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Doris Katz and her Family
between November-Pogrom 1938 and Emigration or Deportation

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A heart-moving letter to the Children's Committee in Amsterdam dated November 16, 1938 asked for the admission of fourteen-year-old Doris Katz from Michelstadt. The family has been very poor since some time and relied on the support of a brother of the wife. He, Otto Reichhardt, himself had a wife and children and as his belongings were destroyed and he himself was imprisoned, both families are now without any means.¹

The letter was written by Heinz Joseph, a cousin of Doris. He had been living in Amsterdam since October 1933. He was the son of Ernst Joseph and Louise, born Reichhardt, the favourite sister of Doris' mother Lina. He was 26 years old. After finishing secondary school at Dorsten, Heinz had begun studying medicine in Cologne in the summer- semester of 1931 and had become a member of a Jewish beating union. He continued his studies in the summer-semester of 1932 in Koenigsberg, where he met Friedel Sternfeld from Ruegenwalde. He stopped his studies and moved to Berlin and completed a photography apprenticeship in the photo studio of the school *Reimann, Priv. Arts and Crafts School* in Schoeneberg. Since Albert Reimann's parents were Jewish, the Nazi-*Sturmabteilung* surrounded the school in the summer of 1933 and prevented teachers and students from entering. That was a signal for Heinz Joseph. He did not agree to any concessions to the Nazis. He received the entry permit for the Netherlands because he was able to earn his living and opened the PHOTO-STUDIO HEJO in Amsterdam. The P.C. Hoofstraat 142, telephone number 29264, AMSTERDAM-ZUID² was a very good address. Friedel, now his wife, worked as a tailor.³

In a letter of November 24, 1938, Heinz Joseph assured the *Comité voor Hulp aan Buitenlandsche Kinderen* (Aid Committee for Foreign Children) in Amsterdam that the family agreed that Doris Katz would not be housed privately in the Netherlands, but would live in an official facility until she could travel to another country with her parents. To enter the Netherlands, Doris Katz needed an exit certificate, a photo and a medical certificate. The travel expenses would be paid for by a doctor. Keesing in Amsterdam.⁴

Doris Katz was born by Caesarean section in the district hospital in Erbach/Odenwald on November 2, 1924. On November 24, 1938 she was noticed leaving her hometown, Michelstadt, by the local police. The parents blessed their child before parting. They put their hands on Doris's head and said the traditional words: *Bless you the Eternal and keep you. Let the Eternal shine His countenance upon you and pardon thee. It turns He eternal His face to you and give you peace.*⁵ The parents had done everything humanly possible for their only child. In Frankfurt Doris could stay with her aunt Emma Schneider, her father's younger sister. Uncle Georg was a hairdresser. At the end of February 1938, cousin Herbert, classified as "half-Aryan", was licensed by Gauleiter Jakob Sprenger to receive a doctorate at the Institute of Vegetative Physiology at the University of Frankfurt am Main.⁶

Hugo Katz had one older and one younger sister. They were all born in Laubach between 1880 and 1885 and grew up in Giessen. Doris' mother Lina Katz, born Reichhardt, had three older brothers and two older and two younger sisters. All eight children of Jakob and Sophie Reichhardt, nee Stern, were born in Wolfhagen between 1874 and 1890 and grew up there. All sisters and brothers helped each other, even more so under the conditions of increasing persecution and deprivation of rights.

The welfare office of the Frankfurt Jewish Community and the *Hilfsverein der deutschen Juden*⁷ organized the transport of children to Holland, whose later emigration to another country should be assured.⁸

Doris Katz was chosen for one of the first transports to Amsterdam. All children wore nameplates around their necks. They were permitted to take one suitcase, one bag, ten *Reichsmark* and one photo with them. Toys and books were not allowed. A large steam locomotive pulled the train from Frankfurt Central Station via Mainz along the river Rhine to Cologne. This city had become a place of refuge for the Reichhardt family. Grandmother Sophie, four aunts and three uncles of Doris lived there. The train with Doris rode on. At the border inspection in Emmerich the last valuables were confiscated. At the first stop behind the border, all children received an unforgettable cup of hot chocolate and a delicious cheese sandwich.⁹

The personal details of Doris Katz are typewritten on a Dutch index card. Five addresses of Doris are registered until April 1940. The religious statement says: Ort. Isr., i.e. Jewish Orthodox.¹⁰ They cooked kosher in most accommodations for Jewish refugees in the Netherlands to prevent religious conflicts. Refugees started with a quarantine. Doris Katz lived in Amsterdam, Zeeburgerdijk 321, outside the city near the IJsselmeer, from December 7, 1938. This quarantine was built in 1918 for sick emigrants to North America and included porter's lodge, command centre, nurses' home and synagogue. There were ten wooden barracks with 164 sleeping places in bunk beds. The first group of refugee children from Germany arrived on November 28, 1938. At the same time, adult refugees with an entry visa for Palestine were accommodated. The barracks were draughty and barely heated. Outside it was cold and damp. A girl from Duisburg, two years older than Doris, who was staying in the accommodation in Bergen aan Zee, het Zeehuis, described the first nights: she woke up and did not know where she was, a girl screamed in the dream, one sighted, spoke, cried. It was very dark. The Red Cross metal beds creaked. The straw in the straw sack did not stay in the middle, her back lay on hard wood. She did not like to go out to the cold toilet, it was warm under the woollen blanket.¹¹ The daily routine was strictly organized, everything had its time: getting up, washing, making beds, breakfast, cleaning, lunch, supper, going to bed according to age. Night rest was obligatory for everybody. There were days for bathing. The food came in large metal containers and tasted metallic. A girl from Hanover, four years younger than Doris, described the food in Rotterdam as follows: everyone had to stand in line and receive a single punch of thick, yellow-shining chicken soup, almost inedible. The girls were not hungry enough to eat it with appetite. They thought of the warm cozy kitchen at home.¹² There were regular times for the mail deliveries. Doris certainly received mail from her mother. Letter writing was the means to stay in touch. There were visiting times. Could Heinz and Friedel Joseph visit their cousin?

