

wacks founded a sports club in Ramat Gan, Israel, for child victims of poliomyelitis.

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[Andrea Most (2nd ed.)]

SPEYER (Fr. **Spire**; Eng. sometimes **Spires**), city in the Rhenish Palatinate, Germany. Although local traditions, largely legendary, speak of Jewish settlement in Speyer in Roman times, Jews probably first came to the city in the early 11th century. Documentary evidence for a Jewish settlement in the city dates only from 1084, when Bishop Ruediger settled Jews in the village of Altspeyer, which he incorporated into Speyer “to increase the honor of the town a thousand fold.” At that time Jews fled from *Mainz for fear of persecution because of a fire they were accused of having caused. The bishop allotted them a special residential quarter and gave them a plot from Church lands to be used as a cemetery. They were also allowed to build a protective wall around their quarter. In a privilege, dated Sept. 13, 1084, Bishop Ruediger granted them unrestricted freedom of trade and considerable autonomy. The **archisynagogos*, later also called “bishop of the Jews” (*Judaeorum episcopi*), was the spiritual head of the community; in lawsuits between Jews he was permitted to give rulings in accordance with Jewish law. The Jews were also expressly allowed to sell to Christians meat which was ritually unclean for Jews, and they did not have to pay any duties or tolls when entering or leaving the city. They also had the right to engage Christian servants. The privilege granted by Bishop Ruediger was confirmed by Emperor Henry IV on Feb. 19, 1090, to *Judah b. Kalonymus, David b. Meshullam, and Moses b. Jekuthiel of Speyer; in addition to renewing the privileges granted by Bishop Ruediger, the emperor guaranteed the Jews freedom of trade in his empire as well as his protection. Henry’s privilege document is of more than passing interest to the historian, since city privileges were at the time a new category of constitutional documents in Germany. By 1096 a synagogue had been built. The *mikveh*, first mentioned in 1125, was in the vicinity.

The Jewish community of Speyer was one of the first Rhine communities to suffer during the First *Crusade. On a Sabbath, the eighth of Iyyar (May 3, 1096), a mob of crusaders surrounded the synagogue intent upon attacking the community while all were gathered in one spot. Forewarned, the Jews had concluded their service early and fled to their homes. Nevertheless, 10 Jews were caught outside their homes and killed. One woman committed suicide rather than submit to baptism, an act that was to be repeated frequently during the period. When Bishop John heard of what occurred, he came to the defense of the Jews with his militia, prevented further bloodshed, and punished some of the murderers. As an added precaution, he hid some of the Jews in villages surrounding Speyer, where they stayed until the danger had passed. The Jews returned to their homes, still fearful of attacks against them. Jews living in Altspeyer (the upper part of the city) did

not attend the synagogue located in the lower portion of the city because of such fears. Instead, they held services at the *bet midrash* of R. Judah b. Kalonymus until a new synagogue was erected in Altspeyer in 1104.

The community grew and prospered during the 12th century; its economic position was excellent and it established itself as a center of Torah. Among the scholars of Speyer in this period were Eliakim b. Meshullam ha-Levi, a student of *Isaac b. Judah of Mainz; Kalonymus b. Isaac, known as a mystic as well as a talmudist; *Isaac b. Asher ha-Levi; Jacob b. Isaac ha-Levi, a German tosfist and author of a dirge on the Crusade period; *Samuel b. Kalonymus he-Ḥasid; Shemariah b. Mordecai, a correspondent of R. Jacob *Tam and a great talmudic authority; Meir b. Kalonymus, the author of a commentary to the *Sifra*, *Sifrei*, and *Mekhilta*; and Judah b. Kalonymus b. Meir, the author of a talmudic lexicon, *Yihusei Tanna'im ve-Amora'im*. In 1195, after severe persecutions following a *blood libel, Emperor Henry VI demanded that the Jews be compensated for damages and that the burned synagogue and ruined houses be rebuilt. Under the guidance of R. Ḥezekiah ha-Nagid, the Jews rebuilt their community. Early in its history the community developed a close relationship with the other Rhine communities and particularly with the closely allied cities of Mainz and Worms (see *Shum). In a series of synods beginning in 1196 they promulgated a series of communal decrees known as *takkanot Shum*, later to be of decisive influence on all Ashkenazi communities. The synod of 1223 took place in Speyer; among the most important scholars participating in the synods was R. *Simḥah b. Samuel of Speyer, although Speyer had then lost the dominant position it had held as a Torah center.

