also might have been, according to Lars, the *Schutzjude* (protected Jew) David Joachim Schottländer, who was born in Alt Schottland about 1730. In 1772 he dealt in old gold and silver. Israel David's father also might have been - always according to Lars Menk - the banker David Marcus Schottländer. Both David Joachim and David Marcus lived in Alt-Schottland in 1772.

I personally, however, believe that Israel [ben] David's father most probably was David [ben] Israel. *(Ben* means "son" or "son of" in Hebrew). It was not uncommon at that time to name a boy after his grandfather, followed by his father's name. This can be noted, for instance, in my mother's family. The son of the court agent Herz [ben] David (1699-1788) was David [ben] Herz (1728-1791). (See Part I - The Sieskind Family.)

Israel David Schottländer was born in Zülz in 1775. The town of Zülz (now known by its Polish name Biala) was a so-called *Judenreservat*, a kind of open city where Jews had been permitted to settle since the Middle Age, same as in the neighboring town Hotzenplotz. These, as well as Glogau, were the only towns in Silesia where Jews were tolerated. They enjoyed a special status and constituted privileged communities. While in the rest of Silesia the Jews were expelled in the sixteenth century, they could only remain in Glogau and Zülz. Since Zülz came into existence in the fourteenth century, no expulsion of the Jewish population ever took place there. The Hebrew name of Zülz therefore justly is:

מקום יזדיק - *makom tzaddik* - the place of the Just

Zülz was the only city in the Holy Roman Reich where the Jewish population exceeded the number of Christian inhabitants. In 1782, 1061 Jews lived in Zülz, as compared to 961 Christians. Later on, when in 1740-1745 most of Silesia fell under Prussian rule and the restrictions of domicile were lifted, though in 1746 Jews were again banished, many Jews left Zülz and other small communities to establish in the Silesian capital Breslau (now Wroclaw), which was a big center of commerce and had a large Jewish community. While in 1782 over one thousand Jews lived in Zülz, in 1850 their number was about 500 and in 1910, twenty only. In the 1920s only two Jewish families were left, consisting of nine persons.

Around 1803 Israel David married Bertha Apt, born about 1780 in Münsterberg, Lower Silesia (now known by its Polish name Ziebice), where at that time only eighteen Jewish families lived. Bertha died very young, about 1812. Due to his marriage, Israel David moved from his home town Zülz to Münsterberg in 1803. As all Prussian Jews before the emancipation, Israel David had to obtain a certificate of tolerance which granted him the right to stay in the city and to engage in commerce. Israel David is mentioned in the list of Jews who were established in Münsterberg in 1803. In 1811 Israel David already owned a small house there, which he had bought for 250 talers, and he enjoyed a certain wealth.

On March 11, 1812, the Prussian Edict of Emancipation of the Jews was promulgated by King Friedrich Wilhelm III. It enabled them to apply for Prussian citizenship and also to choose their place of residence. On the other hand, this edict obliged the Prussian Jews to adopt surnames (instead of the patronymics usually used by them until that time). Later on, in the reaction following the fall of Napoleon, many of the concessions granted to the Jews in 1812 were rescinded or diminished in varying degrees. Israel David and his family are shown on the list of families, dated March 24, 1812, who received Prussian citizenship from the Münsterberg Municipal Council on that day. On September 25 of the same year, he declared before the same Council that he wanted to keep his family name Schottländer.

Israel David and Bertha Schottländer had two sons, Löbel (Chaim Leib) and Marcus, both born in Münsterberg. Löbel, my great-grandfather, was born on May 16, 1809 and his brother Marcus, around 1811. Israel David was an optician. He worked with optical instruments, spectacles, etc., which he did not sell only in Münsterberg, but also at markets and fairs. Later on, in 1818, he established an optical store in Breslau. It is told that once, as a young man, before 1796, the year the Czarina Catherine II of Russia died, when Löbel still was an itinerant salesman, he sold a pair of glasses to the Czarina, who was on a visit. When she could not see clearly when trying on these glasses, he pulled his shirt out of his pants to clean the lenses. Another story says that when the monument of Fredrick the Great was inaugurated in Breslau, Frederick's grandson, King Friedrich Wilhelm III, came to the city and had a pair of glasses bought from Israel David.

After the death of his first wife, Bertha, in 1812, Israel David married again. His second wife was Händel (Hanne) Abraham, born on July 7, 1783, died on March 18, 1828, in Münsterberg. She brought into this marriage her daughter Adelheid, from her first marriage, born around 1809. Israel David and Händel had two sons, both born in Münsterberg: Abraham (called Adolf), born about 1812, died on July 25, 1865 in Breslau, and Pincus, born about 1817. Adolf was a linen merchant. He married Dorothea Wollstein (born in 1821) in Breslau in 1843. Pincus was a merchant. He married Franziska Wollstein (1814-1867) in Breslau in 1837.

As Israel's second wife, Händel, treated her two stepsons, Löbel and Marcus, from Löbel's first marriage, without any love, they were sent away to be brought up by the sisters of Löbel's first wife, Bertha. Löbel was sent to *Muhme* (aunt) Malke, married to Schlesinger, who came to Münsterberg from Weidenau near Troppau. Marcus was sent to his aunt, the wife of Benjamin Werner. He married Bertha Werner, Benjamin's daughter, born on January 27, 1820. Marcus entered his father-in-law's reputable wholesale textile store B. Werner, in Breslau which later on he and after his death, which occurred before 1899, his widow took over.

According to his death certificate, in my possession, Israel David died of *Bauchwassersucht*, ascites, an accumulation of fluid in the abdomen. He died at the Jewish Hospital in Breslau on January 27, 1827, at the age of fifty-one. He was buried at the old Jewish cemetery on Claasenstrasse which does not exist any more.

BERNHARD SCHOTTLÄNDER - (1895-1920)
A COMMUNIST LEADER IN THE FAMILY

A great-grandson of Löbel Schottländer's brother, Marcus, was BERNHARD SCHOTTLÄNDER, born in Breslau in 1895. Bernhard was assassinated in Breslau on March 2, 1920, during the counter-revolutionary monarchical *Kapp Putsch*. He was an opponent of the war, affiliated with the Independent Social Democrats. He founded and directed the *Arbeiter Zeitung*, published in Breslau, the workers' newspaper which later became the official organ of the Communist Party in Silesia and bore his name as founder on the first page, under its title. He was jailed during the *Kapp Putsch* and slain by the escort crew two days later during his transport to the Carlowitz barracks. His body was thrown into the Oder river. Only after many weeks was his corpse found and buried at the Jewish cemetery on Lohestrasse (now Ul. Slezna) in Breslau. When I was in Silesia in 1932, I came across the mentioned *Arbeiter Zeitung* and was surprised and touched to find the name of its founder, Bernhard Schottländer - a member of the Schottländer family - printed on the first page, with the indication that he had been murdered.

2nd GENERATION



Löbel Schottländer



Henriette Schottländer née Grossmann

LÖBEL SCHOTTLÄNDER - (1809-1880)

my great-grandfather

Israel David's son Löbel (Chaim Leib) was born on May 16, 1809 in Münsterberg, Lower Silesia. He died on April 3, 1880 in Breslau. On November 27, 1834, in Münsterberg, he married Henriette (Jettel) Grossmann, born there on June 24, 1817, died in Breslau on January 19, 1894. Jettel's parents were the merchant Samuel Grossmann and his wife Beate née Steiner. Samuel Grossmann's parents were the merchant Berel Isaak Grossmann and his wife Veronica née Salomon. Beate's parents were the book printer Naftali Steiner and his wife Jettel née Aron, who married in Münsterberg in 1813. They lived in Dyhrenfurth (also spelled Dyhernfurth), Silesia. On his sixtieth birthday, on March 9, 1873, Samuel Grossmann became honorary citizen of the city of Münsterberg.

Löbel, who stood six feet tall, was an imposing personality. He and Henriette had eleven children, four sons and seven daughters. Four of Löbel's daughters, who were married and had very young children, died relatively young, before him. According to Lisbeth Ledermann, Löbel therefore did not allow his sons-in-law to remarry, because he himself had suffered so much as a young boy because of his mother's early death and being treated so badly by his stepmother.

Löbel started out as a small grain dealer in Münsterberg. He bought all kind of produce from the farmers in the countryside, selling it at the market in Breslau, the capital of Silesia. He prospered and was able to buy valuable real estate, as the restrictions on Jews buying land had been lifted after the edict of emancipation in Prussia in 1812. In 1850 Löbel bought a large estate with a beautiful house in Münsterberg, so that his large family would have a good residence. This house, called the *Schottländergut* (the Schottländer estate) remained family property for many decades and later on was sold by his heirs to the Münsterberg municipality. He also bought various large *Rittergüter*, manor estates, and other large tracts of land in Silesia, which he farmed profitably. In summer he and his family lived at one of these manor estates. His estate was worth many millions of marks. It was administrated by his son Bruno

and one of Bruno's brothers. In 1860 Löbel and his family moved to Breslau, where his eldest son, Julius, the owner of mills there, already lived.

Breslau was the third-largest Jewish community in Germany, after Berlin and Frankfurt. In 1932, Breslau had a Jewish population of 25,000, four percent of the total population. It was a very important Jewish cultural center. The Jewish Theological Seminary, founded in 1854, donated by Jonas Fraenckel, was the first rabbinical seminary in Germany. It existed until 1938. Rabbinical studies took seven years. One of the teachers at the seminary was the well known Jewish historian, Heinrich Graetz. Many famous personalities were among the Jews born in Breslau, such as Heinrich Graetz and Ferdinand Lassalle (1825-1864), who was killed in a duel. He founded the *Allgemeiner Deutscher Arbeiterverein*, the forerunner of the Social Democratic Party in Germany. The Breslau Jews also played a very important role in commerce, industry and science.

Löbel's interests also extended to other activities. He owned brickyards and was a major partner of the Upper Silesian Portland cement factory in Oppeln, as well as of many other industrial enterprises. He also obtained a lease on all navigation on the left side of the Oder River and owned an Oder navigation line. Besides land, he also bought many houses. In 1864 he constructed a beautiful house for himself at the newly built Tauentzienplatz in Breslau. He and his family lived on the ground floor of this house at Tauentzienplatz 1A.

In 1866, Löbel and his sons undertook the purveyance of part of the Prussian Army when it crossed Silesia in the Austro-Prussian war. From these important supplies Löbel obtained much profit, which increased a few years later with large army purveyances during the German-French (also called Franco-Prussian) war of 1870/71.

Lisbeth Ledermann comments:

> "Documents are kept in the family archive, in which the commander of one of the Prussian armies confirms how excellent the supply of the army was during the campaigns of 1864 and 1866 against Austria, made by Löbel when the army passed through Silesia. Löbel and his sons were in a position to satisfy the great needs of the army, due to the manor estates and mills they owned. They supplied cattle, corn and also spirits from their own distilleries at the manor estates. At the outbreak of the German-French war in 1870 the army command again entrusted part of the purveyance to the same family, with full confidence.
>
> "As the head of the family, Loebel was in charge of all business. Two of his sons and two sons-in-law accompanied the army during the war. Persons of his trust were in charge of the efficient supply of the army. As experienced farmers the Schottländers guaranteed best possible provisions. Already prosperous, they now became quite wealthy. Many possibilities in commerce and industry opened up for them. They made good use of their wealth and were very charitable. Loebel had one thing in mind: to leave his family and coming generations well taken care of after his death."

Löbel was a yearly guest of the Karlsbad (now Karlovy Vary) spa in former Bohemia (after World War II part of Czechoslovakia). It was the most elegant spa in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, patronized by many famous Hassidic *Wunderrebbes* and their followers, dressed

in their typical garb. Löbel - as all other spa guests - would drink the famous Karlsbad mineral water from the fountain several times a day. While doing so, he came upon the idea that the bottling, distribution and export of the water would be a very profitable business since the raw material, the mineral water itself, did not cost anything. He obtained information as to the person who was the lessee. It was Count Mattoni, from Gieshübel, who had held the lease for a long time already. Löbel approached him, proposing to become a partner in the business. Count Mattoni obviously declined, as he did not need a partner at all in this profitable business. Löbel then waited until the end of the fifteen-year period when the lease lapsed. The amount paid for the lease by Count Mattoni was kept secret, but Löbel succeeded somehow in obtaining this confidential information. At the time of the next bid in 1872, Löbel submitted a higher offer and consequently obtained the lease for the sole distribution and export of the Karlsbad mineral water throughout the entire world.

It was a very profitable business indeed and a great source of income. The amount the Schottländer Family paid for the lease was very low in the beginning; later on it was increased to 25,000 Gulden. Afterwards, the amount was increased to 75,000 Gulden and in 1909 it was already 280,000 Gulden. This was due to the fact that after Löbel had closed the deal with the Karlsbad administration, many competitors also started submitting bids, at the time the bid was to be renewed. Notwithstanding, the business remained very attractive.

As Löbel always did, after starting a new business and developing it in the beginning, he then passed it on to members of his family, so that he could dedicate himself to new business. He handed over the management of the *Karlsbader Mineralwasser Versendung* to his son-in law, my grandfather Julius Oliven, who took care of this business for ten years. It was then taken over by other members of the Schottländer and Oliven Families. Löbel gave donations to the Karlsbad Jewish community and also donated free water cures in Karlsbad to needy women of the Breslau Jewish community.

For sixty-six years, from 1872 until 1938, when the Nazis invaded Czechoslovakia, the Karlsbad lease remained in the hands of the Schottländer Family. My father belonged to its supervisory-board. The Löbel Schottländer Karlsbad mineral water distribution was established at Karlsbad and later on had its main office in Berlin, the Löbel Schottländer Vertriebsgesellschaft, directed in the 1930s by Ludwig Oliven, a son of Löbel's eldest daughter, Auguste, marrried to Jacob Oliven. When the Nazis invaded Czechoslovakia in 1938, they confiscated the Company in Karlsbad and forcefully liquidated the firm in Berlin at the end of 1938. After the war, the Czechoslovak Republic declared the firm in Karlsbad former Nazi property and refused to return it to its rightful owners - all the heirs of Löbel Schottländer, including my father, except for the ones that had previously sold their part of the property. The German tribunal also denied restitution to the distributors of Karlsbad mineral water, Löbel Schottländer Vertriebsgesellschaft, which had its main office in Berlin.

As far as I know, only two great-granddaughters of Löbel were able to obtain any compensation from the German government, after the end of the war, for the Karlsbad firm (not the one in Berlin). The two heirs were Hortense Schottländer, who lived in Nairobi, Kenya, and Lotte Lewin, who lived in Pacific Palisades, California. Both requested *Lastenausgleich* (onus compensation), which was the proper way to do it. My father, on the other hand, did not get any compensation, because his lawyer had requested *Wiedergutmachung* (restitution), which was denied, instead of onus compensation. By the time I became aware of this, many years later, long after my father's death, the deadline for the onus compensation process had expired.

Löbel stipulated in his will that his widow Henriette should receive 3/5 of the profit from the Karlsbad mineral water distribution and export and his other heirs the remaining 2/5 and that his whole fortune should be distributed among his heirs only after Henriette's death. Löbel's inheritance amounted to many million marks. Part of it consisted of very valuable estates in Silesia.

In 1877 Löbel established a Family Foundation, the *Löbel and Henriette Schottländer'sche Familien Stiftung*, with an initial capital of 250,000 talers (1 taler = 3 marks). Lisbeth Ledermann mentions an amount of one million marks. Löbel's will contained the provision that the capital of the Family Foundation could only be touched after it increased, with interest, to half a million talers. This sum was reached within a few years, as the capital was very well invested. Besides, Löbel's direct descendants were very well-off and therefore did not have to avail themselves of the funds of the foundation.The purpose of the foundation was to protect Löbel's descendants against any emergency and to support needy family members, only direct descendants of Löbel. The foundation also supported needy brides, giving them dowries, and paid student expenses to Löbel's descendants.

Thousands of marks were granted yearly to members of the family for scientific studies and research, or helping them to get established, without the recipients necessarily having to be needy. Large amounts were granted to members of the family for health purposes, paying their expenses at spas or sending them to warm climates, sometimes for several years. Later on, during the Nazi regime, the foundation also helped family members to prepare their emigration. There was also an auxiliary foundation which owned various houses in Breslau where single Jewish women received free or very cheap dwellings. Working women or elder ones found a proper home there. In 1938 the Nazis closed these houses and the women who lived there had to abandon them immediately. As the capital of these two foundations was invested mainly in real estate, they even managed to withstand the catastrophic inflation in Germany in 1923.

From 1880, the year Löbel died, every year on his birthday, May 16, the family got together for a *Familientag*, a Family Reunion. One of its purposes was to keep the family united. Usually it took place at the splendid castle Hartlieb, near Breslau, which belonged to Löbel's son, Julius, who maintained his own synagogue there. First there was a commemorative service at the synagogue for deceased family members, followed by a visit to the Jewish cemetery on Lohestrasse. Afterwards, the trustees of the Family Foundation got together at Julius' town house in Breslau. A financial report was presented, followed by a discussion of the report and a vote regarding the distribution of funds to needy family members. Only Löbel's direct descendants had the right to vote, while spouses who were related through marriage only were excluded from voting. The last of these Family Days, the only one in which my sister Susi and I participated, took place at our apartment in Berlin, at the end of 1938 or early 1939, after the so-called *Kristallnacht.* The meeting of the Family Foundation was always followed by a meeting of the trustees of the Karlsbader Mineralwasser Versendung.

In 1909, on the occasion of what would have been Löbel's hundredth birthday, a gold coin, called "Löbel d'or," with Löbel's head in relief, was minted. It was presented as a gift to each of Löbel's direct descendants, who attended that year's Family Day, on May 16. My sister, Suse, owned one of these coins, which she had received from our grandmother, Luise, Löbel's daughter. However, shortly before our emigration, a new Nazi law was issued in February 1939, according to which all Jews in Germany were obliged to deliver to the Nazi authorities,

within two weeks, all jewels, objects of gold, silver, platinum, pearls, precious stones, etc. The only exception were gold wedding rings. So this "Löbel d'or" also had to be surrendered by our family at that time, together with many other precious family jewels.

Sigurd Schottländer, a great-grandson of Löbel, who lives in Basel, knew of my great interest in our family history and everything that is related to it, and presented me with the same coin, which was in his possession. This "Löbel d'or" coin is now prominently displayed in a crystal cabinet in our dining room.

Later on, during World War II, the property and capital of the Schottländer Family Foundations - as well as of all other Jewish foundations - was confiscated by the Nazis. Many years after the end of the war, the German government made restitution for the Schottländer Family Foundation in the small amount of about 25,000 marks (a capital of 18,000 marks plus accrued interest). The restitution process had lasted for over twenty years and was finally settled in a judicial agreement at the *Landgericht*, the provincial tribunal, in Berlin in 1978. The principal cannot be touched, but the yearly interest of about 1,200 marks reverts to Sigurd Schottländer's daughter, Franziska, who was a single mother at the time and had to raise and support her daughter all by herself. Sigurd, and before him his father Leo, a grandson of Löbel Schottländer and a trustee of the Schottländer Family Foundation, were in charge of the very lengthy restitution process.

3rd AND FURTHER GENERATIONS

LÖBEL AND HENRIETTE SCHOTTLÄNDER'S DESCENDANTS

My great-grandparents, Löbel and Henriette, had eleven children, all born in Münsterberg, Lower Silesia:

1. **Julius**, born on March 16, 1835 - died on January 2, 1911
2. **Auguste**, born on November 5, 1836
3. **Lina**, born on January 29, 1838 - died on October 24, 1879
4. **Bruno**, born on July 9, 1839 - died on December 5, 1907
5. **David**, born on April 1, 1841 - died on August 26, 1841
6. **Dorothea** (called Dora), born on January 1, 1843
7. **Salo**, born on June 19, 1844 - died on April 2, 1920
8. **Bertha**, born on August 13, 1845 - died on April 18, 1865
9. **Malwine**, born on October 1, 1846
10. **Paula**, died on June 20, 1926
11. **Luise** (my grandmother), born on October 30, 1851 - died on May 30, 1935

The descendants of Klaus Oliven's great-grandparents

LÖBEL SCHOTTLÄNDER (1809-1880) ∞ HENRIETTE GROSSMANN (1817-1894)

1 - JULIUS SCHOTTLÄNDER

SLOMOVSKA		**ANNA GALEWSKI**		
Clara ∞ Hugo Goldschmidt 1. Hilde ∞ von Clarville 2. Victor 3. Ernst	Emma ∞ Alfred Marckwald 1. Róza Elly ∞ Anne Krüger 2. Fritz	Paul ∞ Milla Schlesinger 1. Fredy ∞ Inge Lemcke Hans ∞ a) Hilde Sam aa) Alfred bb) Hans-Peter b) Sabine Jaesrich Sarah Dorothea 2. Dora ∞ von Tepper Laski 3. Ard-Heinrich (Heinz) ∞ Gerda Deutsch ∞ Denny (Heinz, his wife Gerda and their four months old son Denny died in the Holocaust)	Rósza ∞ I. Pringsheim Hans 2. Isenbarth	Gertrud ∞ Walter Sobernheim 1. Lotte 2. Frigene 3. Martin

The descendants of Klaus Oliven's great-grandparents

LÖBEL SCHOTTLÄNDER (1809-1880) ∞ HENRIETTE GROSSMANN (1817-1894)

2 - AUGUSTE SCHOTTLÄNDER ∞ JACOB OLIVEN

Albert	Max	Paula	Ludwig	Hulda	Oscar	Malwine
∞	∞		∞	∞	∞	∞
Clara Levy (no children)	Paula Gernsheim | Fritz ∞ Hilda Böhm | 1.Eleanor 2. Conrad ∞ Roberta Bonnema | a)Catherine b) Laura Anne ∞ Stephen Silberfarb | 1 daughter c) Gregory	(mentally retarded)	Else Morawetz (committed suicide upon being informed of her deportation) | 1. Robert 2. Lotte ∞ Henry Grünfeld | a) Thomas b) Luisa	Theodor Ehrlich | 1. Lisbeth ∞ Georg Ledermann | a) Elly b) Ernst 2. Alice (perished in Auschwitz) ∞ Moritz Morawetz | a) Ludwig b) Franz c) Hella	Sonny Löwe | Gerald ∞ Hedi Fischer (no children)	Edmund Heller | Walter (Malwine drowned during WW II. She was on the way to her son Walter in New York, when her ship was hit by a German sub- marine.)

The descendants of Klaus Oliven's great-grandparents

LÖBEL SCHOTTLÄNDER (1809-1880) ∞ HENRIETTE GROSSMANN (1817-1894)

3 - LINA SCHOTTLÄNDER ∞ LOUIS PACULLY

Siegfried	Emil	Adele	Georg	Rudolf	Richard
∞ Elfriede Berliner | Lina ∞ Georg Brotzen | 1. Ursula ∞ a) Ernst Rosenthal | Stephen b) Frank Laurens 2. Franz	no data	∞ Ludwig Brieger | 1. Walter 2. Käthe ∞ Lothar Schlesinger | Hans ∞ Yolanda Ibañez (no children) (Lothar, Käthe and their son Hans emigrated to Brazil. Yolanda was born in Porto Alegre)	no data	no data	no data

The descendants of Klaus Oliven's great-grandparents

LÖBEL SCHOTTLÄNDER (1809-1880) ∞ HENRIETTE GROSSMANN (1817-1894)

4. BRUNO SCHOTTLÄNDER
∞
BERTHA HAUSMANN

Curt	Richard	Felix	Martha	Grete
∞		∞	∞	∞
Elise Elias (Curt died in Theresienstadt)	(committed suicide in Rio de Janeiro, at the age of nineteen)	Lilly von Fischel	Aegidy (perished in Auschwitz)	Max Graetzer (Grete died in Theresien-stadt)
|		|		|
Hortense (Hortense was not married. She died in Nairobi. She left her whole fortune to charitable institutions in Israel.)		1. Erwin Robert (Umberto) ∞ 1 son 1 daughter 2. Richard (committed suicide in Buenos Aires)		Günther Richard ∞ Klara Milch | Marianne ∞ Joel Yancey | 1. Will ∞ Caroline Marie Gabriel 2. Hans Günther ∞ Miriam Ruth Michel 3. Reinhard ∞ Mary Alice Carroll

6. DORA SCHOTTLÄNDER
∞
COHN

Róza Cohn
∞
Herrmann Feige (shot by the Gestapo)

The descendants of Klaus Oliven's great-grandparents

LÖBEL SCHOTTLÄNDER (1809-1880) ∞ HENRIETTE GROSSMANN (1817-1894)

5. DAVID (died four months old)

8. BERTHA (died unmarried at the age of nineteen)

7. SALO SCHOTTLÄNDER
(1844-1920)
∞
RÓZA BRAUNSTEI N
(1854-1939)

Leo	Käthe	Victor
∞	∞	∞
Elisabeth Lissack	Georg Marck	Sella Henrici
|	|	|
Sigurd	Albert	Nora
∞	∞	∞
Heidi Linder	Ritter	Godofredo Stutzin
|		|
Franzisca		
|		
1.Noemi Jöelle 2. Natalie		1. Andrés 2. Michael

9. MALWINE SCHOTTLÄNDER
∞
MORITZ KORN

Erich	Arthur
∞	∞
Betty Köhler	1. Meta
	|
	Werner
	2. Elisabeth Friedländer

The descendants of Klaus Oliven's great-grandparents

LÖBEL SCHOTTLÄNDER (1809-1880) ∞ HENRIETTE GROSSMANN (1817-1894)

10. PAULA SCHOTTLÄNDER
∞
THEODOR HEYMANN

Tony
∞
Emil Nawratzki
(committed suicide to escape arrest by the Nazis)
|
1. Ilse
2. Lotte
∞
Bruno Lewin
|
1. Peter
∞
Anneli
|
a) Mirtelle
∞
Bruno Lewin
|
1. Peter
∞
Anneli
|
a) Michelle
b) Martin
2. Klaus
∞
Patricia
|
a) David
b) Nicola
∞
Walker
|
filha
c) Bruno

Edith
∞
Arthur Hantke
|
Jonathan Theodor
|
Tehilla
∞
Benny Gabbai

11. LUISE SCHOTTLÄNDER (1852-1935)
∞
JULIUS (JONAH) OLIVEN (1842-1910)

Fritz Oliven
∞
Leonie Meyer
|
a) John (Hans) Oliven
∞
Charlotte Bauchwitz
|
aa) Constance
∞
Robert Cambreleng
|
2 daughters:
Rebecca
Courtney
bb) Thomas
∞
Josephine Valenza
|
twins:
Andy & John
b) Susanne
∞
Herbert Schall
(no offspring)
c) Klaus
∞
Seldi Reifen
(6 children)

Elly
∞
Georg Abelsdorff
|
(no offspring)

Malwine (Mietze)
∞
Fritz Abelsdorff
|
Walter
∞
Ruth
(no offspring)

JULIUS SCHOTTLÄNDER - (1835-1911)



Julius, Löbel Schottländer's eldest son, was born in Münsterberg on March 16, 1835. He died at his manor estate Hartlieb near Breslau, on January 2, 1911. He first married Róza Slomowska, born in Poland, who died very young, on January 15, 1865, after a short marriage. She left him with two small children, Clara and Emma. Therefore, as mentioned by Lisbeth Ledermann, Löbel agreed to his son Julius' remarriage. On February 2, 1869, in Berlin, Julius married for the second time. His second wife was Anna Galewski, born on August 31, 1846 in Brieg, Upper Silesia. According to Lisbeth Ledermann, Anna was a very distinct and intelligent person. She died on January 20, 1911, a few days after her husband.

Julius was a very good businessman and quite fortunate in his commercial transactions. He had a multifaceted personality. He was at the same time an industrialist, an agriculturist, owner of manor estates and a businessman. He owned oil and wheat mills, a coal pit, brick yards and a sugar factory. He built a network of streets passing through some of his land. Besides the manor estates, he owned thirty-five houses in Breslau. The central administration of the Schottländer Family real estate was located at Tauentzienplatz 2, in Breslau.

Julius improved the Breslau milk supply, building cow sheds. He acquired large tracts of land in the southern part of Breslau. In order to develop that neighborhood, about 1895 he made a major donation of land to the city, in Breslau Krietern, building a park there, the Südpark (now called Park Poludniowy), with an artificial lake and a big restaurant, which he offered as a gift to the city. A tablet was erected in a pavilion showing his name as the donor. This park became the center of a new fashionable residential neighborhood in Breslau. A majestic avenue was leading to the park entrance. Julius' donation to the city, of course, increased the value of his adjacent land very much.

On January 15, 1900, the Schottländer Family celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Schottländer villa and estate in Münsterberg. On this occasion Julius made a donation of 10,000 marks to the Münsterberg Embellishment Society, to which in 1893 he had already donated 6,000 marks for the acquisition of a plot. This new donation enabled the Embellishment Society to pay for the acquistion of a large plot, containing natural springs, for the city's water supply, around which a beautiful City Park was to be built. Julius' brothers

Bruno and Salo donated 1,000 marks each for the same Society and his sisters Auguste Oliven, my grandmother Luise Oliven and Paula Heymann, all living in Berlin, donated 1,300 marks each. Bertha Schottländer née Werner, who lived in Breslau, the widow of Marcus Schottländer, Löbel's brother, also donated 2,000 marks, on this occasion, which coincided with her 80th birthday. On May 15, 1900, Julius Schottländer, the head of the family, became honorary citizen of Münsterberg, in recognition of his great merits for his hometown.

In 1905, on his 70th birthday, Julius donated another 10,000 marks to the Embellishment Society for the construction of the City Park and 300 marks for Münsterberg's poor people. On this occasion, Julius, his family and relatives received a delegation of Münsterberg dignitaries in his splendid townhouse at Tauentzienplatz 1, in Breslau. Müsterberg's mayor made a speech and declared that a monumental honor fountain would be built on a hill at the central point of the City Park. As an homage and in permanent memory of the town's honorary citizen, the hill would be called "Juliushöhe" and the fountain "Juliusbrunnen." A tablet to be fixed to the fountain would remind Münsterberg's citizens for centuries how much the love and sacrifice of one of its best citizens were able to do for the development of the town. In 1907, in a festive ceremony in the presence of Julius and many members of the Schottländer family, the city inaugurated "Juliushöhe" and "Juliusbrunnen" and the tablet in honor of its great benefactor Julius Schottländer.

Unfortunately, the mayor's beautiful words would not come true, as less than forty years after his laudation, these places would be renamed, the tablet removed, Julius' grandson Alfred Schottländer would be sent to a concentration camp and Alfred's brother, Ard-Heinrich and his family, would perish in the *Shoah*, the Holocaust.

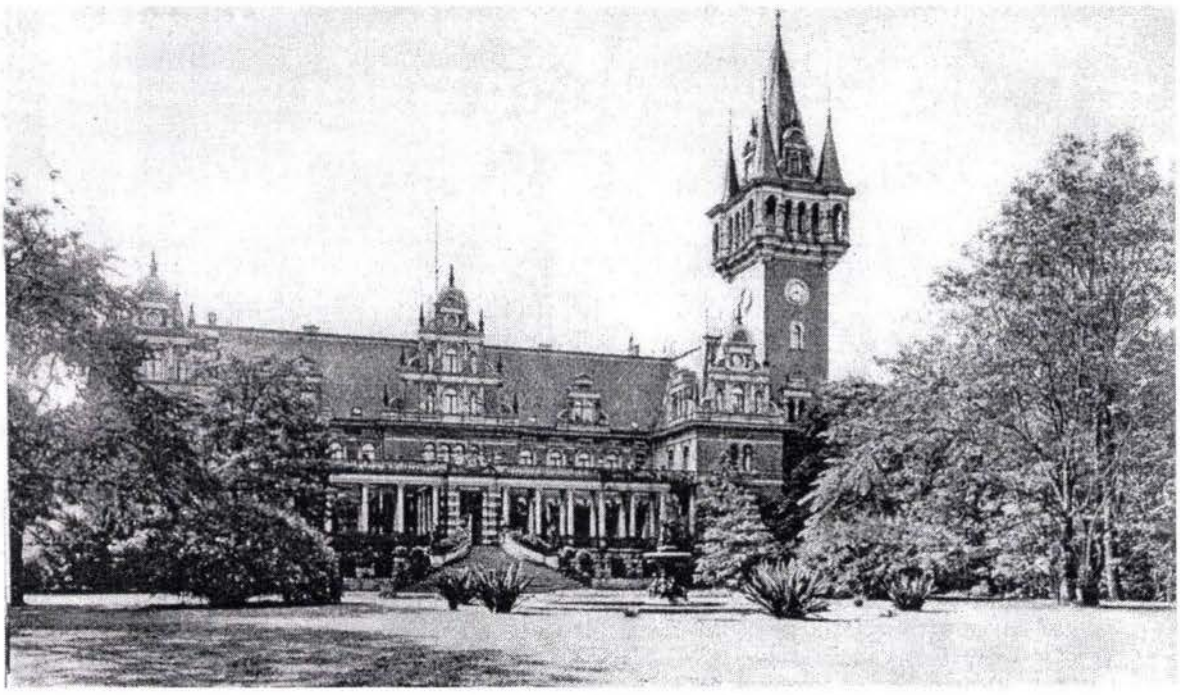
In 1900 Julius made a donation for a home in Breslau for Jewish nurses, the *Jüdisches Schwesternhaus*. He donated the land and paid for the construction of the home. He also paid the salaries of the nurses and their superiors. The neighboring plot was the seat of the Julius and Anna Schottländer Foundation, established in 1896, for the construction of the *Israelitische Altersversorgungsanstalt (Jüdisches Betreuungshaus für alte Leute und langwierig Kranke),* the Jewish Home for the Aged and Chronically Ill, at Neudorferstrasse 35 (today ul. Wisniowa). Julius donated the land, and the home was built under the patronage of the Julius and Anna Schottländer Foundation. It existed from 1896 to 1939. The care and nursing of the residents was in the hands of the Jewish nurses who lived at the adjacent nurses' home. During the first years of the Nazi regime, this home was the only place where Jewish physicians could still exercise their profession. Jewish community administrations also had their seat there at the time. In 1939, one day before Yom Kippur, at the beginning of the war, the Nazis gave the order to evacuate the building immediately, and it was then occupied by German soldiers.

From 1876 to 1899 Julius was a representative and from 1900 a member of the board of directors of the Breslau Jewish synagogue community. In 1908 and 1909 he donated 6,000 marks each year for the Jewish Home for the Aged and Chronically Ill. After his death the family donated 15,000 marks in 1911 and 24,000 marks in 1912 to the same institution, in his and his wife's name. Julius was a follower of the liberal Breslau Rabbi Manoel Joël (1826-1890), one of the outstanding Jewish preachers and theologians of the nineteenth century.

Many times Julius donated enormous amounts anonymously. On his seventieth birthday, in 1905, he established a foundation with a capital of three million marks, for charitable purposes,

regardless of religious confession. Julius stipulated that 10% of the Foundation's calculated 4% yearly interest, i.e. 10% of 120,000 marks plus interest, was to be accumulated for hundred years. The remaining yearly interest of 108,000 marks was to be distributed for charitable purposes among beneficial societies, institutions and establishments in Breslau, the city where he resided; in his hometown Münsterberg, as well as in other Silesian cities. Julius stipulated that during his lifetime he would be the administrator of the foundation, and after his death, his wife and sons, or the respective owner of the Hartlieb manor estate at the time, if the same would continue to be a Jew. Julius declined all commendations or awards. He was the supervisory-board chairman of the Upper Silesian Portland cement factory in Oppeln and of the Silesian Real Estate Shareholding Company. In 1908, Julius was Breslau's richest citizen. In recognition of his contributions to the city of Breslau a street was named after him (today ul. Karkonoska), and two streets after his children, Anna and Paul. Later on, under the Nazi regime, these streets were renamed and the tablet at the Südpark removed. Julius followed in his father Löbel's footsteps and was justly considered "one of the greatest benefactors in Breslau."

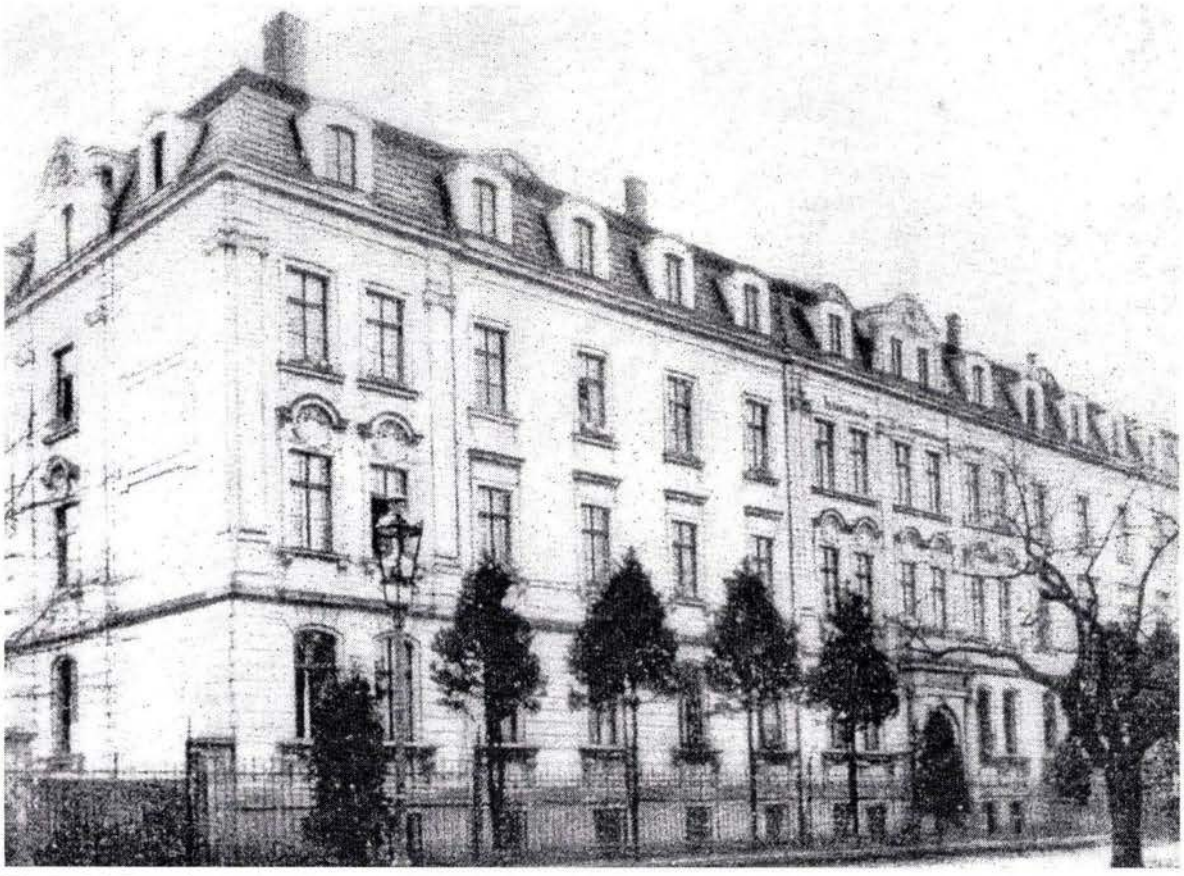
Julius owned many estates, as for instance Hartlieb, Wessig, Althofdürr, Grünhübel, Alt Schliesa, Eckersdorf, Karowahne, Cawallen, etc., as well as plots in Krietern and Herzogshofen, in the southern part of Breslau. He had inherited some of these estates from his father Löbel. He lived at his splendid castle, Hartlieb, near Breslau, built by him between 1878 and 1882, in Neo-Renaissance style. Hartlieb had fifty rooms, a picture gallery, a two floor-high ballroom with a gallery and its own synagogue. A majestic, richly decorated staircase led to the entrance of the castle. Hartlieb was destroyed during World War II and torn down in the post-war years. The villa at Wessig-Bergmühle, which his son Paul inherited from him, was also torn down after the war. The only thing left at Wessig today is a beautiful statue of a lion, one of a pair that once flanked the entrance to the villa. It has become a solitary reminder of past splendor.



Manor estate Hartlieb, near Breslau, built by Julius Schottländer between 1878 and 1882

When Julius died, in 1911, he left a fortune of 50 million marks. A majestic mausoleum for the Schottländer Family, in Egyptian style, was erected at the Jewish cemetery in Breslau, on Lohestrasse (today ul. Slezna), used from 1856 to 1942. During World War II this cemetery was damaged by heavy fighting between the defending German and the attacking Soviet army. Bullet holes still can be seen at some of the grave monuments. Julius' son, Dr. Paul Schottländer, inherited Julius' real estate, while his daughters, except Róza, inherited his investments and securities.

The photos shown herein of Julius Schottländer, manor estate Hartlieb, the Jewish Home for the Aged and the family mausoleum, are reproduced from the book *Breslauer Juden 1850-1944*, by Maciej Lagiewski. It has been translated into German from the Polish original. Some of these photos were placed at Mr. Lagiewski's disposal by Hans Schottländer, Munich, Julius Schottländer's great-grandson. Mr. Lagiewski, whose wife is Jewish, speaks fluent German. He was born in Wroclaw (formerly Breslau) in 1955. He is the director of its Historical Museum. He published various other books, among them "The old Jewish cemetery in Breslau" and *"Macewy Mówi*a" - the talking *Matzevas* (tombstones). In 1983 he started and directed a major restoration project of the old Jewish cemetery at Lohestrasse. Lagiewski became a friend of Hans Schottländer. They met for the first time when Hans was visiting the Jewish cemetery at Lohestrasse. Lagiewski contributed greatly to documenting and preserving Breslau's very rich Jewish heritage.



The Jewish Home for the Aged in Breslau, built in 1896, under the patronage of Julius and Anna Schottländer



The Schottländer Family Mausoleum in Egyptian style, made of granite, at the Jewish cemetery on Lohestrasse (now ul. Slezna) in Breslau (now Wroclaw)

From his first marriage, to Róza Slomowska, Julius had twins, Clara and Emma.

1.1. CLARA SCHOTTLÄNDER, born before 1865, married Hugo Goldschmidt. He owned an estate but lost a lot of money with its land. He then became director of a conservatory. Clara and Hugo had three children, Hilde, Victor and Ernst. Hilde married von Clarville. They had a son. Victor had a daughter, Miriam, who lived in Israel. Ernst married and lived in Israel.

1.2. EMMA SCHOTTLÄNDER, born before 1865, married Alfred Marckwald. He once was co-owner of a jewelry company in Berlin. They had two children, Róza Elly (her first name after Julius' first wife), who called herself Elly only, and Fritz. Elly married and lived in Berlin. She was baptized at the Messias Chapel in Berlin in March 1939. She had a daughter, Anne Krüger, living in Berlin. Fritz Marckwald emigrated to London.

From his second marriage, to Anna Galewski, Julius had three children, Paul, Róza and Gertrud.

1.5. GERTRUD SCHOTTLÄNDER, born after 1870, married consul Dr. Walter Sobernheim, born in Berlin in 1869, died in New York in 1945. He emigrated to the U.S.A. via France. He was the general director of the well-known Patzenhofer brewery in Berlin. Gertrud and Walter had three children, Lotte, Frigene and Martin. Lotte first married Simon. They had two sons, who emigrated to New York and changed their name from Simon to Hutton. From her second marriage, to *Geheimrat* (Privy Councilor) Just, Gertrud had a daughter, who lived in New York. Frigene married Fürstner. Martin Sobernheim emigrated to London. He married twice and has children.

1.4. RÓZA SCHOTTLÄNDER - SHE CHANGED HER FIRST NAME, CONVERTED, MARRIED A PRUSSIAN GENERAL, WAS DISINHERITED, AND AT THE END COMMITTED SUICIDE

Róza, born after 1870, was named after her father Julius' first wife. She first married professor Fritz Pringsheim, who was Jewish. He was born in Hünern, Silesia, in 1882 and died in Freiburg i.Br. in 1967. He emigrated to England in 1939 and returned to Germany after the war. He was the owner of a manor estate and a professor of Roman and Greek law. Róza and Fritz had a son, Hans.

Róza's drama started at the end of the nineteenth century, when during a maneuver of the Prussian army the handsome commander of a regiment, colonel Wilhelm Isenbarth, was quartered at the Pringsheim estate. Róza, who was about thirty years old at the time, fell deeply in love with the colonel. She then divorced her husband Pringsheim and changed her name from Róza (which must have sounded too Polish-Jewish to her) to Hertha, converted and became a Christian and married the high-ranking officer Isenbarth.

As a consequence, Julius disinherited his daughter and banished her from the family. Julius was a proud and conscious Jew, who practiced his religion, worked actively for Jewish communal affairs and donated very large amounts to the Jewish community and charitable institutions. Róza's conversion and second marriage certainly must have been a big shock for him. Julius did not forgive his daughter. Never again did he see her and she ceased to exist for him.

Due to his marriage to a divorced Jewish woman, the imperial Prussian colonel Isenbarth, however, infringed the taboo of the officer corps. He therefore was discharged from the military with the rank of a major general. This was not only the end of his military career, but at the same time a bitter disappointment for his wife, whose ardent wish and ambition was to be socially accepted by the nobility and to belong to the officer circles.

The couple then retired to the Riviera and in wintertime mainly to Egypt. There General Isenbarth suddenly died at the well-known Hotel Cataract in Assuan in 1911. The couple had no offspring. Hertha returned to Germany together with the German physician who had cared for Isenbarth in Egypt until his death. She then started to realize her project to build a "General Isenbarth Convalescent Home for Officers," with a capacity to accommodate twelve officers of the Prussian imperial army and their personnel. The home should be erected at one of the most beautiful places in Germany, in memory of her beloved husband.

Hertha disposed of the necessary means to realize her plan, due to the mandatory part *(Pflichtteil)* of her inheritance. She had just received it from the estate of her very rich father Julius, deceased in 1911. It amounted to twelve million gold marks. In the same year she acquired from the city of Bühl an enormous forest plot overlooking the Rhine, at the Black Forest highway, near Baden-Baden. From 1911 to 1914 she built on it a majestic baroque style castle with an adjacent sanitarium, which she called Bühlerhöhe. She constructed the sanitarium for the German physician from Assuan, who would not be satisfied professionally working at a convalescent home.

In order to eventually obtain the acceptance of the general staff, she wanted to donate the castle and sanitarium to his Majesty, Wilhelm II. But the wily Emperor only wanted to accept

this gift, if the current maintenance expenses would be fully covered by an additional donation. Hertha, however, could not afford any more another amount of millions of marks, which would have been necessary for this purpose. The Kaiser's rejection of her fondest wish was Hertha's second big disappointment.

The recently finished construction of the castle remained without use during World War I, while the sanitarium was used during the war from 1914 on as a reserve military hospital. The German physician worked there during the war as a sanitary officer.

The third and final bitter disappointment for Hertha was the engagement of this physician to a young girl. It made her world collapse completely. During the troubled times of the fall of the monarchy in 1918, lonely Hertha committed suicide in Baden-Baden.

In 1920, Bühlerhöhe was sold by her heir, probably her son Hans from her first marriage, to a finance group that transformed it into a well-known health resort which exists until the present date.

1.3. PAUL SCHOTTLÄNDER - (1870-1938)

Paul, Julius Schottländer's only son, was born in Breslau on February 14, 1870. He died at his estate, Wessig-Bergmühle, near Breslau on March 18, 1938. He is buried at the Jewish cemetery on Lohestrasse in Breslau. Paul was the only heir to Julius' real estate, including the manor estate Gut Hartlieb, near Breslau. He earned his Ph.D. in Breslau in 1892. He was a real estate owner, an agriculturist, a zoologist and a botanist. He belonged to the board of directors of the Jewish synagogue community and its *Hevra Kaddisha*, the burial society, as well as to the board of the Jewish Hospital in Breslau. In 1921 Paul was the co-founder, along with lawyer Max Naumann, of the Union of National German Jews *(Verband Nationaldeutscher Juden)*. The purpose of this organization was to unite all those Jews who - not denying their Jewish descent - felt so connected with German substance and culture that they could not feel or think themselves to be anything but German. It was a far-right organization of German Jewish patriotic nationalists. They probably would have fully embraced the Nazi ideology, were it not for its violent antisemitism. Paul felt himself to be a Prussian and German citizen of Jewish faith.

Paul, in the tradition of his father Löbel and grandfather Julius, was always generous to needy people. He also contributed generously to various Jewish and non-Jewish institutions. He made a contribution of 10,000 marks to the Jewish art academy *Bezalel* in Jerusalem, as well as to the Jewish communities of Münsterberg and Breslau, to the *Hilfsverein der deutschen Juden* and to the home for Jewish nurses.

Paul was a member and senator of the Kaiser Wilhelm Society for the development of science and until 1933 the director of the Breslau University Association. He had great interest in science. In 1911 he donated 250,000 marks to the Breslau University for the instruction of scientific travelers and zoological deep-sea explorers. One year later he donated 300,000 marks for the Kaiser Wilhelm Society for its ocean exploration station in Rovigno, Italy (now Croatia). In 1913 he donated a glass-bottomed boat to the same Society, to be used in exploring undersea life at the station in Rovigno. He handed this donation personally to Kaiser Wilhelm II in a special audience the Kaiser granted him. This station was of great importance to the German navy. Paul belonged to the Rotary Club in Breslau. He and his family lived in Breslau at the family town home at Tauentzienplatz 1A, or at his Hartlieb or Wessig estates, which he administered.

Paul married Ludmilla "Milla" Schlesinger, born in Ratibor, Upper Silesia, on October 7, 1877. The Schlesinger family was very esteemed and well-off. They owned a yeast mill and a spirits factory in Ratibor. Later on, Paul and Milla separated. Milla was the sister of Lothar Schlesinger, husband of Käthe Brieger. Käthe was a granddaugher of Julius Schottländer's sister, Lina Pacully. From 1934 to 1938 Milla lived at her villa in Berlin-Dahlem. In 1943 she succeeded in emigrating to Switzerland through a ficticious marriage to a Swiss citizen, Dr. Eric Guignard, from Kanton Fribourg, Switzerland, who during part of the war lived in Germany. After 1945 this marriage was dissolved. Milla died on April 24, 1958, in Berlin Dahlem. She was buried at the *Waldfriedhof*, Dahlem.

One day, by coincidence, the Schottländer genealogist Lars Menk discovered and bought Ludmilla's Hebrew prayer books from an antiquarian in Berlin, who was a friend of his. Imprinted in gold letters on the backs of these books were the names of some members of the

Schottländer family. Lars had a schoolmate by the name of Schottländer, whose family came from Breslau. He then got in touch with him again. All this was the starting point for Lars' genealogical research of the Schottländer Family. Lars confided to me in a letter, and also later in a conversation in Berlin, that had he known at that time that there are so many people by the name of Schottländer in Germany and scattered around the world, he probably would not have started this strenuous and time-consuming enterprise.

Paul and Milla Schottländer had a son, Alfred "Fredy" Leo, and a daughter, Dorothea "Dora". Milla's youngest son Ard-Heinrich "Heinz", though officially and for all purposes also Paul's son, actually was not a Schottländer by blood. He was an illegitimate child whose real father was Count von Thun, from an aristocratic old German family. During military maneuvers he had been quartered at Paul and Milla's manor estate. He was killed in France during WW I.

At the time Paul died, in March 1938, after suffering from illness for a long time, he was greatly worried about the future and the fate of the Jews in Germany.

1.3.1. ALFRED LEO SCHOTTLÄNDER - (1899-1947)

HE BECAME A HOSTAGE OF THE NAZIS

Alfred "Fredy" Leo Schottländer, Paul's oldest son, was born on November 17, 1899, and died in Montreux, Switzerland, on June 3, 1947, at the age of forty-seven. He studied agriculture. He lived at the Althofdürr estate, which he had inherited from his father Paul. One of the few remnants of the Althofdürr estate is part of a gate leading to the horse stables. Alfred was engaged in agriculture and principally horse breeding and raising and managing race horses. Some of these horses won prizes at international exhibitions. Alfred served in the navy artillery during World War I. At seventeen he was the youngest Jewish war volunteer from Silesia. He was decorated with the iron cross.

In 1928 Alfred became a member of the *Deutsch-Nationale Volks Partei*, DNVP, a far-right party which, together with the Nazi party, NSDAP, formed the first short-lived government after president von Hindenburg appointed Hitler chancellor of the Reich on January 30, 1933. In 1930 Alfred adhered to the *Stahlhelm*, also a far-right organization of former front soldiers, founded in 1918. They had their own special uniform, and when Hitler came to power, they were incorporated as reserve in the SA, Hitler's uniformed assault troops. Hans Schlesinger, a relative, reported that several times he met Alfred in Berlin, on Kurfürstendamm, wearing the brown SA uniform with the swastika band on the left sleeve. In 1934 Alfred was forced by the Nazis to leave the SA when it became known that he was of Jewish descent.

Shortly after the end of World War I, Alfred converted to the Protestant faith. This most probably did not please his father Paul very much, who belonged to the board of directors of the Breslau Jewish community.

Alfred divorced his first wife, a Christian, from a well-reputed banking family, and then married Ingeborg (Inge) Lemcke, born on February 12, 1905. As Lisbeth Ledermann reports: "She was influenced by the Nazis and caused his [her husband Fredy's] being taken to a concentration camp, so that she could take hold of his substantial property at the time." As a matter of fact, she denounced him of *Rassenschande* ("race defilement") with a female employee.

Rassenschande was a term created by the Nazis. Under the "Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor," one of the infamous Nuremberg Race Laws of September 1935, intermarriages and sexual relations between Jews and "Aryans" were strictly forbidden, subject to long years of imprisonment.

Alfred then began a divorce trial. As a consequence of his wife's denunciation, Alfred was jailed in Breslau in the autumn of 1937. After nearly a year in jail he was finally acquitted by the tribunal in Breslau, but at the very moment he was released from prison, in August 1938, the Gestapo, the feared secret police, was waiting for him already in the street and transported him immediately to the Dachau concentration camp. Later on he was transferred to the Buchenwald concentration camp.

The official reeason of his imprisonment, as stated in his concentration camp files, was that he failed to return his SA badge when he was forced to leave that organization. His son, Hans,

recently obtained this information from the German Division of the International Red Cross, which keeps all German concentration camp files.

Alfred's father, Paul, was already dead, following a long disease. He was so ill that nobody told him that his son Alfred had been jailed. Paul just thought his son was traveling. Alfred's younger brother, Ard-Heinrich, then tried evrything he could to get Alfred released. After his brother's imprisonment Ard-Heinrich took over the administration of the family property. He hired a lawyer in Berlin with good Nazi connections, who came to Breslau. He was told by the Gestapo that Alfred would be released only after the Schottländers had sold "the last square meter of their property." Thus Alfred had become a hostage of the Nazis.

As a consequence, Ard-Heinrich and his sister Dora decided to liquidate the family property, in order to save their brother's life. They were forced to sacrifice the real estate, selling it at a very low price, much under its real value. However, the final liquidation of the large real estate was very complicated and took quite some time. The Gestapo at this point insisted that Alfred leave Germany at once, and his siblings, of course, also wanted him to get out of the concentration camp with the utmost urgency.

This, however, would only be possible by paying enormous taxes regarding the liquidation of the valuable real estate. Besides, as a precondition for the emigration permit, payment had to be made in cash of the *Reichsfluchtsteuer* (evasion tax, 25% of taxable wealth), and the special *Sühnesteuer* (punitive tax, 25% of declared wealth, totalling one billion Reichsmark, which Göring imposed on the Jews after the Kristallnacht). In December 1938, Ard-Heinrich deposited on behalf of his brother the large amount of 814,000 Reichsmark with the German financial authorities covering these two special taxes. As to payment of the various other taxes applying to the liquidation of the property, by that time Ard-Heinrich and his sister Dora did not dispose any more of the necessary large funds in cash. Therefore Ard-Heinrich had to agree to become personally liable for payment of all taxes the Nazis demanded for Alfred's release. The final liquidation of the large real estate took over two years. Ard-Heinrich, whose presence was time and again required by the Nazi authorities for this purpose, therefore had to delay his and his wife's own emigration, resulting in their tragic end later on.

After Ard-Heinrich became the personal guarantor for his brother and had paid the amount of 814,000 marks, Alfred was released from Buchenwald in the first days of January 1939 and could then finally emigrate to Kenya, via England. He engaged in agricultural activities in Kenya, running a farm owned by English people who lived overseas. As Alfred's second cousin, Hortense Schottländer, reported when we met her in Nairobi, Alfred played very loud German march music on a phonograph out in the open air. As it was wartime, he was denounced by the neighbors or people at the farm and consequently jailed and sent to an internment camp by the British authorities. During his internment he caught tuberculosis. After the war ended, he went to stay with his mother, Ludmilla, who lived in Montreux, Switzerland at the time. He was already very ill, as a consequence of the terrible treatment he received in the German concentration camps, aggravated by his internment in Kenya by the British later on. He died in Montreux soon after his arrival.

Alfred Schottländer and his second wife, Ingeborg, had a son, Hans-Jürgen, born in 1934. When Alfred was jailed and forced to emigrate, Hans stayed with his mother Inge. Alfred had transferred his real estate, Althofdürr and Eckersdorf, to his wife, but when the divorce came through, the tribunal annuled this transfer. Obviously, the transfer was made only because Ingeborg was an "Aryan". Alfred's idea was that by transferring these properties to his wife,

they could not be seized by the Nazis, as they were no longer "Jewish". The Nazi authorities, however, were very interested in having the real estate revert to Alfred Schottländer, because thus they could lay their hands on it in the future, as "Jewish property." Ingeborg certainly must have been quite frustrated by the annulment, as she had imagined that she would come into possession of all of her husband's valuable real estate.

Ingeborg then moved to Garmisch-Partenkirchen and had an affair with a high-ranking Nazi officer, belonging to Hitler's elite *Leibstandarte*, which was a division of the SS, the elite Nazi troops in black unforms. Hans-Jürgen was registered by his mother under her maiden name, as an illegitimate Christian child. After the war, when his father, Alfred, went to live at his mother's in Switzerland and was already very ill, he wanted to see his son Hans, whom he had known only as a four-year-old child. Hans' mother, however, did not permit her son to visit his father in Montreux, because she was apparently afraid Alfred would not send him back to her. She did not want to let Hans go, because she was afraid of losing her claims to restitution for having hidden and saved a *Mischlin*g, a half-Jewish child, during the war. Hypocritically, she expected to be rewarded by the German authorities after the end of the war.

1.3.1.1. HANS-JÜRGEN SCHOTTLAENDER

Hans, Alfred and Ingeborg's son, was born in Breslau on December 26, 1934. He was raised by his mother in Garmisch-Partenkirchen. He went to school there, registered under his mother's maiden name, Lemcke. For many years he did not even know that he was half-Jewish, until one time his mother got impatient with him, found he looked too Jewish and called him *Judenjunge,* a "Jew boy."

Hans married Hildegard Sam, born in 1936, whom he later divorced. After 1976, as a divorce settlement, she became the sole owner of the house in Berlin-Dahlem, half of which Hans had inherited from his grandmother, Ludmilla Schottländer, and the other half Hildegard Sam had inherited from Ludmilla. Hans and Hildegard have two sons, born in Garmisch Partenkirchen: Alfred, born on February 23, 1958, who lives in Denmark, and Hans-Peter, born on March 23, 1961, who lives in Munich. In his second marriage, Hans married Sabine Jaesrich, born on February 26, 1944. They lived first in Berlin and later moved to Munich. Hans, who is now retired, was a municipal official in Munich, in charge of the department for foreigners. Sabine worked for the large insurance company Allianz and is now retired. Hans and Sabine have a daughter, Sarah Dorothea, born on January 10, 1975. She entered the university in Erfurt in 1998, studying social pedagogy. Hans' three children are baptized. Hans is very interested in the Schottländer family history. He is organizing a Schottländer family tree and writing a family history. He and Sabine traveled to Poland to visit Wroclaw (formerly Breslau) and the former properties of the Schottländer family, especially his father's former estates, near Breslau. At the Jewish cemetery in Wroclaw he met Maciej Lagiewski, the historian of the Breslau Jews, for the first time. Hans is very much interested in Judaism and his Jewish roots.

We have met Hans and Sabine several times already in Zürich, sometimes together with Sigurd Schottländer, who lives in Basel. We also have met him and Sabine in Berlin, together with Klaus Schlesinger. Hans also came to visit us and our common relative Hans-Hubert Schlesinger here in Porto Alegre, a few years ago.

Seldi, our daughter Miriam, and I visited Hans, Sabine, and their daughter Sarah in Munich in the summer of 1998. We spent a few days at their home. Sigurd Schottländer and his granddaughter Noemi Joëlle also were Hans and Sabine's guests at the same time and we all greatly enjoyed our stay there with this charming family. One and three years later Seldi and I stayed again at Hans and Sabine's home at Munich. They are wonderful hosts.

1.3.2. DOROTHEA "DORA" SCHOTTLÄNDER - (1902-1975)

HER NON-JEWISH HUSBAND WAS SLAIN BY THE NAZIS

Paul and Ludmilla's daughter, Dora, was born at the Wessig estate, on February 26, 1902. She died in Montreux, Switzerland, on April 28, 1975. In 1935 Dora married Kurt von Tepper Laski, born in 1886, declared dead on April 16, 1941. He was a Christian nobleman. His father was a German general and his mother was English. Kurt suffered a head injury in the First World War and had an artificial silver brain plate inserted. According to Lisbeth Ledermann, von Tepper-Laski was a very congenial person of great merit. Under the Nazi regime he withstood pressure and refused to divorce Dora because she was Jewish. He was a democrat and met regularly with a group of people in Berlin who shared his ideology. During the war, on the night of March 3, 1941, he was returning from such a meeting, a so-called *Herrenabend,* but never made it home. He was slain by the Nazis on his way home and thrown into the Landwehrkanal, just as had happened to Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg some twenty years earlier, in 1919. Kurt's family did everything they could to search for him, placing ads in newspapers and putting up posters on the public round Litfass columns in the streets of Berlin. Finally, one month later, Tepper-Laski's corpse was found in the canal, with his skull crushed. His death announcement in the newspaper is dated April 16, 1941. He was cremated three days later.

Dora managed to hide in Berlin during World War II, part of the time in her mother Ludmilla's villa in Berlin-Dahlem, which had been rented out to a foreign neutral diplomat. After the war she traveled a great deal. She was for some time a professional equestrienne. She and von Tepper-Laski had no children. Dora belonged to the Jewish community. At the end of her life she lived in a hotel in Montreux. She suffered from cancer and a nurse took care of her at the hotel until her death.



1.3.3. ARD-HEINRICH "HEINZ" SCHOTTLÄNDER - (1907-1942)

HE, HIS WIFE AND BABY SON WERE TRAPPED IN NAZI GERMANY AND PERISHED IN THE HOLOCAUST

Ard-Heinrich, Ludmilla Schottländer's youngest son, was born in Breslau on December 26, 1907. Heinz was actually only half Jewish, as he was Ludmilla's illegitime son. His father was not Ludmilla's husband, Paul, but Count von Thun, with whom Ludmilla had an affair. Of course, at that time and in the highly reputed Schottländer family, this had to be kept strictly secret. Ard-Heinrich was a second cousin of mine; our common great-grandfather was Löbel Schottländer.

