Courage, Not Fear

After the vote for Brexit, the specter of fear is once again haunting Europe, and especially Germany. This fear is directed at Brexit, for one, but also at the millions of people who are hoping to flee Africa and the Middle East, at the prospect of a victory by Marine Le Pen in next year’s presidential election in France, at the murky threats being issued by President Erdogan of Turkey, electric power lines, and the amateurish populism of Austrian presidential candidate Norbert Hofer. And most recently, at the diffuse and chaotic heap that makes up the adherents of the German AfD party, varyingly described as opportunists, populists or neo-fascists, depending on one’s mood and point of view.

So must we, as Europeans and Germans, Christians and Jews, now indeed fear the specters of Brexit and the AfD? Europe has withstood Hitler and Stalin, Nazism, fascism and hardcore communism – so how is it possible that we now quake in fear of Mr Johnson and the wretched party of Mr Gauland is it possible that we now quake hard? Does the specter of Brexit mean that the EU is on its last legs? Or that the end of democracy is nigh? What is the price for a return of nationalisms no? Can the SPD be worth something.

Europe must improve, or it will continue to splinter.

No need for charlatans

SPD

Support for Israel

Though critical of some of the policies of the Netanyahu government, in an emergency situation, German Social Democrats would “absolutely” support Israel, confirms the party’s General Secretary Katarina Barley in an interview with JVG. When it comes to countering the rise of right-wing populism in Europe, Barley says that the SPD has an important role to play – not least because of the party’s long and courageous history of democratic action.

TICHY’S COLUMN

Back to Free Trade

Affluence and progress worldwide is closely linked to free trade. For this reason, argues JVG columnist Roland Tichy, it is almost tragic that the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership is on the brink of collapse. Tichy believes that, when it comes to international trade, liberalism must regain “cultural hegemony” over bureaucracity and regulation. Otherwise economic isolationism could lead to the return of nationalisms with potentially deadly consequences.

Committed to Europe

Dear Readers,

This publication supports a united Europe, with no ifs, ands or buts. Brexit is a blow to a free and increasingly connected Europe. There are however grounds for criticism. We acknowledge the EU bureaucracy’s tendency toward over-regulation as well as the problem of waste and inefficiency. But this friction is the price for a unified Europe.

What is the price for a united Europe? For a united Europe which of course we must always seek to improve.

What the European Union has achieved is evident to all: more than 70 years of peace and prosperity. Wha the European Union has achieved is evident to all: more than 70 years of peace and prosperity. Wha the European Union has achieved is evident to all: more than 70 years of peace and prosperity.

70 years of peace and prosperity

Jewish Voice
**BREXIT**

A Future Option for England and the EU

By Elisabeth Neu

Isolation would deepen the division of Europe

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Europe must improve economic prospects for ordinary people – and especially young people

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by replacing Ya’alon with Avigdor Lieberman, thereby solidifying his fragile majority in the coalition and thus containing the rift between the UK and the continent. The economic impact alone will be a severe punishment. Major corporations are likely to pull up stakes and depart the country. Once the island tastes the fruit of its own nationalist egoism, there will be no avoiding its sour aftertaste. Europe must endeavor to keep the door open should the UK seek a return to the Community. Any finger-wagging on Europe’s part would only lend further strength to the forces of nationalism, while leaving its critics in the lurch. Instead, the European Union must focus its efforts on highlighting its strengths.

The EU has brought its citizens, and especially for its young people. It is this foundation that will ensure their support for a united and shared European democracy.

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**ISRAEL**

Danger of Extreme Nationalism

Minister Ya’alon’s resignation is an alarm signal of intolerance

By Rafael Seligmann

Israel’s future is a matter of concern. Defense Minister Moshe Ya’alon’s resignation is a signal, for the former general did not depart of his own free will. Ya’alon’s hand was all but forced by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, whose actions were politically calculated. The ministry of defense has now been turned over to hard-liner Avigdor Lieberman, chair of the Yisrael Beitenu (Israel is Our Home) party. In a democracy, political offices are only temporary appointments and every politician must and should assume they could be replaced at any moment. But in this era, something fundamental is at stake. Moshe Ya’alon is a man of steady resolve who rejects the idea of a Palestine state as unrealistic and as a threat to Israel’s existence. But even his fiercest opponents concede that Ya’alon is honest and morally principled. After Defense Minister Ya’alon viewed a video of the fatal shooting of an unarmed Palestinian attacker by Israeli soldier Elor Azaria, he condemned the killing as an act of vigilante justice. This stance made Ya’alon, who is a prominent member of the Likud Party, the target of vilification by the far-right – including those within his own party. Images of Ya’alon’s face in the cross-hairs went viral on social media, bearing the caption “politically eliminated.” These actions are reminiscent of the campaign of vilification directed against Yitzhak Rabin, which culminated in his assassination in 1995.

