

The Jewish Community of Laupheim and its Annihilation

Foreword

The publication of this commemorative book, which was compiled by a team of members of our historical society ("Gesellschaft für Geschichte und Gedenken", GGG) on a voluntary basis, although sadly coinciding with the 70th anniversary of the Night of Broken Glass (Reichskristallnacht), is a fortunate event for local history: shortly before the passing away of the last contemporary witnesses it has been possible to portray all the fates of Jewish citizens and families in Laupheim of 1933, leaving an enduring memorial as a warning for the future and an attempted contribution to compensate for the wrongs they suffered.

It is also fortunate that, for the first time in our local history, not just an individual historian was involved, for professional or personal interests, but a group of people gathered together as a team, under the guidance of the two historians Dr. Antje Köhlerschmidt and Karl Neidlinger, persevering for six years to produce an extensive work of almost 600 pages. This collective work presents itself as a lasting reference book as well as an important compendium for further investigations.

With this doubly momentous book our GGG is able to emphasize what has been its primary purpose since its foundation and what its name is intended to express: it wants to make history understandable through the specific destinies of individuals and also aims to anchor them in our town by the example of the eventful relationship between Christians and Jews. In addition it strives to uphold and honor the memory of the exterminated Jewish population.

The Historical Society would like to thank all those who enabled this project, the publishers, the authors, the town of Laupheim and the Oberschwäbische Elektrizitätswerke for their support and also those involved in the provision of material and the production of this work.

May this work leave its mark in the public conscience of our town and in our hearts. Laupheim, September 2008

Elisabeth Linck

Chairwoman of the Gesellschaft für Geschichte und Gedenken

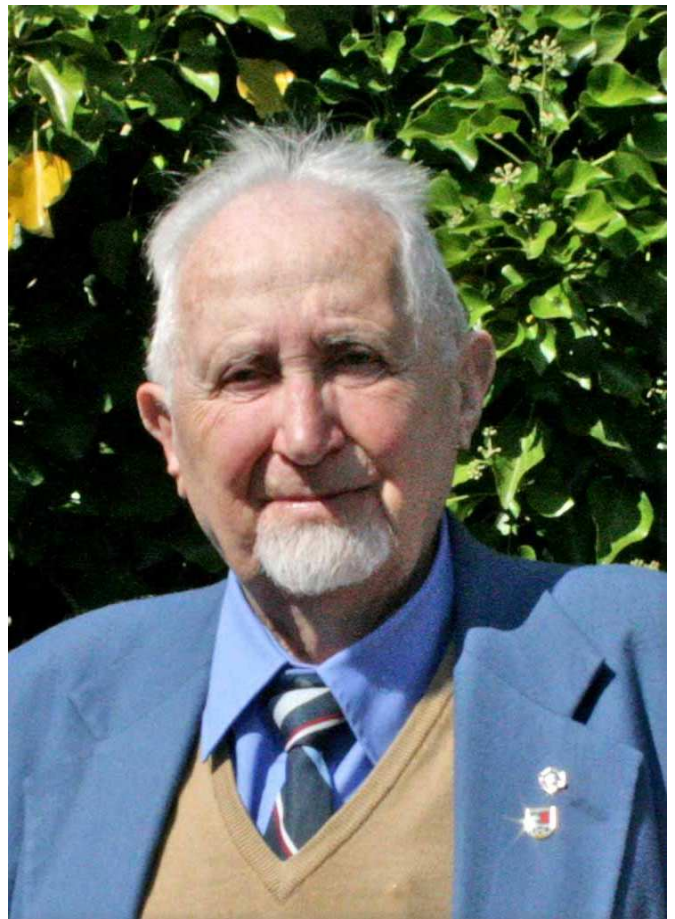
Introductory by Ernest L. Bergmann

At the age of fourteen I left Laupheim in 1936 and returned from the USA for the first time in 1958 on a visit. I still found the Jewish cemetery, but no Jewish person alive, and as I strolled around the town of my childhood, somewhat yearning for the past, I realised painfully how many of the enterprises had vanished and how many names had fallen into oblivion.

