

Herbert Strauss

Born: 2-11-1902 in Kassel, Germany

Died: 17-4-1985 (82 years old)

Burial place: Sundby Cemetery - Copenhagen

Biography

Herbert Strauss, a German-Danish photographer, was born in Kassel as the son of the Jewish couple Sarah and Adolf Strauss. At the age of 17 he studied acting and made his debut at the age of 19. He then worked at a few theatres - including in Solingen, until he came to Berlin around 1925. Here he was immediately accepted after an audition to the sought-after Berliner Stadt Theater. Herbert Strauss was one of its core actors until 1933, when he was fired because of his Jewish ancestry. From a young age he a member of the Communist Party of Germany. This, combined with his Jewish ancestry, made his position totally vulnerable during the Nazification of the country. He refused to wear the Jewish star, carry Nazi pamphlets, and avoided any form of registration. Herbert Strauss remained in Berlin but went "underground" and miraculously avoided capture. With the help of good friends such as the actor Walther Blum, the painter Fritz Cremer, the theater painter Rudy Lesser, and his friends Ernst Gritch and Klaus Isenhöfer, Herbert Strauss was able to obtain shelter, food rations and meager amounts of money. He remained in Germany for a full 5 years after his dismissal from the theatre. In 1938 he was advised to flee, and with the help of communist friends he was transported by fishing boat to Bornholm, where he lived in a tent and survived on fish and mushrooms. He lived a very spartan life for a long time and he was doing fine. However, he traveled to Copenhagen when it became too cold to live in a tent. Herbert Strauss was placed on social welfare as he could not get a job without Danish citizenship. But in Denmark, too, the Jews on the run, and in October 1943 he fled to Sweden, where he briefly worked in a factory, but then continued on to Uppsala, where he held an excellent position in the Danish House until the end of the war in 1945. When Herbert Strauss returned to Denmark, he was still not permitted to work. At one of the minefield's taverns [bohemian taverns in a certain area of Copenhagen] called Vingaarden he met Hilde Larsen, whom he married in 1947 and in the same year they had their daughter Susanne Strauss. It was not until 1952 that Herbert Strauss succeeded in becoming Danish, after which he apprenticed in the photography profession for a short period. Initially Herbert Strauss specialized in taking pictures of children in their homes. He set up his own darkroom in Admiralgade. However, the reaction to the war left him with bad nerves. He lost his ability to work, and the minefield's taverns became a comfortable place for him to hang out. Here he began photographing friends and the regulars at the inns in the minefield. In 1957 he was awarded war compensation, which consisted partly of a cash payment and partly as a continuous pension. Over the next 25-year period he brilliantly depicted life in the minefield taverns of Copenhagen, thus preserving a piece of Copenhagen history that no longer exists. Around 1977, Herbert Strauss stopped photographing. He died in 1985 at the age of 82. The book "The Minefield - Bohemian Copenhagen" (published by Børge Binderup, 1969) is illustrated throughout with photos by Herbert Straus. Herbert Strauss was married on March 21, 1947, at Copenhagen City Hall to music teacher Hilde Margrethe Larsen, née Jensen (b. 09-01-1922)

He appeared in the following 1 film:

[Beyond All Boundaries](#) (1958)