



Inscription at the Installation:

HIER WOHNTE
MARTHA B. HINDEL
 JG. 1896
 VERHAFTET 1937
 1938 KZ LICHTENBURG
 1939 RAVENSBRÜCK
 DEPORTIERT 1942
 ERMORDET 24.3.1943
 AUSCHWITZ

Installation
 25 April 2009

At this time we have not obtained final approval from the Landeshauptarchiv Schwerin (The Mecklenburg State Main Archives in Schwerin) to publish documents [2] to [9] on our website. Therefore, we have left blank the places of the effected documents.



Martha Bertha Hindel and her daughter Carmen-Lore lived at Krausestraße 1

Martha Hindel was born on 4 September 1896 at Reecke-Niendorf (today part of Lübeck-Moisling). She was the second of five children of Karl Hindel, a labourer, and his wife Charlotte, neé Biallas. She had an elder brother Franz and three younger sisters, Anni, Emma and Clara.

Martha Hindel had been living in Hamburg for a length of time before 4 November 1921 which is when her place of residence can first be documented. On 17 October 1925 she gave birth to Carmen-Lore at Hamburg-Altona. The father's name is still unknown. On the first of December 1925 Martha Hindel moved with little Lore from Hamburg-Blankenese to Krausestraße 5, Lübeck, where her sister Emma Baudisch lived. The living conditions there were restrictive in the small flat, so further moves within Lübeck were made.

In 1931 mother and daughter moved first to Brüderstraße 4a, where Martha Hindel worked as a housekeeper. At that time Lore started school. They were both registered with the clerk's office as living at Krausestraße 1, where they lived in one room, which served as their bedroom and sitting room as well as their kitchen. They lived at Krausestraße 1 until 1937.



Martha Hindel with her daughter Carmen-Lore [1]

In 1930 Martha Hindel became a Jehovah's Witness and therefore also a member of the International Bible Students Association (IBSA) which was banned in Germany on 24 June 1933. The prohibition of the IBSA was extended to the whole German Reich on 13 September.

On 7 October 1934 the IBSA headquarters changed its policy of trying to conform to and work within the directives of the government, and in a dispatch of President Joseph Franklin Rutherford the IBSA requested their members to be deliberately noncompliant. At the same time he sent a letter to the Reichsregierung (German Government), in which he spoke out on the ban and pointed out the contradiction between the regime's laws and those of God. He made it unmistakably clear that Jehovah's Witnesses were committed to God's laws. Therefore, with this dispatch the Jehovah's Witnesses became active again, even though their activities were outlawed.

On 8 December 1936 Martha Hindel was sentenced to 5 months in prison by the Hanseatic Special Court Hamburg for going door to door on behalf of the IBSA, witnessing to their faith and offering literature on their faith.

The reasons given for the judgement against her was a quote from one of Martha Hindel's statements to a witness that „*she as a Jehovah's Witness would refuse to use the 'German Salute' (Heil Hitler), but apart from that she was not an enemy of the state (...) She felt obliged to proclaim God's intentions for this world. That was God's commandment for her, which she could not stop obeying.*“

The judges' reasoning given in their judgement goes on further to say:

“The Jehovah's Witnesses are in opposition to the state; they believe they have to obey God more than the authorities on earth. Because of this appalling antagonism they deny the authority of the National Socialist State like any other state. For them the American Rutherford counts for more than the Führer und Reichskanzler (Leader and Chancellor) Adolf Hitler. Concepts like ‚Power' and ‚defending oneself against the enemy' are foreign to them. Their doctrine which is drawn from the Old Testament shows complete judaizing tendencies, and thus nationalistic ideas are repudiated. Their denial of the National Socialist State (...) has the consequence that Jehovah's Witnesses inevitably develop more or less into dangerous enemies of the state. Therefore they are rightly to be banned and are to be vigorously subjugated.”

In explaining their judgement the judges dwelt further on the fact that apart from her activities Martha Hindel was a person „above reproach“. The court saw the sentence of five months as a mild punishment, which was to warn the defendant „Not to spread the Jehovah's Witnesses' doctrine again“ otherwise, the court warned, she could lose custody of her daughter Carmen-Lore.

“If she thinks that she cannot reconcile this with her conscience, she has to think of her child. She has to sacrifice it for her child's sake, otherwise she risks that the guardianship court could possibly take measures to remove her child from her custody.”

