

Memoir of Lisbeth Ledermann

English Translation by Irene Newhouse, 1995

Original document (in German) located in the archives of the Leo Baeck Institute

Lisbeth Ledermann

I. Intro. to the time around 1800

For the Jews, who'd had no rights for centuries, a reformer arose in the 18th. century in the person of Moses Mendelsohn. He converted the mess of language, which the Jews used, into the German language. His translation, around 1780, of the Torah into German was one of the trailblazing works of this great philosopher & thereby opened for ambitious Jews a path to achieve knowledge other than Jewish wisdom.

As tolerated & protected Jews, selected people could live outside the ghettos. 1781 they were allowed to learn trades, arts, sciences, and to practice agriculture, with restrictions. By giving Jews German citizenship, partly through the pressure of Napoleon, they obtained more freedom to pursue education outside religious schools and a better living standard. Although isolation kept the Jews together, and restricted them to the circles of their family and community, they attained respect & recognition among unprejudiced Christians, even as Orthodox Jews. In their improved circumstances & educational opportunities they assimilated themselves to the mores and customs in Germany. Sons & daughters differed little in education and attainments from those of the good families of the land. The beginning of the Emancipation brought a flowering for Jews in music, like Meyerbeer, Felix Mendelsohn - grandson of Moses, poetry - Heinrich Heine, statecraft- Boerne, and many more.

In trade and industry there was a tremendous development. Simple handweavers became the founders of world famous spinning and weaving mills. Blacksmiths developed enormous foundries. Jewish capital founded the first cement and sugar factories. Grandsons of former Jewish bartenders of Frederickian times in Silesia founded large breweries, which became known beyond Silesia.

Around 1815 a few courageous and progressive Rabbis began to preach in the German language & to replace the singsong of the Synagogue with a quiet and orderly church service. Since 1793, the year of the first toleration of Jews in Muensterberg since the Middle Ages, a limited influx of Jews had been permitted. Guild regulations limited their choice of occupation. By 1803 the number of families in Muensterberg had increased to 18. Among those who moved in 1805, who are enumerated in the List of Jews of the Muensterberg City Government, one finds the married couple Israel ben David Schottlaender, born 1776, died 1827.

II. The Schottlaender Family Settles in Muensterberg, Silesia

As all Prussian Jews before the emancipation, Israel ben David Schottlaender had to have a certificate of toleration, which entitled him to residence and occupation rights, in order to stay in Muensterberg. He brought a new element into the Community: as optician and through trade in optical instruments like glasses, etc., which he sold not only in Muensterberg, but at markets and trade fairs.

He was the son of David Schottlaender, who, as one can tell from his name, must have come from Schottland, the suburb of Danzig. From the marriage of Israel Schottlaender with Bertha, nee Apt, issued a son Johann Leib (Loebel), born 18 May 1809. Israel Schottlaender received Prussian citizenship in 1812 from the Muensterberger City Government & on 25 September 1812 he declared his intent to continue using Schottlaender as his permanent surname.

In 1811 he had already bought a small house for 250 Thaler & enjoyed a certain affluence. When he died on 27 January 1827 in the Breslau Jewish Hospital, he was buried in the Jewish Cemetery Claasenstr., Breslau [this cemetery has not yet been restored].

III. The Family's Development in Commerce

Loebel Schottlaender married Henriette Grossmann, born 27 Jan 1817, on 27 Nov. 1834 in Muensterberg. She was the daughter of the merchant Samuel Grossmann & his spouse Beate, nee Steiner, the daughter of the publisher Naftali Steiner. Samuel Grossmann was the son of Berel Isaac Grossmann, and his mother was Veronica, nee Salomon. All these families attained mentionable fortunes after becoming citizens through iron industriousness & frugality. As soon as land ownership was no longer restricted, Jews could buy larger estates, so-called Ritterguete. When Loebel's first son Julius was born on 16 Mar 1835 in Muensterberg, Loebel was already a respected merchant and landlord. In quick succession, the first daughter Auguste, was born 5 Nov. 1836 after Julius; she married Jakob Oliven on 23 June 1857. Two sons & 6 daughters followed. At the end of the '40's, Loebel obtained in Muensterberg the so-called City Estate [Stadtgut] with a lovely house & grounds so that his numerous family had a comfortable residence. This house was owned by the family for a few decades & later became the so-called 'Stadtschloessel' [little city castle] of the Landrat office. Loebel rounded out his assets with several estates around Muensterberg & developed a lucrative agriculture. He moved his family to Breslau in 1860, where Julius lived already & owned mills. The Muensterberger properties were administered by 2 of the younger sons. In summer the family lived there. Loebel Schottlaender's interests turned to other areas, he built the Silesian Cement Factory in Oppeln, bought houses in Breslau, had Brickyards & shares in Oder shipping & built himself in 1864 the house at Tauntzienplatz 1A, in whose ground floor the family resided.

