ROSH HA-SHANA
A Good Omen

Rosh ha-Shana, the Jewish New Year celebration, is an occasion for reflection and joy. Just recently, Germany toppled the Communist regime and established a democracy that was incorporated into the Federal Republic of Germany on October 3, 1990. Some months before, the first freely-elected East German government under Prime Minister Lothar de Maizière had authorized the immigration of Jewish citizens from the Soviet Union. For East German democrats, this invitation was seen as an acknowledgment of historical responsibility. Many Soviet Jews, who had suffered from poverty and anti-Semitic persecution, took up this invitation. More than 200,000 Jews left for Germany. Nearly half went on to join the German Jewish community, thereby helping to ensure its survival. More Jews from the former Soviet Union would have liked to come to Germany, but there were many obstacles in their way. Convinced that the Jewish state was the proper home of all Jews, Jerusalem encouraged Jews from post-Soviet states to immigrate to Israel. Germany’s ministers of interior feared that a continued “wave of Jewish immigration” could give rise to anti-Semitic attacks. And Germany’s existing Jewish community did not wish to become a minority within a minority. And so a historic opportunity to increase the size of the Jewish community in Germany was lost.

Today, in nearly all German cities that are receiving incoming asylum-seekers, tens of thousands of people are volunteering their help. They are greeting the new arrivals, tending to the needs of children and adults, providing welcome gifts and needed supplies, and organizing language classes. “The new Germany is a country that has changed for the good,” as the founder of the State of Israel, David Ben-Gurion, noted more than 60 years ago. His belief in the good in Germany is being confirmed today. It is a good omen for the New Year, and not just within Germany.

The right to asylum is a lived and living reality in Germany

POLITICS
Silvan Shalom: We want peace

Israel’s Vice-Premier is convinced that peace negotiations with the Palestinians need to be advanced. However, unilateral steps taken by Palestinians are not reconcilable with peace talks. In his interview with JVG Shalom also criticizes the recent deal with Iran: “The conditions of the agreement enable Iran to build nuclear weapons within a shorter time period than it could at present.”

CULTURE
Music Academy: We rehearse peace

“We aim to build upon the powers of reconciliation inherent in music.” Former German Secretary of Culture Michael Naumann is currently director of the Barenboim-Said Academy, based in Berlin, which strives to foster harmony in the Middle East. “Our Academy is a symbolic project,” explains Naumann in his interview with JVG. “We want to demonstrate that peace is possible.”

The Friends of JEWISH VOICE FROM GERMANY

With this Rosh ha-Shana, the Jewish Voice from Germany is entering its fifth year. In January 2012, we started with a circulation of 30,000 copies worldwide. Then-German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle presented our first issue. Thanks to the ongoing interest of our readers as well as the Jewish and non-Jewish public, advertising support from major companies, interview partners including Chancellor Angela Merkel, Social Democratic leader and Economics Minister Sigmar Gabriel, Foreign Minister Frank Walter Steinmeier, and Israeli Vice Prime Minister Silvan Shalom in this issue, among others, as well as a dedicated team of editors, we have made steady progress over the past years. Alongside our English-language international edition, we have also been able to launch a German edition in partnership with Axel Springer Publishers. Our circulation currently stands at more than 200,000 copies worldwide.

The Jewish Voice is now the world’s largest independent Jewish newspaper, and presents our concerns to a global audience. But this success cannot undo the reality that print media now finds itself in a time of sinking advertising revenues. To maintain the independence of our newspaper and to ensure its continued publication, a group of friends and supporters have now joined together to lend their backing to the Jewish Voice. If you are interested in joining their efforts, or wish to know more, please contact for additional information. We thank you for your attention and wish you Shana Tova. May the New Year bring you peace and happiness.

The Publisher and Editors
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GERMAN SOCIETY

This is Our Country

Humanity before rules

By Elisabeth Neu

I've now have to start apologizing for showing a friendly face in response to emergency situations, then that’s not my country,’ Chancellor Merkel’s refrain in the face of the refugee crisis marks a turning point in Germany’s self-image and conduct.

Germany has always stood for rules, duty and discipline that are priorities for the individual. Even Immanuel Kant, the humanist philosopher of the Enlightenment, declared that “Duty is the necessity of an action from respect for the law.” That served as a justification for the unconditional fulfillment of one’s duty and obedience to the law demanded by an authoritarian state. The most obscene in-strumentalization, or perversion, of unrelenting obedience came during the Nazi dictatorship. Unlike a political system, a tradition of misusing rules of law prevails over the nesciunt of the individual. Even Immanuel Kant, the humanist philosopher of the Enlightenment, declared that “Duty is the necessity of an action from respect for the law.”

That is because “dutty duty” is often deeply anchored in people’s minds and thus in the way they act in society. The result is the “Unter-tan,” the slavish subordinate, as depicted by Heinrich Mann in his novel of the same name. This phenotype terrorized an entire society. Many people were destroyed by its “secondary virtues.”

No solidarity in Gulf States

In 1980 Lea Fleischmann, a teacher in Frankfurt, published her autobiographical book Dies ist nicht mein Land (This is not my country), in which she depicted how oppressive everyday experiences were in all aspects of life. Attacks on humanity are always covert, wrapped in the mantle of principle and duty.

Angela Merkel has now thrown this monstrosity on to the scrap heap of history. The distress of the refugees—hundreds of thousands of them—is overwhelming. Most are from Muslim countries: Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and Eritrea. It is a fact that the wealthy Gulf States, which boast about their solidarity with Muslims everywhere at every opportunity, are not willing to take in a single refugee. Just as they have not taken in any of their Palestinian ‘brothers’ for almost seventy years now. It would be cheap and undignified to hide behind the indifference of others. Nor is there any point in getting worked up about the way Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán goes on about ‘Christianity’ or about similar comments by other eastern European leaders.

Support for refugees

Whether they derive their position from faith or political-moral tradition, Angela Merkel, the daughter of a peace activist, and the Social Democrat Sigmar Gabriel both know full well that the Jew Jesus preached unconditional brotherly love. And, whatever their reasons, millions of Germans support the refugees and offer them help. They prove that Germany and German society have changed. Life in the land of Angela Merkel, life in our country, has become better and more humane. That is something we can all build on. Not only in times of distress – as we know, necessity knows no law – but also in everyday life.

BENJAMIN NETANYAHU

Israel Should Accept the Deal With Iran

Jerusalem must consolidate relations with the U.S. and Germany

By Rafael Seligmann

The first litmus test for the nuclear deal between Iran and the P5 + 1 is yielding negative results. Ayatollah Khamenei, Iran’s spiritual leader who is also considered the country’s most powerful political authority, continues to vilify Israel as a cancer among nations and calls for its destruction. Even the attempt by peace activist Daniel Barenboim to bring his orchestra to Tehran for a performance was banned. Barenboim is Jewish, and that is anathema to the Arabs. In so doing, he managed to discredit Barenboim as a Zionist – an accusation that was carefully calculated to not upset the boundaries of what their Western supporters are willing to tolerate.

So is Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu correct in calling the Iran agreement a ‘bad deal’? Should Jerusalem continue to oppose the agreement? Iran’s religious authorities have not taken its hatred of Israel. But it would be a mistake for Jerusalem to continue its battle against the implementation of the Iran agreement. As Bismarck rightly pointed out, politics is the art of the possible. For the Obama administration, the Iran deal is a major foreign policy coup – a mark of prestige. The Obama administration managed to convince the majority of the Democratic Party to close ranks and side with the administration. During this process, Washington enjoyed the unqualified support of its Western allies, including Germany. Now it has become clear that Netanyahu may well have overplayed his hand in his reliance on the Republican Party. In so doing, he managed to alienate the majority of the Democrats. The Republican-majority Senate again fell short of the 60 votes it would need to advance legislation meant to kill the deal.

Another attempt to oppose the Obama administration would be harmful to Israel. Should he continue on this course, Netanyahu would be following in the footsteps of Michael Kohlhass, a character from a well-known German novel – a man who, convinced of his own righteousness, burns his bridges and brings about his own destruction. But the political reality is that as the head of government, Netanyahu bears responsibility for the survival of Israel. And no political leader should risk the fate of his own country and people – even if he is convinced that an injustice is being done. Jerusalem would be well advised to assume that the current framework will be implemented, and to maintain the goodwill of its two most important allies, the U.S. and Germany. To preserve its continued existence, Israel will need to work with these two countries, and not against them.
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Germany is Our Best Friend

Israel’s Vice Prime Minister about German-Israeli relations, the Iran agreement and Aliyah


to serve as a home to the Jewish people,

community in Germany should continue
date back nearly 2,000 years. The Jewish
relations as Israel and Germany. History
which enjoy such unique and special re-
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only a few will stand by our side like

at Tel Aviv
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The German Jewish community’s roots
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and serve as a direct link between Ger-
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friendship and there is no doubt that this
is largely due to the Jewish community in
Germany. I always tell you that you continue in
our work out of a sense of understanding your
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Everyone is born with talent, but barriers such as disadvantage, inequality and poverty can stand in the way of success for some. Around the world, Born to Be programmes develop what young people need to succeed in life: skills, aspirations and opportunities. We believe that every child and young person deserve the chance to achieve their full potential and become who they were born to be.