Doris Katz's parents had not found an exile-country, they could not leave Michelstadt. Doris Katz was taken to Ruinen (Hoogeveen) on January 10, 1939. The Noorderhuis, Toldijk D 155, was a new building of the *Centraal Genootschap Voor Kinderherstellings- en Vacantie kolonies* (Central Cooperative for Children's Convalescence and Holiday Colonies). The large, bright, clean, friendly house stood empty in winter and was now given to the Refugee Committee. There was room for 90 children. The staff came back for opening in winter. The modern commercial kitchen was made kosher. The *Vluchtelingenbureau* rejected an application by A. Keesing, Amsterdam, Kloveniersburgwal 113, to include Doris Katz in his family. To prevent homesickness, the children were busy all day long. In the morning, they had to make their beds, as was common in hostels. They immediately received language lessons. The first sentence in Dutch was: *Jan is al wakker* (Jan is already awake). In February 1939 diphtheria broke out. Sick children went to the nearest hospital. Doris as well. On February 27, a girl, Irene Lion from Wesel,¹³ who was half a year younger than Doris and had been with her in quarantine in Amsterdam, died. In April 1939, all children staying in Ruinen were taken to other homes.¹⁴

On April 20, 1939 Doris Katz arrived in her third refugee shelter, in Soesterberg, Amersfoortsestraat 91. The house was built in 1920 as summer camp of the *Centraal Comité voor Protestantisme* (Central Committee for Protestantism) in Utrecht. Between December 24, 1938 and November 1939, about 100 refugee children from the Greater German Reich lived there. In one building was a common room and a dormitory for girls, in another one were one dormitory for boys and one for girls, and the canteen. The school was set up in the third building. Reveille was at 7 am, at 8 am tea and bread was served, lessons started at 9 am. After lunch at 12.30 pm teaching took place from 2 to 4 pm. For dinner at 5 pm the children got a cheese sandwich or jam sandwich and an orange, a banana or an apple. At 9 pm bedrest started.¹⁵

In May 1939, Heinz and Friedel Joseph left Europe. They went from Le Havre to São Paulo on the ocean liner Kerguelen of Chargeurs Reunis. Doris Katz's passport was valid until May 1939. This was typed down on the back of her index card: *pas geldig tot Mei 1939*. Written by hand is added: *Afgelopen. Nog geen uitzicht voor ouders op emigr. Geen geld*, i.e. has expired, still no chance for parents to emigrate. No money.

From July 19, 1939 on, Doris Katz lived in Quarantaine Beneden Heijplaat, Rotterdam-West, Barak D-E. When it opened in 1934, it was the world's most advanced quarantine facility, that could house about 275 people. From December 1938 to November 1939, refugees were accommodated there, both adults and adolescents. The area was far out of town directly on the river Maas. Overhead cranes and docks were visible in the distance. Large ships passed by. There was a house for the manager and the Dutch staff, a kitchen building, a bathhouse and in the middle a boiler house with a high chimney. Five brick barracks were divided each into two dormitories, between which there was a common dining and recreation room.¹⁶ Doris Katz exchanged letters with classmates from the Jewish District School Hoechst (October 1935 to November 9, 1938), especially with her best friend Hannah Oppenheimer from Fraenkisch-Crumbach, sent to England by Kindertransport in August 1939. The third girl of the *trio of friends*, Helga Reichelsheimer, had been sent to England via Bremen in June 1939, but had no money for stamps to write to her friend Doris. On September 3, 1939 Great Britain declared war on the German Reich because the Wehrmacht did not withdraw from Poland. Hannah asked Doris in Rotterdam to forward her letters to her mother, Margarete Oppenheimer, who was now living in Mannheim. Margarete Oppenheimer herself reacted immediately to the mail ban and asked Doris to forward the mail between Mannheim and England. Doris performed this task gladly and conscientiously. Mrs. Oppenheimer was her teacher in Mathematics and Physics in Hoechst.¹⁷ All the refugees' mail was read in the home before being sent. Hardly anyone would have complained in a letter in order not to make the recipient's heart heavier than it already was because of the situation and the separation. On the reply card to Mrs. Oppenheimer of October 9, 1939 Doris Katz wrote in the end: *For me, thank God, everything in the best butter and Shabbat evening, I even called my Mum who paid the call. Of course, the joy was very great, as you can imagine.*

Doris had been away from home for ten months when she was able to congratulate her mother on her birthday by phone. Lina Katz turned 58 on 8 October.¹⁸ The Police Registration Office in Cologne registered Lina Katz as a visitor at her mother Sophie Reichardt, Hohenstaufenring 53 / 55, from October 2 to 26, 1939.¹⁹ Emil, the eldest of the Reichardt siblings, lived at Hohenstaufenring 53/55 in a comfortable five-room apartment with a telephone connection.²⁰ He had been an Upper Post office man, and was forced to retire because he was a Jew.²¹ After his first wife Frieda, b. Loewenstein, died, Emil Reichardt married her older sister Rahel in 1932. His daughter Bertha had emigrated to the USA with husband Kurt Madelong in June 1939. Via the Panama Canal they went to Los Angeles.

