

Freiburg (Baden) : History of the Jewish Community.

Jews are for the first time mentioned in 1230 but probably traded there in the 12th century. In 1326 they numbered eight families, engaged in money lending and controlling the grain trade. Most were burned alive over a well-poisoning libel during the Black Death persecutions of 1348-49. Those spared - 12 wealthy Jews, pregnant women, and children - were expelled, with the children baptized and the Jewish property expropriated.

Jews were present again in the second half of the century under a letter of protection but conditions worsened as a "Jew Law" published in 1394 introduced new disabilities. The Jews were again expelled in 1401 and for a final time in 1424.

During the Thirty Years War (1618-48), Jewish army suppliers set up offices in Freiburg and with the liberalization that followed annexation to Baden in 1805 Jews gradually began settling again.

After emancipation in 1862 there was a large-scale influx of Jews to the city from the surrounding countryside.

In February 1863, the Jews who had moved by then into Freiburg joined the "Jewish religious society" under the chairmanship of Heinrich Zivi-Lang. They rented a prayer room and hired a cantor, which also performed the duties of butcher and religion teacher. In 1864, this first prayer room was for the first time recorded in the Freiburg address book. The "Allgemeine Zeitung of the Jewish community" reported in September 1864 for the first time a synagogue in Freiburg for the 35 local Jewish families, "in which a Reform service with organ accompaniment will be held at Shabbat and holiday". The prayer hall was located in the house which was formerly No. 838 on the Cathedral Square and belonged to the merchant Ludwig Stutz, today back home on Schuster Road 27.

With 25,000 guilders financial support of the Israeli community of Mannheim, a synagogue was built by autumn 1869. For the design and execution, Prof. Georg Jakob Schneider, head teacher of the business school, was responsible, who had also built in 1859-61 the "Colombischlösschen" in Freiburg. On 23 September 1870 the solemn inauguration took place with Rabbi Reiss of Briesach, to which the Jewish community had invited the local city council.

In 1873, a cemetery was opened and, in 1874, a Jewish orphanage. Freiburg became the seat of the district rabbinate in 1885. Its first chief rabbi, Adolf Lewin (1843-1910), was also the first historian of the Jews of Baden. In 1895 a separate Orthodox congregation was formed and in the early 20th century Traditional forces began to gain ascendancy over the Liberals.

The Jewish population grew from 333 in 1871 to 1,013 in 1900 and 1,320 in 1910.

Jews became active in banking and industry and became part of the city's economic and intellectual elite.

Jews were first admitted to Freiburg University toward the end of the 18th century and despite unrelenting antisemitism ultimately grew to comprise 10 % of the student body, the majority in the medical faculty. The Zionist leader and first President of Israel, Chaim Weizmann, obtained his doctorate in chemistry there in 1899.

After Worldwar I, Jews continued to play a leading economic role in the city, ensconced in its upper class as professionals and businessmen and running ten factories, a bank, and the big Knopf department store with its branches throughout south Germany. The community itself operated extensive social and cultural services with an active Zionist movement.

In 1933, there were 1,138 Jews in the city. Anti-Jewish measures were instituted and at the university all 21 Jewish professors and lecturers were dismissed in 1933-35. These included Hans Adolf Krebs, who moved to England and won the Nobel Prize for Medicine in 1953. In the same period the number of Jewish students was reduced from 183 to 54. Most Jewish businesses were liquidated by November 1938. The community responded by providing financial support, organizing job placement and vocational retraining services, and, to aid emigration, offering courses in English and Hebrew.

On 28 October 1938, Jews of Polish origin were expelled to the Polish border. On *Kristallnacht* (9-10 November 1938), the synagogue was blown up by SS and SA stormtroopers and 100 Jewish men were sent to the Dachau concentration camp for prolonged detention, two perishing there. During the Nazi era, 657 Jews managed to emigrate, including about 200 to the United States, 100 to Palestine, 100 to France, 70 to Switzerland, and 70 to England. About 30 of the emigrants were subsequently arrested under the German occupation and deported to their deaths. Another 350 were deported from Freiburg to the Gurs concentration camp on 22 October 1940, of these, 273 perished. Of the 41 Jews remaining in Freiburg, about 20 were sent to the Theresienstadt ghetto on 23 August 1942. During the war a Catholic organization headed by Gertrud Luckner worked to save Jewish lives. She was recognized by Yad Vashem as one of the Righteous among the Nations. A new Jewish community was formed in Freiburg after the war by former residents and East European refugees. In 1977 it numbered 381 and today above 700.