

ADLER, Jakob,

21 König-Wilhelm-Strasse

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Jakob Adler, born 28 May 1875 in Laupheim, died 19 December 1935 in Laupheim. Married Berta Adler, née Herzfeld, born 13 October 1881 in Darmstadt, emigrated to the USA 15 August 1939, died 1980.

– **Herbert**, born 25 January 1907 in Laupheim, died 13 January 1939 in the Schussenried sanatorium (mentally handicapped)

– **Hedwig**, born 26 August 1910 in Laupheim, emigration to Sweden in the Fall of 1937 and to the USA in 1940

Also residing here in early 1933: Martha Baum, born Herzfeld, a relative; moved to Wiesbaden on 18 March 1933 (Berta Adler's older sister).

Around the turn of the century, when 25-year old Jakob Adler gradually began thinking about building a house and marrying, the artistic career of his youngest brother Friedrich had already begun in Munich. One would certainly call Friedrich Adler a "star designer" today, because he had already made a name with the design and creation of different things. So it was an obvious decision to involve his brother in the planning and design of the new house that was being built on König Wilhelm Strasse. They seized the opportunity, designed door and window frames (which he otherwise never did), and also worked with the modern Munich architect Wilhelm Spannagel. The Laupheim citizens, thanks to this cooperation,

were given a completely out-of-the-ordinary, still avant-garde monument that left the then-common school of Historicism completely behind and scarcely noticed Art Nouveau.



Isidor Adler's three sons from his second marriage to Frieda Sommer:

Edmund, Friedrich, Jakob, (from left) 1880. (Friedrich Adler Catalogue pg. 23)

Because Friedrich Adler saw the house of Jakob Adler as his work too, the picture-postcard sent to Hamburg showed it as: "Haus Adler, Laupheim." It was certainly a family project, because the house (which was completed in 1905) was planned for several co-owners and more than one family. To this day a monogram of Friedrich Adler can be seen at the front door, and the door frame edging is regarded as his personal work. The card with the photo of the house went in June 1911 to his half-sister Betty Wolf in Buchen and bears the following text:

Dear Betty! In the middle of the night (it is almost 12 clock) I remembered your birthday, so I want to give you a quick congratulations! If my wife were here a letter certainly would have been written, but without a woman everything is half done. I received 2 cards from Artur; he wants photographs of arts and crafts schools, but I never got around to it, I'm such a good-for-nothing, but I'm coming to bed now, that's for sure! How's Abe? Sincere greetings and congratulations from your Friedel.



HAUS ADLER, LAUPHEIM.

Lieber Betty! Mutter in der
Nacht (w. p. l. u. d. 12 Uhr)
füllt mir auf dem Gebirg
My sin, helfen sie zu machen
Sie fühl's ganz ypposim
was me um. Frau für den
Linn "füllt" Sie für einen
Linn abspalt über einen

Postcard from Friedrich Adler. (Archive of Ernst Schäll)

[Link: report in a newspaper Architecture](#)

Jakob Adler married Berta Herzfeld of Darmstadt in September of 1905. The family lived in the house to the left. A son named Herbert came into the world in 1907, and a daughter named Hedwig followed in 1910.

Herbert was mentally handicapped and spent his later years in the Schussenried sanatorium; Hedy, however, developed splendidly. Jakob and Edmund Adler jointly operated the paternal company, where Jakob probably became the dominant figure. Before the First World War he already had a driver's license and could manage business trips without the services of a chauffeur. In 1911 the company added a truck and in 1913 a car of the brand "Adler," and they undoubtedly belonged to the pioneers of the automobile age in Laupheim. In 1916, aged 41, he was drafted into military service and served to the war's end as a driver for the Wuerttembergischen Armeekraftwagen-Park 16, which was deployed to Müllheim/Baden.



Jakob Adler with chauffeur in his new automobile in 1913 (archive of Ernst Schäll)

Up to now, the family is poorly documented photographically. They are missing in the family photos on the previous pages because they had little private contact with Edmund Adler and other relatives. Jakob Adler was friends with the Bergmanns and had many contacts within his Christian environment. In the 1907 photo of the Laupheimer shooting club, Jakob is particularly easy to recognize.

Wilhelm Pressmar, a distant former neighbor from Kapellenstrasse, immortalized Jakob Adler's place in the club in the "Laupheimer

Schützenmarsch," anno 1910, as follows:" Jakob Adler gladly joins it, but his wife, she tolerates it." Other witnesses agree: Berta and Jakob Adler were not happily married.



Jakob Adler as member of the Laupheimer shooting club, 1907.

