

**Jews
in
Horn-Bad Meinberg**

Documentation over the last 150 years
1837 – 1987

An authentic account, supported by archival material,
registers, documents and testimonies by
some three dozen eyewitnesses,
of the persecutions and deportations
in the Third Reich period

By

Walter E. Capelle

Translated and Abridged 2011

David Blank, son of Fritz Blank, has corrected some details as they regard the Blank family; as such there is a discrepancy with the German original.

Preface

The 50th anniversary of the “Reichskristallnacht” is approaching, that horrifying event of which our contemporaries do not care to be reminded, which they have forgotten or, perhaps willfully, have even suppressed. For the younger people among us, the persecution and annihilation of the Jews is a historical event – nothing more. This problem has been confronted in our schools, discussed with varying intensity, even drilled, but then “dropped”, as happens with so many subjects. Not everything can be kept forever in the forefront, and the flow of information about our Jewish fellow citizens has been sparse. Only the historically inclined urged and pursued the matter, but the emerging picture remained sketchy and very subjectively drawn.

Fifty years make a long time. But anyone who believes that the witnesses of that time have fallen silent is mistaken. This chronicler himself, who experienced the Hitler years as a 12- to 25-year-old, is able to remember many details of that time very well. His parents, who never uttered a spiteful word about the Jews, supplemented his understanding and knowledge, and many conversations with some three dozen eyewitnesses of those dreadful events completed that “stocktaking” which is the premise for a comprehensive report.

I thank all my informants for the agreeable conversations with them and likewise thank all those motivated officials who lent me important assistance.

For some time I hesitated to write, in the belief that the time was not yet ripe and that too much was still obscure. However, intense preoccupation during the last year, and particularly the last months, impelled me to start the writing. Yet I have been questioning myself repeatedly about its meaning and purpose – am I not merely playing the role of a “befouler of one’s own nest”?

However, concealing the frightful crimes in the persecution of the Jews does not undo their occurrence nor does it lighten our conscience about this historic guilt! It is better to acknowledge the darkest times of our German history, for only thus can reconciliation between all nations bear fruit.

May the contribution presented here concerning the past century of our Horn-Bad Meinberg Jews arouse searching reflection by all those who come after us upon what happened and lead to their resolution that the like must not be repeated.

Horn-Bad Meinberg,
in November 1987
Walter E. Capelle

*"A God-fearing man, beyond
reproach from his youth on.
Righteous in all his deeds
and peaceable all the days of his
life"*

Epitaph (rear) for Levi
Klarenmeyer on the
Horn Cemetery; b.
3.2.1821 in Belle,
d. 21.3.1900 at Bad
Meinberg

A student of the Jewish Rolls at the Horn Registrars Office for 1837 – 1876 will feel himself transported to a distant and peaceful era. Everything seems so normal, anything extraordinary is hardly imaginable. Some 15 Jewish families lived in Horn - Bad Meinberg, of these sometimes three in Bad – Meinberg, one or two in Belle and about ten in Horn, some being members of an extended family. The men pursued their livelihoods, mainly commerce but also in soap manufacturing and saddlery and indeed, as teachers. For a few years even a Jewish doctor had settled there. The women saw to their ancient traditional duties as housewives and mothers while the children attended the local school as well as their own Synagogue school on Burgstrasse.¹

Easily 110 children were born in those 40 years in the former Horn District², 70 of them in them in Horn.³ On thirty occasions they celebrated together the marriages of young couples, performed according to the Jewish faith by the Chief Rabbi of the Lippe province, Rabbi Joseph Fahrenbach.⁴ On most occasions, one of the marriage partners came from afar: Hochstift Paderborn (*B.S.- Southeast Westphalia*),⁵ the Oldenburg area, Stadthagen, from the Berg Country and even from Holland.

The narrow Lippe borders meant little to them.⁶ Almost eighty times did they accompany a community member to his grave and burial in the Jewish cemetery of Belle, Schlangen or Horn. The Meinbergers belonged to the Horn synagogue community and were interred there.

The Jews of the district and the town were not particularly prosperous, but they did not complain. Some were propertied, but there were also some very, very poor folk. They bore a relatively heavy tax burden, imposed by the town, the district authority and the Ducal office – the Letters of Protection had to be

¹ Until 1841, classes were taught by Rabbi Joseph Nachmeier, then, until 1862 by Meier Schöndorff and again, from 1869, by Joseph Abraham. The last Jewish teacher taught from 1900 to 1902 in Horn.

² These included the Schlangen Jews, who simultaneously maintained their own synagogue together with the Jews of Lippspringe.

³ Some stayed only a few days because their parents – perhaps without Letters of Protection – were only passing through.

⁴ His successor for many years – into the First World War – was Rabbi Plaut.

⁵ Until ca. 1855 the ceremony was often performed on the Lippe border and, for someone from the Hochstift, at the “Heestener Küte”. To cut costs and possibly in order to circumvent the Duke’s high marriage tax, but also probably because the young couple did not yet possess Letters of Protection, the wedding party assembled on the border, Bride and bridegroom would stand facing each other, the border between them, while the Rabbi, his back to the boundary stone, would perform the marriage.

⁶ Cf. Index of Place- and Family Names in the Appendix

extended at a high fee. At the same time, their own institutions, such as the Synagogue, the school, the cemetery and others required a large contribution, which constituted a severe burden on the small community. In addition there were traditional burdens that their forebears had assumed in better times.

The District Administration of Horn had just been dissolved in 1847 and incorporated into the City Judiciary, when the Mayor and Town Attorney sued the “Jewry of Horn”⁷ to present them with a silver spoon as they had done, “as a sign of loyalty and respect”, for “the District Officer, from time immemorial”. Christmas, they said, was on the doorstep, and the town representatives were now claiming that voluntary gift of previous years as due to them by the right of custom. Aser (*BS- Ascher?*) Aschoff,⁸ spokesman for the synagogue community, defended himself with skill. He could not remember such a gift and rejected their brazen claim. As the claimants failed to bring any proof, the claim was rejected.