Prime Minister Netanyahu solved this escalating conflict by replacing Ya’alon with Avigdor Lieberman, thereby solidifying his fragile majority in the coalition and thus containing the rift between the UK and the continent. The economic impact alone will be a severe punishment. Major corporations are likely to pull up stakes and depart the country. Once the island tastes the fruit of its own nationalist egoism, there will be no avoiding its sour aftertaste. Europe must endeavor to keep the door open should the UK seek a return to the Community. Any finger-wagging on Europe’s part would only lend further strength to the forces of nationalism, while leaving its critics in the lurch. Instead, the European Union must focus its efforts on highlighting its strengths.

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Support of a humane Zionism is required

by Ya’alon’s knowledge of military and party matters is unparalleled. What will be the impact of these events? Netanyahu will continue to pursue the Labor Party, hoping to convince them to join his coalition and thus enhancing his government’s international reputation. Yet this is nothing but a strategic maneuver. What moved Ya’alon to resign, and what continues to worry both Israel and its friends, is the spread of extreme nationalism, and, yes, racism. This must be fought with all legal means. Israel still has time to ward off this threat. The Jewish state still has time to ward off this threat.
Jews have always played an important role in the SPD, all the way back to the early 19th century when Jews fought for the abolition of serfdom in Germany and later for the right to vote. Today, Jews are an integral part of the SPD and the German political landscape.

The SPD has a long history of standing up for the rights of minorities and promoting social justice. In the early 20th century, the SPD was one of the first parties to support women’s suffrage and fought for the rights of workers. Today, the SPD is a leading voice for progressive social policies, including healthcare reform, climate action, and the fight against poverty.

The SPD has a strong tradition of standing up for Israel and supporting the right of the Jewish people to self-determination. In the face of rising anti-Semitism and the threat of the boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) movement, the SPD is committed to defending Israel’s right to exist and opposing BDS.

The SPD is also committed to promoting peace and stability in the Middle East. In the face of the不断加剧的紧张局势, the SPD is working to foster dialogue and understanding between Israelis and Palestinians, and to promote a two-state solution that respects the rights of both peoples.

The SPD is firmly committed to defending the Jewish people and their right to self-determination. As a member of the SPD, I am proud to stand up for a world where Jews and non-Jews can live together in peace and security.

We put a lot of effort into policies for people who are struggling

What motivates your own political engagement?

As naïve as it might sound: I want to make the world a better place. I joined the SPD 23 years ago. At the time, I never imagined that I might one day make politics my career.

... and power...

... that didn’t play a role for me ...

... what about today?

I think I have a very female approach in that respect: not power for power’s sake, but the power to create change ...

... like Maggie Thatcher ... or Golda Meir ...

I need power if I hope to create change. It’s very nice to be where I am now, and to have the power to make a difference, and make a difference. It would make me very happy to know that I’ve done my part to make the world a better place.
**Politics**

**Turkey**

**Erdogan’s Megalomania**

The precarious balance with Europe’s neighbor

By Stephan Weiblinger

The strategy for engaging with Turkey’s President Tayyip Erdogan depends on a deal on our assessment of his long-term goals. Is he amenable to compromise? Or is Erdogan behaving like a wolf in sheep’s clothes, while gradually revealing his true nature? Berlin continues to want to hold fast to its belief in the good in Erdogan. But that is idealistic, in the least.

Germany’s refugee deal with Turkey, intended to stop refugees from venturing to cross over the Mediterranean toward Europe, has brought Berlin into a difficult situation. Germany’s policies toward Ankara are now coming under attack both by leftist supporters of its liberal refugee policies as well as by conserva-
tive critics. The former say that the deal represents a turn away from Germany’s policy of welcoming refugees. The latter say Germany’s openness toward refugees has placed such a strain on the country that it has now become dependent on the help of autocrats such as Erdogan. The result, they say, is that Berlin has become vulnerable to blackmail.

Both are true. The problem became strikingly apparent when the German chancellor decided to intervene in the Jan Böhmermann affair. The German comedian had broadcast a scurrilous poem about Erdogan. The Turkish President was outraged and demanded that the satirist be prosecuted. The poem clearly has little artistic merit, but it is not artistic merit that is at issue here. In a country governed by the rule of law, it is the courts that determine the limits of the permissible. As a private individual, Erdogan was free to file suit against Böhmermann – and he did. But the German government itself crossed the line by then launching an investigation into the satirist, citing the outdated paragraph 103 of the German penal code, a “lèse-majesté” law that protects foreign heads of state from insult.

One encouraging sign, however, was the German Bundestag’s courageous and nearly unanimous Armenia genocide resolution. The lower house of parliament voted to condemn the Ottoman-era massacres of Armenians in 1915 and 1916 as genocide. Moreover, the government emphasized Germany’s complicity in the genocide, noting that Germany had watched and allowed the massacres to happen. A quarter-century after the Swiss federal court ruled that Germany was complicit in the Holocaust, saying to a group of followers, “After all, who today remembers the Armenians?”