(clipping from: Braun, Alt-Laupheimer photo sheet, picture 1, 1985, pg. 30)

"He had no support; he did not have much help from his wife," recalled Liesel Adler. Marriage agreements in those days were primarily determined by economic and social considerations, and the resulting combinations were not always harmonious. Berta Adler also worked in the company. Her former maid Maria Füssinger, born Pretzel, remembers that she had to prepare a hot bath for her every morning at 8 o'clock: she would never go to work without it. Berta sold groceries to walk-in customers from the retail store on Kapellenstrasse. Years later Hedy expressed irritation toward her math teacher, Dr. Schweitzer, who always combined a lesson with a purchase: "for a pound of sugar, he always told my mother in the store how bad I was in math and geometry. It was true, but it didn't change and there was always a row at home. "

Soon after the First World War Jakob Adler became publicly engaged in many ways. When a sponsorship society was established for the

Laupheimer Latin and Junior High School in 1923, he was on the committee. It is not entirely clear when he began serving as the chairman of the Laupheimer Trade Association. However, he led the club throughout the '20s and until 1933. In the Ulm chamber of commerce he served actively on the committee, and in 1924 he was appointed to the Ulm District Court as judge for commercial matters in the chamber of commerce.

In December of 1928 Jakob Adler ran for Laupheim City Council on the "shared nomination" list, behind which stood the Center Party. The Catholic Center had set up a comprehensive, interfaith, multiple associations/social groups list, "to preserve and consolidate the peace and unity of the population." Jakob Adler won this election with the fourth highest number of votes in the council. Adler's great success was also noted by the Jewish community newspaper in its first edition in 1929:

"In the local elections here on 9 Dec, Trade Judge and Provost Jakob Adler became the fourth to be elected among nine candidates to the council. He received a very high number of votes, two-thirds of which probably came from Christian circles. An encouraging sign of good religious harmony in our city, as well as a proof of universal respect for and appreciation of the person elected. "

Gemeinsamer Wahl-Vorschlag.

Kefeisen, Karl, Fabrikant,
 Müller, Gustav, Photograph,
 Rothhelfer, Friedrich, Verwaltungs-Aktuar,
 Preßmar, Wilhelm, Kaufmann,
 Adler, Jakob, Kaufmann,
 Beck, Ludwig, Wagnermeister und Landwirt,
 Schaubaur, August, Mühlebesitzer und Landwirt,
 Müsch, Franz, Schlossermeister,
 Nechenmacher, Emil, Architekt.

Wähler! - Wählerinnen!

Der „Gemeinsame Wahlvorschlag“ ist in Würdigung
 des Wunsches, den Frieden und die Einigkeit unter
 der Einwohnerschaft zu erhalten und zu festigen, zu
 Stande gekommen. Er enthält Namen bewährter
 und in Gemeindeangelegenheiten erfahrener Männer.
 Das Wohl der Stadtgemeinde erfordert, daß am Wahl-
 tage alle Wahlberechtigten ihrer Wahlpflicht genügen
 und den Wahlzettel des „Gemeinsamen Wahl-
 vorschlags“ vollzählig abgeben.

Wahlzeit 10 Uhr vormittags bis 5 Uhr nachmitt.

Bauernverein	Beamtenbund
Gewerbeverein	Handelsverein

(From the "Laupheimer Verkündiger," 12 July 1928)

The Catholic Center (the only religiously oriented party) was increasingly preferred by strict religious Jews in the Weimar Republic for several reasons. The party was able to keep free from anti-Semitic tendencies, it

was a pillar of the democratic republic, and it fought decidedly against the rise of the Nazis. Even in the last free elections on 5 March, 1933, fifty percent of Laupheimers still chose the Center. Liesel Adler told the following story about Rabbi Dr. Leopold Treitel: The very old rabbi, who died in 1931, voted in only one of the numerous elections in the '20s, but his thoughts were still completely in his study. "He sometimes floated around in another world." So he entered the polling station in the Jewish elementary school on Radstrasse with the following question: "Where can you vote the Center around here?"

Daughter Hedwig Adler (born 1910) attended the Laupheimer Latin and junior high school from 1920 to her intermediate certificate in mid-1926. The accompanying photo of her is an excerpt from the graduating class photo and confirmed the memory of eyewitnesses: she was a very attractive young lady. She then attended a high school in Geneva to improve her French, and completed her studies in 1929. After that she would have liked to become a sports and gymnastics teacher, but her father said: "That's no real profession." He insisted that she study music, and she proceeded to do so in Berlin. Only after a nervous breakdown a year later did she receive permission to switch to a sports school in Stuttgart. During this time she was in a relationship with the pharmacist Friedrich Rentschler, and the witnesses are unanimous: this couple had a real chance to become the first case of Christian-Jewish intermarriage in Laupheim! But the relationship ended even before 1933.

Hedy Adler (left) as a 16-year-old pupil: Lotte Beck

(K. Neidlinger: 100 J. Realschule, 1996, pg. 28)

In December 1932 Hedy Adler was able to successfully complete her studies as a physical education teacher and had great plans for the future. Together with a colleague and a former teacher, she wanted to open her own sports school in Stuttgart. But 30



January, 1933 destroyed all hopes. She was dismissed from several places of employment during the year 1933, and she was forced to realize that she had no professional future in the Nazi state. Accordingly she went to London in late 1933 to study English and then emigrate to the USA. She had to leave behind a Catholic "near-fiancé" in Stuttgart at the Institute of Technology: "My conscience would not allow me to embroil him in my fate."

