

## **Curriculum vitae of Ernestine Hammerschmidt née Frischmann**

Ernestine Hammerschmidt née Frischmann was born on 5 February 1902 in Łódź, Poland. Her parents were the merchant Adolf Frischmann (ca. 1869 in Łódź, Poland-4 December 1932 in Berlin, Germany) and Eugenie Frischmann née Schwarz (26 July 1880 in Częstochowa/Czenstochau, Poland-23 March 1944 in Auschwitz/Oświęcim, Poland).

The Frischmann family lived in Berlin from around 1906. Ernestine Frischmann attended the Lyceum in Berlin-Wilmersdorf, the Higher Commercial and Language School and other educational institutions such as the Conservatory of Music, and she attended lectures at the Humboldt University and the University of Berlin. Following her education, Ernestine Frischmann worked as a secretary and translator. For example, she worked for the Olex petroleum company in Berlin-Schöneberg and the Shell company, as well as for the Borkon concert management company in Rankestraße.

From 1929 to 1941, Ernestine Frischmann was employed as a secretary for German and foreign languages at the Chinese Embassy in Berlin. 'She was responsible for correspondence in German as well as in English and French. She had a perfect command of typing and shorthand. She was always conscientious and dutiful and provided her services to the utmost satisfaction,' recalled the Counsellor of the Chinese Embassy in Rio des Janeiro, Brazil, Mr Tan Pau Tuan, in August 1945. From 1 August 1941 to 28 February 1944, Ernestine Hammerschmidt, née Frischmann, was employed as a secretary at the Embassy of the Turkish Republic in Berlin.

On 28 November 1931, she married the lawyer Fritz Hammerschmidt in Berlin-Charlottenburg. Witnesses to the marriage were the lawyer Walter Hammerschmidt (1900 in Cottbus, Germany-1939 in Berlin, Germany) and Ernestine's brother, the photographer, graphic designer and caricaturist Marcel Frischmann, who was born on 4 August 1900 in Łódź, Poland. Anselm Hammerschmidt was born in Berlin-Wilmersdorf on 6 September 1934. He was the only child of Ernestine and Fritz Hammerschmidt.

Ernestine Hammerschmidt had professional plans, but 'I was denied advancement in the career I had begun as a secretary to the embassy, as the necessary attendance at a specialised institute was denied for racial reasons and my career was also interrupted by deportation'.

Ernestine Hammerschmidt, her husband Fritz Hammerschmidt, her son Anselm and her mother Eugenie Frischmann were originally supposed to be deported from Berlin to Auschwitz on 9 March 1944. However, during her stay in the collection camp, she contracted diphtheria and was hospitalised in the Jewish Hospital. When she was released after completing her treatment, she returned to the Schulstrasse collection camp on 2 May 1944. Her family was no longer alive at this time. On 3 May 1944, she was deported to Birkenau concentration camp on the 52nd eastern transport and in January 1945 was to be just one of many prisoners sent on the so-called death marches. She was sent to Ravensbrück and was liberated from the Neustadt-Gleve concentration camp (a subcamp of Ravensbrück) by Allied troops in May 1945. Ernestine Hammerschmidt was taken to Belgium on a Belgian Red Cross ambulance, where she arrived on 20 August 1945. She initially lived in Brussels-Forest, from 1947 in Ixelles (both municipalities in the Brussels region of Belgium) and later in Brussels.

Ernestine Hammerschmidt, née Frischmann, survived, but was marked by her ordeal. In the years that lay ahead of her, she filled out many forms, had to provide documents and affidavits, prove that she and her family had been prevented from advancing in their careers and that everything she owned had been taken from her. And she had to provide medical certificates proving that her health had suffered.

After the war, her brother Marcel Frischmann and a very good friend named Kate Chao searched for Ernestine Hammerschmidt and her family. Kate Chao lived in Clausthal-Zellerfeld, a small town in Lower Saxony, around 1946, but nothing more is known about her.

In 1947, Ernestine Hammerschmidt took on a part-time job as an assistant at the Chinese Embassy in Brussels. She was dismissed in August 1955 as she was 'no longer able to carry out the work assigned to her satisfactorily due to her state of health', as she herself recalled.

In 1952, Ernestine Hammerschmidt married the musician and artist Arthur Georges Leon Godefroid, born on 29 October 1905 in Ressaix, Belgium. Arthur Godefroid died on 21 September 1963 in Ixelles, Belgium, and Ernestine Godefroid-Frischmann became a widow for the second time.

Ernestine Godefroid-Frischmann died on 19 November 1984 in Saint-Gilles-lez-Bruxelles, Belgium.

Sources: ancestry, Archives générales du Royaume, Bundesarchiv, BLHA (Brandenburgisches Landeshauptarchiv), Commune d'Ixelles – Département Citoyenneté, Arolsen Archives, Jewish Museum of Belgium, LaBo (Landesarchiv für Bürger- und Ordnungsangelegenheiten)

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