At the same time, the young Town Attorney Hausmann, not yet 30 years old, interceded on behalf of the totally impoverished, unmarried 27-year old Jewess Sarah Seehof of “im Orte” in Horn, and demanded a cord of firewood for her from the “Jewish Aid Fund” in Detmold. On receipt of their refusal⁹ he pursued the matter further because, she was sick and unable to work, and thus dependent on assistance.¹⁰ For Hausmann, who all his life was involved in the cause of people on the fringe of society, this was an obvious step. Here it was care for a weak individual; there a struggle for alleged rights. Both these examples serve to show how unreservedly social minorities were treated in those days.

In 1854 the Jews of Lippe, like the Catholics, were granted fully equal rights with all the “County’s children”. The Letter of Protection became superfluous and was abolished. They were taxed like everybody else and could leave the Jews’ ghetto. They were no longer deprived of the right to buy houses and real estate. At that time many houses of emigrants were up for sale and they made use of this. The school and synagogue, which became their property, were

⁷ Cf. Jews’ file in Town Archive of Horn - Bad Meinberg

⁸ Aschoff’s house stood on the lower Mittelstrasse, later in Duwel’s property, today the Volsbank.

⁹ The grounds were that she could keep house for her likewise unmarried brother.

¹⁰ According to the certification from Dr. Kemper, who lived on Mittelstrasse in Horn and practiced as physician to the spa.

rebuilt and, in 1856, dedicated.¹¹ They left the town house “Im Orte” and now settled on Mittelstrasse, and on Nord-, Burg- and Heerstrasse. They performed their military service in the Lippe Battalion and served as a matter of course in the campaigns of 1866 and 1870/1. The first indications of budding anti-Semitism in literature and the sciences, stoked by sectors of the Church and the middle class, sullied the atmosphere in the major cities, particularly Vienna, Berlin and Hamburg (Sigmund Freud, Albert Ballin, who was a friend of Kaiser Wilhelm II, and others) but in the country, life went on as usual. The Jews felt themselves as ‘Lippe subjects’. For example, a daughter of the Examus family in Horn married a citizen of Blomberg with the evocative name ‘Lipper’, a name that proves loyalty to the authorities. Levi Klarenmeyer, later resident in Meinberg, whose epitaph from 1900 is the Keyword heading this essay, was a tax official in Belle/Wöbbel. He participated significantly in the erection of a ceremonial arch¹² on the Lippe-Prussian border when Count Leopold III married his young consort Elizabeth of Schwarzburg-Rudolstadt and now escorted her home to Lippe-Detmold. On a large diaphanous cloth in the middle of the archway, he had displayed the following greeting of welcome:

“Here lives the tax man Klarenmeyer,
An Israelite; proudly and with esteem
Does he swear fealty to his Count
And the young Countess by his side!
Elizabeth and Leopold,
Grant favor also to the Israelites!”

Here is another indication of this trend: As a matter of course the Jews played their role in the Horn Rifle Club, membership of which was based on tradition and loyal citizenship – this until 1933. Master butcher Moses Examus of

¹¹ Cf. Isermann: *Chronik Stadt und District Horn*, pp. 35,36

¹² Cf. the account of 90-year old Mrs Anne Krohne, née Schleifer, a forester’s daughter from the Beller Wood, whose father had repeatedly recounted this event and the rhyme to her. She was a friend of Klarenmeyers’ small daughter. Cf. Appendix 1.

Burgstrasse even served as Officer of the Town Platoon.¹³ He was fortunate then not to have an inkling of his last bitter years in Horn!

Until the beginning of the Weimar Republic the Jews had no problems and were fully integrated. ‘Anti-Semitism’ was generally a foreign term, a concept totally unknown to society. Jews traded, bought and sold, became bankrupt, and they went to court, for instance in order to establish paternity.¹⁴ Two died a “Hero’s death” in the First World War and others were highly decorated. They took part in club life, were co-founders of the Horn Football Club of 1912,¹⁵ active players themselves, were members of the management and indeed umpires. They met at the Regulars’ table and at regular card-playing sessions.

The Weimar period soon changed their circumstances. The churches lamented the passing of “Throne and Altar”, that traditional power relationship. The lost war and the new democratic structure of the State were unacceptable to and not approved by the population. The inflation in November 1923 was the last straw and the global financial crisis beginning in 1929 triggered the permanent release of tensions. The democratic state was too weak to recognize its mortal enemies and fight them betimes, so that the disaster took its inevitable course. A plurality of parties, from the atheist and communist down to the nationalist all feuded with each other. Mutual opposition instead of joint purpose drove them into chaos. And so the National Socialists, led by Hitler, Goebbels and Schleicher, screamingly propagated the blame for the defeat in war, for the “shameful diktat at Versailles”, for the inflation and the massive unemployment in the German Land – “on international Jewry”. The recriminations were made in a manner so facile, so crude and so monstrous. And although the defamations were so evil and false, ever more “innocents” allowed themselves to be misled. The true situation of the Jews was patently and constantly seen by all, yet this play with the ‘scapegoat’ provided them a certain satisfaction. The civic behavior of the NSDAP was irresponsible, and those few who saw through it were quickly silenced. Woes betide a Jew who defended himself. The Jews had no lobby, were defenseless and resigned themselves to their fate. Yet only a few could probably guess the horrors that yet awaited them.

¹³ Cf. the picture, 1912, of the Rifle Officers of Horn.

¹⁴ StA-DT: Jews; Register of 1847, Horn District (Amt Horn)

¹⁵ Albert and Max Sondermann, Walter Examus.

Here and there, a few of them may have confided to friends: “We Jews will soon be going through grim times, but then the big persecution of Christians will start.” They believed that they had to seek the roots of their persecution in their denial of Jesus Christ as the son of God and in his death on the cross. But their bitter enemies were hardly motivated by Christian sentiments, because anti-Semites were and always are opponents of Christianity. Actually it was their despicable race hatred, rooted in the Romantic period of the early 19th century, together with the accusations, that fired their fanaticism.

