



# Our Family

by

Heinz and Thea Ruth Skyte, née Ephraim

BETTY EPHRAIM

the second child and only daughter of Julius and Rosalie Ephraim (née Levy) was born in Berlin on 16th November 1882. Her official name was Bertha, having been named after her grandmother Bertha Levy née Alterthum, but throughout her life was never known as or called anything else but Betty. After the death of her mother Rosalie in 1914 (her father had already died in 1904) Betty continued to keep house for her two brothers Paul and Alfred at Sybelstrasse 28 until they married. Betty remained single. She was a first-class professional dressmaker. Sometime in the 1930s Betty moved to Berlin-Halensee, Joachim-Friedrichstrasse 20, still working as a dressmaker from home.

As all Jews Betty suffered greatly under the Nazi regime. During 1942/43 she was arrested and detained on several occasions, but her family had managed to achieve her release from detention. She was, however, finally deported from Berlin on 3rd March 1943.

Inquiry of tax authorities at the inhabitants registration office asking for the whereabouts of Betty ("Berta") Ephraim. The handwritten note in the left corner states "3 March 1943 transferred to the east".

(photo: Heinz & Thea Skyte)

Jüdische Gemeinde zu Berlin  
Allgemeine Verwaltung  
Hs. Hauptbüro

Berlin N 4, den 15. Juli 1950  
Oranienburger Strasse 26  
42 54 76

Herrn/ ~~Frau/ Fräulein~~

Alfred E p h r a i m, Berlin N. 54.,  
Wilhelm Pieckstr. 42.


Bekannt: Bertha E p h r a i m, geb. 16.11.1888 in Berlin,  
zuletzt wohnhaft Berlin-Malensee, Joachim-Friedrichstr. 20

Unseren Ermittlungen zufolge ist/ ~~ist~~/ die Obengenannte(n)  
mit dem 33. Ost - Transport  
am 3. 3. 1943 nach  
deportiert worden.

~~Der~~/ die Obengenannte(n) hat (~~hat~~) sich bei zum heutigen Tage  
nicht zurückgemeldet.

Wir bedauern, Ihnen einen günstigeren Bescheid nicht geben zu  
können.

Hochachtungsvoll



In 1950 the Jewish Community in Berlin informed her brother Alfred that Betty was deported on the 33. transport to the East and had not reported back, regretting not to have been able to give him a more favourable reply.

(photo: Heinz & Thea Skyte)

In 1990 documents dealing with Betty's deportation were located in the Landesarchiv Berlin. After the deportation the Gestapo had ordered her assets to be confiscated, according to various laws passed between 1933 and 1942 regarding the confiscation of "communist, unpatriotic and subversive" assets. These laws also laid down, how confiscated assets of "Enemies of the State" could be used in favour of the "Reich".

Transcript of the German Government Notice No. 14728. June 1943

## ANNOUNCEMENT

According to paragraph 1 of the law regarding the confiscation of communist assets of 26 May 1933 - RGB1.I S.293 - combined with the law regarding the confiscation of assets of Enemies of the State of 14 July 1933 - RGB1.I S.479 -, the decree of the Minister of the Interior of 14 July 1942 - I 903/41 - 5400 -MB1iV of 22 July 1942, S. 1481 regarding the alteration of confiscation of communist assets in Berlin and the decree of the Fuehrer and Chancellor regarding the use of confiscated assets of enemies of the State of 29 May 1941 - RGB1 I S.303 - the inland assets of the person named below will be confiscated in favour of the German State:

Ephraim, Berta Sara

born 16.11.1882 in Berlin

finally resident at Berlin Halensee, Joachim-Friedrichstr.20

addendum to the 33.transport to the east

German Secret Police (Gestapo) Gestapo Headquarters Berlin

(Translation TRS)

Betty's "*Judenwohnung*" (an apartment occupied by a Jew) was re-allocated. The new tenant took over part of her furniture and fittings. It is curious though that, although it would appear from a detailed inventory, the apartment at that time was still completely furnished with all her belongings, e.g. harmonium, oil painting and sewing machine and some of her beautiful antique furniture was valued at next to nothing. She also had a valuable crystal chandelier. Could this have been the light fitting valued together with some other lamps in the inventory at 10 RM?

In April 1944, more than a year after Betty's deportation and murder, the appropriate office dealing with the confiscation of assets enquired at the local Ministry of Finance, whether any further assets were known, and whether there were any securities to pay the "*Reichsfluchtsteuer*", a special tax going back to 1915 levied by the State on people who had fled the country. The Nazi regime imposed this tax on people forced to emigrate and also on those who had been deported and, as in the above case, were already dead.

Communication with Yad Vashem in Jerusalem confirmed that, according to their records, Betty had been deported to Auschwitz. Betty's name has been inscribed in the Pages of Testimony in the Hall of Names at Yad Vashem.

## AUSCHWITZ

The establishment of the notorious Concentration Camp at Auschwitz near the Polish town of Oswiecim (Kattowitz) was ordered in April 1940 by SS Chief Heinrich Himmler. Nazis started taking prisoners there from June 1940. By March 1941 the numbers of prisoners at the camp (later to be known as Auschwitz I) had risen to 10,900. In that year Himmler ordered a second larger camp, the notorious Auschwitz Birkenau or Auschwitz II with its gas chambers and crematoriums. This was soon followed by Auschwitz III and many smaller camps, mostly used as forced labour camps, prisoners being used as manpower for the armament factories established in the area by the Nazi

government. To make room to build these camps inhabitants of several villages were moved out and their houses demolished.

At first the camps held mainly political prisoners and Poles, soon to be followed by transports of Jews, Gypsies and others from Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia etc. Prisoner transports were brought into the camps by rail in good wagons and cattle trucks. On arrival they were registered. The younger and fitter were selected to work in the factories. From 9 September 1942 the old, sick or weak amongst them, and women and children were directly taken to the extermination chambers without registration.

In 1943 transports arrived daily. Documents taken from Archives of the Auschwitz Memorial and the German Federal Archives published in a book "Auschwitz Chronicle 1939-1945" show that on 6 March 1943 at least two large transports arrived in Auschwitz. One consisted of 1,128 Jews, 540 men and 588 women and children, from Berlin. Of these 389 men and 96 women were selected to be "admitted" to the camp. 406 men and 190 women were also "admitted" from the second transport of 1,405 Jews from Berlin, Breslau and other towns.

So on that one day alone at least 1,452 human beings, 151 men and 492 women and children from the first and 125 men and 684 women and children from the second transport, were immediately sent to their deaths in the Auschwitz gas chambers!

Betty Ephraim was most likely to have been one of these.