**In front of the Gate**

Five Stolpersteine have been placed in December 2025

in memory of family Stern, a Jewish family from Diez

Monika Felsing, Lastoria e.V.

**Diez upon Lahn/Ober-Gleen.** 87 years ago they fled. They sold their house, Emser Straße 32 in Diez upon Lahn, to a man whose mother had been a Socialdemocratic politician. What they had left, did fit into a lift. What they left behind, was the life they had known. Louis Stern from Balduinstein, his wife Johanna Stern nee Lamm from Ober-Gleen in Upper Hesse, and the children Hermann, Ruth and Ernst-Lothar started anew in the U.S. The connection to Diez has never broken. Now it is more or less cemented: Five Stolpersteine, five stumbling stones, are placed in front of the former house of family Stern. In front of „the gate“ that Ruth Stern Glass Earnest had immortalized in the title of her autobiography.

The artist Gunter Demnig, initiator of the meanwhile Europe-wide memorial project, is living in Elbenrod close to Alsfeld for several years now, not far from Johanna’s homevillage. In September, he came to Diez upon Lahn to the place Stolpersteine at several addresses in the memory of victims of the Nazi era. Also in front of the former house of family Stern, of five who have survived the Holocaust as they managed to flee to overseas in time.

Members of the Aktionskreis Stolpersteine Diez, descendants of the man who bought the house and a group of pupils watched Gunter Demnig at work and heard the voice of the youngest son of the emigrated family: Ernie Stern talked about being a German migrant, about his career, from school to University to the management of a French security, defense and electronic company. The late U.S. citizen from Diez had sent the audio in 2017 as his contribution to the audiobook „Jiddisch Leben“ of the non-profit historical society Lastoria, Bremen, after a request of Monika Felsing. Like Johanna Lamm the historian and journalist is from Ober-Gleen, and together with Justus Randt, the vize-president of the historical society, she has donated one of the five stones for the family.

Since 2008, she works as a volunteer in projects of Lastoria, and among others, she has translated the childhood memoir „The Gate“ of Ruth Stern Glass Earnest under the title „Das Türchen“ into German. During the Stolperstein ceremony, she talked about the girl who had, as a little child, observed with alert eyes what was going on in the street and who had, as a pupil, had been turned in the Nazi era from Ruthchen to „Judsche“. Ruth’s mother had urged emigration. Other than Louis, she didn’t believe that this storm would soon poass, and other than Louis, she did not feel safe in Diez. The song „Es Kelbl“ about the calf that was brought to the butcher was played during the ceremony, as an audio of a benefit concert during the Alsfelder Kulturtage in 2022: „*Om Waa, zèm Schloachder, woar ogebonne è draurech Kalb. Huuch ewwerm, om Hemmel, flugg gaans owe è kläi Schwalb*…“ Ruth who had been a teacher and taught a computer language in the 80ies in New York, was there in a way, though she isn’t alive anymore: Ylva Lambertus, from the group of pupils of the Sophie-Hedwig-Gymnasium, read the foreword and the epilogue of the childhood memoir.

„As a timewitness, Ruth cannot speak anymore, but her observations have been so precise that, in more than one respect, she can help us to understand that era“, Monika Felsing says. „The perspective of the childeren, also of the Child Survivors, has been negleced for a long time, and it was often presumed that they hadn’t been aware of the danger in which their family and they themselves had been. The parents had wanted to protect their children and hadn’t let their own fears and sorrows show. Ruth, on the other hand, had been very aware of what was happening to her and had tried to explain herself what nobody explained to her. Her book gives us an impression of how it has been, then, to be a child, how it had been, to be a Jewish child, and how it had been to flee and to grow up in a foreign country. I hope that many young people will get to know Ruth and her siblings by reading her book.“ A podcast would be possible, a school theatre play, if young people would like to cooperate.

The Geschichts- and Museumsverein for Diez and the area had published a booklet concerning the Stolpersteine that where placed in September. One can get in in the museum in Diez, and the two sons of Ruth Stern Glass Earnest shall also get them. What could be of interest for their family: Louis Stern had confirmed in 1948 that the father of the woman who lives in the house today had been fair when he had bought the house from him and that he was a decent person who had always treated him well. A notary from New York, Judith J. Brisker, who had added (altschul) twice to her name, confirmed that the document was authentic: „Ich verkaufte mein Grundbesitz, Haus mit Garten und Scheune Emserstraße 32 an Karl Schröder Diez/a/d.Lahn zu dem vereinbarten Kaufpreis; welchen Er mir bei Übergabe ausbezahlte. Er war zu mir immer sehr anständig. Dieses bescheinige ich hiermit. Louis Stern, New York, 4. Mai 1948.“ Documents of this kind were often presented during denazification.

Another contract, about 100 years old, had also been kept well. Louis and Johanna had moved into the building with its stable and garden. Their three children were born in Emser Straße 32. This house was a home. Until the Nazis came to power, the family Stern had been a family from Diez like others. And Ruth had still been Ruth.

**More about it:**

**In the local and regional newspaper RLZ,**  Thorsten Kunz reported on the fifth of September on the Stolperstein ceremony.

**„The Gate“** is the title of the original version of Ruth Stern Glass Earnest’s childhood biographiy. The German version, „Das Türchen“, translated by Monika Felsing, is available at Books on Demand.

**In the sixth part of Lastoria’s podcast about emigration from Hesse via Bremen or Hamburg to the U.S. and Canada** there is a little more about family Stern und Ernst Lothar Stern.

**The German version: Jetzt fahrn wir... Übersee!**

<https://monikafelsing.de/WordPress_03/?p=1676>

**English version: Now we go… Overseas!**

<https://monikafelsing.de/WordPress_03/?p=1674>

**The books with the manuscripts are available at BOD** in German („Jetzt fahrn wir... Übersee!") and English ("Now we go... Overseas!").

**In the memorial book "Bettys Nachbarn" about German speaking persecuted people from the Nazi era who seeked exile in Amsterdam Zuid,** there are hundreds of names, also some of Diez and Ober-Gleen.

**In our fairy tales with historical background and in coversongs in Upper Hessian dialect**, I refer to Ruth and her family more than once.

All of our nonfiction and fiction books have been published as results of voluntary work. They are available in bookshops and at Books on Demand (BOD). If you want to know more about it, please contact our historical society Lastoria: mail(at)lastoria-bremen.de.