Chronology of the Jewish community in Fürth until 1945

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The market place of Fürth in 1705. No. 4 indicates the house of *the Jew Berman*

Introduction

One cannot deal with Jewish history in Bavaria without having at least a quick look at Fürth, Nuremberg's smaller, but older (first mentioned in 1007) twin city, which since the 18th century had been addressed as the *Franconian Jerusalem* for being a center of rabbinical scholarship. The following chronology also completes the kaleidoscope of Jewish postwar life in Bavaria as offered on our pages: Wilhermsdorf (text in German) as a typical rural Franconian community, Nuremberg as an example for a former imperial city becoming an industrial boomtown with a fast growing and influential Jewish community and the Bavarian capital of Munich, where the Kehilla developed from the settlement of Jewish experts in trades and finances serving the needs of the court.

The specific political conditions in Fürth led to the unique status of its Jewry: The Margrave of Ansbach, the provost of the episcopal cathedral in Bamberg and the imperial city of Nuremberg fought for dominance in the small market town for 300 years . This *triple government* still symbolized by the city's coat of arms, the triple cloverleaf, created a competition among the officials of these regional powers in Fürth, of which the Jews profited by being granted rights unequaled in any other community in Bavaria. Hence not even Nuremberg, Fürth's both strictly anti-Semitic and envious neighbor could the Kehilla prevent from flourishing. In an uninterrupted continuity the Jewish inhabitants (an average of 20 % of the market town's

population until the 19th century) developed a thriving and facetted spiritual, social and economical life. Nowhere else in the region the mutual benefit of the German-Jewish symbiosis had been so great. This *spirit of Fürth* could not be expressed better than by the slogan painted on the wall of an old inn: *Whether Heathen, Jew or Christian, come in if you are thirsty!*

Personal note: Being myself a Nuremberger (but having attended the *Heinrich-Schliemann-Gymnasium* for seven glorious years to decrease my inborn guilt), I inherited some of the traditional envy looking at Fürth: Other than in Nuremberg many sites of Jewish life still can be seen there today, though important places like the *Schulhof* and parts of the old cemetery had been destroyed by the Nazis.

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Chronology

1440	First mentioning of Jewish inhabitants in a register. These people most likely were banned from Fürth in 1478 by an order of the bishop of Bamberg.
1528	Against heavy objections from the imperial city of Nuremberg Margrave Georg der Fromme permits the Jews Perman and Uriel to settle down in Fürth. For their protection Perman and Uriel had to pay annually 20 florins, at the time a respectable sum.
1556	The provost of the cathedral in Bamberg allows the Jew Heimann from Regensburg to settle down in Fürth. The reason for this change of mind well might have been - besides the perspective of gaining another source of income by the annual fees for the granted protection - the loss of catholic subjects to the bishop, since many inhabitants had converted to the Lutheran church and thus subjected themselves under the Protestant Margrave of Ansbach. In the following years most of Fürth's Jews were subjects to the bishop's provost while the Margrave of Ansbach only hesitatingly permitted Jews to settle down in his part of the town.
1566	Approximately 70 Jews living in Fürth.
1607	Consecration of the old Jewish cemetery at the banks of Rednitz river.
1617	Construction of the first synagogue in Fürth, later called the *Altschul* (old synagogue). The opening of the synagogue became a public festival for all the inhabitants of Fürth. A contemporary chronicle gave the following report: *That day the Jews were very happy and so were the Christians in the taverns and inns.*
1618 - 1648	During the Thirty Years' War Fürth is devastated several times, worst in 1632 when the troops of the catholic emperor and the Swedish army fought the battle at *Alte Veste* (old castle) near Fürth.
1652	The rules of the market town Fürth grant the Jewish community two representatives in the town council.
1653	Opening of the first Jewish hospital near the cemetery.

***Derech S'lulah* (The Straight Path) printed in Fürth by Isaak David Zindorfer (see monogram beneath the Ten Commandments) in 1802. Throughout the 18th and the first half of the 19th century Fürth had been one of Europe's centers of Hebrew printing. This frontispiece is particularly interesting, because it had been printed during the short period of Prussian rule in Fürth. Therefore it shows the royal Prussian eagle holding the town's coat of arms, the triple cloverleaf. To the left and right of the Ark of the Covenant standing are Aaron and Moses.**

1670 Expulsion of the Jews from Vienna and other places of the Habsburg Empire. Jewish refugees from Vienna come to Fürth, among them prominent scholars and craftsmen, in particular printers.