Ard-Heinrich was an electrical engineer. He married Gerda Deutsch, born on November 15, 1912. She came from a traditional Jewish family from Breslau. Her grandfather, Josef Deutsch, was a member of the board of the *Hevra Kaddisha*, the Jewish burial society, in Breslau. Her father, Stefan, occupied the same honorary position in La Paz, after his emigration to Bolivia in 1939. Ard-Heinrich was the only one of Ludmilla's three children who married inside the Jewish faith and who actually cared about his Jewish heritage, though he himself, contrary to his siblings, was actually only half-Jewish. When my mother, Leonie, contacted him about some dates regarding his and my great-grandfather Löbel Schottländer, in connection with her genealogical research and family tree, he got in touch with Rabbi Brilling in Breslau and sent her some information. In 1937 Ard-Heinrich lived in Berlin. I met him there for the first and only time at the last Schottländer Family Day, which took place in our apartment in Berlin, in late 1938 or early 1939. It was already a very critical and tense time, shortly after the November pogrom, when my parents finally started to prepare for emigration.

As we have seen above, after long negotiations Ard-Heinrich finally managed to get his brother Alfred released from the Buchenwald concentration camp, enabling him to emigrate to Kenya, by becoming guarantor for the total payment of the heavy taxes levied against Alfred by the Nazis. With Ard-Heinrich's assistance, his parents-in-law, Stefan and Frieda Deutsch, also managed to emigrate - to La Paz, Bolivia - in 1939. Liquidation of all the real estate that Ard-Heinrich and his siblings had inherited from Paul Schottländer took a long time and was rather complicated.

Ard-Heinrich considered it his mission and sole responsibility, after his brother Alfred's emigration, to proceed with this liquidation until everything was settled. Thus most precious time elapsed with regard to Ard-Heinrich and Gerda's own emigration. They helped their relatives escape from the Nazi hell, but in the end they themselves became trapped and could no longer emigrate. Ard-Heinrich certainly must have underestimated the ever-increasing mortal danger for Jews remaining in Nazi Germany, after the Reichskristallnacht. Had Ard Heinrich started earlier than 1939 to care intensively for his and his wife's own emigration, he most probably could have saved their lives. Emigration from Germany turned out to be extremely difficult thereafter. The situation became ever worse as time went by.

Hans Schottländer, Ard-Heinrich's nephew, handed over to me copies of his uncle's voluminous correspondence with his wife's family, in Bolivia and the U.S.A., from 1939 until December 1941, as well as with his Jewish lawyer, Dr. Richard Eckersdorff, Breslau, from the same time until February 1942, dealing with Ard-Heinrich's emigration. Reading all this correspondence makes one upset, indignated and sad. How could such a thing happen in the middle of the twentieth century in 'civilized' Germany? Even though one has read so many books, reports and articles about the Holocaust, this is a typical case study of how a young family - father, mother and a baby son of less than one year - were mercilessly wiped out by the Nazis. All the multiple efforts which Ard-Heinrich exerted for over three years to find a country to emigrate to eventually failed, and the end was a terrible tragedy. Based upon the broad documentation in my hands, I could examine this particular case in greater detail.

Ard-Heinrich lived with his wife during this period at the Wessig-Bergmühle manor estate, near Breslau. Ownership of the house there had been transferred by Heinz's father, Paul Schottländer, to Heinz' sister, Dora, when she married Kurt von Tepper-Laski. From 1939 until the very end, in early 1942, Ard-Heinrich tried by all means to emigrate with his wife Gerda. During this period he tried unsuccessfully to obtain immigration visas for Chile, the Philippines, Persia (Iran), Brazil, Ecuador, Bolivia, San Domingo and Guatemala.

In 1939 Ard-Heinrich's brother-in-law, who was already settled in La Paz, Bolivia, tried to get him an employment contract from the large Bolivian mining firm Hochschild. He was to be hired as an engineer for a railway construction project. The same firm had another project involving transfer from Germany to Bolivia of machinery for agriculture and sugar production. In the end, nothing came out of it - all these projects failed. Many of the countries made the issuing of immigration visas conditional on the transfer of funds in hard currency or of industrial or agricultural machinery. The problem with the transfer of such goods was that it had to be authorized by the German financial authorities, which usually denied approval.

In 1940 Ard-Heinrich, through his relative, Lothar Schlesinger, who lived in Porto Alegre, Brazil, acquired real estate and a photo shop in São Leopoldo, near Porto Alegre, from a German who wanted to return to Germany. The acquisition was a precondition for obtaining the Brazilian visas, but this purchase notwithstanding, they were not granted. The efforts exerted by Ard-Heinrich's cousin, Gerhard Schlesinger, who lived in Rio de Janeiro at the time, were likewise unsuccessful. Ard-Heinrich also acquired a leather and shoe factory in Guatemala, but the result was the same. He also made a deposit in dollars at a bank in Ecuador, but the visas again were ultimately denied. At the end of 1940 his lawyer came up with a project in Brazil, involving the transfer of money from Jews in Germany to Brazil, in the total amount of RM 4.500.000.- against the granting of about two hundred visas, but this project also came to nothing.

In December 1940, Ard-Heinrich mentioned in a letter to the former Brazilian consul general in Berlin, Silvio Romero, whom Ard-Heinrich knew personally but who had returned to Brazil in June 1940:

> "You may be interested to know, that we both belong to the Roman Catholic church."

Certainly Ard-Heinrich knew about the secret circular letters of June 1937 and September 1938, which the Brazilian Foreign Ministry had sent to all Brazilian consulates around the world, instructing them to deny visas to Jewish persons, with only very few exceptions.

Ard-Heinrich probably did not know it, but his white lie about his and Gerda's religion is fully justified under Jewish law. In Hebrew it is called:

פקוח נפש - *Pikuach Nefesh* - the salvation of a life in danger

According to this rule of conduct, when a life is in danger and can possibly be saved, a law, even the holy laws of *Shabbat*, can be transgressed.

In July 1941, Heinz wrote to his father-in-law in La Paz, sarcastical and yet resigned at the same time:

> "Governments change, but the difficulties in obtaining the visas remain about the same. Nothing can be done about it."

On June 25, 1941 a son was born to Gerda and Heinz, whom they named Denny. In the middle of their tragic situation, a ray of happiness! In his letters to Gerda's parents and relatives overseas, Heinz wrote about the difficult and complicated birth and the raising of the baby, who was their joy in the middle of darkness and despair.

By the end of 1941 things had become more and more difficult, if not hopeless. Heinz and Gerda, in order to be able to emigrate, would of course need valid passports and special permission to leave the country, but the Gestapo refused to issue them these documents. Meanwhile, the United States entered the war and no passports were issued any more. On October 23, 1941, the SS issued instructions prohibiting the emigration of Jews altogether. That same month, the "evacuation of the Jews to the East" began. The Nazis euphemistically called these mass deportations "resettlement." On January 20, 1942, the *Wannsee Konferenz* took place in Berlin, in an elegant villa in the Wannsee suburb, to discuss the so-called *Endlösung* - the Final Solution of the Jewish question - through deportations, mass murder and extermination. Actually, every person "evacuated" to the East was heading toward his or her certain death. Raul Hilberg, author of *The annihilation of the European Jews* which has become the standard work on the *Shoah* - mentions that the year 1942 was the most deadly one in Jewish history.

In January 1942, as a last desperate effort, Heinz came up with the idea of his adoption by an old Swiss lady living in Berlin, a friend of the family, so that he consequently would become a Swiss citizen, thus enabling him to emigrate to Switzerland with his family. His Jewish lawyer in Breslau, Dr. Richard Eckersdorff, discussed the legal implications of such an adoption at length by correspondence with a colleague in Bern, that is, whether such a procedure would fall under Swiss or German law.

On February 6, 1942, Dr. Eckersdorff, made the following note in his documents:

> "During the last days I had several conversations with my client regarding emigration, transfer and all related questions. Unfortunately, it turned out that his mother's [Ludmilla's] promise that the Brazilian visa would be issued was mistaken. The consul made the granting of the visa dependent upon the [Brazilian] government's forwarding him the permit numbers *(Landungsnummern)*. These have not been received any more. Mr. Schottländer will therefore not be able to leave, as planned, on the ship sailing on the 15th of February and probably will have to completely give up his plans for emigration, for the time being. I asked him therefore to withdraw at once the transfer requests made by him or Dr. Siegheim in Berlin, respectively, at Eichborn [Ard-Heinrich's bank in Breslau]."

Dr. Eckersdorff's last letter to Ard-Heinrich was dated February 10, 1942; the subsequent letters were signed by a legal auxiliary clerk. On April 21, Mrs. Eckersdorff sent a bill addressed to Ard-Heinrich, for fees due "my late husband." It is uncertain whether this bill was still received by Ard-Heinrch. Dr. Eckersdorff probably had been murdered by the Nazis in the meantime. Thus, nothing came of the adoption project either.

Finally, after year-long efforts, on December 19, 1941, Gerda's father, Stefan Deutsch, in La Paz obtained Bolivian immigration visas for Heinz, Gerda and Denny. He sent cables to the Bolivian consuls in Berlin and Hamburg and also to the Hapag navigation line, communicating obtention of these visas. On February 18, 1942, Stefan wrote to the Jewish community in Breslau, advising them regarding obtention of the visas and the cables he sent and informing that the last news he received from Gerda and Heinz was dated December 7. On February 16, Heinz and Gerda sent a message to Stefan Deutsch, twenty-five words only, through the German Red Cross, which was received in La Paz only on March 26. This was the last communication Gerda's parents received from her and Heinz. It reads:

> "Dear Parents, visas for Bolivia received, no shipping connection any more. Nevertheless, have not yet given up efforts. Brazil attempt failed. Withdraw deposit Ecuador, because of no point. We three are healthy. Yours, Gerda, Heinz."

The tragic end was that when the Bolivian immigration visas finally were granted and arrived at the Consulates in Germany, after three years of immense efforts, it was too late in every respect.

Very little is known about what happened then. Ard-Heinrich's nephew, Hans Schottländer, did research at the Polish archives in Wroclaw (formerly Breslau), which hold the archives taken over from the Germans. Unfortunately, only the archives of the former German Finance Administration are still in existence, while all the other ones were burned by the SS before capitulation. From the still existing archives, Hans managed to discover that Ard-Heinrich was arrested by the end of April and "deported to the East" in a *Sammeltransport*, a mass transport, on May 3, 1942. Even the transport number is known but not the ultimate destiny. It is assumed that the transports that left Breslau in May had as their final destination (in the real sense of these words) the cities of Kovno and Vilna. It is also known that the ghettos of these cities were hopelessley overcrowded. Therefore, at that time the deportees were immediately shot upon arrival, in front of these ghettos.

The epilogue to this story is the confiscation of the remainder of Ard-Heinrich's wealth. On February 3, 1944, Ard-Heinrich's bank in Breslau, Eichborn & Co., remitted to the Superior Department of Finance in Breslau an amount of RM 131.083,75 representing the "confiscation of financial values - estate of the Jew Dr. Paul Isr. Schottländer, formerly Bergmühle Breslau Land," in accordance with the "law of confiscation of communist property," as well as that of "enemies of *Volk* and *Reich*." Altogether, the German financial coffers had already received a total of over one million marks from the Paul Schottländer estate during the Nazi years, in the form of special taxes and other "contributions."

Paul Schottländer's grandson, my friend and relative Hans Schottländer, recently had the names of his relatives, his grandmother Ludmilla, his father Alfred, his aunt Dora, his uncle and aunt Ard-Heinrich and Gerda and their infant son Denny Schottländer engraved on Paul's tombstone at the old Jewish cemetery on Lohestrasse (now Ul. Slezna) in Breslau, in memory of these dear relatives.

Let us never forget the crimes of the Nazi criminals and what they did to Ard-Heinrich, his wife Gerda and their infant son Denny, who did not even complete one year of life. Let us always remember what they did to all holocaust victims, so that such heinous crimes against humanity will never, ever happen again!

MAY THE SOULS OF OUR SIX MILLION MURDERED BROTHERS AND SISTERS REST IN PEACE!

2. AUGUSTE SCHOTTLÄNDER (born in 1836), Löbel Schottländer's eldest daughter, married Jacob Oliven (1833-1908). I have already written about them and their descendants - (see THE OLIVEN FAMILY - 4th GENERATION).

3. LINA SCHOTTLÄNDER was born in Münsterberg on January 29, 1838. She died young, on October 24, 1879, in Leubus and is buried at Ohlau, now called Olawa, a town near Breslau (Wroslaw). She married Louis Pacully, born on August 8, 1822, at Thomaskirch near Ohlau, died on May 2, 1898, in Baumgarten near Ohlau. Lina and Louis married in Breslau on July 12, 1859. Louis owned a manor estate in Silesia, called Bankwitz. Lina and Louis had six children:

a) SIEGFRIED PACULLY, born in Ohlau, Silesia, in 1862, died in Berlin in February 1929. He married Elfriede Berliner in 1890. They divorced in 1895. Siegfried Pacully's estate was called Baumgarten, situated near Ohlau.

Siegfried and Elfriede's daughter, Lina Pacully, named after her grandmother Lina Schottländer, was born in Kraschen, Silesia, in 1891. She died in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1977. She married the physician Dr. Georg Brotzen. They emigrated to Brazil in the 1930s and from there to the United States. Lina and Georg had two children, Ursula and Franz. Ursula was born in Sommerfeld, Silesia, on September 15, 1910. She first married Ernst Roland Rosenthal, a lawyer, in Brazil, whom she divorced. Her second marriage was to Frank Laurens (formerly Lewinsohn), in Cincinnati. Frank had a firm that bought, overhauled, sold and exported heavy secondhand machinery. Ursula and Ernst's son, Stephen Ernest Rosenthal, changed his name to Laurens, after his mother remarrried.

Lina and Georg's son Franz, who lives in Houston, Texas, spent the 1930s in Brazil, working in pharmaceutical sales for the Bayer chemical company. During World War II he became a military translator and assisted in the interrogation of German prisoners. After World War II he earned his Ph.D. and became a professor of Material Science and later the Dean of Sciences at Rice University in Houston.

b) EMIL PACULLY (born in 1864), married a Parisian and lived in the French capital. He was a philologist and knew 17 languages. He used his inheritance from his mother Lina to invest in classical paintings, including Rembrandt, Tintoretto, Ruisdael, Fragonard, Goya, three paintings by Rubens, and many other ones by famous painters of the German, French, Spanish, Flemish, Dutch and Italian School. His art collection became known in Paris as "Collection Emile Pacully." In 1903 it was appraised and a beautiful catalogue printed. Later on, in 1938, after he had died, his valuable collection was auctioned off in Paris, by order of the French authorities, as it seems he owed them a great deal of back taxes.

c) ADELE SARA PACULLY, born on January 9, 1865, in Breslau, died on January 8, 1920, in Berlin. She married Professor Dr. Ludwig Brieger, born in Glatz, on July 26, 1849, died in Berlin, on October 18, 1919. He was a well-known physician and worked at the Charité Hospital in Berlin. He was the director of the Hydropathic Department of the Berlin University. He was an opponent of vaccination. Adele and Ludwig had two children, Walter (1891-1922) and Käthe.

Käthe Brieger was born in Berlin on January 18, 1885, and died in Porto Alegre, Brazil, on April 22, 1974. She married Lothar Schlesinger, the brother of Ludmilla (Milla) Schlesinger, who married Julius Schottländer's son Paul. Lothar was born in Ratibor, Upper Silesia, on May 15, 1880, and died in Porto Alegre, on November 13, 1959. Lothar Schlesinger and his first grade cousin Gerhard Schlesinger had inherited a yeast mill in Ratibor, from their fathers. In the 1930s both Lothar, Käthe and their son, Hans-Hubert, as well as Gerhard, converted to catholicism. As late as 1938, Lothar managed to make an advantageous transfer when emigrating to Brazil with his family. He traded his house in Ratibor and some other valuables for a chocolate factory and house in Porto Alegre, Brazil, which belonged to a German living there who wanted to return to Germany. While the Schlesingers still could leave Germany for Brazil, the German could not return to Germany any more, because, as agreed upon, he assisted Lothar with the factory in the beginning. Meanwhile, the war broke out. As Lothar did not understand anything about the production of chocolate and did not speak the Portuguese language, the factory went bankrupt after a while.

Lothar Schlesinger's cousin, Gerhard, emigrated to Brazil in 1939. His wife and son Klaus, born in 1934, came after the war, but at the end of the 1950s, they all returned to Germany. Klaus Schlesinger worked at the Schering pharmaceutical concern in Berlin. He retired recently. We always see him when we are in Berlin and have a nice time together. On weekends he drove us and our daughter Miriam to Potsdam and other interesting places around Berlin. Klaus assisted Lars Menk with his genealogical work on the Schottländers.

Lothar and Käthe's only son, Hans-Hubert, born on July 7, 1912, in Ratibor, earned his doctorate in philology in 1935 in Berlin. On July 30, 1942, he married Yolanda Ibañez in Porto Alegre, Brazil. Yolanda was born in Porto Alegre, on January 28, 1916. Her father was of Spanish and her mother of German descent. Hans and Yolanda had no children. Hans died in Porto Alegre on April 22, 1996. We are in touch with Yolanda and see her from time to time.

d) GEORG PACULLY, born in 1866, inherited from his father, Louis, together with his brother Rudolf, the Baumgarten estate near Ohlau. No further information is available on Georg.

e) RUDOLF PACULLY was born in 1870. No further information is available on him.

f) RICHARD PACULLY, born in 1872, also owned an estate. He survived the war in Berlin, by hiding, because he had good connections with a German general.

4. BRUNO SCHOTTLÄNDER was born in Münsterberg on July 9, 1839. He died on December 5, 1907. He married Bertha Haussmann, born in 1847. She died on September 9, 1899 in Bad Kissingen. Bruno was a combatant in the German-French war of 1870/71. He owned the Schützendorf and Nieder-Kunzendorf manor estates near Münsterberg, in Silesia. Bruno and Bertha had five children: Curt, Richard, Felix, Martha and Grete.

a) CURT SCHOTTLÄNDER was born on April 9, 1875 in Breslau. He was a doctor of philology. He inherited the Nieder-Kunzendorf manor estate from his father. His real estate was worth one million marks. Curt married Elise Elias, born on August 7, 1880, in Vienna, of Turkish nationality and descending from a Sephardic family from Turkey. Her father was a rich jeweler in Vienna. Elise died young in 1923. Curt was the *Vormund* (legal guardian) of his nephews, Erwin and Richard Schottländer, after the death of their father Felix. Their mother Lili was in constant conflict with her brother-in-law, Curt, about this matter. At the end of the 1930s, Curt moved to Berlin. On September 24, 1942, at the age of sixty-seven, Curt was deported from Berlin to the concentration camp Theresienstadt.with the 66th *Alterstransport* (transport of aged people). A short time after, on February 27, 1943, he died there of pneumonia.

HORTENSE SCHOTTLÄNDER, Curt and Elise's only child, was born in Nieder-Kunzendorf on April 18, 1907. She remained single. Hortense emigrated to Kenya in March 1940 and lived in Nairobi. Seldi and I visited her there in 1982. She was an amateur art expert. She lived in a very austere way in her very small, overcrowded apartment in which she kept her valuable collection of antiquities. The car she owned - in which she kept a mousetrap - was a very old model. She lived in this spartan way because being single, living in Nairobi, she was certainly frightened of being assaulted and robbed and therefore avoided living ostentatiously. She died in Nairobi on April 14, 1986, and according to her express wish was buried in Jerusalem. She left all her fortune of about US$250,000, originating from restitution she received from Germany for her father's estate, to various charitable organizations in Israel and to the Barsilai Medical Center in Ashkelon. Hortense very actively pursued her restitution claims for her late father's real estate, hiring various competent lawyers in Germany.

b) RICHARD SCHOTTLÄNDER, Curt's brother, died at the age of nineteen in Rio de Janeiro, at the beginning of this century, possibly committing suicide.

c) FELIX SCHOTTLÄNDER was the owner of two manor estates, Münchhof and Schützendorf, both inherited from his father Bruno. He lived in Breslau. He died before 1926. He married Elisabeth (Lili) von Fischel, born December 12, 1889 in Brünn, Moravia, died January 17, 1967, in Belfast. I mentioned Lili earlier, in Part I of this manuscript, when referring to Hans H. Pinkus in the chapter "The descendants of Samuel & Lina Meyer's children" under c) Karl Herzfeld. After Felix died, Lili married Hans H. Pinkus. Felix and Lili Schottländer had two sons, Erwin and Richard.

ERWIN ROBERT "UMBERTO" SCHOTTLÄNDER, Felix's son, was born on October 1, 1913, in Breslau. From his father he inherited the Schützendorf manor estate, which was under the legal guardianship of his uncle Curt. He studied in Genoa, Italy, at the same time as my late brother John. He emigrated to Argentina and lives in Buenos Aires. Seldi and I visited him there once. He has a leather export business and became very prosperous. He has a summer resort in Punta del Este in Uruguay. Erwin is a Catholic. He does not want to be reminded of the past and what happened in Germany, as he once pointed out to me in a letter. He is married to an Argentine Catholic woman of Spanish origin. He has a son and a daughter and four grandchildren.

RICHARD SCHOTTLÄNDER, Erwin's brother, was born on February 1, 1919, in Breslau. From his father Felix he also inherited a manor estate that was under the legal guardianship of his uncle Curt. Like one of his half-sisters, Freda Maria Pinkus, he suffered from epilepsy which, however, did not show up until he was about fourteen years old. After studying in Lausanne, he emigrated to Buenos Aires to join his brother Erwin. Shortly after the war, he committed suicide, just like his namesake uncle in Rio de Janeiro before him. Officially he "fell out of a window" under mysterious circumstances. As mentioned by John Peters, Hans H. Pinkus' son, it was reported this way because his mother Lili von Fischel, who though of Jewish descent was very Catholic - her very ambitious father converted to Catholicism - did not want to admit that her son had committed suicide.

d) MARTHA SCHOTTLÄNDER married *Regierungsrat* (councilor to the government) Aegidy, who perished at Auschwitz.

e) MARGARETE (GRETE) SCHOTTLÄNDER was born on January 18, 1873. She died at the concentration camp Theresienstadt on March 8, 1942. She married Max Graetzer (1862-1926). Their son, Dr. Günther Richard Graetzer (1893-1967), married Klara Milch (1907-1960). An aviation general of the German *Luftwaffe* under Göring also had the name Milch and belonged to the Milch clan, but of course he denied he was of Jewish descent. This lead to Göring's famous saying *"Wer Jude ist, bestimme ich."* (It's me who determines who is a Jew). Günther was an engineer. He owned a large farm at Langenau, in Silesia, now known by its Polish name Cienin. Günther and Klara emigrated to the United States at the end of the 1930s. Günther became dean of the university in Dayton, Ohio. Günther and Klara had three children and nine grandchildren. Günther's children are Marianne, born on May 17, 1928, in Breslau; Hans Günther, born in 1930; and Reinhard, born in 1933. Hans Günther married Miriam Ruth Michel, born in 1932. They have four children. Reinhard married Mary Alice Carroll, born in 1936. They have two daughters. All the Graetzers became Americanized. They converted in Germany a long time ago. Günther Graetzer converted to Protestantism around 1914; his wife Klara née Milch, around 1920.

On December 28, 1954, Marianne Graetzer married Joel Alexander Yancey, Ph.D., born in San Antonio, Texas, on October 28, 1925. Their son, William "Will" Frederick Yancey, Ph.D., born on August 30, 1956, in Boston, Massachussets, lives in Dallas, Texas. He is married to Caroline Marie Gabriel, born in Fort Worth on February 14, 1959. Will and Carol have a son, Michael Joel, born on February 16, 1991. Will is very interested in the Schottländer and Graetzer genealogy. His great-grandmother was Grete Schottländer. In 1989 Will converted from Protestantism, the religion of his birth, to Roman Catholicism.

Will compiled many pages of computerized genealogical tables, which he sent me recently. He also sent me a detailed report of his and his mother's trip in May 1997 to Breslau and the Langenau estate, where his mother was raised. They were joined by Hans Schottländer, of Munich, who is Marianne's third cousin; and Hans' family. They were assisted in Wroclaw by Maciej Lagiewski, the director of the Wroclaw Historical Museum.

5. DAVID SCHOTTLÄNDER, born in Münsterberg on April 1, 1841. He died of emaciation on August 26, 1841.

6. DORA (DOROTHEA) SCHOTTLÄNDER, born in Münsterberg on January l, 1843. She married Alexander Cohn, a merchant established in Breslau. Their daughter Róza married Herrmann Feige, who owned the Rux manor estate which he inherited from his father. Róza and Herrmann's son, Willi Feige, was shot by the Gestapo, the Nazi secret police. This branch of the Schottländer family is extinct.

7. SALO SCHOTTLÄNDER was born in Münsterberg on June 19, 1844. He died in Breslau on April 2, 1920. On March 12, 1872, he married Róza Braunstein. Salo was twenty-seven years old when he married and Róza, only seventeen. Salo met Róza while on a business trip to Poland. She was the daughter of the banker Arthur Braunstein. She was born in Warsaw on August 21, 1854, and died in Breslau on September 22, 1939. As a wedding gift, Salo's father, Löbel Schottländer, built the Benkwitz manor estate for him. This estate today is in ruins.

Salo was co-founder of the national liberal daily *Schlesische Presse*, which was published in Breslau from 1873 on. In 1876 he took over publishing this newspaper. At the same time, he became a book publisher. In 1878 he established his own printing shop and became sole publisher of the magazine *Nord und Süd*. In 1889 he founded and was the director of Schlesische Verlagsanstalt (formerly Schottländer) G.m.b.H. Most of my father's satirical *Rideamus* verse books were published and printed by his uncle Salo's publishing firm. In 1906 Salo transferred this firm from Breslau to Berlin but kept living at his estate Benkwitz, near Breslau.

Salo participated as a cuirassier in Prussia's war against Austria in 1866 and in the German-French war of 1870/71. He was honorary royal Greek consul for the province of Silesia. Various gold and silver medals were bestowed on him. Like his brother, Julius, Salo was a follower of the liberal Breslau Rabbi Manuel Joël. Salo and Róza had three children, all born at Benkwitz manor estate: Leo, Käthe and Victor.

a) LEO SCHOTTLÄNDER was born on August 6, 1880. He died in Basel on November 17, 1959. He was a musician. He composed operettas, was a theater manager and an opera and orchestra conductor. He also translated and adapted operas, the best known being Verdi's Nabucco. During World War I, he lived in Switzerland, where he became a Swiss citizen. After WW I, Leo returned to Germany. In September 1927, in London, Leo married Elisabeth Lissack, non-Jewish, born in Dresden on April 24, 1903, died on January 24, 1975, in Offenburg/Baden. They later divorced. In the 1930s Leo returned to Switzerland. Leo and Elisabeth had a son, Sigurd. My father and his cousin Leo had an intense correspondence in the 1950s, exchanging many letters between Porto Alegre and Basel regarding an operetta my father was writing, to be composed by Leo. This project never came to fruition, however, as my father died in 1956.

SIGURD ERIK SCHOTTLÄNDER, Leo's son, was born on March 17, 1928, in Görlitz, Germany. In 1955 he married Heidi Linder, non-Jewish, born in 1934 in Walenstadt, Switzerland, whom he divorced in 1976, after twenty-one years of marriage. After twenty-one years of separation, Sigurd and Heidi remarried in 1997. Sigurd lives in Basel. He was a radio programmer for the Swiss Radio at Basel until 1990, when he went into retirement.

Sigurd and Heidi's daughter Franziska (Fränzi) was born on February 28, 1959, in Basel. Both Sigurd and his daughter are free-thinkers. In 1980 Fränzi became a single mother. Her daughter, Noemi Joëlle, was born in Basel on May 10, 1980. In 1987 Fränzi married a music teacher, Manfred Bielser, who is non-Jewish. He adopted the name Schottländer. Fränzi and Manfred have a daughter, Natalie Naima Meredith, born in Basel on February 18, 1987. Seldi and I met Sigurd several times, in Basel, in Zürich and, in 1998, in Munich, at a family reunion at Hans Schottländer's home. Sigurd was there with his granddaughter Noemi Joëlle. We all had a very good time together.

b) KÄTHE SCHOTTLÄNDER was born at Benkwitz estate on August 16, 1883. On July 18, 1905, in Breslau, she married lawyer Georg Marck, established in Breslau. In 1942, when she knew she was going to be deported by the Nazis, she committed suicide in Berlin. Käthe and Georg had a son, Albert. He married Ritter. He perished at Auschwitz. Both mother and son became victims of the Holocaust, at different places and different times.

c) VICTOR SCHOTTLÄNDER was born on December 7, 1890, at Benkwitz estate, inherited from his father Salo. Victor married his father's secretary at Benkwitz, Sella Henrici. He owned an estate at Sägewitz. In 1936 Victor wanted to make a transfer, in connection with his emigration, swapping his estate with a German who lived and had a farm in Tanganyika (before World War I this country was known as the German colony East Africa, and now its name is Tanzania). However, upon arrival there it turned out that the German was a crook and cheated him, so Victor lost everything, as his relative, Hortense Schottländer, reported in a letter to me. Victor then returned to Germany. During the so-called *Reichskristallnach*t, on November 9, 1938, he was jailed and taken to the Buchenwald concentration camp. He consequently was obliged to sell the Sägewitz estate under pressure. In 1939, shortly before the outbreak of World War II, Victor and his family succeeded in emigrating to Santiago, Chile.

My mother, Leonie, who was corresponding with Victor and was a good businesswoman, managed to export neckties from Porto Alegre, Brazil, to Victor in Santiago, making a shipment by parcel post. Victor and Sella both died in Santiago, Victor in 1978 and Sella in 1974. They adopted a daughter, Nora, called "Mädi", who was of Jewish Hungarian descent. She was born in Vienna on August 14, 1928. Nora married Godofredo Stutzin, a lawyer, from Berlin. They live in Santiago and have two sons, Andrés and Michael, and five grandchildren.

8. BERTHA SCHOTTLÄNDER was born in Münsterberg on August 13, 1845. She died there of emaciation on April 18, 1865.

9. MALWINE SCHOTTLÄNDER was born in Münsterberg on October 1, 1846. She died at the age of about thirty. When she was young, she was slim but later on, as a married woman and mother, she became excessively obese, which was harmful to her health. She married Dr. Moritz Korn, an eye specialist. He moved from Breslau to Berlin. Moritz and Malwine had two sons, Erich Korn, born in 1868, and Arthur Korn, born in 1870, died in 1945. Erich was a jack-of-all-trades. Once he was a stage manager; then he owned a mineral beer brewery, with which he did not succeed financially. He married Betty Köhler, called *Häschen* (little rabbit), born in 1876. They had no children.

Arthur Korn was first married to Meta. They had a son, Werner. In 1922 Arthur re-married. His second wife was Elisabeth "Liesel" P. Friedländer, born in 1896. She was twenty-six years younger than Arthur. Elisabeth was a portrait painter and a pianist. Arthur was a physicist. He developed the pioneering theory of phototelegraphy, which became the basis and precursor of television and the fax machine. Through the method he developed in 1904, it became possible for the first time to transmit a photo by telegraph from one German city to another, by reducing it into dots and strokes. Arthur received an honorary degree (doctor of engineering) from the university in Breslau in 1930. Arthur had a research laboratory in Berlin. The Korn family left Germany in 1939 and emigrated to the United States.

Arthur and Elisabeth's son, Granino Korn, was born on May 7, 1922. His name, Granino, is a word play. In German Korn means grain. Granino means a little grain. He married Theresa "Terry" Marie McLaughlin on September 3, 1948. He obtained a Ph.D. in physics from Brown Univerity in 1948. He was a professor of electrical engineering at the University of Arizona from 1953 to 1983.

10. PAULA SCHOTTLÄNDER was born in Münsterberg. She died in Berlin on June 20, 1926. She married lawyer and notary Theodor Heymann in Berlin, who died on January 29, 1902. Paula owned the house at Lessingstrasse 49, in the Tiergarten district of Berlin, where my grandmother Luise lived. Theodor and Paula lived there, on the first floor; after Theodor died, Paula moved out and later Luise moved in. Theodor and Paula had two daughters, Tony and Edith.

a) TONY HEYMANN married the physician Dr. Emil Nawratzki. He owned a sanitarium in a suburb of Berlin. Tony and Emil committed suicide in Berlin on the night of 6th to 7th July 1938, after Dr. Nawratzki had heard that he was about to be arrested by the Nazis. They had two daughters, Ilse and Lotte. Dr. Ilse Nawratzki, who did not marry, was an ophthalmologist at the Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem. We visited her often in Jerusalem and once she came to visit us here in Porto Alegre. She died at an old age in Jerusalem, in September 1996.

Lotte Nawratzki married the psychiatrist Dr. Bruno Lewin. They had two sons, Peter and Klaus, both physicians. The Lewins emigrated to Palestine and during WW II moved to Alexandria, Egypt, where Bruno was a doctor in the British Army. Both Peter and Klaus attended a famous British Public School in Alexandria, named Victoria College. It not only was a prestigious school for the locals but was the school for the nobility of the Middle East. Interestingly, the majority of the famous people at the school were in Peter's and Klaus' classes. They included King Hussein of Jordan, the ex-kings of Bulgaria and Albania (Zog), the nephew of the king of Italy and the grandson of King Senussi of Lybia. Another king with whom they played on a British beach in Alexandria was the future king of Iraq. Lastly, the first nobility they met were the granddaughters of emperor Haile Selassie of Abyssinia (now Ethiopia), who held the title of Lion of Judah and claimed descent from a legendary union of King Salomon and the Queen of Sheba, who came to visit the king, as reported in the Old Testament. The Abyssinian emperor's granddaughters lived next door in Jerusalem beside the Abyssinian Church.

With the outbreak of the Suez campaign in 1956, the Lewins had to leave Egypt, moving to Düsseldorf, Germany. Their children studied in England, and later on Peter moved to Canada and Klaus to the U.S.A. Lotte Lewin, who by then had become a widow, joined her son Klaus and his family in Pacific Palisades, California. After I visited the Lewins there, Lotte came to visit us in Porto Alegre. Lotte died in Pacific Palisades, California in November 1987.

Peter Lewin lives in Toronto, Canada. He was born in Jerusalem on August 22, 1935. From 1940 to 1953, Dr. Lewin attended Victoria College in Alexandria, Egypt. He married Anneli Buchholz, born in Kleinsberg, Germany, on December 5, 1943. They have two children, both born in Toronto: Michelle born on July 15, 1966, and Martin, born on August 5, 1969. Peter is a staff physician at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto and Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Toronto. He also has a private practice. He is a visiting pediatrician at the Sioux Lookout Zone of Northwestern Ontario, at the Zone's Indian and Northern Affairs Hospital. He has published many scientific papers, particularly on his pioneering work with infectious proteins. For many years he has been associated with the Canadian Forces Medical Services. He also has been involved in Medical Archaeology. He pioneered the use of electron microcospy in the examination of Egyptian mummified tissue, writing an article entitled "Mummies that I have known." He analyzed a sample of Napoleon's hair and found no evidence of chronic arsenic poisoning, as documented in an article he published. He has received many Canadian decorations, orders and medals. His curriculum is quite impressive. We visited Peter at his home in Toronto several years ago. We also met him and his daughter again in 1995 at Ilse Nawratzki's home in Jerusalem.

Klaus Lewin, Peter's brother, lives in Pacific Palisades, California. He was born in Jerusalem on August 10, 1936, and raised in Alexandria, Egypt. He is married to Patricia Coutts Milne, of Scottish descent, born in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on June 25, 1940. Patricia converted to Judaism. She is a family physician at Kaiser Permanente in Los Angeles, which is a large medical organization. Klaus is professor of Pathology and Medicine at the University of California in Los Angeles (UCLA). Over the years he served as Vice Chairman of the Pathology Department and Chief of Surgical Pathology. Currently he runs the Diagnostical Surgical Pathology Division of Liver/Pancreas/Gastrointestinal Tract. Klaus and his two co-authors published a voluminous book on gastrointestinal pathology that has become the standard work in its field and are currently working on the second edition. Klaus also published another book, on tumors of the stomach and esophagus, the highly regarded AFIP (Armed Forces Institute of Pathology) fascicle. Klaus participated in a research project in Beijing with the American and Chinese cancer centers. He visited Porto Alegre in 1997 and lectured at the local Federal University. In October 1999, Klaus came to Porto Alegre for three weeks, regarding a research project on cancer of the esophagus, between the Pathology Department of the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul and the American National Cancer Institute. He held lectures here for pathologists.

Klaus and Patricia have three children, David, Nicola and Bruno, all of them physicians like their parents. David was born in London on August 27, 1965. He is a pathologist and a faculty member at South Carolina University, Charleston. He is divorced. Nicola, born in Exeter, England, on August 6, 1967, married the lawyer Thomas More Walker. They live in Seattle and have a daughter, Sarah Katherine, born on July 4, 1998. Bruno was born in Stanford, California, on July 3, 1971.

Klaus and Patricia are adorable people. They own a very nice home in Pacific Palisades, which formerly belonged to the movie star Anthony Quinn. I have stayed there twice, once together with my youngest son Gabriel and another time with Seldi. We had a wonderful time.

Dr. ARTHUR HANTKE - (1874-1955)
A ZIONIST LEADER IN THE FAMILY

b) EDITH HEYMANN, Paula Schottländer's second daughter, married lawyer ARTHUR HANTKE.

Dr. Hantke was born in Berlin in 1874 and died in Jerusalem in 1955. He opened a law practice in Berlin in 1900. He became a very important Zionist leader, both in Germany and Israel. He attended the Fifth Zionist Congress in Basel in 1901 and most subsequent Congresses. In 1903 he was named to the Executive Committee of the Jewish National Fund KKL, an office he held until 1928. In 1905 he became president of the Zionist Organization in Germany and was elected to the World Zionist Organization's Actions Committee. As a member of the Zionist Executive from 1911 to 1920, Hantke played an important role in international Jewish and Zionist affairs during World War I. In 1926 he became director of the Jerusalem headquarters of the Keren Hayesod, a position he held until a few months before his death. He led the opposition to concentration on political aspects of Zionism and favored emphasis on a program of practical settlement work in Palestine.

I remember Hantke from the family dinners at my grandmother Luise's house, celebrating Pesach or Hanukkah. Hantke was present only occasionally at these reunions, as his Zionist activities required a lot of traveling. By the mid-1930s, as a young Zionist myself, I felt great respect for Arthur Hantke, the famous Zionist leader (who, incidentally, never learned to speak Hebrew well). In the family itself, he certainly was considered kind of an outsider, a 'black sheep', because long before Hitler came to power, he was already an ardent Zionist, something quite uncommon in the rather assimilated Oliven and Schottländer families.

Edith and Arthur Hantke's son, Jonathan Theodor, owned a book distribution business in Jerusalem. He was an enthusiastic nature hiker. He was married to a *Sabra*, a native Israeli. Their daughter, Tehilla, is married to Benny Gabai. They live in Ness Ziona, Israel, and have two children. We visited Jonathan and his family in Jerusalem back in 1963.

11. LUISE (LOUISE) SCHOTTLÄNDER my paternal grandmother (1851-1935), married Julius Oliven, my grandfather (1841-1910). I have already written about my paternal grandparents - (see: THE OLIVEN FAMILY - 4th GENERATION).

JULIUS AND LUISE OLIVEN'S CHILDREN

Julius and Luise had three children:

FRITZ OLIVEN - (my father). He was born on May 10, 1874, in Breslau and died on June 30, 1956, in Porto Alegre, Brazil.

ELLY OLIVEN was born on May 18, 1882, in Hartlieb, the big estate near Breslau that belonged to Luise's brother, Julius Schottländer. She married Professor Dr. Georg Abelsdorff, an ophthalmologist, born in Berlin on June 30, 1869. He died there on December 24, 1935. He was a professoer at the university in Berlin. Instead of receiving a dowry, Elly got a lifelong pension from her parents. Elly and Georg had no children. Elly died in Berlin in the 1930s after her husband.

MALWINE (MIETZE) OLIVEN was born on August 8, 1875, in Breslau. She died in London in the 1960s. My father's two sisters, Mietze and Elli, married two brothers named Abelsdorff. Mietze married Fritz, born on December 12, 1871. He owned a wholesale textile firm in Berlin. Mietze received a dowry of 300,000 to 400,000 marks. The Abelsdorffs had good connections to the Lord Mayor of London, which enabled them to obtain immigration visas for England. In 1939 they moved to London. At the beginning of World War II, Fritz was interned on the Isle of Man for some time as an "enemy alien." At the beginning of the war the British did not distinguish between German nationals and German Jews, who - persecuted by the Nazis - had emigrated to Great Britain. Jewish immigrants were later released, and able young men served then in the British army during the war. Fritz Abelsdorff was released after some time, but being an old man, his health had suffered due to the internment. He died in London on July 2, 1945. Mietze survived her husband for many years. She died in London at the age of over ninety.

Fritz and Mietze Abelsdorff's son, Walter, born on December 7, 1898, was a lawyer. In 1935 he married Ruth. Both were born in Berlin. Ruth and Walter emigrated to London, together with Walter's parents, in 1939. There Ruth and Walter changed their name to Abels. Walter worked as a solicitor in a London law office. He also was temporarily interned by the British on the Isle of Man at the beginning of the war, just as his father. Walter died in London, relatively young, on July 5, 1952. Ruth and Walter had no children. Ruth returned to Berlin, long after the end of the war, to live in a senior home. She died there in 1991. Seldi and I visited her in Berlin several times.

THE *JÜDISCHER KULTURBUND*

Ruth Abelsdorff was secretary to the theater director of the *Jüdischer Kulturbund*, Dr. Kurt Singer, in Berlin. Her husband, the lawyer Dr. Walter Abelsdorff, my cousin, also worked for the *Kulturbund*, in its legal department. The *Kulturbund* existed from 1933 through 1941. It was an extraordinary organization. It was founded in Berlin, which had a Jewish population of about 180,000 at the end of 1932, more than four per cent of the German capital's total number of inhabitants. The *Kulturbund* had branches in many German cities. It was established when the thousands of Jewish artists, actors, musicians, singers, ballet dancers, etc. lost their jobs as soon as the Nazis took over in early 1933. In its first year of existence the *Kulturbund* already had 20,000 members. It employed about 2,500 Jewish artists altogether.

During eight years this organization conveyed general and Jewish culture to its members, presenting theater plays, operettas, operas, concerts, floor shows and all kinds of cultural activities. While in the beginning the *Kulturbund* was free to choose its repertoire, soon it was forbidden by the Nazi authorities to present performances of theater plays, operas, operettas and concerts by German authors or composers. It was then restricted to presenting only works by either Jewish or foreign authors and composers. My parents were members of the *Kulturbund* and I, a few times together with Seldi, assisted excellent performances there. Only Jews could attend and they had to identify themselves at the theater entrance.

The *Kulturbund* worked under unimaginably difficult conditions, being closely supervised and controlled by the Nazi authorities. The reason they permitted the activities of the *Kulturbund* was to demonstrate to the world press and opinion that the Jews enjoyed full cultural autonomy under the Nazi regime, a true Potemkin farce! It was the only organization in Nazi Germany that could resume its activities, or more correctly, was obliged to go on, after the Kristallnacht of November 9, 1938. For this purpose, the director, the orchestra conductor and many actors had to be quickly released from the Sachsenhausen concentration camp near Berlin, where they had been taken to. Thus, this macabre show could go on for nearly another two years. The final act came when the Gestapo decided to liquidate the *Kulturbund* in September 1941.

That same year, the remnant of this organization re-opened in Amsterdam, which was under German occupation. It functioned there for scarcely one year until eventually being shut down by the Nazis in July 1942. Most of the personnel was then deported to the Dutch concentration camp Westerbork, from where about 100,000 Dutch Jews were taken to the extermination camps in the East. As paradoxical as it seems, for some time theater plays and concerts were still presented at Westerbork by the same actors that had previously played on stage in Amsterdam, while deportations from this camp had already begun. Finally, in August 1944, this concentration camp was also liquidated. Most of the artists were then sent to Theresienstadt, as an intermediary station, and from there to Auschwitz.

A very interesting illustrated book about this unique and little known aspect of German Jewry under the Nazis was written by E. Geisel and H. M. Broder, *Premiere und Pogrom*. Ruth Abelsdorff, as well as many other persons, gave their firsthand testimony to the authors. One chapter reproduces a short interview with Ruth and shows a photograph of herself, along with her wedding picture.



Dr. FRITZ OLIVEN (RIDEAMUS) - (1874-1956) - MY FATHER

My father, Dr. Fritz Oliven, was born in Breslau (now Wroclaw) on May 10, 1874. At the age of thirteen he was sent to Berlin, where he boarded with a teacher and went to high school. Later on his family also moved to Berlin and he lived with them. He had always wanted to be a writer and began to write early in his life, but his parents were firmly against it. In wealthy Jewish circles of the time, a writer was considered a bohemian, living in some drab attic under a leaky roof. Writing was definitely not considered a reputable profession. Fritz' father, Julius, worried that the good name of the family would suffer by having a writer in its midst. In order not to compromise the family reputation, right from the beginning of his literary career my father always wrote under the pseudonym "RIDEAMUS", which in Latin means "Let us laugh."

At Julius' insistence, in 1892 Fritz studied law in Berlin and Freiburg im Breisgau, earning a doctor's degree in Leipzig in 1895. Law studies lasted only three years at the time. His doctoral dissertation was "About unlawful acquisition under the ancient Roman jurisdiction." Fritz commented about his law study in a letter: "It did not do me much harm, but it was of no use whatsoever." The profession of a lawyer did not suit him. He opened a law office but never practiced law, except near the end of his student years, when he had to defend indigent criminals who could not afford a private lawyer. He once told me - half jokingly - that once he had to defend a murderer who also had committed robbery. The man had gotten a life sentence and my father was glad of it. When I asked him why, my father said that if the defendant had been sentenced to serve a limited time only, the first thing he would have done, after getting out of jail, would be to buy a gun and shoot his lawyer for the incompetent way he had defended his client. My father's office was also his residence. He had an office clerk whose only job was to paste newspaper critiques of my father's literary work neatly into many big files which are

still in my possession. As my father was very successful as a writer when still a young man, he abandoned his law practice and dedicated himself exclusively to his literary career.

Fritz was not a very practical man, and after his marriage he left all practical and economic matters to my mother, who was thirteen years younger. My father liked ice skating and practiced mountain climbing as a young man. The story has been told that he secretly used to place some tomes of a heavy encyclopedia into the guide's rucksack at night, so that the guide would not be able to walk so fast next morning.

When bicycling came into fashion in Germany, Fritz ordered the best bicycle from England. When it arrived, he found out that he could not reach the pedals with his feet because the seat was too high. My father therefore thought that he had received a bicycle of the wrong size, suitable only for taller people. When his cousin Oscar Oliven asked him about the bicyle, expressing interest in buying one, my father sold his own bicycle to Oscar at a very cheap price, well below its cost. My father avoided his cousin after that, as he felt guilty since Oscar was about the same height as he was. But Oscar once came up to my father at a party to tell him how satisfied he was with the brand-new British bicycle he bought so cheaply from him. My father was quite surprised and asked Oscar how he could use the bicycle with the seat so high up. Oscar, who was an engineer, laughed and said, "Oh yes, indeed, I had to unscrew the bolt and lower the seat a bit until I could reach the pedals."

My father stayed up very late at night. This was the best time for him to write, as he neeeded complete silence to get his inspiration. Therefore, he would get up very late in the morning and it took him quite a long time to get dressed. He had breakfast at about 1:00 p.m., and would still be sitting at the breakfast table reading the newspaper when I came home from school at about 2:00 p.m. We usually had lunch at 3:00 p.m.

When traveling, my father always took along his bedding, consisting of bed sheet, blanket and pillow, in a *Bettsack*, a big special bag that could be locked on top. To my mother's despair, he only took late trains, never leaving in the morning. His big trunks were always stuffed to the top and usually he could not lock them by himself. The maid then had to call a coachman or taxi driver to take my parents to the railway station. At that time, in the 1920s and early 1930s, in Berlin there were still coaches pulled by horses. The maid also sometimes had to call a carpenter named Neumann, who was the handyman for everything at home. They would sit on the trunk, the coachman at one end and the handyman at the other, trying hard to press the cover down, while the maid would kneel in the middle, in front of the trunk, making a great effort to press the cover down to lock it. My mother would grow quite impatient about this procedure.

My father was a very anxious person. When my uncle, Fritz Straus, sent me his used bicycle from Karlsruhe as a gift, when he and his family emigrated to California, my father told the housemaid to hide it in the attic, as he was afraid I might have a traffic accident. I had to get it out of the attic and hide it in the cellar of our apartment house in Berlin. When I was sixteen, I bought a used paddle boat. I had to do this secretly, because my father was so afraid the boat could overturn and I could drown then. I also had to hide the used motorcycle I bought later on.

My father always had a barber who came to our apartment every morning to shave him and,

from time to time, give him a haircut. It so happened that the last barber he had in the early 1930s was an ardent communist. He always supplied me (secretly, because of my father) with communist literature and magazines, such as the *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung*, published by Willy Münzenberg. When the Nazis seized power in January 1933, my father feared that employing a communist - even if it was a barber only and for less than an hour daily - could compromise him. He therefore regretfully dismissed this competent barber.

From that time on he began to shave himself with a safety razor. As to his haircut, he was afraid he might catch a skin disease or infection at the barber shop. He therefore bought his own equipment, a hairbrush and comb, a razor, scissors and a cleaning brush, for his exclusive use; he always took these along in a pouch when going to the barber for a haircut.

My father was very superstitious. He kept many suits in his wardrobe and wore a different one every day, because he was convinced that this way they would last longer than if he wore the same suit several days in a row. In his wardrobe, however, he always left the 13th hanger empty.

My parents had received a grandfather clock as a wedding gift. It struck at the quarter hours, half hour and on the hour. My father, however, had the striking mechanism disconnected, because he did not want to be constantly reminded of time's passing.

When Lina, our Baptist housemaid, wrote a poem for my father's 50th birthday and put it on the breakfast table, he became quite upset after reading it. He said that the whole day had been spoiled for him, because in her poem Lina mentioned something about how he should stay happy and strong forever, until his blessed end. He did not want to be reminded of that, especially not on this special occasion.

My father was a great fan of the well-known Berlin soccer club Hertha B.S.C. Every Sunday, in summertime as well as in winter, he watched his team's match. The Hertha B.S.C. stadium was located in the northern part of Berlin, near Bahnhof Gesundbrunnen, a workers' district. To make sure he would get his favorite box ticket, during the week he would send a messenger of the GEMA, the writers and composers' copyright association, of which he was a member of the board of directors, to buy the ticket at the stadium box office.

Fritz was a real *Lebenskünstler*, an artist in the way he conducted his life. Being a humorist, he knew how to enjoy life. He never lost his great sense of humor, not even under the most advserse circumstances, as during the Nazi regime and when he had to emigrate at the age of sixty-five to build a new life in a strange country with a language unknown to him.

After he arrived in Porto Alegre, Fritz bought a Brazilian grammar and a Portuguese-German dictionary. As he was a very systematic person, every day he studied some pages of the grammar and learnt a few pages of the dictionary by heart, in alphabetic order. He also got busy writing. The period after WW II was one of intense writing activity, which went on until his death. He correspondended regularly with his German editors as well as with his lawyers regarding his restitution claims. On June 30, 1956, my father died peacefully at our home at the age of eighty-two.

RIDEAMUS' LITERARY WORK

Rideamus, a playwright, librettist and humorist-poet, was the author of many widely read humorous and satirical books, written in verse, illustrated by the best artists of the period. Altogether, one million copies of his books were sold. His verse was recited by heart by many people of society back then. The most famous reciters, such as Marcell Salzer, traveled around Germany, performing very successfully Ridamus' best known satirical works on public stages, such as among others:

Willis Werdegang (Willi's career), written in 1902 and considered the year's bestseller
Berliner Bälle (Berlin Balls), written in 1904.

Rideamus' other verse books, written between 1905 and 1925, are:

Der neue Willi (The new Willi)
Die Erfindung der Sittlichkeit (The invention of morality)
Lauter Lügen (Just lies)
Burlesken (Burlesques)
Lenz und Liebe (Spring and love)
Reinfälle (Deceptions)
Wilde Sachen (Wild things)
Lustige Liebe (Funny love)
Wichtigkeiten (Important things)
Reisemärchen (Travel tales)
Kleinigkeiten (Small things)
Hugdietrichs Brautfahrt (Hugdietrich's honeymoon)

Most of Rideamus' humorous books were published by Schlesische Verlagsanstalt (formerly Schottländer G.m.b.H.). The founder and principal shareholder of this publishing house was Fritz' uncle, Salo Schottländer. A collection of Fritz' humorous pieces - *DAS LUSTIGE RIDEAMUS BUCH* (The humorous Rideamus Book), published by Josef Singer Verlag A.G., appeared in 1932. In 1951, while living in Brazil, my father's only prose work, *EIN HEITERES LEBEN* (A merry life), was published in Germany. In 1957 it was republished by Wilhelm Goldmann Verlag Munich, who later put out a pocket book edition. It is kind of a humorous autobiography, combining fiction and fact.

Rideamus' satirical verse, full of irony and humor, depicts the bourgeois society and the moral and customs of his times. It was first presented at the famous satirical cabaret, the "Überbrettl" in Berlin, directed by Baron Ernst von Wolzogen at the beginning of the 20th century. Wolzogen, imitating the Paris cabaret "Chat noir," presented to the public for the first time a literary variety theater instead of the usual variety numbers. Every week a new program was presented.

It was there that Rideamus met the composer Oscar Straus in 1901. They had already created some small numbers whose perennial success made them "evergreens." One day Straus proposed to my father to write some operettas together. Rideamus originally wanted to write the libretto for an operetta to be called "Potiphar's Wife." But when he submitted his text for

previous approval by the censors, as was mandatory in the Wilhelminian Empire in the beginning of the 20th century, he was denied permission to publish and present it in public. So Rideamus changed the subject and in 1902 wrote the libretto for the operetta *DIE LUSTIGEN NIBELUNGEN* (The Merry Nibelungen). It was first presented at the Carl Theater in Vienna, in 1904, and shortly after in Berlin. It is a parody of the German Nibelungen Saga, and therefore provoked strong opposition in the rightist nationalistic circles and press in Germany and Austria. In 1907 there was a gala presentation at the Kurtheater in Bad Ischl in Austria, on the occasion of the meeting of King Edward of England and Emperor Franz Joseph of Austria. Rideamus thought it his duty to advise the marshal of the imperial court that some passages in the second act were a bit "bold." The marshal replied: "Oh, we will not come to it. After the first act, their Royal Highnesses will leave and have supper." And so they did indeed.

In 1908 there was a big theater scandal and tumult at the premiere of this operetta, at the Municipal Theater in Graz, Austria. The police had to arrest the rightist troublemakers, and part of the standing room and galleries had to be evacuated. The curtain went down and the performance had to be interrupted for a quarter of an hour, until order was restored. The theater director made a speech regretting the events and advised that no further performances of this operetta would take place at his theater. Next day the demonstrators, whom the police had forcefully removed from the theater, received a refund for their entrance tickets. During the Nazi period, of course, this operetta could not be performed at all. At present, however, it is playing with great success at various German theaters, nearly a century after its first performance. In 1905, at the same Vienna theater, Rideamus and Oscar Straus' second operetta *HUGDIETRICHS BRAUTFAHRT* (Hugdietrich's honeymoon) had its premiere.

In 1917 Rideamus wrote the libretto for the operetta *DREI ALTE SCHACHTELN* (Three old women) together with Herman Haller, with music by Walter Kollo. One of the best known melodies of this operetta is *"Ach Jott, wat sind die Männer dumm"* (Oh God, how stupid men are). This song was performed in Berlin slang by Claire Waldoff, a popular singer at the time.

Rideamus and Haller cooperated again in 1921 to write the libretto for *DER VETTER AUS DINGSDA* (The Cousin from Nowhere). The music was composed by Eduard Künneke. This must be considered Rideamus' most successful operetta. It is still staged constantly throughout Germany as well as in other German-speaking countries. One of the operetta's couplets, *"ICH BIN NUR EIN ARMER WANDERGESELL"* (I am just a poor vagabond), has become a perennial favorite, sung by all the famous German tenors and recorded time and again.

In addition, Rideamus wrote the following operettas:

Together with Herman Haller, music by Eduard Künneke:

Der Vielgeliebte (The dearly beloved)
Wenn Liebe erwacht (When love awakes)
Die Ehe im Kreise (Marriage in a circle)
Verliebte Leute (People in love)

He also wrote the libretti of further operettas, with music by Walter Kollo:

Majestät lässt bitten (His Majesty is expecting you)
Frauen haben das gern (Women love it)

and together with Theo Halton, music by Walter Kollo, he wrote:

Die Männer sind mal so (Men are like that)

During the "Golden Twenties," when Berlin became the cultural capital of Europe, surpassing even Paris, my father collaborated with Herman Haller and Willi Wolff to write the text for various Haller Revues, with music by Walter Kollo. Each of these revues enjoyed a successful one-year run at the Admirals Palast on Friedrichstrasse, in the eastern part of Berlin. Haller was the director of this theater. Back then, my father and Haller would travel to Paris every year to see the shows there. They went for inspiration and new ideas and to hire the best artists and singers, as, for instance, the popular "Tiller Girls" dancers from England, who were then a great success in Berlin and elsewhere at the time.

The Admirals Palast located at Bahnhof Friedrichstrasse, survived World War II intact and after the war was renamed Metropol Theater. (Admirals do not seem to have been very popular in the former GDR). It became a popular operetta theater in East Berlin. In the last few years the theater was privatized, but still supported by large subsidies from the city of Berlin, as it was the only surviving operetta theater in Berlin. In 1996, its manager became René Kollo, the grandson of composer Walter Kollo. René is a very famous tenor in Germany. Yet after so many years, the theater was closed in 1997, since mismanagement had led to heavy debts.

The following Haller Revues were presented at the Admirals Palast:

1923 - *Drunter und Drüber* (Up and down)
1924 - *Noch und Noch* (Ever more)
1925 - *Achtung! Welle 505!* (Attention! Wave 505!)
1926 - *An und Aus* (On and off)
1927 - *Wann und Wo* (When and where)

From the Haller Revue *Drunter und Drüber* came the very popular song:

So lang noch unter 'n Linden die alten Bäume blüh 'n,
kann nichts uns überwinden, Berlin bleibt doch Berlin.

(As long as the old trees are still blossoming on Unter den Linden, nothing can overcome us, Berlin is still Berlin.)

Unter den Linden is the main boulevard in East Berlin. Its name derives from the linden planted along this most fashionable avenue. The messsage of this song was of course very appropriate during the division of Berlin.

From the Haller Revue *An und Aus* came the popular number:

Mit Dir, mit Dir, möcht' ich am Sonntag angeln geh 'n
(With you, with you, I would like to go angling on a Sunday).

It was performed successfully by Marlene Dietrich, among other singers.

The premieres of Rideamus' plays were always very exciting events. I remember some premieres of the Haller Revues when I was a small boy. My parents would get home very late, because after the premiere, the authors, the composer and the theater director and their wives would have supper at an expensive restaurant. In the morning our maid had to buy all the newspapers published in Berlin at the time. Some newspapers had very outspoken critics and their opinions could make or break a theater play, operetta or revue. My parents, of course, were very nervous when opening the entertainment section of the newspapers to find out if the reviews were favorable or not. Bad reviews could ruin not only the theater owner and director, Herman Haller, but also meant no royalties for Rideamus. Fortunately, all five Haller Revues that my father wrote together with Willi Wolff received very good reviews and turned out to be great successes, each running for a whole year.

After 1927, when Haller wanted to reduce expenses, he changed authors, hiring a new and not so well known librettist who worked for less pay. The result was that his libretto and, consequently, the whole revue were complete failures. It played for just a short time, and earned only a small fraction of what had been invested. Consequently, Haller nearly went bankrupt.

My father was a member of the board of directors of GEMA, the copyright association of German authors, composers and editors, from 1926 until 1933 when the Nazis seized power. GEMA still exists today. In 1926 he also was elected president of the *Bund deutscher Liederdichter*, the association of German librettists.

Under the Nazi regime, Rideamus' operettas such as *Drei alte Schachteln* and *Der Vetter aus Dingsda* were still presented on many German theater stages. As the composers were non-Jewish, the programs just showed the name of the composer and omitted the names of the authors.

In 1989, C. F. Kutscher, of Wiesbaden, originally an army officer who later became a Protestant theologian, wrote a 75-page manuscript, "Die Wiederentdeckung des Rideamus (the rediscovery of Rideamus) - a documentation of satire and humor." Mr. Kutscher, a Rideamus enthusiast, formed a literary circle and organized lectures and discussions of Rideamus' work. At one of these meetings, in 1989, dedicated to Rideamus' works, Mr. Kutscher phoned me from Wiesbaden, in order to conduct an interview with me about my father's personality and his literary production. The conversation was done by speaker phone, so that the audience could accompany the interview.

Even today, Rideamus' operettas, mainly *DER VETTER AUS DINGSDA* and to a much lesser extent *DIE LUSTIGEN NIBELUNGEN* and until some years ago also *DREI ALTE SCHACHTELN* are shown on many stages all over Germany and are sometimes presented on radio and TV. Many of the famous songs from his operettas and revues, like *SO LANG' NOCH UNTER'N LINDEN - MIT DIR, MIT DIR MÖCHT' ICH AM SONNTAG ANGELN GEH'N*, etc., are performed by many famous artists on CD's, cassettes, radio and in concerts.



JOHN (HANS) F. OLIVEN - (1914-1975) - MY BROTHER

Hans was born in Berlin on June 26, 1914. He was quite unruly as a child. Sometimes we had two governesses at home, one just for my brother only and the other one for my sister Susi and me. Hans was not a very good pupil at the high school and his behavior exasperated his teachers. Once my father was called to Hans' school and told that due to Hans' low marks, he would probably not be promoted to the next grade. My father replied, "If Hans is promoted, I will take him out of this school and transfer him to another one. If he is not promoted, he will stay and repeat the year." The result of this talk was that Hans was promoted at the end of the school year (no questions asked), and my father transferred him to another school.

My mother engaged a private teacher for Hans to help him in some subjects. Once, my mother met Hans in the street, near our apartment, roller skating when he should have been having a private lesson at the teacher's house. Hans explained to my furious mother that for months he had been paying the teacher the money my mother gave him at the end of each month, but had never gone to any of his lessons. Apparently the teacher was quite satisfied with this arrangement and so was Hans.

Hans had a collection of private tutors. They were unusual people. One, Mr. Blumenthal, was a former musician who had been fired from the band because he did not practice; another one was mostly interested in botany and nature. He caught toads and frogs and made my sister Susi and me hold them in our hands for a while, which was not quite to our liking. Still another, Mr. Rosenwald, a Hungarian Jew, was a very gifted man, a jack-of-all-trades and also a good chess and piano player. He had started to study medicine, but never finished his studies. He gave lessons to Hans in all subjects. He was very interested in all kinds of sports, such as athletics and swimming. He went with us to a public pool and taught us the crawl. This was quite unusual, as it was not a very well-known swimming style in the 1920s, when only the breast stroke was practiced in Germany. He had a horizontal iron bar installed in our corridor and taught us gymnastics. He also had a rope installed, hanging from the very high ceiling of our apartment. On the top he attached a candy bag. We had to learn rope climbing so we could snatch the candy bag. Some time after he had left us, he suffered a nervous breakdown and had to be committed to an institution. He died there early in 1933.

Hans also had a private mathematics teacher, Mr. Schmittke. He was a mean person. Hans' bedroom and mine were separated by a thin fiberboard wall only. This private teacher once got furious at Hans and was slapping him in the face repeatedly. Hans put his hands on both cheeks to protect himself. I trembled when I heard the teacher in the next room screaming, "Take your hands down, you coward" and then another slap could be heard.

