

“I arrived as a wealthy person in Erfurt
and departed as plundered Jew.”

Fates of Jewish Families in Thuringia 1933-1945

Monika Gibas, Ed.

This picture shows the deportation of the Jews from Eisenach on May 9, 1942. The population of Eisenach is clearly visible on the background of the picture, observing the procession from the kerbside.

Foto: Stadtarchiv Eisenach

Translation: Julia Palme

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Monika Gibas

Introduction

“Aryan”, “Aryan paragraph”, “Aryanization” – these terminologies originate from the vocabulary of the racially motivated anti-Semitism that became a central pillar of the Nazi regime’s social policies with its accession to power in 1933. The so-called “Aryan Paragraph” was enacted as the first measure of the “Reichsgesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums” (Civil Service Restoration Act). The encyclopedia entry of “Der Große Brockhaus” elucidates the term “Aryan paragraph” in the edition of 1935 as follows: “A decree with the aid of which the racial core of the German people, that is the Aryan race, is to be protected and promoted through the elimination of non-Aryan people.”

“Non-Aryan”, according to the authors, was every German citizen, who was considered a descendant of “Non-Aryan, especially Jewish parents or grandparents; it is applicable as well, if one of the parents is non-Aryan. In case the Aryan origin descent is ambiguous, a certificate has to be obtained from the experts on “Rasseforschung” (“racial research”) authorized by the Reich Interior Minister.”

With the NSDAP’s (National Socialist German Workers’ Party) accession to power in spring 1933, the Aryan paragraph marked the beginning of the state organised expulsion of people of Jewish faith, as well as German citizens who fell into the category of “Jews” ac-

cording to the conditions set by the bureaucrats of the Nazi state.

Early on, the Land Thuringia, which played a leading role in the institutionalisation of racial policies, founded a “Landesamt für Rassewesen” (regional state office for racial matters) on July 15, 1933 in Weimar through the appointment of a Nazi racial theorist, Hans F. K. Günther, from the University of Jena.

This was the first institution of its kind at the Federal State level and Karl Astel, a physician and racial theorist, was appointed chairman. In the “Thüringer Staatszeitung” (Thuringian newspaper) of July 23, 1933, he proclaimed that the institution’s central aim is “to free the race’s flux of life from sick and alien hereditary dispositions”. Under his leadership, the office began establishing an archive on hereditary details, wherein every third inhabitant of Thuringia was to be recorded within a short period of time. Already by 1935, over 466 000 dossiers had been produced, which paved the way for the institutionalisation of racial policies in Thuringia. On September 15, 1935, the “Entjudung” (systematic elimination of the Jewish people), as it was officially called in the national socialist party- and state-bureaucracy’s jargon, was supplemented with the “Reichsbürgergesetz” (The Law of the Protection of German Blood and Honor), which was a series of laws that became known as the

"Nuremberg Laws". These racial policies were supported by a ferocious mixture of ideology, pseudo-scientific findings and doctrines. The anti-Semitic propaganda was spread through the national socialist standardised press, the educational system, popular fiction, as well as arts and culture. "Sömmerda fending off the Hebrews", "Special School for the Jews of Meiningen", "The Jews of Gotha. We must not associate with them. A List of Jews." – these were the headings of Thuringian newspapers that had been published in the context of the government act introduced in the autumn of 1935. In the 'Gothaer Beobachter' (local newspaper of Gotha) it was written: "In the following we make known to all Jews still residing in Gotha (...) This publication is finally going to create clarity. From now on, it can no longer be accepted that Germans interact with Jews or buy Jewish products with the excuse of not knowing that XY is Jewish (...) Whoever is observed interacting or doing business with Jews is guilty!" Furthermore, it was openly declared as a threat that: "a number of people have been indentified, who shop in Jewish stores and have personal relationships with Jews. Those fellows that have forgotten their descent, we are going to shame and make them known to the public through the Stürmerkästen (public reading of the strictly anti-Semitic newspaper "Der Stürmer"). They should not dare complain as we had warned them!"

In the following years, the NS regime drove the systematic social expulsion and isolation of the Jews by labelling them as "Volksverderber" (spoilors of the German race) trough

a chain of acts and administrative orders to promote perfection. Many professions were no longer accessible to Jews and they were forbidden to use social- and cultural facilities like public pools, parks, libraries, cinemas and theatres. The impulses for the growing exclusion of the Jews from all social life came not only from the authorities, but also from the lower levels of the NSDAP and communal administrative units. As written by the chairman of the "Deutschen Gemeindetag" to the Thuringian interior ministry on July 28, 1934, a year before the adoption of the Nuremberg Laws: "As we are aware, the Jews are no longer allowed to use the public lido. In another town it was recently discussed whether to deny the Jews access to any sort of baths (steambath, saunas, indoor pools). From our perspective, this measure should be welcomed. This is a pleasant evidence of volkish self-consciousness and racial awareness. The people no longer tolerate sharing the same pools, baths, steamrooms and saunas with alien races. The authorities should do their part to support the people in this matter. From my point of view, it would be hazardous, if the authorities would continue to allow alien races the use of such public places as the message that will come across the people is that their rejection is not considered justified and would contribute to the re-blurring of the racial distinctions."

At the beginning, the main objective of the new rulers was to force the Jews to leave the country. The National Socialists applied following methods in order to achieve this: legally backed acts of discrimination (laws, de-

crees), harassment by the administrative authorities, psychological terror and use of direct physical violence through “spontaneous eruptions of the people’s wrath” or by state organised pogroms like the Night of the Broken Glass in November 1938. The determined politics of expulsing Jews from Germany was also financially motivated. In the timeframe of 1935 until 1938, the Nazi authorities generated a high number of measures that aimed at the fiscal extortion and confiscation of the Jews’ financial assets. All levels of public authority participated directly in the extortion of the Jewish citizens. The Reich ministry of finance, especially the regional ministries of finance, the affiliated exchange control offices, as well as the fiscal authorities and main customs offices on the local level implemented the aforementioned policies. The exchange control offices oversaw the “Reichsfluchtsteuer” (Reich flight charge) that had to be paid by those who decided to emigrate. They collected charges such as the “Judenvermögensabgabe” (capital levy for Jews) and taxes for personal effects and moving items. They blocked bank accounts, enforced export- and foreign exchange acts and applied penalties on those, who did not comply with exchange control regulations. With help of the so-called safety rulings they were able to freeze all Jewish private and company assets. Whoever attempted to avoid the requirements of the fiscal authorities by fleeing the country, was traced through “Reichssteckbriefe” (search warrants).

The state organized anti-Semitism was also motivated by politico-economic objectives. Soon after 1933, many Jewish businesses

were in a difficult situation due to the boycott-campaigns such as that on April 1, 1933, the refusal of bank loans and other forms of harassment. The owners had to declare themselves bankrupt and were forced to sell their businesses. All sales since 1933 were predominantly caused by the pressures and constraints that confronted Jewish businesses increasingly under the new political circumstances. What took place was a subtle form of expropriation, which coincided with the dictatorship’s policies aiming to “free the German economy of all Jewish influence”. After the pogrom on November 9/10, 1938, the Nazi government took the next step proclaiming the compulsory “Aryanization” of businesses to fulfill its politico-economic objectives.

The term “Aryanization” was used in the authorities’ jargon to name the processes of Jewish citizens’ economic expropriation. It originated from the German-Volkish anti-Semitism of the 1920s. In the 1930s, it primarily signified the economic suppression and the destruction of Jewish livelihoods in a broader spectrum and secondly, the transfer of Jewish assets into “Aryan” property.

The implementation of the economy’s “Aryanization,” which was the process of step-by-step expropriation of the Jewish citizens after 1933, was one of the most profound transfers of property in modern German history. Until 1939, around 100.000 businesses owned by German citizens of Jewish origin had to be given up or sold to buyers of German descent. One of the reasons for the “Aryanization” processes was to ban the “typical Jewish” en-

richment through German economic life. The creeping expulsion of Jewish enterprises was not only result of the anti-Semitic policies of the government. The economic repression was also heavily dependent on the behaviour of the "Aryan" entrepreneurs. Already in 1933, they insisted on the destruction of the Jewish competitors' livelihoods independent from government or NSDAP authorities.

On December 3, 1938, the "Verordnung über die Zwangsveräußerung jüdischer Gewerbebetriebe und Geschäfte" (law on expropriation of Jewish enterprises and businesses) was issued, which came into force on January 1, 1939. In Thuringia, Jena's newspaper introduced the new decree to its readers with the headline "The Path to Aryanization". It elaborated: "The state does not tolerate any Jewish influence on the economy – It only takes care of orderly transfer into Aryan ownership. The national socialist state never gave any reasons to doubt that it demands the removal of Jews from all positions, wherever their engagement is considered as politically and economically disruptive. The Aryanization of Jewish businesses has become a widely known process, yet its overall implementation does not take place in the desired speed. The previous decrees only allow for voluntary Aryanization, of which, however, became increasingly common by spring 1938. Despite this, there is a vast number of Jewish businesses and properties, where the sale to Aryan buyers appears to be difficult, partly because Jewish owners left the country or did not show any signs of understanding the demands of time (...) The Reich government's new decree is mainly

concerned with the remaining commercial property owned by Jews, and also with agricultural and other landed property, bonds, gold assets and art treasures. The dominating idea is that the Jews have to relinquish all direct and indirect influence, which they have derived from economic strength, be it by the management of enterprises, through shareholdings, property assets etc. (...) The new law creates the necessary possibilities in order to accelerate the Aryanization process up to the desired speed. In those cases of voluntary sale, the appointment of a trustee is no longer necessary. It goes without saying that the Jews are no longer allowed to purchase any new properties or objects made of gold."

In Thuringia, around 650 family businesses fell victim to the "Aryanization" according to the latest research results. Alone in 1938, around one hundred Thuringian businesses had been aryanized and for another hundred, negotiations were already in process. Two hundred businesses alone had to close down due the boycotts and plummeting demands by 1938. In October 1938, even before the decree for compulsory "Aryanization" came into force the NSDAP districts Schleiz and Sonneberg already announced that they were now "judenfrei" (cleansed of Jews) and on October 27, the Rhön newspaper's headline read: "Vacha – cleansed of Jews!". The municipal legal office of Jena formally thanked Carl Schmidt, the commissary for "Aryanization", for his services in a written communication on June 12, 1939: "My request from December 12, 1938, to dissolve and wind up Jewish retail businesses in the district of Jena

on the grounds of the decree on the exclusion of Jews from the German economic life, has been completed. Due to your expertise and your active, intelligent commitment regarding this politically and economically difficult matter, the liquidation and winding up were conducted without any obstructions. This way, I was able to communicate the successful completion of the issue to the responsible authorities punctually and without any provisos. This is reason enough to thank you, dear Mr. Schmidt, for your exceedingly valuable and commendable cooperation."

With the prohibition of any economic activity and full exclusion from all professions and all opportunities to live life as a normal citizen had perished for the Jews. On January 17, 1939, the protection of tenants was abolished for Jewish people and on April 30, 1939, a directive came into existence which stipulated that non-Aryans had to be evicted from "Aryan" houses. This happened in Thuringia's towns and parishes. From then on, the Jews were forced to live in very limited space, in the so-called "Jew-houses" that were provided by the municipalities.

During the war, the national socialist policies towards the Jews became increasingly radicalized. From 1941 onwards, it was no longer about dispossession, emigration and abscondence but rather about the annihilation of the Jewish citizens. From March 4, 1941, those capable of work had been obligated to forced labour. From September 1, 1941, all Jews above the age of six years in the German Reich had to wear the Yellow Star. They were

no longer allowed to leave their residential district without permission from the police. On October 1, 1941, a general prohibition of emigration for Jews out of the German sphere of influence, came into existence and the deportation of Jews from the Reich began on October 14, 1941. On November 25, the regulation on the confiscation of Jewish assets in case of deportation was decreed. The mass transports of Jews into the ghettos and extermination camps began on May 26, 1942. One of the first transports with 515 Thuringian Jews departed from Weimar's train station to the ghetto Belzyce near Lublin, wherein their traces disappear. Only one person of this particular transport has survived the Holocaust.

Amongst the deportees of May 10, 1942 were Frieda and Siegfried Kirchheimer from Eisenach. Their story is going to be told in this book. The cover shows Frieda among many other Jews, who are on their way to Eisenach's trainstation on May 9, 1942. On May 10, 1942, she was going to board the train in Weimar leaving to the ghetto Belzyce. This picture was the last sign of life. "Parents departed on May 9, 1942. No messages for months." – This short notice was received by Frieda's daughter Ingeborg, who was already living in England, sent by an acquaintance in Eisenach. Frieda and Siegfried Kirchheimer were said to be missing. Until today, there is no reliable, definite count of the murdered Thuringian Jews. The volume at hand is a collection of ten biographical miniatures authored by students of the Friedrich - Schiller University of Jena, which traces the life and suffering of Thuringian Jewish families between

1933 and 1945 who fell victim to the Nazi racial policies. These stories represent an initial approach towards the biographies of those families. This is being done, first and foremost, on the grounds of research in different Thur-

ingian archives. It was possible only in a few cases to find survivors of the Shoa or to interview their descendants. Therefore, not all details could be uncovered and not all questions could be answered.

Ramona Bräu

***“...my wife and I left poisoned Germany in January 1939.
We had no other choice but to leave, because
we could feel that our lives were at risk.”***

Committed Patriot and Protestant –
Dr. Walter Spiegel – Lecturer from
Thuringia, Gotha/Gera

Walter Spiegel was born as son of the merchant Albert Spiegel in Berlin on December 16, 1887. Already during his schooldays at the Schiller – secondary school, he was enthused about evangelic religious studies and keen to study Protestant theology. After a course of academic studies at the universities of Halle, Lausanne, Berlin, Greifswald and Erlangen, Walter Spiegel earned a doctor's degree in theology in Erlangen on June 6, 1910.

Walter Spiegel passed the first state examination in theology in Stettin in April 1912. From May 1912 until August 1914, he was working at libraries in Bremen, Wolfenbüttel and at the Kaiser-Wilhelm library in Posen. With the beginning of World War I, the patriotic vicar-aspirant, Dr. Walter Spiegel, took a completely different professional route. Considered unsuitable for combat duty due to a heart condition, he began a probationary year at the Friedrich-August secondary school in Eutin in the area of Oldenburg on August 31, 1914. From his point of view, as teacher he did his “service” to the “fatherland”.



*ThHStAW, Personalakte aus dem Bereich Volksbildung
Nr. 27017 Bl. 1d*

The teacher Dr. Walter Spiegel, Easter 1930.

In July 1915, the seminarist Spiegel took the examination for a teaching post at secondary level and thus gained permission to teach religious studies, Latin and German language.

As young teacher, he began his career in the town of Eutin. From there, he moved to the venerable secondary school Ernestinum in Gotha in mid-1918 where he accepted his first permanent position as teacher in 1918, just before the end of the war. After the war, Dr. Walter Spiegel continued to work in the field of education, although he had successfully passed the second state examination in theology in November 1915.

At first, Walter Spiegel resided in the Seebachstraße 19 in Gotha. He belonged to the town's more affluent citizens, because of his father, who had passed away in 1920, and left him with a business in Berlin and some other shares. Walter Spiegel experienced the difficult economic circumstances of the post war and inflation period not without throwbacks. He lost his share assets and other outstanding debts were accumulating. This led to the



Stadtarchiv Gera

The secondary school at the Nicolaiberg 6 (today Rutheneum) in Gera, date unknown.

seizure of his salary by the bank house Max Mueller. Within the heated political climate at the end of the 1920s, Dr. Spiegel, who had advanced to the position of assistant master, was confronted with the allegation by conservative-national colleagues and parents claiming that he was instigating “pacifist propaganda” at school. The patriotic Dr. Spiegel, who was also member of the “Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland” (Association for Germanness Abroad), however, managed to refute all the accusations against him.

At the beginning of the 1930s, the conditions for teaching and studying at the Ernestinum became increasingly difficult and were constantly accompanied by cutbacks and abatements. At this time, the married assistant master changed his workplace upon his own request on April 1, 1932. He took up a position in a school at the Nicolaiberg 6 in Gera. Walter Spiegel moved together with his wife to a flat in the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Straße 52. Also his widowed mother Margarethe, nee Anheim, moved with him. Walter Spiegel, who was known among his pupils as strict but just teacher for religious studies, also liked to perform as violin soloist at charity concerts. He was teaching only for a short period at his new workplace. In the spring of 1933, his career as teacher ended with the occupational ban.

Suspension, Persecution and Escape

As a consequence of the “Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums” (Civil Service Restoration Act) of April 7, 1933 that contained an “Aryan paragraph”, which stipulated that all “non-Aryan” civil servants were to be sent into retirement, Dr. Walter Spiegel was dismissed from the teaching profession on October 1, 1933. Spiegel, who stemmed from an assimilated family, considered himself a Protestant. For this reason he initially refused to give any specification about his descent on the “Aryan questionnaire” and he was not dismissed until he was denounced by one of his colleagues. All his subsequent attempts to resist against the indiscriminate measures remained without success as he was regarded a Jew by the terms of the racial ideology of the National Socialists.

The expulsion of Gera’s Jews from their offices and positions had begun in early February 1933, directly after Hitler’s appointment to Reich chancellor, with the anti-Semitic campaign against the head physician of the municipal hospital, Prof. Dr. Simmel. Simmel was ousted from his position, because of his Jewish descent. The boycott campaign of April 1, 1933 against Jewish entrepreneurs, lawyers and physicians that was propagated by the National Socialists across the Reich, which for Gera signified the targeting of the department stores “Tietz” and “Biermann”, also represented the prelude to the Jews’ persecution and the destruction of their livelihoods. It has

4. § 3 des Gesetzes:

a) Sind Sie bereits am 1. August 1914 Beamter gewesen und seitdem geblieben?

In welcher Stellung?.....

oder

b) Lagern am 1. August 1914 bei Ihnen die Voraussetzungen der Dritten Verordnung zur Durchführung des Gesetzes zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums vom 6. Mai 1933 (Reichsgesetzbl. I S. 245) zu § 3, Nr. 2 Satz 2, vor?

oder

c) Haben Sie im Weltkrieg an der Front für das Deutsche Reich oder für seine Verbündeten gekämpft?

oder

d) Sind Sie Sohn (Tochter) oder Vater eines im Weltkrieg Gefallenen?

Falls nein zu a bis d:

e) Sind Sie arischer Abstammung im Sinne der Ersten Verordnung zur Durchführung des Gesetzes zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums vom 11. April 1933 (Reichsgesetzbl. I S. 195) zu § 3, Nr. 2 Abs. 1?

(Nachweise zu 4c bis e gemäß der Ersten Verordnung zur Durchführung des Gesetzes zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums vom 11. April 1933 — Reichsgesetzbl. I S. 195 — zu § 3, Nr. 2 Abs. 2, sind beizufügen.)

ja!

statutarischer niedersachsl. Hilfsarbeiter an d. tagl. haupt. Kreis-Werkst. in Wolfenbüttel

Nach Erfüllung sämtlicher Voraussetzungen für die letzte Aufstellung im Besonderen Dienstverhältnis die Voraussetzungen gegeben vorliegen. I. Anlage!

nein!

nein!

Nähere Angaben über die Abstammung:

Eltern:

Name des Vaters

Vornamen

Stand und Beruf

Wohnort und Wohnung

Geburtsort, -tag, -monat und -jahr

Storbeort, -tag, -monat und -jahr

Konfession (auch frühere Konfession)

verheiratet { in

{ am

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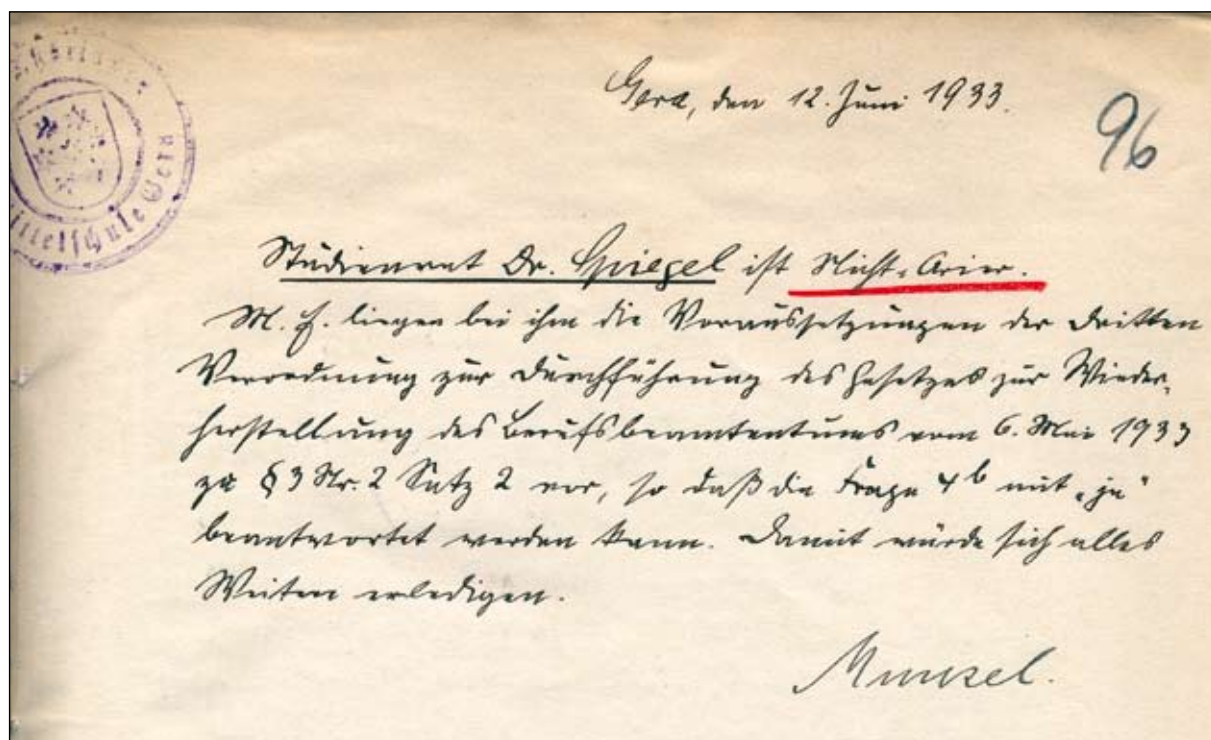
Questionnaire for the implementation of the Civil Service Restoration Act of April 7, 1933. Spiegel makes no specifications on his descent under section e).

not been conveyed, how Walter Spiegel perceived these developments as it is presumed that he was not affiliated to Gera's Jewish congregation due to his Protestant family background and his choice of profession.

The rapid sequence of anti-Semitic laws and measures also affected the Spiegel family. In May 1933, the civil servants, employees and workers of the council of the town of Gera were prohibited to purchase products in Jewish businesses at the disposition of the mayor Kießling. In the following months, more and more occupational bans and anti-Semitic regulations had been enacted. The anti-Semitic baiting indicated economic collapse to many

Jewish companies and businesses. In Gera, the Biermann family who owned the department store at the Johannesplatz 8, attempted appealing to the sense of justice of Gera's citizens against the economic exclusion process without success. From the end of 1935, the then "Aryanized" fashion boutique operated under the name of "Modehaus Fritz Jahnke".

There was also an aggressively displayed hatred against all Jews and against everything Jewish that increasingly dominated the life situation of the Spiegels. In August 1935, Gera's SA stormtroopers (paramilitary organisation of the Nazi Party) organised a sightseeing tour under the motto: "Who knows



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A handwritten supplement to the "Aryan questionnaire" indicating Walter Spiegel's non-Aryan descent.

the Jew, knows the devil!" On September 11, 1935, the local paper "Geraer Beobachter" declared "Jewish children as "contaminants among Aryan pupils." The Nuremberg race laws followed on September 15/16, 1935 and declared marriages between Jews and non-Jews a "racial disgrace" and ultimately degraded Jews and labeled them second class citizens. A few weeks later, Gera's mayor requested permission from the Thuringian Interior Minister to officially register all Jewish businesses located in Gera in order make the "Aryanization" process more effective.

