Hope set sail on the „Hilda“

The story of the Goldwein siblings' escape from Meimbressen

by Michael Dorhs

Hermann[1] and Irmgard[2] Goldwein were siblings – separated by just fourteen months in age, yet bound together by a shared fate. Born in 1911 and 1912, they spent their early childhood before the profound upheavals that the First World War was to bring to the village of Meimbressen in northern Hesse. They grew up in a sheltered environment in house no. 43 (now: An der Nebelbeeke 16).

Their parents, the cattle dealer Levi Goldwein[3] and his wife Amalie Mathilde,[4] who was 19 years his junior, ensured a stable financial foundation and a harmonious family life. Together with their younger siblings Martha[5] and Erich,[6] they were part of a family that was firmly rooted in village life during the years of the Weimar Republic. They prospered during the 1920s. Business was going well: *„My father ran a livestock trading business dealing in slaughter and farm animals. He dealt exclusively in large livestock – that is, cattle, horses, oxen and calves – either by selling the animals at the slaughter cattle market in Kassel or by bartering working livestock from farm to farm. A labourer was employed as and when required. I am unable to provide any figures for turnover or earnings. It may serve as an indication that he provided a decent living for*

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[1] Hermann (Naphtali) Goldwein, born on 20 May 1911 in Meimbressen. There are conflicting accounts regarding Hermann Goldwein's dates of birth and death: (1) born 21 May 1911, died 15 March 1941; https://www.myheritage.de/research/collection-1/myheritage-stammbaume?colId=1&itemId=534341801-1-501522&indId=&action=showRecord&siteId=312665841&language=DE&isExternal=1&rfr=super_search_email&tr_date=20200731 und (2) 21. Mai 1911- 13. März 1941; Quelle: https://billiongraves.com/grave/%25D7%25A0%25D7%25A4%25D7%25AA%25D7%259C%25D7%2599-%25D7%2592%25D7%2595%25D7%259C%25D7%2593%25D7%2595%25D7%2595%25D7%2599%25D7%259F/20111962?referrer=myherita+ge

[2] Ilse, known as 'Irmgard', Goldwein, born on 19 July 1912 in Meimbressen, died on 5 August 2005 in Frankfurt am Main.

[3] Levi Goldwein I, born on 28 December 1868 in Meimbressen, died on 4 August 1941 in Kassel. There were two Jewish men in Meimbressen with the first name Levi, so the villagers 'numbered' them to tell them apart. Amalie Mathilde's husband was therefore 'Levi Goldwein I'.

[4] Amalie Mathilde Goldwein, née Goldwein, born on 5 July 1888 in Meimbressen.

[5] Martha Goldwein, born on 2 August 1914 in Meimbressen, died on 18 October 1936.

[6] Erich (Elijahu) Goldwein, born on 20 September 1918 in Meimbressen, died on 4 April 1982.

his family of four children and that my eldest brother went to university."[7] (Irmgard Stern, née Goldwein) And they were fully integrated into the village community, which had been accustomed to a largely peaceful coexistence between Christians and Jews since the 14th century:[8] „*We were on good terms with all the Christian residents, especially our neighbours Konrad and Karoline Sauer. Whenever Mrs Sauer had a baby or was ill, my mother would cook some chicken soup, and as a child I would take it over to them*,"[9] recalls Irmgard Stern 60 years later.



Jewish youths in 1927 on the Hesselnberg in Meimbressen. Standing at the top (2nd from left): Irmgard Goldwein; sitting at the bottom (2nd from left): Erich Goldwein.
(Source: Stadtmuseum Hofgeismar, Bildarchiv Judaica Hassiaca)

[7] Affidavit by Irmgard Stern, née Goldwein, dated 10 March 1954; Hessisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Wiesbaden (HHStAW,) Collection 518, No. 71247.
[8] In 1356, the Wolff von Gudenberg family was granted the right by the Archbishop of Mainz, as landlords of Meimbressen, to settle so-called 'protected Jews' (Schutzjuden) in the village; cf. Eberhard Wolff von Gudenberg: Meimbressen, die Wölffe von Gudenberg und die Juden. In: Dorfchronik Meimbressen. Festschrift zur 1100-Jahrfeier 2006. Meimbressen / Hofgeismar 2006 (= Die Geschichte unserer Heimat 44), p. 18.
[9] Letter from Irmgard Stern to Michael Dorhs dated 3 October 1996; Stadtmuseum Hofgeismar, Judaica Hassiaca Department, Meimbressen file, the Levi and Mathilde Goldwein family.