Hans, besides being nearsighted, had severe astigmatism in one eye. He once told me modern medicine would have allowed for correction or improvement of his eyesight, if treated while he was a child or young boy. The fact that he did not see very well probably was the reason why Hans always was caught when playing some trick. Once Hans and some school friends went to a candy store at the corner of our street. They asked the sales girl for the price of some chocolate pie, because they knew that the girl would have to ask the manager in the back of the store. The manager who was suspicious of the boys, saw they were stealing his chocolate and chased them. Everybody ran away quickly, except Hans, who was caught by the store manager and taken to my father. My father had to pay for what all the boys had stolen - and probably the manager even charged him much more.

One day I came home from school and was told by the governess to be very quiet because the doctor was examining Hans, who "had a hole in his head." Hans and his schoolmates, when they got out of school, used to tease the Bolle milk delivery boy with a derogatory jingle. Bolle was a well-known enterprise in Berlin, which sold their milk products from vans in the streets. One day the delivery boy had enough of it and chased the school boys with his metal milk can in his hand. The boys ran away very fast, except for Hans, whom the delivery boy caught and hit over the head with the heavy can.

Once Hans got a good mark at school, rather an exception. He was so glad that when he came home he wanted to tell my mother about it right away. My mother was having her music lesson. Leonie played the piano and the teacher, an English lady, accompanied her on the violin. In order not to be disturbed, my mother had closed the very big sliding glass door to her study. Hans was not aware of the door and ran smack into it. The result was an enormous explosion of scattered glass. Hans, who fortunately was not hurt, shouted to my mother *"Nichts passiert,"* nothing happened.

As a young boy, Hans entered the Jewish sports and hiking club *Kameraden* (Comrades), which was a non-Zionist Jewish youth organization. On a Sunday, in wintertime, the club organized a sledding party in the Grunewald woods not too far from where we lived. Everybody sled down a little hill. Some pinetrees stood at the hill, but Hans apparently did not notice them, probably because of his poor eyesight. He ran his sled into one of the trees and broke his leg. His comrades in the group had to transport him home. On the same day my sister Susi was having her dancing lesson with a group of girls at our home. Hans knew about it and asked his friends to carry him to the third floor, through the back entrance, rather than going up by elevator, in order not to disturb Susi's dancing lesson. Hans' friends had to struggle to take him up the winding back staircase. It was not easy for the young boys as Hans was a stout boy. This kind of conveyance certainly was not very recommendable for a fractured leg. The back entrances of the apartment houses at that time were mandatory for servants, messengers and delivery boys. Attached around the bell of the front entrances always hung an enamel sign *"Nur für Herrschaften"* - roughly translated: "for ladies and gentlemen only." These discriminatory signs left me indignant when I still was a young boy.

On one of his birthdays, Hans invited his friends to a party at our home. My mother had bought cream puffs. Instead of eating them, his friends preferred to throw them at each other. When the boys saw a cream puff coming in their direction, they ducked and the puff would hit the wallpaper. My parents were not at home and the maid was helpless and desperate. To get rid of the wild boys she told them there was something very interesting to be seen downstairs in the backyard court. The boys believed her and raced down the back staircase.

When they found out there was nothing to be seen, they ran back up the staircase. By then the maid had locked the rear entrance of our apartment and despite the boys' insistence, she did not open it up for the wild bunch to come in again. This was the end of Hans' birthday party.

Once as a young boy, when my mother gave him some money, Hans ran to the baker's shop on the other side of the street to buy some pastry. He did not pay attention when crossing the street and was run over by a car. My mother, who was near the window, heard the noise of car brakes, looked down and saw a crowd in the street. She had a feeling that something had happened to Hans. She raced outside and saw that Hans had been run over. She later said that her heart trouble began then. Fortunately, at that time cars were built very high above the ground and a child could easily lie under the car without being hit. Hans was taken to a hospital, but the examinations showed he had suffered no harm. Our governess, Miss Götze, also ran out with Susi and me to see what had happened. We could just see that Hans was being taken away to a hospital by car. Our governess' only reaction was to shout, "They stole Hans' sailor's cap!"

Later on, my parents sent John to a boarding school, Schloss Salem, in the state of Baden. Pupils there were educated according to a rigid, spartan-like method with strict rules. The schoolmaster, Mr. Hahn, was Jewish. After Hitler seized power, this well-known school was moved to Scotland, where it is now called Gordonstoun School. Prince Charles was educated there at his father Philip's request. Philip himself, who is of German descent, was a pupil at Schloss Salem. The school in Scotland maintains the same rigid, spartan style of education as formerly practiced in Germany.

After Hans had been at Schloss Salem for a short time, my parents received a bill from the school for dozens of broken windowpanes. When my parents inquired about what had happened, they were told that Hans, who had received a chemistry set for his birthday, had caused an explosion while mixing magnesium with some other chemicals, and this had shattered many windowpanes. Later on my parents received another bill, this time for dozens of dishes, glasses, cups and saucers. Upon inquiring again, my parents were informed that Hans, probably due to his poor eyesight, had collided with a female employee who was carrying a big tray and had knocked down everything on it.

After finishing school Hans began studying medicine in Berlin but only briefly. In 1933, shortly after Hitler seized power, he went to Basel, Switzerland, where he studied for a short time. Soon after, by mid-1933, he went to Italy and continued his studies at the University of Genoa. In 1937, he went to Rome, where he worked in the Psychiatric Department of the University Clinic for Mental and Nervous Diseases during the last two years of medical school. He received his MD degree in Rome in 1938.

For a while it was possible to transfer a certain amount of money from Germany to Italy because of the alliance between Hitler's and Mussolini's fascist regimes. Owning foreign currency or having foreign accounts was strictly forbidden in Germany at that time. My parents used this unique opportunity to transfer money abroad legally. They transferred this money in my brother's name, with the idea that it was advantageous to remit funds abroad in case they had to emigrate someday or in order to have a reserve abroad for any future eventuality. Hans used part of this money to buy a small Fiat Topolino car. My mother, upset about it and wanting to see what kind of car Hans had bought, went with me to a Fiat dealer

in Berlin on Kurfürstendamm. It was a very small, low-slung car. My mother sat down behind the steering wheel, but because she was a very stout woman, some salesclerks and I had to help her get out again.

In 1938 Mussolini concluded an alliance with Nazi Germany. Under German pressure, a thoroughgoing antisemitic policy was then adopted in Italy. In the same year a series of decrees were published, restricting the rights of the Jews. These culminated in the November 17, 1938 law, an obvious imitation of the German Nuremberg laws of 1935, containing very severe measures against the Jews living in Italy. Among other restrictions, as for instance prohibiting marriages between Jews and non-Jews, the law voided any and all naturalizations of Jews made after January 1, 1919, and all denaturalized or foreign Jews living in Italy had to leave the country and its dominions by March 12, 1939. There were very few exceptions, such as for those who had fought in the Italian army in the war against Abyssinia (Ethiopia) in 1935. More restrictive legislative measures followed soon. In June 1939, all Jewish notaries, doctors, lawyers, engineers, architects, pharmacists, etc. were barred from exercising their profession, except among Jewish clients, in strict imitation of the Nazi laws. Many Jews were then removed from office and began emigrating.

Hans therefore was forced to leave Italy. He wanted to emigrate to the United States. Immigration to the U.S. was subject to a quota system by nationality. The U.S. Consulates issued quota numbers according to the date the application was filed. Hans then was dating two sisters - at the same time. He wrote to my parents mentioning how wonderful it was to have two sisters as girlfriends. The girls asked Hans, who was very kindhearted, to lend them his car for a short time to drive to some places in Italy they wanted to visit. However, they stayed longer than agreed upon.

In the meantime, the new antisemitic law was issued in Italy. Instead of going to the U.S. Consulate General in Rome right away for registration, Hans preferred to wait several days until the girls returned his car. He then drove to the Consulate by car. Maybe he thought the consul had nothing better to do and would look out the window and be impressed by Hans driving his own car. He thus lost precious time and received a high U.S. quota number. So in early 1939, when he had to leave Italy, he had to go to Cuba first, where he stayed for about a year until his quota number was called. He made a living in Cuba by giving English lessons to other prospective Jewish immigrants to the United States. He once told me he was always one lesson ahead of his pupils.

It was illegal in Italy at that time to change liras into dollars and take them out of the country. When Hans was about to leave for Cuba, my parents advised him to see a reliable person in Rome to change the money, recommended by my uncle, Fritz Straus, a banker in Karlsruhe with many good connections abroad. The exchange rate for such a deal was not very favorable, of course, as it was a risky business. Hans had a friend, also from Germany, who told him he had heard of a person who gave a much better exchange rate. Hans called on this person, who offered him an excellent rate. As this was an illegal and dangerous transaction, the "moneychanger" gave Hans instructions: They would meet on a certain day and hour on one of Rome's hills surrounding the city. Hans would park uphill and come over to the man's car on the other side of the street, where he would hand over the liras in exchange for the corresponding dollars.

When Hans arrived at the appointed location, he saw the man's car already parked downhill,

on the other side of the street. The man signaled him to come over. Hans handed him the liras through the open window on the driver's side. But as Hans walked behind the man's car to get to the other side, in order to get in and pick up his dollars, the man, who had kept his motor running all the time, drove off downhill at full speed. Hans ran back to his car, made a U-turn, and chased the crook's car. But the man drove into Vatican City, which was forbidden to foreigners at that time. Thus the considerable amount of money (or what was left of it), that my parents had been able to transfer to Italy, was lost forever.

My parents wanted to give Hans a complete new wardrobe of clothes before his departure to Cuba and later to the United States. Hans, prior to emigrating to Italy, had left his measurements at my father's excellent tailor in Berlin. So my father asked this tailor to make some expensive suits for Hans to wear in the U.S. Hans was traveling by train through Italy and Switzerland to the port of embarkation. At the Swiss/Italian border there was a customs inspection. Hans apparently must have looked very suspicious to the Italian customs official, who asked him to accompany him to check his documents. This inspection lasted longer than the train stop. When Hans returned, the train was gone and he lost all his baggage, including the brand new German suits.

Hans reached the United States in 1940 and changed his name to John Fredrick Oliven, (his middle name was originally Fritz, after my father). He received his psychiatric training in Chicago, where he worked at a number of hospitals. In 1942 a new regulation was issued in the state of Illinois, making foreign doctors subject to a certain period of internship before their diplomas could be revalidated by the state. Hans did not want to comply, because he considered this requirement illegal. He wrote my parents that he was going to sue the state of Illinois. My father gave him the good advice to move to another state where such an internship was not mandatory, rather than suing and wasting money on an uncertain result. John agreed and moved to New York.

When John arrived in New York, he did not have much money left. My mother had a large autograph collection, started by my maternal grandmother. This collection contained many very valuable autographs of famous people - kings, presidents, writers, statesmen, politicians, composers, etc. One of the prize pieces of this collection, highly valued in the United States, was a letter written by George Washington. My mother gave it to John for safekeeping. John certainly was not aware of the very great value of this autograph. Once he wanted to take a girlfriend out for dinner. This was beyond his means at the time. So he decided to sell the George Washington autograph to finance his night out. He went to an autograph dealer. The owner must have been very smart. He asked John why he wanted to sell the autograph. John, who was not a very good businessman, admitted that he needed the money to give his girlfriend a treat. So the man helped him figure out how much he would have to spend on flowers, dinner at a good restaurant, a show, etc., adding up everything and offering him some extra money on top. John gladly accepted the offer and that was the end of George Washington's most valuable autograph.

John had an excellent career in the United States. He became a psychiatrist at Vanderbilt Clinic. From 1948 on, he was associated with the Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center, where he served as an associate attending psychiatrist at a number of hospitals in the Northern Westchester area. He was a Senior Psychiatrist at the famed Bellevue Hospital and Mental Clinic until 1949 and an Instructor in Psychiatry at the College of Physicians and Surgeons of

Columbia University. John had a private office on Park Avenue in New York. Later on, when he and his family moved to Croton-on-Hudson, N.Y., he also had another office in Peekskill, N.Y.

John followed in our father's footsteps. He began writing at a very early age. As a schoolboy, he invented stories and wrote birthday poems for our father and other compositions, etc. While still a student in Germany, he became greatly interested in psychiatry and sexuality. He studied, taught, practiced and wrote about psychiatry ever since. After arriving in the United States he soon fully mastered the English language and had an excellent style.

John was the author of numerous health articles that appeared in well-known popular magazines, such as *Look*. One of his articles was called "Calm down and sleep." Another one dealt with the popular belief that the phases of the moon have some influence on people's psychic conditions and behavior. John took pleasure in debunking old wives' tales related to health and well being. He also was a contributing author of scientific articles to medical journals. John was widely quoted in the 1940s and 1950s for his research on suicidal risks. John published "Suicidal Risk" in the *New England Journal of Medicine* in 1951 and "Suicide Prevention as a Public Health Problem" in the *American Journal of Public Health* in 1954. John is the author of *Sexual Hygiene and Pathology - a manual for the physician*, published in 1955 by J. B. Lippincott Company. This standard book for the professions appeared in its third edition in 1974 (556 pages), under the title *Clinical Sexuality*. It has been translated into a number of foreign languages, including Spanish. John also authored the bestseller *A Doctor talks to Newlyweds*, published in 1966, which physicians ordered for their patients. He was also the co-author of the chapter "Miscellaneous Therapies" in the *American Handbook of Psychiatry*, published in 1959. John also wrote articles and short stories for teen-age magazines.

John was a diplomate on the American Board of Psychiatry, a psychiatric consultant to the Social Security Administration in New York, a Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association, a member of the New York and Westchester Medical Association, of the Westchester Academy of Medicine, as well as of a number of other professional and specialized societies dealing with mental health.

On November 9, 1945, John married Charlotte Bauchwitz, born in Halle/Saale on April 4, 1915. Charlotte, called Charlie, had been an insurance broker before getting married in New York. But at John's request she gave up her profession after their marriage. John said it would not reflect favorably on a doctor's standing if his wife was working and earning money. Charlie handled efficiently all financial and practical matters for the family. This was very important to John, because he was not familiar with business matters.

John was always ready to help his family, friends or anyone else. He was a good son, husband, father and brother. He was highly intellectual and earned great distinction in his profession. He spent a great part of his time during the last years of his relatively short life revising and rewriting his *magnum opus*, *Clinical Sexuality*, which in its revised third edition was published shortly before his untimely death. He stayed up writing until late at night, jeopardizing his health. John became seriously ill and underwent lung surgery. He died at Montefiore Hospital in New York on January 6, 1975 at the age of sixty, the same age as our mother, Leonie, when she died in 1948, at a nursery home in New York.

John and Charlie had two children:

1. Constance (Connie) Frederica, born in New York on December 5, 1948. Connie married Robert Cambreleng. She is divorced from her husband. Connie is an accountant and has two daughters:

a) Rebecca (Becky) Snow Cambreleng, born on September 26, 1979, in Morristown, New Jersey

b) Courtney Jeanne Cambreleng, born on August 5, 1982, in Morristown, New Jersey

When Connie divorced, she and her daughters moved back to her mother's house. A few years ago Connie decided to move with her family to Portland, Oregon. Charlie, who wanted to stay near her daughter and granddaughters, sold her house in Croton-on-Hudson and also moved to Oregon. She now lives in a retirement home in Wilsonville near Portland. Seldi and I visited Charlie, Connnie and her daughters in Oregon in the summer of 2000 and had a very nice time together.

2. Thomas (Tommy) Curtis Oliven, born on September 14, 1952, in New York. Tommy changed his name from Oliven to Oliver. In 1991 he married Josephine (Josie) Valenza, born on April 4, 1957, in Monte Bello, Los Angeles. Tommy and Josie lived in Los Angeles. Their house there was badly damaged by an earthquake a few years ago. Tommy worked at the credit card department of the Bank of America for many years. Later he was transferred by the bank to their branch in Yorba Linda, California. Recently he left his position and accepted a job as financial administrator at a big firm in Atlanta, Georgia. Tommy and Josie have twins, Andy and John, born on September 8, 1997. Josie worked at a credit agency but had to quit her job, as she is quite busy taking care of the small children. Seldi and I visited Tommy and Josie in Los Angeles back in 1994, shortly after their house had been hit by the earthquake.



SUSI SCHALL NÉE OLIVEN - (1916-1999) - MY SISTER

Susanne Helene (Susi) Oliven was born in Berlin on April 16, 1916. Her middle name was given her after my maternal grandmother Helene Meyer. In Germany, Susanne was called Suse, and in Brazil and the United States Susi. She was always very good in sports. Susi attended the Reimann art school in Berlin, studying painting and sculpture, and turned out to be a talented painter and sculptress. As a young girl she joined the Socialist-Zionist youth movement *Habonim*. In late 1933 she went to *hachsharah*, near Hamburg, and in 1934 to Denmark, where she worked on a farm.

In 1939, she, my parents and I emigrated to Porto Alegre, Brazil. There Susi worked as an artist in wood, metal and clay, creating Indian heads and typical Brazilian characters. Her sculptures included a typical Brazilian family and heads or whole figures of prominent Brazilian personalities, carved of wood or cast in metal. Some of Susi's sculptures were commissioned by the local museum.

In official swimming competitions, Susi won first place in diving. She competed successfully in long-distance swimming competitions and river crossing. She also won first place in local and state competitions in the discus and javelin.

On November 9, 1944, Susi married Herbert Schall, born on December 10, 1905, in Berlin. Herbert was the vice-administrator of Quatro Irmãos, an agricultural settlement in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, of which Porto Alegre is the capital. This settlement covered an area of over 93,000 hectares. Quatro Irmãos had been established in 1911 by the Jewish Colonization Association (ICA), founded in 1891 by Baron Maurice de Hirsch, a banker, railroad builder and philanthropist. Baron Hirsch (1831-1896) was born in Munich and later settled in Paris. Baron Hirsch's idea was to help Jews to emigrate from countries, usually from Eastern Europe, where they were persecuted or economically disadvantaged, and resettle them in productive agricultural activities in America. In 1903, Philippson, in Rio Grande do Sul, became the first ICA colony established in Brazil. Philippson's settlers came from Bessarabia. ICA's main work has been in Argentina, where settlements such as Moysesville and others were established at the end of last century. There were also some ICA colonies in Canada, the U.S.A. and other countries.

Baron Hirsch's project ultimately failed in Brazil because most of the immigrants' children or grandchildren eventually left the colonies for the cities, where life was much easier than in the countryside. Today there are no more ICA settlements in Brazil. However, in Argentina

some ICA agricultural colonies still exist and the ICA continues to operate there. It is to Baron Hirsch's great credit that many thousands of Eastern European Jews, the greatest part of whom would certainly have perished in the Holocaust, were saved by the ICA, which resettled them in America. Most of the Jewish families now living in Porto Alegre and other Brazilian cities can trace their origins in Rio Grande do Sul's ICA colonies.

Susi moved to Quatro Irmãos after her marriage. This, of course, was quite a change in her life style, but she adapted very well to it. She was accustomed to the city and now had to confront life in a very small village, which was the center of the colony. The village included Yiddish-speaking grocery store owners, colonists who owned houses built of wood, livestock, etc. The ICA even had its own short railway line, with a Jewish train engineer and a maintenance workshop. This was most probably the only Jewish railway line in the world, outside Israel. Seldi and I, together with our two oldest children, visited Susi and her husband on occasion in the 1940s, and my father also spent some time there.

Always influenced by her Zionist upbringing in the *Habonim*, Susi, together with her husband Herbert, organized fundraising for Eretz Israel (the land of Israel) among the Jewish colonists of Quatro Irmãos. She raised funds all year long for *Keren Kayemet Leisrael* (Jewish National Fund), which is in charge of the purchase, development and forestation of land in Eretz Israel. Herbert was an active fundraiser for the *Keren Hayesod* (Foundation Fund), the World Zionist Organization's main fundraising instrument, mainly for financing immigration, settlement, and absorption. Herbert addressed the Jewish population on the High Holy Days at the Quatro Irmãos synagogue, where they all gathered to celebrate Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year) and Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement). He would then obtain pledges for the *Keren Hayesod* from those in attendance.

Several years after their marriage, Herbert left his position at Quatro Irmãos, and he and Susi moved to Porto Alegre to join Susi's family there. Herbert obtained a position in Porto Alegre at the central office of a big lumber company, engaged also in export. Susi and Herbert had no children. Herbert died in Porto Alegre on March 23, 1952. A short time after, Susi moved to New York, where our brother John lived with his family.

Susi studied at New York City College and received her Master of Arts. She worked at a day nursery and as a teacher at a school for disadvantaged girls. After retiring she was a volunteer manager of the gift shop of the conservative synagogue Forest Hills Jewish Center, in Forest Hills, New York. She lived in a studio apartment nearby.

My sister Susi was a model aunt indeed. She loved her family and was very attached to it. She always treated her nephews and nieces, as well as their children, as if they were her own. She accompanied their upbringing, stressing our Jewish values and traditions, helping out whenever needed, and spoiling her nephews and nieces with generous gifts. She taught them arts and crafts and put on puppet shows for them. She was extremely kindhearted and took part in everything going on in our families' life. My wife Seldi, who never had a sister, found a sister in Susi.

Susi died on October 24, 1999, in Lake Oswego, near Portland, Oregon, at the home of my niece Connie Cambreleng, who, together with her daughters, took most admirable care of Susi during the last months of her grave illness.



PART IV - KLAUS OLIVEN - MY OWN STORY

CHILDHOOD IN THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC

I was born in Berlin on January 20, 1918, shortly before the end of World War I. As the hospitals were then overcrowded by the many wounded soldiers, I was born at home. It was a complicated birth. Many of the younger physicians had been drafted and had to attend to

the armed forces on the front or at home. The old, overworked gynecologist had left a cotton pad in my mother's body which resulted in an infection and made another surgical intervention necessary. My mother had no milk for breastfeeding me, nor was any milk available in stores. I became seriously ill with dysentery and vomited and cried all day and night long. My mother, in her despair, rented a goat in the suburbs of Berlin. Every day our nurse went there to milk the goat, but the animal was always completely dry. Once the nurse arrived a little earlier than usual and saw how the crafty woman who owned the goat was milking it for herself. No wonder the goat was always dry when the nurse arrived.

I am a child of the short-lived Weimar Republic (named after the place where the German constitution was written in 1919). The Weimar Republic lasted only fourteen years (1919-1932). It was a weak democratic regime that never grew firm roots on German soil. Less than twenty-one years elapsed between the end of World War I in November 1918 and the beginning of another horrific war, World War II, in September 1939. I grew up during that time, in the so-called Golden Twenties, when Berlin became the cultural capital of Europe.

I was generally a well-behaved child, who did not cause too much trouble at home or at school, contrary to my brother Hans. My sister Susi and I always had a governess, from early childhood on. For seven years, from 1921 to 1928, we had a very mean governess, Fräulein Götze. She certainly would have stayed at our place longer, but fortunately for us children, she got ill and had to leave her job. She mistreated us most of the time. She threatened me, pinched me, spanked me, slapped me, you name it. I will mention only a few episodes, to show to the younger generations how "education" was often administered back then.

Once Susi and I traveled with our governess to a place where we spent our summer vacation. I was about six years old. Susi and I went for a walk there with an acquaintance and her son, who was about my age. At a gift store the lady bought a nice white cane for her son. It was small, suitable for children. I mentioned that I would also like to have a cane like that, and to my great satisfaction the lady promptly also bought one for me. When we got home, Miss Götze asked me who had given me the cane. When I told her, she grabbed it and thrashed me with it. She told me I never should have been so impertinent, asking that lady for a present.

I remember well the afternoon Miss Götze took us to a houseware store. She asked the sales clerk for a bamboo cane "to beat rugs." She tried out various canes and bought the most elastic one, which made the biggest noise when swinging it through the air. However, no rug was ever thrashed with it. The cane was meant for Susi and me.

We had gymnastic lessons at home. Some children from the neighborhood also participated in these lessons. When the teacher, Mr. Geige, arrived at our place, the first thing Miss Götze did was to lend him the cane. Mr. Geige then had all the children line up in a queue in our corridor and a mattress was placed on the ground. All the pupils then had to perform a somersault. Mr. Geige stood beside the mat, with his arm raised high, holding the cane. At the exact moment when the child's bottom was up in the air, he lowered his arm with a jerk and the cane landed on the pupil's bottom. Mr. Geige was very skillful about it and the bamboo cane always landed on the right spot. This routine exercise was the first part of our private gymnastic lesson.

Once before the gymnastic lesson, I was not feeling well and all of a sudden had to vomit on the floor of my bedroom. When Miss Götze saw it, she took a piece of wet cloth and hit me in the face with it and shouted, "Clean up this dirty mess right away!" Another time I had whooping cough. I was coughing a lot at night. First Miss Götze ignored me, but then she became angry at me. She stood up and pinched me in the chest, saying, "all day long I work and now it is impossible to sleep a wink at night, because of your 'cawing'." From then on, whenever I had to cough, I put my head under the blanket, nearly suffocating, in order not to disturb the governess' sleep.

Often in the afternoon we went by streetcar to the tennis club *Blau-Weiss*, where my mother went to play tennis. Miss Götze cleaned and dyed my tennis shoes white. While standing in the crowded streetcar, somebody stepped on my foot. At the streetcar stop, she helped me get out. As soon as the streetcar left, she slapped me in the face without saying anything. I really did not know why, but then she scolded me for soiling the tennis shoe she had cleaned just shortly before.

At that time we lived in a big apartment on Joachimstaler Strasse near one of Berlin's main streets, Kurfürstendamm. Nearby was the Zoo in the Tiergarten district, which we often visited as children. It was then in 1928, that 22-year-old Josephine Baker became a sensation in Berlin, dancing and singing in accented French, clad only in a girdle of bananas. Josephine first went to Paris in 1924 and skyrocketed there to international fame, dancing on a huge mirror at the Folies Bergère and strolling down the Champs Elysées with two leopoards on a leash. (The leopards were eventually replaced by swans).

I remember a funny incident that happened then. One day our governess, Susi and I entered the Zoo, and right behind the entrance in the main alley was a wooden stand. Inside, there were many dark-black Africans, singing, dancing and playing native instruments. Miss Götze had never seen a colored person before and could hardly believe her eyes. When people explained to her that these were natives from Africa, born black, she just did not believe it. She thought those people were only painted black. In order to make sure, she grabbed one of the bewildered colored men by his arm, spat on it and rubbed it hard, shouting, "Excuse me, *Herr Neger*, I just want to check out whether your color is natural or painted."

At the time there was an infamous mass murderer in Germany, named Harmann. In the course of various years he killed twenty-four young men. When Fräulein Götze got very angry with me, she often started singing a ditty popular then:

Warte, warte nur ein Weilchen,
Dann kommt Harmann auch zu Dir,
Und mit einem Hackebeilchen,
Macht er Schabefleisch aus Dir!

Wait just a little while,
until Harmann comes and gets you,
and with a little chopper
he'll make minced meat out of you!

Frightening a small child that way was not very pedagogical indeed, but this really is a true story.

SCHOOL DAYS

During the first three years I went to a private elementary school near the place where we lived. I had a teacher by the name of Schüler (meaning "pupil" in German). When I was a boy of seven, he once slapped me in the face, and my glasses fell on the ground and broke. I was already wearing glasses then, as I was quite myopic from a very early age. I inherited this from my father, who suffered from extreme myopia. I was very angry about my broken glasses and told the teacher, small as I was, that he would have to pay for the new lenses. When I got home, I told my father and asked him to go to school at once, talk to the teacher, and demand payment, but my father declined to do so. He told me that the teacher would be angry at me until the end of my school days there. He preferred to pay for the glasses himself. This, of course, was a big disappointment for me. Some time later Mr. Schüler passed away suddenly, one day after he gave me as a punishment an assignment to copy something. I remember very well that I was glad when I heard he had passed away, because I would no longer have to turn in the copy.

Mr. Schüler was followed by another teacher, Mr. Langeheine. He was a tall, strong man. When he got angry at me, he used to slap me in the face. Once I complained about it to my parents. Instead of going there personally, they sent the governess with me, to check what was happening. When we got there, Miss Götze told the teacher I was complaining at home about his hitting me. The teacher then shouted angrily at me with all his might, "Did I ever slap you?" I was so intimidated that I replied in a very low voice, "No, sir, never." When we left, Miss Götze did not say anything, but hardly had we come out of the school building, when she slapped me hard in the face. She told me I was a miserable liar and how ashamed she had felt in the presence of the teacher. At home she told my parents I had invented the whole story.

I remember another event at the same primary school. One of my schoolmates arrived late at the first morning lesson. He had gathered chestnuts in their green shells, which had fallen from a chestnut tree in the street in front of our school. The headmaster had obvserved him from his office window. When the pupil finally entered our class, the schoolmaster came in immediately and asked why he was so late. The pupil gave some lame excuse and the schoolmaster then grabbed him, shouting "you liar," put him across the bench and gave him a sound spanking.

After Miss Götze had left us, we got a new governess, Miss Sanner. She was a nice person. She took care of us and accompanied us on our summer vacation. Once, when I was ten years old, Susi and I were sent to Gstaad, a well-known summer resort in Switzerland. We had to change trains in Switzerland. When we all got on the new train, I noticed that the third-class compartments were crowded. I saw a second-class compartment that was completely empty. There were a few minutes left until departure. I made myself comfortable in the empty compartment. I heard Miss Sanner calling, "Where is Klaus?" I thought, "Let her look for me." Indeed, she did not find me and thought I must have stayed behind on the train platform. So she got off the train to look for me. The conductor asked me, "Is this your mother?" I said, "No."

Suddenly the train moved away and our governess was left behind. I went to the conductor and asked, "Why didn't you wait? You saw the lady had left the train." The man answered, "I

asked you if that lady was your mother." I answered, "She is not my mother, she is my governess." Miss Sanner had the stationmaster phone the next train station. Susi, who also was in the train and I were advised there that she would arrive in Gstaad on the first available train within two hours and that we should go straight to the hotel my parents had reserved. When we arrived, the hotel car was waiting for us at the station. Miss Sanner, who arrived later, of course, was quite upset and frightened because of her responsability, but in organized Switzerland these things were no great problem and everything turned out alright.

Once, when we were very small, Susi and I had a fight with our parents. We decided to go off by ourselves for a while. We went to the *Hinterhof*, the back courtyard of a neighboring apartment house, and started to sing. At the time there were millions of jobless people in Germany. Many of them would sing or play a hand organ or some other musical instrument, at Berlin's *Hinterhöfe*, sometimes accompanied by domestic animals. To earn a few pennies, they would place a cap or a box on the ground. Some of the tenants used to open up their windows to throw some coins wrapped in paper into the court. Susi and I started to sing the best we could, but nobody seemed impressed. Not a single coin whatsoever was thrown down to us. We then returned home penniless.

Once, on a winter day, Susi and I went sledding in the Tiergarten. We sled down a little slope and landed on a small lake. The ice was very thin. Susi went first and the ice broke. I could not stop and both of us fell into the lake. Fortunately, it was very shallow, because at that time neither of us knew how to swim. We were soaked through. We took a nearby taxi cab home. We changed clothes and had a hot shower and luckily did not catch cold.

From the age of eight on, I was a voracious reader. I had little notebooks wherein I listed all the books I had read, with a review of each at the back. I also made lists of all the movies and theater plays I had seen. When I was a young boy, one of my favorite authors was Karl May. He wrote many books with stories about the Indians in the Wild West, though he never visited the United States. One of my favorite volumes, which I had received as a gift, was called *Winnetou*, the name of the Indian chieftain. I had started to read it but when I wanted to continue, I could not find the book any more. I looked for it everywhere, to no avail. Finally I asked my brother Hans if he had seen it. He confessed that, as he needed some money, he had taken it to a second-hand book dealer and sold it for a small amount. I got very angry and decided to take revenge. This was shortly after Hans became Bar Mitzvah. Usually Bar Mitzvah boys receive a lot of gifts, among them many books, most of which they never read. Hans had received the complete collection of Brehm's *Tierleben*, life of the animals, from a relative. It was the standard work on this subject and consisted of many heavy, illustrated volumes.

I decided to sell his whole collection at the same place where he had sold my single Karl May book. This was a bookstall several blocks away from where we lived. So I took the brand new heavy collection and schlepped it to the bookstall. This was a very strenuous task, as I was small at the time, about nine years old. The books were very heavy and the bookstall not so near. When I finally got there, I found to my great regret that on that particular day the book vendor had not come to work. I returned with the books the next day. This time the book vendor was present. He asked me to whom the books belonged. I replied, "of course, they are mine." He then told me I had to present him with a written confirmation from my parents authorizing the sale of the collection, before he could buy the books. I was greatly disappointed, because I knew my parents would never give me such an authorization for the sale of my brother's collection. There is an epilogue to this story. Six years later, in 1933,

when Hans was studying medicine in Basel, Switzerland, I sold his brand-new, unread Brehm collection, this time with his authorization. I still have his letter, where he thanked me and wrote half jokingly: "to me the profit, to you the 'moral' merit."

In 1927, when I was nine years old, I started keeping a diary. There are altogether fourteen volumes, written between 1927 and 1945. In the second volume, written between 1931 and 1933, I wrote about the following abstract subjects among others:

Things that should be changed - Right or wrong, my country - War never again! - Radicalism or Tolerance? - Objectivity - Courtesy - Bureaucracy - Superstition - Prejudice - Generalization - Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité - Religion - Tradition - Internationalism - Socialism - Educational Problems - Nudity Culture - Zionism - Esperanto - Duels and Fencing - Drinking and Smoking - What do we live for?

Later on, my diaries had a more personal character again, as in the beginning. When I was in Brazil, in the 40s, I wrote down many things that happened to me in Germany in the 30s. This was very useful for the present chronicle, for otherwise I would not have remembered so many details of my own story, after so many decades had elapsed.

During the third year I spent at the elementary school, the Prussian government made a new law extending the duration of primary school to four years. Gifted children could skip the fourth year if their primary school recommended it and if the child passed a special examination. Upon my mother's request, my elementary school gave the following report:

> "Klaus Oliven gives the impression of being an anemic child. He has severe myopia. As the son of the well-known poet Rideamus, he evidently is influenced by his home atmosphere. In his manner of speaking, he makes a precocious impression and his behavior is somewhat peculiar. He only participates a little bit in the lessons being taught and gives the impression that his mind is constantly occupied with other things.
>
> "His homework as well creates the impresssion of his being constantly absent-minded. He is filled with thoughts beyond his age. He easily assimilates the subject being taught, has a lively imagination and is skillful and self-assured in expressing himself. In his relations with his schoolmates, he already considers himself the leader. He is interested in literary subjects. [...]."

This school report is dated January 25, 1927, when I was exactly nine years old. However, I failed the special examination. Still my mother would not give up. She decided to send me to Karlsruhe for one trimester to live with her sister Edith and her husband, Fritz Straus. In the state of Baden, unlike Prussia, the duration of primary school was still only three years. After that, pupils could enter the gymnasium (high school), if they passed their entrance examination. At the end of my first school day in Karlsruhe in 1927, I took the entrance test for Goethe Gymnasium. I passed and was admitted to the first class, called *"Sexta."* It was the same class my cousin Werner was in. My uncle had advised Werner to take care of me and to accompany me on my way home, since I did not know the city at all. When Werner left school, he looked for me everywhere but did not find me because I was taking the entrance examination in one of the classrooms. After looking for me for a long time, he finally gave up

and went home without me. My uncle got very cross at him and became quite nervous. He notified the police immediately. They dispatched a police car to search for me, to no avail. After roaming the streets for about an hour and a half, I finally found my uncle's house and arrived home safely. I enjoyed living at my uncle and aunt's and becoming acquainted with my five Straus cousins. The eldest, Werner, is about my age. Werner and I participated in the activities of the local Zionist youth organization, *Kadimah*. The leader of the group was Martin Klein, who later became my friend. He and his wife Tamar, who is very ill for some time already, live in Israel, in Kfar Yedidia, where Seldi and I have often visited them. I never forgot something he once told me in Berlin when I was a young boy: "He who trades playing cards has no thoughts to trade." I took this advice very seriously and never played cards from then on.

After three months in Karlsruhe, I returned to Berlin and was transferred to the Kaiser Friedrich Schule, a high school for boys only. It was located one block away from the Kurfürstendamm, around which most of the so-called *Westjuden* lived. In 1933, the year Hitler seized power, the total number of pupils at the Kaiser Friedrich Schule was 547. According to the school's statistics for that year, 272 (50%) of the pupils were of the Jewish faith. In later years, following Jewish emigration, this percentage diminished gradually. The Jewish population in Germany at the time amounted to a little less than one per cent of the total population.

One of my first remembrances of this school was our mathematic teacher, Dr. Fiedler. He was elderly and would retire just a few years later. Under the pretext that I knew nothing about mathematics (probably because I had come to the class three months late), he asked me to stay in the classroon during recess. He said he wanted to give me some explanations. During recess, all the other pupils went to play in the courtyard. He then took me on his knee (I was nine years old) and pinched my buttocks constantly, while simultaneously mumbling that I was a complete ignoramus in his subject..

Once, a few years later, I had not done my homework for German class. So I copied it from my neighbor before the beginning of the first class. Our German teacher, whose name was Knoche, was going down the corridor just then. He caught me copying and seized my copybook. He then told me I could choose between two kinds of punishment: either one hour of *Arrest*, which obliged me to come to school in the afternoon to copy some text, or a slap in the face. I chose the latter, because I was not inclined to come to school for an extra hour. He then rubbed his fingers in circles on my smooth skin for a while, and suddenly lifted his hand into the air. It landed on my face with a mighty slap.

Of course, spanking is nothing new and always was part of the school education in the past, even in other countries, as one can see from the popular English song:

> School days, school days, dear old golden rule days,
> Reading and writing and 'rithmetic,
> Taught to the tune of a hickory stick.

The difference is that all the events I mentioned occurred during the Weimar Republic. Oficially, corporal punishment at school was forbidden at the time, but one must not forget that many of the teachers dated back to the old autocratic Wilhelminian Empire and did not give a damn about such prohibitions. So spanking pupils at school was widespread, even after the old regime was replaced by a new, democratic one in 1919.

I could mention many more of these spanking incidents, but it would become repetitious. I just want to sum it up by saying that I survived all the trials I went through at home as well as at school safe and sound. I did not later have to see a psychiatrist to overcome these unpleasant events that happened during my childhood. Nowadays people who have gone through such an experience most probably would need years of psychotherapy to overcome it, but fortunately I was able to cope very well without any such treatment.

I grew up at a time when TV, colored photos and movies, microwave ovens, faxes, computers, video cassette recorders, CD players, radio cassette recorders, cordless phones and all the other modern conquests that nowadays are an integral part of our life were completely unknown. Our grammophone was cranked manually. I had a "detector" radio, which was a small wooden box, on top of which there was a crystal and a needle that had to be placed skillfully on the crystal, so the sound to be heard in the earphones would come out. My mother had a radio accompanied by an accumulator, which was a kind of heavy storage battery that had to be recharged from time to time at a nearby specialized electrical store.

I remember that in the late 1920s I was anxious to see Charlie Chaplin's famous silent movie *Goldrush*, but my parents would not permit it. So I decided to play truant and miss my school gymnastic lesson, which was in the afternoon, going to the movies instead. It so happened that the piano player, who always had to look up from his piano to the screen above in order to accompany the film accordingly, was late on that particular day. The movie could not start without the pianist. The audience had to wait quite some time until the pianist finally showed up and the show could start. I got quite nervous about this delay and shifted in my seat from one side to the other, because I was afraid that when I would get home very late, my parents would find out I was not at the gymnastic lesson at all. In 1927 the first musical sound-picture came out, *The Jazz Singer*, starring the famed Jewish entertainer Al Jolson (Asa Yoelson) his face painted black. Jolson (1888-1950) started his musical career as a cantor (his father's profession in a Washington, D.C. synagogue).

Before the Nazis took over, some of our teachers, whenever they were angry at one or the other Jewish pupil, called us *Verflixte Kurfürstendamm Kinder*, damned Kurfürstendamm children. Of course, during the time of the Weimar Republic, they could not call us "Jew children." We had a few Jewish teachers but also some hidden Nazis, who on from 1933 displayed the Nazi party membership button on their lapels. It certainly was one of Weimar Republic's serious mistakes that it did not oust the government officials and teachers who were declared enemies of a democratic system. I remember, just to give a small example, that once a year it was mandatory for all schools to celebrate the *Reichsverfassungstag*, German Constitution Day, on August 11, the day the constitution was signed in Weimar by the social democratic Reichspräsident Friedrich Ebert in 1919. It had been drafted by the Jewish Interior Minister of the time, Hugo Preuss and was approved by the elected National Assembly that met in Weimar because of the unsafe situation in Berlin.

On that day all the pupils had to assemble in a large sportsfield near our school. The government appointed a speaker, usually a ministerial official. Standing there out in the open, facing the summer heat, sometimes for several hours, the assembled pupils and their teachers would have to listen to the speaker sing the praises of democracy and freedom. These long speeches usually were very boring for us young pupils. I remember one particular year, shortly before Hitler seized power. One of our teachers belonged to the far right.

He was directed by the schoolmaster to advise us that we had to be present at a certain time at the celebration of that important day. He did so in roughly the following manner: "Tomorrow is *Reichsverfassungstag*. Everybody should be present at the designated time and place. If you do not show up, it does not matter too much." Of course, we young pupils accepted this suggestion readily and stayed home. That was the way the short-lived Weimar Republic functioned and how it was undermined.

At school, I liked French, English and history but did poorly in mathematics, physics and chemistry. Before the end of the school year, there was always a teachers' conference to discuss who would be promoted to the higher class and who would have to repeat the school year. As my French teacher once told me, this was usually a routine affair and was decided on for each pupil within a few seconds. Only my case was different. My science teachers insisted I had to repeat the year, but on the other side my language and history teachers insisted that I was very gifted and had to be passed. As there was a kind of compensatory system at the time, my good marks in languages and history cancelled out the bad ones in the three scientific subjects. So in the end, I always had to be promoted, after long discussions between my teachers.

I therefore never paid much attention to scientific subjects and made no effort at all to understand the theories of Pythagoras, Euclid, Thales, etc. Even as a school boy, I knew I would never ever in my life use these or any other mathematical theories or formulas. I had a role in the theater play *Cyrano de Bergerac* by Rostand, which our class presented in French to the school audience, including the parents, in the evening. In French lessons, I addressed our class in French about France's political situation. In history, I spoke about the Greek statesmen and historians.

In German, we once had to write a composition about the profession we would like to follow in the future. I was twelve years old at the time. I wrote quite precociously that when I grew up I wanted to be *Reichskanzler* (prime minister), so that I could change things and laws for the better. I would, for instance, abolish the death penalty and the anti-abortion law and I would also prohibit excessive armament on the part of the government, making better use of public money by building homes for the poor. I would enforce the laws against corruption and bribery on the part of government officials, mayors and government suppliers. Later on, I wanted to become a diplomat, a statesman or a politician.

I was very bad in drawing. Our teacher was a World War I veteran and had suffered severe injuries at the front. He was a very mean person. He kept a bamboo cane under his desk. Once we had a table tennis tournament at school over the weekend. I got into our classroom and broke the cane into many small pieces. The teacher did not know any of his pupils. At the end of the school year he was obliged to give a mark to each of us for the school certificate. He asked each of his pupils to give him a folder with all the drawings they made during the school year, so that he could check them and give a mark. I played a trick on him. My sister Susi was a gifted painter. She signed all her school drawings with "S. Oliven." I put her recent drawings into a folder and wrote on the cover: Siegfried Oliven. The teacher was not aware that my first name was Klaus, not Siegfried. So I got an excellent mark in drawing, which was very important to partly compensate my bad marks in scientific subjects.

We had an English teacher who supplemented his salary by going in private to the homes of the parents of some pupils - mostly those who were weak in the subject he taught and whose passing to the next grade depended on a good mark in English. He told the parents he was going to get married or that he had to move and needed a small loan "for a month or so only." The parents gave him the "loan," knowing a refusal could result in a bad mark on the school certificate and thus endanger their son's passing to the next grade.

A schoolmate, who now lives in the United States and who always was an excellent pupil, confirmed this corrupt practice, in a letter he sent me in 1991. He writes, "One Sunday afternoon, probably in 1934 or 1935, he [the English teacher] appeared at our apartment [...] and told my father he wanted to borrow 500 marks. I am sure my father immediately knew this was an extortion, but a refusal could have resulted in unforeseeable consequences regarding my *Abitur* [the final German high school diploma, entitling the examinee to enter the university]. Therefore my father paid - and never saw the money again, which at that time was already getting scarce. The teacher never mentioned this matter again nor did he do it again. His signature is still on my *Abitur* certificate." My schoolmate made this final school examination in 1936, two years after I had left school. He informed me that this teacher became a translator for the U.S. occupation army after WW II.

At that time with over fifty pupils in our class, it was divided for religion lessons, which took place twice a week. The Jewish pupils had lessons with a rabbi; the Catholic ones, which were a small minority in our class, had lessons together with the Protestants, given by a clergyman. Our teacher was a Reform rabbi, Dr. Karl Rosenthal, who later emigrated to the United States. According to Reform movement ideology of the time, he refused to teach us Hebrew, considered by him a "dead language." He also did not teach us Jewish history and tradition. We, the Zionists among my schoolmates, insisted on having lessons in these subjects, but to no avail. This Reform rabbi probably did not know much Hebrew anyhow. Though I argued with him many times, he had a certain empathy for me. The reason apparently was that my rich aunt, Sonnie Oliven, the wife of my father's cousin, Oscar, belonged to the Reform Movement, went to the services at the rabbi's temple and certainly was a good contributor.

At that time the Reform Movement eliminated the Hebrew language from their prayer books nearly completely and also the religious service was mostly conducted in German. The weekly Shabbat service was transferred from Saturday to Sunday morning, as this was more convenient for the congregants. At that time there was no "weekend," with businesses closing on Saturday, at least not in the morning. *Kippot,* scull caps, also were no longer used by men and boys in the Reform Temples, and men and women were no longer sitting separately.

Rabbi Rosenthal was an anti-Zionist. He told us Palestine was not the solution for the Jewish question. He insisted that Palestine, at a time when the Jewish population there consisted of only a few hundred thousands, had no room for even a cat or dog any more. (Today nearly five million Jews live in Israel!) We were constantly arguing with him. Instead of teaching us our rich Jewish heritage, the only thing the rabbi busied himself with was the "Anti-Anti," a booklet containing loose pages arranged in alphabetical order. It was published by the *Central Verein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens* (the Central Organization of German

Citizens of Jewish Faith). My parents belonged to that organization, which published a newspaper of their own, the *C.V. Zeitung*. Ideologically, they stood in marked contrast to the Zionist idea. Its objectives were to fight antisemitism, to protect and strengthen Jewish civic and social status, to unite all Jews regardless of their religious and political views and to foster their German patriotism.

The loose pages of the "Anti-Anti" were arranged in such a way that if, for example, a Nazi at a public meeting or private discussion argued that Goethe was an antisemite, one just had to look up the respective page under "G" (Goethe) and present the counter-arguments. Rabbi Rosenthal was apparently so ingenuous that he thought he could stem the advance of the Nazis (which at that time, the early 30s, were ever growing in strength) by familiarizing us and other people with counter-arguments against antisemitic lies and defamation.

At the corner of Kurfürstendamm and Uhlandstrasse, very near our school, there was a news vendor who sold *Der Angriff* (The Attack), a Nazi newspaper published in Berlin by Goebbels, who later became minister of propaganda. When the news vendor called out *Der Angriff* to sell his papers, my friend Landau and I would shout from some safe distance *Der Anschiss*, which was quite an insult. Once the man became so angry that he dropped his leather pouch with the papers and chased us. Contrary to my poor brother Hans (at the time when he had been teasing the "Bolle" milk boy and had his skull fractured), we ran away as fast as we could and were not caught. Max Landau was my schoolmate in the fourth year of high school. He was two years older than I. He had come from Galicia with his parents and belonged to the Jewish youth movement *Hashomer Hatzair.* He was highly intellectual. Later, after he left school, we still corresponded for some time.

In the early 1930s, before the Nazis seized power, there was a communist weekly newspaper called *Der Schulkampf* (The School Fight), in Berlin, which reported exclusively on what happened in Berlin's high schools. The articles, criticizing the school system and its teachers, were mostly submitted to the editorial board by the pupils themselves. The distribution of this newspaper inside the schools apparently was not permitted by the authorities. We had a teacher, Dr. Müller, who was a fierce nationalist. He could not stand our using anglicisms or gallicisms in the school compositions. He wanted to clean the German language of all foreign terms. He was a member of the VDA, a rightist association for the aid and assistance of German citizens living abroad. He told us proudly that some years ago he had participated in a banquet of this organization at which Gustav Stresemann, the German prime minister and then later foreign minister, was seated near him. When the meat was served, he was not ashamed to ask Stresemann to pass to him the *Tunke* (a word used mostly by peasants and workmen), rather than employing the usual word *Sosse* (sauce). Dr. Müller, on the other hand, had no scruples at all, using vulgar terms such as "shit", etc., when he got angry for some reason during the lessons.

My friend Landau wrote a story and had it published in the *Schulkampf*. It was about this German language "purist", who, on the one hand, wanted to clean the German language and, on the other hand, used quite vulgar terms. Landau did not neglect to have the editorial board of the newspaper send a copy to Dr. Müller himself and another one to the principal. The former of course knew it could only have been a pupil of our class, who had this story published about him in the hated newspaper. In one of the lessons he asked us "Who is the *Denunzianten Schwein* (the informer pig) that published the article?" As nobody came forward,

soon after, during one of our classes, the principal and Dr. Müller showed up and began a search in every pupil's schoolbag. Landau used to distribute copies of the newspaper among us, but on that particular day fortunately no copies were found in his schoolbag. The *razzia* turned out to be a complete failure. All this happened in 1931 during the democratic Weimar Republic, under a social democratic Prussian government!

My Bar Mitzvah took place in early 1931 at the beautiful Fasanenstrasse Synagogue, just off the fashionable Kurfürstendamm. We lived very near that place at the time. It was a liberal synagogue and my family attended it. This monumental synagogue was inaugurated in 1912, built in Neo-Roman style. Rabbi Leo Baeck often delivered his sermons there.

Susi's Bat Mitzvah and my Bar Mitzvah took place together. Afterwards we had a party at our home to which our relatives were invited. We had preparatory lessons with Rabbi Dr. J. Bergmann at that synagogue, together with other pupils. Shortly after 1933 Rabbi Bergmann got pensioned and then emigrated to Palestine. He died there at an old age. The *Haftarah* I read at my Bar Mitzvah was the story of the prophetess Deborah, from the Book of Judges, chapter four. Shortly before the service was to begin, I realized that I had forgotten my reading glasses at home. Since an early age, I always wore two kinds of glasses, one for distance, for general use, and the other one just for reading. Fortunately I knew exactly where I kept the reading glasses in my desk. My father rushed home by taxi as fast as possible and brought them to me at the last moment, just in time.

As early as 1931, the Fasanenstrasse synagogue was the object of attacks by the Nazis. On the eve of the second day of Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, on September 12, 1931, organized bands of the Hitler Jugend, equipped with sticks and iron bars, led by SA men - the brown storm troopers - intended to invade the synagogue during the religious service. When they arrived, the service was already over. Then the mob followed the Jews who had left the synagogue and were on their way home, attacking them in the streets around the Kurfürstendamm.

The police arrested some of the troublemakers and took them to the nearby police station, which occupied one floor of the apartment building where we lived at Joachimstalerstrasse 11. One of the rooms had iron bars on the windows and was transformed into a detention cell. Using my binoculars, I could watch the cell on the other side of the courtyard and saw how the Nazi rowdies were locked up in the cell. They all took their detention very lightly and were in excellent spirits. They did headstands on the cell table, shouting and having a good time. After a few hours of detention, they were all released next morning. They marched off across the courtyard, singing their Nazi songs. Nothing else happened to them. During its short existence the weak Weimar Republic was always lax in enforcing the law.

I remember this incident clearly, because on that day I was visiting my school friend Gerhard Schey. As I was an avid reader and he and his elder brother owned a good library, I borrowed about ten books from him. In the early evening there was a phone call from my parents advising me not to come home because of the trouble with SA men in front of our building, who were being taken to the police station there. As I did not want to stay overnight at my friend's, I took a taxi back home. When I arrived with my heavy load of books, I found myself in the middle of the skirmish between the police and the SA men. The janitor had locked the building's entrance door and it took some time until he showed up and opened it for me.

In the winter of 1932, I took advanced French courses in the evening at the Humboldt Hochschule. Only grown-ups attended these courses. I, a boy of fourteen, was the only exception. The teacher was a French lady. She also taught us *argot,* the thieves' language, and *patois,* the vulgar terms. I often clashed with her, when speaking in French about socialist books and their authors. She was rather conservative and did not like my ideas. Later on I had a good private Belgian teacher who shared my ideology. I also had private English lessons.

Living in our apartment on Joachimstaler Strasse became unbearable. Besides the police station on the first floor, a night club opened on the ground floor and every night there were noisy disturbances. The troublemakers - men and women - would be taken one floor up to spend the rest of the night behind bars, until they sobered up and calmed down again. The political situation also became more tense, and the incidents with the SA storm troopers, in their brown uniforms, increased ever more. The wearing of uniforms was forbidden for a while, but this law was later revoked. A short time after, we moved to another very large apartment at Giesebrechtstrasse 11, a side street of Kurfürstendamm, further up. Only the roof of this apartment house was damaged during WW II. It stands today exactly as we left it in 1939. On one of our visits to Berlin, Seldi and I asked the new tenant, an office now, for permission and visited the apartment where I lived with my family many years ago, and so did our son Miguel during his first visit to Berlin. The apartment house at Joachimstalerstrasse 11, however, does not exist any more. It was bombed out during the war and later torn down.

The Fasanenstrasse synagogue was destroyed and burned down during the pogrom night of November 9, 1938. In 1959 the Berlin Jewish Community Center was inaugurated on the site of the former synagogue, with a large library, conference rooms, etc. A section of the destroyed synagogue's surviving Moorish style portal and two columns from the entrance façade were saved from the ruins and incorporated into the entrance of the new building.



The interior of Fasanenstrasse synagogue after its destruction during Kristallnacht

As to the Kaiser Friedrich Schule, an imposing red building in gothic style, built in 1900, it still stands at the same place, on Knesebeckstrasse, near Savigny Platz. Only the gymnasium hall, a separate building where we had gymnastic lessons, was hit by a bomb and tore down. One can see the school from the S-Bahn passing the Savigny Platz station. Today the Kaiser Friedrich Schule is a school for the children of Russian immigrants. We visited it several times on our visits to Berlin.

LIFE IN BERLIN

Berlin's middle- and upper-class *Westjuden* lived mainly in the districts of Charlottenburg and Wilmersdorf in West Berlin. Most of them lived around the Kurfürstendamm, one of West Berlin's main streets, with many fashionable stores. The upper crust lived in villas in the Grunewald district. The so-called *Ostjuden* lived mostly in the northern part of Berlin. The more recent, poorer immigrants, who came mainly from Russia and Poland (mostly Galicia), lived in the Scheunenviertel, the slum district west of Alexanderplatz. Those who were a little better off lived around Prenzlauer Berg. The ones who were able to make some money and could afford the higher rents moved to West Berlin, which gave them a higher social status. As a young boy, I had never been to North Berlin. It was only when I entered the Jewish youth movement later on that I came to know that part of the capital, because many of its members lived there and also various of the organization's meeting places were located in the same neighborhood. The Kurfürstendamm and the Scheunenviertel were worlds apart.

The Scheunenviertel was a real ghetto, but it was a voluntary one without high walls. The stores bore inscriptions in Yiddish, indicating the owner's name and what merchandise was for sale. The Hebrew lettering on the façade of a few run-down houses there even survived the Hitler regime and World War II. The letters only disappeared a few years ago when the façades of the old buildings in this East Berlin neighborhood, capital of the German Democratic Republic, were plastered over upon the occasion of Berlin's 750th anniversary. The streets there were crowded in the 1920s and early 1930s, with open markets in the streets, where the Jewish stall keepers sold live chicken and eggs among other goods. Most of the Jews there wore their typical eastern garb: long *kaftans* and black hats. The younger, more modern ones wore already frock coats. There were two prayer halls and various tiny prayer rooms, many of them located at the *Hinterhöfe* of some of the run-down buildings. Strangely enough, but merely coincidentally, the Jewish immigrants coming from the East settled in the Scheunenviertel on all the streets with military names, such as Grenadierstrasse, Artilleriestrasse and Dragonerstrasse.

In 1925 Berlin's Jewish population was 172,000, which accounted for about 30% of the 564,000 Jews living in Germany at the time (about 0.9% of the total population). The Jewish population of Berlin amounted to about 4% of the capital's inhabitants. A quarter of all Jews living in Berlin at the time were foreigners. The German Jews played a very important role in the cultural, intellectual and economic life of the capital in the 1920s and early 1930s. They were at the forefront in theater, cabaret, the film industry, press, publishing, music and literature, as well as in medicine, law, architecture, business, etc.

BECOMING A COMMUNIST AT THE AGE OF THIRTEEN, AT A TIME OF GREAT POLITICAL TURMOIL IN GERMANY

From the age of thirteen, I wanted to fight for a better world, without injustice and exploitation. Influenced by some Jewish classmates, I became a communist. At the age of fourteen I devoured *Das Kapital* by Karl Marx and various writings by Lenin and other communist authors. I was a regular reader of the *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung* (Workers' Illustrated Magazine), and also *Die Permanente Revolution*, a Trotskyist newspaper, both weeklies. I was greatly influenced by Trotsky and shared his ideas at the time. The *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung* was published by the prominent communist leader Willi Münzenberg. Later, after fleeing to the Soviet Union when Hitler came to power, he fell into disgrace there and became a victim of Stalinist terror, during the infamous purges of many of the old and faithful communist leaders.

Once I was ice skating at the club where I played tennis in summer. It was in the winter of 1932. My friend Gerhard Schey, nicknamed "Muddelchen," was with me. I was wearing an "Antifascist Action" button on my left lapel and a KPD (German Communist Party) button, which my father's barber had given me, on the right one. A gang of Nazi boys surrounded me. My friend Gerhard, who thought I was crazy, got scared and abandoned me at once. The boys then threw me down on the ice and ripped off my two buttons.

The number of unemployed people in Germany rose from four million in 1930 to six million in 1932. That same year, 1932, the ultraconservative *Reichsfeldmarschall* Paul von Hindenburg was reelected German President, defeating Hitler and the communist candidate Thälmann. Hindenburg dismissed the Catholic conservative prime minister Brüning and appointed the ultraconservative rightist von Papen. The reactionary new prime minister immediately dissolved the parliament to avert a no-confidence vote. He also promptly revoked his predecessor Brüning's prohibition of the Nazi SA storm troopers and SS elite troops. The SA wore white shirts instead of brown uniforms during the time they were forbidden.

The political situation in Germany grew ever tenser and more complicated. In Berlin the fights between the SA and the communist Red Front fighters turned more and more vicious and violent. Each of them had their *Stammlokale*, usually corner pubs, and there were mutual assaults and shootings at these places every other evening, with people killed and injured. The NSDAP (the National Socialist Party), was growing constantly. Nobody had taken the party seriously before 1930. In the 1928 parliamentary elections they obtained only 600,000 votes, i.e., 2.6% of the total. However, two years later, in 1930 they received 6.4 million votes, 18.3% of the total, with 107 delegates in the *Reischstag*. In the July 1932 elections, after von Papen had dissolved parliament, they became the strongest party, winning 7.4 million votes, 37.8% of the total, and thus conquering 230 seats out of a total of 608. This newly elected parliament, however, was dissolved, after approving a no-confidence vote against von Papen. In the new elections of November 1932, the Nazi party lost one million votes.

The biggest German state, Prussia, was then ruled by an elected social democratic government, under the leadership of prime minister Braun and interior minister Severing. On July 20, 1932, von Papen called the leaders of the Prussian government to the German chancellery. He declared that Hindenburg had appointed him caretaker of the state of Prussia because the safety and order of the state could no longer be guaranteed by the state government, which

then was dismissed. The social democratic Prussian government's only reaction was a verbal protest, expressed by Severing with the famous words *"Ich weiche nur der Gewalt,"* (I only yield to power). The short reply was "We are the power." The "power" to which Severing then yielded his government office, without even a gesture of resistance, consisted of only three people: the newly apppointed Berlin police chief and two police officers from Severing's own Prussian police force. The social democratic state government then simply capitulated, without any mass protests, public demonstrations or a general strike. This was the sad end of the democratically elected Prussian government. The doors to Hitler's takeover half a year later were now laid wide open.

NIGHT OVER GERMANY

On the fatal day of January 30, 1933, Reichspräsident von Hindenburg appointed Adolf Hitler chancellor of the German Reich. This was the beginning of the greatest disaster that befell the 20th century. Though Hitler proclaimed *Das tausendjährige Reich,* instead of one thousand years, the regime lasted twelve only. But during this relatively short time, World War II (1939-1945) cost the lives of fifty-five million people, more than twice as much as the twenty-six million people who died in World War I (1914-1918). Six million Jews perished in the Holocaust, during WW II, more than one third of the Jewish people, among them over one and a half million Jewish children!

The Nazis celebrated their seizing power in the evening of the same day with a parade of the SA and the ultra-nationalist Stahlhelm. The uniformed columns marched down through Brandenburger Tor and along Unter den Linden holding torches in their hands. There were only two Nazi ministers in Hitler's first cabinet and eight conservative members; the vice chancellor was von Papen. Within a short time, however, the conservative ministers were all discharged and from then on the Nazis were the sole rulers of Germany.

Night fell over Germany. In February, Göring had the Reichstag burned. Four Bulgarian communists were accused of arson, including Dimitroff, who later became head of the Third International. A feeble-minded Dutchman, by the name of van der Lubbe was also accused; he served as a scapegoat and was eventually executed. Dimitroff was brilliant in his defense at the tribunal and made Göring lose his head The four Bulgarians ultimately had to be acquitted for lack of proof. At night I listened closely to my little radio, quite excited by the broadcasting of this trial, reproduced on phonograph records. All enemies of the Nazi regime and I myself were greatly impressed by Dimitroff's courageous defense.

The burning of the Reichstag was the pretext for radical measures against the political opposition. Their leaders, mainly from the left, were now jailed or assassinated. Concentration camps were opened for the first time for political opponents. The Communist Party was outlawed, as was the Social Democratic Party, a few months later, in June. All other parties "dissolved" themselves later on. In March 1933, after the Parliament was dissolved, there were new elections. In spite of the terror, Hitler never obtained a majority. His party received only 43% of the votes and could form a government only by making an alliance with the ultra-conservatives, the German National People's Party, DNVP, which receiveded 8% of the vote in this election.

From now on one restrictive and oppressive law and measure followed another. On April 1, 1933, the boycott of all Jewish stores took place; the same month, all Jewish government officials were dismissed. On the night of May 10, at Opernplatz (now Bebelplatz), on Unter den Linden in Berlin, over 20,000 "un-German" books by hundreds of authors of German and world literature, among them many Jews and communists, were burned in public. An underground memorial of the book-burning, called "The Empty Library", constructed by an Israeli artist, was inaugurated at the same place in 1995. Over hundred years earlier, in 1821, Heinrich Heine really had been prophetic when writing in *Almansor, Eine Tragödie*:

Das war ein Vorspiel nur,
dort wo man Bücher verbrennt,
verbrennt man auch am Ende Menschen.

"This was a prelude only,
once they burn books,
they will end up burning people."

On June 30, 1934, Ernst Röhm, head of the SA and several other prominent SA leaders, assembled in Munich, were arrested by the SS and shot on the spot to reduce the power of the brown storm troopers. Hitler used the opportunity to get rid of conservative adversaries. In Berlin some forty prominent rightist opposition leaders and politicians who had fallen into disgrace were shot by the SS.

