

Jewish life in Hamburg today



From about 19.000 Jews living in Hamburg during the twenties of 20th century the number approximately sank down to 1200 Jews after the liberation of the city by the British army in 1945. The fate of the majority of the Jews of Hamburg can be divided in two groups: Those who could still manage to flee and those who were deported and murdered later on.

The number of 1200 Jews living in Hamburg remained more or less constant during the decades following after the war. A radical change has taken place since 1989, when – with the collapse of the former Soviet Union – Jewish immigrants from that region came to Germany and to Hamburg. The number of 1.300 Jewish people then increased to roundabout 5.000 members of the community in 2003.

It was the topic of one of our group-works to examine Jewish life in Hamburg today. Jewish life does not only mean the activities of the Jewish community of Hamburg as an association. It should rather show the every-day life of Jews in the city with its characteristics and specific features.

Nowadays the centre of Jewish life in Hamburg is situated at the Grindel nowadays, just like it was before the year of 1933. But today most part of it is nothing like back in the time of the beginning of the 20th century. Many houses and streets were destroyed by the bomb attacks of the Second World War. The huge synagogue was destroyed by the Nazis in 1937.

Today the Grindel is mainly characterised by the buildings of the University of Hamburg, which were erected there after 1945.

But inside the modern Grindel quarter you find modern Jewish life, too:

- the Jewish Café Leonar
- the famous theatre “Hamburger Kammerspiele” founded 1945 by Ida Ehre
- a Jewish Wine Shop offering kosher wine
- a Supermarket with labeled kosher products
- a Jewish School in the building of the former Talmud Tora School
- the Institute of the History of Jewish Life in Germany having a considerable archive
- the Centre of the Jewish Community and a Synagogue
- the Chabbat Studie Centre
- the Office of the German - Israeli - Society.

During the youth meeting in March 2012 we visited some of these places and met people there.

Some short reports on these occasions you can find here:

- Visit of one supermarket offering kosher products
- Visit of an archive
- Meet an Israeli living in Hamburg
- Visit of the Chabat Studie Centre
- Visit the Jewish School and a secretary coming from Ashdod working there.

These reports can give you a first view on Jewish life in Hamburg. In future we will add these step by step in order to present a widespread spectrum of different lifestyles, hopes, dreams and ways of life.