

# Gedenkstätten- Rundschau

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## From the Neckar River to the Mediterranean – Shavei Tzion Was Founded 82 Years Ago.

Barbara Staudacher, Horb. Translated by Rosy Lumsden and Sarah Davis-Röck

“Once upon a time there was a village in the Black Forest and this village would have remained completely unknown if we hadn’t come to Shavei Tzion. Yes, you got it, Rexingen

became famous because of Shavei Tzion, Shavei Tzion, on the other hand, became famous because of the Rexingers.” This is how Pinchas Erlanger from Ravensburg, a baker and

tourist guide in Shavei Tzion, liked to characterize the two villages when he took groups of German visitors around his new home. And today, 10 years after his death, this still applies.



The first day in Shavei Tzion. In the background, the barracks made from prefabricated parts are being erected. From left: Hans Schwarz, Siegfried Steinharter, Hermann Gideon, Isidor Loewengart, Manfred Scheuer, Manfred Weil, and Leopold Schwarz. (Courtesy Rexinger Synagogenverein)

Dear friends all over the world!

Since 2008, the *Gedenkstätten-Rundschau* is the biannual joint periodical of the *Gedenkstättenverbund Gäu-Neckar-Alb*, a confederation of thirteen memorial associations in the German state of Baden-Württemberg. The *Gedenkstätten-Rundschau* provides both the *Gedenkstättenverbund's* member associations and the public with information about research and current projects.

Every member association is in close contact with descendants of Jewish families and former concentration camp inmates. Children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren regularly visit the places which were of such importance to their ancestors. The descendants support our work with photos, documents, family stories, and last but not least by encouraging and appreciating our work.

This special issue of the *Gedenkstätten-Rundschau* in English is a little thank you to all our friends who do not speak German. Thank you for your interest in our work and your support!

Finally, we would like to thank all authors who contributed to this issue!

Most of the visitors who come to Rexingen to see the former Synagogue or the old Jewish graveyard know of Shavei Tzion or have been there. And vice versa, Rexingen is nearly a household name for those who come to Shavei Tzion to learn more about its history. There they are taken into the so called 'Rexingen Room', the memorial to those parents, grandparents, relatives, neighbours and friends who stayed behind, for those who weren't saved. 128 names are engraved on the wall and there isn't one founder of Shavei Tzion who didn't have to bear the loss of a loved one in the Shoah.

On the 9th of November 1938, the Torah scroll from Rexingen's synagogue was damaged. It was later saved and is now on display in Shavei Tzion's 'Rexingen Room'.



*"And that stood in Rexingen, high above our houses and disheartened us no end", recounted Hermann Gideon, a cattle-dealer's son. He recognised the danger and he and his sister Käthe joined the group of emigrants. (Courtesy Rexinger Synagogenverein)*

### Should We Stay or Should We Go?

On the 13th of April 1938, 80 years ago, the village by the Mediterranean was founded, situated just a few kilometres north of the old crusader town of Akko and about 20 kilometres from the Lebanese border. Its founders were men and women from Rexingen, who 2 years previously had decided to take this brave and life-saving step. Their shared vision was to create a settlement in what was then British-ruled Palestine. Their fight to achieve this was at times hard and desperate. Most of them were young people, couples with children, tradesmen, cattle-dealers, bank employees and housewives. They all had one thing in common: an increasing concern about the future and that of their children. Wolf Berlinger, a young Zionist and teacher in Rexingen in 1933, was instrumental in enabling the Rexingers to take this step.

*"As Nazi activity increased, only we, the younger generation, saw the writing on the wall. We knew that we had to act. However our attempts at trying to convince the older generation of the steps to be taken fell on deaf ears."* These lines are from Hedwig Neckarsulmer's memoirs.

Hedwig, however, managed to convince her parents Alfred and Bella Hopfer, to take that step and come to Palestine. But her parents-in-law made the decision to stay behind and died in 1942 in Treblinka.

That being said, it wasn't easy to take your parents with you. In fact nothing was easy for Jews in Nazi Germany. They were forced to emigrate, but the Nazis made this emigration as difficult as possible, from state sponsored theft to officials humiliating them at every given opportunity. And then there were the strict immigration requirements for Mandatory Palestine laid down by the English. Official approval was expensive and there were quotas for certain professions, meaning that the chances for a whole group applying for immigration status were slim. This didn't put the Rexingers off, in fact when they realised that there were not enough of them to run the planned agricultural settlement viably, they advertised in other Jewish communities in Southern Germany, resulting in families from Baisingen, Freudental, Ludwigsburg, Buchau, Bittenhausen, München, Mannheim, Würzburg and other places coming on board. In the end

# EINE JÜDISCHE GEMEINDE AUS WÜRTEMBERG BAUT IHR NEUES DORF IN GALILÄA



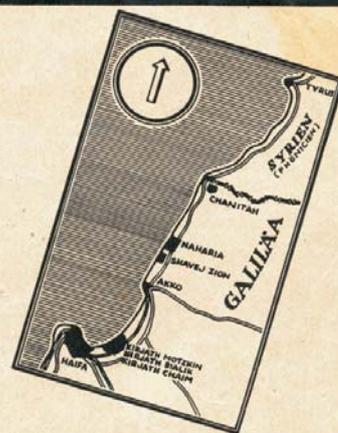
**בשוב ה' את שיבת ציון היינו כחולמים...**

## AUF BODEN, DEN DAS VOLK ERWART

Ende März landete die Alijah-Gruppe Rexingen in Haifa, und am 13. April 1938 errichtete sie zwischen Morgen und Abend südlich von Naharia eine befestigte Wohnsiedlung, den Kern des neuen Dorfes „Shavej Zion“.  
 Noch ist der Name, den sich die neue Ansiedlung gegeben hat, von der Namens-Kommission des KKL zu bestätigen; aber wer den dramatischen Tag miterlebt hat, an welchem diese jüdische Gemeinde, die aus ihrem schwäbischen Dorf in Erez Israel eingewandert ist, sich Kastell und erste Behausung zwischen den Bergen Galiläas und dem Mittelmeerstrand errichtete, in dem klingt Pathos, Zuversicht und Jubel dieses Namens mit — „Heimkehrer Zions“.  
 Hier ist zum ersten Mal die korporative Wanderung eines Teiles einer Judengemeinde aus Deutschland und ihr Neuaufbau in Palästina bewerkstelligt worden. Unter der Leitung der Kolonisationsgesellschaft Rassco, mit eigenen Mitteln, doch mit nationaler Hilfe: auf Boden, der Gemeinbesitz des jüdischen Volkes ist.  
 670 Dunam Boden, guter, wasserreicher Boden, unveräußerlicher Boden, den Heimkehrern in Erbpacht übergeben für ewige Zeiten — Heimatboden ...

Für die Alijah- und Siedlungsbe-  
 wegung mittelständischer Juden  
 dürfte dieses neue Dorf bei-  
 spielgebend werden. Jede  
 Familie wird ein eigenes Heim  
 erhalten; die einzelnen Wirt-  
 schaftszweige: Hühnerwirtschaft,  
 Gemüsewirtschaft, Viehwirt-  
 schaft, Pflanzungen sollen aber  
 gemeinsam betrieben werden.

So wird die Einwanderung eine  
 wahre „Alijah“, ein Aufstieg  
 auch zu höherer Organisation  
 von Bodenbesitz, Arbeit und  
 Gemeinschaft.



**HELFT NEUEN BODEN SICHERN — STÄRKT UNSEREN BODENFONDS!**

**KEREN KAJEMETH LEJISRAEL**

„ALS GOTT UNS WIEDER HEIMKEHREN LIESS NACH ZION, DA WAREN WIR WIE TRÄUMENDE ...“ PSALM 126,1

Wer gab den Boden?  
 Die Blaue Büchse - Deine täglichen 5 Pf.

*The Jewish National Fund used this well-distributed brochure to publicise the successful group emigration from Nazi Germany. They hoped that other Jewish communities would take note and follow in their footsteps. However, at the end of the day it was too late. Hardly anyone managed to escape after the 9th of November 1938. (Courtesy Rexinger Synagogenverein)*

they had not only enough people, but also the necessary capital and support to dare to take this step.

They had already drafted a cooperative contract, as their settlement was not to be a Kibbutz, which would have meant forgoing private property. They were too Swabian for that. They all agreed that their earnings should be paid into a common house-keeping kitty, with every family or individual being paid only according to their needs. However, they wanted to run their own households independently of one another within their own walls.

On the 6th of February 1938, the Jewish families in Rexingen held a farewell service in their synagogue with the Rabbi from Horb, Dr. Abraham Schweizer. Their parting was difficult, but they consoled themselves with the belief that in better times

they would be reunited and that there would be a lively coming and going between their old and their new offshoot community on the Mediterranean. Wolf Berlinger, the teacher who was part of the group of emigrants along with his wife, put it like this, "Today isn't a farewell party, but a party to mark the foundation of a beginning in Eretz Israel. We want to open a branch of our community there, which will gradually become our headquarters."

Unfortunately, the idea of two existing Jewish communities, one in Rexingen and the other in Shavei Tzion, was soon to be destroyed by the brutal reality of Nazi Germany.

The first group left Germany on the 14th of February and sailed from Trieste to Haifa. Not all of the 41 men, women and children were part of this group, as

the English had not yet approved all 41 immigration applications.

Some families still had to put their affairs in order, sell their house, organise the transport of their belongings and struggle with the Nazi authorities for permission to leave the country.

Their leaving was marked by spiteful comments in the press, but also, according to Resi Schwarz, by sad reactions from their neighbours who, as they were leaving in 1938, cried and asked, "Why are you going? We won't hurt you."

Once in Palestine, the first group of Rexingers joined forces with the emigrants from the other southern German communities. In the early morning of Wednesday the 13th of April 1938, they began with the creation of Shavei Tzion. Their plot,



*Aerial photograph of Shavei Tzion from 1939. In the center, one can see the barracks, the guard tower, and the wooden "Lift" containers as well as the first concrete buildings and the new water tower. On the right, next to the beach, are some small portable chicken houses. The street on the left runs to the Nahariyah-Haifa main road. (Courtesy Rexinger Synagogenverein)*

that had been chosen by 3 scouts, was given to them on the basis of a long term building lease by the Jewish National Fund.

The plot had been bought from a Turkish princess, Madame Said Pascha, and was called 'El Sitt' by the Arab neighbours, which means 'a woman's land'. It was surrounded by Arab villages. The only Jewish settlement was 3 kilometres away in Naharija, which was also founded by Jewish refugees from Germany. These refugees helped enormously with the creation of Shavei Tzion. An enclosed camp with barracks and a water and watch tower was erected within one day, thanks to prefabricated and preassembled building material.

Although their Arab neighbours reacted in different ways towards the new immigrants, they always had to be prepared for an armed attack. For that eventuality, the English provided arms and auxiliary policemen.

### **The New Life**

Life was hard and full of deprivation. From day one both the men and the women were faced with tough manual work and every day brought its own challenge, whether it was the unfamiliar climate, the strange food, the makeshift sanitation or the sheer isolation in inhospitable and dangerous terrain. And yet they managed. Little by little, they laid out gardens and fields, roads and paths, the first animals - chickens - were introduced, they rested on the Sabbath, tried out the sea and cautiously got to know the area.

Dr Manfred Scheuer, a lawyer from Heilbronn, captured all the ups and downs in that first year in his concise yet graphic diary. He was Shavei Tzion's community chairperson and mayor for 27 years.

More settlers gradually came until November 1938, when the synagogues, businesses and homes in Germa-

ny were destroyed and the men arrested and deported to Dachau. Not everyone who had committed to the cooperative managed to escape. There were instances where people's belongings were on their way to Shavei Tzion whilst they were being deported to Riga. Among them were Martha and Simon Fröhlich from Wiesensbronn, Friederike and Berhold Schweizer from Baisingen and the Lembergers from Rexingen – Isidor and Rosa with their four sons.

During Shavei Tzion's first year, houses and the water tower, which still dominates the village's image today, were built, children were born and a synagogue was erected. The first cows were brought into the village. The cattle dealers set up an extremely successful dairy farm, with the cow shed becoming the heart of the settlement. Villagers could get the bus into Haifa and on the way back, at the Shavei Tzion stop, the bus driver



*Vegetables were grown to feed the settlers, but also for them to sell, the upside being that it was one of the settlement's first incomes, the downside that it required a lot of labour. (Courtesy Rexinger Synagogenverein)*



*The former southern German cattle dealers were devoted to their cows. Here, proudly presenting their breeding success, for which they were renowned throughout Israel. (Courtesy Rexinger Synagogenverein)*

used to shout, "Zion's sheep (Schafe Zions) – all change!". And the Rexingers used to answer back with "And the cattle can stay on!"

The older generation couldn't master the new language, or at a push just a smattering, and consequently the official language of the village administration was German until the 1950s. As of 1955, the minute books were kept in both languages and after a transition period just in Hebrew.

### **The Post-War Period and Contact with the Old Homeland**

Agricultural production grew and developed well. There is hardly a fruit of the field or garden that was not planted at some time, if only in order to give it a go. Sheep breeding

was attempted, as was fishing. The cooperative set up a hotel for the tourists who began to come to Israel from Europe and Germany in greater numbers after the end of the Second World War.

On more than one occasion, the city of Stuttgart sent delegations and supported the Swabian village on the Mediterranean in many ways, including the construction of a retirement home.

For many years, Shavei Tzion was famous for the roses it grew and sent to markets in Germany and Holland. Another important area of activity was growing avocados, while dairy farming and cattle-breeding remained secure sources of income for decades. So that they were not entirely dependent on

farming, the founders set up a plastics factory, where plastic foil and thermoformed packaging was produced and used, for example, in the food industry.

All this came into being through the inventiveness, diligence and the will to survive of a few dozen families from Germany, who had been torn apart and forced to leave their homeland in order to save their lives. This remarkable creativity is one of the most astounding aspects of Israel as a country, even to today's visitors. The only thing that remains constant is change, and of course this applies equally to Shavei Tzion.

The idyllic garden village with its first settlers' houses still lies at the heart of the village today, however, the two large housing developments do now

In dem Bestreben, unseren Gästen das Beste zu bieten und ihren Aufenthalt so angenehm wie möglich zu gestalten – im Einklang mit unserer achtjährigen Tradition – haben wir nun einen neuen, hochmodernen Speisesaal gebaut.

# BEIT HAVA

## HOTEL PENSION SHAVEI-ZION

נשך TELEFON: 920391

Unser Erholungsheim ist ganzjährig geöffnet. Der Frühling ist gekommen! Jetzt ist die schönste Zeit für einen herrlichen Urlaub im „Beit Hava“. Nützen Sie die schöne Vorsaison aus!

*The Beit Hava Hotel, which was run by the cooperative, opened a new dining room in 1964, serving kosher food. This advertisement is from the Jedioth Chadashoth newspaper in Israel, on 30th April 1964. (Courtesy Rexinger Synagogenverein)*



*In the summer of 2015, young people from Horb and Shavei Tzion came together in the garden of Alisa Klapfer, right. Alisa Klapfer was born in Rexingen in 1933. Her father Alfred Pressburger was one of the three scouts who chose the location of Shavei Tzion in 1937. He died 1938 in Shavei Tzion. Alisa has two children and many grandchildren and great grandchildren. (Courtesy Rexinger Synagogenverein)*

dominate. These have been built on the land that used to be farmed. Gradually, farming ceased to be profitable and ultimately there was not enough acreage. Also, the number of cows (in what had become high-tech cowsheds) was too low. The severe environmental regulations made it impossible to remain in competition with larger agricultural settlements. Even the retirement home with its nine apartments had to be closed for financial reasons. Nevertheless, the hotel, now leased, has recently been refurbished and rebuilt to meet modern requirements, and a small group of holiday homes is usually fully booked. The plastics factory is still in production and, many years on, has begun to generate profits again.

### **Into the Future**

In the last ten years, more than a hundred young families have built houses on the areas that have been freed up, indeed many of them even have roots in Shavei Tzion. The number of children has risen signifi-

cantly. The schools are now based in neighbouring communities but there are three kindergartens and many of the children there are great, great grandchildren of the first immigrants. The small beach with its family atmosphere is popular with young and old and the surf club is housed in a chic beach-house.

There are small shops, a bar that is very popular at weekends and a cosy café with a huge choice of small, local dishes. Everything is run by young people and has a very international feeling.

The Rexingen Room with its memorial wall is still there, and a small museum about the founding years is housed in an old hut that also dates back to those times. Naharija has grown into a vibrant, multi-cultural town with a population of 55,000 and has practically merged with Shavei Tzion, separated only by a narrow watercourse and a small wood. A magnificent promenade stretches right along the beach to the town centre three kilometres away and is packed

with walkers, joggers and cyclists morning, noon and night. The neighbouring Arab village of Masra'a, on the other side of the main road between Haifa and Naharija, is where people go for a trip to the post office or the huge Feisal vegetable supermarket, that draws customers from miles around with its spectacular and excellent-value produce. When construction of the high-speed railway is complete, it will take just one hour from Naharija to Tel Aviv in an air-conditioned train.

Hardly any of Shavei Tzion's 1,200 inhabitants now work there. They commute by train or car to their workplaces in the surrounding area or further afield. Today, the main responsibility of the cooperative is a social one, looking after the needs of children, young people and the elderly. Integration of the many young families into village life is a new challenge for everyone. Those original Swabian roots have grown to form a tightly-knit network with roots from all corners of the globe.

# Letting History Speak: Storytelling from the Shavei Tzion Archives

Judy Temime, Shavei Tzion, Israel

When I was drafted to work in the Shavei Tzion archives at the beginning of 2013, after the deteriorating health of our very veteran archivist, Uri Gefen, forced him and his wife to relocate near their children, I asked for an explanation of my mandate. After all, though I'd studied history in college (true, almost 50 years earlier), I'd had no experience with archival work and Uri and I had had no opportunity to transition. With no clear framework to guide me, I spent several weeks opening and looking briefly through every box and folder on the shelves, and I realized, then, that even if the archivist pursues his work in social isolation, the archives holdings are communal property. The materials we have are themselves engaging and moving, and exploring our community's unique historical narrative seems to appeal even to the newest of Shavei Tzion's inhabitants. What I've been working at since those first weeks is sharing the contents of the archives with as wide a public as possible.

## Working with Universities and Schools

Over these last seven years, I've fielded a number of queries from university students (in history, architecture and film) and from scholars. In one rewarding instance, I was able to supply a few bits of information to Dr. Suzy Gruss, a lecturer on the literature of the Jewish people at Bar Ilan University who was preparing to present a paper at an international symposium. What was the Shavei Tzion connection? The subject of her lecture was the editor of a Ladino newspaper in Israel who was, as well, a playwright. In 1953, one of his plays, translated into Hebrew, was the centerpiece of the elaborate program marking the 15th anniversary of the founding of Shavei Tzion. I provided a scan of the mimeographed German-language playbill from that evening, produced for those moshav members,



*The Shavei Tzion Archives are located in only two rooms. However, it houses important documents on the history of the settlement, its families and the community's relations all over the world, especially with Germany. (Courtesy Shavei Tzion Archives)*

parents of members, and guests who could not follow the Hebrew action on stage.

Occasionally, as well, pupils visit the archives to gather information for school projects. Our fourth-graders typically visit all of their classmates' home villages during the weeks they study "My Moshav", and a talk at the archives is a natural part of that learning experience. One of Shavei Tzion's fourth-graders, Natan Cohen, signed on as a volunteer and during the year or so we worked together, we completed several projects, including polishing a Hebrew key to first and early settlers' names that I'd compiled from the original 1939 register. Natan actually caught more than one error in my work. Today, Natan busies himself with other activities (mainly water sports), but 13-year old Hila Shahar has been volunteering at the archives for almost two years now. She has a real interest in our history, a genuine respect for our veteran residents, an aesthetic point of view, and the skill set that young people bring with such facility

to tasks we older folks might find challenging.

High-school students, too, sometimes visit the archives, and under the aegis of the country-wide "Shelach" enrichment program, classes from the neighboring town of Nahariya have spoken with me or with Hava Berkowitz, the venerable "first child" born here who brings that vantage point to her conversations with the youngsters. The "Shelach" program—the Hebrew acronym stands for "field, nation, society"—gets students out of the classroom to learn about Israel by walking it. With a population of 60,000 today, Nahariya is far removed from the tiny, fragile colony of the late 1930s and most of its current high school students have no family connection to the German-Jewish story. For them, a visit to Shavei Tzion may be quite as eye-opening as a visit to a Bedouin village.

## Tours of Shavei Tzion

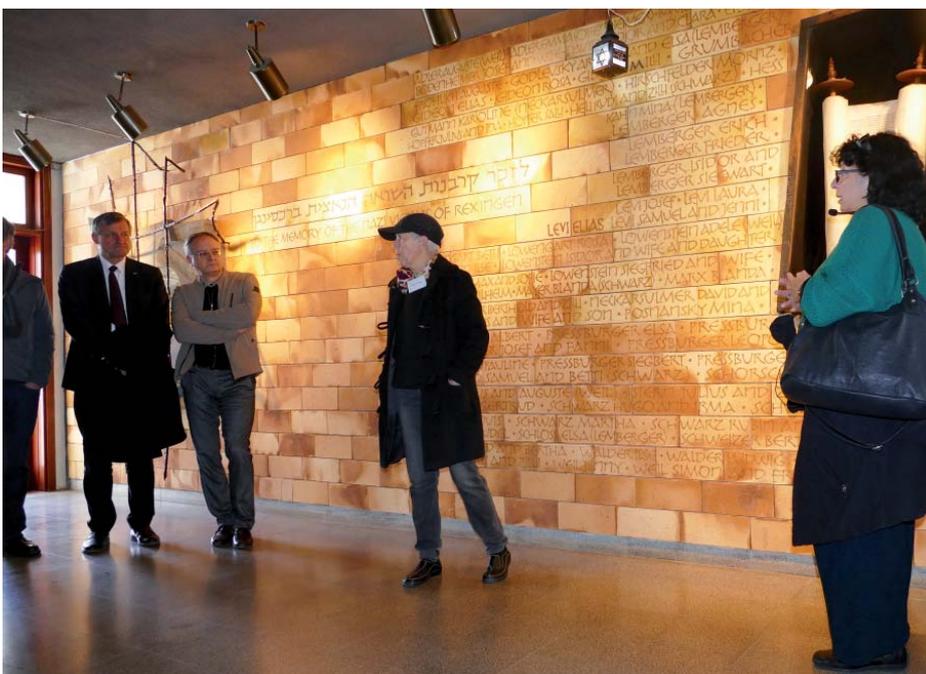
Besides the students who do a Shavei Tzion walk-about, many adults visit the moshav, as participants in char-



*Often my historical tour starts at the only remaining barrack from the year 1938. (Courtesy Rexinger Synagogenverein)*



*Amos Fröhlich, here with Sabine Kurtz, vice-president of the state parliament of Baden-Württemberg, and Mayor Dr. Schairer from Stuttgart, can tell the story of the settlement from its beginnings as a contemporary witness. (Courtesy Rexinger Synagogenverein)*



*The Rexinger Room preserves the names of the Jews murdered in the Shoah and a damaged, rescued Torah scroll from Rexingen. (Courtesy Landeszentrale für politische Bildung Baden-Württemberg)*

tered tours from within Israel or from abroad, or in informal Israeli or foreign groupings of friends or families who have an interest in the history of the country and, especially, in the dramatic pre-state years of Jewish Palestine. Other visitors may return to Shavei Zion on a kind of "roots" tour, wishing to see again, or to show their children, the moshav they knew when they attended our celebrated summer camp in the 1940s and 50s. In those years, the camp served urban

families who sent their children here for "recreation and recuperation" in a setting that allowed them to enjoy the seaside and also, while food rationing was still in effect, afforded them an ample and nutritious farm-style diet. Other visitors may be motivated by curiosity to follow a trail that begins, literally, in Rexingen or begins with the clues in family reminiscences. During 2019, more than 30 groups, including several from German schools, enjoyed tours of the moshav.

Tours are usually planned and confirmed well in advance but, once in a while, a person or a small group of people will simply appear at the archives, trying their luck and hoping to talk a little with whomever they find there. On those occasions, if I can, I'll drop whatever I'm doing and devote 90 minutes or more to doing a proper – if impromptu – tour. In that way, I once spent part of a late afternoon with a Jewish businessman from Chile whose parents had immigrated there from Germany: Shavei Zion was a name quite familiar to him. One spring day several years ago, I received a call asking me to host a group of North Koreans who were camping out around the country and had just finished having coffee (or perhaps tea) at our "Breakfast Club" restaurant here. I regret very much that they had to be off setting up camp elsewhere before I could get home from Tel Aviv that day: what an interesting meeting that would have been!

Amos Fröhlich, who came here in 1938 as a boy of eight, often receives German-speaking visitors and he brings to those encounters not only the fascinating recollections of a childhood and youth spent here, but



*In one room of the last barrack the carpenter's workshop of Julia Rotbein is reconstructed. (Courtesy Shavei Tzion Archives)*

*Another room shows the Schumacher workshop of Asher Steinmann. (Courtesy Shavei Tzion Archives)*

also a talent for explaining an Israeli world view in words that are both passionate and rational. I myself have long since become a seasoned hand at guiding visitors around the moshav in both Hebrew and English, but I'm still sometimes surprised at how a tourist's question can force me to reconsider an event I'd thought I knew well.

### **Chronicling Shavei Tzion's History**

For the first four years, much of my time at the archives had been given to researching and writing articles on subjects drawn from the foundational years of the moshav. I wrote in Hebrew and then translated those articles into English for an enthusiastic readership of more than 130 persons who received them posted by email as PDF files. I've also placed print copies in our local library. I've written about religious tradition, the communal kitchen, childhood, transportation and transport, gardens, Hebrew and German, family life and much more. Each article has drawn upon written memoirs of moshav members and others; interviews which I conducted with elderly members; old community newsletters; web publications; historical periodicals; varied print material including the Heinz Högerle-Carsten Kohlmann-Barbara Staudacher *Ort der Zuflucht und Verheißung* catalogue issued in



*In spring 2019 I was able to show the last barrack to Muhterem Aras, president of the state parliament of Baden-Württemberg. She had come to Israel with a large delegation of members of the state parliament. (Courtesy Landeszentrale für politische Bildung Baden-Württemberg)*

2008 for Shavei Tzion's 70th anniversary; and photos and other graphics which amplify the text. I've tried, as well, to provide some context for those focused articles by touching on contemporaneous events in Palestine-the Land of Israel-the State of Israel. The feedback I got was encouraging and it was always terribly gratifying to be told by one of our seniors, "I read such-and-such a thing in your last article and, you know, I'd forgotten that!" Or, even, "I never knew that!"

At the beginning of 2018, for Shavei Tzion's 80th anniversary, I created two Facebook pages for the archives, one in Hebrew and one in English.\* I post new material on these parallel pages every week, usually texts and photos, but sometimes also video clips taken from film dating to the 1940s. Facebook, I thought, would be a perfect tool for reaching even more of a readership than the much longer articles had.

\* <https://www.facebook.com/shaveitzionarchives/>



*Next to the last barrack, a plough that was formerly used in the agriculture of Shavei Tzion is exhibited. (Courtesy Shavei Tzion Archives)*

Despite having lived in Shavei Tzion for 44 years, I probably learn something new every time I review a document or listen to a story. I've been surprised by the generosity of my informants and also by the willingness of persons I've contacted "cold" to help me pursue a line of inquiry. In one such instance, in response to several questions I had, Rabbi Dr. Walter Rothschild of Berlin, an authority on the railways of Palestine before the founding of the State of Israel, sent me a 40-page extract from his doctoral dissertation on the subject and also gave me an introduction to Chen Melling, the archivist of Israel Railways. Chen then enabled me to spend an entire morning in research at the Railways' archives in Haifa. And as a collateral product of my work since 2013, I've been able to exercise and expand the bit of German I studied in 1968.

Although much has already been written on many aspects of life in Shavei Tzion, I believe that gathering material from a really broad variety of sources and knitting it together as I am trying to do, helps to illuminate the human experience at the level of the family and the individual. I'm interested in reporting the calculations and compromises that allowed the early settlers to live together and thrive. I'm much less interested in the profits made by the dairy shed in any given year except as they bear on the human story.

Not long after I took up my position at the archives, I renewed the appeal

to middle-aged and older members of the moshav to open for themselves what we call a "personal file". The file should contain, at a minimum, a completed questionnaire which sketches the member's biography; optimally, it will contain documents, or copies of documents, and other evidence of the person's life trajectory and accomplishments. The response was frankly disappointing: I was able to add only some ten new files. On the other hand, I've created digital and print files of eulogies of members and other Shavei Tzion persons, and those files fill in at least some of the gaps where a personal file is missing.

I've also completed a map of our cemetery based on an aerial photo captured by a drone: every row and grave has received a number which will appear on the paper plan and I've recorded the contents of every gravestone inscription.

### **Renovating the Archives and Updating the Exhibition**

We expect in the near future to renovate the building in which the archives is housed, the first public building in Shavei Tzion, erected in 1940. The watch tower that overlooks the building is currently undergoing a thorough renovation that will preserve its historic character. In the meantime, Yehuda Shilo initiated changes to the small exhibit space in our "First Settlers' Barrack", an authentic wooden hut from the 1938 Tower and Stockade camp that was moved to its present location and rehabilitated more than 20 years ago. Yehuda, Rami Glaser and I have replaced a collection of smaller photographs with several carefully-chosen enlargements; we've cut down the legs of the table on which is mounted the scale model of the original camp made by Hillel Baum, in order to make the model more easily viewed by all visitors, including young children; and we've set up a vignette of the workshop used



*The watchtower from the founding period of Shavei Tzion and the adjacent building that houses the archive. The picture was taken in November 2019. (Courtesy Shavei Tzion Archives)*



*Pictures from 2020. The watchtower is undergoing major renovation. The archiv building will be renovated in 2020.  
(Courtesy Shavei Tzion Archives)*

by our bicycling shoemaker, Nahariya resident Asher Steinmann, and also a vignette of the carpentry shop where Jula Rotbein worked for many years. All of the vintage tools displayed in the barrack have been lent by Rami from his extensive collections. The space allows visitors to look into all of the articles I've written as well as the early journal kept by Dr. Manfred Scheuer. In the garden between the barrack and the synagogue, we've

placed an impressive old plow and planted a dozen young trees. The little path leading to the barrack has been repaired and resurfaced.

From fall 2015 to early spring 2016, I attended an introductory course for kibbutz and moshav members working in their village archives. An important feature of the course was convincing us students of the need to responsibly digitize our archives' holdings but, for the time being, that

remains a dauntingly major task for Shavei Tzion. In any case, neither the course nor the experience I've happily acquired since 2013 allow me to call myself an archivist: that is a credential reserved for professionals. But I'm quite willing to be thought of as the present guardian of the Shavei Tzion archives, as a spokesperson for our very particular history and as (perhaps most of all) a good storyteller.

**Judy Temime about herself:**

I was born in Chicago in 1950 and grew up there, attending public schools and receiving my Jewish education at the reform temple to which my family belonged. I earned a B.A. in history and in English at the University of Illinois at Chicago, and an M.A. in education at Northwestern University. During all of 1974, I lived on a kibbutz, learning basic Hebrew in the „ulpan“ there and working as volunteer in the citrus orchards. I've lived in Shavei Tzion since late 1975, and have been a member of the agricultural co-operative (the moshav) since spring 1977. Before I began working in the moshav's historical archives in 2013, I'd worked in our roses hothouses, in child care, and in gardening. I also lifeguarded at the moshav's swimming pool for several



*(Courtesy Benedict von Bremen)*

summers, managed the communal laundry for five years and then managed our small old age home for 21 years. In addition, for more than

40 years, I tutored schoolchildren in English, and taught English in adult education classes.

# A Sixty-Year Friendship of Muslim and Jew, Born on the Soccer Pitch

**Muhammed Einan and Motke Berkowitz have led parallel Galilee lives as they maintain ‘a pure friendship’**

*Diana Bletter, Israel (Originally published in The Times of Israel, November 10, 2018)*



*Mohammed Einan (left) and Motke Berkowitz, one Arab, the other a Jew, are lifelong friends who found each other through soccer. (Courtesy Diana Bletter)*

It's Monday morning and two 83-year-olds are meeting for their weekly coffee. Motke Berkowitz, or Berko, and Mohammed Einan have been friends for more than sixty years. That's a feat in itself, but it's not just that.

The pair met playing on a soccer team in 1954 or 1955 (they're not quite sure); one man is Muslim, the other a Jew, and they live in neighboring villages in the Western Galilee.

Each week, Berko drives across the highway from Shavei Zion to the coastal village of Mazra'a. While his wife, Chava, shops for groceries in Faisal's Supermarket, Berkowitz sits with Mahmood – as he calls Einan – sipping coffee in the second-floor food court. Outside the picture windows, in the distance, stretches the Mediterranean Sea.

Berkowitz and Einan played on Hapoel Nahariya's soccer team in the 1950s and 1960s, when, for seven years, Berkowitz was the captain of the team.

He now walks with difficulty, using a metal walker, after two operations

on his back. Einan says he isn't in quite as good shape as he used to be, either.

Instead of running marathons – he won second place in the Sea of Galilee Tiberias Marathon in the Sixty-Plus category in 1995 – he has cut down on long distances, he said, “running only ten kilometers twice a week.”

Both men distinctly remember the goal that gave Hapoel Nahariya its national championship in 1957.

“Berko passed the ball to the shortest player on the team,” Einan said. “He headed the ball to score the winning goal.”

When Einan first joined the soccer team, he was the first and only Arab. At the time, he said, “Arabs didn't play sports.”

He was studying in a program sponsored by Mapam, Israel's United Workers Party, in which he lived on a nearby kibbutz and learned Hebrew, farming and sports. He liked soccer and during a friendly match between Mazra'a and Nahariya, the Nahariya coach asked Einan to join the team.

The only reason that Berkowitz even

made the soccer team, playing forward and then center, was because he happened to bike over to the soccer field to watch his older brother, Katriel, who was already a player. From the sidelines, Berkowitz sprinted



*Mohammed Einan (left) and Motke Berkowitz in their soccer gear in the 1950s. (Courtesy Motke Berkowitz)*

to retrieve the ball whenever it went out, kicking it back into the field, and the coach signed him up.

Berkowitz was born in 1935 in Transylvania, Romania, and as a little boy, fled the Nazis with his father and older brother. After the war, Berkowitz, then 13, left Europe in a clandestine boat mission with 15-year-old Katriel and other youngsters, headed for then-Palestine.

The British captured the boat and sent the youths to Cyprus, but they eventually reached their final destination. The two brothers attended a boarding school in central Israel, and then made their way north to Moshav Shavei Zion, then an agricultural cooperative.

In the beginning, Berkowitz said, he worked as a p'kak, a plug.

"I filled in holes in manpower in every job on the moshav," he said.

"I used to get up at three in the morning to milk cows and then bike to soccer practice."

After his army service, he spent most of his years working in Shavei Zion's farming branch, what he called the falcha, the Arab word for fields.

Einan, who was born in the same year, grew up in the Galilee village of Sheikh Danun, about ten kilometers from Mazra'a. His parents were farmers and although they could not read, he says, their seasonal fruit and vegetables "tasted a lot better than the sprayed produce today." In fact, he still farms his father's land in Sheikh Danun, growing olive trees, lemons and pomegranates.

Until the 1948 Israeli War of Independence, Einan attended a religious Muslim school. After the war, he went to live with his mother in the village of Mazra'a while his father stayed in Sheikh Danun with his second wife. Then Mapam selected Einan and other Arab youths to participate in a seminar program that would groom them to become leaders in their respective villages. The hope was, he said, to work for peace.

"But the years passed and nobody has brought us any closer to hope or light," he said. To support his family, Einan drove a taxi and continued to stay in shape. "If government leaders played sports, they could have put a



*Mohammed Einan's wife, Heediyah. (Courtesy Mohammed Einan)*

stamp on a peace deal a long time ago." "Sports brings people together," Berkowitz agreed. "I felt a connection to Mahmood as soon as he joined the team and I have felt it ever since."

At the coffee shop, the men talk occasionally about politics, but mostly about sports. Some of their teammates have died; others have moved away. Every now and then, Berkowitz will try to organize a get-together for the team. But Berkowitz and Einan are the only ones who attend their weekly meetings where they reminisce about their past, and discuss the everyday happenings in their somewhat parallel lives.

Einan and his wife, Heediyah, have eight children, fifteen grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren. Berkowitz and Chava have three children, seven grandchildren, and think they will soon be expecting their first great-grandchild.

When Berkowitz's children were small, he and Chava used to take them on hikes in the fields near Mazra'a, and then stop to visit Einan's house on the way back. Historically, the two communities have always had good relations. But the fields have given way to houses, and their children have all grown.



*Chava Berkowitz, Motke's wife. (Courtesy Motke Berkowitz)*

These days, the only hike Berkowitz can do is on Saturday morning when he and Chava make their way slowly down the street to the local synagogue. Across the road, in addition to praying five times a day, Einan goes to the mosque on Friday mornings. He says he follows the same routine as before he runs: he warms up before he begins, saying prayers before prayers. Doctors want to prescribe him medications, but he takes nothing. Sports, he believes, is his medicine.

At their food court table, neighbors and friends sometimes join them. The owner of the supermarket, Faisal Aslan, often stops by to shake their hands and say hello. After a while, her shopping done, Chava came upstairs to get Motke. He and his old friend said goodbye to one another until the following week.

"Ours has always been a pure friendship," Berkowitz said.

"We believed that if we played soccer together we could live in peace," Einan said. "I still believe that if Arabs and Jews work together, this country could be the pearl of the Middle East."

# Hirschfelder Family History

Kent Hirschfelder, St. Louis, MO, USA

To follow the history of the Hirschfelder family one must begin in southern Germany in the mid-1700's (as far back as we have been able to trace). In 1924 the Rexingen Rabbi Spatz wrote in a newspaper article that the Hirschfelder family had moved from Mühringen to Rexingen in the 18th century, which would be consistent with the records in the 2003 publication *In Stein gehauen: Lebensspuren auf dem jüdischen Friedhof in Rexingen*, the chronicle of the community's Jewish cemetery.

It indicates that Moses Hirschfelder, who was born in 1760 and died in 1838, is buried there, as is Henriette Hirschfelder (1774–1852). At that time the village was under the control of the Johanniter, the Knights of St. John, a Catholic military order. It is

thought that they settled in the village some years after the Dukes of Rexingen, crusaders who were thought to have been in the village as early as 1278. An interesting note is that one of the most prominent homes in Rexingen, which I know as the "Hirschfelder House", was acquired about 1806 by Wolf Abraham Fröhlich from the Johanniter Order (possibly against the wishes of the community), and was then sold to Veit Hirschfelder, my great-great-grandfather, in 1862. Wolf Fröhlich's son-in-law was Jacob Hirschfelder. It has been determined that some of the walls were constructed in the 1300's and the earliest Jews to arrive in Rexingen were permitted to live there.

**Veit Hirschfelder** (1801–1882) was a successful cattle dealer who sent his

son Max (1836–1909) to the Real-Schule in Hechingen for a good education in commerce. He returned to Rexingen and married Rike Wälder (1845–1914). They had ten children, four of whom died before their first birthdays. The remaining six:

**Simon:** born in 1868, he became a merchant and spent his adult years in Munich in the leather business. Victor, one of Salomon Hirschfelder's sons, later became a co-owner of his leather business in Munich.

**Rosa:** the only daughter that lived into adulthood, born in 1871, married leather merchant Isidor Dreyfuss. They lived in Offenburg and Freiburg. Rosa died at a fairly young age but had a daughter, Martha, who in 1928 married Isidor Hess and lived with him first in Saarbrücken and later in Metz,



*Family home of the Hirschfelder Family. Purchased by Veit Hirschfelder in 1862. A number of Hirschfelder family members were born in this house. Between the tower and the house was a garden where the family grew vegetables and an area where chickens were raised. After the World War II the first floor became a tavern/café. (Courtesy Kent Hirschfelder)*



*Hirschfelder Family in Rexingen circa 1920. Back row: Rosa H. (wife of Salomon; mother of Victor, Richard and Gretl); Moritz; Simon; Victor (son of Salo); Salo; Emil Dreyfuss; Isidor Dreyfuss; Richard (son of Salo); Rose Dreyfuss. Front Row: Max Dreyfuss (son of Isidor); Martha Dreyfuss; Isidor Hirschfelder (known to family as "Uncle Dr."); Gretl (daughter of Salo). (Courtesy Kent Hirschfelder)*

France. Their daughter, Ruth, married Harry (Buje) Lehman of Strasbourg and lived with him in London. Both of them died in 1984.