In October 1934 eighty-five-year-old Sophie Reichhardt had fled from hometown Wolfhagen with her unmarried eldest daughter Clara and her married youngest daughter Martha Klebe, with husband Samuel Klebe and daughter Ulla.²² Together, the five moved to Cologne in an apartment in Venloer Strasse No. 59. They had to give up the old department store L. Reichhardt in Wolfhagen, Schuetzeberger Strasse 27. They had to leave the graves of the ancestors, of grandfather Jakob Lazarus Reichhardt (01/03/1846-04/1/1926) and great aunt Malchen Stern (12/06/1836-08/26/1928). In Cologne, Samuel Klebe and two partners ran a textile trading company at Wollkueche No. 20-24.²³ In July 1939, the Klebe family emigrated to Kenya, where they ran a small farm in Kitale. Sophie and Clara Reichhardt moved to the Hohenstaufering. There Sophie Reichhardt, b. Stern, born on September 6, 1849 in Guetersloh, celebrated her 90th birthday with her children Clara, Emil, Otto and Anna with wives and husbands, but without grandchildren.

After 17 years, Anna and Leopold Wertheimer had to give up the department store Reichhardt in Hockenheim, now Adolf Hitler Strasse 13. The childless couple moved to Cologne-Lindenthal on November 1, 1937, into a beautiful apartment in Rueckertstraße 1.

Otto Reichhardt deregistered from Michelstadt for Cologne on March 20, 1939, his wife Milly followed on June 2, 1939. Son Erich had become a baker and emigrated to Palestine in September 1934. His brother-in-law Hellmut Stern later claimed that if Erich had stayed in the kibbutz for one more year, his parents would have been allowed to follow him from Germany. But Erich married and moved to Rishon-le-Zion.²⁴ - Daughter Aenne was taken to New York by acquaintances at the end of December 1936. Daughter Lotte followed her parents from Frankfurt to Cologne.

What they did to merchant Otto Reichhardt (60) and his family in Michelstadt in the pogrom evening of November 9, 1938 would not have been considered possible by any civilized Odenwald Christian in the 20th century. After a brutal robbery on the Reichhardt department store and the family's home in Braunstrasse 14 a riot followed and a torture parade through the streets of the city to the marketplace in front of the historic town hall from 1484. Then the last men of the Jewish community of Michelstadt were arrested overnight in the small detention cell in the historic town hall.²⁵ The next morning seven men were transported to concentration camp Buchenwald near Weimar. The ride on an open lorry took all day, so they had to wait overnight to be admitted.²⁶ Otto Reichhardt was released on December 5 after his mother Sophie in Cologne had transferred money for a train ticket. Back in Michelstadt, Otto Reichhardt sent the youngest daughter Gertrude to Beelitz near Potsdam on December 14, 1938. The director of the Jewish children's home there, Sally Bein, was married to Rebeka, b. Loewenstein. To leave Michelstadt Otto had to sell the house in Braunstrasse, as his sister Lina has to sell her house in Schulstrasse.

What had happened to the Reichhardts in Cologne during the November pogrom 1938 is not known. In the morning of November 10, 1938, all six Cologne synagogues were burned down or destroyed. Jewish shops and apartments were plundered and demolished.²⁷ From Cologne and its environs, about 800 men were arrested and imprisoned in the Klingelpuetz prison or the Brauweiler provincial labour institution. After a few days, some men were released, the majority was transported by rail to concentration camp Dachau.²⁸ Unlike their brothers Carl Reichhardt from Dortmund and Otto Reichhardt from Michelstadt, Emil Reichhardt (64), Leopold Wertheimer (68) and Samuel Klebe (44) were not tortured in a concentration camp.²⁹

Carl Reichhardt (59), wine merchant in Dortmund, had been deported to concentration camp Sachsenhausen near Berlin. He was released on December 23, 1938.³⁰ He had to leave Germany and fled to England with his wife.

On November 12, 1938 the *plenipotentiary for the Four-Year Plan* used the November pogroms for three restrictive decrees. The decree for atonement for Jews of German nationality called for the

payment of 100 million Reichsmarks. The decree on the Elimination of Jews from German Economic Life prohibited Jews from operating retail, mail order or order accounts as well as the independent operation of a handicraft business as of January 1st, 1939. And the *decree on restoration of the street scape at Jewish business stores* demanded that the Jewish owners immediately remove at their own expense all damage to their shops and apartments during the pogrom on November 8, 9, and 10, 1938. Any insurance claims were confiscated *in favour of the Reich*.³¹ These decrees were published in German daily newspapers. More enactments and decrees should regulate the implementation. Where there were still assets, payments were blackmailed. Thus, neither Hugo Katz nor Otto Reichhardt in Michelstadt,³² nor Samuel Klebe in Cologne or Carl Reichhardt in Dortmund had a chance to reopen their businesses. At the end of December 1938, the Reich Ministry of Labour issued a secret decree calling on the employment offices to *ensure the immediate employment of unemployed Jews in public and private companies (taking care to separate them from the general public) as otherwise they might have to be supported by public funds*.³³ The wartime economy changed life in Germany. Immediately, restrictions were enacted for everyone even more incisive ones for Jews.

On September 4, 1939, people in Cologne experienced the first air raid alarm. By mistake, the anti-aircraft guns fired a squadron of German aircraft. The following night, the arrival of Allied aircraft triggered an air raid. Jews were only allowed to visit separate air raid shelters.

