

# RIESER, Babette,

29 Radstrasse

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*DR. ANTJE KÖHLERSCHMIDT*

**Heinrich Baruch Rieser**, born February 27, 1856 in Laupheim, died December 19, 1932 in Laupheim, married to Babette Rieser, née Gump, born October 7, 1860 in Krumbach, died May 15, 1941 in Laupheim

- **Hermine Rieser**, born July 2, 1884 in Laupheim, died July 3, 1884 in Laupheim

- **Clothilde Levy nee Rieser**, born Feb 2, 1887 in Laupheim, deported on August 23, 1944 to Theresienstadt and then to Auschwitz on October 28, 1944, where she was murdered, married to Julius Levy, born May 29, 1877 in Buttenhausen, deported August 23, 1944 to Theresienstadt and then to Auschwitz on October 28, 1944, where he was murdered.

- **Margaret Levy**, born September 30, 1913 in Buttenhausen, emigrated on January 24, 1938 to New York, USA.

- **Hedwig Meinstein, née Rieser**, born July 10, 1890, deported to Riga on November 28, 1941, killed February 28, 1942, married **Hermann Meinstein** on July 19, 1882 in Fuerth, deported on November 28, 1941 to Riga, murdered on February 28, 1942.

- **Elsa Ruth Rieser**, born January 30, 1892 in Laupheim, deported on August 23, 1942 to Theresienstadt, died April 8, 1984 in Munich.

When the reader focuses on the members of family, and his attention turns finally to Elsa Ruth Rieser, he will discover that she is one of two Laupheim residents that survived the Shoah.

The fact is that, no one else survived from the four Laupheim deportations that occurred between 1941 and 1942, to Riga, Izbica (near Lublin), Auschwitz and Theresienstadt. Only these two young Jewish women who were born in Laupheim survived the terrible deportations from other places in Southern Germany and the concentration camps. They are Recha Schmal and Elsa Ruth Rieser, whose lives can be portrayed in greater detail due to the rich array of sources. Information about their relatives is sparse.

The Rieser families in this commemorative book, just like as the Einstein families, are, in various degrees related to each other. They date back to Emanuel Hirsch Rieser (1757-1818) and his wife Miriam, nee Thannhauser (1745-1839). Heinrich Baruch Rieser, was born February 27, 1856 in Laupheim, the son of Raphael Hirsch Rieser (1819-1896) and Bertha, nee Hofheimer (1826-1908) and belonged to the fourth generation of Riesers in Laupheim. He grew up here and became a merchant. On February 26, 1883 he married Babette Gump, who was born on October 7, 1860 in Krumbach. The couple lived in the husband's home at 29 Rad Street . Attached to the house were a barn, cattle stall, and 3 acres of land. Heinrich and Babette Rieser had four children. The first-born daughter Hermine died in 1884 the day after her birth. Clothilde, was born on February 2, 1887, Hedwig, born on July 10, 1890, and Elsa Ruth, born on January 30, 1892, all grew up in Laupheim and attended the Jewish elementary school, which was also on Rad Street.

From this period there are photographs showing the girls. Clothilde is in the photo, taken around 1895, of the Jewish elementary school with the teacher Adolf Gideon, and was taken around 1895. In the third row, second from the right, between Bertl Einstein and Berta Adler. Elsa Ruth Rieser is pictured in the second row from the top at the far right in a photograph of the image the same school. Interestingly, the name Rosa Ruth Rieser appeared in the list of names. The reason for this is not known. However, is not mentioned. We can conclude today, that this is because, Elsa had a two year younger cousin of the same name, who is also shown in the photo. She was the daughter of her uncle Max Rieser and his wife Milli. It is possible that, Rosa was a nickname of Elsa Ruth Rieser, in order to distinguish the cousins apart. The photographs dates from 1904 alternatively 1905 and depicts the Jewish students with their teacher Haymann. A photograph of Hedwig during this time could not be located.