In September 1935, the infamous Nuremberg Race and Citizen Laws were enacted "for the protection of German blood and honor." Jews were gradually being eliminated from all professions and from economic life in general. Jews could no longer employ "Aryan" females under the age of forty-five in their households. Intermarriages and sexual relations between Jews and "Aryans" were strictly forbidden. Jewish male "offenders" accused of *Rassenschande* ("race defilement") were sentenced to long imprisonment, which by the end of 1938 varied between four to five years. Their "crime" was "contamination of German blood." Jewish women accused of "race defilement" were taken into "protective custody." "Aryan" women had their heads shaved and were humiliated in public. During the war, alleged Jewish transgressors of both sexes were deported to their deaths, often without trial.

MY VISIT TO THE SOVIET EMBASSY

In 1933, while still in school, I decided to realize my communist ideals. I wanted to go to the Soviet Union to become a worker in the "workers' paradise" and later a party official. In preparation, I started having Russian lessons with a private Russian tutor, without my parents' knowledge. This was to be helpful much later, on varios occasions, when Seldi and I traveled to Moscow, Leningrad, Belgrad and Bosnia. Knowing the Cyrillic alphabet at least I could identify the names of the streets, the type of stores, etc.

Seldi never learned Russian, but on one occasion, while we were strolling down Moscow's popular Arbat Street, we wanted to buy some black bread for dinner. There was a big queue at the bakery, stretching out into the street. Most people were buying white bread, but we knew that black bread was also on sale. When our turn came, Seldi said 'Cherniye' to the salesgirl quite resolutely, and we got what we wanted without any problem. Seldi had remembered the popular Russian song *Ochi Cherniye* (Black Eyes). Sometimes, when in need, it becomes necessary to improvise.

One day, at the end of October 1933, when I was fifteen, I knocked on the big entrance door of the Soviet Embassy on Under den Linden. I remember the place very well. It was a huge building located in the most elegant part of Berlin. After the war, it was completely rebuilt and stands there today as in the past. At the main entrance there was a large wooden portal on which a huge globe, divided into two hemispheres, was skillfully scarved. Inside the globe was the hammer and sickle, symbol that one day communism would rule the world. Going to the Soviet Embassy back then was not without danger, because certainly the Gestapo, the secret police, watched everybody entering the place, looking for communists, who under the Nazi regime were outlawed and persecuted by any and all means.

I went to the Soviet Consulate, which was in the same building, and demanded to speak to the commercial attaché. I told him I was still going to school, that I was a communist and that I wanted to go to the USSR to be useful there as a worker, helping to build the Soviet Union. I asked him if I should finish school, taking my final examination, the *Abitur*, or quit and learn a practical profession. He told me the final school eamination would not be necessary, but added that his country was not then interested in receiving German immigrants. He advised me that his government was suspicious that some Nazi spies could infiltrate among the German immigrants. He added that, as to German communists, the Soviet Union had no interest at all in their coming, preferring them to stay inside Germany fighting the Nazis from within, working illegally in the underground, with the aim of eventually overthrowing this oppressive regime.

In February 1934, when I was bicyling to my Russian lesson, somebody suddenly passed me. It was my former schoolmate Luzian "Lutz" Stern. He too was a communist. From then on we met regularly. He told me much about his work as a metal worker at a construction site and about the political opposition there. He had left school three years earlier and we had never met since. We spoke about politics and he told me about his life as a manual laborer. As I already wanted to become a worker, I was greatly interested in everything he told me, for I knew very little about it at the time. Sometimes I asked myself secretly if I would be strong enough to be a worker all my life, but back then I had the idea of being a worker in the Soviet Union for just a few years and then becoming a state offical or holding some similar position.

I even considered going to Birobidjan, the autonomous region in East Siberia, near the Mongolian border. It was established in the Soviet Union in 1928 and allotted for Jewish settlement; Yiddish was recognized as an official language. About 20,000 Russian Jews went there in the early days of the experiment. Some settlers arrived from Poland, the United States, Argentina, etc. There was a Yiddish library, a newspaper, *Birobidjaner Stern*, founded in 1930, and a Yiddish theater closed in 1950. In 1934, there remained only about 9,000 Jews living there and the governmment began to recruit new settlers. That year, Birobidjan, which had been declared a Jewish National District in 1928, was officially promoted to the status of a Jewish Autonomous Region. During the Soviet purges in the latter 1930s, numerous leading officials in Birobidjan were arrested on charges of treason, sabotage, or Jewish nationalistic and Zionist counter-revolutionary activities. In the period immediately following WW II there was an increase in the Jewish influx to Birobidjan. Those who came were mostly survivors of the war years. In 1951 there were about 40,000 Jewish inhabitants. Today there remain only a few thousand Jews in Birobidjan. I did not realize at the time that the Bira river is not the Jordan and that no Jewish settlement outside Eretz Israel has ever succeeded in the long run.

MY LIFE AS A PROLETARIAN IN A BIG FACTORY

Because of my political ideas, I did not want to go to school any more. I quit during Easter of 1934, two years before the final school examination, the *Abitur*, a prerequisite for entering a German university. My parents were desperate. They had imagined an academic or at least a commercial career for me. Even the principal of our *gymnasium,* Mr. Voigt - a very decent person and not a Nazi at all - pleaded with my mother to persuade me to finish school. Mr.Voigt, who was not a Jew, taught Hebrew as an optional subject (the old Hebrew used in the Bible) at our school to pupils interested in this subject. His efforts on my behalf and those of my parents were in vain; I had decided to start working as a manual laborer.

My mother had a friend, Mrs. Wolff, with whom she rode horseback in the Tiergarten. Mrs. Wolff's husband often picked up my father in his car on Sunday afternoons to go to soccer games. My father, a great soccer fan, went to see his favorite team, Hertha B.S.C., while Mr. Wolff was a fan of the rival club, Tennis Borussia. Mr. Wolff had a printing plant where he made greeting cards. His brother William was owner and director of the firm Schwerdtfeger & Co., a large offset and lithography plant that made illustrated advertising placards. William later immigrated to London and his brother to Lyon, France. William established a new firm in London, making color prints of beautiful landscapes and children's portraits, while his brother opened a new plant in Lyon, printing greeting cards, as he had in Germany. It so happened that after the end of the war, when I started to work as a representative of foreign firms in Brazil, I got in touch with them by mail and then represented them both, selling their merchandise to local firms here.

The Schwerdtfeger printing plant, where about 400 workers were employed, was located at the Wedding, in the heart of the workers' district, in the northern part of Berlin. Through my parents' relationship with the owners, I was accepted as a regular apprentice, with a four year apprenticeship contract. I started to work in April 1934, earning four marks a week. Once a week in the morning I had to go to the vocational graphic school. I got along very well with my colleagues and the lithographers, who knew that I was Jewish. The workers were no Nazis or antisemites, at least not at that time. One of them, Erich, a very intelligent young man, became my friend. He was a strong opponent of Nazism. I corresponded with him after he had to leave the factory, because he was required to join the *Arbeitsdienst*, as a kind of slave laborer in Königsberg, former East Prussia (now Kaliningrad, in Russia). This was a mandatory labor service for young men, created by the Nazis to avail themselves of cheap labor for their road-building program. I still have Erich's indignated letter written from Königsberg in August 1934, sharply criticizing the Nazi *Arbeitsdienst.*

As an apprentice in the Schwerdtfeger plant in Berlin, a new life began for me. I worked like a real proletarian, forty-eight hours a week.Work started at 7 a.m. and on Saturdays at 6 a.m., with only fifteen minutes interval each for breakfast and lunch. As it was quite far by S-Bahn to the factory, I had to leave home very early in the morning. The workers were mostly social democrats or communists. At great danger, the communist workers distributed illegal newspapers in the factory. The Nazis ordered their party posters to be put up on the doors and walls in the corridors. The young communist workers tore these down, and so did I. As this kind of political sabotage increased, the factory's Nazi cell which consisted of only three people, called two officers from the secret police, the Gestapo, who hid behind the corridor

doors to discover which workers were removing the Nazi propaganda. When an apprentice tore one of the posters down again, the Gestapo officials caught him and took him in his workers' overalls straight to the Gestapo headquarters at Alexanderplatz. A few days later, he was released due to the connections enjoyed by his uncle, who worked at the police. The same thing could have happened to me, with the difference that as a Jew the Gestapo probably would not have released me so soon.

WORKING IN AN ILLEGAL COMMUNIST YOUTH CELL IN NAZI GERMANY

After having met my friend Lutz several times, in Easter 1934 he invited me along on a hiking trip near Berlin, together with his communist youth group. The last time I had gone hiking was a long time ago, in 1927, during my short stay in Karlsruhe where together with my cousin Werner I belonged to the Zionist youth movement *Kadimah* (Forward). We slept in a stable and on the way back we hitchhiked. One evening Lutz took me along to one of his group's illegal meetings. Of course, we could not meet regularly at a private home, because all apartments and residences were being watched and spied upon. Each apartment house had its *Hauswart,* usually the janitor, and each block had its *Blockwart,* who were responsible for the house and the block, respectively. They had to inform the Gestapo of every suspicious movement or meeting at the place or on the part of the street for which they were responsible.

So what place was left for these secret, forbidden meetings? The answer was open-air meetings only. In the beginning, our illegal underground communist group met in front of an S-Bahn station on the outskirts of Berlin. Later on, we became more cautious. Then each of us would go alone, usually on bicycle, to the meeting place in the forest. We had to memorize its location carefully. I will never forget these meetings. Our group was composed of boys and girls. Nobody knew anybody else's real name. We knew each other by code names only. This was a necessary precaution, so that if anyone was caught, he could not reveal his companions' names. The code name of the group leader was *"Schweinche*n," piglet. He was only one year older than I, a handsome boy who still went to school. He was non-Jewish. One of the members of the group, a beautiful girl, was called "Dunja." At that time, the underground groups were still mixed, composed of Jews and non-Jews, but it soon became obvious that such mixed groups were in double jeopardy. So it was later decided, as a necessary precaution, to separate the groups. Jewish communist youngsters then had their own groups, separate from non-Jews and, at the same time, the groups were limited to a maximum of five members only. Our group sometimes consisted of eight people, and one evening there were even fourteen of us, but this was prior to the new security precautions.

On a Sunday we met exceptionally at an apartment. A girl, a student from Vienna, gave a report on the bloody workers' revolt there in February 1934, and showed us photos of this event. I remember our evening meetings in the forest well. One of the group members would sit under a thick blanket, so his voice could not be heard in the neighborhood. In one hand he held a flashlight and in the other, Lenin's brochure *State and Revolutio*n, from which he read to us in a very low voice. Every rustling in the forest would frighten us, every passerby, every strolling couple walking by - and obviously there were a lot of them in the forest on summer nights. It was not easy, under these circumstances, to concentrate on Lenin's difficult text.

One evening at one of these illegal meetings we were all lying on the ground in the forest, about seven to eight young people, listening to the text of Lenin's brochure. Suddenly a spotlight was pointed at us from a car on the nearby narrow road. Somebody in our group shouted: "Police! Run!" We jumped to our feet, ran through the forest, stumbling over couples lying on the ground, stopped, ran again. My heart was beating as if it were about to burst. One of us had left his bike behind, another one had thrown the brochure by Lenin into a nearby thicket. Somehow I made it to the station. A loudspeaker from a nearby restaurant was just then broadcasting a speech by Hitler in his typical, bellowing rabid voice. Soon I saw two other members of the group show up at the station entrance. We conferred about what to do.

If it really was a police raid - I am not sure about it even now - it would have been foolish to think things through at the station, because certainly the Gestapo would have left some officials there to deal with us. We finally decided that, once the danger was over, the boy should return to the forest, trying to retrieve his bicycle and possibly the precious and at the same time very suspicious brochure as well (all kind of communist or socialist literature was strictly forbidden under the Nazi regime and very hard and dangerous to come by), if he could find it at all in the dark.

Another time, after one of our forest meetings, we were riding home on our bicycles, late at night, four boys in a row. Two of the boys carried illegal communist newspapers and leaflets hidden in their breeches. It was extremely dangerous to distribute illegal literature, which was printed secretly in clandestine workshops or copied on mimeographs. Suddenly, out of the dark, two policemen showed up. One of them shouted at me: "Get off the bike!" The reason the policemen stopped me, fortunately, was not because they suspected us of belonging to an illegal group, but because I had forgotten to switch on my bike headlight. My friends, who were unaware of this of course, rode off as fast as they could. The cops were quite surprised that my friends did not stop to assist and help me, and I had to explain that they started work very early in the morning and therefore wanted to return home as soon as possible. Since I had no identity card with me, the cops took me to the nearby police station, where they checked by phone with my police home district to see whether I was registered there. The penalty was either one day in jail or a fine of three marks. I preferred to pay the fine.

The illegal work in Germany was heroic. After being involved in it for any length of time, people's nerves were shattered because of the permanent fear in which they lived. Fear of denunciation, searches of their homes, arrests, jail and concentration camps. Nearly all clandestine fighters landed there after some time. One cell after the other was smashed. Small wonder, Germany under the Nazi regime had become a country of informers, with its *Haus-* and *Blockwarts*, where every innkeeper was requested to listen in on his guests' conversations.

A short time after I had left this group, it was smashed by the Gestapo. An informer had infiltrated. They let the illegal group continue their work for some time, with the hope of catching more members. In the end, they were all jailed. There was a trial and all the young people were sentenced. They were imprisoned in a juvenile detention center. I did not know about this. Lutz' uncle, whom I phoned one day to obtain Lutz' address, told me that "he was not at home." Later on, after Lutz was released, I ran into him on Kurfürstendamm and we arranged to meet shortly after. He told me that he had spent nineteen months in a juvenile prison. He, of course, had lost his job in the meantime. When I asked him what he was doing at present, he at first did not want to tell me but then said he was delivering bread for a bakery early in the morning. Despite having been jailed, upon release he got in touch with the remaining members of his former group again, the ones who were out of prison. He also contacted various Zionist youth organizations. The purpose was to infiltrate them and, at the same time, create a legal background and a kind of alibi for the Gestapo, should same prove necessary. In this way he would be protecting his efforts to win new members from these legal organizations over to the clandestine communist youth groups.

MY WAY TO THE SOCIALIST ZIONIST YOUTH MOVEMENT *HABONIM* MEETING ENZO SERENI

With the passage of time, the situation worsened for the Jews in Germany. I began to have doubts as to whether the solution of the Jewish question could really be found in communism, or if it would be preferable to have our own homeland first and fight for socialism there.

I was influenced by my sister Susi, who belonged to the Socialist Zionist youth movement *Habonim* (the Builders). In 1934, she was in Denmark at *hachsharah*, the agricultural preparation for settlement in Eretz Israel. She suggested that in order to clear up my ideological doubts, I get in touch with Enzo Sereni, a *shaliach*, or emissary, of both the Jewish Agency and the *Histadrut*, the organization of the Jewish Labor Movement in Israel.



Enzo Sereni

Sereni, born in Rome in 1905, died in Dachau in 1944, was the scion of a distinguished Italian-Jewish family. His father, a doctor, was a physician at the court of King Victor Emmanuel III. Enzo Sereni was a doctor of philosophy. He became a Socialist Zionist pioneer and made *aliyah* (immigration to Israel) from Italy in 1926. He was among the founders of Kibbutz Givat Brenner. From 1931-33, and again in 1934, he was in Germany as a *shaliach* to help organize the Zionist youth movements and the *Hehalutz* (the Pioneer), which was the organization of young Jewish men and women, who mostly had not belonged to a Zionist youth organization previously.

Hehalutz prepared and trained its members for a productive life as workers in Palestine. Before 1933, *Hehalutz* was a relatively small organization, made up mostly of former members of the Zionist youth organizations *Habonim* and *Hashomer Hatzair.* After 1933, when the Nazis rose to power, the situation changed drastically. Most of the young Jewish people, who had been working in department stores or offices, suddenly lost their jobs and realized that they had no future in Germany any more. They had not belonged to any Zionist youth movements before, and most of them had little Jewish education and no knowledge of Hebrew. Their belief in assimilation was suddenly shaken. In deep despair they looked for a way out. Many tried to emigrate to other countries, but they soon realized that this would not be so easy.

They then became members of the *Hehalutz*, though they had never been Zionists before. The membership of this organization suddenly grew from 500 in 1932, to 9,000 in September 1933 and soon rose to 15,000. The new members had not been influenced by Zionist ideology at all. They just wanted to emigrate. If for this purpose they had to learn Hebrew and Jewish history, become knowledgeable in the history of Palestine and Zionism, etc., so be it. Their main concern, however, was how long they would have to go to *hachsharah* and when they would receive their *Zertifikate* (immigration certificates), enabling them to emigrate to Palestine. Of course, with this sudden unexpected influx, *Hehalutz* did not have enough capable leaders to take care of these thousands of new members. In view of this emergency situation, and recognizing the urgency and importance of the moment, *Habonim* made a sacrifice and placed at the disposal of *Hehalutz* some of their own most able leaders, who, however, remained in the leadership of this youth organization at the same time.

Sereni, besides cooperating with *Hehalutz* and the Zionist youth movements, mainly *Habonim*, also assisted in the transfer of German-Jewish assets to Palestine, through an organization

called *Haavarah* that operated successfully from 1933 to 1939. Later, in 1943, Sereni organized Jewish parachutists from Eretz Israel to be dropped into Nazi-controlled territories.

The purpose was for the parachutists to make contact with partisans and to organize Jewish rescue and resistance activities in Europe. In May 1944, Sereni decided to be parachuted himself by the British army into northern German-occupied Italy. His mission had various other purposes, among them to help in the rescue of Italy's remaining Jews; assisting hidden Jews and escaped Allied prisoners to cross to the Allies who occupied southern Italy; to obtain detailed maps of the environs of Florence, in anticipation of the fighting to take place there; and to contact two Italian generals to convince them to come over to the Allies.

He also wished to search for his youngest brother, Emilio Sereni, a prominent figure in the Italian Communist party. Emilio, active in the communist underground, had been previously sentenced to twenty years of imprisonment by the Fascist regime. After five years, when an amnesty was proclaimed by King Victor Emmanuel, on the birth of his grandson and direct heir to the throne, Emilio was released from prison. However, he recently had been captured near Nice and was to face a Fascist tribunal again. After the war he became a Communist deputy in the Italian Parliament.

Due to strong winds during the night Sereni was dropped behind enemy lines, he landed near a German construction unit building fortifications, far from the designated spot near Florence. He probably was captured immediately by the Nazis. He was first taken to an Italian prison in Verona, then to a large German concentration camp in a suburb of Bolzano, in South Tyrol, a region that had recently been annexed by Germany. Finally, in October 1944, he was transferred to the infamous Dachau concentration camp near Munich where he was tortured. He was murdered there on November 18, 1944. Sereni was an extraordinary personality. Kibbutz Netzer Sereni is named for him. Akiva Eger, to whom I referred in the first part of this chronicle, lived on this kibbutz.

There remains one question: Why would Enzo Sereni, one of the most prominent Zionist activists in Palestine, go on such a highly dangerous mission himself at the age of thirty-nine? He himself explained the reason in a talk with Golda Meir on the day he left for his last mission. As Golda reports, he told her: "Golda, I have sent friends to this dangerous mission. I cannot remain behind, I have to join them."

In June 1934, I had my first interview with Enzo Sereni, which I later wrote down in my diary. He was lying on the couch of his furnished room, reading a very voluminous book that I believe was in Hebrew. When I came in, he threw off his glasses and rose from the sofa, saying "What's new, Klaus?" I spoke about my doubts and opinions. After talking with me for some time, he said that my beliefs were not sufficiently founded and that I was not schooled enough in Socialist and Zionist ideology and literature. I think he was right in his judgment. He recommended that I read the standard work *Socialism and Zionism* by Ber Borochov. At the end of our talk, Leo "Pony" Steinberg came in. He was one of the leaders of the *Habonim* youth movement and he promised to obtain this book for me. Some time later, I had another talk with Sereni. My friend Lutz Stern gave me *The Communist Manifest* by Marx and Engels, along with other elementary brochures by Engels. From Pony, I obtained Borochov's book.

I was greatly influenced by this work, which is a synthesis of the Socialist and Zionist ideology. Borochov (1881-1917), a Russian Jew, joined the Russian Social Democratic Party early, but

the party's attitude toward the Jewish problem led him to establish *Poale Zion*, the Jewish Labor Party, founded in 1906. He underscored that Zionism stood for the redemption of the Jewish people, the renaissance of Jewish culture and of the Hebrew language, and the return to the ancestral Homeland. Borochov's Marxist analysis of the economic structure and social situation of the Jewish people stressed the necessity of territorial concentration in its own country, in Palestine, as the only way to economic normalization and occupational redistribution, including primary production.

I read Borochov's book very attentively and made many notes. It convinced me that the only way for a consequent Jewish Socialist is the one indicated by Borochov. I started to realize that the Jews are a unique people; that there is no other people without a territorial base, scattered around the world, who, inspite of all their persecution, has survived and succeeded to maintain its culture, tradition, customs and identity, based on its common history. I realized it would be necessary to fight for the survival of our people in the first place. This could only be guaranteed by our becoming a normal people again, in our own country, Eretz Israel, after two thousand years of *Galut*, or Diaspora. At that time I also had discussions with Lutz and the leaders of the illegal group, who did not recognize Zionism as a legitimate solution for the Jewish question. At the same time, I often visited Pony at the *Beit Halutz* (House of the Pioneer) of *Habonim*, where he lived, located on Lessingstrasse in the Tiergarten district, the same street where my grandmother Luise lived. I had many talks with Pony there.

The *Beit Halutz*, a housing community, was a very common institution among the Jewish Zionist youth at the time. The leaders or other members of each youth movement, many of them coming from mostly small German cities, rented an apartment in a city with a larger Jewish population and formed a collective, working outside on different jobs. The *haverim* (boy companions) and *haverot* (girl companions) had dinner together and a menial task was assigned to each of them like cooking, cleaning, maintenance, etc. There also were cultural activities, such as lectures, celebrations, etc. Each youth movement, such as *Habonim, Hashomer Hatzair* and *Werkleute*, had its own *Beit Halutz*. *Habonim*, the largest of these youth organizations, had more than one of these homes in Berlin. In other German cities, these institutions were organized by *Hehalutz* and were open to members of all Jewish youth organizations. At the height of the Zionist organizational activities in Germany in 1935/36, *Habonim* had about 5,000 members; in Berlin alone there were one thousand *haverim* and *haverot*. *Hehalutz* had about 15,000 members. *Habonim* issued monthly bulletins and periodical publications with very interesting, high-level articles, mostly written by its leadership or other prominent members. Also *Hehalutz* issued periodically interesting publications.

Through Pony, I met other members of *Habonim*, with whom I had many ideological discussions. At the same time I also had debates with members of the illegal communist youth group about my Zionist ideas, which I did not want to keep secret but which they condemned. I had to come to a decision. It was not possible to work in both organizations simultaneously, even though I did it for a brief, transitory period, when I was not sure yet which way to choose. But in the long run it would of course endanger the activities of both movements. So, in October 1934, after several conversations with leaders of *Habonim* to clarify my ideological doubts, I finally concluded that my place was no longer in the illegal communist youth group, but in the Socialist Zionist youth movement, training for life as a *halutz* in Eretz Israel. I then joined the *Habonim*. This youth organization was founded in early 1933, as the result of the unification of two Zionist youth organizations, *Kadimah* and *Brith Haolim*. I entered the division *Gdud Brenner,* located in West Berlin. The name of my group was *Kvutzah Artzah.* Its leader was Pony Steinberg.

At first everything was very strange to me, bearing in mind the conditions under which the illegal group had been meeting. And now, suddenly, we met at a home on Kantstrasse, one of the crowded streets of West Berlin. It was nicely ornamented, with posters in German and Hebrew and drawings on the walls, and a library as well. At the *Onege Shabbat*, the gatherings on Saturday afternoon, there were about hundred boys and girls. The home was so crowded that one could hardly move. Noisy young people dancing *Hora*, singing German or Hebrew songs, as much as they liked, without those frightened looks over their shoulders, to make sure they were not followed by anybody and that nobody was listening in, and no constant pressure and fear of being arrested. Here, Jewish Socialist Zionist youngsters could still gather freely, have lectures, organize celebrations, sing and play, be merry and go hiking. Wasn't this but a dream, could it be true, I asked myself. But after my initial amazement, I soon grew used to it and no longer found it strange. Sometimes, however, at our meetings in the beautifully decorated and heated home, I had to remember those poor, unhappy, brave idealists, who were now meeting secretly in the open air or in a back room behind tightly closed shutters and doors, always frightened and wondering, "haven't we already been betrayed, isn't there a spy in our midst?"

At Easter, Pentecost or other holidays, our group always went hiking. It was wonderful to enjoy nature, to be in the open air, cooking in the open at night. Somebody would bring along his guitar. We would sing German and Hebrew songs around the open fire, dancing *Hora*, watching the starry sky and sleeping in tents we brought along. All this was a unique adventure and the young people who never experienced it really missed something. I could now understand the *Wandervogel* movement in Germany around 1900, which rebelled against conventional education, the traditional Sunday afternoon walks in long pants and a tie, accompanied by parents and relatives. These boys and girls would rather go hiking in short sleeved shirts and in shorts, leaving the grown-ups horrified. Eventually this movement failed because it had no new constructive ideas to replace the old conventional ones, but in a way its members really were pioneers. In the same way the Jewish youth movements play an important educational role and have a lasting positive effect on all children and youngsters who participate in them.

After having read the elementary writings of Marx and Engels, always taking notes, I began a concentrated study of the Bible, Jewish history and Zionist literature. I was very eager to fill in the gaps in my Jewish education and knowledge. More precisely, there were no gaps but a complete ignorance, due to my assimilated upbringing. Among others, I started to read Luther's translation of the Old Testament from the very beginning to the end, as well as the three volumes of Graetz's *Popular History of the Jews.*

The leader of our group, Pony Steinberg, was a very gifted, highly intellectual young man. His parents were of Russian origin. He was born in Danzig (now the Polish city Gdansk), which was then under the protection of the League of Nations. (Today this institution is known as United Nations). As Pony held a special status, as a foreign Jew born in Danzig, he could continue studying medicine in Berlin, taking his final examination in 1935/36 and receiving the highest marks. This was a remarkable achievement, considering that he dedicated an enormous amount of time to his intense activities as a leader of *Habonim.* Besides, living in a *Beit Halutz*, he had little privacy and chances to concentrate on his medical studies.

Pony was a very multifaceted personality, someone very hard to come across nowadays. He knew very much about art, music, literature, politics, education, medicine, etc. He also was a good sportsman. I took him along in my paddle boat, which I had bought secretly. My father,

who was always frightened, would not have permitted it. Pony could not go fast enough with the boat. He also beat me at tennis.

Pony had an enormous library in his room, with excellent books. Later on, when he went to *hachsharah* in Germany, he sent his library, together with his selected record collection (78 r.p.m. at the time), ahead to Kibbutz Gedera, which he was going to join. One day he brought me a very big and heavy suitcase containing "illegal" books, which he asked me to keep for him. Among the books Pony gave me for safekeeping was the complete correspondence between Marx and Engels. In addition, there were many books by Engels and also by Rosa Luxemburg, whom he adored, as well as a big volume of articles and speeches by Lenin, which I devoured in one night. Later on, Atte Heilbrunn, who was then the main leader of the Habonim, brought me another suitcase of illegal books. Any kind of communist literature was illegal at the time and keeping such books or brochures was very dangerous. If the Gestapo found this kind of material during a *Haussuchung* (a domiciliary search), which was a very common event at the time, the consequences for the person who kept it were very serious. I had to hide these suitcases very carefully, because my parents would have been scared to death, had they known about them.

I will never forget a beautiful Liebknecht-Luxemburg celebration in January 1935. It was a Sunday and our group went hiking during the day. In the evening we had a celebration for all the older *haverim* (companions) at our home in North Berlin, on Oranienburgerstrasse. Pony organized the evening. First we read from Liebknecht's and Luxemburg's works, and then Pony made a speech, which greatly impressed me.

Part of Pony's ideology was what he called the "deepening of the emotions." He asserted that a human being's personality is made up of two components: *Gefühl* and *Verstand*, emotions and reason. Among Jews, reason by way of the intellect is usually more developed, and therefore it is necessary to deepen the emotional part. The aim of the Jewish youth movement's educational work, Pony said, must be unity of the emotional and the rational components of the human being. I fully shared Pony's ideas. I believe that the Zionist ideology, for instance, may be founded on rational reasons only, such as the abnormality of the situation of the Jewish people, but in order to become a deeply rooted Zionist, an emotional relationship is indispensable, a love for the Jewish people and its culture and a strong will to fight for its survival and continuity, despite persecution and tremendous hardship.

I adored Pony's personality and greatly admired his intellectual capacity. After obtaining his M.D. in Germany, he first made *hachsharah* there in 1935/36 and then went on *aliyah* to Kibbutz Gedera. In Israel he married Rachel, the widow of his friend Seev Orbach, one of the very early *halutzim*, or pioneers from Germany who settled in Kibbutz Givat Brenner before the Nazis took power. He died in 1936 at the age of twenty-seven, leaving a baby child, Yehuda, whom Pony adopted. Yehuda lives now in Kibbutz Merom Hagolan. He was a member of the *Knesset* (Parliament) for the "Third Way" party. Pony Steinberg translated his name in Israel to Arie Harel. He spoke Russian fluently and was appointed Israel's minister to the USSR, after Golda Meir left this post in 1949. Later he became chief of the Ihilov Hospital in Tel Aviv and also worked at other hospitals, such as the Rambam (Maimonides) Hospital in Haifa. He also taught at the School of Medicine in Tel Aviv. Seldi and I visited him once in Tel Aviv, but it was always diffcult to get together on our visits to Israel, because he traveled frequently, participating in international medical congresses. Harel died in 1998.

CHANGING MY PROFESSION - BECOMING A HORTICULTURIST

Slowly I began thinking that now, after having changed my ideology and priorities, I consequently would also have to change my profession. I realized that it was useless to undergo a four-year apprenticeship in lithography, if this kind of printing did not even exist in the kibbutz movement. My first idea was to become a cabinetmaker, a profession many *haverim* in my group were learning. I was looking around for a volunteer position and could have started to learn this profession at one of these places. My parents, especially my mother were distraught. They could not understand why I wanted to leave the Schwerdtfeger printing factory. My mother had speculated that one day, due to her connections to the owners, I would hold a leading position at this big lithography plant. I could understand her reasoning, because at the time, early 1935, nobody could yet foresee how terrible things would become for the Jews in Germany just a few years later. My mother cried all the time. In no way could she agree with my becoming a cabinetmaker. She said there was no future in such a profession.

I had talks with various leaders of the *Habonim* about which profession to choose. One of the leaders, Atte Heilbrunn, proposed gardening. I agreed readily, because horticulture would be a good preparation for my future life on a kibbutz. I wanted to work in a tree nursery, so I went to the *Hehalutz*, where they gave me a list of gardening establishments on the outskirts of Berlin. I looked them up but found none of them suitable. I therefore made up a list of my own, taken from the telephone directory, and went looking for a good place to learn gardening. At that time Jews could no longer be employed as apprentices in establishments connected to the soil, which the Nazis considered sacred, unfit for Jews, and therefore to be worked on by pure "Aryans" only, according to their slogan *Blut und Boden*, blood and soil.

Finally I found a position as a volunteer in the tree and rose nursery Kokulinsky in Berlin Lichtenrade. Before being able to start the new job, as I still had an apprenticeship contract with the litography plant, I had to get a medical certificate declaring that, since I was very nearsighted, my eye condition had worsened due to performing my printing job. In May 1935, I started to work at the tree and rose nursery. I stayed there until October 1937, learning everything about gardening and tree care, including the grafting and pruning of fruit trees and rose bushes. For about two and a half years, I also attended the mandatory vocational horticultural school one morning a week, while I worked as a volunteer gardener.

It took about 75 minutes each way to get to my new job. I had to change public transport three times. First I took the S-train, then the subway and finally a streetcar. The suburb of Lichtenrade in south Berlin is quite far from the West, where we lived. We worked until 6 p.m. After changing clothes, I came home at about 7:30. The Kokulinsky Brothers' tree nursery was a first-class establishment. The owners were very decent people. I had a good relationship with the gardeners who worked at this place, especially with one of them, who became my good friend. My knowledge of gardening proved very useful when I arrived in Brazil later on, where at first I worked as a gardener and then as a landscape architect. Later on I planted every tree, shrub and flower in the garden of my own house and until now I enjoy gardening very much.

I read very much at that time, mostly Socialist and Zionist literature. By the middle of 1935, I began to study Hebrew intensely. I had to start from the very beginning. I did not even know the *Alef Bet*. Everything I read at my Bar Mitzvah I had learned by heart, the *berachot* (blessings) as well as the *Haftarah*, the part of the Prophets that is read after the reading

of the Torah during the religious service on Shabbat. From then on, I studied *Ivrit* (Hebrew) for two to three hours a day, mostly on my way to the horticultural establishment and back, and during my one-hour lunch break. I made progress very fast. After about two years I became a Hebrew teacher at the Hebrew Youth College in Frankfurt am Main, which had been inaugurated in 1937, when I was living in that city.

LIVING UNDER THE NAZI REGIME IN THE MID-THIRTIES

Gradually life as a Jew in Nazi Germany became more and more difficult and burdensome. New regulations and restrictive measures were issued constantly. One day a new law went into effect prohibiting Jews from owning any kind of weapon. My father had never been active at the front in World War I. As he was severely myopic, he was dispensed from service at the front and had to serve in the garrison only. He always carried a document in his pocket during the war, given to him by his brother-in-law, the ophtalmologist Dr. Georg Abelsdorff. The document certified that due to his very strong myopia he was unable to recognize his military superiors in the street and therefore was not responsible if he did not salute them first, as mandatory. In the Wilhelminian Empire, not saluting military superiors first was a severe offense, punishable by strong penalties.

As my father was serving in a garrison, he had to wear a uniform, and part of the outfit was a sabre. After the war he had kept it, and it probably had grown rusty after so many years. So now he had to get rid of it, as a sabre undoubtedly is a weapon. The question arose: how to dispose of the sabre in a completely unsuspicious way. My father conferred with my mother and they decided that the best way to get rid of the sabre would be to wrap it up in a package and throw it into the Grunewald Lake at night. They secretly prepared the package, placing the sabre in a large box, so the shape of the package would not reveal its contents. Late one night they hired a taxi cab and told the driver to take them near the lake in Grunewald, a suburb of Berlin. When they arrived, they waited until the taxi driver had left and then checked if anybody was watching or following them. After making sure that nobody was near, they walked quickly toward the lake and threw the package with the sabre into the water, rushing back to the nearest taxi stand to go home.

It was strictly forbidden at the time to keep, sell or distribute "illegal" books or literature. On May 10, 1933, hundreds of thousands of "un-German" books had been cast into bonfires all over Germany. Not only communist or socialist literature fell under the category of forbidden books but also many books written by progressive Jewish and non-Jewish authors, such as Remarque, Döblin, Feuchtwanger, Toller, Thomas Mann, Stefan Zweig, etc., etc. My parents did not have too many "leftist" books, as they were always good liberal democrats, as most of the Jewish bourgeoisie. They never were politically engagé. My father's library consisted mostly of Meyer's many-volumed encyclopedia and complete collections (mostly unread) of the classic German writers, such as Goethe, Schiller, Wieland, Kleist, etc. (most of which wedding gifts from dear relatives). However, they may have owned one or another book by authors declared by the Nazis as "enemies of the state," such as Tucholsky. My mother read a lot, but she always got her books from a nearby private lending library.

My father, who was always terribly afraid, decided to 'clean up' his library one day. He selected a few books that he thought might be dangerous to own. The question was what to do with them: He could not simply tear them up and throw them into the garbage can. There was the possibility that somebody might find the paper shreds, put them back together again and denounce him to the Gestapo. So he had the brilliant idea of throwing the shreds into the toilet. In consequence, the toilet soon plugged up. The problem now was what to do. If my father called the nearest plumber, the man might denounce him. To be completely safe, he had to find a politically reliable plumber who was not a Nazi and would not be a threat. After looking around for some time, somebody recommended such a person, who then proceeded with the job, no questions asked.

My father's next step was to inspect my library. Of couse, being a young communist at the time, I had a lot of "illegal" books, not just literature, but political pamphlets, brochures, etc. However, I had hidden them long before. The only book my father remembered in my library, and which seemed suspicious to him, was a very interesting biography by Fülop Miller *The Holy Devil - Rasputin and the Women*. Rasputin, of course, had nothing to do with communism. He was assassinated in 1916, prior to the Russian Revolution. Knowing my father, however, I had hidden even this book and refused to turn it over to him. The book survived and still stands in my library today.

It was very hard and dangerous then to obtain forbidden literature, even fiction. Through my friend Rudi Lichtenstein, I discovered a bookseller in southeast Berlin who was a communist. He had a small bookstore and risked his life by selling secretly under the counter secondhand leftist books. It was there that I succeeded in buying John Reed's *Ten days that shook the world*, describing the events that led to the October Revolution in the USSR. The bookseller was eventually jailed when it was discovered that he was selling "illegal" books.

Soon after Hitler took power, the media was *gleichgeschaltet,* or "equalized." There was no place any more for journalists holding dissident opinions. They lost their jobs immediately, except for a few turncoats who managed to change their opinions on the spot, adapting them to the new times. There was a reading salon on Kurfürstendamm where people paid a small fee to read foreign newspapers and magazines. By that time no foreign newspapers were sold any more. This place was always crowded, mostly by Jews living in West Berlin who were anxious to know what was going on in Germany and in the world. Later on, when even the reading of foreign newspapers was forbidden, this place was closed by the Nazis. Many people then traveled to nearby countries to obtain the latest information about the political situation from newspapers published abroad, many in German.

My friend Rudi Lichtenstein, who for some time belonged to the Jewish youth movement *Hashomer Hatzair*, traveled to Prague in 1937 to read foreign newspapers. On his way back, he was taken off the train in Dresden and jailed. At that time I already belonged to the *Hashomer Hatzair*. When we found out that Rudi had been jailed, I was sent to his place immediately to pick up all material connected with our organization and any communist literature that he might also own. This was necessary to make sure our organization and he himself would not be jeopardized should this material be found during the Gestapo's likely search of Rudi's home.

Not only books were forbidden but the sale of foreign jazz records too. American jazz was considered *entartete Negermusik*, or "degenerated negro music." There was only one place left in Berlin where imported American jazz records could be bought under the counter. This was the large music store Alberti on Rankestrasse in West Berlin. As I had been always a great fan of jazz ever since I was a young boy, I often went there to buy some records. I remember that among others I bought the imported 78 r.p.m. record *A-Tisket A-Tasket, I lost my yellow basket,* performed by Ella Fitzgerald. This song made her famous in the mid-thirties. Later on, when already in Brazil, I became a great fan of the blues. My favorite blues singer is Bessie Smith, "the Empress of the Blues." It was also forbidden to tune in to foreign radio stations. I remember I would often sit beside the radio, listening mostly to the BBC, to hear the news or jazz music. This had to be done with the volume tuned way down so that the neighbors would not notice and possibly denounce us.

The only place where hidden opposition could somtimes be heard between the lines was the famous *Kabarett der Komiker*. Before 1933, the best comics in Berlin were all Jews. This cabaret was famous before the Nazis took power. Afterwards, it struggled to survive. A well known comic was Werner Fink. He was a political opponent of the Hitler regime. He could not express his opposition openly, as he had to watch his words most carefully, because at all shows there were Nazi censors present who watched every word he uttered. During one of his presentations some Nazi shouted, *"Juden raus,"* Jews out. Whereupon Fink replied, "I am not a Jew, I just look that intelligent." The result was that he was jailed the next day for some time. The cabaret was eventually closed for good.

In the summer of 1936, a bloody Civil War broke out in Spain. It lasted for nearly three years and cost the lives of over one million Spaniards. General Franco and his Moroccan militia invaded Spain from North Africa with the aim of toppling the democratically elected Republican government. Franco immediately received support from Germany and Italy, which secretly sent armaments, planes, pilots, trained soldiers, etc. The legal Spanish government received the help of volunteers only - the International Brigde - whose members came from all over the world, but most of them had no military training. The support the Spanish government received from the Soviet Union was completely insufficient. Although it had a socialist government at the time - the "Front Populaire", headed by Léon Blum, a Jew, France declared neutrality and closed its border with Spain (the Pyrenees) to prevent arms and volunteers from crossing. It was an unbalanced fight, but the besieged capital Madrid never surrendered. In the Jewish youth movement we most anxiously watched the development of the Spanish Civil War.

In August 1936, the Olympic Games took place in Berlin. The Afro-American athlete Jesse Owens won four gold medals. Hitler left the Olympic Stadium early to avoid having to shake hands with him. During this time, so that foreign visitors would not be unfavorably impressed, the glass showcases in the streets where the pages of the vitriolic antisemitic newspaper *Der Stürmer* were exhibited in public remained empty. This newspaper was published in Nuremberg by the notorious antisemite Julius Streicher. In the 1946 Nuremberg trials of prominent Nazi war criminals, Streicher was sentenced to death.

In the history of the Soviet Union, 1935 became the "Year of the Purges". In 1936, the infamous show trials started. They were held against the most prominent Russian communist leaders, such as Zinoviev (the former head of the *Comintern*, the Communist Third International); Kamenev (Trotsky's brother-in-law); Radek; Bucharin, and many other ones. Like Trotsky, who was first exiled and later assassinated in Mexico, in 1940, they once were Lenin's closest collaborators. In 1935, Zinoviev was condemned to ten and Kamenev, to five years in prison. In their second trial, in 1936, they were both sentenced to death. Altogether about 1.3 million people were victims of Stalin's reign of terror, including most of the Jewish intellectual elite, among them the well-known writer Isaac Babel.

BECOMING A MEMBER OF THE *HASHOMER HATZAIR*

Through my friend Rudi Lichtenstein, I met Shimon Pilz (now Peles), one of the leaders of the *Hashomer Hatzair* (The Young Guardian) in Germany. The *Haschomer Hatzair* is a Jewish youth organization founded in Galicia in 1913. Politically it stands more to the left than the *Habonim*. After making *aliyah* its members joined the kibbutzim of *Kibbutz Artzi*, which favored a kibbutz of limited size. The members of the *Habonim* went to the *kibbutzim* of *Kibbutz Meuhad* and joined the Labor Party *Mapai*. *Hashomer Hatzair* originally had strong roots in scouting, which was maintained as part of the educational system. The movement embraced a strict Marxist ideology and insisted on "ideological collectivism," demanding that its members adhere to one doctrine. The *Hashomer Hatzair* movement played a leading role in organizing the resistance in the ghettos of Warsaw, Vilna, Bialystok and other Polish cities. The commander-in-chief of the Warsaw ghetto uprising, Mordechai Anilewicz (1919-43), was a member of the *Hashomer Hatzair*. Before the establishment of *Medinat Israel, Hashomer Hatzair* favored a bi-national state. The movement participated in the formation of the leftist *Mapam* party.

I often met with Shimon from then on. He tried to convince me to leave the *Habonim* and join the *Hashomer Hatzair*. We had many ideological discussions. Shimon currently lives in Kibbutz Dalia with his wife, Ilse. We always visit them while in Israel. As Pony had left our *Habonim* group in West Berlin, because he had to prepare for his final medical examinations, I joined another group of this movement in North Berlin, at *Beit Halutz* on Prenzlauer Allee. There I met one of the *Habonim* leaders, Xiel (Xaver) Federmann, a very dynamic person. Though only three years older than I, he was the director of the *Youth Aliyah* School, which prepared young people for their future life in Palestine.

Xiel and I talked frequently. He shared many of my ideas and was close to me ideologically. I also met his *haverah* and future wife Bella. Xiel became for me what Pony had been previously. We became good friends. Xiel was one of the organizers of *Aliyah Bet* (illegal immigration to Israel) in Germany. As the British severely limited the number of "certificates" for legal immigration to Palestine, an illegal *aliyah* was organized with clandestine ships leaving European ports and landing in Palestine secretly. In 1939 Xiel came to London working there for the *Hehalutz* movement on the rescue of Jewish youths from Europe, placing the young people on *hachsharah*, the preparation for pioneering work in Palestine. He also organized in England Youth *Aliyah* and *Aliyah Bet*. When Xiel arrived in *Eretz Israel* in 1940, he rendered relevant services to the British, becoming contractor to the Royal Navy during World War II. He used his contacts to secretly infiltrate arms for the *Haganah*. In 1947 he was sent to Europe to buy equipment and material which the *Haganah*, the clandestine organization for Jewish self-defense in Palestine required, anticipating the outbreak of war.

Xiel bought a small hotel built on the beach in Tel Aviv by a German immigrant, Käthe Dan, and later transformed it into the five-star Dan Hotel. He now owns the Dan Hotel chain and is one of the country's leading hoteliers, entrepreneurs and industrialists, co-owner of Federmann Enterprises, managed by his son today. He became one of the richest men in Israel. Xiel is now known as Yekutiel Xiel Federmann. I visited Xiel once at the beautiful Dan Accadia Hotel in Herzlia, which he owns. In summer 1999, Seldi, my daughter Miriam and I visited him and Bella at the Dan Hotel in Tel Aviv and had lunch there. Xiel wrote numerous articles about Israel's politics, economy and society, reproduced in two booklets, "The road we missed" and "The road to peace."

I belonged to the *Habonim* for about two years, taking an active part in its group activities. At the end of 1936, I left this organization for ideological reasons and joined the *Hashomer Hatzair.* I had long ideological discussions with the leaders of both these Zionist youth organizations before making my decision, which I summarized in a letter to the *Habonim* leadership. As soon as I became a member of *Hashomer Hatzair*, I was appointed leader of a boys' group within the organiazation. This had always been my wish.

While I was still a member of *Habonim*, Shimon had often taken me to the meetings of the group he was in charge of at the *Hashomer Hatzair*, called *Baderech* (On the Way). It was made up of *haverim* and *haverot* of about my age. At one of these meetings in February 1936, I met a *haverah* (companion) of this group. Her name was Rosi Laufer. She came from Hagen, a town in Westphalia. Her parents, who were very poor, came from Poland. Rosi was born in Germany but had the Polish nationality of her parents. She was about one year older than I. At the time she worked as a housemaid at the home of a Jewish gynecologist, Dr. Sonnenfeld. After the group meeting, she asked me how I liked it. I realized that we both were going home the same way. It was a cold winter night. As she had not brought along an overcoat, she was very cold. In general, she suffered very much in cold weather. I took off my overcoat and gave it to her. Later she confessed to me that my gesture had impressed her greatly. The *haverim* of her youth movement group (which I later joined) were of the opinion that girls do not merit special treatment and that it makes no sense to help them get into an overcoat, let them go through the door first or have the better seat at shows, etc. This was considered "bourgeois" and not appropriate for members of a socialist youth movement.

We talked for a long time that evening. She told me that due to her job and the fact that she was the leader of a young girls' group at the *Hashomer Hatzair*, she had hardly any time to attend a course to study *Ivrit* (Hebrew). I already knew *Ivrit* fairly well at the time, though I had studied it for only nine months. I therefore suggested giving her lessons. She accepted my proposal and from then on I went to Dr. Sonnenfeld's apartment to give her Hebrew lessons in the evening twice a week. On these occasions we also had ideological discussions. She defended the ideas of the *Hashomer Hatzair* and in the beginning I defended those of the *Habonim*. A friendship slowly developed. On Sundays I sometimes helped her with the dishes so she could leave her job earlier. We went to the movies in the evening or she came to my place. A few times on Sundays she came along in my paddle boat, but not very often because usually she was busy with her girls' group.

Some time later Rosi left her household job and moved to the *Beit Halutz* of the *Hashomer Hatzair* on Essenerstrasse. First she did the household chores at the *Beit Halutz.* Then she took over the *Maskirut* (office) of the *Hashomer Hatzair* on Meinekestrasse. She was a very competent, efficient secretary, who took care of the correspondence and all other office work.

In July 1936, Rosi and I took a vacation trip to the beautiful Rhineland. As we did not have enough money, our only way of transport both ways was hitchhiking. I wore a short- sleeved blue shirt and blue velvet shorts with a large leather belt and Rosi also wore a short-sleeved shirt, a blue skirt and a Scottish plaid vest. Both of us carried backpacks. When a boy and a girl are traveling together, hitchhiking is much easier. Especially when the girl is good-looking, as Rosi was. I stayed a little bit off the road while Rosi stopped the vehicles that passed by. I appeared only after the car or truck had stopped and the driver had agreed to give Rosi a lift. Usually the drivers' faces, as one can imagine, showed some disappointment then. This way

we had no trouble hitchhiking to all the places we wanted to see and then back home. Besides going to cities like Leipzig, Frankfurt a.M., Cologne, Düsseldorf, etc., we visited many beautiful small towns on both banks of the Rhine between Bingen and Koblenz.

Usually we stayed overnight at the homes of *haverim* or *haverot* from our youth organizations in the cities where they existed. In smaller towns we once found quarters at a carpenter's workshop and another time at a winery. As Rosi was blond and did not look Jewish at all, it was not difficult to find a free place to stay overnight. Once, however, in Eisenach, we could not find any quarters and had to sleep out in the open at the foot of the Wartburg. This was because we ostensively never greeted anyone by saying "Heil Hitler" and raising our right arm, as was expected of us and everybody else in Nazi Germany at the time. This raised suspicions when we entered a crowded restaurant. So nobody offered us a place to sleep.

In early 1937, Rosi left the *Beit Halutz* and rented a small room near the place where I lived. In July 1937, during our summer vacation, Rosi and I traveled together again, this time to beautiful Bavaria. We visited Munich and surroundings. Then we stayed for a while at a small place, Unter Wallgau. We rented a little room with breakfast and made daytime excursions from there to Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Mittenwald, Ober-Ammergau, the nearby castles and other beautiful places.

On the way back, we separated. Rosi went to visit her parents in Hagen and I traveled first to Zurich and then to Karlsruhe. In Zurich I was a guest of my uncle Oscar Oliven and his wife Sonnie. They rented a room for me at the five-star Eden-au-Lac Hotel. I used my time mostly to read books forbidden in Germany and foreign newspapers. Among others, I read André Gide's book *Back from the Soviet Union* and the books by Konrad Heiden *Adolf Hitler, the life of a dictator* and its continuation *A man against Europe*. During the few days I stayed in Zurich, I also read many magazines about the situation of the Spanish civil war. I spent nearly the entire time in my hotel room, reading books, newspapers and magazines until late at night.

From Zurich I traveled to Karlsruhe to visit my uncle, Fritz Straus, aunt Edith and my cousins. My cousin Erwin, who owned a motorcycle, taught me how to ride. I greatly enjoyed motorcycling. Erwin and I drove to Baden-Baden, but at the casino they did not let me in because I wore neither a jacket nor a tie. So I borrowed them from my cousin. I stayed such a long time at the casino that my cousin, who was waiting for me outside, finally had the doorman call me. I lost only a very small amout, as I played roulette most cautiously. I always bet the minimum, which at the time was one mark, and on red only. When Erwin had to return to his school in Switzerland at the end of his school vacation, I stayed a few days longer. I drove on his motorcycle to Baden-Baden again, to the Schwarzwald and to other nearby places. Later on, after I returned to Berlin, my boss' brother, who was a partner of the firm, lent me his motorcycle for a while. I really enjoyed motorcycling. I would bike to my job or to the vocational horticultural school once a week and also to our organization's meetings.

While still in Karlsruhe I received a letter from the leadership of the *Hashomer Hatzair*. They asked me to move to Frankfurt am Main to take over leadership of the organization's local group there. I did not agree with this proposal, as I intended to stay at the tree nursery another nine months to complete three years of apprenticeship, which would occur only in Easter 1938. Another plan of mine was to become a guest student at the Horticultural Academy at

Berlin-Dahlem. This was still posssible at the time. I even had made an application to enter the academy.

When I returned to Berlin, our big apartment was completely empty, because my parents and my sister had traveled to Italy to visit my brother there. When Rosi returned to Berlin after having visited her parents, she moved over to my place during my parents' absence.

At the tree nursery, I had already learned all kinds of garden tasks, such as pruning, planting trees, digging up trees for sale, grafting rosebushes and fruit trees, etc. This proved very useful for me then and also after my emigration. I wanted to earn some money, in addition to the small weekly amount of six marks I received from the tree nursery. I had an ad published in the the Berlin Jewish Community newspaper, offering the services of a "young Jewish gardener, trained in all types of garden work." I received several replies. Jewish families preferred Jewish employees at the time. The Jewish Hospital in Berlin wanted to give me a permanent job. I also received replies from an actor, a manufacturer of mattresses, etc. However, I could not stay away from my work at the tree nursery for too long. Therefore I only accepted one job, at the garden belonging to a poetry album manufacturer, located next to his factory in South Berlin. I pruned the trees, spread manure and dug the ground, etc. At one mark per hour, I earned good money, making about nine to ten marks a day. In springtime I had to sow grass there. Since I had never done this before, I studied all the garden books I owned, and indeed I succeeded. After three weeks, when I returned to the work place somewhat worried, I found the garden green all over. I took care of this garden from then on.

In winter 1936/37, I took a vacation, as there was little work at the tree nursery in wintertime. I used my free time to visit various museums in Berlin, admiring famous paintings and copperplate-engravings by the old masters as well as contemporary artists. I also attended interesting criminal trials at the Moabit courthouse. Furthermore, I participated in a course given by the famous political economist and sociologist Franz Oppenheimer at the *Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums*.

The Gestapo-imposed restrictions on the activities of Jewish organizations and youth movements became more and more severe. From time to time, all our activities were totally forbidden. They had to take place then in small groups in private homes, with utmost precautions taken. Afterwards, when meetings were allowed again, they had to be registered with the Gestapo in advance and special forms had to be filled out, with four or five copies each. They had to contain the date, place, time and duration of the meeting, the name of the responsible leader, the name of the speaker and the subject to be debated. Meetings with less than fifteeen participants were no longer permitted. The responsible leader had to be at least eighteen years old and had to be of German nationality. This made continuation of our work very difficult. Unlike the other Zionist youth organizations, *Hashomer Hatzair* had very few members of German nationality. Most of them were sons or daughters of Polish Jews who, though born already in Germany, had their parents' nationality. I was one of the very few members of the organization who was over eighteen and was of German nationality. I came in contact with the Gestapo various times during my period with the *Hashomer Hatzair*, first in Berlin and later in Dresden.

The Gestapo controlled all our activities and sent their officials to nearly every meeting to check out if everything was correct and strictly in accordance with the information contained in the mandatory registration forms. The leaders of the organizations were summoned to the

Gestapo whenever anything at the meetings was not in complete accordance with the information given on the registration forms. The activities of our organization would then be forbidden for a determined or undetermined time.

Our meeting place in West Berlin was a rented apartment on the second or third floor in the back courtyard. of an old apartment house on Schaperstrasse. At every meeting, one of our boys would keep watch out in the street in front of the building for the likely arrival of the Gestapo official, who was well known to us and could be recognized from far away. As soon as he was seen approaching, our watchman downstairs let us know by means of a special whistle signal. Then everyone rushed to action. Everything had been rehearsed beforehand. Chairs were quickly moved, as one group had to sit with another one, to complete the minimum number of fifteen people required by the Gestapo. The *haver* or *haverah* of German nationality who always had to be present (though in most cases they were not the ones to give the *sicha*, or lecture) started to speak about the geography of Palestine or whatever unsuspicious subject was shown on the registration form. Many times the group leader had ben talking about a socialist theme and then had to change subjects very fast, before the Gestapo official arrived. Sometimes two officials would come together. After a short time they usually left as they were not too interested in the geography of Palestine. Every three months, each organization had to give the Gestapo a list of its members and their addresses and also advise how many new members had joined and how many had left the organization.

One day I was giving a lecture to my group. Suddenly a rather drunk Gestapo official showed up. I changed the subject of my lecture immediately. After I had finished, the official asked me if my name was Edith Silberberg. I said my name was Klaus Oliven. It turned out that the leader responsible for the programming schedule delivered to the Gestapo had made a mistake. He had mixed the date of my lecture up with the one to be given by Edith Silberberg to a girls' group one day later. The offical took note of my name and address and everything else. I then locked the apartment and we went downstairs together. He smelled of alcohol and was very upset that he had to go down the unlit dark staircase, risking breaking his neck. I wished he would, but to no avail. He lit one match after the other but the matches just would not burn. As our organization was always in arrear with rent payment, the landlord did not change the burned-out lamps in the staircase and hallway.

Next day I received a summons from the Gestapo to show up at their headquarters on Saturday at 9 a.m. The Gestapo occupied part of the big old building of the Central Police Station at Alexanderplatz. At the entrance, two SS men were sitting at a table. They gave me a form and I had to fill out everything, including the hour and minute of my arrival. I then went to the room indicated to me, stood in front of the door, considering whether I should wait until being called or just go in. Then I heard terrrible shouting. I thought to myself, "This surely is going to get tough." Suddenly the door opened abruptly and the leader of my group, Shimon Pilz, who was also one of the leaders of the organization, stepped out. His face was pale all over. He wore a tie for this occasion, something he normally never did.

I was surprised to meet him there and just wanted to ask him what had happened. When the Gestapo official saw us talking, he shouted that talking here was strictly forbidden - right in front of all the other people who were waiting and who were quite intimidated. Then he called me in, after having yelled at poor Shimon: "You squarehead, I am going to show you what happens when you talk in here." Then he closed the door after me and asked: "What did he tell you? Certainly, forbidden things." I replied that he had just told me to go in. Then he

went on, "How dare you give a non-registered lecture?" I had sat down in a chair without having been asked to and tried to explain what had happened, whereupon he shouted at me, "You impertinent fellow, get up at once." He then went on, "Don't grin so insolently." I really did not feel like grinning. "Well, I am going to show you. I am going to lock you up in jail, you and the other fellow outside." I again had the feeling that the situation was getting quite tough and dangerous. Then I thought about what would happen to such fellows as this mean Gestapo official when we seized power one day.

Then looking at the paper in front of him he asked, "What's the name of this organization?", I replied, *"Hashomer Hatzair."* He said, "We will investigate this organization more closely." Then he asked me, looking at the form I had filled in at the entry, "How long have you been here already?" I thought he was referrring to the time I had already spent at the headquarters at Alexanderplatz, because I had to mention the exact time when entering the building. I replied, "About twenty minutes." Thereupon he screamed at me, "You want to be a youth leader? Ignorance is written in your face. I ask how long you have been in the organization, and you answer 'about twenty minutes'! Wait outside until I call you again. Maybe in the meantime you will become more intelligent." Then he called Shimon in again, who came out after some time and left the building at once. I still had the feeling that the Gestapo official was going to jail me. After having to wait outside for an hour and a half, he called me back and the inquiry about the unregistered lecture started anew. At the end he let me go. On the way out, I had to return the form I had filled in upon my arrival.

When I was out in the street again, I breathed with relief. I decided to go to Shimon's apartment. I found him and his *haverah* Ilse there. Shimon was still very pale and excited. He told me he had been summoned because he was the leader responsible for the organization. None of us two actually knew that the other one had been summoned too. He told me that he had arrived a short time before me and was called in together with another young man. The official then shouted at the young man, "So you are Klaus Oliven. How dare you give an unregistered lecture?" The other guy did not know what was going on. He was quite disturbed and could not reply at all. Shimon wanted to explain the misunderstanding. He started, "Excuse me," whereupon the offical shouted, "Shut up, I did not ask you." Then he repeated the question, but the young man, who probably was summoned for quite a different matter, again could not answer the question at all. Shimon once more attempted to explain that there was a misunderstanding. The official then screamed at Shimon again. This was the exact moment when I arrived and when Shimon was thrown out of the room. Things were then cleared up, the other fellow was sent out and I was called in, just when Shimon and I were found talking in the corridor.

When I talked to him at his apartment, Shimon was quite upset and depressed and went about mumbling all the time that he had a premonition that he was going to be jailed or thrown into a concentration camp even before his *aliyah*, which was to occur very shortly. Ilse and I had a hard time calming him down. A short time after, in summer 1937, Ilse and Shimon made *aliyah*, settling in kibbutz Dalia in Israel.

Meanwhile, my friendship with Rosi was slowly coming to an end. She was 100% the youth movement type and considered me in some ways too "bourgeois." She also reproached me for not giving her enough attention, not bringing her flowers and things like that, and for seeing her only twice a week. We often got into arguments and she would end up crying.

Then the *Hashomer Hatzair* leadership decided she should go to Cologne to take over our local group there. She insisted that I accompany her, but I didn't want to. So our friendship, which lasted one and a half years, came to an end then.

At the same time, our leadership insisted that I should go to Frankfurt am Main to take over our local group there. I was not inclined to do so, but as a good and disciplined *shomer* (member of the *Hashomer Hatzair*, literally meaning guardian), I reluctantly agreed. At the end of October 1937, I quit my job and moved to Frankfurt, the second-largest Jewish community in Germany. I rented a room from a Jewish family for a special rate, in exchange for giving English lessons to the daughter of the house. The Kulb family were nice people. They had formerly had a grain business in a small place in Hessen.They had come to Frankfurt shortly before then, because they could not stay in that small town any more. People threw bombs at their house and their life was made hell. The family had already obtained their affidavits of support from a relative or friend, then necessary for immigration to the United States, as a guarantee the immigrants would not become a public charge, and were only waiting for their registration number to come up.

I had my meals at the local *Beit Halutz*. I therefore had to carry out kitchen and cleaning services just like all *haverim* who lived there. I had to wash dishes, clean up, peel potatoes, fetch coal and kindle the cooking-stove. Kitchen service started very early in the morning as the *haverim* had to leave very early for their jobs. I remember the first time I was on kitchen duty. I left my place when it was still completely dark outside. I had brought my bicycle from Berlin. It was a cold winter night. When I arrived at the *Beit Halutz*, I could not get the cooking-stove to light. The coal would not burn with the pieces of paper I threw in. I was afraid that when the *haverim* and *haverot* came down, they would have no hot coffee. Fortunately a girl who lived there showed up and did the job for me without any problem. I had never done anything like that before. At home we cooked with gas only and it was our cook's job to light the kitchen-stove.

As the leader of our organization's local group, I had to arrange meetings and everything else connected with our activities. I studied *Ivrit* very intensively, seven to eight hours a day. A Hebrew language school for young people had recently been founded and I made a speech in Hebrew at its inauguration. I gave two courses there, one for beginners and another one for advanced pupils. During my stay in Frankfurt I attended the lectures of outstanding Jewish personalities, such as Martin Buber and Leo Baeck.

After a few months it became clear that our group had little chance of expanding. In Frankfurt there were many Jewish youth organizations, religious ones and the *Werkleute* as well, greatly influenced by Buber. They had a *Beit Halutz* of their own, which often I visited. A number of our *haverim* went to *hachsharah* at agricultural farms in various places in Germany, in preparation for their future *aliyah*. Others accompanied their parents when they emigrated, mostly to the U.S.A. or South America. Membership in our local group thus dropped and the leadership in Berlin came to the decision that it was not worthwhile to maintain the local group. Our group of younger boys and girls was transferred to the *Werkleute*. I then returned to Berlin on March 1, 1938, but I was not to stay for long. The leadership of *Hashomer Hatzair* decided I should take over the leadership of our Dresden group. Our local organization there consisted of about fifty people, divided into various age groups.

The time I spent in Dresden from the end of March to the beginning of November 1938 was a very happy one. Economically, I was completely independent there. Dresden is an extremely

beautiful city. Its castle, the Zwinger, was totally bombed out during the war, as was most of the city, but it has now been completely rebuilt. I was very busy with my activities, giving lectures, Hebrew courses, having talks with members of the Jewish community, parents, the Zionist organization, members of our organization, etc.