Passion to Perform

EQUAL
FRANZ JOSEF STRAUSS REMEMBERED

A Loyal Friend

World politician and close ally of Israel

Franz Josef Strauß (1915–1988) was one of the most eminent politicians of the Federal Republic of Germany. He contributed substantially to good relations with the United States and Israel. Long-term chairman of the CSU (Christian Social Union), Strauß also served as West-Germany’s minister of defense (1956–1962), minister of finance (1966–1969) and from 1978 until his death as minister-president of the Free State of Bavaria.

By Gerda Hasselfeldt

Israelis and Germans have two causes for celebration this year: the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Germany and Israel, and the 100th birthday of Franz Josef Strauß, an early and close friend of the State of Israel.

Germany’s relationship to Israel, and Israel’s to Germany, will always be a very special one. Today, our countries are allies, partners and friends. After all, what the Germans did to the Jews, this is indeed a miracle. It was possible because Israel was willing to reach out its hand. It was possible because Germany’s relationship to Israel during the years that remembering actually preceded the formalization of diplomatic relations long before this. Strauß was willing to reach out his hand, and thus laid the basis for new beginnings. Yes, another Gerda Hasselfeldt

Franz Josef Strauß kept his word and thus laid the basis for David Ben-Gurion’s historic meeting with Konrad Adenauer in New York in 1960, which in turn led to the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1965. Decades later, Shimon Peres wrote on the occasion of Strauß’s 70th birthday: “Strauß’s willingness to stand with Israel has imprinted itself deeply in our memory.”

Extraordinary as his courage was, he also had nuanced and farsighted motives for supporting Israel during its early years. Although Strauß never became foreign minister, he did much to shape German foreign policy in every office he held – as a Federal Government minister, and as Bavaria’s prime minister. He made more than 600 trips to 63 countries, including three visits to Israel.

Franz Josef Strauß was not only a convinced European; he was an equally convinced transatlanticist. No one worked harder for the United States alone to expect the U.S. alone to guarantee Europe’s security. He therefore regarded the Europe of Christian Community, with a military contribution by the Federal Republic of Germany, as the key to safeguarding peace in Europe. Only a strong Europe standing shoulder to shoulder with the U.S., therefore, was able to preserve peace.

Today, these principles are more relevant than ever. The latest violent upheavals in the Middle East and North Africa remind us, with startling clarity, that Israelis and Europeans share the same fundamental security interests. However, a secure Israel cannot exist without an independent, viable and democratic Palestinian state within the framework of a two-state solution. Germany must therefore intensify its efforts, together with its partners in the EU, to achieve a solution to the conflict. Twenty years after the Oslo Accords, it is time to break the deadlock in the peace process.

Just as Europe is not, and must not become, a Christian club, neither should the Middle East be – or become – a Muslim one. In Israel, a new synthesis of European and Oriental Judaism is emerging. I am firmly convinced that this can be the starting point for a new and much-needed bridge between East and West.

Throughout his life, Franz Josef Strauß was connected to Israel on historical and moral responsibility. But he always regarded good relations as a task for the coming generations as well. Strauß’s remembrance meant internalizing the past again and again. And so today, it is our duty to renew and strengthen the bond of friendship between our two nations. That is why I saw the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Germany and Israel as an occasion for a school exchange between young people from Israel and Germany. The German students from Dachau in July, and I look forward to being in Israel with the German students in October. I hope that close and lasting friendships will ensue.

German-Israeli friendship is a stroke of great good fortune for Israel and Germany. Let’s take these two anniversaries as encouragement to renew and strengthen this bond based on responsibility for the past, and responsibility for the time to come.
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A Jolt of Charity

The vast majority of Germans won't allow hate to divide society

By Stanislaw Tillich

Seventy years ago, at the end of World War II, Germany stood militarily and morally defeated. Having lost the war she started herself, and having committed unimaginable crimes against humanity. Today, Germany stands as the nation so far having taken in 40 percent of the refugees arriving in the EU, amidst the biggest humanitarian crisis since World War II, and being accused by other European governments of, supposedly, encouraging refugees to come in ever greater numbers. A very different Germany indeed.

However, at the same time the world watched in shock at footage of German right-wing extremists fire-bombing the police line in front of an asylum shelter. The terror of this fanatical minority is shock at footage of German society. More of us demonstrate our solidarity with the nation so far having taken up diplomatic relations with the State of Israel. This year, we commemorate the end to the Nazi regime. When it was toppled by a democratic revolution in 1989, the Synagogue of Dresden, Saxony, it was a great moment. It told the world about the renaissance of Jewish life in Eastern Germany. Whether someone is a Muslim, a Jew, a Christian or an atheist, everyone shall be defended against extremist attacks.

We will not cede an inch to those who attack fellow citizens. Everyone shall be defended against extremists. United we stand. This is intolerable. No one in Saxony shall ever live in fear again. I myself and the entire Saxony government have made it abundantly clear that all extremist violent attacks shall be prosecuted, and the perpetrators shall, if convicted, feel the full force of the law. The Saxon state will not cede an inch to those who attack fellow citizens, on whatever grounds. Whether someone is a Muslim, a Jew, a Christian or an atheist, everyone shall be defended against extremist attacks.

However, at the same time the world watched in shock at footage of German right-wing extremists fire-bombing the police line in front of an asylum shelter. The terror of this fanatical minority is shock at footage of German society. More of us demonstrate our solidarity with the nation so far having taken up diplomatic relations with the State of Israel. This year, we commemorate the end to the Nazi regime. When it was toppled by a democratic revolution in 1989, the Synagogue of Dresden, Saxony, it was a great moment. It told the world about the renaissance of Jewish life in Eastern Germany. Whether someone is a Muslim, a Jew, a Christian or an atheist, everyone shall be defended against extremist attacks.

The vast majority of Germans won’t allow hate to divide society.
A Germany of Light or a “Dark Germany”?

By Dieter Sattler

Last year, Germany received about 200,000 new applications for asylum. It had already been announced that the number would increase significantly, to about 400,000, largely due to the dramatic escalation in the war-torn regions of the Middle East, as well as Germany’s economic attractiveness. Today, however, many observers say Germany may see as many as one million new asylum-seekers this year. So far, only a few thousand refugees and asylum-seekers have been allocated to Germany under a quota plan. Currently, however, the eastern EU members are opposed to a quota plan. Countries such as France, Britain and Denmark are stonewalling under the pressure of right-wing nationalist parties. Even Portugal had only taken a few hundred refugees until August.

Lion’s share

Germany, which together with Austria and Sweden is assuming the lion’s share of the burden, will receive at least as many refugees this year as all other EU states combined. This mass immigration has met with an ambivalent German public. Although incoming migrants and refugees are received with cheering crowds and welcome parties at train stations in cities such as Munich and Frankfurt, the newcomers are then distributed to shelters for asylum-seekers, where some have encountered outright hatred. There have already been several arson attacks on refugee shelters. In eastern Germany, in particular, the anarchists have received open support from a significant segment of the “ordinary population.”

When Chancellor Angela Merkel went to visit a refugee shelter in Heidenau that had been the target of attacks, she found herself booed by a group of anti-refugee protesters, who called her a traitor. In light of recent developments, controlled immigration is no longer an option, at least for the current year. Instead, the Christian Democratic party is facing an archaic influx of migrants and refugees, to which the state can only respond with remedial and afterthought measures. Germany is now faced with a demographic transformation, which could have been met more easily through immigration policies along the Canadian and Australian models, which support the immigration of highly-skilled and educated workers. Instead, Germany is now facing an archaic influx of migrants and refugees, to which the state can only respond with reme- 　　dial and afterthought measures. According to a random survey of migrants, about 13 percent of asylum-seekers and refugees who hold a residence permit in Germany were university graduates. Roughly a quarter had completed lower secondary education. But 58 percent had completed vocational training, at least for the current year. In- deed, the Christian Democratic party has decided that the proposed new immigration law must be shelved for the time being. Chancellor Merkel has already announced that Germany must seek to fill its shortage of skilled labor from the pool of qualified and quali- fiable migrants and refugees. What remains to be seen is if the economic benefits of integration and assimilation will exceed its costs. If the costs outweigh the benefits, Germany’s economy may find itself facing an immense and unforeseen burden.

The current explosion of openness and goodwill must be maintained to master challenges ahead

Germany’s labor ministry will need to spend up to three billion additional euro this year for language classes and other educational and vocational training measures for migrants and refugees. It is likely that hundreds of thousands of these new arrivals will require public assistance. In some cases, educational and vocational training measures may allow some of these new arrivals to join the workforce, but the funds for these measures may end up coming at the cost of programs for un- 　　employed Germans. Sigmar Gabriel has already warned that the government must avoid giving the impression to ordinary citizens that all monies would now have to go to help asylum-seekers.

Of course, Germany wants to and must help refugees who are fleeing war-torn areas. But in early September, at least, it seemed that Germany was reaching its breaking point. After Chancellor Merkel announced that Germany would be able to rise to the challenge – “we can do this” – the message that wealthy Germany was prepared to take in migrants spread like wildfire across social networks, and soon everyone seemed to want to come only to Germany.

