

**EDWARD H. ROSE**

**A SHORT REVIEW OF MY LIFE**

Annotated by An Huitzing and Ad van den Oord<sup>1</sup>



*Heinz Rosenbaum, Paris 1946.*

Born as HEINZ ROSENBAUM on 2-16-17 in Thorn<sup>2</sup> (south of Gdansk and belonging today to Poland), second son of Dr. Otto and Stephanie ROSENBAUM (mother's maiden name Vogel). We lived in Schwerin/ Mecklenburg (Germany). At age of 6 entered public school and transferred at age of 9 to the local Gymnasium where Greek, Latin, English and old History were the main subjects. Although my father worked long hours, we were a very happy family and we kids - one older brother and one younger sister - grew up in a nice atmosphere and pretty surroundings. At an early age I joined a sport club where I spent many happy hours playing soccer, tennis and field hockey.

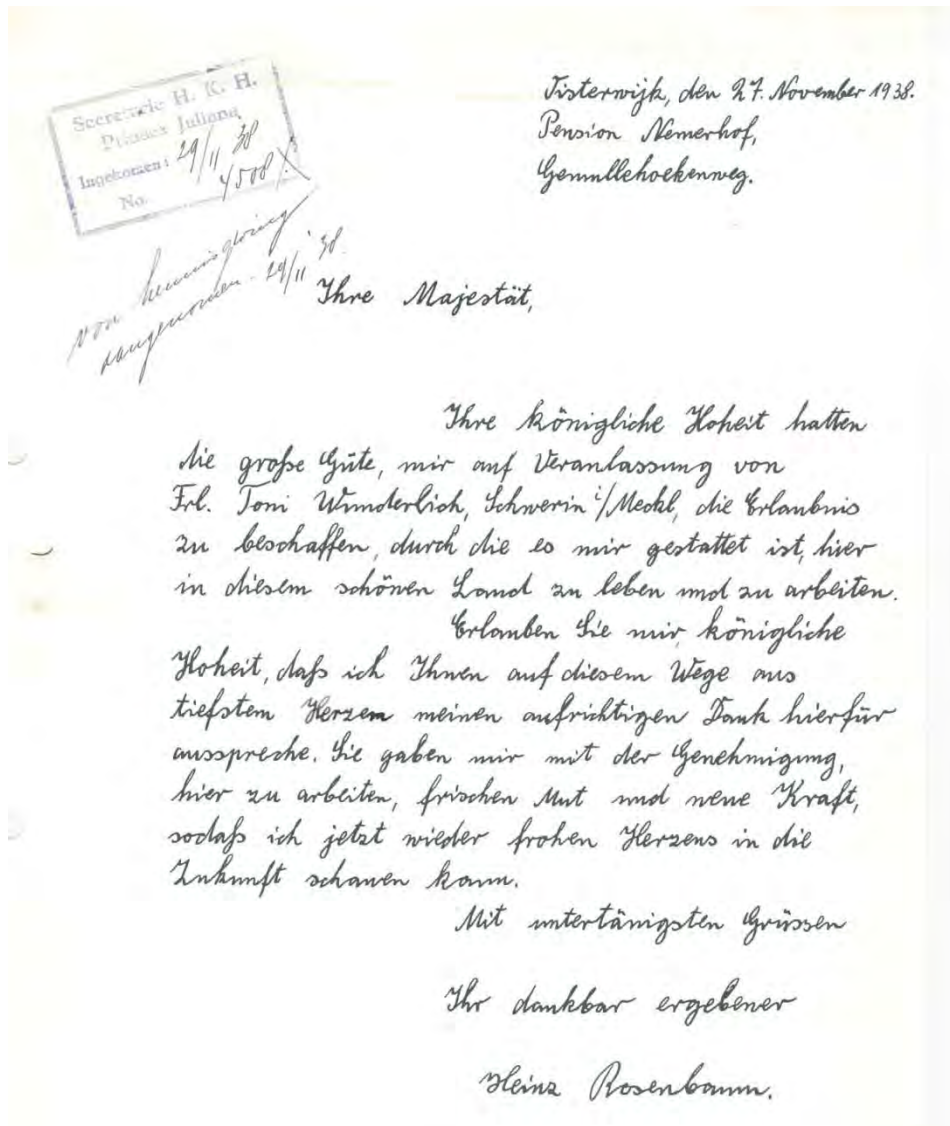
In the early 1930's things began to change as the Nazis became more aggressive and prominent. Our State (Mecklenburg - by the way located in the northern part of Germany on the Baltic Sea) was the second State in Germany to get a Nazi Government, months ahead of the national government.<sup>3</sup> In late 1932 my brother Herbert left the Gymnasium (the same school our father and I were educated) because of very heavy Anti Semitism. Our father, who was a physician, tried very hard to keep me in school as he had the strong desire to see at least one of us to follow him in his footsteps.<sup>4</sup> However, in the fall of 1933 (the Nazis now being in full power) it became impossible for me to continue in school as the only remaining Jewish student in this big school. One of the great activities I had to attend was military instructions; when marching the best-liked song went something like 'When Jewish blood runs off our knives everything goes doubly well'. At this time my father agreed reluctantly to take me out of school. Also at this time I was arrested for the first time by the Gestapo because I was supposedly laughing from our window at the passing local Nazi leader. Of course the whole family was very excited, but I was released after some hours. By this time Herbert was working in a leather tanning factory, about 30 miles from home. In spring 1934 I joined him there as an apprentice.<sup>5</sup> About a year later the local people in this small village chased the Jewish employees out of town. Our firm felt obliged to give me the chance to finish my apprenticeship and engaged me to do so in their headquarters in Berlin. I worked here until 1938 when, in spring, somebody decided that they didn't want me there anymore and forced the firm to fire me. So I came home a week after brother Herbert had left for the U.S.A., which was of course a very upsetting period for my parents.<sup>6</sup> For the next 6 months a friend of our father's, having a jewellery store, arranged for me to learn something about engraving and repairing of alarm clocks.

One of our father's patients at this time (1938) was an old lady who had taught at the Royal Dutch Court the future Crown princess and Queen of Holland. As my father visited her frequently he told her about his worries what to do with me. He also mentioned to her that the leather factory I had worked in also owned a big factory in Holland, called the 'Royal Leather Works'. Thereupon this lady wrote to the then Crown princess Juliana and asked for her help.<sup>7</sup> By return mail a letter came from Juliana telling us to ask the factory in Holland to apply for a work permit if they would then be willing to give me a job. All this worked out and I prepared to emigrate to Holland. Also, I had already applied for an immigration visa at the U.S. consulate in Hamburg. However, I had been informed by the US authorities that no visa would be issued to me in the foreseeable future as I would be classified to fall under the Polish quota and not the German, because of the place of my birth which now belonged to Poland and the Polish quota was extremely small.

During the summer of 1938 another terrible Nazi decree appeared: It revoked the medical licenses for all Jewish doctors.<sup>8</sup> After this, the parents also decided to apply for an immigration visa to go to the USA. In order to prepare himself to be able to work in the USA, our father arranged to learn regular and medical English, which could be done only in Berlin.

So every week he travelled from Monday to Friday to this city. So when the infamous 'Crystal Night' occurred, during which all Jewish men were arrested, all Synagogues were burned and all Jewish stores were destroyed<sup>9</sup>, father was not home when the police called for him. However I was and I was taken to City Hall, where I joined all Jewish males of our town, including cousin Werner.<sup>10</sup> After sitting there all night and not being able to talk to each other, we were transported to a MAXIMUM SECURITY PRISON.<sup>11</sup> With this we were very lucky as in our neighbourhood no concentration camps were available. This all happened on Wednesday night, November 9th, and I had a plane reservation for Sunday to fly from Hamburg to Amsterdam. Somehow I must have mentioned this at some time to one of the SS guards, because Saturday afternoon I was suddenly released while all my fellow prisoners stayed there for six weeks. The prison was located about 50 miles from home, so I had to try to find a train to go home.