After my arrival, I had to look for a room. I went to the Jewish Community, which maintained a room service. The girl that worked there recommended her mother's apartment, where there was a room to let. I had a feeling then that this would be the right place for me. After checking out many other rooms indicated by the Jewish Community, I rented the room the secretary at the Community had recommended, at Frau Eisenhardt's. She was a very nice widow with two daughters. She was very poor. She continued her husband's business, a room-rental agency, but she had only very few clients. When I came to this place, the girl to whom I had spoken to at the Jewish Community, Lotte, opened the door and called her younger sister Rosl. I liked Rosl from the first time I saw her. She told me her mother was not at home, but she could show me the room. We talked for a while and I told her I would come back next day. I liked the room. Of the various rooms I had seen, there was only one other that was suitable, very near the Jewish Community Center, where later on I would have my meals in the community kitchen. I also had meetings at the Center every evening. However, having taken along my bicycle, I could reach the Center from Mrs. Eisenhardt's room within a few minutes. I preferred her room, because of her young daughters. Staying at her place would not be so boring, as we could always talk, and young Jewish people were coming and going most of the time. Rosl became a very good friend of mine. I took her along on some excursions by rented motorcycle to the beautiful area surrounding Dresden.

Rosl was seventeen years old when I met her for the first time. She had a nice Jewish boyfriend, Hasso Steiner, six or seven years older than she. Both, Rosl and Hasso, had belonged to the *Bund deutsch-jüdischer Jugend*, abbreviated B.d.j.J., the Association of German-Jewish Youth. Rosl even had lead a group there. Belonging to a Jewish youth organization influenced a person greatly and left its permanent traces. The assimilationist German Jewish youth organizations, such as B.d.j.J., were forbidden later on. Only the Zionist youth organizations could continue to exist, because their goal, *aliyah* to Israel, meant emigration from Germany, which the Nazis encouraged at the time.

Rosl later married Hasso, when she became pregnant. Besides the civil marriage, they had a religious ceremony, celebrated by Rabbi Wolff. Their son Jeremia (called Jerry) was born in July 1939, shortly before the outbreak of World War II. (Jeremia was one of the names on the offical list issued by the Ministry of Interior, which Jews had to choose from for their newborn babies.) While Lotte, Rosl's sister, managed to emigrate to the United States, Rosl and her family were not so lucky. It was always somewhat easier for a single person to emigrate than for a couple with a baby. After I left Dresden, I kept in touch with Rosl and she visited me in Berlin once, where she tried in vain to obtain a visa to some country. In January 1939 Hasso wrote, "All our thoughts circle around one pole, emigration." In March of the same year Rosl wrote that they received a waiting number for immigration from the American Consulate, which was around 72,000, while the numbers being called at the time were around 40,000. She added sadly that it would take about six years until their waiting numbers would come up.

Rosl, who was a gifted seamstress, worked at home mending clothes for Jewish ladies. The last letter I received from her, when I was already in Brazil, was dated January 1941. It was

very resigned and pessimistic. Rosl and Hasso were still living in Dresden. All their friends had already left. They were facing great hardships, barely surviving. Several years later I received a letter from Lotte informing that Rosl, her husband and baby son had perished in the Holocaust. Rosl's tragic case is similar to that of Ard-Heinrich Schottländer. In both cases a whole family - a couple with a baby boy - were wiped out. There was only one difference: Rosl and Hasso were very poor and Ard-Heinrich came from a very rich family, but both families could not find one single country in the world at the time that would accept them and open its doors in the face of the mortal danger threatening them.

WE AND ALL FUTURE GENERATIONS SHOULD NEVER EVER FORGET WHAT THE NAZI MURDERERS DID TO US, INDISCRIMINATELY KILLING CHILDREN, MEN, WOMEN AND THE AGED!

THIS IS ONE OF THE REASONS I AM WRITING THIS CHRONICLE, PERPETUATING THE BLESSED MEMORY OF A FEW OF THESE VICTIMS OF THE HOLOCAUST.

When I arrived in Dresden the situation was chaotic. All Jewish stores had been sealed off, preventing buyers to get in. The window panes and the pavement had been defaced with anti-Jewish epithets. Nobody dared to go in. It just was not possible to defy the boycott in such a relatively small city as Dresden where people were known to each other. The aunt of one of the members of our organization tried one night to remove the paint on the window panes of her store with acetone and got a pale of dirty water thrown on her head. The Jewish stores were then forced to place a yellow note saying "Jewish store" in each store window. The other stores placed notes in their store windows saying "Aryan store" or "German store." In Berlin the Jewish store owners were forced to paint their names on each of their store windows with huge, ugly white letters. They were obliged to add to their first names an additional one: "Israel" for men and "Sara" for women. These stores could thus be immediately identified as belonging to Jews. In Berlin it was also possible to easily identify cars belonging to Jews. They were assigned very high special registration numbers, above 50,000, shown on their license plates.

In Dresden, the *Hashomer Hatzair's* original scouting education was still being practiced, while in other cities it had been mostly abandoned. The youngsters wore special outfits (a gray shirt, blue shorts and special neckwear); there were roll calls; and the leader gave commands and used a whistle. In the beginning I had some trouble adapting to this scouting system, but then I slowly got used to it, giving commands in Hebrew at the roll calls before each meeting, such as "fall in line, step forward, to the left, to the right," etc., and used a whistle myself. Shortly after my arrival, we had a special big public celebration, which was a great success. I took care of the preparations, the ticket sale, propaganda, etc. The large community hall was packed. The leadership of our organization had come from Berlin. A play was presented. I made a speech in Hebrew. Not too many people understood what I said, but the important thing was that the public realized there existed a living, modern Hebrew language. After me, the liberal, cultivated rabbi Dr. Wolff made a speech. At a later date he was treated most cruelly in the Buchenwald concentration camp.

In Dresden, there was a nice municipal open-air swimming pool. At the entrance there was a sign: "Entrance forbidden for Jews." As nobody knew me in Dresden, I went swimming there during the summer months. This swimming pool had been donated to the city of Dresden by the Jewish banker Arnhold.

After the celebration I started to look for a job as a gardener. As Dresden is a garden city, there were many horticultural establishments. I looked up several and finally started to work at a large rose and tree nursery in a suburb of Dresden. I worked there in the rose garden. I earned forty-eight pfennigs an hour, which was the offical wage at the time. The work day was nine hours a day, from 6:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Each way took me forty-five minutes on bicycle, riding through a beautiful park full of rhododendrons and azaleas. I had to get up at 5:30 in the morning. I would prepare my breakfast the evening before. I had lunch at a cheap place near my job, paying fifty pfennigs each meal on a weekly basis.

Through a member of our youth organization, I later got a job with a Jewish woman who owned a house with a big garden. The garden had been totally abandoned as nobody had taken care of it for about four years. I had to re-do it completely. The grass was so high it was necessary to cut it with a scythe. I never had used this tool before. When sharpening it with a whetstone, I cut my right index finger and have a scar since then. For a few days I also worked at an apple juice factory, because this activity is somewhat related to fruit-growing. It was a very hard job. The place where the juice was made was very dirty and not hygienic at all.

In the evening I was always busy with my work in the youth organization and came home very late. Therefore I was always tired. Mrs. Eisenhardt said I would not last like that for long. I would have to choose, either working as a gardener or being in charge of the local group of our organization. I stayed at the job at the rose nursery for two weeks only. I did not look for a new one, because in the meantime I already had various pupils whom I was teaching either Hebrew or, mostly, English. One of my English pupils was a scrap metal dealer and his wife, who would emigrate to the United States soon. I used a modern book "English learning - a pleasure." Most of my pupils were beginners, and only a few were advanced. In a few hours work I earned nearly as much as in nine hours of heavy, strenuous garden labor. To pupils who were working during the day, I could give lessons in the evening only from 9:15 p.m. on, as every evening I was busy with my work with the youth groups until nine p.m. I gave lessons to most of the pupils twice a week Each lesson lasted an hour and a half, and cost three marks per lesson.

From then on, I ate at the Jewish community kitchen, paying twenty-five pfennigs a meal. The kitchen was kosher. Since kosher slaughtering was forbidden in Nazi Germany, no meat was served during the week. Kosher chicken was served only on Shabbat, imported from abroad. On Sundays the kitchen was closed. I had lunch then at Mrs. Eisenhardt's, together with her two daughters and their boyfriends. These Sunday meals were always very pleasant. Mrs. Eisenhardt usually complained that I was soiling her snow-white napkin with red cabbage or gravy.

One of the members of our organization, Margot Neuding, a good friend of mine, worked at the best photography study in Dresden. She was a very gifted photographer. I visited her once at her work place at lunch break, when nobody else was at the studio. She then took various

pictures of me. I think they are the best photos ever taken of me. I was twenty years old at the time. One of these photos with her signature is reproduced on the title page of this book.

It was then that I also learned how to drive cars and trucks. I thought that being able to drive a truck might be useful in my future life in *Eretz Israel.* I took driving lessons and also theoretical ones, about the motor and its functioning, including diesel engines, small repairs, etc. These lessons were mandatory for obtaining a professional driver's license. I obtained it for all kinds of vehicles: heavy motorcycles, cars and heavy trucks.

As in Berlin, the leaders of the Jewish youth organizations in Dresden and the ones giving lectures and responsible for the groups had to be of German nationality. Many times our meetings were attended by a Gestapo official and I had to switch the subject I was talking about all at once, without causing his suspicion. I also had to submit in advance the monthly program of the activities of all our groups to the Gestapo headquarters. I had to deliver this document personally and it was not at all agreeable to enter the lion's den, as can be easily imagined. The reception there was sometimes very disagreeable. One could never know for sure what was going to happen. I always was quite relieved when I came out of the building, safe and sound.

On March 12, 1938, German troops occupied Austria. They received a warm welcome from the native population. Next day Austria was incorporated into the Reich. At the time of the Anschluss (the takeover), some 200,000 Jews lived in Austria, 90% of them in Vienna. They played an important role in Austria's intellectual and cultural life. For them, the same tragedy that German Jews had been facing for over five years, since 1933, began at that time. In the summer of 1938, the systematic Nazi polemic against Czechoslovakia, which had lasted for months already, intensified. The Czechs were accused of oppressing the Sudeten Germans, a German minority. The Nazis considered the Czechs allies of the Soviet Union. The Nazis were afraid that the German capital or other cities could be bombarded from Prague, as the distance between Prague and Berlin is relatively short. Already in May the Czechs mobilized their troops, while the British mobilized their navy, and Germany, mobilizing thousands of workers, created a defense line along the Rhine: the Siegfried line. On every bridge in Dresden flak cannons and soldiers were posted. As Germany was determined to annex the Sudetenland, the situation became very tense.

In Dresden, many hundreds of refugees arrived from the Sudetenland. Dresden was the nearest big city from the Czech-German border and therefore was most exposed to possible air attacks. One of the main targets of such an attack would be the central railway station. My room at Eisenhardts was about five minutes away from the central station. A bomb might easily have hit our building. Every household near the station received a sheet with written instructions of how to proceed in case of an air attack. One had to sleep half-clad, with a flashlight nearby and foodstuff for some hours, a gas mask, bandaging material, etc. Mrs. Eisenhardt read these instructions out loud to her tenants in a trembling voice. In September 1938 the situation became critical. I received insistent letters from my mother in Berlin asking me to leave Germany at once and move to Switzerland to study at a horticultural institute there.

Finally, in order to appease Hitler, a shameful agreement was made in Munich on September 29, 1938, between Germany, Italy, France and England, in the presence of Hitler, Mussolini, the French prime minister Daladier and the British prime minister Chamberlain. In accordance

with this agreement, Czechoslovakia was forced to cede the Sudetendland to the Germans. The Czech prime minister Benes resigned, and Chamberlain, carryring his traditional umbrella, ingenuously proclaimed upon his triumphant return to London that by signing this agreement he had brought "peace in our time." Hitler had promised him in Munich that the Sudetenland would be Germany's last territorial demand. Within half a year, in March 1939, Hitler would take over the rest of Czechoslovakia and less than a year later, on September 3, 1939, after the invasion of Poland, World War II would break out!

In September 1938, the *Hashomer Hatzair* leadership in Berlin decided I should return to Berlin and from there go to *Hachsharah* at Gut Winkel, near Fürstenwalde/Spree, an agricultural training center near Berlin. They had already sent a young member to Dresden to substitute me there. He promptly took over the youngest group of our members, while I continued leading the older groups for the time being, introducing him slowly to his future activities. Our youth organization decided to arrange a good-bye party for me. However, unexpected events would soon change all these plans.

LIFE UNDER THE NAZIS BECOMES UNBEARABLE
MORE RESTRICTIONS AND HARASSMENTS

From 1938 on the oppressive measures against the Jews in Germany increased steadily. I will mention just a few of these laws and regulations:

- April 26, 1938 - All Jewish fortunes exceeding 5,000 marks in Germany and abroad have to be registered with the authorities.
- In public parks and squares Jews cannot sit on the same benches together with "Aryans." They have to sit separately, on special yellow benches.
- June 14, 1938 - All Jewish commercial establishments have to be properly identified.
- July 25, 1938 - Jewish physicians are no longer permitted to exercise their profession. They can treat only Jewish patients. They can no longer call themselves physicians, but only *Krankenbehandler*, caretakers of sick people.
- August 17, 1938 - Jews must choose the first names of their newborn babies from an official list of Jewish names issued by the Ministry of the Interior. From January 1, 1939 on, they have to add Israel or Sara to their first names and also sign all documents accordingly.
- September 27, 1938 - Jews can no longer be lawyers. They can only be law advisers to Jews. They cannot call themselves lawyers any more, but only *Konsulent*, consultant.
- Jews can no longer be commercial representatives.
- October 5, 1938 - The identification page of all passports issued to Jews must be stamped with a prominent three-cm long 'J' in red color. This measure, as incredible as it sounds today, was taken at the behest of the Swiss and also the Swedish governments.The Swiss wanted to be absolutely sure not to grant any visas to German Jews, and for this purpose they had to be able to differentiate between a German and a German Jew.
- November 12, 1938 - a law was issued regarding the exclusion of Jews from the German economy. From January 1, 1939 on, Jews can no longer own any stores or offices or exercise a mechanical trade.
- November 15, 1938 - Jewish children are excluded from public schools.
- December 3, 1938 - Driver's licenses belonging to Jews are no longer valid and have to be turned over to the authorities.
- December 6, 1938 - Jews are forbidden from going to theaters, movies, cabarets, concerts, public events, public libraries, museums, public parks, amusement parks, sport halls, skating rinks, public or private swimming pools, etc. In Berlin they cannot go to the streets comprising the government quarter, such as Unter den Linden, Wilhelmstrasse, etc. The term "Jew ban" is created for these restrictive measures. Jews who are owners of commercial establishments can be obliged to liquidate them by a stipulated date. Jews are obliged to deposit their shares, bonds and other assets with an officially designated exchange bank. Jews are forbidden to buy, pawn or sell objects of gold, platinum, silver or precious stones.
- December 8, 1938 - Jews are excluded from going to universities.
- January 30, 1939 - Hitler, in a public speech on the occasion of the sixth anniversary of the date the Nazis seized power, announces "the annihilation of the Jewish race," should war break out.
- February 21, 1939 - Jews holding German nationality have to deliver to a special government office objects of gold, platinum, silver or precious stones within two weeks. Only wedding rings are excluded from this regulation.

According to the above mentioned law about Jewish first names, I had to add still another to the five names with which I was registered upon birth: Israel. My complete name then became Klaus Fritz Emil Kurt Hermann Israel Oliven, often to the despair of bureaucrats who have to fill out official forms and documents.

I will explain why my father gave me so many middle names. I was named Klaus after Klaus Kersting, the leading character of his 1917 operetta *"Drei alte Schachteln."* The name Fritz was given me in honor of my father and Emil, in honor of my maternal grandfather. Kurt was my father's superior in the barracks where he served during WW I at the time of my birth. As my father wanted a leave to visit my mother, he told his superior, whose first name was Kurt, that a son had been born to him and that he would call him Kurt in honor of this officer. He did not tell him, of course, that Kurt would only be my fourth name. The man felt so honored that the famous writer would name his son Kurt, - his name - that he granted the leave at once. As to Hermann, that was the first name of Herman Haller, the theater director and my father's literary collaborator. My father was much obliged to him, as Haller always had a theater guaranteed for the premières of the operettas. Therefore, due to my father's generosity (at my expense), I am burdened with all these names. Later on I had to add one more, Israel, due to the afore mentioned Nazi law.

Though all these laws made the life of the remaining Jewish population in Germany desperate and miserable, terribly worse things were to happen soon during the war years, when I had left Nazi Germany already. They culminated in the Holocaust, in Hebrew *Shoah*, the deportation and extermination of six million of our brethren, over one third of the world Jewish population at the time.

On August 23, 1939, an incredible thing happened, which nobody would have thought possible: the archenemies Nazi Germany and the communist Soviet Union entered into a non-aggression pact, signed in Moscow by Foreign Ministers Ribbentrop and Molotov, in the presence of Stalin. A few days later, on September 3, World War II broke out and German troops entered Poland. On September 17, the Red Army entered East Poland and annexed Polish territory. On June 14, 1940, the Wehrmacht entered Paris. On June 22, 1941, the German troops invaded the Soviet Union. Germany's capitulation occurred four years later only, on May 8, 1945.

THE "ENDLÖSUNG" - THE FINAL SOLUTION - THROUGH DEPORTATION AND MASS MURDERS

- February 12 and 13, 1940 - The first deportations from Germany started. Jews from Stettin were deported to places around Lublin in Poland.
- September 1, 1941 - a decree ordered the Jewish population above the age of six to wear in public a yellow Star of David with the word "Jude" in black Hebrew-like letters on it, to be firmly sewed to the left side of their garments.
- October 18, 1941 - the first mass transport to the East of 1,251 Jews from Berlin, stuffed like cattle into boxcars, was dispatched to the ghetto in Lodz. On that date, about 66,000 Jews still lived in Berlin, about half of the Jews remaining in Germany. Berlin had received a large influx of Jews, who fled from the small German towns where life had become unbearable for them. In the big capital, Berlin, in a certain sense they were somewhat more protected by anonymity. Over the next months, many other transports left Berlin, each carrying an average of one thousand Jews. They were first taken to the destroyed synagogue on Levetzowstrasse, in the Tiergarten district (where my grandmother Luise used to pray), or to the Jewish Home for the Aged on Grosse Hamburger Strasse, and from there to the Grunewald railway freight station. The so-called *Osttransporte* (transports to the East) left Berlin from that station. Memorials stand at these three places today. There were altogether 63 *Osttransporte*, with 35,000 deportees, and 117 *Alterstransporte* (transports of the aged) to the Theresienstadt ghetto, with 15,000 deportees, all of them departing from Berlin. Transports to the East headed to Lodz, Minsk, Kovno, Riga, Trawniki, Auschwitz, etc. The first direct *Osttransport* to Auschwitz took place on July 11, 1942, with 210 deportees. From 1943 on, all *Osttransporte* from Berlin headed to Auschwitz. The largest was *Osttransport* no. 31, on March 2, 1943. It consisted of 1,758 Berlin Jews. By the year 1944 the number of Berlin Jews being deported to Auschwitz had decreased considerably, since by then most of the remaining Berlin Jews had already been "evacuated" during the previous three years. In only a few cases the number of each transport exceeded thirty people in 1944. The last transports to Auschwitz took place as late as January 5, 1945, a short time before its liberation. It consisted of seven men and seven women. The last deportations of Berlin Jews took place shortly before the end of the war, in March/April 1945, and consisted of eleven men, who were taken to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp, and thirteen women, transported to Ravensbrück. Altogether over 56,000 Jews from Berlin were murdered in concentration and extermination camps. Many died of hunger, diseases or mistreatment and the remainder in the gas chambers. Thousands eventually perished in the death marches, when they were driven on foot through Germany shortly before the end of the war, when the camps had to be evacuated on account of the advancing Allied Forces.
- October 23, 1941 - The emigration of Jews was prohibited. It was a very important date in the Nazi policy. It represented the turning point from forced emigration to systematic deportation and extermination. Between September and November 1941, the decision was taken to implement the *Endlösung* - the Final Solution - through perfectly organized mass murder of the European Jewry.
- November 25, 1941 - a decree mandated the automatic seizure of property of German Jews who had left or would leave the country. This meant that all property belonging to every deportee was confiscated immediately before or upon his or her deportation.
- January 20, 1942 - The extermination of the Jews throughout Europe was prepared at the

Wannsee Konferenz, which took place on this date in an elegant villa in Wannsee, a suburb of Berlin. Today the villa houses an interesting exhibit of the period. Convened by Hitler, the *Wannsee Konferenz* was presided over by SS-Obergruppenführer Reinhard Heydrich, chief of the RSHA - *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* (Main Office for Reich Security) and deputy chief of the *Geheime Staatspolizei*, or Gestapo, the Secret State Police. He was known as *Der Henker* ("The Hangman"). On July 31, 1941 Heydrich had been ordered by Göring to prepare "the final solution of the Jewish question in Europe." In 1942, Heydrich was assassinated near Prague by a Czech partisan. The Wannsee conference was attended by representatives of various minstries, of the RSHA, the SS, the Securitiy Police and by Nazi party officials. The discussions at the *Wannsee Konferenz* centered around the so-called *Endlösung*, the Nazi euphemism for the physical annihilation of the Jews who lived in Europe. The Nazis used other euphemisms too, such as *Aussiedlung* for evacuation, *Abschiebung* for deportation and *Selektion* for extermination. The minutes of the *Wannsee Protokoll* regarding the Final Solution of the Jewish question through the extermination of the eleven million European Jews, were recorded by SS-Obersturmbannführer Adolf Eichmann. He was the head of Department IV-B4 of the RSHA, established at the outbreak of WW II, which was in charge of planning the annihilation of the European Jewry. This department was located on Kurfürstenstrasse. The building was the former seat of the *B'nai Brith* (Sons of the Covenant), the Jewish Brethren Society. As a school boy I once participated in a table tennis tournament that took place there. On our first visit to Europe, in 1963, Seldi and I visited this place, which was a bomb-battered building then. Eichmann was captured in Buenos Aires in 1960 by the Mossad, Israel's Secret Service. They managed to smuggle him out of the country and take him to Israel by an El Al airplane. He was tried in Jerusalem in 1961 and executed one year later.

- July 7, 1942 - Deportations to Auschwitz began and were to last until March/April 1945. By 1943 most of the remaining Jews in Germany were forced to live in special *Judenhäuser*, houses where only Jews were allowed to live. They were concentrated there as the last stop before their deportation. About 135,000 Jews from Germany were deported to the East. Only five thousand survived, most of them from the Theresienstadt ghetto.
- November 9, 1942 - 20 officials of the Jewish Community administration in Berlin were taken hostage because some Jews had been able to escape deportation, either by suicide or by going underground. Eight of the hostages were shot and the others were deported together with their families.
- End of December 1942 - By the end of that year, over 800 Jews had committed suicide, to escape deportation.
- February 27 and 28, 1943 - On these dates the so-called *Fabrikaktion* took place. About 15,000 Jewish forced laborers, who worked mostly in the German armament industry were rounded up at the factories and deported to Auschwitz, over 7,000 of them in Berlin.
- June 6, 1943 - Liquidation of the Central Association of Jews in Germany. At the beginning of 1933, when Hitler seized power, the number of the Jewish population in Germany was estimated at 525,000, some 160,000 of them in Berlin. Until the outbreak of World War II about 247,000 of the Jews living in Germany had left the country, among them about 90,000 from Berlin. Jewish emigration from Germany reached its peak in 1939, when 78,000 Jews left Germany. Many of them went to other European countries where they were later caught when the Nazis invaded most of the European continent. Many Jews committed suicide upon learning they were going to be deported. About 15,000 Jews escaped deportation because of their "Aryan" spouses.

As most of the emigrants were young or middle-aged persons, the number of deaths greatly exceeded births among Jews in Germany from 1933 to 1939. This figure varied from 5,500 in 1933 to 8,000 in 1938. reaching 10,000 in 1939. At the outbreak of World War II, there remained well over 200,000 Jews in Germany, 80,000 of them in Berlin. It is estimated that during the war years about ten thousand Jews in Germany tore off the yellow Stars of David, which they were obliged to sew on to their garments, and went into hiding to escape deportation and extermination camps, living "underground", half of them in Berlin. For the most part they arranged fake or false identities. They were called *Untergetauchte*, people who "submerged" in the underground. They also were known as "U-boats", or submarines. Only about twenty-five percent of these "illegals" survived. The rest were denounced, caught by the Gestapo or died of malnutrition. Of the estimated 5,000 Jews that went underground in Berlin, only between 1,200 to 1,500 survived. About 1,900 Jews returned to Berlin from the concentration camps. Today the Jewish Community in Berlin, the largest in Germany, has about 9,000 members, mostly coming from the former Soviet Union, who started immigrating in the1990s.

If the life of the Jews during the Nazi regime could be resumed in one sentence, it would be:

TWELVE YEARS OF HELL

THE "POLENAKTION" - OCTOBER 27 & 28, 1938

My activities as the leader of the *Hashomer Hatzair* in Dresden came to an abrupt end on October 27/28, 1938, the date of the so-called *Polenaktion*, the forced repatriation of Polish Jews. About 17,000 Jews of Polish nationality, living in Germany, were picked up by police without warning. With just five minutes' notice to pack the barest necessities, they were suddenly torn from their homes. Many were woken up in the middle of the night and herded away, without regard for sex or age, to be deported by train to the German-Polish border and from there chased over the border into Polish territory. Whole families were rounded up in this way.

About 50,000 Jews of Polish nationality lived in Germany at the time.The Nazis were anxious to get rid of them. At the end of March 1938, the Polish government had passed a decree that the passports of Polish citizens residing abroad for more than five years would require revalidation, by means of a special stamp to be placed in these passports. On October 6, 1938, the Polish government announced that the decree would take effect on October 29, the deadline for passport revalidation. The Polish Consulate in Berlin was packed with desperate Polish Jews who all wanted their passports stamped, but the Consulate refused to do so, as they were anxious to get rid of their Jewish citizens living in Germany and elsewhere. Enormous queues also formed in the streets outside the Polish Consulates in Vienna and many other cities. All countries - except England - did not consider these Polish passports valid any longer after October 29, without the special stamp required by the Polish authorities. At the beginning of October 1938, the Nazi authorities contacted the Polish government concerning the repatriation of these citizens. The Poles, who always were notorious for their antisemitism, refused to accept them. The date chosen by the Nazis for the *Polenaktion* was timed perfectly: two days before the passports of the Polish Jews living in Germany would lose their validity and they could not be expelled to Poland any more then.

Under a 1913 German law of citizenship, which is based on the legal principle of *jus sanguinis*, the law of the blood (as opposed to *jus solis*, the law of the soil), parentage and ethnicity determine German nationality, and not the place of birth. Many of the Jews of Polish nationality living in Germany had been there for a long time and their children, who kept the Polish nationality, were born there already. Notwithstanding, officially being foreigners, every year they had to revalidate their foreign resident license and work permit. This, for instance, was the case with my friend Rosi Laufer and my future wife Seldi Reifen, as well as thousands of other people in the same situation.They had been born in Germany, did not know a word of Polish, had never been to Poland, but had to go through this procedure year after year.

The following lines about the *Polenaktion* are taken from my personal notes. They are mostly a transcript from my diary about these terrible events, written down in Brazil in May 1940, one and a half years after they happened. They took place while I was still in Dresden. Unfortunately, today, over sixty years later, not too many eye witnesses are left. I reproduce the text of my diary dealing with these horrible events almost in its entirety, because I feel that this is my duty towards younger generations. We shall never forget and we must make sure that younger generations know about the atrocities that occurred to the Jewish people during the Nazi regime, so they can never happen again! We must always remember. In order to be remembered, the story has to be told to future generations again and again.

When I came home in the afternoon [on October 27, 1938], Frau Eisenhardt was very nervous. The police had arrested her tenants, a young Jewish couple, and she did not know the reason. Some time later they returned, accompanied by a policeman, and had to pack their bare necessities within five minutes. Then the policeman locked their room and disappeared with the couple. We all ventured a reason for this arrest. I believed that despite the existing prohibition, the man may have continued to exercise his profession as a commercial representative without a permit, which was unattainable at the time. I presumed he had done so as he had to make a living. After all, how else could people who had no savings survive? Frau Eisenhardt had another tenant of Polish nationality, who hid in another room of her apartment when the police came to arrest him as well.

Late in the evening, Monnie, Lotte Eisenhardt's friend, came running to the apartment. He was very upset. He told us that in the evening at the Jewish Community Center, where all Jewish organizations were located, they had arrested all Jews of Polish nationality. They had taken them out of the courses and meetings that took place there. They had also arrested most members of the *Hashomer Hatzair*, who had come together at the Community Center that evening to prepare a good-bye party for me - and this of course was the reason I was not present at that meeting.

That same evening, all Polish Jews were arrested in Dresden as part of a simultaneous and completely unexpected action. All of a sudden they were pulled from their houses and apartments, some in the middle of the night, and arrested wherever the police could find them - altogether 2,000 to 3,000 people, men, women and children. They were given five minutes to pick up their most necessary objects. They were permitted to take only ten marks with them. They were then taken to the central police prison, but as there was not enough space for so many people, part were taken to various large assembly halls. However, there was no food for them. The kind Rabbi Wolf tried to talk to them and to bring them some food, as far as he could obtain it in the middle of night, but in some places they did not even let him talk to these poor people. Closely watched, herded together in these overcrowded places, the terribly frightened Jews waited for things to come, anxious to know what would happen to them. Every Jew of Polish nationality without any exception had been arrested in Dresden - men and women, very old people, children, babies and the ill.

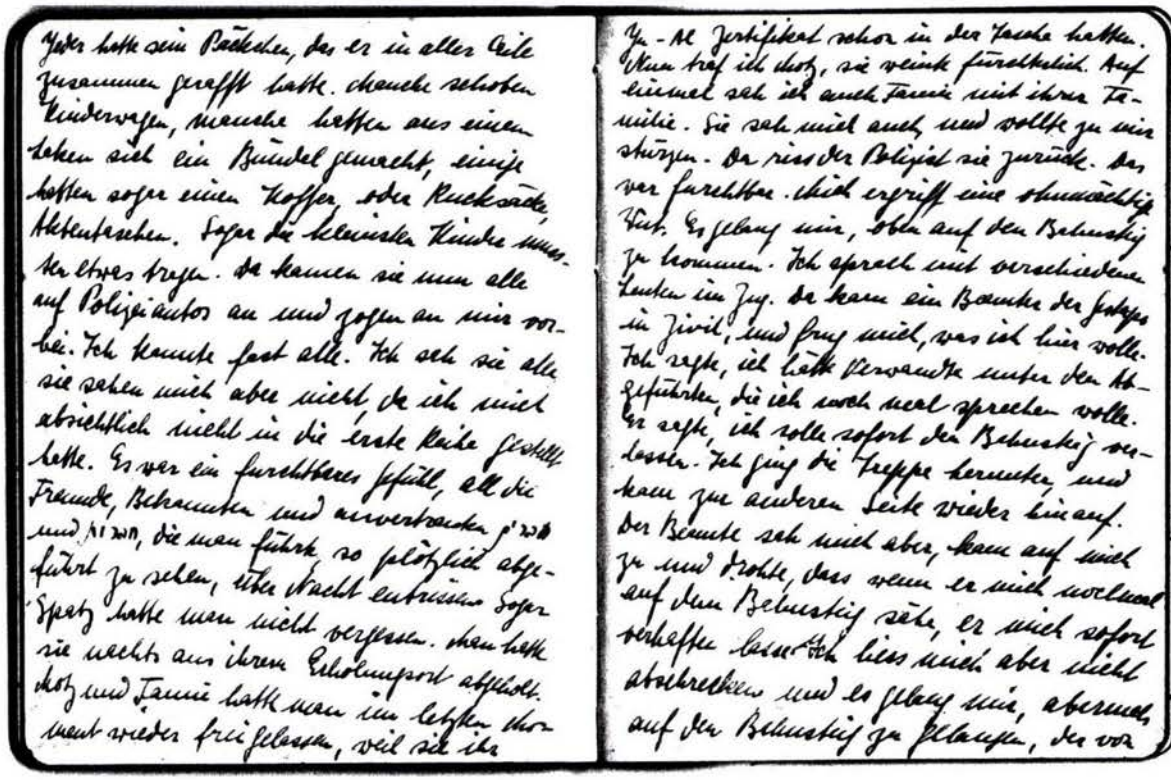
Very early the next morning, I went to the Jewish Community Center to see if I could help in any way. The situation was totally chaotic. The members of the Community Board, as well as Rabbi Wolf, were all extremely upset and were rushing around all over the place. The telephone did not stop ringing for one moment. Everybody wanted to know what had happpened. Some poor people who did not know anything at all about the events and just wanted to collect their regular monetary assistance also came, along with people who came for other reasons. Some people who believed they could obtain some more information about the previous night's sad events also showed up.

I noticed that anybody standing around at the Center would only disturb the urgent, important work of the Community Board. I therefore went to the Neustädter Railway Station, where people were being herded into trains to be deported over the Polish border. There I met some people from the Community who had come to hand over some food to the poor people to take along on their trip. However, they were not permitted to talk to them or to even go to the train platform. The police, the SS and the Gestapo had cordoned off a track for the arrested

Polish Jews, leading from the street where the trucks arrived to the station entrance. On both sides of the track there stood in silence a tightly squeezed crowd of curious people who did not want to miss this spectacle. It was terrible to watch such a tragic scene.

Open police vehicles were arriving constantly, full of frightened Jews closely guarded by policemen with rifles. The old Jews with long beards had to jump down from the high vehicles. Then they were marched off to the station entrance, one behind the other. Some were desolated; others walked straight and tall; some were defiant. There were women crying, many of them old. And then there were the men, some limping, some carrying heavy packs. Everybody was carrying a pack, containing the things he or she could pick up from among their belongings in the rush when they were rounded up. Some were pushing baby carriages; others had wrapped their most indispensable personal objects up in a bed sheet A few people were carrying a suitcase; others, a rucksack or a briefcase. Even the smallest children were carrying something.

They all arrived by police cars, and then walked by on foot. I knew nearly everybody. I saw them all, but they did not see me. I did not stand in the front row on purpose. It was horrible to see all my friends, acquaintances and the *haverim* and *haverot*, the boy and girl companions of the *Hashomer Hatzair* whose education had been entrusted to me during the last few months. All of a sudden, they had been arrested at night and dragged out of their homes. I saw my friend Margot, the photographer, who had been taken from the place nearby where she went for health reasons. Among the people watching this sad spectacle I met her sister, who cried terribly. She and a friend of hers had been released at the last moment, because she could prove she had already obtained a Youth Aliyah certificate, authorizing her immigration to Palestine. Suddenly I saw another good friend, Fanni, and her family among the deportees. She wanted to run in my direction, but the police held her back. It was heart-rending. A terrible wrath overcame me, increased by the fact that I was powerless to react.



Pages from Klaus Oliven's diary, about the events of the "Polenaktion" in Dresden

I managed to reach the train platform, where I spoke to a number of people in the train. Then a plain-clothed Gestapo official asked me what I was doing there. I said I had relatives among the deportees to whom I wanted to speak before their departure. He told me to leave the platform at once. I went down the stairs and came up again on the other side. The official had seen me coming up again and threatened to arrest me immediately if he saw me there again. However, ignoring any danger, I refused to give up and managed to go up to the platform once again.

The platform was guarded by SS, Gestapo, police and the army. I walked the full length of the train and talked to many pople. Everybody called me, everybody wanted something from me. It was heart-breaking. I talked to my sixteen-year-old friend Fanni Kohn and tried to console and encourage her. She was very courageous but her mother was desperate. I bought cigarettes for her father, who was a very religious man. Then I talked to Rosl Schwarz, another good friend of mine. The only thing she asked me for was a pocket comb. In the hurry she could not find hers. I gave her mine. I also talked to my good friend Margot Neuding. She looked at me with a sad face. Then I spoke with various members of our organization. Margot's father wanted to know if his relatives were on the train. An old mother asked me desperately for the name of her son to be called out, so she could find out if he was on the train.

It was simply terrible to see all this misery and affliction. All these people sat or stood tightly squeezed in the locked train. In each car there was an armed policeman. The train was so crowded that most people had to stand. The air in the cars must have been terrible and the sanitary conditions horrendous. Distribution of foodstuff was not permitted. All this would be repeated a few years later on a much larger scale and under even much worse circumstances, when the sealed boxcars overcrowded with deportees started to roll off to the extermination camps in the east.

I was running alongside the train all the time and had to watch carefully not to be seen by some Gestapo official. Everybody in the train was anxious to be able to speak with someone who stayed behind. They asked me to deliver a message or wanted me to find out if certain persons were on this train. Finally the train departed. All these people were heading for a completely uncertain destiny. In the middle of the night they had been dragged from their beds, forced to abandon their apartments, with hardly any time left to take along the most needed personal belongings. Their apartments were officially sealed. In a space of only twelve hours they had to leave a city and a country in which they had lived for decades and in which their children had been born.

Ninety percent of the *haverim* and *haverot* of the *Hashomer Hatzair* were on the train, and nothing was left of our local group in Dresden. All the efforts and energy I had spent with these youngsters came to a sudden end. Within a few hours everything had been wiped out. It was pure barbary, brute force, in short, Fascism. An eyewitness to all these horrible things and the events to come soon after will never be able to forget them! It was the Nazi regime personified. When I left the station, I heard a woman who had watched the Jews being marched off from the trucks to the railway station saying to another one, "This was the most beautiful day of my life." I nearly slapped her face. But what would have been the point? So I restrained myself. I just looked at her in a way that made her recoil, out of surprise, and then she remarked, "This one must be a Jew as well." Implicitly she wanted to say that every non-Jew would certainly approve and be in favor of the terrible things she had just witnessed.

I could not eat or drink anything when I left the station. I just had some black coffee to calm down. I felt anger and shock. Just that afternoon I had my second driver's test for truck driving. It was already dark. It was raining and the lighting in the small streets was very poor. The truck's horn and windshield wipers did not function. The examiner had me constantly and unexpectedly turn into narrow streets. They were so narrow that I could hardly manage to turn the big old truck around. In spite of all these difficulties, of my rage and shock, I passed the examination on that terrible day.

The Nazis had prepared the *Polenaktion* quite well. It was carried out simultaneously and swiftly all over Germany and Austria to everyone's complete surprise. In Berlin, which was home to by far the largest population of Polish Jews in Germany, only the men were arrested, because the Nazis were incapable of arresting the whole Jewish population of Polish nationality who lived in the capital. Most of the trains coming from other parts of Germany had to pass through Dresden. Meanwhile the Jewish Community there had obtained the permission from the Gestapo to set up on the railway platform a service to assist the deportees and provide them with food on the trains that passed. For this purpose the Community needed young, active and efficient volunteers who could help with whatever was necessary. Rosl Eisenhardt and her friend Hasso, her sister Lotte and her friend Monni and I enlisted at once. Trains with thousands of deportees were passing through the station constantly. That day the last train went through Dresden after midnight. Next day, many other trains passed through. It was terrible to see all this misery.

Our aid service at the station was organized in the most efficient way. Hot soup was prepared in the Jewish Community kitchen and then promptly taken to the station by truck. It was important that the soup be kept hot until the trains arrived. Coffee was also brewed and distributed hot in paper cups to the thirsty, distressed people on the trains. We handed out urgently needed objects, such as soap, toothbrushes and combs. We also distributed postcards or wrote them ourselves on behalf of the deportees. We handed out milk for the small children, as well as chocolate, rolls, biscuits, cigarettes, and so on. Rosl, Lotte and I had to make the impossible possible, namely, to arrange five hundred rolls on a Sunday. We ran from one bakery to the other, until we finally had this quantity. The bakers wondered what we were going to do on a Sunday with so many old rolls left over from the day before.

Many curious people at the station who saw our stalls remarked that the Czech crisis had already passed and wondered if more Sudeten German refugees were arriving from Czechoslovakia. Trains from Frankfurt were passing through and in one of them I met some of my old friends from the *Hashomer Hatzair*. However, there was no time to talk to them for long. Most of the time I was running alongside the train distributing chocolate, biscuits, coffee, milk, and so on. We also handed out medicine, diapers and sanitary napkins. Then I collected the postcards written by the people on the train to their relatives and friends. Even though I ended up with mountains of postcards, people wanted to write more and there were not enough of them to go around. For each person we had a good word, trying to cheer people up and encourage them.

Though this service was strenuous, it gave me a feeling of enormous satisfaction to be able to help in my own small way, to be needed and to know that these poor people on the trains depended so much on us volunteers. The thankful looks and words of the people whom we tried to help as much as possible were a reward for our efforts.

I was nearly locked into one of these trains. An official asked me to get into the train at once, because it was going to leave right away. Fortunately, the Jewish Coummunity had supplied the volunteers with an identity card, so that I could convince the official that I was not a Polish Jew but had come to help them.

Trains from the Rhineland and all parts of Germany came rolling through. The first trains crossed the Polish border without any problem, because the Poles were caught by surprise. People on the first trains, who all held Polish passports, could freely travel onward from the Polish border to wherever they wanted to go. Many had relatives and friends in Warsaw, Lodz, Lwow, Cracow, etc. and traveled on to these places. However, shortly afterwards the Polish authorities realized what was going on. The Poles then simply refused to accept their Jewish citizens and closed their border immediately and no further trains could pass.

The deportees on the trains that had already reached Polish territory, were placed by the Poles in a big improvised camp at the border town Zbaszyn (called Sponzin in German), right at the Polish-German border. They were also placed there in filthy, condemned military stables, in unheated barracks or in private dwellings. The town of Zbaszyn in the province of Poznán (Posen) had about four thousand inhabitants but with the influx of these deportees it more than doubled its number. The place was not prepared to receive so many newcomers. Five thousand people lived there for weeks. Everything was missing and no adequate quarters were available for these thousands of people. The cold winter weather and poor sanitary conditions led to disease, and sixty-eight people died there.The American representative to the League of Nations demanded that something be done, but the Polish ambassador denied any improprieties at the improvised dwellings.

Many of the *haverim* and *haverot* of our youth organization landed in Zbaszyn, among them my former girlfriend Rosi Laufer. She had been taken there from Cologne where, together with another *haver*, she had become the leader of the local group of the *Hashomer Hatzair.* I sent her a suitcase with warm clothes as it was very cold in Zbaszyn. I also sent another suitcase to my friend Fanny Kohn and her family, who were able to travel on to Lwow (Lemberg), as they were on the first train departing from Dresden. The young members of the youth organizations who were taken to Zbaszyn did not lose their courage and cooperated in organizing life in the camp, opening up a laundry, kitchen, kindergarten, and so on. They even tried to reorganize the youth organization activities there. The Jewish communities in Poland finally managed to intervene, finding some shelter for the deportees in Warsaw and other Polish cities. Various oldtimers who held leading positions in the Zionist youth movement, as for instance Rosi, managed to obtain an immigration certificate for Palestine, departing directly from the camp. Rosi made *aliyah* and went to live in a kibbutz. She married Walter Leeser. Later they left the *kibbutz* and moved to Haifa. Later on her husband died. She now lives in a comfortable senior home in Kfar Saba. We always see her on our visits to Israel.

When the Poles closed the border, the German authorities at first tried to evacuate the deportees from their border town of Neu-Bentschen by forced marches, crossing the Polish-German border secretly at night. Neu-Bentschen was the final stop of the trains carrying the deportees. They were pulled out of the railway-cars there and chased over the border with rifle and gun butts. The old people who were too exhausted could hardly withstand these night marches and had to throw away most of their belongings on the way, as they became too heavy to carry.

Altogether over 8,000 Polish Jews were dumped off in no-man's-land at the border between Neu-Bentschen in Germany and Zbaszyn in Poland. When the Polish police caught these unwanted refugees next morning, they tried to push them back again into German territory at night, but they were received with drawn guns by the German frontier police. As Poland denied their citizen entry, they were forced to languish between two borders, in the cold and without food or shelter. Nobody wanted these poor people who were being driven back and forth through no-man's-land. The Poles then arranged to close the border hermetically. When new trains arrived, the deportees had to remain in the trains at the border, in German territory, under terrible conditions, closely watched by the German police.

After two days of uncertainty, orders arrived from Berlin that the trains that had not been able to cross into Polish territory should move back to the cities from where they had come, with all people on board. Now we saw part of these unhappy people whom we had helped on the trains to Poland only a few days ago, back again at the railway station in Dresden. The deportees from Dresden had all reached Polish territory because they were on the first train that left Germany. Most people from Frankfurt and other German cities, however, came back now, and we had to reinstall the aid service at the railway station in Dresden. I talked again to many people from Frankfurt. Many of the people on the trains were in bad shape, especially the older ones, due to the turmoil and the terrible hygienic and sanitary conditions on the trains. During two full days they were stalled at the border, locked up in their railway-cars, with very little food, facing sleepless nights and a completely unknown future ahead. People on board the trains became quite distressed and famished. They threw themselves on the food and hot coffee we distributed, making our distribution efforts quite difficult.

We therefore had to ask the station chief to give the order that the passengers had to remain on board the trains. This was the only way to make these distributions from one railway-car to the other. A member of the Jewish Community had donated large quantities of sausage, which we cut into pieces and which I distributed in cardboard cartons. This sausage, however, was not *kosher* and I had to announce this expressly in each car. Most of the hungry people accepted the sausage anyhow. Some bearded old Jews, however, refused it angrily. I had great respect and esteem for these deeply religious people who in spite of being starved refused to eat the *treif* sausage.

A member of the orthodox *Mizrahi* organization wanted to tear the sausage carton away from me. He told me it was an indignity for the Jewish Community to distribute *treif* sausage, inducing people who were in great distress to break the law. I, a radical young man at the time, replied that the most important thing at this moment was to feed these famished people. Besides, I added, I was announcing in every car that the sausage was not *kosher*, so that everbody who was not in accordance with breaking the law could decline to eat it. The distribution of this sausage really was a problem for many of the hungry people, who were subject to temptation. Besides, the day the first train left Dresden was a *Shabbat* and this also was a problem for the religious Jews, though it clearly was a case of *force majeure*.

Some of the accompanying policemen were quite cooperative and they even told us in which cars we would find persons that needed our help most urgently. They looked enviously at the hot coffee we distributed, because the German authorities had forgotten to take care of them. Therefore we sometimes also distributed some coffee and foodstuff to these German people as well.

We, the volunteers, always had to be ready during these tumultuous days to get to the central railway station immediately and take up our job there as soon as the Jewish Community informed us that another train would pass through. The completely improvised aid assistance of the Jewish Community at the railway station in Dresden functioned very well, despite the most unfavorable conditions. For us at least it was a small consolation to be able to help these poor deportees a little bit.

Next Saturday evening the Jewish Community seminar, which always was crowded with young people listening to lectures at that time of the week, was sad to see. Only a few Jewish youngsters remained in the youth organizations in Dresden. Most of them were of German nationality, some were stateless and a few had Polish nationality, but had been forgotten by the Nazis or could not be found when all Polish Jews were rounded up. Only three people were left from the *Hashomer Hatzair*. Of course, the good-bye party that was being prepared for me on that fateful evening was cancelled. For my successor in Dresden there remained nothing to do any more. I would have left Dresden earlier, but of course I remained there during these difficult days, in order to be able to help at the railway station, until the last trains returning from the Polish border had passed through.

Now the time had come for me to leave Dresden, after a stay of seven and a half months. I loved Dresden very much. If I had departed under normal circumstances, the railway station would have been crowded with members of our youth organization and my friends to bid me good-bye. Now that nearly all of them were gone, only Rosl and Lotte Eisenhardt and their boyfriends, who all were German Jews, came to the station to say good-bye. Before I left, we celebrated my departure with coffee and cake at the Eisenhardts'. I left behind many friendships, dear people, the leadership of the local *Hashomer Hatzair* group, a beautiful city, motorcycle tours in the surroundings, complete independence from my parents and many happy days, in spite of the somber outside situation.

THE POGROM OF NOVEMBER 9 & 10, 1938 - KRISTALLNACHT

On November 9, 1938, only a few days after the *Polenaktion*, a pogrom erupted all over the Reich which now also included Austria and the Sudetenland. The Nazis euphemistically called this event Kristallnacht, the night of the broken glass, a cynical reference to the tons of shattered glass from Jewish storefronts, homes and institutions.

On November 7, Herschel Grynszpan, a seventeen-year-old student in Paris went to the German Embassy. He had received a desperate letter from his parents from the Polish border town Zbaszyn. They had been deported by the Nazis from Hanover, Germany during the *Polenaktion*, together with his sister and thousands of other Jews of Polish nationality a few days earlier. They were interned there under dreadful conditions. In revenge, Herschel decided to kill the German ambassador. Instead he shot a minor official, the third secretary Ernst vom Rath, who died of his wounds two days later.

The Nazis used the death of vom Rath as a welcome pretext to launch their largest pogrom to date. The night of November 9/10 was a nightmare for the Jews living in Germany. About 30,000 Jews were rounded up - 12,000 in Berlin alone - and sent to three concentration camps. 11,000 were sent to Dachau, 10,000 to Buchenwald and 9,000 to Sachsenhausen. Ninety-six Jews were killed that night by the SA men. Several hundreds more died in the camps as a consequence of mistreatment inflicted by the guards and from exposure to the elements. It was an extremely cold winter. The lucky ones were released after a few days, if they could prove that they held a valid visa and were about to emigrate and agreed to sell their businesses for a minute sum. Others languished in the camps for months. They all came out with shaven heads and frozen limbs and with their physical and mental health seriously damaged.

Hundreds of synagogues were torched, Torah rolls and prayer books burned or desecrated. Forty of the fifty synagogues in Berlin were destroyed. The only ones not burned down were those located in buildings that were not detached, because of the danger that the neighboring "Aryan" property could catch fire too. The fire department and the police had received prior instructions not to intervene. They were nowhere to be found or they stood by, looked on and watched. About 7,500 Jewish stores and countless Jewish homes were smashed or looted. The damage to Jewish property was estimated at several hundred million marks; the value of the shattered glass alone, which the Jews were forced to replace, was about twenty-four million marks. The next morning the SS forced the Jews to sweep up the broken furniture, household items and shattered glass that littered the streets, while they stood around laughing and taunting them. The proper identification of Jewish stores by the Nazis was very easy, because from June 1938 on, Jewish store owners were forced to paint their names in large white letters on each store window, including the additional first name "Israel" or "Sara."

The Nazis invaded Jewish hospitals, old-age homes and orphanages. They used the pogrom to dismantle most of the Jewish organizations. In Berlin, for example, the Jewish Community was extremely well organized. Its institutions included a hospital, orphanages, schools, a school for the blind, a school for the deaf, a rabbinical seminary and a teachers school, a seminary for the science of Judaism, religious schools, senior homes, libraries, a Jewish museum, youth departments, and so on and so forth. Most of these institutions were looted and came to a sudden end after the November pogrom. The Jews and Jewish organizations

were then forced to pay the German government within six weeks a *Sühneopfer*, that is, an "expiation," amounting to the enormous sum of one billion marks, the equivalent of four hundred million dollars at the time, payable in four instalments, plus the cost of repairing the Jewish storefronts.

I was present in Berlin during the events of November 9/10. They occurred only a few days after Seldi and I met for the first time. I believe no one who did not live through that period in Germany can really understand what it meant to face this ever-worsening discrimination, persecution, chaos, imprisonment and concentration camps. The terror practiced against the Jews was simply indescribable. During that November night, the storefronts of all Jewish stores were smashed, but that was only the beginning. The next morning, on November 10, I went to the main shopping street in West Berlin, Kurfürstendamm, to see with my own eyes what was going on. I saw a gang of hoodlums armed with crowbars and pickaxes going from one Jewish store to the next. They destroyed everything, throwing the merchandise into the streets or reducing it to rubble. They also demolished all the furniture, counters, shelves and lighting, leaving nothing intact.

I never will forget the picture of the the ashen-faced owner of the oriental rug store Krisch, who stood in the back of his store on Kurfürstendamm, paralyzed and trembling; watching the labors of his lifetime destroyed in a few minutes. Most of the other Jewish store owners ran away when the hoodlums approached, but he stayed in his store watching the mob throw ink on his precious rugs and completely ruin them. Then the mob went to the next store, Etam, where they threw all the stockings and other merchandise on the street. The next business to be demolished was the furniture store Redlsheimer. They also pillaged Jewish restaurants and cafés. The mob was relatively small, even including some children, the *Jungvolk* - that is the Nazi boys' organization, in their black uniforms. The hoodlums became ever more intoxicated in their destructive rage.

I went to my optician Riegel on Olivaer Platz. I had left my glasses there for repair. When I arrived at the store, I found it all smashed up. Mr. Riegel, a Polish Jew, tried desperately, as a Polish citizen, to get through by phone to the Polish consul in Berlin, about protecting him and his property. But the Polish Consul could not care less; he simply did not give a damn. In the evening I walked along Kurfürstendamm. The picture there was appalling. Nearly all the stores were dark, except a few non-Jewish ones. Everywhere there was rubble and shattered glass. A few storekeepers were closing over their smashed storefronts with sheets of plywood. On the north side of Berlin the mob invaded the apartments where Jews lived and ravaged them, stealing their property. At the watch store Brandmann, the mob threw all the jewels and watches into the street. They immediately disappeared.

In the rest of Germany, things were sometimes even worse. In Dresden members of the board of the Jewish Community had to march through the streets carrying the Torah scrolls, which they were forced to desecrate. They were watched by SS men, who taunted them. The beautiful synagogue, which was about 150 years old and had been built by one of the most famous architects of the time, had been dynamited. The place was then completely razed. In small towns and villages homes belonging to Jews were invaded and all their property demolished or stolen. The *hachsharah* places were partially destroyed and the cattle carried off. At Gut Neuendorf they even killed one of the *haverim*.

The German Jewish males began to be arrested all over Germany. I was very lucky not to be jailed along with many thousands of other Berlin Jews. I was not registered in Berlin on that date. In Germany one had to register with the local police when moving from one city to another - both at the place one was leaving and again at the new city of residence. If I had stayed in Dresden, I would have been arrested too. Though I had registered my departure with the police in Dresden, I had not registered yet in Berlin,. as I wanted to stay there only a few days before going to *hachsharah* at Gut Winkel. My departure from Dresden had not been processed by the police in Dresden. Lotte Eisenhardt, the daughter of my former landlady in Dresden, told me later that on the night of November 9, the police or Gestapo had come to arrest me, but I had already moved to Berlin. However, they arrested another Jewish tenant living at the same place. They did not come to arrest my father, because in Berlin they did not arrest the older Jews, as it would have exceeded the capacity of the concentration camps.

In the early evening hours, one could see dozens of Jews rushing along Kurfürstendamm. They carried a briefcase or an attaché case containing pajamas and a toothbrush. They were taking refuge with friends who were not in danger or with non-Jewish acquaintances. Some people checked themselves into hospitals. My cousin, the lawyer Dr. Walter Abeldsdorff, spent all night long riding the subway, from one end to the other.

At the concentration camps, five hundred people had to sleep in barracks with a capacity of only seventy-five.They had no place to stretch out and were deprived of drinking water. The temperature that winter was many degrees below zero. The prisoners froze their hands and feet in the winter cold. Many old and weak people who were not used to such hardship did not survive. They died after a short while. Their ashes were then sent to their families in urns, for which the post office charged 3,75 marks, cash on delivery. The wealthier prisoners had to pay for their room and board. There were hardly any Jewish families at the time who did not have at least one member detained at a concentration camp in the wake of the November pogrom. All remaining Jewish businesses were "aryanized" after the November pogrom. Many decrees followed, submitting the Jews to further restrictions and humiliations.

Both the October 1938 *Polenaktion* and the November Pogrom Night took place in public. During the *Polenaktion* the Jews were taken to the railway stations by truck and then on foot to the platforms. During the pogrom the synagogues were torched and the Jewish stores smashed and vandalized, and thousands of Jews arrested in broad daylight, for all to see. The allegations of most Germans after Hitler's defeat in World War II - "we did not see anything, we never heard it, we did not know anything about it" - are quite apparently great lies and an excuse to justify the passivity or tacit agreement with the Nazi regime of most German citizens at the time. It were not just some fanatical Nazis who carried out the gruesome job, and it was not carried out secretly either. During the first years after Hitler came to power there was practically no organized resistance whatsoever in Germany against the Nazi regime, except the heroic fight of the small illegal communist groups whose members risked their lives pursuing their underground activities. Most of the other people were indifferent and accepted passively the fate of the Jews, preferring not to know and looking the other way. It is estimated that more than 100,000 Germans out of a total population of about sixty-five million at the time were actively involved in one way or the other in the so-called "Final Solution to the Jewish Question." Most of them have never been tried for their horrible crimes.

JEWISH EMIGRATION FROM GERMANY

No exact figures of the number of Jews who left Germany during the Nazi regime are available, but a good estimate is between 270,000 and 300,000. According to Herbert A. Strauss' article "Jewish Emigration from Germany" published in *Leo Baeck Institute - Year Book,* London, Jerusalem, New York, volume XXV (1980), the number of Jews who emigrated from Germany between 1933 and October 1941 or were able to escape after that date, when emigration was banned, totalled 278,500 by the end of 1944, distributed as follows:

1933	37,000
1934	23,000
1935	21,000
1936	25,000
1937	23,000
1938	40,000
1939	78,000
1940	15,000
1941	8,000
1942-44	8,500
Total	278,500

The main places of emigration were the United States, Palestine, Great Britain and South America. About 18,000 German and Austrian Jews emigrated to Shanghai, the only place in the world at the time where no immigration visas were required. Shanghai thus became a haven for Holocaust victims from Nazi Europe, receiving altogether about 25,000 Jewish refugees. After the end of WW II, almost all left that city and emigrated to other places, such as the United States and Israel.

By the time of the November 1938 pogrom, less than half of the approximately 525,000 Jews who had been living in Germany at the beginning of 1933, when Hitler came to power, had emigrated. During the first years of the Nazi regime, emigration was relatively easy, but with the passing of time, especially after the Kristallnacht, it became more and more difficult. During the first years of Hitler's rule, the emigration of German Jews proceeded at a rather slow speed. One may ask from hindsight why most of the German Jews did not leave Germany during the first five years of the Nazi regime, when this was still feasible though ever more difficult. One of the reasons was that many Jews thought the Nazi regime would not last long. In the beginning, most of those who emigrated were either in political danger, or were young people or families financially not so well-off. These less affluent families had little to lose and they could try more easily to make a living outside Germany. The younger people were not yet set up in their lives and consequently did not earn very much. For them, emigration was not too much a problem. There were also the members of the Zionist youth movements and *Hehalutz* who made *aliyah* during that time. They wanted to build a new life in Eretz Israel.

Jews had been living in Germany for over one thousand years. Most of the German Jews were well established. They were prominent physicians, lawyers, architects, builders, scientists, writers, painters, artists, etc. They had their roots in the country. They fought for it in World

War I and their ancestors in previous wars. Certainly it is not easy for people with strong roots to leave their country of birth, give up their existence and family bonds and emigrate to another country, to start all over again., often not knowing the language.

Though the annihilation of the Jews was part of the Nazi party program and had already been mentioned in Hitler's book *Mein Kampf*, written in the 1920s, few people took these statements very seriously in the beginning. Starting in 1933 there were indeed many discriminatory laws, decrees and persecutions making the lives of the German Jews miserable. Nobody, however, could foresee what would happen as of 1938. The way the Polish Jews were brutally deported without notice in October 1938 foreshadowed the violence to follow a few days later, in November, during the pogrom night, the so-called Kristallnacht. During the war years this humiliation and terror reached a point beyond imagination. These events culminated in the Holocaust - in Hebrew *Shoah* - mass deportations and extermination in the gas chambers of six million Jews.

After November 9/10, it became crystal clear for most Jews who had not emigrated yet that life in Germany had come to an end. The Kristallnacht was the final shattering of Jewish existence in Nazi Germany. After this pogrom, life in the Nazi hell became utterly intolerable. Even those who had nurtured some illusions that things would eventually 'straighten out' somehow finally lost all hope and began desperately seeking to emigrate. Emigration had suddenly become a matter of life and death for Jews in Germany. But by then, as the remaining hundreds of thousands of Jews in Germany and Austria wanted to leave the country urgently, emigration had become a nightmare.

Lengthening lines of desperate Jewish men and women could be seen in front of consulates, travel agencies, and the Palestine Office of the Zionist Organization at Meinekestrasse 10. One of the beleaguered Jewish travel agencies was the Palestine & Orient Lloyd, also located on Meinekestrasse, through which my parents bought our ship passages to South America. It became virtually impossible to obtain a visa, as doors the world over slammed shut in Jewish faces. Instructed by their governments, consulate officials categorically refused requests for visas. Some, mostly from South American republics, were corrupt and "sold" tourist visas at very high prices to Jews who could afford them. Payment had to be made either in foreign currency or in exchange for precious jewels or diamonds. These consuls became rich overnight.



Long lines in front of the travel agency Palestine & Orient Lloyd in Berlin, after Kristallnacht, November 1938

In order to be released from the concentration camps after the November pogrom or to escape from being taken there, it was indispensable to have a valid visa stamped in one's passport - no matter from what country. For a while, for instance, the consul general of the Kingdom of Siam (called Thailand today) in Berlin, issued visas for that country. His name was Otto Hagedorn. He had a store that sold silk stockings. In order to obtain a Siamese visa, one had to buy several pairs of his merchandise. Seldi had such a visa stamped in her passport, dated November 30, 1938. It did not matter at all that for months there would be no space open to that destination on any ship. The essential thing was to be able to prove to the Gestapo in case of need or danger that one was "in the process of emigration." It took some time for the Gestapo to discover that these visas were of no practical use whatsoever for emigration.

The offices of the Jewish institutions in charge of emigration were all overcrowded. The appointment schedule at the central Jewish emigration office - the *Hilfsverein der deutschen Juden* - was backlogged two to three months. The Jewish Community in Berlin was besieged by a great influx of hapless Jews who urgently needed to find a country to which they could emigrate. The *Hehalutz* had published a news item mentioning a very limited possibility for young people of getting out of Germany by going to *hachsharah* abroad. *Hachsharah*, an agricultural training, was the preparatory phase for *aliyah*, emigration to Israel later on. Young people then rushed to the central office on Meinekestrasse to obtain information. Extra office hours had to be instituted. In light of this emergency, I also became a counselor for a short time. It gave me great satisfaction to be able to advise and help the young people and check their qualifications for *hachsharah*. Most of them could not understand that in view of the limited *hachsharah* places abroad, only old and trusted *haverim* could be sent there, and that the newcomers first had to get their agricultural training inside Germany.

At the same time, the Zionist youth movements and the *Hehalutz* intensified their efforts to get the greatest number of *halutzim* out of Germany, especially the leadership. Pino Ginsburg, one of the leaders of the Zionist youth organization *Habonim*, was the head of *Aliyah Bet,* illegal immigration to Palestine. He, my friend Xiel Federmann, who was also one of the leaders of *Habonim*; and other young Zionist leaders worked feverishly and in greatest secrecy to organize *Aliyah Bet*, on clandestine rundown ships, that sailed secretly at night from the ports of some East European countries. These old vessels sought to break the blockade of the British mandatory power, landing at night off the Mediterranean coast. From there the illegal immigrants were transported to shore in small boats or on the shoulders of permanent residents, who were waiting for them at the beach. Upon arrival they received identity cards belonging to the people that had taken them to shore. When the British would search for these illegal newcomers, they could not jail them, because their documents apparently were in order.

