

Oskar Osias Pinkas Gellert

Oskar Gellert is born on May 4, 1920, in Düsseldorf (Germany) to Jakob Gellert and Rosa Gellert-Tugendhaft who are Polish Jews. Jakob is born in Husakow on March 2, 1891, and Rosa is born in Sokolów on July 16, 1896. After their marriage, they settle in Düsseldorf, Germany, where their four children are born: Oskar (1920 – 1943), Paula (1922 – 1998), Cilly (also named Tzipora 1926 – 2001) and Bernard (1929 – 1988). The increasing antisemitism and anti-Jewish measures of the 1930's probably trigger the family to flee to Amby, where they are housed at the Hoofdstraat 38 (currently named Ambyerstraat Zuid). When arriving, Oskar is 16 years of age and works as a “salesman in textile.”



On 24 August 1942, the Jewish Amby residents are handed over a registered letter from the German *Wehrmacht*. It is a deportation order to camp Westerbork, a Dutch transit camp for Jews, scheduled for the next day already. No-show will be punished, likely with deportation to the ill-famed concentration camp Mauthausen. 37 Jewish Amby residents are listed to receive this letter, including the Gellert family, father Jakob excepted. Ultimately 13 persons are sent to Westerbork, the majority decides to flout the order and go into hiding. Also the Gellert family, including Oskar, decides not to respond to the order but instead, to split up and go into hiding. Consequently, the major of Amby requests Oskar's arrest since he had no “permission to change domicile” – a phrase used to indicate that a person went into hiding. Paula, Bernard, Jakob and Rosa seek shelter as well. Bernard and Paula find refuge in Hilversum where they stay with the family of reverend Peter Lambooy and his wife Ana Magdalena. Remarkably, Cilly's name is on the deportation list while she is registered as an Amsterdam resident since August 12, 1942. It is however questionable that she actually resided on this address given that as from 1941, Jews needed permission to swap domicile and their freedom to move had been considerably confined. Ultimately she goes into hiding in Amsterdam, where Oskar probably has sought refuge as well. But after having lived in hiding for seven months, Oskar is caught by the Amsterdam police on March 9, 1943, and subsequently handed over to the German *Sicherheitsdienst*. He is sent to camp Westerbork on June 20th 1943. After 9 days, he is put on a transport no. 16 to concentration camp Sobibor on 29 June, together with 2396 others. Immediately upon arrival, all 2397 persons are murdered, including Oskar. He dies at the age of 23.

Oskar's parents, sisters and brother survive the war. But on November 15, 1949, Rosa dies from grief. In 1946 Bernard leaves to Israel but returns to Maastricht after his mother passes on. He marries in the early '50 and has two children. He settles in Antwerp, Belgium, where he works in the diamond industry. He dies in 1988 at the age of 59. Also Cilly moves to Israel where she and her family are joined by Jakob until his death in 1957. Cilly passes away in 2001, at the age of 75.

Paula too, lives in Israel with her husband and two sons. In 1955 she moves to München, Germany, where she works as a school teacher. She dies in 1998, at the age of 76.

Our thanks go to Oskar's nieces Diana, Chana and Rina -children of Bernard and Cilly- for contributing to this biography.