**Salomon:** He took over his father Veit's business in Rexingen and, besides trading in cattle, expanded the business in grain trading. He was born in 1872 and lived in the Hirschfelder house until 1926 when he and his wife Rosa (Löwengart) moved to Stuttgart where he died in 1937. Their children were Victor (1901–1960), Richard (1904–1990) and Gretl (1913–1985), all of whom emigrated to the United States and eventually settled in Chicago where they started a very successful leather goods manufacturing and import business (RICO Industries) which has expanded and still is owned and operated by a grandson today.

**Moritz:** Born in 1874, he is the only one of the siblings mentioned as a Rexingen resident in 1933. He had

slight mental deficiencies and worked as a helper of local cattle dealers. He lived in a house by himself, supported by his brother Isidor and other family members, and was cared for by Katharina Schmelzle (1887–1977)



*Katharina Schmelzle, who took care for Moritz Hirschfelder. (Courtesy Rexinger Synagogenverein)*

who was probably not Jewish. She had worked for the family for years, including Simon in Munich, and was given Moritz's house in the 1930's. He died in 1942 and it has been a source of discussion whether he died from natural causes or was a victim of euthanasia by the Nazis, even though this practice had been "formally" ended several years earlier. Katherine was later involved in transforming the Rexingen Synagogue into a Protestant church and getting it furnished.

**Heinrich:** Born in 1876, he moved to Munich in 1908 and became a successful textile merchant. He bought a store in downtown Munich, near City Hall, where he sold cloth and tailoring supplies and employed three salesmen who travelled through Southern Germany selling to custom tailors. He married Johanna Levy (c.1882–1944) of Stuttgart in 1909 and they had one son, Max, my father (1910–2003). While Johanna

was able to escape to the United States in 1941 and live with her son in Centralia, IL, her two sisters and their husbands perished in Theresienstadt. Ironically the site of my father's home in Munich, at No. 74 Goethestraße, near the park where Oktoberfest is held, is now a McDonald's restaurant!

**Isidor:** Born in March 1878 in the Hirschfelder house. Because of his extraordinary accomplishments and the honors bestowed upon him posthumously, I will have additional comments about his life and legacy.

Heinrich had only one son – my father – and Isidor, Simon and Moritz never married, so the number of cousins and uncles is quite small and limits what could have been a much greater family loss during the Holocaust.

The Hirschfelder family, like many other Jewish families whose ancestry stretched back for generations, always considered themselves full citizens of Germany: German by heritage and Jewish by religion. Until the rise of Nazism in the early 1930's they were not staunch Zionists and no one spoke of a Jewish "race". It is unknown if the earliest family members came from Spain or France but the Germans neither spoke nor understood Yiddish. A considerable percentage of Rexingen's population were Jewish (25–40%), many of whom were in the grain or cattle trade. They had their own synagogue and their own rabbi, who served as the grammar school teacher for the Jewish community. While orthodox in many of their customs, they did not wear traditional "side curls" or yarmulkes on their heads. As is required in orthodox Judaism the men sat downstairs and the women in a balcony upstairs. The relationship between the Jews and the Catholic and Protestant members of the community was always cordial, even though the social life was usually not assimilated. Mimi Schwartz (born 1940), the daughter of Arthur Loewengart (1899–1973, whose family was prominent in the village for generations and grew up there), wrote a book in 2008 *Good Neighbors, Bad Times: Echoes of My Father's German Village* which chronicled the remarkable relationship

between the Jews and gentiles of the village. For example, on Crystal Night none of the village youth would participate in the burning of the synagogue and looting of Jewish-owned stores. "Thugs" had to be brought in from outside to undertake this horrific task. In addition, the two torah scrolls from the synagogue were rescued from the flames by Christians. One was hidden and sent to Israel a year later, the other was given to a Jewish family shortly thereafter and they smuggled it out when they emigrated to America ... it is still in use in a Connecticut synagogue today.

Though my father spent a lot of holidays and summers in Rexingen with Hirschfelder family members, he was born and raised in Munich. After Gymnasium he spent 3 ½ years in Munich in medical studies, then a year in Bonn, from where he would make visits to Krefeld, sixty miles away, to visit his Uncle Isidor. He spent the summer of 1932 in Vienna, where he took additional medical courses, and at the end of 1934 he passed the German medical state board exam. Because the Nazis had already begun to impose controls on Jews dad could not obtain an internship at a German hospital ... without this he would not be granted a license to practice medicine. Switzerland recognized credits from German universities and many Jewish medical students went there. However, while Switzerland required an additional year of medical studies, after which one received their M.D. diploma, it did NOT grant the right to be in private practice in Switzerland. Dad had chosen to spend his year as an assistant in the University Hospital in Bern after which he had no choice but to leave Europe.

On June 9th, 1936 he arrived in Chicago with letters of introduction from some of his professors in Munich, and obtained a residency at the University of Illinois Eye and Ear Infirmary. Being a newly-arrived German immigrant in America, dad thought it would be easier to become assimilated if he wasn't in a big city, and although he could have stayed in Chicago he moved to southern Illinois,

where he practiced ophthalmology for fifty-one years, until his retirement in 1991.

A street sign for a beautiful residential street in the City of Krefeld, is named in memory of my great-uncle Isidor, a much revered and respected pediatrician in the community who served his patients with professionalism, care, and commitment. That there are also a city plaza and "Schullandheim" in nearby Herongen named for him and a memorial plaque on the wall of Krefeld's pediatric hospital attests to the reverence with which the community held him. His is a remarkable story.

Born in Rexingen in 1908, he completed Gymnasium in Tübingen and, with the goal of becoming a doctor, studied in Freiburg, Munich and Berlin, receiving his medical license in 1903, completed a pediatric residency in Berlin and moved to Krefeld where he started the first pediatric practice there in 1906. He was the first member of his family to receive a university education. In addition to his medical practice (conducted from his home), he raised funds and opened a maternity outreach clinic and an independent children's hospital.

Conscripted into the German army on the first day of World War I he was awarded the Iron Cross, First Class, for saving the life of his company leader in a battle. Meanwhile his Children's Home on Peterstraße had grown to 75 beds and after returning safely from the war he made certain that the children of Krefeld who needed food received it. In 1918 he founded a children's hospital that included a training program for obstetrics nurses, attracting 40 students in its first year. He was very popular with his young patients and their mothers and sometimes took children home with him to care for them there. And he treated many of his patients free of charge.

But despite Isidor's decorated service to his country and dedication to the health of the children of his community, he could not escape the scourge of the Nazi regime. In 1933, his medical license was revoked. In December he had to give up his



*Dr. Isidor Hirschfelder. (Courtesy Kent Hirschfelder)*



*The street sign in Krefeld in memory of my great-uncle Isidor. (Courtesy Kent Hirschfelder)*

management role at the children's hospital. Although he had letters of sponsorship from relatives that would have allowed him to easily emigrate to the United States, he refused to leave because he wanted to remain in Germany for the sake of his patients and worried that medical care for Krefeld's remaining Jewish population would suffer.

At the end of 1938 he was forced to leave his apartment and surrender his vehicle and had to move to a small two-room apartment with his servant, Simon Friedemann, known as Fridolin. On November 9th, 1938 (Crystal Night) he confronted the Gestapo wearing his full uniform and Iron Cross, forcing them to retreat. That tactic worked only one time. From August 1941 on, he lived in a so-called "Judenhaus" and when the Gestapo arrested his servant he lost all hope. After the Gestapo made a second threatening visit he ended his life on October 29, 1941 using the revolver with which he had defended his country. He was 63 years old.

On his grave marker are the words "Friend and helper of the Children." Every year, on the anniversary of his death, citizens of Krefeld walk to the cemetery to lay flowers on his grave. Seventy-five years after his death they still remember and honor this humble doctor, his many good deeds, and his martyrdom.

I first visited Rexingen with my father in 1963, just after graduating high school. This was a time when very little was spoken of the Holocaust, and even less talked about or taught in the schools. Elie Wiesel had written his powerful book *Night*, and Adolf Eichmann had been captured just a few years before. Memories among the survivors, and victims families all over the world, were still raw, and the topic of the Holocaust was rarely spoken about. As Adolf Sayer told me when I spoke with him in Rexingen in 2009, children were forbidden to bring up the topic with their fathers and grandfathers. But as time went on younger generations insisted on speaking about this ... learning about how one of the most educationally, economically and culturally successful countries in the world could have allowed this to happen. Consistently the older German generation did not acknowledge knowing anything about the Holocaust while it was occurring. Fortunately, the younger German generation is taught the Holocaust, primarily as "history". Students I spoke with recognized the importance of dealing with their past as well as their responsibility to prevent future genocides and promote racial tolerance. Certainly, the events of recent years in Germany have tested these attitudes, and have led to a growing

right-wing presence. The stories are still being written as to how this will all turn out.

In the United States, Holocaust education is mandated in many states, and there are Holocaust museums and memorials in many cities. The mission of teaching the lessons of the Holocaust: "Never Again" and "Don't Be an Innocent Bystander" continue to be taught, but there is a great emphasis, using new technologies, to recognize recent genocides, incidents of homophobia, racial tensions, and intolerance.

On October 12, 1991, in the speech I gave in the lobby of the pediatric hospital in Krefeld, on the occasion of the unveiling of the plaque remembering Isidor Hirschfelder, I concluded with the following remarks:

I have two children. I have tried to instill in them a sense of what the Holocaust was and what it meant, so that they might be vigilant to any signs that this might happen again. I would ask that you tell your children and that they tell their children, and that the bonds between Jews and Christians remain strong. That is the legacy that Isidor Hirschfelder would have hoped for.

# 1945 – Harry Kahn Returns to Baisingen

Dr. Fredy Kahn, Tübingen. Translated by Benedict von Bremen

The story of the return of his father Harry Kahn to Baisingen was told by Dr. Fredy Kahn to Barbara Staudacher and Heinz Högerle on August 21, 2015. In the following article, the oral form was retained. All photographic rights: Dr. Fredy Kahn, Tübingen.

## A New Start in Baisingen

Every now and then, my father told the same stories about his return to Baisingen. I think he had typhoid when he came back. He probably had to stay in Theresienstadt for a few more weeks to recover, but I can't say for sure. There, they nursed him up a bit, I think. Then he came to Baisingen. Of course it was easier for him to go back to his "Heimat," his home. The Polish Jews tried that too, but for them the same problem was there in a different way. They were expelled again. There was no overt anti-Semitism in Baisingen. But what was going on in the back of their minds, I don't know.

In any case, his neighbour Max Schiebel was a decent man. He was very happy that Harry was back and helped him right away by giving him a pot and a pan and something to wear, a suit, so that he simply had something.

And then I only know that people left his house. He never told me exactly. Whether he threw them out or if they had to leave by order of the authorities, I don't know. But either way, he settled back down there. And in Baisingen, they knew, "Harry's back." The people who had been decent to Jews before welcomed him back with open arms. Concerning the others, I don't know.

With some people in Baisingen – and I also felt that – he did not speak a single word again. He did not trade cattle with them either; that was taboo.

He always told the story about the cemetery fence: that when he returned, the cemetery no longer had a fence. The fence was around the

*Brothers Siegfried (left) and Harry Kahn meet again in Baisingen after the end of World War II. In January 1939, Siegfried was sent to England by his parents. He returned to Germany as a British soldier. Harry had survived the Jungfernhof and Kaiserwald concentration camps near Riga, Buchenwald, and Theresienstadt.*



mayor's tree garden, who had been mayor during the "Third Reich." And then he told him, "The fence will be put back up." One can imagine what his attitude was like after three and a half years of concentration camp. You

didn't think twice. You said either you fix it by tomorrow or I punch you in the head. Anyway, the fence was back up. That was his first "restitution," quote unquote.

And then he very soon started to



*This honorary identity card from the "Zentralstelle der Betreuung der Opfer des Nationalsozialismus Württemberg-Hohenzollern" (Central Office for the Care of Victims of National Socialism) made it easier for Harry Kahn to pursue his profession as a cattle dealer in the occupied zones.*



RED CROSS ENQUIRY/MESSAGE  
ROTES KREUZ ANFRAGE/NACHRICHT

Stamp of issuing Red Cross  
FOREIGN RELATIONS DEPARTMENT,  
BRITISH RED CROSS & ORDER OF ST. JOHN  
CLARENCE HOUSE, ST. JAMES  
LONDON, S.W.1.

ENQUIRER  
ANFRAGER

Name/Zuname KAHN  
First Names/Vornamen SIEGE  
Date of Birth/Geburtsdatum \_\_\_\_\_ Place of Birth/Geburtsort \_\_\_\_\_  
Nationality/Nationalität GERMAN  
Address/Adresse 7, GURDURK, 3- SNOWDROPVILLAS, ETON RICK, WINDSOR, BERKS.  
Original Home Address (in the case of a Displaced Person).  
Heimatsadresse im Falle von Auswanderung \_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship of Enquirer to Addressee/Verwandschaftsgrad BROTHER  
The enquirer desires news of the Addressee and asks that the following message should be transmitted to him.  
Der Anfrager wuenscht Nachrichten vom Empfaenger und ersucht die folgende Botschaft zu uebermitteln.  
MEIN LIEBSTER BRUDER - GOTTSIEDANK DU BIST AM LEBEN. NACHRICHT VON USA.  
BIN UEBERGLUECKLICH. VERSUCHE DIR ZU SCHICKEN. ANTWORTE SOFORT. BIN  
GESUND. BLEIBE GESUND. DEIN BRUDER SIEGI.  
Date/Datum 9.7.45

ADDRESSEE  
EMPPFAENGER

Name/Zuname KAHN  
First Names/Vornamen HARRY  
Date of Birth/Geburtsdatum 15. 9. 11 Place of Birth/Geburtsort BASINGEN  
Nationality/Nationalität GERMAN - JEWISH  
Single Married Widow (or) Divorced (Delete all irrelevant matter).  
Ledig Verheiratet Witwe (er) Geschieden (Unerwünschtes durch zu streichen).  
Profession/Beruf MERCHANT (GARDEN)  
Last known address/Letzte Adresse THERESIENSTADT, ROOM 1, P.7

The Addressee's reply to be written overleaf (not more than 25 words).  
Antwort umseitig (Hochstzahl 25 Worte).

S & D Ltd - 33672

In July 1945, Siegfried Kahn received the photo on the left, showing Harry Kahn with Basingen-born Fritz Erlebacher, who was an American soldier. A note written in English on the margin of the photo reads: "Remember your brother? He looks swell. Basingen, July 4th, 1945. Fritz." Via the Red Cross, Siegfried sent a message to his brother: "My dearest brother. Thank God you are alive. Message from the USA. Am overjoyed. Trying to send you. Please answer immediately. I am healthy. You stay healthy. Your brother Siegi. 9.7.45."

work with the farmers again, with those whom he knew you could still have contact with under the Nazis for a long time as a Jewish man, as a Jewish cattle dealer. Back then, they had said to him, "Then you'll come around in the evening and through the back door." After the war, the cattle trade was for the most part laying idle. There was a gap that the Jewish cattle dealers had left behind in many communities. The stable boys had taken over the companies. This was not seen as an "Aryanization" but as simply continuing. And my father came back and rebuilt his cattle trade.

### Harry Kahn Marries Jeanette Karschinierow

The concentration camp inmates in Theresienstadt, and also in other concentration camps, heard each other's language and dialect - "This one came from Hamburg, that one's from Württemberg." Of course they asked each other, as far as was possible, "Where are you from?" That's only natural. And that's where my father met his second wife, my mother. His first wife, Irene Weinberger from

Haigerloch, had been killed in Riga, where my father had been too.

My mother told me how after the liberation yellow buses from Stuttgart came to Theresienstadt and brought back the Jews from Württemberg. Whenever she saw a tram bus, she would always say, "I was picked up by one of those."

I don't know if my dad went with

them too. He never told anything about that. In any case, they met again in Stuttgart. Very few German Jews returned to Stuttgart. Many Jews came from Poland. They met and prayed in the Jewish congregation. My father did not go to Stuttgart to pray. He didn't pray much anymore, but he knew all the prayers. In Basingen, all of them had been very



Jeanette Karschinierow, standing on Harry Kahn's first cattle truck, visits Basingen.



*Civil marriage of Jeanette and Harry Kahn in 1946 in Baisingen. On the right: best man Adolf Haarburger, also a survivor of Theresienstadt and, together with his wife Therese, another returnee to Baisingen.*

devout people. My father's mother was a very religious woman. She wore a "Scheitel" wig. If my father wasn't in the synagogue at the right time on Friday night, it was a disaster for her. He sometimes just made another business and ran late.

So, they met again in Stuttgart. And then my father noticed that they didn't have much to eat in Stuttgart. He invited them, "As you all have a pass, come to Baisingen!" And then they came, and it was probably very unkosher. He got some smoked meat and something to eat. And then they kept coming, and my mother was there, too. And when he knew that his first wife was no longer alive, he said to my mother, "You can also stay here." And she said, "Harry, you have

an office here, right?" And she applied her secretarial skills there and they got married in 1946.

Before her deportation to Theresienstadt, my mother had been a secretary for the Jewish congregation. She had previously worked as a secretary for various companies. In the end she was only allowed to work for Jewish companies, for example the Krautkopf company. Then even that became more and more difficult and she became a secretary at the Jewish congregation.

My mother was born in 1908 and I was born in 1947. So she was 39 years old when I was born. It was not easy to have a child at that age.

In my father's business, my mother made one request: to go to Stuttgart

once a month to the hairdresser and to do some window shopping. When I was younger, the two of us always went to Stuttgart together. It was a ritual because my father only ever ran after the cow's tail. Then, my mother always said, "Today we're going to Stuttgart together, 10:32 a.m. from Eutingen. 5:46 p.m. we arrive back in Eutingen." We had always had a really nice time. That was her only time off.

Of the deported Jews, aside from my parents, the married couple Adolf and Therese Haarburger as well as Karoline Marx returned to Baisingen. Karoline Marx lived with us in our house. For me, she was grandma.

### Post-War Childhood in Baisingen

Remembering my childhood, how my parents raised me, my parents' advice comes to my mind: "Try not to stand out, because if you do something, it's not you; it's the Jews, it's the Jewish boy."

I've stuck to that. And I realized that I had to be careful and be good a boy because these people who are my parents have already been through so much – when visitors came, they talked about those terrible times – and I understood that what had happened must have been terrible. My father told me that he had been very skinny, that grandmother had died, and stories like these. So I thought I had to be especially careful not to put my parents through anything more than they had already experienced. I



*Harry Kahn donated memorials in both the Baisingen and Rexingen Jewish cemeteries commemorating the Shoah and those who had been murdered. Picture left: the 1948 dedication of the memorial in Baisingen's Jewish cemetery. Dr. Guttman, Landesrabbiner (chief rabbi) of Württemberg, stands in the middle; to his left: Harry Kahn, to his right: Adolf Haarburger. Picture right: the memorial in Baisingen.*



functioned, I was good, I didn't grumble, there was nothing until puberty and not even during puberty itself.

When I went to school, the teacher, Miss Schweizer, said, "When we pray, we will send Fredy out." My parents then asked, "Why do you want to send Fredy out? He gets up with the others and doesn't say anything or make a cross. He just stands there." "Oh, well then," Miss Schweizer said, "that's possible?" "Yes, that's possible," my parents said. And it always went like this.

School was quite normal, the Catholic elementary school in Baisingen, it was all great. Two classrooms, four classes each. That was great, that was nice. We played soccer. Then came the first big soccer games. My father was not amused when Germany became world champion in 1954. I screamed with enthusiasm. He said, "Why are you shouting? If you knew what I've been through, you wouldn't shout like that." He sometimes said things like that.

There was also the story of ringing the bells when the sacristan once kicked me out of the church, saying, "Get out of here because you killed the Savior." We, the boys, always jumped out of school at quarter to twelve to get to the church. Whoever was fastest could grab the bell rope. There were four ropes. I was always the fastest, I was later the school's best hundred meter runner, and so I always reached the rope. Suddenly someone grabbed me from behind and threw me out. At that time I thought it was true, we must have done something wrong.

My father had an old wallet in his bedside table. I noticed that it had pictures in it. Because whenever visitors came from America or Israel, he'd take it out of the drawer every time. And I saw them taking the pictures out. But he always sent me away first. "Go over there and play something." "Yeah, okay." But I noticed something was being shown, and I saw that they were black-and-white pictures. And at some point I went there, I was about seven or eight years old, and found this wallet in the bedside drawer. I looked at the



*1946: Karoline Marx (1868-1953) stands at her husband's grave in Baisingen's Jewish cemetery. Née Karoline Kurz, she married David Marx (1862-1931) from Baisingen. In 1942 she was deported to Theresienstadt. She returned with Harry Kahn and Jeanette Karschinierow and lived with the Kahn family. For Fredy Kahn, she was "Oma" (grandma). Karoline Marx is buried in the Baisingen cemetery.*

pictures and saw corpses, a whole mountain of them, and I was shocked.

Much later, my father told me that one of the SS men in Theresienstadt always took pictures. I don't know what happened to him when the concentration camp was liberated. Anyway, my father found the pictures and took them with him. I don't know where they are today.

When I looked at them for the first time, I put them back and did not ask for them. For God's sake, no.

As time went by, I listened more and more. My father also told me a little bit when I asked, "How and where?" He told us where the Jews had been sent to. That great-grandfather had died there. And grandmother. Then, I knew something. And I always tried to not make more trouble for my parents.

### **The Cattle Trade**

There were always things that had to do with my father's work and where anti-Semitism flared up. There were also people who came to him and said, "Harry, could you confirm that I was decent?" And if someone had been was, it had been like that. And if someone had not been, my father threw him out. There were quite a few like that.

There is one story I remember, I must have been maybe five years old. There was a big cattle market in Nagold. And at the big cattle markets in Herrenberg, Nagold, Weil der Stadt, Köngen, my mother was always there too. There she sat in her car, a VW, and this was her office.

Whenever cattle was sold, my father wrote down the number of the ear tag and wrote down the price and said, "Go over to my wife." And I carried the small note over to her, together with the farmer. My mother sat in the VW—window down—and had a kind of office in there and wrote everything down. I didn't go to school yet. My parents didn't want to send me to kindergarten. They didn't want me to go to Catholic kindergarten. They didn't do that.

After the cattle market, you always went to an inn, to people you knew who had been decent people before. People who hadn't written, "Jews not wanted." But people who had said, "Come, your grandfather and your father already had their dishes with me and brought their kosher sausages." And he went back to such hosts after the war, and in Nagold that was the "Schwanen" (swan).

There was a hall, and after the cattle market people sat there. The hall was



*Harry Kahn and his son Fredy at a regional cattle market, 1953.*

separated by a sliding wall. And in this separated part my mother sat and counted money and wrote out receipts because afterwards we went to the "Volksbank". And my father ate together with me. All of a sudden, he jumps up and rips the door open. And I see him grabbing a man by the collar and beating him up.

Later on, I learned the reason why. A cattle dealer had been sitting there who said—he didn't know that Harry was sitting behind the partition wall—"It's a pity they didn't gas him too; then we'd have the best deals." Things like that happened from time to time.

But otherwise my father was very welcome among the farmers. First, they knew he knew what he was doing. And then there was an unwritten law between my father and the farmers. You can buy cows from Harry Kahn even if you don't have the money yet. He gives you time. I make a down payment of 20 percent and don't have to pay the rest for eight months. That's not the way others did it. Even today, people come to my practice and say, "My grandmother had no milk and nothing to give. Your father gave her a cow so we children would have milk." This was one way how the Jewish cattle traders dealt with the farmers. That was what made them special somehow. Because they knew exactly: we are Jews, and they may like us, but if you do a little bit more, it will be to our advantage

again. That was my father's philosophy. If someone bought a cow, he always got a bottle of wine.

And if he wanted to buy a cow somewhere, he said, "I'll give you 980 Deutschmarks for this cow now." "No way, Harry, I want 1100 Deutschmarks." "No way, that's not possible." That's how they bartered. In the end, my father said, "Okay, you get 1020 Deutschmarks. But you'll only get a thousand. And your wife gets 20." So, of course, he won the woman over. She thought to herself, "My man keeps me short and Harry gives me 20 Deutschmarks." And that's how they knew him.

#### **Uncle Siegi's Family**

Siegfried Kahn, known as Siegi, my father's brother, went to England at the age of 17 in early 1939. He was ten years younger than my father. His parents had sent him there to protect him. He was nationalized in Great Britain and then had to go to Germany as a soldier. And so he found his brother again after the end of the war and was incredibly happy that his brother was still alive. Then he got married. He was very pious.

After the war the English, as winners of the war, were worse off than the German population. I still remember when Uncle Siegi came to visit in the early 1950s and told us they still had food stamps. We were already doing pretty well back then. Then Siegi came every year to his brother

on holiday, first by train, then by car and with his family. And my cousin Franklin was two years old and I was three when the family first came, which was about 1950.

The two brothers then traveled together. Every day, my father took his brother with him. He took him to the farmers and showed him this and that. And he introduced him to friends, for example Hilde Maier in Horb.

Then a sister-in-law of my uncle Siegi was about to get married in London. And Siegi said we should come to London for the wedding. I was a small man of five or six years. My father was quite generous then. He had a tailor in Horb make a tiny suit for me. A white suit with a white kippa. And then I went with my mother to London for this wedding. It was great; I'll never forget it. My cousin Franklin came back to Baisingen every year, and still does so until today.

#### **New Friendships**

My parents took such good care of me. They never left me alone. I had a nanny from Haigerloch, Waltraud. She lived there in the "Haag", which used to be the Jewish quarter. She was with us on weekdays and in Haigerloch on Sundays. My parents practically never went out in the evening either, except to Horb for carnival. They dressed up and took me along undisguised. We always sat at a table with Hilde and Walter Maier. Walter Maier worked at the agricultural office. That's probably where the connection to my father came from. Hilde Maier was at the telephone exchange and pushed the connecting plugs in there. Back then, there were not many telephones. We had the number 339, first 39, then 339. You did not say "07 something" but "Ergenzingen 339."

When my dad made a call, it was a special thing. It went like this in the Kahn office: "Jeanette, what's the number of Noll in Bieringen?" My mother knew all the numbers by heart. When he called the telephone exchange, my father didn't say, "This is Mr. Kahn from Baisingen." but simply, "Noll, Bierlingen, 458." And with Hilde Maier he didn't even have

to say the number, just: "Frau Maier, Noll, Bierlingen." Hilde Maier then made the connection. My mother got upset about it and said, "How you treat the Fräuleins from the office!" But my father thought that everything was fine. "At Christmas, I'm going to give them a present." And then, from the beginning of the 1950s onwards, my parents sent a parcel containing about 30 smoked sausages to the Horb telephone exchange every Christmas, gift-wrapped and accompanied by a very long poem.

And at some point Hilde Maier said, "You can leave Fredy with me if you're stressed." And so my father took me by car to Hilde Maier and she went with me to the Neckar river for a swim. Hence, the friendship became closer and closer. The Maiers then also came to Baisingen. Or they picked them up on Sundays and went out to eat with them. My parents didn't have very many friends: a few in Nagold and the Maiers in Horb. Hilde Maier was very fond of traveling and joined us on holiday. The story of Hilde's father, who as an old member of the Social Democrats had gotten into trouble under the Nazis, was of course also an important background. My parents knew that Hilde's father was with the Social Democratic Party, Hilde is with the SPD. But one did not politicize.

Then there was Hermann Lemberger from Rexingen, the father-in-law of Josef Eberle, the publisher of the *Stuttgarter Zeitung* newspaper. He was an old man and a cattle dealer. He came back from America after the war and lived here again. My father used to pick him up on Sundays. Because the only rest my father had was on Sunday, from one to six in the afternoon. That was his holiday. He took me and my mother with him and went with us to Freudenstadt and we drank coffee and ate something. I sat in the back of the Mercedes and was bored; I would have preferred to go with my mates. But I was a good boy. And often there would be this old man with us, Hermann Lemberger. And this old man was only dealing cattle during the whole car journey, from beginning to end – verbally. Finally, they had to take him to the



*Stuttgart main train station, ca. 1949: Siegfried Kahn's family arrives from England for a visit. Harry has his little nephew Franklin in his arms. In front of him: Renée Kahn, the wife of Siegi Kahn.*



*In Baisingen, ca. 1952: little Franklin on his father Siegi's shoulders is afraid while Fredy rides the bull with confidence.*

psychiatric hospital in Rottenmünster. He was buried in Rexingen.

### **Relations with the Jewish Congregation**

Because of me, my father went to the Jewish congregation in Stuttgart for the service. To have the boy see that there are holidays, how the rabbi speaks, and when and how the

cantor sings. On Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashanah, he always went to the synagogue. On these days, he closed his business. We went there and spent the day in the synagogue. And at noon he said to me, "Let's go to Breuninger, I'll buy you some trousers." That was just normal for him. And I said to my father, "Say, why don't you pray?" He says, "Because



*Purim celebration at the Jewish congregation in Stuttgart in 1953. Standing second from left: Jeanette Kahn. 6-year-old Fredy is the second child from the left at the table.*

I know everything by heart, I don't need it like that. I know everything by heart." I used to check him out sometimes, "Now tell me, look here." I was maybe eleven, twelve years old. He actually did know all the prayers by heart. And he could sing, and how! They had done the same thing in Baisingen back then. But he never felt comfortable in Stuttgart because this nigun, the rhythm of the songs was completely different from Baisingen and Rexingen. There, the services had been more solemn. In Stuttgart, it was just different now.

He had no position in the congregation. He only paid contributions, and he was one of those who paid a lot. And donations, of course. But he didn't have the time, after all. He didn't want to at all, and he didn't have time.

### **Emigration Plans?**

All his life, my father had the feeling—and he also conveyed it to me as a child—that he didn't want to miss any more time because he had been forced to lose a lot of time during his youth. We never explicitly talked about that, but you could sense it. "I say, vacation, I don't need that." "Restitution, I don't have time for that. I'll make own restitution. You'll only get in trouble anyway. You have to prove everything. I don't need that." He wasn't hectic, but he was

impelled. He was impelled to make up for these three-and-a-half years and also perhaps to make up for what had happened before, to catch up. And that's how his life was structured.

My mother was part of it. She recognized that in him. She wasn't like that herself. She was a bit more artistic. She said, "The boy has to learn an instrument." My father just said, "What does he need an instrument, he's going to be a cattle dealer anyway. You don't need an instrument for that." That's what he always conveyed.

Somehow, by talking to Jews, he started to think about whether what he was doing at that time was right. He was running after the money, he had missed out on something, and he wanted to make up for that, he had to make money again so that we could be well. Because in the end, you don't get anything for free. Then you have money and you should actually invest it. But not in Germany. It had been of no use because he had already lost everything once. This was the conflict he was in.

At one point, he had the feeling that America was an alternative. There was a connection to America through a friend of my mother's. There were relatives, too: his uncle Max who had emigrated to San Diego. And then my father started to save money, thinking that he had to bring money to America

to perhaps build up an existence there. And he invested money through my mother's friend. And then, in 1955/56, news arrived that all the money in America was gone. It was not possible to explain why. That was the end of this plan.

There were almost no plans at all to emigrate to Israel. People came, for example Egon Schweizer, born in Baisingen, a strong young man. He helped him. He donated money. He got things that were needed and sent them to Israel, whatever was needed. But by then my father was already so rooted again in Baisingen that he didn't want to leave.

Then people from Israel came and said to him, "Why are you living in Germany? Tell me, are you crazy? You were persecuted here and you were a nobody and now you pay taxes again." That was a bit difficult for him. But he always showed his attachment to his "Heimat." And I think he would have never been happy anywhere else.

But then people came and said, "Yes, well, okay. But this young guy, he shouldn't be here now. Why don't you send him to Israel?" I was the only son. And I should leave? And who knows what will happen there. They will corrupt the future cattle dealer with intellectual posturing. It sounds funny now, but that's how my father thought and talked, "What does he need? He should do an apprenticeship at a bank. He doesn't even need a high school diploma, and that's that." – "But America and Israel – the world is open to the boy!" I listened to that.

### **Connections to Shavei Tzion**

The Jews of Shavei Tzion also came to my father and told him that it was really great there. There was Resi Pressburger née Gideon. Her father had had a butcher shop in the "Jugendässle" street. She lived in Shavei Tzion. And in Nahariya, my father had a cousin, Hermann Zvi Kahn. He had a small boarding house there, a small hotel. And then there was one of Kahn's sons, from whom my father had bought the house in Baisingen, from Hermann Kahn, a very rich Jew who later lived in London. His sons

were in Israel. One had a small company for medical equipment. They always came to visit.

And then came Thea Lemberger and Hilde Löwengart. They came to Freudenstadt every year or two to take a cure. He visited them there on Sundays and they came with us. And Thea Lemberger's husband, Karl Lemberger, was also a cattle dealer. He tried to get a foothold here again. That failed, of course.

And then I had a religious education teacher, his name was Herbert Kahn. And he always said, "You have to go to Israel." My parents were close friends with the teacher couple Kahn.

Finally, it was said in our family that we would visit Israel one day. Not my father, though, who said, "I have to work. Okay, you go with mum. You're 18 now. You have a driver's license. You're going with your mom to Israel, to Shavei Zion."

Egon Schweizer from Baisingen had his own farm in Israel with 40 cows and with orange groves. When he heard that we were coming, he called and said, "Well, I need this and that. You bring that." And then he hung up. That was Israel.

Well, my mother sorted it all out. My father gave us a Mercedes 190. We went to Venice, then on to the ferry for four days. You got on the boat in Venice and you were in Israel. The crew, the atmosphere, the food, the parties in the evening with the Hora dances. It was fantastic. For the first time I had the feeling that I was home.

My mother, my cousin Franklin from England, and I went. We drove around Israel in a Mercedes—wonderful. And we drove to Shavei Zion. The first person that came to meet us, Resi, said, "You are Harry's son." Right away, in Swabian. We stayed at the Hotel Beit Chava. That was great. We went from house to house. And everywhere we had to tell them, "Why isn't your father with you?"

The end of the story was that in 1988 we celebrated the Bat Mitzvah of my daughter Nathalie in Shavei Zion, in the Hotel Bet Chava, with my teacher and many guests. It was a huge celebration. By that time my parents had already died. But we had very close relations to our relatives, to



*The Kahn family – Jeanette, Harry, and Fredy – at the Stuttgart Jewish congregation's Hanukkah ball, ca. 1958.*

Herbert Kahn, to Resi Schwarz, to the Löwengarts. I had also met the old, rich Artur Löwengart from the USA, and he told me on the terrace of his house in Shavei Zion that he had now donated the money for the Löwengart Hall in Shavei Zion.

### **My Connections to the Jewish Congregation in Stuttgart**

In Württemberg, children must attend religious education classes at school unless their parents say no. But my parents didn't object. I came to the chief rabbi of Württemberg, Dr. Fritz Bloch, for religious instruction for the first time when I was eight years old. There were no teachers at that time. The rabbi saw the children from Stuttgart in the synagogue on Saturdays. But there was a Fredy Kahn from out of town, whose father didn't come much. But Fredy also had to have religious education. In the beginning, my mother brought me to Stuttgart once a week or every other week. With Bloch, we had to write Hebrew the way it was written in the prayer book, hence in printed form. For an eight-year-old, that's crazy. I totally lost all the fun. It took me half an hour to write one word because it had to look like it was printed.

And then Israeli teachers came.

That's when some zest entered. These teachers were roving teachers. They came by train to Eutingen, at 1 pm. And I came by bus from Nagold from school at 1 pm. I had religious education every week, always on Thursdays. And it varied according to the teacher. One of them liked to sing. The other one told stories and I was also allowed to do crossword puzzles. It was real learning, but in a small circle, that means the teacher and me.

Then there was bar mitzvah and still the home lessons. At that time there were no high school finals in Jewish religious education in Württemberg. It was only later that Mr. Meinhard Tenné was able to enforce that. I stopped learning when I was seventeen. But on the holidays I always went with my parents to the synagogue in Stuttgart and later with my wife Cathy and the children.

I grumbled a lot about the school lessons at that time. Finally I said to myself, "You should not grumble, you have to take responsibility." So I got myself elected to the audit commission of the IRGW [Israelitische Religionsgemeinschaft Württembergs, the Jewish congregation of Württemberg] and then later to the IRGW board of directors. I'm sure my father would have liked that.

# The Levy Family and Ongoing Ties Between Branches in Hechingen and Quincy, Illinois

Cynthia Francis Gensheimer, Ph.D.<sup>1</sup>, Denver, CO, USA

When Hechingen-born J.D. Levy and his wife Matilda Steinau celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary in 1885, a local newspaper called them “among the best known and most highly esteemed citizens of Quincy.”<sup>2</sup> Residents of the Illinois city for 15 years, they were an affluent couple with ten children and members of a vibrant Jewish community. Expensive gifts reflected the Levy’s social ties. Matilda’s mother traveled from Kentucky to present a diamond breast pin. J.D. and Matilda’s baby granddaughter – the same age as the Levy’s own youngest child – gave them a silver spoon. Other gifts – nearly all silver – came from employees of J.D. Levy’s business, including two nephews from Hechingen, Siegfried Hochstadter and Samuel Raff.<sup>3</sup> Matilda’s sister had come from Rochester, New York, presenting “an ancient Pompeian brass urn.” The party, which took place at the Levy’s “elegant home,” began when Quincy’s rabbi unfurled a scroll and read a poem that he’d written for the occasion.<sup>4</sup> A few days after the party, J.D. went to New York City, “for the purpose of superintending the manufacture of his fall stock of clothing.”<sup>5</sup>

The 70 people who attended the party consisted of relatives and Quincy’s established Jewish couples who made up a tight social group. Writing 15 years later, another rabbi, Elias Eppstein, described Quincy’s close-knit community: “We have been associated in business interests, in social life, and our voices have blended in prayer and praise before the same sacred shrine.”<sup>6</sup> J.D. and Matilda were integrally involved with the city’s sole synagogue and in many ways resembled the other immigrants who had succeeded in business and made Quincy their home for over a decade. Every American city was home to Jews like them. The Levys were unusual, however, in their ongoing business dealings with J.D.’s German relatives.



*Oil portraits of David and Henriette Levy. (Courtesy Private Friedlaender Family Collection)*

## J.D. Levy’s Youth

Joseph David (J.D.) Levy was born in Hechingen in 1829, the fourth child of merchant David Wolf Levy (1790-1866) and his wife Henriette Bacher (1800-1852). Oil portraits of David and Henriette Levy commissioned when J.D. was a young boy speak to the couple’s prosperity.<sup>7</sup> J.D. had five brothers and one sister. In 1831, they resided at House Nr. 97 in Hechingen but had moved to House Nr. 106 by 1858.<sup>8</sup> J.D. was known for his intellect and outstanding education. Undoubtedly he learned Hebrew at a young age, for it was in Hechingen that he earned the reputation of being a fine linguist.<sup>9</sup> Groomed to take a place

in the business world, he was sent to Stuttgart—to a school “known most favorably in commercial and financial circles for over one hundred years.”<sup>10</sup> At the age of 19, J.D. left for the US. According to one source, “during the revolution in 1849, on account of his political opinions, he left Germany and came to America, arriving at Louisville, Kentucky [...]”<sup>11</sup> There may have been anti-Semitism in Hechingen at this time as well.<sup>12</sup> With competition from so many brothers in the family business, J.D. may have left thinking his prospects were better abroad. In any event, he traveled alone from Le Havre to New Orleans, Louisiana.<sup>13</sup>

1 The author wishes to thank many people for their help: Benedict von Bremen, John Dromey, Lothar Vees, David Frolick, Anton Hieke, and Bridget Harrison.

2 “Silver Wedding,” *Quincy Whig*, May 28, 1885, 6.

3 “Death of Siegfried Hochstadter,” *Quincy Daily Journal*, Jan. 28, 1889; “Siegfried Hochstadter,” *Quincy Daily Herald*, Jan. 29, 1889, 4

4 “A Silver Wedding,” *Quincy Daily Journal*, May 22, 1885, 4.

5 “City News,” *Quincy Daily Journal*, May 30, 1885, 4.

6 “Farewell Reception,” *Quincy Morning Whig*, Oct. 14, 1897, 8.

7 “J.D. Levy exhibits an oil portrait of his mother painted in 1838.” from “Among the Art Exhibits,” *Quincy Daily Herald*, Feb. 15, 1889.

8 Otto Werner, *Hechinger Memorbuch* (Hechingen: Verein Alte Synagoge Hechingen e.V., 2000).

9 “The Jews of Illinois. Part Second: Jewish Communities Outside of Chicago,” *Reform Advocate*, May 4, 1901. Several examples of the writing of J.D. Levy have survived. In correspondence with the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, his proficiency with the written English language is evident.