Ethnicity rules the policy

After the vote, Erdogan attacked the eleven German parliamentarians of Turkish descent who backed the resolution, calling them traitors. In the Bundestag, Norbert Lammert minced no words, denouncing Erdogan’s attacks as a “complete breach of a taboo.” In Germany, policymakers go to great pains to ensure that Germans who hail from immigrant backgrounds are not treated as second-class citizens. But in Turkey, Erdogan rides roughshod over the concept of citizenship and believes he has the right to lay claim to Germans with Turkish roots as his own. In Germany, integration of immigrants is a democratic goal. At the very same time, however, Erdogan is permitted to hold rallies in Germany in which he warns “his Turks” of the dangers of “assimilation”. Why German politics has allowed Erdogan to cross the line repeatedly in this way is incomprehensible. But we must not let Erdogan’s attacks pass without response, especially when he dared to attack Germans of Turkish decent – who are elected members of the German parliament, no less – by accusing them of having “tainted blood”. This is an outrage. The death threats that have been made against German-Turkish members of parliament, including Green party leader Cem Özdemir, are a direct result of Erdogan’s slander. The eleven members of parliament are now under police protection.

It is time now to set limits with Erdogan. Putin showed what language Erdogan speaks: it is the language of power. Last November, the Turkish military shot down a Russian jet involved in the Syria campaign, ostensibly because it had crossed the Turkish border. Moscow responded with economic and travel sanctions and informed Turkey that any further incidents would be met with military reprisals. That had the effect of restoring Erdogan to reason. Since then he has been exercising greater restraint toward Moscow.

Germany certainly does not wish to employ the same methods as Putin, nor should it. But Germany should make it clear to Erdogan that he is at least as dependent on Germany as Germany is on him. Germany is Turkey’s most important trade partner. The same is not true in reverse. And given the importance of German tourism to the Turkish economy, travel warnings issued in response to the ongoing attacks could also be raised as a possibility. Russian tourists are already staying away; if Germans did, too, this would present a considerable blow to the Turkish economy.

In this sense, it comes as no surprise that Erdogan appeared to continue to cross over the Mediterranean toward Europe, has brought Berlin into a diplomatic bind. It has since become clear that Erdogan’s true goal is a far more prosaic one: absolute power for himself and for those who surround him. He wants to surpass the founder of the Turkish republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. For Erdogan, the cult of religion and nation is just a vehicle. There is a great deal of evidence to suggest that the main reason Erdogan abandoned the peace process with the Kurds was because the pro-Kurdish HDP party had become a gathering place for disaffected of all stripes, as well as a political force which through its electoral successes appeared poised to undermine Erdogan’s plan to establish presidential rule. Meanwhile both Kurdish members of parliament as well as critical journalists are being persecuted in Turkey.

When it comes to authoritarian governments such as Moscow and Ankara, plain speech is usually most effective. And now it is time to speak plainly. If other countries fail to issue this warning, some Turkish general may well venture to depose Erdogan, ostensibly for threatening the Kemalist legacy. But there is no one who truly wants this – especially since the only outcome would be to set back into motion the merry-go-round of authoritarian rule in Turkey.
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With you from A-Z

Allianz
Populism Sweeps Europe

France
Front National gambles away cultural values

By JVG

T he significance of the Front Na-

tional is reflected in the biog-

raphy of its co-founder, Jean-Marie Le Pen, and his daughter Marine. The elder
Le Pen, who was born in 1928, openly
proclaimed his far-right extremism and racism. He also candidly admitted his anti-Semitism, calling the gas cham-
bers of the Nazis a “detail of history,” a statement for which Le Pen was tried and convicted – which changed his behavior not one whit. As a dyed-in-the-wool racist, Jean-Marie Le Pen
saddled Muslims and Arabs. Such incitements brought the senior Le Pen some currency in the political mainstream. In 1984, he was elected a member of the European Parliament. In 2002, Le Pen succeeded in forcing Jacques Chirac into a sec-

ond round of elections for the presidency, where, however, Le Pen was roundly defeated. Marine Le Pen is “more modern” than her father. She rejects open anti-Semitism and claims she is opposed to racism “on principle”. Instead Marine Le Pen presents herself as a populist. She is opposed to immigration, particularly immigration of Muslims and people from third-world countries. And she rails against European integration and the euro. But her behavior is not one whit “grubby” far-right extremist but rather of a mainstream politician who is at the very least grounded by political soci-

ety. For this “moderate” image, Marine Le Pen is prepared to sacrifice every-

thing, even the party membership of her blustering father, who with age is increasingly de-

scending into ob-

stinate ideolog-

ical intransigence. Marine Le Pen by con-

trast is chang-

ing in stature, even as the tra-

ditional middle-

class French par-

ties are losing favor.

