

The Jewish Community of Laupheim and its Annihilation

Book Pages 141 - 152

EINSTEIN, Arthur Emil,

Tobaccos, 4 Marktplatz

Translated by: Alina Blankenstein, Bopha Duong, Stella Kirst, Franziska Lenth, Christina Roth, Vanessa Soldan
Supervised by: Dr. Robynne Flynn-Diez
Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg
Institut für Übersetzen und Dolmetschen, Englischabteilung

DR. UDO BAYER / DR. ANTJE KÖHLERSCHMIDT

Arthur Emil Einstein, born April 19, 1865 in Laupheim, died June 23, 1940 in Laupheim, married **Mathilde, née Einstein, div. Wallersteiner**, born November 30, 1865 in Laupheim, died March 27, 1940 in Laupheim

Hertha, born June 5, 1895 in Laupheim, died in 1993 in New York, married Dr. Erich Nathorff, born in 1885, died in 1954 in New York, USA

Heinz Nathorff, born January 10, 1925 in Berlin, died in 1988 in New York, USA

Sophie Einstein, born February 2, 1902 in Laupheim, immigrated to New York, USA in 1938, married **Martin Pauson**, born January 7, 1897 in Göttingen, Germany, immigrated to New York, USA in 1938

Elsbeth Einstein, born June 8, 1906 in Laupheim, immigrated to the USA in 1939, married **Dr. Otto Treitel**, born May 16, 1887 in Karlsruhe, Germany, died October 8, 1949 in Philadelphia, USA



Arthur and Mathilde Einstein, 1934.

The married couple Arthur and Mathilde Einstein belonged to a group of Jews who stayed in Laupheim but did not have to face deportation, as they both died just before the forced relocation to the *Wendelinsgrube*. Their eldest daughter, Hertha Nathorff, who occasionally visited Laupheim, recorded their living conditions after 1933 in her diary. There she describes the increasing discrimination and deprivation of rights as well as the end of a well-established civic life. The diary was published by *Fischer Taschenbuch* in Frankfurt/Main, Germany, in 1988 as "*Das Tagebuch der Hertha Nathorff, Berlin - New York, Aufzeichnungen 1933 bis 1945*" (The diary of Hertha Nathorff, Berlin - New York, notes 1933 - 1945). Nowadays, it is an important source of information for us to understand from the perspective of the people affected.



Residential and commercial property, 4 Marktplatz.

The Family business

It is very likely that Emil Einstein, father of Arthur Einstein, started the Einstein family business with a shop selling smoking tobacco, cigars and cigarettes. When Emil Einstein passed away in 1879, at the young age of 46, he was survived by his wife and six children. Back then Arthur was 14 years old. According to an official announcement made by the regional court of Laupheim on January 18, 1879, it was Sophie Einstein who initially continued to run the business. Afterwards, Arthur took over and later managed it together with his son-in-law Martin Pauson. The three owners kept the founder's name "Emil Einstein" and amended it by "& Co".

The business was situated in a very representative building at 4 *Marktplatz*, this can be seen, in the picture taken in the 1920s or 1930s despite it being out of focus. The owners regularly advertised their choice of goods in the local newspaper *Laupheimer Verkündiger*, and thereby ensured a good turnover. This is documented by the advertisements extracted from the *Laupheimer Verkündiger*. Christian holidays were used as an occasion to specifically advertise holiday gifts, as shown in the announcement: *Wir empfehlen als willkommene Festgeschenke* (We recommend as welcome holiday gifts). Since this advertisement was

published on December 5, 1925, the recommendation applied to Christmas. Moreover, the owners offered cigars, cigarettes and smoking tobaccos for resellers. According to eyewitness reports, this was used especially in surrounding villages during the difficult times of the Weimar Republic to supplement income. It became known that Arthur Einstein granted his clients enough time to pay until they had sold all of the tobacco and so even the destitute resellers could conclude their transactions. For decades, the owners were very successful in Laupheim and well known as important taxpayers in the community.

