



Chapter 4: The first look at Bitterfeld

- first journey to Bitterfeld
- clean factories
- visit the downtown of Bitterfeld
- interview with member from the town hall and citizens

It was on a cold day of December 2004 when we met in Berlin city to go together to Bitterfeld. With different expectations we started to Leipzig early in the morning.

We already saw large industrial areas in the region of Halle, Leipzig, Bitterfeld from the motorway. But in spite of our expectations there was no black smoke above the factories but if at all only little white cleaned smoke.



large industrial areas

Shortly after that we reached the motorway exit of Wolfen/Bitterfeld and left the motorway.

At both sides of the street there were large fields covered with snow. On one

side you could recognize industrial areas not far away, on the other side of the street there were fenced in areas with signs "No entrance" and "Keep off". These were deposits for toxic industrial waste and former mines.



„Fischer“ - deposit

We continued and after a short look we found a parking place 100m away from the market place and the town hall. We followed a pedestrian zone passing the town hall to the market place. And again no trace of pollution. On that day was market day, we met many especially old people.

During our meeting in Berlin we had defined some questions to ask as many people as possible in short interviews to get some basic information about life in Bitterfeld.

Our first way however led us to the beautiful town hall built of red bricks. There was an information room where



town hall of Bitterfeld

we got information booklets and a friendly employee told us to get further

information in the archive of the town in the building nearby. Next we went there but with such a large group and without announcement we didn't get any documents. But they gave us the advice to go to Wolfen/Nord. There we would find stereotype houses to be pulled down. They were unnecessary because of the decrease of population and nobody wanted to live there. At this place we could recognize the consequence of migration most clearly. First we had still some interviews in the city centre. We met two elder men living in Bitterfeld since many decades



The artificial lake called "Goitzsche"



and who were willing to answer some questions. Both confirmed that there



court office of Bitterfeld

was going on a considerable emigration from Bitterfeld. They both told us the main reason for it: There is

a high lack of employment. The elder people stay in Bitterfeld, some of homing instinct the others because they had been able to build an established position. The younger people, however, seldom have another possibility than leaving the region to find training facilities or jobs.



our girls wrote down, what they heard

Before going to Wolfen-Nord we decided to have a good look at the "Goitzsche". This is a surface mining

having been flowed some years ago. We saw a huge water surface but it

was so cold that we did not stay there any longer.

Then we went to Wolfen-Nord . Indeed there were many deserted buildings but in some of the apartments there were still living people. It did not take a long time to find these vacant houses but it was not so easy to find someone who was willing to answer our questions.



inner city of Bitterfeld

We met only some people in that deserted region but everybody was reserved and was unwilling to answer. Only a young Turkish owner of a snack

bar was ready to make an interview with us. We got some shocking information: In spite of the full snack bar at midday he would prefer to go to a bigger town in the west of Germany, Berlin or Hamburg, if he had a choice. Bitterfeld is desolate, the atmosphere



is very bad because of so many unemployed people. We had a snack there and then we returned to Berlin. During our later visits to Bitterfeld we researched in the town archive information about the history of the chemical industry and then had an interview with the representative of the

region. Besides we visited the Goitzsche again and there we found a gourmet restaurant and many signs of developing water tourism.

We then went to the city centre: It was Saturday in the early afternoon, no market day and the city centre was



Christmas market in Bitterfeld



new chemistry factory in Bitterfeld

mayor. He gave us much information about the plans for the future of this

