

ROSENBERGER, Samuel,

Head teacher (retd.), 20 Radstrasse

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Samuel Rosenberger, born April 24, 1861 in Oberdorf,
died November 11, 1939 in Stuttgart OO (married August
26, 1890)

Babette Rosenberger, née Bierig, born February 19, 1864
in Edelfingen, died March 20, 1942 in detention camp
Dellmensingen.

- Rosa, born September 17, 1891 in Thalheim, unmarried,
deported to Riga on December 1, 1941, where she was
murdered,

- Frieda, born March 30, 1893 in Thalheim, unmarried,
murdered 1942 (location unknown),

- Saly, born September 4, 1896 in Öhringen, unmarried,
died June 13, 1935 in Laupheim.



(Archive of Theo Miller)

At the beginning of the school year 1909/1910, there was yet again a change of teachers at the Israelite elementary school on Radstraße depicted above. The young teacher Bernhard Sichel was transferred and replaced by 48-year-old Samuel Rosenberger. In autumn of 1909 he moved into the teacher's apartment in the school building with his family of five.

Since the number of students of the Jewish community was rapidly decreasing, the imposing school building, erected in 1868, had become far too big. For this reason, Latin and other secondary school classes were held there until the construction of the new building on Rabenstraße was completed in 1911/12. Subsequently, parts of the house were let to various tradesmen. Samuel Rosenberger and his family continued to live in the school building long after his retirement, which occurred presumably no later than 1925. The family only moved to Stuttgart in September 1938, where one year later the father passed away and was buried.

At the end of the school year 1908/1909, before Samuel Rosenberger began working in Laupheim, the school only

consisted of one class with 15 students. Apparently, class photos like the one below were no longer taken after his employment, or at least none of them have been preserved.



Israelite school in Laupheim with teacher Bernhard Sichel, 1909.

(Leo-Baeck-Institute, NY)

Names of the students depicted, from left to right:

Top row: Julie Nördlinger, Marie (Mina) Friedberger, Emmy Heumann, Recha Schmal.

Middle: Hilda Einstein, Mina Lämmle, Fredel Nathan, Hermann Nördlinger, Gretel Gideon, Theodor Einstein, Poldele Friedberger.

Sitting: Selma Wertheimer, Geddi Löwenthal, Hermine Wertheimer, Sophie Einstein.

Numerous children from the Bergmann's extended family completed their primary education with Mr Rosenberg as their teacher. Both Gretel and John H. Bergmann therefore characterize him in great detail in their memoirs – and both sources portray him in a negative way. Gretel Bergman was especially critical in

her judgement, however, she did suffer considerably from the school system at the time, she was not afraid to speak her mind, and might have exaggerated a little. Gretel Bergmann's memories of her time at the primary school in Laupheim:

"I truly believe that the worst teachers were only sent to small towns and I can truthfully say that I only ever had two rather decent teachers in all my school years.

The Laupheim school system was unusual in many ways: For the first three years, Catholic, Protestant and Jewish children attended their own denominational schools. Afterwards some proceeded to secondary school, while the rest stayed together until eighth grade and then started working or took an apprenticeship.

The Jewish school only consisted of one class; I hardly believe there were ever more than twenty students. It seems quite incredible to me that we learned anything at all in those first three years. (...)

You do not need to be a supporter of Sigmund Freud to realize that something has to be wrong with a teacher who flies into a fit of rage whenever he hears the word 'child'. As soon as boredom in class became unbearable, someone simply had to call out the hated word and the hunt began. The culprit ran through the room, the teacher, birch rod in hand, gave chase. Whenever the menacing hand came too close to the wrongdoer, someone else called out the provoking word from the other end of the classroom, causing the teacher to run after his new target like a raging bull until he was completely exhausted.