(Hanseatisches Sondergericht 11 Js.Sond. 1472/36-(38)Sond.Ger. 531/36.)

The explanations given in this judgment are examples of the attitude of the NS-state towards Jehovah's Witnesses.

The regime implied the IBSA aimed to overthrow the state under the guise of a religious activity and saw the Jehovah's Witnesses as enemies of the state.

The Jehovah's Witnesses denial of the authority of the state was another cause for banning the IBSA. In addition to refusing to use the German Salute, as Martha Hindel had declared to a witness, everything else that was in conflict with Biblical commands as seen by Jehovah's Witnesses was included, namely:

- Military service
- Taking part in anti-aircraft measures
- Voter participation
- Joining NS-organisations
- Taking the oath of allegiance to the "Führer"
- The Nuremberg Race Laws

The judges' judgement also made it clear that Jehovah' Witnesses were in danger of further and more oppressive legal action.

The threatened legal action against Martha Hindel was to remove her child from her custody and it is presumed that this threat was already made during Martha's pre-trial confinement. Several times Martha Hindel addressed the guardianship court in written form. In her case file we can also read that Martha Hindel repeatedly appealed to the foster parents. According to her grandsons the foster parents, with whom Lore finally had to stay, were loyal Nazis.

Martha Hindel served her sentence at the „Lübeckischen Gefangenenanstalt-Lauerhof“ (Lauerhof Prison in Lübeck) and was released in 1937.

Due to accusations by a sister-in-the-faith, who was herself in detention while awaiting trial, Martha Hindel's apartment at Krausestraße 1 was searched for literature of the IBSA but the search failed to find any and the accused was summoned to appear for interrogation at the "Grenzkommissariat" (name of the regional department) of the Lübeck Gestapo (the secret police) on 29 November 1937.

When questioned by the Gestapo on 29 November 1937 at the Grenzkommissariat Martha Hindel made the following statement concerning her identity and the accusations made against her by the Gestapo:

„a) Concerning my identity:

I was born as the daughter of the labourer Karl Hindel and his wife Charlotte, neé Biallas, at Reeke-Niendorf (a village south of Lübeck) on 4 September 1896 and was educated as a Protestant. From age 6 to age 14 I attended the two classroom „Volksschule“ (the local school) and left after 8 years of schooling. After leaving school I worked as a domestic servant.

During the war I worked as a nurse in Barmbeck (correct spelling “Barmbek” which is a suburb of Hamburg) and after the war at the Lübeck hospital. Subsequently I have been cleaning homes up until now and I am receiving a rent allowance from the welfare office. I have never belonged to a political party.

b) Concerning the accusation against me:

Since 1930 I have been a Jehovah’s Witness and have regularly attended meetings. In 1930 or 1931 I was baptized by my brother-in-the-faith Thümmler and also have gone door to door to speak to people and to offer them literature on the Jehovah’s Witnesses’ faith. After the banning of IBSA in 1933 I became active again in 1939 by going door to door. Therefore I was sentenced to 5 months in prison by the Hanseatic Special Court on 8 December 1936..“

(Interrogation transcript of 29 Nov.1937, Gestapo – Staatspolizeistelle Kiel – Grenzpolizeikommissariat Lübeck, Abt. II B1, Tgb.Nr. 9014/37)

Martha Hindel further had it entered into the records that she had taken part in the leafletting actions „Resolution“ and „Open Letter“ initiated by Jehovah’s Witnesses in June 1937. During questioning in court she further described meetings in the home of Hans Jürs at Weiter Lohberg (a street in the Lübeck city centre) (→ see his Stolperstein and further information at www.stolpersteine-luebeck.de), where they held Bible studies and read the “Watchtower” together.

„Resolution“ was the title of an appeal drafted by the IBSA Congress in Lucerne/ Switzerland in September of 1936. It was addressed to the Pope and Adolf Hitler and other members of the government. The appeal not only announced the noncompliant resistance of Jehovah’ Witnesses, but also called upon everybody to refuse to participate in the prosecution of their followers.

The pamphlet “open letter” dealt substantially more clearly with the persecution of Jehovah’s Witnesses by the national-socialist regime. Thus the open letter quoted the required declaration as demanded by the regime with which the Witnesses would renounce their faith. The declaration finished with the salute “Heil Hitler” which Jehovah’s witnesses refused to use.