A flourishing community continued to exist in Speyer until the middle of the 14th century, although the Jews were drawn into a conflict between the bishop and the burghers in 1265, and in 1282 a blood libel brought suffering upon the community. In 1286 many Jews of Speyer and the neighboring communities of Worms, Mainz, and *Oppenheim were involved in the ill-fated attempt at immigration to Erez Israel led by *Meir b. Baruch of Rothenburg. In December 1339 both the bishop and the municipality promised their protection to the Jewish community for a period of ten years. The city possessed a *Judengasse* but Christians lived on it as well, and Jews owned houses elsewhere in the city. The community had a high degree of autonomy, administered by a “*Judenbischof*” together with a Jewish municipal council. In this period the community maintained not only a synagogue and a cemetery but also a communal wedding hall, a hospital for the indigent poor (**hekdes*), and a *matzah* bakery. The community suffered somewhat during a blood libel in 1342; it was, however, to meet its destruction during the *Black Death persecutions. In January 1349 a mob gathered and stormed the Jewish quarter. Some Jews locked themselves into their houses and set fire to them; others were killed by the mob, while a small number allowed themselves to be baptized in order to save their lives. Among the martyrs was the scholarly R. Eliakim, treasurer of

the community's hospital. The loss of life was very great; out of fear of contamination, the burghers packed Jewish corpses in wine barrels and threw them into the Rhine. A small number were able to flee to neighboring communities such as *Heidelberg and Sinzheim. All Jewish property was confiscated or destroyed by the mob in an attempt to find hidden gold in Jewish homes. Tombstones were dragged away and utilized in the building of towers and walls, while the graveyard was plowed and sown with corn. All debts owed to the Jews were annulled. Emperor Charles IV absolved the city's inhabitants of any wrongdoing and allowed the city to retain confiscated Jewish properties. Although their houses in Altspeyer remained in Christian hands, Jewish autonomy was restored in 1354 and part of the cemetery returned, together with the right to rebuild communal institutions.

With much difficulty the community was rebuilt, but without any of its prior standing as a center of learning. Emperor *Wenceslaus issued a new letter of protection (see **Schutzjuden*) to the Jews of Speyer in 1394. Nevertheless, in 1405 they were expelled from the city and allowed to return only in 1421. In 1430 they were again expelled, returning again in 1434, only to be driven out once more a year later. After an interval of 30 years they were again domiciled in Speyer. In 1467 the city granted the Jews their protection for a period of ten years. Yet in 1468 and 1472 Bishop Matthias von Rammung issued anti-Jewish decrees, including a ban on charging interest and practicing usury; forbidding Jews to appear publicly on Christian feast days; forcing Jews to wear distinctive clothing; forbidding the building of a school or synagogue without the bishop's permission; and an edict confining Speyer Jews to a ghetto. By that time, however, the number of Jews in Speyer was very small. In fact, from the 16th to the 18th centuries, only individual Jews lived in the city. Those who fled from Speyer settled in neighboring places such as *Bruchsal, Berghausen, Harthausen, Dudenhofen, Otterstadt, and *Landau.

In the 19th century the community was renewed; by 1828 it was flourishing once more. A new *talmud torah* was opened, employing a permanent teacher. In 1829 the statutes of the community, which determined the synagogue regulations in particular, were published. In 1831 a Jewish elementary school was dedicated and in 1837 a synagogue, with an adjoining *mikveh*; the synagogue was enlarged in 1866. A new Jewish cemetery was consecrated in 1888. There were several societies for social self-help, which united in 1910 to aid the needy. The board of the community consisted of five members in 1920. At the beginning of the 20th century Dr. Adolf Wolf *Salvendi and Dr. Steckelmacher were rabbis of Speyer.

Holocaust Period

In 1933 there were 269 Jews in Speyer, since many had previously moved to other German cities. That same year all the community's cultural associations as well as the Jewish youth societies were banned. The Speyer municipal government investigated the proprietors of firms and placed orders only with "Aryan" firms. In May 1934 the community initiated courses

for the study of Hebrew; in 1935 a conference of Jewish youth took place in Speyer. In subsequent years, up to the outbreak of the war, many emigrated because of increasing antisemitic excesses. Almost all young Jews left the city. In 1939 there were still 77 Jews there; in 1940 there were 60. Of these, 51 were deported on Oct. 22, 1940, to the *Gurs concentration camp in France and almost all the rest to camps in Eastern Europe, where they perished. No new community was established in Speyer after the war. The synagogue that had been built in 1836 was destroyed in 1938, but the cemetery still existed in 1971. Remains of the old Jews' court and Jewish public baths were preserved in the Palatinate Historical Museum in Speyer, along with a number of Jewish tombstones from the 12th and 15th centuries and Jewish ritual objects from the former community.

The medieval synagogue in Speyer, dating back to 1104, is the oldest Jewish religious structure preserved in Germany. Archaeological excavations in 2001 brought new findings about the history of the building, the interior, and the early history of the Jews in the episcopal city. In 2004–2005 the Palatinate Historical Museum in Speyer held the exhibition "The Jews of Europe in the Middle Ages," which included a computer-based reconstruction of the synagogue. Near the site of the synagogue, a plaque (inaugurated in 1978) commemorates the building that was destroyed in 1938. Another memorial to the former Jewish community was consecrated in 1992, bearing the names of all the Speyer Jews who perished during the Nazi era.

