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Dahn in January 2020

**January 27th - 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz
In memory of the Jewish victims from the Wasgau region.
"That Auschwitz may not be repeated."**

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By Otmar Weber

Translated by Peter Blystone, Arizona

On this day seventy-five years ago, Soviet soldiers liberated the Nazi extermination complex of Auschwitz. For the deported fellow citizens from the Wasgau, the liberators came too late. About 50 Jews from Busenberg, Dahn and Erlenbach were murdered by the Nazis during that time; most of them in the extermination centers of the East. Many of them in the gas chambers of Auschwitz-Birkenau.

More than 6000 Jewish citizens of all ages were deported from the Palatinate, Baden and the Saar region to the concentration camp Gurs/Pyrenees (Vichy France) in a night and fog action by the Gauleiters Bürckel and Wagner on October 22, 1940. About 2000 died in the French camps. For nearly 4000, the gas chambers of Auschwitz, Majdanek and Treblinka were the final destination. Only a few returned to the Palatinate, Baden or the Saar region after 1945. No one from our region who was in Auschwitz survived.

From the middle of 1942, the transport trains from the camps in southern France rolled via Drancy/Paris into Auschwitz. The detailed passenger transport lists give us an insight into the gruesome Nazi extermination machine. At least ten Dahner can be found in these transport lists. Helene Rosenstiel, born on August 5, 1889, Weißenburger Straße 2, was deported with transport no. 19 from Drancy/Paris to Auschwitz-Birkenau on August 14, 1942, and murdered there. The transport consisted of 991 persons. Mrs. Marianne Katz, born on 26.05.1886, Marktstrasse 16, was deported with transport no. 25 on 28.08.1942 from Drancy/Paris to Auschwitz and murdered there; the transport consisted of 1000 persons.

Helmut Levy, the youngest son of Elsa Levy, met a terrible fate.

Helmut Levy, born on 03.05.1925, the youngest son of Julius and Elsa Levy, living in Dahn, Weißenburger Straße 2, experienced the *Reichspogromnacht* in Dahn with his

family in 1938. During the Red Zone evacuations on 01.09.1939, Helmut went to Mannheim. On October 22, 1940, he was deported to Camp Gurs in southwestern France. From there he was taken with his family to Camp Rivesaltes in the south of France in 1941. At the age of sixteen, he did forced labor road construction in Brest and other places in France. From an unknown location he was transferred to the transit camp Drancy near Paris in August 1942. Helmut was deported from there to Auschwitz on Transport No. 29 on 07.09.1942 and used as forced labor.

Regarding Transport No. 29 on September 7, 1942, the files show that the SS man Ernst Heinrichsohn wrote a telex which was signed by his superior, Heinz Röthke, head of the anti-Jewish Gestapo in France. He informs Eichmann, the concentration camp administration (in Oranienburg) and Auschwitz that transport D 901/24 with 1,000 Jews has left the Bourget/Drancy station under the leadership of SS man Krüger. The telex bears the number (CDJC) XXVb-155. This transport included 435 women and 565 men. Among the deportees were at least 123 children under the age of 17, including 71 girls and 51 boys. One of these boys was Helmut Levy from Dahn. He was seventeen years and four months old at the time.

In Auschwitz itself, 59 men with the numbers 63164 - 63222 were designated for forced labor and thus provisionally left alive. The same happened to 52 women, who were given the numbers 19242 - 19294. Helmut Levy was among those selected for forced labor. The rest of transport No. 29 was immediately sent to the gas chambers. Only 34 men from Transport No. 29 are known by name to have returned home from Auschwitz after 1945. Helmut Levy from Dahn was not among them. Before the Soviet liberators arrived in Auschwitz on January 27, the SS evacuated the Auschwitz death camp and marched the remaining prisoners in January/February 1945 on the infamous "death marches" through ice and snow westward into Reich territory. Helmut Levy even survived these inhuman hardships. His martyrdom finally ended at the Buchenwald concentration camp. A fellow prisoner who himself survived the death march and Buchenwald concentration camp later emigrated to Canada after his liberation. He confirmed in the 1990s that Helmut Levy was still alive only days before the liberation of Buchenwald concentration camp by English soldiers. The presumed date of Helmut Levy's death is February 23, 1945. Helmut Levy is considered to be missing.

In one of his last letters before his transit to Auschwitz from Camp Rivesaltes, Julius Levy, Helmut's father, informed his son Karl-Heinz, who had emigrated to London, that his brother Helmut had been picked up again for a work assignment. The place of deployment was unknown to him. The name of this place is now known to us thanks to the attention of a family from Dahn, who discovered a memorial plaque for Jewish victims during their vacation in 2006 in the town of Rosans in France. On it is written the name: LEVY, HELMUT, 3.4.1925 DAHN.

The plaque was erected in memory of 25 young foreign Jews who were handed over to the German occupiers by the French Vichy government police on August 26, 1942, and deported to extermination camps. Helmut Levy, together with 32 other foreign Jews, was arrested on August 25, 1942, under orders of the Prefect of the Hautes-Alpes Department, and placed in the Lastic-Rosans Center. On 08/26/1942, these 33 prisoners were transferred under police guard to Camp les Milles (Bouchers-du-Rhône) and deported from here to Auschwitz via Drancy. Cf. (jewishtraces.org/le-centre-daccueil-du-lastic)

Helmut's parents Julius and Elsa Levy, his uncle Ludwig, aunts Meta Levy and Helene Rosenstiel, were deported via Drancy to Auschwitz in 1942, where they perished. Since 2006, six Stolpersteine (stumbling stones) at Weißenburger Straße 2, commemorate the victims.

At the Jewish cemetery in Busenberg, which was ransacked on November 1994, an inconspicuous gravestone commemorates the Nazi victims: Julius Levy (father), Elsa Levy (mother) and Helmut Levy (son). In light of what is happening today, the words of Theodor Adorno - spoken almost fifty years ago - have lost none of their relevance: "That Auschwitz may not be repeated."