Thank goodness there were always people ready give their custom to the Jewish businessman and merchant. The latter had early on adopted the features of modern business practice: quality, good prices, discounts for quantity and so on. Children liked buying their marbles from him – they would always get one more for the price, and they would be bigger and often better, than elsewhere. In the cattle trade, it was worth taking care, till a handshake sealed the usually more favorable price. Numerous families had an interest in good neighborly relations and the Jews nurtured such contacts and helped out where they could. Rather like homeless people nowadays make use of the social and welfare facilities of the church, so the hungry knocked on the doors of Jewish merchants and were always sent away satisfied. Two Jewish families on the Market and on Nordstrasse in Horn were famous throughout the town for their compassion. However one event of 1932 reveals an ominous tendency, which is well ascribable to national-socialist propaganda. The Rifle Competition and Fete was held despite the high unemployment, and the Jews participated as usual. In the youth section of the competition, Fritz Blank, a senior high school pupil, was approaching the lead. “There’s a big disgrace in the making here” was the opinion of certain circles in the Officers’ Corps, even of the youth sector. In the end, Fritz Blank achieved only the second-best shot. But as “Vice Rifle-King” he was entitled by statute to a special honor in the ceremonial march. That was too much for the officer of his church platoon. He saw to it that, out of protest, the platoon of young sharpshooters, Blank’s platoon, did not march. We leave it open whether this foolish behavior provided satisfaction or ‘saved their honor’, not to speak of the disgrace involved.

With seizure of power by the National Socialists in 1933, the situation of the Jews decidedly deteriorated. Inexorable and systematic persecution now began, and thus their path to annihilation.

Julius Streicher's "Stürmer", a fanatical and disreputable incitement sheet, was displayed weekly on the Market Square.¹⁶ It served, like the rest of the uniformly cowed press, to propagate the new laws concerning the Jews. Their shops were now officially boycotted, buying from them being forbidden. Anyone purchaser in contravention of this risked being denounced, along with a picture, in the "Stürmer" box. Some of our eyewitnesses were involved in this way. Sometimes the entrances to the stores were kept under surveillance and control. But from a distance of 100 m. "innocents" also could well be denounced. This happened to the wife of a vicar in Horn, whose visit to a neighboring merchant got her falsely on to the list of names displayed in the Stürmer show case. Her demand for rectification and an apology, which should have followed as a matter of course, never ensued. Her complaint to the courts was not admitted because the informer was a high party functionary. The wife of a retired senior official was not to be intimidated and continued to buy as usual, although she was severally branded "in the box" with her picture. Others entered by the back doors or did their shopping after dark. The Jewish butchers delivered to their customers, of whom there were quite a few, in the same way, very early in the morning or late in the evening, and this particularly for customers who held public office. They did not want to cause trouble for their customers; neither did they want to lose them.

From the beginning of 1935, an "Arian" could no longer be employed by a Jewish businessman. For many this meant the loss of their job, a decent salary and the generous gifts gone forever. In early 1935, a respected citizen of Meinberg who had been working for a decade as a manager in Horn and was not prepared voluntarily to give up this position of trust, was thrashed on the street in broad daylight by some SS-men, stamped upon even in the gutter and so beaten up that his capacity to work was henceforth limited.

Not just buying from a Jew, but also working for him was strictly forbidden from 1934. Yet there were enough craftsmen who knew how to circumvent this prohibition. In their own town or village they had to avoid being seen, although their former Jewish customers always paid fully and in good time. But in Detmold, for instance, no one knew them, so the Detmold master

¹⁶ on a private house in Mittelstrasse, soon to be renamed "Adolf Hitler-Strasse". The house owner was unable to resist its display.

craftsmen would send round their workers from Horn, who would do the job and be sent off with a handsome tip.

But this did not suffice. The Jews were generally excluded from all public events. They could no longer attend the theater, concerts and celebrations of a social nature. They were excluded from clubs and could not even watch a harmless football match!

For Max Sondermann that was the worst blow in the first years of the “Third Reich”, since he was particularly attached to the footballers. After the game of “his” favorite team had started, he stepped out of the adjacent copse – old friends had expressly encouraged him to do so – followed the course of the game in inimitable manner, and no one “chased” him away.

Despite all prohibitions, contacts with the Jews were still maintained in the first years. A card-circle met regularly every week for a game of Skat, - a “fellow-traveler”, one reserved fellow and a young Jewish family man. Of course, talk would turn also to politics. Once, the last mentioned partner said: “I am a Jew through and through, but you Willi – I doubt whether you are a National Socialist through and through!” Instead of the expected dialog about Jews and National Socialism a vicious fist blow to the face followed. Unfortunately that, and only that was the language of communication between the Nazis! For this time, the game was over. It was himself that the fellow traveler had disqualified, both for the future as well as for this round of Skat.

At the turn of the year 1937/8 the last “regular” Jewish interment took place. The deceased had been spared something terrible. For the last time, the Horn - Bad Meinberg Jewish community was having a big funeral procession, attended also by a few Christian guest mourners, as it wended its way to the small Jewish cemetery on the old Veldrome Road in the Sekretärkamp (BS: *a tree nursery*). A young Nazi from Horn, proud possessor of a brand-new heavy motor bicycle, displayed his contempt for the Jews by escorting the funeral procession with his roaring machine, sometimes level with the Rabbi, sometimes with the horses. “Horse-hirer” Meyer had to exert all his efforts to stop the horses from shying - a disaster, if they had bolted! A few Jews in the procession raised their umbrellas in threat, but did not strike with them. The young man was boasting about his heroic acts in front of a local workshop. The chronicler did not stop him, could not stop him. He did not dare to, stole away and was ashamed of himself. His lack of civil courage then has not allowed him to forget that disgusting deed to this day.

In this connection, a short digression may be in order. At that time, a colleague viciously defamed a respected master craftsman in Horn. His nose (which, according to the “Stürmer”, is an infallible hallmark of the “Jewish race”) cast doubt, so it was said, on his “Arian” ancestry. The accuser had researched the Ravensberg Church Rolls and found that one of the man’s ancestress in the 17th or 18th century had supposedly introduced Jewish blood into the family. Her name was said to be Ilsabe Salmon, and that sounded most suspicious! It was bad enough that such a threadbare statement could even be uttered, but even worse that the people in power regarded it “as true”. The public works orders that had been placed with him were withdrawn, so that the accused had to appeal to an arbitrator, indeed to the judge, for assistance. A small inconspicuous notice in the daily paper, with a correction “and an expression of regret” was imposed on the slanderer – no more than that. Was the motive a competitor’s envy? What misguided fanaticism was behind it all! For our craftsman, membership of his guild was at stake. If he had been expelled, he and his family would have reached the breadline.

As the years went by, dialog between Jews and non-Jews became ever more sparse. When a conversation did arise, the Jews very soon gave expression to their worries about the future, about hunger, persecution and annihilation – and their powerlessness in the face of these was increasingly apparent. Their partners to the conversation would then offer their help and say (probably to calm them down): “It will never get as bad as all that. You’ll always be able to earn your bread with me!” – just to comfort them. Did they believe their own words?

