

ICI VÉCURENT, EN CAMP DE
CONCENTRATION AUX CÔTÉS DE
RÉSISTANTES FRANÇAISES DES
FEMMES ANTIFASCISTES D'AUTRES
PAYS, REFUGIÉES SUR NOTRE SOL.

PARMI ELLES, LE 26 AOÛT 1942
DES FEMMES ALLEMANDES ET
POLONAISES FURENT DEPORTÉES À
AUSWCHITZ D'OU ELLES NE SONT
JAMAIS REVENUES.

HOMMAGE À LEUR MÉMOIRE

Thilo Figaj

Refugees on Our Soil

The Fate of Ruth Karola Kahn, 1923 - 1942



Ici, vécurent en camp de concentration aux cotés de Résistantes françaises des femmes antifasciste de autres pays.

Réfugiées sur notre sol.

Parmi elles, le 26 Août 1942 des femmes allemandes et polonaises furent déportées a Auschwitz d'ou elles ne sont jamais revenues.

Hommage a Leur Memoire

Here, antifascist women from other countries lived in concentration camps alongside French Resistance fighters.

Refugees on our soil.

The German and Polish women among them were deported on August 26, 1942 to Auschwitz from where they never returned.

A Tribute to Their Memory

Inscription on the memorial of the former Concentration Camp Brens in France

Ruth Kahn's photo is from the 1939 NS Identity Card and shows her at the age of 16.

Thilo Figaj

Refugees on Our Soil

The Fate of Ruth Karola Kahn, 1923 - 1942

Lorsch, July 2019

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Translated from German

Das Schicksal der Ruth Karola Kahn, 1923 – 1942

Heimat- und Kulturverein Lorsch, 2015

Online

www.kulturverein-lorsch.de/images/Verein/Thilo-Figaj---Das-Schicksal-von-Ruth-Karola-Kahn-1923-1942.pdf

Babenhhausen, April 2015

When the artist Günter Deming laid his shining brass Stolpersteine for Karl and Paula Kahn and their three daughters Miriam, Liesel and Suse in Babenhhausen in 2015, he paused briefly. He had only just heard that there had been a fourth daughter who had also become a victim of the Shoa. Demnig changed the arrangement in the sidewalk at short notice and added an empty stone for Ruth – to be replaced by the real brass stone at a later date.



Photo: author

Ruth's exact fate was indeed in the dark for many years. It was only known that she had been separated from her parents and siblings. With 6,500 Jews from Baden she was deported to France already in 1940. Her murder in Auschwitz had become certain at the latest with the research of Serge Klarsfeld, who was the first to document the deportations from France.

Three preserved letters are the key to her story. Ruth's last communication was kept for years in New York, later in Johannesburg, and finally in London by members of her mother's family. Two more letters remained in the paternal family in Canada, from where her uncle Leopold Kahn had 1948 searched for her unsuccessfully in France. The clues from these letters reveal the stations on her long fateful journey through France, which could now be traced back in French local archives of the often small and scattered internment camps.

Some of Ruth's fellow sufferers survived these camps and wrote about their stories after the war. It is thanks to their reports that we can get very close to the places and feelings of the victims. We see in Ruth a young woman who was by no means willing to follow the path of the offering lamb. It even seems that in her young life Ruth was able to experience the love for a young man in the camp and together with him the hope for a better future after fleeing together. They wanted to get married.

That should not be any consolation to us, because she was finally separated from him and a victim of the Shoa. We don't know about the fate of the nameless young man. But every ray of light in the dark history of the Shoa should be noticed. It was Ruth's glimmer of hope for a better future after all; it belongs to her all by herself. It can't distract us from the truth either.

Lorsch and Babenhausen, 1923 - 1940



The Kahn House

Babenhausen, Fahrstrasse 80. Photo ca. 1965 / collection author

Israel Kahn was a cattle trader in Babenhausen, about 20 km east of Darmstadt. He came from a long-established family and owned a respectable town house in Fahrstrasse, opposite the prominent town brewery.

Two of his five sons, Leopold and Karl, married to Lorsch which is 30 km to the south. Their wives, both from old established Jewish families from Lorsch, Karola Mainzer and Paula Lorch, were best friends.

Karl Kahn and Paula were married in 1922, and Karl came to Lorsch to buy a textile and manufactory shop for his wife and she continued to run it at Bahnhofstraße 14, just opposite the house she was born in. Paula bought fabrics and had Lorsch housewives sew her laundry from them. Karl continued to run his livestock trade. Between 1923 and 1929, four girls were born in their Lorsch apartment above the shop: Ruth, Miriam, Liesel and Suse. The Lorschers spoke of them as the "Mädchen-Kahns", to distinguish



them from Karls brother Leopold Kahn and Karola, who had five boys and were therefore the "Buben-Kahns". Pictures from those years show the Bahnhofstrasse, which has always been the shopping street of the village, full of children.



