MILK & HONEY
TOURS

Jewish Women in Germany: Frankfurt, Hamburg, Berlin

An 9 Day Special Interest Group Tour Program

Jewish-German history is peppered and spiced with the stories of truly extraordinary women who made a great impact on their city, community, and country, earning them a spot in the history books and a spot on our new tour, "Jewish Women in Germany." In a nine-day exploration of the cities of Frankfurt, Berlin, and Hamburg, discover the strong and daring Jewish women including rabbis, activists, businesswomen and philanthropists, who paved the way for 20th century feminism and wrote their own remarkable stories .

Our first stop is **Frankfurt**, home of the Rothschilds and the founding city of the Jewish Women's League, where Gutle Schnapper was born in 1753. She married the financier Mayer Amschel Rothschild, the founding father—both literally and figuratively—of the Rothschild dynasty. Gutle Rothschild's influential role as head of the family and reigning "queen mother" of their international empire made her a symbol of female power in an age when few existed. Through her, we can learn of the history of the Jews of Frankfurt, tracing their upwardly mobile path from the ghetto to the heights of financial prowess. Other Rothschild women also overcame relatively staid and traditional circumstances to make their mark. Baroness Betty de Rothschild led a cultural, artistic salon and Hannah Mathilde von Rothschild founded a hospital. Bertha Pappenheim is perhaps best known as Freud's patient "Anna O." but let us tell you much more about this pioneering feminist, social worker and founder of the Jewish League of Women (*Jüdischer Frauenbund*) who spent most of her adulthood in Frankfurt. In recent years, Frankfurt has joined one of four cities in Germany with women rabbis. Rabbi Elisa Klapheck leads Frankfurt's Reform Jewish Community which leads us to one of the homes of Reform Judaism…Berlin!

In **Berlin** it was the salon life of the early 19th century that laid the foundation for Jewish integration into German society and it was Jewish women who founded and inspired these world-famous salons. In their gracious homes women like Henriette Herz, Rahel Varnhagen and Dorothea Schlegel provided places for Jews to meet with non-Jews in a secular setting to enjoy a session of sophisticated repartee with poets, natural scientists, politicians, and even royalty of the day.

The name Rosa Luxemburg is still infused with revolutionary glamour. Politically active in her native Poland, Luxemburg made her way to Berlin at the turn of the 20th century. A strong critic of German imperialism, she wrote and spoke out against the coming of World War I, uniting workers' parties against the war. With fellow revolutionary Karl Liebknecht, she founded what was to become the Communist Party of Germany. They were both arrested and then murdered by right wing forces but her wise words have meaning today: "History is the only true teacher..." Later in the 20th century Cora Berliner became a prominent government economist and social worker within the context of the progressive Weimar Republic era. Even during Nazi repression she worked ceaselessly to train women for immigration and actively helped many to immigrate while she herself stayed behind and faced deportation. Recently a street by the Holocaust Memorial has been named in her honor.

Representing the cruelest chapter of Jewish women's history in Germany is Ravensbrück, the women's concentration camp located approximately 90 km north of Berlin. About 20% of the 130,000 women imprisoned there were Jewish. Jewish American Gemma LaGuardia Gluck, sister to then Mayor LaGuardia of New York City was one prominent prisoner. Esther Béjarno was incarcerated in Ravensbrück as well as being part of the girls' orchestra of Auschwitz. Recha Freier, a Jewish German teacher and poet, founded the Youth Alija, an organization that rescued 22,000 Jewish children from Nazi Germany through immigration to Palestine. These are just a few of the many courageous Jewish women's stories to be told at what is now an important educational and memorial site.

Regina Jonas, the world's first female rabbi, was ordained under Leo Baeck in Berlin in 1936. She served in various synagogues throughout the city before her deportation to Theresienstadt where she continued her exemplary work with the elderly women arriving there. In her ordination dissertation Regina Jonas answered the question: "Can a woman be a rabbi" with a resounding "Yes!" based in Halacha and inspired many generations of female rabbis after her including Rabbi Gesa Ederberg, the current rabbi officiating at the New Synagoge in Berlin.

On to **Hamburg,** an important city of the Hanseatic League, the union of trade cities that dominated Northern Europe's seas for centuries attracted the Portuguese Jews who settled in growing numbers starting in the 17th century. One of the earliest examples of successful Jewish businesswomen was Glikl bas Judah Leib, known as Glückel of Hameln. Together with her husband she built up a successful gold and jewelry business, which she took over upon his death, traveling widely and recording her life in a series of diaries. This manuscript gives us an unparalleled record of a Jewish woman's life in the 17th century as well as recording major events of the day such as the fervor surrounding Sabbatai Zwi, the 'false messiah.' In the 18th century Fromet Guggenheim became wife of the philosopher Moses Mendelssohn, mother of the banker Abraham Mendelssohn and grandmother of the composers Felix and Fanny Mendelssohn, was from Hamburg. Her grave in the Königs St. Jewish cemetery was damaged by bombs but has recently been restored.

We will end our tour with an inspiring discussion with Rabbi Alina Treiger. On November 4th, 2010 in a moving ceremony at the Pestalozzi St. synagogue in Berlin, Rabbi Treiger became the first woman to be ordained in Germany since the Shoah. She officiates now not far from Hamburg in the city of Oldenburg, and this young dynamic woman will give us an indepth look at the life of a Jewish woman in Germany today.