When I got there late that evening I found that my mother and sister had fled to Berlin and also had taken with them my passport. To make a long story short, mother came with my papers by night train to Hamburg where I joined her and was able to catch my flight out of Germany on Sunday morning! In Holland I received an extremely friendly reception from the people with whom I was to live and work for four years.<sup>12</sup> Most of my off-hours I spent being very active in sports, playing hockey, tennis and water polo. I was very well received by the young people in the hockey club.<sup>13</sup> All my fellow employees were very nice and helpful.<sup>14</sup>



Letter from Heinz Rosenbaum to Princess Juliana (Royal Dutch Archives).

Now came the year 1939 which was of course a most terrible year for the whole world as this was the year when the Second World War started.

In early 1939 my sister Gerda -again through our Dutch connection- got permission to enter Holland<sup>15</sup> where she got a job with some relatives<sup>16</sup> as a maid in Amsterdam.

In the meanwhile, our parents, not making too much progress with the issuance of the U.S. visa, also got permission to come temporarily to Holland. So in August 1939 they packed their possessions which they planned to take with them eventually to America.<sup>17</sup> This accomplished, the furniture was packed into two big crates and shipped for temporary storage to the German port of Bremen. Now, at the end of August the danger of war became daily greater. I followed closely the radio stations in Holland, France and England and on August 29 I called the parents at home, who, of course having the German news

only at their disposal, did not have the slightest idea of the great danger. As they were so taken aback by this news, I told them that I would call them back the next day at which time they would have to leave everything and just take the train and come to Holland. I made that call and they took at once the train which should have brought them to Tilburg, the next railroad station to the little village of Oisterwijk where I lived. I was at the station with a car from the factory to pick them up, but they were not on this train. As it turned out, the Germans had given them such a hard time at the border that they missed the express train and finally arrived 5 hours later on a local train. The parents had about \$10 and two small suitcases with them. I found some Dutch people who rented us two furnished rooms with use of the kitchen. The next day, September 1, the Germans marched into Poland and started World War 11. So our beloved parents got out just in time!



*In front of Peperstraat 4, Oisterwijk, 1939: Gerda, Otto, Stephanie and Heinz.*

The parents made the best of their now ever so much changed situation and they were now looking forward to their emigration to the U.S.A. We had very little money to live on. Herbert and Gerda both sent small amounts of money and I turned my meagre salary over to father. But somehow we managed. In early spring, our landlord decided that he could make more money for the rooms by renting them to summer vacationers and so we had a big problem. Then something very heart-warming occurred. The mother of a Dutch friend of mine went to work: she rented a very small house for us and arranged with quite a few local families to provide us with all that was needed to furnish a house.<sup>18</sup> I got a horse and wagon from the factory and collected from the various houses furniture, linen, dishes etc. Once we had all these things in the house, there was nothing missing, not even pictures on the wall. The people, who took part in this operation, were all lovely Catholic Dutch people. This all of course lifted the spirits of the parents quite a lot.

In Rotterdam at this time lived father's cousin and fellow student Paul and Kathe Bonheim.<sup>19</sup> In order to spend some time with our parents, they sold some of their furniture and rented for one month a small place in our village so that they could be together with the parents. They arrived on May 1, 1940. On May 10 the Germans started their attack on the Western front which included the violations of the neutral countries, Holland and Belgium. These countries were invaded by the German army. Our location was not far from the German border and we were overrun within two days.

The big port city of Rotterdam was firebombed and totally destroyed on the third day with a loss of about 35000 people.<sup>20</sup> On the next day Holland surrendered. It is impossible to describe our feelings when we saw the arrival of the German troops. The German Jewish refugees were kept for one week under house arrest. When this order was lifted, my first undertaking was to call on the Bonheim's, as they did not speak Dutch and did not know anybody in town. They were physically in good shape, but of course terribly upset. They told me that they intended to take their lives, which they did about a year later.<sup>21</sup>

I could continue to work even though the Germans installed one of theirs as overseer in this Jewish enterprise.<sup>22</sup> Every day we heard rumours or threats about what would happen to us. In Holland there was always plenty of food, but that changed fast. In mid-June, France capitulated and I saw every day from the factory windows German freight trains coming through, loaded with French prisoners of war.

All Jews were ordered to turn in their radios, which of course shut us completely off from all world news.<sup>23</sup>

At this time we were unable to continue paying for the furniture which was stored still in Germany and we were able to have the furniture shipped to the factory where I worked, so that we had no further expenses. These crates were stored together with similar ones of some of the owners of the factory. Then one day a fire broke out in the building where this furniture was stored. It was a very bad fire. I came home in the evening and had to tell the parents that the only things they owned were burning! It is hard to describe the mental state of the parents thereafter.

I returned that evening to the factory and worked all night with the firemen.<sup>24</sup> When I came home the next morning, I could only report that all was lost, including father's medical instruments, which certainly was extremely upsetting to him. Of course we were only able to carry a minimum insurance. But in the long run this was a blessing. The insurance company paid in full, and this money just about lasted the parents until the end.



*The Leather Factory, Oisterwijk.*

The whole situation was, of course, very depressing. The Bonheims had returned to Rotterdam, which of course was not a great help either. But the parents made the best of it. They took daily long walks in the very pretty surroundings and father continued to study English. It was a custom at the factory that at Christmas time every employee was called into the boss' office and then was given his bonus. In 1941, each of us Jewish employees was called in and was told: No bonus and you are fired!<sup>25</sup>

This of course was a very bad situation, as I made no money now, and of course, since the occupation, no money from Herbert was available. But somehow we must have managed with the insurance money. In our street was a Dutch shoemaker who took me, of course without any pay, and taught me something about shoe repairs.<sup>26</sup> I also took a course, arranged by some Jewish organization, in paperhanging and upholstery. Then we got a new decree: all Jews had to turn in their bicycles.<sup>27</sup> Bicycles of course were the only way of transportation. Things became worse every day. I had some Dutch friends who had connections with the Dutch underground.

At this time, the Germans arrested more and more young Jewish people but let the old people alone. My father was by now very depressed, and often spent hours just sitting in a chair, crying. My friends talked to me daily that they had a way for me to get away, but I would not hear of it, and I told them that I would not leave the parents alone. By the way, I should mention here that we were wearing on our chest for months already the Yellow Star.<sup>28</sup>

As we now heard more and more of young Jewish people being taken away, and after difficult discussions with the parents, I listened to their advice and prepared for my escape. I had provided the

