



Our Family

by

Heinz and Thea Ruth Skyte, née Ephraim

Martin ALTERTHUM

son of Adolf Alterthum and Margarete née Simonsohn was at the time of his father's death (14 November 1910 in Berlin) a *Referendar* (junior barrister) in Magdeburg (1).

Eventually he became *Landsgerichtsdirektor* in Dessau (Senior judge of the District Court of Dessau), a position he held until 1928. He then changed to an administrative position in the Civil Service. In 1932 however, the Nazi party already having gained a majority in the district of Anhalt, he left the Ministry and returned to his legal profession (2). He was also a member of the Executive Committee of the Jewish congregation of Dessau.

In October 1934 he moved from Dessau to Leipzig to take over the management of the Zionist organisations of Central Germany and the administration of the *Palestinaamtes* (Palestine office). As a member of the Executive committee of the Jewish Congregation of Leipzig he was also served as Administrator of their Welfare Board. As the political position grew worse and worse he spent most of his time to plan and organise for future emigration. He arranged courses to teach various crafts such as building work, locksmiths, joinery and agriculture. There was also a domestic school and a Hebrew language school.

On 9 November 1938, as all over Germany most male Jews in Leipzig including Martin Alterthum were arrested and sent to the Concentration Camp Buchenwald. After his discharge from there he and his wife left Leipzig by train via Triest on 6 March 1939 to find a new home in Palestine. He died in Tel Aviv about 1977 (3).

Footnotes

- (1) Records Jewish Cemetery Berlin-Weissensee.
- (2) Ball-Kaduri "Martin Alterthum - Das Sozialamt der Juedischen Gemeinde in Leipzig 1934 - 1939" (Social Welfare offices of the Jewish Community of Leipzig). Leo Baeck Institute New York.
- (3) Martin Alterthum: "*Der vorletzte Akt der Tragodie*" (The penultimate chapter of the tragedy, Memories of the Social Welfare Offices of the Jewish Community of Leipzig 1934 - 1939). An article Alterthum wrote at the request of friends for publication in a newsletter describes

fairly detailed the happenings in Leipzig during these years. (Leo Baeck Institute, New York).

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