Papers are preserved in the family archive, in which the commander of a Prussian Army commends the way in which Loebel Schottlaender supplied the Army in its passage through Silesia for the Austrian campaigns of 1864 & 1866. Loebel & his sons were, on account of their estates & mills, in a position to be able to meet the largest orders. They delivered livestock, grain, and through their own distilleries on their estates, Schnaps for the commissaries. On outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War in 1870, the Army general staff therefore entrusted part of their commissioning to the same family. As head of the family, Loebel directed the business, two sons & two sons-in-law were in the field with the Army, and trusted employees oversaw the supply transport. As experienced agriculturalists they could guarantee the best deliveries. Affluent men became rich ones. They were offered many opportunities in trade & industry; Loebel had one aim in view when making good use of his riches & in his philanthropies: namely to assure that the family and their descendants would be well- cared for after his death. When he died on 3 April 1880, the Loebel & Henriette Schottlaender Foundation was already in existence. Through his generous endowment of 1 million he assured the future of his family & tied to the main foundation a branch foundation for general philanthropy.

IV. Foundation & Charity

The fundamental goals of the L&HSF were executed until the confiscation of all Jewish foundations under Hitler. The foundation consisted of a main foundation, which concerned itself with descendants of the founders, as well as a subsidiary foundation. As the direct descendants of Loebel found themselves pecuniarily exceedingly well-off, there was little call for its services at the beginning, the capital increased steadily through good acquisitions, and both foundations even survived the inflation, by owning their buildings. The purposes of the main foundation were met as needed. Every year family members received thousands for scientific study & research. Requests by ailing family members for recuperative journeys, as well as for years of residence in warm climates, were generously granted. Transient financial reverses, mortgages, help in getting started, for dowries & starter homes were discussed & granted, without the requester having to be indigent. Finally a few requests for assistance in emigrating could be fulfilled before the confiscation.

In the buildings of the subsidiary foundation single women received apartments cheaply or gratis. Career or older women had a regular home here. In 1938 I had the sad duty, to tell the tenants as gently as possible, that the houses were being closed by [government] order, and that the poor people were going to be deported the next day. I was then working in an advisory capacity - as oldest great-granddaughter of the founders- in the administration of the subsidiary foundation. If, after the annual distributions of the main foundation, there were still funds left, they were used for the dowry of a needy bride suggested by the Community.

The Family Day was celebrated every year on May 16 - Loebel Schottlaender's birthday - since 1880, even after his death. After a memorial service in the Synagogue at Schloss Hartlieb near Breslau, Julius Schottlaender's estate, the graves

of all deceased family members were visited in the Lohestr. Cemetery, then the foundation meeting, presided over by its directors, took place in Julius' city residence at Tauentzienplatz 2. On the 1909 Family Day, every member was given, in honor of the 100th anniversary of the birth of the founder, a gold medal with Loebel's head in relief on it. After the meeting, the directors held their meeting about Loebel Schottlaender's Karlsbad Mineral Water Export. As annual guest at the spa, Loebel became interested in how the lease of the export rights by the Mattoni family from Gieshuebel was executed. In the summer of 1872, while he was on there again for a cure, the lease was let out for bid again, as occurred every 15 years. The amount to be paid for the lease had to be submitted as a sealed bid.

Partly in fun Loebel submitted a bid & with his estimate removed the previous lease holder from the field. Until the Nazis annexed Czechoslovakia in 1938, the family held the lease continuously for 66 years. Only family members took part, the revenues were shared out, the Karlsbad Jewish Community given a share, a few needy women from Breslau were sent to Karlsbad for a cure. Often larger sums were extended to the Karlsbad city government. Until her death in 1894, Henriette Schottlaender was sole owner of the enormous revenues from Karlsbad, and distributed large sums to her grandchildren on the Family Day.