*Clothilde Rieser between Bertl Einstein and Berta Adler  
in a school photo taken 1895.*



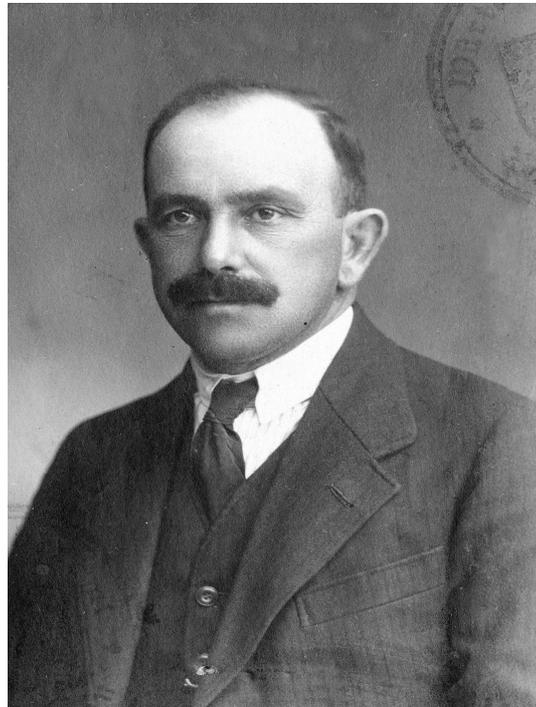
*Elsa Ruth Rieser (middle) in a school photo of the same school ca. 1904.*

The further education and vocational training of the three sisters is uncertain, but it may probably be assumed that they attended visited the secondary school and then pursued separate other paths. The two older sisters married but Elsa Ruth Rieser decided to become a nurse.

## **Clothilde and Julius Levy**

Clothilde Rieser married Julius Levy from Buttenhausen at the age of 23 on March 14, 1910 in Laupheim. Contrary to the usual custom for the young wife to take residence at the home of the husband, these newly weds took up residence in the home of the bride at 29 Rad Street in Laupheim. Julius Levy was a cattle dealer and carried out his business from there. On September 30, 1913, in Buttenhausen, Clothilde gave birth to her daughter Margaret Levy. Unfortunately, she is not found on any of the known school photos. Later on, Margaret became a stenographer. She was the only member of the Reiser family who managed to emigrate. On January 24, 1938 she left for New York, USA, where she later married a man from the very well known Heumann family from Laupheim.

Thanks to the discovery of passport photographs in the State Archives of Sigmaringen, these photographs of Julius and Clothilde Levy can be printed today for the reader to contemplate.



*Clothilde Levy née Rieser. Julius Levy.*

These passports were required in order to send their daughter in America a monthly allowance of 10 Reichsmarks. This points out the difficult situation of the newly-arrived Jewish immigrants in the United States, but also the generous and caring support of the parents for their daughter. Due to the severe restrictions imposed on Jewish business people by the Nazis, and the permanent anti-Jewish propaganda, as well as the and intimidation of the Christian customers, the Reisners's business profits had declined steadily since 1933. By 1938 the cattle trade association of Stuttgart, which was controlled by the Nazis, revoked the migrant business license of Julius Levy. Ultimately this meant a ban from his occupation as cattle dealer who mainly traded locally with the farmers. It remains unknown how the family was able to support themselves. It may only be said with some certainty that their fate continued to worsen. In addition assaults throughout Germany on life, health and freedom of the German Jews and their property, reached a new dimension with the reprisals against them which took place on Kristallnacht (Night of Broken Glass) on November 9, 1938. Julius Levy avoided being placed in so-called protective custody on this night in Laupheim. However, on the anniversary of this terrible event, November 9, 1939, Julius Levy, his brother-in-law Herman Meinstein, and eleven other Jewish men in Laupheim were sent to prison on by the order of the district court in Laupheim. Under the orders of the Nazis, Julius and Clothilde Levy were removed from their Rad Steet home, and sent to the barracks on the edge of town near the Wendelin gravel pit. Why and under what circumstances remains unclear, why the family was sent to Tigerfeld in the district of Muensingen on April 2, 1942 remains totally unclear. Their further destiny is however certain. They were then deported on August 23, 1942 with the transport XIII / 1 to the Theresienstadt concentration camp, and then they were sent to Auschwitz on October 28, 1944 where they were murdered.