After Hitler was appointed Reich Chancellor on January 31, 1933, massive anti-Semitic campaigns soon followed. Simultaneously, the process of *Gleichschaltung* was



Wir empfehlen als willkommene
Festgeschenke:
Cigarren
in allen Preislagen
in Packungen zu 10, 20, 25 u. 50 St.
Cigaretten
in den beliebtesten Marken
Rauchtabake
beste Fabrikate
Für Wiederverkäufer beste
und billigste Bezugsquelle.
Emil Einstein
& Co.
Marktplatz.

swiftly and consistently enforced, so it was quickly noticeable in Laupheim. Just like everywhere else in Germany where Jewish people lived and worked, SA-members in uniform turned up in front of Jewish businesses on April 1, 1933. In Laupheim, for instance, they appeared outside of the business "Emil Einstein & Co.", as the following picture of the Nazi boycott of Jewish businesses shows.

The aim of the first measures included discouraging customers from frequenting Jewish shops; which was intended to deprive shop owner's of their income and therefore their means of existence.

Zigarren, Zigaretten, Tabake

**in schönen Geschenkpackungen
in allen Preislagen
in reichhaltigster Auswahl
und besten Qualitäten
empfehlen**

Emil Einstein & Co.

Marktplatz 4

Telefon 142.

("Laupheimer Verkündiger", December 5, 1925)

Over the course of the following years, the repressive measures became much more extensive, so that Arthur Einstein came to the following conclusion, which was noted by his daughter Hertha Nathorff-Einstein in her diary entry from April 24, 1938:

"We were in Southern Germany, in my small hometown. Many Jewish businesses were sold, the owners emigrated, the houses of the Catholics were defaced with offensive words, the streets besmirched, and people didn't dare to greet each other anymore. My dad says he doesn't want to sell his company. Its name shall go down with us. The old man is right; the Nazis have no right to take in their dirty hands what existed in reputation and good name through generations."



Boycott of the Einstein tobacco shop on April 1, 1933.

The "Decree of the Systematic Exclusion of Jews from Business and Society of November 12, 1938", (*Reichsgesetzblatt 1938, part I, p. 1580*) prohibited any business-related activity from January 1, 1939, on. This was completely contrary to the will of Arthur Einstein, a well-established Jewish citizen of Laupheim. The records of a local council meeting in Laupheim not only reflect the rapid implementation of the law enacted by the Nazis, but they also show the fraudulent efforts of Hitler's local profiteers to obtain the commercial property with its backyard garden for below its value.

Record of a local meeting in Laupheim:

"Another current case of aryanization is the Einstein tobacco shop. At first, Einstein had leased the business including the apartment to Fritz Nothelfer. The responsible committee had decided to close down the tobacco shop. Due to this, the aryanization did not take place. However, Nothelfer or rather his father-in-law A.B. still wanted to buy the house. Another prospective buyer for the shop was Hans Reinhalter who wanted to move his cigar shop from Radstrasse to the Einstein house, as it was more conveniently located. The responsible committee would very likely not place any obstacles in his way, as this would just mean a simple business transfer of the same sector. Moreover, Otto Schlichthärle, owner of a footwear business, had also shown his interest. The local Reich party departments and the mayor had already assured their support for their endeavor some time ago. As there were still more prospective buyers he had explained to the owner, Einstein, that the town would buy the house. The town would then be free to resell it. The mayor still thought that it would be Schlichthärle's turn then..."

On January 6, 1939, the district administrator of Biberach instructed Josef Hänle to immediately carry out the sale of the long-established business in Laupheim. Thus, on March 3, 1939, Arthur Einstein was eventually forced

to sell his residential and business property to Theresia Schlichthärle, mother of Otto Schlichthärle, mentioned above. After 1945, the sale was subject to the restitution, which was carried out in the French occupation zone at the time. The information regarding this restitution was not provided.

About the family

Arthur Einstein and his wife Mathilde belonged to the extensive fourth generation of the Einstein descendants in Laupheim, who all could be traced back to Leopold und Esther Einstein.

The similarities of the couple were not only limited to their belonging to the Einstein family, they were also cousins, both born in 1861, raised in Laupheim and of course of the same religion.

They got married in Ulm on June 7, 1892, which nowadays seems a little unusual, especially as they were both from Laupheim.