The guarantee of asylum to people fleeing Syria would also appear to have led some migrants to attempted to pass themselves off as Syrians. For a time, security issues also fell by the wayside at the German border. This in part explains why fears have arisen that some of the new arrivals may pose a threat to the security of Germa- ny’s democracy.

Dynamic and vibrant

Among the many Germans who are now caught up in the spirit of enthusiasm and welcome for the new arrivals, there will also be some who have failed to grasp what changes this influx will bring. Germany will become more dynamic and vibrant, but this is likely to come at the cost of some social tension. Germany’s escalating labor shortage, which is the result of demographic transformation, could have been met more easily through immigration policies along the Canadian and Australian models, which support the immigration of highly-skilled and educated workers. Instead, Germany is now facing an archaic influx of migrants and refugees, to which the state can only respond with remedial and afterthought measures. According to migration expert Dietrich Thränhardt, Germany would be

Syrians in Hungary trying to make it to Germany

The logistical feat of accommodating this influx of new arrivals is one thing, but the integration and assimilation of the newcomers into German society poses another and far more difficult challenge. What will happen when the party is over, and day-to-day life resumes? “Reality is grey,” in the words of the Frankfurter Rundschau daily, which is normally known for its support of a multicultural Germany, Spiegel magazine noted that the task ahead will be more than a “sunny fairy-tale.” And indeed, this mass migration into Germany has many aspects. Businesses are looking forward to an influx of skilled workers – and perhaps also to a larger pool of low-wage labor. The market-friendly Free Democrats are already demanding the suspension of the minimum wage for migrants. This is mirrored by concerns and unease among the lower-middle class and working class, groups that are more affected by competition for affordable housing and low-skill jobs than are the internationally-oriented elite.

Educational training

Although the educational level of the incoming Syrians appears to be relatively high, the migrants are not all engineers, doctors and skilled workers. According to a random survey of migrants, about 33 percent of asylum-seekers and refugees who hold a residence permit in Germany were university graduates. Roughly a quarter had completed lower secondary education. But 58 percent had completed vocational education at all. Among this current influx of refugees and migrants, initial experiences have been sobering, and Labor Minister Andrea Nahles has now stated that only about ten percent of the new arrivals will be able to directly enter the workforce. About 25 percent of the arriving adults are illiterate, and they will be particularly difficult to integrate into the workforce.
A Bridge Between Us Seemed Nearly Impossible

How a German Jew helped pave the way to Nostra Aetate

By Hartmut Bomhoff

This fall, a symposium at Rome's Pontifical Gregorian University will mark the 50th anniversary of Nostra Aetate, the Declaration of the Second Vatican Council on the Relations of the Church with Non-Christian Religions proclaimed in 1965. A group of faculty and students from the Jesuit house, across the street, from the synagogue in Basle to the Great Synagogue in Rome will participate. It is noteworthy that it was one of the early advocates of this initiative, the historian and scholar of religious studies Ernst Ludwig Ehrlich (1921–2007), who was instrumental in setting the stage for formal Jewish-Christian dialogue during the deliberations of the Second Vatican Council. In 1943, with the help of Christian friends, Ernst Ludwig Ehrlich escaped from Berlin to Switzerland. As Ehrlich later recalled, "a bridge between us seemed nearly impossible" — but then he went on to become a bridge-builder himself.

Advancing a faltering dialogue

Ehrlich’s hoped-for breakthrough in relations between Catholics and Jews finally came with the Declaration of the Second Vatican Council, Nostra Aetate. "A bridge between us seemed nearly impossible" — but then he went on to become a bridge-builder himself.

As Ehrlich remembers, “That was when Cardinal Bea first sought personal contact and an exchange of ideas with Jewish people, and where he suddenly became aware of the extent of the opposition to Jews within Catholicism.

The Council marked a turning point, but Ernst Ludwig Ehrlich did not relinquish his efforts. In 1968, Ehrlich noted that many Christians still did not accept the reality of Jews, the Jewish people, and Israel. “The reason is the lasting legacy of the belief that Judaism is merely a fossilized religion that lost its historical validity with the resurrection of Jesus.” And Ehrlich continued: “The fact that Christians — even more so since the Council declaration — continue to display such a helpless attitude toward Jews and Judaism, and that so little constructive change has taken place, is related to the lack of knowledge about the reality of Judaism. First of all, on the Christian side, there is all too often a general lack of awareness of the diversity of ways in which one can be a Jew. Judaism is not hierarchically organized, nor is there a world headquarters for Judaism. Judaism is a house of many rooms that can accommodate a diversity of residents. These residents may not always speak well of one another, and they may not appreciate the forms that religious worship takes among other Jews; they may accuse one another of being intolerant, too liberal, too chauvinistic, too universalist, too assimilatory, too genteel, too critical, too uncritical. But they are all Jews and, above all, they all acknowledge one another as Jews. The reality of Judaism encompasses its diversity and pluralism.”

Nostra Aetate acknowledged Judaism as a religion created by God and recognized Christianity’s roots in Judaism

The Second Vatican Council convening at St. Peter’s

The Great Synagogue in Rome

Ernst Ludwig Ehrlich at the Arch of Titus
The origins of institutionalized hatred

By Heide Langguth

In recent years, our society has again seen a rise in anti-Semitism that extends beyond far-right circles. An increasing number of "concerned citizens" from the mainstream of society are weighing in under the guise of criticism of Israel. They claim that Israel and the "international Jewish financial capital" are mainly to blame for the conflict in the Middle East and the worldwide financial crises. Their arguments are anything but nuanced, and it is apparent that age-old anti-Semitic stereotypes and modes of thought ("the Jews are to blame for everything") are enjoying a revival. These patterns of thought and explanation have their origins in the nearly two-thousand year tradition of anti-Judaism within Christianity. This year we are marking the 800th anniversary of institutionalized anti-Semitism. In November 1215, Pope Innocent III proclaimed the resolutions of the Fourth Lateran Council in Rome. Some of the 71 decrees dealt with relations between Christians and Jews. In Canon 65, Jews were forbidden from exporting "oppressive and immoderate interest," with which they "in a short time exhaust the resources of the Christians." In Canon 68, Jews and Saracens (Muslims) were instructed to dress in such a manner that Christian and Jewish or Muslim in Czechoslovakia, who were both convicted of being agents of Zionism, served as further evidence of increasing rancor toward the Jewish state.

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Todays debt is higher than ever before. As a result, governments and central banks have only minimal to no room to maneuver. Government and individuals, together, have now accumulated a total of US$ 200 trillion in global debt, which corresponds to 258 percent of global GDP. In the seven years since the global financial crisis of 2007–2008, debt has increased by a further US$ 60 trillion, or more than 40 percent. But debt is not an inevitability; it is an impact that has largely been forgotten, perhaps because it calls into question the much-touted primacy of politics.

Dilemma of Regulation
The World of Finance in Uncertain Times – What about the Investor?

By Marcus Vitt

Capital markets have experienced a great deal of turmoil in recent years. At the turn of the century, the collapse of the New Economy bubble soon gave way to the upheaval that followed the attacks of September 11. The financial markets, since 2008, historically low interest rates and the ongoing impact of the global financial crisis, and debt crisis have remained cause for concern.

The greed for profit, with its often negative impact on decision-making, has also played a role in these events. Policymakers have responded by tightening regulations on banks, with the aim of pro-
tecting consumers from the consequences of poor investment advice. Since the start of the global financial crisis, every year has seen a flood of new legal duties, regulations and laws – with no end in sight. The result is a regulatory wave is affecting all banks, even those that have always plowed the interests of their clients at front and center. But does this truly serve the interests of consumer protection? The reality is that this regulatory frenzy has done little to protect investors. To the contrary: the surfeit of new regulations means that banks are increasingly scaling back their advisory services, leaving an ever-larger number of consumers to navigate on their own. And without competent investment advice, consumers are prey to erroneous worries and fears.

Rules should benefit clients
The flood of laws and regulations has also had an impact on banks. Many financial advisors have become cautious, concerned mainly with avoiding mistakes. German financial institutions are becoming increasingly reluctant to provide investment advice. This trend is even apparent among banks that specialize in an affluent clientele. And many clients are tired of dealing with a seemingly endless mountain of paperwork. More and more are switching to portfolio management services, where banks can operate freely within a pre-defined limit. Only then do private banks even decide to switch entirely to portfolio management services, even for their high-wealth clientele.

And what about the clients who are unable to afford professional portfolio management, for example through a private bank? This is the true dilemma of regulation. A surfeit of caution has taken hold among investment advisors. Strict accountability and client requirements are keeping many potential investors out of the securities market. But with the European Central Bank enforcing continued low interest rates, securities have become an even more important investment tool. Financial repression on the part of the state will have a devastating impact on pension systems. By maintain-
The digitization and net-
working of the economy and society seems un-
stoppable. This development, which permits continuous com-
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dustrial landscape in profound
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Organized robbery

The brave new world of digi-
tization and networking brings
with it an unprecedented op-
portunity for economic devel-
oping. But it also poses enor-
mous risks, which could easily
take on dystopian dimensions. Subjacent
extraction, espionage,
and other forms of organized
criminality are also a reality
cyberspace. Indeed, by 2009
cybercrime had become more
profitable than drug trafficking.
In February 2015, it was reported
that the Carbanak cybergang
had stolen up to US$ 1 billion from a total of more than
100 banks worldwide. Ordinary citi-
zens, tourists, and other forms of organized
criminality are an especially attractive target
for cybercriminals via
the Darknet, a hidden and
anonymous underworld of
a web. On the Darknet, ser-
cices available for purchase range from human trafficking and weapons to the hiring of
contract killers.