Loebel's oldest son Julius, born 16 March 1835, was very lucky in his business dealings in Breslau. He owned oil & grain mills, a coal mine, brick kilns, built up entire streets, owned Rittergueter & houses. He had such a variety of business opportunities offered him that he had to have an organization to help him run them all. In 1883 he made my father, the husband of his niece Hulda, nee Oliven, who married Theodor Ehrlich in 1879, his representative with complete power of attorney, to organize, further develop, & run the entire concern. Interest-free apartments were obtained for active & retired employees of the estates and offices. The poor milk supply in certain areas of the city was improved by setting up dairies on one of his streets. Large tracts were bought south of the city, a sugar mill was built, and competent supervisors & inspectors achieved higher yields on the estates.

Following tradition, Julius Schottlaender made significant gifts & set up foundations. Around 1895 he gave the city Breslau 100 Morgen [an obsolete measure of land- sorry, I don't know how big] of land south of the city, to establish a park & scenic boulevard, in order to promote development in this area. A marker in a pavilion by the artificial pond proclaimed his gift. When his native city Muensterberg needed a water supply around 1903, he gave the city a large area that had many springs. In order that this area might not only be useful, but also beautiful, he paid to have a lovely park planted, and sheltered the springs with an imposing structure. His grant for a residence for Jewish nurses made this institution possible in Breslau around 1900. He donated the lot, financed the construction of the building, as well as board for the administration & the nurses. On the adjoining lot the Julius & Anna Schottlaender Foundation building was erected. The purpose of this foundation was a Jewish home for the aged. The care & board of the aged was the responsibility of the nurses, who lived right next door. This home for the aged was the only modern

place, in Hitler's time, in which Jewish doctors could still practice, and Jewish administrators work. In 1939 - one day before Yom Kippur - the order for immediate removal came. It was the very last center of Jewish activity. The building was occupied by soldiers. As anonymous donor he [we're back to Julius S now...] gave enormous sums. I was there when he read of a major accident in a coal mine in the Rhineland. He directed that 35,000 Reichsmarks be turned over to the President of Germany immediately, for his transferal, without naming the donor. On his 70th birthday, 1905, he gave the city of Breslau a grant of 3,000,000, for philanthropic purposes regardless of the religion of the recipients. He declined all medals & decorations. But when, from highest sources, the hereditary rank of Major was offered for his estate of 10,000 Morgen, he became the only Jewish Major in Germany. When Julius Schottlaender died in Breslau on 1 January 1911, he left an estate of 50 million marks. His only son, Dr. Paul Schottlaender, exclusive of the 4 daughters, inherited all the real estate holdings, his wife, Anna Schottlaender, nee Gallewski, having survived her husband by only 20 days. The daughters inherited the rest in capital & bonds.

Dr. Paul Schottlaender, born 14 Feb. 1870, took over many responsibilities in the philanthropic area, which continued beyond his father's death. He was a good landlord, but also had great scientific interest. As member of the Kaiser Wilhelm Society he donated many resources for oceanography in Rovigno, which was of great significance for the German Navy. In the summer of 1913 he donated a research ship to this station, handing it over personally in the presence of the Kaiser. The University of Breslau enjoyed his grants, and he had an open hand for the needy. He died 21 March 1938 after much suffering, much cast down by the fate of the Jews.

V. Theodor Ehrlich

The many-sided extensive experiences of my father Theodor Ehrlich through his activity led many institutions to consult him, in addition to his annual gifts. Around 1895 my parents, along with a few other families, founded the school "Daheim" [At Home] for the children of irresponsible parents, and supported it through gifts for many years, until the city Breslau, convinced of its success, took over the institute. He also made sure, that the children of the boat crews for an Oder shipping line, which had been in the family since Loebel's time, were obligatorily educated during the months in which their families were at anchor. As member of the board of the Silesian Deaf-Mute Institute, he advised the teachers and director, and every week spent a few hours there himself, for inspection purposes. Where there was need, he was financially generous. His readiness to help & his practical sense were highly valued, whether it dealt with hospitals, scientific institutes, theater, museums, or music. When the First World War broke out, my father, as royal Spanish consul for the province of Silesia, was one of the few representatives of a neutral European country. The consulates of England, France, Austria, Italy, Poland & Russia all gave him positions. At that time, along with uncountable other guests, there were innumerable Polish & Russian Jews at Silesian spas, who'd been arrested by the German authorities as enemy aliens & jailed in Breslau. My father, through his great

influence, succeeded in winning freedom for these Jewish visitors & enabling their journey home. At special occasions, such as the golden anniversary of my grandparents Jakob & Auguste Oliven, nee Schottlaender, in 1907, & of my parents, Theodor & Hulda Ehrlich, nee Oliven, in 1929, instead of personal gifts, beds were endowed in the Jewish Hospital in the names of children & grandchildren. When my both my parents died in 1930, they were spared the misery of the Hitler era.