However, with the establishment of the Nazi dictatorship from 1933 onwards, a process began that would gradually change the family's life. What started as creeping exclusion developed within a few years into an existential threat.

In October 1936, the family suffered a further blow: Martha, the younger sister of Hermann and Irmgard, died of Graves' disease at the age of just 22.[10] That very same year, the family lost their means of livelihood: „*My father saw no point in continuing the business any longer and gave it up.*"[11] (Erich Goldwein) In Meimbressen, too, the enforced boycott of Jewish shops had by now taken its toll! Had it not been for a few courageous Christians who secretly supplied their Jewish neighbours with food, they would have gone hungry! „*I was told that, during those difficult times, Mrs Sauer used to throw bread and butter through the cellar hatch to my parents at night. This was observed and reported. The next morning, a Magen David Adom* (i.e. a red 'Star of David'; MD) *had been painted in red on her front door, and underneath it was written 'Sauer, servant of the Jews'.*"[12] (Irmgard Stern)

The November pogroms of 1938 ('Reichskristallnacht') ultimately marked a turning point. For many Jewish families in Meimbressen, they shattered their last hope of a political turnaround. By now, at the very latest, it had become clear that Jewish life in Germany would have no future. The marginalisation they had endured up to that point had openly turned into violence. No one was under any illusions any longer as to where the relentless exclusion of German Jews from the non-Jewish majority society was leading. Although numerous Jewish residents of Meimbressen had applied for a passport as early as 1935,[13] only a few – such as Meier and Minna Goldwein with four of



Erich Goldwein / Source: www.myheritage.de / collection 10902

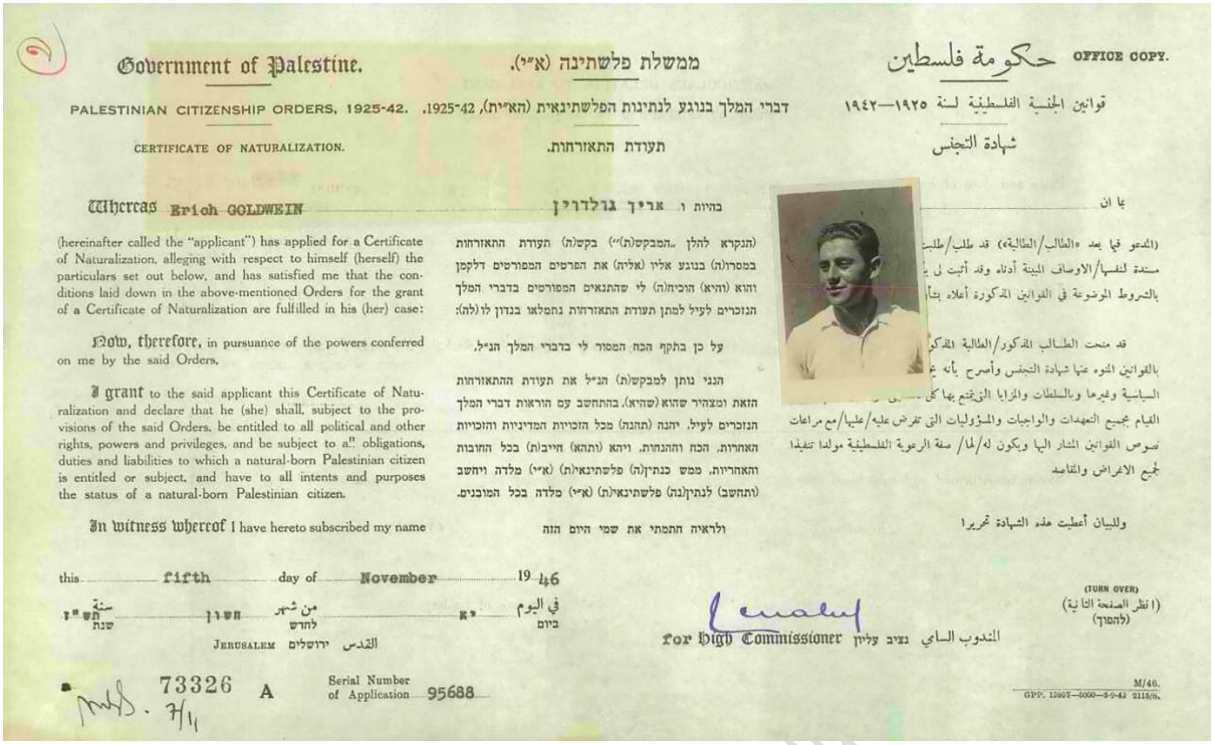
[10] Martha Goldwein died on 18 October 1936 and was buried in the Jewish cemetery in Meimbressen, where her gravestone remains to this day.
[11] Affidavit by Erich Eliahu Goldwein, Tel Aviv, 11 Prague St. of 17 September 1956; HHStAW, Collection 518, No. 19573, Vol. 1.
[12] As in note No. 9.
[13] Cf. Hessisches Staatsarchiv Marburg (HStAM), Bestand 180, Kreis Hofgeismar, Nr. 3794: 6 April 1918–3 January 1936.