Because of their technological knowledge and
sophistication, German companies are an especially attractive
target for cybercriminals. The potential economic
damage caused by cyber-
crime is estimated at € 5 billion
(US$ 7.5 billion), or approximate-
ately 1.6 percent of Germany’s GDP.
And the potential impact of cy-
berattacks could be devastating.
For example, this past year a Ger-
man steel mill was hacked in a
cyberattack. And it is not only
large companies that have been
the targets of such attacks. Up
to 10 percent of SMEs have also
fallen victim to such attacks.

Alongside industrial and eco-
nomic policy, digitization also
poses new challenges to interna-
tional security and defense pol-
icy. Since 2012, when Estonia
was attacked, cyberattacks were carried out on
a number of Estonian organiz-
ations, including the parliament,
ministries, and banks, which
have been
tended to force to reduce that
gap. But
German policy in matters of IT se-
curity is still lagging, in part due
to very low levels of government
investment. The agency in charge
of IT infrastructure in Germany,
the Federal Office for Information
Security (BSI), in 2014 presided
over a budget of € 79 million. This
corresponds to approximately
1.5 percent of the budget of the Federal
Ministry of the Interior, of which
the BSI is a part.

New law is no remedy

The cyberattack carried out on
the German Bundestag earlier
this year, which lasted for sever-
al months and led to data theft
from the parliament’s comput-
ing facilities, demonstrates that
governments have understi-
mated the importance of cyber-
security. The new IT Security
Act passed by the Bundestag in
mid-June is unlikely to remedy
this situation. One provision of the new
law requires operators of
infrastructures – including
the Bundestag – to report signifi-
cant IT security incidents to the
new cybersecurity agency, which
is only 25 percent, and the intro-
duction of such “placebo” regula-
tions will do nothing to improve
this situation. Also, the new law
will do nothing to change the
fact that the Internet currently
operates as a kind of legal vac-
uum. But accepting this state
of affairs poses a grave risk to our
future. Instead, we must develop
a vision of an Internet that is free
of cybercrime.

This kind of governance by
bureaucracy also exacts a price
on private enterprise. When
the state’s remedy is little more
than a sham, private enterprise is
forced to take matters into its
own hands. In recent years, German companies have been
steadily increasing their IT se-
curity budgets. Cybersecurity
has become an important issue
during acquisitions of competi-
tors and in corporate mergers.
To maximize their security, Ger-
man enterprises are constantly searching for new solutions and
instituting new alliances, such as
the German Cyber Security Hub
of Electricity (Cyberhub-E), an alli-
ance of energy companies that is
focusing on cybersecurity strat-
egies and concepts. Last month,
four major German companies – Volkswagen, Allianz, Bayer and
BASF – announced that they would
work together to develop innovative solutions, which
will sell information-technology secu-
rity services to help companies in
Germany identify cyber risks and
ward off attacks.

Towards innovative solutions

German Defense Minister Ursu-
la von der Leyen’s April 2015
visit to the NATO cyber defense
center in Tallinn could represent
a turning point in cybersecurity policies. According to initial re-
ports, the issue of cybersecurity was high on the agenda for the
2016 Bundeswehr White Paper,
in which the German government defines its security policy guide-
lines and which is scheduled for
presentation at the end of the year.
This would appear to be a move in
the right direction. In the face of a
digital attack on German soil,
however, the responsibility would
lie with the Federal Ministry of the Interior and its agencies.

This question arises whether the German Bundeswehr may not be in a bet-
ter position to ensure Germany’s
cybersecurity. At the same time,
Germany would be well advised
to establish a coordinating of-
center at the highest level, based in
the Federal Chancellery, along the US.
and Israeli model. In a
number of governments, the structure of the
intelligence services, this co-
ordinating office would enable
the agencies to efficiently coordinate the
various measures undertaken by the
Bundeswehr, the Federal Ministry
of the Interior, the intelligence
services, and the German states.

Such a step would help reinforce
Germany’s security policy, even
given current budgetary con-
straints. This would allow Ger-
many to become a driver of in-
novative cybersecurity solutions,
rather than continuing to play a
game of catch-up in this sphere.

Arne Schönbohm is president of
Cyber-Sicherheitsrat Deutsch-
land e.V., founded in 2012

**Watch Out: Cyberattack!**

Government must invest to enhance security

**The attack on the German Bundestag shows that policymakers have underestimated the importance of cybersecurity**

By Arne Schönbohm

The digitization and net-
working of the economy and society seems un-
stoppable. This development, which permits continuous com-
munication between man and
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dustrial landscape in profound
ways. With the rise of Industry
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}
By Tilo Mandry

Germany’s life science sector is second only to the U.S. in terms of how best to combine pharmaceuticals and medical technology to biotechnology, and export success in the healthcare devices industry. Alongside well-established larger companies, the sector also includes many small and mid-sized enterprises (SMEs). For these SMEs, Israel is an exciting opportunity. For one, Israel offers a market for German products. But German companies can also benefit from the innovative potential of Israel’s healthcare sector. To date, however, German companies have not fully exploited this potential, to the detriment of both the German and Israeli sectors.

Favorable prospects

Generally speaking, economic relations between Germany and Israel in the healthcare sector are largely ignored by the press. One exception was Israeli drugmaker TEVA’s 2010 acquisition of the German generics manufacturer Ratiopharm, which received significant international attention. TEVA is the world’s largest generics manufacturer. Economic prospects for German companies in Israel’s healthcare sector are favorable. Israel is already Germany’s second-largest trade partner in the Middle East, and Israel’s population is increasing rapidly. Although its population is still relatively young, the percentage of elderly is growing fast, a trend that will also increase demand for healthcare products. Imports of German medical technology to Israel rose 2.7 percent in 2014, even though public hospitals were not fully funded for a portion of the year. With imports totaling US$ 177 million, Germany is Israel’s second-largest exporter of medical technology, topped only by the U.S.

new ideas and found new businesses. In Germany, SMEs tend to be family-owned and passed down from generation to generation. As a result, tradition tends to play a significantly larger role in a variety of relations than in respect to a German. A German company would approach a medical technology deal in its many years will tend to stick to their tried-and-true technological approach, and refine it on an ongoing basis. In Israel, companies in the life science sector tend to be especially innovative in their search for new solutions. For example, an Israeli company invented a capsule camera that is swallowed by patients in order to deliver images from inside the patient’s body. This capsule camera represents an entirely new approach, rather than simply an elaboration of existing endoscopic technology. But it is precisely these differences in corporate culture that make collaboration between Germany and Israel so fruitful.

Potential partners

But what steps are necessary to launch a German-Israeli joint venture? Are German partners able to obtain licenses for Israeli products? And how can a German business collaborate with an Israeli partner to refine a product, or enter a third market? The Export Initiative for the German Health Care Industry provides assistance to German SMEs establishing contact with potential Israeli partners, and in obtaining answers to these and other questions. The initiative is financed by the German Ministry of Economics and maintains competitive neutrality in its operations. Over the past four years, the initiative has succeeded in strengthening the position of German SMEs in Israel. To help establish contacts between companies, the initiative organizes podium discussions and workshops at trade fairs and congresses in Israel. Most of these events are conducted in collaboration with the German Chambers of Commerce and the German-Israeli Life Sciences Committee, and receive support from the German embassy in Tel Aviv.

At the University of the Negev in Beersheba, for example, the initiative helped organize a podium discussion on the topic of biomanufacturing. The focus of these events was not restricted to quantities of biotechnological substances for use in clinical studies, but also much lower growth rates. The events demonstrated how German contract manufacturers can meet the specific interests of their Israeli clients.

Clinical studies

At the Life Sciences Israel conference, a forum was held on the execution of clinical trials. The forum focused on how data from clinical studies can be utilized for regulatory approval of pharmaceuticals. Germany is an important site for the execution of clinical studies. At an event held to mark the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Germany and Israel, the focus was on partnerships with industrial enterprises and financing via venture capital funds. Much like in the U.S., the venture capital forum was held on the execution of clinical trials. Ger-

Asian Stock Market and Private Investors

By Jens Spudy

The somewhat laborious task of setting dynamic stop-loss limits in accounts can secure profits and other alternatives will continue. Investors should therefore use the opportunity presented by the latest market corrections to check their current asset allocations: What market classes are still missing in my portfolio because they seemed too expensive two months ago? What assets or countries, like India or Russia, have I been ignoring? What investments have become so large compared to my original allocation that they now represent a cluster risk for my portfolio and should therefore be reduced? And how am I positioned regarding dividend stocks that may be able to offset short-term losses with their high dividends?