Paula Kahn (1902-1942), nee Lorch at the age of 18. Photo: Jonathan Cobb

Kahn shop in Lorsch, Bahnhofstrasse, ca. 1932. Two Christian employees of Karl and Paula Kahn, Anni Beutel (left) and Appolonia Netzer, b. 1913

Photo: Hannelore Werner

Ruth was given the second name Karola, after her mother's girlfriend. 1929 she was enrolled in primary school. The need for school space was quite large at that time, and two classes were formed. While the purely Catholic girls' class remained in the old school in the town centre, Ruth came to the new school on the Wingertsberg not far from her home, with a mixed confessional class of 47 children, boys and girls.



Ruth 1929, schooling in Lorsch
Class photo detail: Lorsch, City Archive
Karl Kahn (1890-1942), 1939
Photo from NS Identity Card

After the Nazi seizure of power, the business of the parents went poorer due to the boycott of Jewish shops, which was also clearly noticeable in rural communities such as Lorsch. In 1934 they sold the shop and said farewell to their friends and customers in Lorsch. In their parting address published in the local paper 15 November 1934 Karl announced they would move to Mainz.

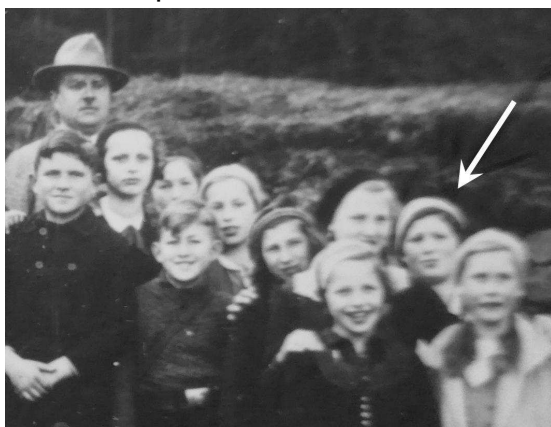
After his father and two older brothers had died, the family later moved back to Babenhausen, to live in the inherited family house. Until about 1937 he was able to pursue his profession as a cattle dealer in his hometown. Only then did the National Socialists enforce the ban on Jewish traders in the Hessian slaughterhouses. During the November pogrom of 1938, the family suffered considerable attacks. Like most Jewish families the Kahns decided to emigrate. Paula Kahn's sister Irma and her husband had succeeded in emigrating to South Africa. Relatives of the Lorch family had already lived there since the turn of the century, and Karl and Paula and their four daughters also wanted to go there. They applied and received their travel documents in 1939. Dramatically, Johannesburg did not work out any more by the time they had their tickets. They saw a final opportunity to go to Rhodesia (today's Zimbabwe).

The family had already sent their overseas trunks to Bremen when there was a delay. The British protectorate government in Rhodesia had yielded to the pressure of the white farmers. The German Press Agency DNB reported ironically:

"Rhodesia renounces Jewish population growth.

London 2 August 1939. As the Times from Salisbury reports, Rhodesia's leading political circles take a sharp stance against the British government's proposal to settle 500 Jewish emigrant families in Northern Rhodesia. On the occasion of the opening of an agricultural exhibition, the chairman of the Legislative Council of Northern Rhodesia, Moore, asked whether it would not be better to bring 500 English families to Northern Rhodesia instead of the Jewish families. The Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia, Huggins, also issued a statement on Monday against the settlement of Jews in Northern Rhodesia".

A few days later the war broke out. The Lines across the Atlantic suspended their traffic. The shipping agent sent the Kahns' luggage back to Babenhausen. Their ship passages fell into disrepair. The District Government Office in Dieburg withdrew the passports. Since they had already sold their house in Babenhausen, the family was transferred to an apartment in the neighbouring village Sickenhofen, Karl's, and his brother's birthplace. They now desperately tried to find a way to leave for the US. For a family with many children this was almost hopeless. Paula was even willing to let her husband Karl go alone with Ruth. Her idea was, if the two found work and thus the base for the urgently needed affidavit, her husband could "request" her. With their relatively high application number she guessed, they would have to wait for years to get into the quote together. According to Paula in her last preserved letter, the three younger girls could be sent with a Kindertransport for the time being. By the time she wrote this letter, only Holland would have remained open for such a transport. None of Paula's plans worked out.