At the time of the Kristallnacht during November 1938, Xiel Federmann spent various days deep in the snow in the Ardennes mountains to prepare a route for clandestine Jewish refugees from Germany to Holland and Belgium. It was used by many hundreds of people from all over Germany.

When it came to legal *aliyah,* the only relatively privileged group were boys and girls between fifteen and seventeen years of age, for whom *Sonderzertifikate* (special immigration certificates) were available from 1933/34 on, issued by the British mandatory authorities. In 1932, Recha Freier, the wife of an orthodox Berlin rabbi, conceived the idea of sending children and young people, most of them belonging to that age group, from Germany to Eretz Israel. They would be cared for and educated mostly in kibbutzim, receiving agricultural training there. The reaction

to this plan by most of the Jewish organizations that had been asked to help financially was quite cool at the time. An exception was the aforementioned *shaliach* (emissary) Enzo Sereni, who caught fire at the idea. Even Henriette Szold, the head of the social welfare department of *Vaad Leumi*, the National Council of the Jews in Palestine, whom Mrs. Freier had contacted, initially reacted negatively to the plan. Recha Freier herself then began to raise funds for her project, and on January 30, 1933, the day Hitler rose to power, established the Society for Youth Aliyah in Berlin. In May 1933 she went to Palestine and after the Zionist executive formally adopted the plan, persuaded Henriette Szold to take over the leadership of the office in Jerusalem in charge of the project. In 1934 the first group of youngsters from Germany arrived at Kibbutz Ein Harod.

Under the direction of Ms Szold, a great American Zionist leader - who in 1912 had organized *Hadassah*, the Women's Zionist Organization of America - Youth Aliyah grew into a unique educational and rescue enterprise. Ms Szold was the head of Youth Aliyah from 1933-1945, which during this period saved the lives of 3,200 Jewish boys and girls from Germany. During the war years some ten thousand children of all ages from all over Europe escaped the Holocaust through Youth Aliyah. By May 1948, when the State of Israel was established, altogether 29,000 children and youths had been transferred, absorbed and educated by Youth Aliyah in Israel.

Another rescue action for Jewish children from Germany were the *Kindertransporte* (children's transports), a special arrangement for children aged seventeen and under, authorized by the British government. A similar bill was introduced in America, but it died in U.S. Congress. The first major transports to England - out of Berlin, Hamburg and Vienna - took place in December 1938. Most of the young boys and girls received foster care at the homes of English families. Altogether nearly 10,000 young people were rescued in this way between December 2, 1938 and September 3, 1939, when England entered WW II and the transports came to a sudden end. As incredible as it sounds, England was the only country to admit Jewish refugee children from Germany and Austria. No other country followed this humane and generous example.

Emigration from Germany and Austria in general became most restricted after the outbreak of World War II. From then on it was only possible to emigrate to a few neutral European countries and to some countries overseas. Finally, in October 1941, when the Nazis started to implement the *Endlösung* - the Final Solution - emigration was prohibited altogether.

THE EVIAN CONFERENCE ON REFUGEES - JULY 6-15, 1938

When the situation of the Jews in Germany and Austria became ever more critical in 1938, President Roosevelt announced that he wanted to summon an international conference on refugees from Germany and Austria. In his invitation to thirty-three countries around the world he mentioned, however, that he did not expect that these countries would change their immigration laws and accept additional immigrants. So the conference was doomed from the beginning. Italy was the only country that refused to accept the invitation altogether.

The conference took place in France, at the fashionable resort Evian-les-Bains on Lake Geneva. Its purpose was to examine the possibilities for resettling the Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria. American participation in the conference was less than enthusiastic. For nine days, thirty-two delegates, among them nineteen from Latin America, met at the elegant Hotel Royal. Uninvited but permitted to make brief statements were thirty-nine relief organizations already working on behalf of these refugees, twenty-one of them Jewish. Representatives of both the *Reichsvertretung der deutschen Juden* (the official central organization of German Jews) and the Viennese Jewish Committee were given an opportunity to make their plea, speaking on behalf of the potential refugees themselves.

The thirty-two nations represented at Evian expressed their regret that they could not let in more Jews. The few countries that were still acccepting Jews wanted farmers, not professsionals or businessmen. The Jews who still remained in Germany and Austria at the time were disproportionately old. No country wanted middle-aged or elderly people. They were afraid that this type of immigrants would become a burden to their governments. Though the delegates from each country in turn professed their sympathy with the plight of the Jewish refugees, on the other hand they offered all kinds of excuses for declining to accept them.

Each country expressed its own reasoning. The Australian delegate stated, "We don't have a racial problem and we don't want to import one." Canada, which was going through an economic crisis at the time, justified its refusal in the following way, "One would be too many." They would, however, accept farmers. Small comfort for the urbanized Jews seeking urgently to leave the Reich. Britain had no room on its small island and refused to open Palestine to Jewish refugees. Roosevelt was acting to placate public opinion, but did not admit additional refugees to the United States beyond the yearly German and Austrian immigration quota, which was 27,300 at the time. Venezuela was reluctant to disturb the country's "demographic equilibrium." Therefore the Jewish merchants and intellectuals were not welcome. Holland and Belgium were willing to give temporary shelter to a few refugees. After the Nazis invaded the Netherlands, Belgium, and France in May and June 1940, the 30,000 Jews who had found refuge there from 1933 on, fell into the hands of the Nazis once again. The Swiss government stated quite frankly, "the boat is full."

A high official of Brazil's Foreign Ministry who participated in the conference commented, "All South American republics made it clear in Evian, that they rejected immigration to their countries and would never receive these 'subversive elements that bring social disorder'." Brazilian Foreign Minister Oswaldo Aranha mentioned a short time after, in connection with the establishment of an Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, that Brazil was not interested in helping the refugees and that his country had participated in the Evian Conference just because the United States had asked it to do so.

Leopold Schwarzschild, an anti-Nazi intellectual who fled Germany as soon as Hitler took power, was publishing an immigrant magazine in Paris called *"Das neue Tagebuch."* After the end of the conference he commented that every delegation knew that the situation was shameful. Every delegate was hopeful that the delegates from the other countries represented at the conference would resolve the situation. He mentioned, "Nothing has changed whatsoever, now that the conference is over." Evian spelled backwards is "naive." Informed people would have been naive indeed to believe that any concrete solution would come out of this conference. Under these circumstances, little was expected or accomplished.

The chief concierge at the very fashionable five-star Hotel Royal where the conference took place is reported to have commented, "Very important people were here and all the delegates had a nice time. They took pleasure cruises on the lake. They gambled at night at the casino. They took mineral baths and massages at the Etablissement Thermal. Some of them took the excursion to Chamonix to go summer skiing. Some went riding. We have, you know, one of the finest stables in France. But, of course, it is difficult to sit indoors hearing speeches when all the pleasures that Evian offers are outside."

The only concrete result of the Evian Conference was an agreement among the delegates to establish a permanent Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees which "would attempt to negotiate with the German government, so that an orderly emigration from Germany may take place." Thirty-two delegates took part in the conference of this Committee, which was convened a short time after in London, on August 3 and 4, 1938. The Intergovernmental Committee tried in vain during a long time to contact the German government. Finally, four months after the Committee had been installed, a meeting in Brussels was agreed upon with a representative of the German government. However, the Germans cancelled the meeting because of their representative's "sudden illness." The tidal waves of refugees from the Reich soon overwhelmed the very few offers of asssistance that appeared. The Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees achieved very little before finally being dissolved less than a decade after its foundation.

A SHORT BUT EVENTFUL INTERVAL IN BERLIN - MEETING SELDI

In the beginning of November 1938, as there was nothing else I could do in Dresden, I decided to return to my parents in Berlin, and from there go to *hachsharah* at Gut Winkel near Berlin. My friendship with Rosi Laufer had been over for a year. As usual when I came back home to Berlin, I phoned my old friends to make appointments to meet them. One of them was Rudi Lichtenstein. He came to my place for coffee on a Sunday afternoon, on November 6. He told me then he had to go some place and if I wished, I could come along with him. We went to Tauentzienstrasse, near the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtnis Kirche, and then entered a side street, Nürnbergerstrasse. We climbed up four flights of stairs. When we arrived and Rudi rang the bell, a female voice asked through the door, "Rudi?" When he said "yes," the girl behind the door reproached him for having come so early. She was not ready yet and not dressed. We had to wait outside. My first impression was not a very good one.

Finally Rudi's girlfriend, Seldi Reifen, opened the apartment door. He was very proud to introduce me. We had coffee but did not stay long, because I had to send off some urgent letters for my mother in connection with our emigration, at the nearby Bahnhof Zoo railroad station. Rudi and Seldi accompanied me there, where I first had to find the post office to buy stamps. Then I ran into a tenant of Polish nationality, who had lived in the same apartment as I at Frau Eisenhardt's in Dresden, but took refuge in Berlin after the *Polenaktion*, because he was not registered with the police in Dresden. Seldi grew fed up with waiting and insisted with Rudi that they should leave right away, but Rudi refused to abandon his friend at the station and waited patiently until I returned. Afterwards we went to Rudi's place and then, since we could not have dinner there, we went to my place. All my life I have wondered how different our lives would have been, if Seldi had left me at the station on that fateful day. No marriage later on, no children, nothing would have been the same. Such apparently trivial things can change a person's whole life completely.

Afterwards we went to see a French film *La belle équipe* with Jean Gabin, at a small cinema on Kurfürstendamm. I bet with Seldi about the exact time the show would start and won the bet. The cinema was already packed, as we arrived late. First we and some other people had to stand. Then they brought in several chairs, which were placed in the aisle one behind the other. Destiny definitely was on my side on that date. Seldi was seated on the chair in front of me and Rudi on a chair way behind. Seldi's beautiful long dark curly hair attracted me very much, and I started to stroke it gently. She did not object. Then I told her in a low voice that, since I won our bet, as a prize I would like to meet her tomorrow morning. First she murmured *unverschämt (impudent),* then she set a very early time, because she intended to play truant at her fashion design school where lessons started at eight a.m. Seldi did not want her mother to get suspicious. Of course I did not know this at the time. I had a feeling then that her relationship with Rudi could not be very intense. He and Seldi accompanied me home when the film was over. Rudi put his arm under Seldi's in a patent gesture to show me that Seldi was his girlfriend.

The next morning I arrived punctually at the big Jewish linen store Grünfeld, the place of our date. I wondered whether Seldi would show up. I nearly lost hope, as twenty-five minutes went by. Finally she arrived. She always came quite late at all our dates, which from then on took place daily. This bothered me very much. Once in the morning when I was riding the bus to meet Seldi, I met Rudi on the same bus. He asked me where I was going so early. I told him I was going to see my dentist. Certainly he would have been quite surprised if I had told him

the whole truth. On the first day Seldi and I met, we went to the nearby Tiergarten. It was love at first sight. The next day we went to the Grunewald. Another time Seldi came to my place. I played American jazz records for her on my portable record player, which had to be cranked manually. I played "Swinging the jinx away" by the Nat Gonella orchestra from the film *Born to Dance*, as well as "Feeling like a million" and "Sunshowers" from the 1938 *Broadway Melody*. These were of course 78 r.p.m. records, and I still have these and other ones we played back then. I also read her passages from books I treasured. Three days after our idyllic flirtation started, the terrible pogrom of November 9 intervened. The short time - less than four months - Seldi and I knew each other in Berlin before separating were politically very troubled and sad times indeed.

One night in November we were walking in the streets of West Berlin. It was so cold that one of my ears froze and I had to see a Jewish skin doctor. Like all Jewish physicians at that time, she was permitted to treat Jewish patients only. She could not call herself a physician any more, but just *Krankenbehandler*, caretaker of sick people. The consultation took place shortly after the November 9 pogrom, and the physician thought this had happened to me in a concentration camp.

Seldi and I spent very happy days in Berlin, if one can distance oneself from the terrible situation prevailing at the time. I was twenty years old and Seldi eighteen. Sometimes we would go to the movies or to a café or to a restaurant, even though this, too, was forbidden to German Jews. The law did not apply to Seldi, who was Polish. (After the outbreak of World War II, the Nazis did not make those distinctions anymore, of course).

We went to the very few cafés and restaurants which did not display a sign *"Juden unerwünscht,"* Jews not welcome. The few Jewish cafés and restaurants that still existed in Berlin before November 9 were now heaps of rubble, such as Café Dobrin on a corner of Kurfürstendamm, where Seldi and I had coffee and cake just a day or two before it was ransacked. We met every day, sometimes twice. In the evening I wrote her very long letters that she received by mail the next morning. After a short while, Seldi decided to end her relationship with Rudi, as it was not possible to go on like that. When she told him the truth, he simply could not believe it and became quite upset.



SELDI

Seldi was born in Berlin on November 21, 1919. Her registered first name on her birth certificate and other official documents is Susi, because the registrar told her parents that he was not permitted to register the name Seldi. This name was not included in the list of officially approved first names in Germany. So her parents had to register her as Susi, but she was always called Seldi.

Seldi is named after her maternal great-grandmother, Selde Lichtenberg. The name Seldi, according to Alfred J. Kolatsch's *Jewish New Name Dictionary*, comes from Old German, meaning: happiness, joy, good fortune and blessing. Seldi honors her name indeed. As a matter of fact, she always radiates happiness and joy and is a blessing for everybody!

Seldi went to the Heinrich Roller public primary school located on the street of the same name, near Prenzlauer Berg, in the northern part of Berlin. After WW II this district was part of the East Sector of Berlin. Today at the place where Seldi was born, Prenzlauer Berg 3, there stands the modern Ibis Hotel, where we stayed on a visit to Berlin in 1998. The northern and eastern part of Berlin were mostly a workers' district, quite different from the wealthy Kurfürstendamm neighborhood in West Berlin, where I was born and raised. As a matter of fact, I rarely had visited the northern and eastern part of Berlin until I entered the Jewish youth movements.

Seldi will never forget the words that her father, Israel Georg Reifen, a very conscious Jew, told her when she entered the first year of primary school and at the same time also the Jewish Community's school of religion, located on Rykestrasse near Prenzlauer Berg. Israel said that he expected Seldi to get good marks in the general subjects taught at the elementary school, but as to the Jewish school of religion, *Religionsschule,* he expected her to get only the best marks in all subjects taught there. Seldi took these words to heart. She always was the best in all Jewish subjects and got excellent marks. As a reward, the school once presented her with a large illustrated *Haggadah.* The lessons at Berlin's Jewish Community schools of religion and related subjects, including Hebrew, were free of charge.

The Jewish school of religion as well as the Jewish elementary school at Rykestrasse 53 occupied the front part of a several-story-high apartment building. These schools were built to house about five hundred pupils. In 1937, when most of the Jewish pupils had already left the public schools, this Jewish elementary school alone - not including the school of religion - had 750 pupils.

In the *Hinterhof,* the backyard of the same building, there was a synagogue with a seating capacity of 2000, inaugurated in 1904. This was the synagogue which the Reifens frequented, assisting the weekly Shabbat morning and all other religious services while they lived nearby in the northern part of Berlin. It was one of the few in Berlin that was not destroyed during the pogrom of November 9, 1938. The Nazis could not burn it down, as it was not a detached building like most other synagogues in Berlin, but stood in the midst of residential buildings. Before Pesach 1939, the synagogue was reopened for religious services. During the war years, from 1940 on, it was used as an army warehouse and horse stable. In 1953 it was completely renovated and reinaugurated by Rabbi Martin Riesenburger, the only officiating rabbi in the German Democratic Republic. This synagogue was the only one in East Berlin that functioned during the communist regime. Seldi and I participated in a religious service there, when on a visit to East Berlin. Recently, in September 2000, the first yeshiva on German soil since the war has been inaugurated at this place, with ten students from around Germany.

Through an older girl at the school of religion, Seldi soon became a member of a small Jewish youth group, *Deutsch Jüdische Jugendgemeinschaft,* led by Rudi Bartha. Seldi asked the girl who wanted her to join the group about its purpose. The girl replied that the purpose of the group was for the boys to wear white shirts and blue shorts and the girls, white blouses and blue skirts. Seldi said she agreed that boys and girls should all wear the same clothing, and so she entered the group.

When Seldi finished elementary school, she went to the Königstädtisches Oberlyzeum, also in the northern part of Berlin. In 1932, when she was twelve years old, the Reifens decided to move to West Berlin and to rent a larger apartment. For Seldi, who had felt quite at home in North Berlin, the move to West Berlin was quite a change. She did not feel at home in her new surroundings. Her mother, Fela, however, always had disliked the proletarian district in North Berlin. It was her ardent desire to move to a better neighborhood. Of course, the rents in the West were much higher than in North or East Berlin, but Fela was firmly decided to move. She compensated the higher rent they had to pay by renting out various rooms of the new apartment in the better neighborhood, for which they could obtain higher rents than in the North. Many of her tenants were foreigners, mostly Russians with their families, who were sent to Berlin on commercial missions by the Soviet foreign trade organization. As these people did not speak German, they preferred to rent rooms at Fela's apartment, because

being born in Warsaw and speaking Polish, she understood Russian and could talk with them in that language.

Seldi's parents later lived in a number of other apartments in West Berlin. When I met Seldi, she and her mother lived at Nürnbergerstrasse 16, off Tauentzienstrasse, in a good neighborhood, quite near the big department store *Kadewe*, owned by Tietz until the Nazis took over. Seldi's apartment was on the fourth floor. The apartment house, which had no elevator, survived the war. Seldi went to different schools while living in West Berlin. The last school she went to was a Jewish school. Due to the rising antisemitism at the public schools, the Jewish pupils gradually abandoned them and entered Jewish schools. There were a great number of Jewish schools in Berlin, most of them belonging to the Jewish Community or to religious institutions. There were also a number of Jewish private schools. After 1933, all these schools had to be greatly expanded and new ones were also founded.

After having moved to West Berlin, Seldi entered the Zionist youth movement *Werkleute.* Seldi and I had the same background - the Zionist youth movements. Their educational values and upbringing left permanent marks on the young people who participated in them. The *Werkleute* were inspired by Martin Buber. They founded Kibbutz Hasorea in Israel, affiliated with the *Kibbutz Artzi* organization, to which Kibbutz Mishmar Haemek and Dalia also belong. This roof organization, comprising many left-wing *kibbutzim,* originated from the *Hashomer Hatzair* youth movement. When we are in Israel, we always visit these places, where we still have various old *haverim* and *haverot.* These *kibbutzim* are large and prosperous today, but in the beginning they had to face very hard times.

Contrary to the *Hashomer Hatzair*, the members of the *Werkleute* youth movement were nearly all of German origin. Seldi was one of the very few Polish members, as her parents both had immigrated from Poland at the beginning of the twentieth century and had never cared to become Germans. Therefore, according to German law, being her parents Polish, Seldi was Polish too, though she was born in Berlin.

When Seldi was thirteen years old, the *Werkleute* decided to organize a summer camp in Denmark. The whole group bought tickets together for the railway and ship passage. Seldi, however, could not travel together with the group, because she needed a Polish passport. For German citizens, an identity card was sufficient. Seldi had no Polish passport at the time and it took a few days until she could obtain it from the Polish Consulate in Berlin. When the passport finally was issued, her group had left already. Seldi did not want to miss this summer camp and therefore decided to travel to Denmark all by herself to join the group.

Because she was so young, her parents would not let her. Seldi decided to send an older girl to speak to her parents, telling them that there was a second group about to leave and Seldi would travel together with that group. Her parents did not believe this story and insisted in not letting her go, but Seldi was bound and determined to join her group. She had already received her railway and ship passage from the group leader. Next morning she rose very early and left the apartment quietly while her parents were still asleep. She left a note for her parents telling them that she was traveling to Denmark to join her group at the summer camp. When she came home, her father did not speak to her for quite some time, but her mother forgave her soon.

From 1933 until March 1936 Seldi went to the Girls' Middle School of the Jewish Community, at Grosse Hamburgerstrasse 27. A middle school in Germany was a school for pupils who did not want or could not afford to study at a university. The elementary school consisted of four and the middle school of five years. Originally the Middle School on Grosse Hamburgerstrasse was a Jewish boys' school only, established in 1778 under the influence of Moses Mendelssohn. In 1931 the Jewish girls' school was united with the boys' school and its seat transferred to Grosse Hamburgerstrasse. In 1934, at its peak, this school had 1025 pupils.

Next to this school stood the oldest Jewish cemetery in Berlin, inaugurated in 1672. Moses Mendelssohn and many other prominent Jews are buried there. The cemetery was used until 1827. About 12,000 Jews were buried at this place. In 1943 the cemetery was destroyed by order of the Gestapo. There were only a few gravestones left, which had been built into the cemetery wall.

The cemetery was flanked on one side by the Jewish Middle School and on the other by the Jewish Old Age Home, located at Grosse Hamburgerstrasse 26, inaugurated in 1829. The cemetery was surrounded by a park. The pupils of the Jewish School as well as the residents of the Old Age Home used this park for recreation or taking a walk. Seldi told me that during recess, she and her classmates used to hide behind the old gravestones of this cemetery.

In 1942 the Gestapo transformed the Old Age Home and also the Jewish School into a *Sammellager*, an infamous concentration point. The place then became a kind of prison, with fences, watch posts and spotlights, to prevent escapes. Old and young, men, women, children and even babies were squeezed in there together, lying on the floors. They lived under the most terrible conditions, awaiting their final transport to the extermination camps in the East. Today a memorial showing a group of deportees has been erected at this place, in memory of the 56,000 Berlin Jews who were murdered during the Nazi's regime of terror. A memorial plaque also has been put up there.

In 1998 we revisited Seldi's old school on Grosse Hamburgerstrasse. During our previous visits to this place, at the time of the German Democratic Republic, a vocational school was in operation there, and nothing at all indicated that the place had once been a famous Jewish school. We were very glad to see that now a Jewish school is once again open at the same place. We went into the building and entered a class. The school now serves the needs of the young Jewish boys and girls who, together with their parents, immigrated from the former Soviet Union. They are now learning about Judaism for the first time. They also have lessons in all other general subjects. The teacher of the class we entered asked Seldi to tell the pupils a little bit about her experience at this school over sixty years ago. Seldi was quite touched about this unique experience.

While going to school on Grosse Hamburgerstrasse, at the age of fifteen Seldi started to give private lessons after school, in order to earn some money.. She taught various subjects to younger, slow pupils belonging to the same school, usually two grades below hers. She did not tell her parents about it, so that she could keep the money all for herself. Her parents were always very tight with money and they had trouble making ends meet, as Seldi's father did not have a regular business. When school was over, Seldi did not come home for lunch, because her school in the northern part of Berlin was very far away from her apartment in the West.

She decided to have lunch at the kitchen of the *Ahavah* at nearby Auguststrasse 14/15. This building belonged to the Jewish Community and housed various Jewish institutions. There also was a cooking and nutrition school at this place, directed by Mrs. Hammerstein. The meals the apprentices prepared there were served to elderly Jews. A very low price of twenty pfennig was charged, but for very poor persons who could not afford to pay, the meals were served free. Seldi decided to have her lunch after school at this communal kitchen. When asked by Mrs. Hammerstein if she could pay the regular price of twenty pfennig, she said she was very poor and was immediately dispensed from paying for her meals.

One day, after having received her first payment from one of the pupils, she decided to give herself a treat. On the same street, Auguststrasse, a little bit farther up, there was an ice-cream shop. Seldi was always very fond of ice-cream and all things sweet. Instead of buying the usual cheap ice-cream cone, she decided that now - after having earned her first money - she could afford to order ice-cream in a dish to be eaten with a spoon, at a table in the shop. She was comfortably seated right at the shop window, watching the street and the people going by. Just then, while she was enjoying her ice-cream, Mrs. Hammerstein came passing by on her way home. She could not believe her eyes! Poor *Seldilein* was sitting there happily relishing her ice-cream. Apparently Mrs. Hammerstein was at first in doubt whether the girl sitting there behind the shop window was Seldi indeed. So she turned around and went back a few steps to double-check. No doubt, it was Seldi in person. The next day at lunchtime, when Seldi asked for her free meal as usual, Mrs. Hammerstein said in an admonishing voice, "No way. From now on you will have to pay twenty pfennig for each meal." That was the end of Seldi's freee lunch at the communal kitchen on Auguststrassse. In 1999, while in Berlin, we visited that place. The run-down *Ahavah* building still stands there, but for the time being it is not occupied any more.

From April 1936 to August 1937, Seldi would go with her *Werkleute* group to *hachsharah* at the Jewish agricultural training farm at Gut Winkel, near Berlin. It was the same one I would go to in November 1938. The apprenticeship at Gut Winkel lasted for about one year and a half. Seldi learned many practical things there. She worked in the chicken coops and the dairy barns. She was so good at milking cows, that the dairyman dismised three other pupils and wanted Seldi as the only helper. She also learned how to preserve fruit, how to cook for large groups, how to do household chores, etc. After finishing her agricultural apprenticeship there, Seldi returned home. The *Werkleute* leadership had proposed that she go to Frankfurt a..M., where they had a local group and also maintained a *Beit Halutz,* a residential collective. They wanted her to learn cooking to people on special diets. Seldi, however, declined to go.

From October 1937 to the end of November 1938, Seldi held various part-time jobs in the afternoons. She worked consecutively for three Jewish families, taking care of their small children. When I met Seldi in November 1938, she was also attending the Feige-Strassburger fashion design school in the mornings. She had obtained a scholarship to this shool from the Jewish Community in Berlin, as she is very gifted in design.

Seldi likes to read good books and is very fond of classical music. Our musical taste is quite different, as I am fond of jazz and blues. She likes to give presents to members of her family and to other people too. She has a very sweet disposition and never has fights or quarrels with anybody. She always has an open ear for other people and their various problems. That is the reason why everybody likes her and seeks out her good advice.

MY STAY AT THE *HACHSHARAH* AT GUT WINKEL NEAR BERLIN

Back in September 1938, when I still was the leader of the local *Hashomer Hatzair* in Dresden, the leadership in Berlin had decided that I go to *hachsharah* at Gut Winkel, the best and largest Jewish agricultural training farm in Germany. My stay there, however, had to be postponed twice, first because of the *Polenaktion* in October and then on account of the pogrom in November, during which it would have been very dangerous to travel. As officially required, the Gut Winkel administration had already registered me twice with the local Gestapo, but each time I had to postpone my departure. The deadline for my arrival became November 15, because Gut Winkel could not register me more than three times and my final third registration expired on that date.

From the beginning I liked the idea of further agricultural training at Gut Winkel. This training farm was located near Berlin, at Fürstenwalde/Spree.This was very convenient for me. The professional preparation there was first-rate. Gut Winkel had dairy barns, chicken farms, a tree nursery and greenhouses for growing flowers. They even made their own canned goods as well as apple juice there. The place was under the direction of the agricultural and horticultural expert Martin Gerson. He had enormous practical and theoretical knowledge. After the Reichskristallnacht, the Central Representation of the Jews in Germany appointed him supervisor and sole responsible for all the other *hachsharah* centers in Germany. He therefore had to travel a lot to visit these places and could not continue giving theoretical lessons as before. Gut Winkel was the largest and best organized *hachsharah* center in Germany, with a capacity for about one hundred trainees. It was owned by Salman Schocken, a philanthropist and famous publisher of Jewish books.

Of course, back at that time it was a most difficult decision for me to leave Berlin, since only a few days earlier I had fallen in love with Seldi. I was rather undecided about what to do, packing my things and then unpacking them again. The idea of living at my parents' again did not appeal to me, after having lived an independent life in Frankfurt and Dresden for about a year. The educational activities at the *Hashomer Hatzair* had practically come to a standstill, so there was nothing left for me to do in Berlin. The only thing keeping me there was my new girlfriend, Seldi.

Finally I found the best possible solution under the circumstances. I bought a used motorcycle, so that I would be able to visit my love more often, shortening the distance between Gut Winkel and Berlin. I bought it relatively cheap (two hundred marks) through my friend Rudi Lichtenstein, from a street vendor who sold fruit. A short time after, when returning to Gut Winkel from Berlin in the evening as the road was getting dark, I wanted to turn on the headlights. I then discovered that the fruit seller had cheated me. The motorcycle did not have a dynamo, an electric generator, which charges the battery while the engine is running. I was therefore forced to ride in the dark. Without this standard equipment, I had to have the battery recharged constantly and I never could be sure that the light was not going to give up in the middle of the road.

I then decided to definitely go to Gut Winkel. I had waited until the last possible date, November 15, and even took the last train on that day. Fortunately I saw a boy of my age in a leather jacket on this train, and by his looks I had a certain feeling that he was on his way home to Gut Winkel. The *haverim*, the companions of the Jewish youth organizations, recognized

each other easily. We introduced ourselves. He was returning from his vacation. I was very lucky to meet that boy, because nobody was waiting for me at the train station. It was a cold and dark winter night. I was all by myself with my luggage and nobody was around. I certainly would not have found my way to Gut Winkel in the dark. It also turned out that there was no bus running to the farm any more. My new *haver* helped me with the luggage. We had to walk about half an hour until arriving at Gut Winkel. The boys there arranged for me to stay in their dormitory and I was even able to get an upper bunk.

Many of the *haverim* at Winkel had already been expecting me for some time and were curious to meet me, especially since I had postponed my coming several times. On my part, I was sure I would fit into the new community and collective life quite well, as I never had any trouble adapting to a new way of life. I was better prepared for the work at Gut Winkel than most of the other young boys and girls, because I had studied horticulture for quite some time and was familiar with it, in practice and theory, whereas the other young people had never worked in that field before.

On some afternoons I was dismissed from work, because I gave Hebrew lessons to the people there and had to prepare lessons and correct papers. I already had experience, teaching Hebrew to young people at the Hebrew School in Frankfurt, which I helped to establish. The Hebrew courses took place very early in the morning before work started. Due to the cold - it was November - getting up so early was rather difficult for me, especially as I went to bed very late and then spent some time reading in bed. Seldi had recommended that I take along a little bed lamp which could be attached to the book by a clamp. This bothered my roommates, who argued that they could not fall asleep because of that lamp.

I liked my new life at Winkel. In the morning there was practical work in the fields and in the afternoon theoretical lessons were given as well. I took part in the advanced course. In the beginning I did unskilled work, digging the fields or hoeing strawberry fields. This was quite easy for me. I also sorted potatoes with a special sorting machine.

Seldi, who had received agricultural training at the same place, Gut Winkel, before I arrived there, visited me one Sunday. She showed me around, as she knew Winkel much better than I. We stole strawberry jam from the kitchen and drove by motorcycle to the nearest little spot. There was a cozy café in that little town, where we warmed up and ate pie. There was a piano on which we made a sorry attempt to play the "flea waltz" in four hands. In short, it was a wonderful Sunday.

One day after her birthday, November 21, I visited Seldi in Berlin. In the middle of the *Reichsautobahn*, I ran out of gas and had to push my motorcycle to the next place to fill up. I sweated a lot in spite of the cold winter day. I left my motorcycle at the railway station Erkner, the halfway point to Berlin. From there I continued my journey to Berlin by train on the S-Bahn. After the visit, I returned very late and arrived at Winkel at about two o'clock in the morning. I had already switched off the engine before arriving at the dormitories, so that the noise would not wake everybody up. The night watchman, however, had spotted me. He was quite frightened, as I had not told him in advance that I might return late. After the November 9/10 events only a few days earlier, the night watchmen, who were *haverim* of Winkel, expected Nazi attacks at any time.

When he saw me coming, the night watchman unleashed the dog. The animal, however, knew me by smell and instead of jumping at me, to my great luck, it started chasing a rat. The dog's barking was enough to wake up Martin Gerson. He came to his bedroom window in his nightgown. With a flashlight in his hand he illuminated the courtyard and shouted "Who is there?" I gave my name. "What time is it?" "Two o' clock." "Where are you coming from so late?" "I ran out of gas and had to push my motorcycle." "We will talk tomorrow morning." We spoke to each other the next morning but he did not mention the incident.

I enjoyed Gut Winkel for only two weeks and then returned to Berlin. My parents were in the process of emigration. They planned to emigrate to Uruguay and I had to help them liquidate the household. This and my wish to be nearer Seldi prompted me to leave Winkel after only such a short time. I had left my motorcycle at a repair shop in Spreenhagen, a place near Winkel. Shortly thereafter, the Nazis enacted new degrading laws, among them one prohibiting Jews to drive any vehicle whatsoever. Since I could not drive my motorcycle back to Berlin, I had to leave it at the repair shop. I had to sell it very cheap to the son of the janitor of the apartment building where we lived in Berlin.

Martin Gerson, the director of Gut Winkel, was born in Posen in 1902. He had studied fruit tree and vegetable growing at the Jewish agricultural school in Ahlem near Hanover. He then studied at the Horticultural Academy in Berlin-Dahlem. In June of 1941, Gut Winkel was forced by the Nazis to close down. Its facilities were transferred to the nearby *hachsharah* center, Landwerk Neuendorf. Despite the Nazi harassment, Gerson was able to continue his work there until June 5, 1943, when he and about eighty trainees were transported to Berlin by train, watched by Gestapo agents. They were then marched through the streets of Berlin to the *Sammellager*, the point of collection on Grosse Hamburgerstrasse, at the Jewish Community building, located directly beside the oldest Jewish cemetery in Berlin.

During these terrible years, Jews were often marched openly through the streets in columns, in broad daylight, guarded on both sides by police and the Gestapo. They were then taken to the collection points, from where they were to be transported by sealed boxcars under unimaginable conditions to the extermination camps in the East.

Martin Gerson and his pupils were transported to Theresienstadt. In October of 1944, when a transport of Gerson's group was deported from there to Auschwitz, he did not abandon them. He went with them. According to eyewitnesses, Gerson was sent to the gas chambers immediately after his arrival, at the age of 42. His wife, Bertel, who had a degree in landscape architecture, and their two daughters were taken to Auschwitz four weeks later.

Gerson was one of those extrordinary people in German-Jewish public life, who suddenly became burdened with an enormous responsibility never encountered before. They remained at their posts until the last moment to assist their brethren in organized emigration as long as this was still possible. Though many times they could have saved their own lives by emigrating, they considered it their duty to stay behind, sacrificing their life on behalf of their distressed brethren. They themselves eventually perished in the ghettos and in concentration and extermination camps.

HONOR TO THE MEMORY OF THIS MARTYR AND HIS FAMILY!

BACK IN BERLIN AND BECOMING ENGAGED TO SELDI

Seldi and I had known each other in Berlin for only four months, from November 1938 to the end of February 1939. These were horrible times for the Jews in Germany. Our personal happiness during that short time in Berlin - two young people very much in love - was overshadowed by the terrible climate and tragic situation which surrounded us. We could not disengage ourselves from what was happening all around us; we were constantly reminded of the situation.

Israel Gerson Reifen, Seldi's father, had been deported during the *Polenaktion* at the end of October 1938, a few days before I met Seldi for the first time. This deportation left her mother in a desperate situation. Seldi's brother Melech, called Mischa, had not been arrested and deported in October, because he had delivered his Polish passport to the Polish Consulate for revalidation just at that time. As he was without a passport, he could not be deported by train over the Polish border like all the other thousands of Polish Jews. He was just jailed for one night and then released. He was summoned to the police station two days later, where a friendly policeman (a few still existed at the time, leftovers from the old Weimar Republic) whispered to him while examining his documents: *"Mensch, hau bloss ab!"* (Man, make your getaway!).

On February 20, 1939, Seldi and I became engaged, but we did not tell anyone. Since we had very little money, we bought gilded tin rings which blackened after a short time from a friendly jeweler. We still have them today. Engraved inside the rings - just as the inscriptions on our present wedding rings - was the date of our engagement and the initials G. L.W. These initials stand for *Glaube* (faith), *Liebe* (love) and *Wille* (willpower), the faith and willpower based on our mutual love, to be reunited in the shortest possible time, after our forced temporary separation which was to happen very soon. Our future was completely uncertain. Despite our imminent emigration to two countries, very far apart, and a political situation in Europe that was worsening steadily, we firmly believed we would be able to overcome the terrible situation around us and be together again some day in the near future, maybe in a year or two.

EMIGRATION AT LAST - LEAVING GERMANY

After the November pogrom, it became obvious to all Jews still in Germany at the time that it was no longer possible to go on living there. Even those wishful thinkers who had always hoped that things would straighten out somehow were finally convinced that in order to save their lives, they had to emigrate, the earlier the better.

During the six years we lived under the Hitler regime, my father was in quite a unique situation. He was one of the very few exceptions among the Jews living in Germany at the time, because his economic situation was not affected by the discriminatory Nazi legislation excluding the Jews from the German economy. My father wrote under the pseudonym Rideamus. Among others, he was the librettist of the very successful and popular operettas *"Drei alte Schachteln"* and *"Der Vetter aus Dingsda,"* which were presented all over Germany. It so happened that the well-known composers of these operettas, Walter Kollo and Eduard Künneke, were "Aryans." .My father's pseudonym as a librettist was simply dropped and not mentioned any more in theater programs, etc. So the operettas went on being performed in many German cities, and my father enjoyed the same good income as before.

It is thus easy to understand why in the beginning my father was not in a particular rush to leave Germany, in spite of the Nazi regime. Besides, the Jews living in Berlin did not feel the persecutions as drastically as did the ones living in small towns or the countryside, where every Jew was well known by the rest of the population and became an easy target and victim of antisemitic discrimination and persecution.

After November 9 & 10, however, things changed drastically. This pogrom became the writing on the wall. From that event on, my parents and everybody else intensified their efforts to find a country to emigrate to. On December 24, 1938 my mother obtained from the American Consulate General in Berlin a number assigned to us on the waiting list for candidates for future immigration to the U.S.A. Our family received registration number 47,764 from the U.S. Consulate in Berlin on the waiting list for people born in Germany. The Consulate at the same time advised in a circular letter that it was impossible to inform the date our immigration application would be processed. As a matter of fact, there were tens of thousands of Jewish people on the German waiting list at the time who had registered with the American Consulate long before us. Consequently they had much lower registration numbers on the waiting list. It was actually only in February 1940 that the American Consulate in Berlin wrote to our former address there, asking us to present the documents necessary for immigration. At that time we had already been in Brazil for nearly a year.

According to the American immigration laws at the time, a yearly quota was reserved for each country, for people born there who wanted to emigrate to the U.S.A. This yearly quota normally could not be surpassed. Of course, in 1938 there was an enormous waiting list for the immigration quota reserved for people born in Germany. President Roosevelt could easily have increased the German, Polish and other immigration quotas in 1938/39, in view of the emergency situation, had he wished so seriously. Roosevelt and Churchill have extraordinary merits in saving the world from tyranny and dictatorship, but Roosevelt's tragic omission to authorize substantial additional immigration quotas was a tragic failure to bring more Jewish refugees into America, before the Nazis prohibited emigration altogether in October 1941. As a matter of fact no country at all lifted a finger at the time to help the desperate Jews

persecuted by the Nazis, as so clearly became evident at the Evian Conference of July 1938. During the war, the American and British Air Forces also could have bombed Auschwitz and other extermination camps, and the railway tracks leading to them, but apparently these mass murder installations were not on their priority list.

Somebody had told my parents that tourist visas for Uruguay could be obtained through the Uruguayan consul in Frankfurt am Main. The consul illegally charged a high price, to be paid to him in foreign currency. As not everybody had foreign currency (owning it was strictly forbidden at the time), the consul also accepted precious jewels in payment of these visas. My parents paid his asking price and in return, on January 23, 1939, we obtained tourist visas, which actually were issued by the Uruguayan Consulate in Paris. Probably the Uruguayan consul in Frankfurt was not authorized any more to issue visas to Jewish people and therefore had to send our passports on to the consulate in Paris.

At that time I could have gone to Eretz Israel by means of *Aliyah Bet.* I was on the *aliyah* list, as I belonged to the wider circle of the *Hashomer Hatzair* leadership. I longed to go to Eretz Israel and to finally realize my Zionist dreams and ideals. Another proposal was that I go to *hachsharah* in England which opened its gates at the time for people with agricultural experience or who wanted to get agricultural training. I also would have liked very much to go there, especially as Seldi was going to leave for England soon, also to do agricultural work. We would then be together again, this time in another country.

Meanwhile Seldi had obtained a permit to go to England as an agricultural worker. She had already made the *hachsharah* in Gut Winkel and qualified for this special agricultural permit. It was obtained with the assistance of Seldi's uncle, Charles Kuperstein, who - probably thanks to the foresight of his mother (Seldi's grandmother Chawa Sarah Kupferstein) - was born on a British ship and therefore had British nationality. He had emigrated to England before World War I and was established in London as a manufacturer of ladies' garments. He was quite successful and became a wealthy man.

As soon as my parents got the tourist visas for Uruguay, my mother put strong pressure on me. I did not want to go with them at all. My wish was to follow one of two possibilities: either go to Eretz Israel by means of *Aliyah Bet* or to *hachsharah* in England. The pressure went so far that my mother threatened to commit suicide unless I went with them. This was really emotional blackmail. Ultimately, my parents' pressure was too much for me, and after many lengthy discussions, I finally agreed to accompany them to South America. My idea was to help them get settled in the new country, during a year or so, and then go back and realize my Zionist ideals. The outbreak of World War II a few months later made this plan unfeasible. It was a very difficult decision for me. When I finally had the possibility to realize my ideals, to go on *aliyah,* after years of working in the Zionist youth movements, I could not take advantage of the opportunity, on account of my parents. I suffered greatly at the time, having to face a great dilemma.

When the *Hashomer Hatzair* leadership heard of my decision to accompany my parents to Uruguay, their prompt reaction was to exclude me from the organization. The *Hashomer Hatzair* had always been a very dogmatic organization. Deviations from the official line in ideological questions were not welcome. Principles had to be safeguarded. There was a wall of separation between those who realized the ideology, culminating in *aliyah,* and those who did not. The latter could not belong to the organization any longer. I was, of course, greatly

shocked and offended by my exclusion. Small wonder. I just could not understand this decision, considering that I had abandoned my intended study at the *Gartenbau Hochschule,* the horticultural academy in Berlin-Dahlem, on behalf of my educational work for the *Hashomer Hatzair* in Frankfurt and Dresden. The organization had sent me there to be the leader of the local groups and I had dedicated myself to this task full time, willingly and whole-heartedly, on a purely voluntary basis.

The responsible leaders, rather than excluding me right away, should have examined each case separately. In my case they should have analyzed the reason and circumstances that made me take the decision to accompany my parents abroad temporarily rather than making *aliyah* right away and living in a kibbutz as was expected from me. Seldi and I have always remained faithful to our Zionist ideology and worked for it all the time. I am not sure, however, whether the kibbutz would have been the ideal way of life for me and I doubt that I would have spent my whole life there. Probably I am too much of an individualist to have shared this collective life.

After my parents had obtained the visas for Uruguay, my mother started all the preparations for our emigration. This was a very strenuous task. She had to go to many German government offices to get all the documents necessary for emigration, after making payment of many different taxes. She started packing all the things we would take along, including furniture and household goods. They were packed in many wooden cases by competent professional packers. Before closing the cases, they had to be inspected by a German customs inspector. We started auctioning off all the objects we could not or did not want to take along. On January 27, 1939, the traditional antiquary J.A. Stargard held an auction at our apartment to sell part of the valuable autograph collection of many famous people, initiated by my maternal grandmother. A special catalogue of this collection to be auctioned off was printed by Stargard, which still is in my possession.The firm Stargard, established in Berlin and specialized in autographs, still exists today. The traditional Schottländer *Familientag*, the yearly Family Reunion, instituted by my great-grandfather Löbel, also took place then at our apartment, for the last time.

My parents bought our ship passages to Uruguay through the Jewish travel agency Palestine & Orient Lloyd, located on Meinekestrasse, near the Zionist headquarters. The tickets were for the German steamer *Monte Pascoal*, sailing from Boulogne, France, in early March 1939. My parents had all their baggage forwarded to Boulogne to be loaded on that steamer. A few days days before our departure to Paris and from there on to Boulogne, some very bad news reached us. The Uruguayan authorities had become aware of the dishonest procedure of some of their consuls in Germany and elsewhere, "selling" visas and earning a fortune. Therefore the government issued a new law that went into force immediately, under which no Uruguayan consul abroad was authorized any longer to issue visas of any kind. From that date on, visas had to be authorized exclusively by the Foreign Ministry in Montevideo. All visas already issued by the consuls would lose their validity immediately.



Klaus' German passport with temporary visa for Uruguay and tourist visa for Brazil. The red "J" stands for "Jew"

When my parents were informed about this new law, they obviously became desperate. My father phoned the Uruguayan consul in Frankfurt at once and asked him what would become of us in view of the new situation. The consul replied that as we had already the Uruguayan visas in our passports, nobody would object to our leaving Germany and embarking to Montevideo on the scheduled steamer. However, upon arrival there, he added, the Uruguayan authorities, in view of the new law, most probably would not let us disembark. One can imagine how my parents felt. They decided to leave Germany anyway and to travel to Paris as planned, facing a very bad situation and a completely uncertain future.

Seldi obtained her British immigration permit on February 20, 1939, the day we became engaged. She left Germany on March 16, 1939 and arrived in Southampton the next day. From there she traveled to London. She faced a very difficult situation there. She had left her mother behind and alone in Berlin. Her father, who had been deported, lived in Warsaw, and her brother in Antwerp. I, her fiancé, whom she had known only for a short time, was on a steamer to far-away South America. Seldi was only nineteen years old at the time. She lived with her cousin Arion and his family in London at first, later moving to a farm in the countryside, at Apethorp near Northampton, where she did agricultural work with a group of Jewish refugees from Germany. Shortly before the outbreak of the war, Seldi moved back to London. First she lived at the Jew's Temporary Shelter in Whitechapel, the old Jewish quarter of London in the East End, sleeping in a dormitory together with forty other women of various nationalities. The Jew's Temporary Shelter once was the haven for thousands of Jews from Eastern Europe, who arrived in London between 1880 and 1906, friendless and often penniless. Later Seldi rented a small flat together with her brother, who by that time had arrived from Belgium. Seldi then began to work as a seamstress in various garment factories.

Seldi's brother, Mischa, who was one year older than she, had heard of people crossing the German-Belgian frontier at Aachen illegally. He left for Aachen with only a briefcase and 300 marks. That was all his mother Fela could give him for the journey. He met a German in a café in Aachen who organized illegal transports across the border, charging 500 marks per head. Mischa told the man that he had only 300 marks, and the man agreed to take him along, as he could take just one more person to complete the transport. Mischa then told him that he would need a little time to pick up his toothbrush and briefcase. But the man advised him to leave everything behind, because if Mischa was caught with a toothbrush and other personal effects, the police would immediately know he was planning to cross the border.

Mischa's group, guided by the same man whom he met in Aachen, crossed the border into Belgium at night. A Belgian contact man was waiting for them on the other side with bicycles. The refugees then rode to the nearest village. Mischa went on from there to Antwerp, where relatives of his mother lived. He stayed there a few months until his entry permit for England arrived, in May of 1939. Mischa had studied to be a toolmaker at a technical school in Berlin. However, the only way to get the permit was as an agricultural worker. He finally got the permit - as Seldi did - with the help of his uncle Charles in London.

Shortly before the outbreak of the war, Seldi's mother, Fela, decided to join her husband in Warsaw. By that time her children, Mischa and Seldi, were both already in England. Fela wrote her children from Berlin about her plan to join her husband Israel Georg in Warsaw and asked for their opinion. Both responded in agreement with her plan and mentioned that in their opinion it would be the best thing to do under the extremely difficult situation at the

time. Rather than staying behind in Berlin all by herself, with her husband and children abroad, it would be preferable to join her husband. Nobody, of course, could foresee how things would develop in Germany and Poland after the war broke out. It was a deadly situation with no way out.

On March 2, 1939, my parents, my sister Susi and I left Germany by train bound for Paris. When we arrived there, we at once went to the local branch of the Jewish travel agency Palestine & Orient Lloyd through whom we had bought our ship passages in Berlin. We informed them about our desperate situation, mentioning that we would not be able to disembark in Montevideo because our Uruguayan tourist visas had lost their validity. One of the persons working at this agency mentioned that he had been informed that the Brazilian consul in Marseilles was still issuing temporary visas for Brazil. My mother, who was a very resolute person, took our passports and immediately left for Marseilles by night train.

She arrived at the Brazilian Consulate there early in the morning. She told us that it was a sleepy place. She said to the official in charge that she wanted visas for Brazil, for herself, her husband and two children, and showed him our passports, all of them bearing the big red "J" on the first page, which identified us as Jewish. The consul then simply placed his visa stamp in our passports and signed with an illegible signature. These visas, obtained on March 3, 1939, were temporary. An additional stamp mentioned that the visas were good for a period of 180 days and that the bearer could not execute any paid activity in Brazil.

As incredible as it sounds, at that time a simple rubber stamp on a passport page could mean the difference between life and death for the bearer! This Brazilian consul in Marseilles saved our lives by granting us these temporary visas for Brazil. By doing so, propably for humanitarian reasons, he clearly acted against the prevalent Brazilian immigration policy at the time. Only sixty years later, at my request, my son Gabriel Fernando who lives in Rio de Janeiro was able through the Brazilian Foreign Ministry to discover the name of the Brazilian consul in Marseilles at that time. I wanted to know this, so that this courageous man who acted against the express instructions of his government, would not remain in anonymity and his name forgotten. He was Murillo de Souza, Brazilian consul in Marseilles from 1938 to 1941. He was pensioned in 1942. The Brazilian Consulate in Marseilles was closed in 1998. The consulate only functions in Paris now. Had it not existed in Marseilles at the time, who knows what would have become of us, because in Paris we certainly would not have obtained Brazilian temporary visas then.

When we arrived in Rio Grande, Brazil, in late March 1939, together with other German Jews, who had also obtained their visas in Marseilles, I remember clearly how the immigration officer shook his head and said in a loud voice, *"Todos de Marselha,"* all of them from Marseilles. He probably denounced this strange fact to the Foreign Ministry in Rio de Janeiro, which then must have strongly reprehended the Brazilian consul in Marseilles, asking him to stop issuing visas and infringing the Brazilian immigration policy. My father, after we had obtained the Brazilian visas, wrote immediately from on board the ship to one of his fellow librettists, who had been unable to obtain a visa for emigration in Germany. My father urged him to travel to Marseilles at once to obtain a Brazilian visa. However, when my father's collaborator arrived there a short time after, the consul was no longer able to grant a visa.

I was in Paris for the first time. Unfortunately our stay there was only very short. Paris and its beauty impressed me very much. The beautiful Champs Élysées, the many cafés and

restaurants, children playing, couples in love, the *bouquinistes,* selling their old books and prints at the the banks of the Seine river, the bohemians at Montparnasse - everything was exciting and new for me. However, there was hardly any time to enjoy all this beauty.

With the temporary Brazilian visas stamped in our passports, we were now able to travel on to Boulogne and take the same German ship to South America, the *Monte Pascoal*, on which my parents had originally booked our passages. The only difference was that instead of disembarking in Montevideo, we would get off in Rio Grande, Brazil. Our trunks and suitcases had already been forwarded to the same ship from Germany.

During our ship voyage in March 1939, the bloody Spanish Civil War came to an end, after three years of uneven fighting. The Republicans had to surrender the territory they still held and Franco's troops finally entered Madrid. Hundreds of thousands of refugees now entered France or went to Mexico. The ones not lucky enough to escape in time were killed or jailed by Franco's troops. Three to four hundred thousand Republican fighters were thrown into French concentration camps. This was the bitter end of a heroic fight against the Franco army, which was aided by the German and Italian armies and air forces. It also was the end of the Spanish Republic and the beginning of the fascist regime there. A few months later, on September 3, 1939, World War II broke out, only about 20 years after the end of World War I.

A NEW LIFE IN PORTO ALEGRE

On March 26, 1939, our steamer arrived in Rio Grande. It was a good feeling when we finally left the German steamer and, consequently, German territory. The few hotels in Rio Grande were all full and my father and I had to sleep on the floor of a grocery store among rice and sugar bags. My mother and my sister stayed at a hotel. From Rio Grande we took a coastal steamer to Porto Alegre, capital of the state of Rio Grande do Sul. We decided to go to Porto Alegre, in the south of Brazil, because the only people my parents knew in Brazil were Dr. Herbert Caro and his wife Nina, who lived in that city. Herbert was the son of my father's best friend, the lawyer Dr. Ernst Caro. He and my father had been in the same class at school, and for many years we lived in the same apartment house on Joachimstaler Strasse in Berlin. Herbert Caro was a well-known intellectual and an excellent translator in Porto Alegre. He translated foreign books by famous authors like Thomas Mann, Franz Werfel, Elias Canetti, etc. Nina was a German teacher, who also wrote some children's text books. They were very good friends of ours. Both died a few years ago.

The coastal steamer to Porto Alegre would leave only two days later, and it would take three days to reach Porto Alegre. Herbert and Nina Caro were waiting for us at the port in Porto Alegre. They had reserved three rooms for us at a cheap downtown boardinghouse, one room for my parents, one for my sister Susi, and another one for myself. We moved into the place with our many trunks and suitcases. There were plenty of cockroaches and mosquitoes in the rooms. We stayed at this boardinghouse for several months, awaiting the arrival of the many wooden crates containing our furniture, household goods, and so on. All my books and records, my typewriter, portable record player, etc. were packed in these crates. At first the German exchange authorities refused to grant permission to pay the ocean freight in foreign currency. So for some time it was doubtful whether our crates would ever arrive at all. Finally, a few months later, after a lot of correspondence, the crates arrived in Porto Alegre shortly before the outbreak of the war. My parents then rented a two-story house for all of us in a nice neighborhood.

Two weeks after our arrival, I saw an ad in the local newspaper, advertising for a gardener. I presented myself and got the job, though I did not speak Portuguese at all at the time. The lady of the house had to explain the work to me, and we spoke about the salary and work hours in French, so that we could understand each other. First I had to transplant grass. I had never done this before because in Germany grass is grown from seed, but I nevertheless managed to do it in the Brazilian way. In Brazil at that time grass blades were cut from existing lawns and replanted one by one, while nowadays grass is mostly planted in sods or rolls to form a carpet. Then I had to plant pansies, but these were soon destroyed by large numbers of big ants that cut the leaves and flowers. I had never seen this type of ant before. I was given bellows and a poisonous gas to fumigate the ants through a thin hose to be placed inside their hole, but at first I could not light the charcoal in the bellows.

I soon learned to speak and write Portuguese. Some time later, I got another gardening job, also at a residential home. Later I laid out a new garden for a recently built house in a suburb. At the same time, twice a week, on Sunday mornings and one weekday, I gave Jewish history and culture classes for children of the German-Jewish Community, called Sibra, founded in 1936 by emigrants from Germany.

After the new garden was ready, I worked as a lithographer in a local printing shop. As I earned very little there, I left this job after two weeks. Some time later I took a job as a secretary at an import firm, writing business letters in English and Portuguese. I had never written letters in English before, and of course also not in Portuguese, but I managed to do it. I learned the Portuguese language very fast and half a year after I arrived in Brazil was able to speak, read and write it. I also did translations of technical manuals from English to Portuguese at this same firm. I stayed at this job for three years, from September 1939 to October 1942. The owner, Dr. Gastão de Oliveira, was a physician, but he did not exercise this profession. He was schizophrenic, but a very intelligent man, who spoke a number of languages. From his father, a banker, he had inherited various valuable buildings and plots of land. The well-located downtown buildings consisted of many apartments and offices. The plots, situated in a developing suburb, were sold by him in instalments to people who built their homes there. He imported marine engines and was a pioneer in importing air conditioners and washing machines from the United States at a time when these electrical appliances were completely unknown in Porto Alegre.

Since we came to Brazil with temporary visas only, which expired after six months, we tried to obtain permanent residence permits upon our arrival. This also would enable me to work legally in Brazil. However, the Brazilian authorities denied permanent status to us and all other refugees. This was under the instructions of the Brazilian government, headed at the time by President Getulio Vargas, a sympathizer with Nazi Germany. Meanwhile, the war broke out and the Brazilian government could not expel the refugees because no other country would accept them. Finally, in July 1941 the Brazilian authorities granted provisional residence and work permits to all temporary or "irregular" immigrants; these could be revoked at any time. They were granted *"a título precário"* (provisionally) only, until the end of the war.

OBTAINING THE HARD TO GET BRAZILIAN IMMIGRATION VISA FOR SELDI

After my arrival in Porto Alegre, I of course wanted Seldi to come to Brazil very much and made every possible effort to get an immigration permit for her. But this was nearly impossible at the time, due to the government's antisemitic immigration policy. Although Brazil had not entered the war yet, the secret circulars sent out by the Foreign Ministry to all Brazilian consulates and diplomatic missions instructed them not to grant visas to Jewish people.

When Foreign Minister Oswaldo Aranha was visiting his mother in Porto Alegre in February 1940, I went to her house, where her son stayed during his short visit here. I explained my situation to him and gave him a petition requesting that a visa be granted to my fiancée in London. He promised to take the petition along to Rio de Janeiro, but I never received a reply.

All my other attempts to get a permit for Seldi also failed. I therefore decided to travel to Rio de Janeiro, where I could go in person to Brazil's Foreign Ministry, called Itamaraty, and try to get the visa I longed for so much. Everybody here told me that it was an impossible enterprise, but I had firmly decided to do the utmost to reach my goal. I prepared my trip in the best possible way. Through personal connections I tried to obtain letters of recommendation. I had also many documents translated, proving that I had a horticultural apprenticeship, worked as a gardener in Germany, had attended the vocational horticultural school there and that Seldi had agricultural training in Germany. I also obtained a recommendation from a local lawyer for whom I had laid out a garden in Porto Alegre. All this was very important as people with agricultural training had absolute priority as far as immigration was concerned.

All these documents were attached to the new petition that I had prepared for the Foreign Ministry. It was a true masterpiece, much different from the very formal one I had submitted here in Porto Alegre a few months earlier. It stressed the absolute necessity I had to have a woman at my side - my future wife - to help me in planting and cultivating a selected apple orchard in the countryside. At the end, the petition stressed how urgently I needed to obtain the visa, due to the fact that my bride was residing in London. Her life there was in danger because of the war and soon a voyage across the ocean might not be possible any more. The draft of this petition was written by my friend Stefan Wertheimer, also a refugee from Germany, who recognized the great importance that both of us, Seldi and I, had agricultural training. The final, masterful Portuguese version was prepared by Wertheimer's acquaintance, Alvaro Franco, who was an English teacher and also had published a Portuguese-English dictionary.

Through the intermediation of Dr. Gastão de Oliveira, the owner of the firm where I worked as a correspondent, I contacted Oswaldo Aranha's brother, José Antonio Aranha, who lived in Porto Alegre. He gave me a personal letter of recommendation for his brother's secretary at the Itamaraty. Through my friend Wertheimer's valuable connections to a local musician, Schultz, who knew Aranha's mother, Luiza de Freitas Valle (Dona Luizinha), I got in touch with her at her residence. I also asked her to give me a recommendation. I told her that I planned to settle in the countryside, as a horticulturist, but I could not do that without having my fiancée - whom I intended to marry - at my side.

I showed Dona Luizinha a photo of Seldi milking a cow at Gut Winkel. This photo and my story obviously impressed her very much. She was quite touched and promptly gave me a

letter of recommendation to hand to João Carlos Muniz, who held an important government post. He was the president of the powerful Council of Immigration and Colonization, an organ of the Foreign Ministry, located at the Itamaraty palace. Several years later he became the Brazilian representative to the United Nations. He held this post at the time Oswaldo Aranha presided over the historical session of the UN General Assembly on November 29, 1947, which approved the resolution to partition Palestine.



Seldi in agricultural work in Gut Winkel

Supported by all this documentation, I left Porto Alegre by train on June 28, 1940. The train stopped at São Paulo three days later. I got out there for a day to get to know the city. I finally arrived in Rio de Janeiro on July 3, after a five-day trip. Traveling to Rio de Janeiro by train was cheaper than by steamer. There were no commercial flights in Brazil at the time.

Upon arrival I went to Itamaraty. The long line of refugees seeking entrance to the Foreign Ministry extended the length of the street. Guards at the door barred all these desperate people, who were trying to obtain visas for their relatives in Europe - some even for their husbands or wives whom they had had to leave behind - in an attempt to save their lives at that very late date. Most of them were told by an official at the entrance door to come back later. In fact, almost no visas were being issued for Jews any more.

However, the personal letters of recommendation I carried opened all the doors for me. I was admitted to Itamaraty without any trouble when I waved the white envelope in my hand, saying "I have come on the recommendation of Dona Luizinha Aranha." First I went to see Oswaldo Aranha's secretary, Dr. Sergio de Lima e Silva, and showed him the recommendation of Aranha's brother. The secretary informed me that the minister was traveling and would be out of town for some time.

I then called on João Carlos Muniz and gave him the handwritten letter from Aranha's mother. Muniz was very sympathetic and promised to do everything he could regarding the matter. He asked me to return in a few days, but actually I ended up waiting several weeks for the outcome and had to come back various times. Meanwhile, at the end of August, Dona Luizinha came to Rio, as a grandchild had just been born. I visited her at the hospital.

Two days later I returned to the Foreign Ministry. Muniz told me - to my greatest happiness - that a permanent visa would be granted to Seldi. He sent his secretary, Laura, to accompany me to the passport department (which was in another wing of Itamaraty) with instructions to issue the visa. There I was told that I first had to take care of a few formalities, such as having my signature notarized, etc., and then, after everything was in order, a cable would be sent to the Brazilian consul in London. After having taken care of the formalities, I was told at the passport department that now everything was alright. The cable authorizing the visa would be sent to the consul and therefore I could return to Porto Alegre right away.

However, my friend Wertheimer had warned me before leaving that I should be very careful with the head of the passport department. Wertheimer had some recent experience, as he also had endeavored at the Itamaray to bring his parents over from Germany - and he had finally succeeded. He is half-Jewish and Protestant by birth. He is married to a very nice Jewish woman, Eva. They live in Rio de Janeiro. We visit each other when we are in Rio or he comes to Porto Alegre.

Wertheimer knew that the head of the passport department, Labienno Salgado dos Santos, author of the study "The unsuitability of the semitic emigration" was a virulent and notorious antisemite. At the end of 1939 the Brazilian consulates were notified that the issuing of visas to "semites" would depend on an authorization by the passport department of Itamaraty. This meant it was Salgado dos Santos who ultimately had to authorize the granting of all visas.

Taking into consideration Wertheimer's warning, I decided not to pay heed to the passport department's recommendation to return to Porto Alegre. I resolved to stay in Rio until I could ensure myself that a numbered cable had been sent to the Brazilian consulate in London authorizing Seldi's permanent visa or until I received Seldi's cable confirmation that the visa had arrived. This was the right thing to do indeed. After a few days, Seldi contacted me with the news that no telegram with a visa authorization had arrived at the consulate. I promptly returned to the passport department but they could find none of the relevant documents regarding my petition and its favorable decision. When I returned to Muniz' department and told him what had happened, he was furious and sent his very helpful secretary, Dona Laura, to accompany me back to the passport department.

This had the necessary effect. The documents were finally located at the bottom of a drawer - where they had probably been deliberately placed. This time the visa authorization was processed immediately, and on September 5, I personally sent the Foreign Ministry's numbered cable to the consulate in London, via Western Telegraph Co., together with my cable to Seldi. After Seldi confirmed that the authorization had arrived, I returned to Porto Alegre on September 8. I was finally back on September 12, after having spent eleven weeks in Rio, waiting for the processing and for a favorable outcome of my petition. Of course, I was very happy that I finally had succeeded. Very few people were able at the time, in the middle of the war, and in spite of the antisemitic Brazilian immigration legislation, to obtain a visa for their relatives, not even those who were able and willing to pay large amounts of money.