Fritz Blank, son of businessman Salli. Blank of “an der Ecke” had matriculated from the Leopoldinum (a high school) in Detmold in 1934. He clearly and consistently discerned the looming disaster. That there was no future for him in Germany he had understood when he was seized by SA men in Schönemark in 1934. They had forced him on to a streetcar and had him get off on Nordstrasse. Carrying a big placard on his chest - “I am a Jew pig” he was paraded through the town as far as the fire station, which at the time, served as the town’s investigatory prison. After repeated harassment, he was however, unexpectedly released and disappeared immediately from Horn, going underground among relatives in Frankfurt. But the German borders were already under surveillance. The stamp that he still needed for his flight abroad was, on telephoned request, “obtained” for him and sent on by a municipal

employee. He managed to escape, to Strasbourg and later to Zurich. He was a reader for political commentary on the Strasbourg Radio and agitated against National-Socialist Germany, to the severe detriment of his parents and sister, who had stayed behind.

The Olympic Games were held in Berlin in 1936, and many foreign visitors were expected, including many Jews. For the sake of a particularly favorable impression of the “new state”, the anti-Jewish incitement in the “*Stürmer*” was temporarily suspended. Everywhere, including in Horn, the “*Stürmer*” show cases were removed. For a short while the Jews were treated “with kid gloves”. Family Walter Sondermann of the Market - father, mother and 12-year old son Fritz - exploited this opportunity to flee to Cologne. Only few people were in the know. Valuable objects were given away as gifts. The piano was conveyed over the Market Place late in the evening. They too lacked the municipal stamp needed to allow them to cross the frontier. The same municipal official “arranged” this one too, so that the undertaking was successful. Sondermann received the transit visa through Belgium only one week before outbreak of the war in 1939. By the afternoon of that day their cases were packed and they had crossed the German border.¹⁷

Once the Olympic Games were over, the reins were again pulled tight. The outside world had been largely fooled by this tactical move, despite all the warnings of Fritz Blank of the Strasbourg Radio and others...

A well-directed Jewish self-help campaign had been working for several years. Twice or three times a week a camouflaged Jewish “postal vehicle” would drive into the darkest corner of Horn, Paternoster Strasse, behind the Town Hall, at that time still without street lighting. Everything was done very quickly, and the supplies, often bearing important personal information attached, would reach the addressees by devious routes. The next stops, at Schlangen and Bad Meinberg were visited with the same precautions. The participants may well have uttered many a “Pater noster” (*BS: a prayer “Our Father... ”*) - as the saying goes: “nomen est omen”! (*BS: Latin for: “ the name is an omen ”*)

The lot of the Jews deteriorated from month to month. The poorer among them suffered severe want. They literally starved because their wealthier brethren now had nothing more to give away or share. The post service was

¹⁷ Cf. Supplement 4: Obituary in the *Gazette Telegraph* in Colorado Springs of 28.10.1976

discontinued because there was nothing more to distribute. The risk of being discovered and of falling into the hands of the ubiquitous catchers was too great. Perhaps one or other of the neighbors had long forgotten his promise to intervene in time of need, or...he no longer wished to be reminded of it. An old Jew in Horn did remember such a promise in his hour of need and knocked at his neighbor's back door at dusk. In former times, this door was always ajar, never locked. However recently it was being bolted – after all one could never know... The old man, anxious to be admitted, knocked repeatedly, more loudly each time. Inside they pretended not to hear, and the old man shuffled off, his purpose unfulfilled. The pretender's shame for his cowardly behavior elicited an embarrassed silence among the family, and the son of the house reported: "So my father started weeping when he remembered his promise. It was the only time I saw my father cry."

The old man died shortly thereafter. It was his funeral that we described above. As the family was indeed at their wits' end, they gave up their home in Horn and found refuge with relatives in Salzkotten.

In those years, the German people was so preoccupied with Hitler's policy of aggression – his exit from the League of Nations, rearmament, the annexation of Austria, the Sudeten problem, to mention only a few policy objectives – that the Jewish Question was temporarily pushed to the background. The NS rulers believed in 1938, that the Jewish question would solve itself, or, where relevant, had already been solved. And then the unexpected happened in Paris: at the beginning of November, vom Rath, counselor at the German Embassy was shot in his office by a 17-year old Israelite.¹⁸ The assassination of a German official in the Foreign Service was interpreted by Hitler's "Leading Staff" as an assault on the NS State. It unleashed a punitive blow against all Jews remaining in Germany that has entered history under the cynical moniker "Reichskristallnacht". The action was prepared according to plan. On the 9th November 1938, late afternoon, SA and SS squads were taken in camouflaged trucks to places within 10 to 30 km. The men, not in uniform, were inconspicuously dressed, so that people at the sites of the incidents would barely recognize them. An agreed signal at a late evening hour triggered their work of destruction all over the Reich. About half a dozen men from Horn,

¹⁸ The body was laid out for a week in the community hall of the evangelical Lutheran church in Paris, before it was released for transfer to Germany.

gathered at “im Orte”, i.e. outside the door of the Jewish merchant Blank, are reported to have boarded a truck which had turned the corner and stopped briefly, then to speed away in a southerly direction.¹⁹ Only next day did the eyewitness realize its connection with the previous night’s disgusting crimes.

Terrible things happened. Shop windows were smashed and the display goods dragged on to the street. Shelves and drawers were emptied of their precious contents. Textiles and bales of material landed outside in the dirt. The residents fled into the cellars and tried to hide in their fear, or to escape via dark alleys. Tracked down to their hiding places, they were beaten and abused. Woes betide anyone resisting these brutes. Old, very old Jews had, with total innocence seen and heard and become witnesses to the acts of destruction. They were pushed and shoved, even down the stairs. For such witnesses might one day be dangerous, so it was best to liquidate them. The work of destruction centered on four sites in the town. The former Examus home on Burgstrasse was spared because it had already been sold, the same being true for the Sondermanns’ house on the Market and that of the Klarenmeyers on Parkstrasse in Bad Meinberg.