underground with my passport picture and so the date of my departure was set. My mother sewed the Yellow Star very light on my jacket, so that I could easily remove it. My best friend, a young Dutch fellow, took me on the back of his bicycle to the next town, 7 miles away, so that I could take there the railroad.<sup>29</sup> Of course, he risked his life by giving me this lift. I went into the railroad rest room and removed the Yellow Star and said goodbye to my friend. The parting from the parents suddenly was made easier as just that day it was announced that the Canadians had landed on the French coast. So when I bid the parents goodbye, I told them that the long awaited invasion by the Allies had begun and that it was quite possible that I would return very shortly. However, it turned out that the Canadian attack in Calais was not the hoped-for invasion, but a raid of the port installations. By the way, the police came for me the day after my escape. I took the train to the Dutch-Belgian border, where I was received by a friendly young girl from the underground.<sup>30</sup> She took me to her house where she presented me with a new BELGIAN identity card to which my picture had already been attached, and carried my real day of birth. However, my name turned out to be EDOUARD MICHIELS. She made me try a few times my new signature and then I signed the card. She gave me something to eat, and then we both took bicycles and crossed the border at a point where the fences were broken open and the grass showed that many people before me went the same way. We reached the first Belgian railroad station and I boarded there the night train to Paris. Most people on the train were females smuggling some black market goods. One young girl thought it would be safer to sit in my lap, but at that particular time I had some other things on my mind! I had a little money in Dutch and French currency in my possession. When we approached the French border, I decided to go to the men's room and put the Dutch currency in my shoes. While doing this, somebody knocked at the door and I thought right there that this would be police and the end of my escape. However, luckily I was wrong. Reaching the French border, I noticed a frightful thing: instead of French border police, German police came to check the passports. The German checking my papers took a very long time and my heart slowly began to stop. Then he asked me something in French, which I didn't understand. He repeated his question in German, and I answered in Dutch. He had then noticed the recent date of the issuance of my papers and everything was OK. The newness of my card had drawn his suspicions. Of course this was a big hurdle and I breathed a little easier after he had left. Around 6 a.m. the train arrived in Paris. Here a Dutch girl, working at the Dutch Embassy and whom I had met previously in Holland, was supposed to meet me at the station. But she was not there! She was the only person whom I knew in all of France. My knowledge of the French language was nonexistent! This Dutch girl had given me the address of her parents who lived outside Versailles, and she had told me to only use this address if I could not possibly avoid it. However, this turned out to be the only solution for me, as I just did not know anybody else in the whole country. I found at this early hour some people friendly enough to explain to me, because of my language difficulties, that I had to go to another railroad station and to take there the train to Versailles, about 20 minutes' ride. From the station I had to walk about 3 miles, as during this war time no local buses were available. So I walked on this country road, carrying a small briefcase which contained all my belongings. I was about the only person walking on this road. After a while I noticed that at a certain distance I was being followed by a German officer who walked at the same speed as I did. I was sure that he was following me for a reason. After a while I noticed that more and more Germans were appearing and I found out that my road passed right through a German army camp. Of course this situation was rather frightening. But once I had successfully passed through the camp, I felt a little better. Thirsty and hungry, I finally reached the small village where this couple I was looking for were living. However, where in this village I did not know. So I went to the local bistro and asked. The owner was very friendly, and before he let me go, he offered me a glass of wine, as he noticed that I must have been exhausted. My first glass of wine in France! He told me where these people were living and I knocked at their door. They were Dutch and I could finally talk to somebody! This retired Dutch couple were extremely nice people and could not do enough for me. They called up their daughter and she showed up the next day. After all, my presence there put her parents in great danger. She made arrangements with a Dutch farmer who owned a small farm about 25 miles away, and I travelled there the next day. Now, in August 1942, I started my new career as farmer's helper! The farm was run by a childless Dutch couple who treated me very nicely. Their problem of course was that there was no labour available in

those days. I learned fast the many chores I had to do, like splitting wood in the morning before the sun was up, to clean the few very big work horses they had, getting the horse in front of the cart - which was difficult and dangerous, ploughing the fields and many other jobs. When winter started, my boss told me that for the cold season he would not have enough work for me, but he had talked to another farmer next door to let me work at her place. Yes, the boss was a Belgian woman. This farm was much bigger. They had many cows and also bred some horses. My sleeping facilities were lousy, as I slept in a room next to the horse stable. They kept in this room also the feed for the horses. When the horses were fed in the morning, the guys getting the grain for the horses mostly left the door open and when I returned in the evening, my room and bed were covered with the deposits of many chickens. I learned here to milk cows, which is done at 5 a.m. Breakfast is only available after the milking of the cows. I owned only one coverall. This would get so stiff from the spilled milk that it would stand up just as well without me in it! Supper we ate at the end of the whole day's work, which was usually around 10 p.m. In those days I felt very strong and could eat plenty of food. As working companion I had a 14 year old French boy from whom I picked up a lot of the French language. By the way, the small village where I worked was called Pamfou (S & M) near the towns of Melun and Fontainebleau. By the way, we worked 6 1/2 days. Sunday afternoon was the time I could wash myself and shave. During this time it seemed that the French underground had blown up a German train somewhere in the neighbourhood. So the Germans took action against the civilian population: all males in that region were called upon to guard the railroad tracks with their lives. They had to walk along a certain stretch of the railroad tracks and if something would have happened, they would have been shot. I had to do the night shift from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. I walked alone up and down the tracks. It was an awful feeling! This I had to do for one week. After a while, I had to change jobs again, as the boss felt that I ate too much! So I found employment in the same village on a French farm. This was owned by a Parisian family who had bought the farm before the war as an investment. When the war came, they moved away from Paris because of food shortages. Their farm had been run by a French couple; the husband had been called to the army and was now a prisoner of war. His wife, together with the owner and his son, ran the farm. Here my sleeping arrangements were even worse, as I had a bed left over from the First World War and no blankets. I got new sheets about every 3 months. The bed was located right in the cow stable. Let me tell you that cows smell a lot worse than horses! By the way, the toilet facilities in all these places were out-houses without any water; toilet paper was nonexistent. Also, there were no newspapers available. We used leaves only. By this time my only pair of shoes had worn out and all I could get were wooden soles for them, which cost me one month's salary, about \$3 or so. I also obtained some Dutch wooden shoes, which were very tough on my feet and had a tendency to get stuck in the mud. When I got hungry during the day I was always able to find an egg somewhere, which I ate raw, and that kept me going. By now I had learned of course some French words. But my communications with other people were still very difficult. The hardest for me to take was that I had very little news from anybody. About twice I got a letter which my mother had written to me, but sent to my Dutch friend<sup>31</sup> who then rewrote the letter in her handwriting and sent it to her friends in Paris, who in turn forwarded the letter to me. I communicated in the same way. Another French woman living in Paris and whom I had met somewhere, invited me to come to her place in Paris for Christmas for a couple of days. As I knew of the food shortages in Paris, I filled my small briefcase up with a few pounds of potatoes to take along. However, my boss noticed this somehow, and took them away from me, and I really caught hell for it. I enjoyed my stay in Paris, of course, as I was at least able to talk with some people. But when I returned to my 'bedroom' I just could not comprehend that I was sleeping in such a stink. I found it also extremely difficult that I had nearly no knowledge of what was going on in the world. I prayed that the Allies would make great progress, but I heard very little of the war news. Finally, at one point I did hear that the Americans had landed in North Africa.<sup>32</sup> The worst of course was the constant fear of a possible discovery by the Germans and the total loneliness in a totally strange surrounding. It was very easy to get depressed when I worked alone in a big field early in the morning, cutting cabbage, my pants wet to above the knees from the morning dew. And then suddenly I discovered close by a family of wild boars, huge animals with their little ones. There was no other living being to be seen anywhere. Were these

animals friendly or hungry? I did not know! They looked me over and then went the other way. I continued cutting my cabbage.

In the Fall of 1943 I got a message from the only bistro in the village that there was a long distance call for me and I should come at once. Now who in the world would know where I was and where I could be reached, or who even would want to get in touch with me? So I asked my boss for a bicycle and went to the bistro, which by the way was owned by the mayor of the village. The mayor, who turned out to be a very nice fellow, told me that there was indeed a call for me from somebody in the town of Melun, and the party there was waiting for me to call back. I made this call and what I found out upset me no end! The caller was my sister, Gerda, who had fled Holland with the help of the same friendly people who had helped me to get out of Holland.<sup>33</sup> There she was about 8 or 10 miles away, not knowing anybody in all of France but me. My old girlfriend, Willie van Breemen, in Oisterwijk, had promised not to divulge my whereabouts to anybody.<sup>34</sup> Of course she told Gerda where I was and of course I didn't mind that. So I returned to my farm and asked my boss for a second bicycle and I set out with two bicycles to Melun. I had told Gerda to start walking already, as there was no public transportation available at all. So Gerda and I met on a small country road in no-man's land. I took her back to the bistro, as I was convinced that I could trust this man. I was right about that. Then I asked my boss whether Gerda could possibly sleep in the stable somewhere. But this was considered too dangerous by these people and they refused. The man in the bistro put her up as he had an extra room. The terrible news Gerda brought me was that our parents had been arrested by the Germans! Now, before continuing, I would like to report here what all had happened to the parents and to her since I had left. A few months after I had said goodbye to the parents, they moved to Amsterdam to live close to Gerda.<sup>35</sup> In these terrible days there was in Amsterdam a Jewish organization which was tolerated by the Germans, but indirectly probably kind of helped the Germans in their murderous enterprise of solving the 'Jewish Problem'.<sup>36</sup> The deportation of Jewish people in Holland had started at this time. Gerda joined this organization because that exempted not only her but her family also from deportation. In order to save another family she went through a 'make-believe' marriage so that this man and his parents would also be exempt from deportation. Our parents were very upset about this whole deal, but Gerda did not listen to their advice. The young couple decided to go beyond the 'make-believe!!'. I found out about this later.<sup>37</sup>



