

Interview 8 (file RG-50.219.0008.01.01) – Helga Liné Stern

Language: Spanish

Helga was born in Berlin (year unspecified). Her non-Jewish mother was of Russian origin, and her Jewish father (family name: Stern) was of Polish origin.

Helga has very few memories of her life in Berlin. She remembers that she went to dancing school when she was four years old. After her parents got divorced, she lived with her mother, who remarried a non-Jewish man and had a child with him.

When the war started, Helga's mother decided to leave Germany. At the time, Helga was under ten years of age. She does not remember the details of her trip, but knows that they (her mother, her brother and she) went from Germany to Italy by train, from Italy to Seville, Spain, by plane, and from Seville to Lisbon by plane as well. They wanted to go to "America," but did not have papers and had to stay in Portugal. Her mother's husband joined them some time later.

They were in Lisbon for one or two years, until the Portuguese police asked them to move to Calhas de Rainha. Helga has good memories of Calhas de Rainha. She went to school, but could not finish her secondary education because she started working. The family needed money and her mother made her work as a contortionist in the circus "Coliseu dos Recreios" (17:30). Her brother continued his studies. She also worked as a model at age fourteen, and in a variety show in the theater "Maria Victoria" (19:35) at age sixteen. Her teen-years were very hard. Her mother and stepfather always favored her brother over her, and her stepfather tried to rape her at age thirteen. Her stepfather moved back to Germany one or two years after the war.

In Portugal, Helga's mother told Helga that her father had been killed in a concentration camp in 1944 or 1945. Some of Helga's father's brothers emigrated to Palestine. Helga's father's sister was married to one of the most important antiquity dealers in Berlin, **Gustav Schweitzer** (12:35), who lost everything with the war.

At age seventeen, Helga showed up for an audition in Lisbon to play a role in a Portuguese-Spanish coproduction called "La mantilla de Beatriz." She got a role in the film, and later decided to move to Spain. In Spain, she acted in films and worked in variety shows. She married a Spaniard and had a daughter. She also made films in other places, such as Italy, Miami and Istanbul. She participated in over 100 films.

Helga's brother finished school and later studied German Philology at a university in Portugal. He worked for the German embassy as a translator after graduation, and died at a young age. Her mother moved back to Germany after Helga's brother's died.

Helga's daughter married an Italian diplomat who got an assignment in Buenos Aires, Argentina (year unspecified). Helga decided to join them and settle down in Buenos Aires. Helga also brought her mother to Buenos Aires, and they lived together until Helga's mother died at age 94. Helga's daughter died in Peru. Helga's only family at the time of the interview was a granddaughter.