What plans did the Reichhardt siblings discuss during the three weeks of October 1939 when Lina Katz was in Cologne? Did they also remember the hopeful times before World War I in Erfurt, the large Thuringian trading city in the middle of Germany, where Otto Reichhardt had worked from 1904 to 1910 as a commissary, where his sisters Anna (as a tailor) and Lina and Martha had worked just for some time.³⁴

On October 22, 1939, Doris Katz wrote to Ms. Oppenheimer: *the Quarantaine is now only quarantine by name. As it is well suited for this purpose and was available, refugees came here. In the beginning, it really served as a quarantine for the newcomers, but not anymore. Unfortunately, we cannot learn a profession here, but we have lessons. Commercial calculation and languages, which are also of importance. There are quite nice girls, but I do not have a girlfriend among them. I do not get along with them that well, but I still have the 'Hoechster' [i.e. classmates from the Jewish District School at Hoechst]. Unfortunately, they are not here, but we always write to each other.*

Since April 1934 cousin Heinz's parents lived in Rotterdam. Aunt Louise and uncle Ernst Joseph could no longer run their fashion store in Dorsten, Markt 14, because they lost their customers and their credit had been terminated at short notice. In April 1934, they received an entry permit for Rotterdam, where they opened a small drugstore on Schieweg 113c, with six shelves and two packing tables. Thus, they could earn their living.³⁵ Cousin Margarete Joseph, almost five years older than Doris, was sent to aunt Anna at Hockenheim.³⁶ Anna had opened the Reichhardt department store in Obere Hauptstraße 13 before she had married Leopold Wertheimer. Aunt Anna gave needlework lessons, and Margarete Joseph had to study with her to get an entry permit for the Netherlands. On September 21, 1934, *Grete* was permitted to follow her parents to Rotterdam. Was she able to visit her cousin Doris in the Quarantaine in 1939?

On November 2, 1939 Doris Katz was transferred to Hoogstraat 79. It was her 15th birthday. Her address was now: Rotterdam, Achterklooster 40. The Dominican monastery had been dissolved already in the Reformation period and was situated in the disreputable harbour district. Since April 1939, the building served as an accommodation for 100 children. The rooms were uncomfortable large and high. The children were hardly allowed to go outside. Doris Katz wrote to Mrs. Oppenheimer the fourth postcard on November 18, 1939: *We moved last week [...] I do not know exactly why.* - The

Quarantine Beneden Heijplaat was used for 181 passengers of the St. Louis. The ten-year-old transatlantic passenger ship of the Hamburg-America Line (HAPAG) had reached Havana on May 27, 1939. But passengers, Jewish refugees with tourist visas, were not allowed to land. Neither the United States of America nor Canada agreed to accept them, therefore the St. Louis had to return to Europe. She was allowed to land in Antwerp. Belgium accepted 214 of the passengers, France 224 and Great Britain 287.³⁷ - Did the German refugee children know that? Doris was allowed to spend Sabbath with her relatives. What did the Joseph family talk about?

Doris went to a school for housekeeping. She wrote about this to Ms. Oppenheimer, and that her parents and she herself were very happy about that. An event was the visit of Dina Meier from Reichelsheim and Edith Freudenberger from Darmstadt. Another event was the visit of Recha Kahn, the second wife of the headmaster of the *Jewish District School Hoechst*, with her son Meinhold, about three years younger than Doris. They could all leave Europe on board of the *SS Rotterdam*. Two weeks later, they were greeted by the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbour. Doris continued going to school in Rotterdam, struggling with Dutch language and needlework, and was anxious about her report card. At the end of January 1940, she wrote to Ms. Oppenheimer on pages torn out of a notebook because she had ran out of stationary.

In April 1940, the facility in the Achterklooster was closed for structural reasons. Doris had to bid farewell to cousin Grete, aunt Louise, and uncle Ernst. April 17, 1940 marked the last change of location on her index card. A letter from England by Hannah was forwarded by Doris with a short note on the reverse: *Dear family Oppenheimer! In a hurry, that the letter still goes off. I have a new address: D.K. Huize Kraaibeek, Driebergen (Holland).*

The property Hoofdstraat 63 in Driebergen dated from the early 19th century and was renovated in 1910. There were 25 rooms. Eighty-five refugee children lived in the large building. They had to clean a lot and received little lessons. Going out for a walk after dinner was allowed only under supervision and in rows of two behind each other. A girl wrote to her parents that the staff was very unfriendly, she only managed to mail the letter into a mailbox because she was in the last row.³⁸

After the *lightning victories* over Poland, Denmark and Norway, the *Wehrmacht* started the western campaign. On the clear full moon night of May 10, 1940 from three o'clock on the sky over the Netherlands was full of *Luftwaffe* airplanes. German airborne troops were dropped off near Rotterdam, The Hague and Dordrecht, causing great terror and confusion. In the early hours of the morning, Wehrmacht troops crossed the borders of the neutral Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg in their entirety. In the early afternoon of May 14, the *Luftwaffe* bombed the city center and the port of Rotterdam. The old town was laid in ruins, including Achterklooster 40. 814 people lost their lives. The American consulate with its archive was destroyed, including all documents required for entry visas. The prison, where Ernst Joseph was imprisoned immediately after the German invasion for being German, was also damaged. Ernst Joseph could escape and go back home to his wife and daughter at the Schieweg, where the bombs had done little damage. The radio reported that Queen Wilhelmina and the government had gone into exile in London after fierce battles. The mood was panicky, especially among the Jews from Germany. The next day, May 15, 1940, the Netherlands capitulated. A German military administration was set up. The occupiers confiscated Huize Kraaybeek. On May 21, 1940, all German refugee children were taken from Driebergen to Amsterdam. The former administrative building of the Koninklijke Hollandsche Lloyd in Oostelijke Handelskade 12 served as refugee accommodation from August 1939 to October 1940. Doris Katz stayed there for ten days.