*Rudi Nowalski and Gerda Rosenbaum, June 1943 (Photo Annemie Wolff, copyright Monica Kaltenschnee).*

Gerda's "husband," called Rudolf Nowalski (also from Germany) was twenty years older than she! Gerda was 21 years old at the time. To continue Gerda's story: In summer of 1943 the Germans surrounded all of Amsterdam with 10,000 troops, drove with loudspeakers through the streets and ordered all Jewish people to be ready for deportation. Gerda was exempted, but our parents and her 'in-laws' were not! They were transported to a concentration camp, Westerbork, in Holland, where they were held for some time. Through previously described ways I still received one letter from our mother from this camp. This letter tried to be cheerful, telling that father was helping the sick people and that they were managing. This was the last message we received from our parents. Now back to the continuation of the



events: The mayor of our village found a job for Gerda at a nearby farm. She had to feed the rabbits and chickens. So at least she had a place to stay and she got fed there. Although we worked within less than a mile, we saw each other only on Sunday afternoons when I had a few hours off. Of course, we did not tell anybody that we were brother and sister, also because of our names: her name was Mme. Rozier-Dupont (first name I do not recall) and mine was Michiels. Of course, both of us were not too enchanted with our situation. Gerda did not want to stay at the farm under any circumstances and she convinced me that in Paris she could earn some money making belts of some kind. So in the Fall she went to Paris, where my friend found a small apartment which was owned by a Dutchman, now living in Holland. As Gerda was so sure that she could make saleable belts which I, in turn, should go out and sell, I also left my farmer's career and moved to Paris into the apartment. (Later about the apartment.) Of course, the manufacturing of the belts did not work and I had to find a way to make a living. A gentleman from the farm village, who, by the way, had taken me to Paris in his truck, had given me his address, telling me if I ever needed help to contact him. Later on I found out that he belonged to the Resistance. So it did not take me long to contact him and he offered me at once a job in a carpenter shop which he managed. The place manufactured wooden barracks etc. and was located in one of the suburbs of Paris. The subway got me there every day, although riding the subway with phony papers was very dangerous. The Germans used the subway also and the French police often raided the cars to check identities. I found out soon that many of my colleagues were either escaped prisoners of war or were underground for any other reasons. The work was a lot easier, but the food was a hell of a lot worse. Of course, all food was rationed in Paris and could only be obtained with coupons. As my phony papers stated that I was living and working in farm country, I was illegal in Paris and therefore not entitled to food coupons. We had moved around November 1943 to Paris and shortly afterwards Gerda told me that she was pregnant! To say the least, this was an unexpected surprise for me. I tried with all my strength of persuasion to convince her that there was no other way but an abortion. It would endanger our lives even more and a baby would not have a chance to live through all this. Gerda would not listen! Now I would like to describe the apartment we were living in. It was located in a good neighbourhood, in a seven story apartment building, on the ground floor.<sup>38</sup> It was nice, but entirely too small to bring up a baby here. It consisted of one room and a bathroom. No kitchen. We had a gas operated water heater over the bathtub. So I put some wood over half of the bathtub and put a gas burner on it. And that was our kitchen. As Gerda would not change her decision to have the baby, we made the necessary preparations to get a doctor etc. By the way, the apartment had only one double bed in which we slept for nearly four years!! Gerda got some extra food coupons because she was pregnant, but I, of course, had none. When we received our monthly ration - two eggs - we had a conference what to make of them. In other words, our food situation was very difficult. Sometimes we traded our monthly allowance of a liter of wine for some butter or something else. Meat we were able to get once a week. There were times that we were really hungry! One day in early 1944 I tried to get some food by going by train outside of Paris to attempt buying something to eat from a farm. After a short while on the train, it stopped. The rails ahead had been bombed and we had to walk a mile or so to continue with another train. Although I was trying the whole day, all I came back with were a couple of heads of lettuce!

In early March 1944 on a Saturday evening, a very good and always helpful Dutch friend, Louk, had asked us to come to her place for a visit. When we knocked at her door we got no answer!<sup>39</sup> The 'concierge' answered our inquiry that she had been arrested earlier in the day by the Gestapo. Because of the danger of arrest (and also shortness of funds) we never frequented any movies, coffee shops or restaurants. But now we needed a telephone to call Louk's friend to see whether anybody could help her. So we went to a small milk bar close by and made the call. And in came a group of French policemen, lining up at once all people, including the waitresses, against the wall and asking for identity cards. That right there seemed to be the end!! This was about two or three weeks before Gerda was expected to give birth! The police announced that everybody had to board an open truck which was parked outside. I had heard about similar situations, where one guy was able to run away and duck between the parked cars and make a get-away. But when I came out into the street, there were two lines of policemen lined up on the sidewalk, and no chance whatsoever to get away. Gerda was the only one they let go AFTER taking her name and address. Our vehicle was driven to and unloaded at a very

big police station, where I could see that quite a few more truckloads of people had been brought here for the same reasons. I was interrogated by two detectives, while a third detective questioned another guy who was found with German food stamps on him. Then they took this guy out and one of my policemen also left. Of course, they had found out very fast that my papers were phony; my papers were French and my knowledge of the French language at this time was nearly nonexistent. Also, I was unable to answer their question in what unit of the French army I had served. At this time of course I was convinced that meant certain arrest and immediate turnover to the German Gestapo. However, now I was alone in the room with only one detective. Suddenly he asked me why I had phony papers, and I answered him that I tried not to go to work building fortifications on the English Channel against an Allied invasion. He then took me to the door which was guarded by a few policemen and told them: Let him get out!! Suddenly, to my greatest surprise, I found myself in the street! I did not even know where I was, but I just started walking away from this place. Then, after a while, I got my bearings and I returned home where I found Gerda. As Gerda had to give the police her address, we decided that it would not safe to sleep home that night. So we found a safe place with some friends in the building. The whole deal was a very close call. Normally, the French would have turned me over to the Gestapo within one hour and that would have meant certain deportation. Of course, I never could find out the name of that French policeman. A few weeks later Gerda was ready to give birth. The only transportation available to get her to the hospital was a police ambulance and I had completely different identification cards and names. So after having called the police I again went to some friends upstairs. Gerda got to the hospital all right and the next day I called for some news. So when I called the hospital, they tried to find the father so that they could collect the cost of the delivery etc. As I could not get any information on the phone, I went to the hospital and saw Gerda and her new born baby boy. Of course, I was asked questions about my relationship with the mother and somehow I talked myself out of any problems. At the end the Welfare Department of the City of Paris paid for everything. Then, after a few days mother and the new baby came home and my life underwent another drastic change. The small room we lived in had to be readied for the baby. One of the first things I did was to hang some strings across the room so the diapers could be dried. Of course another important matter was to obtain formulas etc. which all was very difficult in those days. Also it was not easy to find a doctor as we lived after all 'underground' and had to be very careful with our phony papers. By the way, the baby was born on March 15, 1944. Now came the big news we all had waited for in occupied Europe for so long: friends of ours heard on a Swiss radio station that on June 6 the Allies had LANDED IN NORMANDY! Although up to this time occasional bombings and the very difficult food situation had not made our lives any easier, we now knew that things were really looking up. In the meanwhile, the baby, now named Rene, behaved quite normally like a baby of this age should. I had to stand many hours in line to obtain our meagre rations. In August the Allies finally broke through the lines in Normandy and the great advance started across France. Now the excitement became bigger as we began to hear artillery fire from outside Paris and we were ready to be liberated!! The last two weeks the subways had stopped to run and I could no longer get to my place of work in the suburbs. With some people we went to the roof of our apartment building and we could see in the distance that the Germans were burning their bases and supply depots. We now knew: THE ALLIED TROOPS WERE NOW JUST OUTSIDE PARIS!! The people put out the French flags and new newspapers appeared in the streets. But the troops did not come into the city because they were waiting to bring first in a contingent of the Free French Army. As no Allied troops showed up yet, the Germans started to roam around with tanks and were shooting into the windows from which French flags were flying. So the civilian population built on important intersections barricades which prevented the tanks to get around. I also took part in this operation. This was a difficult week: the American troops were standing outside Paris, waiting for the Free French Army to be the ones to enter the French capital first. On the evening of August 24, shooting from the suburbs of Paris could be heard. Gerda and I, being really very impatient to see the Allied troops, started walking to the outskirts of the city. But needless to say, we could not get through. Of course, during all these years, Paris was blacked out. But around midnight, the switches were turned on and suddenly each corner of Paris, one after the other, was lit up which was to us the most beautiful thing to see. At 12 midnight all church bells were rung. No more German soldiers were seen in the street. On the

