



„Vater sagt, er will die Firma nicht verkaufen. Der Name, er soll mit uns untergehen [...]“.

LAUPHEIM

Das Tagebuch Dr. Hertha Nathorffs (geb. Einstein) vermittelt ein lebendiges und manchmal alptraumhaftes Bild von den Erfahrungen der jüdischen Ärztin in Nazi-Deutschland. Am 24. April beschreibt sie einen Besuch bei ihren Eltern in ihrem Geburtsort Laupheim in Schwaben: Viele jüdische Geschäfte waren verkauft worden, ihre Besitzer emigriert. Die Bemühungen der Nazis, die Juden zu verleumden und zu isolieren, waren so erfolgreich gewesen, dass die Vorübergehenden Angst hatten, sie zu grüßen. Ihr Vater hatte ihr mitgeteilt, er werde die Firma, seit vier Generationen im Familienbesitz, nicht verkaufen, sondern lieber mit ihrem Namen untergehen. Das Ausmaß der Isolation, der deutsche Juden ausgesetzt waren, geht auch aus einer Episode hervor, die im selben Eintrag erwähnt wird: Dr. Nathorff ist überrascht, dass ihr ehemaliger Professor tatsächlich den Mut hatte, ihr durch eine Patientin Grüße ausrichten zu lassen.

QUELLE

Leo Baeck Institute – New York | Berlin 

Hertha Nathorff, Memoir, *Reichstagsbrandt*, ME 460.

GESTERN UND DIE TAGE ZUVOR

23. APRIL

DER PRATER

22. APRIL

FACHKRÄFTE WANDERN AUS

21. APRIL

EIN JÜDISCHES FILMINSTITUT?

Handout

Our name should perish with us. A Jewish physician describes a nightmarish visit to her hometown

April 24, 1938: Berlin based physician Hertha Nathorff visits her hometown and notes the startling changes in the once familiar surroundings.

Topics

Discrimination; marginalization; emigration; medical profession

Source

<https://www.lbi.org/1938projekt/detail/our-name-should-perish-with-us/>

Type: Diary (typescript)

Date: April 24, 1938

LAUPHEIM

The diary of Dr. Hertha Nathorff (née Einstein) paints a vivid and at times nightmarish picture of the Jewish physician's experiences in Nazi Germany. On April 24, she describes a visit with her parents in her native Laupheim in Swabia. Many Jewish shops had been sold, and their owners had emigrated. The Nazis' efforts to malign and isolate the Jews had been so successful that passers-by were afraid to greet her. Her father had informed her that he was not going to sell the company which had been in the family's possession for four generations and that he would prefer that it perish along with their name. The degree of isolation experienced by German Jews at the time is also evident in another episode mentioned in the diary: Dr. Nathorff is amazed at the fact that her former professor had the courage to send her regards through a patient.

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Background Information

Biographical information

Hertha Nathorff was born in 1895. In 1923 she was appointed as director of a children's home and baby nursery run by the Red Cross in Berlin Charlottenburg, and her husband, Erich, was an internist and senior physician at the Moabit Hospital. Additionally, the couple had a private practice. Shortly after the Nazis came to power, both lost their positions. Until then Hertha Nathorff has been the first and only female member of Berlin's Medical Chamber. The married couple maintained their joint practice until September 1938, when the licenses of all Jewish physicians were revoked. Erich Nathorff was among the few Jewish physicians who were allowed to tend to the needs of Jewish patients as so-called "caretakers of the sick." He was arrested at the November Pogroms and incarcerated at the Sachsenhausen concentration camp leaving Hertha Nathorff to fend for herself and take care of the family's emigration. She sent her son on a Kindertransport to England and managed to obtain US visa for her husband and herself. In 1939 they arrived in London from where they continued to New York. Although the family escaped, neither Erich nor Hertha were able to continue their successful medical career as their degrees weren't recognized in the US. Hertha Nathorff never returned to Germany and died in 1993 in New York.

Further information

Hertha Nathorff's German memoir can be accessed through DigiBaeck:

Hertha Nathorff, Memoir, Reichstagsbrandt, ME 460

<http://www.lbi.org/digibaek/results/?qtype=pid&term=423505>

Analyzing source material

- What kind of source is depicted?
- When does it date from?
- Where was it written?
- For which audience?
- From which perspective is the story told?
- How does the person describe the situation?
- Which words is he/she using?
- Which feelings are being expressed?
- What are the main points?
- How can the source be put into its historical context?

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