

***Jüdische Rundschau*, 25 April 1933: article on the suicide of a Jew
with German nationalist convictions¹**

Personal tragedy

We received correspondence from Stuttgart: of the cases that reveal how current events are driving Jewish people to take their own lives,² there is one from *Stuttgart* worth mentioning given its accompanying circumstances. A young retailer, 31 years of age,³ an enthusiastic supporter of German gymnastics and sport and squad leader of a gymnastics association, living a settled life, has shot himself dead. Among his papers was a marked news item on the decision by the German Gymnastics Association to introduce the Aryan Paragraph,⁴ as well as the following letter addressed to his friends.

My dear friends,

I'm bidding you a final farewell! A *German* Jew could not bring himself to live with the awareness that he is regarded as a traitor to the fatherland by the movement by which nationalist Germany is hoping to be saved! I go without hatred or resentment. I cherish a deep wish – may reason soon call a halt to this! And because, until such a point, I am unable to do anything at all based on my way of thinking, I am attempting by virtue of my suicide to shake up my Christian friends. You might be able to recognize from this step I am taking how things look now for us German Jews. How much more gladly would I have given up my life for my fatherland! Do not mourn, but try to raise awareness of the situation, and help the truth to prevail.

In that way you will do me the greatest honour!

Your F...⁵

This case and this letter typify a phenomenon repeatedly observed during these days: in these times of severe turmoil, the Jew whose life revolves around the fact that he has *switched off* his Jewishness is more defenceless than someone who is somehow metaphysically bound to Judaism, whether by faith or by blood. F. wanted to die as a witness to his Germandom, but through his death he has, beyond his knowledge and wishes, also become a witness to the cause of Judaism.⁶

1 'Persönliche Tragödie', *Jüdische Rundschau*, 25 April 1933, p. 163. This document has been translated from German.

2 On the increase in suicides among German Jews, see Doc. 41, 9 May 1933.

3 Fritz Rosenfelder (1901–1933), retailer; partner in the firm Moritz Rosenfelder, 1932; sports coach of the gymnastics league in Bad Cannstatt.

4 On 8/9 April 1933 the main committee of the German Gymnastics Association voted to introduce the Aryan Paragraph. On the events in the German Gymnastics Association, see Doc. 61, 1 July 1933, and Doc. 80, 23 Sept. 1933.

5 Footnote in the original: 'At the request of the family, the name is to remain anonymous.'

6 *Der Stürmer* printed the suicide note on its front page under the heading 'Der tote Jude' ('The Dead Jew'), gave his full name, and commented on the suicide with the caption 'Fritz Rosenfelder is sensible and hangs himself': *Der Stürmer*, no. 30, July 1933, pp. 1–2.