

Lilli Dora Rehfisch (née Stadthagen) was born in Berlin on the 29th of September 1891 to Agnes née Jacobi (1864-1938) and the Justizrat Dr Julius Stadthagen (1855-1912), a Berlin family living at Zimmerstraße 94 in Mitte. Lilli was the middle child of three siblings, her older sister was Toni (1887-1942) and her younger brother Paul (1893-1943). Her mother Agnes was born in Hamburg and her father Julius, born in Berlin, was a lawyer practising at the Landgerichte (Regional Courts) in Berlin with his office opposite the family apartment at Zimmerstraße 16-17. Among many relatives was her uncle, the distinguished Social Democratic (SPD) Reichstag Member Arthur Stadthagen (1857-1917).

The family moved in 1900 to Am Karlsbad 2 south of the Tiergarten. Lilli's father Julius was an amateur Egyptologist and had a collection of antiquities in the family apartment. Returning from a visit to Egypt in 1912, Julius died of a heart attack at sea on the 9th of March. Julius's body was returned by train from Naples and he is buried at the Weißensee Cemetery in Berlin.

Lilli attended Berlin schools before enrolling as a student at the Friedrich Wilhelm University in Berlin, at first studying Natural Sciences from 1911 and then Medicine from 1913. An achievement for a woman at this time, her ambition was to be part of a pioneering generation of female medical doctors. She also spent a semester of study in Medicine at the Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich in 1916, before returning to continue her studies in Berlin, though without gaining her medical license.

Lilli had met Dr Hans Rehfisch (1891-1960), an aspiring playwright and trainee Berlin lawyer, in about 1913. Hans went on to serve as a soldier through the First World War and the couple married in May 1917 while he was on leave in Berlin, their son Thomas was born on the 31st of January 1918. The family moved in 1919 to their apartment at Württembergallee 26-27 in the Westend of Berlin, where their daughter Beate was born on the 3rd of August 1921. Hans had already begun his writing career, becoming a successful playwright of the Weimar period.

Lilli was a stimulus and support for many of Hans's plays, responding to and assessing his writing in progress. Working with adjoining studies the apartment became a professional and social centre for the couple as their careers progressed. Lilli enjoyed the outdoors, sailing her own boat on the lakes of the River Havel, with moorings nearby at Pichelsberg. Many of her close relatives with their families lived nearby in the Westend, her mother Agnes and her sister Toni at Hölderlinstraße 10, her brother Paul at Kastanienallee 24.

While Lilli's studies in medicine had been suspended with her marriage and new family, her interests in medicine led her to the emerging field of psychotherapy. Lilli trained as a psychotherapist in the twenties with Alexander 'Alphonse' Neuer (1883-1941), a follower of the psychoanalyst Alfred Adler's Individual Psychology. This

approach to therapy took note of both external environmental factors as well as personal familial experience in treatment, incorporating an emerging feminism.

As a psychotherapist Lilli treated adults and young people in her study at the apartment and children in summer camps, with patients referred to her by the prominent therapist Fritz Künkel (1889-1956). She presented radio talks on mental health and therapies and gave public lectures on her area of psychotherapy. Neuer encouraged Lilli to pursue her medical studies again, with the intention of finally qualifying as a physician to complement her practice as a therapist with the group of Berlin Adlerians associated with Neuer.

Lilli hosted a reception at the family's apartment for Alfred Adler, after the 1930 Internationalen Kongress Für Individualpsychologie held in Berlin. Her daughter Beate (Beata Duncan) remembers this event (described in her poetry collection Berlin Blues) along with many others at the Rehfish couple's home, a time of remarkable creative and intellectual activity. However, with the accession of Hitler in 1933 Hans was briefly arrested for his anti-Nazi plays and left Germany for Austria. The Rehfish marriage had been in difficulty and the couple were now effectively separating, their divorce finalised in 1939.

Given their Jewish origins Lilli subsequently decided that it would be safer for Thomas and Beate to emigrate. The two children travelled to Britain in 1934, initially to attend the Bunce Court School in Kent, a school on progressive lines that had been relocated from Herrlingen in Germany by the headmistress Anna Essinger. Lilli remained in Berlin and had support from her father-in-law, the noted cardiologist Prof. Dr Eugen Rehfish (1862-1937), sharing research interests in psychiatry.

Due to ill health Lilli attended sanatoriums in Germany during the 1930's, by the beginning of the Second World War she had been unable to emigrate. In Berlin, Lilli met a new companion, Bernhard Gros (1870-1941/42) from Altdorf in the Black Forest, and the couple were able to enjoy a late relationship despite persecution and oppressive restrictions. Accused of not wearing the 'Judenstern' (Jewish Star) both Lilli and Bernhard were arrested on the 31st of October 1941 in Nuremberg, while travelling in southern Germany. They were subsequently deported together from Nuremberg on the 29th of November 1941 to the Jungfernhof Concentration Camp outside Riga, Latvia.

Lilli Rehfish was murdered in the winter of 1941/1942.

Bernhard Gros was murdered in the winter of 1941/1942.

Lilli's sister Toni Salomon and niece Evamarie Salomon were deported on the 11th of July 1942 to the Auschwitz-Birkenau Concentration and Extermination Camp, where they were murdered. Her brother Paul Stadthagen was deported to the Theresienstadt Concentration Camp on the 23rd of September 1942, where he was murdered.

Lilli was remembered by her two children Thomas and Beata as a beloved mother, a woman of intelligence, compassion and empathy and as a wise and skilled therapist who contributed to the early development of an important system of psychotherapy. She is celebrated today by her descendants, her grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

This biography has been written by Lilli's grandson Stephen Duncan with the assistance of her great-grandson Robert Duncan. London 2022.

Lilli Rehfisch's Stolperstein has been sponsored by her descendants.

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Sources: LAB-Landesarchiv Berlin; Czitrich-Stahl, Holger, Arthur Stadthagen: *Anwalt der Armin und Rechtslehrer der Arbeiterbewegung* (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2011); Universitätsarchiv der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin; UAM-Universitätsarchiv, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München; Barch PA-Bundesarchiv Abteilung Personenbezogene Auskünfte Berlin-Reinickendorf; BLHA-Brandenburgisches Landeshauptarchiv Potsdam; StANu-Staatsarchiv Nürnberg; Arolsenarchiv

Weblinks to be inserted:

Toni Salomon <https://www.berlin.de/ba-charlottenburg-wilmersdorf/ueber-den-bezirk/geschichte/stolpersteine/artikel.1146363.php>

Paul Stadthagen <https://www.berlin.de/ba-charlottenburg-wilmersdorf/ueber-den-bezirk/geschichte/stolpersteine/artikel.179349.php>

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