10 Addison Langdon, *An Illustrated Chapter of Representative Men and Residences, Quincy III’s: The Most Beautiful of All Western Cities* (Addison Langdon, 1888).

11 *Quincy Daily Journal*, August 12, 1896, 4.

12 *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life Before and During the Holocaust*, Vol. 1, Shmuel Spector, ed., (NY: New York University Press, 2001), 502.

13 Joseph Levy, age 20, from Hechingen arrived in New Orleans on May 18, 1849. New Orleans Passenger List, accessed on *Ancestry.com*, February 21, 2017.

Not much is known about J.D.'s early days in the US. According to a flattering biographical sketch written decades later, he spent his first four years in America working in the "mercantile and importing business" in Louisville. While there, he met his future wife, Matilda. Eldest child of Abraham Steinau and Henriette Mendel, Matilda had come to the US as a toddler. Her parents were married in Hochstätten, but Matilda's birthplace is unknown.<sup>14</sup> Matilda's father and grandfather had a fine jewelry store in Louisville, and Matilda spent her childhood surrounded by a huge extended family.<sup>15</sup>

### Canton, Missouri

J.D. visited Hechingen in 1854 and then moved to Canton, Missouri, a thriving port on the Mississippi River, where he established a clothing store.<sup>16</sup> At the age of 29, he returned to Louisville to marry 16-year-old Matilda.<sup>17</sup> After the 1860 wedding, the newlyweds shared a house in Canton with several others, including J.D.'s younger brother, Emil.

The couple's first child Hattie was born in Canton just two weeks after the start of the American Civil War (1861-1865). Canton was a divided community, with some favoring the Union and others supporting the Confederacy. As a border state, Missouri supplied troops to both sides and was a dangerous place, the site of many skirmishes. At the outbreak of the war, the Levy brothers enlisted in a Union home guard unit. While J.D.'s military record states that he was a private who "did but little duty," Emil rose to the rank of 1st Lieutenant during four months of service.<sup>18</sup>

J.D. Levy made his contribution to the war effort as a sutler paid to supply provisions to Union troops. An 1861 letter provided safe passage for J.D. when he traveled to St. Louis on business, describing him as "an energetic and unwavering friend of our now distracted but still glorious old Union."<sup>19</sup> The next month when officers nominated J.D. to be a sutler, they vouched for him, stating: "We know him to be loyal honest & faithfull also capable in every respect to fill this office."<sup>20</sup>



*Father, Joseph David Lery, Mother, Mathilda Steinau Levy. On Father's right – Hattie E. Levy (Louchheim). On Mother's left – Harry Belle Levy (Silberman). Boy sitting on stool – David Wolf (D.W.) Levy. Boy standing – Alfred Joseph (A.J.) Levy. Girl on Mother's lap – Naomi Levy. Photo circa 1871. (Courtesy Private Friedlaender Family Collection)*

With J.D.'s duties taking him away from home a good deal, Matilda returned to the relative safety of Louisville, where she gave birth to the couple's second child Mary in 1863. By the time the next two were born – Alfred J. in 1865 and David Wolf in 1867 – the couple was back in Canton, and the Levy clothing store was thriving despite the effects of an 1864 fire that destroyed the docks and warehouses on the waterfront.

J.D. and Emil had the backing of "wealthy relations in Germany," and an 1867 credit report estimated that J.D. was worth between \$20,000 and

\$30,000, and Emil was worth \$10,000.<sup>21</sup> They had received \$10,000 from Europe over the previous year, and their prospects were considered "[very] good."<sup>22</sup>

In 1869 the Levy family moved across the Mississippi River and 20 miles south to the booming city of Quincy, which was the largest city in Illinois outside of Chicago.<sup>23</sup> The city's future was promising, because the first railroad bridge over the Mississippi River was completed there, and goods now moved from east coast to west coast through its rail hub.

A decade after a Canton credit

14 Abraham Steinau and Henrietta Mendel marriage document, July 3, 1843; Private Friedlander Family Collection.

15 Abraham Steinau worked in Louisville and Henderson, Kentucky. By the early 1850s, he and his father-in-law sold and repaired fine imported jewelry and watches. When Matilda's grandmother died in Louisville in 1884, she left 12 children, 75 grandchildren and 50 great grandchildren. Collins' 1848 City Directory for Louisville, Kentucky; advertisement, *The Democratic Banner*, Henderson, Kentucky, 21 Oct 1852, 3; *Louisville Daily Courier*, 24 Aug 1854, 4; *The Courier-Journal* (Louisville, Kentucky) 14 Oct 1884, 5.

16 J.D. Levy took out a small notice in a Hechingen newspaper which translates as: „I hereby say a heartfelt 'farewell' to all my friends and acquaintances as I am returning to New York." It was dated May 5, 1854 and signed "Joseph D. Levy." [My thanks to Benedict von Bremen for finding this notice.]

17 Joseph D. Levy and Matilda Steinau married in

Jefferson County, KY on May 21, 1860. Kentucky Marriage Records.

18 Joseph D. and Emil Levy served in the 2nd N.E. Missouri Home Guards. Office of Adjutant General, Record of Service Cards, Civil War, Box 51, Reel s00887.

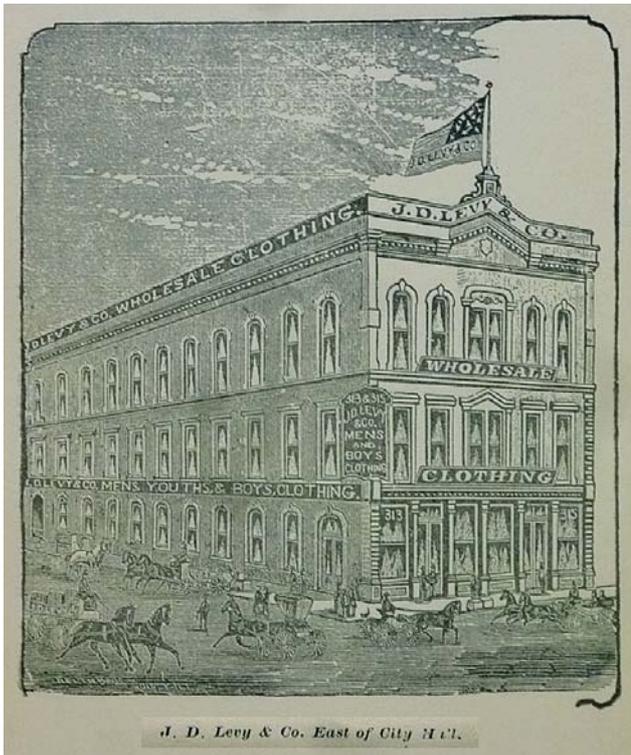
19 James Ellison and William Ellis to Mr JD Levey, Canton [Missouri], Sept. 26, 1861. Private Levy Family Collection.

20 B.B. King, EV Nelson, Charles [ ] to H.M. Woodyard, Colonel Commanding, Canton [Missouri], Oct. 7, 1861. Private Levy Family Collection.

21 October 16, 1867, Missouri Vol. 22, p. 72, R.G. Dun & Co. Credit Report Volumes, Baker Library, Harvard Business School. 10,000 USD in 1860 is the equivalent of about 264,000 USD in 2015 (<https://www.minneapolisfed.org/community/teaching-aids/cpi-calculator-information/consumer-price-index-1800>.)

22 Ibid.

23 James E. Davis, *Frontier Illinois* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 375.



*Storefront of J.D. Levy & Co. Store. From: Thad W. Ward, Souvenir Views of the Principal Public and Private Buildings of Quincy, Illinois (Quincy, IL: Hoffman and Schoeneman, Printers and Binders, 1892), no pagination.*

reporter characterized J.D. as a "Dutch Jew: not well known," J.D. had established a reputation as a "strictly honorable" good businessman.<sup>24</sup> With Henry Oberndorfer as a NY partner, the Quincy business expanded into a wholesale operation. By 1875, they manufactured their own clothing in New York City (NYC). Annual sales of \$250,000 (the equivalent of over \$5 million in 2016), made them one of the largest clothing dealers in the entire "West."<sup>25</sup> By 1879 the firm of J.D. Levy & Co. (with trade in Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Iowa and Nebraska) employed ten men and five or six traveling salesmen. Importers, as well as manufacturers, they had one of the largest factories in the east and an office in Leipzig as well.<sup>26</sup>

The Leipzig office may have been the headquarters of the immense international fur trader Joseph Ullmann, J.D.'s business associate. On one of his many trips to NYC, J.D. wrote to Matilda of plans to bid farewell to Ullmann, who was departing for a six-month stay in Europe.<sup>27</sup> The letterhead that J.D. used was that of a branch of the Ullmann fur enterprise, whose Fifth Avenue address was identical to the NY address of J.D. Levy & Co.<sup>28</sup>

J.D. displayed his respect for an

internationally known Jewish philanthropist when he added a postscript to the letter: "We will call the baby Montefiore, wich [which] will shorten to Monte, this is a nice name, sounds well & is at the same time in honor of our celebrated coreligionist Montefiore in London."<sup>29</sup>

**J.D. Levy and the Jewish Community**  
Rabbi Elias Eppstein, who served Quincy's congregation from 1890 to 1906, was a neighbor and frequent visitor in the Levy home. In his diary, the rabbi described J.D. Levy as "principally a home man." J.D. conducted

- 24 January 4, 1859, November, 1869, Missouri Vol. 22, p. 91, R.G. Dun & Co. Credit Report Volumes, Baker Library, Harvard Business School.
- 25 "J.D. Levy & Co.," *Quincy Whig*, Jan. 7, 1875, 1; An ad in Quincy for J.D. Levy & Co. described them as "manufacturers and jobbers" and gave a Quincy location and a NYC location as well. (160 162 South 5th Avenue, New York); *Quincy Daily Herald*, Apr. 5, 1878, 2.
- 26 *The History of Adams County Illinois: Portraits of Early Settlers and Prominent Men* (Chicago: Murray, Williamson & Phelps, 1879), 963.
- 27 J.D. Levy to Matilda Levy, Jan. 25, 1875. Private Levy Family Collection.
- 28 The letterhead was that of Oberndorfer, Chemidlin, & Co., Furs, Hides, Wool, &c., 160 & 162 South Fifth Ave, the same address listed in an advertisement for J.D. Levy & Co. *Quincy Whig*, Jan. 7, 1875, 1. "Joseph Ullmann Inc. Move into New Premises," *Fur Trade Review*, Sept., 1921, 165.
- 29 Sir Moses Montefiore (1784-1885) was a well-known British Jewish philanthropist who used his substantial influence to ease the persecution of Jews around the world and support those living in Palestine. On the occasion of his 100th birthday, Hattie

an extensive business, but otherwise "could at all times be found in the company of his wife and his children." And yet, J.D. Levy was quite involved in Jewish communal affairs, locally and nationally. He was once vice president of Quincy's Reform congregation B'nai Sholom, whose trustees remembered him as an honored member of the larger community, "incessant in his devotion" to the congregation, "and in all relations of life esteemed for his . . . unbending integrity."<sup>30</sup>

J.D. and his brother Emil were known by Jews throughout the US.<sup>31</sup> Perhaps in part because of his frequent business travels, J.D. often acted as Quincy's liaison to the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC), a national network of Reform congregations established in 1873. J.D. served on its prestigious national executive board and as Quincy's delegate to conferences around the country. He collected local pledges toward a national campaign for the Hebrew Union College; his donation of \$200 put him at the top of the list of Quincy's 11 contributors.<sup>32</sup>

Apart from the UAHC, J.D. was primarily involved with charitable work. In 1882, a group of Jews who banded together in Quincy to help persecuted Jews fleeing Russia elected him president, and he attended a national conference in NYC to discuss ways to help.<sup>34</sup>

- Levy sang at a large commemorative service held by Jews in Quincy. J.D. Levy to Matilda Levy.
- 30 *American Israelite*, Oct. 31, 1889, 6; Sept. 17, 1896; *Jewish Voice* (St. Louis, MO), April 3, 1891; L.H. Cohen to Lipman Levy, Secretary, UAHC, Nov 3, 1874, URJ Collection MS-72, Folder 4, Box A1-6, American Jewish Archives.
- 31 "Toledo, Ohio," *The American Israelite*, Feb. 19, 1875, p. 6; Herman Eliassof, "The Jews of Illinois," *The Reform Advocate*, (Chicago, IL), May 4, 1901, 378.
- 32 Lawrence (KS) Daily Journal July 11, 1879, p. 1. J.D. Levy to Lipman Levy, January 5, 1880. MS-72, Folder 4, Box A1-6, American Jewish Archives.
- 33 J.D. Levy contributed \$200 to the HUC in memory of his parents. Sinking Fund Subscriptions, URJ Collection MS-72, Series A. Correspondence, 1873-1983, Box A1-1, p. 649; "Memorial Contributions to the Hebrew Union College," *American Israelite*, Nov. 12, 1880, 157.; "UAHC Receipts for February, 1881," *American Israelite*, March 11, 1881, 295.
- 34 "Hebrew Relief Society," *Quincy Daily Whig*, May 12, 1882; *Gould's Quincy City Directory*, 1884-1885, 506; "City," *Quincy Daily Whig*, June 3, 1882, 8.

### Emil Bacher Levy

Born in Hechingen in 1838, Emil likely began clerking for his older brother J.D. but soon became a partner. At age 32, Emil married Julia Frank, who had come to Quincy to join a sister.<sup>35</sup> Julia was born in Poultney, Vermont but spent her childhood in NYC.<sup>36</sup> When in Toledo en route home from a NY business trip, Emil had a breakdown and was assisted by Max Epstein, a childhood friend from Hechingen.<sup>37</sup> After Emil died young, Julia took her 3-year old son David to NYC, where they lived with her parents.<sup>38</sup> An impressive stone monument was erected for Emil in Quincy's Jewish cemetery.<sup>39</sup> As an adult, David made a big impression when, in 1907, he visited Quincy in his chauffeur-driven motor car, sharing hair-raising tales of the poor quality of the roads between Chicago and Quincy.<sup>40</sup>

### Matilda Steinau Levy's Life in Quincy

Matilda was busy with child rearing during a period of three decades. From 1861 when her first child was born, she gave birth every two to three years. All but one of her 11 children grew to adulthood. Quincy's Jewish community thrived during the 1870s and 1880s, and Matilda's social life revolved around her family and Jewish friends. Around 1870, the city's Jewish population peaked at 450-500 of its 24,000 inhabitants.<sup>41</sup>

Matilda's drew her closest friends from the women who worshipped at B'nai Sholom. They were nearly all immigrants and had brought with them a familiar communal structure from their European homes. Many came from Jewish communities that were leaning toward Reform. As in Hechingen, men and women organized into separate benevolent societies that originated as burial societies.<sup>42</sup>

When Matilda moved to Quincy, she joined the Hebrew Ladies' Benevolent Society (HLBS), formed in 1863. Members assisted one another in times of sickness, attended dying members, and prepared corpses for burial according to Jewish tradition. They also helped the poor, particularly Jewish women, and supported the temple and its rabbi. The HLBS



From Mary Belle Levy's Photo Album. (Courtesy Private Friedlander Family Collection)

conducted business and recorded its minutes in German through 1886.

Matilda must have spoken fluent English, although late in life she gave German as her mother tongue.<sup>43</sup> Her written English was quite good, and the blessing that she gave her son Mont upon his 1899 graduation from the University of Michigan Law School indicates that she was religious but also worldly: "be it the will of our heavenly [sic] Father that [...] [this] may be the first step which will carry you on to fame & fortune [...] all I can say to any of my own darling

ones is, may Gods [sic] good protecting hands ever be guiding them in all their good thoughts & work."<sup>44</sup>

Matilda encouraged her children to participate in the synagogue. They attended the Sabbath school and after confirmation some of the girls taught there as well.<sup>45</sup> Several of the daughters sang in the temple choir.<sup>46</sup>

### Hattie's and Mary's Trip to Europe

When they were of marriageable age, Hattie and Mary, the two eldest, spent a year abroad.<sup>47</sup> Like other affluent Jewish parents, the Levys

35 "Matrimonial," *Quincy Daily Herald*, Feb. 2, 1871, 4.

36 Julia's father was Moses Frank and her mother was Hannah Gutheim, a sister of Jacob Koppel Gutheim, a prominent American rabbi born in 1817 in Menne, near Warburg.

37 "Toledo, Ohio," *The American Israelite*, Feb. 19, 1875, p. 6.

38 David Emil Levy was born in Quincy on March 19, 1872. As an adult, he spelled his surname Levey. Date of birth from New York Passenger List, 1930, Ile De France.

39 "A Beautiful Monument," *Quincy Whig*, Feb. 15, 1877, 8.

40 "Come to Quincy from New York," *Quincy Daily Journal*, July 20, 1907, 1; "News in Brief," *Quincy Daily Journal*, July 23, 1907.

41 Author's calculations; "Hebrew," *The Quincy Whig*, Dec. 13, 1877, 2; US Federal Census, 1870. Hechingen's Jewish population peaked decades earlier at 809, and was a much larger portion (25%) of the city's population. In 1880 it had diminished to 340. *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life Before and During the Holocaust*, Vol. 1, Shmuel Spector, ed.,

(NY: New York University Press, 2001), 502.

42 In Hechingen, male and female *chebra kadischa* societies cared for the sick and dead and also for the community's poor. In 1893, J.D.'s brother Michael was one of the leaders of Hechingen's *chebra kadischa*. For a full description of these organizations and their history, see Otto Werner, "Jüdische Bruderschaften und Verein in Hechingen", *Hohenzollerische Heimat*, March 1982, 11–52; Juni 1982, 20–22.

43 1920 United States Federal Census, St. Louis, MO.

44 Matilda Steinau Levy to Mont Levy, June 18, 1899; Private Levy Family Collection.

45 "In Memoriam," *Quincy Daily Whig*, November 11, 1894, 3; Hattie Levy was one of four young women who taught in the religious school in 1886. *American Israelite*, Feb. 12, 1886, 5. Leah Levy was confirmed in 1893 and afterward taught in the Sabbath school. "Confirmation at the Temple," *Quincy Daily Whig*, May 23, 1893.

46 See, for example, "Montefiore Celebration," *The Quincy Whig*, October 30, 1884, 5.

47 According to a newspaper account of a surprise

wanted their daughters to polish their German and French and develop an appreciation of German literature, music, art and culture.<sup>48</sup> Although the girls began with six months in Hechingen, unfortunately the diary is silent as to their time there. A separate photo album does contain photos of Mary in Hechingen.

Mary's travel diary reveals the family's affluence and its extensive network of contacts. It begins on Oct. 7, 1880, when the sisters "left the beautiful little city of Quincy, Ill" by rail and settled down to enjoy a picnic supper, "the last meal prepared by the hands of their mother for a long time to come."<sup>49</sup> They stopped in Louisville to visit their grandparents before continuing to NYC and on to Europe.<sup>50</sup>

Newspapers published enthusiastic letters that Mary wrote home. One described an American "capitalist" she had met who was developing "an air-vessel of steel" capable of crossing the Atlantic in two or three days: "To me it hardly appears credible, but still what can not be achieved in this, the nineteenth century? We are scarcely allowed to entertain a doubt of any scientific invention."<sup>51</sup>

The girls' travels took them throughout Germany, visiting relatives and acquaintances nearly everywhere.<sup>52</sup> They spoke German well enough to enjoy attending the theater and opera. Mary's entry for the day they spent in Wiesbaden is typical. She described the history of a beautiful church, marveled at the scenic countryside and concluded: "Among other places of interest we saw the Synagogue, Anlagen, took refreshments at Römers one of the best confectionaries in Germany, and attended the Concert in the evening at the Kur Saal."<sup>53</sup>

At the end of their holiday, the girls visited Paris, where they strolled through the Tuileries, went window shopping, and spent time with several eligible Jewish bachelors.<sup>54</sup> They traveled in style on their return. Mary described the ship's elegant ladies' parlor but mentioned also that it carried over 1,000 third-class passengers. She wrote, "During the trip three children which died were

buried in the 'depths of the deep blue sea' [...]"<sup>55</sup>

### Children in Quincy

Upon arriving home at Quincy's train depot, Hattie and Mary were greeted by friends singing to the accompaniment of the Gem City Band.<sup>56</sup> The Levy children were part of an elite group of Jewish teenagers that met regularly and staged performances to support the HLBS, the temple and the Sabbath school.<sup>57</sup> These children had studied elocution, piano, violin, and voice. Whatever the event – be it the 10-day fair that the HLBS staged to retire the debt on the temple in 1884, or a leap-year dance hosted by young women in 1888 – Levy children were involved.<sup>58</sup>

Matilda took a more active role in the HLBS as her children grew older. When serving her first term as HLBS president in 1892, her three middle daughters starred in a puppen-fest the group staged to raise funds for the poor before winter. Dressed as different kinds of dolls, the children sang and danced, and Levy girls played a piano duet as well.<sup>59</sup> Matilda presided over the HLBS at a time when it faced an influx of families from eastern Europe that needed aid. At a special meeting held at the Levy house, the group voted to purchase a sewing machine "for a poor Russian

woman, who would thereby aid her husband in supporting the family."<sup>60</sup> In addition, HLBS members rotated on a committee to visit the sick.

Women's organizations in Quincy, drawn almost exclusively along religious lines, included a German Catholic women's society that was similar to the HLBS.<sup>61</sup> In 1890, a nondenominational women's group was organized, with Matilda serving on the philanthropy committee.<sup>62</sup>

J.D. was one of several Jews who played key roles in the citywide Associated Charities.<sup>63</sup> He was remembered as "always actively identified with every movement calculated to promote the public welfare."<sup>64</sup> Some of the Levy children also participated in nonsectarian associations, including the Turnverein. The children, all of whom attended public schools, had Christian friends, but none married outside the faith.<sup>65</sup>

### Children's Adult Lives

By the time the eldest son, Alfred J. Levy, married Gussie Jacobs, the family's place in society was secure. The press described the 1891 wedding, which took place in the temple, as the "social event of the season," uniting "two of Quincy's oldest and most highly respected families."<sup>66</sup> Alfred had been groomed to take over the family business, and he and Gus-

send-off party for the girls the night before they left Quincy, they had planned to spend two years in Europe. "Going to Europe," *Quincy Daily Whig*, October 4, 1880.

48 "Off for Europe," *Quincy Daily Herald*, April 29, 1874.

49 Mary Levy Travel Diary, Oct. 7, 1880. Private Silberman Family Collection.

50 Mary Levy Travel Diary, Oct.

51 "Quincy Folks Abroad," *Quincy Daily Whig*, Dec. 18, 1880, 4.

52 They spent a month in Stuttgart and made short visits to Mainz and Frankfurt.

53 Mary Levy Travel Diary, July 3, 1881.

54 Mary Levy Travel Diary, Aug. 21–24 1881.

55 "Trip from Europe to America," Sept 1st-Sept 9th 1881, Mary Levy Travel Diary.

56 *Quincy Daily Herald*, Sept. 23, 1881, 4.

57 Levy children belonged to the Utile Dulce [U.D.] Society of Jewish children who organized to raise money for the Sabbath school. "The U.D. Entertainment," *Quincy Daily Whig*, Feb. 17, 1887, 3; "The U.D. Entertainment," *Quincy Daily Journal*, Feb. 17, 1887, 4.

58 "A Grand Fair," *Quincy Daily Herald*, Oct. 26, 1884, 4. "On Event Rarely Excelled," *Quincy Daily Herald* Feb. 29, 1888, 4. *Quincy Daily Whig*, Jan. 9, 1880, 10. *Quincy Daily Herald*, Jan. 12, 1892, 3.

59 Letter to the editor from Rabbi Elias Eppstein, [writing under his pseudonym "S"] dated Nov. 4, 1892,

Quincy, Ill., *American Israelite*, Nov. 10, 1892, 2.

60 HLBS Minutes, Feb. 19, 1894, Wohltätigkeitsverein Israelitischer Frauen (Quincy, Ill.) Minutes, X–41, American Jewish Archives.

61 The St. Elizabeth's Society held fairs and festivals to raise money primarily to beautify its church and help the priest. Theodore Bruener, *History of the Catholic Church in Quincy in the State of Illinois*, (Quincy, Illinois: Volk, Jones & McMein, 1887), 46–48.

62 "Women in Council," *Quincy Daily Whig*, Oct. 14, 1893, 3.

63 "Election of Officers," *Quincy Daily Herald*, Dec. 13, 1893, 1.

64 "Death of Mr. J.D. Levy," *Quincy Daily Whig*, Aug. 13, 1896, 3.

65 Based on what is known about the Levy daughters, they all completed eighth grade. The second-to-youngest graduated from high school, and Leah, the youngest, completed a four-year college program and became a nurse. Leah practiced her German by writing letters to Rabbi Eppstein. *Quincy Daily Whig*, Sept. 22, 1907, 7. Ruth married Milton M. Mayer, son of one of Chicago's first clothing manufacturers. Together they founded Chicago's North Shore Congregation Israel, an offshoot of Sinai. "Ruth L. Mayer," *Chicago Tribune*, Nov. 19, 1974, 50; "Obituary," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 10, 1916, 11.

66 "Hearts and Hands," *Quincy Daily Herald*, Sept. 10, 1891, 5.

sie remained in Quincy for another decade.

Proficiency in German enabled David, second eldest of the Levy sons, to enter the family's European business. In his early 20s, David bicycled with a group of Americans for four months through the British Isles and continental Europe, ending by cycling along the Rhine.<sup>67</sup> David may have visited Hechingen, because shortly after his return, the Levys began selling "Natural Wool Sanitary Underwear made in our own factory in Hechingen, Germany."<sup>68</sup> A few years later, David moved to NYC to be the exclusive American distributor of the Hohenzollern Sanitary Underwear produced in his uncles' Hechingen factory. A Quincy newspaper reported that the company had been established a century earlier by David's grandfather. From his base in NYC, David made extensive business trips to Hechingen and other European destinations over the next several years.<sup>70</sup> Initially, he enjoyed great success, "in a single year [...] introducing these goods in nearly every important city of the country. They are regarded as the best sanitary woolens manufactured and are in demand everywhere."<sup>71</sup>

J.D.'s brother Max died in 1892 in Hechingen, where he was a partner in the family business and said to have "amassed a large fortune."<sup>72</sup> J.D. had transferred much of the responsibility of the Quincy store to the next generation. Discouraged in part by a freak accident which affected his health, and hoping to find a cure in Europe, in 1896 J.D. Levy traveled to Hechingen accompanied by Matilda and their two youngest daughters. He was further saddened when he learned that his sole surviving brother, Michael, had died while the group was sailing to Europe.<sup>73</sup> Still unwell upon his return to NYC, J.D. sought a water treatment in a Hartford sanitarium.<sup>74</sup> Doctors there judged him to have a bright intellect but diagnosed "senile insanity" brought on by a business setback.<sup>75</sup> J.D. died of heat stroke only eight days after his admission.<sup>76</sup> He was buried in Quincy, where he was remembered in the press as having been one of the city's

*Hohenzollern Sanitary Underwear Advertisement in the San Francisco Chronicle, January 9, 1898, p. 15.*



"most prominent business men [...] a great reader, possessing a rare fund of information on all important questions."<sup>77</sup>

After J.D.'s death, Matilda received a sizable life insurance payment as well as a large inheritance.<sup>78</sup> J.D. had left his entire estate to her and named her executrix of his will, with the stipulation that "should she desire any advice concerning the management and control of my estate that she

confer with my eldest daughter, son and son-in-law."<sup>79</sup> Matilda remained in Quincy a few years before moving to NYC and then to St. Louis, where she died in 1923.<sup>80</sup> Alfred headed the family business in Quincy until 1901, when his family moved to St. Louis. In 1903, he paid \$2,500 for the Angelica Jacket Company and its six sewing machines.<sup>81</sup> Alfred brought his brothers Mont and David into the business, and the three transformed it

67 "Sights in Paris," *Quincy Daily Whig*, July 28, 1889, 2; "A European Bicycle Tour," *Quincy Daily Whig*, Mar. 3, 1889, 9.

68 Advertisement for "Levys'," *Quincy Daily Herald*, Oct. 13, 1889, 6.

69 "Local and General News," *Quincy Daily Journal*, Nov. 4, 1892, 7.

70 David Levy traveled to Europe for stays of up to six months as American representative of Hohenzollern Sanitary Woolen Mills. See, for example, "Local and General News," *Quincy Daily Journal*, July 27, 1895, 7.

71 "Splendid Sales," *Quincy Daily Whig*, Oct. 28, 1893, 3.

72 *The Quincy Whig*, Dec. 8, 1892, 5.

73 After Rabbi Epstein delivered the eulogy at J.D. Levy's funeral, the rabbi reflected upon J.D. Levy's personality: "Extreme nervousness producing melancholia was his sickness. Indeed with Jos. D. Levy a good man has departed this life." *Diary of Rabbi Elias Eppstein*, Aug. 12, 1896; Aug. 16, 1896.

74 *Diary of Rabbi Elias Eppstein*, Aug. 12, 1896.

75 Final medical report of J.D. Levy, attachment to a letter dated Nov. 1, 1991, from The Institute of Living, Hartford, Connecticut. Private Friedlander Family Collection. Substantial debts owed by J.D. Levy at the time of his death suggest that his business had lost a lot of its value in the Panics of 1893 and 1896. Will and probate documents concerning the estate of J.D. Levy, Illinois Wills and Probate Records, accessed on Ancestry.com, April 15, 2017.

76 J.D. Levy died on August 12, 1896. Final medical report of J.D. Levy.

77 "Death of Mr. J.D. Levy," *Quincy Daily Whig*, August 13, 1896, 3.

78 "Brevities," *Quincy Daily Whig*, Nov. 26, 1896, 8. In addition to insurance, J.D.'s estate came to about \$35,000: a personal estate of \$30,000 and net business interests of a little over \$5,000. J.D. Levy owned business property valued at \$10,000, consisting of two farms, lots in small towns, and an ice house in Quincy. Stock in the J.D. Levy Clothing Co. was valued at \$25,000. J.D. was heavily indebted, however, owing a total of \$19,100 (\$5,200 to a brother-in-law, Leo Block of Rochester, NY; \$11,100 to Ricker National Bank in Quincy; \$2,100 to Bert M. Jacobs; \$700 to a Louisville bank.) After payment of those debts, substantial funeral costs, and final medical and legal fees, about \$5,000 remained. Will and probate documents concerning the estate of J.D. Levy.

79 Will of J.D. Levy, signed March 2, 1896, witnessed by Wolf Joseph and Rabbi Elias Eppstein, Quincy, IL., Illinois Wills and Probate Records, accessed on Ancestry.com, April 15, 2017.

80 "Personals," *Quincy Daily Whig*, May 27, 1900, 8; Matilda died on April 5, 1923. Missouri death certificate.

81 "Angelica Corporation History," <http://www.fundinguniverse.com/company-histories/angelica-corporation-history/> accessed Mar. 2, 2017.

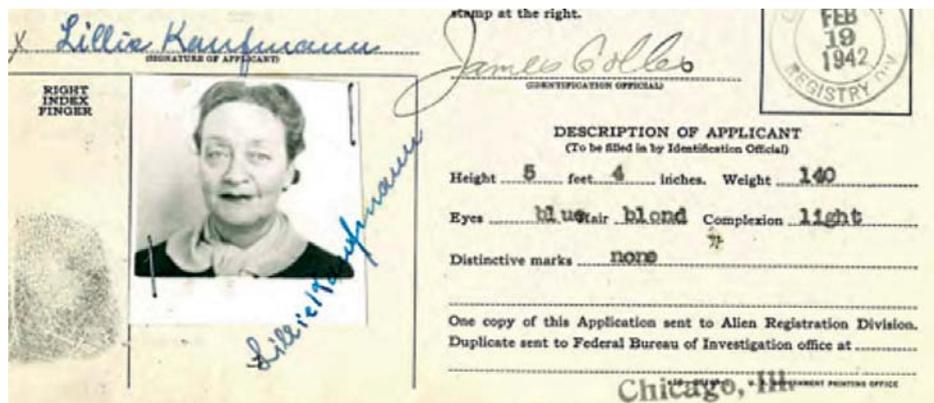
into a flourishing nationwide manufacturer of uniforms of all sorts. During World War II, they made combat jackets for soldiers and uniforms for female factory workers.<sup>82</sup> Alfred and Mont lived in St. Louis most of their adult lives and were generous contributors to Jewish and secular causes.<sup>83</sup>

When J.D. died, Matilda was in Chicago visiting her daughter Mary, then the mother of five children. Mary's husband, Sigmund "Sig" Silberman, born in Rockenhausen, immigrated to Quincy in 1870. He began as a country peddler with a horse and cart buying furs, wool and hides from farmers and small-town merchants.<sup>84</sup> Continuing in that line, he and two brothers built up a thriving business in Quincy, moving to Chicago in 1886.<sup>85</sup> First a giant in the wool industry, the firm had become one of the leading fur firms in the country by the time Sigmund brought in his two eldest sons in 1910.<sup>86</sup> The Silbermans were members of Chicago's Jewish elite and active in charitable work. Mary belonged to her temple's (Sinai) Sisterhood and the National Council of Jewish Women and was devoted to immigrant resettlement.<sup>87</sup>

### Ludwig Levy

Ludwig Levy, son of J.D.'s brother Max, left his Hechingen home in 1872 at age 17, sailing from Hamburg to NYC on his way to Quincy.<sup>88</sup> By this time, Max and another brother headed the family textile business in Hechingen. Ludwig was a clerk and bookkeeper for J.D. Levy and lived with the family.<sup>89</sup>

Ludwig chaperoned Hattie and Mary on their journey from Quincy to Hechingen in 1880. Mary described him as "the gentleman, to whose care the ladies were left, [...] their cousin from Europe, although at the time spoken of, an American Citizen, as he had been in the US long enough to become naturalized."<sup>90</sup> Once the three arrived in NYC, Ludwig wrote to the US State Department requesting to renew his passport: "[...] I have performed no act to forfeit my American citizenship, with the exception of staying in Europe somewhat over two years [...] Is it necessary for



*Alien Case File A7571559, Lillie Kaufmann, National Archives Identifier 7234440, Alien Case Files, 1944-2003, Record Group 566, Records of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, National Archives at Kansas City.*

American born ladies, who visit Europe, to procure passports?"<sup>91</sup>

Ludwig moved back to Germany permanently and married Boston-born Lottie Phillips. Their one child Lillie, born in Hechingen in 1888, left at 15 to attend school in Berlin.<sup>92</sup> She married a hat manufacturer, and the couple lived in the same Berlin apartment building as Albert Einstein, whom they considered their closest friend.<sup>93</sup> Ludwig died in 1922 and was buried in Hechingen.<sup>94</sup> Two years later Lillie and her husband vacationed in the US, and Lottie left her home in Hechingen to visit Mary Levy Silberman in Chicago.<sup>95</sup>

Lillie had one child, Ellen, a blue-

eyed blonde who grew up in Berlin and spoke English, French, and German. Ellen eloped to Paris to marry Fritz Wallmann. In 1936, Mary Levy Silberman, who lived with her son Hubert in Chicago, sponsored the couple to immigrate to the US.<sup>96</sup> Hubert was in the Silberman wool business and traveled frequently to Europe. The next summer, Ellen vacationed in St. Louis, where she visited other children of J.D. and Matilda Levy.<sup>97</sup>

Ludwig's widow Lottie managed to leave Germany in 1939, and Lillie and her husband left in 1941 via a circuitous route: Nice, France to Martinique to St. Thomas to NYC.<sup>98</sup> In Chicago,

82 By the 1960s the Angelica Uniform Co. was "the largest manufacturer of men's and women's washable service apparel for hospitals, restaurants and hotels." "Angelica Corporation History." <http://www.fundinguniverse.com/company-histories/angelica-corporation-history/> accessed Mar. 2, 2017; "Angelica Corporation—St. Louis History," [http://stlc.in.missouri.org/history/people/detail.cfm?Master\\_ID=1705](http://stlc.in.missouri.org/history/people/detail.cfm?Master_ID=1705) accessed Mar. 2, 2017.

83 "Funeral of Alfred J. Levy," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, Aug. 11, 1947, 15; "Alfred J. Levy Estate," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, Sept. 13, 1947, 5; "Mont Levy Dies at 64," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, June 19, 1939, 17; "Mont Levy Dies While in East on Business," *St. Louis Star and Times*, June 20, 1939, 5.

84 Memoir of Sig Silberman. Private Friedlander Family Collection.

85 "Going to Chicago," *Quincy Daily Whig*, April 22, 1886.

86 *Fur Trade Review*, Vol. 46, Feb. 1919, 212-214; *Hunter Trader Trapper*, Vol. XX, April, 1910, 105.

87 *Chicago Jewish Community Blue Book* (Chicago: The Sentinel Publishing Co., ca 1918), 5, 349.

88 Ludwig departed Hamburg on the Holsatia on May 22, 1872. Hamburg Passenger List accessed via [ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com), March 2, 2017.

89 Edmonson's Adams County and Quincy City Directory, 1876-77, 25.

90 Mary Levy Travel Diary, Oct. 7, 1880.

91 Ludwig Levy to U.S. Department of State, Oct. 19, 1870, on stationery of Hochstadter Brothers, Manufacturers of Clothing, NY.

92 *Hechingen Memorbuch*, 336.

93 Upon their arrival in NYC on Jan. 29, 1924 on the *Majestic* from Southampton, Lillie and Siegmund Kauffmann listed Professor Einstein, Haberlandstr. 5, Berlin, as their closest relative or friend in Germany. New York Passenger List.

94 *Hechingen Memorbuch*, 336.

95 Lottie Levy arrived in NYC from Hamburg on Nov. 2, 1924 on the *Albert Ballin*. New York Passenger List.

96 Fritz and Ellen Wallmann listed their closest relative in Germany as Fritz's father, W. Wallmann of Berlin. For US relative they gave "Aunt, Mrs. M. Sillerman," 4849 Greenwood Ave., Chicago. 4849 Greenwood Ave. was the address of Mary's son, Hubert S. Silberman. US Dept. of Labor List or Manifest of Alien Passengers for the United States, S.S. Lafayette, sailing from Le Havre France, Aug. 19, 1936.

97 Ellen Wallman's photo album included a page she entitled "Vacation 1937 to St. Louis, Mo." prominently featuring photos of Alfred J. Levy and his wife Gussie as well as Hattie Levy Louchheim. Private Wallman Family Collection.

98 US Dept. of Labor List or Manifest of Alien Passengers for the United States, Passengers Sailing from Martinique, May 31, 1941; Alien Case File A7571559, Lillie Kaufmann, National Archives Identifier 7234440, Alien Case Files, 1944-2003, Record Group 566, Records of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, National Archives at Kansas City.

the refugees received some help from relatives but never regained the ease of their former lives. Lillie and her husband earned a small sum by tending chickens and selling eggs.<sup>99</sup> After her husband died in 1943, Lillie lived for 20 years in a Chicago senior residence.<sup>100</sup> The Selfhelp Home was a mutual-aid organization run by and for Holocaust survivors and refugees, where Lillie organized cultural events and may have done administrative work.<sup>101</sup> In 1986, Lillie's daughter Ellen returned to Berlin as part of a group of 240 Jews hosted by Berlin's Bürgermeister (mayor), who advised the group to "try to attach our feelings to the good memories of our

childhood." Ellen attended services at a liberal synagogue, where the music sung by the "magnificent kantor" made her very emotional, thinking, in her own words, "that here I was worshipping freely in a place where 3 generations ago my Jewish brethren were killed for just doing that."<sup>102</sup>

### Conclusion

J.D. and Matilda Levy's tale is not the typical "rags to riches" story so heralded in the 19th century. J.D. worked hard but came from an affluent family, most of whom never had reason to leave Germany. The close-knit branches of the family straddling the Atlantic were refined and cultured

and had much in common, retaining business relationships into the 20th century. The extended family exemplifies Jews living in small cities who were philanthropic, sophisticated and worldly.

99 The death certificate of Siegmund Kaufman, who died on May 12, 1943 in Evanston, IL, stated that he was an egg dealer. Conversation with Howard Wallman, Feb. 8, 2017.

100 Conversation with Howard Wallman.

101 For a history of Chicago's Selfhelp Home, still in operation: <https://www.selfhelphome.org/dignity/>. Conversation with Howard Wallman. Ellen Kaufman's husband served in the US military in WWII and was wounded when his plane was shot down over Germany.