The maintenance of their living standards became increasingly difficult to many Jews due to the advancing "Aryanization" of whole occupational fields and commercial lines. The involuntary pensioner, Walter Spiegel, tried to make ends meet and to improve his income by giving private lessons. In September 1936, he requested permission to teach non-Aryan children from the Thuringian ministry of education. Although, he was allowed to teach, the childless couple could not see any future in Germany. On October 27, 1938, Walter Spiegel applied for permission to relocate abroad. For the Spiegels, this implied, after losing employment and reputation, the abdication of their remaining income – the former teacher's pension - , as it could only be transferred to a German account. The events of the night of the pogrom on November 9/10 had a decisive impact on the living conditions of the Spiegels as it left all remaining Jewish businesses destroyed, the synagogue devastated, detained and taken all Jewish men – among them Dr. Walter Spiegel – to the con-

centration camp Buchenwald. Walter Spiegel returned ill from the detainment at the concentration camp after several weeks and they felt that their lives were at risk.

After the Spiegels had stored and sent their personal items to the company Röhling & Co. in Bremen for shipment, they emigrated from Hohegeiß in the Harz – their last residence in Germany – via Switzerland to Cincinnati/U.S. in January 1939. Their personal items never reached their destination in Ohio. Presumably, it was sold at the highest bidding price in one of the numerous auctions of "Jewish relocation items" to "Aryan comrades". The payments of the Thuringian pension institution to the retired teacher were transferred to a special account for "pension benefits" at the Dresdner Bank in Gera with the permission of the Thuringian head of finances and thus became property of the Reich and in December 1940, the Gestapo office in Weimar took all steps necessary for the expatriation of the Spiegels. Furthermore, in conjunction with the expatriation, Dr. Walter Spiegel was also deprived of his doctor's degree.

Unavailing Search for Justice

In 1949, Walter Spiegel, who was working as professor at the Quincy College in his new home Quincy, Illinois, claimed compensation in a letter to Thuringian president. His claims, however, were rejected on the grounds that the Thuringian compensation law did not allow payments like pension to be refunded. The valuables that had been confiscat-

Walter Spiegel
Studienrat i. R.
Gera.

Thüringisches
Volkshochschulministerium
Eingegangen
3. Sept. 1936
1936/37

Gera, den 2. September 1936
Agnesstr. 24

An das Thüringische Volkshochschulministerium
Weimar

Infolge nichtarischer Abstammung bin ich mit Wirkung vom 1. Okt. 1933 in den Ruhestand versetzt worden.
Ich bitte um die Erlaubnis, gegebenenfalls nichtarische Kinder unterrichten zu dürfen.

Gehorsamst
Walter Spiegel
Studienrat i. R.

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Geheime Staatspolizei
Staatspolizeistelle Weimar

II B 4 - B.Nr. 1264/40

Bitte in der Antwort vorstehendes Geschäftszeichen und Datum angeben

An des
Thüringische Volkshochschulministerium
Weimar

Weimar, den 21. Dezember 1940
Regelplatz 1 / Januar 25.00, 25.01

Thüringisches
Volkshochschulministerium
Eingegangen
24. Dez. 1940
IV

Betrifft: Jude Dr. Walter Israel Spiegel, Studienrat a.D. geb. 16.12.87 in Berlin, in USA aufhältlich.
Vorgang: Ohne.

Spiegel soll ausgebürgert werden.
Er war bis 1933 in Gera an der Mittelschule als Studienrat tätig.
Ich bitte um Mitteilung, wann, wo und bei welcher Fakultät Sp. zum Dr. promovierte.

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ed by the fiscal authorities after Spiegel's expatriation and the remaining liquidated funds could not be investigated according to the

heads of the revenue offices in Hanover and Blankenburg and therefore could not be reimbursed either.

Janine Heiland

***"I arrived as a wealthy person in Erfurt
and departed as plundered Jew."***

David Littmann and the Mohren- apotheke in Erfurt

David Littmann, born on June 12, 1882 in Philadelphia, was the youngest of eleven siblings. His parents had immigrated with their children to America. Yet, they were unable to settle and all their hopes of a better life had been disappointed, which made them return to Germany in 1887. At that time, the youngest son, David, had reached the age of five. In Germany, David's father ran a licensed house. Due to the narrow circumstances of the family, it was a great privilege for the youngest son to study at university. At the turn of the century, David began to study pharmacy at the University of Königsberg.

He chose this particular course of study as it allowed him to work during the holiday period in order to finance his education. Shortly after he had successfully completed his degree, he acquired his first pharmacy in Lobsens in the province of Posen.

He got to know Margarete Regina Aufrecht, who was later to become his wife, in Berlin. She descended from a Jewish family that originally stemmed from Upper Silesia. During that time, she enjoyed better education at an upperclass girls' school in Breslau. On April 17, 1912, Dav-



G. Littmann

David Littmann as student of the Königsberg University.

id married the six years younger Margarete at the registrar's office in Berlin and after a year, she gave birth to their first son, Werner, in Lobsens. Littmann moved with his young family



G. Littmann

David and Margarete Littmann (left) with their youngest son Gerhard and a distant relative.

to the town of Memel, where he obtained a new pharmacy and he was working as a pharmaceutical commissioner of the regional governing body. He conducted the revisions for the pharmacies at the countryside together with the medical officer of health, Dr. Huwe. David Littmann could not take part in World War I due to a congenital condition of his feet. In 1923, his second son Gerhard was born in Memel. Five years later, David and his family left the area, where civil war conditions had been prevailing. He set up a new business in Erfurt and the family quickly settled in its new home town. At the weekends, the Littmanns

often went by train to the Thuringian Forest: during summer hiking and during winter skiing.

On March 1, 1928, David Littmann had acquired a pharmacy from the Allendorf family in Erfurt - the so-called Mohrenapotheke (Moor's Pharmacy). After rebuilding it in 1929, this became the most modern pharmaceutical facility in Erfurt. David Littmann had modernized the pharmacy's rooms and altered the private rooms of the upper floor into surgery rooms, with an expenditure of 100.000 Reichsmark. The Mohrenapotheke was renovated as



ThHStAW, Oberlandesgericht Erfurt, Nr. 1092 Blatt 6-10 Anlage 6

The Mohrenapotheke's front view before the conversion of the building.



ThHStAW, Oberlandesgericht Erfurt, Nr. 1092 Blatt 6-10 Anlage 5

The Mohrenapotheke's façade after the conversion.



G. Littmann

The ten year old David Littmann in Oberhof.

it was a family property that was ought to be taken over by the sons at one point in the future. David Littmann was regarded as an excellent pharmacist and highly valued by his customers and colleagues. Furthermore, he was known as distinguished master of apprentice and it was reckoned a good reference to accomplish an apprenticeship at his pharmacy.

Excluded from the German “Volks- gemeinschaft” (national community)

The Jewish belief played a subordinate role to the Littmann family. David had always disliked his Jewish first name. If he would have been born in Germany, presumably the parents would have given him a different name - for his older brothers, who had been born in Germany before the parents' immigration to the U.S. at the end of the 19th century, had been named Siegfried and Adolf. The fact that they celebrated the Bar Mizvah (admittance to the congregation) of their sons Werner and Gerhard bears evidence of their remaining Jewish sense of tradition. The Littmann family's Jewish roots were given unexpected emphasis when Hitler took power and the government propagated racially motivated anti-Semitic laws. All of a sudden, they were no longer German citizens, but Jews that represented an “inferior race” and it was not long when the family felt the impact of those policies. Werner, the oldest son of the Littmann family, was denied his school-leaving examination in 1934 and so, his dream of being a pharmacist like his father had been obstructed, which made him move to Holland and take up a job as a gardener. Gerhard, the youngest son, was exposed to anti-Semitic hostilities through teachers and fellow pupils at school every single day. Hence, the contact to other Jewish families became increasingly important to the Littmanns as time passed and no German was prepared to associate with them any longer.

Boycott and Compulsory Sale

The boycott campaign of April 1, 1933, against Jewish businesses, medical practitioners and lawyers throughout the Reich also hit the Mohrenapotheke at the Schlösserstraße in Erfurt. Like so many other Jewish businesses in Erfurt, the pharmacy became a target of anti-Semitic attacks. SA men positioned themselves in front of the pharmacy and on their signs and leaflets, which they distributed to the pedestrians, it said: "Whoever buys Jewish products is a traitor to the nationalist cause!"

This was not the only open anti-Semitic demonstration by the SA's men on April 1, 1933. Since Hitler's takeover, repeatedly, there had been posters and leaflets published in front of the pharmacy that were intended to threaten customers not to enter.

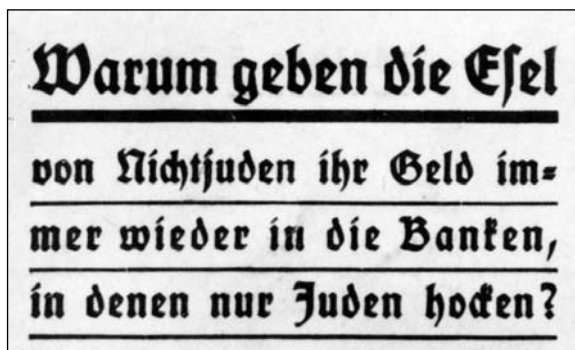
Only a minority of Erfurt's citizens felt no intimidation by those actions and continued to do their usual shopping. These customers, however, risked being photographed which would



ThHStAW, Oberlandesgericht Erfurt, Nr. 1092 Blatt 6-10 Anlage 2

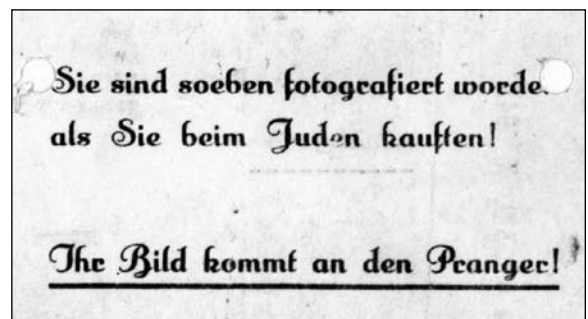
Anti-Semitic baiting on a leaflet distributed in front of the Mohrenapotheke.

later be used to publicly shame them. One day, a lady received a leaflet after she had come out from the pharmacy: "You just have been photographed while you were buying Jewish. You are going to be shamed in public!"



ThHStAW, Oberlandesgericht Erfurt, Nr. 1092 Bl. 6-10 Anlage 1

Anti-Semitic poster that had been placed at the Mohrenapotheke's entrance door.



ThHStAW, Oberlandesgericht Erfurt Nr. 1092 Bl. 03

Pedestrians that dared to enter Jewish shops, received such leaflets.

David Littmann had not only suffered from the permanent anti-Semitic boycott-measures, but also from his colleagues, who denounced him to the Gestapo and reported the loyal customers to the SA. In order not to leave the pharmacy unobserved, the family moved from the Herderstraße into the pharmacy building in 1935. Nonetheless, they were unable to stop the economic breakdown, in which they were intentionally pushed into. Although, they made the lowest offer for a medication purchasing order of the town's prison, they did not receive the order. Additionally, the health insurance funds no longer compensated for the medication of customers if it had been purchased in a Jewish business. For those reasons, Erfurt's citizens refrained from purchasing from the Mohrenapotheke. Due to the economic damage and also the increasingly harsh anti-Semitic measures David Littmann decided to finally give up and sell the pharmacy. At a time when the Nuremberg race laws had only been two weeks old, a buyer that was willing to make profit from of the misery of a Jewish fellow citizen, was easily found. On November 2, 1935, the pharmacy and the entire property were sold at a price of 413.000 Reichsmark, an amount which represented only a fraction of its true value, to Franz Quermann.

Not only did the buyer obtain the pharmacy and the property itself, but also everything what was inside it: furniture, medical goods and all pharmaceutical products. Shortly after, to demonstrate that the Jewish property had been transferred to an Aryan owner and to show that any further boycotts were pointless, the customers found a sign stating: "German pharmacy."

If the sale would have not taken place under these circumstances before November 1935, it was going to happen through the "Aryanization"-processes the following year. On April 1, 1936, a new Reich decree on pharmacies came into existence that forced all Jewish pharmacists to sell or rent their property before September 30, 1936. After the sale, the Littmanns had to move out of the pharmacy building. At first, they were staying at a befriended Jewish family's place and later rented two small furnished rooms in Friedrichroda, just for a few weeks.

From the agreed total selling amount of 430.000 RM, David Littmann received only a sum of 95.000 RM. A reason for that is that the buyer had not paid the monthly rates of 3.000 RM and the mortgages encumbering the pharmacy's property due to the modernization efforts had to be acquitted. But not even the 95.000 RM were at the family's disposal as this money had to repay their debts that were caused by the boycott measures. All that was left was a bank balance of 9.578 RM from which a considerable amount was taken by the German gold discount bank for the clearance of an overseas transfer and confiscated as a so-called "Judenabgabe" (Jew tax).

Emigration

In consequence of the compulsory sale of the Mohrenapotheke and the intensifying anti-Semitic reprisals, David Littmann considered emigrating as the only way to escape the national socialist terror. Yet, it was not ought to be a leap

Abschrift

Anlage 1

Nr. 614 des Notariatsregisters für 1935

V e r h a n d e l t
zu Erfurt, den 2. November 1935.

Vor mir, dem unterzeichneten Vertreter des Notars im Bezirke des Oberlandesgerichts zu Raumburg a.d. Saale Dr. Hermann Kühler in Erfurt

Assessor Dr. Max H e l b i g
erschieden heute :

1. Herr Apotheker David Littmann aus Erfurt
Schlösserstrasse 9/10,
2. Herr Apotheker Franz Quermann aus Witten a/Ruhr,
Ruhrstrasse 28.

Die Erschienenen sind dem Notarvertreter persönlich bekannt.
Die Erschienenen schlossen nachstehenden

K a u f v e r t r a g :

§ 1.

Herr Apotheker David Littmann in Erfurt verkauft das im Grundbuch von Erfurt-West Band 9 Blatt 413 in Abteilung I eingetragene Hausgrundstück Schlösserstrasse 9/10 zum folgenden Stern und zur Helleparze, Ktbl. 29 Parzelle 1444/20, bebauter Hofraum von 4 ar 49 qm mit dem in diesem Hause betriebenen und befindlichen Apothekengeschäft nebst den sämtlichen zur Apotheke gehörigen Einrichtungen, Warenvorräten und pharmazeutischen Präparaten, die dazu gehörigen Utensilien, überhaupt alles, was an Gegenständen zum Betriebe des Apothekengeschäftes dient, ohne jede Ausnahme, insbesondere auch sämtliche Originalvorschriften zu den seither in der "Mohrenapotheke" hergestellten Präparaten, an Herrn Apotheker Franz Quermann, in Witten a/R. zum vereinbarten Gesamtpreis von 413.000.- GM. in Buchstaben: Vierhundertunddreizehntausend Goldmark.

Von diesem Gesamtpreis entfallen:

- a. auf das verkaufte Hausgrundstück 140.000.- GM
 - b. auf das Warenlager 20.000.- GM.
 - c. auf das Geschäftsinventar 50.000.- GM.
 - d. auf die Kundschaft 25.000.- GM.
 - e. auf die verkauften Originalvorschriften und sonstigen geistigen Eigentumsrechte 25.000.- GM.
 - f. auf das Apothekerprivileg 155.000.- GM.
- insgesamt also 413.000.- GM.

§ 2.

Der Kaufpreis wird wie folgt belegt:

Der Käufer zahlt in Anrechnung auf den Kaufpreis insgesamt bar den Betrag von 103.000.- GM. in Buchstaben: Einhundertunddreizehntausend Goldmark- in folgenden Raten.

- a) Der Käufer zahlt heute bei Abschluss dieses Vertrages den Betrag von 10.000.- GM.- Zehntausend Goldmark.- an den Verkäufer.
- b) Der Käufer verpflichtet sich spätestens bis zum 2. Dezember 1935 einen weiteren Teilbetrag von 40.000.- GM.- Vierzigtausend Goldmark- an den Verkäufer zu zahlen.
- c) Der Käufer zahlt weitere 40.000.- GM.- Vierzigtausend Goldmark bei Übernahme des Hausgrundstückes und der Apotheke an den Verkäufer.
- d) Weitere 10.000.- GM.- Zehntausend Goldmark- ist der Käufer verpflichtet, am 1. April 1936 an den Verkäufer zu zahlen.

in the dark and so David Littmann searched for prospects to establish a livelihood in Belgium. As he could not find anything, he travelled to Italy where he bought a cloves plantation with the family's remaining funds. The family prepared for their exile but they were held up from emigrating by the buyer of the pharmacy for several months, who refused to pay the remaining rates. It was only after the amount was paid that the Littmanns were able to emigrate to Italy in September 1936. They settled in Imperia, a small town close to Genua for two years, where the family suffered far less anti-Semitic assaults compared to what they encountered in Germany. Yet Italy was not to be the final destination of their escape.

As a native-born American it was possible for David Littmann without any obstacles, which other Jewish or political emigrants had to confront, to enter the U.S. with his family. Having received the confirmation of their American citizenships, they tried to secure tickets to a ship from Genua to New York. For that purpose they were lacking the financial means and in order to obtain the necessary amount, David Littmann wrote to the pharmacist who had bought his pharmacy in Lobsens many years ago and still owed him a certain amount of money. He asked him to transfer the money to Italy but due to the ban of foreign exchange transfers that had become effective in Poland, the transfer did not take place. Thus, the Littmann family had to travel the long route from Italy to Poland to board a ship to the United States. Avoiding Germany, they travelled via Yugoslavia, Hungary and Czechoslovakia to Poland while the pharmacist from Lobsens

had secured tickets for the family. After enormous stresses and strains, the Littmanns eventually managed to leave for the U.S. in 1939.

They arrived in New York without any funds and were forced to live in great poverty. David Littmann, who was now at the age of 57 years, could no longer work as a pharmacist as he hardly spoke any English and did not hold the necessary American certificates. For this reason, he took up the profession of a bookbinder and the whole family had to help with this work. David Littmann passed away in New York on February 17, 1975. Both of his sons, Werner and Gerhard, still live in the US today.

Compensation Demands

On March 28, 1946, the pharmacy that had been sold by the owner to an Aryan under the pressures of the circumstance in 1935, was confiscated at the instigation of the Land Thuringia. A trustee was appointed that was to represent the interests of David Littmann and four months later, on August 1, 1946, David Littmann demanded compensation.

On February 5, 1951, the Higher Regional Court ruled that the buyer, Franz Quermann, has to return the pharmacy to the previous owner. David Littmann, however, was asked to pay a settlement amount of 165.000 DM. This arbitral verdict is contradictory to the Thuringian compensation law, which acts on the assumption that all Jewish owners who sold their property after 1933 were acting under high political pressure. Given that David Littmann



G. Littmann

David and Margarete Littmann in Chicago, September 1970.

was not able to pay the demanded amount, he was dispossessed a second time: the pharmacy was declared public property and was accrued by the DDR (German Democratic Republic) state.

Only with the demise of the DDR, reassignment demands could be claimed again. In

1989, however, not only Gerhard and Werner Littmann claimed the parental assets, but also the offspring of Franz Quermann. They pleaded at court that the pharmacy was not sold under the coercion of the political circumstances, but due to the poor management of the business and to the encumbrance of the Jewish owner. Nevertheless, Gerhard Littmann

Auszugsweise A b s c h r i f t .

Herrn
H- Liebmann
(15) Erfurt
Klaußnerstr. 2

229 East Kingsbridge Rd.
New York 58 , N.Y.
August 1, 1946

Sehr geehrter Herr Liebmann !

Ich bestätige dankend den Empfang Ihres Briefes vom 17. Juni 46. Selbstverständlich erhebe ich Anspruch auf die früher in meinem Besitz gewesene Mohren- Apotheke nebst Grundstück Schlösserstr. 9/10 und bitte Sie, diesen meinen Wunsch auf dem Präsidialamt in Weimar vorzutragen. Ich wäre Ihnen sehr dankbar, wenn Sie mir mitteilen würden, unter welchen Bedingungen die Rückgabe gehandhabt wird.

Mit den freundlichsten Grüßen bin ich

Ihr ergebener

gez. David Littmann

ThHStAW, Land Thüringen, Ministerium der Finanzen Nr. 3400 Bl. 135

was able to prove to the court that the pharmacy had been bankrupted by the economic reprisals of the national socialist regime and

was hence sold at a price far below value. After more than 60 years, the Mohrenapotheke was returned to its Jewish owner.

Philipp Gliesing

“As was confidentially ascertained, a number of customers have (...) cancelled their monthly accounts at the Jewish department store “Römischer Kaiser” in Erfurt as from September 1, 1935.”



Stadtarchiv Erfurt

Sales campaign “Volkstümliche Tage” at the department store “Römischer Kaiser” around 1920.



Stadtarchiv Erfurt

Sales campaign "Rekord-Tage" in 1925.

The Department Store "Römischer Kaiser" (KRK), Erfurt

At the turn of the year 1905/06, Siegfried Pinthus, a shop owner at the Friedrich-Wilhelm-Platz in Erfurt, recognized the favourable lo-

cation for the establishment of a department store at the Anger in Erfurt. Together with Arthur Solms Arndtheim, a relative of the family corporation Tietz, he launched the department store Römischer Kaiser on March 23, 1908. The KRK GmbH (KRK Ltd.) developed into a very successful enterprise and by the year 1927, the

sales area had been doubled by an extension. A large lounge was built, where bands and fashion shows provided entertainment to Erfurt's citizens. Special days of sale and service ensured the popularity of the store among the people from the town as well as the countryside. The staff enjoyed extensive training, there was a company creche, a pension scheme and a sports club. Furthermore, there was a lending library with 5000 volumes as well as a box office collection. All those things stood for exemplary social standards and at times, up to 450 staff were employed by the store.

Social Responsibility

Siegfried Pinthus and Arthur Arndtheim belonged to Erfurt's upper class. The two fathers of a family, were not only bound by profession, but also related by marriage. Arthur Arndtheim was born on June 8, 1879 in Brieskow-Finkenheerd, a small municipality south from Frankfurt/Oder and his sister, Hedwig, was born March 22, 1882 to parents Luis and Cassandra Arndtheim, nee Tietz. Hedwig got married to Siegfried Pinthus, born in 1870 in Berlin. The married couple moved to Erfurt in 1896,



Stadtarchiv Erfurt

Window-dressing around 1930.



Stadtarchiv Erfurt

The department store's opening ceremony in 1929.

where Siegfried's father, Louis Pinthus, ran a department store and held a leading position at Erfurt's Jewish community. In January 1903, Hedwig and Siegfried's first daughter, Lotta Johanna, was born followed by a second daughter named Elly Fanny a year later.

Siegfried Pinthus rejected public appointments. Instead, he intensively dedicated himself to Jewish parish life. From 1926 until 1937, as chairman of the Jewish community in Erfurt, he advocated Jewish heritage and revived the parish life. In 1937, he was co-founder of the

"Association for Jewish History and Culture" and later led the "Thuringian Working Group for Jewish Agency". In 1933, he organised a meeting with young people to talk about Palestine as emigration had become a central topic in the Jewish community since Hitler's aggressive challenge in 1922. Controversial discussions between Zionists and assimilated Jews were on the daily agenda. Through active commitment to their religion, the owners of the department store Römischer Kaiser opposed the zeitgeist of assimilation.



Jüdische Landesgemeinde Erfurt

Portrait of S. Pinthus (oil-based paint).

