

Cordelia Edvardson, Eichkatzweg 33

Cordelia Edvardson was born on 1 Jan. 1929 in Munich. She was the daughter of the baptized Roman Catholic writer Elisabeth Langgässer (1899 - 1950) and the Jewish expert for constitutional law, Hermann Heller. Elisabeth Langgässer was a teacher in Griesheim near Darmstadt and moved to Berlin with Cordelia shortly after she was born. In 1935 she got married to the non-Jewish philosopher Wilhelm Hoffmann and moved into a house in Eichkamp called "Eichkatznetz" (squirrel's nest) with her daughter and husband. Eichkamp was a small cooperatively built up part of town. Elisabeth Langgässer was seen as living in a "privileged mixed marriage", her daughter was considered Jewish. Elisabeth Langgässer had three other daughters in 1938, 1949 and 1942. Cordelia was a serious and shy girl. Beginning in 1939 her social discrimination increased seriously, although the papers of her Jewish heritage only existed in 1940. When she had to wear the Jewish star at the age of 12 in 1941, she moved to friends so that she wouldn't endanger her family. Her mother tried to place her in safety in Switzerland or Brazil, but she couldn't get the required visa. In Nov. 1942 Cordelia's emigration finally failed. Yet Elisabeth Langgässer succeeded in having her adopted by a Spanish couple - now she was called Cordelia Garcis-Scouart. Thereby she was safe for a short time. In her book "Burned child seeks the fire" (published in Sweden 1984) Cordelia Edvardson describes the fatal interrogation by the Gestapo. Her mother was threatened with high treason, because she had tried "to withdraw a Jew from the race laws" by adoption. The 14-year-old Cordelia had to sign a document about a double citizenship. If she had refused to do so the family would have suffered rationing of food and branding of the house with a yellow star. Not much later the Gestapo came and took her to the former Jewish Hospital in Iranische Straße, which was a camp at that time. In autumn 1943 she was deported to Theresienstadt (Therazin). Wilhelm Hoffmann who refused to get divorced from his non-Aryan wife was compelled to forced labour by the Todt organisation. Elisabeth Langgässer also had to do forced labour. In 1944 Elisabeth Langgässer got the news that Cordelia had been deported to Auschwitz with the prisoner's number A3709. At the beginning Cordelia had to work in the production of light bulbs, then in the office, probably even for Joseph Mengele. She got seriously ill and was then safely taken to Sweden by the "White Buses", an organisation of the Swedish Red Cross by Folke Bernadotte. There she tried to overcome the traumatic experiences of her past by psychoanalytic treatment. Her mother only got news of her survival in 1946. This was also the year when Elisabeth Langgässer's novel "The inextinguishable seal" was published whereby she became world-famous. Nevertheless something was irretrievably broken within her soul. She met Cordelia again in 1949, a year before she suddenly died.

Cordelia Edvardson became a successful journalist in Sweden, got married and had four children. In 1974 at the time of the Jom-Kippur-War she moved to Israel working as a foreign correspondent for the Svenska Dagbladet. She returned to Stockholm in 2006. In the documentary film "The girl from Auschwitz" she gives a clear report of her eventful life and she also proves a critical observer of the Israelian policy of settling and occupation.

She was surprised to get a "Stolperstein" (stumbling stone) in Eichkamp in autumn of 2008 and did not expect that there would be anybody remembering her in Eichkamp.

She died in Stockholm at the age of 83 on 29 Oct. 2012.

She has given a description of her life in her autobiographic novel "Gebranntes Kind sucht das Feuer". ("Burned Child Seeks The Fire", Hanser Verlag München, 1986, winner of Geschwister-Scholl-prize) She also published "Die Welt zusammenfügen" in 1989 ("Setting the world together") and a collection of poems "Jerusalems Lächeln"(1993, "Jerusalems Smiles"). In 2001 she received the Royal Prize of the Swedish Academy. She published in Swedish and said in an interview that the German language "had been stolen from her".

Stolperstein-Initiative Berlin-Charlottenburg-Eichkamp