102 Ellen Wallman's reminiscences

## Rexingen, Revisited

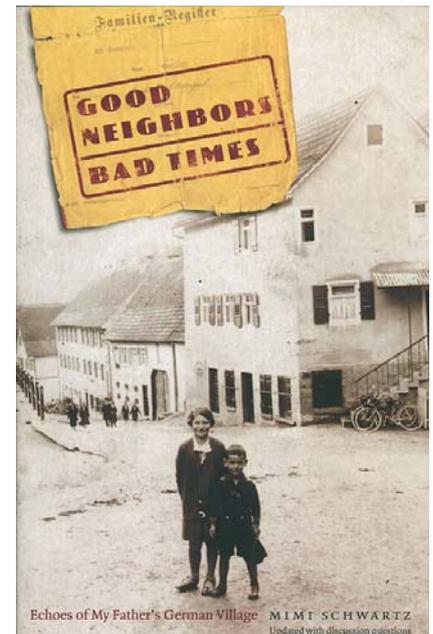
In 2018, a man from Australia wrote to author Mimi Schwartz in New Jersey about her book about Rexingen (*Good Neighbors, Bad Times, Echoes of My Father's German Village* – 2008). This man, Max Sayer, had been a young Catholic boy in this village during the Hitler years – and confirmed her father's memories of Jewish/Christian relations before Hitler: "As your father told you, we all got along...."

So began a correspondence that led Schwartz to this second edition, now called *Good Neighbors, Bad Times Revisited: New Echoes of My Father's German Village* (University of Nebraska Press – Spring 2021).

Schwartz splices into her previous work 20 excerpts from a private memoir that Max wrote, remembering his Rexingen from age five in 1935 to the end of the war. Schwartz finds new perspectives in the complexity of decency and what that meant then—and what it means now in our polarized times of rising anti-Semitism and hate of "Other." This edition also captures the growing trust and friendship that develop across oceans between two families that, without Hitler, would have lived five houses apart in a village whose legacy they share.



*Mimi Schwartz is an award-winning, socially conscious American author, educator, and public speaker. She lives in Princeton, USA. Her father Arthur Löwengart was born in Rexingen in 1899, her mother Gerda Tiefental in Stuttgart in 1911. The couple emigrated to the USA in 1936 and always kept close contact with Shavei Zion, where they are both buried.*



Cover of the First Edition.

### What one early Reviewer has to say:

*Schwartz' scrupulously researched, humane and multi-voiced account of a German village where Jews and gentiles "all got along...." has been profoundly enriched in this second edition. Now we have excerpts from a private memoir of a man who as a boy witnessed the burning of the village synagogue, the encroachment of Nazism, the deportation of Jews, and the burgeoning of the Hitler*

*Youth movement. And beyond that, as an extraordinary gift, in the letter writing between Schwartz and this newly discovered family, the meaning of "neighbor" gains an utterly new dimension.*

Alicia Ostriker, New York State Poet Laureate and Academy of American Poets Chancellor

# The Laying of Stumbling Stones for Tübingen Jews

Sigrid Goth-Zeck and Günter Häfelinger, Tübingen

In 2011, 26 Stumbling Stones were laid in Tübingen's Südstadt on the initiative of the Protestant Eberhard Church congregation for escaped and deported Tübingen Jews.

In 2016, a private initiative was then set up to lay further Stumbling Stones in Tübingen's city centre. In June 2017,

the Christian Churches Association backed their demands. In September 2017, the Cultural Committee of the City of Tübingen approved a motion to relocate the Stumbling Stones by a large majority.

The 29 Stumbling Stones were laid on 10 July 2018 at eight locations by

the Cologne artist Gunter Demnig in downtown Tübingen. For three days, 23 descendants of Tübingen's Jews from England, France, Israel and the USA had travelled to the site. Below are a speech that were given on the occasion of the Stolperstein 2018 relocation.

## Talk of Sigrid Goth-Zeck on the Reception on Monday, July 9, 2018 in Tübingen for 24 Jewish Guests of the Stolperstein-Initiative Tübingen

Dear guests,  
for two years we have worked together as an initiative for this moment. This is a very important day for all of us, and the work of remembrance has become more and more important to us. What has moved us most in this time, I would like to make clear to you in our last contact with some relatives from the USA:

In June this year we received an email and a phone call from two grandchildren living on the west coast of the USA. Her grandfather had emigrated to Illinois in 1888 at the age of 16. Exactly 130 years lie in between, until the day tomorrow when two stumbling blocks are laid for her grandfather's two sisters. We could first tell these grandchildren that their grandfather had two sisters. And they give us – as they say - their complete permission and thank us for laying the stum-

bling stones in Tübingen. They wrote us: "What an amazing project you are working on with your co-workers. It is very, very moving. We appreciate that." Unfortunately, they cannot arrive now, but ask us for a photo of the two stumbling stones that they, like us, want to visit in the next years.

But dear guests, you have come today to express this love and appreciation of your relatives, who were also defamed, expelled and finally murdered in Tübingen between 1933 and 1942. We are very touched by this. You have a long journey behind you and you are not afraid of the financial expenditure. You expose yourself to internal and external stress in order to remember your relatives in front their last home. We thank you for this from the bottom of our hearts.

The small brass plates with the inscription of the dates of life pay

tribute to the individual, unimaginable suffering inflicted on your relatives. We bow before them.

With the stumbling stones we join a Europe-wide culture of commemoration. The Cologne artist Gunter Demnig has created an impressive work with this idea since 1992. Tomorrow he will also lay the stones for your relatives himself. There are now almost 70,000 stumbling blocks in over 20 European countries that keep the common memory of the victims of National Socialist ideology alive. They want to be a reminder that what has happened will never be forgotten and that we remain very vigilant with regard to the current situation.

And there is hope for that here today:

- If you have come as a generation of children and grandchildren to commemorate –
- If pupils and their teachers are prepared to deal with the Nazi era and when they are prepared to deal with the biographies of the displaced young relatives and then even write and read them themselves, –
- then this is an essential contribution to understanding across the generations
- even in our city – and we don't have to fear that our memories will run out. I would like to conclude with a quotation from a letter Hanna Bernheim who wrote on September 22, 1981. It expresses it's "hope that the majority of the young generation will be ready to help to heal the deep wounds and to prevent such barbarism from recurring".



Gunter Demnig laying the stumbling stones for the Oppenheim and Schäfer families on Holzmarkt, Tübingen, July 10, 2018. (Courtesy Benedict von Bremen)

## Welcome Speech by Günter Häfelinger on July 9, 2018

On behalf of the Stumbling Stone Initiative, I warmly welcome you all.

I would like to start with a big thank you to all those who have supported us in many ways, especially the many donors who have made the financial regulation of these three days completely possible for us with large or small money transfers and who have even made a travel subsidy possible.

As already mentioned, Sigrid Goth-Zeck asked in 2014 why there are no stumbling stones in Tübingen. Since 2013 we have been a member of the Association for the Promotion of Jewish Culture by Harald Schwaderer, who is here, and we learned that there have been 26 stumbling stones in the southern part placed in 2011. Harald named us Jonathan Schilling, a former student of the Wildermuth High School. From 2013 on he was active with regard to stumbling stones in Tübingen and in 2014 he visited in Jerusalem Liselotte Schäfer married Michal Wager, a former pupil in the 1920s at Wildermuth High School. He told her about the stumbling stones and that he wanted to make an effort to set a stumbling stone for her in Tübingen. She was moved to tears. With his idea, however, he ran against closed doors all over Tübingen's city administration. They argued that the Tübingen local council decided in 2008 not to let any stumbling blocks be set in Tübingen. The alternative concept of the culture of remembrance in Tübingen should be realised through the Geschichtspfad steles of the Geschichtswerkstatt and anyway the former Tübingen Jews would not want any stumbling stones. Pastor Wassmann told us in a talk in June 2015 how the stumbling stones in the Südstadt came about. Afterwards, together with Pastor Staiger and the association Loretto, they had collected enough money for over 20 stumbling stones and, bypassing the municipal council, he had organized the laying of 26 stumbling stones with the Civil Engineering Office, because no historical path stelae are planned in the southern city. After this lecture, four people, apart from Jonathan,

Sigrid and myself, had sat down with Elisabeth Odinius and we decided to support Jonathan's positive decision by Michal Wager for a stumbling stones. After the time when the history trail steles would be set up. This was finally realized in May 2016. Thereupon, on July 19, 2016, we had a first meeting of our so-called Stumbling Stone Initiative with 9 peoples. But with a letter we also caused a strong rejection on the part of the city administration and the history workshop (Geschichtswerkstatt). However, we were able to prove that the Jews questioned by Mrs. Schurig, who lived in Tübingen, and the descendants of former Tübingen Jews written by us are strongly for stumbling stones. After a negative discussion with Mayor Palmer, a special meeting of the Culture Committee was held on 16 September 2017 at the request of the AL/Greens, to which Sigrid and I were invited with the right to speak. The result of the vote was overwhelmingly positive: the future laying of stumbling blocks in Tübingen was approved with only two votes against!

The realization was made possible by my contacts to the Dietrich Bonhoeffer community, to which I had belonged for 16 years as a parish council. In an intensively discussed joint meeting, they unanimously decided to support our initiative and made a very important decision: The donation account for our group can be managed by the community

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*The stumbling stones for the murdered cantor and religion teacher Dr. Josef Wochenmark, his wife Bella and their fled sons Alfred (Mark) and Arnold (Marque) were laid at Wöhrdstrasse 23 on July 10, 2018. (Courtesy Prof. Dr. Günter Häfelinger)*

secretary of the DBK, who can also legally issue donation receipts for an amount from 200 Euro. Since then, our group, which has now grown to 17 active people in the meantime, has been able to hold a total of 22 meetings free of charge in the rooms of the DBK. The community also made today's room available and donated the welcome sparkling wine. Many thanks for all to our pastor Angelika Volkmann.

Our other activities were concentrated on: informing the Tübingen public from 2016 on with a total of four flyers, the last edition of which you all received, and the collection of a total of 600 support signatures, as well as the announcement of our donation account in the flyers.

As a completely private initiative (no association!) we sought the support of the Tübingen churches. After the DBK parish council, then the so-called Closer Council of the 7 Tübingen Protestant parishes and after that the large and important ACK = Arbeitsgemeinschaft Christlicher Kirchen. There are connected to 27 churches in Tübingen. We have always met with the great approval. In an ACK meeting, for example, a spontaneous donation of Euro 1,000 was decided.

You can now experience the result of our almost exactly two-year activity this evening and in the following two days. I am delighted that you have all come and that we are now experiencing days together that will remain in your memory.



# The Tübingen History Path to National Socialism: An Example for Researching and Exploring Local History

Benedict von Bremen, Tübingen

## Tübingen during National Socialism

Tübingen had been a regional Nazi stronghold already before Adolf Hitler came to power in 1933. The university town's academic and bourgeois environment was characterized by nationalist, *völkisch*, and antisemitic sentiments. In the 1920s and early 1930s, Tübingen Jews were insulted and became victims of violence; some local businesses owned by Jews were boycotted. In the 1932 Reichstag elections, the Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (National Socialist German Workers' Party, NSDAP) received 40 per cent of the popular vote in Tübingen.

After the National Socialists seized power on January 30, 1933, Tübingen quickly became "gleichgeschaltet" (forcibly coordinated along the lines of Nazi ideology). In the March 5, 1933 Reichstag parliamentary elections, the NSDAP and its right-wing coalition partner received 62 per cent of the popular vote in Tübingen (in the whole German Reich, they gained about 50 per cent). On March 9, National Socialists raised the swastika flag on both the Neue Aula (the university's main auditorium) and Tübingen city hall, thereby signaling the Nazi takeover of both university and town. By late March, the Tübingen city council was forcibly coordinated and consisted only of NSDAP members; Social Democrats, Communists, and other political enemies were persecuted and incarcerated in concentration camps while all political parties except the NSDAP were outlawed by the summer of 1933. On April 1, 1933, SA stormtroopers led the boycott of Jewish-owned businesses. In May 1933, the Tübingen city council was the first in the German Reich to put a so-called "Freibadbeschluss" into action, thereby banning Jewish citizens from visiting the public outdoor swimming pool (Freibad).

The National Socialist "Volksgemeinschaft" ("people's community")

was attractive to many Germans. The NSDAP and its many satellite organizations provided career opportunities and offered recreational activities. Minors often happily served in the Hitler Youth. Mass events like marches on national holidays cemented the feeling of togetherness. At the same time, the "Volksgemeinschaft" excluded those who did not fit the Nazi Weltanschauung: Jews, political enemies such as democrats or communists, Sinti and Roma, or the mentally ill and physically disabled.

The Eberhard Karls Universität boasted about being "Jew-free" already in 1933. Tübingen University housed several faculties which scientifically underpinned Nazi ideology; its outreach was not only regional but also national. Moreover, a number of high-ranking Tübingen National Socialists directly participated in the Holocaust and other war crimes. Most of these perpetrators had studied in Tübingen and started their SA or SS careers there. One of them, Theodor Dannecker (1913–1945), became Adolf Eichmann's right hand and was primarily responsible for the deportation of about 476,000 Jews from several European countries. Another one, Ernst Weinmann (1907–1947), became Tübingen's youngest lord mayor, served as an SS officer in occupied Serbia during the war, and was afterwards sentenced to death as a war criminal in Belgrade.

Tübingen's Jewish community numbered 101 members in 1933. By 1939, all Jewish-owned businesses had been forcibly "aryanized." At the end of World War II in 1945, over 20 Tübingen Jews had perished during the Shoah; most of the others had found refuge in the United States or Mandatory Palestine. In Tübingen's university hospitals, several hundred persons who did not fit the Nazi world view were forcibly sterilized between 1934 and 1944. During World War II, over 1,700 forced laborers from Nazi-occupied European countries had

to work at the university, in local businesses, and in private households.

Except for some air raids, Tübingen remained relatively unscathed by World War II. As elsewhere in Germany, the post-war years were characterized by German self-victimization because of its total defeat and the millions of casualties. The fates of former Jewish citizens and other victim groups were largely ignored. It was not until the 1960s/1970s that individuals and grassroots organizations began to critically examine Tübingen's recent history.

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## The History Path to National Socialism

The Geschichtswerkstatt Tübingen e.V. (Tübingen History Workshop) was founded in the mid-1980s as a grassroots organization with the aim to research Tübingen's recent local history. One of the latest Geschichtswerkstatt projects is the *Geschichtspfad zum Nationalsozialismus* (History Path to National Socialism). The *History Path's* goal is to inform not only local citizens but also Tübingen's many visitors about the city's history during the Nazi era.

The City of Tübingen was involved in realizing and financing the *History Path*. The concept and texts were devised by the Geschichtspfad working group, which consisted of members of the Geschichtswerkstatt, the Arbeitskreis Universität Tübingen im Nationalsozialismus ("Tübingen University during National Socialism" working group), the Jugendguides (youth guides), the Jugendgemeinderat (youth municipal council), and the City of Tübingen's Fachbereich Kunst und Kultur (municipal office of cultural affairs). Braun Engels Gestaltung conceptualized and realized the graphic design of the *History Path*. The Geschichtspfad was inaugurated on May 8, 2016. The Tübingen *History Path* is one of the few of its kind in Germany.

The *History Path to National Socialism* takes visitors to 16 historical places from the Nazi era in Tübingen's inner city. Each of the stations – which are columns made of steel – provides information on the history of a respective place. Together, they serve as a sort of permanent exhibition, preserving and presenting the traces of both the perpetrators and the victims. The *History Path* is not organized in any specific order; each column stands on its own. It is possible – but not mandatory – to start at the Former Synagogue Square Memorial in Gartenstraße 33.

### The stations are:

- Gartenstraße 33: Synagogue Square Memorial
- Youth Hostel: Headquarters of the Hitler Youth
- Bursagasse 18/4: A Holocaust Per-



*In front of Tübingen city hall, Monika Schober, a member of the Geschichtswerkstatt Tübingen, gives a tour of the History Path to National Socialism at its inauguration on May 8, 2016. (Courtesy Benedict von Bremen)*



*Youth guides from various member associations of the Gedenkstättenverbund Gäu-Neckar-Alb gather in front of the History Path stele at the former Tübingen Gestapo headquarters on May 6, 2017. (Courtesy Benedict von Bremen)*

- perpetrator – Theodor Dannecker
- Corner of Holzmarkt and Neue Straße: An Example for "Aryanization" - The Openheim and Schäfer Families' Clothing Store
- Münzgasse 13: Police and Persecution during National Socialism
- Hohentübingen Castle: Science and Crime during National Socialism

- City Hall: Destroying the Municipal Democracy
- Löwen Hall: Meeting Place of Tübingen's Labor Movement
- Psychiatric Hospital: Forced Sterilizations during National Socialism / Forced Labor in Tübingen City and the University
- Neue Aula: Tübingen University du-

- ring National Socialism / Excluding Jewish Students
- Wilhemstraße 24: NSDAP Kreisleitung (District Leadership)
- Silcher Memorial: National Socialist Appropriation of the Arts
- Uhlandstraße 15: The Hayum Family – Committed to Democracy and Welfare
- Corner of Karlstraße and Uhlandstraße: Anti-Semitism before 1933 / Albert Weil – Cutting-Edge Publisher of the *Tübinger Chronik*
- Schellingstraße 2: The Wehrmacht in Tübingen
- Freight Depot: Prisoners of War and Forced Labor

An example for the Tübingen History Path to National Socialism is the column at Uhlandstraße 15:

### The Hayum Family – Committed to Democracy and Welfare

From 1905 on, Simon Hayum (1867–1948), his wife Hermine (1875–1967), and their five children lived in Uhlandstraße 15. Here, lawyer and local politician Simon Hayum operated the largest law firm in Tübingen. Hermine Hayum was engaged in voluntary social welfare work. The Hayums represent a generation of Jewish citizens whose livelihood was destroyed by National Socialist Germany.

Simon Hayum was born into the humble circumstances of a rural Jewish family. He successfully rose on the social ladder, obtained a Ph.D. in



*Simon and Hermine Hayum in their garden, 1938. One reason for Hermine Hayum's involvement in charity work was her Jewish faith. The Hayum household was well-known among Tübingen's poor and homeless. A soup kitchen was set up in the ironing chamber of Uhlandstraße 15 each winter. After the Nazis came to power in 1933, Jewish charity work became undesirable in the eyes of the authorities. (Courtesy Geschichtswerkstatt Tübingen e.V.)*

law, and was involved in the left-of-center Volkspartei (People's Party) during the time of the German Empire. From 1908 to 1912 he was chairman of the Tübingen Bürgerausschuss (citizens' committee). In the 1920s, he was Stadtrat (city councilor) for the Deutsche Demokratische Partei (German Democratic Party, DDP) and, from 1928 on, that party's chairman. In the Gemeinderat (town council), Hayum was a proponent of citizen-friendly and pragmatic policies.

In late March 1933, during the phase of National Socialist "Gleichschaltung" (forced coordination), he resigned from his political post in order to elude imminent attacks by Nazis in the Tübingen town council.

On April 1, 1933, brown-shirt stormtroopers from the "Sturmabteilung" ("Storm Detachment," SA) prevented clients from entering Hayum's law firm, which was followed by a creeping boycott. On the streets, the once-esteemed lawyer and former local politician was mostly ignored by his fellow citizens. Simon and Hermine Hayum avoided visiting concerts, restaurants, and theaters in order to evade insults. After the pogrom of November 9, 1938 ("Crystal Night"), the couple prepared its escape to the USA, following their children who had already immigrated there. The Hayums had to sell their house well below worth to the City of Tübingen. Simon Hayum died in 1948 in Cleveland, Ohio; Hermine Hayum passed away in 1967 in Newark, New Jersey.

### Further Information

*The English translation of the History Path, complete with pictures, can be found online on the City of Tübingen's official website: <https://www.tuebingen.de/en/3327.html>*

*The Geschichtswerkstatt Tübingen offers English city tours and can be contacted via [info@geschichtswerkstatt-tuebingen.de](mailto:info@geschichtswerkstatt-tuebingen.de).*

## Wege der Tübinger Juden: Now Available on DVD with English Subtitles

In 2004, the movie *Wege der Tübinger Juden – Eine Spurensuche* ("Paths of Tübingen Jews: A Search for Traces") was published. It is based on interviews conducted by members of the Geschichtswerkstatt Tübingen e.V.<sup>1</sup> in Tübingen, Israel, and the United States between 1999 and 2001. In the movie, former Tübingen Jews tell personal stories about their childhood years in Tübingen, the experience of being discriminated against under Nazi rule, and how they escaped and started a new life abroad. Many of the interviewees have since passed away, but the movie *Paths of Tübingen Jews* remains their



legacy for future generations. Thanks to generous financial support from the City of Tübingen<sup>2</sup>, the movie received

English subtitles (translation: Benedict von Bremen) and was digitized by the University of Tübingen's Center for Media Competence<sup>3</sup> in 2018.

*Wege der Tübinger Juden* is available on DVD in German with English subtitles from the Geschichtswerkstatt Tübingen ([info@geschichtswerkstatt-tuebingen.de](mailto:info@geschichtswerkstatt-tuebingen.de)) for Euro 10 plus post & packaging (in Germany: Euro 1,95; international orders: Euro 16,50).

<sup>1</sup> <http://english.geschichtswerkstatt-tuebingen.de>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.tuebingen.de/en/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://uni-tuebingen.de/en/facilities/central-institutions/the-center-for-media-competence/>

# November 9, 2019 Tübingen.

## Speech by Rabbi Ari Silbermann

*In November 2019, the Geschichtswerkstatt Tübingen e.V. invited Martin Silbermann (Jerusalem) and his son Rabbi Ari Silbermann (Manchester, UK) to Tübingen. The Silbermanns are descendants of the Hirsch family. In 1850, Leopold Hirsch (1807-1875) was the first Jew to receive the Tübingen citizenship; the textile business founded by him was operated by three generations until it was forced "aryanization" in 1938.*

*On November 9, 2019, 81 years after the Night of Broken Glass, Rabbi Ari Silbermann gave the following speech<sup>1</sup> at the Former Synagogue Square Memorial in Tübingen:*

"Good evening,  
Firstly, I wish to thank all of the organisers for this commemoration and for inviting my father and I to attend. I wish to share with you some thoughts at this point. Firstly what this place means for me and how that is relevant for my relationship to Germany as a whole. Secondly, I hope to commemorate the victims of Shoah and consider what it means for us. Thirdly, I will mention the lessons that this place bears for us today.

What does this place mean for me: This is the site of the synagogue of the Tübingen Jewish community, or in Yiddish we would call it a shul. Tübingen was a small Jewish community, which does not feature prominently in Jewish history. It had existed for a time in the Middle-Ages until the expulsion of the Jews. When the Nazis came to power it was a young community, not even 100 years old. Apart from the Judengasse, there are no remnants of the earlier community. This place which was a synagogue is all that remains. My great-great-grandfather was instrumental in building it and although it is not standing, to a discerning Jewish eye there are some elements that can still be detected. Although perhaps the dry halacha<sup>2</sup> would say that the holiness

of such a place is no longer, there is certainly a specialness which comes with being here.

Since my family was instrumental in building this synagogue, prayed here and held celebrations here, this place carries great meaning and a sense of belonging. Indeed, this feeling for connection is basic to our human nature and is one of the reasons why narratives in Bereishit (Genesis), which we are currently reading during these sabbaths contain long genealogical lists. We all seek out our connection to our families, to our past, and seek out to understand where which towns and families we came from.

On the other hand, I am ambivalent because this place is the last memorial for the small community of Tübingen. There is no synagogue here and there are no Jews. This place is bound to the destruction of European Jewry, the destruction of entire cultures and ways of life. For this reason, I have nothing to do with this place anymore except to commemorate the destruction and mourn what was lost—both by my family and my people. I would add that it is also a place of mourning for all of Western civilization. This place represents, for my generation, grandparents who were traumatized, families that were small, stories of heroism and stories of tragedy.

This place, therefore, has a strange feeling about it and in many ways describes my connection to Germany. On one hand I want to draw closer to it, learn about it and spend time here and on the other hand I wish to be nowhere near it, have nothing to do with it.

I would now like to mention a word about my family, my people and the Shoah. My family from Tübingen, represents what were early attempts, after enlightenment, to assimilate into German society, and strike down roots. The tombstones at the cemetery up the road in Wankheim testify to this process—they begin in Hebrew, move to a mix of German and Hebrew and some of the later ones are

German only. They petitioned the city to be allowed to return to the city, they built businesses and lives, integrated into society here. Many of them served for Germany in the Great War. However, all of this ended with Dachau and similar camps. My great-Grandfather, Leopold Hirsch<sup>3</sup>, refused to leave Germany because of his belief that they would not truly expel loyal Jewish citizens. However, all of this ended on Kristallnacht, when he, along with other Jews were taken to Dachau. He was released two weeks later, probably along with other WWI veterans and given 24 hours to leave Germany – which he did. Unfortunately his brother Arthur Hirsch<sup>4</sup> did not make it out of Dachau. His sister, Paula<sup>5</sup>, also did not manage to leave Germany, perhaps because she could not receive a visa. She was deported with her son Erich<sup>6</sup> to Riga and murdered. My father, who is here tonight, never recalls hearing about any of this, and we only know it because of the work of Lilli Zapf<sup>7</sup> and also new information provided us by the Geschichtswerkstatt Tübingen. My Grandmother, Laura Silbermann, never spoke of Germany again, and burnt all of her possessions that related to Germany. Perhaps a testament to her feeling of being let down—testament to broken dreams. The trauma of this entire period, for much of the Jewish people today, is still being felt.

I would also like to commemorate however, the survivors of this tragedy. In spite of everything that occurred, my people, as has been their way throughout history, have managed to thrive once more, rebuilt lives for themselves and built up a state of their own. Whether it be in South

1 Explanations in footnotes by Benedict von Bremen.

2 Jewish religious law.

3 Leopold Hirsch (1876–1966), son of Gustav Hirsch (1848–1933) and grandson of Leopold Hirsch (1807–1875).

4 1886–1938.

5 1897–1942.

6 1924–1942.

7 Lilli Zapf, *Die Tübinger Juden* (Tübingen 1974).



*On November 10, 2019, Martin and Ari Silbermann visited the grave of their ancestor Leopold Hirsch (1807-1875), the first Jew to receive Tübingen citizenship, in the Wankheim Jewish cemetery. (Courtesy Geschichtswerkstatt Tübingen e.V.)*

Africa or Australia, the United States or Europe, Jews everywhere have managed to rebuild shattered lives, raise families and live lives of meaning. However, the greatest witness to Jewish heroism is the building of the modern State of Israel. To be sure, this began before the Shoah, but survivors who made it to the Holy Land played important roles in its success. I am proud to stand before you as an Israeli, who has taken part in the miracle that is the State of Israel and as a Jew who devotes his life to Jewish education and community. As my people have always known, the greatest most long lasting monuments are not made from stone or buildings but are those that change the hearts of men and women. I am a Rabbi and a bearer of the tradition of my people – a people who never sought greatness in empire, and does not do so now either, but always sought integrity and greatness in the life of the spirit.

To end, it would be remiss of me to

not mention the fact that as a Jew, I no longer feel safe on the streets of Europe. Just 71 years after that fateful night, when Jewish synagogues were set ablaze, their dreams dashed, their worlds collapsed. Just 71 years after the wholesale slaughter of Europe's Jews, our synagogues have high walls and armed guards – not only in Europe but in places like Australia and the United States. Unfortunately, in Germany itself, we have witnessed terrible events in the last weeks.<sup>8</sup> Sadly, it seems that the lessons of the Shoah have not been learned and have been forgotten. This is true for my people as it is for other minorities and victims of such attacks. However, only Jews have to pass through high walls and security to enter their schools and synagogues, and only Jews walk without identifying marks in the streets of Berlin.

To end, I wish to thank the city of Tübingen and the Geschichtswerkstatt Tübingen for their assistance in commemorating the Jewish communi-

ty and in arranging for this visit. On this visit, as in previous visits to Germany for work or study, I have been taken aback by the welcome I have received. Particularly here but also at other academic conferences, the organisers go out of their way to ensure that we have Kosher food and can observe the Sabbath. This is not the case in other countries and is perhaps just a small example of the attempts by average Germans to do their utmost for us to feel at home and to rebuild bridges.

My prayer for the future is continued success of the Jewish people and German people and lasting bonds of mutual support."

<sup>8</sup> The October 9, 2019 synagogue shooting in Halle.

# Jewish Rottweil: Places and People

Angelika Braun, Rottweil. Translated by Benedict von Bremen

In Rottweil, the former free imperial city on the upper Neckar river, numerous places in the city center and elsewhere are connected to Jewish life. There, Jewish citizens lived their religion and culture, were business people, and actively participated in the city's public life. Civic and commercial buildings in the city center once owned by Jews bear testimony to Rottweil's second Jewish community which was only able to develop after the Napoleonic Wars, the subsequent reorganization of the German empire, and the assumption of power by the duke (and later king) of Württemberg.

In the beginning, there was Moses Katz (1750–1829) from Mühlingen. Katz had acquired a handsome fortune as a moneylender, army

supplier, and intermediary in times of war. He acquired great prestige by organizing the sale of silver objects and thus raising the necessary funds to save the city from devastation by Napoleon's troops. Still, the magistrate did not grant him the right to settle in the imperial city. It was only with the Peace of Lunéville in 1801, when the former free imperial city became part of the duchy of Württemberg under Duke Frederick II of Württemberg as territorial lord, that Moses Katz received the right to settle in Rottweil. He acquired the representative residential and commercial building no. 29 on Obere Hauptstraße (upper main street) near town hall. On the top floor, he set up a prayer room which served Rottweil's Jews as a place of meeting and worship until the

purchase of the building in Kameralamtsgasse. Completely impoverished due to bankruptcy, Katz died in January 1829. Until the beginning of the 20th century the house remained in the possession of descendants of Moses Katz.<sup>1</sup>

*Moses Katz acquired the residential and commercial building in Obere Hauptstraße No. 29 at the beginning of the 19th century. The building also housed a prayer room in which Jewish families gathered for services until the establishment of the synagogue in the Kameralamtsgasse.*

In the second half of the 19th century, a grandson of Moses Katz held an important position in Rottweil's local life: in 1851, physician Dr. Meyer Rothschild (1813–1884) became editor of the *Rottweiler Anzeiger* (Rottweil Gazette). Its printing office and publishing house were located at Friedrichsplatz no. 16, an imposing estate which had once been a monastery courtyard of the Benedictine Saint Blaise Abbey in St. Blasien in the Black Forest. The corner building bordered on Lorenzgasse, the former location of the medieval Jewish quarter. On May 14, 1851, the *Rottweiler Anzeiger*, later renamed *Schwarzwälder Bürger-Zeitung* (Black Forest Citizens' Newspaper), advertised itself as going to present "the political and social conditions of the present day outspokenly, dispassionately, 'without fear and without hate'" as well as to publish official and private advertisements.<sup>2</sup> Meyer Rothschild's descendants continued operating the printing press and publishing house until the National Socialists came to power and stripped the newspaper of its status as an official gazette; eventually, following further measures to exclude Jewish journalists, the economic basis of the publishing house was completely taken away. In May 1934, brothers Ernst and Wilhelm Rothschild announced that the *Schwarzwälder Bürger-Zeitung* would have to cease publication. Although the Rothschilds continued to run their commercial printing business, its economic return was low and Wilhelm Rothschild moved with his family to Stuttgart. He was incarcerated in Dachau concentration camp from November 9 to December 20, 1938 and then fled via England to the United States. Ernst Rothschild moved to Basel, his wife's home town; from there, he immigra-

1 Emily C. Rose, *Als Moises Katz seine Stadt vor Napoleon rettete. Meiner jüdischen Geschichte auf der Spur* (Stuttgart 1999).

2 Gisela Roming, *Jüdisches Rottweil 1798–1938. Entstehung – Entwicklung – Vernichtung* (Rottweil 2018), p. 42.





*The building at Friedrichsplatz no. 16 housed the printing press and the publishing house of Meyer Rothschild. The Schwarzwälder Bürger-Zeitung was produced here until May 1934.*



*On the left: In House no. 17 in Hochbrückenstraße with the restaurant "Zum goldenen Becher" was Abraham Bernheim's residential, commercial, and bank building. The restaurant was also an important social meeting place. Right: Detail of the richly decorated oriel window of the restaurant.*



ted to the United States at the end of World War II.

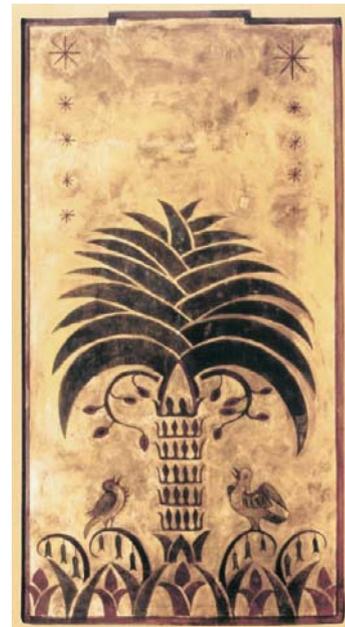
In 1811, half of the house at Hochbrücktorstraße no. 17, with the *Zum goldenen Becher* (Golden Cup Inn), belonged to Jewish merchant Abraham Bernstein (1773–1839); in 1828, the entire estate came into his possession. In a 2012 essay, Winfried Hecht characterized Bernstein as a "skillful businessman" who, in addition to being an inn keeper, was also trading wine and other alcoholic beverages as well as, later on, textiles.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, he was also a moneylender and thus made a large fortune. He was the richest among Rottweil's Jews. Bernstein was held in great esteem by the Jewish community because he had been, together with Moses Katz, one of the founding fathers of the Rottweil branch of the Mühringen congregation. Abraham Bernheim died in 1839 without having obtained complete Rottweil citizenship. It were his descendants who acquired it and who held important positions both in the city's commercial life and in the local Jewish community. The *Becher* as a meeting place was an important institution. It is said that the "rabbi" (that is, the Jewish teacher and cantor), the Catholic pastor, and the Protestant pastor shared a common regulars' table at the *Becher*. Until 1931, the building housed a bank of the Bernheim-Adler family.

On October 26, 1860, an early 19th century two-story building on the corner of Johannsergasse and Kame-ralamtsgasse was sold to five members of Rottweil's Jewish community. They converted the house to accommodate a synagogue, a school, and a teacher's apartment and then sold it

<sup>3</sup> Winfried Hecht, "Das Rottweiler Bankhaus A. Bernheim zum Becher (Teil 1)," in: *Gedenkstätten-Rundschau* No. 9 (November 2012), pp. 7–11.

*On the left: The building on the corner Johannsergasse/Kameral-amts-gasse housed the synagogue from 1860 until November 1938.*

*Right: Wall painting still preserved in the rooms of the former synagogue.*



to the Israelite congregation. The branch congregation now had a worthy seat until the 20th century. But that era came to an end already in 1933 when longtime cantor Max Straßburger (1872–1938) was solemnly bid farewell. The final end of Rottweil's Jewish community came in 1938. On the evening of November 10, SA stormtroopers forcibly entered the synagogue, threw religious objects and interior decoration onto the street, and set everything ablaze. The plaques of honor for the Jewish participants of World War I were also destroyed. Inside the synagogue, part of the wall painting has been preserved, the most valuable part of which is still visible on the eastern wall where the Torah shrine was once located. After the Night of Broken Glass, the remaining Jewish citizens left their home town.

When Jews took up residence in Rottweil, their deceased were buried in the Jewish cemetery in Mühringen; Benjamin Bernheim found his final resting place in Hechingen. In the course of the congregation's evolution, the desire for a burial place of their own in Rottweil itself grew. Finally, a Jewish graveyard was established in 1850, not far from the town cemetery. In contrast to usual practice, the cemetery regulations demanded gravestones of uniform shape and size lying flat on the ground. To commemorate those who, like Moses Katz, had been buried in Mühringen or



*The Jewish cemetery in Rottweil is located at Hoferstraße. In contrast to usual practice, the cemetery regulations required gravestones of uniform shape and size lying flat on the ground.*

elsewhere, and as a replacement for illegible grave inscriptions, a large memorial stone with the names of Rottweil Jews was erected opposite the graveyard's entrance in 1967.

The new Israelite Congregation of Rottweil<sup>4</sup> refused to have "Stolpersteine" (stumbling stones) laid in memory of their fellow believers who had been murdered during National Socialism. Instead, the city of Rottweil erected a stele with the names of these Jewish fellow citizens on a field of trees at the edge of the city center. The new synagogue is located not far from there.

In 2013, the Verein Ehemalige Synagoge Rottweil e.V. (Former Rottweil Synagogue Association) was founded. We see our task in researching the Jewish history of Rottweil and its vicinity as well as in keeping

this memory alive in the consciousness of modern-day Rottweil citizens; moreover, we take care of the places of remembrance. On the basis of local and regional Jewish history, we would like to impart knowledge about Judaism. We also maintain contact with former Jewish inhabitants, their descendants, and their relatives. In addition, we cooperate with the Jewish Community of Rottweil/Villingen-Schwenningen.

*Photos: Verein Ehemalige Synagoge Rottweil e.V.*

*Contact – Web: [www.ehemalige-synagoge-rottweil.de](http://www.ehemalige-synagoge-rottweil.de)*

*Email: [Ehem.Synagoge-RW-eV@t-online.de](mailto:Ehem.Synagoge-RW-eV@t-online.de)*

<sup>4</sup> [www.zentralratderjuden.de/vor-ort/landesverbaende/key//israelitische-kultusgemeinde-rottweil-villingen-schwenningen-kdoer/](http://www.zentralratderjuden.de/vor-ort/landesverbaende/key//israelitische-kultusgemeinde-rottweil-villingen-schwenningen-kdoer/)

# Remembering Löwenstein, Pausa, Bauhaus

In 2009, had seventy-three years passed since the Löwensteins were forced to leave Mössingen. In 2019, the Research and Archive Center Artur and Felix Löwenstein was founded.

*Irene Scherer and Welf Schröter, Mössingen*

In July 2009, eight members of the Löwenstein family, which had been exiled seventy-three years ago, made their first visit (back) to Mössingen. On July 23, 2009, we agreed to initiate the project "Pausa – Artur and Felix Löwenstein – Bauhaus – Adolph Lowe". This step, initiated by the Löwenstein-Forschungsverein (Löwenstein Research Association), was the beginning of an international effort that is to study, among other things, the significance of the Bauhaus production site in Mössingen in the 1920s and 1930s. This effort is supported by numerous family members, partners from outside the region and, especially, dedicated citizens of Mössingen.

**Irene Scherer, Löwenstein Research Association Mössingen** (excerpt from her speech, July 22, 2009)

There are facts in this world on which a fine person cannot have different opinions. This wellknown sentence of the philosopher Ernst Bloch proves most meaningful today and at this place. We came here to recall together and in public what happened so many years ago. We want to honour four personalities, Felix and Helene Löwenstein as well as Artur and Flora Löwenstein, whose traces disappeared out of the history of Mössingen. We are here to open our mouths on the subject of crime and injustice which has continued until now. We are here to finally shake hands with those who some decades ago were chased away and threatened with hatred. We like to establish the story of the Löwensteins as a definite part of the history as well as our future acting in Mössingen. This year 2009 for several reasons seems to be the right moment because 50 years ago in 1959 Artur Löwenstein died. [...]

When in September 2007 about a dozen people of Mössingen and surroundings founded the Löwenstein Research Association we were con-



*Artur Löwenstein with his son Helmut (Harold) in front of the Peter-and-Pauls-Church in Mössingen in 1926. (© Private Photo / Löwenstein Research Association)*

fronted with a long lasting and most difficult and detailed task of research. [...] We want to make an effort that historical inheritance becomes known and is dealt with. With carefulness and delicacy the members want to talk and get in touch with people and facts. [...] Mössingen is planning to establish a place of remembrance of the brothers Löwenstein. The association will try to look for and find ancestors and living members of the Löwenstein family. They should be invited for a stay at Mössingen. The history of the PAUSA and the history of the Löwensteins are part of the history of Mössingen. We want to carry on this idea into our future as reality. [...] It took almost two years before we luckily found Doris Angel in Manchester and Harold Livingston in London.

It took us three weeks to prepare our first letter. It should be honest, serious and inviting. We knew how important this first approach was and that eventually it would hurt too much. Their first reaction gave us hope. Harold Livingston wrote: "I'm pleased to learn that the city of Mössingen will conserve the work of my father and uncle for the future." From his second long autobiographic report we understood that past times still were quite present for him. He wrote: "The Nazis could not manage to kill me." An important remark. After first letters, e-mails and phone calls we decided on the following procedure: before people of the Löwenstein family would travel to Mössingen, we felt we should see them at their homes. There we planned to deliver personally the official invitation. The first meeting was very touching. Many in detail going conversations took place and lots of memories of their childhood, some rests of the Swabian idiom returned. We asked Doris Angel at the end how she feels about visiting Mössingen. She answered: "For me this is coming home."

