

The Jewish Community of Laupheim and its Annihilation

Book Pages 556 - 560

WEIL, Jonas,

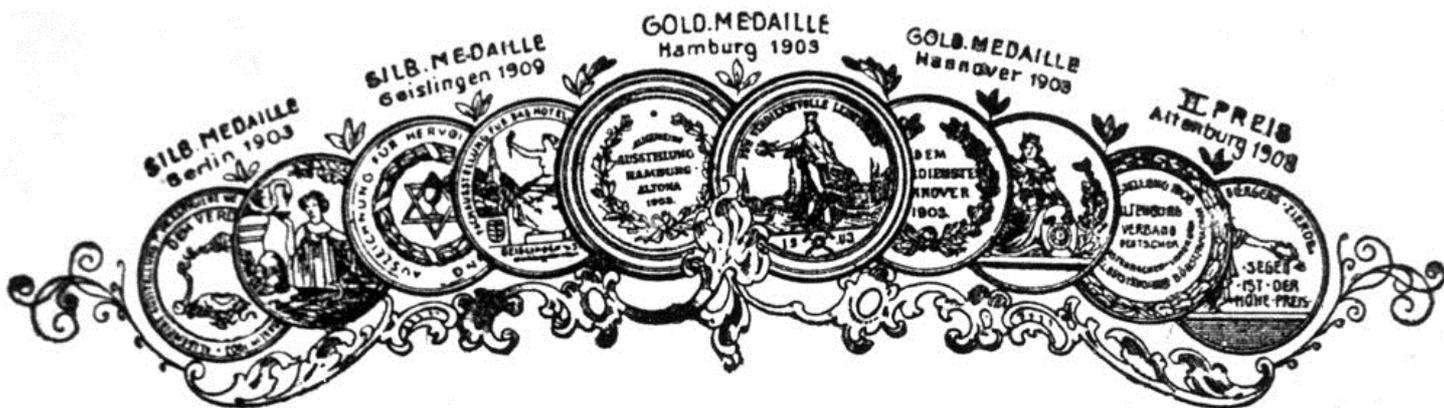
Oil and Grease Factory, 31 Radstrasse

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Jonas Weil, born on February 9, 1871 in Laupheim, died in 1942 in Chicago/USA OO Cilli Weil (Nördlinger), born September 10, 1877 in Laupheim, died in the USA

– Selma, born April 27, 1905 in Laupheim, 1925 - marriage to Max Bernheimer, Buttenhausen. Jonas and Cilli Weil emigrate to Chicago/USA on April 9, 1940.



Laupheimer Oel- u. Fettwaren-Fabrik J. Weil

Laupheim (Württemberg).

Telegr.-Adresse:
Oelfabrik Weil.

Telefonruf-
Nummer 34

Postscheck-Conto:
Stuttgart Nr. 1910.

≡≡≡ Lager: Laupheim - Feuerbach - Mannheim - Hamburg ≡≡≡

Laupheimer Oil and Grease Factory J. Weil

(Source: Archive Theo Miller)

Laupheimer Oel- und Fettwarenfabrik J. Weil

Telefon Nr. 34 / Gegr. 1899.

Beste Bezugsquelle

sämftlicher Oele und Fette für Industrie und Landwirtschaft.

Laupheimer Oil and Grease Factory J. Weil

Best source of many different types of oil and grease for use in industry and agriculture.

(From: Address Book Laupheim 1925)

Grease for use with carts, lubricating oil for belt drives, linseed oil varnish, and floor wax: these products once sold and, to a certain extent, manufactured by the Oil and Grease Factory J. Weil in Laupheim have been forgotten, as has the factory itself. The two advertisements above are the only attainable written evidence of the Oil and Grease Factory founded in Laupheim in 1899 by Jonas Weil. Shortly after its foundation, the company must have done quite well very quickly – various awards won in the first decade after the company was founded are shown on the first advertisement pictured above. As are a lot of other things, it is unclear which innovative ideas and products resulted in the many gold and silver medals won at exhibits in Berlin, Hannover and Hamburg.

No less than ten oil and grease factories and distribution centers can be found in the Laupheim address book from 1925. How did these factories operate? Jonas still had five employees, three traveling salesmen, and paid 840 reichsmark (RM) in local business taxes. Was "*Schmoltz-Weil*," as those in Laupheim called him, the local market leader in oil and grease products? These are questions which would be quite difficult to answer. The photographs found from this time period are much better than the non-existent written documents in this regard.