A photo, taken around 1936, shows Ruth at the age of 13 on a school outing with her class and teacher in Babenhausen. Photo: Maria Fischer (†), Babenhausen, her class-mate in those days.

Ruth was 16 years old by now. She no longer had a school place like her sisters, who still went to Frankfurt. To find a meaningful activity for Ruth, her mother sent her to her brother Alfred Lorch and his wife Franziska in Lorsch. They had had another child in January 1940. Little Eli Lorch was the last Jew to be born in Lorsch. Ruth helped her mother's relatives with childcare and household work. At some time in the course of 1940 she went to Ludwigshafen on Rhine. There lived another brother of her father, Siegfried and his wife Lucie. Whether she was only here to visit, or whether she also helped here in the household is no longer ascertainable.



The house in Ludwigshafen on Rhine, 2015

Photo: author

Siegfried Kahn (1885 – 1942),

Photo: 1939 NS Identity Card

The "Wagner-Bürckel Action" of 1940 and deportation to Gurs

On 21 and 22 October 1940, 6,504 Jews were deported to Gurs in Southern France following a plan that had been hatched by Adolf Eichmann. The procedure became the blueprint for the mass deportations to the East that began a year later. The action against the Jews living in Baden (East of the Rhine) and Saar-Palatinate (West of the Rhine) was systematically carried out by the Gauleiters Robert Wagner and Josef Bürckel. It began on Sukkoth, a raid-like assault.. The people were absolutely unprepared and unsuspecting. Within one hour the victims had to pack their belongings, 50 kg were allowed per one person. The transports started from the railway stations of the cities in Baden and Saarpfalz and were observed by a greater public. Seven trains were directed to unoccupied "Vichy"-France. The Gurs internment camp at the foot of the Pyrenees, was as unprepared for the arrival of thousands of Jews from Germany. In previous years the French had built several

such camps to intern refugees of the Spanish Civil War. Although a big camp, Gurs was too small for all the new people and catastrophic hygienic conditions evolved.

Karl and Paula Kahn had no information at first about the whereabouts of their daughter. In the autumn of 1940, her father searched for her, in Lorsch with their Jewish relatives and with the Gärtner family. Ruth's school friend Margarethe Gärtner later remembered the evening when Karl Kahn came to them. It was an illegal visit, for of course a Jew was no longer free to move around outside his living place. Karl Kahn came to the back entrance of their house in Klara Street, and the kitchen window was darkened. "Where our Ruth is, we don't know," Margarethe Gärtner remembered Ruth father's desperate words still seventy years later.

Camps Rivesaltes, 1940 and 1941

From Gurs the Jews were distributed to other camps in unoccupied Vichy France. One of the largest camps was Rivesaltes. Ruth, her aunt Lucie and her uncle Siegfried were also brought here. A letter has been preserved from Lucie Kahn. It was written on New Year's Eve 1941, after more than one year in the camps. Siegfried Kahn was in the infirmary for several weeks, with a "bad finger", as Lucie relates. He had already lost 42 kg; Ruth wrote ten days later in her own letter.



Rivesaltes, July 1941. Photo: Gisela Friedemann

The internees were desperately dependent on parcels and packages to ensure their survival. Theoretically they had the possibility to shop, but of course they had no funds left. The real strains are often only indicated in the letters in order to spare the

family members and relatives. "You don't know what condition we're in sometimes," Lucie only hints. In reality the situation of the elderly was hopeless, it was already their second winter on the concrete floor of the camp, and they froze terribly.

The younger ones didn't want to surrender to their doom. In Rivesaltes Ruth met a young man. Together they planned the escape. Later, they wanted to get married. They spoke of Switzerland or Spain, as one survivor remembered in 1948. Theoretically an escape from the internment camp was conceivable, and sometimes it was dared. But only a few succeeded.

Whether Ruth and her boyfriend took the risk, whether they failed or whether there were other reasons why their plan did not work out, we will probably never know. But something must have happened in connection with this escape plan, because Ruth was transferred from Rivesaltes to Rieucros in November 1941, far away from her uncle and aunt, far away from her boyfriend. Lucie reported this in her letter of 31 December 1941. She writes that Ruth had been transferred to a "youth camp". She is not more specific. She certainly did not believe in that herself, but rather seems to have spared the family the truth she must have known. The assumption closest to this is that the relationship between the two young people and perhaps also their escape plans had become known. A disturbing hint is given by a document from the Rieucros women's internment camp where Ruth was sent to.

Ruth's referral file of 20 November 1941 is kept in the archives. The reason for her internment - or better imprisonment - is stated to be: "se livre á la prostitution". This is conspicuous solely because criminal or political reasons were indeed usually cited, but the term for Jewish women was usually "sans motif connu", meaning reasons for detention are (allegedly) unknown to the camp commandant.