## Heinrich Baruch and Babette Rieser

The father of the family died on December 19, 1932 in Laupheim and was buried in the Jewish cemetery. In the book "The Jewish cemetery Laupheim" on page 507 it is said of him: "The merchant was the oldest member of the board of the Talmud Torah Association, to which he had belonged for 25 years" This club was founded in 1794, its task was the dissemination of Jewish religious knowledge among the community members, especially the youth. In addition, it assumed responsibility for the caring of the poor and the nursing of the sick, and performance of the usual customs and prayers for the dead. The long-standing commitment of Heinrich Rieser in the Talmud Torah Association suggests that the Jewish faith and social work action were particularly important to him.



After the death of her husband, Babette Rieser remained living with her daughter Clothilde, son-in-law Julius Levi and also granddaughter Margaret in the 29 Kapellen Street home. Nothing else about her life in Laupheim itself has been discovered. Her life is likely to have been limited to the welfare of her family, the Jewish community and immediate Christian neighborhood. For some time during 1939 and 1941, Babette

Rieser lived in the Jewish old people's home, which was established in the former rabbinate. It is not known why she periodically stayed there. Perhaps the house at 29 Kapellen Street became too crowded after Hedwig and Hermann Meinstein moved in. In any case, it is thanks to her

stay there, that we have two photos of her. In the photo on the left, Rosa Einstein is shown with Babette Rieser at about age 80 behind her. In the better-known photo above of the Jewish old people's home, which was housed in the Laupheim rabbinate, Babette is seated on the right side of the festively decorated coffee table. On May 15, 1941 Babette Rieser died in Laupheim, and, like her husband, she is buried in the local Jewish cemetery.

## **Hedwig and Hermann Rieser**

Hedwig Rieser was the middle child of the three daughters, born on July 10, 1890 and on October 31, 1919 married Hermann Meinstein born on February 19, 1882 in Zirndorf, District of Fuerth in Bavaria.

As was the custom at the time, she left her home and followed her husband. Nothing is known about her life after marriage until 1938. Their marriage remained childless. On December 7, 1938 Hedwig and Hermann Meinstein moved in with her mother, sister and brother-in-law at 29 Rad Street in Laupheim. In October 1941 they were forcibly resettled with Clothilde and Julius Levi to the Wendelin Sand and Gravel pit outside the city. The couple were among the first to be deported from Laupheim, with 1011 other Jewish Wuerttembergers, to Riga in the East, on 28 November 1941, via the Stuttgart Killesberg mountains, to the East. On December 20, 1949, the District Court of Laupheim recorded their date of death as March 26, 1942. Hedwig and Hermann Meinstein were probably killed in one of the numerous mass shootings in the months after arrival in Riga on 3 December 1941.

## **Elsa Ruth Rieser**

Unlike her two older sisters, Elsa remained unmarried. After high school, she trained as a nurse. As early as 1912 she had joined the Red Cross Aides for "The Volunteer Medical Team of the Red Cross" in Laupheim, where she was engaged in emergency services and first aid, and also in provided preventive health care. In the case of war it was necessary to care for the wounded and injured, as decreed by the "Geneva Conventions" of 1864. The religious affiliation of the Red Cross members took second place, as is shown in the photo opposite. The picture was taken in 1914, in front of the seat of the Senior District Administration, showing 15 participants after they completed a medical course. Elsa is the only Jewish woman in the photo.



First row left to right: Gerhardt, Rieser, Ganser, Bammert – Second row: Trefz, Esslinger, Kinzelbach, Ruth Steiner, Schabel, Schick, König. –Men: J. Schick Group Doctor, Dr. Bullinger in Medical Officer's Uniform, A. Herzog.

Elsa applied to the Jewish nurses' home on Dillman Street in Stuttgart, as a professional nurse, and passed the state exam. Especially noteworthy is that she is the only female listed in the directory by Jonas Weil's "directory of the war veterans of the Israelite community," assembled by Jonas Weil, because during the First World War, on August 15, 1914, she had originally enlisted as a Red Cross nurse's aide in the Laupheim Hospital as a nurse's aide from the Red Cross.

During the war she worked in battle field hospitals in Calimanesti in, in Romania and also in Morlanwelz in Belgium, as a Red Cross nurse's aide Elsa was not only appointed Jewish Professional Nurse, but was also awarded the Wuerttemberg Charlotte Cross and the Prussian Red Cross Medal. On 28 November 1918, she was dismissed to the Jewish nurses' home in Stuttgart. Until 1933 she had been employed as a nurse for both Christian and Jewish patients, but afterwards only for patients of her own denomination.

