

Laying of Stolpersteine for Amalie und Bernhard Katz, Wednesday, September 21
Dr. Rainer Driever

Amalie and Bernhard Katz

Amalie Lipschütz was born on 8 August 1874 in (Wodzisław) Waidiskow, her later husband David Katz in 1867 in Brody. At that time, the area still belonged to Russo-Poland. In the spring of 1901, the couple moved from Leipzig to Göttingen. They initially lived on Gronerstraße 5. David Katz worked as a sorter of bristles.

Their son Bernhard is born on 17 February 1903. At that time the couple lived on Weenderstraße 14. As is not unusual for families with low income, the three of them moved almost every year. In 1907, David Katz dies a mere 40 years old. This dramatically worsens the already economically tense situation of the small family. Amalie Katz now has to provide for herself and her son Bernhard alone. In 1915, the two of them move into a new flat on the second floor of Gronerstraße 13 where they remain living for the next 20 years.

Bernhard Katz attends primary school, then commercial school. Subsequently, he completes a commercial apprenticeship at the fur wholesaler Raphael Hahn Söhne, a Jewish family business based on Weenderstraße 63. After his apprenticeship he is taken on by Max Raphael and Nathan Hahn. This enables him to contribute to the upkeep of the small family.

Besides his work in Hahn's company, there is little time left. Bernhard uses this time, among other things, to play football in the 1st SC Göttingen 05. Ludolf Katz, who is not related to him (emigrated to the USA in 1938), reported after the war: "I joined the 1905 football club when I was fifteen and was a member until 1933 or 1934 when we Jewish members were kicked out by order of the party." Apart from Bernhard Katz, this also included Julius Löwenstein and Walter Stern.

Since the economic situation of mother and son remains very tense, Amalie Katz opens a small grocery shop in one of her two rooms on Gronerstraße 13 in February 1924. There are walk-in customers but the core business is conducted via supply. She concentrates on trading in kosher fat and sausage products. She gets most of her goods from Kassel; her customers mainly are the orthodox households in Göttingen. The range is supplemented by cleaning products and soaps.

Amalie is in frail health; in addition to that, the efforts of retail trade wear her out. This is why her son Bernhard takes over the management as of 1925. He mainly picks up the shipped goods at the railway station and then supplies the customers. The profit is low, barely enough to feed two people. Bernhard is to take over the entire business, and there are plans to move the shop to the ground floor of the house.

From April 1933 on, two SA men are primarily gunning for Bernhard: Heinz Lange and Oskar Fiege. This makes deliveries difficult; Bernhard fears abuse; probably he still remembers the images of the March Pogrom vividly. This affects the already low turnover of the shop again, it decreases by half. Soon Bernhard Katz sees no future for himself in Göttingen. In October

1934 he goes to Frankfurt, marries there and travels with his wife Paula via northern Italy to Palestine. The couple settles in Haifa. His German citizenship, acquired in 1927, expires, and as of March 1935 he is considered a stateless person.

His mother Amalie continues to run the small business until the end of 1934. Then her income is no longer sufficient for the small flat on Gronerstraße 13. She moves into the house of the Jewish community on Obere Maschstraße 15 at the end of February 1935. Amalie Katz now receives 8 RM in welfare payments.

In the summer of 1933 she had still received a temporary residence permit. Upon her request, the Polish consulate in Hamburg informs her in May 1935 that her Polish citizenship would be checked on the basis of her husband David's documents.

In 1938 the situation changed. Poland made efforts to revoke the citizenship of nationals living abroad. This, in turn, gave the Nazis rise to arrest 17,000 Jews with Polish citizenship for the purpose of expulsion. In Göttingen, Markus Wagner, Netty Wagner and Amalie Katz were taken into deportation custody on 27 October 1938 and handed over to the Gestapo in Hildesheim. From there they were brought to the Polish border and driven to Zbaszyn (Bentschen). Amalie Katz remained in the camp there until she found a place in a home in Poznan (Posen) in 1939. From there she wrote to her son Bernhard on 11 August 1939:

"Now, dear children, I would like to tell you that I feel very weak, life here has been hard enough up to now but since the last three weeks it has become terrible, all the aid committees are in disarray because there are no more funds available and we are told that no more money is coming in from abroad for the unfortunate emigrants. Since 3 weeks the kitchen here in the home has been completely closed and no more food is given to us, not even a glass of warm water. (...) For the time being, we here are given an allowance of 4 Sloti once a week ... but since everything here is very expensive it is quite impossible to provide ourselves only with the bare necessities for living from that amount."

Three weeks later the German Wehrmacht was already in Poland and the trace of Amalie Katz is lost. She was probably deported to the General Government together with the Posen Jews in December 1939. She died either in one of the numerous ghettos or in one of the extermination camps at the latest. In 1962, she was pronounced dead by the Hanover District Court.