

# The Jewish Community of Laupheim and its Annihilation

Book Pages 173 - 180

## EINSTEIN, Max, Kapellenstrasse 6

Translation by: Markus Ganser

*ROLF EMMERICH*

**Max Einstein**, born July 24th, 1878 in Laupheim, died April 21st, 1944 in St. Gallen/Switzerland,  
OO Fanny Einstein née Marx, born May 6th, 1892 in Altenstadt, died February 5th, 1964 in St. Gallen/ Switzerland.

– **Klara Einstein**, born October 13th, 1913 in Laupheim, died August 12th, 1933 at Nebelhorn (Allgäu Alps),

– **Siegfried Einstein**, born November 30th, 1919 in Laupheim, died April 25th, 1983 in Mannheim,

– **Rudolf Einstein**, born September 3rd, 1921 in Laupheim, died June 6th, 2002 in St. Gallen/Switzerland.

Before 1933, Max and Fanny Einstein lived the life of an upper-class family who had personnel for housekeeping and child care and a chauffeur. Accordingly, the department store at the market place included a well-appointed apartment for the family on the upper floor.

Fanny Einstein came from a banking family from Altenstadt at Illertal and was raised in Munich. Her husband Max grew up in Laupheim. In 1917, he was still called to war, at the age of 39 years. His son Siegfried characterized him as follows:

***"His four favorites were people, truth, freedom and Mozart."***



*Max and Fanny Einstein, 1930.*

The decline of their civil existence was brutally brought about by the Nazis (see also chapter D.M. Einstein, department store). On November 10th, 1938 Max Einstein was deported to KZ Dachau along with 15 other citizens of Laupheim.

More than a month they were jailed in the wintery cold on nothing but a concrete floor, severely maltreated and left without any protection against the frost. Max Einstein, who suffered from diabetes, returned from the concentration camp as a broken man. Fanny Einstein had to push forward their emigration plans. Due to denunciations by their former chauffeur, the Einstein family had to hold on for another year until they could emigrate to distant relatives in Switzerland. On leaving they were not allowed to keep the sparse proceeds from the "sale" of the department store, which had been forced in the context of the "aryanization". They arrived, destitute, in Switzerland and received financial assistance from relatives, particularly from the Steiner family, with Hedwig Steiner from New York being explicitly stated as a strong supporter in this context. The decline of their civic existence was brutally brought about by the Nazis (see also chapter D.M. Einstein, department store).



*Children's carnival „Kinderfasnet“: Rudolf, Klärle and Siegfried. Klärle Einstein, summer 1932.*

## **Klara, „Klärle“ Einstein**

The artistically talented young woman took a course in design in Munich. As the elder sister of her two younger brothers she was considered to be the “heart of the family”. She was already engaged when, in August 1933, she spent a holiday in Klein Walsertal with her parents and brothers. The nineteen-year-old went on a hike with her brother Siegfried on the Nebelhorn Mountain. They were caught in a thunderstorm with thick clouds and rain. The young woman was struck by lightning and died on the spot. Her walking stick proved to be a fatal lightning conductor.

## **Rudolf Einstein**

His father took him to St. Gallen/Switzerland in September 1936. The reason was that Jewish pupils had been “removed” from the Laupheim Lateinschule (grammar school). First of all Rudolf obtained a diploma in commerce at a private school. But as he was denied a work permit, he



attended a fashion school and became a qualified designer for embroidery. He worked in the fashion business until his retirement in 1986. Since 1956 he was a citizen of St. Gallen and accordingly, a Swiss national

*Rudolf Einstein 1999.*

Until his death he was in regular contact with old fellows from Laupheim. In long telephone calls he proved to be a man with a distinctive sense of humor and great interest in what was happening there. However, he refused to take a trip back to his old home town.