The conservative Nicolas Sarkozy and socialist François Hollande are both extremely unpopular. Sarkozy aroused distaste in large part for his proximity to the affluent; Hollande has been castigated for his economic fail-

ures. Hollande’s approval ratings are a disaster, at times hovering around five percent. Even thought more than 70 percent of French voters say they want neither Hollande nor Sarkozy to compete in the next presidential election. In so doing, they are forcing voters to choose between the deeply unpopu-

lar political establishment and the Front National. As the December 2015 regional elections demonstrated, the Front National is currently the most powerful force in French politics. This is in part because the French state has failed to placate the desire for security among rural and suburban vot-

ers in particular. France has also been unable to integrate young people of Maghreb descent and to effectively coun-

ter the rise of Islamist extremism. For many in France, the terror attacks of the past two years are evidence of a larger failure of the state, which has caused even some French Jews to gravitate toward the Front Na-

tional. But this state of affairs offers no hope. No, Marine Le Pen is no open an-

ti-Semite. But her de facto racism is no real improvement. Nor is her policy of European disintegration. Marine Le Pen models herself on the likes of Putin, Orbán and Erdog-

an. Their authoritarian worldview, which has driving their countries into isolation, is contrary to the French desire for openness that all enlightened nations still cherish: the spirit of liberté, égalité, fraternité.

Poland
Success at stake

By Robert Kahn

T he 70th anniversary of the post-Shoah pogrom of Kielce, where locals murdered and beat Jews, has not only spurred a complicity debate but also sparked national identity tangles. The discus-

sion focuses on a blame game and is just one expression of the deep divisions of Polish so-

ciety today. Poland’s lurch to the right began years ago when a major sector of its popula-

tion didn’t come to terms with the rapid tran-

sition from the old communist era to one of the greatest success stories of the European Union. The right-wing nationalist nation, that “the current Constitutional Tribunal is a redoubt of everything that is wrong in Poland.” With this primacy of political will over law, many legal mechanisms are now in a state of paralysis.

The PiS party, which is also holding the country’s presidency, is sys-

tematically under-

mining the system of checks and balances. Kaczynsky has actually praised Viktor Orbán’s leadership, or “illiberal democracy”. In the recent months, hundreds of thousands of Poles have taken to the streets to protest the changes. However, the oppo-

sition is a loose confederacy of parties, and its inability to unite has been a factor in the PiS’s frequent victories in national elections.

When Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány, an advocate of a full-fledged free-market democracy, resigned from office in 2005, his socialist-liberal coalition faced a pile of shards. Its incompe-

tence in matters of adminis-

tration, as well as accusations of lies and corruption scandals, made many of their followers look for a strong leader personality. Viktor Orbán has made increasing the state’s role in the economy the cornerstone of his rule; he calls this a shift as profound as the one from communism to democracy. But it looks good and people want it today, with its new metro line, new pedestrian zones and lavish develop-

ment projects, but more and more lo-

cal questions this happy narrative. The ruling Fidesz party has come under fire for using its constitu-

tional majority to push through legislation and constitutional changes, while the silent majority is tired of gen-

erally poor governance. A bitter foretaste of such a regression is in the western city of Wroclaw: In November, dozens of demonstrators participated in the burning of the effigy of an orthodox Jew, the “eternal other,” to protest Muslim immigration. In early May, during an anti-EU protest march, Ultra-

nationalists burned the poster of the Mayor of Wroclaw, Rafał Dutkiewicz, who was shown wearing a kippah. Dutkiewicz is a staunch sup-

porter of Poland’s liberal political camp which is now under threat.

Hungary: Nepotism meets poverty

By Hartmut Bomhoff

W hen the Left doesn’t respond to people, they turn to the Right,” admits a representative of the Hungarian left.

Six years after Vik-

tor Orbán won his first supermajor-

ity, right-wing in-the-wool parties are still enjoying massive support in Hungary. One recent Median poll showed that the percentage of eligible and decided voters supporting the governing Fidesz party fell from 53 percent in January to 46 percent in February. Another Median survey discovered that a third of all Hungarians hold anti-Semitic views, and there are plenty of Hungarians who are happy to defend their gov-

ernment’s tough policies on refugees and migrants.

When Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány, an advocate of a full-fledged free-market democracy, resigned from office in 2005, his socialist-liberal coalition faced a pile of shards. Its incompetence in matters of admin-

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THE STATE OF THE JEWS

The Price of Coolness
Terrorist attacks are taking their toll

By Ludwig Engel

It’s terrible. But the party will go on. “We’ll be more careful in the future,” says Eden Shoshani. The 28-year-old clothing boutique sales clerk from the southern district of Florentin echoes the larger chorus of Tel Aviv residents in the wake of the recent terror attack on a café in the elegant Sarona district. “Don’t let it get to you.” “Continue on as before.” “Tel Aviv is indestructible.” “It would take more than a machine gun to extinguish our joie de vivre.” “If we show fear, the terrorists have won.” When tourists or foreign correspondents ask Tel Aviv residents about their reactions to the terror attacks, the responses are unwavering. An unflappable cool, after all, is a Tel Aviv trademark.

The denizens of Tel Aviv are not nearly as unfazed as they may present themselves to outsiders. But in Tel Aviv, unlike in Jerusalem, the unwritten rule is to maintain a façade of nonchalance. And that goes without exception for everyone – whether they are young or old, healthy or sick, native-born or a nurse from Manila. It was this invincible zest for life that made it possible for the city that was founded in 1909 on the dunes next to the old town of Jaffa, in ancient times the home of the Philistines, to become the beating heart of Israel within a few short decades, the center of economic, cultural and social life. But this attitude also exacts a price: “Show no self-pity. Not at any cost.” “The people here are no different than they are in Haifa or Netanya. They have the same fears. But in our city they maintain a stiff upper lip. And they are determined to continue to do so,” explains Jakob Goldman. The 66-year-old was for years a professor of surgery. But after being held captive during the Yom Kippur War of 1973, he also began devoting one afternoon a week to providing mental health care to people in crisis. “During our imprisonment, we were tortured physically and mentally. The emotional scars are not visible. But they must be treated, or else the damage to the psyche will become more severe, or even irreversible.” Since his retirement a year ago, Goldman has been providing care, two days a week, to people traumatized by attacks. This trauma affects not only people who have been injured in the attacks; it also affects those who by good fortune escaped harm, and particularly the families of the victims.

Goldman explains that this “stiff upper lip” can be a source of strength in the immediate aftermath of an attack. But for people who have suffered serious injury or who have lost a family member or loved one, expert help is needed. “In the military, up to 50 percent of those affected suffer post-traumatic disorders. In attacks on civilians, therapists first tend to the people directly affected by the attack. But the people who were sitting at the next table, who escaped seemingly unscathed, often develop anxiety disorders that grow more severe over time.”

In a sense, this is true of the entire state of Israel. And Tel Aviv is no exception. No Israeli has ever experienced a lengthy period completely free of terror attacks or military conflict. This applies to both Jews and Arabs alike. The terrorists operate according to a simple and implacable logic: they attack civilians, hoping for the largest number of victims, in order to provoke a military response from Israel. This in turn fosters hatred, particularly among Arab youth. The result is a spiral of violence, which continues to escalate. Ending this vicious circle has so far proven impossible.

The people of Tel Aviv may present an unflappable face to the world. But this deliberately cultivated appearance is belied by statistics. For decades, residents of Israel have been the highest per capita users of tranquilizers in the world. Tel Aviv is no exception.
WHEN was the last time you heard anything about Doha? No, I don’t mean the capital of Qatar, but the world trade negotiations that took their name from that city. For many years, the Doha negotiations were headline news, at least in the business pages, as if a spirit of optimism was followed by a sputter, continued with a series of incremental failures and then collapsed in 2015. Grand ambitions ended with a whimper. The Doha rounds were, in diplomatic phrasing, “suspended indefinitely.” But let us take a look back at these events, which have profound consequences for our lives today.

Bilateral talks on the reduction of trade barriers were to substitute the Doha rounds and World Trade Organization negotiations. One such present-day example is the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) – an agreement that now also appears to have foundered on the shoals of the Atlantic – from Donald Trump to French President François Hollande – are urging their flock to “buy American” or “buy French.”

Regardless of Brexit, the true question in Europe is not “exit.” Which country will be the next to leave the association of states that began as a free trade association? Nowadays, free trade negotiations are the realm of technocrats and bureaucratic experts; politicians who have their fingers on the pulse of the people want little to do with them.

Free trade with its promise of prosperity, globalization as the promissio non facti – from the Latin for “promise is not fact” – has fallen by the wayside. Are we witnessing today what the historian Geoffrey Barat calls “the end of globalism”? Is globalism an outdated concept that is not fit for purpose? Is the rest of the world tired of waiting for improved prosperity?

We must fear the return to isolation and the inevitable cruelties to which isolationism gives rise.

Roland Tichy is one of Germany’s most renowned business journalists. He also runs the website “Tichy Einblick” (www.rolandtichy.de)

WHAT’S GOOD?

Back to Free Trade

Tariff reduction stabilizes prosperity and peace

Hamburg port: Germany’s gateway to international trade

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Nothing is more exciting than achieving the highest of positions. That is why there is no absurdity in the fact that the decision-makers are not permitted to question – both professionally and personally – what men and women are or what they are able to achieve. In many cases, it is said that our society is still influenced by tradition, which means nature, and that the role of men and women is determined by their nature.