Active women – “Lights of the Family”

The realization of Jewish life at home and within the congregation would not have been impossible without the versatile knowledge and skills of the women. In the Pinthus family, religious literacy was complemented with general education. Hedwig Pinthus enrolled for the summer term 1932 at the Friedrich-Schiller University of Jena to obtain a degree in philology and successfully completed her studies in 1937 with a dissertation on the “The Normandy in Barbey d’Aureville’s Novels”.

Hedwig Pinthus was chairperson of the Israeli Women’s Association and of the Women’s Association of the Lodge of Erfurt and she took part in their representative’s gatherings as a full member. She was living in a mansion in Hohenzollernstraße 24 in Erfurt and after her husband had passed away in November 1937, she moved in with relatives in Berlin and resided in the Bayernallee 19a until July 1938. During the war, the nearly sixty year old lady fled to the Netherlands, where she passed away in 1941.

The daughter, Lotta Johanna Pinthus, was a trained welfare worker and became a member of the women’s organization’s commission since 1929. She got married to Dr. Louis Herzberg, the personnel manager of the department store Römischer Kaiser and she gave birth to two daughters, Eva and Hanna. From 1928 until July 1933, the Herzberg family lived in a large residence in the Gustav-Adolf-Straße 2. At first instance, the political circumstances immediately after January 1933 caused the family to flee to France but they returned to Erfurt in October 1934. The children, Eva and Hanna, were taken to Hedwig’s grandmother. In 1935, Lotta Johanna, Dr. Louis Herzberg and the two girls left the country for good. Initially, they found refuge in Nijmegen (in the Netherlands) and later moved to Amsterdam.

Through a decree by the Reichsführer-SS (Heinrich Himmler) to the government of Erfurt on November 13, 1937, the Herzberg family were robbed of their German citizenship – like hundreds of other people and, therefore, all their assets fell to the Reich. Eva was deport-

ed to Auschwitz and then to Mauthausen on November 3, 1944, where she was presumably murdered. On Eva's prisoner card index it was noted: "domicile of the next of kin: Father: KL Au." The father was murdered in Auschwitz in 1941. Details of Lotta Johanna Herzberg's fate, nee Pinthus and her daughter are still unknown.

The Department Store "under new management"

There had been numerous boycott-measures against the popular department store and one of the branches located in the Johannesstrasse had to be closed on the basis of an official directive. In 1935, the popular entry hall, the lounge and the lending library had to close and in 1936, the chamber of industry and commerce dissolved the internal continuation school. It became evident in the position reports of the Gestapo from 1933 until 1936 that the department store was under constant observation. In August 1935, the Reich tournaments of the SA took place; the police report read: "The Jewish businesses did not have any noteworthy custom during the propaganda days. Even on the following days, the Jewish businesses were anxiously avoided. As was confidentially ascertained, a number of customers have (...) cancelled their monthly accounts at the Jewish department store "Römischer Kaiser" in Erfurt as from September 1, 1935."

The decline in sales caused by the anti-Semitic agitation became obvious by the end of 1936

and the daily life of the entrepreneur's families became increasingly difficult. The owners were compelled to search for sincere potential buyers of the store. The compulsory sale of the Römischer Kaiser was monitored, controlled and authorized by Erfurt's mayor Kiessling in consultations with the Gauleiter (leader of a Nazi-Gau) Sauckel. The NSDAP member Völkert, an ombudsman of the Munich party executive committee, represented the buyers: Hans Quehl, an entrepreneur from Leipzig, Dr. von Zabiensky, bank director from Erfurt and the lawyer Dr. Walter Ahlburg from Berlin, who had specialized in the acquisition of "Jewish depart-

KAUFHAUS RÖMISCHER KAISER



unter neuer Leitung

Das Kaufhaus Römischer Kaiser
Erfurt
ist in arischen Besitz übergegangen

Wir bitten um Ihren Besuch

Erfurt, den 2. Oktober 1937

Kaufhaus Römischer Kaiser

Announcement in the newspaper "Thüringer Allgemeine" of October 3, 1937.

ment stores" by the means of bank loans. The partners Pinthus and Arndtheim felt obliged to sell the store for half of the agreed price as some of the loans had not been approved. The instant dismissal of all Jewish employees was stipulated in the annex of the agreement.

In October 1937, the public learned the news about the family business' sale and attention was drawn to it by the press as Swastika flags were put up on the building as signs. Shortly after, there was a great run to the store as the customers were no longer afraid to do their shopping there. The "Aryanization" process, however, did not go as smoothly as expected. The owners of the retail sales had especially trusted the NS propaganda before the power takeover and had hoped, as an effect, for the closure of the modern store. They suspected that behind the name "Hans Quehl & Co." is the Jewish owner in disguise but with the help of "Aryan" advertisements the new partners attempts to squelch such rumours were succesful.

The families Arndtheim and Pinthus had no longer any means of existence as the result of their department store's "Aryanization". On November 21, 1937, shortly after the loss of his life's work, Siegfried Pinthus passed away in Friedrichroda due to a heart disease. Arthur Arndtheim had been arrested once in 1936 and since then, he was forced to live in secret. At the time of the November pogrom (the Night of the Broken Glass) he stayed in Berlin. At this same night, the executive director of the store Max Arenstein and the youngest son of the Arndtheim family, Karl Heinz, were

taken to Buchenwald and imprisoned for several weeks. In March 1939, the district manager and NSDAP member Ernst Grasshof acquired the residential building of the Arndtheim family at a price of 35.000 RM payable to the tax

Geschmackvolle Blusen

mit denen Sie Ihre Bekleidung abwechslungsreich gestalten können!

Flotte Taftbluse
Kunstseide in blau, coralle, braun, marine, schwarz **7⁹⁰**

Taft-Schottenbluse
Kunstseide in verschiedenen Farbstellungen **5⁹⁰**

Gröpe-Satinbluse
Kunstseide mit Handauszug, in modernen Farben **7⁹⁰**

Gröpe-Satinbluse
Kunstseide, reich gesteppt, versch. Farben **9⁷⁵**

Beachten Sie bitte unsere Schaufenster

KAUFHAUS RÖMISCHER KAISER

Unter neuer Leitung in arischen Besitz

Announcement in the newspaper "Thüringer Allgemeine" of November 12, 1937.



Die neue Frühjahrs-Mode

in Kleidern, Mänteln, Hüten, Kleider- und Seidenstoffen, Schuhen, Modewaren und sonstigen modischen Kleinigkeiten bringt ganz entzückende Neuheiten. Das Interessanteste haben wir in einer Frühjahrs-Modenschau in unseren Fenstern zusammengestellt. Mehr noch zeigt Ihnen ein Rundgang durch unsere modischen Abteilungen

Wir bitten um Ihren Besuch!

**Kaufhaus
Römischer Kaiser**

Arisches Geschäft

Advertisement in the local newspaper "Thüringer Allgemeine" of March 14, 1938.

authorities and in April 1939, the family emigrated to Palestine and lived there in the city

of Ramat-Gan. On January 31, 1940, the Arndt-heim family was officially expatriated.

No Compensation

After the Red Army had occupied the town of Erfurt on July 3, 1945, Hans Quehl was disappropriated on the basis of the SMAD decrees 124/126 (Soviet Military Administration in Germany), as he was considered to be a charged fascist. He filed an objection and attempted to vindicate the contract of sale, but defected eventually to the western occupation zone. In the post war period, the heavily damaged department store was used as provisioning station.

On May 21, 1946, the sequestered property was assigned for beneficial use to the town of Erfurt and was put on the "A-List" for restitution processes with the requirement "that the business is intended for compensation". The Thuringian department for compensation at the presidential office attended to the claims of the original owners. Georg Chaim, who was assigned to administer Jewish assets, endeavoured to get in contact with the next of kin of the expelled family as he tried to exhaust the legal situation to the benefit of the claimants and resisted the municipality's attempts to bring about a final decision without any contact to the aggrieved parties. Chaim appointed the economic advisor Hille as trustee, who made intensive efforts to get the store released.

On September 27, 1947, Erna Arndtheim, the widow of Arthur Arndtheim, applied directly at the presidential office for compensation but the prospects for success were grim. In the course of the year 1947, Chaim and Hille

advised the recovery commission for sequestered businesses at the municipal council on the straight-forward legal situation. Yet, due to a cabinet decision of the government from March 1948 – accordant to the SMAD decree 69 – the store was registered in the cadastre under public property and the former department store "Römischer Kaiser" became the largest emporium of the DDR. The "Amt zum Schutze des Volkseigentums" (Office for the Protection of Public Property) notified the directorate of the synagogue congregation in July 1950 that there was no legal basis on which to recompense Erna Arndtheim. She passed away in Konstanz at the Bodensee in 1975. After reunification, her son Karl-Heinz Arndtheim brought the new owner, the Karsstadt AG, to trial. The proceedings ended in a settlement and Karl-Heinz Arndtheim was finally granted compensation.

Thomas Wenzel

“...well if you buy a boat ticket to leave Germany on such and such a day we'll release him for that day.”

The Industrialist Family Ruppel, Gotha/Saalfeld

The brothers Emanuel and Abraham Ruppel stemmed from Stadtlengsfeld on the Thuringian Rhön Mountains and in 1870, they moved together with their families to the town of Gotha and opened the ironmongery “Gebrüder Ruppel” in the “Haus zur Goldenen Schelle” at the Hauptmarkt 40. They sold metal goods and house- and kitchen utensils. The business took a favourable development. In 1894, the brothers bought an estate in the Reinhardtbrunner Str. 57-59, where they began to build up their very own factory, manufacturing and varnishing household goods. After the death of the two founders, Robert Ruppel, one of Emanuel Ruppel’s sons, took over the upcoming family business in 1906 and the first own utility patents were registered that were to provide the foundation for the subsequent economic success of the company. In the following years, the production of industrial sheet metal fittings, for example, for the automotive industry, increasingly replaced the manufacturing of household goods.

Since December 1929, Marianne Brandt acted as head of the development department in the family business that had been renamed to “Ruppelwerke GmbH”. The student of the



RUPPEL **DAS TAST-LICHT** DRP a. L. PAT. 1.1

Auch Sie haben des öfteren im Dunkeln vergeblich den Schalter Ihrer Nachtlampe gesucht.
Wir verschaffen Ihnen

LICHT durch TASTEN

Beim TAST-LICHT
schaltet die gesamte Fläche des Lampenfußes.
Sie greifen in der Dunkelheit nach der Lampe, tasten nach irgendeiner Stelle des Lampenfußes oder der Säule und haben Licht. Dazu kommt, daß unsere Ausführung dem Zeitgeschmack am meisten Rechnung trägt. Durch Fortfall des üblichen Schalters wird eine geschlossene, schöne Formgebung erreicht, die ein bequemes Reinigen ermöglicht. Der eingebaute Schalter ist vor Beschädigungen geschützt.
Die durchdachte Konstruktion, unsere seit vielen Jahren anerkannte Qualitätsarbeit, vorschriftsmäßiger Aufbau und strenge Kontrolle vor Verlassen des Werkes garantieren für die Lampe.
In Zukunft wird das TAST-LICHT die Nachtlamp- beleuchtung sein.

Das TAST-LICHT wird geliefert

Nr. 2282	Chrom-Kunstharz-Ausführung
Nr. 2283	Full rund, Säule rund, Lampenmodell Schiebelschalter, ein- betriebsbereit abgesetzt, Tast-Platte und Säule aus Kunst- harz, hellbeige, Lampenarm und Fassung-Einrichtung für die hellen Glaspläne verchromt.
Nr. 2284	Chrom-Luxus-Ausführung
Nr. 2285	Full rund, Säule rund, Full edelg., Säule edelg., Lampenmodell Schiebelschalter, ein- betriebsbereit abgesetzt, Tast-Platte und Säule aus Kunst- harz, hellbeige, Lampenarm und Fassung-Einrichtung für die hellen Glaspläne verchromt.

RUPPELWERK G.M. B.H. GOTHA
METALLWARENFABRIK

Seite 187

Stadtarchiv Gotha 2/1415, Bl. 28 (Katalog Ruppelwerke)

Innovative products manufactured at the Ruppelwerke.

Bauhaus founder Walter Gropius modernized large parts of the product-line. Standishes, bookends, moneyboxes, lamps and trays were produced according to her blueprints. In November 1932, however, Marianne Brandt left the “Ruppelwerke”.

Gewindeschneiden für Reihenmaschinen

Eingebaute Gewindeschneideinrichtung

Für Reihen-Bohrmaschinen der „SAALFELD“-Modelle 53—57 findet die gleiche Gewindeschneideinrichtung, die bei den Einspindelmaschinen eingebaut und unter Positionen 568/570 beschrieben ist, Verwendung.

WARIUS-Gewindeschneidapparat

Auch dieser kann bei Reihenmaschinen S 52/S 54 und E 6/E 13 verwendet werden, sofern die betreffende Spindel nicht ausschließlich zum Gewindeschneiden benutzt werden soll. Trifft dieses jedoch zu, empfehlen wir Spezial-Gewindeschneidmaschinen. Wir verweisen auf nachstehende Positionen 581—585.

ULTROMAT- Gewindeschneidmaschinen

Bei Reihenbohrmaschinen verwenden wir für die ausschließlich Gewindeschneidarbeiten dienenden Spindeln ULTROMAT-Gewindeschneidmaschinen. Diese arbeiten ausschließlich automatisch.

Position Nr.	581	582	583	584	585
Größe	UG 1	UG 2	UG 3	UG 4	UG 5
Größtes zu schneidendes Gewinde in Stahl . .	M 5	M 8	M 12	M 16	M 30
Größtes zu schneidendes Gewinde in Messing .	M 8	M 12	M 16	M 24	M 39
Spindelrehzahlen normal	700, 1400	500, 1000	280, 400	200, 280	100, 140, 600
	2800	2000	1120	1120	880, 400, 560
Größt. Spindelhub ca. mm	40	55	80	80	100
Bohrfutterkegelzapfen ca. mm	6	10	15	20	25
Ausladung	120	150	160	190	300
Größt. Abstand zwischen Futter u. Tisch ca. mm	260	340	340	340	500
Leistung des Antriebsmotors kW	0,2	0,37	0,8	0,9	2,2
Telegrammwort	zulrut	zulryk	zulzi	zulaf	zulbz

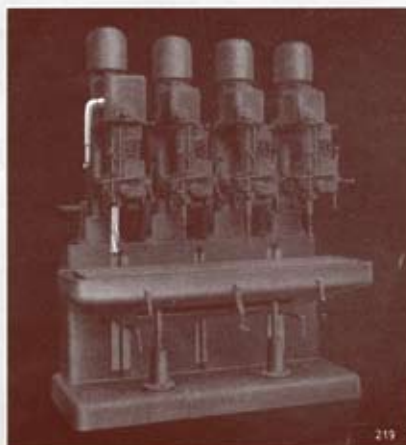


Bild 219. 4-spindl. Reihenbohrmaschine bestehend aus 3 Spindeln S 56 PA 8 und 1 Spindel S 56 PA 8 G.

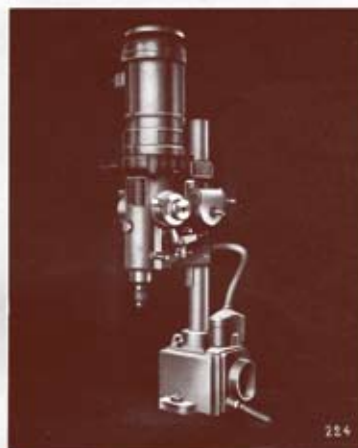


Bild 224. Modell UG 4

Motorschutzschalter

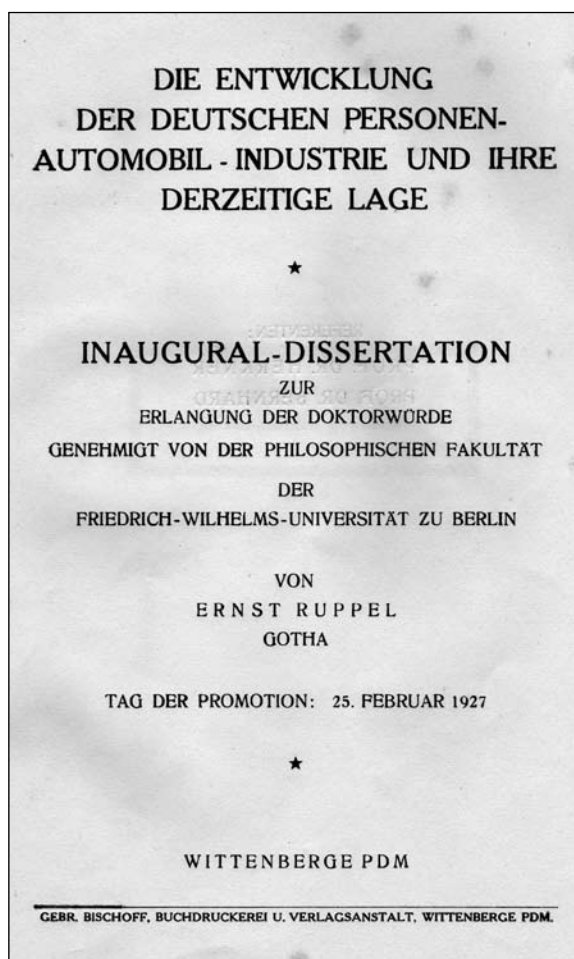
Alle Reihenbohrmaschinen, Bohreinheiten sowie die Einspindelmaschinen in Kastenständer-Ausführung werden mit Motorschutzschaltern Vullt, die im Preise enthalten sind, ausgestattet. Wir empfehlen ebenfalls die Absicherung der übrigen Modelle mit Motorschutzschalter, Fabrikat SKIB, Einbau-Type. Der Motor wird vor Dauerüberlastung (3 thermische Auslöser), Kurzschluss im Netz und Phasenausfall geschützt. Er schaltet bei Ausbleiben der Spannung selbsttätig aus. (Nullspannungsauslösung).

Pos. Nr.	geeignet für Spannungen von	Mehrgewicht ca. kg	Telegrammwort
590	220—380—500 Volt	1	zumky



After the death of the councillor of commerce, Robert Ruppel, in 1931, his son Dr. Ernst Ludwig Ruppel, who had been born on September 18, 1900 in Gotha, assumed the business dealings. Like his older sister Elisabeth (1897-1983), Ernst had attended the "Ernestinum" in Gotha, where he gained his qualification for higher education. Thereafter, he studied economics, natural sciences and business administration in Frankfurt a. M., Munich and Berlin. In the winter semester of 1925/26, he took courses in macroeconomics and law at the Friedrich-Wilhelms University of Berlin and on February 25, 1927, he was awarded his doctorate with a dissertation on "the development of the German automobile industry and its current situation" in Berlin.

The commercial operations of the company in Gotha had been very successful, as Robert Ruppel acquired an engineering factory in Saalfeld. "Auerbach & Scheibe" – a company with a long tradition that was specialised in manufacturing drilling and rounding machines, had been domiciled in Saalfeld since 1889 and had also been a family business until the takeover. Parts of the production line went to Asia and Latin America. Ernst Ruppel was now member of the incorporated company's directorate in Saalfeld and simultaneously continued to be executive director of the "Ruppelwerke GmbH". In 1929, Ernst Ruppel married the trainee teacher Annemarie Fleischhauer from Gotha, who resigned from the school office after their wedding. In November of the same year, the first son, Klaus-Robert, was born followed by a second son, Ernest Dieter, in January 1934.



Wenzel

Cover of Ernst Ludwig Ruppel's dissertation.

Defamed as "Jewish Enterprise"

With the beginning of the Nazi regime, the Ruppel family faced stigmatization and social exclusion, which was going to reach its peak in November 1938 and the first glaring evidence appeared in August/September 1935. In the "Judenspiegel", a supplement of the local newspaper "Gothaer Beobachter", families were openly denounced as "jüdisch", like many other families and businesses. The engineering company "Auerbach & Scheibe AG" in Saal-



Bildarchiv Stadtmuseum Saalfeld, 09119

Employees of the Auerbach & Scheibe AG in 1936.

feld was one of the largest employers of the region and Dr. Ernst Ruppel was the managing director and all shares were held by the family. Unlike in Gotha the business owners had not yet been publicly defamed in Saalfeld.

Since the April-boycotts of 1933, which had been initiated by the NS government and were supposed to be a signal for the "Entjudung" (the cleansing from Jews) of the economy, Jewish businesses were increasingly sold to "Aryan" buyers, with which the amplitude and the dimension of those sales caused the emergence of a regular market. Since 1935/36, the NSDAP became actively involved through

the appointment of economic advisors in the Gau (administrative district of the NSDAP). They had the authority to ultimately decide on the "Aryanization" of the businesses. Even so the economic advisor of Thuringia, Staatsrat (privy council) Otto Eberhardt, only supervised the "Aryanization" processes from March 1938, in June 1937, Dr. Walter Schieber, his most important assistant and later successor, already enquired about the ownership situation of the Ruppels' company in Saalfeld. Otto Steuerwald was to become the most important actor in the background regarding efforts made for the company's "Aryanization". He was the plant manager of the "Auerbach

AUERBACH & SCHEIBE

Werkzeugmaschinenfabrik und Eisengießerei

SAALFELD (SAALE)



Zubehöre

Arbeitsfische
Schraubstöcke
Werkfischbeleuchtung
Kühleinrichtungen
Gewindeschneideinrichtungen
Bohrfutter
Bohrköpfe usw.

„SAALFELD“

Bohrmaschinen ersten Gütegrades

Wenzel

Catalogue of the Auerbach & Scheibe AG.

Vertrauliche Ausführungen zu der Frage des
Besitzwechsels Auerbach & Scheibe Akt.-Ges.

Es ist nicht ausgeschlossen, daß Dr. Ruppel versucht, das Unternehmen in eine offene Handelsgesellschaft umzuwandeln und es als rein jüdisch mit ihm als Betriebsführer zu stempeln, weil er von folgender Überlegung ausgeht: Es ist mir die Hauptsache, das Unternehmen für meine beiden Söhne, die seiner Ansicht nach nach den Nürnberger Gesetzen als arisch gelten, zu retten, wenn auch der Auftragseingang wesentlich zurückgeht und dadurch sehr viele Gefolgschaftsmitglieder abwandern, so macht das nichts aus, weil diese Leute ja überall wieder Arbeit finden.

Er übersieht dabei, daß immer die Besten verlorengehen, und er übersieht ferner, daß im 3. Reich mit einem heereswichtigen Betrieb solche Experimente nicht gemacht werden können.

Ich mache folgenden Vorschlag: Der Kaufpreis der Aktien wird m.E. RM. 800.000.-- betragen müssen. Das Aktienkapital wäre also von RM. 400.000.-- auf RM. 800.000.-- zu erhöhen. Ich verpflichte mich, die Aktien innerhalb 3 Monaten zu verkaufen. Dabei lege ich Wert darauf, daß sich die Gefolgschaft beteiligt. Die Beteiligung wäre möglich; eine Abzahlungsfrist von einem Jahr würde durch Mithilfe einer Bank erreichbar sein. Die restlichen RM. 700000.-- könnte Steuerwald wie folgt unterbringen:

1) Gruppe Jahn/Steuerwald	RM. 100.000.--
2) Paul Rohde	" 100.000.--
3) Zeller/Vöhringer	" 50.000.--
4) Bosch, SSW usw.	" 100.000.--
5) Interessenten der Stadt Saalfeld	" 50.000.--
6) Gruppe Präsident Schneider	" 50.000.--
7) Bank-Kunden	" 150.000.--
8) Vertreter-Gruppe	" 50.000.--
9) Allgemein	" 50.000.--
	<hr/>
	RM. 700.000.--
10) Belegschaft	" 100.000.--
	<hr/>
	RM. 800.000.--

Ich glaube, in Rücksicht darauf, daß die Gefolgschaft verlangt, daß der Betrieb arisiert wird, diesen Vorschlag nunmehr machen zu müssen, um zu vermeiden, daß der Betrieb

& Scheibe AG" at that time and the expulsion of the Jewish owner was in his personal interest, as he planned to take over the company together with his partner and to do so, he denounced Dr. Ernst Ruppel in numerous letters to the Gau economic advisor's office. Steuerwald's behaviour irritated the responsible advisor and was, thus, requested to refrain from such activities.

