

LITERATURE

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CREDITS

Ruth Weikersheimer, 1935. This photo is printed in: Römer, Gernot: Schwäbische Juden. Leben und Leistungen aus zwei Jahrhunderten in Selbstzeugnissen, Berichten und Bildern. Augsburg 1990. S. 168.

RUTH WEIKERSHEIMER

* 1910 – MEMMINGEN, MÜNCHEN



My name is Ruth Weikersheimer, but my maiden name is Ruth Guggenheimer. I was born into a very happy family on 20th July 1910 in Memmingen. My sister Nelly is three years older than me and my brother Fritz is four years older. Our **apartment** speaks for itself when it comes to the wealthy, Jewish middle class. When you enter it, you notice at first an old farmer's closet and an antique coffer by the window. My mother is very strict about table manners when sitting at the dining table.

My father Max Guggenheimer and my mother Rosa Guggenheimer have known each other since they went to school together. They are known as the „married Jewish horse trader of the Allgäu“. My father is a well respected merchant and quite wealthy. He bought our **house**, which is known as the **Hartliebsches Palais**¹, located in Bahnhofstraße 6 on 20th April 1905. Together with his brothers he runs a horse trade, stables and offices in Herrenstraße 7.

My siblings and I, we didn't really notice the years of war. All of us were really young at that time and my parents took care of anything. The first winter after the war was harder for us than the years during the war because me and my siblings we often had to go to bed still hungry. From spring 1919 and its better supply of groceries, our situation got better and better. In 1921, the economic state of affairs in Germany worsened due to an increase of prices because of the inflation. Right-wing extremist tabloid rags² seized this opportunity for their antisemitic³ campaigning. At that time, I didn't pick it up though. This incitement of the people⁴ led to the first antisemitic riots in Germany. I heard about a respected Jew being spit at, insulted and chased through the city. Meanwhile young demonstrators tried to break our gate and screamed: „You will be next!“ This tumult scared me so much that I didn't want to leave the house for days. I really started to grasp these incidents later in life when I grew up.

In our house, we made music on cozy winter evenings. My parents like to sing a lot. Since I was a child, I have always seen my father as the best singer ever and I really enjoyed when he sang songs like „Stürmisch die Nacht und die See geht hoch“, „Am Brunnen vor dem Tore“ or „Alle Tage ist nicht Sonntag, alle Tag gibt's keinen Wein“. Some years later, these singing evenings were replaced by a gramophone but my father's voice could never be replaced.

¹ cottage, **Prachtbau**, **Sommerschloss**

² „Revolverblatt“ ist die despektierliche Bezeichnung für eine reißerisch aufgemachte Zeitung bzw. Boulevardzeitung, die zur Steigerung ihrer Auflage über besonders spektakuläre Vorkommnisse berichtet.

³ Directed against Jews, not the Jewish religion but meant as the Jewish race

⁴ Volksverhetzung ist das Aufstacheln zum Hass gegen Teile der Bevölkerung mit der Aufforderung zu Gewalt- und Willkürmaßnahmen gegen diese.

When I was 15 years old, I spent a lot of time with my friends Lolo und Bertha; but also with Herbert Werner, whom I was in love with. He was tall and had black hair. Unfortunately, I could not meet with him in secret since my parents were against me loving him. This is why my friends had to accompany us when we met in the park or when we biked to a pond nearby. This love ended as fast as it had started. As soon as Herbert moved away for his higher education, we were only able to communicate by writing letters. My mother soon found out about that and our relationship. She wouldn't stop talking me out of it. Over time, Herbert wrote more scarcely and so our relationship came close to an end.

I was very enthusiastic about going to **primary school Volksschule**⁵. I enjoyed the most learning the alphabet and being able to read. In contrast to that, I found embroidering and knitting very hard to learn because I just couldn't handle needles. After finishing **primary school, Volksschule** and passing the entrance examination for **secondary school Realschule**, a new chapter in my life began. I still think dearly about my teacher Professor Gürtner. He managed to arouse my love for nature by taking our class on hiking trips through forests every Sunday in spring and summer. As low as my interest was in knitting in **primary school**, a slow was my enthusiasm for mathematics in **secondary school**.

After graduating from **secondary school Realschule**, I attended business school⁶ in Munich. My mother arranged for me to live with a **doctor's family**. **Arztfamilie** After I finished my apprenticeship, I returned to Memmingen. Thanks to my father I am now working as a secretary in a grain company and I moved back in with my family.

Here I am once again in my home town. I am a member of the alpine club and the tennis club. And I am very happy about living at the foot of the mountains.

⁵ Nowadays elementary school

⁶ Handelsschule ist eine berufsbildende Schulform für kaufmännische Berufe.