The camps Rieucros and Brens, 1941 and 1942

The Rieucros internment camp is the third camp since her deportation from Ludwigshafen. Ruth Kahn has been here since 20 November 1941. She has a job in Rieucros and thus a "small earning opportunity", and she receives messages from

home, Babenhausen and Sickenhofen via the Red Cross. On 9 January 1942 she receives a letter from Leo Lorch, an uncle of her mother's side from Lorsch, who lives in New York. At the time of his emigration to the United States, in March 1927, Ruth was only 3 1/2 years old. So, she could hardly have had her own memory of him.



Camp de Rieucros, January 1942, Photo: Dora Schaul

There would be a lot of snow this winter, she replies. The food was better than in Rivesaltes, where her uncle Siegfried and aunt Lucie Kahn stayed behind. Their nerves were "completely ruined". She assumes for herself that she is "even better off than her parents at home in Babenhausen". Ruth thanks him for 200 francs she received from the family. That corresponded to 14 Reichsmark at the rate at the time – according to purchasing power 2015 around 63 Euro – and made it "for the first time" since her abduction possible for her to make smaller purchases.

The small women's camp Rieucros was abandoned very soon after her letter to Leo Lorch in February 1942. The internees were transferred to the Brens Camp near Gaillac on the Tarn river, in the Département Tarn.

Camp du Rieucros, par Mende (Lozère)
Bar. 3 Ruth Kahn

Le 11.1.1942

Lieber Leo!

Deinen Brief vom 26. Okt. habe am 9.1.42 erhalten, und mich sehr damit gefreut. Vielen Dank für die Einlagen, ich war ganz glücklich wenigstens mal wieder von der Handschrift von den Kietzen zu Hause zu sehen. Ich bin jetzt in einem anderen Lager, Onkel und tante aber sind noch in Rieucros. Die Verpflegung hier ist um einiges besser. Seit 20.11 bin ich hier, und habe mich ganz gut eingewöhnt. Für wie lange noch? Es ist für mich jetzt schon das dritte Lager und schon 15 Monate her. Alles verläuft so. Dass tante Irma nicht direkt schreiben kann verstehe ich nicht, denn ich kenne eine familie in Riv. die ziemlich regelmässig von Johanneburg Post bekommen, und selbst tante Justel überreicht einen Hefter von ihr Geld nach Riv., welches gut ankom. Lieber Leo bei meinem Onkel hast Du für schon viel erreicht, er hat hat sich aufgeschlossen an Deinen lb. Brief anzusprechen, worüber ich sehr erstaunt war. Doch ich will nicht unverschämte sein, er schickte mir 200 fr. die ich sehr gut gebrauchen kann. Ich besuchte jetzt seit 1 Jahr das external et was Geld. Sprich Onkel Leo bitte in meinem Namen vielen Dank aus, ich habe mich sehr damit gefreut. Auch die Lieben in Canada grüße

bitte vielmals von mir sowie alle andern Bekannte und Verwandten, besonders Deine lb. Angehörigen. Von meinen lb. Eltern höre ich ab und zu durch das rote Kreuz etwas, und so erhielt diese Woche das erste mal Nachricht von Onkel Alfred. Onkel Siegfried fühlt sich gar nicht wohl und liegt er seit fast 4 Wochen in der Infirmerie. Auch tante Lucie dürfte es besser gehen. Onkel Siegfried hat nur 42 klg. abgenommen. Kannst Du ihn so vorstellen? Keine, sowie tante Nerven sind vollständig kaputt. Hier ist er momentan sehr kalt und haben wir viel Schnee, jedoch die Landschaft selbst ist herrlich. Das Lager liegt 450 m. hoch. Ich habe hier kleine Verdienstmöglichkeiten, was sehr schön ist. Wie geht es Dir und Deinen Lieben? Ich wollte ich könnte bei Euch sein, doch ich will den Kopf oben behalten, es muss doch noch einmal anders kommen. Ich glaube sogar, dass ich vielleicht noch etwas besser daram bin, wie meine lb. Eltern, und schon deshalb muss ich aushalten. Jetzt will ich schlafen sei für heute recht herzlich gegrüßt von

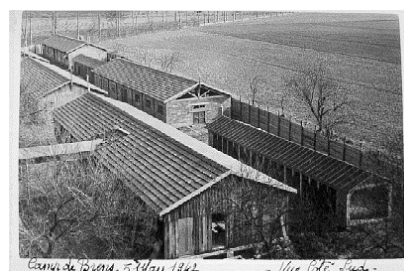
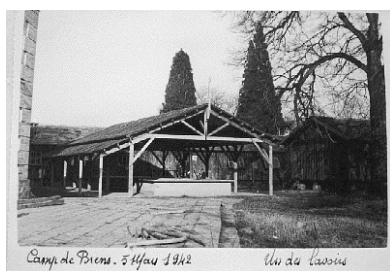
Deiner
Ruth

Ruth's letter 11 January 1942 to her uncle Leo in New York. A translation can be found in the appendix.