The "Aryanization" of the Auerbach & Scheibe AG in Saalfeld

Dr. Ruppel realized the situation's gravity by all means and he was well aware that he, as a Jew, was to be cut off from his own company. Thus, he attempted to overwrite the company to his children but they were considered as a "half breeds of 1st degree" ("Mischlinge I. Grades") and therefore Ruppel's suit was declined and the sale of the company became inevitable. Ernst Ruppel was not willing to leave such a decision to the NS authorities and so he tried utilizing his influence as much as possible in an effort to find a buyer independent from the Gau economic advisor and he eventually found Willy Starcke, a member of the directorate, as a suitable buyer. Willy Starcke was at that time, the director of the Singer sewing machine factory in Wittenberge near Potsdam and he was bound to Ruppel by a long friendship as Ruppel had even dedicated his dissertation to Starcke. Hans Helmut Wilkens, Dipl. Ing., the director of the Hoesch-Stahl company and owner of the golden party emblem, became Starcke's co-partner.

Ernst Ruppel tried to stay at least in the management of his business through cooperative conduct. He approached the SS-Obersturmbannführer Walter Schieber at the Gau office for economic affairs and requested, as concession for being forced to retreat involuntarily from his business by the circumstances, the permission to carry on as advisor to the Auerbach & Scheibe AG. He was granted to act in an advisory position to the company and on April 19, 1938, the acquisition agreement was eventually signed. From the stipulated purchase price of 975.000 RM, 95.000 RM had to be paid for "Aryanization" charges and the remainder was to be remitted in equal shares to the previous shareholders of the Auerbach & Scheibe AG, the heirs of Robert Ruppel that is his widow Sophie Ruppel, his son Dr. Ernst Ruppel and his daughter Elisabeth Kaufmann. The "Aryanization" of the long-established company had not been concluded at that time and for the full takeover, the permission of the Reich department of trade and industry had to be awaited in order to deposit one third of the purchase price to a blocked account of Ernst Ruppel's sister Elisabeth Kaufmann. Elisabeth had already relocated to London several years ago and was as foreigner subjected to special "Devisenschutzgesetzen" (foreign exchange protection laws). The main issue and therewith the main obstacle for the conclusion of the proceedings was apparently the concession that had been made in the negotiations on the "Aryanization" process, which stated that "the Jew" Ruppel was still responsible as an advisor on export even after the sale of the business and this was to be avoided at all costs.

Zusammengefasster kurzer Bericht über die Arisierung der Auerbach u. Scheibe A.-G. als Unterlage für die Besprechung am 14. April 1938.

Es handelt sich bei der Firma Auerbach u. Scheibe um eine Aktiengesellschaft mit einem Kapital von RM 400.000,--, die sich mit der Herstellung von Geräten für Auto-Reparaturen befasst. Der Umsatz belief sich im Jahre 1937 auf RM 3.000.000,-- davon etwa RM 500.000,-- Export. Die Firma hat Heeresaufträge, beschäftigt werden ca. 550 Angestellte und Arbeiter. Vorstand ist der Jude Dr. Ruppel, Betriebsleiter ist Steuerwald. Das Aktienkapital befindet sich zu je 1/3 im Besitz von Dr. Ruppel, von seiner Frau, die Arierin ist und von einer Verwandten Ruppels, Frau Dr. Kaufmann. *Wittenberge*

F. Meier
Im August 1937 entstanden Differenzen zwischen dem Exportleiter der AG und einem Vertreter der Deutschen Levante Linie G.m.b.H., in deren Verlauf Heuer abfällige Bemerkungen über die Schifffahrt machte. Diese Differenzen wurden durch das Eingreifen der Gauwirtschaftsberatung behoben. In jüngster Zeit entstand eine erneute Unruhe im Betrieb, durch das Verbot der Flaggenhissung. Durch verschiedene Anzeigen, die dem Gauwirtschaftsberatung durch den Betriebsleiter Steuerwald zugehen, befasste sich die Gauwirtschaftsberatung mit der Firma Auerbach u. Scheibe A.-G.. Dr. Ruppel, der wohl zunächst geglaubt hatte, das Unternehmen seinen Kindern, die Mischlinge sind, erhalten zu können, erklärte sich mit der Arisierung einverstanden und legte den Entwurf eines Kaufvertrages vor, demzufolge das Aktienpaket aus den Händen der Juden zur Hälfte in den Besitz des bisherigen Aufsichtsratsmitglieds der Firma Auerbach u. Scheibe, Dir. Starcke, Wittenberge, und zur Hälfte in den Besitz des Dipl. Ing. Helmut Wilkens, Berlin, Träger des goldenen Parteiabzeichens, übergehen soll.

Als Kaufpreis ist eine Summe von RM 940.000,-- genannt. Dr. Ruppel scheidet aus dem Vorstand aus. Verschiedene Schätzungen von Buchprüfern haben für den Wert der Gesellschaft verschiedene Preise, schwankend zwischen 1 und 2 Mill., festgesetzt. Das als Unterlage für den Kaufvertrag vorliegende Gutachten der Thüringisch-Fränkischen Revisions- und Treuhand G.m.b.H. in Saalfeld/Saale sieht einen Wert von RM 1.040.000,-- vor. In der Bilanz per 31.12.1937 ist das Eigenkapital mit ca. RM 633.000,-- angegeben. Aus dem Gutachten der Treuhandgesellschaft geht hervor, dass die Grundstücke und die Fabrikgebäude zu niedrig eingesetzt sind. Die kurzlebigen Wirtschaftsgüter sind mit nur RM 1.- eingesetzt, ausserdem ist von dem Vermögen als Abschreibung auf das Warenkonto ein Betrag von RM 143.000,-- (20%) abgesetzt worden, dessen Berechtigung nicht ohne weiteres klar ist. Die Firma, hat bis in das Jahr 1935 mit Verlust gearbeitet. Im Jahre 1936 hatte sie einen Gewinn von ~~RM~~ RM 90.000,--. Im Jahre 1937 nach Abschreibung einer gesetzlichen Rücklage von RM 40.000,-- und einer Sonderrücklage von RM 50.000,-- immer noch einen Gewinn von RM 143.000,--.

-2-

ThHStAW, NSDAP Gauleitung Thüringen, Nr. 23 Bl. 140

Report on the planned "Aryanization" of April 14, 1938 (presumably released by the office of the Gau economic advisor).



Bildarchiv Stadtmuseum Saalfeld - 06689

Employees of the Auerbach & Scheibe OHG, circa 1940.

The "Judenreferat" (department for Jewish affairs) of the Reich department of trade and industry offered an extortionary bargain to resolve the complex issue. Dr. Ruppel was ought to make a payment of 45.000 RM without substitution to the German gold discount bank and to accept the annulment of the contract on his advisory position within a timeframe of six months and only under these conditions the "Aryanization" of the Auerbach & Scheibe AG was going to be authorized. It was after

Ernst Ruppel had made the payment and the "Aryan" buyer, Hans Wilkens, had repeatedly contacted the responsible bodies in Thuringia and Berlin, that the exchange control office at the Thuringian finance office in Rudolstadt authorized the payments for the purchase of Elisabeth Kaufmann's, nee Ruppel, company shares. Therewith, the "Aryanization" of the company was officially approved and completed.

Forced Termination of the Ruppelwerke in Gotha through “protective custody” in the Con- centration Camp Buchenwald

The acts of violence that erupted after the assassination of the legation councillor Ernst vom Rath in Paris on November 9/10, 1938, also hit Ernst Ruppel. Together with thousands of other Jewish people, he was taken in “protective custody” at the Buchenwald concentration camp. The prisoner, registered under the number 20735 was visited by Heinrich Heunisch, the executive director and stakeholder of the Ruppelwerke in Gotha and in the presence of Heunisch, Dr. Ernst Ruppel – on pain of violent measures against his family – was forced to sign an additional contract on the “Aryanization” of his venerable family business in Gotha.

On November 12, Heinrich Heunisch and his three new partners received the approval of the Reich governor of Thuringia for the “Aryanization” of the Jewish business in Gotha. The takeover price for the entire assets of the Ruppel family in Gotha was stipulated at a sum of 470.000 RM from which the family was supposed to receive 410.000 RM and a balance of 60.000 RM had to be deposited as “Aryanization” charge into an account of the Thuringian state bank. With the “Aryanization” of the two companies, large private and company assets were switched to different owners overnight. From now on, more than 1.000 workers and employees worked for the “Aryan” owners as intended by the Nazis. The takeover-

date of the company that was now registered as "Gothaer Metallwaren-Fabrik GmbH" was not even concealed in the company chronicle, published in 1942.

The Road to Exile

Ernst Ruppel managed by chance to emigrate together with his family. After his arrest and detention at Buchenwald, his wife undertook great efforts to obtain visas for the United Kingdom and she personally went to the po-

[illegible]

ThHStAW, Konzentrationslager Buchenwald, Geldkarte Ernst Ruppel

Ernst Ruppel's stored value card from the concentration camp Buchenwald.

lice president, Paul Hennicke, and begged him for her husband's release. Hennicke agreed on the release of Dr. Ernst Ruppel under the condition that he was able to provide a valid exit visa. Through acquaintances, Annemarie came coincidentally into contact with Frank Foley, the head of the passport department of the British embassy in Berlin who was at the same time, working as an agent of the British secret service. He supplied the whole Ruppel family with entrance visas to the United Kingdom as he did for thousands of other Jewish families. On board a Dutch plane, the Thuringian

entrepreneurs family fled its home country for good.

In exile in Stourbridge close to Birmingham, the family succeeded to rebuild their existence and to regain some wealth. The family, however, was not going to retrieve the factories in Germany even after the end of World War II. With the short remark that the assets had been become part of the people's property, the family was mulct of its property a second time and no compensation demands were put forward in 1989/90.



Quelle: „Kampf und Sieg in Thüringen“, Abb. 58

Superintendent Paul Hennicke.

A/D1

den 30.12.48

Präsidialabteilung
Ref. Wiedergutmachung

I A 3 - WJ - 284A

Herrn
Rechtsanwalt Dr. Zinn,

G e r a.
Goethestr. 1a.

Betr.: Wiedergutmachung Sophie Ruppel, Ernst Ruppel, Elisabeth Kaufmann hinsichtlich der Firma Auerbach und Scheibe, Saalfeld.

Wir bestätigen Ihr Telegramm vom 29.12.48 mit dem Sie Ansprüche der oben Genannten auf die Firma Auerbach & Scheibe gemäß Wiedergutmachungs-Gesetz vom 14.9.45 anmelden.

Diese Ansprüche wurden bereits durch Herrn Rechtsanwalt Dr. Alfred Kauffmann, London W.C.2 am 15.7.48 zur Anmeldung gebracht.

Nach uns gewordenen Mitteilungen seitens des Amtes zum Schutzes des Volkseigentums ist jedoch die Firma Auerbach & Scheibe

b.w.

in den Besitz des Volkes übergegangen, sodaß das Wiedergutmachungs-Gesetz vom 14.9.45 auf Rückgewähr der Firma selbst nicht zur Durchführung gebracht werden kann.

Im Auftrag

(Aufrichtig)

Christian Faludi

“The German singer only knows one condition, only one spirit, one people and one loyalty. This is his tacit service to the fatherland.”

The Family Bernhard Prager from Apolda

Bernhard Prager was born in the Hessian town of Wenings on June 29, 1888. He was still a child when his parents decided to relocate to Apolda in order to assume the business of an aunt. Around the turn of the century, the small Thuringian town developed into a hub for textile and engineering industry causing the flourishing of the regional economy. The sixty Jewish inhabitants of the town that were predominantly involved in the trading profession carried a large share of the increase in prosperity. Many of them earned their money in the textile trade, refining or selling textile products, running department stores as well as a chocolate factory or butcheries – and the family Prager was no exception. Salomon, Bernhard’s father, maintained a business for coats and guts for which the whole family worked. Consequently, Bernhard completed an apprenticeship as a merchant, accordant to the family tradition, and prepared himself to assume the business dealings someday.

Before that could happen, World War I broke out and Bernhard Prager, who was patriotic to the core, was one of the first volunteers of the imperial army. Like so many Jews in the German Kaiser Reich, he regarded the military



Peter Franz

The dwelling and business house of the Prager family at the turn of the century. Bertha Prager shown right from the window.

service as a chance to assert himself and to prove to his nation that the Jewish Germans were prepared to be of service to their fatherland. Severely injured by the frontline-battles, the soldier returned home while the war was



Advertisement of the business in the local newspaper in the 1920s.

still ongoing. A shot to the head had injured him to such an extent that the physicians were forced to implant a large silver sheet that was to remind him of the combat all his life. In hon-

our of his bravery, the Jewish coat trader received the Iron Cross of the fatherland, which he was wearing proudly even on his civilian clothes.

In September 1918, Bernhard Prager got engaged to Gertrud Katzenstein from Erfurt and they married the following year. Both of them drew repeated attention to themselves as they helped poor people in the hardship of the post war period and because they were very dedicated to the Jewish congregation in Apolda. Despite the attempts to socially conform, the Pragers continued adhering to their



Peter Franz

The Pragers: Gertrude and Bernhard (standing on the left), Bertha and Salomon (sitting on the left) on the wedding day of their niece, Selma, in November 1921.

religious traditions, celebrated Jewish holidays and buried their dead at the Jewish cemetery in Erfurt.

In the 1920s, Prager's business developed - despite the devastating economic situation - in such a good manner that the couple was able to open a new butcher shop. Bernhard Prager was a dignified member of the "Freien Fleischerinnung Apolda" (Independent Butcher's Guild Apolda), and he was respected for his diligence. Next to his professional activities, the merchant was also actively involved in the "Reichsbund jüdischer Frontsoldaten" (Reich association of Jewish veterans), in the "Büchsen-Schützengesellschaft Apolda" (marksmen guild of Apolda) and a choir with "16 song-loving butcher-souls" whose motto was: "The German singer only knows one condition, only one spirit, one people and one loyalty. This his tacit service to the fatherland." In 1922, the birth of the first son, Heinz, completed the family's happiness and fortune.

Boycott and Segregation

Although, there was an agile national socialist movement already in the 1920s and the NSDAP was participating in the Thuringian government since 1930, the last years of the Weimar Republic proceeded free from anti-Semitic reprisals against the residing Jewish people here but the situation changed abruptly in January 1933, when Adolf Hitler was appointed Reich chancellor and when the NSDAP was given the power over Germany. Already in March of the same year, the NS regime prohib-

ited the operations of the "Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens" (Union of German Citizens with Jewish Belief) that advocated the interests of those Jews in Germany that were willing to assimilate and maintain a location group in Apolda. It became prone to anti-Semitic assaults throughout the Reich that had been organised by the NSDAP party base. Initially, the assaults against the Jewish populace had been of spontaneous character, before they culminated in anti-Semitic campaigns - the so-called April-Boycott across the Reich.

Thereupon, at dawn of April 1, 1933, SA men positioned themselves in front of 17 Jewish businesses in Apolda - among them the business of Pragers - and refused entry to the customers, which made significant impact as immediately after, non-Jewish shop owners began to label their businesses as "Aryan" and underlined the announcement with "purely Christian business". Some of the Jewish shopkeepers were so terrified by the developments that they quickly gave up their businesses and decided to emigrate. Bernhard Prager, on the contrary, appeared to be little impressed by those scenes as he had risked his life for Germany during the Great War and was so severely injured in doing so, disavowed that he was no longer accepted in his own country. In order to demonstrate his patriotism, he was wearing now his Iron Cross on his jacket even more often.

Soon after the end of the boycott, Apolda was calm again and everybody returned to their daily routine. Bernhard Prager visited as usu-



Peter Franz

Bernhard Prager (in the middle) of a family trip in 1931.

al the regulars' table at the "Goldenes Lamm" and sang as honorary member in the choir of the butcher's guild, to which he donated together with business friends a banner in 1933. Nevertheless, the situation of the Jews deteriorated visibly and in Apolda, the so-called Stürmerkästen appeared, in which the anti-Semitic vulgar tabloid "Der Stürmer" owned by Julius Streicher was posted with the intention of stirring up hatred against the Jewish population.

As a result of Nuremberg laws of 1935, "registers of Jews and Jewish descendants" were

generated in localities across the Reich and the authorities in Apolda registered 114 persons that had been categorized accordingly. The Nuremberg laws signified the increasing exclusion from the "Aryan" society for the Pragers as Bernhard was expelled as "Gemeinschaftsfremder" (stranger to the national community) from all clubs and was no longer allowed to participate in the choir of the butchers' guild. The access to public institutions and events became prohibited to the Jews and more and more "racial comrades" began to take part in anti-Semitic activities like protests against publicly shamed "race dese-

crators". From 1935, transparencies sharply increased as newspaper advertisements and rallies called for the boycott of Jewish businesses. Again, these campaigns made such an impact that the Jews were increasingly forced to give up their businesses and to emigrate and those who remained strong, were soon to be a victim of the "Aryanization" process.

"Aryanization"

The branches of the big Jewish department store chain "Fried & Alsberg" and "Karstadt" disappeared from the townscape of Apolda and soon after, the regional department stores "Rosewitz" and "Becker & Salinger" followed suit, before smaller businesses were targeted by the governmental - but also increasingly private "Aryanization" efforts. In 1938, members of the butchers' guild that used to value Bernhard Prager's membership so highly in the previous years, suddenly became interested in one of his two properties and the interested parties negotiated with him and agreed on the partly sale of the property with the intention of erecting a commercial building. After the municipality learned about the deal, Mayor Julius Dietz decided without further ado, that the premises had to be ceded to the town in exchange for a minimal compensation. Subsequently, the house on the premises was demolished and one part of the property was sold to the guild. The contract, which had been negotiated by the parties before, was revoked and replaced by an agreement between the municipality of Apolda and the interested parties. This course of

action implied not only that the property of the family was sold at a price far below value but also the business was ruined, which signified the dilapidation of the family's livelihood. Moreover, a large part of the already marginal revenue fell prey to the "Aryanization" charge, so that the Prager family received only 25 per cent of the actual purchase price.

The November-Pogrom (The Night of Broken Glass) and its Consequences

In the face of this harassment, the Pragers managed to endure the following years, in which the anti-Semitic attacks became increasingly repressive, without any greater harm. During the pogrom of November 1938, their windows were broken by the "furious people's rage" but Bernhard Prager escaped the accompanying mass arrests due to his status as former combatant. Yet the Pragers remained not unaffected by the internments to the Buchenwald concentration camp while after the first prisoners had been released, a group of Jewish women that was spontaneously founded and to which also Gertrud Prager belonged to, took care of the badly abused men. Another result of the pogrom was that the Jews were forced to clear the resulting damage on their properties at their own expense and to come up with an "atonement payment" to the amount of one billion Reichsmark. The Apolda's Jews were compelled to pay 134.600 RM to the national socialist state according to the calculations of the local fiscal authorities. Furthermore, as a consequence of the anti-Semitism's

Der Reichsstatthalter in Thüringen
Der Staatssekretär und Leiter
des Thüringischen Ministeriums des Innern.

Weimar

den

69

1941.

Verfügung

Auf Grund des § 1 des Gesetzes über die Einziehung kommunistischen Vermögens vom 26. Mai 1933 — RGBl. I S. 293 — in Verbindung mit dem Gesetz über die Einziehung volks- und staatsfeindlichen Vermögens vom 14. Juli 1933 — RGBl. I S. 479 —, der Verordnung über die Einziehung volks- und staatsfeindlichen Vermögens im Lande Österreich vom 18. 11. 1938 — RGBl. I S. 1620 —, der Verordnung über die Einziehung volks- und staatsfeindlichen Vermögens in den sudetendeutschen Gebieten vom 12. 5. 1939 — RGBl. I S. 911 — und der Verordnung über die Einziehung von Vermögen im Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren vom 4. Oktober 1939 — RGBl. I S. 1998 — wird in Verbindung mit dem Erlass des Führers und Reichskanzlers über die Verwertung des eingezogenen Vermögens von Reichsfeinden vom 29. Mai 1941 — RGBl. I S. 303 —

das gesamte Vermögen des — ~~der~~ Bernhard Israel

Prager,

geborene _____, geboren am 29.6.88

in Wenings,

zuletzt wohnhaft in Apolda

Sandgasse Straße/Platz Nr. 8

zugunsten des Deutschen Reiches eingezogen.

Im Auftrage



H. H. H. H.

ThHStAW, Land Thüringen, Ministerium der Finanzen Nr. 3477 Bl. 069r

Ruling allowing the confiscation of the property, September 15, 1941.

dynamisation through the pogrom, the Jews were no longer allowed to go to "Aryan" schools and for this reason, Heinz Prager, the son of Bernhard Prager, who visited the fifth grade of Apolda's secondary school, was expelled. Heinz moved to his grandmother Fanny Katzenstein in Erfurt and went henceforth to a Jewish school that was subsisted by the "Reichsvereinigung der Juden In Deutschland" (Reich Association of Jews in Germany) but it was not long before Heinz had to leave this institution as well as the NS authorities committed him to forced labour in one of Berlin's armament factories due to the manpower shortage that was prevalent with the outbreak of World War II. Thereupon, his grandmother, who was 81 years old at that time, stayed all by herself in Erfurt, before she moved to her daughter and son-in-law to Apolda in 1940.

The economic and social situation of the Pragers had dramatically deteriorated at that point as the family business had been closed per compulsory enactment by the town's mayor in spring 1939. Hence, Bernhard and Gertrud were out of work and forced to live off their savings. In the same year, the NS authorities took the radio receivers from all Jews of Apolda – among them the Prager family. Since 1939, they were obligated to bear the names "Sara" and "Israel" and the labelling of their identification papers were accompanied by the compulsory display of a yellow Star of David with the inscription "Jew" on it, which complemented the surveillance of the Jewish Germans and their segregation from the "Volksgemeinschaft" (national community). At that time, the majority of Apolda's Jewish

inhabitants had emigrated due to the persistent reprisals. For those who still had not managed to emigrate by then, the departure became next to impossible from October 1941 onwards.

The "Final Solution to the Jewish Question"

By the end of 1941, the "solution to the Jewish question" proceeded to the "final solution," and it was not long that the deportations began to take place across Thuringia. Jews from Apolda fell victim to the "evacuation" to the East for the first time in May 1942. On the strength of Bernhard Prager's "combatant status" the local authorities made him an instrument of their measures and as an involuntary collaborator, he was pressurized to deliver the message of their impending transport to 15 other Jews in Apolda. On May 9, they were picked up and - together with hundreds of other Jews from all over Thuringia – taken to the Gestapo prison in Weimar. The following day the detainees were taken to the train station from where they were transported on the waggon train "Da 27" together with 987 other German Jews to Belzyce, close to Lublin in Poland. Most of the deportees died shortly after in the gas chambers of the Majdanek concentration camp. At first, Bernhard Prager and his family remained untroubled by this fate on the grounds of their privileged status but the period of grace, however, only lasted a few more months until they were also deported on September 20, 1942.

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Zur Beachtung!

Sachen, die anordnungsgemäß mitgenommen werden, sind nicht einzutragen. Für jede Person (auch Kinder und Ehefrauen) ist ein gesondertes Formular auszufüllen. Für Minderjährige oder Ehefrauen hat die Ausfüllung in der Regel der Vertretungsberechtigte (Vater) oder der Ehemann vorzunehmen. Dies gilt auch dann, wenn kein eigenes Vermögen oder Einkommen der Minderjährigen oder Ehefrauen vorhanden ist. Sämtliche das Vermögen verkörpernde Urkunden (z.B. Wertpapiere), sich auf das Vermögen beziehende oder sonstige vermögensrechtliche Fragen regelnde Urkunden (z.B. Verträge und Beweismaterial) sind, soweit greifbar, beizufügen.

