

After eight years, we are today standing in front of the house Obere-Masch-Straße No. 10 – the Jewish community house until 1942 – once again. There are already Stolpersteine here for Fanny and Caesar Asser as well as for the family of Erich Meyerstein who we commemorate today. Why do we stand in front of this house again today? Until the year 2016, only stones for the murdered victims of the Holocaust were laid in Göttingen. In 2018, this was changed by the Stolpersteine for the families Hahn, Meininger and Silbergleit. From that year on, Jewish fellow citizens were also included who succeeded in fleeing and who were able to emigrate. This is why today we lay a Stolperstein for:

Erich Meyerstein

Erich was born in Göttingen on 14 August 1923 as son of the livestock dealer Hugo Meyerstein and his wife Paula. His father moved to Göttingen in 1913. Like his brother Siegfried, he had previously worked for his father Magnus L. Meyerstein as a livestock dealer in Bremke. This way of earning a living was not unusual for German Jews in rural communities. It resulted from various restrictions that had made it impossible for German Jews to choose their profession freely. With the foundation of the German Reich in 1871, freedom of trade in Prussia and legal equality lifted these restrictions but did not mean that family traditions were abolished thereby.

So, his father Hugo Meyerstein also ran a livestock business in the Rote Straße. In 1919, he married Paula Jaretzki from Posen. The couple had three sons and one daughter. Financial difficulties led to the family moving several times within the city. After the depression at the end of the 1920s, Erich's father lost his legal capacity due to an oath of disclosure. Therefore, the livestock business was continued in 1931 in the name of his mother, Paula Meyerstein. The pressure exerted on Jews with regard to economic activities as from 1933 at first resulted in the forced sale of Hugo Meyerstein's real estate in the Rote Straße. During that time, the family moved to Obere-Masch-Straße 10. On 1 January 1937, the livestock business was completely closed.

Erich Meyerstein spent his early childhood in Rote Straße 33. His school years did not end like those of his 10-year-old brother Georg at the Luther School in November 1938: "On the morning after the "Crystal Night" the ten-year-old Georg Meyerstein entered – as reported by a former classmate – his classroom at the Luther School late, pale and bleary-eyed. His teacher asked him to go home again and gave him something to take along, namely, that he didn't need to come back. By the decree of the Reich Minister for Science and Education Rust on 15 November 1938, all Jewish pupils were then prohibited from attending school. It says there that: "after the nefarious murderous deed in Paris, it can no longer be demanded from a German teacher to teach Jewish schoolchildren. It also goes without saying that it is unbearable for German pupils to sit in a classroom together with Jews." What is meant here is the attempt on the German diplomat Ernst vom Rath's life made by the 17-year-old Jew Herschel Grynszpan in Paris on 7 November.

Already at this time, Erich Meyerstein did no longer attend school. In order to ensure the family's income, the 15-year-old worked for Göttingen construction companies in 1938, and so did his brother Ludwig and his father.

After the November pogrom 1938, his father and he were arrested and taken to the Reinhausen court prison. With the support of an aid organization, an apprenticeship place in England was found for Erich Meyerstein and he emigrated there in January 1939.

The price for the rescue of the 16-year-old Erich was the separation from his family. It is uncertain whether he managed to maintain contact with them in one way or another. His 51-year-old father Hugo, his 52-year-old mother Paula, his 21-year-old brother Ludwig and his 14-year-old brother Georg were first taken to the Hanover-Ahlem collection camp on 26 March 1942 and then deported to the Warsaw ghetto via Trawniki. They either died in the Warsaw ghetto or were murdered in Treblinka with the other survivors of the ghetto. His sister Hertha who had already moved to Silesia in 1929 survived the Holocaust.

In England, Erich called himself Herman Eric Marston. He died at the age of 67 in Enfield, Greater London, in October 1990.

Erich Meyerstein, who was called Herman Eric Marston for most of his life, is an example of the innumerable fates of German Jews about who scarcely anything is known. We know where and under which circumstances he grew up. We know little about his life itself but – in contrast to his parents and his brothers – he was able to live a life.

Sources:

U. Schäfer-Richter, J. Klein: Memorial Book. The Jewish Citizens in the Göttingen District 1933-1945, Göttingen 1992, p. 173.

Stolpersteine for the family Meyerstein (Paula, Hugo, Ludwig, Georg), Obere Maschstraße 10, laid on 10 February 2016, text: Students of the Otto-Hahn-Gymnasiums (OHG) Göttingen.

<https://www.geni.com/people/Herman-Marston/6000000040174529758>