# Siegfried Einstein

***"I have no wish to come back home,  
where they chased me away saying I don't fit."***

This is the start of a late poem by writer Siegfried Einstein. Surprisingly, it ends with the verse:

**This piece of land that my forefathers loved and found,  
Let it serve me to rest in peace at last.**

The poem clearly illustrates Siegfried Einstein's inner conflict and the ambivalence of his relationship to his home town.

The sensitive boy grew up in Laupheim. At the age of nine he already started writing poetry. His artistic work was particularly encouraged by his mother's sister, Caroline Marx, who was his favorite aunt. After his Bar Mizwa, the thirteen year old was faced with the beginnings of the barbarian Nazi regime in Laupheim. On April 1st, 1933 all four shop windows of the parents' department store were smashed. SA forces occupied the store and tried to force their way into the family's apartment.

Siegfried was shocked. For days, he was not able to go to school. And once he was back attending classes, one of Siegfried's teachers started with racial mobbing against him. In an interview dated from January 30th, 1983 Einstein described:

*„The teacher said that this is what the Jew looked like. He said that he'd make a chalk drawing of the shape of my skull, and that's exactly what he did. When I stepped back from the board, I was horrified by my portrait. I had an extremely long nose and oversized ears, while in reality I have a rather small nose and little ears. The whole class, except for a friend of mine, started screaming and yelling. The teacher gloatingly said that I could go now, and I went home“.*

Eight months later, Siegfried was pelted with stones in the school yard of the Lateinschule during a break and severely injured. Covered in blood, he dragged himself off. *"I owe my life to this hail of stones"*, is how he summarized this incident later. On September 26th, 1934 Siegfried Einstein was sent to friends in Switzerland. He attended the renowned boarding school situated on the Rosenberg Mountain and studied English, French, and Spanish. In the following years, he achieved a diploma in commerce. But, being a foreigner, he was not granted a work permit.

Throughout his life, he suffered from the feeling of being displaced. This is illustrated by the following poem:

## **Abendlicher Monolog**

Der Heimatlose bin ich hier und dort,  
in allen Städten und auf allen Gassen.  
Da ist soweit ich denken kann, kein Ort,  
den nicht der Fremdling, der ich bin, verlassen.

Die andern haben einen Herd, ein Haus,  
und manches Glück ist ihrem Tag bereitet:  
Da ziehen Kinder ihre Schuhe aus  
in Räumen, die mein Fuß nur scheu durchschreitet.

Und wie ein ungebetner später Gast.  
Und abends, wenn ich meine Hände hebe,  
als hätte ich mein Anderssein umfasst,  
so weiß ich manchmal nicht, ob ich noch lebe.

Und staunend sehe ich die andern gehen  
Mit Sicherheiten, die mich fast erschrecken;  
Und Flammenzeichen, die sie nicht verstehn,  
sind Todespein, wenn sie zur Nacht mich wecken.

Der Heimatlose bin ich hier und dort,  
in allen Städten und auf allen Gassen.  
Da ist soweit ich denken kann, kein Ort,  
den nicht der Fremdling, der ich bin, verlassen.

## Evening monologue \*)

A stranger am I here and there,  
wherever roads and streets unwind,  
I cannot think of any place – nowhere  
a single spot I had not left behind.

The others call a house their home,  
and luck will get them through the day:  
Little shoes lined up where children roam,  
in rooms I'm hushing through while on my way.

Just like a late and uninvited guest.  
In the evening, I hold my hands trying to size  
my different kind that has no rest.  
It makes me wonder quite some times if I am still alive.

Amazed I see the others go,  
their securities almost giving me fright,  
and the flame signs that they don't know,  
bring deadly pain to me and wake me up at night.

A stranger am I here and there,  
wherever roads and streets unwind,  
I cannot think of any place – nowhere  
a single spot I had not left behind.

