

„Hell“ and back twice

The damaged life of Flory and Marga Goldwein from Meimbressen

by Michael Dorhs

From 1984 to 1986, the German-language newspapers „Aufbau“ (New York) and „Israel Nachrichten“ (Tel Aviv) published several articles about the Hofgeismar Town Museum's search for emigrants from Northern Hesse.¹ The response was overwhelming. Many Jews then got in touch with me and told me, the then 24-year-old theology student, about their experiences during the Nazi era. Finally – so the basic tenor of all letters – someone from her old „Heimat“ is interested in their life story and tale of woe. And they willingly provided information.

Except for Flory Friedner and Marga Sender. One consistently remained silent, the other one only briefly mentioned to me in her letter the fact that her parents were murdered in the concentration camp. Not a word about themselves and their fate! What I didn't know at the time: Both belonged to the small group of nine Shoah survivors from the district of Hofgeismar, who had suffered through and survived at first hand the horror of the ghettos and concentration camps.² And both had made the experience that they had been freed externally from the hell of Riga and Stutthof. But on the inside, they've never let go of the terrible experiences from those years. Both lives *after* hell always remained a life *with* hell.

¹ Vgl. Judaica im Museum von Hofgeismar. In: Israel Nachrichten Nr. 3407 v. 23.11.1984; Hofgeismarer Museum sucht Emigranten. In: Israel Nachrichten v. 3.1.1986; Hofgeismarer Museum sucht Informationen über Emigranten. In: Aufbau v. 3.1.1986.

² Neben Flory Friedner, geb. Goldwein und Marga Sender, geb. Goldwein sowie Pauline Löwenstein, geb. Kaiser (alle Meimbressen) hatten noch die Geschwister Gertrud und Herta Michelsohn (Karlshafen) und Wilhelm David mit seiner Frau Regina, geb. Gottgetreu mit ihrer Tochter Ruth sowie Erwin Machol (alle Grebenstein) die Deportation ins KZ überlebt; vgl. Enid Bloch: „Story of a Survivor“, by Gertrud Sonnenberg as told to Enid Bloch. In: Shir L'Sholom. A Literary Review. The Voice of Temple Sholom, Bridgewater, N.J. (USA), Vol. 7, No. 3 (Spring 1985), p. 4-11.;-- dies.: Return to Hanover... Fifty Years Later. In: Shir L'Sholom. A Literary Review. The Voice of Temple Sholom, Bridgewater, N.J. (USA), Vol. 14, No.3 (Spring 1992), p. 2-11.;-- Michael Dorhs: Nachbarn, die keiner mehr kennt... Schicksale jüdischer Familien aus Grebenstein. In: Jahrbuch 1998 Landkreis Kassel, S. 119-130; erneut veröffentlicht in: H. Burmeister / M. Dorhs (Hgg.), Das achte Licht (2002), S. 143-166.;-- „Sie haben den Krieg nicht vergessen!“ Interview mit Erwin Machol aus Grebenstein. In: Stimme und Weg, hg. v. VdK Kassel. Nr. 47/1975; erneut veröffentlicht in: H. Burmeister / M. Dorhs (Hgg.), Fremde im eigenen Land (1985), S. 119.

They were born in Meimbressen, what was then the district of Hofgeismar. Of more than 600 inhabitants in 1933, just under 12% were of Jewish faith.³ Flory, born in 1910,⁴ grew up there with 4 siblings⁵ as the daughter of the cattle dealer Levi Goldwein⁶ and his wife Ida, née Hammerschlag.⁷ Marga, born in 1925⁸ and thus fifteen years younger, came from a family of cattle dealers too. Her parents, Louis⁹ and Bertha Goldwein, née Katz,¹⁰ also ran a small farm. Marga had a sister, Ruth,¹¹ who was a year and a half older.

