

# STEINER, Adolf Wohlgemuth, Gross-Laupheim Castle

Translated by: Aylin Ariguel, Babett Spiczak, Huesniye Coşkun, Maria B. Caballero Gahete, Stina Ott, Luisa Wassermann  
Supervisor: Dr. Robynne Flynn-Diez  
Ruprecht-Karls-Universitaet Heidelberg  
Institut fuer Uebersetzen und Dolmetschen Englischabteilung

*DR. ANTJE KOEHLERSCHMIDT / DR. DETLEV VON KALCKREUTH*

**Adolf Wohlgemut Steiner**, born May 30, 1875 in Stuttgart, died September 13, 1957 in Laupheim, ♂ **Ruth, née von Kalckreuth**, born September 22, 1879 in Neisse, died September 7, 1955 in Laupheim.

– **Marie-Luise Steiner**, born October 16, 1905 in Laupheim, died May 24, 1980 in Heidelberg, ♂ **Hubertus Count Leutrum von Ertingen**, born December 13, 1897, died April 13, 1974,

– **Ulrich Steiner**, born August 21, 1908 in Laupheim, died December 25, 1961 in Munich.



*Gross-Laupheim Castle – Place of Christian and Jewish history in Laupheim.*

The history of the castle and its owners, to which the Steiner family belonged, significantly reflects the eventful history of Christians and Jews in Laupheim to this day.

The following account only focuses on the time from the beginning of the eighteenth century until today, since a comprehensive historical overview of the castle would exceed the purposes of this chapter. At that time Freiherr Carl Damian of Welden ruled over Gross-Laupheim Castle and Klein-Laupheim Castle. As a result of inheritances before and after 1600, the basis of the Freiherren of Weldens' livelihood had been reduced so that a life befitting their social status and an appropriate training of the often numerous progeny proved to be very difficult. With Austria's permission, Freiherr Carl Damian of Welden allowed four Jewish families to move to Laupheim around 1730. The contract was not only for the benefit of the contracting parties, but also to revive local trade and commerce. Later, the first official letter of safe conduct (official document protecting Jewish people) from October 5, 1734 allowed twenty Jewish families to settle in Laupheim. It not only stipulated several codes of conduct for the settling Jewish families but also the payment of protection money as well as special taxes to which they would be subjected. On the other hand, the contract specified particular rights such as the granting of a separate lower jurisdiction. With this began the more than 200 year history of coexistence of Christians and Jews in Laupheim. The safe conduct was extended and expanded to other families in 1754 and 1784. Therefore, the Catholic majority and Jewish minority lived in close proximity to one another but separated within the framework of the feudal system.

This feudal system progressively fell apart at the beginning of the nineteenth century when the *Reichsritter* (Free Imperial Knights) lost their

sovereign rights in 1806. In 1817 and 1836 laws for the abolition of serfdom and the connected soccage, taxes and services were issued in the Kingdom of Wuerttemberg.



*Carl Freiherr of Welden and wife Walburga, née Freiin of Hornstein.*

(Source: Braun, Alt-Laupheimer Bilderbogen)

In 1828, the *Emanzipationsgesetz* (Emancipation Act) came into effect. Due to this act, issued by the government of Wuerttemberg, the *Schutzstatus* (official protection status) of Jews living in Germany was revoked and they were declared subjects of the government of Wuerttemberg. These social changes together with many judicial disputes led to a worsening of the financial situation for the aristocratic owners of Gross-Laupheim Castle and Klein-Laupheim Castle. Constantin Ludwig Freiherr of Welden (1771-1842) transferred the ownership of both castles to the state of Wuerttemberg. Thereupon the baronial family moved to Huerbel Castle. While Klein-Laupheim Castle remains state property even today, Gross-Laupheim Castle was sold in 1843 to the master brewer Franz Josef Lauterwein from Oberkirchberg and Viktor Steiner, a Jewish resident in Laupheim. In 1853, the latter eventually became the sole owner of the castle grounds. This change of ownership not only reflects the dissolution of the old feudal hegemonic and legal structures as well as the rise of the middle class, but also the gradual emancipation of the Jewish population in Wuerttemberg. *Schutzjuden* (once protected Jews) had now become the owners of the Gross-Laupheim Castle.

Throughout the following years of economic development, Laupheim was granted a city charter in 1869. The Jewish community formed a significant part of the town as they not only, with a total of 843 people, made up a fifth of the population, but also contributed significantly to the city's prosperity. At that time the synagogue community of Laupheim was the second largest in Wuerttemberg, after Stuttgart.

