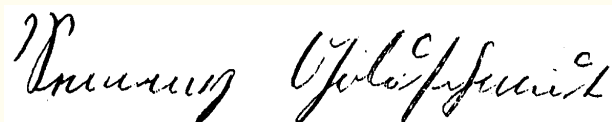


Semmy GOLDSCHMIDT

12 Oct 1882 – 21 Oct 1944

Leo Goldschmidt's youngest brother, **Semmy Goldschmidt**, was born on 12 Oct 1882 in Stolzenau.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Semmy Goldschmidt". The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid and somewhat slanted to the right.

This is Semmy's signature dated 5 Apr 1891, when he was less than 10 years old. It is taken from his Passover Haggadah, that is now in my possession.

On 18 Jan 1922, in Berlin, at the age of 40, he married **Betty Lahndt** (b. 4 Jan 1880). Betty became a convert to Judaism on marrying Semmy. They had no children.

From my interviews with other family members, it is evident that Semmy was remembered with much affection by his nieces and nephews. Semmy served his country as a soldier on the front in WWI, though this did not help him avoid being murdered in Auschwitz in 1944.

Semmy lived in Berlin and owned a business manufacturing ladies' coats. It was called *Collin & Heilborn Damenmäntelfabrik* and was located at Markgrafenstr. 48 in the Reinickendorf district of Berlin. Semmy and Betty lived comfortably and enjoyed horse riding. They owned two horses. The only photos I have of Semmy are of him on horseback. I have taken an enlargement of his face from one of these, and subsequently enhanced it using *Remini* software.



Semmy on horseback



Betty and Semmy riding



Betty Goldschmidt née Lahndt



Semmy enlarged from photo above - enhanced

Semmy was not anxious to leave Germany until things got to be very bad. Then, under pressure from the Nazis, he transferred ownership of his business to his wife Betty; they divorced, and on 9 Feb 1939 he fled to the Netherlands. Betty remained in Berlin and continued to operate Semmy's business which was then liquidated in 1940. Betty subsequently opened a new ladies wear business called *Betty Lahndt & Co.* located at Meinkestr. 7 in the Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf district of Berlin. She and her business survived the war, despite being bombed out three times, and she died in Berlin in 1951.

Betty was well liked by other members of Semmy's family, and I believe this remained unchanged after the divorce. I have a copy of a letter Betty wrote in 1947 to her sister-in-law Else in South Africa that shows they remained on good terms. In my mother's reminiscences, she spoke positively about Betty, and said she sent CARE packages to her after the war.

In Amsterdam, Semmy found accommodation in the *Rivierenbuurt* quarter, where many Jewish refugees from Germany lived after 1933. He attempted to start a new business; but I have no information on whether that was successful. During this time, at least one relative from his mother's family (Mat Bongard, who lived

in the Netherlands and survived the war) visited him. I believe Semmy also saw his nephew Max Rubin during this period.

Germany invaded Holland on 10 Mar 1940 and the persecution of Jews began immediately. Jews who had fled to Holland from Germany, like Anne Frank's family, decided to go into hiding and were able to survive for a while. It is not known whether Semmy also contemplated going into hiding. It is known that he met Cato de Hoop (b.31 Dec 1892 in Amsterdam). She was from a Dutch-Jewish family. On 19 Apr 1943 Semmy and Cato were married, and immediately after their arrest were held at the Schouwburg Theatre in Amsterdam. They were then taken to Westerbork transit camp, about 130 km northeast of Amsterdam, before being deported. Probably Semmy and Cato already knew they were about to be deported at the time they got married.

Records show that on 21 Apr 1943 Semmy and Cato were on transport XXIV/1 to the Theresienstadt ghetto, where they arrived the next day. This train carried 295 German Jews: 195 of them (101 men, 79 women and 15 children) were from the Westerbork camp. Of these, 54 survived the war. Unfortunately, Semmy and Cato did not.

They remained at Theresienstadt for 18 months. Semmy did not meet his sister Ida, who had also been in Theresienstadt, because she had died there one month before his arrival. It is likely Semmy did meet his nephew Max Rubin, who was in Theresienstadt from January-September 1944.

On 19 Oct 1944, Semmy and Cato were rounded up along with approx. 1500 other prisoners, and transported by train to Auschwitz-Birkenau, where they arrived two days later. It is presumed that they were selected for the gas chambers on arrival. According to the German Memorial Book both are listed as having died on 21 Oct 1944. Of the prisoners on this transport from Theresienstadt, 1421 were murdered, 72 survived and 6 are described as "missing".

I wish to acknowledge the immense help I have received from Ute Müller who provided much of the research that reconstructed the last years of Semmy Goldschmidt's life. Ute Müller did this research as part of a project she led, to install *Stolpersteine* (Memorial Stones) in the town of Stolzenau where she was born.

Ute informed me in 2021 about Semmy's second marriage to Cato de Hoop. I knew nothing about this earlier. I do not believe my mother and other family members of my mother's generation knew about this second marriage either. Semmy and his wife Cato are memorialized on the *Joodsmonument* to victims of the Holocaust from the Netherlands.





***Joodsmonument* in Amsterdam for 102,000 Dutch Holocaust victims**