Therefore, in many cases, it is still said that women are not capable of achieving the same level of success as men. This is a belief that is often reinforced by society, which tends to believe that women are biologically inferior to men.

The reality of this concept is that the gender gap is still present in many professions. In many cases, women are not given the same opportunities as men, and this is reflected in their salaries, job titles, and promotions.

Good marks, no careers

In nearly all professions – and especially those which over the past 30 years have introduced a large number of clauses, including the natural sciences, medicine and veterinary medicine, and even banking – women now number or outnumber men in university admissions. But this is not always the case, and there are still many professions where women are underrepresented.

For women, there are many challenges. They must compete against men for jobs, and they must also deal with the fact that they are often not taken as seriously as men. This can lead to a lack of confidence, which can in turn lead to a lack of success.

Family and work

Another challenge that women face is balancing work and family. Many women are forced to choose between their careers and their families. This is often reflected in the fact that women are still more likely to take on the role of primary caregiver, which can lead to a lack of opportunities for professional advancement.

Emancipation and reality

The concept of emancipation has been a goal for many women, and many have made significant strides in this area. However, as we can see from the examples above, there is still a long way to go.

In conclusion, the gender gap is still present in many professions. Women must continue to fight for their rights and strive for equality. Only then will we be able to reach a true level of emancipation for all.
### Unequal Terms

**Shopping spree in Europe vs. lack of access to Chinese markets**

*By Klaus-Dieter Oehler*

Of course, it was a coincidence that German Chancellor Angela Merkel departed on a state visit to China at the very moment that the debate regarding Chinese investment in Germany reignited. Such state visits are organized well in advance, of course, it was a co-incidence that the Chinese at the Trough”. German Economics Minister Sigmar Gabriel has also said that he would be very happy if an investor from China has now offered several billion euros for Kuka – an offer which has prompted a public outcry. One daily newspaper reported on the proposed takeover under the headline “The Chinese at the Trough”. German Economics Minister Sigmar Gabriel has also said that he would be very happy if an alternative offer based in Germany or Europe would be made. To date, however, no other firm has been willing to step up to the plate, Siemens included.

**Appealing destination**

This political intervention was nonetheless sufficient to scare off the Chinese government and large investors. Through its foreign investment strategy, China hopes to reduce its dependence on exports and gain access to important markets and key technologies. From Beijing’s perspective, this is the next logical step to becoming one of the world’s leading economies. Germany, which boasts an open market, a stable legal framework and a large number of mid-sized high-tech companies, of which many are market leaders in their field, is an appealing destination for the Chinese investment strategists. And compared to the US, Germany has far fewer security barriers in place that would hinder direct investment.

Until now Germany has generally welcomed Chinese investment, in part because it has helped to safeguard jobs. But this may be about to change. The reason, say business people in Beijing, is the “asymmetry” between the German economy’s openness to Chinese investors and the growing hurdles confronting German companies in China. “We have strong indications that further opening has not only slowed but seems on the brink of turning in the wrong direction,” said the German ambassador in Beijing, Michael Clauss, in the Hong Kong daily, the South China Morning Post. According to Clauss, German companies are being confronted with bureaucratic hurdles, including inspections and requirements for licenses, that are making it increasingly difficult to do business.

Chancellor Merkel’s visit to China, therefore, presented an opportune moment for her to make her opinions known regarding China’s position within the global economy. As Merkel is aware, China continues to display deficits, both in terms of human rights as well as with respect to economic issues. Reforms are still necessary in both the steel sector and in other areas. But, Merkel said, “no person has an interest in larger trade wars. We don’t want that between the EU and China. But that also means we need to speak openly about existing problems.”

China, for example, is currently exporting a great deal of steel due to its own excess capacity, which is leading to serious problems for the European steel industry. “We of course must see to it that we have fair conditions of competition,” Merkel added. When China joined the World Trade Organization in 2001, a 15-year transition period was agreed upon. That period will come to an end during 2016. This explains why China is keen to obtain “market economy” status from the EU, as that would make it more difficult for the EU to impose protective tariffs against Chinese companies. However, granting such status to China is a move opposed by some EU member states, who argue that the Chinese economy remains under substantial state control.

**Expansionary enthusiasm**

But this has not dampened the expansionary enthusiasm of Chinese companies. In 2014, Chinese investment in Germany and Europe soared to record levels. This trend did not abate during 2015, as consultancy firm EV noted. Germany remained the preferred site, with 36 companies being purchased last year. The largest deal, however, was to go to the second-favored destination for Chinese investment, Britain, where Hutchison agreed to buy Telefonica-subsidiary O2 for $15.4 bn. The merger, however, was blocked by the EU commission.

Through foreign investment, China wants to gain access to important markets and key technologies.