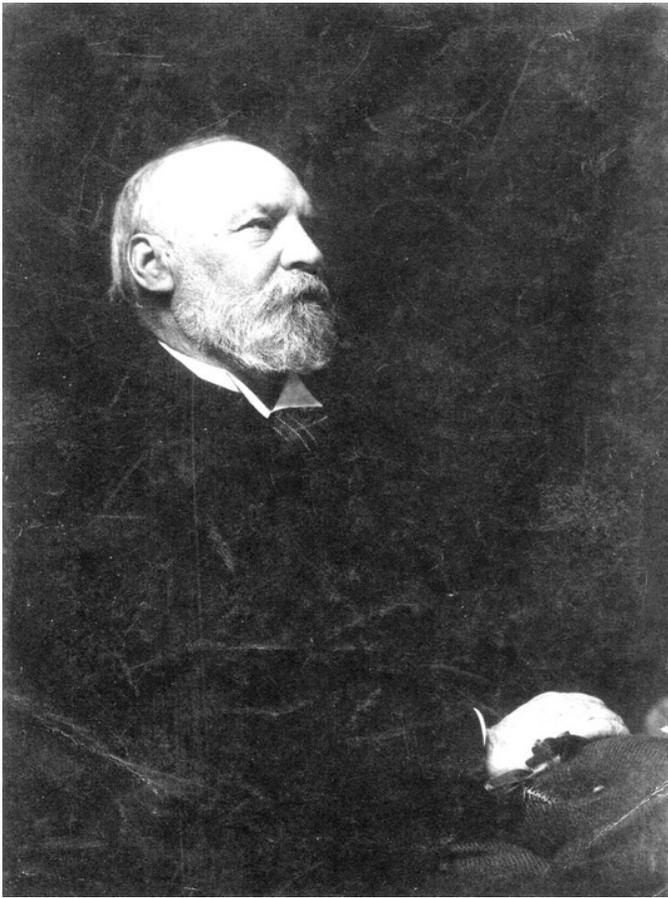


*The parents: Viktor Steiner (1790–1865) and Sophie née Reichenbach (1799–1866).*



(Source: Address book 1925)

Viktor Steiner (1790-1865), a Laupheim local, ran a leather goods store. After acquiring Gross-Laupheim Castle with its land tenure he made use of the castle's right to brew beer by improving the technical facilities. As a result, he arranged for a room to be set up in the eastern part of the castle for a brewing kettle and for a machine house to be built in 1872. The former fief castle (a loan in form of a castle) was also used for storing hop, hatching eggs, and keeping chicks. The castle owner was married to Sophie (Zemirah, called "Zirle" as a child), née Reichenbach (1799-1866), from Hohenems in Vorarlberg. Three generations of the Steiner family followed the couple buried at the Jewish cemetery in Laupheim. The following generations all lived at Gross-Laupheim Castle until the end of the family's lineage.



Viktor Steiner's son **Kilian of Steiner (1833-1903)** became one of the outstanding personalities of the German Empire's period of the *Gruenderzeit*. A detailed description of his career and lifework can be found in Otto K. Deutelmoser's book "Kilian Steiner und die Wuerttembergische Vereinsbank. Stuttgarter historische Studien zur Landes und Wirtschaftsgeschichte, Band 4" (Kilian Steiner and the Wuerttembergische Vereinsbank. Stuttgart Historical Studies of Regional and Economic History, Volume 4), published in 2003. The native of Laupheim was one of the founding members of the *Deutsche Partei* (National Liberal Party) as well as the Schiller National Museum/German literature archive. As *Geheimer Kommerzienrat* (Royal Privy Councilor) of Wuerttemberg, he was also instrumental in supporting the banking industry, the process of

industrialization and the economy of Wuerttemberg and nineteenth-century Germany, for which he was ennobled.

In 1894, he acquired the castle from his siblings, and moved from Bad Niedernau near Rottenburg to Laupheim. He modernized the brewery, bought large local estates and forestland in Oberdischingen. He arranged for an extensive agricultural business model to be built, including spacious economic and administrative buildings in a style characteristic of Vorarlberg and Switzerland. Furthermore, he supervised the establishment of a botanical park and a rose garden, and the castle was elaborately restored and furnished with works of art. The bust of Kilian of Steiner in the castle's rose garden and the local vocational school bearing his name pay tribute to him.

Adolf Wohlgemut Steiner (1876-1957) took over the property after his father's death in 1903, as his father had wished. During his time in the castle the National Socialists ruled Germany for twelve years from 1933 to 1945, leading to the destruction of the Jewish community of Laupheim. Thus, the coexistence of Christian and Jewish people that had lasted more than two hundred years was over within only a few years. The Steiner family was distinctly affected by the persecution of the National Socialists.

The last family owner was Mut Steiner's son Ulrich Steiner (1908-1961) who shortly before his death in 1961 sold the residential buildings of Gross-Laupheim Castle and the castle park to the Laupheim municipality. The

town restored the landmarked building. It took decades, marked by controversial discussions and intensive struggle, to develop a coherent utilization concept. The result was the creation of a unique museum focusing on the more than 200 year history of Christians and Jews in Laupheim. For the purpose of commemorating the city's special history, this museum had been initiated by the municipality of Laupheim with the House of History in Stuttgart acting as central coordinator. Due to the castle's history there is probably no other place more suitable for this particular exhibit.

## **Adolf Wohlgemut Steiner**

We now come to the life of Adolf Wohlgemut Steiner, called Mut. He was born on May 31, 1876 in Stuttgart as the youngest child of the Royal Wuerttembergian Privy Councilor Kilian of Steiner, J.D. and his wife Clotilde, daughter of Abraham Bacher, court Jew of Royal County Hohenzollern-Hechingen, widowed Goldschmidt. In addition to both of his half-sisters Henriette (1855-1898) and Emilie from his mother's first marriage, both adopted by Kilian of Steiner, he had an older brother, called Viktor (1870-1939) and an older sister, Luise (1872-1932).