Vermögenserklärung

Vornamen (Nachname unterstreichen) und Zuname (bei Ehefrauen auch Mädchennamen): Prager Bernhard Israel

Beruf: Kaufmann Jude? ja

Letzte Beschäftigung (Firma, Gehalt, Lohn): keine Kriegsbesch.

Wohnung (Stadt, Stadtteil, Straße und Hausnummer, seit wann? 1895)
Apolda, Landstrasse 8.

Name, Anschrift und evtl. jüdische Rassezugehörigkeit des Hauseigentümers:
Bernhard Israel Prager, Ebn
Apolda, Landstrasse 8

Größe der Wohnung (Zimmerzahl und -art, WC, Warmwasser, Dampf- oder Warmwasserheizung, Balkon, Wohneschoß, Fahrstuhl, Gartenbenutzung, Nebenräume wie Diele, Badezimmer, Mädchenkammer, Keller, Boden usw. Genaue Angaben):
1 Wohnzimmer, 2 Schlafzimmer Küche
Wohnkammer, Flur

Höhe der monatlichen oder vierteljährlichen usw. Miete (Mietvertrag beifügen): 45,-

Sind Sie Untermieter? (Dann auch Name, Anschrift und evtl. jüdische Rassezugehörigkeit des Untervermieters angeben):

ThHStAW, Land Thüringen, Ministerium der Finanzen Nr. 3477 Bl. 070

Bernhard Prager's statement of property from September 13, 1942.

1. Liste der Deportierten XVI/1 0.9.1942 04/559 38

501	Bühner, Anna	geb. 07.07.76	ohne	alle	Leipzig
502	Wagner, Leo	geb. 07.07.76	ohne	alle	Leipzig
503	Wegel, Carl	geb. 07.07.76	ohne	alle	Leipzig
504	Wittke, Alfred	geb. 07.07.76	ohne	alle	Leipzig
505	Wittke, Carl	geb. 07.07.76	ohne	alle	Leipzig
506	Wittke, Carl	geb. 07.07.76	ohne	alle	Leipzig
507	Wittke, Carl	geb. 07.07.76	ohne	alle	Leipzig
508	Wittke, Carl	geb. 07.07.76	ohne	alle	Leipzig
509	Wittke, Carl	geb. 07.07.76	ohne	alle	Leipzig
510	Wittke, Carl	geb. 07.07.76	ohne	alle	Leipzig
511	Wittke, Carl	geb. 07.07.76	ohne	alle	Leipzig
512	Wittke, Carl	geb. 07.07.76	ohne	alle	Leipzig
513	Wittke, Carl	geb. 07.07.76	ohne	alle	Leipzig
514	Wittke, Carl	geb. 07.07.76	ohne	alle	Leipzig
515	Wittke, Carl	geb. 07.07.76	ohne	alle	Leipzig
516	Wittke, Carl	geb. 07.07.76	ohne	alle	Leipzig
517	Wittke, Carl	geb. 07.07.76	ohne	alle	Leipzig
518	Wittke, Carl	geb. 07.07.76	ohne	alle	Leipzig
519	Wittke, Carl	geb. 07.07.76	ohne	alle	Leipzig
520	Wittke, Carl	geb. 07.07.76	ohne	alle	Leipzig

Yad Vashem Archives, 064/269, Bl. 35

Extract of the deportees-list of the transport XVI/1, which took Bernhard and Gertrud Prager as well as her mother Fanny Katzenstein to the ghetto Theresienstadt in September 1942. The train carried 877 people, mainly of older age. Only 92 survived the "Third Reich".

In contrast to the other deportees, Bernhard Prager, his wife and his mother in law were not taken to Poland, but to "Theresienstadt" "the ghetto for the elderly" in the "Protectorate Bohemia and Moravia" that had been established as "showcase-camp" for "privileged Jews". At first, the couple was forced to sign a "nursing home agreement" for the accomo-

dation in the ghetto, which was similar to a concentration camp and this agreement between the Pragers and the "Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland" (Reich Association of Jews in Germany), materialised on September 9. The stipulated price for the stay in the "ghetto for the elderly" until death amounted to 13.847 Reichsmark, which matched the total sum of the remaining mobile assets of the couple. The family had to register their stationary assets in a declaration of property on September 13. Two days later, municipal tax inspectors came to the Pragers and estimated their real estate at a value of 11.000 Reichsmark and seized the entire house including all furnishings. The Pragers were only allowed to take a few personal belongings with them that were of low material value Bernhard Prager, nevertheless, succeeded to withhold some valuable religious objects from the financial authorities. Shortly before his deportation, he was able to pass a Hanukkah candleholder and Sabbat cloth to Jewish friends, who were meant to hide it from the authorities and keep them in remembrance of him. On September 19, 1942, the time had come when Bernhard, his wife Gertrud, the 83 year old mother-in-law and three other Jews from Apolda were taken to the Gestapo post in Weimar. Again, there had been hundreds of Jews gathered, who were going to be deported. On the lists of the transport XVI/1-Da 517 to the Protectorate Bohemia and Moravia, Bernhard and Gertrud had been reduced to the numbers 519 and 520 of the total 877 numerics, each of which meant a human life. Shortly after their arrival at the ghetto, Gertrud's mother, Fanny was the first to fall victim to the inhumane conditions and

she died in December of the same year. The 52 year old Bernhard Prager was still able to bear the conditions for nearly two years until he died in "Theresienstadt" on September 26, 1944. The loss of her husband simultaneously meant the loss of Gertruds Prager's privileged status and after, she was deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau, where she was instantaneously murdered after her arrival in one of the gas chambers at the camp. The traces of their

son, Heinz, also lead to Auschwitz. In 1942, he was first taken from Berlin to a ghetto in Riga, Latvia, before he was allocated to an "Arbeitskommando" (work squad) at the concentration camp Auschwitz. Weakend by the exertions and suffering of various diseases, Heinz Prager fell prey to the "selection at one of the medical barracks" and was killed by means of a "Phenolin" injection into his heart.



Peter Franz

Picture of a Sabbath cloth owned by the Prager family: They handed it over to friends just before their deportation.

The Pilferage of the Deportees

Even before the Pragers had left their place of domicile, a number of interested parties were claiming the property that had fallen to the German Reich. Individuals as well as the authorities attempted to assert claims on the property, of which the town rejected. The municipal authorities declared that they could not sell the house before the end of the war and were instead going to rent it out to interested tenants. On October 19, 1942, the local tax inspectors recorded all of the household articles that had been left by the Pragers, estimated them at their sales value and offered them for sale at a public auction two weeks later. Numerous residents of Apolda took up the offer and enriched themselves on the property of the deportees. Although the town had not been affected by the destructions of the war just yet, people bought everything from the second hand “underpants” and “corset” to “Goethe’s collected works” to “kindling wood” and “leather lounge chairs” that the bailiff presented for sale. The earned profit amounted to 5.853,68 Reichsmark, which went directly to the accounts of the fiscal authorities that brought the raid of the Prager family to a close and cleared their last traces in Apolda.

After the war, relatives of the robbed and murdered family claimed for compensation in order to retrieve at least the former residential premises but their efforts failed against the German Democratic Republic’s principles of law, which meant that the house and the estate of Bernhard Prager were retained in state ownership. Only after the demise of the DDR, it was possible to return at least part of the looted property to the family’s descendants.

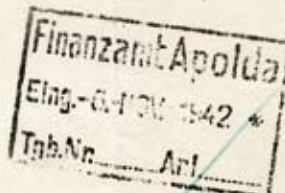


ALBERT PALM - APOLDA

EINGANGS- UND BEARBEITUNGSVERMERK:

An das
Finanzamt
Abteilung Grundstückverwaltung

Apolda



GESCHAFTS-ZEICHEN UND TAG IHRES SCHREIBENS

GESCHAFTS-ZEICHEN UND TAG MEINES SCHREIBENS
Steuer Nr.2/249 d.5.11.42.

BETRIFFT:

Heilstand

Mit nachstehendem möchte ich mir die Anfrage erlauben, ob das Haus in der Sandgasse von Prager zu verkaufen ist. Ich möchte es eventuell für meinen Schwager in Bremen, der gern hier her ziehen will kaufen, denn Wohnung ist schwer zu haben und das kleine Haus eignet sich ja nur für eine Familie. Mein Schwager ist pensionierter Telegrafistenbeamter und altes Parteimitglied. Ich erbitte Ihren Bescheid und zeichne

Heil Hitler!

Al. Palm

ANLAGEN

BERNRUF
944

POSTSCHECK
ERFURT 24631

BANK-KONTO
KOMMERZ- UND PRIVATBANK A-G
FILIALE APOLDA

ThHStAW, Land Thüringen, Ministerium der Finanzen Nr. 3477 Bl. 117

Purchase enquiry regarding the house of the Pragers from November 5, 1942.

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Apolda, den 29. Oktober 1942

Herrn

Gerichtsvollzieher Westhäuser

Apolda
=====

Sie werden hiermit beauftragt, das bei dem Juden Bernhard Prager Apolda, sandgasse aufgenommene u. verzeichnete bewegliche Vermögen bestmöglichst zu verwerten.

Dabei ist zu berücksichtigen, dass die Mitteldutsche Umsiedlings Aktiengesellschaft in Weimar den Vorzug auf Kauf dieser Sachen erhalten hat.

Das Finanzamt Apolda
J.A.
gez. Scheller

ThHStAW, Land Thüringen, Ministerium der Finanzen Nr. 3477 Bl. 146

Release order of the property to the bailiff from October 29, 1942.

147
Apolda, den 2. November 1942 - - -

V e r k a u f s p r o t o k o l l

Sache Bernhard Prager
=====

Auf Antrag des Finanzants Apolda habe ich heute mit dem Verkauf der beweglichen Sachen des Juden wernhard Prager, Apolda, Sandgasse begonnen.

Es wurde bekant gegeben, dass der Verkauf nur unter der gesetzl Bedingung erfolgt, namentlich , dass dem Käufer wegen eines Mangels an Recht oder wegen eines Mangels der verkäusserten Sache ein Anspruch auf Gewährleistung nicht zustehe u. dass die Übergabe der verkauften Sache nur gegen Barzahlung erfolge.

Hierauf habe ich die im nachstehenden Verzeichnis aufgeführten Sachen zum beigesetzten Preis verkauft u. übergeben.

Verzeichnis der verkauften Sachen.
=====

angeschlossen


gerichtsvollzieher

ThHStAW, Land Thüringen, Ministerium der Finanzen Nr. 3477 Bl. 147

Title page of the sales record from November 2, 1942.

152

Zu- ver- kau- f- Nan- mer	Summe d. Hän- dungs- proto- kolls	Gut	Meist- gebot	Des Meistbietenden		Bemerkungen
				Name	Wohnort	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
95	116	2 Bettücher	24 3/4	Frau Schäler	Apolda	✓
96	112	2 H. Nachthemden	3	Frau Hoffmann	"	✓
97	106	1 Tischdecke	2	Herr Dietel	"	✓
98	109	1 Serviette	40	Mich. Andriowitsch	"	✓
99	29	6 Teegläser	1 50	Frau Kähler	"	✓
100	28	6 Biergläser	1 50	"	"	✓
101	163	1 Backform	50	Herr Schuster	"	✓
102	176	2 Tortenplatten	2	"	"	✓
103	27	11 Weingläser	4	"	"	✓
104	149	1 Bürste	50	"	"	✓
105	205	2 Speckbrettchen	30	"	"	✓
106	168	1 Abtreter	80	"	"	✓
107	23	versch. Bücher	3	Herr Ebener	"	✓
108	20	Goethes Werke	17	Alb. Müller	"	✓
109	21	Storms Werke	3	"	"	✓
110	18	1 Sofakissen	1 50	Frau Schneider	"	✓
111	12	1 Wandlampe	3	"	"	✓
112	37	Gardinenreste	1	Total Werk	"	✓
113	110	5 Geschirrtücher	75	"	"	✓
114	122	2 Leintücher	2	Herr Dietel	"	✓
115	168	1 Abtreter	1	Herr Lappe	"	✓
116	232	1 Aktenregal	5	"	"	✓
117	184	4 Holzroste	6	"	"	✓
118	169	2 Stuhlkissen	1	Herr Urlau	"	✓
119	209	1 Wandschaft	1	Frau Schäler	"	✓
120	17	1 Kassenschrank	100	Herr Langenbach	"	✓
121	7	1 Sessel	80	Frau Burkhardt	"	✓
122	158	1 Blumenständer	4	Frau Müller	"	✓
123	22	1 Lexicon	20	Frau Burkhardt	"	✓
			269 75			

GVZ. 31.
Ertrag aus Versteigerungsgeschäften
1942 Nr. 10. Lfz. Nr. 4. 20.

ThHStAW, Ministerium der Finanzen 3477, Bl. 152

Extract of the auction record of the Prager family's property after their deportation on November 2, 1942.

Henriette Rosenkranz

***"I specifically emphasize that I have no
intention to emigrate at my age..."***



Eva Fox-Gal

Jenny Fleischer-Alt

Injustice beyond Death – The Fate of the Singer Jenny Fleischer-Alt from Weimar

Jenny Fleischer-Alt was born as Jenny Charlotte Alt into a Jewish family in Pressburg (today Bratislava) on August 3, 1863. Early in her life she decided to be baptized. She completed a vocal training and became a reputable singer. In



Eva Fox-Gal

Jenny Fleischer-Alt

1884, she was employed at the courtly theatre of Wiesbaden and when she gave a guest performance in Weimar, she received an offer for a highly lucrative engagement as coloratura singer at the Weimar Theatre of which she accepted. Since then, she was living and working in Weimar. In addition to her engagement at the theatre, the popular singer gave lessons as private singing teacher. Enthused by her talent, the grand duke, Carl Alexander, awarded her with the honorary title "Großherzogliche Kammersängerin" (grand ducal court singer).

In 1891, Jenny Alt married professor Friedrich Fleischer and under pressure to observe the social conventions of the family, she gave up teaching and her engagement at the theatre. In 1900, the Fleischers moved to their new residence – a mansion in the Belvedere Allee 6.

Although the popular singer had given up her engagement at the Weimar Theatre, Weimar's population was not forced to forego her singing altogether. Jenny Fleischer-Alt performed as stage- and concert singer for charity events and she continued to give singing lessons as well and since 1920, she was teaching at a music school in Weimar. The employment, however, ended in 1927, when the head office of the music school ignored her request to gain a title as a professor and to conduct her own academic class. Whether anti-Semitic sentiments were already playing a role in this decision-making, cannot be argued with certainty. In any case, Jenny Fleischer-Alt resigned from her contract with the music school and the students attempt to convince the head office to keep Jenny Fleischer-Alt through a pe-



Rosenkranz

Mansion situated at the Belvederer Allee 6. Jenny Fleischer-Alt lived here between 1900 until 1942.

tition failed and the singer retreated into her private life.

Plundered

With the death of her husband at the turn of the year 1937/38, Jenny Fleischer-Alt was no longer under the protection that she used to “enjoy” due to her so-called “mixed marriage”. The repercussions of her new status as a “Jewish” sole heir to her deceased husband’s prop-

erties became obvious. From then on, all the laws and decrees that had been enacted by the Nazi rulers for the social marginalisation of the Jewish citizens from the German “national community” and also for the systematic plunder of the same, applied also to her. On September 7, 1939, Jenny Fleischer-Alt received a “Sicherheitsanordnung” (safety ruling) and like thousands of other citizens of Jewish descent, she was requested to present a detailed statement of her assets to the finance authorities. Her statement showed a

77 77

Kurt Töpfer
Jenny Sara Fleischer
 (Name des Einreichers)

Meininger
Blodernsallee Straße Nr. 6

Beruf: _____

An den
Herrn Oberfinanzpräsidenten Thüringen
 (Devisenstelle)
 in **Rudolstadt (Thür.)**

Betr.: Ihre Sicherungsanordnung vom 7.9.39 Ges. Z. F. 1. 67 Lb/L

1. Ich bin geboren am 3/8. 1863 in Dresden (Preußen)
~~ledig~~ ~~verheiratet~~ ~~geschieden~~ und habe minderjährige Kind im Alter von _____
 Ich lebe von meiner Ehefrau getrennt.

Ihr Aufenthalt ist: _____
 (genaue Anschrift)

2. Ich selbst — sowie meine Ehefrau — und mein minderjährige Kind habe nach dem derzeitigen Stand folgendes Vermögen:

	(ohne Pfennige)
Bank-, Sparkassenguthaben und Postscheckbestand	RM 1.600.-
Wertpapiere (Kurswert)	RM 242.000
Rückkaufswert von Versicherungen	RM —
Hypotheken	RM —
Beteiligungen	RM —
Grundbesitz <i>Vollkornstr. 6</i>	RM 34000.-
Sonstige Vermögenswerte <i>in jährlicher</i>	RM —
<i>Rechtsanwalt von Kell 13.754,50</i>	RM —
Aktiv-Vermögen insgesamt	RM 277.600.-
Von dem Aktiv-Vermögen sind abzusetzen sämtliche Schulden einschl. der noch nicht gezahlten Reichsfluchtsteuer und der Judenvermögensabgabe <i>4.700.-</i>	RM 6800.-
verbleibt ein Reinvermögen von	RM 270.800.-

3. Ich selbst — sowie meine Ehefrau — und meine minderjährige Kind habe im letzten Steuerjahr ein Jahreseinkommen von insgesamt RM 40378.-
 versteuert und werde im laufenden Jahr voraussichtlich ein Einkommen von RM 32.000.- haben.

4. Bei einem 7 köpfigen Haushalt habe ich zur Zeit monatlich folgende Ausgaben:

a) Wohnungsmiete, Heizung, Gas, Wasser, Elektrizität	RM —
b) Lebensunterhalt, einschl. Bekleidung	RM —
c) Ausgaben für Hausangestellte (_____ Personen)	RM —
d) laufend zu leistende unentgeltliche Zuwendungen	RM —
an _____	RM —
an _____	RM —
an _____	RM —
an _____	RM —
e) Sonstiges	RM —
<i>Laufauslage</i> laufende monatliche Ausgaben insgesamt	RM 1767.-

Vordruck Dev. VI 3 Nr. 2 (R. 328). 25. 8. 30. 2000.

wealth of 270.000 RM, which was composed of cash money, securities and the estimated value of the mansion at the Belvedere Allee 6 in Weimar. Jenny Fleischer-Alt presented all the monthly expenses that she had to cover as offset. The expenses amounted from the wages of the house staff, the maintenance of the house and the support of her unsound sister Ilka and her daughter Edith Gal, mother and sister of the composer Hans Gal.

All these costs added up to 1.700 RM, which was on par with the "allowance" that was authorized by the fiscal authorities after she had no longer unlimited access to her account. Her account, like the accounts of all Jews, had been declared as only "constricted available" by the tax authorities. This way, the financial administration of the Nazi regime acted as factual account holder. In a letter to the tax authorities, Jenny Fleischer-Alt wrote, in addition to the summary of her monthly expenses, the amount of the taxes she was going to pay the following year. The consolidated balance sheet of her financial obligations showed clearly that the widow was thrown into profound financial difficulties by the deprivation of access to her assets. This situation did not only mean a great constraint in her usual standard of housekeeping, but also necessitated the sale of securities in order to pay taxes for a property of which she could no longer dispose freely.

Until the time of the regulation of the so-called "allowances", the exchange control office "released" the income of interest to Jenny Fleischer-Alt for the financing of her household and particularly for the tax payments. The wid-

ow had earnings from a patent, a certain type of painting material developed by her husband, which was at her disposal. Now, however, she was forced to inform the company that was developing products on the basis of the aforementioned patent to make its payments to the constricted account.

Despite the reprisals, Jenny Fleischer-Alt had no intentions to leave her home country and she communicated this clearly to the relevant authorities. She justified her decision to remain in Germany with her unsound physical condition and she was able to prove this with a medical attestation. Obviously, she was still hoping, despite the persecution by the Nazis, to remain in her home town Weimar.

Driven into Suicide

Since the abolition of the protection of Jewish tenants across the Reich on January 17, 1939 and the directive that "non-Aryans" had to be evicted from "Aryan" houses of April 30, 1939, Weimar's Jewish citizens were banished from their homes and herded together in "Jew houses". This also applied to Jenny Fleischer-Alt, yet in a different way. She did not have to leave her home in the Belvederer Allee, but her house was declared one of the "Jew houses" from 1940. Initially, the widow had to accommodate two fundless women, Käthe Friedländer and Martha Kreiß and later the concertmaster Eduard Rose. From then on, she had to provide for three more people from the already limited means.

The precarious situation, however, was going to deteriorate as a decree by the "Reichssicherheitshauptamt" (Reich Main Security Office) of November 27, 1941 ruled that Jewish citizens were only allowed to withdraw an "allowance" of 150 RM from their accounts to cover their livelihoods' expenses. For Jenny Fleischer-Alt, this meant that she was permitted to live from only 500 RM. At the same time, her niece Edith Gal was deleted from the account statement, "because she has her own account and her own allowance sum" as stated in a notification by the fiscal authorities. In desperation, Jenny Fleischer-Alt contacted the "Deutsche Bank" directly with the objective to achieve a relaxation of the regulation to be able to pay the hospital's and doctor's bills of her sister Ilka, who was hospitalized due to an accident. The bank, however, forwarded the letter without comment to the exchange control office. They had instructed Jenny Fleischer-Alt to reimburse part of the support assigned to the niece, which had, according to the authorities, "exceeded the allowance". She had to cover a cost of about 200 RM more with her already low monthly "allowance." A month later, the exchange control office received a communication from the "Gestapo" with the suggestion to further reduce her monthly "allowance" to 300 RM.

Beside the harassment, Jenny Fleischer-Alt suffered from the loss of her sister Ilka on March 4, 1942 and she also had a constant fear of deportation, which had been announced in May 1942. Jenny Fleischer-Alt and her niece Edith Gal considered suicide as the only way out and during the Easter-weekend, on April 7, 1942,

Jenny Fleischer-Alt departed this life. Edith Gal passed away four days later, on April 11, 1942, as a consequence of the suicide attempt.

Inheritance Confiscated

Shortly before her death, Jenny Fleischer-Alt had written a will stating that her nephew, Dr. Eduard Wolff, was going to be the principal heir to her property. Moreover, she stipulated kind benefits for the former house personnel and she appointed Dr. Peters as caretaker of the inheritance, who was employed at the Thuringian trust society in Weimar. Irrespective of the valid will, the exchange control office claimed the inheritance of the deceased and they demanded detailed information from the caretaker about the current value of the assets. Due to the still applicable "safety ruling" for his aunt's accounts, the nephew Eduard Wolff, the sole heir, was even forced to file an "application for access to a constricted safety account" in order to pay for her funeral. In connection with this, the authorities requested a declaration from him indicating "whether he is a Jew, a crossbreed (if so to which degree?) or an Aryan".