morning of August 25, 1944, the first French troops entered the city!! We lived very close to the railroad station - Gare Montparnasse - so Gerda with her baby, now five months old, and I went to the big boulevard in front of the station and helped welcome the troops. The Germans had decided to surrender the city without a fight. The French soldiers pointed out to the people the French General who had passed us in a jeep. This was General Le Clerq<sup>40</sup> who accepted in this railroad station to surrender of the city of Paris from the Germans. This was the day we had waited and hoped for all these years!!! I never believed that I would live to see this day. In the afternoon the first American troops came in force and there were soldiers ALL OVER THE PLACE. When the tanks stopped and the soldiers jumped from them, there was not one soldier who was not kissed by one or more French girls. Old Frenchmen stood there with tears in their eyes, some of them gave their last bottle of wine to a soldier; they had preserved this bottle for this purpose! In the meanwhile, there were still 10,000 German soldiers in town who, however, did not dare show their faces outside. So some tanks pulled up in front of these buildings, some of their shells made the Germans come out with their hands up. That night the Germans attacked Paris by air and caused a lot of damage. I don't know how many days later, General De Gaulle made his great entrance into Paris: both sides of the Champs-Élysées were lined by French tanks and General De Gaulle, with leaders of the Resistance marched down this famous avenue. I was there and saw this historical event! Even at this time, some collaborators started some shooting into the tremendous crowd there, but they were subdued quickly. By now, of course, the city was full of American soldiers. As Gerda and I had some command of the English language (certainly better than our French) we tried to talk to as many Yankees as we could, in order to get some word to Herbert in the USA, to let him know that we were still alive, and also to ask him whether he could start in the USA some inquiries about our parents. Our English turned out not to be too bad, and I had no real problems to understand or talk to the Americans. After all, I had never met or heard any Americans speaking. After a few days, I somehow talked to a sergeant and he asked me whether I could drive a car. I answered him that I could and he told me that, if I would be interested to work for the Yankees, to come and see him the next day in his motor pool. Of course I went to see him and after a driving test, I was working again as my carpenter's shop had closed for lack of work. It was a strange feeling for me at first, as I had not driven a car since 1938, and secondly the jeeps were altogether new to me.<sup>41</sup> I got used to driving all kinds of vehicles: jeeps, weapons carriers, big 6X6 trucks and many types of civilian cars, including automatic Cadillac's (for Generals and Senators,) also right hand driven cars which had come from England. And all this while I had to speak English and find my way around Paris! In the meanwhile, the food situation for us improved of course very slowly. We still had great difficulties to get the needed baby food. After a while I got to work for a Lieutenant who was in charge of one of the finest hotels in Paris, which was taken over by the American Army for high-ranking officers. After a while I worked nearly every day for this Lieutenant, who, by the way, came from Rochester, NY, where I visited him many times after I had settled in the USA. This man was extremely helpful as I got many meals in the officers' mess, got milk for the baby and some food for us. My work was rather interesting, as I met quite a few important people like Generals, Senators, etc. Of course, I also worked nights and weekends. Of course, Gerda, Rene and I had to do with the money I made. It was rather difficult to find food of course, and also to fill all needs for the baby. Also, Gerda and I had practically no clothes and not enough money to buy some if there were any to be bought. Lines for food were often long. But at least the constant fear of being caught by the Germans had finally disappeared!

On May 8, 1945, I was again privileged to witness a historical event from close by. This was V-E Day, Victory in Europe! I tried to drive a weapons carrier from the hotel to the motor pool along the Avenue Champs-Élysées. This Avenue was filled wall-to-wall with victory celebrating people. In no time flat I had about fifty people on my vehicle. It took me about two hours to get to my destination! The people were just deliriously happy - and so was I.

In the meanwhile, living with Gerda and the baby in those small quarters with diapers all over the place was not too easy. Especially when I had to work nights. After the liberation, I went to the French authorities to turn in my French name and the French identity card. They issued me a stateless identity

card with my old name and also told me that I needed now a work permit, which had to be renewed every three months. This was always difficult, but it worked until I left France. The next problem was to straighten out Rene's papers, as the only paper he had was a birth certificate with the phony name of his mother. I had to take a lawyer; it was difficult and expensive, but finally successful. Now life became a little easier, but of course we were always short of money. It was not always easy to live with my darling sister. My work was still interesting, as I made quite a few long distance trips, like to Normandy, where the invasion had taken place; also to Cognac, Reims, and Chartres. I also drove many big shots to Versailles and around Paris. Then came the time that my Lieutenant and his unit returned home and I had to look for another job. I found work - some driving, some office work – for the American Office selling all the war surplus in Europe. After about a year, I joined the staff of the American Embassy, where I was employed at the Annex of the Embassy as receptionist, where my knowledge of English, French and even sometimes German, came in handy.

Of course, all this time we tried to get information about our parents and finally we got official information that they had been deported to Sobibor in Poland, which was an extermination camp from which only very few people returned alive.<sup>42</sup> Also Gerda's husband and his parents went the same way.<sup>43</sup>

This news was of course a terrible shock to us, and it was not easy to live on with this knowledge. In the past months we paid many visits to the Immigration Office at the Embassy, inquiring about the possibilities of obtaining visas to the USA. Gerda, belonging to the German quota, was lucky and got her visa in early 1947 and left with Rene<sup>44</sup> for the United States in April<sup>45</sup>, while my Polish quota number seemed to make it impossible to get a visa. I approached many high ranking Americans I had met and - maybe - somebody put in a good word for me. In early March 1949 I was notified by the Immigration Office that I could get the visa! I was delighted, because I wanted to get the hell out of Europe. Previously I had tried through my old firm and relatives to emigrate to Argentina, South Africa and even Australia. But none of these countries were very much interested in my company. Anyway, in early May 1949 I left Paris and spent a few days in London, where some of our relatives were living, who received me very nicely. I then boarded a French boat in Southampton and on May 11, 1949, I passed the Statue of Liberty and I got my first glance of New York City. Gerda and Herbert were at the pier. I never believed that this would come about.

FREE AT LAST!<sup>46</sup>

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Edward Rose, alias Heinz Rosenbaum wrote this memoir sometime between 1985 and 1989 from memory. Although he must have had a very good memory, he sometimes made mistakes for instance in the timing of events. Research has been done about the facts, times, and places he mentions and is added in footnotes. The authors of the footnotes are either Ad van den Oord or An Huitzing, both Dutch researchers. They have used contributions by Jane Berger, Sylvia Ulmer and Steve Rose. They would also like to thank Mark de Vries for his grammatical corrections. No changes were made in Edward Rose's text except some grammatical corrections.