Dear Doris, dear Harold, 73 years have passed since you were forced to leave Mössingen and Stuttgart at the age of 12 and 13. It was a sad parting which destroyed your way of life, interrupted friendship and dispossessed your fathers' work. Today, so many years later we start to understand more clearly the achievements of your fathers. The appreciation of Artur and Felix, Helene and Flora Löwenstein is no longer a question of secret talk. It has turned into a public and official matter. [...]

In this year 2009 we look back on 90 years since the PAUSA was founded. The foundation of the "Bauhaus" took place at the same time in 1919. The PAUSA was closely connected with the "Bauhaus". There were letters going back and forth of

Felix and Artur Löwenstein with Walter Gropius who initiated the new artistic concept in Weimar and Dessau. In addition the artist Ljuba Monastirskaja, one of the great "Bauhaus" women in the field of design, represented the "Bauhaus" ideas in Mössingen from 1929 to 1932. She had participated in the renowned weaving class in Dessau in 1927. Her colleague in this class Otti Berger was murdered in Auschwitz in 1944.

While visiting in Manchester some weeks ago we were able to see original material from the PAUSA production before 1933, all influenced by the "Bauhaus" art. We can be sure about the close cooperation between PAUSA and "Bauhaus" before 1933. Walter Gropius initiated a presentation of PAUSA fabrics at the world exhibition in Paris in May 1930. This tradition should be continued.

[...] The PAUSA library which still exists partly owns a book by the title "German Handicraft 1927". Felix Löwenstein wrote his name in it. In the preface we read: "The main duty of our time is to produce by machinery unexpensively, for everybody (mass production). In order to do so you need a handicraft model." In this way the PAUSA followed exactly the necessities of the time. It is up to us to carry on and develop the inheritance of the Löwensteins. We are responsible to present their activity and creativity to our young generation of the 21st century. This includes engagement against any old and new antijewish activities. Let us be curious and see how this will work in the future. Let us start on this project.

**Doris Angel, daughter of Helene and Felix Löwenstein (excerpt from her article in: Artur und Felix Löwenstein, edited by Irene Scherer, Welf Schröter, Klaus Ferstl, Mössingen 2013.**

I was born in 1924 in the city of Stuttgart. The youngest of three much-loved children, I lived in a big house on Staffenbergstrasse, our family on the ground floor, our grandparents on the top and cousins in the middle. Our family was Jewish but non-observant, assimilated. We had dropped many of the practices

that had defined the Jewish people as different. We considered ourselves as German first and foremost. My father Felix Löwenstein served for five years in the German army during the First World War, much of the time in Flanders. My Mother, Leni Rieser, trained as a nurse on the outbreak of war, and worked in the Jewish hospital throughout. Leni was the best friend of Bea, Felix's sister. Felix and Leni became engaged at some point during the war and were married when he returned to Stuttgart. [...] When I was nine, in 1933, Hitler came to power. He defined the Jews, amongst others, as being an underclass: My life changed. The girl whom I had thought of as my friend, whom I had sat next to for three years, complained to the teacher that I smelt. I was moved to sit on my own. Jews were no longer allowed to employ help in the house and the factory was facing hard times, so my family moved to a smaller flat at the top of the same building. Jews were not allowed to go to the theatre or concerts any more or even to play in the park. In 1936 teachers at the school told my parents that they could not protect me against prejudice and bullying any longer and they advised that I should be taken out of school. My parents kept me at home, I played with my cousin Harold – and missed out on two terms of education – until we were able to leave Germany. [...]

In 1919 Felix and his brother Artur had founded a textile company named 'Pausa' in the town of Mössingen, fifty miles from Stuttgart. They developed it into a world-renowned manufacturer of modern fabrics for the interior design industries, introducing the Bauhaus style into their woven and printed fabrics. Its reputation was confirmed by a commendation received at the World Fair in Barcelona in 1929. Bauhaus was a social movement as well as an artistic approach - and it was forbidden by the Nazis.

I recall that in the early years there was an office and showroom in Stuttgart. I have a childhood memory of visiting and seeing many curtains hanging down. Initially there had been a manager in Mössingen and Felix would only go there periodically.



*Helene and Felix Löwenstein, co-founders of the textile company Pausa, in 1919. (© Private Photo / Löwenstein Research Association)*

Due to inflation and other difficulties in business, however, the Stuttgart office closed and after that Artur and Felix travelled to Mössingen every Monday morning, returning Saturday lunchtime, usually by train.

My father used to travel in Europe and to the USA to sell Pausa products. My mother travelled with him to Spain and to the USA, since she spoke English, whereas he did not. At these times our grandparents looked after us. During the holidays I took it in turns with my brother Roger and cousin Harold to visit Mössingen because there was only one spare bed. I think I was a nuisance. I loved wandering there, especially in the spinning shed. I tried to copy what the women were doing with the spindles. They always had to re-do it! I loved the paints, the colours and the printing tables. I was shooed out of the weaving shed because the workers were afraid I would get under the machinery and hurt myself. They encouraged me instead to play with the children in the village.

When Hitler first came to power there was some resistance. One worker in Mössingen, a member of the communist party, climbed the tall chimney of my father's factory and



*Irene Scherer, chairwoman of Löwenstein Research Association, handed over the new book “Artur and Felix Löwenstein” to Doris Angel, daughter of Helene and Felix Löwenstein, in Mössingen in 2013. In the background District Administrator Joachim Walter and Harold Livingston, son of Flora and Artur Löwenstein. (© Private Photo / Löwenstein Research Association)*

put a Hammer and Sickle flag at the top of it. The Nazis wanted it down, but none of them was brave enough to climb the chimney – so they ordered my father Felix to stoke the fires in the factory and create so much heat that the flag would burn. In 1933 there was a general strike and workers at Pausa asked if they could join a protest march against the Nazis. My father agreed. Many people were arrested. The only other factory in Mössingen locked their workers in and did not permit them to protest. Nazi laws limited Jewish people in what they could do and we were not able to do business with non-Jews. As a consequence my father’s firm could no longer operate and in 1936 he was forced to sell it to non-Jews. [...]

In 2008, I was very surprised to receive a letter from the “Löwenstein Research Association.” This turned out to be a group of German citizens who wanted to honour the contribution that Felix and Artur had made to their town – Mössingen. Representatives of this association, Welf Schroeter, Irene Scherer and Klaus Ferstl travelled to England and explained how they had traced me through the

Baden-Württemberg State Centre for Civic Education – the same Centre which coincidentally was based in the house in which we had lived!! They presented us with an invitation to Mössingen from the Lord Mayor and the members of the Mössingen town council, who invited me and my cousin Harold to visit. Harold was the same cousin with whom I had played in 1936, when we could no longer attend school in Stuttgart.

During a successful and moving trip in July 2009, where trust and mutual respect were nurtured between the citizens of Mössingen and the Löwenstein family, we were told of an exciting plan to honour our fathers’ memory with a permanent memorial: one of the Old Pausa factory buildings would be re-developed as a municipal library and centre for social services. It would be built on a new town square – to be called Löwensteinplatz, in honour of Felix and Artur’s contribution to the town. I felt surprised and delighted that the value of their work had been recognised in Mössingen.

In February 2012 Harold and I, accompanied by 10 members of our family, returned to Mössingen. As part

of the visit we took our own Pausa tablecloths to show the people there. Members of the Löwenstein Research Association showed us around the old factory premises and we saw tens of thousands of rolls of cloth. We were pleased to hear of plans to open a textile museum in Mössingen at some time in the future.

We attended a reception in the new library, where dignitaries from the State Government of Baden-Württemberg spoke of the importance of remembering the Holocaust, the Jews and their contribution to Germany. Later we were invited to officially dedicate Löwensteinplatz. We look forward to visiting again in June 2013 to attend a play about Pausa and to renew our friendships in the town.

The Pausa factory and Löwensteinplatz are now on the map as part of a web of memorials to the Jewish contribution to the region. This is particularly important because it is clear that all members of the Mössingen town council voted for this dedication, whether they were from the left or right of the political spectrum. To the best of my knowledge my family and the young women who came from Bauhaus were the only Jews to work in Mössingen, but it is important that their work, which was curtailed only because of Nazi policies, is remembered as part of the history of the town.

**Harold Livingston, son of Flora and Artur Löwenstein (excerpt from his article in: Artur und Felix Löwenstein, edited by Irene Scherer, Welf Schröter, Klaus Ferstl. Mössingen 2013.)**

As I was born in November 1923, I was not even 10 years old when Hitler came to power, and therefore my memory of what happened to me, and to us as a family, is probably incomplete. For the same reason my memories are not necessarily in chronological order. I must also mention that of course my sister Lilo (Ronnie and Anita’s mother) was very much part of most of this. Unfortunately she died at the relatively young age of 62, from cancer. [...]

After a lot of searching, a cousin of my mother, who was already in

England found us a guarantor enabling us to come over to the UK. No easy immigration in those days, somebody had to guarantee that immigrants would not be a burden on the state. So we arrived in London on 3rd March 1939. and moved in with that cousin, who's name used to be Fritz Loewenhaupt, the second name being the name of my Urgrossmutter, who lived in Kitzingen, and who we often visited when we were still in Germany. [...]

I went to Harrow Polytechnic School, to try to acquire some English exams, including physics, chemistry, math, and English of course. That polytechnic became a university after the war, and is now known as Westminster University. However, after a while I wasn't allowed to attend there any more, because as Germans we were all classified as "Enemy Aliens", never mind that the fact we were Jewish and, therefore, more against Hitler than anybody else. The reason we were given for not being allowed to continue on at the polytechnic was that the headquarters of RAF Fighter Command, which defended London against the German bombing attacks,



*Flora and Artur Löwenstein, co-founders of the textile company Pausa, in the 1920s. (© Private Photo / Löwenstein Research Association)*



*District Administrator Joachim Walter with Doris Angel, daughter of Helene and Felix Löwenstein, and Harold Livingston, son of Flora and Artur Löwenstein, in Mössingen in 2011. (© Private Photo / Löwenstein Research Association)*

was nearby. After the fall of France, it was believed that many German spies – the so-called "fifth column" – had infiltrated Great Britain. Churchill's solution, made famous by his choice of words, was: "Collar the Lot"! (That's the only thing I ever had against Churchill). As a consequence, nearly all German Jewish refugees were interned. My father went first, then my mother, and then me when I was about 16½ years old. My parents were interned on the Isle of Man, though I was taken to a camp near Liverpool, and then shipped off to Australia, on the infamous troop ship "Dunera". [...]

On the way to Australia, the Dunera travelled southward along the African coast, calling at Freetown, Sierra Leone, then continuing along the same course we eventually rounded the southern tip of Africa, crossed the Indian Ocean, and finally, after our first Australian port of call, arrived in Sidney Harbour. On our return journey we travelled on the Stirling Castle – a converted luxury liner – first to New Zealand, then across the Pacific Ocean, through the Panama Canal, then zigzagged our way across the Atlantic at maximum speed to

avoid more German U-Boats. But they missed me again! I arrived back in the UK one week before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour. [...]

I soon found work in a factory manufacturing ammunition, however, after working there for about a year, I decided that I wanted to do more in the war effort against the Nazis. So I volunteered for the Royal Air Force, and worked as ground crew on the engines of heavy bombers that attacked Germany. That felt good. Though it didn't feel so good when some of the bombers did not return from their missions. First I worked on Stirling Bombers, and then on Lancasters, which each had four Rolls Royce engines. Toward the end of the war I was transferred to a "Disarmament Unit", because of my knowledge of German, and spent two years in Germany "disarming" the Luftwaffe, mostly by translating for RAF officers interrogating Luftwaffe personnel. On our way to my first posting in Germany, which was in Neumunster, our convoy was the first the inhabitants of Hamburg saw of any British troops. As Hamburg was just a complete heap of rubble, we were not made to feel very welcome. At that time, immediately



*Lord Mayor of Mössingen Michael Bulander with Harold Livingston, son of Flora and Artur Löwenstein, and Doris Angel, daughter of Helene and Felix Löwenstein, in Mössingen in 2011. (© Private Photo / Löwenstein Research Association)*

after the German surrender, we saw lots of German soldiers, still fully armed, but of course not fighting any more. As an interpreter I was promoted to the rank of sergeant (Feldwebel) or whatever the equivalent rank would have been in the Luftwaffe. RAF food rations were not very good, so we often travelled to Denmark, to buy butter, cheese, etc. About three days after arriving in Neumunster, a Palestinian volunteer with us, who was Jewish (remember, at that time Palestine was a British Protectorate, and the State of Israel did not yet exist), told me he was going to Belsen Concentration Camp and asked me – if we could get permission – if I wanted to go with him. Of course I agreed, and so I arrived at Belsen just one week after it had been liberated by British troops. All the survivors were still in the camp, along with the piles of dead bodies. The survivors looked 99% dead, it was a horrible experience. I saw the gas chambers and the ovens in which the bodies were burned. I have been trying hard to find a photo I took of a sign at the entrance to the camp that had been put up by British troops, which read, "This is an Example of German Kultur"! I got on very well with the

officers and men of the Luftwaffe, and I made no secret of my German Jewish origins. [...]

Now I come to the Grosse Überraschung (great surprise), when I first heard from the Gründer (founder) of the Löwenstein-Forschungsverein, Irene and Welf. As we had heard nothing about or from the Pausa, this was totally unexpected, particularly the great efforts that had been made to try to contact any survivors of the families of Felix and Artur Löwenstein. Some of the greatest experiences were to see all the collection of Pausa Stoffe, and also to return to my old home in Stuttgart, and to stand on that Balkon in Stafflenbergsraße to see the view over the whole town. I don't need to go into all the other details; you know them better than I do. The highlights of everything were of course our visits to Mössingen, the overwhelmingly friendly relationships that we all managed to have with each other, and all the "Old Pausaner". It was quite overwhelming to see a square named after our family, "The Löwenstein Platz". [...]

**Löwenstein Research Association: Concept for the Development of a Research and Archive Center Artur and Felix Löwenstein** (excerpt, Mössingen 2019)

On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of Artur and Felix Löwenstein's founding of the innovative textile company Pausa, and the 100th anniversary of the opening of the Staatliche Bauhaus in Weimar (Bauhaus), the Löwenstein Research Association, Mössingen, established the "Research and Archive Center Artur and Felix Löwenstein" in cooperation with the Löwenstein family descendants and partners from the Mössingen area on July 28, 2019. This took place ten years after members of the Löwenstein family came to Mössingen again for the first time, on July 22, 2009, following the joint invitation of the Löwenstein Research Association and the City of Mössingen – 73 years after the forced expropriation of the Löwenstein's Pausa Company and the family's expulsion in late 1936.

Since it was founded in 2007, the Association for the Research of the Löwenstein Brothers' Life Work and History (Verein zur Förderung der Erforschung des Lebenswerkes und der Lebensgeschichte der Gebrüder Löwenstein e.V.) has done extensive research, organised publications and events, and done international networking. These activities have been based on civic initiative and volunteer work. In order to make the results of the Association's work of more than ten years available to a wider public and more accessible for academic activities, a precise location and institutional framework is necessary. This shall be ensured by the founding of a "Research and Archive Center Artur and Felix Löwenstein". The development of the Research and Archive Center will initiate a new division of responsibilities: The Löwenstein Research Association will focus more on commemoration and memorial activities, information and communication within the public discourse, as well as giving impulses for civic courage and democratic action. The Research and Archive Center will professionalize and

consolidate the research work. Over and above being a Mössingen textile firm, the Löwenstein's Pausa Company had a large impact on the whole Swabian Jura region and its textile industry. Already in the 1920s, the Pausa Company developed into an internationally successful firm, a global player. In its early years, the company established strong ties to the Bauhaus in Weimar and Dessau.

The Löwenstein's Pausa Company reflects a highly innovative industrial heritage. Its expropriation was part of the suppression of modern Jewish culture. The "Research and Archive Center Artur and Felix Löwenstein" is to explore the significance of the Löwenstein's Pausa Company as a distinctive part of active Jewish industrial heritage in the region. It will examine and describe the roles that Artur and Flora Löwenstein and Felix and Helene Löwenstein played as pioneers of industry. The Research Center is to explore the complex interactions and influences between Jewish companies and the textile industry, Jewish as well as non-Jewish, at various locations in the region (i.e. Hechingen, Bronnweiler, Albstadt), in order to illustrate the development of economic and cultural modernity. In addition, through its research on the Löwenstein's Pausa Company, the "Research and Archive Center Artur and Felix Löwenstein" would like to contribute to the city's historic research effort. Focusing on aspects of industrial culture, including its own historic heritage, could also enhance Mössingen's appeal as a business location.

The work of the Löwenstein Research Association to date has resulted in the following 15 main topics for the "Research and Archive Center Artur and Felix Löwenstein". This list may be augmented in the course of the Research Center's activities:

1. Research on the Pausa founders' entrepreneurial, artistic and cultural activities in the 1920s and 1930s, including a focus on their contacts to the "Werkbund" and other artistic associations.
2. Research on the connections between the Löwenstein's Pausa Company as a "Bauhaus" production site and the "Bauhaus"

*The new logo of the "Forschungs- und Archivstelle Artur und Felix Löwenstein" (Research and Archive Center Artur and Felix Löwenstein) at the external wall of the old town hall of Mössingen in 2019. This logo was created by Andreas Felger, an artist in Mössingen. (© Private Photo / Löwenstein Research Association)*



- in Weimar, Dessau, and Berlin, with a special focus on Ljuba Monastirskaja's and Lisbeth Oestreicher's careers.
3. Research on the connections between the Löwensteins' Pausa Company and Bauhaus artist Friedl Dicker-Brandeis' work.
4. Research on the Löwensteins' Pausa Company's significance as part of regional Jewish industrial culture, as well as on the Pausa Company's interactions with other Jewish and non-Jewish businesses in the area.
5. Research on the Löwensteins' Pausa Company's significance for the development of Mössingen's economic, social, and political structures in the 1920s and 1930s.
6. Research on the Löwensteins' Pausa Company's influence on Armi Ratia's artistic work and the founding of the Marimekko Company in Finland in 1951.
7. Continuation of the research on the ties and cooperation between the Löwenstein family and the circle of Bauhaus artists in Stuttgart around Lily Hildebrandt in the 1920s and 1930s.
8. Research on the contacts and cooperation between the Löwensteins' Pausa Company and other artistic networks of the period's avantgarde.
9. Research on the expropriation and forced "Aryanization" of the Pausa Company by the National Socialists, including evaluating and coming to terms with these injustices.
10. Research on the Löwensteins' Pausa Company's international

- activities and impact.
11. Research on the connections between the Pausa Company's founders and the family of Adolph Lowe and Beatrice Lowe, née Löwenstein.
12. Research on the Pausa founders' entrepreneurial, artistic and cultural life work, its influences and public reception. Research on Felix Löwenstein's work in Bolton, Greater Manchester, in particular his founding of the Helios Company, commissioned by Sir Thomas Barlow. Research on innovative (avantgarde) aspects of Felix Löwenstein's designs.
13. Professional support for the moderation of the dialogue and exchange of ideas between Artur and Felix Löwenstein's descendents and the citizens of Mössingen.
14. Development and maintenance of an archive for documents of all kinds, as well as the provision of the archived material for scholars, the media, schools, and other interested persons and institutions.
15. Preparation of educational material and teaching units on the history, influences, and reception of the Löwensteins' Pausa Company and its work.

*Book recommendation (German): Irene Scherer, Welf Schröter, Klaus Ferstl (Hg.): Artur und Felix Löwenstein. Würdigung der Gründer der Textilfirma Pausa und geschichtliche Zusammenhänge. Mössingen 2013, 396 Seiten, ISBN 978-3-89376-150-0. To get in touch with Irene Scherer: scherer@talheimer.de*

# Looking for Jewish Traces in Haigerloch – A Short History of the Jewish People in Haigerloch

Helmut Opferkuch, Grosselfingen

Jewish inhabitants belonged to the townscape of Haigerloch for over six centuries. The first Jews are said to have settled in Haigerloch in the year 1346.

In 1498, Jews were expelled from the Duchy of Württemberg. The Count of Hohenzollern guaranteed them the right to live and trade in return of the payment of protection money. The details were laid down in the so-called Jewish charters. The first charter for the Jews in Haigerloch dates back to October 6, 1534 and was signed by Count Christoph Friedrich von Zollern.

The burial ground for the Jews living in Haigerloch was situated outside the town. It is about three kilometres away from Haigerloch in a forest near Weildorf. The oldest gravestone dates back to 1567, the last burial took place in 1884.

At the end of the 18th century, the Jewish community wanted to have a new cemetery in the part of town called "Haag" as their number was



*The old Jewish cemetery near Weildorf. Only very few of the inscriptions on the gravestones can still be deciphered.*

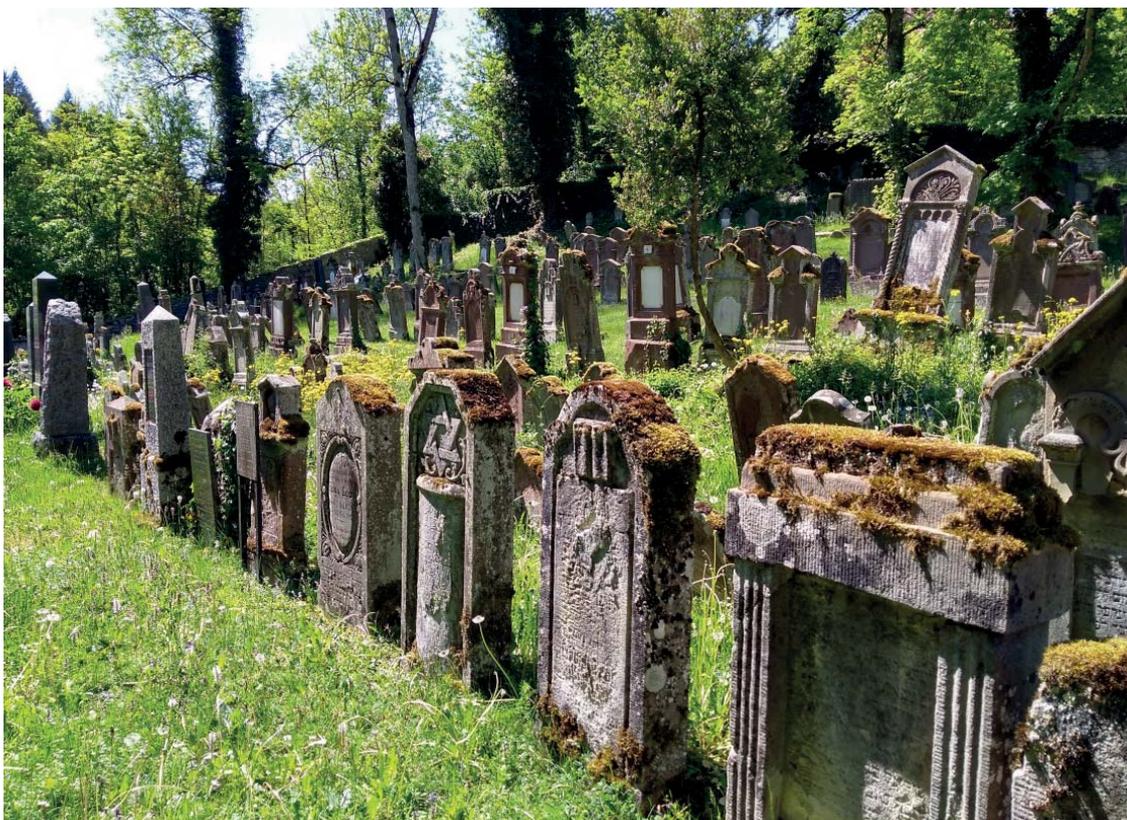
growing and the old cemetery was too far away. In 1802, the area below the "Haag", a steep slope unsuited for

the cultivation of vegetables, was bought for this purpose. The first burial took place there on January 6, 1803 and the latest in 2019.

In total, there are 661 graves in the cemetery. A lot of the gravestones made of sandstone have weathered so much that their inscriptions are hardly readable. Some of the gravestones have collapsed.

In 1780, Prince Karl Friedrich laid down that all the Jews in Haigerloch who were not homeowners had to settle in the "Haag". The "Haag-schlössle" (the little castle of the "Haag") and three other buildings were allocated to 10 Jewish families.

In 1782, the Prince allowed the construction of a synagogue. The synagogue as religious centre was inaugurated only one year later on May 5, 1783. Before, the Jewish community had only had a prayer room, which was probably located in the upper part of town. But very quickly the synagogue became too small for the growing Jewish community.



*General view of the new cemetery down below the "Haag".*

In 1795, apart from the 10 families in the "Haag", there lived another 22 Jewish families in town already.

And in 1836, 306 Jews were living in Haigerloch. In 1839-1840, the synagogue was enlarged. In 1858, the number of Jewish inhabitants reached its peak with 397 persons, which represented 32% of the total population of Haigerloch. According to the census of 1910, 260 Jews lived in town in January 1933, there were only 193 left (about 14% of the total population).

### **Rabbinat Building, Primary School and Community Hall**

There was a Jewish primary school in Haigerloch from 1823 to 1939. It was first located in an extension of the synagogue. The extension was pulled down in 1839 and in 1841, the Prince gave the authorization to build a three-storey building near the synagogue. It provided room for the school, for the teacher's and for the rabbi's flat. After 1945, the house was used as accomodation for German displaced persons. Today, traces of the Mezusah can still be found on the doorframe of the building. It has been in private hands since 1955.

*The Former School and the Rabbinat Building*



### **The Mikveh, the Jewish Ritual Bath**

Since the inauguration of the synagogue in 1783, the Jewish community also had a bathhouse for their purification ritual.

But it soon couldn't meet the needs of the community. It had to be pulled down during the enlargement of the synagogue (1839-1840) and was replaced by a new Mikveh in about 1845.



*View of the Mikveh with the "Haagschlössle" (the little castle of the "Haag") in the background.*



*The former inn. The "Rose" was an important place of encounter and exchange among Jews and non-Jews.*

## **The "Rose", a Place of Encounter**

Professor Utz Jeggle summarizes the role of the "Rose" in the catalogue of the permanent exhibition: The "Rose" is situated at the border between the Jewish "Haag" and the Catholic upper part of town. It was a place of encounter. Well into the 1930s, there were numerous festivities and performances. Apart from the cultural events, the "Rose" was an inn where one could eat the best roast goose by far. The good soul of the house was the innkeeper, Julie Levi. In the exceptionally large collection of Paul Weber, the local photographer, there are photos of the daily life at the inn.

A lot of them show the important role the "Rose" played in drawing Jews and non-Jews together.

After the Nazis had seized power, the "Rose" was forced to hosting Jewish cultural events only.

## **"Kristallnacht" (Pogrom Night of 1938)**

In the night from November 9 to November 10, 1938, the synagogues in Germany were set on fire. German Jews were beaten up, arrested, some even killed. Their houses were destroyed, the windowpanes were smashed and their shops were looted. In the following days, about 30,000 people were sent to concentration camps.

The German ambassador in Paris, Ernst vom Rath, had died on that day from the injuries he had suffered two days before during an assassination attempt by the Jew Herschel Grynszpan. Grynszpan carried out the attack on the diplomat out of despair after his parents had been deported from Germany to Poland.

Ernst vom Rath's death came at a very opportune moment for the Nazis. They had their operational plans against the Jews all set and so immediately after the assassination, the Nazis and their accomplices received the order to persecute Jewish citizens.

The discrimination and persecution of the Jewish population reached a peak 82 years ago and culminated in the Shoa, the extermination of about 6 million European Jews.

The synagogue in Haigerloch was desecrated, too. At around 4 o'clock in the morning of November 10, about 50 SA men from Sulz together with SA men from Haigerloch came to the "Haag". They smashed 111 windows, bashed in the door of the synagogue and completely destroyed the interior. The classroom in the Jewish community house was also destroyed. The teacher Gustav Spier and his wife helplessly watched as the Nazis wrecked their flat and the classroom.

12 Jewish inhabitants were taken into "protective custody" as the Nazis euphemistically called the nightly mass wave of arrests. 11 men were deported to the concentration camp of Dachau on November 12, 1938.

At least 278 people from Haigerloch were deported to concentration camps in Eastern Europe. Only 10 survived. After the deportations from Haigerloch in the years 1941 and 1942, the Jewish community had been completely wiped out by the Nazis.

## **The Former Synagogue after 1945**

No Jews settled permanently in Haigerloch after WWII, and so the "Israelitische Religionsgemeinschaft Württembergs" in Stuttgart sold the former synagogue to a private buyer in 1951. It was used as a cinema from



*Outside view of the former synagogue. The commemorative stone with the seven-armed candelabra can be seen in the foreground on the right. The commemorative plaques with the names of all the deported Jews of Haigerloch are displayed on the wall of the synagogue on the left.*

1952 to 1968, then as a supermarket ("SPAR") until 1981, and finally from 1981 to 1999 as a warehouse for a textile firm.

In the 1980s, more and more people in Haigerloch became interested in the Jewish history of the town. That is why on November 9, 1988, a citizens' initiative was founded, the "Gesprächskreis Ehemalige Synagoge Haigerloch". The main aim of the initiative was to use the former synagogue in an adequate and worthy way. It was obvious and also necessary to buy the building. The mayor of Haigerloch at that time, Roland Trojan, was very much in favour of the project and supported it consistently. After long negotiations with the owner, the town of Haigerloch could finally buy the building in December 1999 with the support of the initiative that had raised 200,000 Deutschmark thanks to many donations.

During the years 1998 to 2000, the "Ludwig-Uhland-Institut" of Tübingen University carried out a research project entitled "Remembering the Jews of Haigerloch" headed by Professor Utz Jeggle. Thanks to this research, many aspects of Jewish life in Haigerloch came to light again. Memory work was more and more accepted by the population of Haigerloch and it gained an even greater importance within the community.

Between 2001 and 2003, the building was renovated and on November 9, 2003, the former synagogue was reopened with a very moving and impressive ceremony. Former Jewish inhabitants of the town came with their families from various countries. During the inauguration of the freshly renovated synagogue, Carlie Wolf, Alice Wolf's granddaughter, celebrated her Bat Mizwa (religious majority) there. Alice Wolf, a former inhabitant

of Haigerloch, who had survived the Holocaust, had come to Haigerloch with her family for this occasion. Tom Wolf, Carlie's father, ended his speech with the following words: "Today, we are all Haigerlocher".

It gives us great pleasure to see a place once desecrated by the Nazis turn into a place of encounter and dialogue again.

From the very beginning, the "Haus der Geschichte Baden-Württemberg" was involved in planning the future use of the former synagogue and thus, the idea of a museum began to take shape. Cornelia Hecht and Rainer Schimpf from the "Haus der Geschichte" worked on an exhibition concept and on June 14, 2004, the permanent exhibition entitled "Spurensicherung – Jüdisches Leben in Hohenzollern" ("Looking for traces – Jewish life in Hohenzollern") was inaugurated.



*Inside view of the former synagogue with both galleries and the permanent exhibition.*

The "Gesprächskreis ehemalige Synagoge Haigerloch e.V." is in charge of the exhibition and keeps the memory of the Jews in Haigerloch alive.

### **The "Gesprächskreis" and its Activities**

The architectural ensemble of the former Jewish quarter has been almost entirely preserved (the rabbinat building, the "Rose", the former synagogue, the Mikveh and the Jewish cemetery) and reminds us of the lively past of the former Jewish community. The "Haag" is ideal to present the history of Jewish life in Haigerloch to interested visitors.

The "Gesprächskreis" was founded on November 9, 1988 as a citizens' initiative and became a registered association in 2000. Presently, 10 to 15 people dedicate a considerable amount of their free time for the asso-

ciation as volunteers. Working for a memorial for us means **memory work and commitment to humanity and tolerance, against exclusion and racism.**

There are many different fields determining our voluntary work.

**Supervising the permanent exhibition** in the former synagogue has taken up some of our time since its inauguration in 2004. The exhibition is open to the public on Saturdays and Sundays from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. the whole year round. In addition, the museum is open on Thursdays from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. from April to October. Luckily, students and pensioners help to guarantee opening hours as attendants so that we can normally solve any shortage of staff. In 2019, 1365 visitors came to see the exhibition.

**Offering guided tours through the former Jewish quarter, the "Haag"** is another priority of the "Gesprächs-

kreis". The tours usually include the various buildings that have already been described in this article. On request, we offer special theme tours. In 2019, 28 guided tours could be offered.

Children and young adults represent a very important target group for us. Most of them know very little about the Jewish history of Haigerloch. They are the ones, nevertheless, that should pass on this history to the next generation. From the very beginning, our association has carried out different **projects with students from Haigerloch** in cooperation with the "Haus der Geschichte" and presented the results to the public. In the summer of 2019, for example, students produced a short film about the old Jewish cemetery.

In the last 3 years, we have been developing a **thematic range of courses** and teaching material for groups of young visitors. For example,

a rally through the "Haag" has been designed during which groups have to go to different places with the help of an investigation sheet.

Furthermore, **we organize and plan 10 public events per year** that very often relate to topics like exclusion, exile and the development of new perspectives in life.

In November 2019, we hosted a literary evening about the deportation of over 20,000 German and Austrian Jews to Shanghai by the Nazis and their desperate attempts to start a new life.

We show films twice a year. On January 26, 2020, we showed the film *Der Staat gegen Fritz Bauer* to mark the liberation of the camp of Auschwitz. It is about Fritz Bauer's work as Chief Public Prosecutor in Frankfurt in the 1960s. Against the will of members of the German judiciary, Fritz Bauer played a very important role in unmasking Adolf Eichmann in Argentina in 1960. He rendered possible Eichmann's standing in trial and consequently his execution in Israel.

**Keeping in contact with the descendants of the Jews of Haigerloch** is still a top priority for us. In 2003 and 2004, a few former Jewish inhabitants of Haigerloch and their families were still able to attend the inauguration of the former synagogue and the permanent exhibition. However, the situation has changed in the meantime. The last two Jews of Haigerloch who had survived the Holocaust, Henry Schwab and Ruth Ben-David, passed away recently.

**Henry Schwab**, born in 1920, grew up in Haigerloch and had to flee the Nazis as a seventeen-year-old boy. He found a new home in New York. He came to Haigerloch in 2003 to attend the inauguration of the former synagogue. Henry Schwab passed away at the age of 97 on August 8, 2018 in New York.

**Ruth Ben-David** was born on July 27, 1921 in Haigerloch. Her father, Gustav Spier, was the teacher of the Jewish primary school, rabbinic administrator and prayer leader in the synagogue. In February 1939, at the age of 17, Ruth managed to emigrate to England. She was the only member of her family to survive. After WWII,

she emigrated to Israel and lived in the kibbutz Tira Zvi in the Jordan valley. Ruth Ben-David also came for the inauguration to Haigerloch in 2003. She passed away in July 2018.

It is our wish and responsibility, to keep alive the contacts to the descendants of the Jews of Haigerloch and if necessary, to renew them.

In the last few years, we weren't spared by fate. The sudden and much too early death of our long-term chairman, **Klaus Schubert**, on April 24, 2017, left first a paralyzing emptiness and a huge gap in our "Gesprächskreis". Klaus Schubert had been heading the "Gesprächskreis" since its founding in 1988. Thanks to his visions, his quiet and passionate way and his absolute reliability, he was not only an invaluable colleague, but also a very dear friend. We have tried to carry on with our activities in his sense. In those difficult moments, we received valuable support from various institutions. We would like to express our gratitude to the "Gedenkstättenverbund", the "Haus der Geschichte", the "Landeszentrale für politische Bildung" and many other helpers.

On August 28, 2018, **Friedbert Tausch** passed away after a severe illness at the age of 69. He was a founding member of the "Gesprächskreis" and a member of the advisory board. He had designed the association logo, a seven-armed candelabra, as well as the commemorative plaques on the outer walls of the former synagogue (with the names of the 110 Jews of Haigerloch who had been deported to concentration camps).

11 days later, on September 5, 2018, **Helmut Gabeli** passed away after a long, severe illness at the age of 74. He was one of the founding members. Helmut Gabeli helped to shape our memorial in Haigerloch thanks to his contacts to Jewish families all over the world, his research work and his detailed knowledge in law. We have lost a knowledgeable counsellor and companion. He made a tremendous contribution to our knowledge of the Jewish history and culture of our region thanks to his meticulous research work. Helmut Gabeli left a huge gap in our association.

## What is the Situation Today, 82 Years After "Kristallnacht"?

Antisemitism, exclusion and racism are gaining ground and have already reached parliaments. We live in a country where Jewish citizens don't dare wear a kippa anymore.

On September 10, 2019, the right-wing extremist, Stephan Balliet, carried out an attack on the synagogue in Halle. He killed 2 persons during the attack. Following the attack, police presence was increased outside synagogues in many German cities. In Haigerloch, two policemen regularly patrolled the area around the synagogue for several days. Fortunately, the attack in Halle didn't attract any immediate imitators.

We as "Gesprächskreis Ehemalige Synagoge Haigerloch" see with great worries that we live in times in which the use of coarse language has become socially accepted with some groups within German society.

It is our responsibility to establish a dialogue with people of all political colours.

It is also our responsibility to stand up against exclusion, violence, intolerance and racism and to speak out against them.

More than ever, it is for us all a moral responsibility to actively support fundamental values such as tolerance, humanity and democracy.

I owe heartfelt thanks to the late Helmut Gabeli. Without his profound historical research on "Jewish life in Haigerloch" this article would not have been possible.

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Karl Werner Steim, *Juden in Haigerloch – Photos von Paul Weber*, (Haigerloch, 1987).

*Photos: Helmut Opferkuch, 2020.*

# Why Youth Exchange? Why Germany?

Yair Rubin, Israel

Many times, when I think of Israeli-German youth exchanges, my thoughts wander to a certain moment. I was in Oświęcim, on a beautiful European spring afternoon, with a group of Israeli, German and Polish youths. We visited the old Jewish cemetery and the old Synagogue, and we knew that tomorrow we would be going to the concentration camp. And we all really wanted some good ice cream. As one of the Israeli kids said, "If there is somebody who can actually say 'I live in Auschwitz' then surely there will be someone who can say 'I sell ice cream in Auschwitz'."

So what do Israelis do when they are in Oświęcim, when the enormous burden of history and the significance of the place weigh down on their young shoulders? They go for the blackest of black humor; they tell horrible jokes, Holocaust jokes. In Hebrew. And they laugh – much too loud, much too long, teeth exposed in desperation.

When the leader of the German group asked me what they were laughing about I explained, but when she asked me to tell her one of the jokes I refused. She insisted and in the end I translated one of them for her. She looked at me and she looked at the group, and she said: „You know, even before I learned anything about the Holocaust I heard that joke from my father, but he was not laughing“, and the conversation then turned to places I had not known until then.

Since 2006 I have been involved with German-Israeli youth exchange projects, and in those years I have visited Germany quite often. As a Jew, as an Israeli, as a person who loves this wonderful tale called history, as a person who is trying to understand his world, his culture, his life – Germany fascinates me.

Germany fascinates because its memory is so different from the one with which I was brought up. The memory of the Holocaust in Israel is the memory of what was lost, commemoration focused on trying to reconstruct that which is gone. But in Berlin-

Grunewald you can stand on the real platform 17; next to the entrance of the train station in Dresden there is a sign indicating dates and numbers; in so many other places you stumble upon Stolpersteine, and you know – this is where it happened, right here.

Germany fascinates me because it carries on its everyday life inside its own history and does not put it on a pedestal. To see what happened – all you have to do is walk the streets – you can stand in Nordbahnhof in Stuttgart; and you can look down into the empty library in Bebelplatz in Berlin; and everything is right near the coffee shops, bus stations, curry wurst stands and it all happened right here, I mean, over there.

Germany fascinates me because the wounds and pains are on display. In the entrance to the assembly hall of the Reichstag there is a wall full of Russian graffiti and this wall is a warning sign for German politicians – beware! If you are not careful, if you let tyranny and xenophobia rise again, Germany will be defeated – again – and the winner will leave its mark on the Parliament walls – again. You may find it to your taste or not, but personally, I think it is a deep and courageous statement.

Germany fascinates me because it displays its mistakes and the consequences almost everywhere. Memori-

al sites and monuments made of concrete, metal or stone are everywhere; the items in the exhibition of the „Topography of Terror Museum“ are out on the street; the Stasi archives are open to the public. All these invite the public to look and learn how a murderous dictatorship managed to evolve right here, at home, in those very streets.

Germany fascinates me because this blunt display of historic wrongdoing is remorseful but it is not a plea for forgiveness. The different sites and monuments tell me „we did wrong“ but the decision whether to forgive or not is mine. Germany presents the facts and the remorse but leaves me with the option and right to decide for myself. Germany offers me the opportunity to look, to think, to understand, to be a part of a process, at the end of which I might forgive. Or not.