In April 1942, the Gestapo excluded the exchange control office from handling the case and seized the management of Jenny Fleischer-Alt's assets. The accounts and bonds were confiscated in favour of the German Reich and the Gestapo decided that the maintenance of the villa in the Belvederer Allee be passed into the responsibility of the town Weimar. It bought the prestigious real estate "in exchange for

Der Oberfinanzpräsident Thüringen

Rudolfsstadt, 14. August 1942

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- O 5205 - P 22

Bitte in der Antwort vorliegendes Geschäftszettel, Tag und
Gegenstand dieses Schreibens angebenDevisenstelle
hierBetrifft: Eingezogenes Vermögen der verstorbenen Jüdin Jenny Sara
Fleischer in Weimar

Bezug: Ihre Weiterschrift vom 13.d.M. JS 67/IV Bock

Das Vermögen der vorbezeichneten Jüdin ist gemäß Verfügung des Reichsstatthalters in Thüringen - Staatssekretär und Leiter des Thür.Ministeriums des Innern - vom 12.Juni 1942 zugunsten des Reichs eingezogen worden. Die Verwaltung des Vermögens ist vorläufig auf mich übergegangen. In der Ortsstufe liegt die vorläufige Verwaltung beim Finanzamt Weimar, das auch das Haus Belvederer Allee Nr.6 in seine Obhut genommen hat. Für die Weiterbearbeitung der Sache ist der gemeinsame Erlaß des Reichsministers des Innern und des Reichsministers der Finanzen vom 9.April 1942 I a 326/42 - 3800 a und O 5205 - 383 VI (veröffentlicht im Ministerialblatt des Reichs- und Preußischen Ministeriums des Innern 1942 Nr.15) maßgebend. Das dort vorgesehene Verfahren habe ich hinsichtlich des eingezogenen Hauses in die Wege geleitet. Wegen des beweglichen Vermögens konnte

16. 7. 41. 89000. DIN 478 A 5.
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diesnoch nicht geschehen, weil mir ein vollständiges Vermögensverzeichnis noch nicht vorliegt. Seine Aufstellung ist veranlaßt.

Gegen die Vermögenseinziehung hat der angebliche Alleinerbe der Fleischer, Dr.Eduard Wolff in Miersdorf bei Zeuthen, am 17.Juni d.J. beim Reichsminister des Innern Beschwerde eingelegt. Ein Entscheid hierauf ist mir bisjetzt nicht bekannt geworden.

Im Auftrag
gez.OBwald

Beurlaubt

Steuerbetriebsassistent

JS 67

77.8.42

Bock

outstanding land charges and tariff rates with an overall amount of 10.740, 83 RM". Later, the house served as a military hospital after structural alteration works. The Weimar revenue office took on the valuable furnishings of the villa and sold the furniture and fixtures at a public auction in 1944. The paintings that belonged to the descendant's estate, however, were only sold in underhand dealings, arguably the real value of those and their buyers were preferred to be kept in the dark. The revenue office kept carpets and stoves from the estate for its own requirements. The true heir, Dr. Eduard Wolff, appealed against the authorities' course of action in a futile writing to the Interior Minister, Frick, which was forwarded via the chancellery of the "Führer" to the Head of Finance in Rudolstadt and finally channeled to the revenue office in Weimar.

where the new owners were. One buyer that had become known, who had bought a "baby grand with chair and cover from the Jewish decedent estate" simply refused to return the pieces.

Incomplete Restitution

After the end of the war, the nephew of Jenny Fleischer-Alt, Dr. Eduard Wolff, filed an application for the reassignment of his inheritance to the new Thuringian authorities. On the basis of the Thuringian compensation law, he was granted the property of the land and the house in the Belvederer Allee 6. He did not receive, however, the entire inheritance of his aunt that he was entitled to according to her testament. In the course of the proceedings, various difficulties arose particularly in regards to the furniture and art paintings that the national socialist authorities had confiscated and sold. For many objects that had been auctioned, it could not be established who and

Christine Schoenmakers

“We literally escaped with the last train.”

The Friedmann Family from Jena

The story of the Friedmanns takes place in Jena between 1885 and 1892. Originally from the Harz region, they initially settled in the south of Thuringia in the middle of the 19th century. This is where Hermann Friedmann was born in Marisfeld near Meiningen on March 19, 1870. Since September 1, 1892, he ran a butcher shop with a joined coat trad-

ing shop together with his wife Klara (1869-1944) and his son Arthur (1895-1978), who later became a partner. It was a mixture of salesmanship, diligence and the utilizing of leeways that allowed the Friedmann family to progress swiftly. The division of work was consistent with the social coventions of the Kaiserreich. Hermann Friedmann ran the business, while Klara Friedmann confined herself to domestic responsibilities.



Charles H. Friedman

Klara Friedmann



Charles H. Friedman

Hermann Friedmann



Charles H. Friedman

Arthur and Hermann Friedmann as soldiers in World War I.

The international success of the family business permitted the Friedmanns to advance relatively expeditiously to the affluent middle classes and to raise their reputation and wealth. Like most middle-class families, they were interested in culture and in politics to some extent. They did not want to deny their roots and their German Jewish faith, hence they were involved with social and religious matters within the Jewish community. Arthur and Hermann Friedmann were highly engaged in the restab-

lishment of the Jewish congregation in Jena, which often held and chaired by Friedmanns at the family-owned mansion in Jena West. For the Friedmanns it was a matter of course to serve, alongside many others, as soldiers in the war. They also shared the general perception that the war was just and victory the only option. Arthur Friedmann, as former officer of artillery and front-line soldier, was even awarded with the Iron Cross.

The Friedmanns quickly sensed that the public opinion turned against “the Jews” after the lost world war. What was first discussed by the mob in the backyards turned into the dominant worldview and all of a sudden, they, as front-line soldiers, were to bear the blame for the lost war, just because they were of a different faith as their neighbours. In order to set an example against the growing anti-Semitism, Arthur Friedmann founded a Jena’s location group of the “Reichbund jüdischer Frontkämpfer” (Reich association of Jewish front-line soldiers) in January 1919 but all their efforts to confront and fight against the defamations were in vain.

The Expulsion from the “German national community”

It started to become dangerous, when the National Socialists declared the Jews to a “race” of its own. Even in the case of the Friedmanns converting to another religion – as many other Jews did – in the eyes of the new rulers they would always remain “Jews” and a letter from Arthur Friedmann to one of his former fellow

Deutscher Reichskriegerbund " Kyffhäuser "

Auf die Anfrage betr. Belassung des Kameraden
F r i e d m a n n im Artillerieverein hat der Landesverband
nach Anhören des Bundesvorstandes folgende Entscheidung gegeben:

" Personen jüdischen Glaubens können nicht länger
Mitglieder des Kyffhäuserbundes bleiben. Verdiente und angesehene
Kameraden jüd. Glaubens können aber auf Jhren Wunsch weiter in
den Vereinen als Gäste verkehren, wenn der Verein damit einver -
standen ist.

In Fällen von Nichtarieren ihrer Abstammung
nach , haben die Kreisführer die Entscheidung zu treffen. "
In vorliegendem Falle handelt es sich um einen Kameraden jüdischen
Glaubens auf den der erste Absatz zutrifft. Danach liegt es beim
Verein, eine Entscheidung herbeizuführen, die es dem Kameraden
Friedmann gestattet, als Gast beim Verein zu verkehren.

Kameradschaftlichen Gruss ! Heil Hitler !

gez. A. Hase

Führer

Charles H. Friedman

Correspondence concerning Arthur Friedmann's expulsion from the associations.

Artur Friedmann

Jena, den 15. Oktober 1933

Grietgasse 25/26

An den
Herrn Vorsitzenden des Artillerie - Verein , Jena
z.H. des Herrn Max Göbner,

J e n a .

=====

Sehr geehrter Herr Vorsitzender, lieber Kamerad Göbner!

Auf Grund der Verfügung des Herrn Präsidenten des Kyffhäuser - Bundes, Exzellenz von Horn bitte ich in befolgendem Schreiben um meinen ehrenvollen Austritt aus dem Artillerie - Verein , Jena. Als alter Soldat weiss ich, dass jeder Befehl heilig ist und , dass jedem Befehl - mag er noch so ungerecht erscheinen - Folge zu leisten ist. Mit blutendem Herzen schreibe ich diese Zeilen, ganz besonders, da ich mir voll bewusst bin, dass ich jederzeit - im Kriege wie im Frieden - meinen Pflichten meinem Deutschen Vaterland gegenüber stets voll und ganz nachgekommen bin.

Wir jüdischen Kameraden des Kyffhäuser - Bundes haben gleich allen anderen die Kameradschaft hoch gehalten , die Treue zu unserer Fahne bewahrt und dieser Schwur wird uns bis zu unserem letzten Atemzuge heilig sein. Soldatenpflicht, Vaterlandsliebe und Kyffhäusergeist haben mich veranlasst diesen Schwur für Leben und Tod abzulegen.

Gemeinsames Fronterleben hat uns dann aufs engste zusammen geschweisst und der Kameradschaftsgedanke hatte seine Feuerprobe bestanden. Ob Jude oder Christ, wir fühlten uns zusammengehörig, wir teilten - wenn es sein musste - unsere letzte " Eiserne Portion " ; die Kugel des Feindes, die Granate traf uns alle. ----- Dann kam dass Kriegsende; wir jüdischen Kameraden des Kyffhäuser - Bundes hielten in Treue zu unserer alten Fahne. ----- Es kamen die Jahre des Umsturzes, gar mancher wechselte die Farbe seiner Fahne. Wir aber waren und blieben bis zum heutigen Tage stolz und treu den Farben " Schwarz - weiss - rot ". Ich darf wohl in diesem Zusammenhang nur ganz kurz an meine Ansprache im Ratskeller 1924 an unserer Fahnenweihe erinnern und welche Schwierigkeiten man mir dieserhalb Jahre später bei meiner Einreise nach England machte. Und wie stolz war ich, dass man mir gerade dieserhalb Schwierigkeiten machte. Ich habe stets im nationalen Sinne an der Wiedergeburt unseres geliebten Vaterlandes mit gearbeitet und wenn ich heute aus dem Artillerie - Verein ausscheiden muss, so ist mein innigstes Sehnen und mein heissester Wunsch nach wie vor und immer wieder

" Deutschland, Deutschland über alles ! "

Wenn ich heute gehe, so weiss ich aber auch, dass die Kameraden vom Gesamt - Vorstand immer gern mit mir zusammen gearbeitet haben und auch anerkannt haben, dass ich stets im nationalen Sinne gearbeitet habe und hierfür danke ich den lieben Kameraden vom Gesamt - Vorstand herzlichst.

In alter kameradschaftlicher Treue, bin ich
mit deutschem Gruss

Charles H. Friedman

Correspondence concerning Arthur Friedmann's expulsion from the associations.

officers shows that he did not understand what was happening around him. His mates had expelled him from the association in October 1933, which was managed in a polite manner and with a lot of sympathy. This, however, only obscured the fact that the non-Jewish Germans wanted to relegate "the Jews" to the fringe of society: the educated Germans did it in a polite manner, the uneducated SA thugs in a far more brutal manner. Arthur Friedmann's fervent commitment to Germany did not make any difference and it was no longer about him as a person, but merely about him as a member of this "race".

Immediately after January 1933, the resentments towards the Jewish population became an inherent part of the politics and the public life. The boycott activities, induced by the new Reich Chancellor Adolf Hitler, against Jewish businesses, physicians and lawyers at the beginning of April 1933, also hit the Friedmanns hard and like many others, they tried to be "invisible" and hoped that the storm would calm. However, their latitude and space for movement became increasingly constrained. Anti-Semitic decrees and regulations soon followed the first boycott campaign and the infamous sign boards in parks and public spaces with the inscription "Jews unwanted" made the extent of the suppression clear to everyone. Anti-Semitic propaganda and the Nuremberg laws continued to fuel the hatred against "the Jews", which erupted in open violence on November 9/10, 1938.

The Friedmanns, like so many other families, experienced "the Night of the Broken Glass"

petrified with horror and for Arthur Friedmann, it was inconceivable that all boundaries of civilisation had been crossed. The state that he used to be so proud of, did nothing to help or protect them as the police ignored the case that his house was looted and that he was chased through Jena. The mob was jeering and his friends of the chamber of commerce were hiding behind their window curtains. Hermann, as well as Arthur Friedmann, were both abducted to the Buchenwald concentration camp. Kept like animals, they were imprisoned for several weeks and every day, they were forced to stand at attention for hours without enough food and clothing outside in the cold. Whoever could not hold out was beaten with a truncheon. When Hermann Friedmann collapsed due to fatigue, he was so severely beaten at the back of his neck by the warden that he never recovered from it. On February 15, 1940, Hermann Friedmann died as a result of the detainment. In the morning of November 19, 1938, the head teacher of Arthur Friedmann's two sons told them that they were no longer welcomed at his school and their parents felt impelled to send their children in one of the few Jewish boarding schools for over two years. The National Socialists were allowed to do whatever they felt like to families like the Friedmanns and every attempt of theirs to exert influence, failed to improve their situation. There was no law in the national socialist state that protected the "alien race of the Jews" and there was no judge that would make an end to these crimes. After the pogrom, the atmosphere was dominated by fear and distrust and overnight, neighbours and friends had turned into foes.

The “Aryanization” of The H. Friedmann Company

The business of the Friedmanns was a good catch. With two workers and six employees the economic value of the business was estimated at a price of 53.200 Reichsmark. The previous year's turnover amounted to 186.157,21 Reichsmark with net earnings of 15. 331 Reichsmark. Therefore, it was no surprise that the “Aryanization” of the business promised to be very lucrative and thus many people targeted the Jewish business. In the course of 1938, the destruction of the family's economic livelihood took place. The Friedmanns sensed what was going to happen to them and like the way they behaved in their private sphere, they also wanted to become “invisible” with regards to their business. On July 1, 1938, they entered into a rental agreement with the tradesman Paul Voigt from Magdeburg: an “Aryan” was supposed to help revoking the takeover from other voracious “Aryans” of the business. The agreement, however, was nullified shortly after its closure through the intervention of Jena's municipal legal office, the Association of German Livestock Farming as well as the Thur-



Charles H. Friedman

Shop in the Gretgasse.

ingian Chamber of Industry and Commerce. Apparently, the public authorities had uncovered the deception and now they pressed both sides to the closure of an agreement at a sales price that neither the Friedmanns nor Voigt, who was lacking the financial means, could possibly accept. The Farming Association and the Chamber of Industry and Commerce alone would have benefited from the price fixing, because many of their members were interested in the acquisition of the business and thus were able to purchase it at a dumping price.

After some time, Edwin Ullrich from Apolda, tradesman and NSDAP member, moved into the stalled negotiations and he introduced himself as a financier to the merchant Voigt from Magdeburg for the “Aryanization” of the lucrative medium-sized business. Ultimately, the new acquisition agreement between both interested parties and the Friedmanns was concluded, which was also approved by the Gau economic advisory board and the municipal legal office of Jena. The NSDAP district



The company logo.

administration of Jena-Stadtroda, however, raised concerns over the implementation of the agreement on the grounds of existing ambiguity over the political adequacy of the potential buyer Paul Voigt. This objection against the takeover of the Jewish business was in line with the principles of "Aryanization" that the district administration urged for: Exclusively, reliable NSDAP members were ought to be considered as buyers or trustees. With the takeover of Jewish businesses and property, they were supposed to act as political placeholders for the later access of the municipalities or the Land to the real estate in question. In case of the company H. Friedmann, the district administration was insistent that the business was sold to a prospective buyer that fully satisfied its criteria. So, a new agreement between the Friedmanns and the merchant Johann-Heinrich Voigt from Wittenberg was concluded on October 17, 1938 – yet again, it was only for a short period of time. Immediately after the events of the "Kristallnacht" pogrom, the latter withdrew his offer and thus a new buyer had to be found.

Eventually, the company H. Friedmann was assigned to the Hörchner family at a price of 35.500 Reichsmark, which was only half of the actual value. The Hörchner family was classified as "Aryan" according to national socialist "racial criterias" and ran an ironware business in Jena. The early release of Hermann and Arthur Friedmann from Buchenwald stood thereby in direct conjunction with the final settlement of the sales agreement. Since the failure of the first rental agreement with Paul Voigt in Juli 1938, the family had been deprived of



Charles H. Friedman

the family mansion in Jena West (undated).

any influence on the sale of its own company. Swiftly, the business was brought under the control of the authorities and Hermann and Arthur Friedmann sealed the final sales agreement with their signature their roles as losers in the game of poker, in which their assets had been at stake. They were left with nothing and their livelihoods had been destroyed.

There was still more to disperse. On grounds of the decree on the use of Jewish assets of December 3, 1938, the exchange control office Rudolstadt issued a ruling against Arthur Friedmann on September 28, 1939 that denied him any access to his property. Now, he had to ask for permission before he was allowed to access

his own money. Moreover, the town Jena confiscated the villa of the Friedmanns on April 1, 1940 and declared it a "Jew-house". From then on, the building served as accomodation facility for Jews that had been expelled from their rented flats or whose property had been taken over by "Aryans". Not long after, however, the house fell prey to the compulsory sale to a "partisan of impeccable reputation and character" at a very low price.

Coerced into Emigration

After the death of his father, Arthur Friedmann decided to leave his home country. He had been hoping to get through until the end. When the decision was made, connections, fortune and the remaining assets helped him to render his departure from Germany possible. An uncle, who was living in Denver, obtained the life-saving visas to the U.S. for the



Charles H. Friedman

Arthur and Edith Friedmann (undated).

48/455

DEUTSCHES REICH

17. März 1941

REISEPASS

Nr. F 3/1941

NAME DES PASSINHABERS
Karl-Heinz Israel Friedmann

BEGLEITET VON SEINER EHEFRAU

UND VON ——— KINDERN

STAATSANGEHÖRIGKEIT:
 DEUTSCHES REICH

Nr. 31130 S/40

Dieser Paß
 enthält 32 Seiten

Charles H. Friedman

Karl-Heinz Friedmann's passport.

family in 1941. Arthur, his wife Edith and their children Carlheinz and Hansjürgen were allowed to leave but all their assets had to stay in Jena, except from two suitcases and ten Reichsmark per person. On one of the very last refugee-trains that departed Germany towards the West, the Friedmanns left into an uncertain future on July 1, 1941. Crowded into a full train of which windows were covered and doors were locked, they went via France to Spain. In the most confined space, the refugees shared their fears, hopes and misery. The hunger, the heat and the dirt made the journey unbearable.

In Barcelona, where they were going to board a ship to America a few days later, and it was the first time that the Friedmanns slept in clean sheets again since they went on this odyssey. For the time being, they had left the horrors of the war behind. It was almost something like a holiday feeling and for a short period of time normality seemed to have been restored. At the day of departure, however, their dreams bursted like a bubble: Hansjürgen, the youngest son, had developed a heavy tonsilitis and it was not clear, whether he would be allowed on board in this condition. Suddenly, the fear returned and with it the difficult decision to leave the child behind or to hold out together and most likely to be sent back to Germany. A helpful Jewish physican was able to smuggle the boy on board and thus save the life of the family.

Six weeks after their departure from Jena, the Friedmanns arrived in their new home in the city of New York. As one of the very last refu-

gee families that managed to leave Germany, a new period of life was beginning for them – far away from the raging war in Europe. They had survived and they were once again hopeful. They were aware that there was no going back any time soon. They had arrived with literally nothing, thus the following years rebuilding their livelihood was going to become difficult and full of deprivations. Yet, the family held together and everybody tried to cope with the new life situation as much as possible. The children distributed morning papers or worked as shoeshine boys after school. Arthur Friedmann worked night shifts as a dishwasher in a hotel and Edith earned money through cleaning jobs and as sewer and so the first two to three years passed in this manner. They never heard from any of their relatives that had stayed in Germany ever again: Arthur's mother Klara, his sister Martha and her husband Alfred were murdered, in the course of the deportations beginning in 1942, like the entire rest of the family.

Marion Kaiser

"So far, I have never undertaken any steps to emigrate."

[illegible]

ThHStAW Konzentrationslager Buchenwald, Geldkarte: Max Heilbrun

Max Heilbrun's stored value card with the date of his release from the Buchenwald concentration camp: March 12, 1938.

The Company "Gebrüder Heilbrun" from Nordhausen

Max Heilbrun was a respected and successful horse trader in Nordhausen. Born on August 5, 1886, he stemmed from Immenrode, a small parish near Sondershausen. The Heilbrun family had been domiciled here since the 18th century. Max Heilbrun was possibly one of the last family members that had left the village. He got involved with the family business and also became horse trader and since 1923, he ran the company "Gebrüder Heilbrun" together with his cousin, Norbert Heilbrun. Norbert lived with his wife Johanna and his son Günther in Greußen. Their house at the Markt 12 was also the head office of the business. In 1924, Max Heilbrun married the 19 years younger Karoline Schwabe, who was also called Lola

and on November 7, 1924 their daughter, Hannelore, was born.

Karoline was the daughter of a horse trader from Nordhausen. Her father, Julius Schwabe, owned a business of the same name in the Uferstraße 15. After the death of her parents (Julius Schwabe 1923, Gertrud Schwabe 1920), Karoline and her brother, Alfred Schwabe, continued running the business. When Max Heilbrun moved to Karoline in Nordhausen in autumn 1925, he assumed the business and made it a branch of the company "Gebrüder Heilbrun", yet maintained the name "Julius Schwabe". Over 10 years, Max Heilbrun successfully ran his company. He also owned a house as well as fields and willows in Immenrode and Niedertopfstedt.

110207

CERTIFIED COPY of an ENTRY OF DEATH.
Pursuant to the Births and Deaths Registration Acts, 1836 to 1929.

Registration District **HENDON**
1946 Death in the Sub-district of **HENDON** in the COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX.

No.	When and where Died.	Name and Surname.	Sex.	Age.	Rank or Profession.	Cause of Death.	Signature, Description, and Residence of Informant.	When Registered.	Signature of Registrar.
410	13th August 1946 815 Finchley Road GOWER GREEN Hendon W.P.	Max Heilbrun	Male	60	Horse Merchant	In Primary Hospital is to Regeneration of C. Heart in fact Certified by H. E. M. A. L.R.C.P.	K. Heilbrun Widow of deceased Max Heilbrun 815 Finchley Road 1946 Gower Green W.P.	13th August 1946	MONA F. TAYLOR Interim Registrar

I, **MONA F. TAYLOR**, Interim Registrar of Births and Deaths for the Sub-District of **HENDON**, in the COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX, do hereby certify that this is a true copy of the Entry No. **410** in the Register Book of Deaths for the said Sub-District, and that such Register Book is now legally in my custody.

Witness my Hand this **25th** day of **August**, 19**46**.

MONA F. TAYLOR
Interim Registrar of Births and Deaths.

CAUTION.—Any person who (1) falsifies any of the particulars on this Certificate, or (2) uses it as true, knowing it to be falsified, is liable to Prosecution.

ThHStAW, Min. der Finanzen 3662, Bl. 47

A transcript of Max Heilbrun's death certificate from England. He died in London on August 13, 1946.

After the National Socialist Takeover in 1933: The Path to Ruin

Until 1937, the turnover of the company had been continuously rising. Already a year later, the gross earnings halved so that Max Heilbrun had to apply for respite of his estimated taxes. Norbert and Max found themselves in such great financial difficulties that they even considered the liquidation of the business. On October 3, 1938, they informed the tax authorities about their circumstances and for this reason, the family came under the suspicion of wanting to leave the country. The finance authorities demanded not only the payment of the "Judenvermögensabgabe" (capital levy for Jews) but also instantly charged the "Reichsfluchtsteuer" (Reich flight-tax). Max Heilbrun refused in a letter of October 27, 1938, to pay the amount for he had no intentions to emigrate. If anything, he believed that his poor health would not allow him for a new beginning abroad. In the early morning of November 10, 1938, the Gestapo picked up 150 Jews from their flats and houses in Nordhausen and since the police station was too small, they were gathered at the "Siechhof", a former hospital. The day before, members of the SA and the SS as well as others trouble-makers had devastated the businesses and at night they had set Nordhausen's synagogue on fire. 67 of the detainees had not been released from "protective custody" but instead, were taken to the Buchenwald concentration camp in the morning—amongst them was Max Heilbrun. His cousin Norbert Heilbrun, who had been arrested in Greußen, was also taken to Buchenwald. Max Heilbrun was released from the concentration

camp on December 6, 1938 and his cousin followed him two days later. Now, both began to prepare their emigration, which Max Heilbrun had strictly repudiated until this point.