The couple had five children. The first girl was stillborn in 1893 and a boy called Ernst Emil, born in 1898, died only ten days after his birth. The other three girls, Hertha, born on June 5, 1895, Sophie, born on February 2, 1902, and Elsbeth, born on June 8, 1906, grew up in Laupheim where they attended the Jewish *Volksschule* (former German compulsory elementary school). They spent their childhood in their parental home at 4 Marktplatz. Their social environment was typical of the willingly assimilated, wealthy, Jewish middle class. It was characterized by a focus on education and the cultivation of culture.

Sophie

There is even a photo showing Sophie in 1909, when she was about seven years old. The clipping has been taken from a class photo with her teacher Bernhard Sichel of the Israelite *Volksschule* in Laupheim. Not much more could be found out about her life. An engagement announcement in the *Laupheimer Verkündiger* on September 10, 1925, made public her intention to marry. Martin Pauson and Sophie Einstein fulfilled these intentions in Laupheim on May 28, 1926. Martin moved to Laupheim and took his place in the family business, where he became a partner. Sophie Einstein and Martin Pauson remained childless. They both managed to immigrate to the USA in 1938, just as the family of her sister Hertha did. The photo on the following page shows them shortly before their departure.



Israelite Volksschule 1909. LTR: Hermine Wertheimer, Sophie Einstein, Poldile Friedberger.

Statt-Karten.

Die VERLOBUNG
ihrer Kinder
Sophie und Martin
beehren sich hiermit
anzuzeigen.

Arthur Einstein und Frau
Max Pauson und Frau

Laupheim - Göttingen.

Sophie Einstein
Martin Pauson
Verlobte

Laupheim
Göttingen September 1925.

Elsbeth

Even less is known about the youngest of the three daughters. Her marriage on July 29, 1934, was the last one of the Jewish community in Laupheim. Of course her life after she married was closely connected to her husband's, Dr. Otto Treitel, who is portrayed in the article "The Rabbi Family Treitel" in the commemorative book.



Hertha Nathorff-Einstein, her son Heinz, her sister Sophie with her husband Martin Pauson.

Hertha Nathorff-Einstein



The sheer volume of material about her life is enormous in contrast to her two sisters. Not only the diary mentioned above but also several letters and one television film from the year of her death in 1993 are important documents reflecting the life of Hertha Nathorff-Einstein. Moreover, she is one of the best-known survivors of the Laupheim Jewish community, due to her journalistic activities after she immigrated to New York. Her eventful life may in many ways be seen as an example of the fate of Jewish society in Germany. The fate of her family shows the prevailing circumstances of most German Jews who managed to escape annihilation, as well as the trauma of a reluctant decision to leave Germany and the difficulties the exiled faced in their new home.

