

Bianca Pniower, Anni Pniower

Bianca (or Bianka) Pniower was born on 27 December 1865, the daughter of the garment seller Robert Beradt and his wife Rosa (née Fessel). In 1882, she married the salesman Albert Pniower of Stettin, the city that is now Szczecin. Albert, born in Modrzejów in 1851, Silesia, joined Stettin's chamber of commerce in 1884.

In Stettin, Bianca and Albert Pniower had five children. The first, Severin, died in his infancy (1884–1885). Their son Herbert was born on 30 March 1885, their daughter Lucie on 2 May 1886, then came Anni on 1 December 1887, and the youngest child, Fritz, was born on 16 July 1890.

The family seems to have moved to Berlin in 1904; it's possible that Bianca was already a widow by then. From 1927, probably earlier, they lived at Kleiststrasse 24, Charlottenburg. At some point in the mid-1930s, they moved to Hektorstrasse in the Halensee district.

In 1919, Herbert Pniower married the Catholic restaurateur Pelagia Gralak, and the couple lived in Kleiststrasse. Herbert died on 25 March 1946 in Wilmersdorf; Pelagia had passed away on 22 October 1945. They had no children. It has not been possible so far to find out more about how Herbert survived, but we can assume that his marriage to a non-Jewish woman was what saved his life.

Lucie was an actor and married a non-Jewish colleague, actor Axel Kubitzky (born in Görlitz on 22 June 1892). They probably met in 1931 when working at the same theatre in Glogau (today's Głogów). When the Nazis came to power, membership of the new Reich Theatre Chamber became a prerequisite for working as an actor. In order to join, Axel would have needed to divorce his Jewish wife. He refused to do so, and as a result was banned from acting. The couple fled Germany via Vienna, and reached Switzerland probably in 1938. In 1942, the Nazis annulled their German citizenship. Lucie and Axel were granted permanent asylum in Switzerland, where they lived in Zurich. When West Germany passed laws on restitution in the early 1950s, Lucie applied for payment of compensation for her mother's and sister's imprisonment and death. For nine years, impoverished and sick, Lucie continued to fight for compensation from the Federal Republic. She died in the early 1960s, soon after her application had finally been approved.

Bianca's son Fritz appears in the 1930 register of Berlin addresses, where he is listed as a salesman resident at Rudolstädter Strasse 122. The 1936 register lists his address as Hektorstrasse 15, and in 1938 he was living in Lothringer Strasse. In 1939, Fritz and his wife Henriette (Hertha) Pniower, née Rosenthal (born on 23 March 1891) boarded the *Pennland* and emigrated to New Jersey. There, they took US citizenship, and in 1947 Fritz Pniower became Fred Power. Fritz seems to have joined the US Army in 1942. He died in 1953 in Union City, New Jersey; Hertha died in 1967. The couple had no children.

Anni Pniower, Bianca's fourth child, became a secretary. She kept the books at Lehmann & Kronheim in central Berlin, Hoher Steinweg, with a salary of 288 reichsmarks a month. She was dismissed on 1 January 1939 under anti-Jewish employment laws and made to perform forced labour.

In April 1938, Bianca found out that she and Anni would have to leave their two-room apartment in Halensee, Hektorstrasse 15 (ground floor, back building) to make space for a Nazi party member. They had to leave all their furniture behind, along with clothing and jewellery. All they were

allowed to take with them was a velvet-covered armchair, a small card table, and a sewing machine. Bianca and Anni moved to Steifensandstrasse 6 in Charlottenburg, where they sublet from the Goldstein family. We do not know whether the women were friends or acquaintances of the Goldsteins – it's possible, but there were legal restrictions around who could sublet to whom, and not every subtenancy was chosen voluntarily.

When the Goldstein family left the Steifensandstrasse address at some point in 1942, Bianca and Anni probably had no choice but to move out as well. Bianca took a room at Weinmeisterstrasse 3 with the Lautermanns (who were sent to their deaths in Riga just a few months later). Her daughter Lucie sent food parcels from Switzerland, which Lucie's brother-in-law Fredy Kubitzky would bring round to Weinmeisterstrasse "right to the end". It was from that address that Bianca, aged 77, was deported on 11 June 1942. She joined 49 other elderly people on the "4th Elders Transport" to the Theresienstadt ghetto. From there, she was deported on 19 September 1942 "to the east" – that is, to Treblinka, where she was murdered.

Anni was allocated a room in central Berlin at Dragoner Strasse 10 (fourth floor), the street known today as Max-Beer-Strasse; up to the 1930s, the building had housed the [Jewish People's Home](#) (Jüdisches Volksheim). On 12 January 1943, she was deported along with 1189 others on the 26th Osttransport and murdered in Auschwitz.

In the 1950s, the district court noted the dates of the women's deaths first as 8 May 1945, then as 31 December 1945. It seems that the real dates of victims' deaths were only discovered later and gradually, if at all.

Research and text: Kate Sturge, Sources: Adressbücher, ancestry.com, Arolsen Archives, Landesamt für Bürger- und Ordnungsangelegenheiten (LABO)