

Lernen aus der Geschichte e.V.

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<http://www.lernen-aus-der-geschichte.de> veröffentlicht.

Das mehrsprachige Webportal publiziert fortlaufend Informationen zur historisch-politischen Bildung in Schulen, Gedenkstätten und anderen Einrichtungen zur Geschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts. Schwerpunkte bilden der Nationalsozialismus, der Zweite Weltkrieg sowie die Folgegeschichte in den Ländern Europas bis zu den politischen Umbrüchen 1989.

Dabei nimmt es Bildungsangebote in den Fokus, die einen Gegenwartsbezug der Geschichte herausstellen und bietet einen Erfahrungsaustausch über historisch-politische Bildung in Europa an.

Virtual tour of Jewish sites in Freiberg

A virtual tour of Jewish sites in Freiberg in CJD format is being designed in a project called „Internet and Co“. The CD-Rom can be ordered under:

CJD Chemnitz Aussenstelle Freiberg Himmelfahrtsgasse 20 09599 Freiberg Tel.: 03731 / 6769-0
Fax: 03731 / 6769-13 E-Mail: cjd-freiberg@t-online.de

A short introduction to the project:

The tour begins in the "Kornhaus" where the "Judenberg" ("Jewish Hill") was, and ends in Frauensteiner road, site of the "FREIA GmbH". We will lead you through the town centre of Freiberg and show you the location of former Jewish shops. There were also shops outside the city centre.

In the middle ages, the Jewish community played a leading role in establishing Freiberg's foreign trade, while providing the town with an efficient financial system. Up to the 14th Century they were almost the only people in the Christian society of the middle ages who were allowed to engage in financial trade, as this was prohibited to Christian citizens. Their broad trade network helped them establish rich warehouses and offer high-quality products at affordable prices. This made shopping in Jewish shops appealing, though it was seen as objectionable for a long time in this conservative bourgeois town.

„Judenberg“ ("Jewish Hill")

In the middle ages, the former Jewish quarter, supposedly stretching from the "Kornhaus" as far as the "Hirtenplatz", was where all Jews lived. At that time, Jews were forced to live outside the city walls as they were segregated as part of a foreign religion.

The Jews of Freiberg actively participated in foreign trade, coin trade and mining. In old records one can find the expression "Jewish school", which was most likely used to describe a synagogue.

Schocken Department Store

The Schocken Department Store was opened in Freiberg on 27th March 1914, just a few months before the outbreak of World War 1. It was part of a chain of department stores owned by the brothers Simon and Salman Schocken. Their concept of selling quality goods at affordable prices was a new one at the time and the Schocken group was one of the first of its kind in Germany. The group consisted of a total of 13 department stores, in the state of Sachsen it was the largest department store chain. On January 1st 1939 the group was Aryanized and renamed Merkur AG.

The Berg Academy

The Berg Academy was founded in 1765 and was the first academy of its kind in the world. Between 1888 and 1904/05, 398 Russians studied at the academy, of which 78 were of the Jewish faith. Among the 168 Jewish students who studied at the academy between 1876 and 1935, 124 were Russian, 24 Polish, 11 German and 4 Romanian. Astonishingly, quite a few of these students went on to become very successful leaders, including Moritz Hochschild (1881-1965) and Prof. Fritz Seidenschnur.

"The Golden 24"

The "Golden 24" was colloquially known as the "Judenburg" ("Jewish Castle"), as, for centuries, mainly Jewish people lived and worked in Burgstrasse ("castle road") numbers 24 and 24b. One of the best-known shops in the Golden 24 was Isidor and Minna Sieradzki's tobacco shop. They came to Freiberg in 1909 and lived in Donatgasse. In 1933 they were forced to close their shop. They were the first shop-owners in Freiberg to give in to the pressure of the political situation and the open threats.

"Zur Zentrale" ('The Central')

The house on the corner of Hornstraße and Erbische Straße was built in 1896 and has since always caught people's eye. From the year 1909, Erna and Ludwig Weinberg ran a clothes shop in this building. Their lives changed very suddenly when the Nazis came to power. After the Reichskristallnacht in 1938 they were forced to sell their already damaged shop to Germans at less than fair value. The Weinberg family succeeded in fleeing to Cuba, from where they were allowed to enter the USA 2 years later.

Taubenschlag textile business

The factory owners Taubenschlag were one of the most highly respected families of Freiberg. Abraham Wolff was married to a daughter of the family and took over the Mayer Taubenschlag factory, which produced curtain-holders. The sons of the Taubenschlag family died in World War 1. Abraham Taubenschlag was a proud manufacturer whose Jewish heritage was never of importance to him. Jewish holidays were also of no importance to him, the Wolff family was completely integrated in Germany.

After the Reichskristallnacht, the Wolff family disappeared from Freiberg. They moved to Hamburg, from where they sent their children to England and later committed suicide.

"FREIA GmbH"

In October 1944 a total of 100 women in Auschwitz concentration camp were selected for

forced labour and transported to Freiberg. As the women's camp at Hammerberg had not yet been completed, the wagon coming from Auschwitz in mid October was unloaded on the factory premises and the women were housed in empty factory buildings.

The women worked in shifts of 12 to 14 hours daily with a 15 minute break for lunch. Their meals consisted of thin carrot soup, sometimes 3 - 4 potatoes and 250g of bread daily. In the mornings and evenings they had makeshift coffee. After Christmas 1944, the prisoner's living conditions worsened. They were moved to the barracks at Hammerberg and from then on had a 30-minute walk daily through the deep snow to the factory. During air raid warnings, the prisoners were locked into the factory buildings.

On March 31st 1945 the "FREIA GmbH" was closed. On April 14th the female prisoners were again loaded onto wagons and sent on a 16-day odyssey. Many prisoners died from hunger, disease and during air raids. At the beginning of May 1945 the survivors were liberated by American troops.

On May 9th 1995 a commemorative plaque was placed at the council offices in memory of the Jewish workers.