Descendants of Samuel Friedmann

Samuel Friedmann (9 Aug 1847-26 May 1913)
sp: Fanni Schwarzschild (11 May 1852-4 Aug 1918)
  Max Meier Friedmann (13 Jun 1881-1943 H)
  sp: Klara Michel (7 Feb 1890-1943 H)
    Samuel (Sahl) Friedmann (14 Jan 1921-27 Jul 2002)
    Fanni Friedmann (1922-1943 H)
    Edith Friedmann (10 Jul 1923-)
    Martin Friedmann (24 Jan 1928-)
  Moritz (Maurice) Freeman (26 Oct 1882-21 Jan 1945)
  sp: Julia Mayer (1884-7 May 1967)
  Sammy Friedmann (28 Dec 1884-9 May 1917)
  Leo Friedmann (24 Jan 1887-21 Dec 1970)
  sp: Johanna Esther (Hansi) Friedmann (16 Apr 1892-23 Jan 1981)
    Henry Freeman (28 Sep 1922-12 Nov 2005)
    Herbert Freeman (13 Dec 1925-)
  Selma Friedmann (18 Jul 1889-1943 H)
  sp: Hosias Wolfson (5 Nov 1875-1943 H)
    Fanni Wolfson (19 Jan 1921-1943 H)
    Mary (Miriam) Wolfson (22 Apr 1923-1943 H)
    Karl Meier Wolfson (28 Aug 1927-1943 H)
  Recha Friedmann (5 Apr 1891-20 Jan 1974)

Note: For more family history, consult the family tree book "Two Friedmann Families" by Henry Freeman. See footnote on page 1 of the Table of Contents.
Descendants of Leon Reuben Friedmann

Leon Reuben Friedmann (22 Oct 1865-2 Sep 1952)
sp: Hedwig Hurwitz (25 Feb 1862-21 Oct 1919)
  - Johanna Esther (Hansi) Friedmann (16 Apr 1892-23 Jan 1981)
    sp: Leo Friedmann (24 Jan 1887-21 Dec 1970)
      - Henry Freeman (28 Sep 1922-12 Nov 2005)
      - Herbert Freeman (13 Dec 1925-)
    - Theo Friedmann (25 May 1893-28 Jul 1968)
      sp: Lola Mendle (10 Dec 1899-19 Jul 1952)
        - Hedwig (Hede) Friedmann (2 Jun 1923-)
        - Lore Ise (Laura) Friedmann (4 May 1927-)
      sp: Heddy Loepert nee Ansbocher (8 Jun 1897-22 Sep 1998)
  - Baruch Benno Friedmann (27 Apr 1896-29 Apr 1983)
    sp: Leo Charlotte (Lotte) Scheier (23 Mar 1905-3 Mar 1981)
      - Walter Friedmann (1930-1934)
      - Dr. Hadasa Friedmann (18 Feb 1935-16 Feb 1992)
      - Alisa Friedmann (9 Nov 1937-)
  Walter S. Freed (26 Nov 1898-8 Jan 1982)
sp: Lotte Rosenthal (1906-)
  - Eva Marianne Friedmann (3 Jul 1932-)
  sp: Rachel Hinden (24 Dec 1908-3 Dec 2001)
    - Gerald Lewis Freed (6 Dec 1940-)
    - Susan Hedy Freed (26 Sep 1944-)
  Hillel (Heinrich) Friedmann (10 Feb 1900-6 May 1988)
sp: Herta Heymann (27 Apr 1916-)
  - Vacl Friedmann (4 Jul 1944-)
sp: Nanny Marcus (22 Sep 1879-1 May 1954)
What Can We Learn from the Past?
Herbert Freeman

A famous philosopher once said, "He who has not studied history, will be destined to experience it himself." I was born in Germany and came to the US as a boy in 1938, well before the holocaust began. A question that has always interested me is "how could a civilized western country like Germany sink so low as to carry out such barbarous acts as the holocaust?" I don't claim to have the answer to this question, but I know that it is much more complex than is commonly believed.

First let us recognize that Germany was, in the late 1800s, one of the most liberal and tolerant countries in Europe — and probably in the world. Jews from the East, like my maternal grandparents, migrated from Russia to Germany because of the tolerant environment. They could settle anywhere, could attend universities, attend medical schools, were admitted to the professions, and felt safe. In many ways, Germany was far more tolerant of Jews than the United States, where anti-Semitism was rampant till well into the 1960s. Four of my uncles served in the German Army in World War I. In their memoirs they stated that they never encountered any anti-Semitism until Hitler came into power; that, on the contrary, their Jewishness was very much respected. --- My Dad was admitted to medical school in Germany in 1908; yet I could not get into the college of my first choice here in the US in the 1940s because I was Jewish!

How then did Hitler manage to build up the storm of anti-Semitism we got to know? We have to understand that there were three major factors that brought Hitler to power:

1) The economic depression, which, as in the US, created an enormous amount of unemployment and popular discontent.

2) The Treaty of Versailles, which put all the blame for World War I on Germany and saddled it with devastating reparations --- much against the wishes of President Wilson.

3) And, perhaps most important, the fear of communism. Communism had taken over in Russia with disastrous results for its middle and upper classes, and there was great fear among business leaders in Germany that, with the depression at hand, Bolshevik communism would take over Germany as well.