³ Zur Geschichte der Jüdischen Gemeinde Meimbressen vgl. Paul Arnsberg, Die jüdischen Gemeinden in Hessen. Anfang. Untergang. Neubeginn. Frankfurt/M. 1971, Bd. 2., S.64-67.-- Hans Manfred Bock, Die Wolff von Gudenberg. Zur Sozialgeschichte und Familienchronik eines Adelsgeschlechts der Region Kassel. Kassel 2019.— Helmut Burmeister / Michael Dorhs (Hgg.), Fremde im eigenen Land. Beiträge zur Kultur- und Sozialgeschichte der Juden in den alten Kreisen Hofgeismar, Kassel, Wolfhagen und in der Stadt Kassel. Hofgeismar 1985.—Helmut Burmeister / Michael Dorhs (Hgg.), Juden-Hessen-Deutsche. Beiträge zur Kultur- und Sozialgeschichte der Juden in Nordhessen. Hofgeismar 1991.— Helmut Burmeister / Michael Dorhs, (Hgg.), Das achte Licht. Beiträge zur Kultur- und Sozialgeschichte der Juden in Nordhessen. Hofgeismar 2002.— Michael Dorhs, Fremdlinge im eigenen Land. Zum Schicksal der Juden aus dem Altkreis Hofgeismar unter dem Nationalsozialismus. In: Burmeister / Dorhs (Hgg.): Fremde im eigenen Land (1985), S. 71-86, bes. S. 81.— Michael Dorhs (Zsst.), Zeugnisse des Identitätswandels. Briefe jüdischer Emigranten aus Meimbressen, Liebenau und Deisel. In: Burmeister / Dorhs (Hgg.): Fremde im eigenen Land (1985), S. 102-110, bes. S. 102-106.— Michael Dorhs, Jüdische Opfer der Nazi-Zeit aus den Gemeinden der Altkreise Hofgeismar, Kassel und Wolfhagen. Der Forschungsstand 1991. In: Burmeister / Dorhs (Hgg.), Juden-Hessen-Deutsche (1991), S. 169f.— Alfred Heilbrunn / Michael Dorhs, Aus der Geschichte der Synagogengemeinden des Altkreises Hofgeismar. In: Burmeister / Dorhs (Hgg.), Fremde im eigenen Land (1985), S. 58-63, bes. S. 61f.— Herbold Löwenstein, Die jüdische Schule zu Meimbressen. In: JWC 3 (1926), Nr. 41, S. 4-6; kommentiert und erneut veröffentlicht in: Burmeister / Dorhs (Hgg.), Juden-Hessen-Deutsche (1991), S. 105-109.— Herbold Löwenstein, Die Synagoge zu Meimbressen. In: JWC 4 (1927), Nr. 41 v. 28.10.1927, S. 4 (1. Teil) und Nr. 42 v. 4.11.1927, S. 4f. (2. Teil).— Eberhard Wolff von Gudenberg, Meimbressen, die Wölffe von Gudenberg und die Juden (Von den Anfängen bis 1945). In: Dorfchronik Meimbressen. Festschrift zur 1100-Jahrfeier 2006. Mit Beiträgen von Eberhard Wolff von Gudenberg, Norbert Rumpf, Heinrich Neutze u.v.a.m. Meimbressen / Hofgeismar 2006, S. 1-101.

⁴ Flory Goldwein, geboren am 23. Mai 1910 in Meimbressen, wohnhaft dort im Haus Nr. 110.

⁵ Erna, geb. 22. März 1905, ermordet im Ghetto Riga, Arthur, geb. 13. Juli 1913, ermordet im KZ Mauthausen, Louis, gen. „Ludi“ (Elieser), geboren am 14. Oktober 1922, gestorben 18. Februar 2003 in Ramat Gan (Israel) und Marianne, geboren am 5. August 1926, ermordet im KZ Auschwitz.

⁶ Levi Goldwein II, geboren am 16. September 1877 in Meimbressen.

⁷ Ida, geb. Hammerschlag, geboren am 9. Mai 1883 in Meimbressen. Sie war eine Tochter des jüdischen Lehrers Abraham Hammerschlag (6.5.1857 in Harmuthsachsen - 21.11.1908 in Meimbressen) und seiner Frau Johanna, geb. Heilbronn (20.10.1852 - 7.3.1934). Beide sind in Meimbressen begraben.

⁸ Marga[rethe] Goldwein, geboren am 28. Oktober 1925 in Meimbressen, wohnhaft dort im Haus Nr. 2.

⁹ Louis Goldwein, geboren am 28. August 1884 in Meimbressen.

¹⁰ Bertha, geb. Katz, Bertha Goldwein, geb. Katz, geboren am 12. November 1889 in Jesberg.

¹¹ Ruth Goldwein, geboren am 5. Februar 1924 in Meimbressen.



Flory Goldwein in the middle (white clothes) with her sister Erna und her brother Arthur (l. laying) und her brother „Ludi“ (r., sitting), 1928 in Meimbressen. (Photo: Private Collection)

When the Nazi dictatorship began in Germany in 1933, Flory was no longer living in her home village. In 1931 she moved to Alfeld an der Leine (near Hanover) to live with her older sister Erna, who was married¹² to Gerson Jacobs.¹³ His family had leased a small textile shop in the town. Flory worked there from 1931-1937¹⁴ and during these years she met Philipp Jacobs,¹⁵ her brother-in-law's brother, and fell in love with him. When the economic situation worsened due to the increasing agitation against the Jews and the exclusion of the family from German society increased, the two brothers and their wives decided to give up the business

¹² Vgl. die Hochzeitsanzeige in der JWC v. 21. August 1931; <http://www.alemannia-judaica.de>.