their five children, Dina and Meier Perlstein with their son Harry, and Jakob and Jenny Voremberg with their sons Horst, Helmut and Werner – had actually managed to flee Germany. Now, following the nationwide pogroms against Jews in 1938, the urge among German Jews to emigrate had increased many times over.

Hermann and Irmgard Goldwein were now among those who were determined to leave their homeland, which had become a life-threatening place. Their destination was the British Mandate of Palestine, which was known to Jews as „Eretz Israel“, and to which their brother Erich had already emigrated in July 1936. There, he had „*become a member of the Givat Hashlosha collective settlement near Petach Tikvah, where I worked as a farm labourer in return for board and lodging.*“[14] (Erich Goldwein) In Meimbressen, he was regarded „*from an early age as a particularly bright lad*“[15] (Siegfried Löwenstein), but in Eretz Israel he fell ill due to the damp climate and was no longer able to carry out heavy work on the kibbutz. Instead, he began working in a cobbler’s workshop.[16] In 1939, he left Givat Haschloscha and moved to Tel Aviv to set himself up as a shoemaker there.

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[14] As in note No. 11.
[15] Affidavit by Siegfried (Chaim) Löwenstein, Tel Aviv, Prager Strasse 11, dated 25 September 1956; HHStAW, Collection 518, No. 19573, Vol. 1.
[16] Cf. s in note No. 11.



Government of Palestine. ממשלת פלשתינה (א"י). حكومة فلسطين OFFICE COPY.

PALESTINIAN CITIZENSHIP ORDERS, 1925-42. דברי המלך בנוגע לנתינות הפלשתינאית (האי"ת), 1925-42. قوانين الجنسية الفلسطينية لسنة ١٩٢٥—١٩٤٢

CERTIFICATE OF NATURALIZATION. תעודת התאזרחות. شهادة التجنس

Whereas Erich GOLDWEIN בהיות ו אריך גולדוין يما ان

(hereinafter called the "applicant") has applied for a Certificate of Naturalization, alleging with respect to himself (herself) the particulars set out below, and has satisfied me that the conditions laid down in the above-mentioned Orders for the grant of a Certificate of Naturalization are fulfilled in his (her) case:

(הנקרא להלן "המבקש(ת)") בקש(ת) תעודת התאזרחות במסרו(ת) בנוגע אליו (אליה) את הפרטים המפורטים דלקמן והוא (והיא) הוכיח(ה) לי שהתנאים המפורטים בדברי המלך הנזכרים לעיל למתן תעודת התאזרחות נתמלאו בנדון לו(לה):

(المدعو فيما بعد «الطالب/الطالبة») قد طلب/طلبت مستمدة لنفسها/الاوصاف المبينة أدناه وقد أثبت لي بالشروط الموضوعة في القوانين المذكورة أعلاه بشأ

Now, therefore, in pursuance of the powers conferred on me by the said Orders,

על כן בתוקף הכח המסור לי בדברי המלך הנ"ל,

قد منحت الطالب المذكور/الطالبة المذكور بالقوانين المنوه عنها شهادة التجنس وأصرح بأنه غ السياسية وغيرها والسلطات والمزايا التي تتمتع بها كل القيام بجميع التعهدات والواجبات والمسؤوليات التي تفرض عليه/عليها/مع مراعات نصوص القوانين المشار اليها ويكون له/لها/ صفة الرعوية الفلسطينية مولدا تنفيذا لجميع الاغراض والمقاصد

I grant to the said applicant this Certificate of Naturalization and declare that he (she) shall, subject to the provisions of the said Orders, be entitled to all political and other rights, powers and privileges, and be subject to all obligations, duties and liabilities to which a natural-born Palestinian citizen is entitled or subject, and have to all intents and purposes the status of a natural-born Palestinian citizen.