After the Arrest of November 1938: Coerced Emigration

Shortly after his return from imprisonment, Max Heilbrun undertook the first steps towards emigration. On December 9, the mayor's office of Nordhausen informed the fiscal authorities that Max Heilbrun had notified the police of his business' liquidation and of his emigration plans. Max and Norbert Heilbrun anticipated extensive financial penalties due to "short-run liquidation" of their business. Already on December 15, Max Heilbrun took the next step and sold his house in the Uferstraße to the slaughterhouse "Gebrüder Kellner" in Nordhausen. The owners of the same property had made an offer at the time when he was still in detention, on November 25. It was written that: "The sellers are non-Aryan. The husband Heilbrun remains at Weimar (Buchenwald) for the time being". The Kellners, however, were prepared to pay more than the "standard price".

On December 19, 1938, one of the company sites in Niedertopfstedt was sold to a local farmer. Max Heilbrun found it difficult to part with his house in Immenrode and so it initially remained in his property. Norbert Heilbrun sold the head office of the "Gebrüder Heilbrun" in Greußen to the "Modehaus Wild" on May 6, 1939 and in the sales agreement, he empha-

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ATWATER 9-5220



New York, 18. November 1948.

Präsident des Landes Thüringen,
Präsidiatkanzlei
Weimar.

Sehr geehrte Herren !

Ich vertrete Frau Karoline Heilbrun, geborene Schwabe,
325 West 71th. Street, New York City, früher in Nordhausen a/Harz.

Frau Heilbrun hat mich bevollmächtigt, die Ansprüche,
die sich aus dem Thüringischen Wiedergutmachungsgesetz vom 14. September 1945
ergeben, für sie anzumelden und zur Durchführung zu bringen. Frau Heilbrun
bestätigt meine Vollmacht durch ihre Unterschrift unter diesem Antrag. Dieses
vorausgeschickt, erlaube ich mir, folgendes vorzutragen:

I. Meine Mandantin war früher in Nordhausen, Uferstrasse 15 ansässig, wo sie
mit ihrem Manne, Herrn Max Heilbrun, lebte. Im Jahre 1939 wurde Herr Heilbrun
in das Konzentrationslager Buchenwald verbracht, von wo er im März 1939
entlassen wurde, nachdem er sich schriftlich verpflichtet hatte, innerhalb
von 3 Wochen aus Deutschland auszuwandern.

Die Eheleute Heilbrun sind daraufhin am 30. März 1939 nach England ausge-
wandert, wo Herr Max Heilbrun am 13. August 1946 verstorben ist.

Unter dem Druck der in § 1 des angeführten Gesetzes charakterisierten
Massnahmen sind den Eheleuten Heilbrun die weiter unten aufgeführten Grund-
stücke und dingliche Rechte an Grundstücken entzogen worden, und meine
Mandantin beantragt die Wiedergutmachung dieser Entziehungen im weitesten
Umfange.

Infolge des Todes ihres Mannes war meine Mandantin bisher leider nicht in
der Lage, ihre Rechte zur Anmeldung zu bringen. Der Tod ihres Mannes liess
meine Mandantin in England ohne Existenz, und so entschloss sie sich nach
Amerika auszuwandern, wo sie hoffte, sich durchbringen zu können. Erst jetzt
ist es ihr gelungen, die von ihrem Manne geführten Aufzeichnungen über ihr
früheres Vermögen aufzufinden, da sie erst jetzt ihre bewegliche Habe, von
England nachgeschickt erhalten hat.

Ich bitte, unter Berücksichtigung dieses Umstandes aus
Billigkeitsgründen diese Anmeldung als rechtzeitig bestehend anzusehen.

Die Grundstücke und Hypotheken, deren Restitution bean-
tragt wird, waren teilweise auf den Namen des Herrn Max Heilbrun und teilweise
auf den Namen beider Eheleute eingetragen.

Soweit Herr Max Heilbrun aktiv legitimiert war, tritt
Frau Karoline Heilbrun als seine Alleinerbin an seine Stelle. Ich füge Photo-
Copie des Testaments in der Anlage bei. Grundbuchsätze etc. werden, soweit
erforderlich, baldigst nachgereicht werden.

ThHStAW, Min. der Finanzen 3662, Bl. 49

In 1948, Karoline Heilbrun filed a claim for restitution for her lost property in Thuringia.

sized that he urgently required the money in order to leave the country.

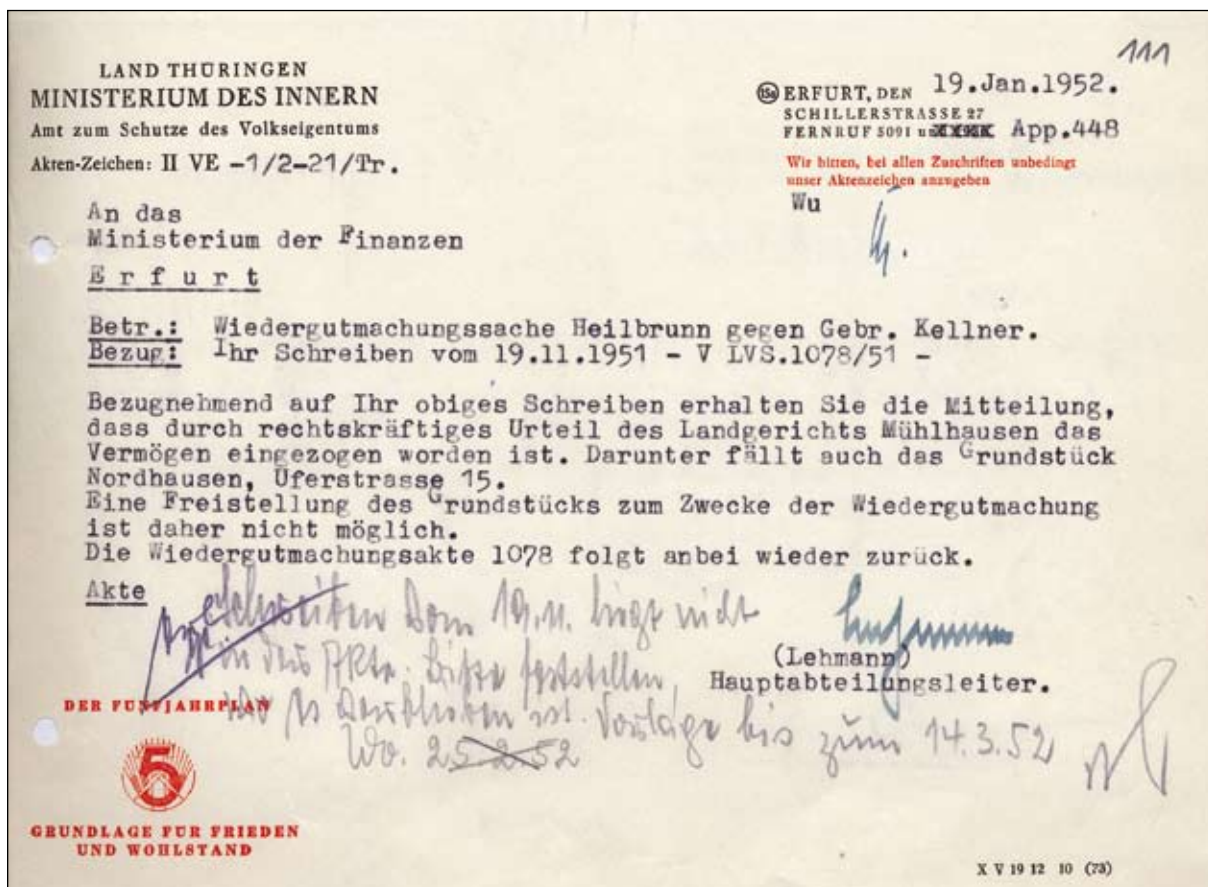
On January 10, 1939, Max Heilbrun had to file an application for a clearance certificate, necessary for emigration, which he received. Thereupon, the exchange control office Magdeburg blocked all accounts of the family and they had no longer access to their financial assets. Karoline Heilbrun reported later that her husband had been arrested again in March 1939. He was released, when he reassured that he was going to leave the country within three weeks at the end of March 1939. Karoline and Hannelore Heilbrun had to give up their home and emigrated to the United Kingdom. They settled in London and were officially expatriated from the German state on October 3, 1939. The fiscal authorities confiscated their property in Immenrode in October 1941 and sold it to local farmers in the same month.

Max Heilbrun and his family survived the war in London. But his cousin Norbert did not manage to escape. He had tried to emigrate with his family to Cuba and together with 900 other Jewish refugees, Norbert Heilbrun and his family boarded the ship "St. Louis" in Hamburg on May 13, 1939. The entry to Cuba, however, was denied and the ship with the refugees on board had to return to Europe. Initially, the people found refuge in various Western European states but many of them were caught up in the war again. After the failed attempt to reach Cuba, Norbert Heilbrun and his family went to France. It is still unknown, when and under what circumstances they had perished.

After the War: Efforts towards Restitution

Max Heilbrun and his family never returned to Germany. On August 13, 1946, Max died from a heart attack in London. His family emigrated to the U.S. His daughter Hannelore had met and married Hans Heilbrun in England, who also came from Nordhausen and belonged to another branch of the Heilbrun family. Hans Heilbrun had also been imprisoned in Buchenwald and emigrated to the Netherlands in 1939 and then in 1940 to the USA. There, he became a soldier and came to England. Hannelore and Max Heilbrun relocated to the U.S. after the end of the war. Hannelore's mother, the widow of Max Heilbrun, followed them and moved to New York. Her financial situation was thereby so difficult that she only managed to obtain her assets that had been left in the English exile much later on. In 1948, she was finally ready to claim restitution in Germany. The department for compensation of the Thuringian state accepted her claims, confiscated the properties that had been necessarily sold in the course of the emigration and appointed a trustee.

Karoline Heilbrun tried to get back the house of her family in the Uferstraße 15 in Nordhausen. However, there was hardly anything left of the house. During bombings of Nordhausen on April 3/4, 1945, large parts of the city had been destroyed. After the war, the Kellners who had bought the house and land from the Heilbruns which in turn had been driven into exile, were only able to rebuild the stables belonging to the house.



ThHStAW, Min. der Finanzen 3662, Bl. 111

The conviction and the expropriation of the Kellner family impeded the restitution of the property in the Uferstraße in favour of the Heilbrunn family.

Though a full restitution never took place, lawyers and arbitrators managed to negotiate an agreement between the parties, in which it was stipulated that Karoline Heilbrunn was to receive a quarter of the property. Her as well as the Kellners accepted the terms of the contract. On January 5, 1950, the agreement was at hand and first approvals had been obtained. The authorization of land registry was the only thing missing as the registry refused to approve it and formal errors were given as a reason. While still attempting to retrieve at

least some of her property, Karoline Heilbrunn passed away in 1950 in New York. The real estate of the Heilbrunn family from Nordhausen, in the Uferstraße 15 was disappropriated by the DDR. This took place in connection with an accusation of the Kellners over "economic crimes" in 1951. They were charged and their entire property was confiscated by the DDR state. A communication by the office for the protection of public property to the original owners, the Heilbrunn family, regarding the question of restitution read: "The release of the property for

the purpose of compensation is therefore not possible.” Whether Hannelore Heilbrun, the daughter of Max and Karoline Heilbrun, continued to push for the return of the house is unclear. A brother of Norbert, named Menny Heilbrun, attempted to get compensations for the company premises but without any significant success.

Hannelore and Hans Heilbrun stayed in the USA. They passed away in the 1970s and left one son, Peter Heilbrun. After 1990, the Jewish Claims Conference received a compensation payment for the lost assets of the company “Gebrüder Heilbrun”.

Tina Schüßler

“... if we have to wait for Brazil or any other opportunity, we are going to grow old and dull and our last pennies will soon be wasted.”

Von meiner Auswanderung gibt es viel zu erzählen.

Mein Vater hatte eine Schwester, 20 Jahre älter wie er. Sie war mit einem Holländer verheiratet. 1925 kaufte der in Nizza 2 "gargonnières" (studios). Im Winter wohnten sie in Nizza, im Sommer in Deutschland wo sie ein Gut besaßen. Anfang 39 kam mein Onkel nach Deutschland und meine Mutter glaubte, ich könnte ganz einfach mit ihm, über Holland, nach Frankreich fahren. Mein Vater begleitete mich nach Nieheim/Westfalen, sein Geburtsort; von dort fuhren wir mit einem Pferdewagen nach Höxter an die Bahn - in Nieheim gibt es keine.

Am der holländischen Grenze mussten wir aus dem Zug und wurden auf die Polizei gebracht. Ich wurde nicht durchgelassen und ich musste alleine mit großem Koffer und ohne Geld zurück. Mein Onkel nahm mir einen Fahrschein bis nach Höxter und fuhr weiter. Es war spät am Nachmittag und der Zug hielt in der Nacht, ich weiß nicht wo. Alle stiegen aus und ein grosser Teil der Leute ging in den Wartesaal wo auch ein Buffet war. Ich folgte und stand so da. An einem Tisch saßen eine Dame, ein Mädchen von 8-10 Jahren und ein Mann mit großem Hakenkreuz im Knopfloch. Er stand auf, sagte der Dame sie könne denken was sie wolle, er nehme das Mädchen (mich) an seinen Tisch. Da kam die Polizei und sagte nein. Ich denke es war allen klar, daß ich ein jüdisches Kind war. Vom Inhaber bekam ich eine Tasse Kakao und ein Butterbrot mit Schinken. Noch nie hatte ich Schinken gegessen und dann noch mit Butter, das ist doch ganz verboten. Für mich war das schrecklich, aber ich konnte das Essen nicht verweigern.

Auf einer ledernen Bank durfte ich dann schlafen. Am frühen Morgen kam ein Polizist und setzte mich in den Zug. Ich fragte mich, wie ich ohne Geld, nach Eisenach zurück kommen könnte. In Höxter stieg ich aus und zu meiner großen Überraschung, stand mein Vater am Schalter und löste eine Rückfahrkarte für's sich nach Eisenach. Er drehte sich rum, war erstaunt und sagte: "Was machst du da?" Mir ging ein Stein vom Herzen, jetzt war für meine Rückreise gesorgt.

Meine Mutter hatte keine Ruhe, sie wollte mich absolut aus Deutschland raus haben. Ich lege meinen Kinderausweis ein. Wenn Sie

Stadtarchiv Eisenach Sammlung Judaica Nr. 29, S.2.

In the period between 1996 and 1998, Ruth Kirchheimer wrote several letters with memories of the time in Eisenach.

The Kirchheimer Family from Eisenach

The Kirchheimer family shared the fate of their Jewish fellow citizens as they had to suffer from the reprisals of the national socialist dictatorship. In a smaller context, it was the fate of a German family of four that was torn apart and destroyed and their story can be told without any gaps. This is especially due to family member Ruth, who later assumed the name Marie Therese. In France, hidden by nuns, she survived World War II and at a very old age, she told the story of her life in letters and during personal encounters. "Who has survived from our family?", she wrote on November 16, 1997. "Only those, who had emigrated: two brothers of my mother that went to Brazil and my sister Inge, who went as a cook to England. The youngest sister of my mother, her husband and son perished at a concentration camp. They used to live in Mainz. The relatives that were in Nieheim, suffered the same fate."

Family Background

Ruth's father, Siegfried Kirchheimer, was born as farmer's son on October 28, 1887. He undertook an apprenticeship to become a shoemaker and came to Erfurt in 1914. After his deployment as Jewish front-line soldier, he met the master tailor Frieda Marx, who was born in Mainz on July 7, 1894. She had relocated to Erfurt in December 1918 and on May 14, 1919, they married. Five months later, the couple moved to Eisenach and opened a shoe shop



Tina Schüßler

The house in the Goethestraße 25a in 2008. The entrance to the Kirchheimer family's apartment was on the left side.

on November 3, 1919. The small business was located at the family's housing space in the Goethestraße 25a.

The Kirchheimers appear for the first time in 1920 on the register of the Jewish congregation that then counted 139 members. They were not a strictly religious family – their shoe shop was open on Sabbath and they only went to the synagogue for major celebrations. On March 12, their first daughter Ingeborg was born and five years later, on January 2, 1925, a second daughter, Ruth Kirchheimer, was born.



Stadtarchiv Eisenach, 40.7 Sammlung Judaica Nr. 44

Marriage ceremony of Stella and Julius Heilbrun in Eisenach. Also attendant: Frieda Kirchheimer (third row, second person on the left) and Siegfried Kirchheimer (third row, sixth person on the left).

Threat

In 1933, the daily life of the young family was going to change as the anti-Semitic measures were gradually confining and complicating the life of the Kirchheimers. The driving force behind those measures was Hermann Köhler, who was appointed NSDAP district leader on July 15, 1934 and his office in the Goethestraße 25 was located directly next to the Kirchheimers' apartment. On August 21, 1935, he announced his intentions, "to combat against

Jewry" on the Thuringian state paper. At the behest of the district leader, Eisenach's cultural institutions joined this "battle" and for this reasons, the Jewish citizens were denied access to the public baths, restaurants and to the Wartburg.

In 1938, the resentments towards the Jews culminated with the pogrom of November 9/10 that took place across the Reich. Ruth Kirchheimer recalls in a letter from August 8, 1996: "When we woke up on November 9, 1938,



Stadtarchiv Eisenach, 41.3 J 317

NSDAP district leader Hermann Köhler.

Hier will man keine Juden sehen!

Eisenachs Gaststätten, die mit im Kampf gegen das Judentum stehen

**** Eisenach wacht auf! Mit Genugtuung kann man es begrüßen. Die Propagandaschiffahrt der NS am Sonnabend nachmittag, die das Gewissen der Eisenacher wahrnehmen sollte, scheint gewirkt zu haben. Wir freuen uns, daß der unablässige Kampf, den unser Kreisleiter Fg. Köhler um die Reinigung von Stadt und Kreis führt, jetzt zu schönen, sichtbaren Erfolgen führt.**

Die Schilder vermehren sich

Draußen im Landkreis stellt Ortschaft neben Ortschaft am Ortseingang Schilder auf, daß dort keine Juden mehr Zutritt haben — es wird nicht mehr lange dauern, dann dürfte die Stadt Eisenach die einzige traurige Ausnahme bilden, wenn alle anderen Städte und Dörfer des Kreises keine Juden mehr in ihren Mauern wissen wollen. Vertragen sich Wartburggeist und Judentum so gut — ?

Aber auch dies wird eines Tages anders sein. Bis dahin freuen wir uns, wie der Gedanke der Rassenreinheit einen kleinen Siegeszug durch Eisenachs Straßen antritt. Gastwirtschaft neben Gastwirtschaft — überall sieht man

in den Fenstern oder sonst gut sichtbar das große Plakat: „Juden haben keinen Zutritt!“ Von Tag zu Tag sind es mehr, die sich in die große Abwehrfront des deutschen Volkes einreihen und Schulter an Schulter mit uns kämpfen gegen den gemeinsamen Feind Mjuda.

Gastwirtschaft um Gastwirtschaft reiht sich ein. Es wird nicht mehr lange dauern, dann werden wir volle Klarheit haben, welche Eisenacher Gaststätten lieber den Verkehr von Juden und Judengenossen wünschen als von Deutschen. Heute aber wissen wir bereits eins:

Wir Nationalsozialisten halten unerschütterliche Disziplin. Wir verkehren einzig und allein in den Gaststätten, die durch deutlich sichtbaren Plakatausgang kundtun, daß sie auf unseren Besuch Wert legen!

Nachstehend geben wir die neue Zusammenstellung aller Eisenacher Gaststätten bekannt, die den Juden das Betreten verbieten.

Waldschänke
Hotel Wille
Sophienhof
Drachenschlucht

Altdeutsche Bierhalle
Harmonie
Wilhelm Ernst
Terminus Weinstuben
Kuenstler
Eisdiele Bahnhofstraße
Restaurant Rud
Schloßkeller
Sophienau
Kaiserhof
Thüringer Hof
Hotel Zimmermann
Kaffee Tiggis
Deutsches Haus
Haus der Arbeit
Karthäuserhof
Hermann Schinke
Liebesbräu, Bahnhofstraße
Eisenacher Hof, Bahnhofstraße
Schmelzerhof
Hotel Fürstenhof
Reichsolzler
Restaurant Siechen
Gasthaus „Zur Sonne“
Kaffee Hoch, Georgenstraße
Kaffee Groth, Marienstraße
Kurschenhaus
Bayerische Gaststätten

Nochmals Nationalsozialisten, haltet Disziplin! Nur hier und nirgendwo anders dürft Ihr verkehren!

Anti-Semitic article in the newspaper "Thüringer Staatszeitung" on August 21, 1935.

the windows of our house had been painted red. On the footpath in front of the house – Goethestr. 25a – it was written in large letters: ‘Whoever shops here, betrays his own people’ (...) My mother refused to stay at the house for the another night.” Frieda Kirchheimer and her daughter fled to friends in Erfurt at the crack of dawn. Their father tried to hide, but was caught and abducted to the Buchenwald concentration camp. After a week, mother and daughter had the heart to return and what they found was disastrous. Ruth described the state of the department: “Our flat was in shatters. Enormous stones were lying all around,

the furniture had been hashed, the mattresses had been slit, all the dishes were nothing but broken pieces and the doors were difficult to open. It was in such a state that we could no longer live there.” On January 29, 1939, the father, Siegfried Kirchheimer, was released from the concentration camp. The shoe shop was confiscated and on December 1, 1938, these proceedings were recorded in a concealing manner as “voluntary business deregistration”. This was at a point in time, when the true owner was still held at the Buchenwald concentration camp.

A B C D E F G H I K L M N O P Q R S Sch St T U V W X Y Z	
Kirchheimer, Siegfried <small>(Firma, Name des Gewerbetreibenden, Rechtsform)</small>	Gegenstand des Gewerbe- betriebes Handel mit Schuhwaren
	Eintragungs- grund Inhaber ist Jude
Eisenach, Goethestrasse 25a <small>(Anschrift)</small>	Beschwerde - oder sonstige Entscheidung <small>(Art der Entscheidung)</small> <small>(Beide)</small> 193 <small>Altens-Beichen:</small> <small>(Datum)</small>
	Bemerkungen Zahl der Geschäfte am Orte 1 Zahl der Angestellten keine
	Lösung Tag der Lösung: Grund: Freiwillig am 1.12.38 abgemeldet.

Nr. 115. 38.1.957 a. Nachdruck in dieser Fassung verboten!
Carl Heymanns Verlag und Vordrucklager zu Berlin W 8

Stadtarchiv Eisenach, Gewerbekartei, 21.4 Nr. 31, Bl. 01

Record of “voluntary” business deregistration of Siegfried Kirchheimer’s shoe shop.

It was not only the loss of the family's financial sustenance, but also the protection of privacy that had been spurned and destroyed. The befriended Ochs family from Eisenach provided the Kirchheimers with a room in the Stolzestraße 5 but the situation was depressing. Due to lack of space, both sisters, Ingeborg and Ruth Kirchheimer, slept in the house of Paul Seliger and his brother Leo Frank in the Clem-dastraße 5. The deprivation of rights by law had also affected the then thirteen year old Ruth. On November 15, 1938, Jewish children were no longer allowed to attend school and from January 1939, Ruth received private lessons together with other Jewish children from Eisenach in one class. The decision to emigrate was finally made during this time, when the Kirchheimers were deprived of their economic and social livelihood.

The Way Out

At the beginning of December 1938, the couple Frieda and Siegfried Kirchheimer and their daughter Ingeborg filed applications for issuing passports. Subject matter: "Emigration". The now eighteen year old Ingeborg Kirchheimer obtained the permission to leave Germany three months after her application, because she had found employment as a cook for a family (Peek) in England. Her parents and Ruth stayed behind but they tried everything to immigrate to France. They attempted to get a residence permit for England, after all the possibilities for an emigration to Brazil appeared to be unpromising. The letters that they were writing to their daughter reflects the desper-

ate – and in the end futile - search for a possibility to leave the country.