But in London she suffered a second nervous breakdown and returned to Laupheim in the spring of 1934. "Now we all sat around uselessly, unable to work anywhere, and we withered." Finally Else Bergmann, Marco Bergmann's wife, gave her a job as a physical education teacher in the Jewish boarding school in Herrlingen, where she got to know her future husband Ernst Wolf. His fate was similar to hers and he had lost his lectureship for French at the Pedagogical University of Bonn. In 1937 Ernst Wolf found work in a German-Jewish children's home in southern Sweden, and so both emigrated to Sweden in the fall of that year. In 1940 they were able to go overland from Sweden across the Soviet Union, then to Japan, and from there by ship to Los Angeles, where an uncle on her mother's side was already established.



Hedy and Ernst Wolf, 1988, in La Mesa, California (Archive of Ernst Schäll)

In California both eventually managed to get a second chance in their professions. Ernst Wolf was a Professor of European languages and culture in a San Diego college from 1947 to 1976. Hedy Wolf (after a "family intermission") worked as a gymnastics teacher at the La Mesa

Community College from 1951 to 1982. The couple's only daughter was born in 1946, after Hedy lost a baby in Sweden due to the enormous psychological stress.

Her father Jakob Adler was the first victim of Nazi racial fanaticism in Laupheim. He was unable to cope with the loss of his honored positions and with his exclusion from the society in which he and his family had been well integrated. The Nuremberg Laws legally cemented this shameful exclusion in 1935. The whole family was especially shaken and stricken by how the pre-Christmas gift-giving campaign went that year. The Adler company traditionally distributed a generous amount of their wares to hospitals, nursing homes, and other social institutions at Christmas time. This year, for the first time, the Christmas gifts were refused and returned...from 1935 on the bakery on Mittelstrasse dared not deliver the bag of fresh rolls to the door every morning. A farmer's wife from Sterngasse announced tearfully that she was suspending the regular delivery of vegetable to the family: they no longer dared...

His older half-brother, Eugene, prevented the head of the company from committing suicide several times in the fall of 1935, as Liesel Adler recalled: "He went after him a few times, he saw him with the knife, saw him with the rope to hang himself." On 19 December, 1935, Jakob Adler went to work like every other morning, but he asked his wife if she was coming too. She was surprised by the question, since she went every day, but paid it little notice. When she came to the store, however, her husband had already drunk a bottle of vinegar essence in the basement, and was still alive but in appalling pain. He was rushed to the hospital where he passed away on the evening of the same day. The Nazi press then maliciously commented: "The Jew Adler has committed suicide."

Although the Nazis pressured Maria Pretzel to terminate her employment with Berta Adler, she retained her job as a domestic servant until the end of 1939. Berta took measures to leave Germany beginning in 1938, and in August of 1939 (two weeks before the outbreak of war) she just managed to escape to the United States. Mary Pretzel received her wages until the end of the year, though, because she had to fully strip the house on König Wilhelm Strasse. The interior of the house had also been designed by Friedrich Adler and completed by the cabinetmaker Philipp Steiner. None of it has been preserved.

Because the assets of deported Jews fell to the state, the Laupheim City Council correspondingly sent the statement reproduced on the overleaf to the Finance Office. The building's share in the fire damage fund assessment in 1943 was due, and the Finance Office, as asset trustee, was to remit the amount. Three of the four owners referred to in the letter were no longer living at the time; two had died violent deaths. Something of this was probably guessed or known by the writer of the bill, but he still wrote it as if everything were quite normal; as if the house

still belonged to the four and he just wanted to remind them to pay the 6.30 marks.

Stadt Laupheim

Laupheim 21. April 1943

Postscheckkonto Stuttgart Nr.34716.
Girokonto Nr.326 b.d.Kreissparkasse Biberach,
Hauptzweigstelle Laupheim.

~~Herrn - Frau - Prl.~~ An

Jakob Jsr.Adler Wwe.

Edmund Jsrael, Friedr.Jsrael,

Wolf Betty Sara

zu Händen des

Finanzamts Laupheim.

Gebäudebrandschadens-
umlage 1943.

~~Einz.Reg.Nr.~~

betr.Geb.Nr.21 König Wilhelmstr.

Finanzamt Laupheim

Eing.: 22. APR. 1943

Nr.

Die Gebäudebrandschadensumlage für das Kalender-
jahr 1943 ist auf 3 Rpf. für 100 RM Umlagekapital
festgesetzt. Unter Zugrundelegung dieses Satzes
schulden Sie der W.Gebäudebrandversicherungsanstalt
aus Ihrem Gebäudebesitz im hiesigen Gemeindebezirk
bei einem Umlagekapital von RM 21000.- nach dem
bei der Stadtkasse aufliegenden Einzugsregister

RM 6.30

Dieser Betrag ist seit 1.Jan.1943 ganz zur Zahlung
fällig. Sie werden um Bezahlung binnen 14 Tagen
an die Stadtkasse ersucht.