הנני נותן למבקש(ת) הנ"ל את תעודת ההתאזרחות הזאת ומצהיר שהוא (שהיא), בהתחשב עם הוראות דברי המלך הנזכרים לעיל, יהנה (תהנה) מכל הזכויות המדיניות והזכויות האחריות, הכח והתגדות, ויהא (ותהא) חייב(ת) בכל החובות והאחריות, ממש כנתין(ת) פלשתינאי(ת) (א"י) מלדה ויחשב (ותחשב) לנתין(נת) פלשתינאי(ת) (א"י) מלדה בכל המובנים.

ولبيان أعطيت هذه الشهادة تحريرا

In witness wherrof I have hereto subscribed my name ולראיה התמתי את שמי היום הזה

this fifth day of November 19 46

ביום في اليوم ב' חשון מן שהר לחדש سنة תש"ו שנת

JERUSALEM ירושלים القدس

For High Commissioner נציב עליון المندوب السامي

(TURN OVER) (انظر الصفحة الثانية) (להמרך)

73326 A Serial Number of Application 95688

M/46.

Stadtmuseum Hofgeismar / Art Ju

Extract from Erich Goldwein's certificate of naturalisation
(Source: www.myheritage.de / collection 10902)

Were Irmgard and Hermann in contact with him? Did they know that the so-called „Great Arab Revolt" (1936–1939) was still raging there – a series of acts of violence by the Arab inhabitants of Palestine against the Jewish population and the British Mandate authorities?[17] Even if they were aware of this, they saw no alternative for themselves. They wanted to, and had to, go to Eretz Israel, as there were no other countries willing to take them in. Were they Zionists? Nothing is known about Hermann in this regard, but Irmgard, at least, was initially enthusiastic about the prospect of a life as a pioneer in Eretz Israel.

Neither of them was living in Meimbressen at the time of Kristallnacht. Hermann had studied at the Israelite Teacher Training College (ILBA) in Würzburg[18] from 1930 to 1933 and, as late as May 1939, was still living and working as a teacher in Berlin-

[17] Cf. background information in: Oren Kessler, Palästina 1936. Der Große Aufstand und die Wurzeln des Nahostkonflikts. München 2025 sowie Ulrich Gutmair, Arabischer Aufstand 1936. Boykott und Brutalität. In: taz, 28 March 2025.

[18] Cf. Falk Wiesemann: Die israelitische Lehrerbildungsanstalt Würzburg (1864-1938). Ein Beitrag des fränkischen Landjudentums zum jüdischen Bildungswesen in Deutschland. In: Wolf D. Gruner (Ed.): Wissenschaft - Bildung - Politik. Von Bayern nach Europa. Festschrift für Ludwig Hammermayer zum 80. Geburtstag. Hamburg 2008, p. 341-359.

Weißensee[19] at the renowned Israelite Institute for the Deaf and Dumb at 22 Park St., founded at the end of the 19th century by Markus Reich (1844–1911).[20] Since 1884, the institution had been run by the „Jedide Ilmim“ association (Friends of the Deaf and Dumb). It had members in around 100 towns and cities throughout the German Reich.

In 1938, at the time of the November pogroms, Irmgard was living in Magdeburg. There, she ran a home run by the Palestine Office of the Jewish Agency in Germany. The head office was based in Berlin. There were representative offices in around 350 towns and cities, including Magdeburg. They were responsible for the preparation and practical organisation of emigration and the distribution of immigration certificates. In Magdeburg, over 20 young men received agricultural training with farmers or in market gardens to prepare them for life in Palestine / Eretz Israel; the girls learnt cooking and home economics.[21] A few days after the Kristallnacht, the hostel in Magdeburg was closed, and Irmgard travelled initially to her parents' home in Meimbressen.[22] To her horror, she discovered that during the pogrom-like riots, parts of her parents' household furnishings had been destroyed or looted.[23]

From Meimbressen and Berlin, Hermann and Irmgard now worked with utter determination to organise their escape. Legal routes were practically no longer available. Their hopes therefore rested on the few remaining possibilities for an illegal departure to Eretz Israel. Rumours were circulating about privately organised „ghost ships“ which had successfully disembarked their passengers on the Palestinian coast under cover of night and fog.