¹³ Gerson Jacobs, geboren am 31. Januar 1903 in Sögel (bei Hannover). Für ihn sowie für seine Frau Erna wurden in Hannover im Stadtteil List, Lister Meile 77/79 zwei Stolpersteine verlegt; vgl.

<https://www.hannover.de/Kultur-Freizeit/Architektur-Geschichte/Erinnerungskultur/ZeitZentrum-Zivilcourage/St%C3%A4dtische-Erinnerungskultur/Stolpersteine/Verlegte-Stolpersteine-in-Hannover>

¹⁴ Angabe „1931“ stammt aus dem Neuropsychiatrischen Gutachten von Joachim Luwisch (New York) v. 21.11.1964; Hessisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Wiesbaden [nachfolgend zitiert als „HStAW“], Bestand 518, Nr. 55735. Möglicherweise lebte Flory Goldwein auch erst seit 1933 in Alfeld; Zahnfachärztliches Gutachten von Ruth Aron (New York) v. 24. November 1964; HHStAW, Bestand 518, Nr. 55735.

¹⁵ Philipp Jacobs, geb. 29. September 1905 in Sögel (bei Hannover). Für ihn wurde in Hannover im Stadtteil List, Lister Meile 77/79 ein Stolperstein verlegt; vgl. <https://www.hannover.de/Kultur-Freizeit/Architektur-Geschichte/Erinnerungskultur/ZeitZentrum-Zivilcourage/St%C3%A4dtische-Erinnerungskultur/Stolpersteine/Verlegte-Stolpersteine-in-Hannover>

and moved to Hanover. Flory and Philipp married there in 1939,¹⁶ but continued to live with Erna and Gerson, in the end compulsory and closely in a so-called „Judenhaus“ in Wunstorfer Str. 16A.¹⁷ On December 12, 1941,¹⁸ all four were arrested and taken to the central collection point for the deportations of Jews from the Hanover area, the former Ahlem Israelite Horticultural School,¹⁹ where Flory's clothes and valuables were taken away.²⁰ Three days later, 1,001 Jewish men, women and children were deported to Riga via the Fischerhof train station from there, including the two Jacobs couples.²¹

Only six days earlier, on the afternoon of December 9, 1941, another deportation train had left the main train station in Kassel, also with Riga as the destination. The parents of Erna and Flory as well as Marga Goldwein with her sister Ruth and her parents were among the 1,024 Jews who were forcibly displaced from their north Hessian „Heimat“.²² The North Hessian deportation was preceded by an increasing concentration of Jews, initially from villages like Meimbressen in the city of Kassel, then crammed together in houses that had Jewish owners („Judenhäuser“), some of whom lived abroad. Since October 8, 1941, Louis and Berta Goldwein have lived with their daughter Ruth²³ and probably also with Marga²⁴ in such

¹⁶ Die genaue Datierung ist nicht eindeutig vorzunehmen. In der Entschädigungsakte von Flory Friedner wird der 8. Februar 1940 als Hochzeitsdatum angegeben; vgl. HHStAW, Bestand 518, Nr. 55735. In dem Neuropsychiatrisches Gutachten von Joachim Luwisch (New York) v. 21.11.1964, S. 1 wird dagegen der „Februar 1939“ genannt; HHStAW, Bestand 518, Nr. 55735. Die Datierung „8. Februar 1939“ wird auch vom Zeit Zentrum Zivilcourage (Hannover) bestätigt; vgl. Mail v. Edel Sheridan-Quantz (Hannover) an Michael Dorhs v. 22. Juni 2021.

¹⁷ Zu den unterschiedlichen Wohnadressen von Flory und Erna Jacobs in Hannover vgl. die Angaben vom Zeit Zentrum Zivilcourage (Hannover) / Mail v. Edel Sheridan-Quantz (Hannover) an Michael Dorhs v. 22. Juni 2021.

¹⁸ Datierung lt. Zahnfachärztlichem Gutachten von Ruth Aron (New York) v. 24. November 1964, S. 1; HHStAW 518, 55735.

¹⁹ Vgl. <https://www.hannover.de/Kultur-Freizeit/Architektur-Geschichte/Erinnerungskultur/Gedenkst%C3%A4tte-Ahlem/Die-Geschichte-des-Ortes>

²⁰ Vgl. Klage Flory Friedner gegen das Land Hessen auf Entschädigung; HHStAW, 467, 2085

²¹ Vgl. Julia Berlit-Jackstien / Karljosef Kreter (Hgg.), Abgeschoben in den Tod. Die Deportation von 1001 jüdischen Hannoveranerinnen und Hannoveranern am 15. Dezember 1941 nach Riga. Hannover 2011.