On 31 December 1941, the Prefect of the Departement was informed that Brens had been chosen as a "Concentration Camp". In January and February 1942, another barbed wire fence was built around eight of the camp's 20 barracks. In contrast to the many internment camps, the core zone of the Brens Camp thus became the only real Concentration Camp in the "South Zone", i.e. in the area of the French Vichy Regime.

320 internees and their 26 children from the disbanded Rieucros Women's Camp arrived on 14 February 1942 in Brens from the Gaillac station by truck. It was a cosmopolitan mixture, only 25% of the prisoners were French women. The heterogeneous group of fifteen nationalities consisted of communist activists, trade unionists, other "suspicious refugees" (meaning the German and Polish Jewish women, including Ruth Kahn), Spanish revolutionaries from the Camp Argelès-sur-Mer (remains of the People's Army of the Spanish Republic), prostitutes (Brens is known as the prostitute camp), women who fought for equal rights or were interned for "other reasons".

The "political" prisoners, especially Jewish women, were separated from other internees. The relatively clean camp had a capacity for 500 people. It was never completely occupied; 450 people were there at the most at one time. In Brens Jewish women were in the minority with 10%, but 80 Jewish women are certainly documented. A total of 1,150 prisoners passed through this Camp during its existence. In terms of size, there were a lot of supervisory personnel, in 1942 there were 120. Four appeals per day and five night inspections was the daily routine.



Camp de Brens, March 1942. Photo Jean Faure

The winter was milder than in Rieucros, but the food was very inadequate. There was a supervised shopping facility in the vicinity, which could be used twice a week and the inmates had the right to two letters a week which of course, were censored. It is not known, but very unlikely, that these facilities and benefits applied to the inmates of the inner 8 barracks of the separately fenced off Concentration Camp.

Resistance and Annihilation

During a raid announced by the Prefecture on 26 August 1942 in the "Judenfreie Zone Brens" (Jewish Free Zone Brens), 31 Polish and German Jewish women were taken from Camp Brens and deported via Paris - Drancy to Auschwitz. Ruth Kahn was in this group.

Throughout the summer there had been rumors in the Camp that the Jewish women were to be transported "to the East". The women had become completely insecure and were living in constant fear. One of them, Dora Schaul, ten years older than Ruth, took advantage of the carelessness of the Gardes Mobiles, the fascist French Auxiliary Police, and successfully fled the camp on the French National Day. She

submerged in Lyon and survived the war and the Shoa. From her and from a few other survivors we know what happened that day. During the raid there was open physical resistance and desperate fights against the Gardes Mobiles, which Gertrud Rast described:

"As we had agreed before, we had all gathered at one end of the barracks. The women and girls who were to be transported were huddled together on the outside wall. The rest of us, we not-affected or not-yet-affected, stood in dense rows in front of them to cover them." The fighting lasted for hours.

This solidarity of the women was a unique but unsuccessful resistance action. Through another nearby camp, the Camp d'internement Saint-Sulpice-la-Pointe, the women were brought back to Rivesaltes. The deportation trains were assembled here and sent via the Vierzon checkpoint on the demarcation line to Paris-Drancy in occupied France.

A nameless supervisor of the Brens camp, a woman whom the prisoners referred to as "our angel", had the courage to board the train to accompany "her women" for three days to ease her fate. In the summer heat she went as far as she was allowed, that was until Vierzon. After her return to the Camp Brens she talked about her story. For example, she had succeeded, even if only for a few minutes at a time, in giving the women access to a small ventilation window in the otherwise windowless wagon.

In Drancy, the deportation trains to Auschwitz were compiled. They drove slowly, non-stop and for over two days across France and Germany to Poland. Ruth Kahn was in "Convoy No. 30," which arrived on September 11, 1942. Ruth's aunt and uncle, Lucie and Siegfried Kahn, had already been deported to Auschwitz with Convoy No. 19 on 14 August 1942.

16 September 1942 was Ruth Karola Kahn's 19th birthday. We do not know whether she lived through this day.

Dora Schaul



Dora Schaul née Davidsohn (21 September 1913 - 08 August 1999), German Jew and antifascist, Communist. Co-prisoner of Ruth Kahn in Rieucros and Brens. 1934 Escape into French exile.