On the corner of Domensoot- and Heerstrasse lived Moses Sondermann (aged over 80), his son Max (aged 52) and his daughter Jenny (aged about 47), all in great poverty because, years ago, they had had to give up the butcher’s shop which they had run together with Examus on upper Veldrome Strasse (today Jahnstrasse). And although nothing was available “to haul out” from there, they were included in the collective family-wide punitive detention. The shop existed no more – so all their pitiful personal belongings, crockery and the preserves from the cellar were thrown out on to the street. Kid goats and lambs were released from their shed and ran bleating about the road. The son Max, our football enthusiast, a bachelor and epileptic, may have tried to defend himself. He was repeatedly and violently beaten up, and his screams set one’s teeth on edge. Our witness, a wall-to-wall neighbor, was woken by the shouting and so shocked that she could not fall asleep again all night. Max Sondermann was dragged to “the fire station” late at night without the neighbors noticing, so there was much guessing as to his where he was. Presumably his injuries and

¹⁹ Probably they traveled to Salzkotten. Either some participants had talked, or else they were recognized there against all expectations. Three of them are said to have been tried for their deeds after the war and to have served their sentences. Names were not mentioned but the rumors refuse to die. All three have reportedly died since then.

epileptic fits did gain him admittance to some hospital. At Christmas 1938 he was released home, feeble and visibly marked by it all. By next day a heavy bout of pneumonia had sent him back to bed. He died on the night of New Year 1938/1939. Thank goodness, the rumor that he had been thrown into a well cannot be confirmed. His sister-in-law Mrs Ruth Krause (née Klarenmeyer) of Belle, now in London, recalls vividly that his funeral on 3rd January 1939 was “totally undignified”. Max Sondermann was the last but one to be buried on the Horn Cemetery.

The Hirschfelds had been living for almost 80 years on the corner of Nord- and Pfuhlstrasse.²⁰ Jakob H (aged 84) and his sister Julie (aged 83)²¹ must have been in bed when those fiends tore them out of their sleep. They could not understand what was happening. The old lady, completely confused, rushed around and got in the way of those evildoers. With a small shove they sent her head tumbling head first down the stairs. The old woman’s cries, the crashing and banging caused by the intruders, had attracted a lot of spectators, who followed the proceedings at a safe distance in apprehensive silence. The casualty of the fall was carried off in a bed sheet. She died the same night without regaining consciousness. Maybe she was already dead when they took her away. On 26.11.38 the police in Bielefeld reported to the secret police offices in Berlin as follows: “The Jewess Miss Julie Hirschfeld, b. 29.9.1856 in Horn, residing in Horn, Nordstrasse 11, lost her life during this action. Hirschfeld is shortsighted and thus fell down the stairs. She died from the resulting injuries in the hospital at Detmold.” Only the date, 10.11.38, is recorded on her grave, since no tombstone erected in the NS period was allowed to bear a Hebrew inscription, except the Star of David. She was loving kindness personified, and continued the work of her mother’s Reka-Hirschfeld Foundation – a commitment to give aid – as a matter of course. For decades she provided hundreds of beggars with food; she of all people had to die so cruelly!

The rampage of destruction then continued at the Sostbergs’ and Blumenthals’, who ran their modest butcher’s shop hardly 100 m. further along Nordstrasse. In a twinkling, the front doors to the house and shop were forced open; next the large marble plate was torn away from the counter and hurled on to the street where it broke to smithereens. Our eyewitness was scared out of his sleep by

²⁰ The father of Jakob H. (now aged almost 85) had bought the house in 1862 from heirs of the Höffelmans, a very traditional family of smiths.

²¹ Cf. Isermann: *Chronik Stadt und Amt Horn*, pp. 118-120, particularly the Reka-Hirschfeld Foundation

this; along with many neighbors, he then watched the proceedings. The men were throwing further valuable objects from display cabinets and cupboards into the street. The young Israelites couple Blumenthal and their unmarried sister/sister-in-law Anne Sostberg, were leaning out of a window on the first floor and flinched every time something clattered or shattered. They themselves were not molested, perhaps because they remained completely passive. The two small children did not appear at the window. Probably they had crawled into their beds out of terror. The whole performance may have taken about 20 minutes until the intruders turned on their next target. Thereupon 83-year-old Jakob Hirschfeld, mentioned above, appeared – bent, distraught and bewildered. He turned to the Blumenthals at the first floor window and shouted up to them in a cracked voice: “Now they are going to do hurt us! Oh no! How cruel, how terrible!” The numerous spectators were seized with dread, but not one intervened.

Old man Hirschfeld could not get over the villainy of the “Kristallnacht” and the death of his sister. Two months later, on the 22nd of January of next year, he too passed away. The last grave on the Horn Cemetery was dug for him.

Then they went on to the Blanks’ place, “an der Ecke”. Here the brutes raged and wrecked at their worst, also, perhaps, because the house-owner was not be found. He was able to get to safety at the last moment over the “Wipper” and to find a safe refuge away from home. But his wife and daughter, who were left behind, bore the full brunt. Oh! the valuables that were destroyed, all of the best quality! Much of it landed in the gutter and here quite few took part in the plunder. The stealing and carting off went on all night – big rolls of material, underwear, the finest silk wares and so on. “It’s only Itzig’s stuff!” was the reply to any questioners. As if Jewish property meant public property. The Seventh Commandment did not apply that night! Next morning the owner’s wife, still quite distraught, was poking about among the remains of her property, which lay scattered all over the streets. Suddenly she picked up an inconspicuous carton, from which she unfolded a white veil – she had worn it well over thirty years ago when her husband had carried her, his bride, over the threshold of their house, and had kept it carefully ever since. Now she started weeping bitterly and hurried back into her ruined home, and the people standing around were ashamed...

Her husband had returned early in the morning. By late morning those monsters had seized him and now gave him a delayed, but therefore an extra

violent and cruel a beating. They dragged him, grimacing with pain and barely conscious, to the “fire station”. His wife and daughter did not leave his side. So they were also locked up, while local Horn SA-men stood on guard!