²² Vgl. Monica Kingreen, Die gewaltsame Verschleppung der Juden aus den Dörfern und Städten des Regierungsbezirks Kassel in den Jahren 1941 und 1942. In: Helmut Burmeister / Michael Dorhs (Hgg.), Das achte Licht. Beiträge zur Kultur- und Sozialgeschichte der Juden in Nordhessen. Hofgeismar 2002, S. 223-228 und Wolfgang Prinz, Die Judenverfolgung in Kassel. In: Wilhelm Frenz / Jörg Kammler / Dietfrid Krause-Vilmar (Hgg.): Volksgemeinschaft und Volksfeinde. Kassel 1933-1945. Bd. 2: Studien. Fulda 1987, S. 211-213.

²³ Vgl. Beate Kleinert / Wolfgang Prinz (Bearb.), Namen und Schicksale der Juden Kassels 1933-1945. Ein Gedenkbuch. Kassel 1986, S. 190f.

²⁴ Für Marga gibt es keine Hinweise auf eine polizeiliche Anmeldung in Kassel, nur ihre Selbstaussage, dass sie von dort mit Eltern und Schwester deportiert worden sei; vgl. Erlebnisbericht von Marga Sender v. 14. August 1958; HHStAW 518, 91584.

a „Jews House“ at Kölnische Straße 4. Although only 15 years old, she was obliged to do forced labor in the Becker & Marxhausen cardboard box factory from mid-1941.²⁵ Flory's parents, on the other hand, were sent to a barrack of the former prisoner-of-war camp, the so-called „Wartekuppe community camp“ in Kassel-Niederzwehren on September 29, 1941.²⁶ From there and from Kölnische Straße 4, the two Jewish families from Meimbressen were brought to the gym complex of boys and girls' community schools No. 1 and No. 2 in Schillerstraße, which served as a collection camp, on the evening before the deportation. Here, the Gestapo carried out the control of the ID cards and, above all, the luggage control, but also body checks, during which people had to strip naked and undergo degrading buttocks checks. Valuables such as watches, remaining jewelry and wedding rings were taken from them under massive threats by the Gestapo. The abductees spent a night in the gym, fearful of the uncertain future, before being driven in a column through Schillerstraße, Erzbergerstraße and Werner-Hilpert-Straße to Kassel Central Station the next morning.²⁷

When the two deportation trains arrived in Riga at the Skirotava freight station, all inmates were driven into the separate district of the Jewish ghetto. It covered an area of about 9,000 square meters and was separated from the rest of the city by a high fence and was closely guarded. The ghetto was completely overcrowded, most of the houses were derelict and the sanitary facilities were completely inadequate. *„We lived there, me and my parents and sister, with another family, 6 people together, in one room. We had to work hard every day at the ‚Organization Todt‘. The food was very bad and very little.“*²⁸ (M. Sender) The „Organization Todt“ (OT) was a special technical force for military construction, especially in the areas occupied by German troops in World War II, named after its founder Fritz Todt. Marga, now 16 years old, was forced to do cleaning work in car repair shops. Her living

²⁵ Vgl. Krankheitsbericht über M. Sender o.D. [nach 1958], o.O. [in Deutschland], Ärztliches Gutachten zum Antrag auf Entschädigung wegen Schadens an Körper oder Gesundheit nach dem BEG für Opfer der nationalsozialistischen Verfolgung von Dr. F. Noack (Haifa) v. 25.7.1959, S. 1; HHStAW 518, 91584.

²⁶ Vgl. Monica Kingreen (s. Anm. 22), S. 226 und Beate Kleinert / Wolfgang Prinz (s. Anm. 23), S. 190.

²⁷ Vgl. Monica Kingreen (s. Anm. 22), S. 227 und Wolfgang Prinz, Die Judenverfolgung in Kassel. In: Wilhelm Frenz / Jörg Kammler / Dietfrid Krause-Vilmar (Hgg.): Volksgemeinschaft und Volksfeinde. Kassel 1933-1945. Bd. 2: Studien. Fuldabrück 1987, S. 206-210.

