

The Markus Stern Family

Oberste Str. 7/ broken down

Markus Stern (*10.09.1886) descended from an old-established Burghaun family. He married Lina Strauß (*12.30.1888 in Rothenkirchen). Lina was Abraham Strauß' sister. The couple had three children:

Jonas *12.28. 1916

Mali *10.14.1919

Herta *06.01.1922

The merchant Markus Stern, Jakob Stern's brother (family # 24), was commonly known in town by his nickname "*Gickel*" (ladie's man). An elderly lady from Burghaun remembered that this nickname resulted from his mother's telling pretty graphically about her son's popularity with the girls. In 1927 Markus Stern became the owner of the house at Oberste Strasse (street address), and the family called it home up to the latter part of 1935, at which time they left Burghaun. Prior to their move – it was more like an escape – Markus had been reported to the police and threatened with arrest. When it became clear that a return to Burghaun was out of the question Markus Stern asked his brother- in- law Abraham Strauss to sell the real estate.

Jonas and Mali

Due to increasing discrimination and exclusion during the thirties it became increasingly difficult for Jewish youth to get an education and gainful employment. That's why Jonas went to Beuthen in then Upper Silesia. There he was able to complete an apprenticeship as a butcher. Afterwards he got a job in Frankfurt/ Main, where as of October 1937 he lived at Hanauer Landstrasse 16 with the Bender family. Mali attended Latin-school (a type of Junior high school up to 10th grade) at Huenfeld, and subsequently she worked as a nanny in her uncle Leopold Strauss' family. After that she too moved to Frankfurt and had a steady job.

Most likely in 1938 Jonas and Mali emigrated from Frankfurt to the U.S.A., and there both of them got married pretty soon. In 1939 Mali married Max Bergmann, and later, after she had been widowed rather early, she married a certain Mr. Meyer. In 1940 Jonas married a young lady by the name of Thea, who came from Hamburg.

In order to secure their livelihood the young people had to work very hard. As of Nov. 1940 Mali was working at a textile factory, and Jonas as a butcher at a hotel in New York. - Jonas Stern passed away in 1995, however, his sister Mali is still living in New York.

Herta's emigration via "Hachshara"

It is very likely that Herta just as her sister Mali attended Latin-school at Huenfeld. Until 11.28.1935 she was registered as a Burghaun citizen. Afterwards she most likely

moved with her parents for almost two years to Jonas at Beuthen, and subsequently to Frankfurt. In September of 1939 Herta emigrated to Holland where she had secured a place at the Jewish "Werkdorf" Wieringerwaard in the northern part of Holland. The "Werkdorf" was an institution of the "Hachshara" where young Jewish people would be prepared for their emigration to Palestine.

Both sisters must have had already contact with that organization, namely through the "Zionist Workers' Centre" which existed in Burghaun in the early thirties. It was a small branch of the Hachshara Centre at Hattendorf close to Fulda, the Jewish teaching farm at Gehringshof. In preparation of their emigration to Palestine the young people worked on some farms of Burghaun farmers in order to improve their agricultural skills.

A separate chapter will feature a report about Herta's life in Holland and further details regarding her fate.

"As far as your emigration is concerned – for the time being it is very difficult..."

As mentioned before, in November/ December of 1935 the parents and their youngest daughter Herta followed Jonas to Beuthen, and in 1937 to Frankfurt/ Main. In Frankfurt the family had to go through the horrors of the 1938 November pogrom in the course of which Markus Stern was arrested, and on 11.16.1938 together with several hundred Frankfurt Jews they were transported to the Dachau concentration camp. 30151 was Markus' prisoner ID#.

After Jonas and Mali had emigrated to the U.S.A. and Herta to Holland, the parents stayed behind in Frankfurt/ Main still hopeful of their joining them pretty soon.