Mut's childhood and youth were shaped by his mother as well as his loving and generous father who greatly influenced his children and grandchildren. Kilian of Steiner's granddaughter Muz Mueller, daughter of Henriette, once described the relationship to her grandfather in a letter from August 3, 1901:

*"It is always terribly nice to be taught by you, grandfather. One always notices how much knowledge of the world and life you have and that there is nothing more sensible than following your advice."* (O.K. Deutelmoser: "Kilian Steiner . . . ", l. c.)

Not only Judaism influenced the family. Just like his brother Viktor who had spent some time in a Protestant priest's house, eighteen year old Mut Steiner joined the Protestant church in 1894. Their father commented on this as follows:

*"We are Jewish by birth. Although my children were not baptized, they attended Protestant religion classes in school. My oldest (step) daughter is married to a Protestant man. I lived in a Protestant rectory as a high school student myself."* (O.K. Deutelmoser: "Kilian Steiner . . . ", l.c.)

After finishing high school in Stuttgart, Mut Steiner studied in Tuebingen and at the Agricultural Academy at the University Hohenheim. He graduated with a degree in agriculture. During his studies he was known as a feared fencing opponent, became a corps student of the *Teutonia*

fraternity and served as a volunteer at the Stuttgart Dragoons<sup>1</sup> for one year.

Kilian of Steiner wrote to his son Mut on July 1, 1897: "Maybe I can still live in L. (Laupheim - author's note) for a few more years and help keep the place cosy." For this, six years remained before he passed away in 1903. His estate and fortune, worth seven million gold Mark at the time of his death were equally distributed among his children and stepchildren with the exception of his son Viktor.

As requested, Mut Steiner took over the ownership of the estate including the castle in Gross-Laupheim. He not only continued the diverse services in agricultural and forestry operations but also improved the structure and technology of the business in order to achieve more efficiency. In close scientific cooperation with the department of agriculture of the University of Hohenheim, he cultivated an original, robust, as well as profitable and high quality type of spelt through systematic genetic selection methods. *Steiners Roten Tyroler Dinkel* (Steiner's Red Tyrolean Spelt) was widely distributed and stood the test of time. Furthermore, Mut Steiner was the owner of an immense brown cattle herd for which he crossbred cattle from Montafon<sup>2</sup> and Rigi<sup>3</sup>. In addition, a dairy, a nursery, a brewery and a poultry farming section belonged to the estate business. In total, there were fifteen employees, plus additional seasonal help, who worked at the farming estate and in the house.

Mut Steiner was involved in different professional agricultural organizations on a regional as well as national level. As chairman of the local association of Laupheim, he was the responsible authority for breeding brown cattle. Furthermore, as vice chairman and member of the Gauverband committee (comparable with an English shire), he was part of the district association for agriculture and the general assembly of the Agricultural Employer's Liability Insurance Association. After local *Wirtschaftsaemter* (economic affairs departments) were established, he became a member of the *Wirtschaftsamt* in Laupheim. Besides these and other offices he was also a district chair of the *Jugendwehr* in Laupheim, an organization for pre-military training, which he also supported financially. He offered his pasture as a playing field for "Olympia", the soccer team of Laupheim, between 1905 and 1929.

---

<sup>1</sup> a cavalry regiment of the Army of Wuerttemberg

<sup>2</sup> a valley in Austria

<sup>3</sup> a mountain massif of the Alps, located in Central Switzerland

After graduating from her traineeship at the Domestic Management School for Women Obernkirchen, 24 year old Ruth of Kalckreuth completed an internship at the dairy of Laupheim Castle in 1903, where she met its owner Mut Steiner. On October 20, 1904 the couple got married in Berlin. Their daughter Marie Luise Clotilde was born on October 16, 1905 in Laupheim and their son Ulrich Kilian Siegfried was born three years later on August 21, 1908.



*Adolf Wohlgemut (called Mut) Steiner.*

(Source: Comital Archive Leutrum)



*Ruth Steiner with Marie-Luise and Ulrich at the beginning of the 1920s of the twentieth century*

(Source: Princess Irmela v. Ratibor and Corvey)

Like most patriotic Germans, Mut Steiner bought many war bonds between 1914 and 1918 in order to support Germany in World War I. They comprised the biggest part of his fortune and were lost in the war.

After Adolf Hitler was nominated *Reichskanzler* (chancellor of the Third Reich) on January 30, 1933, the Nazis quickly and systematically seized power in the country. Their propagation of anti-Semitism rapidly affected the Steiner family. Due to his four Jewish grandparents and despite his conversion to the Protestant faith, Mut Steiner was considered a full blooded Jew, a Nazi classification for a person with at least three Jewish grandparents, and was in a so called privileged, mixed marriage with the Protestant, Ruth Steiner. She and her son-in-law Hubertus Count Leutrum of Ertingen were advised to divorce their Jewish or half Jewish partners. Neither of them followed this advice and thereby protected Mut Steiner and Marie Luise Countess Leutrum of Ertingen from deportation. Due to their partners' upright behavior they were even allowed to keep their property. Although he had converted to the Protestant faith, Mut Steiner, as of 1938, had to hold the compulsory name "Israel", which had been introduced by the Nazis. Additionally, his passport was marked with a "J" for "Jewish".

