



Lina Kesten and Family lived at Holstenstraße 17

The Kesten family lived at Holstenstraße 17 from April 1909 until December 1939. Their flat and credit office was located up on the fourth floor. Heinrich Kesten, a salesman, was able to support his family with his credit business. The 1913 Lübecker address directory indicates there was also a furniture hire purchase/installment plan enterprise and the 1926 directory indicates there was a furniture and merchandise credit business located at Holstenstraße 17.



A pre-war undated photo of the Holstenstraße 17 [1]

Heinrich Kesten was born in 1871 in Kolomea, Galicia (then a part of Austria and now Kolomyja, Ukraine) and was originally given the Jewish first names of Pinkas Hersch. In 1904 he, his first wife, Dirsin née Elster (born 1873), and their six year old son, David Abraham, came to Lübeck. At first they lived on Glockengießstraße and later on Johannisstraße.

Their daughter, Amalie, was born in 1907, followed by Dora Fanny in 1908 and lastly Emanuel in 1911. At the time of Emanuel's birth the Kesten family was already living at Holstenstraße 17.

During the First World War Heinrich Kesten was drafted into the Austrian Army since he was an Austrian citizen. Upon the early death of his wife, Dirsin, at the end of January 1916, he requested that he be exempted from serving at the front. His request was granted and thereby he was able to return to Lübeck to take care of his children. The eldest son, David Abraham, became a naturalized citizen of Germany in 1916 and volunteered to serve in the army. He was awarded the Iron Cross while serving in World War I as a member of the cavalry serving on the western front.

In 1918 Heinrich Kesten married again. His second wife was Mrs. Lina Hamburger, who had been born in Seligenstadt, 30 km/20 miles west of Frankfurt am Main, on 8 July 1879. Therefore, she was 39 years old, when she married Heinrich. Her family had been living in Germany for many years. Her father was a teacher in Seligenstadt.

In June of 1921 their eldest son, David Abraham, left his parental home in Lübeck, and moved to Kiel, where he operated a linen, wool and haberdashery shop at Brunswiker Straße 10. What his fate was is not known as of this time.

Installation at the location:



Inscription at the Installation:

HIER WOHNTE
LISA KESTEN
 GEB. HAMBURGER
 JG. 1879
 DEPORTIERT 19.7.1942
 THERESIENSTADT
 1944 AUSCHWITZ
 ERMORDET

installation
 29 July 2009

His sister, Dora Fanny, went to Frankfurt in 1931. As with her brother this is the last bit of information known about her. In September of 1932 Emanuel also left home and went to Berlin. Up until now it is only known that in July of 1935 he was “on his way to Palestine”.

Amalie worked as a clerk in Hamburg as well as some other towns.. She married Bruno Blume in February 1931. He had been a managing director in the office of Heinrich Kesten since 1927. They first lived in Lübeck at Holstenstraße 8-10. In the beginning of 1934 they moved to Düsseldorf, Bruno Blume’s birthplace.

For several years Heinrich and Lina Kesten lived alone at Holstenstraße 17.

In 1935 they were dealt a heavy blow in that Bruno’s 1923 naturalization as a German citizen was revoked and therefore both he and his wife were expatriated. In a long, hand written letter to the mayor of Lübeck Heinrich and Lina Kesten desperately and urgently pleaded with the mayor to reverse this expatriation order.



Heinrich Kesten’s letter of 28 June 1935 to the Mayor of the Hansestadt (Free City) of Lübeck [2]

But their attempted request fell on deaf ears. Senator Schröder, who was responsible for these affairs, indicated this in his completely cynical response:

“K. as a typical Jewish defiler of our race must from now on be viewed as someone who is not wanted as a desirable member of our future lineage. He is unworthy of holding a German citizenship.”

As a result of their expatriation starting in November 1938 Heinrich and Lina Kesten were under extreme Gestapo and Police pressure to leave Germany and were threatened with incarceration in a concentration camp if they did not leave. In one of the police reviews of their file from the summer of 1939 one reads:

“Lina Kesten is attempting to emigrate. Pinkas Hersch Kesten is sick and cannot be moved.”



The Kestens’ declaration that they accepted the second names forced on them [3]

In Heinrich and Lina Kesten’s 30 December 1939 handwritten declaration that they had accepted as their second names, Israel and Sarah respectively, as forced upon them by the government, they indicated that they were still living at Holstenstraße 17. Yet a few months later the married couple were forced to leave their flat and move to St. Annen-Straßen 11. Bertha and Dora Lexandrowitz mentioned the Kestens’ situation in their letter to relatives in Shanghai. In February 1940 they wrote: “Mrs. Buschner has taken over Kesten’s flat and the K’s now live at the Asyl, where Dr.

Sichels had lived. They have two nice rooms and a kitchen for themselves.” (p. 79 letter dated 15 February 1940) Frau Buschner was the non Jewish wife of a previous steward of the Jewish community’s buildings. The Jewish dentist, Dr. Sichel and his family were able to flee to the United States in 1939.

The senior citizens’ home on St. Annen-Straße 11 had the nickname “Asyl.” More and more it became the collective lodging for those Jews, whose flats were expropriated by non-Jews. Once at the Asyl Lina Kesten assumed the caretaker’s position.

At the end of December 1940 Dora Lexandrowitz, who in the meantime had moved to Hamburg, describes in a letter a visit to Lübeck:

“Had coffee with the Kestens in their flat.” (p.115, letter dated 7 January 1941)

One year later on 25 December 1941 Heinrich Kesten died at the age of 70. On his death certificate the attending doctor noted the cause of death as due to the wasting away of the spinal cord and a weak heart.

Soon afterwards on 19 July 1942 Lina Kesten was deported to Theresienstadt (now Terezin, Czech Republic) arriving on transport number VI/2 on 20 July.

Two years later on 23 October 1944 she was deported to Auschwitz and murdered there. She was 65 years old at the time of her death.

In April of 1942 Amalie and Bruno Blume were deported from Düsseldorf to Izbica, where the trail of information on them unfortunately ends. Izbica is in Poland, southeast of Lublin. The Izbica Concentration Camp was the largest transit Ghetto located between the Belzec and Sobibor extermination camps. The authorities began closing the Izbica Ghetto late in the fall of 1942. Most of the Jews in the Ghetto were taken to one of the extermination camps

Photo Credits

[1] Museum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte der Hansestadt Lübeck

[2] Archiv der Hansestadt Lübeck, Neues Senatsarchiv, NSA 880, Stadt- und Landamt

[3] Archiv der Hansestadt Lübeck, Staatliche Polizeiverwaltung 124

References in Addition to Standard Reference Materials:

- Adressbücher, Meldekartei und Sterberegister der Hansestadt Lübeck
- Archiv der Hansestadt Lübeck
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 - Neues Senatsarchiv, NSA 880, Stadt- und Landamt
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