Blank senior had been inhumanly crushed. His hernia in the groin, an old and recurring ailment, had protruded and he was doubled up with pain. A young woman from next door, mother of a toddler and an infant, heard the pleas for a doctor and took pity. She summoned up courage, went boldly to the “Town Hall” and demanded the urgent attendance of a doctor. She was categorically turned down, with the instruction: “Those are not human beings”. She was to “scram” home and not to dare bother them with such matters; otherwise they would make her do more useful jobs such as pulling beets in Heesten. The young mother was not to be intimidated, repeated her demand and remarked calmly: “Pulling beets – that’s OK with me, but before that I’ll come and deposit my two small kids on your desk!” The woman was not molested further, as was to be expected. Such examples of civilian courage were unfortunately the exception. In the afternoon, the town courier arrived at the “fire station” with a doctor. The pains were eased but the whole situation was deplorable. One neighbor, father of a young family, dared to comment to the guards that they could really let the detainees go because they had suffered enough by now. He was promptly locked up for the night in the “fire station”. Later he was to lose his life in the war...

In Bad Meinberg, brother and sister Hermann and Rosalie Klarenmeyer, both about 80 years of age and unmarried, had sold their house, which was located next to the Marienheim, as early as 1937; the purchasers were Heinrich and Otto Deicke, the latter, a young barber in Bad Meinberg.²² They found shelter with the shoemaker Witte at Marktstrasse 200 (today the Bee café and bakery). Despite frequent harassment, he did do them the service of a Good Samaritan out of a Christian sense of responsibility, so that the evening of their life seemed secure. They were not molested during the “Kristallnacht”. Rosalie died on 8th November 1940 in the Detmold Hospital, aged 83. Her grave can no longer be found. Most probably she was buried very discreetly in the Jewish cemetery in Detmold, without a tombstone for her ever being erected.

²² Until the WW1, the young graduates teaching at the Hermann School would reside at the Klarenmeyers’. In their house, Wilhelm Rebbe received private lessons in Latin. H. Klarenmeyer had good personal relations with the spa manager, Kaupt, to whom he presented a gold balance as a farewell gift. It was the siblings Klarenmeyer who placed the epitaph heading this essay on their father’s grave.

Some 14 days later, on 27.11.1940, Hermann Klarenmeyer reported his departure from Bad Meinberg in order to move to his brother Gustav and the sister-in-law in Lemgo, Echternstrasse 70. At 82 years of age the oldest Jewish “Lemgoer”, he was deported from here on 28th July 1942 with another 15 fellow sufferers to a concentration camp.²³ A taxi owner from Meinberg who happened to be in Lemgo that morning, had only been able to wave to him and he had waved back...

The Klarenmeyers and Sondermanns in Oberbelle were spared personal harassment during the “Kristallnacht”. However the entrance to the house and the front garden were dirtied, indeed filthily dirtied! But it was only next morning that the bestial behavior of those criminals was noticed – for all this had happened under cover of darkness. Perhaps they had been taught caution from a lesson learned the previous year. Then matters had taken far worse a course. A company of soldiers had been billeted in Belle and the local Party leaders had invited them for an evening of free beer, without the knowledge and permission of the company commander. After the drinking bout they caused a scene that was like a rehearsal for the “Kristallnacht”. In the dark, some of the soldiers, led by the Party bosses, set out for the Klarenmeyers’ house. They bawled and banged, and some windowpanes were broken. The residents were frightened out of their sleep and some took to their heels. Mrs. Klarenmeyer, terrified to a panic, jumped out of a window and sprained her ankle... Next morning there was a violent altercation between the Party leaders and the company’s commanders. Maybe the citizens of Belle remembered that stark lesson and thus abstained from worse atrocities on this November night.

On 12th November 1938, Hitler’s cabinet, chaired by Goering,²⁴ decided that the German Jews would have to pay a total indemnity of “one milliard gold marks” as a sort of compensation for the assassination in Paris. The crimes of the “Kristallnacht” were, so to speak, thus to be legitimized, incomprehensible as this may sound. The “Kristallnacht” was prepared and carried out according to a plan, and to deny this borders on cynicism.

Abroad, the pogroms against the Jews had not gone unnoticed. Hitler’s Germany had shown its true face and the world had been warned. In order to

²³ Cf. *Juden in Lemgo*, p. 11.

²⁴ Cf. “General Plan for Total Plunder” Document PS-1816 in: *Das Dritte Reich und die Juden*, pp 75-80.

assuage the massive attacks from abroad and to divert attention from its war plans, Germany now treated its Israelites somewhat more delicately. The frontiers became a little more pervious, though not for everybody. Anyone who had connections abroad could now dare to take the plunge. But most, indeed all of them had been robbed of their financial means, and without these, who was willing to make a fresh start in life? So most of them stayed, at all events the elderly, as yet unaware of the terrors awaiting them. It was bad enough that the emigration permit was granted only for a high – indeed a very high – ransom. The expropriated milliard was not yet enough! It was mainly relations and friends in Holland who made the money available. Thus it was that the following were able to flee during the year 1939 to 1940.

1. Walter Examus, aged 31, via Holland and England to his brother in Connecticut, USA;
 2. Hanna Sondermann of Belle aged 16, to her aunt Helen Klarenmeyer in Mandatory Palestine. Hanna's parents Albert and Else (née Klarenmeyer) and her younger brother, remained in Belle;
 - 3-5. Walter and Mrs. Sondermann, aged 50 and 45, with their son Fritz, 16, had flown to Cologne after the sale of their house in Horn and lived there for three years in dire poverty. The longed-for transit visa via Belgium arrived late in August 1939 and they crossed the border at Aachen that same afternoon on their way to the USA.²⁵
 - 6-7. The sisters Ruth and Anneliese Klarenmeyer of Belle, aged 28 and 36 fled via Amsterdam to London, where they struggled to find the meanest employment and survived the war with great hardship.
 - 8-9. The father, Moses Sondermann, aged 87, and daughter Henny, aged 48, was "allowed" to leave Germany in January 1940 after outbreak of the war.²⁶
- Including Fritz Blank, who had fled early on, this, makes 10 Israelites of our town who escaped the Holocaust.

The following remained in the German homeland of their birth:

²⁵ Cf. Supplement 4: Obituary in the Gazette Telegraph in Colorado Springs, of 28.10.1976

²⁶ In the interval between the Polish campaign (Sept. 1939) and the French campaign of 10.5.1940

1-3. The couple S. and J. Blank, aged ca. 60-70, and their daughter Hilde, aged 15. Soon after the " Kristallnacht" they abandoned their ruined house in Horn and moved to the house in Bielefeld near the railroad station at Falkstrasse 17, which they had acquired in better times. The daughter could have been ransomed, but she did not want to forsake her aged parents in their misery. A roster of a few Horn families rallied round to keep them supplied, in the end, with pork-based meat and sausage products "They would eat everything – they were so hungry" – went the report. Is it possible that they received no ration cards?