VI. Vignettes of the family

In addition to success & wealth, the family had many a severe blow of fate to complain of in its private lives. Loebel Schottlaender, six feet tall & imposing in appearance, lost four blooming young daughters, three of them married, who left behind young children. He never allowed his sons-in-law to remarry, because as a child he himself had suffered much from his stepmother after the early death of his mother & his father's remarriage.

Julius Schottlaender lost his first wife after a very short marriage & there were 2 tiny daughters. He managed to convince his father of the necessity of a remarriage. He married Anna, nee Gallewski, from Brieg, on 14 Feb. 1869; she was an elegant thinker & understanding woman. A son Paul was born 14 Feb. 1869, who was followed by 2 daughters. Julius disinherited the older of the 2 youngest daughters because of her divorce & conversion to Christianity, when she married for the 2nd time a high military officer.

Paul Schottlaender had 2 sons & a daughter from his marriage to Ludmilla Schlesinger. His oldest son married (the 1st time) the daughter of a respected Christian banking family, and after his divorce, another Christian, who was influenced by the Nazis & delivered him to concentration camp, in order to obtain for herself his not-insignificant assets. Also during Paul Schottlaender's life, his daughter married in 1935 a nobleman, who was a sympathetic & valuable person. He was, on account of his marriage to a Jew - she did not convert - murdered by the Nazis in 1940 & after a long search found in Berlin's Landwehrkanal. The youngest son had married a woman from a devout Jewish family. He was deported in 1941, as were his wife & child, & perished miserably.

It was an unwritten law in the family to show great reserve toward others & so many an offer of official offices was declined. High personages strove, from their side, for connections. Thus a long friendship bound my parents with Hermine, the Kaiser's 2nd wife.

After 'conversion' from Orthodox to Liberal Judaism, the family continued to cling to its faith, and family ties remained strong. Only as conversions began to occur among members of the younger generations, and mixed marriages, were certain splits & alienation encountered. Only the Hitler era reminded them all of their origins.

VII. Conclusion

As we, like countless others of our faith, left our home in 1941 with \$4.50 in our pockets, there were no longer and privileged Jews or protected Jews, and no Jewish citizens any longer, and our insignia, worn with pride, was the yellow star. Around us were the deepest Middle Ages, concentration camps, and 6 million murdered co-religionists.

Our possessions consisted of trust in God & the hope of a reunion with our children in America.

May the blessings of the ancestors keep the last scattered twigs of a once numerous family steadfast, in retrospect of 150 years of tradition & success.

12 Items in a memo from Margaret T. Muehsam, 1956, listed as belonging to Lisbeth Ledermann, & borrowed for photocopying [presumably for LBI?]:

1. Loebel & Henriette Schottlaender Family Foundation, Breslau. [I guess that's the work we have]
2. Speech held at Loebel S's grave on 6 Apr 1880
3. Ancestors of Mrs. Ida Ledermann, nee Pringsheim, b 18 Feb 1842 in Oppeln, a contribution to the Pringsheim family history
4. For the 100th birthday of Louis Ledermann, for the history of the Silesian family Ledermann.
5. For the biography of Israel David Schottlaender, 1772-1827.
6. The ancestors of the Oliven family, ... according to acts & records of the archive of the Jewish community of Lissa
7. Descendancy chart of the Ledermann-Pringsheim family
8. Descendancy chart of the Auerbachs, Ancestors of the Ehrlich Family
9. Obituary for Dr. Arthur Korn, pioneer in fax, from the Times, 23 Dec. 1945.
10. Photo of the Ehrenberger [illegible], loaned to Samuel Grossmann by his home city Muensterberg in the year [illegible]
11. Obituary for Rideamus (Dr. Fritz Oliven), from Aufbau, Aug. 1956.
12. A list of family members who attained outstanding rank.