In those years, Mut Steiner was suspended from all his positions in associations and organizations and completely retreated from public life in Gross-Laupheim Castle, where he survived the reign of National Socialism. After the war, he spent his remaining years in the castle and passed away on September 13, 1957.

Laut Verordnung vom ~~12.~~ August 1938 habe ich meine  
Namensführung wie folgt vorzunehmen:

Adolf Wohlgemuth Jsrael

Jch mache hievon pflichtgemäss Anzeige.

*Adolf Wohlgemuth Jsrael Steiner  
Landwirt*

(Source: Registry Laupheim, family register)

## Ruth Steiner, née of Kalckreuth

Ruth Steiner was born on September 22, 1879 in Neisse/Schlesien as the daughter of Lieutenant Colonel Siegfried of Kalckreuth (1851-1901) and Marie of Kriiger (1854-1882). She was the oldest of seven children, who descend from three different marriages due to the deaths of her father's wives. She spent her youth in Oels. The phase of familial lightheartedness ended in 1901 with the death of her father at the age of 49. At the age of 22, as one of the first women ever, she decided to start training at the advanced Domestic Management School for Women in Reifenstein. From April 16, 1901 until March 22, 1902 Ruth completed her training in rural home economics. Followed by that she changed within the Reifenstein Association to the branch in Obernkirchen. There she took her exam to become a teacher in home and agricultural economics and taught dairy farming for a few months.

After the previously mentioned internship and her wedding a year later, she fulfilled her duties as wife, of a Lord of Manor and intellectual, by managing their large household. In addition, she developed her own sphere of influence at her husband's modern dairy factory. Soon after, Ruth Steiner dedicated herself to garden management as well as to the expansion of the poultry farm, making it an acknowledged, efficient part of the farm estate. Her goal was to breed efficient and sturdy animals that satisfy egg yields and qualify as table poultry. White American leghorns, faverolles chicken, Pomeranian goose, Cayuga ducks and Virginia snow turkeys were held and used for brood. These animals were also sold to members of the Agricultural Housewives' Association of Laupheim. The fodder was from their own farm estate. East Frisian dairy sheep, whose

milk was used for chick breeding, were kept on the four acre wide chicken runs planted with fruit trees. The wool of the sheep was spun and woven for different fabrics in the house.

As patroness of the new magazine *Die Gutsfrau* (The Lady of the Manor), Ruth Steiner and 23 other women appeared as publishers of this magazine from 1912 until 1922. The paper saw itself as the "trade paper for educated women in the countryside". Its aim was to support and encourage women in their management tasks, of operating an agricultural farm, by use of technological advancements.

Ruth Steiner dedicated herself to public service in Laupheim from 1912 until the onslaught of the NSDAP. Just like her mother in law Clotilde Steiner, she donated a considerable amount of money to a preschool. The preschool was opened on August 9, 1914 at the corner of Schmidstrasse and Radstrasse in Laupheim and still exists today. Furthermore, she officiated as the chairwoman of the Association for Home and Baby Care from 1916 to 1926.

Her patriotic and benevolent stance is probably what led to her strong commitment to the Red Cross. Before World War I she took over the chairmanship of the depot and the women's department of the Red Cross in Laupheim, to which her duties included creating and managing a depot as well as collecting donations and training helpers. After Germany had entered the war on August 1, 1914, the Red Cross built a military hospital in Laupheim. The first 39 injured persons arrived in Laupheim on September 1, 1914, and 27 of them were treated in the regional hospital. 62 persons with minor arm and leg injuries arrived eight days later and were assigned to Ruth Steiner's department of the military hospital, located on the second floor in the castle. Twelve people with minor injuries from the first group that arrived in Laupheim, had already been treated there.



*Dr. Paramedic training for red cross helpers in 1914: (ltr) Bullinger, Kinzelbach, Ruth Steiner, Schabel, in the front: Ganser (Source: Princess Irmela of Ratibor and Corvey)*

Ruth Steiner personally took part in caring for the wounded. To be able to nurse independently she absolved a six week training course at the regional hospital in Laupheim. She could quickly reach the hospital through the castle park. Eight wounded of the third transport from Flanders were received at the military hospital in the castle. They were treated, nursed and bandaged by her. In addition to that she was part of several drives to collect money, clothes and food for soldiers or those in need on the home front. Her engagement was acknowledged with the Red Cross Medal (III-class) by the German Emperor William II.