On 28 November 1918, she was dismissed from the Jewish sister home in Stuttgart. Until 1933 she had been employed as a nurse by both Christian and Jewish patients, but afterwards only for patients of her own denomination.

Elsa Ruth Rieser described the period from 1933, in an impressive report of her experiences on July 12, 1961, at the request of Dr. Maria Zelzer, on behalf of the City of Stuttgart, for the commemorative book "Path and Destiny of the Stuttgart Jews",

*"Kristallnacht brought us a great change. Many people sought shelter. The next morning we were ordered to leave our house at Dillman Street. From then on we were all continuous harassment as regards food, while eating and living. Our new home was a collective accommodation with many others. In 1941, we were given only 12 hours' notice to evacuate this home, together with many old people and their nurses, for the use of the Hitler Youth. We were sent to a nursing home, and then finally to a collective accommodation in Dellmensingen*

*Of course the food was become scarce and the treatment accordingly bad. We could not leave without the permission of the local mayor.*

*On August 22, 1942 we arrived at the transit camp Killesberg / Stuttgart, from where 1200 people were deported to Theresienstadt. Healthy and sick people died during the journey. We were cooped up in cattle wagons, on the floor was a little straw, and of course there were no meals. We were told we were being sent to another retirement home. We were greatly disappointed when we arrived in Theresienstadt, and found ourselves in the attic of a barracks. There were thousands of people already on the stone floor without any padding, the only bedclothes allowed were a pillow and a blanket. There were no windows and only a skylight.*

*So many people died from typhoid fever and dysentery, because of the little food received and the many other hardships. We were forced to carry water needed for cleaning in small pails, up four flights of steps from the court yard. Often the fountain was turned off. So we were forced to use chlorine for cleaning.*

*Every day transports went to the East. They arrived incessantly from Austria, Czechoslovakia, Holland, Poland and Germany. As soon as prisoners left Theresienstadt, new ones replaced them.*

*The people who were not too sick and too weak, had to work, partly in factories and plants for the military, or were employed in other types of work. There was never a day off, neither Sundays nor holidays.*

*In 1944 I got a blister while working on a broken furnace. My fingers were cut with a pair of unsterile scissors, which immediately caused blood poisoning. My body was completely malnourished and I weighed 70 pounds. The finger had to be amputated. The poisoning continued to spread to my arm and it could not be saved despite 18 operations. I lost my arm in February 1944 and could not get up for months. I was used for medical experiments for the military. My greatest sorrow was no longer being able to perform my job as a nurse. In spite of this, I was able to perform night rounds and some other work in the camp. "(City Archives Stuttgart SO 172, MR)*

From today's perspective it is hard to see how Elsa Ruth Rieser could survive these inhumane living conditions. Her character may have been marked by a profound will to live and an unbroken confidence, in order to withstand the hardships imposed by the Nazi regime. The nurse Resi Weglein from Ulm writes in her memoirs "As a nurse in Theresienstadt concentration camp": "Ruth Rieser, professional nurse from Stuttgart, who lost her left arm due to an accident at work, avoided two transports to the east by the last camp commandant Rham, by volunteering for experimental medical purposes" (p.44). In this context it is definitely not a question of volunteering, since Elsa desperately tried to escape the transports to the extermination camps of Auschwitz or Treblinka in the East and so, murder. Finally, she was one of the few inmates of the Theresienstadt concentration camp that survived and was liberated on 9 May 1945 by the Red Army. The German Reich deported approximately 42,124 Jews to the Theresienstadt concentration camp between 1942 and 1945 on 329 transports from 19 areas. The percentage of all deaths of Terezín prisoners, i.e. death in Theresienstadt and death after further deportation, was approximately 86 percent.