1675 The Fürth Yeshiva, financially supplied by the Fraenkel family, becomes one of the European centers of Talmudic studies. Since the beginning of the 17th century there had been theological courses in the private synagogues (e.g. so-called *Eisik-Schul*), but only the new synagogue and the influx of eastern European rabbis fleeing the persecutions by the Cossacks led to Fürth's development to one of the spiritual capitals of European Jewry in the 18th century. Many later famous scholars attended the various Yeshivot in Fürth, but also Meyer Amschel Rothschild from Frankfurt, the founder of the merchants and bankers dynasty Rothschild.

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1719 Codification of the rulings of the Jewish community by the Bamberg provost in the *Reglement für die gemeine Judenschaft in Fürth*. This privilege - paid for by an annual fee of 2,500 florins - granted the community a status of self-government unequaled by any other Kehilla in Germany, e.g. election of the rabbi and the public servants without external control, a Jewish court to solve internal problems, self-regulation of the growth of the community.

1763 Opening of the Jewish orphanage at Geleitsgasse, since 1868 at Julienstraße (today Hallemannstraße 2), a foundation of Israel Lichtenstädter from Prague. The building had been enlarged in 1884 to include female orphans.

1792 Together with other Franconian territories belonging to the Hohenzollern dynasty Fürth becomes part of the Prussian Kingdom.

1806 Fürth is incorporated into the Bavarian Kingdom.

1813 The *Judenedikt* (Jews' edict) limited the number of Jews living in every Bavarian community to the status quo. As a consequence also many Jews from Fürth had to leave their hometown in order to seek refuge in more liberal German states like Prussia or even emigrated to the United States. These restrictive rulings had been abolished in 1861. From the early 19th century until the first decade of the 20th century the membership of the Jewish congregation in Fürth did not exceed 3,000 souls, because when the *Judenedikt* went out of force other developments such as the attraction of the fast growing community in the larger twin city of Nuremberg and the drop in the birth rate prevented the Fürth Kehilla from expansion. Not even the immigration of Jews from Poland starting in the late 1800s reversed this development significantly.

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Old Fürth: Untere Königstraße before Second World War

1826 Leopold Ullstein born in Fürth. He later went to Berlin and founded there the famous publishing house Ullstein. Leopold Ullstein died in 1899.

1831 - 1873 Tenure of the reform rabbi Dr. Isaak Loewi. In his forty-two year term he

coined the Jewish life in Fürth as well as the appearance of the Jewish community in the general public. At the same time his election marked the fundamental change in spiritual orientation of the Jewish majority in Germany from conservatism to reform and liberalism, inspired by the enlightenment and the subsequent emancipation of the Jewish population. Loewi became the first Fürth rabbi who attended both the Yeshiva (in Fürth) and a regular university (in Munich).

1843 Foundation of the Fürth *Gewerbeverein* (trade association) stipulated among others by rabbi Dr. Loewi. The aims of the *Gewerbeverein* were the modernization of the commercial life in general and in particular the improvement of technical education, thus reflecting the slow but irreversible process of industrialization in mostly agrarian Bavaria. The association's work by funding courses and a collection of modern products and trade equipment as well as acting as a political pressure group for the interests of commerce made it a role model for similar activities in other Bavarian cities.

1844 The Fürth born Julius Ochs left the town and embarked on a ship to the United States because according to the *Matrikelparagraph* of the Jews' edict he was not allowed to have a family here. He went to Knoxville, Tennessee, were in 1858 his wife gave birth to a son Adolph Simon. Adolph Simon made his way from the *printer's devil* with a local Knoxville newspaper to the owner of the *New York Times*, which he took over in 1896.

1846 New Jewish hospital at Theaterstraße, enlarged in 1864 by adding another story to the building.

1848 Dr. David Morgenstern (1810 – 1882) is elected in his constituency Fürth-Erlangen as one of the first two Jewish members of the Bavarian House of Commons.

1862 Foundation of the Conservative Jewish High School, which moved to an own building (Blumenstrasse 31) in 1868.

1866 The young Bavarian King Ludwig II. visits the synagogue in Fürth where he discusses matters of religion with rabbi Dr. Loewi and asks to be blessed by him.