²⁸ Erlebnisbericht von Marga Sender v. 14. August 1958; HHStAW 518, 91584.

conditions and diet were so inadequate that she lost her period for a year and a half.²⁹ Flory came into a forced labor command of the „Deutsche Reichsbahn“ (German Railways). She and her husband „were forced into hard labor (...), had to march to work for 1 ½ hours and then back again. They were given all kind of work. If nothing else was there to do, then chop ice, shovel snow. The bread they got was frozen.“³⁰ Philipp Jacobs only endured this exertion until 1942. According to his wife, he starved to death, either in the Salaspils or in the Jungfernhof satellite camp³¹ of the Riga-Kaiserwald concentration camp³² On August 23, 1942, Flory's forced labor command was relocated to Precu, another subcamp of the concentration camp, in order to do inhuman forced labor for the „Reichsbahn“ there again, „without enough clothing and food, exposed to the harsh winter there, constantly enduring brutalities, exposed to constant threats, defenseless at the mercy of the SS.“³³

Did Flory meet her parents again in Riga? She was also silent about that. What is certain is that they both arrived in Riga a few days before their daughter. It is not known whether they were still alive when Flory arrived or whether they had already been shot in the Biķernieki forest. Officially, they are „lost“.³⁴ Levi Goldwein was 64 years old at the time of his deportation, his wife Ida 58. Flory's brother Ludi (Elieser) later told me that his parents had been murdered in Riga on Passover in 1942.

Marga, Ruth and their parents apparently managed to more or less stay together until the summer of 1944. For only three months, during which Marga was sent from the ghetto to Schamste (near Libau³⁵) until October 2, 1943 „and had to work there all day without interruption and under constant threats,“³⁶ she remained separated from them.

²⁹ Vgl. Ärztliches Gutachten zum Antrag auf Entschädigung wegen Schadens an Körper oder Gesundheit nach dem BEG für Opfer der nationalsozialistischen Verfolgung von Dr. F. Noack (Haifa) v. 25. Juli 1959, S. 1; HHStAW 518, 91584.

³⁰ Neuropsychiatrisches Gutachten v. Joachim Luwisch (New York) v. 21.11.1964, S. 2f.; HHStAW, 518, 55735.

³¹ Vgl. <https://www.bundesarchiv.de/gedenkbuch/de887490>

³² Vgl. HHStAW, 518, 55735

³³ Neuropsychiatrisches Gutachten v. Joachim Luwisch (New York) v. 21.11.1964; HHStAW, 518, Nr. 55735.

³⁴ Beate Kleinert / Wolfgang Prinz (s. Anm. 23), S. 190; <https://www.bundesarchiv.de/gedenkbuch/de877292> und <https://www.bundesarchiv.de/gedenkbuch/de877286>

³⁵ Es gab von 1941 – Oktober 1943 in Libau (Liepaja) im besetzten Litauen ein Ghetto; vgl. Martin Weinmann (Hg.), Das nationalsozialistische Lagersystem (CCP). Frankfurt/M. 1990, S. 666.

³⁶ Erlebnisbericht von Marga Sender v. 14. August 1958; HHStAW 518, 91584.

The already miserable living conditions changed significantly on her return when she and her family were transferred from the ghetto to the nearby Riga-Kaiserwald concentration camp.³⁷ In contrast to other concentration camps, Kaiserwald was not an extermination camp, but served German industry as a reservoir for forced labor. Companies from the „Reich“ had electronic devices manufactured in numerous external commandos. So Marga *„(...) came to the Precu labor camp on October 12, 1943. On arrival, everyone was stripped naked and had to go to roll call, with everyone given their convict number. My number was 56278. In Precu (we) had to work very hard.“*³⁸

In the meantime, however, the war situation had fundamentally changed. After the defeat of the German Wehrmacht in Stalingrad at the beginning of 1943, the Soviet front moved even closer. The SS began to evacuate the Kaiserwald concentration camp with its many external commandos. Inmates who could not be transported were sorted out and shot, among them Marga's sixty-year-old father Louis.³⁹

All other camp inmates were now transferred to the Stutthof concentration camp near Danzig, including – in addition to Marga, Ruth and Berta Goldwein – Flory Jacobs. The conditions in the completely overcrowded camp were horrific. *„We (...) were constantly mistreated by a ‚Kapo‘ (former felon), like being thrown, beaten and dogs chased us. At the same time, there was a severe typhus epidemic in which a lot of people died and they were all buried in an open ditch. The hygienic conditions were terrible, so everyone had to meet their needs in a huge trench (...) in the middle of the camp. The people were full of bedbugs and lice.“*⁴⁰ More than 5,000 completely exhausted Jewish men and women died since October 1944 because they were forced to do hard labor. Abuse was on the agenda.⁴¹ Flory Jacobs was abused by an SS woman who slapped her face with a shoe until she passed out. *„During this*

³⁷ Vgl. Erlebnisbericht von Marga Sender v. 14. August 1958; HHStAW 518, 91584.

³⁸ Erlebnisbericht von Marga Sender v. 14. August 1958; HHStAW 518, 91584.