At the beginning of the war, Dora Davidsohn lived in Paris without valid papers. She was imprisoned in La Petite Roquette prison after an unsuccessful attempt to register legally with the French authorities. In October 1939 she was transferred to the Rieucros internment Camp and later to the Brens Concentration Camp. On National Day 14 July 1942 she used the carelessness of the guards to jump over the barbed wire. It was the right decision that saved her life. Only a month after her escape, the German and Polish Jewish women were deported from Brens. Dora's name had been the second name on the list. She joined the resistance in Lyon and survived. In 2006, the street passing the former Brens camp was named after her.

1948: Leopold Kahn searches for his niece



The only surviving member of the Babenhausen Kahn family is Leopold Kahn, 1892 – 1960. Together with his family he escaped to Canada in August 1939. Before they went, they visited Babenhausen and Karl Kahn and his family for a last time.

After the war Leopold searched for his eldest niece Ruth of whom he knew that she was not deported together with her family and had been interned in France.

The French Jewish Aid Organization COJASOR replied to Leopold Kahn in Canada, with this letter dated 17 December 1948 (Original in French):

"We acknowledge receipt of your letter of 23 September 1948 and apologise for the late response, we have used the time to take the necessary measures and to obtain an overview of your niece, Miss Ruth Kahn."

We could find a née Ruth Kahn, but the lady is not identical with your niece, despite having the same name. Ruth Kahn from whom we speak lives in Lyon, her address is 343, Rue Émile Zola. We introduced ourselves at her home and learned that she is also of German origin, and also went through the Camp Gurs in 1942. In this camp at that time there was a girl who had called herself Ruth Kahn and whom she knew personally. She believes she remembered that this girl wanted to escape with a young man whom she wanted to marry after the escape; they intended to find refuge in Switzerland or Spain. She does not remember the name of the young man in question.

We regret that we cannot provide any further specific information, but we sincerely hope that this person, your niece, has managed to escape."

Timeline

16 September 1923

Ruth Karola Kahn is the first of four daughters of Karl Kahn and his wife Paula, née Lorch, born in LORSCH.

1929, Easter

Schooling in Lorsch.

1934, November

The Karl Kahn family moves from Lorsch to MAINZ and later to BABENHAUSEN

1938

First attempts of the family to leave Germany.

5 February 1940

Ruth goes from Babenhausen to LORSCH to help her aunt Franziska Lorch with the household and her new-born child.

1940

Ruth goes to help another uncle, Siegfried Kahn and his wife Lucie in LUDWIGSHAFEN ON RHINE.

22 October 1940

Deportation together with her uncle and aunt from Ludwigshafen to GURS Internment Camp.

1940

Camp de RIVESALTES, collective internment camp, together with Siegfried and Lucie Kahn.

20 November 1941

Transfer to Camp de RIEUCROS, women's camp.

10 January 1942

Letter to her uncle Leo Lorch in New York, report of her circumstances.

13 February 1942

The women's Internment Camp RIEUCROS is dissolved, transport to BRENS.

14 February 1942

Arrival at Camp de BRENS. Transfer to a separated camp area for Jewish women, which is regarded as the first "Concentration Camp" in Vichy-France.

25 March 1942

Ruth's family is deported from Darmstadt to PIASKI in occupied Poland. Their exact fate is not known. They were probably murdered shortly after arrival in the surrounding death camps (Treblinka).

14 July 1942

Dora Schaul escapes successfully from BRENS inner Concentration Camp.

26 August 1942

Razzia in BRENS, arresting of 30 Polish and German women of Jewish origin. The women put up hours of physical resistance against the French policemen. Transfer via Saint-Sulpice-la-Pointe to RIVESALTES.

04 September 1942

Transport via VIERZON (demarcation line Vichy-France) to DRANCY, to the central transit- / collecting-depot at PARIS.

09 September 1942

KONVOI NR. 30, from Drancy in freight cars, with 18 of the 30 women from Brens. Deportation to Auschwitz.

11 September 1942

Auschwitz. Selection and gassing of Konvoi No. 30.

23 September 1948

After the war, Ruth's uncle Leopold Kahn conducts research about his niece Ruth in France with the Comité Juif D'Action Sociale et de Reconstruction, COJASOR.

17 December 1948

Comité Juif D'Action Sociale et de Reconstruction, COJASOR, reports about their unsuccessful research of the whereabouts of Ruth Kahn.

17 April 2015

Stolpersteine for Karl Kahn, Paula Kahn née Lorch, and for Ruth's sisters, Miriam, Liesel and Suse in Babenhausen.