Industrial Fürth at the end of the 19th century, or as Jakob Wassermann put it, *the city of the thousand chimneys*

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1873 Jakob Wassermann is born in Fürth. In his works the novelist dealt with his Jewish-Franconian background (*Die Juden von Zirndorf*, 1897) as well as with the fundamental dilemma of the role of German Jews (*Mein Weg als Deutscher und Jude*, 1921). Wassermann died in 1934 in Altausee (Austria).

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1887 Construction of the *Centaurenbrunnen* (Centaur's fountain, see above) at Bahnhofsplatz, sponsored essentially by the Jewish honorary citizen Dr. Wilhelm Königswarter.

1902 In the rally to collect money for the construction of the new municipal theater (see below) 59.05 % of the result of 83,873 Marks is contributed by Jewish donors. This fact is even more remarkable considering the Jewish share in the total population of Fürth (5.5 % or 3,017 of 54,822 individuals).

1904 Heinrich Berolzheimer, owner of a pencil factory, founded the *Berolzheimerianum*, a facility to promote the education of the city's inhabitants. The building which had been inaugurated in 1906, today home to the municipal library and a private theater, can be found at Theresienstraße 1 near the central railroad station.

1906 Foundation of the *Nathanstift*. The impressive building, finished in 1909 at Tannenstraße 17 for purposes of care for women in childbed and the nursing of babies had been financed by the lawyer Alfred Nathan (1870-1922) in loving memory of his parents. In the following years many Jewish families originating from Fürth contributed to the assets of the foundation. - Opening of the new Jewish cemetery at Erlanger Straße.

1923 May 27: In a small apartment at Mathildenstraße 23 Paula, wife of the school teacher Louis Kissinger, gave birth to a baby boy Heinz. In August 1938 the family had to flee from Nazi Germany and went to the USA. Here Heinz became Henry and later Secretary of State in the Nixon administration. - In May 1998 Henry Kissinger accepted the honorary citizenship of his place of birth.

1933 January 30: seizure of power by Hitler and the Nazi party. Until 1941 when the last chances to leave Nazi Germany were destroyed by the course of the war, approximately 1,400 Jews were driven out of their hometown Fürth.

1935 A census of the Jewish enterprises in Fürth had the following results: Though the Jewish population had been steadily decreasing still 50 % of the wholesalers, 14.5 % of the retailers and 23.1 % of the manufacturers in Fürth were Jewish. These businesses became the targets of *Aryanization* in the following years.

Ad of the Jewish household goods store Max Jacobowski, 1927

1938 During *Kristallnacht* (November 9/10) the entire complex of the *Schulhof* with *Altschul*, *Neuschul*, *Winterschul* and the rabbi's house is burned down. The Jewish shops along Schwabacher Straße are destroyed and looted. SA-men broke into the Jewish hospital torturing patients. One person had been killed, one committed suicide.

1941 On November 29 the first deportation from Fürth took place. Along with Jews from other Franconian cities 95 Fürthers were shipped to Riga-Jungfernhof concentration camp.

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1942 Among the deportees of March 24 to Izbica in Poland were the Jewish orphans from Julienstraße. The head of the orphanage Dr. Ismar Hallemann and his wife Clara voluntarily accompanied their charges to this place of no return. The last rabbi of the Fürth district, Dr. Siegfried Behrens (born in 1876, in Fürth since 1923) and his family also fell victim to this transport.

1945 In the Shoah at least 886 Jews from Fürth were killed. After the liberation 40 survivors returned to Fürth. Today there is a new Jewish congregation.

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Tables

Development of the Jewish population of Fürth 1910 - 1944
(from the Fürth Memorial Book, p. 13)

Year	Members of the Jewish Community	Percentage of the City's Population
1910	2,826	4.2
1925	2,500	3.4
1933	1,990	2.6
1938	1,400	-
1939	975	1.0
1940	623	-
1941	644	-
1942	513	-
1943	33	-
1944	23	-

Deportations from Fürth
(from the Fürth Memorial Book, p. 14)

Date	Number of Deportees	Destination
Oct. 28, 1938	54	Polish border (Polish citizens)
Nov. 29, 1941	95	Riga, Latvia
March 24, 1942	237	Izbica, Poland
April 23, 1942	4	Krasniczyn, Poland
Sept. 10, 1942	159	Theresienstadt, Bohemia
June 18, 1943	20	Theresienstadt and Auschwitz, Poland
Jan. 17, 1944	4	Theresienstadt

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