The entire story is an odd one, indeed. I, officially a temporary resident whose visa had expired long ago (fortunately no one at Itamaray had asked me about my own status), to whom permanent residence was denied during the war years, obtained a permanent visa for my fiancée. It seems that such a thing can only happen in Brazil. So much the better! Seldi's

permanent visa was obtained mainly through my personal connections and also due to the very important fact that Seldi had an agricultural and I a horticultural training. Under the prevalent Brazilian legislation at the time, agriculturists had absolute priority regarding the obtention of an immigration visa.

I was able to keep my job at the import firm, in spite of having been away in Rio for nearly three months. Of course, in Rio I spent completely the little I had saved in Porto Alegre since I had arrived one year earlier and even had to borrow the money for my railway return fare from my relative, Arthur Seligmann, who lived in Rio. After having returned to Porto Alegre, while waiting for Seldi's arrival, I sometimes was afraid to wake up and find that everything was only a beautiful dream and that we would not be together at all. I just could not believe that I had succeeded, that Seldi could come and that we would live together. But then I realized that I myself had paid for the ministry's cable authorization to the consul and that the whole story was true indeed and not just a dream.



Seldi's Polish passport with visas for Siam, England and Brazil

BRAZIL'S ANTISEMITIC IMMIGRATION POLICY AND LEGISLATION UNDER THE PRESIDENCY OF GETULIO VARGAS

For a better understanding of this subject, very closely related to the immigration of our family to Brazil and Seldi's arrival here during the war, I feel it would be convenient to explore the question in greater depth. In 1930 Getulio Vargas seized power and became president of Brazil. Vargas was strongly influenced by the Nazi-Fascist ideology and sympathized with Hitler's and Mussolini's regimes. His *Estado Novo* regime, proclaimed in November 1937, banned all political parties and established a dictatorship. It was inspired by the totalitarian political systems which were in force in Germany and Italy at the time. The *Estado Novo* (1937-45) was racist and strongly discriminated against the Jews.

On June 7, 1937, Secret Circular no. 1127 was issued by the Foreign Ministry (Itamaraty). It was personally authorized by Getulio Vargas. It was sent by Itamaraty to all Brazilian consulates and diplomatic missions, prohibiting their granting visas to persons of "semitic origin." The main reason why this and the following circulars were called "secret" was that the members of Getulio Vargas' inner circle were afraid of a negative international reaction. Item C of this circular reads:

> "Passport visas shall be refused to every person who is known - by his own declaration or reliable information - [...] to be of ethnic semitic origin. In the event that there only is 'suspicion', it is recommended that the authorities delay the granting of the visa, until such time as they are able, through efficient means of investigation, to clarify the doubt and arrive at a final decision."

Persons who affirmed they were not "semitic" and declared themselves to be Catholic or to belong to any other Christian religion had to present their certificate of baptism, which could not be of recent date. It had to be prior to 1933, meaning prior to Hitler's rise to power. On September 27, 1938, this circular was replaced by Secret Circular no. 1249 concerning "the entry of Jews ('*Israelitas*') into Brazilian territory." This and the following secret circulars were issued at the time Oswaldo Aranha was Foreign Minister and bore his signature. They were approved by president Getulio Vargas. Aranha, who had been Brazilian ambassador in Washington, had been appointed Foreign Minister in March 1938.

The words "of semitic origin" in the previous circular were replaced in the new circular by the word "*Israelitas*," a term considered at the time more neutral and acceptable, suggesting that the Jews would not be considered any more as a uniformly undesirable "race." As a matter of fact, the new circular was anti-Jewish without prohibiting the entry of all Jews. They could now only obtain temporary visas and their requests for visas had to be accompanied by a letter from the government that had issued their passports, stating that there was no legal impediment for their return. Jews from Germany, Austria, Poland, etc. were thus automatically excluded. According to further Secret Circular no. 1328, British, French, U.S. and Canadian Jews were exempted from this requirement. They could obtain a temporary visa "without any problem." Still in accordance with Secret Circular no. 1249, Jewish artists and intellectuals of international fame could also be admitted, as well as Jewish capitalists and/or industrialists with a minimum capital of 500,000 mil reis (US$29,000.00), if they could prove the transfer of this amount and its investment in Brazil. This amount was lowered later on.

On May 5, 1938, new immigration law no. 406 was issued, enacted through decree no. 3010 of August 20, 1938. Its purpose was "to preserve the ethnic constitution of Brazil [...] and to further agricultural work." Eighty percent of the immigration quota reserved for each country had to be filled with agriculturists and rural technicians, who had to present due proof of their profession. One of the reasons presented by the government for preventing Jews from immigrating to Brazil was that they were not agriculturists. This new law was therefore in line with the governmental policy to bar Jewish immigration.

The same law also created the Council of Immigration and Colonization (CIC), a structural organ of the Foreign Ministry, but directly subordinated to the Presidency of the Republic. The Council had its seat at the Foreign Ministry. Its purpose was to orient and supervise immigration and colonization services. The law concentrated in the hands of the CIC the power to examine the situation of Jewish immigration candidates. From that time on, the power of decision-making regarding matters related to the "Jewish question" was left in the hands of the Foreign Ministry and the Council of Colonization and Immigration.This Council was composed of seven members appointed by the Brazilian president. The president of this Council was João Carlos Muniz, precisely the influential person at Itamaraty to whom the letter of recommendation from Foreign Minister Aranha's mother was addressed. This probably was one of the decisive factors for my petition to the Foreign Minister having obtained approval, which certainly was handed down by this Council.

Many among the Brazilian intellectual elite and most of the diplomats during the Vargas era considered Jews as "undesirable." Antisemitism was prevalent and most of the leading diplomats repeated Nazi rhetoric. Some of them were not far behind Goebbels or Streicher in their virulent statements. The following citations, all reproduced from the valuable book about this subject *"O Anti-Semitismo na Era Getulio Vargas (1930-45)*," by Maria Luiza Tucci Carneiro, represent just a few samples to better illustrate this point. The author of this book thoroughly researched Itamaraty's historical archives for nearly two years.

Francisco Campos, Minister of Justice and the Interior, considered the presence of Jews in Brazil "incompatible with our immigration policy." In a memorandum to Foreign Minister Oswaldo Aranha, dated September 22, 1939, he suggested adopting precautionary measures and recommended that consular authorities not grant visas to Jews, not even temporary ones.

In November 1939, the Brazilian ambassador in Berlin, Cyro de Freitas Valle, sent an admonishing letter to his cousin, Oswaldo Aranha, in the name of his "imperative patriotic duty," mentioning that it was impossible for him to be silent about Jews "of bad quality" entering Brazil.

In 1938 Labienno Salgado dos Santos, at the time first secretary of the Brazilian diplomatic mission in Bucharest, submitted to Cyro de Freitas Valle a "study about the unsuitability of semitic immigration." This study was forwarded by Freitas Valle to Oswaldo Aranha.

Labienno's study contained all kind of infamous racist accusations against the Jews. Agreeing with the contents of Secret Circular no. 1127, of June 1937, he states that the "disturbing elements of our country's public order are frequently found among individuals of the semitic race." One of the reasons of the drawback of Jewish immigration, he goes on, is that they

become agents of communism. He adds that he is aware of the contribution of the Jews in establishing communism in Russia and other countries. He continues:

> "Jews scorn the Christians, either because they consider themselves superior or because they hold resentments for two thousand years of persecution. There are few naturalized Brazilian Jews who can speak Portuguese. If they do, they cannot make themselves understood. Nearly without any exception, they come to the diplomatic mission badly clad, dirty, with an appearance that reveals avarice and sordidness. [...] This race rarely works in agriculture."

He thinks it wise to warn the consular services, recommending not to admit employees of "semitic origin." At the end, he most cynically remarks: "Stating my opinion, I am not moved by prejudice of race or faith. I never had them. I am driven exclusively by the interest of studying the question with the utmost impartiality." Probably on account of the "merits" of his antisemitic rhetoric, Labienno Salgado dos Santos was later promoted by Itamaraty to the post of head of the Foreign Ministry's passport department. In this influential position, he exerted his utmost efforts to prevent further immigration of Jews to Brazil.

Mario Moreira da Silva, Brazilian consul general in Budapest, points out in 1938:

> "Brazil needs hands, but friendly, sound ones, never, however, parasite [...] hands. [...] The Jews do no assimilate and are forever Jews, without any love or affection for the country that receives and hosts them. [...] The Jew just knows how to do business [...] and uses dishonest means in his trade."

J. R. Barros e Pimentel, Brazilian consul general in Warsaw, mentions "the ever-growing belief in Europe that the Jews are the main promoters and biggest propagandists of communism in every continent." He states that the Jews are "elements that are directly harmful, dissimulated as agriculturists." He further refers to the "transplantation of this social cancer."

In a cable sent to the Foreign Ministry in 1936, Jorge Latour, Brazil's chargé d'affaires in Warsaw, refers to the Jews as "pernicious elements, undesirable in every country." In a memorandum to the same ministry he refers to the Jews as a "cyst among nations." He further analyzes the "dominant psychical traces of the Jew," among them: "the love of money resulting in greed for profit, nomadism, [...] subversive spirit, [...] a latent anti-social individual," [...] etc.

In a 1936 memorandum the Brazilian commercial attaché in Warsaw, captain Pedro Rocha, points out the negative aspect of the Jewish immigration. Exaggerating the number of Jewish immigrants he states:

> "Brazil will thus end up having the largest Jewish population in the world. It is easy to imagine what will become of our country dominated by Judaism. This already can be observed in Rio de Janeiro."

Referring to the German Jews he utters:

> "They completely forget that in their country they are worth less than a leprous dog."

In a letter to Jorge Latour, he considers the Jews to be:

> "a non-assimilable and egoistic race. Ungrateful, lacking patriotism and highly harmful to the country that hosts them. Psychologically degenerated. Stupidly intolerant in religious matters, considering the rest of mankind as their enemies. These individuals do not adapt to any productive work. [...] They are unhuman and lack all scruples, living solely off the exploitation of their fellow citizens. They always try to live in the city, where they agglomerate in filthy quarters without any hygiene. [...]"

In 1936, Edgardo Barbedo, Brazilian consul general in Warsaw points out:

> "From immemorial time it has been known that the Jew is not an agriculturist. He lives on dirty trade, exploiting other people's misery and many times that of his own people."

In a memorandum of April 1938, sent by the Brazilian ambassador to the Vatican, Hildebrando Accioly, to the Foreign Ministry, he mentions that the Jews are:

> "stronger or more resistant to assimilation due to centuries of segregation, in which the cursed race has lived on the Old Continent. They would thus turn Brazil into the fatherland of Israel."

In August 1938, Carlos Alves de Souza of the Foreign Ministry mentions in a memorandum:

> "The intensification of immigration would destroy our ethnic and religious unity and would establish a division of our country into two antagonic fields, Jews and non-Jews."

In the same memorandum he describes the Jews as being:

> "subversive elements of social disintegration, lacking patriotic feelings, not able to assimilate by temperament, having no scruples, speculators and with no affinity to agriculture."

Further citations of Brazilian diplomats could be added ad nauseam, but this would certainly be redundant. I believe, however, it is necessary to add some considerations about the personality of Oswaldo Aranha. Before he became Foreign Minister in March 1938, he was Brazilian ambassador in Washington from 1934 to 1937. He always was a great friend of the United States and tried to influence President Getulio Vargas in this direction. Vargas, however, sympathized with the German/Italian Axis. He was supported in his pro-Nazi/Fascist sympathy by the war minister, high-ranking generals and other influential government officials. In 1942, Brazil, in view of the military development of the war, broke off diplomatic relations with the Axis powers and a short time later entered the war on the side of the Allies.

Aranha's position with regard to the Jewish question is quite controversial. While in some isolated cases he helped in authorizing the entry of Jewish immigrants, for the most part he

denied such petitions. In October 1938, he sent a letter to Adhemar de Barros, *interventor* in São Paulo, asking that urgent steps be taken to investigate the suspected existence of a ghetto in formation in the city of São Paulo "to prevent the aggravation of a situation which could become highly detrimental." In the same letter he states that the Jews and Japanese are:

> "subversive and dissolvent elements with a tendency to create racial cysts, veritable foreign bodies within the national organism. [...] The Jew, by tendency, has a radical aversion to agriculture and does not identify with other races or creeds. Isolated, there may still be some chance he can be assimilated by the environment that receives him, as usually happens in Brazil at the present time. As a crowd, however, he undoubtedly would become a danger to Brazil's future homogeneity."

On November 19, 1939, Aranha stated in public, with regard to the entry of Jews into Brazilian territory, that he considered the proportion "frightening." In various instances, as documented in Tucci Carneiro's book, Aranha denied immigration petitions to desperate people seeking refuge in Brazil. I would like to mention just two of these cases. The first one concerns a relative of Albert Einstein, the world famous scientist to whom the Nobel Prize was awarded in 1921. With the rise of Nazism, Einstein left Germany in 1933 and settled in the United States. He was appointed professor of theoretical physics at the Institute of Advanced Study in Princeton, N.J. In February 1941, Einstein sent a letter to the Brazilian ambassador in Washington, Carlos Martins Pereira e Souza. Einstein asked the ambassador, in the name of his second cousin, Rodolfo Moss, who lived in São Paulo, to bring to the attention of the Brazilian immigration authorities the case of Moss's mother, Selma, sixty-four years old. She was in a concentration camp in the south of France, "where she was living under the most appaling conditions."

The ambassador forwarded this letter immediately to Oswaldo Aranha, mentioning that Einstein deserved high consideration. The Foreign Ministry, under the direction of Oswaldo Aranha, however, was not concerned, not even about such an outstanding person as Albert Einstein. Forwarded six weeks later to the ambassador and signed by Mauricio Nabuco in the name of the Foreign Minister, the decision was as follows:

> "I regret to inform you that at the moment it is quite impossible to comply with the professor's request, due to the provisions in force."

Another unfavorable decision was the case of Cora Meyer, the wife of a manager of an important wheat mill in Porto Alegre. She had lived in Brazil for twelve years and her husband for twenty. They had two children at the time, born in Brazil. In December 1942, Cora Meyer visited Aranha's mother, Luiza Aranha, in Porto Alegre (just as I had done two and a half years earlier) and then sent her a letter making a dramatic appeal. She asked Luiza to intercede at Itamaraty in favor of twenty of her relatives (her parents, siblings, brothers-in-law, etc.) who lived in France in great danger, "to save them from the claws of the Germans." Luiza promply contacted her son, Oswaldo, asking for his interference. On December 17, 1942, he sent a short formal reply to his mother:

> "Dear Mother, I received your card accompanied by Mrs. Cora Meyer's letter. Unfortunately it is completely impossible to comply with Mrs. Meyer's request, because the laws regarding the entry of foreigners, mainly European ones, are

> absolutely incontestable. As a matter of fact this matter depends exclusively on the Ministry of Justice."

How fortunate I was indeed that I did not use the recommendation of Aranha's brother to Oswaldo's secretary, as an intermediary to the Foreign Minister himself, but rather Luiza's to the head of the Council of Immigration and Colonization, João Carlos Muniz!

In November 1941, the Spanish steamer *SS Cabo de Hornos*, with ninety-five Jewish refugees on board, landed in Rio de Janeiro. These passengers were not permitted to disembark. They had been detained in Cadiz for six months, looking for a ship to take them out of Europe. Their Brazilian entry visas, issued by the friendly Brazilian ambassador in Vichy, Souza Dantas, had expired in the meantime and in spite of his efforts could not be revalidated. Personal appeals to president Getulio Vargas, including a telegram sent by the Brazilian ambassador in Washington, Carlos Martins Pereira e Souza, and pressure on Foreign Minister Oswaldo Aranha on the part of various foreign diplomats in Rio de Janeiro, were of no avail. No permission to disembark in Brazil was granted to these desperate passengers. The steamer was already on its way back to Europe, when finally the Dutch colony Curaçao in the Antilles agreed to accept these refugees, on the condition of their being transferred to some other place later on..

In 1944, Aranha resigned as Foreign Minister. Three years later he was appointed Brazilian representative to the United Nations by the Brazilian president, Eurico Dutra. In September 1947, he was elected president of the UN General Assembly which had to decide about the partition of Palestine. Two months later, on November 29, the partition was approved in a historical meeting of the General Assembly, and the State of Israel created. Aranha, as well as the former head of the Immigration and Colonization Council, João Carlos Muniz, who by then had become the Brazilian representative to the United Nations, both actively supported this historical resolution. The State of Israel, however, was not born "by the tenacity, by the faith full of hope and the dreams full of ideals of Oswaldo Aranha" and he certainly was not "the creator of the State of Israel" as his biographer F. Talaya O'Donnell and others want us to believe. This is a myth only. The State of Israel was fruit of nearly two thousand years of aspirations of the children of Israel, dispersed throughout the world, and of the idealistic and arduous efforts of the pioneers - the *halutzim* - to rebuild the land of our ancestors.

Aranha, a defender of democracy and a friend of the United States, no doubt had the great merit of having aligned Brazil with the Allies during the war and away from the Axis Forces, against strong opposition inside the Brazilian government. Again, in November 1947, it was undoubtedly in the interest of Brazil to accompany the U.S. vote regarding the partition of Palestine and the establishment of a Jewish State. As a two-thirds majority was required, each vote in favor of the proposition was very important, since the outcome of the vote was doubtful. Argentina, for instance, abstained and France's vote was uncertain until the last moment, when that country decided to vote in favor of the motion. The Arab countries wanted to postpone the vote but Aranha succeeded in having the motion voted without any further delay. The partition was approved by a scant two third majority, 33 nations in favor, 13 opposed, 10 abstentions (including the United Kingdom) and one nation absent (Siam). Brazil's favorable vote was important and so was the fact that Aranha presided skillfully and efficiently over the General Assembly session that approved the partition plan.

Oswaldo Aranha, however, assumed different personalities at different times. It cannot be overlooked or forgotten that during the decisive time that Aranha was Brazil's Foreign Minister (1938-44), the greatest restrictions against the immigration of Jews were in force. Thousands of Jews tried in vain at the Brazilian consulates and diplomatic missions in Europe to obtain an entry visa. Many Jewish people who already resided in Brazil also tried unsuccessfully at Itamaraty to obtain visas on behalf of their relatives in Europe. Most of these petitions were denied, in view of Brazil's discriminatory, antisemitic immigration policy. Aranha, head of Itamaraty, undoubtedly supported this policy or went along with it, as we have seen. Thousands of Jewish lives could have been saved, but Itamaraty's denial of entry visas culminated in the death of these unfortunate people in concentration camps and gas chambers. Itamaraty's ultimate responsibility in these cases is evident and undeniable.

There were, of course, a few laudable exceptions among the Brazilian diplomats at the time, such as, for instance, Luis Martins de Souza Dantas, Brazilian ambassador in Paris and later in Vichy. He sincerely tried to help the desperate Jewish refugees and issued visas to many of them before and during the war. He therefore was severely reprimanded by Brazil's Foreign Ministry, Itamaraty, "on account of the large quantity of visas issued to tourists." According to a statement by J. Edgar Hoover, dated March 1941, as mentioned in the book by Americanist Jeffrey Lesser, *"O Brasil e a Questão Judaica"* (Brazil and the Jewish question), Souza Dantas lost the right to authorize visas, because "practically all visas were granted to persons of Jewish origin." In August 1942, after Brazil entered the war at the side of the Allies, Souza Dantas was jailed by the Germans when resisting the invasion of the Brazilian embassy. He was interned in Bad Godesberg for two years.

Another laudable exception was the diplomat João Guimarães Rosa, Brazilian consul in Hamburg, one of the greatest Brazilian writers. He helped various Jews and was known to have exceeded his quota of visas for immigrants. He too was reprimanded by Itamaraty. Just as Souza Dantas, he was jailed by the Nazis when Brazil entered the war. The Brazilian ambassador in Washington, Carlos Martins Pereira e Souza, also interceded in various instances in favor of Jewish refugees.

Last but not least, it is my duty to mention here Murillo de Souza, the completely unknown Brazilian consul in Marseilles. He too was one of the few courageous exceptions among the Brazilian diplomats at the time. Contrary to the prevalent policy of the Brazilian authorities at that time, on March 3, 1939, he put his stamp in our passports, granting temporary visas to my parents, my sister and myself, thus saving our lives. May his memory be honored! To him, to the few other Brazilian diplomats just mentioned and to all the other just people who saved Jewish lives, the Talmudic verse applies:

HE WHO SAVES A SINGLE LIFE SAVES THE ENTIRE WORLD!



Klaus and Seldi in Porto Alegre, May 1941, shortly after Seldi's arrival from London

AT LAST TWO YOUNG PEOPLE IN LOVE ARE REUNITED AFTER A FORCED TWO-YEAR SEPARATION - A FAIRY TALE

It took a month for Seldi to get the permanent Brazilian visa stamped into her Polish passport. The Brazilian consulate's office hours were very short. Furthermore, during the daily bombings in London, the Consulate was nearly always closed. The Foreign Ministry's authorization was dated September 5, 1940, while the visa was issued on October 4, 1940.

A steamship of the Royal Mail Line was scheduled to leave for Brazil soon. Part of Seldi's third-class fare was paid by the Jewish Refugees Committee at the Bloomsbury House; her brother Mischa also paid a part. In November - at the last minute - Seldi was informed that all steamships of the Royal Mail Line had been requisitioned by the government for war purposes, and none would be available for passenger service for the time being. When she was notified of the date the scheduled Royal Mail Line steamer would leave England, Seldi had quit her job in London and canceled her work permit. As the steamer had been canceled, she received a very small stipend from the Jewish Refugees Committee until the final date of her departure. She then moved to Oxford to stay with her good friend Lilly Krauskopf, whom she knew from the agricultural farm in the countryside where she and a group of Jewish refugees worked shortly after she had arrived in England. Seldi stayed in Oxford for a few months and in order to supplement the small amount she received from the Refugees Committee, she worked part-time in the household of three Austrian refugee women. One of them was the widow of the writer Hugo von Hoffmannsthal.

Oxford, a university town, was free of military or strategic targets. It therefore was not bombed during the war by the German *Luftwaffe*. While living in London, Seldi had been subject to daily bombardments from mid-1940 on. She had to spend many nights in air-raid shelters in the basements of the apartment houses she lived at or on the platforms of the subway stations where hundreds of Londoners spent the night.

Finally, through the assistance of the Jewish Refugees Committee - Seldi was offered an opportunity to serve as escort to a young Jewish woman, Johanna Wollner, called Hansi, who was interned at a mental hospital in Bristol. Her parents had had to leave her behind when they emigrated to Uruguay. She needed to travel now to join her family in Montevideo, but since she suffered from a mental illness, she could not travel by herself. This was a very fortunate circumstance for Seldi, since Hansi's parents paid Seldi's first-class fare on the Blue Star Line's *SS Andalucia Star*, plus £ 10, the maximum amount allowed to take out of the country.

Seldi and Hansi left Glasgow on February 15, 1941. Seldi had to take care of her. Due to Hansi's condition, this was no easy job. In the evening during blackout time, for instance, even though the light was on, Hansi would insist on opening up the tightly sealed curtains of the cabin she shared with Seldi. This, of course, was a highly dangerous thing to do. Seldi and the crew had to avoid it by all means. Due to the war, the ship officially left from a port "somewhere in England." It sailed around Ireland, zigzagging constantly and under permanent blackout due to the great danger from German submarines. On the way back the *SS Andalucia Star* carried meat from Argentina to England. During her next voyage, this steamship was torpedoed and sunk by a German submarine.

Seldi arrrived in Rio de Janeiro on March 5, 1941, and had to leave Hansi there, who traveled on by herself to the next port, Montevideo, on the same steamer. Seldi stayed a short time in Rio de Janeiro. My mother's second cousin, Arthur Seligmann, who had emigrated to Brazil back in 1908 and was established in Rio, along with another relative who worked at his firm, Adolph Herzfeld, took care of Seldi upon her arrival, as she did not speak one word of Portuguese. She stayed in a hotel for a few days. During that time she visited Seligmann's big farm near Rio, together with him and his second wife, and stayed there overnight. Seldi then embarked on a coastal steamer to Porto Alegre and arrived here on March 12. When Seldi came to Brazil, she was twenty-one years old and I was twenty-three.

During the first few months we stayed at a very cheap boardinghouse downtown. I earned a salaray of 600 mil reis at the time, about US$32.- (one dollar was a little less than twenty mil reis). For room and board we paid 250 mil reis. Seldi earned her first money, 200 mil reis, a day after she arrived. I took her to the local newspaper, *Correio do Povo*, where she gave an interview about the London bombings. She described how it felt, after those terrible nights of terror in that city, to suddenly wake up in peaceful Porto Alegre. Back then, the city had a population of only about 200,000, while today Porto Alegre has about 1,500,000 inhabitants.

At first Seldi worked part-time. She took care of the small children of friends of ours, the German-Jewish family Weil, for three months. Then she answered a newspaper advertisement, looking for an English teacher, placed by the wife of a high-ranking army officer, and began to give her first English lessons in late July. Her second pupil, Avani, recommended by the first one, was the wife of the *interventor*, Cordeiro de Farias, the federally appointed state governor of Rio Grande do Sul. Avani and her husband lived at the government palace and

Seldi gave the English lessons there. Her arrival at the palace always was announced by a footman who knocked his baton against the ground, calling out "a *professora inglesa,"* (the English teacher).

Seldi is an excellent teacher. Her pupils always loved her very interesting English lessons. Some of her old pupils whom she taught a long time ago still send her flowers on her birthday or send greeting cards. Sometimes when our daughter Judith is traveling, Seldi substitutes her and Judith's pupils adore Seldi's lessons.

With Avani's recommendations, Seldi soon had more pupils than she could take and then earned more than I. She therefore passed these pupils on to me and I then started to teach English too. We gave lessons to children, young people and adults. I was teaching English in addition to my regular job as a secretary.

After a few months we left the boardinghouse and rented an attic room downtown. We bought a bed, a wardrobe, a table, two chairs and a cupboard and were quite happy and proud to have a home of our own. Later, Dr. Gastão de Oliveira, the owner of the firm at which I worked, offered us to move to one of the two-bedroom apartments in his building. Many of them stood empty and therefore I did not have to pay rent or electricity. It was a nice downtown apartment with a view over the Guaiba river. We lived there quite comfortably for several months until we had to move out when I left my job in 1942.

Dr. Oliveira had a tenant on the ground floor of the neighboring commercial building, which he also owned. The tenant operated a nice restaurant there. We had lunch there on weekdays, at a special discount price on a monthly basis. One day Dr. Oliveira had some differences with the German restaurant owner, who from then on - in his imagination - became his enemy. This was the reason he wanted to evict him right away. He told me that we should not have our meals there any more. I told my boss that though I worked for his firm, I would like to go on choosing my eating place at my pleasure. This was the end. Consequently I was fired and also had to leave the comfortable rent-free apartment. We then rented two front rooms in a one-story house near the center of the city, which was the residence of a German upholsterer and his wife.

I then took on part-time jobs as an English and Portuguese correspondent at three local firms. In the evening I gave English lessons. After some time we moved again. This time we rented a little one-story house with four small rooms and a little garden, which we had all for ourselves. This house was near my parents' home. The garden, which lay abandoned at the time we rented the house, was soon in full blossom, as I planted many beautiful flowers and plants that grew very fast. It became a pleasure to sit in the garden. Most of Seldi's and my pupils lived nearby in very fashionable houses as our modest home was situated in an elegant neighborhood. This was very practical for us as we could give a great part of our lessons at home. Gradually we bought more furniture and household goods, as well as an icebox. The iceman woke us up every day very early in the morning, banging against the entrance door and leaving a long block of ice on the step. It was only a few years later that I imported an electric Philco refrigerator from the United States. We still keep it at our beach house in Atlantida. We did not have a kitchen stove. After our oldest children were born, Seldi heated the milk bottles and baby food and everything else on a small portable Primus cooker, made in Sweden, using kerosene. We had a very primitive shower heated by alcohol. It was only several years later, after moving to our own house, that we installed an electric shower and bought a gas stove.

We started practically from nothing. Every new acquisition for our house was a real conquest and we always enjoyed it very much. All this was completely different from the way young Jewish couples here start their married life nowadays. In many instances their parents give them a furnished apartment, a car, a refrigerator, a washing machine and everything else that makes life more comfortable - often only to get divorced shortly after.

On May 20, 1944, our first child was born, a beautiful baby daughter, Judith Vivien, our pride and joy. Some time later, on October 24, 1945, Ruben George was born. It made us very happy indeed that now we had a daughter and a son who could grow up and play together. Judith started to talk at a very early age. We told her stories in German, from children's books such as *Max und Moritz* and *Struwelpeter.* She soon knew the verses by heart and repeated them in German word for word.

From the earliest age on we started speaking German and English with all of our six children. In this way they learned these languages the easy way and spoke them without any effort, just by hearing and repeating, long before starting to go to school. Later we hired private teachers for all of them for English, German, French and Hebrew. I believe this is the best investment we ever could have made. None of our children became overburdened. The knowledge of languages, especially English, is absolutely essential nowadays and the earlier a child starts learning, the better and easier it is. As a matter of fact, both our daughters, Judith and Miriam, made this their profession.

When we were expecting our third child, in 1948, we realized that we would not have enough space in the small rented house. I then bought a plot, 11m x 66m, in a nice but not yet developed neighborhood and built my own house on it. After my mother's death, my father moved into our new home when it was ready. After a few years, however, the house became too small for us, as we had four children by then. Besides, since I had no experience at all when I built this house, various construction defects became evident. So in 1956 I tore it down, except for the foundations. I built a new, more spacious and comfortable house, in which we have lived until the present date. Being a gardener by original profession, I had great pleasure organizing our big garden, planting every ornamental tree, fruit tree, shrub and flower myself. Today we have grapefruits, oranges, lemons, grapes and various other fruit in our garden. During construction, we moved to an apartment just beside our house, so I could look down at the building site and watch it at any time. In 1950 I bought my first automobile, a British Standard Vanguard. On June 30, 1956, before we moved to our remodeled house, my father died pacefully and unexpectedly in our rented apartment, at the age of eighty-two.

For severval years, I was the director of the tennis department of a local Jewish recreation club. Tennis has always been my favorite sport, since an early age. However, when arriving here and trying to get settled, I had to interrupt this activity. Many years later I started to play again. I played with great enthusiasm, singles and doubles, until the age of seventy-seven.

Besides playing tennis on Saturdays and Sundays, during the rest of the week I went swimming at the pool of a local club near our home. I still go swimming daily whenever possible. Usually Seldi comes along. She swims much faster than I.

Seldi and I like to travel very much. We began traveling abroad in 1951. At first, we would travel for periods of over three months every few years. Later we traveled every year, for about two months. Now we travel every year for six weeks. Our first two trips abroad, in 1951 and 1955, were to the United States. During our first trip I bought a used 1946 convertible Ford car in Detroit. We drove to San Francisco to visit my aunt Edith Straus and my cousins. My cousin Werner sold the car for me after we left.

During our second trip, in 1955, I bought a 1951 Cadillac convertible car from a used car dealer in New York. It was a beautiful car, which gave us enormous pleasure on the road. We traveled with this car for two months, starting in New York City. At the end of our trip I returned the car in New York to the same car dealer from whom I bought it. I put on a total mileage of about 20,000 km., crossing the United States from one end to the other. It was a wonderful trip. We visited Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, South Dakota, Wyoming, Idaho, Montana, Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee, North Carolina, Virginia, Washington, D.C., Maryland, Philadephia, and New York.

On the way, we went through Badlands National Park, Mt. Rushmore National Monument, the Blackfoot Indian Reservation in Montana, the Bighorn Mountains, Yellowstone National Park, Glacier National Park, Mt. Rainier National Park, Olympic National Park, Crater Lake National Park, Redwood Highway 101, the ghost town Virginia City in Montana, Grand Canyon National Park, the Petrified Forest National Monument, the Painted Desert, the Hopi Indian pueblos at Wupatki National Monument in Arizona, the huge Carlsbad Caverns in Texas, the Great Smoky Mountains and many other beautiful places.

Altogether we visited over sixty different countries, from Andorra to Zululand, in the twenty five trips abroad, which we made between 1951 and 2001. We both like to travel to far-away and exotic countries. Our visits have included Burma, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Nepal, New Zealand, Russia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Swaziland, Taiwan, Thailand, Tahiti, and Vietnam. We traveled more than once to many of these countries. We often rent a car on our trips, as this is the best and most comfortable way to see a country and to enjoy nature. We also travel frequently to Europe and Israel. Our youngest daughter, Miriam, born in 1961, has accompanied us on many of these trips, as she also likes to travel to far-away countries.

GETTING INTO BUSINESS

When the war was over and international trade could be resumed, I contacted various foreign exporters and some manufacturers, with the purpose of representing them here on a commission basis. I managed to obtain the exclusive representation of several U.S. exporters and a few manufacturers and, later, of British and French exporters and some French manufacturers of automotive equipment and parts, tools and machinery for overhauling automobile and truck engines. Most of the owners of the U.S. export firms where Jewish people.

I also was able to locate the Wolff brothers, the former owners of printing factories in Berlin. I first got in touch with Mr. Wolff, who always took my father along to the soccer matches in Berlin. During the war, he and his wife, who was a friend of my mother's, lived in Italy. Later they went to live in Lyon where Mr. Wolff once again opened a postcard factory, called Rhodania, just as he had owned in Germany. He printed colored postcards for birthdays, Xmas, Easter, etc. The text at the bottom was printed in the language required by the importer. At that time such postcards were not yet printed in Brazil. I sold the Rhodania postcards very well here. Through Mr. Wolff, I contacted his brother, William, who had emigrated to England. He formerly was the owner of the big Schwerdtfeger lithography and offset printing factory in Berlin, where I was an apprentice for one year before changing to gardening. William had become the partner of a big firm in London, Giesen & Wolff, who were making large multicolored prints. They produced different series, such as landscapes, children, etc. I also sold these products very well in the local market. There was no competition here for Wolff & Giesen's quality prints. I was glad that by selling their merchandise here, I could pay back in some way the favors the two Wolff brothers had extended to us in Germany,.

Due to wartime manufacturing and shipping restrictions, there was great demand in Brazil for all types of merchandise immediately after the war. I sold many different products to local firms, and soon most of the well-established firms, wholesalers and retailers, became my customers. In the beginning these goods included combs, buttons, plastic bathroom fixtures, tumblers, hangers, fountain pens, ballpoint pens, chinaware, glassware, pot cleaners, alarm clocks, flashlight bulbs and batteries, costume jewelry, playing cards, greeting cards, prints, sewing machines, tools and many other products, supplied to my customers mostly by several U.S. and also by some European exporters.

After Brazil had used up most of its foreign exchange accumulated during the war years, when there had not been much to import, the government gradually restricted imports, which then were permitted only for essential goods. Therefore I had to drop most of my previous lines of merchandise for which no import licenses were available any longer and had to look for essential goods, not yet manufactured in Brazil and which thus could still be imported.

One day in 1947, I received an offer from the firm with which I worked most, State Export Co., Inc., of New York City. The offer was for "sealed beams," Westinghouse brand, packed in cartons of 48. At the time I did not know at all what "sealed beams" meant and it took me some time to find out that this was a sealed type of automotive headlights, used in most of the U.S. cars at the time. I then offered these lamps to a local wholesale firm that sold automotive spare parts. They immediately placed an order for this merchandise. This was the beginning of my specializing in all kinds of automotive spare parts, and later on, roller and ball bearings for automotive use as well. Brazil had no automotive industry at the time and all cars and

spare parts had to be imported, mostly from the United States. In addition to this, the roads were very bad, which resulted in frequent car and truck breakdowns. Therefore, there was great demand for automobile parts, and I obtained many large orders from my local customers. The volume of my business increased very much from that time on, and so did my income.

In 1953, by the time I was thirty-five years old, besides my own residence I had built two apartment houses and a summer house at Atlantida, a beach about 130 kilometers from Porto Alegre. Seldi designed these buildings and then we gave her drawings to engineering firms, who drew up the blueprints. I had also bought a nice plot in Gramado, a fashionable resort in the mountainside.

Gradually, however, the exchange situation worsened in Brazil and the government was forced to introduce import quotas for each firm. Import licenses became increasingly difficult to obtain. Due to serious bureaucratic difficulties connected with the obtention of these import licenses, my customers did not want to import directly anymore.

To continue in the business, I established my own import firm at the end of 1956. From then on I directly imported automotive spare parts, mostly for Ford and Chevrolet vehicles, genuine Ford and G.M. brands, as well as non-genuine replacement parts. For the most part, I imported ignition parts, distributors and carburetors and their parts, engine parts, ring gears and pinions, crankshafts, camshafts, transmission gears, etc. I also imported automotive lamps and ball and roller bearings for automotive use.

I imported mostly from the United States but also, in a smaller scale, from France, England, Japan, East Germany and Czechoslovakia. I sold the imported goods to the local market in Porto Alegre and vicinity, and to São Paulo and some other Brazilian cities. Some traveling salesmen sold my goods to customers in many cities in the states of Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina and Paraná. I sold mainly to wholesalers, to Ford and Chevrolet distributors, to bus companies, and to wholesale and retail stores selling automotive spare parts.

Altogether, my business activities extended over a period of fifty years, from 1945 to 1995. First I worked as an import agent, from 1945 to 1955. Then, from 1956 to 1995, I had my own import firm. During all these years, Seldi always helped me and cooperated in every way. She took care of the bank work and accompanied my import license applications at the import-export division of Banco do Brasil. This was very important as a prior import license had to be obtained for each import. These licenses were ever more difficult to get due to Brazil's increasing lack of foreign exchange.

When Seldi traveled to São Paulo in later years, to participate in meetings of *Na'amat*, the Zionist Pioneer Women's organization, she connected this activity with business, visiting my customers there, obtaining new good clients, and getting important orders from customers in São Paulo. In later years - when the import situation got more and more difficult - business with clients in São Paulo was a very essential part of my business. Our firm was strictly a family business. I had my office at home and the deposit with all merchandise I had in stock was in a room in the back of my garage. I had an employee for only a few years. Before and after that, Seldi also took care of packing the goods to be sent to clients in other cities and of many other activities related to the business. Without Seldi's permanent and efficient assistance, I would not have been able to manage my business during this long period.

However, due to the ever-worsening economic situation in Brazil, with a monthly inflation rate of nearly 30% at its peak and the subsequent high cost of the U.S. import dollar, I stopped importing in 1990 and gradually sold out the remainder of my stock. The demand for imported automotive replacement parts had decreased drastically, since an automobile industry had in the meantime been created in Brazil and many spare parts factories had been set up. Finally, in early 1995, after having liquidated my stock, I closed my firm, which had existed for various decades.

OUR ZIONIST ACTIVITIES ON BEHALF OF ISRAEL AND THE JEWISH PEOPLE

Seldi and I have long been active in Jewish organizations. In 1948 Seldi was one of the founders of *Na'amat* Pioneer Women in Porto Alegre, the first Brazilian city to have such an organization. She was president of this very active movement for many years. She is now the honorable president of *Na'amat* Porto Alegre and vice-president of *Na'amat* Brazil.

During the Yom Kippur War of 1973, Seldi was among the founders of the Women's Division of *Keren Hayesod* - United Israel Appeal - in Porto Alegre, becoming its first President. The Porto Alegre Women's Division was the first of its kind in Brazil. She also helped found Women's Divisions in Curitiba and in São Paulo. In 1992 Seldi was a founder and first president of Porto Alegre's Jewish Women's Council, an umbrella organization for all women's groups in this city. Seldi derives enormous satisfaction from seeing the Jewish organizations which she helped establish here grow and develop, attracting the younger generation *(Dor Hemshech)* as well, and thus guaranteeing the continuity of Jewish communal endeavors.

Seldi was *Na'amat's* Latin American delegate at the international meeting of the World Jewish Congress in Jerusalem in 1986, on the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary. In 1997 she was a delegate to the World Zionist Congress, the World Zionist Labor Congress and the World *Na'amat* Congress in Jerusalem. She also was the Brazilian delegate to the *Na'amat* USA congress in Washington, D.C., in the same year.

In 1998, Seldi received the Excellency Award *(Yakir Keren Hayesod)*, given for the first time during Israel's Jubilee Year to fifty prominent Zionist leaders from thirty-two different countries, among them Shimon Peres, Yitzhak Shamir and Shlomo Hillel. Three Brazilian personalities received this award in 1998. In the future it will be presented annually to twelve distinguished persons, men and women, from all over the world. It is bestowed on outstanding leaders of *Keren Hayesod* - United Israel Appeal. The award, a polished brass figure embedded in Jerusalem stone, is prominently displayed in our living room. The plaque attached to it bears the inscription "in recognition of exemplary solidarity with the State of Israel and outstanding service to the Jewish People." Our whole family felt very proud of Seldi for having been chosen among the few people in the world on whom this distinguished award was bestowed, a just recognition of her committment, voluntarism and tireless, abnegated devotion to Israel and the Zionist cause.

Seldi, in spite of her important work on behalf of *Hemshech*, the continuity of the Jewish people, the Zionist cause and *Medinat Israel*, is a very modest person and usually declines any homages, interviews for magazines, etc. Therefore she did not accept the proposal of a Jewish city councilor some time ago to become an honorary citizen of Porto Alegre

My activities on behalf of the Jewish people cannot be compared in intensity to Seldi's. For a long time, I was a member of the board of directors of the *Keren Hayesod* (the Foundation Fund), which is the financial arm of the Zionist Organization, established in 1920. I continue to work for this organization. I also was a member of the board of directors of the local Zionist Organization, as well as vice-president and member of the board of the *Keren Kayemet Leisrael (KKL)*, the Jewish National Fund for the acquisition, development and afforestation of land in Israel, founded in 1901.

I was a member of the board of directors of Sibra (the local German-Jewish Synagogue Association) for several years. From 1964 to 1967, I was its president. Recognizing the importance of Jewish education, I was a member of the board of directors of the local Jewish school, Colégio Israelita Brasileiro, which has over seven hundred pupils, from kindergarten to high school. The complete school curriculum in Brazil takes eleven years only.

I was a delegate to various national and international meetings, such as the Brazilian Zionist Congress in Rio de Janeiro in 1948; the Sixth Congress in Montevideo in 1961 of Centra, the roof organization of the Latin American Jewish Communities originating from Central Europe; and the Fourth Conference of Jewish Communities in Latin America in São Paulo in 1962.

I wrote several articles on Jewish and Zionist questions which were published in local Jewish newspapers and magazines. I have often addressed Zionist youth and adult organizations, Jewish public meetings and synagogue functions.

KLAUS AND SELDI'S CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

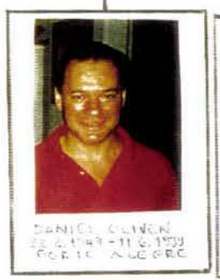
Seldi and I had six children, all born in Porto Alegre:
Judith Vivien, Ruben George, Daniel, Miguel Roberto, Miriam Frances and Gabriel Fernando















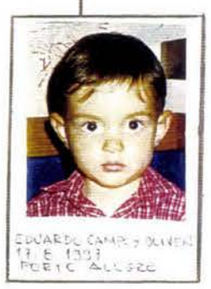
















1. JUDITH VIVIEN was born on May 20, 1944. She first attended Colégio Farroupilha and later Colégio Israelita Brasileiro. She studied education at the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul in Porto Alegre and majored in English. Afterwards she went to graduate school and received a degree in educational psychology. Judith was active in the Jewish youth movement *Ichud Habonim Dror*. When she was seventeen, she lived in Israel for a year, studying at the *Machon Madriche chutz laaretz*, the seminary for foreign youth instructors, in Jerusalem.

After returning from Israel, Judith Vivien taught Jewish culture at Colégio Israelita Brasileiro. Later she and her friend, Renée Stein, opened an English course for children, called Lollypop. She eventually stopped teaching at this school and now specializes in teaching English to physicians and other academic professionals, preparing some of them for fellowships, residencies or other professional activities in English speaking countries.

In 1965 Judith married Moacyr Scliar.

PART V - SELDI'S ANCESTORS

THE REIFEN FAMILY - HASSIDIM AND ZIONISTS

Seldi's paternal ancestors, the Reifen family, came from Galicia, which belonged to Poland until 1772, when it was annexed by Austria. In 1919, after the end of World War I, this region returned to Poland. Galicia had a very large Jewish population. It became a hassidic citadel. The Reifens are a very traditional Jewish hassidic family. They were orthodox and deeply religious Jews.

Hassidism is a popular religious movement. It originated in Podolia, a province of the Ukraine, around the middle of the eighteenth century. It was founded by Israel ben Eliezer (ca. 1700-1760), born in Podolia. He became known as *Baal Shem Tov,* or the Guardian of the Good Name. He traveled through Galicia, Volhynia and Podolia to spread his movement. He taught that all are equal before the Almighty - the ignorant no less than the learned - and that purity of heart is superior to a person's study and knowledge. He proclaimed the Faith in God and Joy of Life. God is in nature and in every living creature. Heartfelt love of the Holy One is more important than prayers and even the study of the Torah and talmudic erudition. To laugh, to sing and to dance with the intention of praising the Almighty is the highest form of prayer. To do good to one's fellow people is more important than the strict observance of all 613 commandments, or *mitzvot.*

According to Nathan Ausubel in his *Pictorial History of the Jewish People,* Hassidism was a reaction to the miserable and backward conditions, abject poverty, and ignorance, under which most of the Jews in East European countries lived in the middle of the 17th century. Jewish life had rapidly declined after Chmielnicki's Ukrainian Cossac hordes had devastated it a few decades earlier, murdering hundreds of thousands of Jews on the way, during their uprising against the Polish landowners and the Catholic clergy. Religious worship had become formalistic. Torah learning, traditionally obligatory for all Jews, had greatly deteriorated. Only a learned and well-to-do elite were qualified by a knowledge of Hebrew and rabbinic literature to devote themselves to the study of the law. The great majority of Jews were barely able to recite their prayers in the sacred tongue. Thus they were no longer able to find guidance and consolation in the Jewish religion.

It is no wonder that under these conditions Hassidism with its new teachings, spread rapidly through the simple Jewish population of Galicia, Poland, the Ukraine and other parts of Eastern Europe. Hassidism created a religious revolution in Jewish life of its time.

At the center of the Hassidic movement stood the *Tzaddik* (The Righteous One), also called *Admor*, a Hebrew acronym, or simply Rebbe (or *Wunderrebbe* later on, if miracles were attributed to him). *Admor* is formed of the Hebrew initials of *Adonenu Morenu ve-Rabbenu*, Our Lord, Master, and Teacher. The Hassidim (The Pious) regarded the *Tzaddik* as the intermediary between God and man. The *Tzaddik's* words were regarded as miraculous and prophetic. The pupils or simply the faithful ones would travel - sometimes from far away - to see their *Tzaddik,* to listen to his teachings, to seek his advice and counsel, and to obtain his blessing Sometimes the faithful supplicants had to wait for hours or even days until they were finally admitted to the *Tzaddik's* court and could see him and speak to him. On Shabbat and

Holy Days multitudes of Hassidim would gather at the festive table *(Tisch)* of the *Tzaddik*. "Courts" formed around popular *rebbes* in various East European cities.



The palace of the *Wunderrabbi* in Sadagora

While some *Tzaddikim* lived in poverty, others - like the *Tzaddik* of Sadagora, for instance - lived a life of luxury and opulence. When they went out, it was often in an elegant coach and entourage. At first, the *Tzaddikim* were chosen for their piety, wisdom and leadership. Originally one of the *Tzaddik's* pupils was chosen to succeed him, but the title eventually became hereditary, passing from father to son. In the Ukraine, however, dynasties of *Tzaddikim* were established from the outset. Later, the various dynasties fought among themselves for hegemony and influence over the Jewish masses. All this would eventually lead to the movement's degeneration.

Only a few of the hassidic dynasties escaped the Holocaust and reestablished their courts elsewhere. These include the dynasties of the Belzer Rebbe (originally from Galicia), now in Tel Aviv; the Gurer (or Gerer) Rebbe (from Poland); and the Rebbe of Sadigura, also called Sadagora (from the Bukovina), both now in Jerusalem. The Gurer Rebbe was able to transfer his entire community to Israel via Shanghai, with the help of a Japanese diplomat in Lithuania, who was declared later on one of the Righteous Gentiles. The Jerusalem Sadigura Institutions maintain a synagogue, a *mikveh* (ritual bath), a yeshiva, an educational institute, a central charity, a Talmud Torah school, as well as a luxurious synagogue in Tel Aviv.

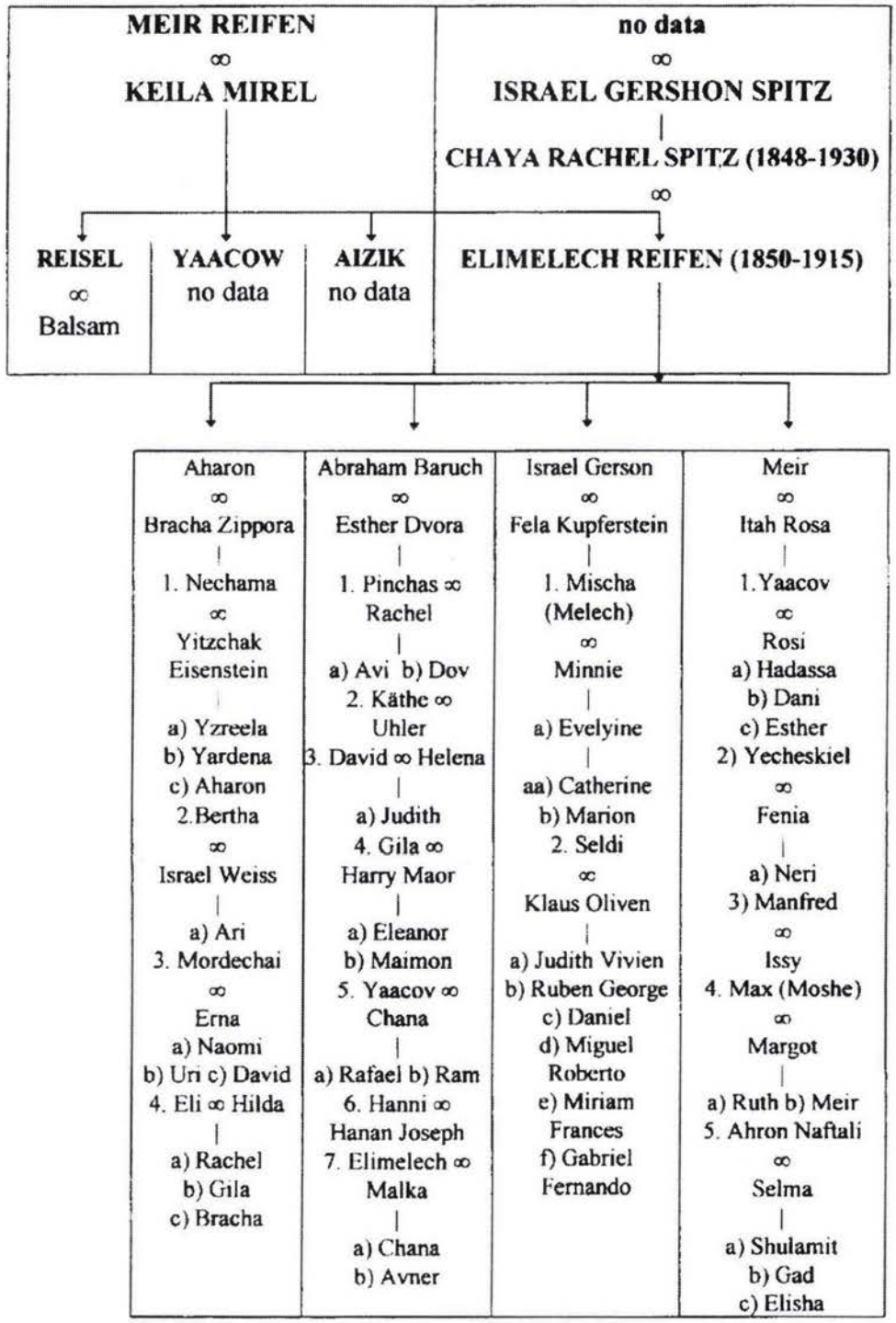
The best known and by far the biggest of these hassidic movements is *Chabad* (from Lubavitch in Russia), the seat of which is now in New York, with branches all over the world, well organized and very active. *Chabad* was headed by the Lubavitcher Rebbes. There are *Chabad* centers all over the world, some in such faraway places as Anchorage in Alaska, Shanghai, Bangkok or Kathmandu in Nepal. They are headed by an international network of *shlichim* (emissaries), young couples sent to each center by the Lubavitch headquarters in Brooklyn, to open up Jewish schools, synagogues, perform weddings, bar mitzvahs, lead *seders* (Passover ceremonies), etc. *Chabad* is a Hebrew acronym, formed from the initials of *Chochmah, Binah va-Daat*, wisdom, understanding, and knowledge. It was founded by Shneour Zalman of Lyady (1747-1813). *Chabad* considered the *Tzaddik* a spiritual leader but not a miracle worker. Their religious philosophy teaches that "there is no vacuum in which God is not present." *Chabad* hassidim stress the observance of the commandments but oppose excessive ascetic practices and fasts. The emphasis is upon Torah study and intellectual contemplations, not emotional ecstasy. Humility, saintliness, joy and melody all play an important role in this widespread movement.

The Reifens were a very early Zionist family. They belonged to the religious Zionist movement *Mizrahi.* Seldi's paternal grandparents were Elimelech and Chaya Rachel Reifen. Already in the twenties, long before the Nazis seized power in Germany, Elimelech's grandchildren - the four children of his son Aharon - went on *aliya*h, emigrating from Germany to Palestine. In 1931, Elimelech's grandson David Reifen, son of Abraham Baruch and Esther Dvora, followed. A few years later David brought his parents and his six siblings to Israel. Elimelech and his wife Chaya Rachel had eighteen grandchildren altogether. The numerical value of the two letters that compose the Hebrew word חי - meaning life - is eighteen. Thus it is highly symbolic that the lives of all eighteen grandchildren of Elimelech and Chaya Rachel were miraculously saved from the Holocaust. All of them went to Israel, except for Seldi and her brother Mischa.

It can be said without any exaggeration that the Reifen family is a Pioneer Family. Many of its members played an important part in the foundation and upbuilding of *Medinat Israel.* Without such pioneers, the State of Israel never could have been established. As we say in Hebrew:

כל הכבוד - May they be honored!

The descendants of Seldi Reifen's paternal great-grandparents



ELIMELECH REIFEN - SELDI'S PATERNAL GRANDFATHER
A PIOUS HASSID AND FOLLOWER OF THE REBBE OF SADAGORA

1. MEIR REIFEN, Seldi's paternal great-grandfather, married **KEILA MIREL.** They had three sons, Elimelech, Aizik and Jaacov, and a daughter, Reisel, who married Balsam.

SELDI'S FAMILY TREE



ELIMELECH REIFEN
DRUMBIWAI - POLEN

CHAYA RACHEL REIFEN
DRUMBIWAI - POLEN
PLAVEN



EVA SARAH KUPFERSTEIN
MOSKAU 1892 (?)



ISRAEL GEORG REIFEN
MAJDANEK, LUBLIN 1943



FEIGA REIFEN geb



SELDI (REIFEN) OLIVEN
Berlin 21 XI. 1919



KLAUS OLIVEN
Berlin 26 I. 1918



JUDITH VIVIEN OLIVEN
PORTO ALEGRE 26. V. 1944



RUBEN GEORGE OLIVEN
PORTOALEGRE 24. X. 1945



DANIEL OLIVEN
PORTE ALEGRE 22. II. 1947



MIGUEL ROBERTO OLIVEN
PORTO ALEGRE 2. IX. 1952



MIRIAM FRANCESOLIVEN
PORTO ALEGRE 28 VI 1961



GABRIEL FERNANDO OLIVEN
PORTO ALEGRE 16. III. 1965



Elimelech Reifen



Chaya Rachel Reifen

1.1. ELIMELECH REIFEN, Meir's son and Seldi's paternal grandfather, was born in Dombrowo near Tarnów in Galicia, Poland, in 1850. He married **CHAYA RACHEL,** née Spitz, born in 1848. Her father was Israel Gershon. Elimelech was a very pious Jew. He belonged to the hassidic sect of Sadagora. This sect is named after the small town of Sadagora (Sadigura), a few kilometers from Czernowitz (now called Chernovtsy), a town in the Bukovina that had a very large Jewish population. This region was annexed by Romania in 1918 and is now part of the Russian Ukraine.

The faithful hassidim (The Pious) of the whole province came to the town of Sadagora to consult the famous *Wunderrebbe*, Moshe David Friedman, whose renown had spread far beyond the borders of the Ukraine. Rebbe Moshe David owned a big palace in Sadagora, where he received his followers.

Elimelech was a tradesman and Chaya Rachel a milliner. The Reifens were very poor in Galicia, facing very hard times. Elimelech worked for a local gentry. When his employer died, Elimelech lost his job and income and as a result could no longer provide for his family. So in 1905, at the advice of their hassidic Rebbe Mottele Alexander, Elimelech, Chaya Rachel and their four sons emigrated to Plauen in the Vogtland, in the province of Saxony, in Germany. Plauen was a large manufacturing center for lace and embroidery, for which there was a big market at the time. An influx of Hassidic families from Poland began in Plauen then - all engaged in embroidery, lace manufacture and trade.

Once, after Elimelech had already been established in the Plauen lace business and saved some money, he wanted to buy a house for his family. A real estate broker offered Elimelech two houses to choose from, telling him that the price for both houses was about the same, although one house had advantages over the other. When the broker showed him the better house, Elimelech looked out of the window and noticed the steeple of a nearby church. Thereupon Elimelech told the broker that he would not buy this house, because he did not want to be constantly reminded of the church, which had inflicted so much suffering on the Jews. Instead, he bought the other house, which though inferior did not have the disturbing view of the church steeple.

Chaya Rachel, Elimelech's wife, was a dedicated Zionist, who used to ask any person traveling to Palestine at that time to bring her some earth from the Holy Land. She was an educated

and very intelligent woman, reading German newspapers and books. She taught herself German, to be able to read *Die Jüdische Rundschau,* the only Zionist newspaper in Germany, which was published twice a week. In the mid-twenties she sold her jewelry, so that there would be enough money to send her two granddaughters, Nechama and Bertha, on *aliyah.*

Elimelech and Chaya Rachel both died in Plauen, Elimelech on August 8, 1915, and his wife on *Adar* 13, 1930. In the 1980s, their grandson Ahron Reifen, Seldi's cousin, who lives at the religious Kibbutz Ein Hanatziv, took the initiative to restore his grandparent's tombs at the Jewish cemetery in Plauen, which at that time was part of the German Democratic Republic. They had not received any care for a long time and the Hebrew inscription on Elimelech's tombstone had become illegible. Ahron was assisted in this task by the retired Protestant minister Vödisch in Plauen. Vödisch had undertaken the maintenance of the derelict Jewish cemetery, together with some other Christian volunteers. The land on which Plauen's Jewish cemetery was erected was bought by the *Israelitische Religionsgemeinde Plauen* in 1898 at a price of 4,500 marks. The cemetery was inaugurated one year later.

Ahron and Vödisch encountered great difficulty finding anyone in East Germany who could restore the long Hebrew inscription on the tombstone. At long last they succeeded and the gravestones were reinaugurated. Pastor Vödisch also had the entrance hall of the cemetery rebuilt. He inaugurated a permanent display there. Pictures of Elimelech and the Reifen Family and various objects are on show in the hall. At the entrance to Plauen's Protestant cemetery, Vödisch had a *Magen David* erected, with a cross on top, to signify that Christianism originated from Judaism. Ahron, his wife Selma, and Vödisch exchanged many letters. Ahron and Selma visited the minister in Plauen once, and he and his wife visited them in Israel several times.

Under the Communist regime, we tried to travel to Plauen to visit the graves of Seldi's grandparents, Elimelech and Chaya Rachel. However, we could not obtain the necessary permit from the German Democratic Republic's authorities in Berlin, because there was no hotel available in Plauen, and without staying overnight, one could not visit any city in the GDR, except of course Berlin. Finally in 1990, after the collapse of the Wall, we were able to visit Plauen, without staying there overnight, traveling by railway from Berlin. Pastor Vödisch met us at the railway station and was very helpful and friendly during our short visit, driving us around in his Trabant car. We visited the Jewish cemetery and the graves of Seldi's ancestors there, and after that Vödisch drove us to the place where the liberal synagogue once stood. An Adventist church stands there now. He also took us to the back of a building where the orthodox synagogue was once located, the place where the Reifens used to pray.

Plauen once had an active Jewish community. It had originally been founded by German Jews in 1884. At the beginning of the 20th century, a great number of Jewish families came to Plauen, mainly from Poland and Galicia (the *Galitzianers*).

Plauen's Jewish Community reached its peak in 1912, numbering about nine hundred. It consisted of three separate groups, German Jews, Polish Jews, and Jews from Galicia. The Jews from Galicia were mostly Hassidim. There were great differences between these three groups. To better understand the situation, I believe it is worthwhile to quote an excerpt

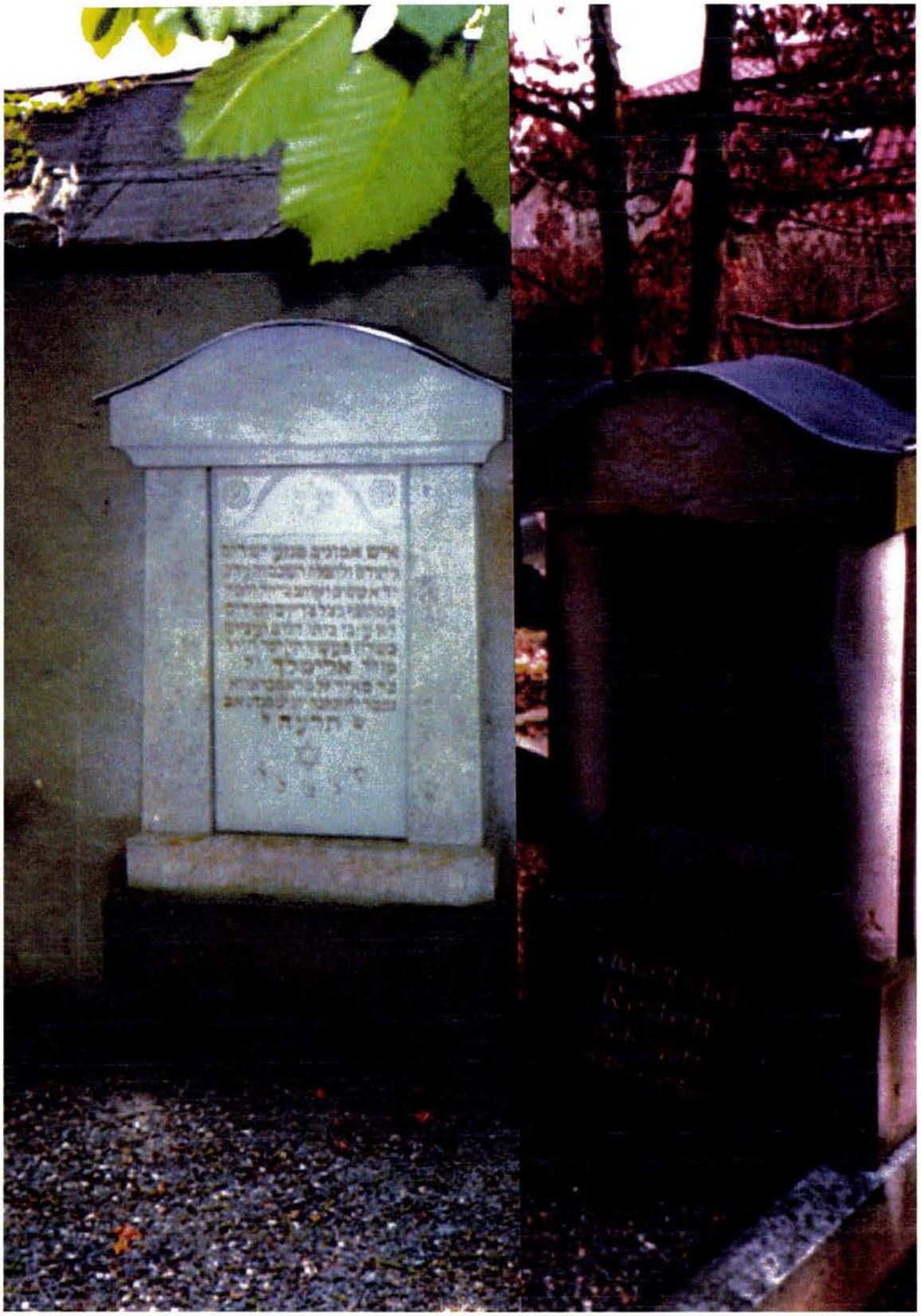
from an article about the Jewish Community in Plauen, written by its preacher Emanuel Heimann before World War I.