The somewhat laborious task of setting dynamic stop-loss limits in accounts can secure profits and give investors considerable peace of mind in tense times should negative emotions have returned to the capital markets thanks to some strong fluctuations in stock prices in the past few weeks. After China’s most recent posting of economic data significantly weaker than expected, the DAX dropped by as much as 4.7 percent, by the latest opening of the country’s currency, the renminbi, by the central bank and the fall in commodity prices suggest that the Chinese economy is doing worse than previously believed. The Chinese stock market is considered from its all-time high of 12,390.75 points all the way down to 9,684.81. This has naturally led to questions of whether we are facing a new global economic crisis. I consider such fears to be exaggerated. China is still a positive driver for the global economy, with its gross domestic product of more than 10,000 billion dollar, even at much lower growth rates.

And yet, a glance at the portfolio balance will displease many private investors. It is closely followed by reflections on how best to respond to the current situation. In view of the continued expansive monetary policy, a notable change in interest rates is not to be expected anytime soon. Inflation in the eurozone remains at a very low level due to largely stagnant unit labor costs and falling commodity prices. These circumstances make it difficult to anticipate a sharp increase in interest rates – even in the longer term. This means the trend of investors moving from fixed-income investments to the stock markets and other alternatives will continue.

Tilo Mandry is director of the Export Initiative for the German Health Care Industry at Germany Trade and Invest, a partner of the Ministry of Economics.

Jens Spudy is executive partner of Spudy Invest.
Music Can Offer Hope

Barenboim-Said Academy shall foster reconciliation between peoples embroiled in conflict

Michael Naumann talked to Elisabeth Neu and Ralf Selbigmann

In my view, these kinds of cultural rearguard actions on the part of the mullahs mean that the fundamentalist regime in Iran will eventually lose its grip on power. Over the past few years, they have tried to take part and then they cancelled, which demonstrates that there are two layers of decision-making in Iran. The Iranian cardinal is more pragmatic than Qom. And as they say there: as Tehran, so goes the rest of the country...

The nuclear deal with Tehran focuses on the technical aspects – but it does not contain a recognition of the right of all states, including Israel, to exist. Does this take you aback?

It does, yes. But I am in favor of the deal. Will Iran remain a threat to Israel? Of course – also because they help finance Hezbollah. The Iranians won’t let go of their ideological Israel-phobia quite so easily. But if the U.S. Senate had blocked the implementation of the deal, two things would have happened. First, Iran would have felt vindicated in its evident mania for nuclear weapons. Second, the international boycott regime would never have been reinstated. Foreign visitors and investors are already lining up in Tehran.

The Barenboim-Said Academy is something of an ivory tower – its curriculum will focus on music, philosophy, cultural history...

We had well over 100 applications. Many came from Israel. But an even larger number of responses came from students of Arab background, hailing from Palestine, Iraq, Egypt, and Lebanon. I’m always amazed and delighted to see how familiar the Arab middle class is with classical European music. That’s very different from what we see here, where only a minority are familiar with Arab music.

Ever since Verdi – for example, the premiere of Aida at Cairo opera house – European opera has been familiar to people all around the Mediterranean. So we’re also drawing upon that cultural and historical reservoir. We assume that our young musicians will return to their home countries after completing their training – to the extent that’s possible, at least. We aren’t aiming for something that is mere window dressing. Our goals are also eminently practical. Our graduates will be able to teach music in schools and conservatories in their home countries, or work as professional musicians. They will be artists who can set an example, who can carry forth the ideals of shared music-making, critical thinking, and harmony.

Politics and art: Karl Kraus once said, “About Hitler, I have nothing to say…” – How do you explain the political improvidence of intellectuals?

Karl Kraus was described in Germany’s first Secretary of Culture (1998–2001). He was appointed director of the Barenboim-Said Academy in 2012.
The Moment to Save Our History is Now
Leo Baeck Institute’s urgent mission

By Carol Kahn Strauss

Jews in Germany joined the modern world well prepared. For centuries they had studied Talmud and other sacred texts making the transition to German-speaking Jewry. By the 20th century, this generation of Jews who fled from the pogroms and the Holocaust, and who moved to the German-Jewish institutions in the United States and the rest of the world, were well prepared. For centuries they had been educated in the traditions of family and faith that remained well after the outward manifestations of observance were discarded. The golden age of German Jewry that generated an extraordinary array of creativity and innovation lived on with centuries-old traditions. The Nazis could neither obliterate the breakthrough developments that paved the way for modernity nor the vestiges of the faith that sustained us.

Library and archives

The library and archives of Leo Baeck Institute contain some of the most important documents in this history of German-speaking Jewry. From illustrious names to unknown villagers, the record of their lives is preserved for posterity. The birth and death records of every Jew in the city of Frankfurt going back to the 13th century; the first edition of Martin Luther’s scathingly anti-Semitic book, On the Jews and their Lies; Ofelia’s Book, the first official document granting Jews special rights; memorabilia attesting to Jewish patriotism in the service of their fatherland; dismissal notices to Jewish lawyers, teachers, professors, and doctors when they were no longer permitted to earn a living in Germany.

There is a vast amount of social, religious and cultural history to be learned from the LBI collections that cover five centuries. It is cataloged and accessible to scholars, genealogists, and researchers around the world. Most of it is digitized and online. All of it is rare, fragile and unique. The great German-Jewish novelist Alfred Döblin once said he knew hardly any real Jews, only people who called themselves Jews. “Perhaps they were the remnants of a vanished people who had long ago been absorbed into their surroundings.” When it came to the catastrophic end of German Jewry, it was clear that being absorbed into their surroundings was a myth. Jews were always Jews, at least to others.

Preservation as primary goal

As the survivor generation passes on, it is the children and especially the grandchildren who are discovering troves of letters, report cards, photo albums and transatlantic correspondence. At Leo Baeck Institute these priceless documents are properly preserved to become part of the permanent record. The preservation of these materials has been our primary mission for 60 years. But our efforts cannot end at preservation. Rather, the Institute has made, and continues to make, every effort to publicize its ongoing search for artifacts that reveal a decimated world. Readers of Jewish Voice can be enormously important contributors. Everything is relevant in the annals of history. Papers that might seem superficially prosaic – perhaps a memoir describing daily routines of life in a small village – can offer powerful insights into social dynamics. When such papers are lost, authentic eyewitness accounts of history are lost with them.

We must cast a wide net to find and save these papers. When the Jews of Central Europe had to flee their homelands, there were 98 countries of exile. This postwar Diaspora resulted in widely dispersed communities where contact was nonexistent. Before letters, photos, memoirs and diaries. Whether in German, Spanish, French or English, the language is always of loss and hope, despair and promise. The last survivors look to Leo Baeck Institute to preserve their stories. When they can no longer speak of the past and how it relates to the present, their voice will still be heard here. We ask you to partner with us in this vital responsibility by sharing our vital mission with anyone you know who might have material for the LBI collections. This may be the last moment to save it. Jewish texts instruct us in remembrance, Jewish writers teach us the importance of the transmission of knowledge. Leo Baeck Institute has taken this obligation as a mandate to collect and preserve our heritage.

Carol Kahn Strauss is International Director of Leo Baeck Institute, New York

Jewish Heritage

The voices of the last survivors will still be heard here

ANTHOLOGY

Third Generation Snapshots of Today
Young German and Israeli authors write about the other country

By Elisabeth Neu

A dancing couple – the guy with his pinkish skin looks as if he has been in the sun for too long, the girl, a dark-haired beauty, has put on socks and boots to brave the weather to come. They’re holding hands, dancing on rail tracks. The buildings on the left are taken straight from Tel Aviv’s shoreline. On the right, a Berlin landmark, the television tower at Alexanderplatz, rises. A yellow Berlin subway train is rattling along, towards a junction from which another track leads directly to – Auschwitz. Hardy a light-hearted jive they’re dancing – or is it?

This cartoon image graces the cover of the book We Won’t Forget – We’re Going Dancing, subtitled: “Israeli and German authors write about the other country.” Appearing simultaneously in German and Hebrew, the anthology contains 18 stories and one poem, each documenting a special and personal perspective on German-Israeli relations far and beyond this year’s celebrations of 50 years of diplomatic ties. Authors include Katharina Hacker, Eva Menasse, Jochen Schmidt and as their Israeli counterparts Li- al Elkayam, Witsch Aloni and Assaf Gavron. With one exception, all the writers were born long after official relations between the two countries were established.

Between the covers, we find everything from politically-correct analysis of Middle East politics by self-appointed German experts to totally politically-incorrect (Israeli) tales of love, soccer, sex, stamp collecting and the power of the past and of memory. The odd die-hard cliche is there too: The German guy is “one blond meter 92,” with “beautiful blue eyes”… Yet it may come as a surprise to many that Germany is viewed by more than one Israeli as the center of a thriving porn movie industry.

Whilst the quality of the contributions may vary, all in all We Won’t Forget – We’re Going Dancing, edited by Israeli writer Amichai Shalev and his German colleague Norbert Kron, makes for a great read. As for the “new” German-Israeli relations, third generation on, why be “normal” when there are so many more exciting things on offer?
Standing Up to Xenophobia and Racism

Taking responsibility for democracy and justice

By Uwe-Karsten Heye

T

he is no more powerful testimony than this photo: The body of a toddler washed up on the shore of the Mediterranean. Thousands of people have perished while attempting to flee across the sea in overcrowded boats, founding on the rocks of Fortress Europe. The Mediterranean has become a mass grave. Aylan was just three years old. Small and fragile, he was found on the beach in the Turkish tourist resort of Bodrum. His photo and his death have come to symbolize the refugee crisis – in the Middle East, the famine-stricken countries of Africa and elsewhere. There are currently 60 million displaced people around the world.