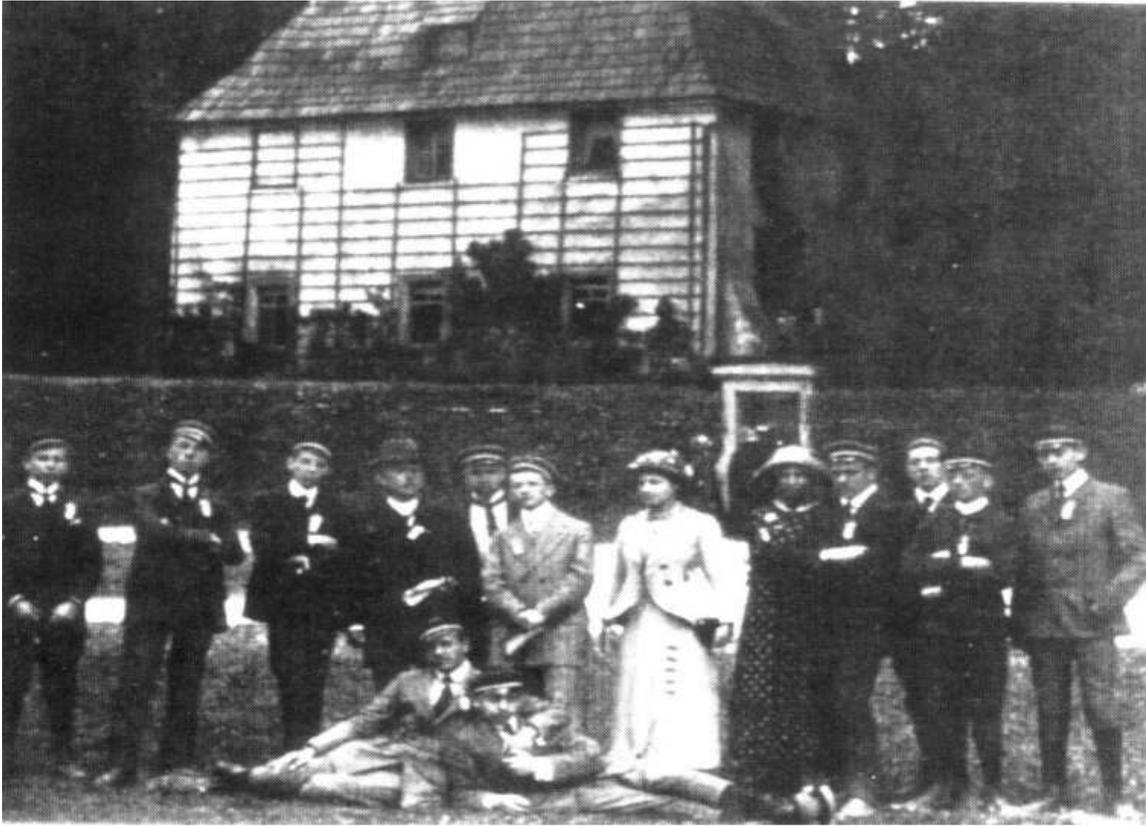
But first one should look a bit further back in time. Hertha told stories about her childhood, when the Christian and Jewish communities co-existed peacefully. Her family maintained friendly relations to people belonging to other religions and they celebrated Christian holidays with them. In a small remembrance book that she wrote for her husband in America, she expressed her relationship to other people's religions as follows: She did not think she could ever not deny being Jewish, nor that there are different Gods for each religion. No, she could not believe that. The strong identification of the German-Jewish educated classes with German culture and especially the literary tradition of the classical period is reflected in her retrospective memory and loving description of the bookcase as a *Hausaltar* with its "multivolume and precious Weimar edition of Goethe and all the literature that we have both compiled with much love over the years and with the careful selection of a collector".

Education played an important role in the Einstein family. Hertha's father, Arthur, had already attended the *Realschule* (German secondary school) with a Latin department, in Laupheim. His oldest daughter was supposed to follow his example as suggested by Professor Flaig.

Hertha Nathorff-Einstein in a letter dated January 21, 1986:

"... Enjoying the silence and beauty of the summer evening, Professor Flaig and my parents were sitting in the garden while I was helping Elsbeth Flaig with her homework. Suddenly Professor Flaig said to my father, 'If Elsbeth was such a good student I would send her to our Lateinschule (Latin school).' 'Our Herthel to the Lateinschule?' 'Yes, if it were possible,' my father responded, a lifetime enthusiast for Latin. 'Latin facilitates rational thinking,' he used to say. And Professor Flaig answered, 'Just try, I would like her to be my student.' My mother, who hardly ever interfered in conversations among men, quickly said, 'Do not talk my husband into such nonsense. Our tomboy has to go to boarding school in Switzerland, where she will have to learn French and good manners, which I cannot teach our wild little bee.' Everybody laughed and the subject was dropped. Therefore, I was completely surprised when my father told me at the end of the summer break that I would have to go to the Lateinschule. He had thus organized the change of schools without saying a word. All this seemed more exhilarating to me and without hesitation I made my way, together with students I already knew, to the Rabenstrasse, the Lateinschule. The professors, probably prepared by Professor Flaig, gave as warm a welcome to me as to the boys. But when it became known that a girl was attending a boy's school, a big furor was caused among the citizens of Laupheim. Many people were enthusiastic about this progress; more were outraged that a girl was sent to the boy's school. Even the Councilor of the highest administrative body of the Catholic Church, a long-time chess partner of my father, told him that he would no longer play chess with him because he was sending his daughter to a boy's school and thereby supporting immorality. I overheard my father talking to my mother. My mother certainly triumphed internally and I heard her reply to my father, 'It had to come to this point!'"

