

Franz Kaufmann

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Franz Kaufmann (1886 - 1944) was a German jurist and victim of the Holocaust. His role helping underground Jews survive in hiding in Berlin and his execution are documented in *The Forger*, the memoirs of Cioma Schonhaus.^[1]

Born to Jewish parents in 1886 and baptized a Protestant, Kaufmann served in the first World War in the 10th Bavarian Field Artillery Regiment receiving, among other medals, the Iron Cross. After being wounded he was discharged from the army in 1918 as a reserve lieutenant. He obtained a doctorate in law and political science and in 1922 was appointed to a specialist post in government finances in the Prussian ministry of the interior. He later became chief secretary of the Reich Public Accounts Office, in the finance ministry.^[2]

In 1936, because of his Jewish origins, he was dismissed from his post as chief secretary. When war broke out in 1939, he volunteered for the Red Cross but was refused, again due to his Jewish origins.^[3] However, he continued to enjoy privileged status due his then so-called racially mixed marriage to an Aryan-classified woman and because he had brought up his daughter as a Christian.^[4]

Kaufmann joined the bible study group The Confessing Church in 1940, and—with other members of the church—began to supply post-office identity cards to on-the-run Jews. Ultimately he headed an underground group that created and supplied all manner of fake documents to underground Jews, including certificates of Aryan decent, driving licenses, and food ration cards. These documents were essential to the survival of many Berlin Jews.^[5]

He was arrested in October 1943. No charges were laid against him, since as a Jew under the Third Reich he was subject not to German law but to police power. On February 17, 1944, he was taken to Sachsenhausen concentration camp and shot^[6].

References

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See also: Franz Kaufmann (disambiguation) and Kaufmann

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