As for all the survivors of the concentration camps after their liberation, they faced the question of where they now should go. They were still in the land of their perpetrators, those that had imposed upon them long years of suffering and murdered their relatives. Elsa's two sisters and their husbands had been murdered in their home country Germany. At first, Elsa Ruth Rieser probably remained for the next few weeks in Theresienstadt. This seemed the obvious thing to do from the point of view of finding food and shelter in the turmoil of the first post-war weeks. The nurse from Ulm, Resi Weglein, described this vividly in her memoirs on page 97: "Life went on without much change, except that we had enough to eat every day. However we weren't able to finish the allotted food of 500 grams. Our stomachs could no longer process so much food. Every fourth day we would give away a whole loaf of bread, and still had enough for ourselves. There were daily meals of barley for lunch and dinner, and once a week, 500 grams of potatoes and meat broth. "In 1945 tuberculosis and typhoid fever were highly prevalent and spread rapidly among the weakened ex-inmates of the concentration camps. Only through determined hygiene measures, quarantine, care and nutrition, could epidemics be brought under control in Theresienstadt, but this also led to a delayed homecoming. On 19 June 1945 three buses from Stuttgart arrived in Theresienstadt to pick up all the Jews from Wuerttemberg. 120 returned to Stuttgart, among them was Elsa Ruth Rieser. Since none of her relatives from Laupheim survived, she remained for her next four years in DP camps, located in the former sanatorium Katz, in Stuttgart-Degerloch. There she worked in the kitchen and house. The abbreviation D.P. stands for Displaced Persons, that is, people who were not originally from this place, which was literally true for all concentration camp inmates and forced laborers of any origin. The DP camps had been set up for them by the French and American occupiers to provide them with a

temporary residence until they could return to their homes or find individual solutions such as emigration to Palestine with the support of various organizations or to already emigrated relatives all over the world. In Ulm there had been a large DP camp.

In October 1945, Elsa Ruth Rieser, who now called herself Rosa Ruth Rieser, attempted, from Stuttgart, to obtain the return of her parents' house, 29 Radstrasse, in Laupheim. With the deportation out of the German Reich of Clothilde and Julius Levi, Hedwig and Hermann Meinstein and Elsa Ruth Rieser the house had been confiscated, for the benefit of the German Reich, on order of the Stuttgart headquarters of the Secret Police (Gestapo) on 24. November, 1941 and on 21. August, 1942 . In 1950 the Chamber for Restitution Claims at the District Court of Ravensburg decided in a judgment that Elsa, now Ruth Rieser, was to have her parents' house returned to her. For various reasons there was certainly no question of her returning to Laupheim at this time. So the house was sold to the cattle dealer Albert Held in 1951. In addition, on 29 March 1946, she contacted the mayor of Laupheim with the following request: "I would be grateful if you could send me the current payments of rent , because I need them." With this purpose, the municipal legal adviser informed the competent tax office in Biberach, but its reply is not recorded. The transfer of the rental income to the rightful heiress of the house is to be assumed.

At the request of then Mayor of Laupheim Heynek on 24 October 1946 Elsa Ruth Rieser hand wrote an initial list of names of those who were sent to various concentration camps. She named 65 people, only - Resi Weglein - had survived, so 64 were victims - a number that sadly had to be revised upwards significantly. 81 people were deported from Laupheim, 68 were citizens of Laupheim and 13 citizens of Heggbach. If one would include close relatives of our former Laupheim Jews, the number would grow much higher.

Kittfurt, 24.10. 46.

M. 2. 91. 16/17A.

An das Bürgermeisteramt Laupheim. 9880  
z. Händen des Herrn Bürgermeisters Herrick!

Ich bin Ihnen, soweit es mir  
möglich ist, die Namen auflisten, die in den verschiedenen  
KZ. mein Leben gekannt sind.

HELENE ADLER  
EDMUND ADLER.  
EGEN ADLER  
THEODOR BERNHEIM.  
JOSEF BERNHEIM.  
MINA EINSTEIN.  
IRMA EINSTEIN  
HEDWIG EINSTEIN.  
HELENE EINSTEIN.  
FRAU SIEGMUND-EINSTEIN.  
JULIUS-EINSTEIN  
FRAU ROSA-EINSTEIN  
MARKUS FRIEDBERGER.  
FRAU MARKUS FRIEDBERGER  
FRAU BERTHOLD FRIEDBERGER.  
KARL-GUGGENHEIMER  
LEOPOLD-GUGGENHEIMER.  
BERTA HEILBRONNER  
JULIUS HEUMANN VERMISST  
ROSALIE FELSENTHAL  
MARIE FRIEDBERGER  
KLARA FRIEDBERGER.