Several hundred thousand have headed to Europe. More and more are coming overland. They travel thousand of kilometers, alone or with their families, because they have pinned their hopes on the European Union, on the rich northern hemisphere.

Ill prepared

But the European Union is evidently far from pleased to be the chosen destination of so many people fleeing civil war or famine and seeking security and protection. The EU has completely failed to appreciate the current political storm as it seeks to defend its borders, spending hundreds of millions of euro to make these borders as impenetrable as possible. No agreements among its member states had prepared the EU for the wave of desperate people hoping to come to Germany which together with Sweden has admitted the largest numbers.

But there are also those who object. Protests in Germany in front of refugee shelters have been organized by right-wing extremist groups; apartment building and sports halls where refugees were to be put up have been torched. Large-scale demonstrations against admitting refugees have been staged in Dresden by a group calling itself “Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the West.” Hatred and resistance are real and should not be underestimated. But there have also been major counter-demonstrations, and they show where the majority of people in Germany stand.

The government too has now made quite clear that Germany has indeed learned from its history. But it was above all civil society – ordinary people determined to take a stand and to help – that prompted the government to finally become active – also spurred on by the Social Democrats, the conservative chancellor’s coalition partners. The CDU’s Bavarian sister party, the CSU, remains opposed to opening the country’s doors to refugees. This year about a million are expected to come to Germany. It is not clear whether they will be here temporally or for ever.

Show your face!

An example of civil society activism: every Tuesday in Berlin volunteers run a “language café” on the premises of Gesicht Zeigen! Für ein weltoffenes Deutschland, a non-profit organization which was founded to encourage people to become involved in society and to take responsibility for democracy and justice in Germany. Its name translates roughly as “Show your face! For a liberal-minded Germany.” At the café, immigrants and refugees can learn German or simply meet and talk, get to know each other and local people. The common language is mostly English, but some volunteers speak Arabic, Kurdish and Turkish.

“Never change a winning team” is a rule set by the board referred to the state of Berlin as “the training ground for solidarity and respect.” While there, children often tell their schoolmates their own stories of being a refugee for the first time. In many school classes nowadays half the children or more are from refugee or immigrant families. The exhibition is about the experiences of young people in the Nazi period, but also about what it means for society today and for young people today.

Diverse and colorful

In all its projects, Gesicht Zeigen! seeks to encourage the young to care about the society they live in and to get involved, to stand up for a free and democratic Germany and for its diverse and colorful society.

Flight is no crime and no person is illegal – demonstration at the Federal Chancellery in Berlin

The initiative Gesicht Zeigen! seeks to encourage the young to care about the society they live in

There are thousands of organizations and initiatives, large and small, dedicated to combating rightwing extremism, xenophobia and racism. Many have adopted the name Gesicht Zeigen! – something its founders can rightly be proud of.

Uwe-Karsten Heye was German consul general in New York and is founder of Gesicht Zeigen!

Culture First

“Never change a winning team” is a rule set by the board of Berlin’s Jewish Community when they cancelled this year’s Days of Jewish Culture at short notice. Refusing the annual state subsidy of about US$ 280,000 was one thing; the justification provided was even more startling, as the board referred to the “difficult financial situation of the state of Berlin.” Launched in 1987, the 10 days festival has become a part of the cultural calendar has become a part of the cultural landscape in reunified Berlin and a cultural must for Berlin residents and their guests, Jews and non-Jews alike, attracting some 35,000 people last year.

Another opportunity to highlight the relevance of Berlin’s Jewish Community was missed on September 6th, the European Day of Jewish Culture, a continent-wide Jewish culture and education festival that encompasses hundreds of events in more than 30 countries. Mapped in more than 30 countries. Marked in more than 30 countries. Marked in 60 million displaced people in various German cities, particularly in Munich, the day provided a platform to battle indifference and prejudice. “Bridges” was the general theme this year, aptly describing the drawing power of Jewish culture as a truly trans-national element of European heritage.

With its many members engaged in the cultural sector, the Jewish Community of Berlin could be a shining example of diversity, dialogue and debate. Jewish culture festivals mushroom throughout Germany, in instances for Stuttgart and Dresden, and enthusiasm for living Judaism beyond textbooks and museums. They also provide an opportunity for the growing numbers of unaffiliated Jews to reconnect with the immense richness of the Jewish tradition beyond religious observance.

We are only at the beginning of the discussion about tolerance, identity, globalization and the consequences of the insight that in this world today we are all minorities. Together with the questions about the quality of life and our role as media consumers, we have to seize the opportunity and present the significance of Jewish culture and Jewish values in Germany today.

Maybe we ought to sidestep official lines and create our own spaces, recognizing the creativity of the wider Jewish community.

BOMHOF RECOMMENDS

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So, Who Integrated Whom Then? 25 Years of Russian-speaking Jewish immigration in Germany

By Hartmut Bonhoff

I came to Germany as a secular Jew who had been brought up in the Soviet Union, and I did not know a word of German. Today I am a religious Jew and a poet and writer in German and Russian. I have always been interested in Central integration.” Boris Schapiro was born in Moscow in 1944. He is a successful natural scientist and is currently working on what he calls a rational theology of Judaism. He came to Berlin in 1975, fifteen years before tens of thousands of Jews from the former Soviet Union began in the summer of 1990. Still, he is quite representative: Like a majority of these immigrants who numbered about 222,000 in all, he hails from a big city and has a university education.

For many, starting a new life in Germany was accompanied by a renewed interest in Judaism: About half joined a synagogue. But tens of thousands of others who had been considered ethnically Jewish faced discrimination were suddenly confronted with the fact that they did not count as Jews under Jewish law because their mothers were not Jewish.

Michaela Michalowitz, a Christian Democrat local politician in Hanover, views things differently: “At first, I saw that people had been considered ethnically Jews in the Soviet Union. Despite discrimination and repressive measures, our Jewish communities there were at least as authentic and stable as the German congregations were unlikely to survive. But they did constitute a community of Jewish survivors. They had fought in the Red Army against Germany and therefore had a different perspective on the Holocaust than those who had survived or had come back after the war, it is not easy in the communities, but it works.”

A two-way process

Mary Sofer is an administrator at the association of Jewish communities in the state of Lower Saxony. “On Rosh ha-Shana I had the opportunity to meet people who came here 20 or 25 years ago. The younger generation went to school here and to university. Many have good jobs. But I have the impression that their background is stronger than the German culture they live in. It is not a matter of language. They speak perfect German.”

One member of this younger generation is Renate Pal. “I think it was a successful undertaking: The newcomers integrated as well as they could at the time. The Germans helped with the integration and in process they changed too; they became a bit Russian perhaps. Now they eat pelmeni and piroshki. As to culture and religion, the fast pace of life and modern media have such a strong influence that things like that fade into the background. But they keep their Russian culture, that is certain.”

Jascha Nemtsov certainly thinks so: “My impression is that the integration was successful – for both sides. Whoever was still able to learn, learned a lot from German culture. And the locals adopted a little Russian culture.”

Nemtsov is a pianist and musicologist who grew up in what was then Leningrad, came to Germany in 1992 and is now professor of the history of Jewish music in Weimar. “Many immigrants have developed a strong identity,” says Alla Vollodarska-Kelmereit, a social worker at the Liberal Jewish Community in Hanover who comes from Ukraine. “We would agree: ‘Wherever they realized that only reciprocal integration can work, integration in the communities has been a success.”

World Class Culture with a Jewish Core

A new festival in Erfurt sparks interfaith dialogue and debate

By Gideon Wollberg

Thuringia has many different faces. Martin Luther, Johann Sebastian Bach and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe have all left their marks in the Free State, and some of its landmarks have been recognized as UNESCO World Heritage sites. This fall, Erfurt, the capital of Thuringia, became a magnet for locals and visitors alike who wanted to discover the diversity of contemporary Jewish culture. The “Achava”, or Brotherhood, Festival, the first event of its kind in the former East German city, attracted more than 4,000 visitors.

The result of event organizer Martin Krane’s vision and supported by patrons including the German Federal Foreign Office, the Israeli Embassy in Berlin and the Central Council of Jews in Germany, the festival featured renowned Israeli musicians like Avishai Cohen, Ravid Kahalani and Idan Raichel.

More than an opportunity to promote artistic quality, “Achava” aimed at discussing current political issues, highlight prejudices and unanswered questions about all things Jewish. “To engage in dialogue and debate, to accept dissent and to encounter each other. It is not easy.”

A highlight was the opening concert at Erfurt Cathedral, introducing the rich legacy of synagogue music with cantors Roslyn Barak (San Francisco), Isidoro Abramowicz (Stockholm) and Aziz Schwartz (New York) performing. The next day, on Friday evening, the three cantors led the small Jewish community of Erfurt in prayers, proving how very much alive this musical heritage is.