On May 30, 1940, Doris Katz was one of the forty refugee girls from the Greater German Reich that were moved to the Nederlands Israelitisch Meisjesweeshuis in the Rapenburgerstraat 171. The old house was already overcrowded. The girls were accommodated in a building opposite with an their

leader. For Betsy Vromen-Snapper (born 1892) that brought a lot of work and a lot of worries. She had to work together with the refugee committee, later with the Jewish Council, with the Aliens police and other institutions. She was the deputy director of the orphanage and supported the seriously ill director Rebecca Frank (born 1876).³⁹ Ms Frank continued censoring the girls' letters.

In Cologne, Emil Reichhardt (66) died in his apartment early morning of July 12, 1940. The cause of death was coronary artery calcification. *Merchant* Otto Reichhardt, Cologne, Goerresstrasse 15, reported the death on the same day at the registry office Cologne III and had to sign the death record with *Otto Israel Reichhardt*.⁴⁰

In the autumn of 1940, German Jews were expelled from the coastal area of the occupied Netherlands. On September 7, 1940, the Joseph family had to move to Apeldoorn, Marialaan 18. A Dutch friend sold the store at Rotterdam, and Ernst Joseph could start a small wholesale trading with perfumery were. He earned just enough to urn a living.

In Cologne, merchant Leopold Wertheimer killed himself. He was last seen alive at 5 pm on February 16, 1941. At 7 pm he was found dead in the *Wassergraben* on the *Gruenguertel*, Gleuelerstrasse, behind the Deckstein mill. Three days later the 14th Criminal Investigation Department reported *Suicide by drowning* at the registry office Cologne Lindenthal.⁴¹ Leopold Wertheimer (70) had been afraid of being deported, like his sister and relatives from his place of birth Bretten and over 6,500 Jews from Baden and the Saar Palatinate who had all been freighted by train to the French internment camp in Gurs on 21 and 22 October 1940.⁴²

In Michelstadt, the purchase contract for the house of Otto Reichhardt, Braunstraße 14, was signed on February 24, 1941. The money should have enabled Otto and his family to emigrate. It was too late. The purchase contract for the property at Schulstraße 3 in Michelstadt could only be signed on 10 July 1941. On the same day, Hugo Katz unsubscribed for Mainz. On April 5, 1941 the merchant had already been registered temporarily in Mainz, Bilhildisstraße 17 as a *worker*. Now he was considered an *unskilled labourer*, presumably conscripted in the Blendax factory like another Michelstadt merchant, Moritz Rothschild.⁴³ Lina Katz followed her husband a month later. The address in Mainz was Margaretengasse 28, 1st floor. This was a Jewish house diagonally opposite the ruins of the splendid synagogue, which had been built in the Moorish style in 1879 according to the plans of city architect Eduard Kreyssig and had been plundered and set on fire in November 1938.⁴⁴

In Cologne, Sophie Reichhardt died in Hohenstaufenring 53-55 on September 7, 1941, one day after her 92nd birthday. *Unskilled worker* Otto Reichhardt, Goerresstraße 15, reported her death the following day at the registry office Cologne III. Old age is registered as cause of her death.⁴⁵

On October 21, 1941, the first great transport of Jews from Cologne went eastward. Otto Reichhardt, his wife Emilie and their daughter Lotte were on the lists, as well as Clara Reichhardt and Anna Wertheimer.⁴⁶ The day before, Otto Reichhardt wrote a postcard by airmail to his younger brother Carl Reichhardt in Pittsburgh, USA, *that we are leaving tomorrow*.

Carl Reichhardt and his wife Martha had emigrated from England to the U.S.A. to their daughter. There Carl earned his living by equipping sewing machines with electric motors. Lore Reichhardt had started studying economics in Cologne in the summer-semester of 1932.⁴⁷ In winter-semester 1932/33 she had registered to study law at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich.⁴⁸ She was expelled by Nazi-students. Back in Dortmund, she fell in love with the dentist Fritz Weinberg, they married and emigrated to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (U.S.A.) in May 1938.⁴⁹

Lina Katz in Mainz asked, in a letter dated December 2, 1941, at the Michelstadt district court whether she could receive the contracted sale cash payment of 1,000 Reichsmark, as the responsible notary had been called up for military service. According to the *Memorial Book Victims of the Persecution of Jews under the National Socialist Tyranny in Germany 1933 – 1945* of the *Federal Archives of Germany* the parents of Doris Katz were transported from Mainz-Darmstadt on Wednesday, March 25, 1942, to the ghetto in Piaski.