Hygiene education was particularly memorable. Our teacher considered a daily tooth brushing a waste of time. He demonstrated his method of cleaning his teeth with his tongue, explaining how this was far more effective than brushing. However, as his neglected teeth were almost moss green, we did not feel tempted to adopt this timesaving technique. (...)
Whenever this so-called educator wanted to erase something from the slates we used for writing instead of paper, he would simply spit on them. (...) The teacher also had the repulsive habit of cleaning his ears with our slate pencils. Every time he used mine for his ears, I would throw it on the ground with all my strength, even though I knew he would smack my palm with the rod he always had at hand. (...)

The Jewish law has specific regulations concerning slaughter in order for the meat to be kosher. This was the shochet's job, which in our case was performed by the teacher. It was common for someone to bring a chicken during class to have it slaughtered following the correct ritual. The teacher would then call out: 'Who wants to hold the chicken?' He considered this a special honor for the volunteers. The killing mercifully took place in the schoolyard and it was overwhelming to see him return with the bloody knife between his teeth, his clothes stained with blood.

Rosa and Frieda Rosenberger.

(Ernst Schäll Archive)



To supplement his undoubtedly meager income he kept chickens. They were all over the place, in the hall as well as on the lawn next to the school building, which served as our schoolyard. As they were pecking voraciously, they defecated where we were supposed to play during the breaks."

Gretel Bergmann's cousin John H. Bergmann judges Rosenberger more leniently, but confirms his disgusting personal hygiene. Considering the teacher's rural background, Bergmann sees him as inappropriate for a community of urban character such as Laupheim.

"Rosenberger was often criticized for being an incompetent teacher, which was probably justified. The fact is that many of the students who graduated from his school were able to read and write Hebrew and were well versed in religious matters. (...) He had his daughters supervise his classes, when he had other religious duties to attend to. (...) Him returning to class with the shochet knife between his teeth and his excessive use of the rod might well have been objectionable. (...) However, as a result of his education or not, most of the Jewish children were among the

best pupils when entering secondary school. It is difficult to say whether this was thanks to him or not."

Little is known about the Rosenberger family and their three children. Saly, the youngest of the three daughters, is mistakenly registered as a boy in the cemetery record (page 512, grave S 27/15). She passed away already in 1935 and was therefore buried in Laupheim. Saly attended a home economics school, where girls of all confessions met every Sunday afternoon. A photo of 1913 shows her in the front row, proudly presenting her self-made bag.

Ernst Schäll's archive has kept an unusual photograph of the two older sisters, Rosa and Frieda. All three of them remained unmarried, most likely because they belonged to the severely decimated generation of the First World War.



*M. Wächter, Saly Rosenberger, Mina Friedberger.
(Braun, "Altlaupheimer Bilderbogen", p. 61)*

Rosa, the eldest, is reported to have been assigned for deportation from Stuttgart to Riga on December 1, 1941, where she was murdered on an unknown date. Many of her former acquaintances from Laupheim suffered the same fate. Frieda, the younger sister, also fell victim to the Shoah, however, the location and date of her death remain unknown.

In March 1942, the 78-year-old mother Babette was taken away by those responsible for the genocide. She was deported to the Dellmensingen detention camp near her old hometown Laupheim. A merciful fate saved her from further deportation. She died only a few days after her arrival there and thus was at least granted a grave on the Jewish cemetery in Laupheim. However, it was only after the war that her grave was prepared and received a gravestone.

Sources:

Gretel Bergmann: „Ich war die große jüdische Hoffnung“. Erinnerungen einer außergewöhnlichen Sportlerin. Ed.: Haus der Geschichte Baden-Württemberg, 2003, S. 43–45.

John H. Bergmann: „Die Bergmanns aus Laupheim“. Eine Familienchronik. Ed. Karl Neidlinger, Laupheim, 2006, S. 66 f.

Nathanja Hüttenmeister: „Der jüdische Friedhof Laupheim“, Laupheim 1998, S. 512. John-Bergmann-Nachlass, Stadtarchiv Laupheim.