In a letter dated May 3, 1939, says: "Please see, if you can do something for us, until now I cannot see any success on any side and will soon become pessimistic, whether we can ever get out of here?", and on May 21: "You know your mum. She is completely distraught!", on June 8: "...we do not have much hope left, because the amount of endeavours we haven undertaken is enormous and until now left without any success", on June 14: "We are learning English as much as we can, but I still cannot imagine how we are going to communicate on the other side, probably you have to be our interpreter every now and then. (...) outside we are just deaf and dumb spongers...", on July 2: "I have been put off for seven months now and I am still just at the beginning."

It was a balancing act between hope and desperation and through the compulsory liquidation of the business, the Kirchheimers had been deprived of their livelihood. This was the reason that they were lacking the financial means to pay the necessary travelling expenses for the emigration and the high entry fees. The greatest obstacle was the restrictive immigration policy of most countries that lastly shattered all plans of escape. Eventually, their passports expired and the only remaining option was the illegal crossing of the borders. Frieda Kirchheimer pressed relentlessly for her second daughter, Ruth, to get out of Germany. Ruth's first attempt to escape failed at the Dutch border at the beginning of 1939, where the train had been stopped and checked by

K i n d e r a u s w e i s .

Name: *Kirchheimer*
 Vorname: *Ruth*
 Geburtstag und -ort: *2. 10. 1915 Eisenach*
 Beruf: *ohne*
 Staatsangehörigkeit: *Reichsdeutsche*
 Wohnort und Wohnung: *Eisenach, Goethestrasse 25a*
 Gestalt: *mittel*
 Gesicht: *oval*
 Farbe der Augen: *bräun*
 Farbe des Haares: *bräun*
 Besondere Kennzeichen: *keine*

Eisenach, den *23. Dezember* 1938.
 Der Oberbürgermeister,

J. H.


Amer

K. A. 5262/38.

*5 photos as proof
 1 photo sep. taken 6.12.
 1000-*

the police but she tried again on July 11, 1939. The father's sister, Minna Bargeboer, who lived with her Dutch husband Adolf in Nice, was supposed to smuggle Ruth across the border. The bold venture succeeded and Ruth was able to escape. She was accommodated by her aunt and uncle in Nice and could attend a convent school. This was the only catholic school that was prepared to accept a German without any knowledge of the French language. She maintained contact to her parents with the help of messages via the Red Cross.

Frieda and Siegfried Kirchheimer stayed behind in Eisenach and their fate can only be reconstructed incoherently. On July 2, 1939, the father had written to Ingeborg that he was going to be drafted for "work". For two months, from January 9 until February 27, 1942, his work at the metal factory Alfred Schwarz in Eisenach can be accounted for. It has not been conveyed when, where and what type of forced labour, Siegfried Kirchheimer, had to render after that. Frieda Kirchheimer obtained the permission to "give lessons in altering and making

A B C D E F G H I K L M N O P Q R S Sch St T U V W X Y Z																									
Kirchheimer		Gegenstand des Gewerbe- betriebes	Unterricht in Umändern & Anfertigen von Garderobe für den eigenen Bedarf für Rasse- genossinnen zwecks Auswanderung.																						
Frieda Sara																									
(Firma, Name des Gewerbetreibenden, Rechtsform)		Eintragungs- grund	Angemeldet am 9.1.1940 Erlaubnis v. 7.3.1940 Schulrat Eisenach Land Thüringen.																						
Eisenach, Stolzestr. 5		Beschwerde - oder sonstige Entscheidung	(Mit der Entscheidung) (Seitende) 193 (Datum) Alten-Zeichen:																						
(Aufsicht)		Bemerkungen	Zahl der Geschäfte am Orte Zahl der Angestellten																						
Genehmigung d. Geheimen Staatspol., Staatspol. Weimar v. 9.1.1940.		Löschung	Tag der Löschung:																						
			Grund:																						
 Nr. 116. 38.1.957 a. Nachdruck in dieser Fassung verboten! Carl Heymanns Verlag und Vertriebslager zu Berlin W 8																									

Stadtarchiv Eisenach, Gewerbekartei, 21.4 Nr. 31, Blatt 02

Business registration for the master tailor Frieda Kirchheimer.

of wardrobes for personal demand of racial fellows for the purpose of emigration”.

In 1941, Frieda and Siegfried Kirchheimer moved from the Stolzestraße to the Julius-von-Eichelplatz. Both accommodations were “Jew houses”. With the abrogation of the protection of tenants on April 30, 1939, Jewish tenants were forced to leave their homes. Simultaneously, they were obliged to accommodate other Jewish tenants or lodgers, which implied a gradual ghettoisation in “Jew houses” for the Jews in Eisenach. The Kirchheimers’ hopes to escape were irrevocably destroyed with the emigration ban for Jews from the Reich’s sphere of influence on October 23, 1941. Himmler’s decree, which prohibited any emigration from the territories of continental Europe occupied by the National Socialists for the duration of the war, meant ultimately the death sentence for most Jews that were still living in Germany.

Deportation

The last time Ruth heard from her parents was at the beginning of 1942. Her sister Ingeborg received a message via the Red Cross from a family friend that was still in Eisenach, Dr. Edgar Grünbaum: “Parents have departed on May 9, 1942. Without news since months.” The last pictures of Frieda and Siegfried Kirchheimer were taken on May 9, 1942 showing them on their way to Eisenach’s train station. It was a Saturday, when they were deported, together with 56 other Jews from Eisenach, first to Weimar and on May 10 with hundreds of Jewish citizens from the whole of Thuringia, via Leip-

zig to the ghetto Belzyce southwest of Lublin. Eisenach’s police records show the entry: “The transport from Eisenach to Weimar took place without interferences. The people did not discuss much about the events.” Frieda and Siegfried Kirchheimer’s fate since the deportation is unknown and they are considered missing.

Survival

Staying in France that had been occupied by German troops, started being dangerous for Ruth Kirchheimer. In October 1943, one of the catholic school’s nuns took Ruth Kirchheimer with forged documents to the convent in Digne, 150 kilometres from Nice as her aunt Minna had decided so, because of fear for Ruth. Minna and Adolf Bargeboer were discovered by the German Armed Forces at the end of 1943 and Ruth’s uncle died in the concentration camp Auschwitz in the same year. Minna was deported from the detention – and transit camp Dancy in France to Auschwitz, where she was murdered.

Also in Digne, the life of Ruth, who was by now eighteen years old, was at risk due to the permanent presence of German soldiers. She spent the years of the occupation, hidden behind the walls of the convent in order ensure her safety and it was here that she converted to Christianity. She was looking for a sort of death, she explained in an interview in 2002, as motivation for her conversion. She could not disengage with the fate of her family, thus she wanted to get away from Europe. So, the sister Ruth went to Cameroon in 1957 and she



Stadtarchiv Eisenach, 41/3, J500

Frieda Kirchheimer (in the background left, looking towards the camera) on the way to the train station on May 9, 1942. Eisenach's citizens are clearly visible, observing the procession from the kerbside.



Stadtarchiv Eisenach, 41/3, J498

Siegfried Kirchheimer (1st person on the right with a large rucksack) entering the train. The official chronicle of the town Eisenach stated on May 20, 1942: "After a notification that was received only a few days earlier, all Jews under the age of 65 (...) were called to gather at the property of the Goethestraße 48 in order to report for the transport (...) The Jews, who were about to be evacuated, were allowed to send parcels of 50kg to Weimar and to carry hand luggage. The train departed to Weimar 11.06 am."

worked there twenty years as a missionary teacher. It was 1990 when Ruth returned to her hometown Eisenach for the first time.

Her sister Ingeborg, who had emigrated to England, survived World War II and got married in London in 1941, gave birth to three children and worked as a shop assistant. She

passed away in 1987. In September 1995, Ruth took part in a "meeting project", accompanied by the eldest son of her sister, Bruno Eismark, to which the town Eisenach had invited former Jewish citizens. On December 30, 2003, at the age of 78 years, Ruth Kirchheimer passed away as sister Marie Therese.

Philipp Gliesing

“Stop purchases at David Binder’s!”

Binder’s Department Store in
Pößneck

David Jakob Binder was born in the Ukrainian university town Czernowitz’ on July 21, 1879. His parents, Benjamin and Milka Binder belonged to a merchant family that maintained close ties to their Jewish tradition. Brought up

in this spirit, David went as young man to Germany. At the beginning, he stayed with relatives in Leipzig but in March 1903, the young man moved to Erfurt, where a thriving Jewish community existed. Three years later, he eventually settled in the calm, eastern Thuringian town of Pößneck and on May 27, 1908, he wedded the 27 year old Hedwig Ullmann from Mannheim. The petite woman also came



(Reproduktion Foto Peterlein)

Lithography, pre-1933.

from a large Jewish merchant family and was a trained servant-girl. The couple started a business and established a gentrified living. On January 14, 1920, their son, Adolf Milian was born in Jena and four years later, his sister Esther Malke on June 19, 1924.

At first, David Binder rented an accomodation at Dr. Emil Körner's house in the Breite Straße. In 1914, he bought the building and moved with Hedwig into the second floor. The offices and showrooms were on the ground floor and later, a SA-physician and a lawyer rented the first floor.

"Binder's department store at the golden corner."

In the directory of 1907, the 28 year old merchant advertised his "bazaar" under "haberdashery goods" for the first time. Due to a sound business policy and numerous business trips, the smart father of a family established a good reputation throughout the region. The economically priced offers of slight seconds, among them household goods, footwear, textiles and toys, were bought by a loyale clientele from all walks of life.



ThStAR, Thür. Amtsgericht Pößneck, Nr. 368, Bl. 7

Letterhead of the company.

David Binder always appeared as generous employer on festive occasions, his employees received discounts for their purchases. Helene "Leni" Proßmann and Lotte Gläser had been the last apprentices of the business and it was a good time and a valuable apprenticeship to both of them. There was a confiding atmosphere of solidarity and Leni often helped Mrs. Binder with the household since, as Jew, she was no longer allowed to employ a housekeeper, and was on her own.



Advertisement in the local newspaper "Pößnecker Tageblatt" from June 16, 1928.

Welchen Anklang und welche Beliebtheit

Binders 95-Pf.-Tage

gefunden haben, beweist der ganz gewaltige

Riesen-Andrang

zu dieser Verkaufsveranstaltung

Es kommen noch weitere grosse Warenposten meines umfangreichen Lagers zu dem fabelhaft billigen Preis zum Verkauf. Einige Beispiele:

Alpaka-Löffel	2 Stück	95	Emaill-Krüge, groß	Stück	95	1a Herrensocken	1 Paar	95
Alpaka-Messer	1 „	95	Wasserkessel	1 „	95	Hosenträger, Gummi	„	95
Alpaka-Gabeln	3 „	95	Washbecken	1 „	95	Schlüpfer mit Gummisohlen	„	95
Alpaka-Kaffeelöffel	4 „	95	Nachtgeschirr	1 „	95	alle Größen		95
Aluminium-Löffel	6 „	95	Emaill-Ziertöpfe	3 „	95	Blusenstreifen, schöne Muster, m		95
„ Kaffeelöffel	12 „	95	Aluminium-Ziertöpfe	3 „	95	1 Butter-, 1 Käseglocke		95
„ Gabeln	6 „	95	Brotkörbe, schöne Dekoration		95	Likör-Service, Steilig		95
Besteck, 1a Qualität	Paar	95	Sand-Seife-Soda, Garnitur		95	Tafel-Aufsatz, 2teilig		95
Gebrauchs-Besteck	2 „	95	Zink-Eimer,	Stück	95	Sahnen-Service 3teilig		95
Thermos-Flasche	Stück	95	Zink-Töpfe, 28 cm	„	95	Wasser- od. Biergläser, 6 St.		95
Aluminium-Tiegel	„	95	„ Schöpftöpfe, groß	„	95	Bierbecher, Schliff,	3 St.	95
„ Durchschläge	„	95	Porzellantassen	3 Paar	95	1 oder 2 Blumenvasen		95
Reibeisen, stark	„	95	Satz Schüsseln, 6teilig		95	Große Glasteller od. Schüssel	St.	95
Kaffee- und Zuckerbüchse		95	Frühstücksteller,	6 Stück	95	Glasteller, 3, 4, 6 od. 12 Stück		95
Topflappen- und Zwiebelkast.		95	Scheuertücher, 1a,	3 Stück	95	Glasschüsseln, 2, 3, 4, 6 od. 12 St.		95
Eiserne Stiepfanne	Stück	95	Handtücher, 1, 2 und 3	„	95	Weingläser, 1, 2 oder 3 Stück		95
Wochen-Zeitungshalter	„	95	Wischtücher, 2, 4 und 6	„	95	Likörgläser, 2, 3, 4 oder 6	„	95
Emaill-Töpfe	2 Stück	95	Taschentücher, 4 und 6	„	95	Große Käseglocke	„	95
Schmortöpfe	1 „	95	Damenstrümpfe,	2 Paar	95			

Hunderte hier nicht aufgeführte Artikel wollen Sie bitte in meinen Schaufenstern und Geschäftsräumen, auf Sondertischen ausgestellt, besichtigen.

Kaufhaus Binder, Pößneck

Advertisement in the local newspaper "Pößnecker Zeitung" from August 3, 1934.

Excellent trading relations to Erfurt and Leipzig permitted the purchase of large amounts of household goods and all kinds of equipment at low prices and also to offer them as value for money. Advertisements were regularly released on the local newspaper of Pößneck (Pößnecker Zeitung).

The Jewish Community in Pößneck

In the "guide through the Jewish parish administration and welfare work in Germany", David Binder is registered as chairman of a Jewish congregation of sixteen, which

existed until 1938. Presumably, there was a prayer room at the house of the Binders and between the Jewish families, close ties had been developed. The Binders always lived their faith only in their private sphere.

On January 21, 1932, they celebrated the bar mitzvah of their son Adolf Milian, called Adi, as was announced in one of Erfurt's Jewish weekly papers. Certainly, David Binder must

have been proud to have a "son of the commandment." The head of the family spent most of his time in his office and his wife kept close contact with the neighbours and was regarded as friendly and candid. The affluent couple was valued and respected throughout Pößneck's well-educated middle class.

"Stop purchases at David Binder's!"

Pößneck.
Am 21. d. M. findet die Barmitzwoh des Adolf Binder,
Sohn des David Binderschen Ehepaares statt.

Wochenblätter für den Synagogenbezirk Erfurt,
Nr. 431 vom 06. Januar 1933

Since 1922, there was NSDAP location group in Pößneck. In 1927, Joseph Goebbels was a guest in Pößneck and delivered one of his enthusiastic diatribes. After the takeover, the lo-



Postcard with view of the Breite Straße. On the right side, the show window of David Binder's department store is visible.

cal NSDAP members did everything to implement the guidelines of the “Führer” and to make Pößneck a NS prime example of a town. From then on, it was agitated against well-known Jewish figures like David Binder at NSDAP gatherings in the hinterland. The people should “no longer buy Jewish” as the hatemongers of the new rulers proclaimed and the countrywide decreed boycott of April 1, 1933, revealed the level of threat to the Jews in Pößneck. Customers of Binder’s department store were photographed, intimidated and summoned, young wretches smeared anti-Semitic slogans with white colour on the large windows of the store. Not all people from Pößneck, however, were hindered from continuing to shop at Binder’s by those actions. The farmers and workers failed to see why they should no longer enter their valued store.

In the face of the threats, the Binder family started living seclusively and debated their emigration to England. However, were they going to simply give up? Should they be giv-

ing up their business, the house, the books, the furniture and their home country? David Binder did not want this to happen—under no circumstances. David Binder was on a list on “currently resident Jews” of May 1938 that was arguably compiled in preparation of the pogrom and within the same year, the Binder family lost its livelihood due to such anti-Semitic activities.

On November 10, such a “Jew-campaign” also took place in Pößneck and the NSDAP had appealed in the daily press to all national socialist unions to participate in a “protest rally”. Fire brigades and police were at stand-by, eye witnesses reported a furious crowd that inflicted damages to Binder’s store and chanted slogans. Children stole toys from the displays, but also adult citizens helped themselves. The old Mr. Binder and his son Adolf were dragged to the street and openly defamed and both of them, together with eight other people, were taken to the Buchenwald concentration camp. All men above 50 were released from detention on November 27, 1938



Announcement in the local newspaper “Pößnecker Zeitung” from November 10, 1938.

and so David Binder was among them but his son Adolf had to stay in the camp. During the imprisonment, David had been coerced into giving up his business with immediate effect and on January 11, 1939, he signed the de-registration of the trade register at the district court. Three days later, David Binder died of a heart failure at the hospital in Pößneck. His longtime rheumatism had deteriorated due to the "protective custody" in Buchenwald. The merchant was buried at the cemetery of the Jewish congregation in Erfurt.

"..., he was such a nice boy and his sister Esther was also nice..."

Adolf "Adi" Milian was a small, cautious boy, who grew up with other kids of the neighbourhood and explored with them the backyards of the small high street. He completed secondary school and took up an apprenticeship at the carpentry "Trogwitz". Due to the fact that the Nazi regime barred Jews from all professions, he was not allowed to complete his apprenticeship. Adolf Binder despaired due to this and from now on stayed close to his father. After the pogrom night of November 1938, he was also arrested and imprisoned at Buchenwald for eight weeks. He managed to escape from Thuringia, yet the details on his fate after that are scarce and contradictory. It could be established that his last residence was in Paderborn. In the 90s, Adolf Milian Binder visited his home town Pößneck again. He used to live overseas, as one of the neighbours and former playfellows recalls. His sister Esther was supposed to prepare for the de-



Gliesing

parture to Palestine from Neuendorf. Yet, this plan failed and Esther was deported from Berlin to Auschwitz on April 19, 1943. The "37th eastern transport" was one of the very last deportation-trains from Berlin.

"The buyers assure that they are of German blood"

After the business' liquidation in December 1938, Hedwig Binder was forced to look on while everything was being taken away from her. Eye witnesses account of a "clearance sale" in the small department store and the lawyer, Dr. jur. Kurt Pfeifer, acted as the "officially authorized liquidator" of the "Aryanization"



Pfeiffer, November 4, 1934.

H. Pfeiffer,
als behördlich bestellter
Abwickler .

ThStAR, Thür. Amtsgericht Pößneck, Nr. 368, Bl. 10

process. He searched for potential buyers of the property and drafted a sales agreement, which was negotiated on March 26, 1940. According to the contract, the widow, Hedwig Binder, had to hand over the house and the remaining inventory to the factory owners Metzel. She received nothing from the sales price, as the 62.000 Reichsmark stipulated by the contract, were directly deposited to the Deutsche Bank to the disposal of the "liquidator". The Reich finance authorities, represented by the tax office Pößneck, claimed 23.031,35 RM as securing mortgage. The Deutsche Bank kept 15.000 RM as land charge. After the contract's closure, Hedwig Binder had to live under poor circumstances in a small room of her former property. Food was strictly rationed and she was only allowed to buy in shops far way and permitted for Jews. In the end, she was in such a bad situation that she considered suicide but the mother of her former apprentice, Helene Proßmann, was able to prevent her from doing so and gave her additional food. At one of their clandestine meetings, she announced distressed the impending "evacuation" to Belzec. After

- 11 -				Vermögen	
				vor-	verfallen
				handen	oder
					eingezogen
315. Hirschowitz	Günther Isr.	23.2.25	Jena		eingezogen
316. Benjamin	Alexander Isr.	18.6.83	Ulzen		verfallen
317. "	Sophie S.	12.10.84	Prichsenstadt		"
geb. Franke					
318. Binder	Hedwig S.	13.2.81	Rottweil		eingezogen
geb. Ullmann					

Thüringer Hauptstaatsarchiv Weimar, Oberfinanzpräsident Rudolstadt, Nr. 694, Bl. 70



Gliesing

This silver spoon originates from the property of the family. Hedwig Binder managed to sell the same and other valuable objects to the clockmaker Friedrich in the desperate situation between 1939 and 1942. This way, she resisted the decree on the compulsory hand-over of all valuables owned by Jews.

Hermann Friedrich Schleizer Straße 11a / Ecke Steinweg	Uhren, Trauringe, Schmuck- und Bestecksachen / alle Reparaturen
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Adressbuch der Industrie und Handelsstadt Pößneck, 1921

her deportation, she got in touch for a last time and wrote on a postcard that they still had not reached their destination yet.

On May 10, 1942, Hedwig Binder was deported from Weimar. The Gestapo ordered in

agreement with the fiscal authorities in Rudolstadt a "safety ruling" of the assets. Their tracks disappear in the extermination camps. In 1950, the district court Pößneck pronounced them dead and December 31, 1943 was determined to be their time of death.

“... so I can come to enjoy my inheritance.”

After the end of the NS regime, the Thuringian compensation law also applied to the real estate of the Binders, according to which it had to be returned to the true owners or to their heirs. The beneficiaries of the “Aryanization”, the factory owners Metzel, filed an objection in September 1948: “The property was rightfully sold to them by the then befriended Hedwig Binder”, as they stated in a letter. In February 1949, the caretaker Max Blau negotiated settlement proceedings whereupon Hedwig Binder was ought to get back the entire property. After that, Clemens Pfeiffer from Jena took over the trusteeship of the assets. His tasks were to find the heirs as well as the management and safeguarding of the house.

In 1951, the governmental trade organisation pushed for the overhauling of the business rooms and rented the sales floor and six more rooms for 450 DM per month. In the meantime, the DDR Interior Ministry was reviewing the case and demanded tangible results from Pfeiffer. Ultimately, he identified heirs, from the Ullmann branch, that is Hedwig’s family. From eight of Hedwig’s siblings only the six years younger Toni Miller was still alive. Three children of Hedwig’s sister, Mathilde, was also found. The reassignment of the property, however, did not take place because the documentary verification of the kinship proved to be difficult and only Toni Miller was still living in Germany, though in the West of the divided country. The DDR Interior Ministry per-

mitted the registration of the legal heirs into the cadastre, yet on condition that the potential heirs would settle in the DDR. Toni Miller was not prepared to do so and he died in Mannheim in 1975. When the emigration of Hedwig Binder’s nephew from Israel also failed, the building was assigned to the town council for beneficial use.

The restitution of the building to the subsequent eligible heirs took place only after reunification. In 1998, the community of heirs finally received what used to be owned by their family. The relatives of the Metzel brother filed another objection at the regional authorities for the settlement of property restitution claims, which, however, was rejected on June 1, 1999. It was stipulated in the explanatory statement: “The property was compulsory sold by the Jewish owners in 1940 due to persecution. It was not proven whether the legal transaction was also going to be concluded without the existence of the national socialist regime. Furthermore, it was not proven that the seller received the actual sales price.”

Mannheim, 22. 6. 56.
E. 7. 9.

An das Haetlinke Notariat,

Betr. Nachlasssache

Pönnels

Hedwig Binder, Pönnels

In der Erbenschaftsangelegenheit
meiner Schwester Hedwig Binder
hat mir der Herr Pfeiffer, den ich Ihr Schreiben
vom 28. Mai mitgeteilt ist, mich auf-
gefordert die Schritte zu meinem Um-
zug einzuleiten. Meine Ueberstellung
nach Pönnels kann ich doch erst
dann durchführen, wenn ich im
Grundbuch als Eigentümerin ein-
getragen ist. verfügungsbeerechtigt bin.
Ich bitte dafür zu sorgen, dass das
geschieht, damit ich auch in den
Genuß meiner Erbschaft kommen kann.
Das bitte ich auch dem Amt für staat-
liches Eigentum mitzuteilen.

Mit besten Grüßen
Herr Herr Müller
Mannheim E. 7. 9.

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