The sisters Cilly and Jutta Levitus from Frankfurt am Main had been admitted to the Nederlands Israelische Meisjesweeshuis in the Rapenburgerstraat 171 in November 1938. They learned in May 1942 that their mother and their little brother had travelled eastward by train. This was written by their mother on a postcard to a friend in Amsterdam. Many of the girls received such news. They arrived daily. The girls were prepared.⁵⁰ From May 1942 on, all Jews from the age of six on had to wear a yellow star with the inscription *Jood* on their clothing. The *Joodsche Raad voor Amsterdam*⁵¹ handed over a large box of cloth stars in the office of the orphanage. Because the material was so bad, the girls had to separate the stars before each wash and then sew them on again.⁵² In the German Reich, the yellow badge had to be worn in public since September 1, 1941.⁵³

In June 1942 the Jewish children's home in Beelitz was closed. On June 13, Gertrude Reichardt, together with director Sally Bein, his wife Rebekka and daughter Liza and 25 more helpers and children were transported from Berlin-Potsdam to Sobibor. From July 1942, calls for employment in Germany were sent to the orphanage in Amsterdam for girls from 16 to 18 years. That meant transport to the east, from where nobody came back. A scarlet fever epidemic, perhaps made up to keep the Nazi's away, in the orphanage led to quarantine until November 1. From that date on, girls who had received a call had to follow through. The *Joodsche Raad voor Amsterdam* tried to save as many people by granting exemptions. Betsy Vromen-Snapper used this to reclaim the older girls, who had to do necessary work in the orphanage.⁵⁴

Since April 30, 1942, cousin Margarete Joseph had such a coveted ban by the *Joodsche Raad* (Jewish Council) in Apeldoorn in her passport. She worked and lived as a seamstress at Zutphensestraat 106. That was the *Apeldoornsche Bos*, the psychiatric clinic for Jewish patients in the Netherlands.⁵⁵ In August 1942, her father, Doris' uncle Ernest Joseph, was arrested and sent to the labour camp Vught. On October 2, 1942 aunt Louise Joseph was arrested at home, Marialaan 18, by an SS man. Margarete did not want to leave her mother alone. On October 3, 1942 both women were delivered to Kamp Westerbork, Ernst Joseph was taken to there from Kamp Vught on October 4. On October 16, 1942, Ernst and Louise Joseph had to board the long freight train. The transport ended in Auschwitz. Margarete stayed in Kamp Westerbork as a seamstress.⁵⁶

In Amsterdam, on February 10, 1943, all five Jewish children's homes were evacuated. In the Rapenburgerstraat they had prepared their backpacks already a year earlier. The older girls had to support the little ones. There should be no panic. A swarm of young men from the Westerbork security service also helped. In front of the house stood the big green trucks of the **raid squads and security policemen** in green uniforms supervising the transport. At the Panamakade a passenger train was ready. When it left that the evening there were 184 people on board, including 70 girls and staff from the orphanage in the Rapenburgerstraat. At night the train arrived at Camp Westerbork.⁵⁷ There cousins Margarete and Doris met. Both were without a message from their parents, who had been transported east, as were their relatives from Cologne. Margarete Joseph was transferred to Camp Vught on February 20, 1943. Doris Katz left with a transport on March 2, 1943, which arrived at the Sobibor extermination camp on March 5.⁵⁸

Margarete Joseph was relocated to Camp Westerbork on September 21, 1943. On March 3, 1944, she was deported to Auschwitz.⁵⁹ At the Birkenau extermination camp, she realized that her parents

were not to be found because they had been suffocated with poison gas immediately after they arrived and then had been burned. Margarete Joseph was tattooed the numbers 75841 in her right forearm, her prisoner number. On January 18, 1945 Margarete Joseph was transported on open freight cars to Berlin, and from there to the crowded women's concentration camp Ravensbrueck. After three weeks, she was taken by a passenger train to the subcamp Neustadt-Glewe to work in the local aircraft factory.⁶⁰

On May 2, 1945, the camp was liberated by Soviet soldiers. Margaret Joseph returned to the Netherlands.⁶¹ In the summer of 1946 she followed her brother to Brazil.⁶² By order of July 9, 1949, the district court of Dorsten set May 8, 1945 as the date of death for Louise and Ernst Joseph, as *no other date of death could be determined*.⁶³

On May 8, 1945 Selma Biedenkapp, b. Katz, the older sister of Doris father Hugo, was freed in the concentration camp Theresienstadt. After her husband Julius Biedenkapp had died on January 2, 1945, she had been without the protection of *intermarriage* with a Christian and was deported on February 14, 1945 from Frankfurt to Theresienstadt. She died at the age of 74 on October 11, 1954 in the Laubach retirement home.⁶⁴

No other members of the Katz and Reichhardt families transported *eastward* survived.

After the end of the war, it took years until the relatives in Frankfurt, U.S.A., Sao Paulo, Kenya and Israel were sure that nobody would ever return. They could not talk about the lost ones to their children. They did not forget murdered relatives and friends till the end of their lives.

Kurt Hecht, born in Michelstadt in December 1923, emigrated to New York still in December 1940, notified the *Central Bank for Names of the Shoah Victims at Yad Vashem, Jerusalem* on October 4, 1996, that Doris Katz died in Bergen-Belsen in 1941-1942. Under *Relationship to deceased*, he stated: *Fellow Student and Friend*. Kurt Hecht died in July 1997. At that time *the Memorial Book of the Federal Archive Victims of the Persecution of Jews under the National Socialist Tyranny in Germany (1933-1945)*, which is updated every six months, was not yet available as online version.⁶⁵

Remarks:

Many thanks to Robert Weinberg (USA) and Suzanne Weinberg (Paris) for many insights into the Reichhardt's family history. Suzanne Weinberg gave me the reference to *www.dokin.nl*. Without the research work of Miriam Keesing: *German and Austrian War Children in The Netherlands*, I would not have been able to follow the path of Doris Katz there. I am also indebted to Miriam Keesing for information about the refugee shelters in the Netherlands. I thank Claudia Gari (São Paulo) for family reports and family photos from the estate of the Joseph siblings.

¹ Brigitte Diersch: ... wir schaufeln ein Grab in den Lüften... Das kurze Leben der Doris Katz [...we shovel a grave in the air ... The short life of Doris Katz, in: "gelurt" Odenwaelder Jahrbuch für Kultur und Geschichte 2010. Erbach 2009, p. 204.