Together with Princess Therese of Hohenlohe Waldenburg (1869-1927) she supported the Federation of Agricultural Housewives' Associations. On October 1, 1916 Ruth Steiner held her first speech as chairwoman at the constitutive meeting of the district association in Laupheim. She spoke about the goals in domestic and agricultural management training of the housewives, the increase in production and marketing of agricultural products, improving the food supply in the cities as well as bypassing the differences between cities and the countryside. Fourteen days later, after the establishment of the association, poultry, vegetables, fruits, potatoes, butter, venison, fish and eggs were already sold by the allies at a newly built sales outlet at 34 Kapellenstrasse. According to her daughter Marie Luise, Ruth Steiner herself was often in the facilities where she checked if everything was in order and dealt with the invoices. Moreover, she embarked on lecture tours to encourage the establishment of more associations. Due to the success of the Agricultural Housewives' Association of Laupheim, the association could purchase a house from Rosa Einstein, née Regensteiner, widow of Sigmund Steiner, with a barn, wash house, courtyard as well as a grass garden and arboretum at 39 a/b Kapellenstrasse on February 14, 1918. The seller obtained the right of residence on the second floor. In the club house there was a place where food was preserved and dried, together with a stove and wash boiler to sterilize fruit juices. The kitchen was a place for all sorts of cooking courses. Despite the difficult situation in Germany after its defeat in World War I, which led to the dissolution of sales outlets and club associations, the Agricultural Housewives' Association of Laupheim managed to maintain their position with 483 members in 1920. After the death of her friend and co-partner Therese of Hohenlohe-Waldenburg, who founded the Association of Wuerttemberg, Ruth Steiner was elected as the first chairwoman of the association in 1928. She pushed to give rural women an understanding of technological and scientific achievements to make their work easier, more effective and more productive. Part of this was setting up a cooperative laundry. By 1932, 416 associations came into being in Wuerttemberg with a total of 8000 members, which reflects quite a success story.



*Agricultural Housewives' Association: "Inauguration of our house in May 1918"*

(Source: Princess Irmela of Ratibor and Corvey)

In 1924, Ruth Steiner furnished a weaving room with a handloom in the Gross-Laupheim Castle. After a short time, five weaving looms and a sewing room were added. During the economic crisis, the goal was to provide rural women with supplementary income. Clothes for children such as rompers, jackets for boys, dresses and traditional shirts were manufactured in the workshop of the *Handweberei Oberland* (hand weaving mill Oberland), which was initially run by Hertha Countess Vitzhum of Eckstaedt, a friend of Ruth Steiner. They also produced work clothes and festive dresses, *Laupheimer Schuerzen* (aprons) with characteristic trims, curtains, tablecloths, rugs, linen towels as well as upholstery fabric and much more. At the beginning of the 1930s, Ruth Steiner took over Hertha's task before she passed it on to Elise Esslinger in 1932. Finally, the weaving mill found its home at 29 Mittelstrasse, where around 22 weavers were still employed at the beginning of the 1950s.

Der landwirtschaftliche Hausfrauen-  
Berein veranstaltet vom 6. November  
bis 3. Dezember in Laupheim einen

## Spinn- und Webkurs.

Gelehrt wird Flachs und Wolle spinnen,  
Weben von Küchenhandtüchern, Handtüchern,  
Schürzenstoff mit bunten Schwedenborten,  
Tischdecken, Vorhängen, Weiderwarbkleider-  
stoffen u. s. w.

Sechsstündige Arbeitszeit mit Mittags-  
pause.

Kursgeld für Vereinsmitglieder 10 M.,  
für Nichtmitglieder 20 M.

Anmeldungen bis 15. Oktober erbeten.

Nähere Auskunft erteilt die Vorsitzende  
Frau Ruth Steiner.

(“Laupheimer Verküendiger”, 10/05/1924)

After the National Socialists came into power, Ruth Steiner had to retire from her position as regional chairwoman of the Agricultural Housewives' Association Wuerttemberg in spring 1933 and secluded herself from society just as her husband had done. The *Gleichschaltung* integrated the association into the *Reichsnaehrstand* (a government body set up in Nazi Germany to regulate food production) and the *Landesbauernschaft Wuerttemberg* (local farming communities) in December 1933. The association's fortune was transferred to the *Reichsnaehrstand*, which sold the Women's Association house on Kapellenstrasse.

According to her own statement, Ruth Steiner was denounced to the local group leader of the Laupheim NSDAP by her cook in July 1944. After the July 20, 1944 assassination attempt on Adolf Hitler became known to the public, she told her cook: “One has to keep in mind that Stauffenberg and the generals believed they were doing the best for Germany. They hoped to bring peace sooner this way.” On July 22, 65 year old Ruth Steiner was arrested. She was reproached and charged for refusing to serve in the German military. Following the assassination attempt, the legal proceedings were handed over to the People's Court in Berlin, while the accused, Ruth Steiner, was moved through several Gestapo prisons. From July 22, until August 19 she was held in custody in Ulm. Her whereabouts between August and November are not on record. From November until the beginning of December she was in custody in Ulm and Leonberg. From December 3, 1944 onward she was in the work education camp for women, in Rudersberg in the Welzheim Forest.

After 1945, Ruth Steiner wrote her memoirs in an essay with the title "Christmas 1944 in the Gestapo camp Rudersberg" and gave it to friends and family:

*"The harsh light flares up mercilessly in the cold, bare bedrooms every day, as well as Sunday at 4 in the morning, and the guard yells with her nagging voice: 'Get up, now. Take position immediately!' The prisoners who lay close next to and above one another get up, still half asleep and take position in rows of 3 for counting. You barely have time to slip into your grey pants, which have been distributed to everyone as the prisoner uniform. They had been put on by the elderly reluctantly and with sorrow, even though they later turned out to be practical and warm. They had to make sure that no one had escaped during the night, and every now and then there is a slap in the face to pick up the pace. The personnel have to make the beds meticulously and then wash themselves with ice cold water in the former bowling alley, now washroom. At the same time, the prisoners, who are on kitchen duty rush downstairs as fast as possible to heat up the big coffee kettle in the kitchen, cut bread and set the table in the dining room. Having barely finished the tasks, the rest of the prisoners appear, who have to go to work outside of the camp by train. The fire does not burn well with wet wood, which was usually collected from the forest the day before. They now have to stand on the podium, those poor people, getting yelled at by the camp guards, who assign the work while extensively using the "oxtail" (a flogging instrument made from an ox's tail) to add weight to their demands. [. . .]"*