³⁹ Im Antrag von Marga Goldwein auf Grund des Gesetzes zur Wiedergutmachung nationalsozialistischen Unrechts (Entschädigungsgesetz) v. 12. August 1950 gibt Marga an, ihr Vater sei „etwa Juni 1943 in Auschwitz vergast“ worden. In der sog. „Anlage zum Mantel der Anmeldung Louis (Levi) Goldwein, Berta Goldwein geb. Katz und Ruth Goldwein“ ist ähnlich festgehalten: „Der Ehemann Louis (Levi) Goldwein wurde im Jahr 1943 vergast.“ Das widerspricht den Angaben in ihrem „Erlebnisbericht“ aus dem Jahr 1958. In einer Mitteilung an Michael Dorhs v. 5.2.1985 schreibt Marga Sender dagegen zutreffend: „erschossen im Getto Riga“.

⁴⁰ Erlebnisbericht von Marga Sender v. 14. August 1958; HHStAW 518, 91584.

⁴¹ Vgl. https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/KZ_Stutthof

*mistreatment, teeth were partly knocked out and partly broken. Other teeth were knocked loose and no longer solidified.*⁴²

In August 1944, a sub-camp of Stutthof was opened in Stolp (Pomerania), to which 600 prisoners were transferred. They also included Flory Jacobs and Marga Goldwein. *„There (we) had to dig splinter trenches and unload and load railway wagons with coal, earth and the like. When I was getting on a wagon once, an SS man deliberately gave the order to set the train in motion, and my right hand came between the buffers and was badly injured, so that my hand is still crippled.*“⁴³ (M. Sender)

The front came closer and closer, and Marga, Ruth and Berta Goldwein and Flory Jacobs, who were miraculously still alive, were relocated again, this time to Burggraben, another sub-camp of Stutthof near Danzig for the elderly and the sick. *„We had to walk day and night through mountains and forests without eating or drinking, and anyone who couldn't go got shot.*“⁴⁴

In April 1945 the remaining concentration camp prisoners were transported to the west by sea across the Baltic Sea. *„There (we) were loaded onto small boats and drove around aimlessly on the water without eating or drinking. My mother died of weakness before my very eyes, and her corpse was thrown into the water.*“⁴⁵ Berta Goldwein was only 55 years old.

On May 3, 1945 the ship reached the Holstein coast near Neustadt, and the few survivors were freed more dead than alive by British troops. Ruth Goldwein only survived the end of her concentration camp imprisonment by six days. On May 9, 1945, the 21-year-old woman died completely exhausted in the Neustadt State Hospital *„of poisoning because she*

⁴² Zahnfachärztliches Gutachten von Ruth Aron (New York) v. 24. November 1964; HHStAW, Bestand 518, Nr. 55735.

⁴³ Erlebnisbericht von Marga Sender v. 14. August 1958; HHStAW 518, 91584.

⁴⁴ Erlebnisbericht von Marga Sender v. 14. August 1958; HHStAW 518, 91584.

⁴⁵ Erlebnisbericht von Marga Sender v. 14. August 1958; HHStAW 518, 91584.-- Im Antrag von Marga Goldwein auf Grund des Gesetzes zur Wiedergutmachung nationalsozialistischen Unrechts (Entschädigungsgesetz) v. 12.8.1950 gibt Marga an, ihre Mutter sei „am 29.4.1945 in der Haft gestorben“. Das ist im Vergleich zu den Angaben in ihrem „Erlebnisbericht“ aus dem Jahr 1958 zumindest missverständlich. In der sog. „Anlage zum Mantel der Anmeldung Louis (Levi) Goldwein, Berta Goldwein geb. Katz und Ruth Goldwein“ ist dagegen festgehalten: „Die Ehefrau Berta Goldwein geb. Katz ist auf dem Schiff, das die Insassen des KZ Stutthof nach Neustadt (Holstein) brachte, am 29.4.1945 gestorben.“

*drank corpse water. We were together in the camps the whole time.*⁴⁶ (M. Sender) Flory Jacobs also reached Schleswig-Holstein on a ship on May 4 or 5, 1945 in Kleinwabs near Kiel. However, she had been suffering from abdominal typhoid since April and had also seen her ship bombed and caught fire.⁴⁷

For Marga Goldwein and Flory Jacobs, the three and a half years of martyrdom in German ghettos and concentration camps were over. They were free again. But were they really?