Jonas Weil is unmistakable: left- as a roughly 25 year old man, middle- in a passport photo taken in 1934, right- as an inhabitant of the Jewish nursing home in 1940

(Sources: Leo-Baeck-Institute NY, County Archive Biberach, Bilderkammer Museum)



The "Laupheimer Oil and Grease Factory J. Weil" on Radstraße 31, house and factory building, around 1910. At the corner of the house is Jonas Weil with his daughter Selma, looking out the second floor window likely Cilli Weil. (Photo: Archive Theo Miller)

Jonas Weil was still single and had not yet founded his company when the first of the three photos was taken in 1895. His father Emanuel, a tradesman and watch maker, had been married three times; Jonas was born to Emanuel's third wife, Malka Guggenheimer, from Hürben. In the year 1901 Jonas married Cilli Nördlinger, one of Ludwig Nördlinger's sisters, from Laupheim. In 1905, Jonas's only daughter Selma was born. In 1925, at the age of 20, Selma married Max Bernheimer from Buttenhausen and then moved away from Laupheim.

The family house, preserved albeit in a largely modified state, was on *Radstraße 31*. The factory building was an add-on to the family house. When looking at this building ensemble, one gets the impression that the house is older and that the factory was clinker-built new right next to it. The sign on it reads "Lauph. Oil and Grease Factory J. Weil", and oil and grease were probably stored in the massive barrels in the yard. Jonas Weil was born on *Radstraße 31*, which means that the house he continued to live in and add onto belonged to his parents.

Jonas Weil was active in the Jewish community in many different ways. In 1912 he was elected to the office of the synagogue warden, sang in the synagogue choir, was a key member of the brotherhood *Chevra Kadischa*, and in the 1930s was even vice-president of the community. He was 43 years old when World War I broke out, so he didn't have to join the army. Regardless, after the war, he created a detailed register of the Jewish soldiers from Laupheim. Today this register is in a museum, and it has been cited in many articles in this book. Such lists are to serve to counteract the accusations perpetrated by right wing radicals in the 1920s that German Jews had not taken enough active participation in the war effort or were even at fault for the loss of the war.

Forced Aryanization and Emigration

It is only possible to superficially reconstruct the fate of the family and of the factory during the national socialist regime due to a lot of missing written documentation. In 1938 the family still lived on *Radstraße 31*. However a Julius Mohr, who also sold oil and grease, lived there too. The photo, which shows the factory Weil owned by a man named Albert Mohr, is from the same time period. The repossession of Jewish companies took place in a similar fashion as in many other cases: under the increasing pressure of Nazi officials, Jonas Weil probably sold his company in 1937 or 1938 to one of his employees or to his brother, keeping the house.



Albert Mohr has been identified as the owner of the company J. Weil on this photo from 1938/39.

A further sales contract, in Nazi jargon "de-Jewification" contract, from November 30, 1939 is preserved in the City Archive in Laupheim. According to this document, Albert Mohr didn't make this purchase, but rather master baker Georg Fezer purchased the entire estate, house and factory building in "good condition" for 17,000 RM. Cilli and Jonas Weil had to move into the Jewish nursing home in the former Rabbinate and continue to live there in cramped living quarters.

With World War II already in full swing, the couple received permission to enter the USA literally at the very last possible moment. They were able to emigrate to Chicago on April 9, 1940. Jonas's daughter Selma and her husband Max Bernheimer, who already lived in Chicago, had probably taken care of the entry permit for them. Jonas Weil died there in October of 1942; his wife Cilli died exactly 10 years later. His older sister Ida, married Rothschild, and younger sister Lina, married Wertheimer (see the chapter after next), were unable to emigrate. They became victims of the Shoa.

Post-war Period

There are just as few written documents, such as restitution cases or demands for compensation, existing from the pre-war period as there are from the post-war period. However, there is a good photo from Theo Miller's archive. On April 17, 1963 the former Weil's Factory building burned down, after which it was rebuilt in a much smaller fashion. It is not until one looks at the photo of the fire, which burned down the factory completely, that one really begins to comprehend the size of the former "Laupheimer Oil and Grease Factory J. Weil."



Jonas Weil's former factory building burned down on April 17, 1963.

*Also pictured: the neighboring building's winter garden on Gartenstraße
(Photo: Archive Theo Miller).*