² https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/PC_Hoofstraat (Call: 12.09.2019).

³ University Archive Cologne, Matrikelkartei I (1919-1935), access 600/37. - Swantje Kuhfuss-Wickenheiser: The Reimann School in Berlin and London 1902-1943. A Jewish enterprise for the education of art and design of international character up to the annihilation by the Hitler regime. Aachen 2009, pp. 305-309. - Records of Margarete Bock, São Paulo, about her brother Heinz Joseph. Family archive Gari-Joseph.

⁴ <http://www.dokin.nl/deceased-children/doris-katz> (Call: 23.08.2019).

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- ⁵ Ruth David: *A child of our time. Memories of a Jewish girl to Germany and to British exile.* (German version: 2nd ed., Wiesbaden 2005, p. 69).
- ⁶ University Archives Frankfurt, Dept. 604 No. 674.
- ⁷ Founded in Berlin in 1901 as an aid organization for the needy, forcibly integrated into the Reich Association of Jews in Germany in 1939. *Enzyklopaedie des Nationalsozialismus*, editor Wolfgang Benz u. a., 5. Aufl., 2007, p. 562.
- ⁸ *Juedisches Nachrichtenblatt*, Berlin, 29.11.1938 and 02.12.1938.
- ⁹ <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kindertransport>. (Call: 23.08.2019).
- ¹⁰ Nationaal Archief The Hague (2.04.58 inv 130), kind information from Miriam Keesing, Amsterdam, from 28.01.2015.
- ¹¹ Hanna Kalter Weiss: *Scuds. A Teenage Jewish Refugee in Nazi-Occupied Holland.* Jerusalem, New York 2006, p. 8.
- ¹² Ruth Herskovits-Gutmann: *Auswanderung vorlaeufig nicht moeglich. Die Geschichte der Familie Herkovits aus Hannover.* Edited, translated and commented by Bernhard Strebel. Göttingen 2002, p. 71.
- ¹³ [http://www.dokin.nl/deceased-children/irene-lion-born-30-jun-1925? A = SearchResult & SearchID = 3046213 & ObjectID = 4831021 & ObjectType = 35](http://www.dokin.nl/deceased-children/irene-lion-born-30-jun-1925?A=SearchResult&SearchID=3046213&ObjectID=4831021&ObjectType=35) (Call: Aug 11, 2019).
- ¹⁴ Ya'akov Friedler: *A long way around, the story of a youth unusually spent* (unpublished 1991), cited: <http://www.dokin.nl/refugee-homes-in-nl/tag/Ruinen/> (Call: 05.09.2019). - Hanna Kalter Weiss, s. Note 11.
- ¹⁵ <http://www.dokin.nl/refugee-homes-in-nl/tag/Soesterberg> (call: 04.09.2019).
- ¹⁶ Erna Rechnitz and her sister were transferred from Zeeburg to Rotterdam on December 21, 1938. Erna [http:// www. dokin.nl/refugee-homes-in-nl/tag/rotterdam/page/4/](http://www.dokin.nl/refugee-homes-in-nl/tag/rotterdam/page/4/) (Call: 23.09.2019)
- ¹⁷ Ruth L. David: *Ein Kind unserer Zeit. [A Child of Our Time]* 2nd edition Wiesbaden 2005, p. 82 f. Margarete Oppenheimer collected all the letters in a folder, which she handed over to her former maid Mina Duemig before the deportation. P. 55 f. The cards and letters of Doris Katz are printed and transcribed in: Brigitte Diersch: *Das kurze Leben der Doris Katz.* Erbach 2010, p. 46-60. Mrs. Oppenheimer put all the mail into the secure hands of her Catholic housemaid.
- ¹⁸ On the Dutch index card, s. Note 10, the date of birth of Lina Katz is 1892, i.e. she was made 10 years younger than her husband.
- ¹⁹ City Archives Michelstadt, Dept. XIII, Conv. 2, Fasz. 54.
- ²⁰ Telephone connections were announced to Jews on 20.09.1940.
- ²¹ Federal Office for Central Services and Open Property Issues (BfzD) 14788, Bl. 18, Letter from Wilhelm Friedrich Kruse, Vice President a. D. of the Oberpostdirektion Koeln, v. 09/12/1960.
- ²² Kind information from Christiane Schiedt, Population Registration Office Wolfhagen, dated 02.10.2010 and 08/13/2014.
- ²³ *Koelner Adressbuch von 1936.* Kind information from Barbara Becker-Jäkli, NS-Dok-Zentrum der Stadt Koeln, from 30.01.2015.
- ²⁴ Hellmut Stern: *Saitenspruenge. Erinnerungen eines Kosmopoliten wider Willen.* 3rd ed., Berlin 2002, p. 138 ff.
- ²⁵ Cf. Hans Winter: *Bei Reichhardt ging es hoch her*, in: "gelurt" 2014, p. 175 ff. - Brigitte Diersch: ... *wir schaufeln ein Grab in den Lueften ...*Das kurze Leben der Doris Katz, in: "gelurt" 2010; Brigitte Diersch: ... *wir schaufeln ein Grab in den Lueften ...* Das Schicksal der Familie Otto Reichhardt, in: *Odenwald-Heimat*, 2009, No. 2-4.
- ²⁶ Leo Baeck Institute NY, Rena Hecht estate F87- B468.
- ²⁷ <http://www.koeln-magazin.info/nationalsozialismus.html> (call: 30.08.2019).
- ²⁸ Dieter Corbach: *6.00 ab Messe Koeln-Deutz. Deportationrn 1938-1945.* Koeln 1999, p. 76.
- ²⁹ They are not be found in the lists of names and access books of KL Dachau. Information of the archive of the concentration camp Dachau by Albert Knoll (19.11.2014) and by Alex Pearman

(06.09.2019). - They are also not recorded in Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp: *In our databases no entries could be found for Leopold Wertheimer and Emil Reichhardt*. Kind information from Monika Liebscher, archive of Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp Memorial, 12.09.2014).