These detained and harassed women came from countries such as Germany, the Soviet Union, Poland, France and Denmark, as well as other countries. Furthermore, they suffered from unhygienic conditions and vermin such as various bed bugs. According to Ruth Steiner, it was her belief in God and love that helped her to overcome her term of imprisonment. In this context, she reports about how the inmates showed solidarity with each other:

*"A compassionate fellow sufferer assists me in applying an excellently effective liquid that temporarily keeps these little pests (bedbugs – author's note) away. After all, there are kind souls helping me clean the kitchen, scour, etc. so that I can sit on a footstool leaning against the big kettle for half an hour after meals. The old cook is actually a kind-hearted farmer from a neighboring village, who secretly provides us with a piece of bread and a sausage as a snack, normally meant only for the guards (camp leaders and female supervisors)."*

Her words have a haunting and touching effect describing the inhumane and undignified conditions. At the same time, she describes how she and the other imprisoned women managed to keep their dignity and uphold normal humane treatment of each other. Ruth Steiner's perceptual

maturity is conveyed through her differentiated observations of the female Gestapo camp guards.

*"And for some reason I have won over the heart of a female guard, who made my life easier during and even beyond the transport through Stuttgart. I would like to be able to reciprocate one day. Of course, there are also bad, deceitful beings that deliberately harass and torment people, although probably even most of them have something decent in them. I was surprised when my daughter was allowed to visit me once, and the respective guards kept taking over shifts in the office to help us until one had to eventually come and lead me away. The guard wept bitterly and told me about her mother, to whom she wanted to return because she didn't want to be a guard anymore. They seem to be mostly poor, misled creatures that also did not know what they were doing when they joined the Gestapo. God only knows from which circles they came."*

On February 14, 1945 Ruth Steiner was moved from the Gestapo camp in Rudersberg to the Gestapo prison in Cannstatt and Stuttgart, where she was liberated by the Allies on April 3, 1945. She was never sentenced by the Nazi State.

Exhausted and in poor health, Ruth Steiner returned back home to the Gross-Laupheim Castle, where her husband Mut Steiner lived and where Marie-Luise Countess Leutrum had taken over control during the absence of her mother and brother. Numerous relatives from the Eastern regions found shelter there. This is mentioned in the Kalckreuth family chronicle: "She never really got over that time, although she was granted a few more years in the big household and on the poultry farm." The family didn't harbor any vengeful feelings and helped as much as possible in the post war period. In the post war years, Ruth Steiner tried hard to make official amends at the *Landesamt fuer Wiedergutmachung* (State office for reparation: translator's note). It does not seem to have been about a material compensation, but rather a mental and moral one. The verdict from 1952, which recognized her persecution and harm, indicates: "There can be no doubt that the applicant, who is married to a Jew, had made the imputed utterances from an opposing attitude towards National Socialism. Back then she was already 66 years old, and with regard to her age it must have been an honorable statement made by a person who had been exposed to very serious misfortunes only by being married to a Jew during that time."

Ruth Steiner died on September 7, 1955 in Laupheim, her husband Mut Steiner passed away two years later. The couple is buried at the family cemetery Oberdischingen. Today the main street in the Ringelhauser Park in Laupheim is named after her.

## Marie-Luise Steiner

The daughter of Mut and Ruth Steiner was born on October 16, 1905 in Laupheim. After graduating from the *Viktoria-Pensionat* (boarding school) in Karlsruhe, she went to the Domestic management school for women in Reifenstein, just like her mother. She studied economics and agriculture at the Institute of Farm Management in Hohenheim and was the first female student to graduate with a degree. There she met the land owner Hubertus Count Leutrum of Ertingen. After their wedding on December 30, 1930 the couple lived at Unterriexingen Castle.

In 1932, Marie-Luise Countess Leutrum established an Agricultural Housewives' Association there, which quickly gained success. When the associations were shut down, she too withdrew from the public.



As requested by the agricultural policy representatives of Wuerttemberg as well as the Allies, Marie-Luise Countess Leutrum continued the efforts of her mother's political commitments by establishing Agricultural Women's Associations after 1945. At the first founding meeting of the Women's State Association of Wuerttemberg-Baden in 1947, Countess Leutrum was elected chairwoman and held office until 1959.