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[19] Cf. 939 German Minority Census: https://www.myheritage.de/research/collection-10901/deutsche-minderheiten-volkszahlung-1939?s=312665841&itemId=104288-&action=showRecord&recordTitle=Hermann+Goldwein

[20] Cf. Markus Reich: Der Jüdische Friedhof Weissensee, Berlin. Ein Rundgang zu ausgewählten Grabstätten. Berlin 2011, p. 49.

[21] Cf. Irmgard Stern's letter to Michael Dorhs dated 17 November 1996; Stadtmuseum Hofgeismar, Judaica Hassiaca Department, Meimbressen file, Levi and Mathilde Goldwein family, p. 1.

[22] Cf. ibid.

[23] Cf. the memorandum from the Regional Council (Regierungspräsidium) in Kassel concerning the compensation claim by the heirs of Levi and Mathilde Goldwein, formerly resident in Meimbressen and later in Kassel, dated 29 November 1959; HHStAW, Section 518, No. 71 247.

Following the suppression of the „Great Arab Revolt“ by the troops of the British Mandate authorities, the British Government's „White Paper" of 17 May 1939 closed the country's doors to Jewish immigrants, leaving only a narrow opening – a concession by the British to the Arab side. The Mandate authorities now meticulously kept records of every immigration certificate and ensured that the number of Jewish refugees flooding into Eretz Israel remained within the limits set. The only way for European Jews to escape German persecution at this stage was via illegal ship transports organised by Zionist activists, who, in view of the almost hopeless situation facing German, Austrian and Czech Jews, had set aside their reservations about illegal immigration to Eretz Israel („Aliyah Bet“).

Hermann and Irmgard were already ready to travel by March 1939. They were due to set off in the summer, but nothing came of it. On 1 September 1939, the „German Wehrmacht“ invaded Poland, and the Second World War began; all hopes of escaping the German sphere of influence seemed to be dashed. In Eretz Israel, too, people felt that an impenetrable „Iron Curtain“ had descended upon the country. Until, that is, the news arrived – which at first sounded unbelievable – that, despite the outbreak of war, two convoys had set off on 11 October: one from Berlin via Vienna and the other from Prague via Bratislava. Total of 600 Jewish „Chaluzim“ (Hebrew for „pioneers“, „trailblazers“), including Hermann and his sister Irmgard, set out on a ship operated by the Danube Steamship Company in search of freedom.[24] Their first destination was Sulina. That was the name of the only town within the Romanian part of the Danube Delta, situated at the mouth of the Sulina branch where it flows into the Black Sea.

At that time, a chartered steamer called the „Hilda“ – a former grain carrier! – was itself making its way to Sulina to take on board the Jewish men and women. However, the „Hilda's“ arrival was delayed because, in the meantime, the Greek government – following British intervention – had forbidden Greek seamen from sailing on illegal immigrant ships, and the Greek consul in Constanța (Romania) ordered

[24] "*We left in October 1939...*"; as in note No. 9.

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part of the crew to leave the ship. It took great effort to recruit Turkish seamen, which led to difficulties amongst the now ethnically and religiously mixed crew, with the result that the „Hilda“ did not arrive in Sulina until early December.

It was here that Hermann and Irmgard boarded the ship.[25] *„We weren't allowed to take any money with us, only 8 kilos of luggage*. "[26] (Irmgard Stern) On 9 December 1939, the „Hilda“, with its 600 passengers and a further 127 Jews from Romania on board, sailed to Balchik, a small, remote port town in Dobruja on the Black Sea in north-eastern Bulgaria, to await another transport. Just as she was finally ready to set sail, the Danube froze over! For six weeks, 729 passengers[27] were forced to remain on the frozen ship before it was finally able to set sail in mid-January 1940.[28] Among the group of illegal passengers on the „Hilda“ was the journalist and later Knesset member Idov Cohen (1909–1998), who was originally from Romania.[29]



On board the 'Hilda'. A ship too small for too many people
(Source: Bintivey Ha'apala Ve Ha Bricha Information Centre – Atlit Camp, Israel)