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**Klaus-Dieter Oehler is financial editor at the daily斯格特Curter Zeitung**
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MUNICH RE

Striving to Learn from the Past

The reinsurance company’s development mirrors Germany’s contemporary history

By Franziska Knupper

The goal of historical research should not only be a purely academic one. Ideally, historical insights should also serve a larger sphere of politics and society. This can be seen, for example, in the numerous times Germans have faced for violence and war, and the political considerations and historically-informed stance. This also holds true when it comes to histories of businesses and corporations, including historical research on the insurance industry. Insurance companies pay a great deal of attention to historical research on their own industry; indeed, when it comes to developing strategies for the future within the insurance sector, the lessons of history play an important role.

Knowledge of one’s own history is always a source of guidance for current and future decisions,” explains Nikolaus von Bomhard, CEO of Munich Re, the world’s largest reinsurance group. And von Bomhard and his team have an outstanding historical volume at their disposal: Munich Re – Die Geschichte der Münchener Rück 1880–1980 (published by C.H. Beck, Munich). Written by the renowned scholars Johannes Bähr and Christoph Kopper, the study is an absorbing guide to the company’s history, and an account of Munich Re, formerly known as Allgemeine Versicherungs-AG (Allianz), which became known as the only insurance company that remained solvent after set-ting the total damage at about $300 million and insured losses at about $75 million. Münchener Rück had an insurance liability of 11 million marks. “The devastating earthquake in San Francisco was the first time that Münchener Rück was confronted with major risks — risks of a magnitude that had not yet featured in their European operations,” note Bähr and Kopper.

Wellspring of globalization

The Munich-based reinsurance firm was one of the wellsprings of German globalization. As company founder Carl Thieme noted in 1880, when the firm consisted only of two staff members and a single office, “Reinsurance must be international by its very nature.” Indeed, this strategy would go on to guide the company’s history through the years.

The first foreign client was the Vienna-based Allgemeine Versicherungs-Gesellschaft Phoenix (General Insurance Company Phoenix). It was followed by clients in England, Russia, Scandinavia, and then in the US — an expansion that was not-

ing short of remarkable for the time. Carl Thieme’s strategy and his business model proved a rousing success. In March 1888, the company’s shares were introduced on the Munich stock exchange. The Munich reinsurance company’s strategy of distributing risk across several countries soon made it a market leader in the field. Business continued to expand, and the company soon had a staff of 200. Branch offices were founded and Allianz Versicherungs AG was launched.

In 1906, the Munich company was called upon to assist its US clients. A major earthquake had devastated the city of San Francisco. Gas mains exploded, and fires raged across the city for four days. More than 3,000 people died and around 28,000 homes were destroyed. Initial estimates placed the total damage at about $300 million and insured losses at about $75 million. Münchener Rück had an insurance liability of 11 million marks. “The devastating earthquake in San Francisco was the first time that Münchener Rück was confronted with major risks — risks of a magnitude that had not yet featured in their European operations,” note Bähr and Kopper. For Münchener Rück, this would be the largest payout the reinsurance company would face for several decades to come. Yet the company remained on solid ground. Indeed, Münchener Rück became known as the only insurance company that remained solvent after settling all its outstanding claims.

But the two world wars would soon usher in what were dark times for the company. The outbreak of the First World War brought an abrupt end to what had been years of nearly uninterrupted growth. The assets of German companies in the US were seized. Business with Russia, Great Britain and France also collapsed.

Tribals and turbulations

Even after the German defeat and capitulation of 1918, stability was not restored. Yet Münchener Rück is one of the few German companies which withstood the trials and turbulations of the 1920s and early 1930s. In the end it was National Socialism and the Second World War that brought the company to the brink of ruin. The company accommodated itself to the Nazi regime and fell into line with its demands. Allianz General Director Kurt Schmitt, who became chairman of the board at Münchener Rück in 1938, Wilhelm Kilkalt, and member of the board Alois Alzheimer all joined the Nazi party — a “brown” blenheim on the company’s history. But the stain went far deeper than this: Kurt Schmitt maintained close ties with the Nazi leadership. In 1939, Schmitt had already become a personal friend of Hermann Göring.

In 1933, Schmitt accepted Reichs-führer SS Heinrich Himmler’s invitation to become an honorary member of the SS, holding the rank of Oberfachh. In June 1935, Schmitt was named Reich Minister of the Economy. “The behavior of the company leadership in the Third Reich is the darkest chapter in the company’s history,” as Bähr and Kopper note. “Although Münchener Rück was not directly involved in the looting of Jewish insurance agents and companies, or in SS business operations, it was indirectly involved. Even though the Nazis’ rallying cries sat ill with the internationally oriented company, which had placed a premium on trust and decorum, and which had maintained close ties with many Jewish business partners, the company acquiesced to the demands and expectations of the National Socialist regime.”

