

From The Reich to RHODESIA



Peter Sternberg

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1935 ♣ 1936 ♣ 1937

I was born on Wednesday 27 February 1935 in Dortmund, Germany. My parents were Robert and Irmgard Sternberg, and I was their firstborn child. I gather that the rest of the immediate family, relatives and friends all rejoiced in seeing a new addition to the family, although my mother, some years later, confided in me that several of their relatives had expressed their reservations at the time, for they felt, and not without reason, that it was not too wise to start a new family, especially a Jewish one, in Nazi-dominated Germany. For this was pre-World War Two Germany that we were living in. Adolf Hitler had been in power for two years, Jew baiting was on the rise and anti-Semitic feelings and laws were gathering swift momentum.

And perhaps they were right in expressing those opinions. For at the time that I came into this world, concentration camps had already been built, Jewish business concerns were being actively boycotted, Jews had been deprived of German citizenship, and in the summer of 1935 notices appeared at the approaches of many towns and villages which quite blatantly stated "No Jews Allowed". Many shops, restaurants and hotels had already banned Jewish patronage from their establishments. And much worse was to follow in the few remaining years leading to the outbreak of World War Two.



However, a brief few weeks respite for the Jewish population occurred during the two week period that the summer Olympic Games were staged in Berlin in 1936 - for the Nazis ordered that all anti-Jewish notices should be taken down, Jew baiting articles should not appear in the newspapers and anti-Semitic attacks and references to Jews in general should be toned down