

Königinstraße 35a

Professor Dr. iur. Karl Alexander Neumeyer

born 19.09.1869
in München,
Suicide 17.07.1941
in München



Photo: private

Karl Neumeyer was an outstanding German jurist of Jewish origin in the first half of the 20th century. With his five-volume work *The International Administrative Law*, published during the years 1910 to 1936, Karl Neumeyer accomplished a unique pioneering achievement in the development of international and transnational public law, which is unsurpassed to this day. Karl Neumeyer also researched the historical roots international private law and contributed significantly to the further education of this area of law.

Karl Neumeyer came from a shop-owner's family and was born on September 19, 1869. His parents Leopold and Fanny Neumeyer had moved in 1861 from the Ries to Munich. After completing his law studies, Karl Neumeyer obtains his doctorate at the Ludwig Maximilian University in 1901. In 1901 he completes his thesis and continues his academic career as an adjunct lecturer at the Faculty of Law, earning the rank of an extraordinary professor. In 1926 he is appointed director of the Institute for Comparative Law. At the beginning of the 1930s Karl Neumeyer is highly regarded both in Germany and abroad. In 1931, the faculty of law elected him dean, after he had been appointed full professor in 1929.

At the beginning of his career, Karl Neumeyer marries Anna Hirschhorn from Mannheim. From this marriage comes his sons Alfred, born on January 7, 1901, and Fritz, born on February 23rd, 1905. The young family moved in 1912 from Hessesstraße across the New Pinakothek to a house on Königinstrasse 35 a on the edge of the English Gardens.

For Karl and Anna Neumeyer, the seizure of power by National Socialists begins – despite high scientific and social prestige – a time of suffering and humiliation. In the summer semester of 1933, students boycott Neumeyer's International Law Lecture, which is then banned by the Bavarian Ministry of Education. After being forced to retire in 1934, Karl Neumeyer is no longer allowed to attend international conferences. Despite the ban on entering public libraries, Karl Neumeyer continues his work with great energy until the spring of 1941. He can still use his private library and the library of St. Bonifaz.

The son Alfred succeeds in 1935, after studying art history with professional stations in Rome, Hamburg and Berlin, to emigrate to the USA with his wife. At Mills College in Oakland, California, he builds a new life. He dies on January 21, 1973. His son Peter Florian, born in 1929, initially stays with his grandparents in Munich. In 1936 Anna Neumeyer brings her grandson to his parents in California, but then returns to Munich. The son Fritz emigrated in 1934, after completing an engineering degree in Sweden. He gains worldwide reputation through his publications on the international patent system. The University of Bern awards him an honorary doctorate in 1959. He dies on 17 February 1978.

The brother of Karl Neumeyer, Alfred Neumeyer, born on February 17, 1867, manages to emigrate with his wife to Argentina in January 1941. Alfred Neumeyer, until 1933 was a judge on the Bavarian Supreme Regional Court, founded and led, until his departure from the association, Israelite religious communities in Bavaria and the Israelite religious community in Munich. He dies on 19 December 1944. Karl and Anna Neumeyer, however, reject the help they are offered for emigration. They love Germany too much and do not want to be a burden to anyone. Werner J. Cahnmann, who emigrated to the USA in 1939, gives Karl Neumeyer's moving words: „Here I was born, here I grew up, here I have done my work, here I am going to die.“

Karl and Anna Neumeyer make the decision to commit suicide during a stay with friends in Vorarlberg when they learn that they have to vacate their house and the library should be auctioned off. The "Communications of the Jewish Community" of July 20, 1941, the „Deaths of June 21, July 20, 1941“ read:

17. July: Dr. Karl Israel Neumeyer	Königinstrasse 35a 71 $\frac{3}{4}$ years
17. July: Neumeyer Anna Luise Sara	Königinstrasse 35a 61 $\frac{3}{4}$ years

His student Murad Ferid paid tribute to Karl Neumeyer in 1969 for his 100th birthday in the FAZ: „If Karl Neumeyer's life's work dominated broad areas of international and public law in unforeseeable times, then this scholar must be a role model for us today, above all in his bravery against tyrants and terror: How, in the knowledge of what should happen, he refused to take advantage of the opportunity given to him to leave the country ‚because one belongs here‘. The most poignant testimony of such sentiment is his continuing work despite all threats and disenfranchisement.“

Text Klaus Bäumler (translation: Olivia Rothstein)

Sources:

- Stadtarchiv München, Einwohnermeldekarte.
- Stadtarchiv München, Judaica, Kennkartendoppel 3037.
- Stadtarchiv München (Hrsg.), Biographisches Gedenkbuch der Münchner Juden 1933 – 1945; (auch zu den im Haus Königinstraße 35 a ab 1939 einquartierten Mitbewohnern jüdischer Herkunft, die den Holocaust nicht überlebten, Gisela Hamburger, Berta und David Neumayer, Johanna und Justin Kohn und Otto Schwarz).

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