In the meantime Germany had provoked WWII, and after the German Army had invaded Holland in May of 1940, Herta wasn't safe there any longer either. As the war continued emigration became more and more difficult and increasingly hopeless. However, on 10.16.1940 Markus Stern reported to his daughter in Holland: "...on my birthday we received a telegram from Mali and Max which stated that they had secured the sponsorship from the Korn's for us:" And on 02.22.1941 it seemed like nothing could hold up their departure: "From Jonas we had proof of documents sent, and passage paid for." However, things dragged on. On June 6th the father wrote to Herta in Holland: "... our departure isn't imminent, and yesterday we once more sent a telegram. Hopefully this will do it; unfortunately things don't progress speedily..." And the mother added: "It's too bad, but so far our reservations haven't been confirmed. We are hoping for a telegram some time next week that will confirm them so that we finally can travel."

However, new drastic regulations rendered the affidavit – the sponsorship – invalid, thus making a flight –escape- all but impossible. As of August 12th the couple was still hoping for a ship to freedom. The father wrote to Herta: "We received mail from the U.S.A.; they have to organize our departure from over there, and we hope that it will work somehow!" The mother appended: "Now we hope that our loved ones shall

arrange everything from there; again new documents have to be submitted, and we hope it won't take that long."

Thus the parents had to continue to wait patiently. Perhaps it was some comfort to them when through Mali's letter of August 17th they could partake of their children's happiness in New York: "... dear Mom, our Jonas cuddles Thea just like Dad used to do it with you, and my old man is even worse. Too bad you can't see it; God willing the day shall come! What do you hear from Herta and her fiancé? How far did they get regarding their emigration? We keep working at it and leave no stone unturned although, dear parents, for the time being there is nothing we can do..." The latter Jonas had to confirm: "...as far as your emigration is concerned, presently it is very difficult. For the time being nothing can be done, unfortunately, we just have to wait for the regulations. We stay with it with it and leave nothing to chance. This is all I can think of, and not for a minute do I think of anything else. We had already been looking forward to September 12th, and we desired to celebrate our and your anniversary together, however, it was not to be.

Less hopeful was the letter that mother Stern wrote on August 29th 1941 to Herta in Holland: "All the people, who had a visa, made it out. With us it was a matter of only 2-3 weeks, but unfortunately it was not supposed to happen. Now we have to wait and see what the dear children might be able to pull off, so far nothing could be achieved. ..."

All the efforts by Jonas and Mali in New York were not supposed to be successful. While the family kept hoping and tried hard, the continual restrictions of flight possibilities were aggravated by a decree of the Reich Security Main Office (RSHA) dated August 23.1941, which stipulated that the emigration of Jews had to be prevented immediately; two months later it was totally banned. The consequences of this development can be clearly read from Jonas' letter dated September 4th 1941. Jonas tries to calm down his parents: "...at the moment nothing can be done since everything is being held up. Here we get all the information, and even what was written in the "Nachrichtenblatt" (some kind of newsletter) we do know. There is nothing that we don't try. ... When the time comes, I am sure she will grant the sponsorship (Mrs. Steinhall). As far as A,C. Besch is concerned it is pointless, people just talk themselves into thinking that he might do it. For the moment Cuba, too, is out of the question. Naturally, dear parents, you don't have to concern yourselves with the idea that your reunion with us might be hampered somehow or other. We try everything as far as it is within our sphere of influence. As you know, you came to me to Beuthen, and then to Frankfurt, and you shall also come over here, wherever it might be, to join me and my beloved Thea. We just can't wait any longer, but where we go you shall come to also. .. dear parents, you shouldn't think that we are ignorant about all the things concerning emigration according to what is written in your newspapers. However, for the time being no affidavit applications for people from over there have been accepted. ..."

Despite all the rescue efforts – it was too late! Markus and Lina Stern didn't manage to get out of Frankfurt/ Main. On November 9th 1941 they informed their children that two days later they had to go away somewhere On 11.11.1941 they were forced to travel from their apartment at Obermainanlage to Minsk in Belorussia (White Russia) – a murderous ghetto. There both of them were killed.-

Translation:

Martin H. Siebert, Im Weidengrund 10, 31226 Peine-Schwicheldt