



## Frank Foley

Frank Foley was born in Somerset in 1884. In the 1930s, he worked for the Foreign Office and became Head of the British Passport Control Office in Germany. Eyewitnesses recall Mr. Foley as an unassuming hero – a small, slightly overweight man with round glasses. However, Foley was in fact Britain’s most senior spy in Berlin.

During his time in Berlin, Foley is known to have saved an estimated 10,000 German Jews after Hitler and the Nazi Party came to power in Germany in 1933. He used his role in the Passport Office as a cover for his real job as an Intelligence Officer working for the British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), later called MI6. This made his efforts on behalf of the Jews even more dangerous. Foley first moved to work in Berlin in 1920. He was therefore able to observe and report back on the political and social changes that took place in Germany as a result of the rise to power of Hitler and the Nazi Party. Foley was also able to see the impact of the many anti-semitic measures introduced by the Nazis and the effect these had on the every day lives of Jews.

If he had been arrested, Foley would have had no diplomatic immunity as he was working as a spy, but for years he ignored many Nazi laws and helped Jews leave the country. He made no money from his rescue efforts but risked his own life to save so many others. He also did not seek recognition or praise for his acts of rescue. Foley broke many Nazi laws, for example he entered concentration camps such as Sachsenhausen and presented visas to the camp authorities so that Jews could be freed to travel. Foley also hid Jews in his home and used his secret service skills to help them obtain false papers, forged passports and visas. By issuing these visas, Foley was also breaking British laws.

During his lifetime, Foley received no recognition for his actions in the UK. However, in 1999, Foley’s actions resulted in his being recognised as ‘Righteous Amongst the Nations’ at Yad Vashem in Israel.

On 24 November 2004, the 120th anniversary of Foley’s birth, a plaque was unveiled in his honour at the British Embassy in Berlin. Among those who travelled to Berlin to take part in a special ceremony was Elisheva Lernau, 91 at the time, who had been

rescued by Foley. Elisheva said, 'His name is written on my heart... I owe my life to this man I never met, a man of humanity in a time of unparalleled inhumanity'. In Highbridge, Somerset, a plaque has been placed on the house where Foley was born and in May 2005 a statue dedicated to him was also unveiled.