

## PLACES AND BIOGRAPHIES



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MARGARITA LEDERMANN \* 1920

Sierichstraße 66 (Hamburg-Nord, Winterhude)

1943 Theresienstadt

1944 weiterdeportiert nach Auschwitz

further stumbling stones in **Sierichstraße 66**:

[Anita Ledermann](#), [Leah May Ledermann](#), [Herbert Ledermann](#), [Hanne Mertens](#)

Herbert Gustav Max Ledermann, was born on 11.6.1890 in Hamburg, deported on 24.3.1943 to Theresienstadt, and deported from there on 29.9.1944 to Auschwitz

Leah May Ledermann, nee Luria, was born on 29.5.1895 in Hamburg, deported on 24.3.1943 to Theresienstadt, and deported from there on am 4.10.1944 to Auschwitz

Margarita Ledermann, was born on 13. 7.1920, deported from there on 24.3.1943 to Theresienstadt, and further deported from there on 4.10.1944 to Auschwitz (she survived)

Anita Ledermann, was born on 17.11.1921, deported on 24.3.1943 to Theresienstadt, and deported from there on 4.10.1944 to Auschwitz

Herbert Ledermann entered the world as the son of a Lutheran painter Maximilian Wilhelm Braun and his wife Minnie, nee Wassermann, who was not a member of any religion. The parents divorced. Minnie Braun most probably married in 1899 the Lutheran businessman Otto Ledermann, who in March 1899 adopted the young Herbert Gustav Max and had him registered as "now a member of the Lutheran religion". Otto Ledermann died in a car accident in 1904. Herbert Ledermann attended a high school in Hamburg, and later a business college in Switzerland. Around 1910 he jointed a business operated by his grandfather on his mother's side, known as the Wassermann Company, which he left in around 1927, in order to establish his own successful wine merchant's business.

In September 1919 Leah May Luria and he married. His wife was from a well-respected Portuguese-Jewish family. They and the two daughters, Margarita and Anita, lived at first at 27 Andreasstraße, and in April 1933 they moved into a large apartment at 66 Sierichstraße.

Margarita and Anita Ledermann attended the private Firgau School at 53 Sierichstraße, a school to which many well-off Winterhuder parents sent their daughters (see Windesheim, Maass, Götz, Kaftal) and where there teachers taught them equally, regardless of their religious backgrounds. In 1936 Margarita and Anita were sent by their parents to an English boarding school at Montreux in Switzerland, so as to avoid the increasing anti-Semitic harassment.

Based on the National Socialist race laws Herbert Ledermann regarded himself as a

"Mischling Grade 2". However, he was not successful in obtaining papers from the USA to support this view.

To save his business from the boycott it was essential to have it registered which was impossible for a "Full Jew" or "Volljuden". A friend of the family, Karl G. Pardo de Leygonie, wrote about this after the War:

"All the efforts of Mr. Ledermann were in vain because an interested competitor, through the auspices of his trade organisation, put the Gestapo on to Ledermann and every movement he made was watched. I recall that Ledermann, during the period while waiting for his documents, rented a delivery truck and was met by the Gestapo at the customers. They not only mistreated him but declared him a VOLLJUDEN (sic) until he could prove the contrary and marked him accordingly. The same happened to his wife."

In November 1940 he was able to have his business registered but not with the desired result of a business undisturbed. After the war, an official of the Compensation office wrote the following in a note about this fact in expressions of the National Socialist state: "The deceased apparently understood how to disguise his full blooded Jewish origin and hold himself out as a Mischling Grade 2. ... It was only by this means that he was able to have his company registered in November 1940." In January 1941 Herbert Ledermann had to cease operating his business. He was forced to work as a labourer in a munitions factory. In February 1943, shortly before he was deported to Theresienstadt, he was arrested in a raid arranged by Willibald Schallert (see Moser, Grünberg) and held for three weeks in the Fuhlsbüttel Concentration Camp.

The family, while trying to prove their origin, attempted to emigrate to the USA. In the summer of 1939 the daughters returned from Switzerland as it seemed departure for the USA was imminent. The outbreak of war destroyed this hope. The daughters were able to return to Switzerland. In 1940 Anita Ledermann was granted her diploma of secretarial studies. Her sister, Margarita, was trained as a laboratory worker at the Soziale Frauenschule in Geneva. Finally, they returned to Hamburg to stand by their parents. An attempt to migrate via Cuba failed in 1941.

Strangely the daughters were categorised as "Mischlinge Grade 1". As their mother was a "Full Jewess" ("Volljüdin") their father should have been recognised as "Mischling Grade 2", but this application had been refused. In order to remove this anomaly the Gestapo used all sorts of threats and harassed the young women so that they would declare themselves "Full Jews" out of love for their parents. They finally agreed. For the Gestapo this meant that an obstacle to their deportation had been removed. On 24 March 1943 the whole family was deported to Theresienstadt.

Shortly before this occurred there was an unusual farewell visit in Hamburg as Karl G. Pardo de Leygonie recalled: "According to Mr. Ledermann a few days before their deportation a police officer from the Sierichstraße Police Station appeared and said that Mr. Ledermann would no longer need his type writer and his transport would be going in a few days. Mr. Ledermann gave his type writer to the officer as a present."

Herbert Ledermann was taken to Auschwitz on 29 September 1944, and on 4 October followed his family. The parents and their daughter Anita died there.

Margarita Ledermann ended up on a labour transport at Freiberg in Saxony, at a Flossenbürg sub-camp. She had to work in a munitions factory. She shared her night quarters with a fellow prisoner who was suffering from tuberculosis. In April 1945 she was transferred to the Mauthausen Concentration Camp where she was liberated by American troops on 5 May 1945. Seriously ill she fled to Palestine. She died in 1994 in Israel. When the cobble stones were laid for her family it was not known that Margarita Ledermann had survived. For this reason a stone was erroneously put in place for her.

Around the time that the Family Ledermann was deported, in March 1943, the actress Hanne Mertens came from Munich to Hamburg. She was given a furnished apartment at 66 Sierichstraße. It is now known whether this was where the Ledermann family lived.

**Translator: Dr. Stephen Pallavicini**

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Quellen: 1; 4; 8; AfW 130720; Archiv des Instituts für die Geschichte der deutschen Juden, Bericht von Leonor Pardo de Leygonie, Sammlung Karl Georg Pardo de Leygonie; Archiv der Staatsanwaltschaft beim

Landgericht Hamburg, Verfahren gegen Willibald Schallert (50) 35/50/50 14 Ks 56/50, Vernehmung Rudolf Hamburger v. 21.10.1948, Bl. 43 (Akten inzwischen an das StaHH abgegeben); Forschungsstelle für Zeitgeschichte, 6262, ff. 26-27; StaHH 332-8 Meldewesen, Bd. 5; Personenstandsbuch Standesamt Hamburg-Eimsbüttel; AB 1938 (Bd. 1), 1941 (Bd. 1 u. 2).



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The stumbling stone pictured above was laid on March 29th, 2005 and thus became the 1000th Stumbling Stone in Hamburg. The picture was taken by Gesche Cordes.

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