13 October 2015

Stolpersteine for Ruth Carola Kahn, Siegfried and Lucie Kahn in Ludwigshafen.

Sources

From letters of the families Kahn (Toronto) and Lorch (London)

Archives départementales de la Lozère, AD48_2W2603_0137, AD48_2W2603_0444-1

City Archives (Stadtarchiv) Lorsch

Hessisches Staatsarchiv (HstA) Darmstadt

Time witnesses Maria Fischer, Babenhausen (†) und Margarete Gärtner (†), Lorsch

Photos Rivesaltes 1941: Gisela Friedemann

Photo Rieucros Januar 1941: Dora Schaul

Photo Camp de Brens 5 March 1942, André Jean Faure <http://apsicbr.free.fr/brens.htm>

House Babenhausen, Ludwigshafen and Stolperstein: author.

Dora Schaul: wikipedia

Map of France with camps: author

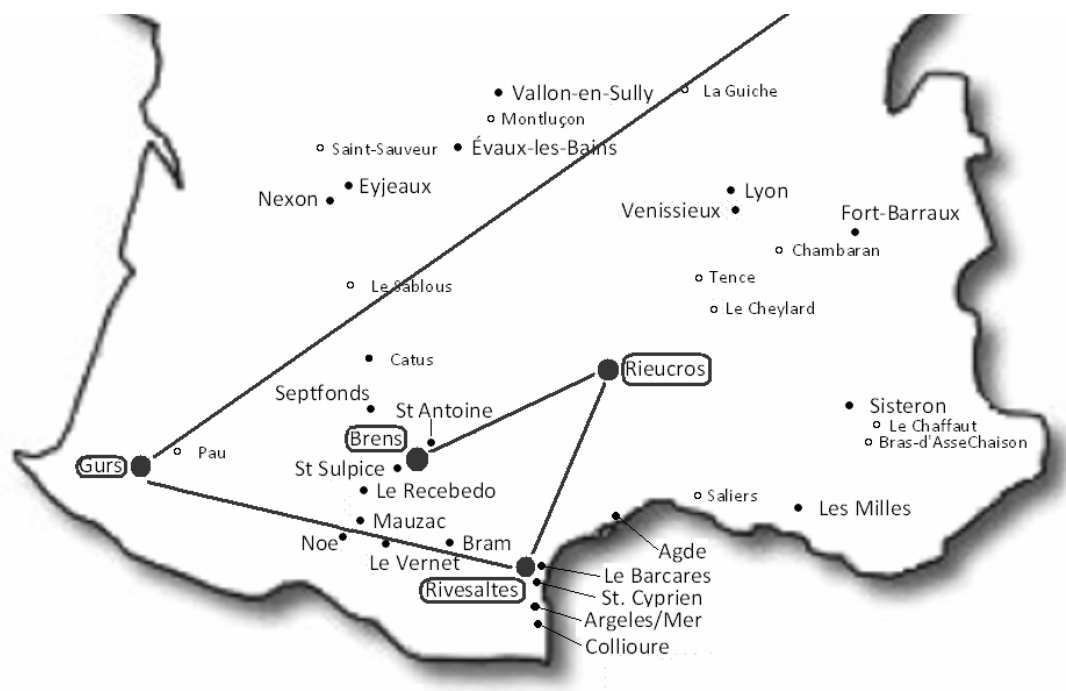
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Rast, Getrud; Allein bist du nicht, Frankfurt 1972, pp. 23-29

Ruth Kahn's odyssey through the camps in Vichy-France



Day	Konvoi Nr.	From	To	Deportees	Gassed on arrival	Selected men	Selected women
14_Aug	19	Drancy	Auschwitz	991	875	115	none
9_Sept	30			1000	909	23	68

Table based on Serge Klarsfeld's book Vichy – Auschwitz, 1983, 2007

Documents

E T A T N O M I N A T I F D E S E N T R A N T E S A U C O U R S D E L A S E M A I N E D U 1 3 A U 2 0 N O V E M B R E 1 9 4 1			
ETAT CIVIL NATIONALITE	PROVENANCE	MOTIF D'INTERNEMENT	ACCORD
COLLARO Alexandrina née le 26/5/1899 à Kerassone (Turquie) RUSSE	Bouches-du- Rhône	Vit de la prostitution et fait l'objet de sau- vais renseignements.	accord
KAROLEWICZ Hélène née le 11/1/1922 à Cherie beck (Allemagne) POLONAISE	Haute-Vienne	sans motif connu	accord
GRYNEBERG Chaja née le 16/II/1917 à Varsovie (Pologne) POLONAISE	ARIEGE	Infractions à police de la circulation des étran- gers relations avec un indi- vidu dangereux.	accord
KAHN Ruth née le 10/9/1923 à Lorsch (Allemagne) ALLEMANDE	PYRENEES-ORIENTALES TALES	se livre à la prostitution	accord

M E N D E , le 20 NOVEMBRE 1941
Le Commissaire Spécial
Chef de Camp.