<sup>2</sup> Heinz's father Otto Rosenbaum (Schwerin, March 8, 1875) was stationed at Thorn during the First World War, Heinz' pregnant mother Stephanie Vogel (Berlin Mai 31, 1886) travelled to Thorn so that her husband and general practitioner Otto could perform the child-birth himself. Geneviève Susemihl, '*...And it became my home*'. *Die Assimilation und Integration der deutsch-jüdischen Hitlerflüchtlinge in New York und Toronto* (Münster 2004) 372.

<sup>3</sup> The Nazi's won the election on June 5, 1932, with 49% of the votes and obtained a majority in the parliament of Mecklenburg-Schwerin.

<sup>4</sup> Otto Rosenbaum was also president of the Jewish community of Schwerin from October 8, 1934 (Bernd Kasten, *Ausgrenzung, Vertreibung, Vernichtung. Juden in Schwerin 1933-1945* [Schwerin 1995] 49). In 1935, he lived at Schlosstrasse 12b (Address book Schwerin 1935 <http://forum.ahnenforschung.net/showthread.php?t=50711&page=59>) and in 1939 at Bismarckstrasse 65 (before: Kaiser Wilhelmstrase 65, now: Mecklenburgstrasse 65 where Stolpersteine for the Rosenbaum family are immured). His wife Stephanie Vogel wasn't religious, see Susemihl (2004) 372. His son Herbert was born on August 14, 1914.

<sup>5</sup> It was at the Adler and Oppenheimer factory in Neumünster.

<sup>6</sup> In 1939, Herbert (Rose) Rosenbaum worked as a skin expert for one of the biggest leather factories in the USA, called the Colonial Tanning Co. Brookline (Mass). He lived at 44 Fullerstraat, Brookline (Mass) at the time. (Dutch National Archives, Archief Rijksvreemdelingendienst, inv.nr. 1039).

<sup>7</sup> The Dutch National Archives (Archief Rijksvreemdelingendienst, inv.nr. 1039) contain a letter dated April 22, 1939 (Gemeentepolitie Oisterwijk aan procureur-generaal) which states that 'on request of the Government, under special intercession', Heinz Rosenbaum, employee at the Royal Leather Factory Oisterwijk, has been stationed at the factory. In the Dutch Royal Archives (A52a-II-316/4508) a letter has been found written by Heinz Rosenbaum, November 27, 1938 to Princess Juliana in which he expresses his gratitude for her mediation through which he could live and work 'in this beautiful country'. In this letter Heinz mentions 'Fraulein Toni Wunderlich' as the person who pleaded for him. Antonia Wunderlich was born in 1848 in Gadebusch, Mecklenburg. She was the youngest of three sisters Wunderlich who ran a school for middle class girls in Schwerin. She had been in the late nineteenth century in Schwerin the governess of Prince Hendrik (1876-1934), the later husband (1901) of the Dutch queen Wilhelmina and the father of princess Juliana (1909-2004) (Heinz Rosenbaum mentioned this fact in a letter to captain K. Kwanters september 4, 1944). In Oisterwijk it was believed that Otto Rosenbaum was a physician at the court of Prince Hendrik von Mecklenburg-Schwerin. No evidence exists for this and it is not supported by Heinz's letter to Princess Juliana.

<sup>8</sup> Enactment of July 25, 1938, which went into effect on September 30, 1938.

<sup>9</sup> The 'Kristallnacht' took place on the night of November 9, 1938. In Schwerin the Nazi's destroyed the synagogue, the department store Kychenthal, and the jewelry store Löwenthal.

<sup>10</sup> This cousin is Werner Gutkind (Schwerin February 17, 1906), the son of merchant Otto Gutkind (1860) and Olga Gutkind born Rosenbaum (October 19, 1879-Ghetto of Minsk 194?). In 1935 they lived at Regentenstrasse 2a Schwerin (Address book Schwerin 1935). Olga Gutkind born Rosenbaum is a sister of Dr. Otto Rosenbaum. Werner Gutkind survived the war and lived in New York.

<sup>11</sup> On the afternoon of November 10, 1938 eighteen Jews of Schwerin were transported by the Gestapo to the prison Alt Strelitz, and later to the prison Neustrelitz, where they were used as forced laborers. See Leo Baeck Institute, Schwerin Jewish Community Collection <http://digital.cjh.org>; see also <http://www.svz.de/lokales/zeitung-fuer-die-landeshauptstadt/loewenthals-verheerendes-urteil-id5926841.html> The distance Schwerin-Neustrelitz is about 143 kilometres.

<sup>12</sup> Heinz stayed at Nemerhof, a guesthouse in Oisterwijk, where more German Jewish refugees stayed between 1933 en 1940. It was located at Gemullehoekenweg 50. Heinz stayed there from November 16, 1938 until January 31, 1939. The guesthouse was run by the family Janssen. Father Harry Janssen became a resistance worker during the war. [http://www.advandenoord.nl/biografieen/Janssen\\_HML.html](http://www.advandenoord.nl/biografieen/Janssen_HML.html). On January 31, 1939, Heinz moved to De Lind 32, where the vintner Louis Fassaert lived, see [http://www.advandenoord.nl/biografieen/Fassaert\\_LCF.html](http://www.advandenoord.nl/biografieen/Fassaert_LCF.html). According to Heinz's 'Persoonskaart' he stayed there until April 30, 1940, but according to some 'Woningkaarten' it

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appears that he lived at Peperstraat 4 from June 1, 1939 and at different addresses from the end of August 1939, together with his parents (see footnote 17).

<sup>13</sup>The Hockey Club was founded by Mrs. Van der Klei. Probably it was there that Heinz met her son: student Bim van der Klei, who became his friend and later a resistance-fighter. Bim wrote about the Rosenbaum family in his memoirs (Bim van der Klei, *De Smalle Weg. Herinneringen van Bim van der Klei* [Geldrop 1980] 25-49): 1939: 'In the meantime, I befriended Heinz, a Jewish refugee from Germany, who found employment at a company in our village and quickly learned the Dutch language. He was soon included in our circle. He told me about his life in Schwerin, where his father was well known as a physician. He told me about the humiliations and fears they had endured, but also about the sympathy of some of the inhabitants of Schwerin, who apparently managed to preserve their fairness and decency. After some time he managed to bring his parents from Germany to Oisterwijk. These folks had to give up everything. Although they barely had a livelihood, they found a feeling of peace and compassion in their new environment. Although - because of the circumstances - they lost their interest in their material wellbeing, something we would experience a few years later, they were full of sadness and anxiety. We, at home, considered anti-Semitism as something inferior and we agreed to try to help this humiliated and displaced family (...) Heinz's father, a significant and strong hearted man, full of care for his family, seemed to me the perfect physician. He showed great calm and, while he also showed great knowledge and intelligence, he could listen with great interest to other people, whom he looked right in the eye, with his little bulging brown eyes. His wife was all kindness and hospitality, although you could read the sorrow and grief on her face. Neither of them any longer hoped to find a reasonable living in Europe. They only wanted to stay in the Netherlands until they could move to their son in America. We had assembled some furniture for them, and so they lived in a small home with lots of fear and little hope in their heart, until the German raid took away the little bit of hope that was left'.

May 10-12, 1940:

'In the afternoon I visited our Jewish immigrant friends. They looked totally defeated. Although they wouldn't hurt us, I understood that they didn't believe we could defend them with success. The old physician looked at me with a strange stare in his great brown eyes. He looked more Jewish than before. I saw he was scared. His wife paced restlessly around the room, with her always melancholy face that made you unsure whether she was crying. At the same time she managed to bring coffee, without saying a word. Heinz told me he thought all has been lost. But if they couldn't escape their fate, it was better to be with us. I could hardly imagine something sadder, a cornered family, trapped like a rat in a cage'.