4. Änne Sostberg, on Nordstrasse, Horn, aged ca. 40.

5-8. The married couple Blumenthal (Mrs. Ella, née Sostberg) and their two pre-school children.

9-14. Mother Examus, née Levi, aged ca. 65 and her youngest son Alfred, 27, as well as the three unmarried daughters, Elly, Hedwig and Erna. Elly had a school-aged daughter, whose father, a Lippe NCO, had broken his vows to Elly Examus under pressure of the National Socialist authorities. They were all staying with the youngest Examus on the Market at Salzkotten.

15-16. The siblings Hermann and Rosalie Klarenmeyer in Bad Meinberg aged 80 and 82;

17. Sarah Klarenmeyer in Belle, aged ca. 80;

18. Her bachelor son, Emil Klarenmeyer, aged ca. ca. 58;

19. Albert Sondermann in Belle, aged 58;

20. Else Sondermann née Klarenmeyer, in Belle, aged ca. 45;

21. Julius Sondermann in Belle, b. 14.4.1927, 12 years of age.

The nature of the humiliations which the Jews who remained behind had to suffer at that time is illustrated by the following example from the spring of 1939. Walter M. of Belle, born 1919, attended the High School, and was about to take his final examinations. On his way from school to Bad Pymont railroad station and home, he was run over on the pavement by a drunken driver, thrown to the ground and grievously injured. A Jewish doctor, in front of whose house the accident had occurred, immediately brought a stretcher and blankets, made the boy comfortable and wanted to give him medical first aid. The spectators round about forbade him to do so and drove him back into his house because he was a Jew! Ample time was still to elapse before an ambulance arrived from the hospital. Hours later, the victim died. His siblings

describe the event as cautiously today as they did then: “Maybe our brother could have been saved by the Jewish doctor...”

The Second World War broke out on the first of September 1939. Many new workers had to be recruited in order to replace those drafted into the armed forces. Besides the many Poles, and, later, Russian POWs subjected to compulsory work, able-bodied Jews were also recruited. But systematic registration and “total recruitment” were not as yet guaranteed. The aim was to harass them and integrate them into the war machine. And whoever was no longer able to meet the demands was quite soon directed towards the “Final Solution” and gassed.

The conditions necessary for these steps were prepared by means of regulations. First, in 1941/2, all Jews remaining in Germany received a new passport in which the men’s given name was supplemented with the name “Israel”, and the women’s, with the name “Sarah”. Thus, at check-ups, everyone’s identity was known. The records in the Registry Office were correspondingly emended, in red ink. It was no longer possible to contradict or appeal these entries. Hitler’s Minister of Justice had deprived all Jews of their civil rights by placing all their affairs under the authority of the police.

In the spring of 1942, deportation of the Jews to the concentration camps began. By the end of March, all Jews living in what was then the Minden Administrative District were registered. The deportation began in the spring of 1942 with the Bielefeld Jews, and went on till late in the summer – in Lippe. Our eyewitness remembers the events exactly and reports:

“I was working in Bielefeld in 1942 and had my day off on the 29th of March. I was taking my regular morning walk through town when I suddenly saw a lot of Jews, identifiable by the Star of David, being herded together and led away by the SA and the police. Among them I recognized Salli Blank, formerly of Horn, his wife and daughter. As I had some time and was gripped by horror I followed the column up to the railroad goods station, where about all the Jews of Bielefeld and district had been assembled. They were all carefully guarding their meager belongings - clothing and a little food: they were allowed 25 kg. of luggage per person. I saw how they were being crammed into each wagon. One overcrowded wagon after the other was bolted shut. Unfortunately I could not wait for the departure of the train. The scene had made me speechless and I left the scene of that dreadful act overcome by my thoughts. Along with me,

other spectators had had silently to permit these inhuman deeds to happen. Any of us protesting would doubtless have been maltreated and imprisoned!

Most likely, the Examus family, who had remained in Salzkotten and comprised the mother, three daughters, the son, Alfred as well as the school-aged granddaughter, will have been forced, soon after this, to travel the same road. The Jews of Horn and Belle will have joined Hermann Klarenmeyer of Lemgo on the 28th July 1942 and been delivered to Detmold. The four-membered Blumenthal family of Horn and Anne Sostberg boarded the streetcar for Detmold under supervision, while mother and son Klarenmeyer and the Sondermann couple and their son Julius were taken away by truck. Thus twenty Jewish fellow citizens of today's Horn - Bad Meinberg were deported and not one has returned! Small children and old men were murdered, a fact not to be denied. Young Robert Levi of the neighboring Schlangen was the only one who managed to escape and come back.²⁷

After war's end, Mrs. Sophie Weil returned to Germany and, from 1951, managed a spa guesthouse in Bad-Meinberg. She died on 30.7.1979 and was buried in Steinheim Jewish cemetery on 3/8/1979. Johannes Waldhof has described her odyssey and that of her family in his book *Die Geschichte der Juden in Steinheim* (pp. 269-272).

Mrs. Emmy Beine née Rätttig (b. 9.9.1897 in Düsseldorf) also found refuge in our town. Married to a Christian, the actor Hugo Beine, she had remained relatively unmolested during the years of the Third Reich, because his profession demanded frequent change of domicile.. Her husband died in 1956.²⁸ Mrs Beine was sociable person²⁹. She died in Detmold Hospital at the age of 87 and her wish to be buried in the Jewish Cemetery in Detmold³⁰ was fulfilled by her officially appointed caregiver. The Rabbi of Herford and its Jewish community conducted the ceremony.

Of the Jews who were able to escape until 1940, none have returned. Such was their embitterment at the cruel events in Hitler's Germany.

²⁷ His odyssey was recorded in 1977 by Christian Starre of Bad Lippspringe in his book: "Fate of the Jews in Bad Lippspringe and Schlangen" (State Archives Detmold, Reg. no. D71, no. 745). See Appendix 3.

²⁸ His grave is to be found in the cemetery on Steinheimer Strasse.

²⁹ She took part also in Christian activities.

³⁰ The Jewish Cemetery in Detmold is the only one in Lippe that is open today.

