

Retraining center of the Reich Representation of German Jews in Berlin Niederschönhausen

Type of Hakhshara

vocational retraining, regular Hakhshara, pre-apprenticeship, forced labor

Founded

1934

Opened

1934

Closed

May 1941

Operating Area

Premises of the bottle factory owned by Selma and Paul Latte

Areas of Training Offered

horticulture, home economics, woodworking, metalworking
gardening, carpentry, blacksmithing, locksmithing

Description

In January 1934, Selma and Paul Latte, the married owners of a large bottle factory, leased parts of their company premises in Berlin Niederschönhausen to the Reich Representation of German Jews, where a retraining center was set up. The engineer Leopold Kuh and his wife Ruth were put in charge of the center. Here, young Jewish men and women were to be specifically prepared for emigration. In Niederschönhausen, young people with both a non-Zionist as well as a Zionist background received training, so that we can speak here of a coexistence of retraining and pre-apprenticeship side by side, as well as a Hakhshara. The center was recognized by HeHalutz as a Hakhshara institution.

In 1936, the participants established a day school for vocational preparatory training as an additional educational institution, which mainly offered vocational training for young people who had left school. The day school was run by Dr. Isaacson, and initially offered three classes for around 60 pupils between the ages of 14 and 16. In both institutions, the adolescents and young adults received practical training in metalworking, woodworking, horticulture and home economics. While learning Hebrew was mandatory for the Hakhshara, in Niederschönhausen, English was also taught due to the non-Zionist participants. The daily routine was tightly structured and lasted all day. After completing their training, the participants received a certificate for the qualifications they had acquired. Those participants who were not from Berlin or the surrounding area lived on the premises. For the beginning of January 1937, it is documented that there were 54 young people between the ages of 17 and 34 staying there.

On June 21, 1938, the retraining center was attacked by a mob as part of the "Arbeitsscheu Reich" (work-shy Reich) campaign between June 13-18, 1938 ("June campaign"). The residents were threatened and harassed, much of the inventory was destroyed and plundered and the carpentry workshop was set on fire. On November 9, 1938, on the other hand, the center was spared from attacks.

Selma and Paul Latte's business was liquidated by a trustee in 1938, and the couple was forced to move into a so-called Judenhaus (Jewish house) in Berlin Hermsdorf at the end of 1938. In January 1943, they were deported to Theresienstadt, where they soon died from the inhumane treatment.

The retraining center continued operating under increasingly difficult conditions until it was dissolved on May 30, 1941. Leopold and Ruth Kuh emigrated to Great Britain in 1938/39; Leopold Kuh was instrumental in setting up the "Kitchener Camps" there. From 1941, a forced labor camp was located on the site of the bottle factory and retraining center.

After 1945, the property was used in various ways, including housing war refugees, being used for temporary allotment gardens and having a training center for the Volkspolizei (East German police force) built there. Today, the large area of the former bottle factory is an industrial park. Since 2016, a memorial stele located on the directly adjacent Selma und Paul Latte Platz (Selma and Paul Latte Square) has commemorated the history of the retraining center and the Lattes' fate. A total of 103 former participants in the Hakhshara Niederschönhausen are known by name: 42 of them were able to emigrate (mainly to Great Britain, Palestine, the USA and Australia), 16 were murdered and two were deported and survived.

State of Conservation

partially preserved

Industrial area housing various trades, only scarce remains of the bottle factory and the retraining center are still visible (railroad tracks, individual barracks).

Related Organizations

[Hechaluz. Deutscher Landesverband](#) (sponsor)

[Reich Representation of German Jews \[Reichsvertretung der Deutschen Juden\]](#) (sponsor)

[Zentralstelle für jüdische Wirtschaftshilfe-Berlin](#) (sponsor)

Related Persons

[Grunberg, Bernard](#)

[Isaacson](#) (director)

[Jaacov, Zeev](#)

[Kuh, Leopold](#) (director)

[Kuh, Ruth](#) (director)

[Latte, Paul](#) (owner)

[Latte, Selma](#) (owner)

Literature

Inge Lammel: Jüdische Lebenswege. Ein kulturhistorischer Streifzug durch Pankow und Niederschönhausen. Teetz: Hentrich & Hentrich 2007.

Rudolf Melitz (ed.): Das ist unser Weg - Junge Juden schildern Umschichtung und Hachscharah. Berlin: Joachim Goldstein Verlag 1937. online: <<http://d-nb.info/1032728663>>.

Museumsverbund Pankow (ed.): „Am Gelände von Herrn Latte fing ein reges Leben an“. Die Flaschenfabrik Latte und die Ausbildung jüdischer Auswanderer in Berlin- Niederschönhausen. Leipzig: Hentrich & Hentrich 2020.

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Historical Region

Greater Berlin