³⁰ See above, Monika Liebscher, information from 16.06.2011.

³¹ Reichsgesetzblatt (RGBl.). Ed. Reichsministerium des Innern. Berlin 1938, I, p. 1579, p. 1580 and 1581, quoted from Walk, Joseph: *Das Sonderrecht fuer die Juden im NS-Staat*. Heidelberg, Karlsruhe 1981, p. 254 f.

³² Otto Reichhardt had taken over the department store (Braunstrasse 14) in 1910, and Hugo Katz the store (Schulstrasse 3) in 1928.

³³ See Walk, note 32, p. 270.

³⁴ Kind information from Jana Wackernagel, city archives Erfurt, from 03.09.2014.

³⁵ Ober Finanzdirektion (OFD) Münster 05608 Bu - J 2975 Rü.

³⁶ Kind archive information from Hartmut Klatt, Buerger-Buero Hockenheim, 19.11.2014.

³⁷ Bernard Wasserstein: *The Ambiguity of Virtue. Gertrude van Tijn and the Fate of the Dutch Jews*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England, 2014, p. 57 f.

³⁸ <http://www.dokin.nl/refugee-homes-in-nl/tag/driebergen/> page / 2 / (call: 15.09.2019).

³⁹ Lea Appel: *Het brood the doden. Geschiedenis en ondergang van een joods meisjes-weeshuis*. Maastricht 1982, p. 97-110.

⁴⁰ Landesverband Nordrhein-Westfalen (LAV NRW), R Personenstandsregister, Standesamt Koeln III, Sterbefaelle 1940, vol. 01, no. 341 / Cologne III.

⁴¹ LAV NRW, R Personenstandsregister, Standesamt Koeln, Lindenthal/ Sterbefaelle 1941, vol. 01, No. 374.

⁴² <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wagner-B%C3%BCrckel-Action> (call: 08.09.2019).

⁴³ Stadtarchiv Michelstadt, Dept. 13, Conv. 2, Fasz. 54.

⁴⁴ [http://www.mainz.de/kultur-und-wissenschaft/stadtgeschichte/magenza/juedisches-mainz.php# c18](http://www.mainz.de/kultur-und-wissenschaft/stadtgeschichte/magenza/juedisches-mainz.php#%C3%A418) (Call: 08.09.2019).

⁴⁵ LAV NRW, R Personenstandsregister, Standesamt Koeln III, Sterbefaelle 1941, vol. 01, no. 335. - The graves of Sophie Reichhardt, Emil Reichhardt and Leopold Wertheimer are located in the Jewish cemetery Koeln-Bocklemuend, kind information from Remigius Boeselager, Guetersloh, 16.06.2010, and kind information from Daniel Lemberg, Cemetery Administrator of the Synagogue Community Cologne K.d.oe.R., Jewish cemetery Koeln-Bocklemuend, from 18.09.2011.

⁴⁶ See note 29, Corbach, p. 317 f., 872, 307. - The surname Reichhardt is never spelled correctly on the transport lists; see. Brigitte Diersch: *For Law and Justice*, in: "gelurt" 2014, p. 222 f.

⁴⁷ Kind information from Dr. Andreas Freitaeger, University Archive Cologne, 14.09.2011.

⁴⁸ Kind information from Dr. Claudius Stein, Archive of the Ludwig Maximilians University, from 20.09.2011.

⁴⁹ Kind information from Dieter Knippschild, Stadtarchiv Dortmund, dated 03.01.2011.

⁵⁰ Lutz van Dijk: *Kein Wort zu niemand*. Munich 2002, p. 102. - Jutta Rosen: *Te midden van vreemden*. Haifa 2001, p. 37.

⁵¹ https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judenrat_Amsterdam (call: 13.09.2019).

⁵² See 51 above, p. 101 f.

⁵³ https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judenrat_Amsterdam (call: 13.09.2019).

⁵⁴ See note 40, pp. 100-102.

⁵⁵ https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Het_Apeldoornsche_Bosch (call 13.09.2019).

⁵⁶ Kind information from Raymund Schuetz, The Netherlands Red Cross, WWII Archives & Research Unit, 10.01.2014.

⁵⁷ Jutta Rosen, Note 51, pp. 48-51, and Lea Appel, Note 40, p. 107 ff.

⁵⁸ Kind information from Guido Abuys, Kamp Westerbork, from 06.03.2009.

⁵⁹ See above from 01.03.2010.

⁶⁰ https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/KZ_Neustadt-Glewe (call: 14.09.2019).

⁶¹ See Note 57.

⁶² Daughter Claudia Gari spent ten years researching her mother's life story and publishing it under the title *Prisioneira 75841. A História de Margarete Joseph*. São Paulo 2015.

⁶³ District Court Dorsten, 3 UR II 7/49.

⁶⁴ Hessisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Wiesbaden (HHStAW), Dept. 518, No. 37297, Selma Biedenkapp, b. Katz.

⁶⁵ Thanks to the online database of the Federal Archives, we can now find the names and dates of the victims of the Shoah at <https://www.bundesarchiv.de/gedenkbuch>. (also in English) The data is updated every six months.