Fritz Blank attained a doctorate, married a French woman and escaped via Switzerland to Canada before outbreak of the war, becoming a university professor of medicine. At war's end he returned to Switzerland in an effort to obtain reparations for the injustices suffered by himself and his family. He ignored those Horn citizens whom, in recognition of their loyal assistance, he had made over some of his landed properties in the Horn district. Fritz Blank knew what these had meant to his parents and sister. For the grave of one old Horn resident he had sent a large wreath and had ordered adding the words: "Your friend". Only twice more would he step on German soil, staying briefly with friends, also in Horn. He died about 1977, aged less 63.

In the early 1960's, Walter Examus wrote to some former neighbors in Horn from the USA, where he had managed to found a livelihood with the help of his brother, and had founded a family. For his reparation claims he needed sworn affidavits that his father had had a butcher's business in Horn before Hitler's take-over. There were difficulties in obtaining this, and Professor Blank, whose Swiss address he had obtained, probably helped him in the matter. Walter Examus bore no more grudge against the Germans. He was always happy to receive post, supplemented by photos and newspaper reports, from his former home. To his own letters he would often add dollar bills for preserving the appearance of the graves. Unfortunately this contact has been interrupted.

Fritz A. Sondermann, born 1923 in Horn, made a brilliant career in the USA. He obtained his doctorate at Yale and was appointed Professor of Political Sciences at Colorado College, and for a while was a member of City Council of Colorado Springs. In 1962 he was elected President of the "Internationale Studiengesellschaft" an Association of some 100 prominent professors in the field of political science, history and economics. He was a member of several professional societies, advisory committees and boards of trustees, particularly of the National Board for the Advancement of Colored Peoples. He was also Chairman of the local Jewish community and therein acted also as Sunday School teacher.³¹

In the autumn of 1969 he stayed in Horn for a visit with his family,³² and made contact with former school friends. They report that he bore neither

³¹ Cf. Appendix 4.

³² With his wife Mrs. Marion Sondermann, born in Nürnberg and daughter of the inventor and manufacturer of "Tempo Handkerchiefs"; with his sons Eric Warren and Gary Frank and his daughter Judy Ellen.

anger nor hatred towards the Germans. A joyous spirit of reunion is reported to have been typical of all these encounters. No word was ever said about reparations and claims arising from the compulsory sale of the house on the Market, though they may well have been existed. Two of his erstwhile girl school friends corresponded with him until his death from cancer on 28.10.1978 at the age of almost 55.

Anneliese Klarenmeyer (b. 1903 in Belle) remained in London, as did her sister Ruth (b. 1911), who married a fellow sufferer (Krause) from Düsseldorf soon after the war. After years of toil the couple Krause, and Anneliese, the sister, were able to purchase a modest terraced house. Soon after the war was over, they resumed contact with old friends and acquaintances from Belle and Bad Meinberg and with one person from Detmold, when regular mutual visits ensued. Mr. Krause has passed away, as has the older of the two sisters (in 1984). Mrs. Ruth Krause, (now aged 76) stayed in Detmold and in Horn - Bad Meinberg in 1986 and 1987. She tended the graves of the Klarenmeyers in Belle³³ and those of the Sondermanns in Horn.

Mrs. Krause is the only survivor³⁴ preserving the tradition of the numerous Horn - Bad Meinberg Jews and she nurtures contact with her former home without hatred or resentment. She declines official honors and contacts, but she and those, now deceased, who shared her fate deserve not to be forgotten.

³³ 13 Gravestones and a memorial tablet; the cemetery is privately owned, being administered by Mrs. Krause.

³⁴ Her niece Hannah Sondermann (b.1927) emigrated to Mandatory Palestine in 1939 and did write from Israel after the war, but contact with her has ceased. She may still be alive.

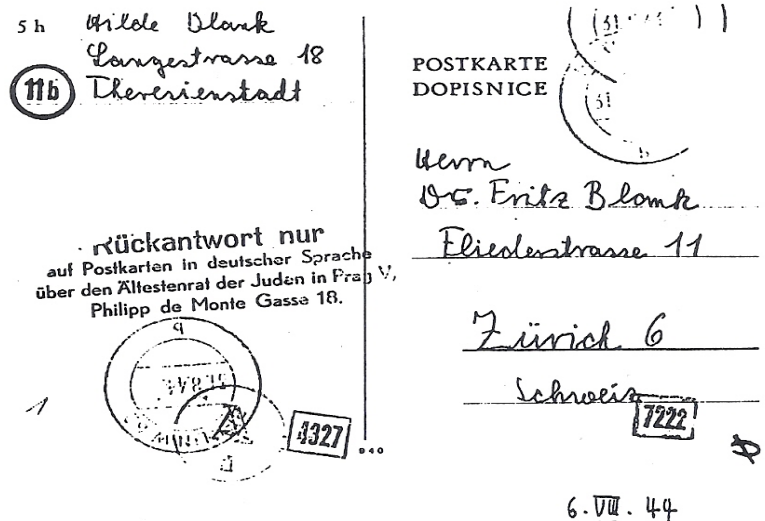
Appendix 5

The last postcard greetings sent by 21-year old Hilde Blank, (b. 1923 in Horn) from Theresienstadt Concentration Camp near Prague. She congratulates her brother Dr. Fritz Blank on the birth of his first child, a son.

The card had been attached as evidence to an application for his sister to be recognized as deceased.

This card "was found" among about 4,000 applications. The original is deposited in

Anhang 5:



D 23 B1 Nr. 1285
1975 29

the Detmold
State
Archives with
the
registration
number:
D23 Bielefeld
Zug. 70/1980,
Nr. 91/48.

Translation:

5h Hilde Blank
Langestrasse 18
Theresienstadt

Reply only on
postcards in
German,
via the Jews'
Elders' Council in
Prag V,
Phiipp de Monte
Gasse 18.

Postcard *Round rubber stamps*

Mr.
Dr Fritz Blank
Fliederstrasse 11
Zurich 16
Switzerland

Round rubber stamps

My dearest ones!

Last week I had much joy with your dear card of May.

I am happy that all of you are well, which I can report also of myself. Is my nephew being a good boy?

I just can't imagine that I am an auntie already.

Please do keep on writing busily. I also will be writing you regularly.

Lots of greetings and kisses

Yours

Hilde