August 1942:

'The circumstances of our Jewish friends became more and more difficult. We tried to be as friendly as possible and to visit them more often since they weren't allowed on the streets in the evening-hours. But their fear and uncertainty grew, as they were increasingly intimidated and restricted in their freedom. My father, as a Frisian, used to enjoy playing 'Skat' [card game] and after he taught me how to play, we played it with passion with our German Jewish friends. Their simple home with bare walls, the auction furniture and the worn 'Deventer' carpet might cause an atmosphere of dismissal, the past, but it didn't change our feelings of friendship. We talked a lot and were pleased that they felt respected and not, as in Germany, avoided. Especially the physician visibly revived when we visited them. He told us about his practice, about his youth and about the things he willingly did in his life. Occasionally a nervous tension around his mouth told us that the memories hurt him and that he had to say goodbye to a lot of things that were irreplaceable. His wife, who had difficulties walking, went from the kitchen to the anteroom and tried to remain a good hostess. We hardly discussed the political and military situation. Although they didn't know the fate of the Jews at that time, they knew that the military successes of the Allied Forces went too slowly. Only once, when his wife had left the room, the physician put his cards down and asked us if we hadn't heard anything about an invasion, and sometimes, with hesitation, he asked us what we thought the German occupier had in mind with the Jews. We couldn't say much to reassure him. So came the summer of 1942, the beginning of the deportation of the Jews. All Jews we knew torn between resigning themselves or trying to escape. But it was too dangerous to talk about these things. Marked by their yellow badge, we saw some of them still in the streets, but some of them didn't show up anymore at all.

Heinz already told me that he had plans to go into hiding, and one day he told me that the moment was there and that I should not see him anymore. He didn't say anything about his parents. They had no expectations left for the future and wished to await the events. Besides that, no one would have helped them. Hiding out hardly existed at the time. It was new to us, and I don't remember when I first heard of it. Hiding out became popular in 1943, when the Germans hunted Dutch young men for the 'Arbeidsinzet' [forced labour] in Germany. From that moment on the resistance and the population revolted together against the German occupier. Before that the deportation of the Jews and -again- the taking the Dutch soldiers as prisoners of war irritated us strongly.

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When the day of departure was almost there, Heinz told me, that he would take the train to the nearest city, where he would meet someone of the escape-line. The farewell was difficult for him, and I proposed to accompany him. He agreed, as long as I didn't ask questions and promised that I would leave him the moment he wished. It was already autumn, and it became dark early in the evening [this is not correct, Heinz fled in August 1942]. Outside, all was quiet and gloomy, and we didn't know if we would ever see each other again. In the train we hardly said a word, the past had been done and the future was ominous and totally unknown to us. A Jew caught escaping was a lost man. But nothing happened. We left the station and Heinz disappeared down a dark street. A moment later he came back without his yellow badge. We said good-bye and each went our separate ways. I had the feeling that I would never see him again. Soon after that, his parents had to leave for Westerbork. But my friend would survive in France by hiding in full isolation. Shortly after the war, I met him in Paris, where he told me his story about poverty, fear and the loneliness that he had to endure to save his life. After that we lost contact. For him Europe was done'.

<sup>14</sup> Heinz worked in Oisterwijk for Siegfried Kanstein, head of the procurement office of the Leather Company and also a German Jewish refugee. He, his wife and her sister tried to escape with the help of a less expensive escape-line, but they were caught by the Nazis and all three were murdered in Auschwitz on November 14, 1942.

<sup>15</sup> Gerda Henriette Florence Rosenbaum (born April 1, 1921) arrived in Amsterdam on June 16, 1939. Addresses of Gerda Rosenbaum in Amsterdam: 1. Diepenbrockstraat 32-huis, where she lived with the family of Ernst Jacob Eisemann, born in Meckesheim in 1893 and his wife Ilse Sophie Zuckermann, born in Hamburg in 1903 (this couple was murdered in Sobibor on May 28, 1943); 2. Paramaribostraat 27-III, where she lived with widow Gertrud Bloch-Hirschfeld, born in 1895 in Berlin; 3. Rijnstraat 110-III, where she lived with Max Steinberg, watchmaker, born in 1893 in Lubny; 4. Noorder Amstellaan 168-III where she lived with the family of Emil Jacob, born in 1881 in Osnabrück; 5. Zuider Amstellaan 53-II where Gerda and her parents lived with Meilech Stark, born in 1893 in Lancut, Germany/Poland; 6. After 25-3-1943 (Gerda's civil marriage with Rudolf Nowalski) she lived with her husband, parents and in-laws in Trompenburgstraat 36-III. After the war the Noorder-Amstellaan became Churchill-laan and Zuider Amstellaan became Rooseveltlaan.

<sup>16</sup> Ilse Eisemann-Zuckermann must be the relative Heinz writes about. Her parents are: James and Ida Betty Zuckermann-Jonas. Ida Betty Jonas is the daughter of Meier Levin Jonas and Sophie Bonheim. Sophie is a sister of Blanka Bonheim, and Blanka Bonheim is the mother of Dr. med. Otto Rosenbaum. See footnote 19: Ida Zuckerman-Jonas lived near Rotterdam. In a letter to the Dutch authorities (April 22, 1939) Heinz declared that his sister had the intention to work temporarily as a maid at the house of E.J. Eisemann for the purpose of relieving her parents financially. Her intention was to emigrate to the USA once her father got a medical practice there. (Dutch National Archives, Archief Rijksvreemdelingendienst, inv.nr. 1039).

<sup>17</sup> Otto and Stephanie Rosenbaum-Vogel arrived in the Netherlands via Bad Bentheim on August 26, 1939. On July 13, 1939 they received permission from the Dutch authorities to stay in the Netherlands for one year, but only for transmigration to the USA and only if they did not need public funds and no other family members migrated to the Netherlands. Heinz Rosenbaum had convinced the Dutch authorities that he earned enough money at the leather factory Oisterwijk (one hundred guilders a month), that his brother in the USA would offer thirty guilders each month for his parents and that the Committee for Jewish Refugees vouched for the livelihood of the Rosenbaums. (Dutch National Archives, Archief Rijksvreemdelingendienst, inv.nr. 1039). They were registered at the municipality of Oisterwijk on August 28, 1939 (Persoonskaarten). According to the 'Woningkaarten' ('house registration') of the municipality Oisterwijk they lived together with Heinz in Peperstraat 4, a guesthouse run by the widow Maria C. van Oers. On November 20, 1939 they all three moved to Burgemeester Canterslaan 1, owned by the architect Johannes A. van Esch (who must be the 'landlord' referred to in the text) and finally, on April 30, 1940 they moved to Peperstraat 18 (that must be the 'very small house' referred to in the text, rented by Mrs. Van der Klei).

<sup>18</sup> That must be Mrs. Van der Klei and it must be around April 1940. The Van der Klei family bought some furniture at an auction and gave it to the Rosenbaums for free. The Rosenbaums also had contact with the Jewish family Van der Heijden-Lobstein, at whose house they sometimes had dinner.

<sup>19</sup> Paul Bonheim (1877) and Käthe Friedensohn (1877). They lived in Hamburg, at Hansastrasse 70 (Stolpersteine were immured in Brahmsallee in Hamburg because the Hansastrasse had vanished after firebombings in the Second World War). Paul worked as a physician at the Freimaurer Hospital in Hamburg. The Bonheims fled to the Netherlands in 1939 and hoped to get permission to immigrate to the United States. They lived in Hillegersberg, near Rotterdam, together with Miss U. Zimak and the couple James Zuckermann (1876), without profession, former grain dealer, and Ida Betty Jonas (see footnote 16). They all moved together at the end of October 1940 to Zutph. Straatweg 26 in Ellecom (a small community near Velp and Rheden). There, Paul and Käthe committed suicide on December 13, 1942. Their son Erwin Albert (1910) was deported via Westerbork to Auschwitz and

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murdered there on July 31, 1944. Their son Hans Hermann managed to get to the United States, where he fathered four children . One of them, Karl Bonheim from New York, was a witness when the Stolpersteine for his grandparents and Uncle Erwin Albert were immured in March 2014. See [http://www.ndr.de/fernsehen/sendungen/hamburg\\_journal/Ein-Stolperstein-fuer-die-Bonheims,hamj34836.html](http://www.ndr.de/fernsehen/sendungen/hamburg_journal/Ein-Stolperstein-fuer-die-Bonheims,hamj34836.html) Zuckermann died on June 14, 1941 in De Steeg, near Rheden. Jonas (Hamburg, January 15, 1880) was murdered at Auschwitz on September 6, 1944.