> "Naturally there was a yawning chasm separating the members, in a cultural and even more in a religious way but also in a social one. In the middle were the German retailers. [...] To the right was the exclusive group of wholesalers and manufacturers, and to the left, the not-very-highly-thought-of Eastern Jewish small tradesmen, who in turn were divided into two circles that fought greatly among themselves - the Polish and the *Galitzianer* Jews. Even the children of these three classes stayed well away from eath other at the schoolyard. The religious distance was even greater. All religious tendencies of Judaism were represented here, from the liberal minded assimilationist, who never entered a synagogue to the fanatic Hassid, who also did not do so, because the service there was not sufficiently orthodox."

The orthodox Jews, mostly from Eastern Europe - among them the Reifens - had their own small prayer room, called *Schul* or *Shtiebel*. They would not pray in the liberal synagogue of the German Jews. Meir Reifen, Seldi's uncle, father of Yaacov and Ahron Reifen, was one of the founders of the orthodox synagogue and religious school in Plauen. Some thirty to forty orthodox families supported these institutions. The local Zionist Organization and the religious Zionist youth movement, *Tzeire Mizrahi*, were mostly made up of the same people. Various members of the Reifen family belonged to these Zionist organizations. When the new liberal synagogue was inaugurated in 1930, the orthodox synagogue and religious school moved to the place vacated by the liberal synagogue. The new liberal synagogue which incorporated a community center, built in a modern architectonic style, lasted eight years only. It was burned down in the Pogrom Night of November 9/10, 1938. Only one Jewish woman lives in Plauen today, Minia Kohn. She and her family are engaged in preserving the old Jewish cemetery and the memory of Plauen's former Jewish community. She is in close touch with Judith Reifen Ronen, a great-granddaughter of Elimelech Reifen, who is involved in the same task.

On May 2, 2000, the world-wide Memorial Day for the victims of the Holocaust was celebrated at Plauen's Jewish cemetery for the city's former Jewish residents, who perished between 1933 and 1945. On this occasion a memorial stele was inaugurated for the victims of Plauen's Jewish Community under the Nazi regime. The stele was a one-man's project, the initiative of Jakob Kohn, from Kiryat Ono, Israel, the chairman of the Association of former Plauen Jews (Sakif), which has its seat in Israel. Minia Kohn, Jakob Kohn's niece, and Judith Reifen Ronen, Seldi's relative, who lives in Tel Aviv, conducted the ceremony in Hebrew, English and German.

It was held in the presence of newspaper correspondents, family members of former Plauen Jews, who came from Israel and the USA, and about one hundred Plauen citizens. The mayor of Plauen and the president of the Jewish Community of Dresden, as well as former friends of the victims spoke on this solemn occasion. Gad Reifen, Ahron's son, from the religious kibbutz Ein Hanatziv, recited *kaddish* and read in Hebrew the inscription on the stele from Psalm 102, "Let this be written for ages to come." Judith Ronen translated the German inscription into Hebrew and English for the foreign guests. At the end of the ceremony people from Plauen put flowers, and Judith Ronen placed a stone from the Holy Land on top of the stele and the Israeli flag in front of it, as a symbol that the Jewish People survived in spite of terrible persecution and established their own proud nation, Israel.



Tombs of Elimelech and Chaya Rachel Reifen

THE DESCENDANTS OF ELIMELECH AND CHAYA RACHEL REIFEN

Elimelech and Chaya Rachel had four sons: **AHARON, ABRAHAM BARUCH, ISRAEL GERSON** (Seldi's father, named after his maternal grandfather) and **MEIR** (named after his paternal grandfather). The youngest two of Elimelech and Chaya Rachel's four sons and their wives perished in the Holocaust: Israel Gerson and his wife Fela (Seldi's parents), and Meir and his wife Itah Rosa.

1.1.1. AHARON REIFEN married Beracha Zippora. As most of the members of the Reifen Family, they were early Zionists. They moved from Galicia to Plauen, and later from there to Berlin in preparation of their *aliyah.* Aharon died in Germany in the 1920s, before he could go on *aliyah.* Aharon and Beracha Zippora's four children - Nechama, Bertha, Mordechai and Eli - emigrated to Palestine in the mid-twenties, long before the Nazi's rise to power. They were able to bring their mother, Beracha Zippora, who died in Israel.

1.1.1.1. NECHAMA, called Netti, came to Israel, together with her sister Bertha, in 1925. She married Yitzchak Eisenstein, who fought with Trumpeldor against the Arabs in Palestine in 1920 and was among the founders of Moshav Kfar Yecheskiel in Emek Jezreel, where he and his wife lived. In Russia he met Hayim Nahman Bialik, the great Hebrew poet. Yitzchak's daughter Yzreela still treasures a handwritten letter from Bialik to her father and a book this poet dedicated to him. They had three children - Yzreela, Yardena and Aharon - and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Nechama died some years ago at the age of ninety five. She was the matriarch of her family. Her son Aharon stayed at the moshav with his parents and later took over this property. He died not long ago.

Nechama's daughter Yzreela marrried Yitzchak Bloch, who is deceased. They had four daughters and a son. Yitzchak served with the British Army in Italy during WW II. He and his wife moved to Moshav Nahalal in Emek Jezreel. Yzreela, who is over seventy years old, still lives there and personally takes care of the property together with her son Israel, including milk production and crops. In 1999 Seldi, Miriam and I visited Yzreela at her moshav and stayed at her nice home for two nights. Yardena lives at Kibbutz Mizra, not far from her sister Yzreela. She has four sons and one daughter. Her husband Moshe Egozi was a lieutenant colonel in the Israel Defense Force (IDF). During the Yom Kippur War he was the commander of an armed regiment in the Golan Heights. He was killed by the Syrians in an ambush, a few minutes before his eldest son came to meet him. He had fixed that meeting over the phone, but the Syrians overheard the communication.

1.1.1.2. BERTHA was a pediatric nurse, specialized in the care of infants. She lived in Jerusalem, where she died some years ago. She was divorced from Israel Weiss and had an only son, Ari. He lives in Haifa and is an artist dealing with graphics. Ari has three daughters. Bertha was the only one of the Reifen Family who ever came to visit us and stay at our home in Porto Alegre. On her way back she spent a few days with Seldi's brother, Mischa, in São Paulo. On one of our visits to Israel, we stayed a few days at her small apartment in Jerusalem. Bertha died at the age of eighty-nine.

1.1.1.3. MORDECHAI (formerly Manfred), who learned to be a watchmaker in Plauen, came to Palestine together with his brother Eli in 1929. He changed his family name from Reifen to Tal, which is the Hebrew word for "dew." The German word "Reif," which means "dew" is similar to the German word "Reifen," which means "hoop." Mordechai went to live at Kibbutz Givat Brenner, one of the largest kibbutzim in Israel, established in 1928. He married Erna. Their three children are Naomi, Uri and David.

1.1.1.4. ELIMELECH, called Eli, a very competent history teacher, was loved and admired by his many pupils. He was married to Hilda. They lived at Kvutzat Schiller. He died in 1982. Eli and Hilda's three daughters are Rachel, Gila and Beracha.

1.1.2. ABRAHAM BARUCH REIFEN (1884-1946) married Esther Dvora, also called Esther Deborah (1883-1969). In Germany Abraham dealt with lace for which Plauen was quite famous. They made *aliyah* in October 1934. Like his father Elimelech, Abraham was very religious. We visited Esther Dvora in Tel Aviv in 1963. Abraham and Esther Dvora had seven children: Pinchas (formerly Paul), Keila (Käthe), David, Gila (Gisela), Yaacov (Heini), Hanna (Hanni) and Elimelech (Eli). While Abraham' daughters Käthe and Gila used to make the lace in Plauen, he and his eldest son Pinchas went to the fair in Leipzig and other places to sell it there.

1.1.2.1. PINCHAS (formerly Paul) was born in Plauen on July 29, 1908, and died in Tel Aviv on January 20, 1996. He married Rachel Gelbard. In Plauen he was also in charge of accounting for the family business there. He and his siblings Gila and Yaacov came to Israel with the help of the religious world organization Mizrahi. Pinchas arrived in April 1934 and Gila and Yaacov in July 1933. They and their brother David who had come to Israel in 1931 already, before Hitler came to power, were able to bring their parents to Israel, Abraham Baruch and Esther Dvora, as well as their youngest siblings, Hanni and Eli, who all arrived in October 1934. In Israel, Pinchas in the beginning worked in the building industry, like his younger brother David. He worked as a tiler and stone cutter. At that time, in the thirties, the Jewish workers had a very hard time fighting for Jewish work places. The Jewish employers in agriculture and the building industry preferred the cheaper Arab labor. Later Pinchas worked at the Israel Electric Company in Tel Aviv. He was a religious Jew.

Pinchas' wife Rachel came to Israel from Poland through a Jewish youth movement in 1935, when she was eighteen years old. She worked in orchards and then became a nurse. In 1939 she joined the Haganah. Pinchas and Rachel's sons are Arie Abraham (Avi) and Dov. Avi works as an economist at the Ministry of Justice. He is married to Judith, who works at Bank Leumi. They have two daughters, Yifat Esther and Ayala Lea. Yifat is married to Oren Zohar. Dov studied economics and business administration and obtained his B.A and M.B.A. He worked in communication for many years and recently retired.

1.1.2.2 KEILA (Käthe) **MIREL** (a derivation from Miriam), named after her paternal great grandmother, was born in Radomishl, Galicia on January 3, 1910, and died in Tel Aviv in July 1990. When she was about to be born, her mother went back from Germany to the place of her birth in Poland, where her daughter was delivered. Käthe had a German communist boyfriend in Plauen. His name was Uhler. When the Nazis came to power, he went into hiding. Eventually in 1936, while Käthe was in the basement of his hideaway, the Gestapo caught him and he was jailed. Käthe then joined her family in Israel. After the war Uhler returned to Plauen which by then belonged to the German Democratic Republic and got

married. He received a good pension, which the GDR's communist government paid to people who had been politically persecuted under the Nazi regime. Käthe left Israel and returned to Plauen in 1950 to join her love there and marry him after he got divorced. Her mother, Esther, was very upset about her daughter's return to Germany and marriage to a *goy*. She refused for years to speak or write to her, or to talk about her daughter and to see her again. Käthe lost her baby at the ninth month of pregnancy. In 1963, Käthe and her husband got divorced, because - as she once told us when we met her in Berlin - the Communist party mattered more to him than his wife.

After her divorce Käthe moved to West Berlin. Only after Käthe's divorce was her mother Esther willing to see her again. Käthe came for a visit to Israel in the early '60s and became then reconciled with her mother. Käthe died in Tel Aviv some years ago while on a visit to her family. She had no children. We visited her several times in Berlin. She lived in a small suburban apartment, in a building that belongs to the Jewish Community in Berlin. At her recommendation our daughter Miriam was able to stay as a sub-tenant at one of these apartments for some time. With Käthe's help Miriam got in touch with the right person, who assisted her in obtaining German citizenship, thus enabling her to work in all countries belonging to the European Community.

1.1.2.3. DAVID REIFEN (1911-1981) - A SELF-MADE MAN ISRAEL'S FIRST JUVENILE COURT JUDGE

DAVID, Abraham and Ester Dvora's third child, was born in Plauen on July 30, 1911, and died in Tel Aviv on January 26, 1981. He married Helena Gross, who came to Palestine from Berlin in April 1933. She was a kindergarten teacher and expert on "problem" children. David was the first of Abraham's children to go on *aliyah*, in 1931, before the Nazis came to power. He had learned to be a baker in Germany. In 1931 he became a member of Kibbutz Givat Brenner. From 1932 to 1935 he worked in road construction and as a builder in Tel Aviv. In 1933 he organized youth groups from Germany in the *Hanoar Haoved* Movement. First he brought his brother Yaacov and his sister Gila to Palestine, in July 1933, a few months after Hitler came to power in Germany. Later on, his other siblings arrived, as well as his parents. Thus David's entire family was saved from the Holocaust.

In 1935 David was appointed Child Welfare Officer with the Tel Aviv Municipality's Welfare Department. At the same time, he was an instructor at the Tel Aviv Municipality's home for wayward children. In 1938 he graduated as a social worker. In 1941 he organized the first class for deaf children in Tel Aviv. He also was in charge of an evening school for supplementary education for juveniles aged 13 to 17 in Tel Aviv. From 1945 to 1948, under a scholarship he had obtained from the Tel Aviv Municipality, he studied at the London School of Economics and Political Science and graduated as a psychiatric social worker. From 1948 to 1949 he was the commanding officer of the rehabilitation center of the Israel Defense Army. In 1950 he was appointed the first juvenile court judge in Israel and in 1965, chief judge of the juvenile courts in Israel. From 1958 to 1968 he was Israel's representative to the U.N.'s European Consultative Group on the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders. From 1962 to 1968 he was lecturer at the Institute of Criminology, Faculty of Law, Hebrew University,

Jerusalem. From 1962 to 1970 David was vice-president of the International Association of Youth Magistrates. In 1975 he graduated *Magna Cum Laude* from Heidelberg University, receiving his Doctor of Philosophy. That same year he received a research grant from the Max Planck Institute in Freiburg. From 1975 to 1979 he lectured at the Institute of Criminology, Faculty of Law, Tel Aviv University. From 1976 to 1978 he was Chair of the public committee for youth. From 1978 to 1981 he was Head Editor of *Society and Welfar*e, a social work quarterly.

David participated in many Israeli and international congresses in his specialty. He was awarded various prizes. David wrote numerous books and articles in Hebrew, German and English, published also in French and Italian, among them *The Juvenile Court in a Changing Society* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972). His articles, published in Israeli and foreign magazines, deal with juvenile delinquency and related problems,. In 1969 he was granted the first Rubin prize for his book *Mission and Purpose in the Juvenile Court.*

On one of our visits to Israel, David took us to a juvenile detention home for Arab children and introduced us to an Arab boy who had killed his sister because she had "dishonored" her family.

David and Helena had one child, Judith. She is married to Ephraim Ronen, from Bucharest, an aereonautical engineer, who works as program manager for the Israel Aircraft Industries. Judith received her Ph.D. from the Tel Aviv University in 1993 for her thesis on the murdered labor leader Chaim Arlosoroff. She is a manager at the Golda Meir Memorial Association in Tel Aviv. Judith is also the Hebrew editor of the monthly publication *Mitteilungsblatt*. She has endeavored to preserve her father's memory, co-editing a list of his works, published by the Tel Aviv Univerity in 1984, entitled *In Thought and Deed - Dr. David Reifen - an annotated bibliography*. Judith and Ephraim live in Tel Aviv. They have two children, Idit and Oded. Idit married Oren Setter in 1999. Oded, though a few years younger, is a good friend of our daughter Miriam. We always meet the Ronens when we are in Tel Aviv. A warm friendship has developed since 1963 when we visited Israel for the first time and David drove us around to meet various members of the Reifen family. This feeling of family bond fortunately has been passed on to the next generations.



The Reifen Family

Top row left to right:
Israel Gerson, Abraham Baruch, Rachel Chaya (mother of the three adult sons), Ita Rosa (Meir's wife), Meir
2nd row: David (Abraham's son), Kurt (Meir's son), Paul (Abraham's son), Yecheskiel (Meir's son)
front row: Manfred (Meir's son), Mischa (Israel's son), Max (Meir's son), Heini (Abraham's son)

1.1.2.4. GILA (Gisela) was born in Plauen on March 11, 1913. She married Professor Harry Maor from Munich, who died in 1982. He was educated in a yeshiva. He was an autodidact who taught himself languages, especially Arabic. He taught English in Israel and lectured in Germany on sociology, Judaism and the history of the Jewish people, also translating books on these subjects. During the last years of his life he traveled every year from Israel to Wuppertal, Germany, conducting there the religious service on the Jewish High Holy Days. Gila lives in Tel Aviv. She worked with children, including disabled ones, for many years. She specialized in educating challenged children, and today, despite her age, she works with challenged adults. Harry and Gila's children are Eleanor Michael, married to Stephen Jacobs, and Maimon (Karl). Eleanor and her children live in the United States and Maimon, in Germany. Eleanor's children are Gordon, married to Debbie, and Julian.

1.1.2.5. YAACOV (Jacob, also called Heini in Germany) was born in Plauen on December 27, 1914, and died in Rehovot on December 15, 1989. He married Hanna Rahman, a *Sabra* (native-born Israeli), who is deceased. Yaacov and Hanna lived in Rehovot. There Yaacov enlisted in the *Haganah*, the clandestine organization in Palestine for Jewish self-defense. Hanna worked in the intelligence service of the *Haganah*. Later on she worked with children. Yaacov was the head of the social security office in Rehovot and the southern part of Israel for thirty years. He initiated new modern and original methods for treating deprived families and elderly people. He created a modern welfare concept with new institutions and facilities, which became a role model not only in Israel, but also in Europe, especially in England. In 1993, the municipality of Rehovot decided to call a street after Yaacov Reifen, in recognition of his contribution to enlarge the city's social services, especially for senior citizens.

Yaacov and Hanna's two sons, Rafael (Rafi) and Michael Ram (Rami), both live in Rehovot. In 1963, after visiting Israel, we went to Switzerland and rented a car. Yaacov and his son Rafi joined us there during part of our trip. Rafi is married to Patricia who is a teacher, specialized in problem children. She also gives lessons at a teachers' seminar. Rafi obtained his Ph.D. in psychology and he as well as Rami are teaching at the Hebrew University in Rehovot. Rafi and Patricia have three children, Yonathan, Michal and Ohad. Yonathan is married and has a daughter, Noya.

Rami, a physician specialized in gastroenterology, is married to Ella Zanvelman, a nose, ear and throat specialist and plastic surgeon. They have two children, Ruth and Hanan. Rami recently conducted a research showing that hummus, an oriental dish which is a favorite in Israel, consisting of a paste prepared with chickpea, is good for preventing certain kinds of cancer, heart atttacks and keeping skin from aging too fast. Rami has given lectures on radio and TV and published articles in the local press about this matter. He recently obtained a grant of 1.5 million dollars from the European Union to continue his research.

1.1.2 6. HANNA (Hanni) was born in Plauen on December 27, 1917, and died in Tel Aviv in May 1985. Hanni was a hospital nurse, working at the Ihilov Hospital in Tel Aviv. She married Hanan (Heinz) Joseph, who first owned a tobacco store and later on the first driving school in Tel Aviv. He died during a trip to Europe in 1961. They had no children. Seldi and Hanni corresponded for years.

1.1.2.7. ELIMELECH (Eli) was born in Plauen on May 23, 1926, and died in Tel Aviv on April 1, 1977. He married Malka Keuhl, who lives in Tel Aviv. Eli was only fifteen years old when he entered the *Haganah* forces in Palestine. He worked as a private insurance agent and then was in charge of the Tel Aviv branch of one of the largest insurance companies in Israel. Eli died of a heart attack at the age of fifty-one. Malka is a manager at a big law firm. Some years ago she, together with her sister-in-law Gila, initiated a project called Levav, a supporting framework for challenged people who meet regularly at Gila's home. Eli and Malka's children, Hanna and Avner, both live in Tel Aviv. Hanna married Jaacov Philersdorf. They have two children, Elimelech (Eli) and Ran. Avner Reifen is married to Bilha. They have three children, Elimelech (Eli), Gal and Ruth.

1.1.3. ISRAEL GERSON (Georg) was Seldi's and her brother Mischa's father. I will write about him further on.

1.1.4. MEIR married Itah Rosa. They lived in Plauen. They both perished in the Holocaust. Meir was one of the founders of the orthodox synagogue and religious school in Plauen in 1918. He owned a retail store. Meir and Rosa had five sons:

1.1.4.1. YAACOV (Jakob or Kurt) was born on May 23, 1913. He married Rosi. They live at the religious Kibbutz Tirat Tzvi in the Bet Shean region. This prosperous kibbutz has a profitable kosher sausage factory. Yaacov is one of the founders of this kibbutz, which was established in 1937. It is located near the former Jordanian border. In 1947 - a short time before the state of Israel was established - heavy fighting with the Arabs took place there. Yaacov and Rosi have one son, Dani, and two daughters, Hadassa and Esther. Hadassa and Dani both are married and have children; they live at Tirat Tzvi. Seldi and I always visit Yaacov and Rosi whenever we are in Israel.

1.1.4.2. YECHESKIEL and his wife Fenia are both deceased. Their son Neri is an engineer. He changed his family name to Ravid.

1.1.4.3. ELIMELECH (Manfred) married Issi. Manfred was a bank employee. He and his wife lived in Haifa. They had no children. Manfred died on October 7, 1999.

1.1.4.4. MOSHE (Max) lives in Petach Tikva. He married Margot. who died on September 7, 2001. They have two children, Ruti, a teacher and Meir, who works at a high-tech company. Max as well as his elder brother Yecheskiel were volunteers in the British Army during World War II. Max was a driver in a transportation unit.

1.1.4.5. AHRON (Arnold) NAFTALI REIFEN
DEPORTED FROM PLAUEN TO POLAND - FINALLY THE KIBBUTZ

Ahron, named after his uncle, is Meir and Rosa's youngest son. He was born in Plauen on May 17, 1921. In 1988 he wrote an eyewitness report about what happened to him and his parents during the Nazi regime. It was reproduced in the booklet *Zur Geschichte der Israelitischen Religionsgemeinde Plauen i.V.*, 1988, by Hannes Schmidt. I am transcribing this very interesting report:

"In the years 1933-34 the Nazis began the boycott of the Jewish stores. The situation of the Jewish merchants became very bad. Our parents were forced to close their retail store. In the years 1933 to 1938, my older brothers left Germany and went to Israel. I, as the youngest son, stayed with my parents until we were deported to Poland on October 28, 1938. The membership of the Jewish Community became greatly reduced. Before the Nazi regime there were about 800 Jews in Plauen; in 1938 there were only 300 left.

I now wish to report the events which started on October 28, 1938. It happened on a Thursday. I was seventeen years old at the time. I was a member of the religious Zionist youth movement *[Tzeire Mizrahi]*. We met every Thursday evening. On that evening I returned home after 11 p.m. My mother of blessed memory was preparing pastry and other dishes for the Shabbat. My father was busy with his correspondence. We all went to bed before midnight. At one a.m. the bell rang at the entrance of the house. We were very frightened and looked through the window to see who was there. In front of the house was a policeman, who wanted to talk to us personally. My parents agreed that I open the door of the building.

The policeman entered our apartment and handed us a written order to come to the nearest police station immediately. When we asked him what would become of us, the policeman said that within a short time we would return to our apartment. We did not believe him, because during the last years many Jews had been arrested like this. Therefore we took along a small suitcase with personal belongings. We locked our apartment and the policeman took us to a paddy wagon that was parked at the next street corner. In the paddy wagon we met some Jewish families who also were Polish citizens. Nobody had any idea of what awaited us. About fifty Jews were gathered at the police station. After a short time some SS men appeared and told us that we would all be deported to Poland immediately. The SS men did not permit us to telephone the Polish Consulate in Leipzig or to contact anybody else.

The SS men took us to the railway station. We were transported to Chemnitz in a special railway car. Upon arriving, we were not permitted to leave the car. Then a special train was summoned. Early in the morning the train rolled to the East without ever stopping. By the names of the stations we noticed that we were approaching the Polish border. We did not get any food or drink. Of course, we all shared the few provisions we had. Saturday at dawn we finally arrived. In the meantime it had started to rain. The train suddenly stopped in the middle of some fields. The SS people, who were seated in every car, shouted the order *'Sofort raus!'* - out at once. Outside we were surrounded by the SS. We were placed in rows of four and got

the order to march towards the East. They shouted at us and told us 'Anyone who leaves the row will be shot.' So we marched through the fields without stopping, without any rest, for three to four hours. We got completely soaked. Some of our fellow Jews were unable to carry their belongings any longer and left everything behind on the road.

Suddenly the SS disappeared in the fog and we stopped marching. We were in no man's land at the Polish border. Behind us was the SS and in front the Polish military. [Ahron is referring to the no man's land between the border stations Neu-Bentschen in Germany and Zbaszyn in Poland]. This situation lasted for about three hours because at first the Polish authorities did not permit us to enter Poland. There was a Polish railway station nearby. Finally the Polish authorities sent a special train which took us to Poland.

All of us were in a terrible shape, especially the old ones, after so many hours without rest or food. When we arrived at the railway station in Cracow, we were received by many members of the Jewish Community, who brought us food. All Jewish deportees were lodged with Jewish families. We had relatives in Cracow, who received us very kindly. I myself left Poland illegally on August 1, 1939, and arrived in Palestine on September 1, 1939."

Ahron arrived at the shore of Tel Aviv with *aliyah bet*, the illegal immigration, just at the outbreak of WW II. Ahron's parents, Meir and Rosa, however, were not able to leave Poland. By the middle of 1942 they were living in the ghetto of Tarnów, situated to the east of Cracow. At Easter 1942 a relative saw them for the last time. Later they were murdered at an extermination camp. Their family still does not know when and where that happened.

Upon arriving in Palestine, Ahron and a group of religious youngsters had to wait quite some time until the *Keren Kayemet Leisrael* was able to allocate land in the Bet Shean Valley. In 1946 they founded there a new religious kibbutz, Ein Hanatziv, just a few kilometers away from Kibbutz Tirat Tzvi, where Ahron's brother Yaacov (Kurt) already lived. Yaacov had made *aliyah* a few years earlier. This kibbutz, like all the other ones, was built from nothing, with hard work and great idealism. Ein Hanatziv, which is a prosperous kibbutz nowadays, produces plastic sheets for covering greenhouses, among other goods.

Ahron was the *maskir* (secretary) of Ein Hanatziv for many years. He was also in charge of distribution and delivery to the slaughterhouse of regional chicken production from the entire neighborhood. He is extremely active in the kibbutz - energetic and enterprising. Some time ago the kibbutz enlarged and renovated its synagogue. Ahron was also involved in that task. He was likewise responsible for building a very worthy monument at the kibbutz in memory of the Jews who perished in the Holocaust and who were related to members of this kibbutz. The names of Ahron's parents, of course, are mentioned on the monument.

Ahron married Selma. They had a daughter, Shulamit, who was a nurse at the religious Shaare Tzedek Hospital in Jerusalem. She is deceased. They have two sons, Gad (Gadi) and Elisha who have five children each. We always visit Ahron and his family at his kibbutz when we are in Israel.



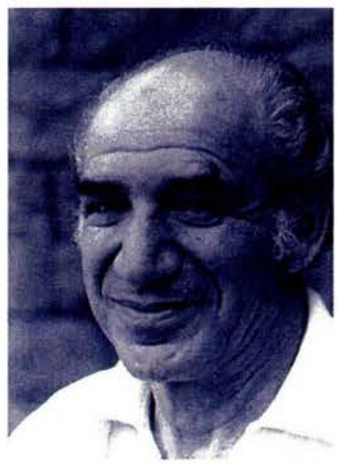
Israel Reifen



Fela Reifen

1.1.3. ISRAEL GERSON (GEORG) REIFEN - SELDI'S FATHER HE AND HIS WIFE FELA PERISHED IN THE HOLOCAUST

ISRAEL GEORG was born in Swarzów, Galicia, on November 10, 1884. At the time he was born, Galicia belonged to Austria. Israel Georg marrried **FELA** (Feiga) **KUPFERSTEIN**, Seldi's mother. Fela was born in Warsaw on February 2, 1887. Their two children are **MISCHA** (Melech), born in Berlin on September 28, 1918, and **SELDI** (Susi) born on November 21, 1919.



Mischa Reifen

Mischa studied at a technical school in Berlin. He arrived in London from Antwerp in May 1939, two months after Seldi had arrived there. He worked as a toolmaker in London. He married Minnie (Wilhelmine) Müller, a German gentile born in Munich, who had emigrated to England a short time before Mischa's arrival. They met in London. Their two daughters, Evelyne and Marion, were both born there. In 1948, after deciding to emigrate to Brazil, Mischa, his wife and two daughters arrived in Porto Alegre. I had arranged a contract for him from a local factory so that he could start working as a toolmaker at once. Later Mischa and his family moved to Caxias, a city not very far from Porto Alegre. He had received a better offer there. After some time, Mischa and his family moved to São Paulo, where more opportunities existed for him in his field. Several years later, Mischa's wife, who preferred to live in England, left him and returned to London with their two daughters. After many years of separation from his family, Mischa - who had become very ill - moved back to his wife and daughters in London in 1992. He died there in late 1993. Evelyne has a daughter, Catherine, who presently studies at Cambridge.

Israel Georg's three brothers remained in Plauen after their marriages, but he moved to the large Bavarian capital, Munich, after getting married to Fela. As a wedding gift, Fela received a piano from the bridegroom's parents. She was a very good piano player. Fela's parents had set up a lace store for the young couple in Munich, but the store did not prosper. Fela played the piano all day long, and Israel, who had attended a business school and was an accountant, had no luck in business.

After a short time the couple left Munich and moved to Berlin, where they rented an apartment on Prenzlauer Allee in north Berlin. Fela studied piano in Berlin at the famous Stern Conservatory. She started to rent out rooms. Israel began working with his brother-in-law, David Kupferstein, who was a jeweler, but he also did not succeed in this business. Israel and Fela were usually in a tight economic situation.

The Reifens moved from North to West Berlin in 1932 and rented larger apartments, where Fela rented out rooms. They frequently moved from one apartment to another. Since West Berlin was a better neighborhood, Fela could charge higher rents. Israel went to work at the Goodyear Tire Company's local branch office. Later he worked as a real estate broker, but all his business activities never amounted to much. He liked to go to coffee houses to meet friends and to play chess and *skat* (a German card play), both of which he was very good at.

Coming from a very religious orthodox family, Israel had had a good Jewish education. He was able to conduct religious services, including the reading of the weekly portion of the Torah, an important part of the Shabbat and Jewish holiday services. However, though always short of money, he declined offers to be a paid cantor at a synagogue on the High Holidays, because he did not want to make business out of religion. Neither Israel nor Fela ever endeavored to obtain the German nationality. That was the reason why their two children, Mischa and Seldi, though born in Germany, were Polish citizens. Israel once said about this matter: "Either being a Pole or a German, I remain a Jew."

Israel was skilled in manual labor. He invented fireproof kitchen and bathroom tiles. However, as a Jew during the Nazi regime, he could no longer patent this invention under his name in Germany. He had to ask a German acquaintance to patent his invention for him. The German obtained the patent for this invention under his own name and then sold it for DM 6,000. He gave Israel only DM 600 out of that amount. When Israel protested that this was contrary to their verbal agreement, the German responded, "Shut up, Jew." So Israel was cheated out of the profits of his invention at which he had worked very hard over a long period of time, conducting many experiments, mostly out of his apartment kitchen.

I never met Israel Georg. During the *Polenaktion* on October 28, 1938, a few days before I met Seldi for the first time, Israel - like so many other thousands of Polish Jews living in Germany - was transported to Poland overnight. He went to stay in Warsaw. His wife, Fela, Seldi's mother, then tried desperately to immigrate to England, where many of her close relatives lived - her mother, her brothers, a sister, nephews and nieces. Two of Fela's brothers, Charles and Albert Kuperstein, had already been living in London for a long time. Charles was a very prosperous businessman. He was the owner of three ladies' garment factories. Fela wrote many letters to her brother, imploring him to obtain a British entry permit for her

and her husband. But Charles, though repeatedly writing to his sister in Berlin, affirming that his petition for British entry visas for her and her husband were already at the Home Office (the British Foreign Ministry), probably did not pursue this application with the necesssary energy and urgency. He may have been somewhat concerned about the additional expenses of bringing his sister and his brother-in-law to London and possibly having to support them there. Charles was already caring in England for his old mother, a brother and his wife, as well as other family members from Germany.

Seldi believes that Charles, as a prosperous British citizen of good standing and a close relative, might have obtained an entry permit for his sister, and possibly for her husband too, if he had tried hard enough. However, on the other hand, one must bear in mind that nobody could have foreseen or imagined, not even in 1938, after six years of Nazi terror, the extent of the final tragedy - the *Shoah* - that would befall the Jews in the European territories dominated by the Germans, at the end resulting in their extermination. Livia, the daughter of Charles' sister Mary, had arrived in London from Germany. Livia became Charles' intermediary to Fela. She advised Fela to go to Warsaw and stay with her husband. When finally Fela realized that there was no possibility for her of going to England, she followed Israel to Warsaw voluntarily, in 1939, shortly before the outbreak of the war.

From time to time Seldi's parents in Warsaw were able to send her to Brazil and to her brother in London a letter via friends in Italy, even after the Ghetto was established in Warsaw on October 16, 1940. Eventually, after Seldi arrived in Brazil and Brazil entered the war in 1941, letters between Seldi and her parents were sent through the Red Cross. The last letter Seldi received from her parents in Warsaw is dated July 2, 1942. After that, there were no more letters. Long after the war was over, Herman Grünberg, a friend of Israel and Fela's from the Warsaw ghetto placed a note in the Jewish newspaper *Aufbau*, published in New York, searching for Seldi's brother Mischa. Seldi got in touch with Grünberg at once. In reply he sent Seldi a letter, dated July 13, 1949, written from a sanitarium in Eksjö, Sweden. Though this is a very sad letter, I consider it my duty to transcribe it in full, translated by me to English from the German original and with language corrections, because Herman, who spoke Yiddish, did not write or speak correct German. He was taken to a sanitarium in Sweden, after the end of the war, for humanitarian reasons, as his health was very precarious after all his horrible suffering during the war years.

Eksjö Sanitarium, July 13, 1949

Dear Mrs. Seldi Oliven,

I received your letter of June 21. After the war, I came to Sweden through the Red Cross, from the concentration camp Belsen, as a very sick person. Already in 1946 I tried to reach your brother, Mischa Reifen, through the World Jewish Congress in London. Unfortunately I did not receive any reply. For over a year I have been in a sanitarium again and have recently tried to write to Argentina [meaning Brazil].

It is very difficult to write this letter to you. But this was your father's last request: If I survived, I would contact you. Since I was born in Warsaw, I met your parents in 1939 and we were together frequently. They showed me your letter saying that you had gotten married and had arrived in Brazil, and that your brother had gone to London. I was with your parents until June 1942. Then the Germans deported the

Jews from Warsaw and killed them. Your parents and I had no contact for awhile. In February 1943, however, I saw your father, who was working at a German company. When I asked him, "How is your wife?" he explained everything. One day in September 1942, he went to work as usual. When he returned home in the evening, your mother was not there. She had been deported by the Germans.

Your father and I were alone. The murderers also killed my family. During those few months your father changed very much. We tried to do everything to survive. In April [1943] the last extermination of the Warsaw Jews occurred. Everything was destroyed in flames and the Jews were thrown into the crematoria.

Due to a fortunate coincidence, your father and I were able to stay alive. We arrived at Maidanek, a concentration camp near Lublin, Poland. On May 3, 1943, we passed through an inspection. The German SS noticed your father's hernia support, and he was killed. His last word was 'Grünberg .'

I fully understand that, when you did not receive any news from your parents after the war, you had no doubts that they were no longer alive.

Best regards. [signed] Herman Grünberg

Private address: Jönköping, Sweden, Tegnergatan 16-B.

In 195l, Herman Grünberg; his second wife Adele, also a survivor; and their small daughter, Ruth, born in Sweden, left that country and made *aliyah* to Israel. At first they lived in Holon, near Tel Aviv. Later they moved to Tel Aviv. Herman worked temporarily as a typographer at the Hebrew newspaper *Davar* in Tel Aviv, whenever his health - deteriorated by the terrible years of confinement, first in the Warsaw ghetto, then in the Maidanek extermination camp and finally in the Bergen-Belsen concentratiom camp - permitted him to do so. We met Herman Grünberg and his family for the first time in 1963, in Tel Aviv. Ruth later married Wurzel. Ruth and her husband left Israel, to her parents' great regret, and emigrated to the United States. We met the Grünbergs again on our second trip to Israel, in 1968. Our subsequent letters to Herman Grünberg went without reply. Seldi believes that Herman died and that his wife went to the United States to live with her daughter.

When the ghetto was established by the Germans in October of 1940, all the Jews from Warsaw and from some other places in Poland, numbering 500,000, were squeezed into an area four kilometers long and two-and-a-half wide. The ghetto was surrounded by a wall sixteeen kilometers long and three meters high. An average of fifteen people lived in one room. They lived on only 184 calories a day. Thousands of Jews died in epidemic outbreaks and of starvation.

In July of 1942, the Nazis began the mass deportation of the Jews in Poland to Treblinka, Auschwitz, Maidanek, and other extermination camps, where they were gassed and cremated. About 300,000 Jews from the Warsaw ghetto were sent to the extermination camp Treblinka, from July to September 1942. During the spring of 1943, between 30,000 and 50,000 Warsaw Jews were sent to Maidanek, an extermination camp three miles from Lublin. Maidanek had first been established in 1941 as a prisoner of war camp. It was enlarged in 1942 to hold

about 150,000 prisoners. In that year, four gas chambers and crematoria were installed. Late in October 1943, large ditches were dug at this camp. Work proceeded day and night, with the help of spotlights. During a single day - November 3, 1943 - about 18,000 Jewish prisoners, who were forced to line up along the mass graves, were gunned down with machine guns by police forces and SS, an action the Nazis most cynically called *Aktion Erntefest* (Harvest Festival). By June 22, 1944, when the Nazis evacuated this camp, an estimated 360,000 prisoners had been killed there, among them 200,000 Jews.

The number of Warsaw ghetto inhabitants was gradually reduced by epidemic outbreaks, starvation and mass deportation. By early 1943, only 50,000 of the 500,000 originally confined to the ghetto remained. Then the order came from the chief of the SS, Himmler, for the final liquidation of the ghetto.

On the first Seder night of Passover - April 19, 1943 - the Germans invaded the ghetto with tanks and heavy artillery, setting fire to the houses and transforming them into a living hell. Each house became a fortress, with fighting taking place in the ruins of burned-out houses. Eventually the fighting continued in the underground sewage canals, which the Nazis flooded with asphyxiating gases to prevent the flight of the remaining ghetto fighters.

The heroic Warsaw ghetto revolt was organized by the Jewish Fighters' Organization. It comprised all the different Jewish groups, parties, and organizations. According to the historian of the Holocaust, Raul Hilberg, author of *The Extermination of the European Jews,* there were only 750 fighters within the Warsaw ghetto, young men and women between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five. They only had a few old and obsolete weapons. But they were determined to put an end to the killing of Jews and to instigate armed resistance to the Nazis. The leader of this organization was Mordechai Anielewicz (1919-1943). He belonged to the *Hashomer Hatzair*. Anielewicz was only twenty-four years old when he was killed fighting in the streets on May 8, 1943, at the headquarters of the revolt - Mila 18 - in the Warsaw ghetto.

The German army, the *Wehrmacht*, and the SS troops were assisted by the Polish police and the notorious Ukrainian, Lithuanian and Latvian volunteers, who fought side by side with the Nazi troops. It nevertheless took the German troops just as long to break the resistance of the remaining 50,000 Jews in the Warsaw ghetto as it took them to conquer the entire country of Poland with a population of over thirty million.

After twenty-eight days of heroic but uneven fighting, the Warsaw ghetto was finally destroyed and the revolt ended on May 16, 1943. Many thousands of Jews died in the revolt. Seven thousand Jews were caught by the Nazis and shot on the spot. Another 7,000 of the remaining Jews were deported to the extermination camp Treblinka and 15,000 to Maidanek. The rest of the ghetto survivors perished in the Nazi work camps.

After the end of the war when they knew about Israel and Fela's terrible fate, Seldi and her brother Mischa decided to have the Keren Kayemet Leisrael plant a little forest in the hills of Jerusalem, in memory of their beloved parents, Israel and Fela Reifen.



Little forest Horshat Reifen near Jerusalem, in memory of Israel and Fela Reifen

The descendants of Seldi's maternal great-grandmother **SELDE LICHTENBERG**

JACOB KUPFERSTEIN ∞ CHAWA SARA LICHTENBERG

ADOLF	MARY (MASHA)	ALBERT	ROSA	DAVID	FELA (FEIGA)	CHARLES
∞	∞	∞	∞	∞	∞	∞
Rachel | Simon died as a child	Vogel | 1. Livia ∞ David Kuperstein 2. Regina ∞ Georges Heyman 3. Hella 4. Anja 5. Paul 6. Arion ∞ | a) Andrew b) Debra	| 1. Max 2. Morris 3. Daniel 4. Millie 5. Polly 6. Mary 7. Dollie	David Weissfeld | 1. Moritz ∞ Marion | 1 daughter 2.Max ∞ Gerda | a) Miguel ∞ Monica | aa) Claudio bb) André's b) Daniel ∞ Carolyn	Livia | 1. Irene ∞ Nick 2. Alice ∞ | a) Evelyne ∞ | aa) Thea bb) Ché cc) Joel dd) Arion	Israel Georg Reifen (Fela and Israel Georg Reifen died in Poland, in the Holocaust) | 1. Mischa ∞ Minnie Müller | a) Evelyne | aa) Catherine b) Marion **2. Seldi Reifen** ∞ **Klaus Oliven** | aa) Judith Vivien bb) Ruben George cc) Daniel dd) Miguel Roberto ee) Miriam Frances ff) Gabriel Fernando	Mery | 1.Jack 2. Leo

JACOB AND CHAWA SARA KUPFERSTEIN
SELDI'S MATERNAL GRANDPARENTS

Contrary to the Reifens, who were a hassidic and early Zionist family from Galicia, the Kupfersteins, who originally came from Russia and later moved to Warsaw, were more worldly. They were neither hassidim nor Zionists. However, although not being orthodox, they kept the Jewish tradition.



Chawa Sara Kupferstein

Seldi's maternal grandfather, **JACOB KUPFERSTEIN**, married **CHAWA SARA LICHTENBERG**. Chawa Sara's mother was named **SELDE,** and my wife Seldi was named after this maternal great-grandmother. Seldi's father Israel told her that he and Fela, Seldi's mother, chose this name in the hope that Seldi would become as good and kind a person as her great-grandmother Selde. She certainly did.

Both Jacob and Chawa were born in Russia. Chawa was born in 1854 or 1855. They were very young when they married. They moved from Russia to Warsaw. Six of their seven children were born in Warsaw. While Jacob was mostly engaged in Torah studies, Chawa Sara turned out to be a capable businesswoman. When she lived in Warsaw, she traveled widely because of her business in ostrich feathers, which were fashionable at the time. They were mostly used to decorate ladies' hats and also fans. When the feather business slowed down at the end of the 19th century, Chawa, her husband, and their six children moved from Warsaw to Plauen in Germany, which had a flourishing lace industry. Chawa Sara then became involved in the lace business and did very well.

When Chawa Sara was expecting her seventh child, Charles, she went on a business trip, traveleling from Germany to London on a British steamer. Charles was born on board the ship and therefore was automatically a British subject, right from his birth in the 1890s. Chawa Sara seems to have had a very keen premonition of the horrible things to come in Germany. Many decades later, in 1938, by holding British nationality and living in England, Charles was able to obtain immigration permits, not only for his mother and his brother Adolf and wife, but also for his niece and nephew, Seldi and Mischa. Thus Chawa's remarkable foresight saved their lives.

The lace boom ended before the outbreeak of World War I, and this business then faced an economic crisis, whereupon Chawa began a ready-made clothing business. She sent her youngest son, Charles, from Plauen to London to open a firm there and import garments from Germany. German Jews had started the ready-made clothing business, mostly in Berlin, and at the time exported their merchandise on a large scale, mainly to England.

Chawa eventually went bankrupt in Plauen, shortly before the outbreak of WW I. Thereupon she and Jacob left Plauen overnight and traveled to London, leaving their daughter Fela behind. Fela, Seldi's mother, was engaged at the time to Israel Georg Reifen, Seldi's father. Chawa wanted to take over the firm in London, but Charles, who lived in that city, said that he - not his mother - was the legitimate owner of the business which he had established in London. Chawa then sued her own son for ownership of the firm, but lost the lawsuit. From that time on Charles refused to see his mother again.

Chawa's husband Jacob died in London, many years before his wife, even before his granddaughter Seldi was born in 1919. Seldi did not know either her paternal or maternal grandfather. Chawa then returned to Germany. First she moved in with her son, David, who lived in Berlin. At that time David was still a bachelor. After David married his niece, Livia, in the early 1920s, Chawa rented a furnished room in Berlin. Later, in the mid-thirties, Chawa - who was by then elderly - moved in with her daughter Fela and son-in-law Israel Georg, Seldi's parents.

Charles sent his mother, Chawa, a monthly stipend from England. She subscribed to English, Polish, Yiddish and German newspapers and periodicals. Every night before she went to bed, Chawa said the *Keriat Shema* prayer. In 1938, when the situation in Germany became critical, Chawa, as well as her eldest son Adolf and his wife, who had no children, arrived in London. They all were supported by Charles. He set Chawa up at Adolf's home. Charles provided for his mother, paying all her expenses, including newspaper subscriptions, until the end of her days. Chawa Sara died in London in 1948, at the age of ninety-three. Since Charles still refused to visit her, he never saw his mother again. Both Jacob and Chawa Sara are buried in London.

JACOB AND CHAWA SARA'S CHILDREN

Jacob and Chawa Sara had seven children: Adolf, Mary (Masha), Albert, Rosa, David, Fela (Feiga), Seldi's mother, and Charles, all of them born in Poland, except Charles.

1. ADOLF and his wife Rachel had a son, Simon, who died as a child in Plauen. Later they moved to Berlin. After his youngest brother, Charles, had obtained the necessary entry permits, Adolf, his wife and his mother Chawa Sara emigrated from Berlin to London, in 1938.

2. MARY (Masha) married Vogel. They had six children, all of them born in Poland. Mary's husband died young, as did three of their children, Hella, Johanna and Paul. They all died in Poland. The remaining children were Livia, Regina (Rebecca) and Arion (Aron). Mary and her three children moved first from Polen to Plauen and later from there to Berlin.

a) Livia married her uncle David, Mary's brother.

b) Regina (Rebecca), a ballet dancer, moved from Berlin to Paris before the Nazis came to power. In Berlin she danced ballet at the opera when she was a young girl. Her mother Mary died in London in early September 1939, shortly after the outbreak of the war. Regina came to her mother's funeral from Paris. The family insisted that she remain in London, but Regina returned to Paris to be with her boyfriend, Georges Heyman, a French Jew, whom she married after the war. When the Germans invaded France, Regina fled over the Pyrenees to Spain. She first went to Madrid, but when the Franco government ruled that all refugees had to register, she did not want to do this and moved to the Spanish countryside. She supported herself as a fortune-teller in a small town.

Georges fought in the French army and became a prisoner of war. He twice succeded in escaping from the Germans. After the war he owned a raincoat factory in Paris. Regina, who worked with the ballet in Paris, once traveled to the Soviet Union to observe the ballet there. We always used to visit Regina and Georges whenever we were in Paris. Regina died in 1992 at an advanced age.

c) Arion (Aron) was the first of the Vogel family to come to London from Berlin, in the 1930s. In the beginning he worked with his uncle Charles. Later Arion established his own ladies' garment factory there. Arion had two children, Andrew and Debra. About 1937 Arion obtained an immigration permit for his mother Mary and his sister Livia, who both moved in with him.

3. ALBERT went to England from Plauen when he was a young man. He owned a zipper factory and was well off. He had seven children: Max, Morris, Daniel, Millie, Polly (Perla), Mary and Dolly (Dora). Shortly after Seldi arrived in London, she was invited to her cousin Millie's wedding. Her father Albert, and his brother Charles as well, had dropped the "f" from the family name Kupferstein. Millie Kuperstein married Silberstein. At the wedding people commented jokingly that Millie was trading "copper for silver." Millie was a hairdresser and her husband was a barber. They opened a mixed gentlemen's and ladies' salon after their marriage. Albert's wife would converse in Yiddish with Seldi.

4. ROSA married David Weissfeld. They lived in Dresden and sold lingerie in the open-air markets. They had two sons, Moritz and Max. During the *Polenaktion* on October 28, 1938, Rosa and David were deported by the Nazis from Dresden to Poland. Their older son, Moritz, who had already been living in Santiago, Chile, for some time, had previously started to prepare the obtention of Chilean entry permits for his parents. Thus, after some time, Rosa and David were able to leave Poland and join their son in Santiago, traveling first to London and from there to Chile. In order not to be too much of a a burden for their son, Rosa and David lived at the Jewish Old Age Home in Santiago until their deaths.

Moritz was married to Marion in Germany and had a daughter, who was born in Chile. Moritz divorced his wife. She and their daughter returned to Germany after the end of WW II. Moritz married again in Chile. His second wife, Raquel, born in Poland, was a widow, who had three children from her first marriage. Moritz was very intelligent. He was a veteran Zionist and had a good knowledge of Hebrew. He was an amateur pilot. Many years ago we visited Moritz and Raquel in Santiago.

Max, the younger brother, emigrated to Buenos Aires, where he had a small lingerie factory, together with a partner. Max and his wife Gerda had two sons, Miguel Roberto (Milo) and Daniel Ruben. A long time ago we visited Max, Gerda and their two young sons in Buenos Aires. When business became very slow in Argentina in the 1960s, Max emigrated with his family to Great Neck, N.Y. He is deceased now.

Milo, Max's son, traveled as a young man from New York to Buenos Aires, to visit old friends. He met Monica there and got married. They were both born in Buenos Aires. After living some time in New York, Monica became very homesick and the couple decided to return to Buenos Aires for good. Milo works there with chemicals and other merchandise. Milo and Monica have two sons, Claudio and Andrés (Andy). We always visit Milo and Monica when we are in Buenos Aires. From time to time Milo comes to Porto Alegre on busines and visits us then.

Milo's younger brother, Daniel Ruben, works at a bank in New York. He is divorced from his first wife and is is now married to Carolyn. He has no children.

5. DAVID married his niece Livia, daughter of his oldest sister, Mary. Later he divorced her, while still living in Germany. He owned two jewelry stores in Berlin, one of them a large store on fashionable Leipziger Strasse. He worked with diamonds, traveling frequently to Antwerp. Some time after the Nazis seized power, David left Germany and went to England, where he lived during the war. Later on he left England and went to live in Australia. He died there.

David and Livia had two daughters, Irene and Alice, whom they sent to school in Belgium, in order to get them out of Nazi Germany. To the amazement of the family members, it was a Catholic nuns' school. There they learned to speak French fluently. When Hitler invaded Belgium, the nuns gave the girls false papers. The nuns tried to convert the two girls, but they remained Jewish. The nuns saved their lives, keeping them at their institution until the end of the war. After the war Irene and Alice went to live in London. Alice married an Israeli. She is divorced, with one daughter, Evelyne, who married a Jamaican. Evelyne and her husband live in Jamaica and have four children, Théa, Ché, Joel and Aron. Irene

married an Indian, Nick Menon, from the state of Kerala, who worked for an Indian airline in London. Irene and Nick lived there. They had no children. Whenever we were in London, we visited Irene and her husband, and we also met Alice there once. Nick died in London on November 7, 2000.

6. FELA (Feiga), Seldi's mother was born in Warsaw on February 2, 1887. She married Israel Gerson Reifen. They had two children, Mischa (Melech) and Seldi. When Israel and Fela, who lived in Plauen at the time, fell in love and decided to marry, this was not well received by either set of parents. The Kupfersteins considered the Reifens too hassidic and orthodox, while the Reifens considered the Kupfersteins too worldly.

7. CHARLES came to England as a young man. He and his wife Mary had two sons, Jack and Leo. Charles owned three ladies' garment factories in London and became very prosperous. In England he changed his name from Kupferstein to Kuperstein.

THE ORIGIN OF OUR FAMILY NAMES

Regarding the origin of our family names, I am transcribing the respective computer entries from the Nahum Goldman Museum of the Jewish Diaspora, *Beit Hatefutsot*, in Tel Aviv. Beside each name, the corresponding computer number is shown. Copies of these and all other entries may be obtained online from the Museum of the Jewish Diaspora's Jewish Family Names Division by simply entering the family name.

OLIVEN (E516):

"Many Jewish family names are closely linked to symbols deeply embedded in history and tradition. Some of them, for instance those relating to the olive, have produced names borne by both Ashkenazis and Sephardis.

"The olive was one of the seven species with which ancient Israel was blessed. A mainstay of the country's agricultural economy, its fruit was used for food, its oil for light, fuel and ritual anointing, its branches for garlands and decoration.

"In Jeremiah and the Psalms, the people of Israel were compared to an olive tree. Its everlasting freshness and greenness were an insurance of Israel's survival despite exile and suffering.

"According to the Talmud, a man was considered blessed if his fields consisted of one part grain, one part olive groves and one part vineyards. A community rich in olive groves could afford to study the Torah and bring light and wisdom to others.

"The Midrash says that the dove, in bringing an olive branch to Noah, brought light to the world. Today the Menorah and two olive branches are the emblem of the State of Israel.

"Zait in Hebrew, Zaitoun in Arabic, Zemor in Berber, Oliveira in Spanish, Olivier in French, Olive in German [plural Oliven], the tree, its fruit, oil and stone are the source of names frequent in many countries.

"Zemour is documented since the 15th century with Rabbi Natan Zemour of Biskra, Algeria. Oliveyra is recorded in the 16th century with Marguerite de Oliveyra of Lisbon, Portugal; Oliveira in 1635 with Manuel Oliveira of Bordeaux, France; de Oliveira in the early 17th century with Diego de Oliveira at Rouen, France; and de Oliver in 17th century Spain. De Oliveira is mentioned in 1683, Oliveras in 1722, and de Oliveras in 1790, all of them in France.

"These and similar names are often linked to place names, such as those of the North African towns Zemmor (one near Constantine, the other near Oran), Azzemour (Morocco) and Zemour (in the Nefoussa, Tunisia/Lybia); the Spanish towns Oliva (in the provinces of Valencia and Bajadoz); or Oliwa, a suburb of the Polish city of Gdansk (formerly the German Danzig).

"Italian variants include Oliveri and Olivetti, German forms Oliwenstein (olive stone), which has the Yiddish equivalent Oliweinstein. The English Olivestone is also found in the United States.

"Oliven is one of the German forms of family names linked to the olive, recorded at Lissa, Poland, in the 18th century.

"A distinguished bearer of the Jewish family name Oliven was the German writer and author of operetta lyrics, Fritz Oliven (1874-1956), whose pen name was 'Rideamus'."

MEYER (E359)

"Literally 'farmer' in German, as a Jewish family name, Meyer is a variant of the Hebrew Meir [מאיר]. The Hebrew name Meir means "illuminates" or "radiates."

"Many Jewish given and family names are based on ideas and symbols embedded in legend and history.

"Light (in Hebrew "or") is the primal element of creation in all ancient cosmologies. In the Bible it is the first creation of God, Divine Light (Gen.1: 2-3). In rabbinical literature, it is also the symbol of the Torah, the soul and wisdom.

"In talmudic times, people credited with bringing light or intellectual clarity to their subject were given the name of Meir (one who sheds light). A 2nd century disciple of Rabbi Akiva, believed to have been named Mesha or Nehorai (Aramaic forms), was known as Rabbi Meir because of his keenness in shedding light on the Halacha (the Jewish code of law).

"Many Jewish family names derive from Meir, Yair (will illuminate) and the Aramaic Nehorai (also light) or their variants or patronymics. Similarly, the names Uri and Shraga (literally fire) also contain the symbolic significance of light or wisdom.

"As a family name Meir is documented at Arles, France, in the 13th century. It appears as Meiger and Meyger in the 14th century in Strassbourg, as Meyr in 15th century France, as Meyer in the 17th century in Germany, as Maier in Germany in the 18th century. Other variants include May in Germany and Poland, Major in Turkey, both in the 16th century, Mayer in France and Germany, and M'rino and Merito in Morocco. Named for their forefathers, families were called Meyerson, Meyerovitch, Meyrovitz. Merovic and Ben-Meir, all meaning "the son of Meir." In 1683 Meyer is documented in Frankfurt am Main with Moses Meyer.

"Distinguished bearers of the Jewish family Meyer include the prominent Dutch lawyer and courageous champion of Jewish interests, John D. Meyer (1780-1834); the oriental Jewish leader, sir Mannasseh Meyer (1846-1930), who founded the first Zionist Society in the Far East; and the 20th century American judge, Bernard S. Meyer, who was a judge of the New York State Supreme Court."

SCHOTTLAENDER [ALSO SPELLED SCHOTTLÄNDER] - (E516)

"Many Jewish family names are based on places of origin or residence.

"In German, Schottland means Scotland. However, many Jews called Schottlaender or Schottländer trace their origins to (Alt) Schottland, one of the suburbs of Danzig (now Gdansk in Poland), the capital of former West Prussia, where Jews were living since the 14th century. Another town to which these names could be linked is Schotten, in Hesse, West Germany.

"As a Jewish family name, Schott (meaning Scot or Scotsman in German) is documented in the 15th century. Schottlaender is recorded in the 18th century and Schottländer in the 19th century.

"Distinguished bearers of the family name Schottlaender include the Danzig-born German educator and reformer Benedet Schottlaender (1763-1846), who was also known as Benedict Schott; the German optician Israel David Schottlaender (1775-1827) [my great-great-grandfather]; and the 19th-20th century Russian-born German gynecologist, Julius Schottlaender."

REIFEN (E603)

"This name means 'hoop' in German.

"Interpreted as an occupational name, it is sometimes associated with hoopers and wine and fish merchants because of the hoops on herring barrels and wine casks.

"Another explanation links Reifen to Raif, the Polish term for the bit of a key, and interprets it as meaning locksmith.

"Yet another source of this German-Jewish family name could be the Hebrew 'Rofe,' that is physician.

"Moreover, Reifen could also be an abbreviation of Reifenberg, a locality in Central Germany."

EPILOGUE

In conclusion of this story, there remains one plaguing question that comes back to mind again and again and seems beyond valid explanation. How was it possible and how can it be explained that the *Shoah* - the state-organized mass murder of six million of our brethren could ever have happened in the 20th century, in the middle of Europe, originating in a country that produced men like Goethe, Schiller and other celebrities and was considered one of the most civilized on Earth? One thing is absolutely sure, without the cooperation and worshipful broad support of most of the Germans, the horrible events that occurred during the twelve years the Hitler regime lasted could never have taken place.

Hundreds of books and articles have been written about this question. One of the recent books on this subject is Daniel Goldhagen's *Hitler's willing executioners.* The author speaks of eliminatory antisemitism, annihilationist in nature, and its general dissemination among the Germans. He mentions that this widespread type of antisemitism was the reason why so many thousands of "ordinary" Germans participated as active perpetrators in the Nazi death machinery while millions stood by, watching and tolerating these crimes. W. Michael Blumenthal, former U.S. Secretary of the Treasury under the Carter Administration and presently President and Chief Executive of the new Jewish Museum in Berlin, in his book by the same name speaks of an "Invisible Wall" separating Germans and Jews, which in the end became "a wall of death." He says that the disaster that occurred in the 1930s and 40s can only be explained by a multitude of events, conditions, and historical antecedents that came together at a unique moment of history.

Regarding this controversial question, I never will forget an event in Berlin in 1985. Seldi and I had been invited that year by the city of Berlin, together with many other Jewish ex-Berliners from all parts of the world, to spend one week as guests of our former hometown. The city paid for our air fare, hotel and everything else. We were taken to various places of interest. One day we were invited for lunch at a federal garden exposition.

The governing mayor of Berlin at the time was Eberhard Diepgen. He was Berlin's mayor again until a short time ago. He personally welcomed us at a luncheon. My first impression at that moment was how radically things had changed in Germany. Here I was, being hosted and addressed by Berlin's mayor in person, while forty-seven years ago I was not even permitted to sit on public park benches. The Olivaer Platz, near our apartment on Giesebrechtstrasse, came to my mind. From 1938 on, the benches there and in other public parks were marked *"Nur für Arier"* - for Aryans only. There also was one yellow painted bench at the Olivaer Platz marked *"Nur für Juden."* Diepgen, who was young at the time, said in his welcome speech that in spite of all the many explanations he had heard and read, it still was not possible for him to grasp how the Holocaust could ever have happened in his country.

The Jewish people have a very long memory. We remember our friends as well as our enemies throughout our millenary history. We remember our archenemy, the tribe of Amalek, who atttacked the weak Israelites in the desert after their flight from Egypt, as mentioned in Deuteronomy (25:17-19):

זכור את אשר עשה לך עמלק - Remember what Amalek did to you!

At the festival of Purim we remember Haman, the Agagite, descendant of the Amalekites. He, as the chief minister of Ahasuerus, king of Persia, wanted to annihilate all Jews in the Persian Empire in the fourth century B.C. His name has become synonymous with an enemy of the Jews.

We must do everything possible so that the present and future generations will never forget the *Shoah.* To forget means to betray the millions of victims and those few who survived. We must fight the "revisionist" historians and Holocaust deniers, people who - despite overwhelming horrendous evidence - want to ignore or minimize the genocide that occurred under the Nazi regime. They distort history by insisting that the Holocaust never happened. We must fight rightist and ultra-nationalist movements which want to revive Nazi-Fascism and ethnic hatred, wherever they emerge. We must make sure that the terrible catastrophe that befell our people in the 20th century will never happen again in the future. Only then will we have learned the lessons of the Holocaust.

We must always remember the biblical word of the prophet Joel (1:3):

"Tell your children of it,
and let your children tell their children,
and their children another generation."

On the one hand it was in our time that the greatest tragedy in the history of our people took place, the Holocaust, victimizing six millions of our brothers and sisters. On the other hand, ours is the most fortunate generation in more than two thousand years of Jewish history. We in our days lived to see an event of which more than sixty generations of our ancestors did not cease longing for and dreaming of day and night, the rebirth of our nation, the state of Israel.

Seldi and I were lucky to escape the Holocaust. This was not due to our own merits, but must be attributed to some fortunate circumstances. We both left Germany in 1939, just half a year before the outbreak of World War II. We could have perished in the extermination camps and their gas chambers, just as Seldi's parents and many of our relatives. Six million of our brethren died in the Holocaust and we could have been among them.

We both believe the fact that we survived leaves us with a moral obligation to fight against assimilation and for *Hemshech* - the continuity of the Jewish people. I believe that if our forebears, despite persecutions and pogroms down through our millenary history, were able to maintain the sacred flame for so many generations, it is the fundamental duty of our generation and of the coming ones to follow in their footsteps.

To reach this goal, memory, education and knowledge are the foundations and decisive factors. It is necessary to transmit to our children, from one generation to the next, our rich heritage, history and culture. I sincerely hope that the chain will never be broken and that our children, grandchildren and further generations will continue to be good Jews, faithfully dedicated to the Jewish people, its religion, tradition, moral values and to *Medinat Israel.*

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