

Press release

3 May 2022

Gerhard Leo – A German in the Résistance **Archive Opening, 10 May 2022, Pariser Platz**

On 10 May 2022, the Akademie der Künste will open the archive of the journalist, author and Résistance fighter Gerhard Leo with an event at Pariser Platz. In a conversation with the author Lothar Müller, historian Annette Leo and writer Maxim Leo will disclose details of the life and engaged journalistic work of their father and grandfather respectively. Ulrich Matthes will read from Leo's memoirs *Frühzug nach Toulouse*. Werner Heegewaldt, Director of the Archives, will welcome the audience and Gabriele Radecke will present the Gerhard Leo Archive.

Born into an assimilated Jewish family, **Gerhard Leo (1923–2009)** was forced to flee Germany with his parents in 1933. His father opened the bookshop LIFA (Librairie Franco-Allemande) in Paris, which soon became an important destination for literary exiles. As a child and teenager, Leo witnessed readings and meetings there with, among others, Egon Erwin Kisch, Heinrich Mann and Anna Seghers. After the outbreak of war, the bookshop was impounded and the family dispersed; Leo was sent to a Jewish children's home. In 1943, the 19-year-old Leo joined the French Resistance and fought against the German occupation. After the war, he returned to Germany, first to West and then, in 1952, to East Germany, where he made a name for himself as a journalist and book author. He worked as a correspondent for the news agency ADN and the daily newspaper *Neues Deutschland*. As a special correspondent, he attended the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem in 1961 and reported on the overthrow of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia in 1979.

The **Gerhard Leo Archive** contains journalistic texts from 40 years of working for the press. These include the preparatory material for his memoirs *Frühzug nach Toulouse*, published first in German in 1988 and in French in 1997, in which Leo recounts his experiences in French exile and in the Resistance. The surviving correspondence consists largely of exchanges of letters with companions in the Resistance. The family papers are also abundant, going back as far as a letter from Alexander von Humboldt in 1831. Of particular note are personal documents on the life of Gerhard's father Wilhelm Leo, a lawyer and active opponent of the Nazis, as well as letters from Gerhard's imprisoned father-in-law Dagobert Lubinski, an author and leading member of the Communist Party of Germany (Opposition) (KPO), who was convicted of high treason and murdered in Auschwitz in 1943. Work documents, photographs and awards, including Leo's being made a Knight of the Legion of Honour by former French President Jacques Chirac, round off this weighty archive.

Press and
Public Relations

Pariser Platz 4
10117 Berlin
T 030 200 57–15 14
F 030 200 57–15 08
presse@adk.de
www.adk.de

Event details

Gerhard Leo – a German in the Résistance

Archive opening with Annette Leo, Maxim Leo, Ulrich Matthes, Lothar Müller,
Gabriele Radecke and Werner Heegewaldt

Tuesday, 10 May 2022, 7 pm

Akademie der Künste, Pariser Platz 4, 10117 Berlin

Admission € 6/4, ticket reservations: 030 200 57-1000; ticket@adk.de

Online tickets: www.adk.de/tickets

Press tickets: reservations from presse@adk.de and tel. 030 200 57-1514

Enquiries on the Gerhard Leo Archive

Dr Gabriele Radecke, head of the Literature Archives,

Tel. +49 (0)30 200 57-32 00, radecke@adk.de and literaturarchiv@adk.de

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