[25] Cf. https://maapilim.org.il/
[26] As in note No. 9.
[27] Other figure: 727 passengers.
[28] Cf. Jürgen Rohwer, Jüdische Flüchtlingsschiffe im Schwarzen Meer (1934-1944). In: Ursula Büttner (Ed.), Das Unrechtsregime. Band 2: Verfolgung / Exil / Belasteter Neubeginn. Hamburg 1986. p.197-248; quoted from https://www.wlb-stuttgart.de/seekrieg/ksp/schwarzmeer/juden_flucht_schiffe.htm, in particular the section „PERIODE 2: DER KRIEGSAUSBRUCH“.
[29] Cf. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Idov_Cohen

The crossing turned into an odyssey! A journey that under normal circumstances would have taken a few weeks turned into three and a half months of hardship.[30] A storm broke out in the bay off the greek island of Kos. The boat was cramped and in no way suitable for such a mass transport, as it had no ventilation and only two (!) toilets. At times the captain went on strike, at times the crew, because the whole operation was illegal. Most of the passengers contracted dysentery. Hygiene conditions on the „Hilda“ were catastrophic. Their rations consisted of cabbage soup with rancid butter and mouldy bread. There were no medicines![31] Two young girls died of dysentery. Due to the cramped conditions on board, a woman lost her life in a small fire;[32] two children were born on the ship.[33] For many passengers, the journey became an ordeal both physically and mentally. As soon as it left the Dardanelles – a strait in the Mediterranean belonging to Turkey, situated between the Aegean Sea and the Sea of Marmara – the „Hilda“ was intercepted by a British warship and escorted to the Palestinian coast.

When the Palestinian coast finally came into view on 22 January 1940, it seemed they had reached their destination. After months of uncertainty, Hermann and Irmgard could already make out the houses of Haifa. Yet their long-awaited arrival was delayed once again: *„(…) Shortly before reaching Haifa, they were refused entry; they had to remain in the Mediterranean for five days, living in constant fear that they might be sent back to Germany (…).“*[34] (according to Irmgard Stern)

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[30] “*(…) The journey, which normally takes 2–3 weeks, lasted 3½ months”*; Expert report by the University Medical Centre Bonn-Venusberg on the state of health of Irmgard Stern from Neuwied, dated 17 September 1957; HHStAW, Dept. 518, No. 88003 / 2.
[31] Cf. the medical report by the University Hospital Bonn-Venusberg on the state of health of Irmgard Stern of Neuwied, dated 17 September 1957; HHStAW, Section 518, No. 88003 / 2.
[32] Cf. https://www.kassel-stolper.com/biografien/familie-feilchenfeld-u-heinrich-k%C3%B6hler/
[33] Cf. Zwanzig Jahre nach dem Exodus. Die „Hilda“-Maapilim fanden ihren Weg im Lande. Undated newspaper article from an unidentified German-language newspaper in Israel (c. 1959/60). A copy is held in the archives of the Judaica Hassiaca Department at the Stadtmuseum Hofgeismar, having been donated by Irmgard Stern.
[34] Medical report by the University Hospital Bonn-Venusberg on the state of health of Irmgard Stern of Neuwied, dated 17 September 1957; HHStAW, Collection 518, No. 88003 / 2.



Atlit Internment Camp
(Source: Bintivey Ha'apala Ve Ha Bricha Information Centre – Atlit Camp, Israel)

Whilst still on board, all passengers on the „Hilda“ were arrested by the authorities as so-called „illegal“ immigrants (Hebrew: „Maapilim“) and, on 29 January 1940, taken by bus to the British internment camp at Atlit, south of Haifa. It had been set up by the Mandate government as a deterrent to restrict Jewish immigration. In Atlit, Hermann and the other men were forced to remain in detention for six months. All the women, including Irmgard, were held there for four weeks. That was the punishment for having dared to challenge the authority of the Mandate government.

When around 400 former passengers of the „Hilda“ met again in Tel Aviv in 1960, they looked back on an extraordinary shared history. Of the 700 people on their transport, over 550 had built a new life for themselves in Israel.[35] Hermann Goldwein had tried to do the same. And yet he was absent from the reunion, for he had been

[35] Cf. Zwanzig Jahre nach dem Exodus. Die „Hilda“-Maapilim fanden ihren Weg im Lande. Undated newspaper article from an unidentified German-language newspaper in Israel (c. 1959/60).

dead for 19 years. When he was finally allowed to leave Atlit at the end of July 1940, he was keen to return to his profession as a teacher of the deaf and dumb. To do so, however, he first had to learn Hebrew. He therefore went to a kibbutz, where he spent half the day doing manual labour and the other half learning the new language. „*In April 1941, he was working* [in Hadera; MD] *in a pit four metres deep; it collapsed and he was buried. By the time they managed to dig him out, it was already too late; he was only 29 years old.*" (Irmgard Stern).