ARTHUR GRAB.  
FRAU LUISE GRAB.  
GEB. LAUPHEIM.  
FRAU LAURA KURTZ  
FRIEDA LAUPHEIMER  
SIEGFRIED LAUPHEIMER  
ADOLF LAUPHEIMER  
MINA LAUPHEIMER  
LINA LAUPHEIMER  
ANNA LEVINGER  
BERTA LEVINGER  
HEINRICH MEINSTEIN  
HEDWIG MEINSTEIN  
GEB. RIESER.

JULIUS LEVI  
KLOTHILDE LEVI  
g. RIESER.

FRAU BERTHOLD FRIEDBERGER. g. LÖWENTHAL

KARL-GUGGENHEIMER

LEOPOLD-GUGGENHEIMER.

BERTA HEILBRONNER

JULIUS HEUMANN VERMISST

ROSALIE FELSENTHAL

MARIE FRIEDBERGER

KLARA FRIEDBERGER.

WEIL \* JSIDOR

WEIL ELSA. GEB. KAHN

EDITH WEIL.

FRAU EMIL KAHN

JULIUS KAHN

MARTHA GÖTZ

FRAU SIEGMUND-EINSTEIN.	HEINRICH MEINSTEIN
JULIUS-EINSTEIN	HEDWIG MEINSTEIN <del>G. RIE</del>
FRAU ROSA-EINSTEIN	GEB RIESER.
MARKUS FRIEDBERGER.	JULIUS LEVI
FRAU MARKUS FRIEDBERGER	KLUTHILDE LEVI
FRAU BERTHOLD FRIEDBERGER.	G. RIESER.
KARL-GUGGENHEIMER	G. LÖWENTHAL
LEOPOLD-GUGGENHEIMER	WEIL * JSIDOR
BERTA HEILBRONNER	WEIL ELSA. GEB KAHN
JULIUS HEUMANN VERMISST.	EDITH WEIL.
ROSALIE FELSENTHAL	FRAU EMIL KAHN
MARIE FRIEDBERGER	JULIUS KAHN
KLARA FRIEDBERGER.	MARTHA GÖTZ
ANNA ROSENHEIMER	
FRAU WEGLEIN A. <del>WEGLEIN</del> . ULM.	
FRAU RABBINER NEUWIRTH.	
KARL HALLHEIMER MIT FRAU X SCHWIEGERMUTTER	
HERR UND FRAU SITTENBERG A. ST.	
MAX WEILER	BETTY WALLACH
JETTLE WEILER.	LUIS LÖWENTHAL
KLARA WEILER.	DORIS LÖWENTHAL.
BERTA WEIL.	SELMA LÖWENTHAL
MAIER WERTHEIMER.	KARI JSAI
LINA WERTHEIMER	RUBEN SCHWARTZ.
SELMA WERTHER.	FRAU SCHWARTZ.
HERR WALLACH	

The List of Laupheim Jews, who had perished in the concentration camps, which was prepared by Elsa Ruth Rieser in 1946, had to be later corrected, unfortunately by adding more names.

Elsa Ruth Rieser decided in the spring of 1950 to go to the Jewish old people's home in Munich. She lived in the Saul Eisenheim retirement home from the April 4, 1950, for 34 years. Again and again she tried various treatments to improve her health. She encountered many bureaucratic hurdles and very hurtful remarks, as late as 1961. "To all that I've been through, I of course do not like to think back. Only my physical condition forces me every day to remember what had happened. When I applied, three years ago, for compensation from the State Office, for rehabilitation treatments because of my poor general condition, I had to listen from the examining doctor that I did not warrant any rehabilitation therapy. He suggested that I should rather let my stump shrivel up, in spite of my poor health, and that only then would I feel better. When I again attempted approval therapy, I was denied with the same reason from the same doctor. The rehabilitation was ultimately granted, yet to listen to her life story, and then hear that rehabilitation was denied, was very painful for her. She took this very personally. Her health finally stabilized, and she enjoyed living in the retirement home in Munich for a long life.

She was designated by Ruth Steinführer , head of the Social Department of the Jewish community of Munich, as a "very gracious and helpful lady who enjoyed great popularity in the nursing home". Elsa Ruth Rieser died there on April 8, 1984 at the age of 92 years.

*Elsa Ruth Rieser.*



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