I think that Israelis do not participate enough in this process. I do not know whether we should forgive or not, I do not know if it is possible or if forgiveness is mine to give. Perhaps we should differentiate between responsibility and guilt – perhaps not, maybe there is "Another Germany" – maybe not. One thing is clear: we in Israel are not listening closely enough to what Germany is trying to tell us.

There is a lot of talk in the Israeli ed-



*Cooking and eating together encourages group dynamics. (Courtesy Yair Rubin)*

ucational system about "meeting the other", but not enough is being done. I think that youth encounters are paramount because meeting "the other" is first and foremost meeting my own self. Participating in a youth exchange compels me to think about myself, to gain a better knowledge of the various elements of my identity and history; meeting others means that I need to know who I am so that I can learn who the "other" is; that will enable me to see the similarities and differences between that "other" and me. The name of the NGO I established is "Face to Face" and the subtitle is "meeting the past, meeting the other, meeting myself".

I think that the encounter with Germany and Germans is significant because it forces us to confront the un-answered question – how could it have happened? How could it have come to pass? The study of the Holocaust in the Israeli educational system, and even more so the Israeli "Journey to Poland", are concerned with what was and what is gone. They tend to deal in a very perfunctory manner with questions such as how things came to be, what happened in the German society, why the Jews became the scapegoat. I believe it is such an enormous and difficult question, that perhaps we will never have a good answer for it – but that should not keep us from trying.

The encounter is important because it breaks our solitude. A lot of Israelis maintain the perception that the Holocaust is an exclusively "Jewish story". I wish to claim that this is not only historically incorrect; it also reduces the possibility of educating in light of conclusions and values we derive from our historical knowledge. Perhaps it is not very nice to say so, but Jewish victimhood is very clear, unequivocal, very easy, but it is also very restrictive. This is a position that does not encourage learning and does not allow the raising of significant questions: do we really know enough about the Nazis, or have we made an easy job of it, defined them as "perpetrators" and excused ourselves from reaching any true understanding? Have we really come to understand the moral, social and historical



*Israeli students from Shavei Zion and German students from Horb at a viewpoint over the lake Kinnereth. (Courtesy Yair Rubin)*

conditions that lead to the Holocaust?

The encounter is important because Jewish victimhood precludes empathy. Here, too, I wish to avoid the discussion of forgiveness, but the ability to understand, to empathize, to "walk a mile in someone else's emotional shoes" (be that someone German or not) – that is essential. If there is just one lesson I have learned from my encounter with Germans, it is that the German soul carries a most terrible wound. Many try to touch it, to heal it, but although there is a deep and sincere desire to do so, it remains. In one of my projects, in a reception held by the participants' parents for us when we arrived, I met the mother of a German youth. She was very happy about the exchange and said so in warm and kind words. When I asked her how she came to speak such German-accent-free excellent English, she said, "I grew up in South Africa but I was born in Argentina". I could sense that she was trying to tell me something (what kinds of Germans are there in Argentina, I asked myself...) but I said nothing. On the last day of the exchange, at the farewell party, she came over and with tears in her eyes, she said to me (these very words): "Thank you for coming here, thank you for giving my family the opportunity to talk about it", and without talking about it, we both knew what "it" meant.

Because every German with a minimum of historical knowledge and

a conscience the size of a peanut feels "it"; and every German with a conscience that is just slightly bigger gets to the point of searching the SS files for any information about Grandpa, or asking Grandma what she knew or did not know. And when they do find Grandpa's photo where they dreaded they would find it, or when an old aunt says something horribly racist – they feel their world collapsing around them. Perhaps, as one Israeli participant once told me, "it is their historical punishment". But even so, even if there will never be normality in the relations, even if we should choose to "never forget or forgive", I would still prefer that moral position to be based on something deeper than just cliché. I would want it to be based on sound knowledge, on true acquaintance with real people, on talking to them with an open heart.

I think that we, the victims' descendants, should be with the perpetrators descendants in that painful, awful place, where you face the atrocities of the past. I think that it is appropriate that we, especially we, should try to help Germans get closer to touching that wound. We should try to find in them, particularly in them, partners in the pursuit of understanding and educating. Perhaps we may even succeed in creating a future that will be free of such deeds.

# The History of the Kozak Family: An Example for the Research of the KZ-Gedenkstätte Hailfingen-Tailfingen<sup>1</sup>

Völker Mall, Herrenberg. Translated by Benedict von Bremen

In November 1944, David Kozak became an inmate of the Hailfingen-Tailfingen concentration camp. He died there on January 16, 1945.

After a tip from Theo Susso in early April 2017, we found out in September 2017 that David Kozak – as “David Kazak” – was on the Auschwitz-Stutthof transport list (no. 96) and that his Auschwitz number can also be found there.

David Kozak was born on March 11, 1909 in Częstochowa, Poland as the son of Moshe Kozak and Adela née Landau. David Kozak and his wife Bronisława owned a metal goods factory in Częstochowa with 300 employees.

David Kozak was taken to Auschwitz by the SiPo (“Sicherheitspolizei,” “security police”) and SD (“Sicherheitsdienst,” the intelligence service of the SS) from Radom<sup>2</sup> on September 9, 1944 and was given the number 193 182 (Danuta Czech p. 874). He was presumably in the Majdanek satellite camp in Radom. As of now, we do not know how and why he had come there.<sup>3</sup>

In October 2017 we received an answer to an inquiry made to the Majdanek archives (Państwowe Muzeum na Majdanku):

*“The Archives of the State Museum at Majdanek does not possess any documentation of the former German Nazi labour camp in Radom, even though it became a subcamp of Majdanek from 17th of January 1944. On 26 July 1944 Germans began the evacuation of the camp in Radom. A few days later almost all of the prisoners were sent to Auschwitz, where they arrived 6 August 1944 – only a small group of the prisoners stayed in Radom to disassemble DAW<sup>4</sup> workshops, but we don't know if David Kozak, born 11.03.1909 in Częstochowa, was among them.”*

It is possible that David Kozak remained in the Radom satellite camp for several weeks after the disassembly of the workshops.



David Kozak. (Courtesy David Miliband)

On October 28, 1944, he was transported from Auschwitz to Stutthof and in November 1944 to Hailfingen (number 40705) where he died on January 16, 1945 and was interred in a mass grave. After the reburial in July 1945, his remains lie in the group grave at the Tailfingen cemetery.

Bronisława and David Kozak had two daughters. In 1934, Dobra Jenta (later Marion) was born and Hadassah in 1937.

On September 3, 1939, two days

after the German invasion of Poland, Wehrmacht troops marched into Częstochowa. The very next day, which went down in the city's history as “Bloody Monday,” some 150 Jews were shot by the Germans. The Kozak family had to leave their home and move into the ghetto, which was established on April 9, 1941.

*“My close family (father, mother sister and even grandparents), we all lived in the ghetto in the same apartment, so of course I remember my grandparents and loved them very much. [...] My grandfather Moses Kozak played dominoes with me when I was ill in bed with scarlet fever.”* (Marion Kozak, April 10, 2017)

On September 22, 1942 (Yom Kippur), the dissolution of the ghetto began. About 2,000 Jews were murdered and 40,000 were sent into the Treblinka gas chambers.

When the deportations began, Marion Kozak, her sister, and her mother were smuggled out of the ghetto by a former employee of her father's shop.<sup>5</sup> The father stayed behind to look after the parents. They were probably murdered in Treblinka in July 1943.<sup>6</sup>

After the dissolution of the ghetto, about 5,000 Jews remained in the so-called “Kleines Ghetto” (“small ghetto”), called “Zwangsarbeitslager

as the Red Army advanced to Germany, perhaps to another concentration camp.” *The Telegraph* May 16, 2010: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/mother-tongue/7730052/The-miraculous-escape-of-Marion-Miliband.html>

- <https://www.kz-gedenkstaette-hailfingen-tailfingen.de/>
- From January 17, 1944 on, Radom was a satellite camp of Majdanek and an arms factory owned by Steyr-Daimler-Puch: [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liste\\_der\\_Au%C3%9Fenlager\\_des\\_KZ\\_Majdanek](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liste_der_Au%C3%9Fenlager_des_KZ_Majdanek). It was closed on July 26, 1944. All inmates were taken to Auschwitz, where the first arrived on July 28, 1944 (numbers 189762 to 190139, Czech p. 831); more arrived on July 31, 1944 (numbers 190656 to 190706, Czech p. 833). David Wajnapel testified: “After a selection at the Stare Miasto (Old Town) Square 4,000 Jews were assigned to forced labour in two camps, established at Szwarlikowska Street and Szkolna Street, the latter becoming the Szkolna Street camp, a subcamp of Majdanek in 1944. [...] In July 1944, the whole camp, including myself, was sent to Auschwitz camp [...]” <http://www.holocaustresearchproject.org/ghettos/radom.html>
- “Dawid had been forced to work, according to the local historian Wiesław Paszkowski, in the notorious Hasag Pelcery slave labour camp in the town. Mr Paszkowski suggests Dawid was deported along with about 6,000 Jews at Hasag in January 1945

4 The Deutsche Ausrüstungswerke GmbH (DAW, “German Equipment Works”) was a defense company operated by the SS and employing, among others, concentration camp inmates. In 1942, Majdanek realized the largest turnover of all DAW factories.

5 “A German was appointed to run the family factory, which was turned into an armaments factory during the war, and there was at least one instance of him being helpful towards the family escaping the ghetto.” *The Telegraph* May 16, 2010.

6 “Adela's gravestone in the town's Jewish cemetery, now overgrown and in the shadow of the local steelworks, states simply: In loving memory of our mother Adela Kozak, murdered by the Germans July 18, 1943 and to the memory of our father Mauryc [a variation of Mosiek], and their children Dawid and Cecylia Kozak.” *The Telegraph* May 16, 2010.

Tschenstochau" (forced labour camp Czestochowa) in official German documents. On September 2, 1942, a German munitions factory owned by the HASAG company was set up in the Stradom suburb.

On January 4, 1943 the first selection took place in the "small ghetto." 350 women and children were deported to Treblinka; 200 were immediately shot. In March 1943, 130 people were shot in the Jewish cemetery.

Sigmund Rolat, head of the World Society of Czestochowa Jews, told the Sunday Telegraph that he was convinced that Marion Kozak was with him during the "miraculous escape" in June 1943. When 30 children were to be transported to the cemetery by truck and then shot there, Dr. Liedt told the SS commander that he wanted to take the children because they could do work that machines could not do:

*"I was the last one of some 30 children, standing in a line waiting to board the truck that would take us to the cemetery for execution. At that point, Dr. Litt [Liedt], a German who ran a munitions factory, walked over and said, 'I will take the children.' The SS captain in charge was angry and challenged him, demanding to know what good children would be in a munitions factory. Litt said something about children being able to do jobs that machines couldn't. One of those children who was saved that day was the mother of David Miliband."* (Sigmund Rolat)

Similarly, the *Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of Ghettos during the Holocaust* reports, "[...] a group of young people between 12 and 15 years survived only thanks to the intervention of the German factory manager Liedt, who agreed to take them to the labour camp next to the HASAG factory."<sup>7</sup>

Marion Kozak said in October 2017 that she could not remember this.

Bronislawa's sister Cecylia Kozak took Marion, Hadassah, and Bronislawa to Warsaw. Under a false name, Bronislawa Kozak worked for a Christian family. The daughters were sheltered in a convent near Warsaw. A few months later, when the manage-

ment of the monastery wanted to get rid of the children, their aunt was able to place Marion in another monastery. With the help of a friend, she came into contact with Helena Sitkowska, who was willing to take in five-year-old Hadassah. Widowed Helena Sitkowska lived with her father, her ten-year-old daughter Magda, and her fifteen-year-old son Andrzej in a quiet Warsaw suburb. Hadassah was not allowed to leave the house or go to school, but the family, especially Andrzej, taught her to read and write.

In July 1944, shortly before the Warsaw Uprising, Cecylia Kozak sought a safer place for her relatives and also brought Marion to Mrs. Sitkowska; later, their mother Bronislawa Kozak joined them. In spite of all the difficulties, constant danger and fear, especially after Andrzej had left the house to support the insurgents, Mrs. Sitkowska took care of her wards. Cecylia Kozak, who was their support and outside contact, was killed during the Warsaw Uprising.

After the suppression of the uprising, the inhabitants had to leave Warsaw. Mrs. Sitkowska took the Kozaks with her into the column of refugees and took care of them, providing them with clothes and money. She placed them with relatives where they remained until liberation in January 1945. After that, they probably lived in Warsaw.

Because of increasing anti-Semitism, they tried to leave the country. Hadassah Kozak and her mother, after living in Paris for a year, went to Israel in 1949, where a brother (Landau) and sister of Bronislawa lived who had emigrated to Leipzig, Germany and from there to Palestine in the 1930s. Hadassah Kozak stayed in Israel until 1967. Marion Kozak was brought to England in 1946 by a Jewish aid organisation. There, she met senior lecturer Ralph Miliband at the London School of Economics. Born in Brussels on January 7, 1924 as Adolphe Miliband, he was one of Great Britain's most famous left-wing intellectuals. In 1940, together with his father, he walked from Brussels to Ostend and fled to England on the last ship before the German invasion of Belgium. Ralph Miliband and

Marion Kozak married in 1961. David was born in 1965 and Ed in 1969. Ralph Miliband died in 1994.

In June 2007, Prime Minister Gordon Brown appointed David Miliband as the United Kingdom's youngest Foreign Secretary in decades. In April 2013, he resigned from Parliament. Since 2013, David Miliband has been President of the International Rescue Committee in New York, where he also lives.

His brother Ed Miliband won a seat for the Labour Party in the House of Commons for the constituency of Doncaster North in 2005 and also became a member of the British government in June 2007. On September 25, 2010, he narrowly defeated his brother David in the election for Labour Party leader. He was the party leader and opposition leader until 2015. He competed in the 2015 general election for the post of Prime Minister against incumbent and Conservative Party leader David Cameron. After a clear defeat, Ed Miliband resigned from his post as party leader on May 8, 2015. Since the 2017 election, he has been be a Member of Parliament again.

Hadassah Kozak is professor of history at Yeshiva University in New York. She received her PhD in 2001 on *Cultures of Opposition: Jewish Immigrant Workers, New York City, 1881–1905*. Until her visit to us, she had assumed that her father had already come to Auschwitz in 1942 and died there. In the Yad Vashem archives, several people by the name of David Kozak are mentioned. One of them (without date of birth) was born in Czestochowa and probably died in 1942 in Treblinka.<sup>8</sup>

Marion Kozak was very surprised when we told her about our research. She replied on April 10, 2017: *"Many thanks for all this information, which is certainly correct. Our father, David Kozak, was definitely born sometime around 1909. [...] I would like to visit*

7 Guy Miron & Shlomit Shulhan (ed.), *Die Yad Vashem Enzyklopädie der Ghettos während des Holocaust* (Frankfurt 2014), p. 874.

8 "Dawid Kozak was born in Czestochowa, Poland to Shmuel and Rudel. Prior to WWII he lived in Czestochowa, Poland. Dawid was murdered in the Shoah." <http://yng.yadvashem.org/nameDetails.html?language=en&itemId=507517&ind=7>



*Photo above, from left: Marion Kozak, Andrzej Sitkowski and Hadassah Kozak 1996 in Yad Vashem at the honoring of the Sitkowskis as „Righteous Among the Nations“. (Courtesy Yad Vashem)*

*Photo in the middle, from left: Hadassah and Marion Kozak, Ed and David Miliband 2017 in Tailfingen. (Courtesy KZ Gedenkstätte Hailfingen • Tailfingen)*

*Photo below: David Miliband speaks at the Memorial for the Murdered in Tailfingen. (Courtesy KZ Gedenkstätte Hailfingen • Tailfingen)*

*your office in Germany and examine any documentation that you may have on the crimes committed during the war in Poland, however painful that may be."*

David Miliband wrote on April 15 and 24, 2017: *"Thank you for your email about this very distressing period in European history. I congratulate you on your determination to establish historical memory. [...] Very many thanks for your efforts and for writing. I truly appreciate it."*

Ed Miliband had traveled to Auschwitz and visited the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial site to find out

more about his grandfather. *"They gave us hints that he didn't die in Auschwitz, but we didn't get anywhere."* He had already been looking for a satellite camp in Germany but had not found out any details. Perhaps he had seen the testimonies of Frida Landau (1925–2015) for his father and grandparents. For David Kozak, the place of death is "Germania."

After a tip from Yad Vashem, his brother suspected that their grandfather had died in Buchenwald. He visited Buchenwald in 2015 and received the (false) information that his grandfather had died in the Harzungen satellite camp while building a runway.<sup>9</sup>

On November 14, 2015, *The Telegraph* reported in "How a trip to Israel helped Ed Miliband rediscover his Judaism": *"Of the 4,000 prisoners at Harzungen camp, 556 died. And Ed Miliband now knew his grandfather had been one of them. Dawid Kozak. Born Czestochowa, Poland, 1909. Died Harzungen, Germany, 1945. Murdered in the Shoa."*

On October 1, 2017, the two daughters and grandchildren of David Kozak came to Tailfingen. It was a very moving encounter.

On October 3, 2017, David Miliband wrote: *"I am writing to thank you most deeply for your committed and successful work to tell the story of Hailfingen's terrible past, and teach a message of humanity to future generations. Your work over many years is a real beacon of hope, and of course in the last two days you have given our family an unexpected chance to find the answers to some very deep questions. Your spirit and sensitivity throughout our stay with you was most appreciated, and your families and fellow local residents could not have been more welcoming or supportive. I left with deep gratitude for your work and profound*

<sup>9</sup> "Mr Miliband, 45, said: 'It has taken us almost 70 years to find out the truth. But it's still very hard to take in. We had thought he died in Auschwitz, but he died building a Nazi airstrip in a camp called Harzungen.' This was part of the Buchenwald death camp in Germany. [...] Dawid had arrived at Harzungen late in the war and he died only three months before the camp was liberated by US soldiers in 1945." *Daily Mail* January 29, 2015. There was no airfield in Harzungen.

*impression of the way Germans are taking charge of their own history and therefore their future.*

*I am very grateful and of course am happy to help your endeavors in any way in future.*

*Sincerely,  
David Miliband"*

On June 29, 1995, Yad Vashem appointed Helena Sitkowska and her son Andrzej Sitkowski as "Righteous Among the Nations." In February 1996, Andrzej Sitkowski, together with Marion Kozak/Miliband and Hadassah Kosak, came to Jerusalem for a ceremony at Yad Vashem in honour of the Sitkowskis.<sup>10</sup> After their visit to Tailfingen on October 2, 2017, Hadassah Kosak and Marion Miliband visited Andrzej Sitkowski, who now lives in Kempten, Germany.

"**Adela Kozak** was born in Czenstchow, Poland in 1879. She was a housewife and married. Prior to WWII she lived in Czenstchow, Poland. During the war she was in Czenstchow, Poland. Adela was murdered in the Shoah. This information is based on a Page of Testimony (displayed here) submitted by her relative, Frida Landau"<sup>11</sup>

"**Mose Kozak** was born in Czenstchow, Poland in 1877. He was a merchant and married. Prior to WWII he lived in Czenstchow, Poland. Mose was murdered in the Shoah. This information is based on a Page of Testimony (displayed here) submitted by his relative, Frida Landau. Place of Death Treblinka, Extermination Camp, Poland"<sup>12</sup>

"**David Kozak** was born in Czestochow, Poland in 1909 to Moshe and Adela. He was a merchant and married. Prior to WWII he lived in Czestochow, Poland. David was murdered/perished in Germany. This information is based on a Page of Testimony submitted by his niece. (Frida Landau)"<sup>13</sup>

10 <https://www.yadvashem.org/righteous/stories/sitkowski.html>

11 <http://yvng.yadvashem.org/nameDetails.html?language=en&itemId=507510&ind=4>

12 <http://yvng.yadvashem.org/nameDetails.html?language=en&itemId=507534&ind=12>

13 <http://db.yadvashem.org/names/nameDetails.html?itemId=739077&language=en>

## The Liberation of the Unternehmen "Wüste" Concentration Camp Inmates in April 1945: French Troops Put an End to Unimaginable Suffering

*Dr. Andreas Zekorn, Balingen. Translated by Benedict von Bremen*

75 years ago, in April 1945, the Unternehmen "Wüste" (Operation "Desert") camps in the Zollernalb region of southwestern Germany, which were satellite camps of the Natzweiler-Struthof concentration camp near Strasbourg, were evacuated by means of rail transports and "death marches." In 1945, there were seven satellite camps at the foot of the Swabian Jura: in Bisingen, Dautmergen, Dormettingen, Erzingen, Frommern, Schömberg, and Schörzingen.

The goal of this absurd project of National Socialist delusion, code-named "Wüste" ("Desert"), was to extract shale oil to cover the enormous mineral oil requirements of the German war machine. In the end, though, oil was only produced on a barely noteworthy scale: out of 96 tons of rock, only one ton of hardly usable oil was extracted. In return, the undertaking cost countless lives. In the course, the concentration camp inmates from all over Europe utilized for this project were exposed to unspeakable conditions.

### Evacuation in Several Steps

The evacuation of the local concentration camps took place in several steps: firstly, as a result of the rescue operation of Count Folke Bernadotte (1895–1948), Vice Chairman of the Swedish Red Cross, Norwegian and other Scandinavian concentration camp prisoners were released from the hell of the "Desert" camps in March 1945. The next phase of the evacuation was the removal of inmates by rail in early April 1945. This was based on considerations to replace the prisoners with civilian workers in order to finally make shale oil production "profitable." These transports were thus not directly connected with the later evacuation of the "Desert" camps in the face of the French advance. The decision was made in late March 1945 in the SS-Wirtschafts- und Verwaltungshauptamt (SS Main Economic and Administrative Office) in Berlin. In a bout of mad delusion, it was apparently believed that a success of Operation "Desert" was still possible.

On April 7 and 13, 1945, two train transports with about 4,000 mostly sick and weak prisoners left for Allach, a satellite camp of the Dachau concentration camp. The inmates were transported in open railroad cars. They were tormented by hunger, thirst, and cold in the open and overcrowded wagons. These transports claimed many additional lives; presumably 280 people died during the first transport, which was probably the equivalent of almost a quarter of the total number of prisoners on train. Already in Sigmaringen, the corpses piled up visibly in the wagons, as was later reported by an at the time 13-year-old boy: "In the middle of the wagons [...] lay dead bodies piled up like wood! In some cases they were stacked more than half the height of the side walls. In the last two wagons, there were only dead bodies, and that up to the top edge." The suffering was not over in Dachau-Allach; inmates died immediately upon arrival in Allach or in the days before the camp's liberation. Some prisoners were again evacuated by train or sent

on "Todesmärsche" ("death marches") towards the Alps. Others experienced their liberation by American troops in Allach in early May 1945.

The actual evacuation of the "Desert" camps took place between April 16 and 18, 1945, with French troops moving in ever closer. There was probably an order to take the remaining prisoners and leave immediately towards the east. The camps in Dautmergen, Schömberg, Schörzingen, and the Spaichingen concentration camp – also a satellite camp of Natzweiler – were the starting points for the "death marches." For the inmates, it was a surprising and chaotic departure. After the prisoners had been provided with some food, marching columns of 50 to 300 men set out from Dautmergen, Schörzingen, and Schömberg in the evening of April 18, probably mostly between 6 and 9 p.m., and were accompanied by camp personnel and guards. Cautiously estimated, from 1,500 to perhaps up to 2,500 prisoners were sent on "death marches." Some sick inmates or prisoners who were hiding stayed behind in the camps and were liberated there.

The prisoners' marching columns took different routes towards the east. According to survivors' statements, possible destinations of the marches might have been Dachau near Munich or the imaginary Alpenfestung ("Alpine Fortress") or even the Mauthausen concentration camp in Austria. Some marches did indeed end in the Füssen, Marktoberndorf, or Innsbruck area, close to the Alps. The marches were chaotic and haphazard. Sad proof of the actual courses of the marches is provided by the documentation of corpses found along the routes.

Camp personnel and guards of the "Desert" camps accompanied the marching columns. What happened to the individual marching groups depended greatly on the respective accompanying personnel. There were large individual differences. Some perpetrators behaved cruelly until the very end, with many prisoners being shot to death. Others behaved more humanely and refrained from shooting inmates or even tolerated attempted escapes.

The departure came as a surprise to the prisoners. They must have perceived that journey into uncertainty as threatening. There were also rumors about a planned shooting of the prisoners at Lake Constance. The marches were mostly carried out at night because of possible air raids, but some columns seem to have been on the move during the day as well.



*The Polish writer Tadeusz Borowski (1922–1951) was a prisoner in the Dautmergen concentration camp. In April 1945 he was transported by train to Dachau-Allach. The photo shows him in Munich after liberation. (Archive photo: Anatol Girs)*

During the "Desert" marches, the guards showed once more their cruel behavior, similar to other "death marches." It is not possible, though, to generalize. Often, the treatment and rations were very bad. Inmates were beaten by the guards. An unspecified number of concentration camp prisoners managed to escape during these marches; the SS guards were simply too weak in number to be able to exercise complete control.

At times, however, it also happened that escapes were tacitly tolerated. The escaped prisoners stayed in the woods or hid with farmers and awaited the invading French troops. The escapees, though, were under constant danger of being seized and shot by SS or Wehrmacht units and therefore had to stay alert. In many cases, prisoners were shot. Later, criminal investigations clearly identified the bodies as having been shot in the neck. Inmates who could not go any further and remained

behind due to exhaustion were shot to death by their guards.

The prisoners who made it to the Bavarian-Austrian border area were only freed by US troops relatively late, around April 28 to 30, 1945. Most "Desert" prisoners were liberated on the march by French troops around April 22. The last hours before their liberation were experienced quite differently by the inmates. At times the prisoners were in danger of being liquidated in the last hour; in one case near Ostrach, SS men intended to set fire to a barn with prisoners inside. The concentration camp inmates' reports about their actual liberation are sometimes phrased quite succinctly: "We arrived in Ostrach on Sunday morning, April 22, 1945. Our remaining group consisted of about 200 prisoners. During the day, we were housed in two barns on the outskirts of Ostrach. In the course of the afternoon, [...] French troops—tank units—came. As they approached, the SS men defected and left us behind. That's how I was liberated. After our group had been broken up in Ostrach, every prisoner left in a different direction and probably looked for shelter."

Another prisoner experienced his liberation in Ostrach as follows: "Suddenly they said, 'The SS has gone!' So I looked around and there was actually no SS man left, but there also were no French troops yet. The place seemed deserted, like a ghost town. Fearing the return of the SS, the prisoners went into hiding. The next day, the French arrived with jeeps. They gave us food; many died of it. The French meant well, but people were so hungry that they ate everything and fast and a lot of it and that didn't do all of them good. [...] Then we parted; the thing was over."

The fact that the inmates did not experience their liberation in such an emotionless way as some later accounts might suggest is shown by the following statement: "At 2 p.m. the first French armored cars moved into Ostrach and we were liberated. The scenes that took place were very moving. The prisoners were crazy with joy. Finally, the moment of liberation had come. I will never forget that feeling!"

# In Times of Corona: 75 Years After the Liberation of the Operation “Desert” Concentration Camp Survivors

Heide Friederichs, Rottweil. Translated by Benedict von Bremen

“Never again war!” German artist Käthe Kollwitz’s 1924 appeal, which remains unanswered to this day, was the motto of the Initiative Gedenkstätte Eckerwald’s (Eckerwald Memorial Site Association) meeting week with international guests and contemporary witnesses in April 2020. But the meeting week and the main commemoration ceremony—this year at the Schömberg concentration camp cemetery—had to be canceled due to the Corona pandemic. Early on, it was clear for the Initiative that it could not expect its few contemporary witnesses from Poland and its guests from Norway, Slovenia, the Netherlands, France, Luxembourg, Austria, Hungary, and Switzerland to make the trip. The Eckerwald Memorial Site Association has been organizing these weeks of encounter since 1995; 2020 was the first time that this always very moving commemoration could not take place.

75 years after the end of World War II, 75 years after the dissolution of the concentration camps and the “liberation” of the prisoners of the Unternehmen “Wüste” (Operation “Desert”) complex along the former railway line from Rottweil to Tübingen, the memorial service at the Schömberg

concentration camp cemetery was supposed to be committed to this date. In this year’s invitation, Brigitta Marquard-Schad, chairwoman of the Eckerwald Memorial Site Association, had written, “Thousands of inmates of the ‘Desert’ camps were not able to experience the liberation. They had suffered from hunger, cold, and epidemics; they had become victims of catastrophic conditions, exploitation, and terror. And for those who had survived, liberation came only after the murderous exertions of the death marches.”

Dr. Andreas Zekorn, director of the Zollernalb District Archives, was supposed to give the main speech on the topic of the dissolution of the “Desert” camps. Survivors of the “Desert” camps Schörzingen, Schömberg, and Dautmergen and their relatives were supposed to address their greetings to us. Over the past years, survivors have visited schools to pass on their very own personal testimonies of the criminal Nazi regime. This year, visits to eight schools in the three districts of Tuttlingen, Zollernalb, and Rottweil were supposed to take place. For Jacek Zieliniewicz from Bydgoszcz/ Poland, a contemporary witness and a

dear friend of ours who unfortunately passed away, it had been a heart-felt desire to pass on his legacy to the next generation: that this terror should not be repeated but that friendship should unite the peoples!

In memory of him and of all our friends, a performance with secondary school students from Rottweil under the direction of Gerhard Lempp was planned under this year’s motto “Never again war.” Some names of inmates who died in the Dautmergen concentration camp were supposed to be recited and texts they had left behind were supposed to be read. One of those who survived the Dautmergen concentration camp was Tadeusz Borowski, born on November 12, 1922 in Schytomyr. He died in Warsaw on July 3, 1951 at the age of 29. He concludes the last verse of his poem with the words:

*“Thus I lie in the barracks, I, glorifier of human life,  
Like the flight of birds, I grasp with my fingers myth, legend,  
I search in vain for a sign in human eyes,  
There are only shovels and earth,  
soul and trembling hands.”*



*Members of the board and advisory board of the Eckerwald Memorial Site Association lay flowers for the deceased on the date of the cancelled memorial service on April 26, 2020 at the concentration camp cemetery Schömberg.  
From left: Gerhard Lempp, Helga Hanisch and Willi Koch. (Courtesy Heide Friederichs)*

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# The Museum Bisingen: Re-Opened in 2019

Dieter Grupp, Bisingen

For quite some time the "Verein Gedenkstätten KZ Bisingen" had not been really satisfied with the exhibition in the museum that had been installed in 1996 and remodeled in 2004. The visitors had to read a lot of texts that were printed on boards; besides, a couple of photographs, some exhibits – not really what you expect from a museum these days, especially because the most visitors are students from the High Schools in the area. Therefore a basic remodeling seemed necessary. Roman Waizenegger, the mayor of Bisingen, supported the project from the very beginning and asked the "Verein Gedenkstätten KZ Bisingen" to develop a concept for the museum that is owned by the local authority of Bisingen

The Verein scheduled a workshop in October 2017, and the members collected and discussed ideas how to rework the exhibition. It quickly became clear that the space of the entrance area will still be needed for events of the "Verein" and that this room should at the same time be used as an introduction to the museum's topics in the future. The other rooms which are a lot smaller were to be dedicated to special topics like "The Inmates", "The Perpetrators", "The By-standers: The Village" and "After the Camp". The workshop was subdivided into subgroups who dealt with these topics and started to develop specific designs for the particular rooms. These designs were discussed again and again in the main group and thus scrutinized and improved.

Meanwhile the concept was presented to the local council by the Verein's chairpersons Dieter Grupp and Ines Mayer, and at the same time a first sketch by Herwig Schneider, the new museum's designer, was shown. The local council agreed that the old museum was a little outdated, it endorsed the "Verein's" concept and commissioned the "Verein" to come up with details for the implementation, with a focus on a modern digital presentation of contents – an idea the



*The Museum outside: an old farmhouse in the middle of the village.*



*The first workshop (October 2017).*

"Verein" wanted to realize anyway. It was agreed that the cost of the remodeling would be shared: The local authority (as the owner of the museum) was to bear two thirds of the costs, the "Verein" (who operates the museum) was to bear the remaining third.

During the following months the "Verein" started to find sponsors who could pay for its share. At the same

time the concepts became more and more refined. It was not easy to reconcile the very theoretical ideas (based on historical research) with the practical implementation (based on the historic farm house the museum is located in and based on the amount of money that was at stake: 150,000 Euro). More than one compromise had to be found. The "Verein" always was counselled by Herwig Schneider,



*Official opening ceremony: The audience (Hohenzollernhalle, Bisingen).*

head of the design company "Design und mehr". Text were formulated, pictures were selected, decisions were made when it came to exhibits, to digital presentations – and a full-fledged concept was developed to convince the local council in July 2018 to unanimously vote for a final mandate to the remodeling. During the time of research the "Verein" had a lot of support: Andreas Zekorn, keeper of the county's archives, contributed a lot of knowledge and acquired all videos from the Shoah Foundation that are relevant to the Bisingen concentration camp; inhabitants of Bisingen even brought new objects that had been stored on the attic; one afternoon the "Verein" invited local witnesses of the past to tell their (childhood) story.

After the unanimous vote the "Verein" started to implement the plans. The subgroups who were still responsible for the accuracy of contents and the research for all kinds of media in the single rooms had to stay in contact with each other and meet frequently to adjust their results. Texts had to be collated, reworked, synchronized and last but not least shortened. Because time was flying, some craftspeople's jobs had to be done: new sockets, supply lines, light concepts, a dry wall. At this time the museum still was open to the public because the "Verein" didn't want to disappoint the long-term visitors from

the schools. The Museum was not closed down until the mid of November 2018 to be re-opened in June 2019.

After the creative work of designing a new museum had been completed, the drudgery of going over the same texts over and over again (and finding the same typos over and over...) started. The new furniture, which had been designed for the museum, was produced, cabinets for the exhibits were installed and what started as a concept in the brain of the "Verein's" active members finally became a three-dimensional exhibition: digitally state of the art, using the idea of story-telling as a consistent concept, integrating many three-dimensional interactive elements, based on the latest scientific findings. The group who planned the new museum was quite rightly proud of the result.

On 2 June 2019 the museum was officially re-opened by an official ceremony: The Mayor of Bisingen, Roman Waizenegger, started with a welcoming address, followed by representative of the county (Zollernalbkreis) and the keynote speaker Jens-Christian Wagner, chairman of the "Stiftung niedersächsische Gedenkstätten" talked about the central question: "What is the aim of a museum dealing with National Socialism?"

Many friends of the memorial site



*The keynote speaker Jens-Christian Wagner.*

and the "Verein" have been present at the ceremony: Christine Glauning, who planned the first exhibition in 1996 and is now the director of the documentation center on NS forced labor in Berlin-Schöneeweide; Silvia Pauli, the granddaughter of the former camp commandant Johannes Pauli; and Claire Vosk, the daughter of Otto Gunsberger, one of the concentration camp's surviving inmates, who came from Australia together with two of her sons.

### **The Address of Claire Vosk at the Opening Ceremony of the New Museum in Bisingen**

*Thank you for inviting me to talk to you today, it is a great honour to continue the legacy of my late father. It was important to Otto and our family that good people insure that the Museum can continue its important work educating and informing people about the more difficult aspects of our past, so that we can pave a better way for future generations.*

*My father's experiences throughout the Holocaust shaped the way we all grew up. Despite emigrating to Australia over 16,000 kilometers away from the atrocities that took place my Mum and Dad still feared persecution and did not engage with the Jewish community in Melbourne until they started to feel safe again.*

*Through my early childhood they avoided teaching me the cultural*



*Claire Vosk, daughter of Otto Gunsberger (left), and Ines Mayer, Chairman of the Verein Gedenkstätten Bisingen e.V.*

*ways of Judaism out of fear. It was only when I was 12 that I began to find out about our history and what exactly had happened.*

*Throughout my childhood I always felt I did not belong, I was taught not to bring attention to myself as people don't like the Jewish people. So I didn't speak up for myself as a child – too shy – it is only in my older years that I have learnt to speak out a bit more. And to know that my opinions are worth listening to.*

*It's only in my adult years that I realise the importance of belonging in society and how great an impact*

*something as terrible as a holocaust can have.*

*One thing my father's experiences have taught me was to be accepting and tolerant of other people and their circumstances.*

*Otto was never one to let the horrible things that happened to him in the concentration camps define him. After being so close to death for so long, he left, not only a survivor, but a lover of what it truly meant to be alive. He realised the importance of moving on and looking forward. Thankfully he was able to do so through his family, his love of classical music, the arts and all that life had to offer. I was truly blessed to have such a strong and truly inspirational role model.*

*It's more important than ever to remember these things today, especially with Brexit, Trump and the swing of Right Wing Politics sweeping the world.*

*Arts culture learning were all instilled into us.*

*But most of all the values of being a close family and having good friendships.*

### **What You Can See in the New Museum in Bisingen**

When you enter the new museum a large room opens in front of you and you see a projection on each wall: on the main wall: there is a set of questions that might bring a visitor to Bisingen, e.g.: Why was there a concentration camp in Bisingen? How long has that camp been in Bisingen for? Who was there? How many of

the inmates died? Were the perpetrators punished? Did the population of Bisingen know about that? How did they feel? Some of these questions can be answered easily (the duration of the camp) or not so easily (knowledge of the population) – but these questions are supposed to meet the visitors' disposition to the topic of the museum. The clear answers are given to the left of that main projection on three screens showing original pictures and unambiguous facts on a rotating basis. On the right hand side you can see two very large aerial views on Bisingen, one of 1945 and of 2016 for comparison: where had the camp been, where was the working place of the inmates, how far was the village away from the camp, which buildings are still at the same place (e.g. the station) – an arrangement that appeals a lot to the visitor because it shows the palimpsest-like existence of the camp even in today's structures.

The first theme room a visitor usually enters is the inmates' room – a design choice deliberately taken by the concept team because we believe that the inmates deserve the most attention of the visitors. In that room you get to know the story of Isak Wasserstein, one of the more than 4,000 inmates that had been held captive in Bisingen. Isak Wasserstein survived not only the ghetto of Warsaw, his hometown, but also nine more concentration camps (among others Majdanek and Auschwitz). There is one quote about each of these camps that are shown on a



*Entrance room: Screens with unambiguous facts and pictures*

stylized map, drawn on a picket fence. Next to it Isak Wasserstein tells a story about his incarceration in Bisingen on a video screen. What we used here is one of the videos of the Shoah Foundation. Altogether we show more than 30 of these videos on a video touch table that is in the center of that room – every visitor can choose which video he wants to watch. The videos are usually in English, some of the are in French and in Hebrew – all videos are subtitled in German. On steles the visitors can read about the life of an inmate in the camp.

In the next room the big lie of the Bisingen concentration camp is unmasked: There was no oil, at least not in sufficient amounts. The visitors can find that out for themselves by moving a sliding door back and forth. Here the visitor can find out about the industrial project that triggered the camps of the so-called "Unternehmen 'Wüste'". There is a big touch screen on which you can navigate through many aerial views, historical views and background information on the insane project to get oil out of the slate.

From there, visitors enters the perpetrators' room. Here they meet with those responsible for the crimes, the slave work and the victims of the Bisingen camp. The visitor can learn about the complex and polycratic structure of the dictatorial regime, represented by the companies and corporations that even earned money with the inmates of the Bisingen camp. They also get to know the biography of two leading officials of the camp and can watch a video about one of the staff who retrospectively tells the story of "where he had to kill an inmate" – a perspective incredibly irritating.

