

## Dr. Johanna (Henny) Stahl

**Johanna Stahl, also called Henny,** was born into a Jewish family in Würzburg on 16th March 1895. She was the youngest of Samuel and Regine Stahl's six children.

Although not yet common at that time, she started studying at university – initially German Philology at the University of Würzburg, later Economics at the University of Frankfurt/Main, in addition to taking classes at the Faculty of Law in Würzburg. In 1921 she sat her final exams. She had studied for four years for her doctorate and wrote her dissertation: *The Social Significance of Furniture Hire Purchase Business and its Reform*. Her father's death in 1922 led to a drastic deterioration in the family's economic situation. It was not until 1925 that her brother paid off the last instalment of her doctoral fees, which was merely 15 Marks.

Henny was actively involved in social and political issues. From 1927 she worked as a freelance journalist, primarily for the "Bayerische Frauenzeitung". Her articles focused mainly on women's issues, which included up to date information about the feminist movement.

Her great concern was social welfare and dealing with people affected by poverty. Within the Jewish community Johanna was committed to strengthening women's rights, for example, by demanding managerial positions for women.

In the 1929 city council elections she ran for the left liberal "Deutsche Demokratische



Johanna Stahl, undated,  
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Partei (DDP)". Although she did not win a seat in the council, she got so many votes that she became a deputy council member which allowed her to take part in council meetings.

Under pressure from the Nazis, Henny had to give up writing for non-Jewish papers in 1933.

The many new restrictions on Jewish citizens made it clear to her that she had to intensify her work for the Jewish community in Würzburg. She took over the social and emigration counselling for the community members. The rapidly deteriorating situation for Jewish citizens meant that the best advice was to leave the country. Given that she was closely linked with organizations in Germany as well as abroad, she was able to forward vital information to those seeking advice.



Shalom Europa and Johanna-Stahl-Zentrum, © BDA

From 1934 she was also involved in the working committee for counselling and economic aid for citizens affected by the occupational ban.

In 1938 Henny visited her brother Leo who was living in exile in Paris. She could have emigrated there and then, however, she returned to Würzburg to assist her mother and siblings, and to continue with the emigration counselling. For many persecuted people in Würzburg her help was their only chance to escape.

Henny was in contact with Dr. Gertrud Luckner, the resistance fighter who helped many to escape, and who in late February 1943 came to Würzburg to meet with ecclesiastical dignitaries and representatives of the Jewish community. Although no evidence has been found that the two women met, Henny was arrested under suspicion of conspiracy in March 1943.

On 17th June 1943 Henny, her sister Jenny and her brother Eugen were deported from Würzburg to Auschwitz concentration camp. They were murdered only a few days after their arrival there.

*Johanna Stahl is the eponym for the Centre for Jewish History and Culture in Lower Franconia.*



Stolperstein Johanna Stahl,  
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**Text**

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Text Eva-Maria Barklind-Schwander with the help of Emma Phelan, Colette Steder and Salua Qidan

**Sources**

Riccardo Altieri: Jüdische Miniaturen - Johanna Stahl  
Dr. Rotraud Ries: Mainpost 27th January 2023