In being a Jehovah’s Witness the religious as well as the social welfare aspects of life are very important. Therefore, members of the faith supported fellow members, who were also in need, financially and materially. In this vein they paid money as they were able into an account organised by the IBSA headquarters, the so-called Good Hope. The deposited amounts served to finance mission work and the support of impoverished members. Membership fees were not charged.

Martha Hindel earned 10 reichsmarks a week. She donated one reichsmark a month to Good Hope.

On Martha Hindel's registration card at the city archives of the Hansestadt Lübeck 19 of her moves from 1913 to 1931 are recorded. From 1931 up to her first prison sentence at the end of 1936 she continuously lived with her daughter Carmen-Lore at Krausestrasse 1.

We may presume that Martha Hindel felt safe and accepted in her religious community. Her situation as a single mother must not have been easy. She worked hard for the upkeep of her small family. From the numerous letters which she wrote from prison to her daughter, brothers and sisters-in-the-faith and her sister Emma the importance of her faith becomes clear. Her religious conviction and her daughter were to her probably the most important things in her life.

Martha Hindel was arrested because of a “danger of tampering with evidence” and on 1 December 1937 was sent to the women's prison Lübeck Lauerhof in Marli for pre-trial detention.

On 26 February 1938 Martha Hindel was sentenced to 18 months prison by the Schleswig-Holstein special court of Kiel in Lübeck. Her sentence was to be completed on 28 May 1938. During her pre-trial detention and after her sentencing she was transferred several times between Lübeck and Kiel.

In the Kiel district attorney's request to the Lübeck-Lauerhof prison, dated 11 February 1938, to accept Martha Hindel for pre-trial detention, it states that she was charged with an offense against the „Heimtückegesetz“ (Treason Act).

The “Heimtückegesetz” (Treason Act) was the short name of the National Socialist special authority law „against perfidious attacks on state and party and for the protection of uniforms “, which served as a safe guard of the National Socialist rule. Its unclear and extensive generalities allowed the authorities to intimidate and suppress [2] political opposition. In short, with this law anyone could be condemned as an enemy of the state by a special court.

Martha Hindel was transferred from Kiel to the prison in Dreierbergen-Bützow in the present day federal state of Mecklenburg-West Pomerania and was incarcerated there from March to May 1938. Several times her prison was changed between Dreierbergen-Bützow and Rostock and Kiel. These transfers took place primarily at night.

[3][4]

Every time she was admitted to a different prison she had to submit to the admission procedures like registering and surrendering her belongings and money, recording of her personal details, having a physical, recording of her body weight and height, writing of her curriculum vitae etc.

Observation reports were made about the prisoners.

(Scan Strafanstalten Dreierbergen-Bützow)

These reports were complemented with "statements by the remaining senior officials“:

(Scan 11.3.38 „Überzeugte Bibelforscherin, ist durch nichts davon abzubringen“(Nothing can dissuade devoted Jehovah's Witnesses)

[5][6]

On 28 May 1939 Martha Hindel had served her sentence. But she never tasted freedom again.

On 26 May 1939, 2 days before the end of her prison term, the Gestapo, through the Grenkommissariat Lübeck, instructed the Dreierbergen-Bützow prison in writing to take Martha Hindel into protective custody for the time being upon completion of her sentence. She was to be brought to Lübeck by the next group transport. (scan Schutzhaft)

[7]

Jehovah's Witnesses were often taken in so-called protective custody, even though they had served their prison sentence. In the *Informationen zur Schleswig-Holsteinischen Zeitgeschichte* (AKENS 2008) (Information on Schleswig-Holstein Contemporary History) Reimer Möller explains among other things in his article „Schutzhaft“ in der Innenstadt Das Konzentrationslager Glückstadt 1933/34 ("Protective Custody" in the City Centre, the Glückstadt Concentration Camp 1933/34) that

“The heads of the district authorities, who had meanwhile all become NSDAP-followers could impose "protective custody" – a security and political repression measure which allowed indefinite custody and was subjected to no judicial scrutiny. The affected persons had no legal recourse against it. This radical curtailment of personal liberties – found in the "order for the protection of the German people" of the 4th of February – was augmented by the 28 February 1933 "order of the president

of the Reich for the protection of people and state” which also became known as “Reichstagsbrandverordnung” (“The Reichstag Arson Order” was named such, since it was passed just after the arsonist set the German Parliament building on fire). In the course of the National Socialist rule the "Schutzhaft" measures were broadened by decrees and as an "arbitrary measure of the Gestapo ” acquired a “general-preventive character in the beginning of 1938”.