*Marie-Luise Steiner as a three-year-old (above) and at elementary school age riding a donkey in front of Gross-Laupheim Castle.*

(Source: Princess Irmela of Ratibor and Corvey)



*The married couple Marie-Luise, née Steiner, and Hubertus Count Leutrum von Ertingen.*

(Source: Princess Irmela von Ratibor and Corvey)

In 1948, she initiated the *Deutsche Landfrauenverband (DLV)*, a nationwide association of and for women in rural areas) and became its president until 1970. It was with subtle diplomacy that she also led the association into the ACWW – Associated Country Women of the World. In 1949, she co-founded the European Confederation of Agriculture, and in the same year she was one of the founders of the Women's Association of Rural Home Economics of the central agricultural cooperative union of Wuerttemberg. At the beginning of the 1950s, she moved to Nippenburg Castle near Schieberdingen with her family. Here, she worked in the church council and later in the county council in Ludwigsburg. For her outstanding service, she not only received numerous honors from the government, the state and associations, but she was also awarded with an honorary chairmanship and the *Goldene Biene* (Golden Bee) by the *DLV*. She received the title "honorary senator" from the University of Hohenheim in 1973. Marie-Luise Countess Leutrum of Ertingen passed away at the age of 75, on May 24, 1980 in Heidelberg. She had two sons and one daughter.



*Marie-Luise Countess Leutrum of Ertingen.*  
(Source: Princess Irmela of Ratibor and Corvey)

## Ulrich Steiner

Ulrich Steiner was born on August 21, 1908 in Laupheim. The urbane thinking and patriotic attitude of his upbringing left its mark on him. During his studies in law and economics in Munich he sympathized with the ideas of the Conservative Revolutionary movement and joined a right-wing, conservative, paramilitary organization, called *Stahlhelm*, League of Front Soldiers. As a result of the crisis at the late stages of the Weimar Republic, he joined in the NSDAP.



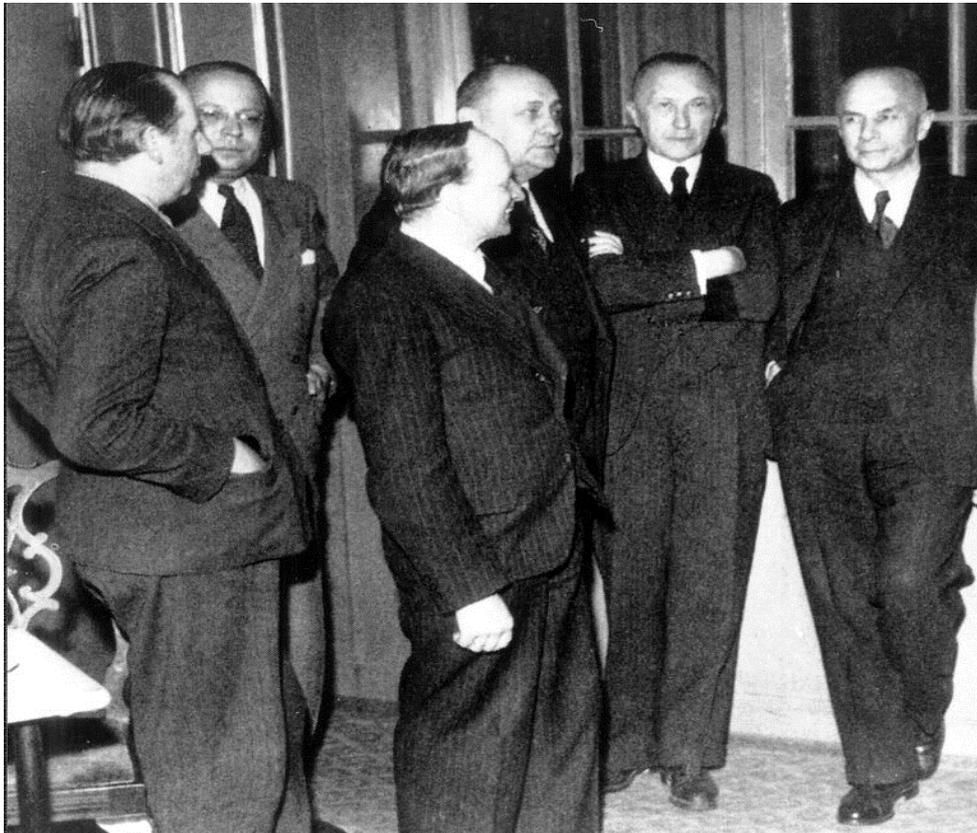
*Ulrich Steiner.*

(Bilderkammer Museum)

However, Ulrich Steiner was soon excluded as he was classified as a *Mischling 1. Klasse*, (the German term used during the Third Reich to denote persons deemed as having both Aryan and Jewish ancestry). In 1933, he was therefore expelled from the NSDAP and his graduation with a university title was denied. Even though he stood out in his army unit as a motivated soldier, after the campaign in France, he was soon dismissed from the army for not being worthy to serve as a soldier. Afterwards he ran the farm estate and the castle's brewery under adverse circumstances. During a wave of arrests after the assassination attempt on Hitler on July 20, 1944, Ulrich Steiner was taken into custody and brought to Leimbach, which was a camp just outside of and under the command of the concentration camp Buchenwald. He was held there until

the end of the war. For a short period of time after the war, he took office as deputy mayor in Laupheim. Due to his personal dedication, he succeeded in obtaining permission to establish a sports club in Laupheim after all other clubs had been dissolved by the occupying powers in 1946. For this club, the former gymnastics club, FV Olympia, and the tennis club were united, and Ulrich Steiner later became their honorary president.