The fact that Hertha was the first girl to attend the *Realschule* with a Latin department in Laupheim did not remain hidden from the authorities in Stuttgart. In the same year they forbade coeducation and Hertha was instructed to leave the school. The rest of this school year, Hertha attended the *Volksschule* and learned the content of the Latin class ambitiously, which her fellow students brought her and studied with her. In the following school year, Arthur Einstein enrolled his daughter for the Latin class again. There, Hertha spent the following four school years, and after she graduated she went to the *Gymnasium* (school for advanced secondary education) in Ulm where she passed her A-levels. In her final year of school the First World War started. Many of her classmates then volunteered for the military service. When one of them said to Hertha, "Now you see that you're just a girl," she decided to study medicine instead of music and literature, as she had planned before.



Hertha Einstein with her Ulm school class in front of Goethe's Summer House in Weimar.

She spent her years of study in Heidelberg and Freiburg. In 1923, she became senior physician at the maternity hospital and nursery of the Red Cross in Berlin. In the same year, she married Dr. Erich Nathorff in Berlin-Charlottenburg, with whom she ran a private medical practice in Berlin. Their only child, Heinz Nathorff, was born on January 10, 1925.

Dr. med. Hertha Einstein

Oberarzt Dr. Erich Nathorff

Verlobte

*Berlin-Lichtenberg
Möllendorfstrasse 68.*

*Berlin
Kurfürstendamm 24.*

Oberarzt Dr. Erich Nathorff
Dr. med. Hertha Nathorff-Einstein
Vermählte
Berlin - Lichtenberg
Guntherstrasse 45 I.

d a n k e n z u g l e i c h
herzl. für freundl.
erwiesene Aufmerk-
samkeiten.

(*"Laupheimer Verkündiger"*, 1923)

The couple experienced the same discriminations as Hertha's parents in Laupheim, when Jewish businesses, law offices and medical practices were boycotted across the German Reich in April 1933, as she described in her diary.

The Nuremberg Laws of 1935 were complemented by the Fourth Decree to the Reich Citizenship Law in September 1938. These more and more perfidiously elaborated amendments revoked the Jewish doctors' licenses. From then on they were only allowed to treat Jews. In August 1938, the Nathorffs provided their affidavit of support to the Consulate General of the United States to speed up their immigration. Carl Laemmle, a paternal relative, had vouched for their support. However, before they were able to leave Germany, the Nazis gave the command for a pogrom in the night from November 9 to November 10, 1938. This happened directly after the assassination of the German legation secretary vom Rath by the 17-year-old Jew Herschel Grünspan in Paris. During the pogrom, Erich Nathorff was arrested in Berlin and taken to the concentration camp in Dachau along with seventeen Jewish men from Laupheim. After five weeks under arrest, when his wife and son feared for his life, he was released.

Hertha Nathorff-Einstein, diary entry of December 16, 1938:
"My husband has returned: Suddenly and surprising, but in what condition? They shaved off his beard, his newly emerging hair sparse and gray. It doesn't matter. I too have my first silver strands. It was not age that whitened them. My husband has returned. The most important thing is, he is alive, he is here! He has said, 'I am ok and I was doing well. And for now, don't ask further questions.'

I know before they were released they had to sign an agreement not to talk about anything, so I will not ask anything. But I need only to look at the blue frostbite on his battered and wounded hands. [. . .]"

The Nathorffs visited their closest relatives in Laupheim for the last time in mid-April 1939 to bid farewell to their loved ones as well as to the place of

their childhood and youth. The life-saving emigration started on April 27, 1939, when they traveled from Berlin to Bremerhaven, Germany.

But how was their new beginning in New York in 1940? Carl Laemmle, who had given them their affidavit, had passed away. Dr. Erich Nathorff had to thoroughly prepare himself for the New York medical exam, as his German medical license was not valid in the USA. Hertha spent this time in low-paying jobs to earn a living and save money for setting up a practice. It was a heavy blow for her when her parents Arthur and Mathilde Einstein, who stayed in Laupheim, both passed away shortly after each other in 1940.

Her husband passed the medical exam successfully and opened his own medical practice in early 1941, where Hertha became his receptionist. She also tried to pass the necessary medical exam several times, but she failed mainly due to her husband's lack of support. The relatively early death of Erich Nathorff in 1954 was therefore particularly tragic.