from: Arbeitskreis zur Erforschung des Nationalsozialismus in Schleswig-Holstein e.V. (AKENS)(Hrsg.): “Siegeszug in der Nordmark”. Schleswig-Holstein und der Nationalsozialismus 1925-1950. Informationen zur Schleswig-Holsteinischen Zeitgeschichte, Heft 50.S. 98.

Immediately this instruction from Lübeck was complied with, the timetable was provided for the so-called group transport and the Gestapo in Lübeck was informed accordingly.

(Scan Transportweg)

According to an instruction of the Mecklenburg State Ministry of the Interior to the Dreibergen-Bützow prison the cost of transportation was to be charged to the prisoner herself:

(scan Transportkosten)

[8][9]

On 20 July 1939 Martha Hindel was brought to the Ravensbrück concentration camp near Fürstenberg, 90 km (58 miles) north of Berlin. From the documents available it cannot be determined where she was incarcerated from 8 June to 20 July 1939 upon her arrival by group transport in Lübeck from Altona, a suburb of Hamburg. It is presumed that at that time she was interned in the Lichtenberg concentration camp in Saxony-Anhalt, because in 1939 a considerable group of Jehovah’s Witnesses came from that concentration camp to the newly opened Ravensbrück concentration camp for women.

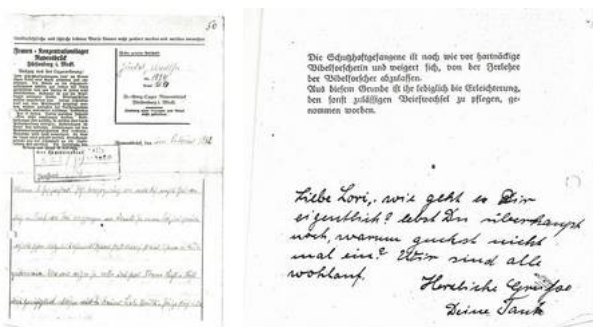
„They (the group) belonged to the first women prisoners registered in Ravensbrück. In the winter of 1939/40 more than 400 Witnesses were held in the cell block because they refused to perform any kind of work which supported the war effort.“ The Jehovah’s witnesses were identified with the mauve stripe on their prison clothes.

Presseinformation Stiftung Brandenburgische Gedenkstätten-Mahn- und Gedenkstätte Ravensbrück anlässlich der Ausstellung “Lila Winkel in Ravensbrück“, Oranienburg 21.02.2007

Even while at Ravensbrück concentration camp Martha Hindel tried by means of letters and postcards to remain in contact with her daughter, her sister Emma and fellow Jehovah’s Witnesses. The correspondence was subject to censorship. Furthermore it was especially checked whether or not she renounced her faith, which Martha Hindel did not do.

In February 1942 she wrote to her sister Emma.

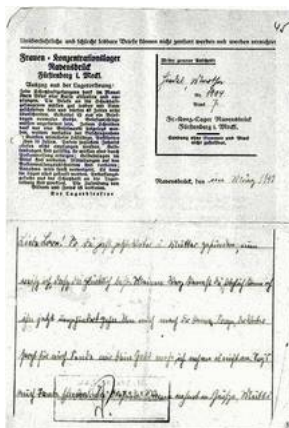
On the back of the postcard the authorities of the Ravensbrück concentration camp stamped that she was forbidden any further correspondence.



Martha's postcard to her sister [10], backside of the postcard showing the writing ban of camp

Martha Hindel's sister apparently passed on the card to her niece Lore. From her short covering letter to her niece it can be taken that her aunt hadn't heard anything from the girl for some time and was trying to contact her.

In spite of the ban Martha Hindel wrote to her daughter in March 1942 that she had now finally a new father and mother. What was most important to her was that her daughter was happy. It can be presumed that she had found out that Lore's foster parents had now become her legal guardians.