Above: Ruth Kahn, "se livre à la prostitution", on the list of the women's camp Rieucros of 20 November 1941. The date of birth is wrong; the correct date is 16 September 1923.

Archives départementales de la Lozère

Below The C.O.J.A.S.O.R Letter to Leopold Kahn of 17 December 1948. Kahn Family.

C. O. J. A. S. O. R.
BOITE 201 - 17.12.48
ET DE RECHERCHES

BUREAU DE LYON
28, COURS LAFAYETTE, 28
LYON (RHONE)
TELEPHONE : MONCEY 44-48

LYON, LE 17.12.48

HS/TH

Monsieur Léopold KAHN, c/o
D. KAHN ET SONS
P.O. BOX 100
ONTARIO (Canada)

Monsieur,

Nous vous accusons réception de votre lettre du 23 Septembre 1948 et nous excusons du retard apporté à notre réponse, ayant profité de ce temps pour faire les démarches nécessaires pour retrouver traces de votre nièce, Mlle Ruth KAHN.

Nous avons pu retrouver une Mme Ruth KAHN née KAEN, mais cette dame n'est pas identique avec votre nièce malgré le même nom. Mme Ruth KAHN dont nous vous parlons habite LYON 4 343 Ors, Bule Zola. Nous nous sommes présentés à son domicile et avons appris qu'elle-même est d'origine allemande et a passé aussi par le Camp de GURS en 1942. Dans ce camp se trouvait en même temps une jeune fille du nom de Ruth KAHN qu'elle connaît personnellement. Elle avait se rappeler que cette jeune fille a réussi de s'évader avec un jeune homme, avec lequel elle voulait se marier une fois en liberté, et elle avait l'intention de se réfugier en SUISSE, ou en ESPAGNE. Elle ne se rappelle pas du nom du jeune homme en question.

Nous regrettons de ne pouvoir fournir des renseignements plus précis, mais nous souhaitons de tout notre cœur que cette personne soit votre nièce qui aurait réussi de se sauver.

Veuillez agréer, Monsieur, nos salutations très distinguées.

LE DIRECTEUR REGIONAL P.I.
H. SCHLESINGER

COJASOR
DIRECTION
REGIONALE
LYON (RHONE)

Translation of Ruth's letter 11 January 1942 to Leo Lorch in New York

Camp de Rieucros, par Mende (Lozère) Le 11.1.1942 [January]

Bar[aque] 3 Ruth Kahn

Dear Leo!

I received your letter dated 26 October on 9 January 42, and was very pleased with it. Thank you very much for the enclosures, I was so happy to see at least the handwritings of the dear ones at home. I am now in another camp, but uncle and aunt are still in Rivesaltes. The food is much better here. I am here since 20 November and got myself quite well accustomed. For how long, yet? It is the third camp for me in 15 months. It is time all lost. I do not understand why aunt Irma can't write to me directly, because I know a family in Riv[saltes] who regularly receives mail from Johannesburg, and even aunt Gustel [from Darmstadt] sent money to a cousin to Riv[saltes] which was well received. Dear Leo, you have already achieved a lot with my uncle, he pulled himself together and added a few lines to your dear letter, which surprised me a lot. However, I do not want to be outrageous, he sent 200 fr[ancs] that I can really use. I now own some money for the first time in one year. Please say thank you, Uncle Leo, in my name, I have been very happy about it. Please do also greet many times the dear ones in Canada by me, all our friends and relatives, especially your loved ones. From time to time I hear something from my parents [from home, Babenhausen] by the Red Cross, and so I did this week receive news from Uncle Alfred [from her birthplace Lorsch, husband of Franziska] for the first time. Uncle Siegfried [in Rivesaltes] is not well at all and is staying four weeks now in the infirmary. Aunt Lucie could also be better. Uncle Siegfried has lost 42 kgs. Can you imagine him like this? He and aunt are completely down with their nerves. It is very cold here at the moment and we have a lot of snow, but the landscape is wonderful. The camp is at an elevation of 450 m. I have small opportunities to earn some money which is quite nice. How are you and your dear ones yourselves? I wish I could be with you, but I want to keep my head up, it's got to be different again. I even believe I am a little bit better off here than my dear parents, and for this reason alone I have to bear it. I have to close now, be greeted warmly for today, by Your Ruth.