Nor was his sister Irmgard among those attending the 1960 reunion of the „Hilda" transport. She belonged to the small circle of remigrants who were looked down upon in Israel, having returned to Germany with her husband as early as 1951. Was it a difficult decision for her to move to the land of the perpetrators? By that time, she was already aware of her parents' fate. Both had fallen victim to the Nazis' genocide of the Jews: her father in Kassel in 1941, and her mother – presumably in 1944 – at the Stutthof concentration camp.[36]

When she was released from the Atlit camp in February 1940, she initially did everything she could to settle into life in a foreign country. She would have liked to have worked in a managerial position in a larger company and therefore attended a business course – unfortunately without success. Instead, she earned her living as a maid for a family. In 1943, she married the merchant Friedrich Leopold Stern, who came from Neuwied and, like her, had fled to Eretz Israel. She lived with him in Tel Aviv. Both soon began to suffer from serious health problems – the consequences of their traumatic escape and the harsh climate in Eretz Israel. These problems became so severe that Irmgard and Friedrich Stern decided to move, first to Neuwied and later to Wiesbaden, in search of a more tolerable climate, „*because there is a Jewish community and a synagogue here*"[37] (Irmgard Stern). She never considered returning

[36] Following the pogrom night in November 1938, Levi and Mathilde Goldwein were forced to leave their home village in 1940 and moved to 14 Pestalozzi St. in Kassel. It was here that Levi Goldwein died on 4 August 1941 – the exact cause of his death is no longer known. Six weeks later, his wife Mathilde was forced to move once more, to what was then 13 Kaiser St. On 9 December of the same year, she was deported from Kassel to the Riga ghetto and later transferred to the Stutthof concentration camp. There she was murdered – presumably in 1944.

[37] As in note No. 21.

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to live in Meimbressen. That said, she did visit the Junkernhof on several occasions: „*I was always very warmly invited by Mr and Mrs Wolff von Gudenberg.*"[38] In 1999, she moved into a care home in Frankfurt. Irmgard Stern died there in 2005. Her death certificate actually still bore the Jewish first name „Sara" – imposed on her during the Nazi era! She was 93 years old. Like so many German Jews of their generation, their marriage remained childless. At first, the circumstances were not particularly encouraging for having children. Then many were too old. Her brother Hermann, too, had died childless.

Only Erich, the youngest brother, who had been the first in his family to flee to Eretz Israel as early as 1936, remained in Israel, where he lived for 46 years. He made a living as a shoemaker in Tel Aviv and, in 1949, married Gisela Ingeborg Goldschmidt from Neuhof near Fulda, with whom he had a daughter named Orit. Erich Goldwein died in Tel Aviv in 1982 at the age of 63.

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Stolpersteine in Meimbressen, laid in 2025 in front of the Goldwein family's house (Photo: M. Dorhs / Source: Stadtmuseum Hofgeismar, Bildarchiv Judaica Hassiaca)

[38] Ibid.

Further reading

Ruth Aliav / Peggy Mann: The Last Escape. The Launching of the Largest Secret Rescue Movement of all Time. London 1974.

Marie-Janine Calic: Balkan-Odyssee 1933-1941. Auf der Flucht vor Hitler durch Südosteuropa. München 2025.

Jon and David Kimche: The Secret Roads. The 'Illegal' Migration of a People 1938-1948. Westport 1953 (Reprint 1976).

William R. Perl: The Four-Front War. From the Holocaust to the Promised Land. New York 1978.

Jürgen Rohwer: Jüdische Flüchtlingsschiffe im Schwarzen Meer (1934-1944). In: Ursula Büttner (Ed.), Das Unrechtsregime. Band 2: Verfolgung / Exil / Belasteter Neubeginn. Hamburg 1986. pp. 197-248.

An abridged version of this essay has been published – without footnotes – in the Jahrbuch [Yearbook] 2027 Landkreis Kassel, ed. by the Kreisausschuss, Kassel 2026, pp. 42-46.

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