After 1990 Jews from the former Soviet Union settled in Speyer. They are partially affiliated with the Jewish community of Rhine Palatinate in Neustadt. In 2005 there were about 50 members. The Neustadt community planned to open a new community center with a synagogue in 2006. Besides Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union, a Jewish community was founded in Speyer in 1996. There were 100 members in 2005.

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[B. Mordechai Ansbacher / Larissa Daemmig (2nd ed.)]

SPEYER, German and American family of international bankers and philanthropists. Progenitor of the family was MICHAEL ISAAC SPEYER (d. 1692) who, on his marriage in 1644, established residence in the Frankfurt ghetto and became community head. His great-grandson ISAAC MICHAEL SPEYER (d. 1807) was an Imperial Court Jew. The latter's nephew JOSEPH LAZARUS SPEYER (1783–1846) married into the Frankfurt banking family Ellissen, and his son LAZARUS JOSEPH SPEYER (1810–1876) carried on business from 1836 under the hyphenated name Lazard Speyer-Ellissen. The latter's partner, PHILIPP SPEYER (1815–1876), moved to New York in 1837. Together with his brother GUSTAV (1825–1883) he established the bank Philipp Speyer & Co. in 1845, later Speyer & Co. Together with its Frankfurt affiliate, it placed the first North American Civil War loan in Germany. Gustav's American-born sons, JAMES (1861–1941) and EDGAR (1862–1932) piloted the family concern to its height. While remaining partners of the Frankfurt house, whose last head was their brother-in-law EDUARD BEIT VON SPEYER (1860–1933), James conducted the American business and Edgar took charge of Speyer Brothers, London. Edgar was made a baronet, but, suffering defamation during World War I, returned to New York. Speyer & Co. alone, and sometimes jointly with *Kuhn, Loeb & Co. and National City Bank, led syndicates which raised European capital for investment in American industry. This movement was reversed after World War I, when a subsidiary, New York & Foreign Investing Corporation, mobilized American capital for investment, mainly through the Frankfurt branch, in German and other Central European issues. Absorbing a Berlin private bank in 1927, the Frankfurt branch became temporarily prominent in the international expansion of the German rayon industry. However, the worldwide crisis after 1929 stopped the trans-atlantic flow of capital, and the German and American houses were liquidated in the 1930s. Institutions benefiting from the family's philanthropic interests included Frankfurt University; Museum of the City of New York; and Mount Sinai Hospital, New York.

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[Hanns G. Reissner]

SPEYER, BENJAMIN (18th century), communal leader and *shtadlan*, merchant in Mogilev-Podolski, and purveyor to the

Russian government. In 1768 Speyer acted with Baruch Yovon (Yavan) to foil Jacob *Frank's appeal to the Russian government for protection. In 1770 Speyer successfully obtained the suspension of a decree expelling Jews from Courland and Riga. When the Frankists sent the "red letters" to the Jews of Russia in 1800, Speyer translated them for Governor-General Gudovich of Kamenets-Podolski, signing himself with the title "court councillor." In 1804 he proposed to the government council in charge of legislation for Jews that they eliminate unfair taxation.

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[Yehuda Slutsky]

SPEYER, SIR EDGAR (1862–1932), British railway financier. Edgar Speyer, a member of the famous German banking family, was born in Frankfurt and came to England in 1887 as a director of Speyer Brothers, the family bank, engaged in currency exchange and railway finance. He was naturalized in 1892. From the mid-1890s he was one of the most important figures in procuring the finance and development of London's "tubes," its electric-powered subways, usually in conjunction with the American railway builder C.T. Yerkes. London's Underground system owes much to Speyer. He was made a baronet (a hereditary knight) in 1906 and was made a member of the Privy Council in 1909. During World War I, Speyer was the victim of a concerted, highly unpleasant campaign against him as an alleged pro-German. In 1915 he offered to resign as a privy councillor, but the offer was declined by the prime minister; at nearly the same time, a lawsuit was brought against him and Sir Ernest *Cassel, another German-born member, requiring them to justify their continued membership. As a result of these pressures, Speyer moved permanently to New York. According to historians, however, there seems no doubt that Speyer was, in some sense, pro-German and was in regular touch with his Frankfurt business. In 1921 he was struck off the list of privy councillors and was accused, in a government white paper, of "trading with the enemy" in wartime. He continued to live in New York but died after an operation in Germany, ironically less than a year before Hitler came to power.

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[William D. Rubinstein (2nd ed.)]

SPICES. The Bible has no special word for spice. In the talmudic and midrashic literature the term *tavlin* is used, from the verb *tavel* (תבל), which is apparently connected with the root *balol* ("to mix"). This term was employed metaphorically by R. Joshua b. Hananiah in his reply to questions by "the emperor" (probably Hadrian): "Why has the Sabbath dish such a fragrant odor?" To this R. Joshua replied: "We have a certain spice (*tavlin*) called the Sabbath, which we put into it [the Sabbath dish] and which gives it a fragrant odor" (Shab. 119a). Spiced foods were very popular among the Jews of Erez Israel and Babylonia, even as they are today among Jews from Oriental