<sup>20</sup> The firebombing took place on May 14 , 1940. 650 to 900 people were killed, 78.000 people became homeless.

<sup>21</sup> On December 13, 1942, so two and a half years later and not one year as Edward remembers.

<sup>22</sup> The German overseer (Verwalter) Dr. Hubert Huppertz arrived in March 1941.

<sup>23</sup> That was in April 1941.

<sup>24</sup> The fire was on December 14, 1940, in the building where the cowhides were washed and dried. *Nieuwe Tilburgsche Courant*, December 16, 1940.

<sup>25</sup> The Jewish employers were fired on January 31, 1942. Depending on how long they had been in service, they received one or two month's salaries.

<sup>26</sup> Probably J.C. van de Wiel, a cobbler who lived at Peperstraat 1. On the list of Jewish persons in Oisterwijk, the profession of Heinz says 'notary clerk', perhaps he worked for a short time at the office of father Van der Klei, who was a notary.

<sup>27</sup> June 1942.

<sup>28</sup> From May 3, 1942.

<sup>29</sup> That was Bim van der Klei, student and resistance worker.

<http://www.advandenoord.nl/biografieen/Klei%20B%20van%20der.html> According to Bim van der Klei they did not go by bicycle from Oisterwijk to Tilburg , but by train. Van der Klei (1980) 48.

<sup>30</sup> Probably Lisa Suijkerbuijk, she was the contact for the Dutch-Paris line at the Dutch-Belgian border at train station Roosendaal. Willy van Breemen and Paula Elzas declared that Lisa was arrested for the smuggling of soap and was held for some time at the Polizeifängnis in Haaren. Paula also declared that Lisa's father worked at the cigar factory Karel van Wely. Paula Elzas and Siegfried Kanstein, both Jewish employees of the Leather factory in Oisterwijk, received help on the Dutch-Belgian border from members of the Suijkerbuijk family. The aforementioned Lisa could have been Elisa Ludovica Suijkerbuijk (Essen 17 maart 1905), she was married with Harrie Coenraads, who managed the Van Wely factory in Nispen. Elisa Ludovica was indeed imprisoned at the Polizeifängnis in Haaren, but only for one night, from January 18 until January 19, 1943, she was Häftling 1507 (e-mail Henk van Helvert, Gedenkplaats Haaren, September 22, 2014).

<sup>31</sup> Probably Willy van Breemen.

<sup>32</sup> This already happened on November 8, 1942: operation Torch.

<sup>33</sup> Willy van Breemen en Jopie Smulders. A man in Amersfoort made the forged identity papers, but the resistance had to pay for that. Smulders accompanied Gerda from the train station of Oisterwijk or Tilburg to the train station of Roosendaal at the border. Jopie was very nervous, but Gerda slept the whole train journey (according to Paula and Willy). According to Willy, Gerda wanted to take two suitcases and according to Paula she wanted to take a 'Jewish bible'. Both things of course didn't please the resistance. Interviews with Willy van Breemen (January 6, 1997) en Paula Elzas (June 3, 1996).

<sup>34</sup> Willy van Breemen was the contact for the Dutch Paris line in Oisterwijk together with Jopie Smulders

<http://www.advandenoord.nl/biografieen/Breemen%20WJ%20van.html> about Smulders:

[http://www.advandenoord.nl/biografieen/Smulders\\_JSC.html](http://www.advandenoord.nl/biografieen/Smulders_JSC.html)

<sup>35</sup> They moved on October 30, 1942 from Oisterwijk to Amsterdam, Zuider Amstellaan 53. In September 1942 their home (Peperstraat 18, owner Platvoet) was searched by Einsatzstab Rosenberg, the Germans were looking for valuables, but at the Rosenbaums they only found non-valuable clothes, the furniture was owned by the Van der Klei family. NIOD (Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies), Archive Einsatzstab Rosenberg, inv.nr. 49.

<sup>36</sup> Heinz means the Jewish Council (Joodse Raad). Gerda Rosenbaum worked for the Expositur, which was connected to the Jewish Council and acted as a liaison with the 'Zentralstelle für jüdische Auswanderung'. The Expositur started as an office which helped with emigration papers for Jews, but when transportation to the East started, it helped getting exemptions from transportation. In a letter that Gerda wrote in October 1944 to her brother Herbert in the U.S.A., she states that she got her job at the Jewish Council thanks to a cousin of an aunt. This cousin was Hans Berthold Heilbut, one of the leaders of the Expositur. He was a metal ore dealer (according to the Jewish Monument) and the boss of a department ('afdelingschef') of the Jewish Council, according to his personal record in the Amsterdam-city archives. He, his wife and daughter died in Auschwitz on October 21, 1944.

<sup>37</sup> The civil marriage of Rudolf (Rudi) Nowalski and Gerda Rosenbaum took place on March 25, 1943. Their religious marriage 'choepa' took place in April. There were announcements in the papers. Rudi and Gerda had photos of



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them as a couple made by Mrs. Annemie Wolff in June 1943. Although the reason for marrying was the chance for Rudi to have better papers, it may not have been as 'phony' as Heinz thought it was. Gerda's parents lived with them in the same apartment, as did Rudi's parents.

<sup>38</sup> The address of the apartment was Paris 15, 6 Rue Armand Moisant.

<sup>39</sup> Louk Roume was the contact for the Dutch Paris line in Paris, she had worked at the Leather factory Oisterwijk from 1928 until 1936. [http://www.advandenoord.nl/biografieen/Roume\\_LR.html](http://www.advandenoord.nl/biografieen/Roume_LR.html)

<sup>40</sup> Philippe François Marie Leclerc de Hauteclocque (1902-1947), was a French general during the Second World War and involved in the liberation of Paris. He is known in France simply as 'le maréchal Leclerc' or just Leclerc.

<sup>41</sup> According to Paula Elzas, a Jewish employee of the Leather Factory Oisterwijk, who had also fled to France, she was accidentally almost run over by Heinz with his jeep in Paris, following the city's liberation. Interview with Paula Elzas (June 3, 1996).

<sup>42</sup> Otto and Stephanie Rosenbaum-Vogel were murdered in Sobibor on July 16, 1943. Their children were informed about their death around April 1946. On April 12, 1946 the three Rosenbaum children 'und 2 Enkelkinder' announced the death of their parents in *Aufbau* (April 12, 1946), they were falsely informed that their parents died at Auschwitz.

<sup>43</sup> Rudi Nowalski (Wanne, May 6, 1902) and his parents Bruno Nowalski (Osche, June 30, 1874) and Hedwig Wertheim (Essen, December 21, 1875) were murdered at Sobibor on July 16, 1943, at the same place and on the same date as Otto and Stephanie Rosenbaum.

<sup>44</sup> In 1955 Gerda Nowalski-Rosenbaum changed her and her son's family name in Nowell, adding Rosenbaum to her first name Gerda.

<sup>45</sup> Before that they stayed in London, at the home of their relatives Ernst and Elsa Rosenbaum. Gerda and Rene travelled from Rotterdam, via Southampton, to New York on the s.s. Veendam, of the Holland America Line. It arrived in New York on April 8, 1947. The Veendam started its first post-war trip to New York on the 21<sup>st</sup> of February, 1947.

<sup>46</sup> Gerda R. Nowell passed away on January 24, 1982, Edward H. Rose on February 8, 2002. Their brother Herbert died on August 19, 1999.