Today, the Jewish Community of Thuringia numbers around 800, amongst them about 500 who live in Erfurt. Thuringia’s Minister-President Bodo Ramelow attended both the concert and the synagogue service. He spoke out in favor of a second edition of the festival, whose success had not been foreseeable. Concentrating on brotherhood and the common grounds of Jews, Christians and Muslims in a state where over two thirds of the population identify as non-religious seemed to be like jumping in at the deep end. However, the festival featured renowned Israeli musicians like Avishai Cohen, Ravid Kahalani and Idan Raichel. More than an opportunity to promote artistic quality, “Achava” aimed at discussing current political issues, highlight prejudices and unanswered questions about all things Jewish. “To engage in dialogue and debate, to accept dissent and to encounter each other. It is not easy.”

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Do you want to study, work or complete a vocational training programme in Germany? Find out how by visiting Career Compass Germany. The app provides comprehensive information in English and German on the most important organisations and opportunities.

Career Compass Germany offers 200 links that take you straight to the key websites.
The painter likes to act the devil. On the cover of his new book „Pavel Feinstein“ (just published by Hirmer, Munich) a glowering look captures the beholder, dark brows furrow above large, penetrating eyes. But once you have climbed the more than 100 steps up to his studio in Berlin, you are greeted by – a jester.

Feinstein is born in Moscow in 1960. Soon the family moves to the Soviet Republic of Tajikistan. The gifted boy receives painting lessons; later attends arts college. Feinstein is twenty years old when he moves on. Emigration. Destination: Berlin.

Feinstein studies at the University of Arts. At that time, the artistic ambitions of the „Neue Wilde“ (New Wild Ones) painters are running riot here – “more of a kindergarten than an artistic laboratory”, as an art critic of the time states. Pavel, soon attending masterclasses at the university, has little in common with them. Pavel is a serious young man, and a jester at the same time, with a penchant for ambiguity, for alienated references. He paints in the style of the Old Masters. His craftsmanship is perfect.

In his studio, where once George Grosz created his works of art before he was defamed by the Nazis and left Germany, Feinstein works on his large and many-faceted oeuvre. There are paintings telling of the transitoriness of living creatures and objects alike – like the fish, wrapped in cloth – next to it on the table a hammer placed in a delicate China bowl. Still lives abound. The 17th century Dutch Masters would have been astonished to see how their genre has evolved. Apparently conservative in choice of object, Feinstein’s brush bestows a magical touch even upon a bunch of humble vegetables. Time and again, pomegranates and their seeds – symbols of beauty, fertility, diversity. Dates on a plate – a masterpiece of chiaroscuro, the art of light-dark, of stark contrast. The scales of a fish shimmer from the canvas, tempting one to touch them. Next to a knife and a lemon, an egg is placed, complete with identification code. These ironic references, quotes and twists make Feinstein’s still lives unique.

Desert paintings. One is tempted to interpret them as Biblical landscapes, scenes from the Old Testament. Human
figures, alone or in groups, often accompanied by goats, their piercing eyes penetrating the dark, are resting in blue-gray landscapes at dusk or in the night. But the human figures are by no means devoutly waiting for a Divine sign from above – they are noisy, swinging sticks and clubs, worshiping the moon or one another. This anarchy seems to pay homage to the great Russian realist Ilya Repin. Feinstein’s figures are on a par with the Zaporozhian Cossacks in their hefty obstinacy and their anarchic vitality.

Monkeys are romping through Feinstein’s paintings. Vanity, lechery and malice have been attributed to this animal making it the mirror image of man himself. Feinstein’s monkeys are painting, aping, trying to capture the skull of a monkey on paper, doing monkey business, courting each other. There is only a thin divide between the tragic and the absurd. Just as in real life. People in Feinstein’s oeuvre – portraits, masterfully rendering beauty, fear, the furrows of everyday life, melancholia. Children’s eyes looking to the future are full of hope and skeptical at the same time. Self-portraits whilst painting – or acting the devil. Nudes showing the human body in its dignity.

Religious themes, also Jewish themes, appear time and again in Feinstein’s work. Scenes of sacrifice, rituals and rites – but always just a little refocused, their interpretation highly ambiguous. Thus the two young Chassids, their arms around each other’s shoulders. In their hands they hold lulav and etrog, attributes of Succot, the Feast of the Tabernacles. All this is traditional – but the two young men are barely clad. The subversive, the turn of the screw of tradition, his re-interpretation, the breaking of taboos bestows an intriguing timelessness on Feinstein’s paintings.

Pavel Feinstein/Photo: G. Lepkowski (6)
“To Perform a Good Deed With Our Hands”

Volunteers accompany survivors of the Shoah

By Lena Altman

Raya has sent more than 12,000 young volunteers to take part in projects across Europe, in countries including Poland, Russia, France and the United States.

Action across Europe

Action Reconciliation was founded in 1928. Office bearers of the ARSP have provided maintenance work at cemeteries, carried out renovation work on behalf of former forced laborers, acted as guides at memorial sites, and encountered young people from ARSP partner countries. They speak with young adults from their host countries about their identities, exchange collective and individual memories, and discuss their shared political, social and religious engagement. During the course of this work, they get to know one another better and gain a more tangible understanding of the scope of the crimes of the past, as well as their ongoing impact today.

Culture of memory

The issue of interculturality and identity of North American Jews as a nation of immigrants, today the memories of National Socialism and its crimes are recalled in Germany by both majority and minority groups from a variety of perspectives. This has had an impact on the culture of memory as a whole. In the Berlin districts of Kreuzberg and Neukölln, the ARSP collaborates with “neighborhood mothers” who have helped develop joint seminars on the topic of National Socialism. These initiatives are part of the ARSP’s work to help Germans with an immigrant background grapple with the mechanisms of exclusion, persecution and genocide under National Socialism. Building new bridges is also the goal of the German Youth Close Up, a program under the sponsorship of the ARSP that promotes encounters between North American Jews and Germans. The program has already funded more than 1,800 grants to support short trips to Germany lasting 8 to 12 days. During that time, participants are able to experience present-day Germany, explore contemporary debates, and observe how Germany is seeking to address its history.

Action Reconciliation Service for Peace is accepting applications for volunteers for the coming year. The application deadline is November 1, 2015. For more information, visit www.asf-ev.de

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We hope to make a contribution toward restoring severed ties

A woman. In the Action Reconciliation program, volunteers demonstrate responsibility by grappling with the history and consequences of National Socialism. For Raya, responsibility entails listening, empathizing and reaching out, while always remaining aware of and examining her own history and past as a citizen of Germany. “Christians and Jews, Germans and Israel, are inextricably tied to one another because of our shared history. With our work, we hope to make a contribution toward restoring and expanding upon these ties,” says Dagmar Pruin, executive director of Action Reconciliation Service for Peace. As Raya and the 180 other volunteers who are taking part in a year of service in one of thirteen different countries, we are well aware, the crimes committed under National Socialism can never be undone, and no amends can ever erase that history. But Raya and her fellow volunteers hope that, through their actions, will help rebuild damaged relationships and promote mutual understanding. In the process, the volunteers learn a great deal about themselves. This is also true for volunteers who take part in ARSP projects in partner countries, including Poland, Russia, France and the United States.

Practicing across Europe

Action Reconciliation was founded in 1928. One of the key figures was Lothar Kreyssig, a German judge, member of the Confessing Church, and opponent of the National Socialist regime. In his founding statement, Kreyssig wrote, “In a sacrosanct rebellion against the will of God, Germans have killed millions of Jews. We ask the people who suffered violence at our hands to allow us to perform a good deed in their countries, with our hands and our resources.” He recognized that young Germans spend a year as a volunteer in a country that had suffered under National Socialism. The starting point for these projects was to be a clear acknowledgment of guilt. But his idea did not catch on. In the years following the war, Germans were more concerned with repressing the memories of the atrocities they had committed, and the consequences of their actions. These were the beginnings of an organization that would go on to send young volunteers to take part in projects across Europe, in Israel, and the United States. For some Germans, the organization and its founders were traitors – people who, they said, were smirching their own nest. And initially, many of the host countries were also skeptical. Yetuala Roemer, who still lives in Kibbutz Uri, remembers the arrival of the first German volunteers in 1966. “We had no idea what kind of people we were letting ourselves in for,” he recalls. But ongoing dialogue helped overcome those initial reservations. “In conversation with people from different cultures and countries, we must engage with their perspectives and memories, demonstrate respect, and confront the ongoing impact of the history of National Socialism for our shared, present-day existence. And, fortunately for us, our project partners soon came to understand with which our volunteers approached that task,” says Dagmar Pruin notes. “We were aware of a special responsibility to speak out against far-right extremism and anti-Semitism, and to actively promote the development of a more open and inclusive society.” Since its founding, the ARSP has sent more than 12,000 young volunteers to take part in encounters that have furthered their understanding of history, their civic courage, and their understanding of other cultures, religions and mentalities. ARSP volunteers provide support to Holocaust survivors and their families. They accompany groups of visitors to memorial sites, and take part in community projects and anti-racism initiatives. They travel to summer camps in Greece, Belarus, and many other countries, where they spend several weeks performing maintenance work at cemeteries, carrying out renovation work on behalf of former forced laborers, acting as guides at memorial sites, and encountering young people from ARSP partner countries. They speak with young adults from their host countries about their identities, exchange collective and individual memories, and discuss their shared political, social and religious engagement. During the course of this work, they get to know one another better and gain a more tangible understanding of the scope of the crimes of the past, as well as their ongoing impact today.