Flory only weighed 31 kilograms and had to spend 3 months in the Eckernförde hospital to somewhat recover.⁴⁸ Marga was hospitalized for ten months in the state hospital in Neustadt for jaundice with liver swelling, malnutrition, visual disturbances and general weakness.⁴⁹ But what was the physical harm compared to the emotional harm they'd experienced? They had survived hell on earth and lost almost all of their families. What else kept her in Germany? Nothing! There was no longer a way back to Meimbressen. The parents and siblings were murdered or displaced. Others now lived in their homes, and everything their families owned until 1933 had been systematically stolen from them.

Flory went to Frankfurt (Main), where she needed further medical treatment, and emigrated to the USA in 1947.⁵⁰ Marga returned to the completely destroyed Kassel⁵¹ on April



Marga Goldwein, 1949 (Photo: Arolsen Archives Collection)

⁴⁶ Erlebnisbericht von Marga Sender v. 14. August 1958; HHStAW 518, 91584.

⁴⁷ Vgl. Neuropsychiatrisches Gutachten v. Joachim Luwisch (New York) v. 21. November 1964, S. 3; HHStAW, 518, Nr. 55735.

⁴⁸ Vgl. Neuropsychiatrisches Gutachten Joachim Luwisch (New York) v. 21. November 1964, S. 6; HHStAW, 518, Nr. 55735.

⁴⁹ Vgl. Ärztliches Gutachten zum Antrag auf Entschädigung wegen Schadens an Körper oder Gesundheit nach dem BEG für Opfer der nationalsozialistischen Verfolgung von Dr. F. Noack (Haifa) v. 25. Juli 1959, S. 1 sowie Bescheid des RP in Kassel v. 9. September 1959; HHStAW, 518, 91584

⁵⁰ Über das genaue Datum der Auswanderung liegen unterschiedliche Angaben vor, entweder im Februar 1947 oder am 18. November 1947; vgl. HHStAW, 518, 55735

⁵¹ Zunächst wohnte sie im Stadtteil Wilhelmshöhe, Habichtswalderhöhe, dann bis zu ihrer Emigration am Brasselsberg in der Birkenkopfstr. 6; Stadtarchiv Kassel, Bestand A5.55, Nr. 109.

25, 1946,⁵² where the „Special Department for Jewish Affairs of the City of Kassel“ looked after her and supported her. She became a member of the re-founded „Israelitische Kultusgemeinde Kassel“ in Heubnerstraße 19⁵³ and took part in a tailoring course in 1948, as she had not yet had the opportunity to learn a profession. Various applications for small financial aid illustrate that after years of Nazi persecution and expropriation, Marga Goldwein had literally nothing. „Miss. G. uses borrowed furniture and would like to buy a wardrobe and a drawer.“⁵⁴ On September 15, 1949,⁵⁵ Marga also left Germany for good and emigrated to Israel.⁵⁶

The USA as a classic immigration country with a highly developed infrastructure and the young state of Israel, which was still being build – externally, the conditions for a new beginning could have hardly been more different. Flory earned her living in New York as a worker in a textile factory,⁵⁷ Marga in Israel as a housekeeper.⁵⁸ Both have more or less integrated themselves into their American or Israelian everyday life and tried as best they could to leave the past behind.

In 1948 Flory married Benno Friedner, a three-years-older widower, who had also survived the concentration camp and came from Czechoslovakia. Marga met the bank official Leo (Jehuda) Sender from Darmstadt in Ramat Gan and married him in 1952. Both marriages remained childless. Jehuda and Marga later adopted a girl born in 1966, Flory maintained close

⁵² Andere Datumsangabe: 26.4.1946; vgl. Bescheinigung des Spezial-Referats für jüdische Angelegenheiten der Stadt Kassel v. 28.1.1947; Stadtarchiv Kassel, Bestand A5.55, Nr. 109; ich danke Hans-Peter Klein (Melsungen) für die mir freundlicherweise gewährte Einsichtnahme in eine Kopie dieser Wiedergutmachungsakte.

⁵³ Mitgliedsbescheinigung der Israelitischen Kultusgemeinde Kassel v. 20. Februar 1948; Stadtarchiv Kassel, Bestand A5.55, Nr. 109.

⁵⁴ Bescheid RP in Kassel (Betreuungsstelle für politisch, rassistisch und religiös Verfolgte) v. 31. Dezember 1948; Stadtarchiv Kassel, Bestand A5.55, Nr. 109.

⁵⁵ Bescheid des RP in Kassel v. 9. September 1959; HHStAW, 518, 91584.

⁵⁶ Im Zusammenhang der sog. „Wiedergutmachung“ im Rahmen des BEG findet sich in den Akten ein Satz, der offenbart, wie wenig der Verfasser – immerhin ein Arzt! – von den psychischen Folgen der erlittenen KZ-Haft Marga Senders verstanden hatte oder verstehen wollte: „Es ist davon auszugehen, daß die Auswanderung am 15.9.1949 keine unmittelbare Folge der Verfolgung mehr sein kann, weil diese Auswanderung nicht erzwungen ist.“ Krankheitsbericht über M. Sender o.D. [nach 1958], o.O. [in Deutschland]; HHStAW 518, 91584.