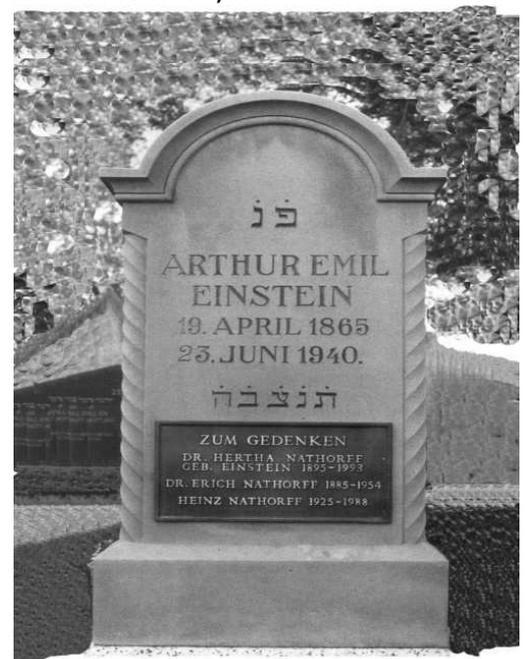
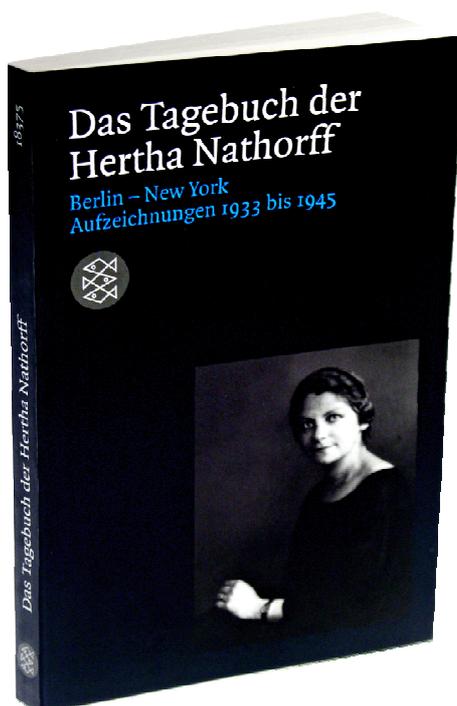
Hertha Nathorff-Einstein, her father Arthur Einstein, her sister Sophie Pauson née Einstein, her son Heinz Nathorff, the husband of her sister, Martin Pauson, her mother Mathilde Einstein née Einstein, her husband Erich Nathorff.

Hertha found other fields of activity, but she could never cope with not having worked as a doctor in the USA. To a certain extent, her new home always remained a little foreign to her. Nevertheless, she was socially committed. In the context of the New World Club, which took care of immigrants, she worked in the area responsible for psychological care. She was a member of the "Alfred Mental Hygiene Clinic", the "Virchow Medical Society" and the "Association for Advancement of Psychotherapy". Moreover, she worked as a publicist for newspapers and gave radio lectures in German.

In honor of her 60th birthday in 1955, an article published in *Aufbau*, the newspaper of Jewish immigrants in New York, described her double life concisely but fittingly as follows: "Charwoman during day, chairwoman at night". Her diverse voluntary work and cultural commitments were honored by the Federal Republic of Germany with the award of the Federal Cross of Merit in 1967. Though she never visited Germany again she still maintained contact that for example, came about due to the publication of her diary by Wolfgang Benz.

In 1986, even at the advanced age of 91, Hertha Nathorff-Einstein took the initiative and wrote a letter to Mayor Otmar Schick in which she announced that she wanted to finance an annual scholarship to honor the best graduating student. This scholarship has now been awarded in a ceremony at the *Carl-Laemmle-Gymnasium* every year since 1987. From 1942 until she passed away in 1993, she lived in her apartment close to Central Park, where her husband had also had his medical practice. As her son Heinz died in 1988, Hertha had to spend her last years of life alone. She was confined to her apartment and bound to her wheelchair due to illness. Only through extensive correspondence was she able to stay in contact with the outside world. After her death, a metal

plate in memory of her husband and son was added to her father's tombstone at the Jewish cemetery in Laupheim.



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