Postcard from Ravensbrück, March 1942 [12]

In the same month Martha Hindel was deported to the Auschwitz concentration camp. Again she established contact with others by means of postcards at least with her sister Emma. From the following lines of her postcard it becomes clear that the incoming mail was also censored.



Thus she wrote on 28 June 1942:

My dears at home! How is our little Lorchen (nickname for Lore)? Why does she not write to her mum any more? Emma, please look after her. You wrote that Klara + Ilse have seen you; how are they then? A little bit was repeatedly cut out of your letter, so that I didn't get to learn of all the various news about you... I am glad that so far you are still well. Please give my love to all of them. Warm greetings to all of you from Aunt Martha and mum.

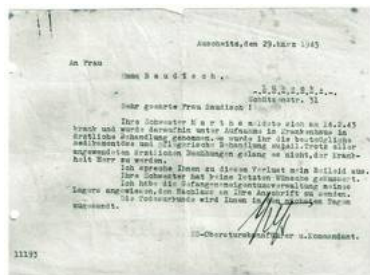


postcard from Auschwitz [13]

From this postcard it can also be understood that there wasn't anymore contact between daughter and her mother or at least it was interrupted. The situation of Carmen Lore, who in the mean time turned 16 years old, must not have been easy. She was growing up in a family loyal to the regime. Her relationship with her mother was complicated by the separation. As she was growing up her mother was not there. Maybe this adolescent could not understand why her mother did not renounce her faith. Carmen Lore may have had the feeling that her mother attached more importance to her faith than to her. She certainly had no precise conception of her mother's life threatening situation.

On the 24th March 1943 Martha Hindel was murdered in Auschwitz.

The notification of her death was sent to her sister Emma Baudisch at Schützenstrasse 31.



Notification of Martha's death from Auschwitz [14]

It is possible that Mrs. Baudisch first believed the contents of this notification. Only after she had learned about the conditions at the camp and the extermination equipment at Auschwitz she might have known that her sister had by no means died a natural death.

Martha Hindel's daughter Carmen Lore lives in Lübeck. She collected her mother's documents and handed them over to her sons, who generously made them available to the *Initiative für Stolpersteine in Lübeck*. Her family agreed to the laying of a Stumbling Stone in memory of her mother and grandmother.

The grandsons had themselves already researched their grandmother's path of suffering and had established contact with the archives.

Mr. Falk Bersch, the district researcher in Wismar, whom I would like to sincerely thank at this point, put me in contact with Martha Hindel's grandsons. He also sent me extensive and valuable material, which became the basis of the information published on the Stolperstein Lübeck website concerning the Jehovah Witnesses in Lübeck in whose memory Stumbling Stones have been laid.

[Stolperstein for Hans Jürs: Information <https://www.stolpersteine-luebeck.de/n/en/main/location-addresses/weiter-lohberg-18.html>](https://www.stolpersteine-luebeck.de/n/en/main/location-addresses/weiter-lohberg-18.html)

[Stolperstein for Heinrich van Loo: Information <https://www.stolpersteine-luebeck.de/n/en/main/location-addresses/morkerkestrasse-17.html>](https://www.stolpersteine-luebeck.de/n/en/main/location-addresses/morkerkestrasse-17.html)

[Stolperstein for Heinrich Maaß: Information <https://www.stolpersteine-luebeck.de/n/en/main/location-addresses/neuer-faulenhoop-23.html>](https://www.stolpersteine-luebeck.de/n/en/main/location-addresses/neuer-faulenhoop-23.html)

After the war Carmen Lore's husband applied for reparations for his murdered mother-in-law Martha Hindel. His protracted efforts ended on 29 April 1958, when the Compensation Office granted Carmen Lore 10,200 DM (ca. \$2,500 US in 1958 dollars) for the loss of her mother.

Here the complete decision [15] can be seen [as a PDF-file <https://www.stolpersteine-luebeck.de/fileadmin/data/stolpersteine/standorte/krausestrasse_1/Entschaedigungsverfahren_Martha_Hindel.pdf>](https://www.stolpersteine-luebeck.de/fileadmin/data/stolpersteine/standorte/krausestrasse_1/Entschaedigungsverfahren_Martha_Hindel.pdf).

Photo Credits

[1] picture from the family estate

[2] to [9] Landeshauptarchiv Schwerin

[10] to [15] documents from the family estate

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Susanne Schledt-Önal, February 2012

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