From February 1941 until June 1945 he was detained in nine different Swiss detention camps. Some years ago, one of his fellow internees made me aware of the severe, unhealthy conditions in these camps:

KANTON ST. GALLEN  
FREMDENPOLIZEI UND PASSBUREAU

Abteilung des Polizeidepartementes . Oberer Graben 36 - Telefon (071) 23823

St.Gallen, den 24.Dezember 1954

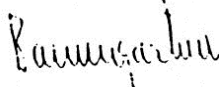
B e s c h e i n i g u n g .

E i n s t e i n Siegfried, geb. 30.11.1919,  
war in der Schweiz (St.Gallen) wohnhaft vom 26.Sept.1934  
bis zum Jahre 1950. Während der Zeit des letzten Krieges  
wurde er als Emigrant zu folgenden Arbeitsdienstleistungen  
aufgeboten:

24.2.1941 bis	22. 6.1941	Lager	Nuova Locarno,
22.6.1941 "	15. 1.1942,	"	Vouvry,.
13.4.1942, "	6. 7.1942,	"	Davesco,
6.7.1942, "	14.10.1942,	"	Visp
14.10. 42, "	14.11.1942,	"	Davesco,
9.8.1943, "	22.10.1943,	"	Arb.L.Locarno,
14.3.1944,		"	Bad Schauenburg,
2.10. 44, "	11. 5.1945,	Zentralmagazin	Zürich Seebach,
12.6.1945, "	25. 6.1945,	Schul- & Werkstättenlager.	

Er wurde als Hilfs- & Bauarbeiter, sowie als  
Bureauhilfe beschäftigt.

KANT. FREMDENPOLIZEI  
Der Adjunt:

  
Baumgartner

*List of the Swiss detention camps where Siegfried Einstein was detained.*

Despite the bad conditions Einstein started with professionally writing poetry already during the war years. These poems, partly mixed with new texts, were published in 1946 titled "Melodies in Major and Minor Keys". In the early post-war years, he was a journalist for several Swiss newspapers and an editor for the small Pflug publishing house.

In 1947, Einstein's son Daniel was born. Einstein wrote one of his most impressive poems during that time:



# Schlaflied für Daniel

*Wir fahren durch Deutschland, mein Kind  
Und es ist Nacht.*

*Die Scheiben klirren im Wind,  
Da sind die Toten erwacht,*

*die Toten von Auschwitz, mein Sohn.*

*Du weißt es nicht  
und träumst von Sternschnupp und Mohn  
und Sonn und Mondgesicht.*

*Wir fahren durch Deutschland, mein Kind.*

*Und es ist Nacht.*

*Die Toten stöhnen im Wind:  
Viel Menschen sind umgebracht.*

*Du darfst nicht schlafen, mein Sohn,*

*und träumen von seliger Pracht.*

*Sieh doch! Es leuchtet der Mohn  
wie Blut so rot in der Nacht.*

*Wir fahren durch Deutschland, mein Kind.*

*Und es ist Nacht.*

*Die Toten klagen im Wind –  
und niemand ist aufgewacht . .*

## **Lullaby for Daniel\*)**

*We're travelling through Germany, my child  
heading through the night.*

*Windows creaking in the wind so wild  
to wake the dead to claim their right,*

*the dead from Auschwitz, my son.*

*You don't know the story of gloom,  
instead you dream of shooting stars and the sun,  
of poppy fields and the man on the moon.*

*We're travelling through Germany, my child  
heading through the night.*

*The dead are groaning in the wind so wild:  
so many people who have died.*

*You must not sleep, my son,  
and dream of splendor so bright.*

*Look out! Poppy fields so long  
are glowing red as blood in the night.*

*We're travelling through Germany, my child  
heading through the night.*

*The dead are moaning in the wind so wild -  
nobody has woken up, all still sleep tight. . .*

In the first edition of the poem, Siegfried Einstein had added the subtitle: „Ulm, departure 6:32 pm.“ This gives reason to believe that shortly before he had visited Laupheim. Einstein’s book about Eichmann dedicates the poem “to all the dead who are forgotten, because they were “only Jews”!”