From here, the next room discusses the complex topic of by-standers. The zones between being involved and not involved in the concentration camp merge: some of the inhabitants in Bisingen profited from the camp, some kids traded food against hand-made wooden toys, some just watched – all of the 2,500 inhabitants knew. The inmates walked through the village on a daily basis, some had to help on local projects, some even



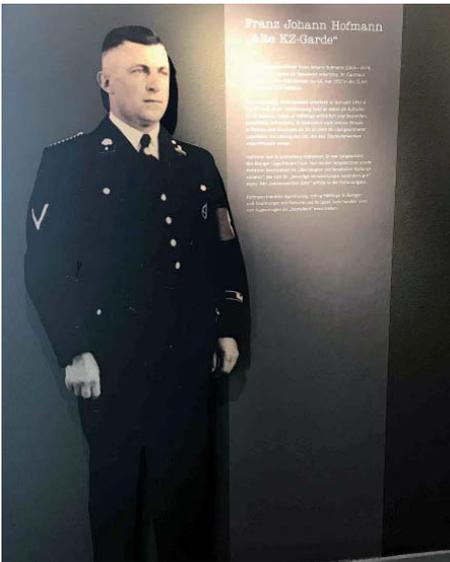
*Entrance room: two aerial views of Bisingen, 1945 and 2016.*



*The inmate's room: the odyssey of the inmate Isak Wasserstein is depicted on a picket fence marking the 13 concentration camps he has survived and showing the correlation between the camp in Bisingen and those in Poland and Belarus.*



*Displays in the inmates' room contrasting quotes of the survivors (screens) with scientific research (beneath).*



*Left:  
Perpetrators' room:  
Franz Johann Hofmann, head of the  
concentration camps in  
the area.*



*Right:  
By-standers' room.*

worked for them – like the story of an inmate tailor, who made a coat for a woman working at the town hall; and that woman even went into to the camp to get measured up for that coat by the inmate. This story is told by the very woman herself in an audio that can be listened to in this room.

Finally, visitors enter the post-history room: What happened to the survivors? What happened to the perpetrators? And how did the village of Bisingen deal with the legacy of having had a concentration camp? These questions have become more

and more important over the last decades. The room shows a long timeline starting in 1945 and ending in the present. According to the topics in the rooms before, the groups of inmates, perpetrators and by-standers are depicted and the phases and turning points of commemoration in Germany and in Bisingen are marked. Three layers in a curved band tell the visitor what happened to inmates like Otto Gunsberger, like Isak Wasserstein, to the Head of the camp – how the experience of the concentration camp was decisive for their further

lives and is an important aspect of Bisingen's identity to this very day.

*The Museum Bisingen (www.museum-bisingen.de) can be visited every Sunday from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. or at any time by appointment with the museum's agent (museum@bisingen.de or phone: +49 74 76 / 89 6-4 14 (on Mondays and Tuesdays). Guided Tours are also administrated by the museum's agents. There is no entrance fee.*



*Room Post-History: entwined bands of history. (All Photos: Courtesy Gedenkstätten KZ Bisingen e.V.)*

# “From the Point of View of Humanity and Helping”.

## Ingeborg Ziebarth: From Berlin to Balingen

Dr. Michael Walther, Balingen<sup>1</sup>. Translated by Benedict von Bremen

“I had not been told when I was laying in my cradle, which stood in a western suburb of the cosmopolitan city of Berlin, that 28 years later, as a real Berliner, I would find refuge in a small village [Tieringen] in the Swabian Jura and, after the war with its destruction, hardships, and misery, [a] home. Until 1944, I had neither known nor heard anything about the village or the nearby town [Balingen].”

Thus begin Ingeborg Ziebarth's memoirs, written in 1977 on a total of eleven typewritten pages with many handwritten corrections, which can be found in the Balingen City Archives.<sup>2</sup> This is one of the few testimonies about the life and work of an unusual woman.

Ingeborg Ziebarth was born on June 28, 1916 in Berlin-Südende (Steglitz) as the daughter of banking clerk Paul Ziebarth and his wife Margarethe née Toepfer. She had an older brother named Wolf (born 1914). After attending elementary school, she entered the Franziskus-Oberlyzeum, a secondary school for girls, in Berlin-Schöneberg on Easter 1926, which she left on Easter 1935 after acquiring her Abitur diploma.

In 1935, her father died at barely 50 years of age. In the spring of the following year, the family moved to Rheydt in the Rhineland. In the years before the beginning of World War II, Ingeborg Ziebarth trained as a photo laboratory assistant. She then worked in Rheydt as a laboratory assistant and photographer until 1943.

In September 1944, the family's apartment was destroyed in a bombing raid. Until the end of the war, mother and daughter – Wolf Ziebarth had been killed in action in the Soviet Union in 1941 – were forced to accept the offer from friends in Stuttgart to live temporarily in their weekend house in Tieringen in what was then the Balingen regional district.

“With only a few belongings, wearing multiple dresses, carrying



*Ingeborg Ziebarth 1941. (Courtesy Balingen City Archives)*

rucksack and suitcase, we set off on our train journey, which was often interrupted by air-raid alarms. But we made it to our destination.”<sup>3</sup> In the house provided by their friends, however, there were already people who had lost their apartments in Stuttgart, also as a result of the air war. The two women looked for, and eventually found, another place to stay in Tieringen: during the day, they could stay in a house with a small grocery store; at night, mother and daughter found a place to stay at an acquaintance of the grocery store's owner who provided them with a sleeping place in her house's attic. About four months later, the two moved to Weilstetten where they occupied a room with a kitchen in the Gasthof Ritter inn. After a further stop in Weilstetten, they were finally able to move into an apartment in Richt-hofenstraße in Balingen where Ingeborg Ziebarth lived until her death.<sup>4</sup>

In late 1944, Ingeborg Ziebarth had to register with the Balingen employment office and was assigned a job as an office clerk for the SS-owned Gesellschaft Deutsche Schieferöl GmbH (German Shale Oil Corporation Ltd.)

in Erzingen. The company had its office in the main barracks of a concentration camp in Erzingen which was part of the Unternehmen “Wüste” (Operation “Desert”). As she herself noted, she was not happy about her new employer, but she probably had no way of refusing this job.

### The Erzingen Satellite Camp

The concentration camp in Erzingen was one of a total of seven satellite camps of the main Natzweiler-Struthof concentration camp in Alsace. They had been built as part of a shale oil project (1942–1944) and the Operation “Desert” (1944–1945).<sup>5</sup> The camp was located near the Erzingen railway station in today's Erlenstraße. The inmates had to work in a “Desert” plant under construction in the Erzingen township. This plant, Werk 4, was one of ten “Desert” plants in which mineral oil was to be extracted from oil shale found at the foot of the Swabian Jura. More than 3,500 prisoners lost their lives in the process.

The Erzingen satellite camp was a so-called “Nacht-und-Nebel-Lager” (“night and fog camp”). The prisoners

1 <https://www.akwueste.de/>

2 Stadtarchiv Balingen (Balingen City Archives): Bestand NA – Ziebarth, “Erinnerungen” (hence “Bequest Ziebarth”). In addition, the Balingen City Archives hold a so-called “Zeitzeugeninterview” (“contemporary witness interview”) with Ingeborg Ziebarth conducted by Margarete Steinhart on December 12, 1988.

3 “Erinnerungen”.

4 “Zeitzeugeninterview”.

5 On the Erzingen concentration camp and Ingeborg Ziebarth, cf. Immo Opfermann, *Jan, ist der Führer tot? Portraits und Glückwunschkarten im KZ Erzingen* (Bad Schussenried 2016); Immo Opfermann, *Porträts und Glückwunschkarten im KZ Erzingen* (Gäufelden 2012) <[https://www.kz-gedenkstaette-hailfingentailfingen.de/pdf/kzht.v.ve\\_portraets\\_e.pdf](https://www.kz-gedenkstaette-hailfingentailfingen.de/pdf/kzht.v.ve_portraets_e.pdf)>, last access May 11, 2020; Immo Opfermann, “Dokumente des Überlebenswillens. Geburtstagskarten und Kalender aus dem Konzentrationslager Erzingen,” in: *Schwäbische Heimat* No. 2 (2013), pp. 133-141; Immo Opfermann (ed.), *Das Unternehmen „Wüste“. Ölschieferwerke und Konzentrationslager entlang der Bahnlinie Tübingen-Rottweil 1944/45. Leitfaden und Materialien zur Ausstellung in der ehemaligen Baracke auf dem Gelände des Oberschulamtes Tübingen 7.5.–31.7.1997* (Balingen 1997). Whether the satellite camp's inmates also had to work in the second “Desert” plant in the Erzingen township (Werk 5 in Bonbachtal) has not yet been confirmed.

had been suspected of resistance against the German occupiers and came from Western European countries occupied by the German Reich; in Erzingen, they were mainly from France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Norway. "Night and fog" prisoners were deported to concentration camps unknown to their relatives and were to disappear forever. This measure served to intimidate the populations of the occupied territories.

According to Immo Opfermann's speech at the inauguration of the Erzingen memorial stelae on May 3, 2015, the Erzingen satellite camp was "an unusual concentration camp. Certain factors came together which enabled the prisoners to survive and which helped to mitigate atrocities and injustice."<sup>6</sup> Food and shelter were much better than in the larger "Desert" camps (mainly the ones in Bisingen and Dautmergen). Nevertheless, the prisoners suffered from malnutrition and, especially during winter, from poor clothing. The prisoner society was far more homogeneous in its structure in terms of origin and nationality, which led to a very special feeling of cohesion among the inmates.

During the construction of a camp for prisoners of war who were also to work on the "Desert" construction sites, Alemannic row graves had been discovered on the nearby "Hungerberg." Thereupon SS-Hauptsturmführer (captain) and "Wehrgeologe" (military geologist) Wilhelm Jordan was commissioned by SS-Obergruppenführer (three-star-general) Oswald Pohl, the head of the SS-Wirtschaftsverwaltungshauptamt (SS Main Economic and Administrative Office) and shareholder of Deutsche Schieferöl, to examine and catalog the finds.<sup>7</sup> Jordan set up his drawing office in the office of the camp commander, SS-Oberscharführer (staff sergeant) Joseph Olesch. In addition to two soldiers who were probably deployed to help during the excavations, two concentration camp prisoners tasked to draw copies of the finds also worked in this office. These inmates were the city architect of the Belgian city of Ghent, Julien Lievevrouw, and Vilnius-born Jewish mathematician

Isaak Wirschup from Lithuania who had been specially requested for this task from Dautmergen, another "Desert" concentration camp. According to Immo Opfermann, "drawings, small works of art on cards and calendars" were created in this drawing office by prisoners for prisoners as expression of the will to survive and of humanity.<sup>8</sup>

Ingeborg Ziebarth began working in this very special environment on December 1, 1944.<sup>9</sup>

### Humanity and Civil Courage

Ingeborg Ziebarth "abhorred the war and despised Hitler and his barbaric regime," according to Dr. Léon Boutbien, prisoner and former camp doctor of the Erzingen satellite camp, in a speech in 1990. Today, over 25 years after her death, it is no longer possible to understand in detail where Ingeborg Ziebarth's attitude towards humanity and compassion, coupled with a large portion of civil courage, stemmed from. The early death of her brother, who had died as an officer in the Soviet Union, certainly strengthened her resistant attitude. Most likely, her critical attitude towards the National Socialists also had to do with her faith, which accompanied her throughout her life, attested to not only by attendance of the Oberlyzeum secondary school in Berlin. Accordingly, the *Zollern-Alb-Kurier* newspaper from Balingen reported in her obituary that Ingeborg Ziebarth "took an active part in the Catholic congregation" until she passed away.<sup>11</sup>

Quite fittingly, Clemens August Graf von Galen (1878-1946), future bishop of Münster and cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church, had been one of her religious education teachers at the Catholic Franziskus-Oberlyzeum in Berlin. In 1909 Graf von Galen was appointed vicar and in 1919 parish priest at St. Matthias church parish in Berlin-Schöneberg and was active in the German capital until 1929. In the summer of 1941, Bishop Graf von Galen, a critical and independent spirit, denounced the Nazi state's confiscation of monasteries, the terror methods of the Gestapo, and the euthanasia murders in three famous sermons. These sermons were widely

distributed not only in the German Reich but also in some of the neighboring occupied countries. In addition to Julien Lievevrouw, whose resistance groups had copied von Galen's sermons and distributed them in Belgium, the Erzingen camp also housed Dutch prisoners who had circulated von Galen's sermons. This similarity between some of the inmates and the German civilian employee Ziebarth certainly helped to quickly establish a certain degree of closeness between them.<sup>12</sup>

Ingeborg Ziebarth helped in many ways. She supplied the prisoners with cigarettes and food, for example by organizing bread from the local farmers before starting her workday in the camp. She also cooked for the prisoners. The "spiritual" supply of the prisoners included prayer books and literature by or about Goethe which she bought in a bookstore and passed on. During a visit to her old home in Berlin just before Christmas 1944, she had the priest of her local parish give her consecrated hosts for Julien Lievevrouw so that he could receive Holy Communion on Christmas—the Balingen priest had refused this request of Lievevrouw. Moreover, Ingeborg Ziebarth hid letters from an Erzingen inmate, although she then gave them to Balingen photographer Hans Schmid for safekeeping because she feared a house search.<sup>13</sup>

6 <<https://www.akwueste.de/deutsch/erinnerung/erzingen-3-mai-2015/>>, last access May 11, 2020.

7 Dana Schlegelmilch, "Zwischen staatlicher Denkmalpflege, SS-Wehrgeologie und Kulturgutraub. Heinrich Himmler und sein Wewelsburger SS-Archäologe Wilhelm Jordan (1903–1983)," in: Susanne Grunwald, Uta Halle, Dirk Mahsarski, Karin Reichenbach (eds.), *Die Spur des Geldes in der Prähistorischen Archäologie. Mäzene – Förderer – Förderstrukturen* (Bielefeld 2016), pp. 121–171.

8 Opfermann, *Dokumente des Überlebenswillens*, p. 135. The drawings are reproduced in: Opfermann, *Jan, ist der Führer tot?* and Opfermann, *Porträts und Glückwunschkarten*.

9 The contract of employment, signed by SS-Obersturmführer (first lieutenant) Hans Jacobi—the authorized signatory of Deutsche Schieferöl GmbH—and Ingeborg Ziebarth was probably concluded subsequently, as it is dated January 1, 1945 (Bequest Ziebarth).

10 1990 speech by Léon Boutbien (Bequest Ziebarth).  
11 November 23, 1993 *Zollern-Alb-Kurier*.

12 Opfermann, *Jan, ist der Führer tot?*, pp. 37f; Katholische Kirchengemeinde Sankt Matthias Berlin-Schöneberg <<https://st-matthias-berlin.de/>>, last access May 5, 2020.

13 On the consecrated hosts, see Opfermann, *Jan, ist der Führer tot?*, p. 90 and the contemporary witness interview with I. Ziebarth. On the inmate's letters,

Her account of how she helped the prisoners in the concentration camp at great risk to her own well-being, perhaps even her life, paints the picture of a courageous woman who always sided with those who are weaker. She quickly revealed her opposition to the National Socialist regime to her superior, Wilhelm Jordan. According to Ingeborg Ziebarth's account, he shared many of her political views, although this assessment could be doubted. Immo Opfermann's assessment seems more probable: that Jordan subordinated his scientific reputation and his thirst for research to his thoroughly pronounced National Socialist beliefs. He appreciated the work of the two inmates and also that of Ingeborg Ziebarth, and, in the end, it seems that, to him, their work was more important than possibly losing it by way of punitive measures. This is also confirmed by new research attesting Jordan a purpose-oriented relationship with the forced laborers who were auxiliaries at his disposal not only in Erzingen. Jordan's attitude, which Dana Schlegelmilch, author of the study, attributes to a lack of empathy,<sup>14</sup> was typical of the prevailing attitude of most Germans during World War II. Forced laborers, most of whom had been abducted against their will and were completely destitute of any rights, were primarily seen as cheap labor without which the German (war) economy would no longer have functioned – Germany had long since developed into a slave-owning state! Or as the German Federal Archives writes on their website about the history of forced labor under National Socialism: "Forced labor was an ongoing public injustice in the Nazi state which was not perceived as such by the majority of the population. Almost sixty years had to pass before German society across the board dealt with this topic and discovered guilt not only on the part of entrepreneurs and public authorities."<sup>15</sup>

Ingeborg Ziebarth's activities were not without danger. In her memoirs, she reports that she was once caught by the camp commandant—probably Joseph Olesch – while slipping something to an inmate. Wilhelm

Jordan, her superior, came to the rescue and prevented Ziebarth's likely punishment.

The prisoners thanked Ingeborg Ziebarth with birthday or holiday cards. At her wish, Isaak Wirschup also produced a painting of Wolf Ziebarth, Ingeborg's brother who had died in the Soviet Union in 1941, which the concentration camp inmate made by using a photo as model. How hard must it have been for Isaak Wirschup, whose wife and child had been shot before his eyes by SS men or perhaps by Wehrmacht soldiers, to draw the portrait of a German in uniform who, on top of all this, had also seen service in the Soviet Union?<sup>16</sup> This episode once more

shows the great esteem in which the prisoners must have kept Ingeborg Ziebarth.

The Erzingen camp was evacuated in two stages. On March 21, 1945, thanks to the rescue operation of the Vice-President of the Swedish Red Cross, Count Folke Bernadotte, the Scandinavian prisoners – twenty-one

see "Bescheinigung von Ingeborg Ziebarth für den Fotografen Hans Schmid vom 1. November 1946" (Bequest Ziebarth).

14 Opfermann, *Jan, ist der Führer tot?*, pp. 34f; Schlegelmilch, *Wilhelm Jordan*, pp. 140f.

15 German Federal Archives, *Zwangsarbeit im NS-Staat* <<https://www.bundesarchiv.de/zwangsarbeit/>>, last access May 5, 2020.

16 Both painting and photo are reproduced in: Opfermann, *Porträts und Glückwunschkarten*, pp. 12f. The original painting can be found in Ingeborg Ziebarth's bequest in the Balingen City Archives.



*Thank you card from Julien Lievevrouw for Ingeborg Ziebarth with a drawing of the Erzingen concentration camp. (Courtesy Balingen City Archives)*

Norwegians and one Dane – were released. On April 13, 1945, the remaining inmates were taken in railway carriages to the Dachau-Allach satellite concentration camp.<sup>17</sup> Geologist Wilhelm Jordan traveled to his family in Westphalia. Until March 1948, he was interned in various camps. In his denazification proceedings, he was sentenced to eight months in prison and a fine, among other things for “exploitation of concentration camp prisoners.”<sup>18</sup>

### The Post-War Period

Before his transport to Dachau-Allach, Ingeborg Ziebarth received a letter of recommendation from Léon Boutbien. The letter is unfortunately not included in her bequest but will have been worded similarly to a letter from Julien Lievrouw dated October 3, 1946, which states: *“Ingeborg Ziebarth [...] showed an admirable attitude towards the prisoners; despite the danger to which she was exposed, she helped wherever possible to relieve the inmates’ misery by all means. I plead the French authorities to be kind enough to take note of this statement. The young lady in question deserves not only preferential treatment but also a great reward. She has helped Belgian, Dutch, French, Jewish, Polish, and Russian prisoners.”*<sup>19</sup>

Because of Léon Boutbien’s letter, Ingeborg Ziebarth was employed from time to time as an interpreter by the French headquarters during the first months of the occupation. She continued to help where she could, this time German petitioners to the French authorities. However, she first earned her living by working for the Photo-Schmid company in Balingen’s Bahnhofstraße. On August 1, 1946, she was, also through the intercession of her former “protégés,” hired as secretary and interpreter by the French headquarters, although no German civilian employees were allowed to work for the French military government at that time. After the dissolution of the French district delegation in Balingen in early 1952, the French regional commissariat in Tübingen transferred Ingeborg Ziebarth to the secretariat of the personnel office on March 1, 1952, where she worked

*Ingeborg Ziebarth as editorial secretary at the Zollern-Alb-Kurier. (Courtesy Zollern-Alb-Kurier)*

until the end of 1954. From January 1 to December 31, 1955, Ingeborg Ziebarth worked as a foreign correspondent for the Wilhelm Beuter Uhrenfabrik clock factory company in Rosenfeld in the Balingen regional district. The serious illness of her mother forced Ingeborg to give up this job and look for employment in Balingen. From January 1, 1956 on, Ingeborg Ziebarth worked as an editorial secretary for the *Balinger Volksfreund* newspaper (today’s *Zollern-Alb-Kurier*). She retired on June 30, 1976.<sup>20</sup>

### International Understanding

In August 1945, Léon Boutbien rode a bicycle from Dachau to Balingen specifically to see Ingeborg Ziebarth. On behalf of all former Erzingen prisoners who had finally been liberated by the U.S. Army in Dachau, he expressed his gratitude for her help, courage, and bravery. That same year, Ingeborg Ziebarth and her mother received an invitation from Léon Boutbien to Paris where the two women were accommodated at Boutbien’s parents and Ingeborg Ziebarth met many of her former “protégés” again.

These meetings, which began only a few months after the end of the Nazi terror regime, were a first and at the time barely perceptible sign that peaceful coexistence between nations was possible. It was not until many years later that state treaties were signed between the Federal Republic of Germany and its (western) neighbors: the 1952 treaty establishing the “European Coal and Steel Community” in 1952 or the Franco-West German Élysée Treaty of 1963.

For many decades, the former inmates met again and again in their



home countries but occasionally also in Erzingen, for example in 1956, 1988, and 1990. Ingeborg Ziebarth was always invited to these meetings, and she frequently attended them. The meetings in Balingen were partly organized by her.

On November 21, 1993, Ingeborg Ziebarth died after a serious illness in Balingen.

Unfortunately, Ingeborg Ziebarth, despite the urging of her former “protégés,” never brought herself to record and publish her experiences. She did not attach much importance to herself and her actions. Therefore, Immo Opfermann was probably the first to evaluate her bequest and who also set a monument to Ingeborg Ziebarth in several publications on Operation “Desert” and the Erzingen satellite concentration camp.

Ingeborg Ziebarth belonged to a minority of Germans who did not see their actions as resistance but as a matter of course. She stands as an example that there are always, even under a terrorist regime, alternative paths of action possible.

17 Andreas Zekorn, “Ende mit Schrecken – Die Räumung der Lager des Unternehmens ‘Wüste’ im April 1945,” in: *Gedenkstätten-Rundschau* No. 14 (March 2015), pp. 1-12 <[https://www.gedenkstaettenverbund-gna.org/images/downloads/gedenkstaettenrundschau/gr\\_14\\_20150412.pdf](https://www.gedenkstaettenverbund-gna.org/images/downloads/gedenkstaettenrundschau/gr_14_20150412.pdf)>, last access May 11, 2020; Andreas Zekorn, “Zivilarbeiter statt Häftlinge. Die Räumung der Lager des Unternehmens ‘Wüste’ im April 1945,” in: *Heimatkundliche Blätter* Vol. 62 (2015), pp. 1937–1942.

18 Schlegelmilch, *Wilhelm Jordan*, p. 163.

19 The letter was translated from French into German by Immo Opfermann and is quoted in: Opfermann, *Jan, ist der Führer tot?*, p. 40.

20 Cf. Ingeborg Ziebarth’s May 15, 1952 and July 27, 1957 curriculum vitae (Bequest Ziebart); Ingeborg Ziebarth’s obituary in the November 23, 1993 *Zollern-Alb-Kurier*.

# Review and Insight: The Stauffenberg Memorial Site in Albstadt-Lautlingen

Susanne Goebel and Doris Muth, *Albstadt*. Translated by Benedict von Bremen

Anyone driving through Albstadt-Lautlingen will hardly suspect that there is a castle just 100 meters away from the main road: the Stauffenberg-Schloss. At first sight architecturally inconspicuous and separated from the rest of the village by thick walls, the castle is situated on a small hill in the direct vicinity of the Catholic parish church of St. John the Baptist.

Although the first commemoration of Claus von Stauffenberg's failed 1944 assassination attempt took place on July 20, 1957 at the "Gedächtniskapelle" (memorial chapel) in Albstadt-Lautlingen, there was, for a long time, no documentation center and memorial site to commemorate the Stauffenberg family and the role of Stauffenberg during National Socialism. But this has recently changed:

not only has an active "Verein" (registered association) undertaken an extensive renovation of the castle barn and made it usable as a place for celebrations and cultural events<sup>1</sup>; in addition to the renowned Jehle Collection of Historical Instruments<sup>2</sup>, the Stauffenberg-Gedenkstätte (memorial site) was solemnly opened in November 2007.<sup>3</sup>

## Background

But how did the memorial site come about? In 1972, Alfred Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg sold the building, which up until then had been used by the family as living space, to the Lautlingen municipality. Three years later, in the course of the 1975 municipal reform, Lautlingen – together with eight other suburbs – became a part

of the newly founded town of Albstadt. A cultural use of the representative building was an obvious choice and found a congenial partner in the passionate musical instrument collector and piano maker Martin Jehle: in 1977, his extensive and renowned collection of musical instruments found a worthy domicile in the former castle of the Count von Stauffenberg family.

Finally, in the course of the Stauffenberg Castle's renovation in 2004-2005, rooms were finally freed up by moving the municipal office to the nearby forester's house which made it

1 <https://www.schloss-scheuer.de/>

2 <https://www.albstadt.de/Musikhistorische-Sammlung-Jehle>

3 <https://www.albstadt.de/Stauffenberg-Gedenkst%C3%A4tte>



Since 2007, the Stauffenberg Memorial Site in the castle in Lautlingen has been providing an overview of the life of the Stauffenberg siblings, culminating in the assassination attempt against Hitler.



*A back-lit picture panel runs through several rooms of the Stauffenberg Memorial Site. With pictures from the family's private photo albums, it gives an insight into the life of the Stauffenberg sons in Lautlingen, in Stuttgart, and at the places where they lived and worked.*

possible to enlarge the already existing Stauffenberg memorial room. This enabled the museum to present the career of Claus von Stauffenberg – one of the most central figures of German military resistance against the Hitler dictatorship – in detail and to honor him accordingly.

Work began in coordination with the Haus der Geschichte Baden-Württemberg (“House of History Baden-Württemberg”) in Stuttgart<sup>4</sup>, which at the same time was planning a Stauffenberg memorial in the Landesmuseum Württemberg in Stuttgart’s Old Palace.<sup>5</sup> Under the direction of Susanne Goebel, director of the Albstadt museums<sup>6</sup>, historian Doris Muth was commissioned to develop a concept for the content as well as the accompanying texts, while the Kulturbüro Schoedel in Reutlingen was responsible for the interior design and the graphics of the printed matter.

With financial support from the Landesstiftung Baden-Württemberg – today the Baden-Württemberg Stiftung foundation<sup>7</sup> – and two generous donations from local companies – Mey and Deutsche Bank – the project could be implemented in a timely manner.

In addition to the Jehle Collection, the castle now houses the Stauffenberg Memorial Room and a memorial site. On about 100 square meters, a richly illustrated presentation of the Stauffenberg family history as well as the dramatic political events surrounding the July 20, 1944 attempt to assassinate Adolf Hitler and bring down the Nazi regime of injustice was created. With an extensive chronological “timeline” of previously unpublished photographic material, original exhibition objects, and some reproductions, visitors are shown the history of the former Lautlingen dominion as well as the dramatic development of brothers Claus and Berthold von Stauffenberg from initial supporters to resolute opponents of Nazi policies. The presentation concludes with a history of how this resistance was seen after the end of the war as well as an opportunity to watch various films on the subject in a media room.

With the popularity of the exhibition – around 7,000 visitors were counted in the first year after the opening – as well as the limited size of the small rooms, a desire for more space for the presentation of other

topics soon arose. Looking through the window at the castle courtyard, the idea developed that the courtyard could also be included in an extension of the Stauffenberg exhibition. This Stauffenberg history trail would also be open to visitors outside the museum’s official opening hours—an important touristic aspect, especially since the opening hours of Stauffenberg Castle are limited to Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays from 2 to 5 pm.

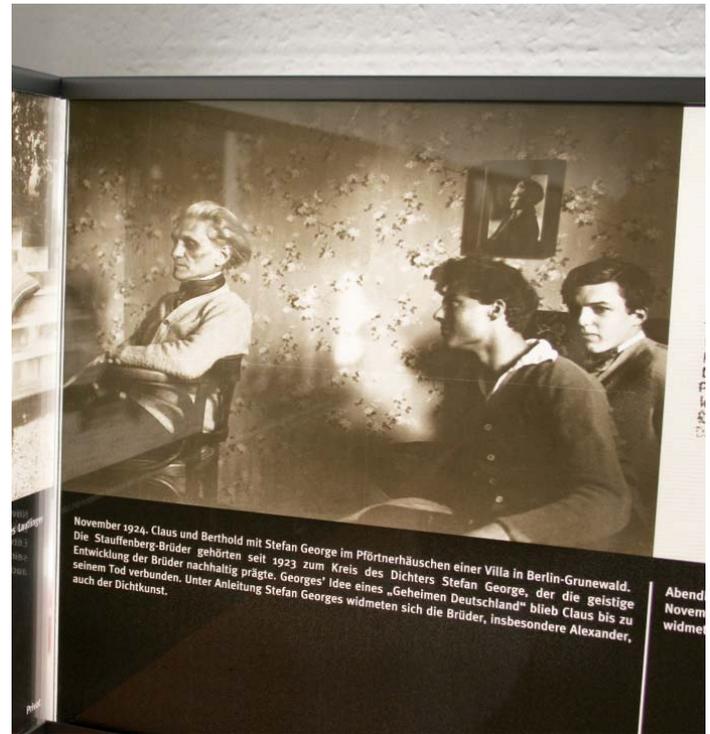
About eight months later, this publicly accessible history trail extending the memorial site into Stauffenberg Castle’s courtyard was solemnly opened in 2008 on the occasion of the July 20, 1944 assassination attempt’s commemoration. On information panels, occasional strollers as well as visitors to the memorial site can complete their knowledge about the construction history of the castle, the church patronage, aristocratic rule, and last but not least the local history of Lautlingen. Another panel informs about the castle’s present –

4 <https://www.hdgbw.de/english/>

5 <https://www.landesmuseum-stuttgart.de/>

6 <https://www.albstadt.de/Museen>

7 <https://www.bwstiftung.de/>



The Stauffenberg brothers were majorly influenced by Stefan George. Right: A photo from 1924 shows Claus and Berthold Stauffenberg with Stefan George in Berlin. Left: A short outline of the family members' professional careers is given under individual portrait photos.

mainly cultural – use as well as about the adjoining castle barn.

### Conceptualizing the Stauffenberg Memorial Site

When conceptualizing the Stauffenberg Memorial Site in Albstadt-Lautlingen, a conscious decision was made to take a biographical approach, with Claus von Stauffenberg as the central figure. This proved to be particularly useful because the Stauffenberg family castle was a local reference point throughout the entire biography of the later resistance fighter. The three brothers Claus (1907-1944), Berthold (1905-1944), and Alexander (1905-1964) spent their holidays there and, as adults, were always happy to return with their own families. The castle formed the geographical center of the widely scattered family; it was a contact point and a place of identification. The exhibition focuses primarily on the intellectual and moral-ethical foundations of Claus Graf Schenk von Stauffenberg's thoughts and actions. The person Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg is approached from different perspectives but always with a view to the events of July 20, 1944. The presentation is divided into five

exhibition units, with each highlighting a particular theme. The first part of the exhibition is dedicated to Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg's family, upbringing, and education. Here, the adolescent's special characteristics, talents, and interests are dealt with. The intellectual, moral, ethical, and ideological foundations of his personal development as well as his upbringing as a humanistically educated, cultivated, and musically interested person are shown here. A key figure in the development of Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg's personality was poet Stefan George (1868-1933), who like no other influenced Stauffenberg's thoughts and actions. As a person and as a man of letters, Stefan George was mysterious and controversial; hence, his role is critically examined in the exhibition. Although he did not allow himself to be completely appropriated by the National Socialists, George never spoke out strongly against them. With his anti-democratic attitude, his denigration of the Weimar Republic as the "rule of the inferior," his anti-Western criticism of civilization, his glorification of Germanic mythologies, and his cult of the Führer, George's

thinking shows clear affinities to National Socialist ideas. In 1928, his volume of poetry entitled *Das Neue Reich* ("The New Reich") was published. In it, George sketched out the vision of an idealized "New Reich" based on the myths of ancient gods and the medieval German empire and to be led by an intellectual elite. A further thematic focus is on the soldier Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg and his self-perception as an officer. After graduating from high school, Stauffenberg decided on a military career. In his "Abitur" certificate, he stated that he wanted to become an officer. Stauffenberg dealt intensively with the question of the military's function in society and the general staff's role within the state. In the army and especially in the officer corps, Stauffenberg saw the bearers of the state and the embodiment of the nation. To him, the general staff had to bear responsibility for ensuring that the army could not be drawn into the atrocities of tyrannical rule. After the outbreak of World War II, these principles took on a special relevance. Since Stauffenberg's actions with regard to July 20, 1944 were primarily determined by military considerations in which his self-perception as a



*Since July 2008, a trail open to the public has been on display in the courtyard of Stauffenberg Castle. Panels provide essential information about the construction history of the castle, the church partronage, the aristocracy, and the local history of Lautlingen.*

soldier and officer also played an important role, this theme is of special importance in the exhibition.

The next part of the exhibition focuses on the question of his motives and his path into resistance—themes which are central to Stauffenberg's biography. Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg's path from a follower of Hitler to his determined opponent was long and contradictory. For many years, Stauffenberg displayed a conformist behavior and showed no signs of oppositional activity. A loyal soldier, Stauffenberg followed Hitler into the war. It was only after a lengthy process of change that Stauffenberg came to the conclusion that the National Socialist rule of violence and injustice had to be brought to an end. The motives for this fundamental change of heart were complex and determined by a variety of factors, with moral and ethical considerations playing as much a role as military, war-strategic, and power-political ones. His humanistic worldview, which was shaped by his upbringing and education, was as

decisive for his decision to join the resistance as was the loss of any ethical basis in German warfare during World War II.

Which of these factors and motives ultimately proved to be the most powerful can only be judged with difficulty, especially since no personal records have survived which could provide insight into Stauffenberg's considerations. But even if the motives of war strategy and power politics should have outweighed the moral and ethical ones, this does not diminish the quality of his resistant actions. One of the presentation's central concerns is to bring out these contradictions and to make them clear.

The "Lautlinger Leitsätze," a conservative-paternalistic manifesto on the shaping of Germany after Hitler's death and the fall of the Nazi regime, which was written during Stauffenberg's convalescence holiday during the summer of 1943 in Lautlingen, are also integrated into this exhibition unit. Another section of the exhibition is dedicated to the history of events. The operation plan "Walküre" ("Valkyrie") is explained and the events of July 20, 1944 are chronicled in order to illustrate the enormous logistical achievement of the entire endeavor.

## Reception History

The final part of the exhibition takes a look at how the assassination attempt of July 20, 1944 was viewed by subsequent generations. After the end of the war, Germans found it extremely difficult to deal with Stauffenberg and the events of July 20, 1944 and even to evaluate the resistance against National Socialism as a whole. Interpretations oscillated between veneration and heroization on the one hand and rejection and defamation on the other. In the decades following the founding of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1949, the patterns of interpretation and the historical image went through different phases of development which varied according to political interests, ideological locations, or psychological needs. At the end of the exhibition, an epilogue

deals with local post-war history and the life of the women who remained in the castle in Lautlingen after the end of the war.

The many interpretations and reinterpretations that the assassination attempt of July 20, 1944 underwent in the decades after the end of World War II have necessarily obscured how Stauffenberg is viewed as a person and have prevented an appropriate evaluation and appreciation of the person and his actions for a long time. Only recently has a view of history developed that attempts to do justice to Stauffenberg and his role as a resistance fighter and which places his extraordinary actions into the context of his life and the world in which he lived. It is an image that attempts to understand and explain his actions and motives before the historical background of his lifetime and which asks about historical developments and political structures, about patterns of thought and scopes for action. The aim of the exhibition is to trace this image, taking a look at the person with all his facets, his cultural imprint, his experiences, his contradictions, and his human limitations, and bringing us a little closer to the assassin as well as to the human Claus Graf Schenk von Stauffenberg.

## Opening Hours and Contact Information

Stauffenberg-Schloss, Am Schloß 1, 72459 Albstadt

*Both guided tours and individual visits are possible. There is also a varied program of events.*

*The Stauffenberg Memorial in Lautlingen Castle is open Wednesdays, Saturdays, Sundays, and on public holidays from 2 to 5 pm or by appointment.*

*Telephone +49-7431-763103 or during the museum's opening hours +49-7431-6041 and +49-7431-1601491.*

*Email: [museen@albstadt.de](mailto:museen@albstadt.de)*

*Web: <https://www.albstadt.de/Stauffenberg-Gedenkst%C3%A4tte>*

*All photos: Courtesy Stauffenberg-Gedenkstätte Lautlingen*

# Jewish Cemeteries in Poland and the Ukraine

## Report on the Excursion to Poland and the Ukraine within the Framework of the European Jewish Cemeteries Initiative (ESJF) in Conjunction with the Stuttgarter Lehrhaus – Stiftung für interreligiösen Dialog from August 21 to September 2, 2016

Dr. Gil Hüttenmeister, Stuttgart

*The aim of the trip was to visit Jewish cemeteries and, if possible, establish contacts with individuals from the local population who would be ready to look after the cemeteries and keep alive the memory of Jewish history and pass it on.*

*The organization of the trip was executed by the ESJF. It was financed by additional funding provided by the Stuttgarter Lehrhaus. In Poland the area around Wrocław/Breslau (Lower Silesia) was selected with cemeteries in Dzierzoniów/Reichenbach, Winsko, Oława/Ohlau, and Wałbrzych/Waldenburg. These cemeteries belonged to German speaking Jewish communities in Lower Silesia before the Second World War.*

**Dzierzoniów/Reichenbach.** The cemetery is in a proper condition. The city itself is interested in Jewish history. For example, the roundabout outside the synagogue is signposted as the "roundabout at the synagogue". Furthermore, a map affixed on the outer wall of a multi-story building depicts, with medallions, notable buildings of the city, including the synagogue. A woman who had explored the history of the local Jewish community showed me around. For the future, a full documentation of the cemetery is considered.

**Winsko.** Winsko (the Jews called it "Winzig" – "tiny") lies north-north-east of Wrocław/Breslau. The cemetery was used between 1827 and 1936.

It is a small forest cemetery surrounded by a partially preserved brick wall. It contains about 40 graves. Part of the cemetery is in order, but many gravestones have been overthrown or have fallen down and are partially broken.

**Oława/Ohlau.** This is also a small cemetery with about 130 to 135 gravestones. It was used from approximately 1835 to 1935. One gravestone is from 2007. The cemetery is in very poor condition – only about a dozen stones are still standing.

**Wałbrzych/Waldenburg.** It is separated from the Catholic cemetery by a fence. The Jewish cemetery has become a disposal place for plastic bags



*At the Jewish cemetery of Korec' in the Ukraine.*



*Two lions hold a crown, Ostroh.*

from the Catholic cemetery. Metal letters had been removed. The gravestones are marked by inserted stone numbers. This means that there must have been a grave list. Often, grave borders are made of stone or metal chains between metal posts. On some gravestones there are minor remains of paint. Most of the gravestones are from the post-war period. The cemetery is very neglected, except for the newer part. In the newer, well-maintained part there are single clean gravestones with (artificial) flowers and candles. The new stones are mostly made of granite, partly with inserted text panels.

The inscriptions are rarely written exclusively in Hebrew – e.g. for a rabbi. Most are bilingual, in Hebrew / Polish. The inscriptions conform to the usual pattern and rarely provide additional information about the deceased person. A large double-gravestone from 1929 has only one side inscribed, a sign that the spouse did not survive the Shoah or was buried elsewhere after a successful escape. The 1950 gravestone of Szimon Rozenblum reads "who died at the hands of murderers". In Polish, however, it says: "Zginał śmiercia tragiczna" ("perished by tragic death"). A very small gravestone, no larger than 30 cm, was placed in 1920 for a grandfather. A gravestone from 1954 holds a German inscription with Hebrew letters: "The deepest compassion is expressed by wife and

children." A commemorative stone made out of marble reminds of seven concentration camps victims with a Hebrew inscription: "These are the martyrs who were abused and oppressed and have died under the heavy yoke in the concentration camp of the Germans – their names may be extinguished! – in the city of Waldenburg".

In many cases, there are so-called arbitrary names given by anti-Semitic officials, e.g. Walfisz ("whale fish"), Wasserkrug ("jug of water"), Sauertajg ("leaven"), Szmuc ("dirt").

Symbols include purely Jewish symbols such as the Star of David (Magen David) and some Menorot. In general one did not care about the prohibition of representing a seven-armed Menorah as it stood in the temple in Jerusalem. There is a representation of a three-armed Menorah from 1956 (cf. the Babylonian Talmud, Rosh Ha-Shana 24a / b, and Menahot 28b, as well as Shulhan Arukh, Jore Dea, Hilkhhot Aku"m 141.34: "You must not make a Menorah (in the form of the Menorah, as it was in the temple) but a five-, six-, or eight-armed Menorah may be made, but not a seven-armed Menorah."). Other symbols which are often found on Christian gravestones and which were generally customary include a broken column for a person deceased at young age, more than 20 palm branches, as well as oak and laurel branches. In addition

there are floral motifs like a rose wreath or a vase with roses. On a gravestone with a garland of roses it says (in German): "Happiness and unhappiness, dear, bear in peace, both pass by. And you do too."