Ulrich Steiner was co-founder of the political party CDU<sup>4</sup> in Suedwuerttemberg-Hohenzollern. From 1945 to 1947 he rose to group chairman as well as chairman of the constitutional committee of the state assembly, in its preparations for becoming a state government. Moreover, he soon became chairman of the state party. On a federal level he was a board member of the party's highest committee, the so-called *Arbeitsgemeinschaft der CDU/CSU – ARGE*. In addition, working together with Marshal Schukow, he was part of a delegation that at an early stage strived to establish relations between Russia and Germany.



*Ulrich Steiner (second from left) together with Konrad Adenauer (fifth from left) and Jakob Kaiser (sixth from left) on the board meeting of the CDU/CSU-Arbeitsgemeinschaft on April 26, 1948 in Frankfurt am Main (Source: Konrad-Adenauer Foundation, ACDP Image Archive St. Augustin)*

---

<sup>4</sup> Christian Democratic Union of Germany

As a result of his exclusion during the Third Reich as well as his lack of administrative experience or cultivated political alliances, he remained an outsider within the leadership of the party. Consequently, he was not able to implement his ideas of introducing a *Gemeinschaftsschule* along with a reorganization of the educational system. Also his main interest in cross-party cooperation, more precisely German and European policy, did not comply with the field of activities authorized by the occupying powers. Furthermore, he thought that his reputation was damaged due to his former membership in the NSDAP. All of this led to Ulrich Steiner not wanting or not being able to have any more influence in his party after 1948.

Instead he organized the *Laupheimer Kreis*, a group in which personalities from different political and denominational areas came together in Gross-Laupheim Castle or other locations. The participants exchanged ideas and came up with influential strategies for personnel issues among other things in the ongoing formation of the West German State. The *Laupheimer Kreis* was composed of noblemen, politicians, academics, economists and publicists, mostly from Southern Germany. Included were, amongst others, Heinrich of Brentano, Fritz Erler, Max of Fuerstenberg, Hans-Christoph as well as Friedrich Schenk of Stauffenberg, August Hauleiter, Otto Lenz, Carlo Schmid, Hans Speidel, and former chancellor of Germany Kurt-Georg Kiesinger and President of the Federal Republic of Germany Theodor Heuss. In the meetings the members discussed history, politics, questions about the reorganization of the state and market economy, as well as security issues and foreign policy.

As Ulrich Steiner had an elitist and conservative background, he was increasingly drifting away from the ever popular CDU and its intentions of becoming a *Volkspartei*. He distanced himself from the opinions of the party members and as a consequence was then marginalized. His experiences during the Nazi regime had left him quite a pessimist, which most likely also contributed. As such, various attempts in 1957 and 1960 failed to revive the *Laupheimer Kreis*.

He also fought in vain against financial problems, caused by his activities in the *Laupheimer Kreis*, as well as health issues. In agreement with his sister, Marie-Luise Countess Leutrum of Ertingen, he sold his property Gross-Laupheim Castle with its park to the city of Laupheim in 1961. His brother in law Hubertus Count Leutrum of Ertingen took over the agricultural business.

Throughout his life Ulrich Steiner was interested in art, literature and history. He composed poems, which were published in the 1950s by his own permanently subsidized publishing company. Moreover, this company released speeches and essays that he had written in the *Laupheimer Kreis*. Ulrich Steiner passed away on December 23, 1961 in Munich and

was buried at a family cemetery in Oberdischingen. He left a third of his assets to two Christian churches.

#### Sources:

Adress- und Geschaeftsbuch fuer die Oberamtstadt und die Bezirksgemeinden Laupheim Wuertt., hrsg. v. Rupert Lang. Muenchen 1925.

Braun, Josef: Alt-Laupheimer Bilderbogen. Band 1 u. 2. Laupheim 1985 u. 1988.

Deutelmoser, Otto K.: Kilian Steiner und die Wuerttembergische Vereinsbank. Stuttgarter historische Studien zur Landes- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte. Band 4. Hrsg. Franz Quarthal u. Gert Kollmer- von Oheim-Loup. Jan Thorbecke Verlag Ostfildern 2003.

Haeussler, Frank: Ulrich Steiner und der Laupheimer Kreis. Ein konservatives Randphaenomen in der Fruehzeit der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Aus: Historisch-politische Mitteilungen. Archiv fur Christlich-Demokratische Politik. Koeln, Weimar, Wien 1999. S. 189–205.

Laupheimer Verkuendiger 1925 bis 1933.

Kussmaul, Sibylle: Geschichten zur Geschichte von Schloss Grosslaupheim. Aus: Christen und Juden in

Laupheim. Hrsg. v.d. Gesellschaft fuer Geschichte und Gedenken e.V. Laupheim. 4/2001. S. 3–7. Schenk, Georg: Laupheim. Geschichte Land Leute. Weissenhorn 1976.

Steiner, Ruth: Weihnachten 1944 im Gestapolager Rudersberg.

Woerner-Heil, Dr. Ortrud: Ruth Steiner (1879–1955). Die letzte Schlossherrin auf Schloss Grosslaupheim. Vortrag am 9. Maerz 2002 im Kolpinghaus am Schlosspark Laupheim.

[www.klausehm.de](http://www.klausehm.de). [www.tsv-laupheim.de](http://www.tsv-laupheim.de). Standesamt Laupheim.