Hitler was a low-life rabble-rouser but with exceptional charisma. He had an antagonism toward Jews from an early age. Hitler's father was born illegitimate and there is some evidence that the unknown grandfather was Jewish. This would make Hitler one-quarter Jewish, and this knowledge may well have been the cause for Hitler's obsession to eliminate Jews. In normal times he would have been dismissed as a clown with an unimportant following, as we today tend to dismiss the Nazi party here in the US. But by the early 1930s the leaders of industry and business were ready to support him because they felt he would be a counterforce against communism.

The democratic government in Germany was failing, largely because of its inability to cope with the economic depression, and Hitler and his supporters mounted an aggressive campaign to get a parliamentary
majority. They came into power perfectly legally, but once in power, quickly seized police powers, and passed the restrictive Nuremberg laws again Jews. Hitler had outlined all this in his book *Mein Kampf* some years earlier, but his strong stand against communism got him the financial and political support he needed to gain power.

A dictator needs an enemy to instill fear in the populace, and by promising to protect people from the supposed enemy, obtain their support. Hitler used the Jews as his “enemy” – blaming them for Germany’s loss of World War I, for the economic depression, and for the rise of communism. He promised to reduce unemployment and to restore Germany’s honor. He started various big construction projects – a national superhighway system, a rebuilding of the German army, and also mounted an enormous public relations campaign (with the aid of his propaganda minister, the infamous Goebbels) to brain-wash the population at large. Any dissent was crushed. Jews were expelled from government jobs, Jewish children had to attend separate “for-Jews-only” schools, and anti-Semitism was fostered by a continuous barrage of hateful propaganda. And ordinary people just acquiesced and went about their daily business.

Many Jews saw what was happening and emigrated. This was not easy, since few countries accepted immigrants. Those who were Zionists tried to go to Palestine, then a British protectorate that according to the Balfour declaration had been set aside as a haven for Jews. Immigrating into the US was difficult because of the severe anti-immigration laws that had been passed in the 1920s. But there were also many Jews who felt that they could weather the Nazi anti-Semitism, that while unpleasant it was not life-threatening. This thinking changed, of course, on November 9, 1938, the so-called Kristallnacht, when synagogues were burned, Jewish stores destroyed, and Jewish men arrested and placed in concentration camps. Then all remaining Jews were frantic to get out of Germany. But the world was not receptive to having immigrants come in. One notable exception was England, which took in 10,000 Jewish children under the Kindertransport plan. England also accepted young women willing to take jobs as household help. An aunt of mine, who had been a teacher in Germany, took advantage of this and accepted a job as a cook in England even though she had never as much as boiled an egg in her life!

Then World War II started and getting out of Germany was virtually impossible for those who still remained. With a war going on, Hitler had a free hand to do what he wanted. Jews were rounded up and deported to slave labor concentration camps in the East or to be killed. And there were also many Poles, Lithuanians, Ukrainians and others willing to massacre Jews with encouragement from German occupiers. In war, life is cheap. Well, we all know the rest.

The questions still remains, how could this happen? What was the cause? Could it have been prevented?

A popular belief is that virulent anti-Semitism was residual in Germany, that Hitler merely brought it out into the open, and that the holocaust thus was an inevitable result. Many Americans after World War II – and even to this day – have refused to buy German cars or visit Germany, feeling that the country as a whole shares in the guilt for what happened. In my opinion this is too simple-minded, and even misguided. What
happened in Germany — and there is no dispute about the facts — could happen anywhere. Every country has its good people and its bad people, its very good people and its very bad people. The challenge is never to let the very bad people gain control!

I want to mention here something that made a particular impression on me. Some years ago, my wife and I were in Copenhagen, Denmark. Now everybody knows how the Danes were wonderful to their Jews, how they saved their Jewish population by ferrying them over to neutral Sweden during the night to avoid having them deported. Well, as we walked around Copenhagen, we came across a museum dedicated to the period of World War II. We went in. The first thing that caught our eye was the information that there had been a strong Nazi party in Denmark before the war, something that we had never heard before. Then we came upon the story about the evacuation of the Danish Jews to Sweden and we learned, much to our astonishment, that it was a German army officer who had tipped off the Danish Jewish community that orders had been received to deport all the Jews to Poland. — Apparently not all Danes were good and not all Germans were bad!

We just have to be watchful that bad people don’t gain control of the leadership. What happened in Germany was due to the leadership of the country being taken over by an incredibly evil leader. If someone had bumped off Hitler in the mid-1930s, everything would have turned out differently. We tend to underestimate the power of leadership — good or bad — but it is really what controls us. We must be ever vigilant that our leaders are good people. We must not compromise on this and must not let bad people use scare tactics to gain our tacit support.

Goldhagen in his 1996 book “Hitler’s Willing Executioners” points to the complicity of ordinary Germans in carrying out some of the most ghastly brutalities against Jews. Yet, and I don’t question his facts, the conclusion he draws misses the point he is trying to make. We are all subject to being brainwashed and then doing things we would never do under normal circumstances. A mild example, but nevertheless, instructive was the McCarthy period in the early 1950s, when one individual, Senator Joe McCarthy, was able to foment a nationwide witch hunt against anyone with even the slightest “leftist” leanings. Although mild when compared to the holocaust, it was instructive to see how a single person could, by taking advantage of perceived threats and fear, lead an entire country in a direction that it would never take under normal circumstances. The brutality against blacks in the South in years back is, of course, another example of how ordinary people can be led into beastly behavior.

Could something like the holocaust occur again? In England? In France? In Italy? — In the US? The answer is, under certain circumstances, yes. It is a bit less likely in the US because of the diversity of the population — but let’s not be over-confident! Under appropriate conditions it could happen here as it could anywhere. We are as susceptible to being brainwashed and being led to do bad things as anyone else.

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