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your father.” In my first encounter with Mißfelder, the subject of the German-Jewish bard arose. Mißfelder loved Heine’s pointed irony. Born in 1979, Philipp Mißfelder was in his mid-20s when we met. But the expression in his dark eyes showed that he understood the depth and complexity of life. When it came to his plans for life, the tall young man moved forward with vigor. At age 23 he was head of the Christian Democratic Party youth organization. Three years later he was one of the youngest delegates in the German Bundestag, and in relatively short order he was on the national board of the CDU. At age 30, he was appointed foreign policy spokesman of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group. At the same time, but not just on the side, he completed a degree in history in Berlin. He married at a young age, and had two children. At the same time, he also worked for a publishing house. But Philipp Mißfelder always remained thoughtful and systematic in his efforts. Any form of hectic ambition or aggressive self-assertion was foreign to his nature. But perhaps he did somehow sense that his time on earth would be short.

Some years ago, I invited Philipp Mißfelder to appear as my guest at a public debate in Hamburg. The young politician had picked a quarrel with the older generation, arguing that medical treatment for an 85-year-old should not be paid for with public means. Was this humane? Mißfelder smiled, and said he had intended to raise awareness for a demographic problem. And in this, he had succeeded. What followed was a lively debate between the younger and the older generation. Despite opposing opinions, in the end we had come to a better understanding of one another. Argument for argument’s sake was anathema to him. As a politician, Mißfelder already possessed the serenity of maturity.

Philipp Mißfelder told me about the subject of his master’s thesis, the German-Jewish writer Maximilian Harden (1861–1927). As publisher of the journal Die Zukunft, Harden was one of the most polemical writers of his time. The revelations contained in Die Zukunft shook the rule of Emperor Wilhelm II. In the Weimar Republic, Harden became a target of the hatred of the Nazis and the far-right. Harden impressed the liberal-conservative Mißfelder, who was also never one to shy away from a necessary argument.

For Philipp Mißfelder, the relationship between Germans and Jews, and the furthering of German-Israeli relations, were both a matter of the heart and a matter of sound politics. He regarded his membership on the advisory board of the Jewish Voice not only as an honor, but also as an opportunity to play an active role in furthering these joint concerns. Mißfelder enjoyed writing contributions for the Jewish Voice, and lent our publication his active support. In what would be our last conversation, he told me about his accident, but was already making plans for the coming weeks and months. Philipp Mißfelder will not be forgotten.

**IN MEMORIAM**

**Philipp Mißfelder (1979–2015)**

**A true friend**

By Rafael Seligmann

Philipp Mißfelder was a person you could talk to. A real conversation – we take that for granted and yet it is so rare, and so important. Anyone can talk. But the willingness to truly listen to one another, to absorb what the other person is saying, and then to contribute to the conversation, to possess one’s own values and to develop one’s ideas on the basis of these, and then to move beyond what was said and transform those words into actions – that is indeed rare. Philipp Mißfelder was still a young man, but he was a wonderful conversational partner who truly enjoyed dialogue, and who took pleasure in implementing the outcome of those encounters.

Philipp Mißfelder hailed from the Rhineland. As a cultural region that has been subject to frequent changes of sovereignty over the course of history, the Rhineland is also a region that discourages nationalistic narrow-mindedness. Once under Roman rule, it later became a disputed area between the French and the Germans. In his poem *The Drum Major*, Heinrich Heine, who hailed from Düsseldorf, admonished German readers to encounter French veterans "with reverence", for "that old man could well be your father.” In my first encounter with Mißfelder, the subject of the German-Jewish bard arose. Mißfelder loved Heine’s pointed irony. Born in 1979, Philipp Mißfelder was in his mid-20s when we met. But the expression in his dark eyes showed that he understood the depth and complexity of life. When it came to his plans for life, the tall young man moved forward with vigor. At age 23 he was head of the Christian Democratic Party youth organization. Three years later he was one of the youngest delegates in the German Bundestag, and in relatively short order he was on the national board of the CDU. At age 30, he was appointed foreign policy spokesman of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group. At the same time, but not just on the side, he completed a degree in history in Berlin. He married at a young age, and had two children. At the same time, he also worked for a publishing house. But Philipp Mißfelder always remained thoughtful and systematic in his efforts. Any form of hectic ambition or aggressive self-assertion was foreign to his nature. But perhaps he did somehow sense that his time on earth would be short.

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On Yom Kippur afternoon, synagogue-goers around the world heard this verse from Leviticus, “You shall not stand by idle when your neighbor’s blood is being shed.” After weeks of reflection and our reckoning before God, this verse called us to take care of those who appear abandoned by the world community. Some of us are already suffering fatigue from waves of unpleasant stories about massive human displacement. It is quite natural that people do not want to be disturbed by strangers who cost money and place a strain on society at large. Our challenge is to remain engaged in the pursuit of justice.

This reminds me of the annual Passover seder: Surrounded by comfort and good food, we are encouraged to remember the story of the Exodus as if we were the ones who had been slaves and refugees. The admonition to treat others with compassion and justice is echoed 36 times in the Torah. We must do so because we ourselves were foreigners in Egypt. The Jewish story is that of refugees. Jews carry the knowledge of how it feels to flee one’s homes. Our Jewish tradition enjoins upon us the love of mankind. The Torah insists that we treat strangers with dignity and respect. The obligation to protect human life stands at the center of our tradition. It is the overarching principle of pikuah nefesh that asserts the supreme responsibility of protecting individuals and even trumps Shabbat observance. In his addenda to Maimonides’ Sefer Hamitzvot, Nahmanides explains on the basis of Leviticus 25:35 that we must save the life of a ger toshav, a stranger in our midst, if he is drowning or if he is sick even on Shabbat, for pikuah nefesh overrides the Shabbat restrictions.

Cities of Refuge

In his Sefer Hamitzvot, Maimonides includes the mitzva of arei miklat, or cities of refuge, among the 613 Biblical commandments. This mitzva is introduced in the Torah portion Masei (Numbers 33:1–36:13). The Israelites are instructed upon entering the land of Canaan to designate places that would serve as asylums for inadvertent killers from violent retribution by their victims’ relatives. For Maimonides, this obligation implies not only the designation of the cities of refuge, but also ensuring their accessibility. Maimonides asserts: “The court is obligated to straighten the roads to the cities of refuge, to repair them and broaden them. Bridges should be built (over all natural barriers) so as not to delay one who is fleeing to [the city of refuge].” Hence the Biblical institution provides us with a Jewish foundation for action for today, as advocated by the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) and American Jewish World Service. To quote Rabbi Jacob E. Fine of the AJWS: “If our tradition displays such concern for people who have themselves committed murder, even if unintentionally, how much more so should we feel compelled to protect these tens of millions of refugees, the bulk of whom are not themselves criminals but rather innocent bystanders driven from their homes as a result of wars and violence.”

Rabbi Walter Homolka is rector of the Abraham Geiger College at Potsdam University.

You Shall Not Stand by Idle

Welcome the stranger, protect the refugee

By Rabbi Walter Homolka

‘According to the effort is the reward’

Pirkei Avot 5:26

HIAS, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, is helping Darfur refugees in Chad

Photo: Courtesy HIAS

Pirkei Avot 5:26

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In his Sefer Hamitzvot, Maimonides includes the mitzva of arei miklat, or cities of refuge, among the 613 Biblical commandments. This mitzva is introduced in the Torah portion Masei (Numbers 33:1–36:13). The Israelites are instructed upon entering the land of Canaan to designate places that would serve as asylums for inadvertent killers from violent retribution by their victims’ relatives. For Maimonides, this obligation implies not only the designation of the cities of refuge, but also ensuring their accessibility. Maimonides asserts: “The court is obligated to straighten the roads to the cities of refuge, to repair them and broaden them. Bridges should be built (over all natural barriers) so as not to delay one who is fleeing to [the city of refuge].” Hence the Biblical institution provides us with a Jewish foundation for action for today, as advocated by the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) and American Jewish World Service. To quote Rabbi Jacob E. Fine of the AJWS: “If our tradition displays such concern for people who have themselves committed murder, even if unintentionally, how much more so should we feel compelled to protect these tens of millions of refugees, the bulk of whom are not themselves criminals but rather innocent bystanders driven from their homes as a result of wars and violence.”

Rabbi Walter Homolka is rector of the Abraham Geiger College at Potsdam University.

You Shall Not Stand by Idle

Welcome the stranger, protect the refugee

By Rabbi Walter Homolka

On Yom Kippur afternoon, synagogue-goers around the world heard this verse from Leviticus, “You shall not stand by idle when your neighbor’s blood is being shed.” After weeks of reflection and our reckoning before God, this verse called us to take care of those who appear abandoned by the world community. Some of us are already suffering fatigue from waves of unpleasant stories about massive human displacement. It is quite natural that people do not want to be disturbed by strangers who cost money and place a strain on society at large. Our challenge is to remain engaged in the pursuit of justice.

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