



Nuremberg 1927 - Tourism and Nazism



Nuremberg's central railway station in the 1920s
(Collage: *rijo*)

The following text is the translation of an anonymously published article from the newsletter of the Jewish communities in Nuremberg and Fürth (“Nürnberg-Fürther Israelitisches Gemeindeblatt”, 8th year, issue no. 1, Nuremberg, Sep 1, 1927). We decided on presenting it here, because the author gives most interesting insights into the atmosphere of times otherwise known as the “Golden Twenties” and his perception of the situation in Germany and Nuremberg in particular.

Almost nine years after the end of WW1 politics and the economy in Germany seemed to have stabilized, what can be understood from the writer's allusion to “reason dawning”. Though the Nazis were visible and active, not only during their party rallies held in Nuremberg. Even in 1927 German Jews could not spend their vacation where they wanted to; the author mentions the idyllic mountain resorts in Upper Bavaria as hotbeds of Nazi ideology and anti-Semitism, a fact confirmed by eyewitnesses among our acquaintances.

What gives the article an additional quality is the comparison of the conditions for Jewish travelers in their German fatherland and abroad respectively the perception of the Nazi movement by foreigners. Keeping in mind what was to happen later, the worries of the author about the image of his nation, his country and his hometown have a tragic connotation. The reader of today cannot help the feeling that in the very moment these concerns were formulated there were already many people who would have denied the writer to claim Germany as his home.

I would like to thank Mrs. Lisa Yondorf for editing my translation of the text.

Gerhard Jochem

Various thoughts about travelling

There were times - not so long ago - when we Bavarian Jews could not visit many sites of our homeland for summer vacation without being annoyed and insulted gravely, especially in some mountain villages. In other words, the landscape could not be seen behind all the Swastikas. One had to expect being bumped all the time, and anti-Semitic incidents took away all the joy of leisure. For this reason no one had to wonder why many people traveled abroad, seeking what they were denied within the white and blue boundary posts of their homeland: tranquility and peace. During these trips abroad we all made the same discovery: Only from a distance could we be fully aware of the horrifying hatred of Jews we had been encountering for years, embittering our lives and warping our thoughts and feelings. With great astonishment we overheard conversations on the train that didn't culminate in tirades against the Jews and noticed the fact that no 'newspaper' like "Der Stürmer" was available. Our children were allowed to play with others and didn't come home saying, "Marie-Luise and Heinrich are forbidden to play with us because we're Jewish." We heard no Nazi songs, and no one tried to humiliate us with leaflets entitled "Ticket to Jerusalem" or posters stating "No admittance for Jews." A country like this was heaven on earth to us.

Yes, there has been some improvement at home, partially because of reason dawning, but partially only because, one realizes bitterly, that merchants believe it is a 'lesser evil' to tolerate the Jews than to have a bad season. These insults, driven by hysteria and injustice, leave us with nagging feelings of deprivation and humiliation.

Not as bad, but still uncomfortable, is the situation in the rest of Germany. At the beginning of every traveling season Jewish newspapers have to publish long lists of places "Where Jews are not welcome," based on reports of anti-Semitism encroaching on one summer resort after another.

Here we come to our fundamental questions: Is there any other country where such things are likely to happen? Are these shameful conditions a German 'privilege'? Can one think of the administration of a Swiss spa tolerating such behavior? (A couple of years ago a German lady was evicted from Schuls-Tarrasp for anti-Semitic remarks.) Would it be permitted on Dutch or Danish shores to provoke Jewish tourists by hoisting the Nazi flag? Only here can such impudence not be prevented. In fact, these incidents are well known around the world. Often foreigners ask about them and express their disgust. Many Gentiles from foreign countries who have witnessed them and could not understand what was going on, like Jewish travelers, have lost their desire to come back.

To illustrate these assertions with a recent example, the following episode took place in Nuremberg's central railway station on the evening of Friday, August 19. The place was crowded with Nazis in uniforms arriving for their party rally or picking up their comrades. The train from Karlsbad-Marienbad had just come in, and a group of American women was striding through the hall in their elegant but casual summer wear.

"Look at those Jewish bitches!" a tall Nazi shouted. "They oughta be beaten up!" a well-off lady with a huge Swastika badge asserted. Most likely the American ladies - surely non-Jewish - did not understand these remarks in our nice local dialect, but if they did, they brought a poor impression of Nuremberg back to the USA, convincing their fellow countrymen to avoid our city in the future. Incidents like these damage our hotels and other businesses that depend upon tourism. It is also a strange way of advertising for the Albrecht Dürer Anniversary in 1928, which, as we know, is supposed to steer tourists from many countries to our city. It might be a singular case, but it also throws a glaring spotlight upon the situation in

Nuremberg. And the situation is bound to escalate because of the Nazi party rally to take place at the same time.

In this context, a new question-and-answer game of the Nazis, heard last Saturday evening at the torchlight procession, must be mentioned.

The leader of the group asked at the top of his voice: "Where is Judah?"

The crowd answered with one voice: "In the basement! Hu, hu, huu!"

Then they all shouted together: "Germany, wake up!"

After that, loudly shouting: "Judah perish, perish, perish!"

The word "perish" they emphasized fanatically, which increased the impression remarkably. This quotation does not need comment; it speaks for itself.

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