⁵⁷ Vgl. Neuropsychiatrisches Gutachten Joachim Luwisch (New York) v. 21. November 1964, S. 3f.; HHStAW, 518, Nr. 55735.

⁵⁸ Vgl. Bescheid des RP in Kassel v. 9. September 1959; HHStAW, 518, 91584.

contact with her only surviving brother Ludi (Elieser) Goldwein in Ramat Gan⁵⁹ and his three children throughout her life. In this respect, Marga's grandchildren and Flory's niece and two nephews made sure that the family life could continue for both Shoah survivors, because a new generation grew up in both Goldwein families despite the German attempt to exterminate all Jews.

And yet the hell they suffered by the ghetto and the concentration camps took its toll. Externally free, they remained internally trapped throughout their lives in what they had experienced and suffered through between 1933 and 1945. In particular, the murder of countless relatives, friends and former neighbors fundamentally shook their certainty of life. A medical report about Flory Friedner from 1964 says: *„This enormous loss of family robbed her of much of the inner stability she possessed, isolated her emotionally, which even a second marriage could not neutralize. Now she can no longer enjoy her life. Her memories still overwhelm her (...).“*⁶⁰ In addition, there were health problems such as unusually great nervousness and reduced physical performance, which had a direct impact on everyday life. *„It can therefore be assumed that the long stay in the concentration camps during the war years 1940-1945, which were the developmental years of Ms. Margarete Sender, hindered physical development (...) and led to endocrine disorders [and] that there is a connection between the difficult camp life and her sterility.“*⁶¹

Almost 60 years later, when I read about Flory Friedner's condition in the 1960s, I am still speechless, saying that she *„makes an extremely exhausted, nervous and at the same time fearful impression. Her report is clear, coherent and there is no tendency to exaggerate. The affect situation is extremely unstable, she keeps losing her composure and breaks out into violent weeping and sobbing. All emotional reactions go very deep, shake her very strongly, and she makes a very battered impression (...).“*⁶²

⁵⁹ Vgl. zur Überlebensgeschichte von Ludi (Elieser) Goldwein: Michael Dorhs, „Ecken-Levis Ludi“ und sein Weg in die Freiheit. Vom Überleben des Louis Goldwein (1922-2003) aus Meimbressen. In: Jahrbuch 2021 Landkreis Kassel, S. 92-98.

⁶⁰ Neuropsychiatrisches Gutachten Joachim Luwisch (New York) v. 21. November 1964, S. 7; HHStAW, 518, 55735.

⁶¹ Ärztliche Bescheinigung Dr. A. Peretz (Haifa) v. 11. August 1958; HHStAW 518, 91584.

⁶² Neuropsychiatrisches Gutachten Joachim Luwisch (New York) v. 21. November 1964, S. 5; HHStAW, 518, 55735.



Left: Marga Sender, née Goldwein, about 2012.

Right: 85th Birthday of Flory Friedner, née Goldwein, 1995. (Photos: Private Collections)

Why didn't she answer my questions 20 years later? That's why! She was and remained traumatized until the end of her life. Her nephew Jehuda Goldwein remembers his aunt in 2021: „We don't know anything about her life during the war. She never wanted to speak about it and we can sure understand why. That's why she didn't want any connections with Germany or Austria and unlike my father she never agreed to visit there. (...)“⁶³ Against this background, I suspect that it was probably no coincidence and also not a maybe badly chosen time that prevented Marga Sender and I from meeting in Haifa in 1993, although I only have had set up my quarters a few houses from her on the Carmel in Haifa. At least she was able to take the extended hand of her former Meimbressen neighbor Eberhard Wolff von Gudenberg, who was almost the same age as her, when he visited some of the Jews of his village in Israel in 1987 and 1995. There was even a return visit to the „Junkernhof“ in Meimbressen in 1991! But her own story of suffering remained a taboo even during these encounters.

Flory Friedner and Marga Sender have reached an old age – both turned 88 years old. Flory died in 1999 in Ramat Gan, where she moved to from New York after the death of her husband in the early 1990s to be close to her brother and his family. Marga's life ended in 2013 in Haifa, which had become her second home. *May their souls be bound up in the bond of life.*

Translation: Marike Dorhs

⁶³ E-mail von Jehuda Goldwein (Ramat Gan) an Michael Dorhs v. 10. Februar 2021.

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