Such two- or four-liners were common in the German-speaking world since the second half of the 19th century. They were either rhymed by relatives or acquaintances of the deceased, or they searched for something suitable in books, as, for example, "Wiedersehen." *Eine Sammlung von 424 auserlesenen, zum Gebrauche besonders geeigneten Grabschriften* (Prague and Leitmeritz, 1848). The book was written by a Christian. The copy in my personal library bears the ex-libris of the Chief-Rabbi of Prague. In the cemetery is a renovated Tohorah-house, which was, based on its inscription, dedicated by Salo and Sophie Wygodzinski in 1902.

In the **Ukraine** the cemeteries in Ostroh, Korec', Zdolbuniv, Klivan' and Mizoč about 200 km east of Lviv/ Lvov, had been selected.

**Ostroh.** The Jewish settlement there dates back to the 15th century. At the beginning of the 20th century, the Jewish population was over 60% of the total number of inhabitants. During the German occupation about 10,000 Jews were shot in Ostroh and the surrounding area. The cemetery is very large, surrounded with a fence and locked. During Soviet times, the cemetery was intentionally destroyed and a discotheque was built on it. Many stones have been glued and erected in more recent times. However, there are many fragments. Most of the cemetery is today without gravestones. Low shrubbery covers part of the cemetery. The gravestones are usually very high, often over two meters, and very thick. The gables are altogether richly ornamented. There are five- and even seven-armed candlesticks, two lions holding a crown between them, a vase with vines, some stars of David, birds feeding their young, etc. From time to time, German words are written with Hebrew letters, e.g. in 1926:

אין יאהר – גישטארבן אין יאהר)  
 "Born in the year – died in  
 the y(ear)".

A 1906 French inscription reads:  
 ICI REPOSE MARIE HERMANN de  
 KRIVINE DECÉDÉE À L'ÂGE DE  
 SOIXANTE DEUX ANS LE VINGT  
 DECEMBRE 1906 ("Here rests Marie  
 Hermann from Krivine who died at  
 the age of 62 years on December 8,  
 1906").

The pre-World War II inscriptions  
 are written in error-free Hebrew. The  
 letters are often in relief. Acrostics are  
 repeatedly present, as is the year of  
 death expressed through Gematria.  
 The numerical value of the individual  
 letters of a word or sentence express  
 the desired year, for example: "Woe!  
 A great loss for the city of Ostroh"  
 (אהה אבדה גדולה לעיר אוטרהא)  
 This corresponds to the year (5)662 =  
 1901/1902. Or: "In the year: Esther"  
 (אסתר), which corresponds to the  
 year (5)561 = 1800/1801.

Another example: "The righteous  
 shall be in everlasting remembrance"  
 (ולזכר עולם יהיה הצדיק) (Ps 112:6)  
 and below: "Have compassion!"  
 (תיירחיים) – the numerical value in  
 both cases is identical with the year  
 (5)648 = 1887/1888.



The year 1938 corresponds to the  
 Jewish year (5)698, in Hebrew תרצח.



This can be read, if you take it as a  
 word and not as a number, as "you  
 will be murdered" ("tiratsah").  
 Outside Germany the order of the  
 letters is generally the same, yet in  
 Germany, based on the background  
 of the persecution of Jews, they were  
 always modified and written as:



*An ohel – a "tent" on the grave of an important scholar in the cemetery of Korec'.*

תרחץ, meaning "you will be purified"  
 ("tirahats"); the numerical value  
 remains the same. But in Ostroh we  
 find both ways of inscription. In the  
 case of the name Arie (lion), the last  
 letter is omitted by the Orthodox and  
 instead the abbreviation sign is placed  
 behind the penultimate letter because  
 the last two letters give one of the  
 divine names: ארי instead of אריה. It  
 is interesting to note a description of  
 death from 1882. It says, "Suddenly,  
 the voice of death knocked on his  
 window." This image is taken from  
 Jeremiah 9:20.

All this points to an advanced  
 community, which, despite assimilation,  
 preserved its religious traditions.

**Korec'.** It is a very large cemetery,  
 east of Rivne. It is fenced in and has  
 a wrought-iron gate and a small gate  
 below three small Ohalim ("tents"  
 erected on the tombs of famous scho-  
 lars). The oldest stones are located  
 on a steep slope. There are about 15  
 stones, mainly for rabbis, scholars,

and presidents of the rabbinical court,  
 as well as three Ohalim which are  
 provided with a new text in Hebrew  
 and a brick edging. The stones, as far  
 as can be seen, are from the 17th to  
 19th centuries. The stones are carefull-  
 ly made and adorned with ornaments.

Between the old and the new part  
 there are no stones or at least none  
 that are visible. This is by far the  
 largest part of the cemetery.

The new part lies in the upper, flat  
 part. The stones consist almost  
 exclusively of a cluster of small or  
 medium-sized broken quarystones or  
 red-bricks, which are covered by a  
 cement mantle and thus have the  
 appearance of a coffin covering the  
 actual tomb. These gravestone  
 coverings are always without inscrip-  
 tions. At the top-end there is a small  
 gravestone with a usually very short  
 inscription. The overall impression is  
 that of a very poor community. Since  
 many of the stones, which date from  
 the beginning of the 19th century to  
 1940, have decayed, a more precise



*A plant-eating lion.*



*Two lions eating from one tree.*

dating can only be determined after thorough investigation. There seem to be several hundred graves but most of them have decayed. In addition, many of the stones carrying inscriptions have fallen over. It is noticeable that these gravestones at times have three times the thickness of a normal gravestone.

The inscriptions of the old part are within the framework of what is customary. They are carefully wrought and practically flawless. There are very rarely any abbreviations, apart from the standard abbreviations, as they occur in almost all inscriptions. The texts often contain only the name of the deceased, the date of the death, and the concluding benediction. Even the list of good qualities is often

lacking. Around 1938-1940, there are isolated gravestones without inscriptions. The reason is unknown but probably due to the difficult times. Sometimes the name is on the back. This is common in many parts of Central Europe; this way it was easier to find a particular gravestone. The most recent stones also bear short Ukrainian inscriptions. There are a few symbols and ornaments. The old stones have mostly floral motifs like ivy. There are some symbols in the new part, especially among the younger stones. In 1847, there is a lion which is nibbling at some leaves of a tree, and there is a similar figure with two animals, which are supposed to represent lions nibbling at the leaves of a tree or shrub. A gravestone

from 1923/1924, now collapsed, in the shape of a broken tree is the symbol of a life that ended early. The Hebrew inscription is carved onto a large tree leaf. Similarly, we find the image of a broken tree on the tomb of a Cohen (priest). There are also blessing priest's hands depicted with the fingers spread out in a certain way like the Cohanim hold them over the congregation when they give the priestly benediction (Numbers 6:24-26). On another gravestone with the inscription almost completely weathered, two birds and a menorah are depicted.

This cemetery offers a completely different impression than other cemeteries. The very poor stones in the new part and their arrangement in the form of a coffin are characteristic, as well as the almost complete absence of symbols and ornaments in the new part and the short, meaningless inscriptions.

**Zdolbuniv.** It is a small cemetery with a fence and a gate erected by ESJF in 2015; a trilingual plaque (in Ukrainian, Hebrew, and German) points this out. A lot of stones - more than a hundred - have been knocked over or have fallen over.

The cemetery was used in the 1920s and 1930s, but there is a single post-war gravestone from 1962.

The cemetery seems neglected but has been recently mown. It offers a uniform picture. The stones are large and have the same size throughout. The grave sites are covered with a cover stone in the form of a coffin. The stones are at times colored in black or white. One grave has a double stone for two brothers who died within two days.

The inscriptions are usually very short and, apart from names and dates of death, often only provide a brief description of the deceased's character. The inscriptions are mostly in Hebrew. The Hebrew is consistently fault-free. An inscription from the year 1931 is in Ukrainian as well as three more without a recognizable date. In addition, one post-World War II gravestone from 1962 has a plaque made of marble with a Ukrainian inscription.

There are three identical juxtaposed stones with no inscription. The reason for this is unknown. Maybe the inscription was painted or there was no chance to put an inscription on the stones because of the circumstances.

Symbols include the hands of the Cohanim giving the priestly benediction, but there is no Levite pitcher. Many gravestones have a Star of David. There is a 1937 Magen David with a rectangular indentation, in which a remainder of a black-colored glass plate is stuck. There are some Menorot under a semicircular arch with a draped curtain. The most common symbol are two upright lions holding a crown. There is also a bird. A book of Psalms (תהלים) is depicted on a grave from 1909 – a symbol for a particularly pious person.

**Klivan'.** It was also fenced in by the ESJF. This is a very large cemetery as well, partly flat, partly steeply sloping. Different fields are maintained. About 70 to 80 gravestones are preserved. The younger stones from the 1920s and 1930s are usually from broken quarrystone or red brick, covered by a cement mantle. The grave sites are covered with a stone covering them in the shape of a coffin. These are mostly without inscription. On the inscriptions, sometimes some colour (blue) is still visible. Using particularly large letters, names and concluding benedictions are highlighted. I could not find acrostics. Again, as in Ostroh, the letters of the year 5698 (1937/1938) are written in a different order: תרחץ ("you will be purified") instead of תרצה, to avoid the meaning "you will be murdered" – תרצה. There are three-, six- and eight-armed Menorot, Levite pitchers, broken tree stumps, books, candles, a bird drinking from a cup, and many Stars of David. There is also a mass grave for Jews shot by the Germans.

**Mizoč.** The cemetery is surrounded by a wall built by the ESJF. It is covered with shrubs and trees. It is medium in size and contains about 40-50 stones from the first half of the 20th century (1900-1935). All grave sites have a covering stone. The gravestones are big and thick. In the back part of the



*Blessing hands on the gravestone of a Cohen, a member of the priest's tribe, Korec'.*

cemetery there are some single standing stones. One of them has the (Hebrew) inscription: "Cemetery of the Holy Community of Mizoč. In this holy place were the 'tents' of the rabbis of Misoč." The short inscriptions are mostly German and Hebrew. Repeatedly there is a circa 20 x 10 cm cavity in the gravestones.

Symbols include two lions with a menorah, Stars of David, and seven-armed Menorot.



*The Levite jug identifies the deceased as a member of the Levites, Klivan'.*



*May their souls be bound up in the bundle of life!*

### Summary

I got in contact with people who are interested in local Jewish history or who had published books on this subject. Further cooperation is planned.

Somebody suggested to renovate the Ohel above the grave of a scholar and describe his life and his importance in a brochure in order to stimulate tourism. This would interest mainly some orthodox Jews or historians but probably hardly attract many visitors. This does not mean that one should not do that. It is more important, in my humble opinion, to prepare the cemetery, to publish a brochure recollecting the history of the community and the cemetery to point out special features, to docu-

ment inscriptions, symbols and illustrations, etc. All this can be achieved through lectures, guided tours, by questioning the local population about the history of their Jewish communities (since this is also a significant part of local history), as well as by assisting in the preparation and further care of the cemeteries, etc. Through the actions of the ESJF the interest is already awakened and should be further exploited and utilized. A prior consultation with the responsible Jewish authorities and their support is, of course, self-evident.

*Photographs by Natalia Videneeva.*

## Four Poems

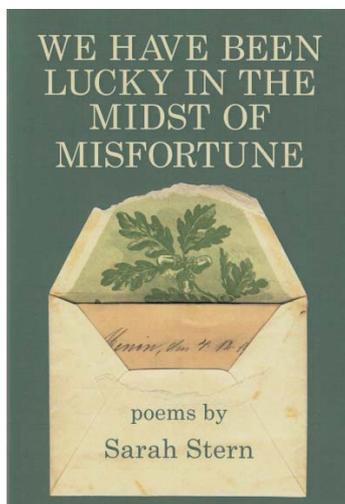
*Sarah Stern, New York, USA*

Sarah Stern is the author of *We Have Been Lucky in the Midst of Misfortune* (Kelsay Books, Aldrich Press), *But Today Is Different* (Wipf and Stock Publishers) and *Another Word for Love* (Finishing Line Press). She is a five-time winner of the Bronx Council on the Arts' BRIO Poetry Award. She graduated from Barnard College and Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism. More of her work at [www.sarahstern.me](http://www.sarahstern.me)

Sarah Stern's mother Helen Pressburger was born in Rexingen in 1923. Her grandparents were Klara Schweizer from Baisingen and Julius Pressburger from Rexingen. They ran a cattle trade on the Bergstraße in Rexingen. Julius Pressburger was a corporal in World War I and returned from the Western Front with three awards.

After the pogrom night in November 1938 and Julius Pressburger's release from the Dachau concentration camp, the family fled in 1939 to the USA.

The poems were written after a visit of several days in Rexingen in 2014. They are taken with kind permission from the volume *We Have Been Lucky in the Midst of Misfortune* (American Fork, UT: Kelsay Books, 2018) <https://kelsaybooks.com/products/we-have-been-lucky-in-the-midst-of-misfortune>.



### Cemetery in Baisingen (town neighboring Rexingen)

The cemetery.  
So many Cohanim hands  
on the tombstones.  
My Oma Klara was born in Baisingen on May 3, 1889.

I spent summers in Monroe, Connecticut.  
When I didn't have day camp,  
we went to visit Susan and Inga, sisters,  
who lived in Bridgeport.  
We'd go to the beach together.  
Susan and Inga were from Baisingen.  
Susan worked at Alexander's  
in the Trumbull Shopping Center.  
She smoked, had a deep raspy voice.  
Inga was funny.  
They both wore fancy bathing suits.  
I liked them very much.

### Bergstraße 41, Rexingen 2015

My mother's house.  
Now Turks live here, a photo  
of me now by the front door, calico, too. Here kitty.

### Café Levi

Before the war there was a café in Horb,  
down the hill from Rexingen.  
You could sit and talk there.

## Haigerloch Sisters

We'd visit Selma and Berta on their Catskills farm every summer.  
Mom always said, *We're going to Haigerloch.*  
All these years I thought she made the name up,  
but it was another town in the *Schwarzwald*.  
I have a photo of its big yellow sign.

Selma and Berta were from Haigerloch.  
Berta's long grey braids  
crowned her head.  
Her smile spanned farther than her teeth.

Selma was the quiet sister.  
Their house sat crookedly opposite the barn.  
The dining room had a heavy  
German table, a picture of her husband

and son with Selma's eyes.  
Both shot July 1941 in Theresienstadt.  
Berta and Selma must have  
had 20 dogs, more cats.

Chicken eggs all over.  
Selma milked the cows,  
pulling at them efficiently  
as she sat on a stool.

We'd pitch a tent on a hilltop, as far  
as the station wagon could go.  
Make a fire.  
Fry eggs in the morning.

The cows were named stars there –  
Johnny Carson was an ornery bull.  
I remember so much cow shit  
and the dogs, yelping, wild in the valley.

Berta fed the calves.  
She let me feel their sandpaper  
tongues. My whole hand  
in their mouths.

# A Photograph and Two Poems Inspired by My Trip to Rexingen in May 2017

*Hannah Yerington, Canada*

## We Don't Leave Flowers at The Graves of Our Ancestors

Jewish stone is the only stone that can feel pain, the only stone that feels the kiss of Jewish lips.  
Jewish stone is the only one that speaks.  
If you strike it in the desert, a well appears.  
When you pick up a Jewish stone, it will never fall out of your pocket.  
It will not sing over your grave.  
But it will ache each time the wind blows, it will stand steadfast,  
It will not fade, it will not drop leaves and grow mold.  
It will simply sit.  
For years, till there are no more descendants left.  
You will be left, left with nothing but stones.  
Jewish stones are the only stones that feel pain  
the only stone that can feel the kiss of Jewish lips.  
For this, you are grateful.

## Queen Esther

The first time I knew I was a bird was when I woke and pulled feathers from my hair,  
brushed long blonde strands and soft down from my scalp.  
At night, my grandmother does laundry till dusk, the rumbling noise to silence the whirring of  
the black beast moving through her rafters.  
My mother's matzo balls are never fluffy enough, we experiment with spoons, soda water, selt-  
zer and heat.  
The broth is always perfect.  
She places it in mason jars in our blue fridge, a small note "This recipe is your inheritance. Try  
to swallow around the guilt."  
I never have.  
Sometimes I think about kissing a German, if our children would call me Ema or Mutter,  
If I would fill their nursery with chamsahs, if I would be afraid of the evil eye,  
Build them a puppet theater for Purim, sculpt Esther with orange hair, bright eyes, give her a  
gown gown of silk,  
Tell my children, play, play, play that you're Esther,  
Play that you're a Jewish princess,  
royalty,  
comb her hair,  
create stories.  
May you never know what it is like to be a bird in a boy's hand.  
May you never be reminded of the feathers that grow in your hair.  
May you never be forced to bury your parent's nest.  
May you never hold my guilt.  
May you scrape your knees,  
hold mud in your hands,  
feel growing pains,  
always cry out for food.  
May you know that we have been birds, but you, you are children.



Hannah Yerington is an emerging young poet. Her work has been published in *The Fem*, *Algebra of Owls*, *Rogue Agent* and is forthcoming in the *River Heron Review*, among others. Hannah Yerington runs the Bolinas Poetry Camp for Girls every summer and is a spoken word artist and poet. She is pursuing her MFA in poetry at Bowling Green State University in Fall 2020. She writes about many things; primarily the space between Judaism and feminism, as well as talking flowers, post-memory, and sometimes seals.

# Germans Hold Keys to My Jewish Roots. Their Work is a Critical Beacon in a Time of Rising Hate

Erica Gies, Canada and USA

Erica Gies is a science and environment journalist who lives in Victoria, British Columbia, and in San Francisco. Her grandmother, Elizabeth ("Betty") Zürndorfer grew up in Rexingen before moving to Stuttgart as a young adult. Her grandfather, Otto Hanauer, came from Schluchtern, near Lein-garten and Heilbronn. They fled to the United States in 1938 with their two young children and Otto's mother. Erica has at least 15 ancestors in the Rexingen cemetery.

The gravestones, dusted with snow, tilted among the pines as we walked up and down the rows looking for my ancestors. From time to time I would

consult a map to the cemetery's 935 headstones on the inside cover of the weighty tome I carried. With me in this graveyard on a hill in southern Germany were Barbara Staudacher and Heinz Högerle, warm, friendly Germans around 70 who published the book I carry: *In Stein gehauen (Hewn in Stone): Traces of Life in the Jewish Cemetery in Rexingen*. The book documents not just each individual entombed here – birth and death dates, spouses, children, professions – but also tells the story of a village that vanished in the Holocaust.

Barbara and Heinz are the loving caretakers of this cemetery, keeping it tidy, deterring the vandalism that still desecrates many other Jewish cemeteries in Germany. But they are also bringing back a glimmer of this lost

village. They know more than I do about my ancestors, who invested three centuries in this picturesque corner of rural Germany before they were uprooted by the Nazis.

Recent world events make their devotion to unearthing and sharing individual life stories of my people feel more important with each passing month. Tribalism is sweeping the globe, evidenced in political victories for demagogues such as Donald Trump, Marie Le Pen, and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan; nationalist moves like the Brexit vote; and increasing violence against Jews, Muslims, and immigrants. It is disturbingly clear that the Third Reich was not an aberration of human history but a manifestation of a darkness that lurks within the human animal, ever ready to leap out



View over the Jewish cemetery of Rexingen. It is located in a beech wood above the village. (Courtesy Erica Gies)

if political winds align and generational memory forgets just how visceral were the horrors and lessons learned.

In his 1978 book *Orientalism*, Edward Said popularized the term “othering” for the human tendency to separate us from them. Seventy years after the Holocaust erased Jewish, Sinti, and Roma communities across Europe, Germany knows what lies at the end of systematic persecution and dismantling of an “other.” During that period it lost a vibrant culture that had contributed to the country for centuries, and it lost its innocence, as democracy rapidly collapsed into violent autocracy.

Barbara and Heinz are part of an extraordinary movement of older Germans who understand how critical it is to remember these lessons. They are dedicating their retirements to meticulously and lovingly cataloguing their missing Jewish neighbors. By focusing on individual and community stories, they underscore the humanity in the others – and in themselves. Their work is a critical beacon in this dark time, especially for descendants of survivors like me.

### Disconnection

My father, Eric Hanauer, his parents, brother, and grandmother fled Germany for the United States in 1938. My grandparents started over in middle age with nothing. They didn't speak the language. They were alone; their relatives scattered or murdered. Like so many refugees before and since, they looked to the future and didn't talk about the past. As a result, I grew up with big gaps in my own story.

I knew only the basics of my father's immigration journey: In the late '30s, the Germans were happy for Jews to leave the country – as long as they didn't take any of their money with them. The bottleneck was finding another country that would accept them. The American government had a quota system, and German Jews could apply for a number from the American consulate. My grandfather lucked out; he got a low number in the lottery and was able to get a cousin in Chicago, Dr. Walter Zürndorfer, to sign an affidavit saying he



*Barbara and Heinz are looking for the graves of my ancestors in the cemetery book. (Courtesy Erica Gies)*

would sponsor them, which was required by the Americans.

In May 1938, they sailed for the United States on the SS Washington: My grandparents Otto and Betty Hanauer, my father, my uncle Joe Hanauer, and my great-grandmother Bertha Zürndorfer. “My third birthday was aboard the ship,” said Eric. “Kristallnacht occurred five months later.” Life in Chicago was difficult initially. As was common in these cases, their sponsor didn't actually support them financially. “My parents had to fend for themselves,” said Eric. Initially my grandfather washed dishes in a hotel while studying English at night. Eventually, “he formed a small leather goods company and sent both of us through college,” said Eric, referring to himself and his brother Joe.

That's what I knew: how they got out and got on. What they had left behind, however, was a void to me. I knew nothing about my ancestors, not even where we were from in Germany. This history was further obscured by the fact that I didn't grow up with my father; I was adopted by my maternal aunt and uncle, who are Christian. So I knew little about Jewish religion or culture either. I wasn't sure if I was really a Jew at all. My disconnection from my

culture and my history is an enduring, 21st century manifestation of the Final Solution.

### Not Forgetting

Germans have also spent decades alienated from the past. For some people in Barbara and Heinz's generation, born during or just after the war and coming of age in the 1960s, that silence was oppressive. Heinz said the student movements of the '60 pressed his generation to ask hard questions. “I felt a strong responsibility to ensure that it doesn't happen again,” he said.

So when Germany at last began talking about accountability and reparations, when high school history classes began to cover the Third Reich, they listened closely. But in German classrooms, material on the Nazis comes mostly from a 10,000-foot perspective: national and abstract rather than local and personal, with little recognition that atrocities were made possible by neighbors turning on neighbors.

Genocides can begin when democracy ends, Heinz said. “It's very important for me that we are a functioning democracy now and we have been for many decades. And the question lingers, how could it be that in 1930-33, another democracy went

down the drain? What happened? And what can we do to keep it from happening again?"

The German researchers' work in the Not Forgetting movement, telling specific stories of individuals and communities, is a weapon against the human tendency to isolate and persecute perceived outsiders. The specificity also helps to counteract the notion that the genocide was caused by unique circumstances, never to be repeated.

For Barbara, her quest began 30 years ago, when she moved from Stuttgart to Rexingen, a picturesque town on the edge of the Black Forest and the Swabian Alps where my grandmother, Elizabeth "Betty" Zürndorfer, was born. Barbara moved into an old stone house on a small road that terminated in an obscure, overgrown cemetery. Curious, exploring, she realized it contained almost a thousand Jewish graves dating back to the 18th century, one of the largest remaining in Germany. Yet her new town had no living Jews. Barbara began to inquire about these former inhabitants. Her Catholic neighbors were full of warm, pre-war stories about their friendly relations with their former neighbors – but silent about what came next.

"When we came to Rexingen, we

felt a big lack of awareness of the history," said Barbara. "And this was for us very, very depressing, very frustrating. We want to fill this with information and also to bring back the Jews in a way, in a symbolic way, to the village."

### Reconnection

I met Barbara and Heinz thanks, in part, to the German government. In the 2000s, Germany offered citizenship to those who had lost it when they fled the Nazis. Thanks to the work of an intrepid cousin, my father regained his citizenship, which was then extended to me. A German passport meant the freedom to live and work anywhere in the European Union. Although I had no desire to live in Germany, getting an E.U. passport seemed like a no-brainer. And in 2012, I finally took advantage of it, moving to Paris for a year abroad. I traveled a lot around Europe that year, including making two trips to Germany to research my roots. I was thankful for the opportunity, but every time I pulled out that passport, it was an uncomfortable reminder. I'm passing as German. But I'm not German.

I emailed Barbara and Heinz (whom my father had met on a previous trip) to tell them I would be in Rexingen in November. Barbara instantly endeared

herself to me by inviting us to stop at their house first thing for Second Breakfast. (Like a Hobbit, I eat frequently.) We met at their new house, a flat in an historic building in Horb, the neighboring town to Rexingen. Barbara and Heinz live upstairs and had restored the ground floor — once a Jewish prayer room — into a museum for exhibiting documents and artifacts that tell local stories from the war and educate visitors about Jewish religion and culture and the new lives of Rexingen's Jewish diaspora.

On the day I visited, they were readying their first exhibit, "The neighbors are being taken away," which revealed Nazi activities in Horb and Rexingen. One document on Nazi letterhead listed all the items looted from Jewish houses that Nazi officers and their wives had appropriated for themselves: furniture, serving ware, coffee pots. The exhibit also had an auction announcement, enticing buyers from Rexingen and other villages to come bid and get bargain prices. At that time the Nazi party line was that the Jews were moving elsewhere temporarily so they could farm better land. But auctioning off Jews' possessions made it obvious what was happening, said Heinz. Angry, choked up, he said, "They knew. They knew!"

The exhibit is emotional — and important — because, even today, not everyone in town is ready to accept the role their predecessors may have played in the Nazi program. A math teacher at the high school in Horb led some of his students in vandalizing the Jewish Prayer Room in Horb during Kristallnacht. Heinz and Barbara uncovered several documents about this but were missing one detail. Ever dogged in their pursuit of the puzzle, they called his daughter for clarification. She denied her father was involved. "I think she refuses to accept it," said Barbara.

On our outing to the cemetery I discovered 11 relatives dating back to the 1700s. I found that a couple of my relatives had been moyles, men who perform circumcisions. A cousin, Josef Zürndorfer, had been a hero in World War I.



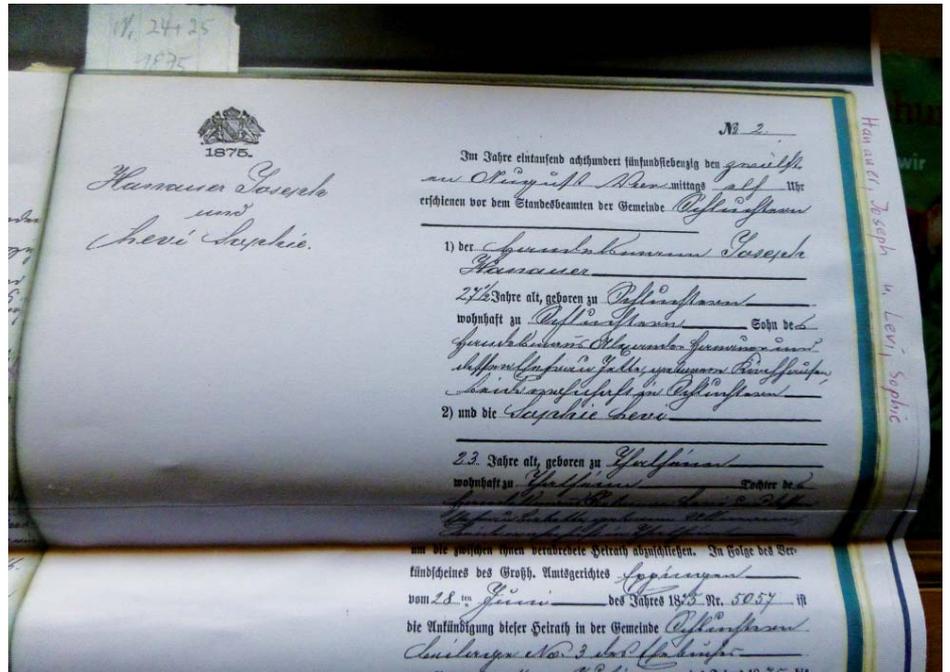
*With Barbara and Heinz in Horb in front of the Jewish Prayer Room Museum in Horb. (Courtesy Erica Gies)*

From my uncle, I'd learned that my grandfather was from another village, called Schluchtern. After leaving Rexingen, we drove beyond Hanau to Schluchtern and spent a confusing day checking with a town recorder and finding no record of my grandfather. Later, after talking with Barbara and Heinz, we learned that there are two Schluchterns in Germany, and we had gone to the wrong one. We wanted Schluchtern, which had been swallowed up by the neighboring town of Leingarten, near Heilbronn, not Schlüchtern.

I Googled around and found that people at a local church had done some research on the Jews of Schluchtern and wrote to them. The church passed me along to Norbert Geiss, who, like Barbara, had moved to a house a few doors down from his town's abandoned Jewish cemetery and succumbed to intrigue, backburning another project to research and publish a book about Schluchtern's lost Jews.

So we returned to Germany in the spring to visit the correct Schluchtern. Norbert and his wife Marie-Luise had practiced their high school English for days in anticipation of our visit and served us German sweets and tea. Then they walked us through the formerly Jewish section of town, telling stories of past inhabitants, including my grandfather's family. In the cemetery near their house, I found my great-grandmother's grave. They showed me the site of my grandfather's boyhood home, which had been replaced with a newer house. They also gave me a copy of my great-grandparents' marriage certificate. It was strange getting something so personal from strangers.

Geiss' book, *Geschichte der Juden in Schluchtern: Ein Gedenkbuch für die Opfer der nationalsozialistischen Judenverfolgung* (History of Jews in Schluchtern: A memorial book for the victims of the National Socialist persecution of the Jews), has a page on my great-grandparents and their children. My grandfather had a brother, Moritz Hanauer, who was killed in Piaski, Poland, in 1942. He also had two sisters who married the same man from Rexingen. Berta



*The marriage certificate of my great-grandparents Joseph Hanauer from Schluchtern and Sophie Levi from Thalheim from 1875. (Courtesy Erica Gies)*

Hanauer married Julius Hopfer but died from complications of childbirth in 1916, according to Barbara and Heinz's book. Then my grandfather's other sister, Ida Hanauer, traveled to Rexingen and married Julius. Together they were deported to Theresienstadt and finally Auschwitz, where they were killed in 1944. Before my visits to Germany, I had no idea that my grandfather had siblings.

I wondered how my grandparents had met, being from distant towns, and why my grandfather's sisters had also married someone from Rexingen. Norbert told me that Schluchtern's Jews were typically cattle traders. Because both towns were on the Neckar River, they traded cattle and goods with each other and had opportunities to meet.

We then returned to Rexingen to visit Barbara and Heinz again. Thanks to Norbert's book, Barbara was able to confirm that Moritz was Otto's brother; something she'd wondered about but had no proof. From Barbara and Heinz, Norbert learned that Bertha was also one of their siblings, a fact he hadn't known and had omitted from his book.

It was a beautiful spring day so we walked a forest path between Rexingen and Horb. In the distance was the Neckar River and fields painted bright yellow with rapeseed in flower. The

sounds of cows lowering wafted up to our ears from the valley below. I imagined my grandmother walking this idyllic path to school, passing the same sights and sounds. Picturing my grandmother — whose thick German accent I could barely understand on the phone — in the place where she was born and grew up was revelatory — but alienating. This was home. But then it wasn't.

When in Germany, the Holocaust is never far from my mind. I imagine Germans are recognizing me as a Jew, feeling antipathy or guilt. I may be imagining it, but that doesn't make it any less uncomfortable. Despite Rexingen's bucolic beauty, despite delicious local foods like spaetzle and flammkuchen and towering beers, I felt guarded.

Upon returning from Europe, I sought out my great-aunt Johanna "Hanna" Zürndorfer, who had grown up in Rexingen too but fled to New York just ahead of my father. "It was easy living," she recalled of Rexingen a couple of years ago when I visited her at her home in the Bronx. She was nearly 100 but her mind was sharp. "You had your friends. You lived a real easy Jewish life. Holidays were wonderful. Shabbat was wonderful. Everybody came home and you went to temple in the morning. I have very good memories about growing up there."



*In Schluchtern with the married couple Marie-Luise and Norbert Geiss. At my side Peter Fairley.*

Still, Jews weren't allowed to go to college, so Hanna took a trade course in bookkeeping and shorthand, leaving Rexingen to find work in a bigger town, Bad Soden-Salmünster, northeast of Frankfurt. There, in 1936, she felt anti-Semitism much more than she had in Rexingen, where a third of the inhabitants were Jews. "There we couldn't go to the movies," she said. "When we took a walk on Saturday afternoon, they threw stones at us." It was these experiences that spurred her, at age 20, to get an affidavit from her sister who had moved to New York the previous decade and immigrate to the United States.

One of the biggest surprises from my visits to Germany was discovering a new minority. We visited my grandmother's childhood home, where my great-grandfather ran a small shop. Today, a Turkish family

lives there. In my grandfather's hometown, Turks, including some of Kurdish descent, also live in the former Jewish ghettos. Starting in the 1950s, Germany began inviting Turks to come work. Many still lack citizenship, even two and three generations on. Many speak a hybrid dialect dubbed "Türkendeutsch," much like Yiddish before it. Many are Muslim and sometimes draw unwanted attention for their beliefs.

Barbara and Heinz are focusing their efforts on the next generation, partnering with teachers and teens to expand education in schools. For some students, the Holocaust is ancient history, tired, overblown, even trite thanks to repetition. After 70 years, why should they be forced to wear this albatross, when they had nothing to do with it? But they don't all feel that way. Barbara said that, when she lectures in high school class-

rooms about atrocities in Rexingen during the war, young Turks "have big ears."

One way Barbara and Heinz make lessons vivid to today's youth is to highlight the role the high school played during the war years. There was the Catholic math teacher who led students in Kristallnacht. But a Jewish teacher at the Jewish school was the reason why so many Rexingen Jews escaped Germany during the 1930s. He understood what was coming and warned his students and their families. "He said, 'You must leave your beloved Germany. You can't stay here,'" recounted Barbara. "I'm sure he saved the Jewish people in Rexingen."

The year I lived in Paris, I traveled around Europe and beyond with my partner who is also half Jewish, and our adventures became an unplanned pilgrimage of sorts to Jewish monuments throughout Europe. Elementary schools in Paris are engraved with the names of young students taken from school to the camps. In Fes, Morocco, we attended a Shabbat service in a hidden synagogue over a nondescript store with about 20 of the last 60 Jews in Fes, down from 60,000 just 50 years ago. We visited the Jewish cemetery there, a large expanse of bright white half-dome crypts dotted with olive trees. Next door, one of the remaining Jews, Edmond Milmoun Gabay, now in his 80s, has taken any discarded possessions from Jews who moved away and turned them into a hoarders' museum, Habarim Synagogue's museum of Jewish memorabilia. In Sevilla, Spain, we stayed in the charming old Jewish quarter, Barrio Santa Cruz (now a tourist quarter), and walked across the Guadalquivir River to Castillo San Jorge, the Museum of the Inquisition – much of which, ironically, had been temporarily taken over by a Christmas nativity display. Ironic because the primary targets of the Spanish Inquisition were Jews and Muslims, many of whom had lived in Spain for centuries.

The latter got me thinking about how Jews have been pushed from place to place throughout history, never accepted anywhere for long. The timing of the Inquisition rang a

faint bell. From Barbara and Heinz I learned that my family – and all the Jews in Rexingen – had come to Germany about 400 years ago. Could my ancestors have been living in Spain and forced to flee the Inquisition? I don't know. For my father's 80th birthday, I gave him a genetic test. The data currently available is not at all nuanced, ending before the dawn of recorded history. But it showed that, within the last 8,000 years, our ancestors came from Greece and Lebanon. They could have moved to Spain and then on to Germany, and now on to the United States.

### **A Little Bit of History Repeating**

On my father's side I am first generation American, but this new safe space is beginning to feel unsafe. As climate change and explosive population growth increase pressure on resources around the world, new waves of immigrants flow into Europe and North America, stoking anti-immigrant sentiment. Synagogues suffer bomb threats; mosques are torched. Syrians fleeing their civil war – touched off in part by severe drought – are conflated with terrorists.

In 2016 the United States acquiesced to economic fears, falling for rhetoric from a narcissist leader who scapegoats others and incites violence against them. Waking up the day after the election, I felt physically sick that so many of my fellow Americans had listened to all of Donald Trump's hate speech and thought either, "Yes! Finally someone is saying what everyone is thinking!" or "Meh, whatever. As long as he builds the wall/bans Muslims/brings back coal jobs."

A leader speaking hate matters; it makes haters think it is acceptable to express those ugly voices in their heads. Trump supporters whine about political correctness run amok that forces them to keep such thoughts to themselves. It is not. It is basic civility and humanity, which are, frankly, the bare minimum that is required to coexist in a multicultural society on an increasingly crowded planet.

New research has found epigenetic evidence of trauma, meaning survivors of genocide and civil war pass down the stress through the genera-

tions. I think I have felt this anxiety, although my mother's death when I was three has also left me anxious. But both a family history of being forced to move across the world under threat of murder and the loss of a parent as a young child shake one's psychological foundation in profound ways. Tenuousness is the watchword. You take nothing for granted, not possessions, not loved ones, not jobs. On a visceral level you understand that anything can happen at any time, that life as you know it could be capriciously pulled out from under you. It is a life on low-level trigger alert; a pragmatic anxiety. And so authoritarian tones make the hair stand up on my neck. When a leader or his lackeys says something is true because they say it is, alarms ring in my soul.

### **Better Angels of Our Nature**

Today, the Germany that murdered six million Jews and has discriminated against Turks is leading the world by taking in more than 1 million Syrian refugees – but not without backlash.

I am living in Canada now, a country that institutionalized its indigenous peoples, making it a policy to strip away their cultures. But it is now undertaking a truth and reconciliation process, trying to come to grips with that past. On a more humane note, it has been comparatively welcoming to Syrian refugees. A heart-warming policy allows ordinary people to form a sponsorship group, raise money, and bring a refugee family to Canada. In my town, Victoria, British Columbia, more than 70 such groups sprang up over the last couple of years, and through this process I became involved with two Syrian families.

I was motivated to help because I visited Syria in 2007 and was amazed by the warmth and hospitality of the Syrian people who would literally run out of their homes and businesses, thrusting food and drink into my hands and saying, "You are welcome!" They were open and friendly to me despite the fact that my country's war in Iraq had driven many Iraqi refugees into Syria, taxing its economy. I had followed the resulting Syrian war with deep sadness and

wanted to repay their hospitality. As I've gotten to know my Syrian friends and have listened to their stories, I see that they are living my grandparents' experience. They are learning a new language in middle age. They are taking jobs far beneath their former economic station. They have very little money. They are haunted by terrible experiences they suffered. And they worry every moment about the safety of many family members still in Syria or stuck in limbo in Lebanon or Turkey.

It's clear that humanity has not left behind civil wars and genocides. The German researchers' revelations about intolerance, marginalization, and persecution remain distressingly relevant. Unfortunately, these activities are part of human nature. Wars and genocide are not "... an aberration of history, a result of the growing pains of our species' maturation," writes the biologist E.O. Wilson in his book *The Social Conquest of Earth*. "Wars and genocide have been universal and eternal, respecting no particular time or culture."

The human tendency to separate us from them is evolutionary, he writes. In social animals such as humans, there was an evolutionary advantage to teaming up, working together to build shelter, gather and hunt food, and protect the community from predators. But altruism unfettered would be an evolutionary disadvantage. In order to take care of the group, the tribe must consider those outside to be others.

But even if our biology is fundamentally tribal, that doesn't mean that we shouldn't fight against our basest instincts. It's easy to find one's tribe in others if you connect with people one on one. Barbara and Heinz have found that to be true.

The political has become the personal to them, said Barbara. Meeting the Rexingen diaspora in Israel and New York "was a very strong incentive to do more work." In sharing research and continual visits, they have formed a community with the descendants of their Jewish subjects, becoming like family to them. Now, said Barbara, "I do it for love."

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Dear readers, we would be pleased to receive your feedback on the articles in the Gedenkstätten-Rundschau. You can contact the member initiatives of our association directly – contact addresses can be found at the end of the articles, on page 93, or write to the editors: [verlagsbuero@t-online.de](mailto:verlagsbuero@t-online.de) and [vonbremen@gedenkstaettenverbund-gna.org](mailto:vonbremen@gedenkstaettenverbund-gna.org). Best wishes, Heinz Högerle and Benedict von Bremen

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