This poem has been recorded and reprinted several times. But Einstein, a foreigner, single, with an illegitimate son, got into trouble with the Cantonal authorities. Einstein’s quick-tempered nature may have also played a certain role here. In 1953 he returned to Germany, and settled in the Hessian town of Lampertheim near Mannheim.

After several short novels, Einstein’s most outstanding volume of poetry, “Das Wolkenschiff” (The Cloud Ship), was published in 1950 and printed in two editions. The Laupheim Museum zur Geschichte von Christen und Juden (Museum of the History of Christians and Jews) features the complete collection of Einstein’s printed books.

The collection also includes the two posthumously published books „Meine Liebe ist erblindet“ (My Love has Turned Blind) and „Wer wird in diesem Jahr den Schofar blasen?“ (Who is going to Blow the Shofar this Year?). Einstein received several awards for his literary work, including the Thomas-Mann-Förderpreis and, in 1961, the Tucholsky Prize. The latter prize was awarded for his book „Eichmann – Chefbuchhalter des Todes“ (Eichmann - Death's Head Accountant). The lyricist and essayist Siegfried Einstein considered this book as his most painful piece of work. He documented revisionist and anti-Semitic tendencies within the Federal Republic of Germany, and exposed the names of die-hard politicians. The book was translated into several languages. A second edition was turned down because he refused to delete any parts of the text.

However, he wasn’t able to earn enough from his literary work to make a living. Therefore, he also wrote for different newspapers. He was furious about the die-hards among his contemporaries that were still stuck in the past. For several years, he was an author for the socialist newspaper “Andere Zeitung” which was directed against the rearmament of Germany. He also gave readings and lectures, throughout the Federal Republic, on poets who had suffered persecution. Notably, he also held the speech during the commemorations of the centenary of Heinrich Heine's death at Montmartre Cemetery, to whom he felt very close, both as an author and human being.

His visits to Laupheim were always kept short. However, he regularly returned to his home town. He visited the grave of his sister Klärle, and also met with friends who had stood firm during the times of the Nazi regime. However, in his conversations he used to get himself into a rage quite quickly. “Siegfried, you had better go now, was what I usually said to him in such situations”, is how a former female class mate described these incidents. “His wife Ilona then had to find the fastest way to drive

the car out of Laupheim." "He lived like a man without skin, so sensitive, so vulnerable", is how Einstein's wife confirms this characterization. In one of his last poems, Siegfried Einstein takes stock of his life with unabashed openness.

In one of his last poems, Siegfried Einstein strikes a pitiless balance with his life:

## **Mein Leben**

*Ich habe mein Leben lang*

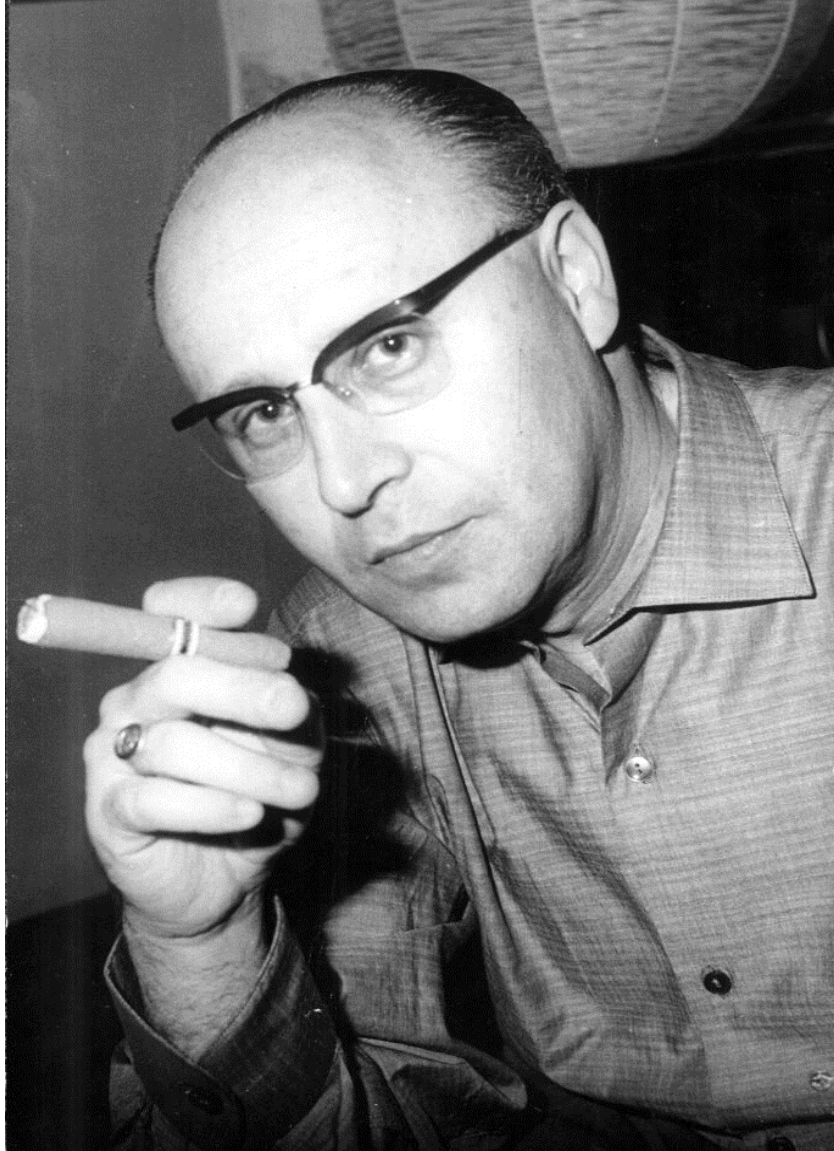
*gekämpft, gefürchtet, geweint, gelacht, gestritten,  
geschlichtet, gewusst, gehofft, gebeichtet, gelogen,  
gesucht, gefunden, gelobt, geleugnet, geschwiegen,  
gesprachen, gewacht, geschlafen, gelesen, geträumt,  
geglaubt, gelästert, gebangt, gedroht, gelitten,  
gequält, gegeben, genommen, gejagt, gezittert,  
gehungert, geprasst, getrunken, gedürstet,  
gezeugt, getötet, gewusst, gespielt, gemahnt, gehetzt,  
gepflanzt, gejätet, geflucht, gesegnet, geheilt,  
gepeinigt, geheiligt, getreten, gedacht, geblödet,  
geschwitzt, gefroren,  
geächtet, geachtet, geworben, geschlackert,  
gerufen, gehorcht, geliebt, gelebt – gelebt, gelebt.  
Gelebt? – geträumt vom LEBEN!*

## **My life \*)**

*All my life I have*

*fought, feared, cried, laughed, quarreled,  
reconciled, known, hoped, confessed, lied,  
searched, found, appraised, denied, hushed,  
spoken, watched out, slept, read, dreamed,  
believed, backbitten, worried, threatened, suffered,  
bothered, given, taken, haunted, trembled,  
hungered, splurged, drunken, thirsted,  
fathered, killed, known, played, warned, defamed,  
planted, weeded, cursed, blessed, healed,  
aggrieved, hallowed, trampled, memorized, joked,  
sweat, frozen,  
proscribed, esteemed, pled, shivered,  
called, obeyed, loved, lived – lived,  
lived. Lived? - dreamt of LIVING*

Siegfried Einstein had only just recovered from several heart attacks. However his death came suddenly, on 25<sup>th</sup> April, 1983. He died on the way to see the doctor. Almost 50 years after the tragedy of "Klärle" Einstein's fatal accident on the Nebelhorn he was buried next to his sister in the Jewish Cemetery in Laupheim



*Siegfried Einstein, around 1960*



*„Klärle“ Einstein, in 1933.*

\*)not official

translation from German original.