Standing at the market square I looked down the Mittelstrasse and pictured the linen shop Hofheimer and opposite, the clothes manufacturer's Heumann. Up the hill leading from the square the tobacconist's Einstein/Pauson and further up the shoe shop Heumann and the Heumann Bank, and at the top of the hill the Castle of Grosslaupheim, owned by the Steiner family.

Looking from the square along the Kapellenstrasse, an imposing start on the right: the department store Einstein. Opposite this the Steiner tannery with the tanning vats, then further on the inn "Zum Ochsen", owned by the landlord Sanger and his family. Diagonally opposite the large Laupheimer house, in which the traditional butcher's and the shoe shop Grab were to be found. Then the limited partnership Kurz and the clothes shop Bach and the grocer's Adler with ware from overseas. On the other side the Steiner houses and the hop warehouse and its grounds, followed by the house and stables of the livestock dealer Nordlinger, the textile shop Wallach, further along and on the other side again, the little shop (Ladele) of the Kirschbaum sisters, the horse dealer Kahn and the inn "Zum Kronprinz", and the hop warehouse Lowenthal on the opposite side.

In the side streets also Jewish life was prevalent. At house number three in the Bronnerstrasse, where I grew up, the residence of the tanner Steiner, with its stables and its barn at the back, was still standing. The livestock dealer Nathan lived opposite. On the other side there was the former Jewish inn "Zur Sonne" with the forecourt to the synagogue and opposite, the Jewish community centre, further on the livestock dealer Adler, the Jewish cemetery and at the foot of the Bronner Berg the livestock dealer Stern.



On the slope of the Judenberg there lived on the right the soap manufacturer Heilbronner, opposite the poultry trader and matzo baker Weiler, then came the butcher's Laupheimer, the Jewish mortuary, the entrance to the cemetery and behind the cemetery the Jewish Fields.

In the Radstrasse there was the Volksbank Heumann, the Jewish primary school and opposite the Bergmann house, where also the tobacco dealer Obernauer lived, and behind it the extensive grounds of the hair factory. The neighbours were the livestock dealer Friedberger and the oil and fat trader Jonas Weil at the crossing with the Gartenstrasse. Further away on the little stream Rottum was situated the Steiner Laupheim Tool Factory.

Since that first visit another 50 years have passed and even more has changed. Old buildings have been renovated or demolished and new ones have emerged. The entire Jewish Fields have been built upon, but the exceedingly beautiful old Jewish cemetery still exists, thanks to Ernst Schäll and his voluntary assistants, and the "Höhenanlage", the park area on the Bronner Berg, is still thriving: It is the result of Max Bergmann's great commitment in local politics.

The former Jewish inhabitants of Laupheim are not forgotten, and the memory of them grows stronger and stronger. Today there is a Bergmannstrasse and a Steinerstrasse, a Carl-Laemmle-Weg and a Friedrich-Adler-Weg. The town's large schools bear the names of these two men. Gretel Bergmann has been immortalized in the sports grounds in Herrenmahd and many commemorative plaques with Jewish names can be discovered in the town. Furthermore the well-conceived and instructive Museum of Christian and Jewish History in the old Castle of Grosslaupheim has been developed. It relates the story of the peaceful co-existence of all the inhabitants over several centuries and houses many personal documents of these families.

The political community of Laupheim is intent on not forgetting the past. Both the very active "Gesellschaft für Geschichte und Gedenken", as well as the newly-founded "Freundeskreis des Museums zur Geschichte von Christen und Juden" have anchored the commemoration of Laupheim's Jewish history in their statutes.

Much has already been written about the Jewish inhabitants, their presence and their solidarity with the municipality of Laupheim. It is highly commendable that the authors of this work have embarked upon writing a unique new book about all the former Jewish families of Laupheim. It must certainly have been very difficult as there are only very few alive who have knowledge of these former citizens. It has appeared at the last minute! The key year 1933 is the starting point, when still about 250 Jewish citizens lived here. In that year the German catastrophe began. In its wake some managed to emigrate and today the descendants are scattered all over the world, speak different languages and some have altered their names. But over a hundred former citizens suffered the fate

of deportation and they sadly never saw their home town again. All their destinies are described in this book. It aims to bring back the memory of them all. May it attract a large number of readers!

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