



Our Family

by

Heinz and Thea Ruth Skyte, née Ephraim

The Scheidts in Fuerth 1912 - 1939

Sali and Frida Scheidt



Sali Scheidt, 1911

(photo: Heinz & Thea Skyte)

Salomon (Sali) Scheidt, son of Raphael and Ricka née Sahlmann, was born in Kitzingen on 21st June 1880. After his marriage to Frida Gutmann, elder daughter of Samuel and Sophie Gutmann on 24 March 1912 the couple settled in Fuerth and set up home at Nuernbergerstrasse 97.

Sali had joined the old established family firm Forchheimer & Schloss, founded by Frida's grandfather Max Schloss in 1848 (see the Schloss' in Fuerth), a wholesale and retail business dealing in drapery, linen, cloth, as well as carpets, linoleum and curtains with premises at Obstmarkt 1 as well as a branch at Schwabacherstrasse 28. (For history of the firm see "Forchheimer & Schloss"). Fritz, their first son was born there on 5 January 1913.

At the outbreak of World War I Sali was called up on 6 August 1914 and served with the 11th Company of the 6th Royal Bavarian Infantry Regiment in France, Belgium and Lorraine. After being wounded he spent some time in military hospitals and was finally invalided out of the army as no longer being fit for military service and received a 25% military pension. The Military Cross 3rd Class with Crown and Swords was bestowed upon him on the 17 April 1917.

In the same year Sali also received the "Buergerrecht" (Civic Rights) of Fuerth.



Frida Scheidt, 1911

(photo: Heinz & Thea Skyte)

Heinz, their second son was born on 14 February 1920. Sali and Frida took an active part in the commercial, religious and social life of Fuerth and its Jewish Community. Sali was elected to the Executive Committee of the Fuerth Jewish Congregation in September 1933. The following year he was appointed to the commission of Liberal Synagogues "to supervise services, choir, allocation of seats and the rota of service in the synagogue". He was also a member of many other organisations such as the local Chamber of Commerce, the Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen (R.J.F.= Reichsbund Juedischer Frontsoldaten) and the Jewish Sports Club in Fuerth, of which he eventually became Chairman.



Frida, Sali, Fritz and Heinz

(photo: Heinz & Thea Skyte)

On 20 April 1935 Sali received from the Hitler Government the "Ehrenkreuz fuer Frontkaempfer" (a medal for soldiers who had served at the front in World War 1914/1918). In common with many other Jews Sali, however, returned this medal as unacceptable, in view of the ever increasing persecution of Jews.

When in 1934 the third floor apartment of the family house at Obstmarkt 1 became available, the family moved in "above the shop" and also a floor above Frida's parents Samuel and Sophie Gutmann. (See the Gutmanns of Sugenheim - The Gutmanns in Fuerth). The house had been built in 1901 by Samuel Gutmann and his brother-in-law Heinrich Schloss and is now one of the historic houses of Fuerth and under an order of protection.

After the death of the family partner Heinrich Schloss (uncle of Frida) in 1928 and the retirement of the other family partners, Siegfried Arnstein (son-in-law of Heinrich) in 1934 and Sali's father-in-law Samuel Gutmann in 1936, Sali became the sole owner of Forchheimer & Schloss.

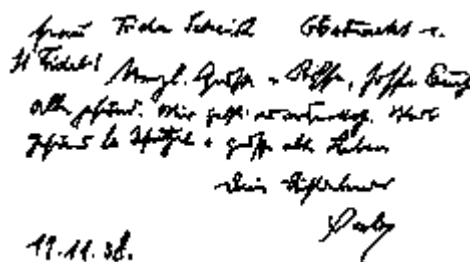
On "Kristallnacht", the night of 9/10th November 1938, Frida and Sali together with all Jews of Fuerth, young and old, men, women and children, were rounded up and taken to the Schlageterplatz, a central square, and kept standing there for some five hours, during which they were subjected to abuse, jeered at and spat upon. At about 4 a.m. Frida together with all women and children was released and allowed to go home. All men were then marched to the Berolzheimianum, a building which Heinrich Berolzheimer, a prosperous Fuerth Jew, had been presented to the town in 1906 for cultural pursuits, where they were tortured.

Sali, together with a least 150 men under 60 years, was then sent from there to the Concentration Camp Dachau. However, the next morning before Sali and two other members of the Executive Committee of the Fuerth Jewish Congregation were transported to Dachau they were taken to the offices of a Notary and there they were forced to sign a document transferring the entire assets, land and properties of the Congregation, including five synagogues (or what was left of them) and surrounding land, administrative buildings, the house of the Rabbi, the ritual bath, slaughter house, two cemeteries with their buildings and mortuary to the Town of Fuerth for a total amount of 100 RM (one hundred Reichmarks).

We only learned about the "sale" and Sali's part in it in 1998 when we were invited for a function in Fuerth and pupils of the High School presented a program on the Holocaust. To see the sale document flashed on the overhead screen with Sali's signature on it was a tremendous shock to us. A letter from the District Attorney dated 15 February 1939 states "that the unit value of the properties by far exceeded RM 100,000."

A note from Sali to Frida was smuggled out of Dachau: It reads:

Dear Fridl!
Much love and kisses. Trust you are all well. I am alright. Keep well my darling. Remember me to all our loved ones
Your loving Sali
11.11.38



from Frida Schell Obstmarkt -
H. Friedl! Much love and kisses. Trust you are all well. I am alright. Keep well my darling. Remember me to all our loved ones
Your loving Sali
11.11.38.

Sali's note from Dachau

(photo: Heinz & Thea Skyte)

Sali was released some five weeks later on condition that he would emigrate. Sali could never bring himself to talk about his time in Dachau, but his personality had changed and he was never the same man again.

Whilst Sali was in Dachau the firm Forchheimer & Schloss had been confiscated by the Nazis, and a liquidator had been appointed. The house on Obstmarkt, which was jointly owned by Frida's father Samuel Gutmann and the heirs of Heinrich Schloss was disposed of by a forced "sale". The money was paid into farcical accounts controlled by Nazi Officials.

The Christmas of 1938 afforded the family, i.e. Sali and his brothers and sister, the last opportunity of a get-together in Frankfurt. This was very much a crisis meeting, the men having all been in Concentration Camps and recently released with shorn heads, some with injuries, both physical and mental, and all entirely pre-occupied with the very urgent necessity to find a refuge somewhere, wherever a country could be found that would admit them.

After very many frustrating frantic but unsuccessful attempts to gain admission to a number of countries, Frida and Sali on 3 August 1939 finally received their Visa to enter the United Kingdom, where their sons Fritz and Heinz were then living in Leeds. It was for a single journey only and they were allowed to enter Britain for a 12 months visit on condition that they did not enter employment either paid or unpaid during their stay. On 9 August they each received the equivalent of RM 10.- in English currency, the only money they were allowed to take out of Germany.

Sali and Frida made arrangements for their departure, but had wanted to remain in Fuerth until they had arranged and supervised the packing of their furniture and belongings. In England, in the meantime, it had become clear that war was imminent and after repeated urgent frantic phone calls from their sons, they finally purchased their one way tickets from Nuremberg to Leeds on 25th August 1939, leaving Fuerth and Germany the following day. They arrived in England on 27 August 1939, just five days before the outbreak of World War II in the hope to make a new life for themselves, but that is another story.