After the collapse of the Nazi regime, this dishonorable behavior would take its toll. Contacts between Münchener Rück and its foreign partners ceased. Kurt Schmitt and Alois Alzheimer denied that it had willingly complied with the demands of the Nazi regime. When the restitution of Jewish prop-erty began and Münchener Rück was ordered to annul its purchase contracts for “Aryanized” real estate, the company displayed little by way of remorse.

Knowledge of one’s own history is always a source of guidance for current and future decisions

As Bähr and Kopper note: “The restitution of Jewish property … was handled no differently than was the restoration of other wartime damage of a more material nature.” It would take some years and the emergence of a new generation of leader-ship shaped by postwar democratic attitudes before Münchener Rück would learn from the failures and culpability of its past, and transform into Munich Re, a company with a modern and liberal outlook. In the more than 130 years that have passed since its founding, the company has enjoyed remarkable stability, as evidenced by the fact that only eight chairmen of the board have held the reins of the company over the years. Now, however, stability and steady profits are joined by renewed moral integrity.
A few months ago, after a soccer fan died of heart attack during a Bundesliga match in Dortmund, the 80,000 supporters at the stadium observed a few minutes of silence and then sang the song so popular with fans around the world: “You'll Never Walk Alone.” The Liverpool anthem was a fitting tribute in that tragic moment. It was also a fitting anthem for the two clubs, Dortmund and Mainz, two clubs that in Germany are regarded as bastions of soccer tradition. Both have in the past also boasted that true soccer-romantic, manager Jürgen Klopp, at their helm.

But Klopp has since moved on to Liverpool. And he, too, is not alone here – he is adored by Liverpool fans, even though his salary, of course, comes mainly from US billionaire John W. Henry. Like most British clubs, Liverpool belongs to a pan-European or world championship is that a good showing at a European or world championship then helps to boost their market value.

We must remember, though, that this big business is dependent on a decidedly non-capitalist phenomenon – the joy of soccer. And that holds true for both the Real Madrid stadium and back courtyards of Berlin – where the Boateng brothers learned to love the game. Today, they are both highly paid professionals.

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A City of Many Colors Builds Its Identity

Poland’s boomtown celebrates itself as a European Capital of Culture

By Hartmut Bomhoff

Today Wroclaw is already a different city,” stated Mayor Rafal Dudkiewic earlier this year. “I can’t wait for the European Capital of Culture to change the mentality and habits of the residents, but I can say that the citizens of Wroclaw needed such a challenge, they tackled it with enthusiasm and are more and more openly happy about it.” In the framework of this year’s celebrations, four grand projects and about a thousand cultural events help promote intercultural dialogue and understanding in the city that proudly identifies as “the Meeting Place.”

If you visit Wroclaw you will immediately understand why so many people love it. It has been voted the prettiest Polish city. Thanks to its location on the Odra river, it has 12 islands and 130 bridges. The Old City is full of architectural treasures, with a market square about 250 ft. long, full of architectural treasures, and 130 bridges. The Old City is full of architectural treasures.

The Odra river, it has 12 islands and 130 bridges. The Old City is full of architectural treasures, and 130 bridges. The Old City is full of architectural treasures, and 130 bridges. The Old City is full of architectural treasures, and 130 bridges.

Stories of transformation

Wroclaw’s history entwines the tales of Germans and Poles. Until its German population was expelled after World War Two, Wroclaw (then known by its German name, Breslau) was the capital of the Prussian province of Silesia and home to a vibrant Jewish community. The Second World War left the city utterly ruined. People who had been driven out of the city of Leobs in eastern Poland (now Lwów in Ukraine) were settled here. Breslau became Wroclaw, but it took a while for the new citizens to build, or regain, the city’s identity and to embrace its heritage.

Maciej Kirschenbaum, whose grandfather Salomon arrived at Wroclaw in February 1946 and was among the founders of the city’s postwar Jewish community, has witnessed the rapid changes: “When I was a child in the early 1990s, Wroclaw was Poland’s fourth largest city, but had the tenth largest budget. Wroclaw’s Old Town, my neighborhood, was full of dilapidated tenement houses waiting for a better time to come. And come it did. I saw the center of Wroclaw transformed into its vibrant, manicured self, once again claiming its places among most-visited destinations in Central Europe.”

Wroclaw is now home to an ever growing list of highly respected international companies such as IBM, HP, Credit Suisse, Nokia, LG and even Google and Amazon. There are also many medium sized IT companies which are Polish but serve clients across Europe, including Germany. “Unfortunately, Wroclaw’s social development did not keep up with its economic boom,” notes Kirschenbaum. “Some Wroclawians who did not get to enjoy the fruits of economic prosperity became alienated and embraced radical ideology. Today the city is the main centre of right wing radicals in Western Poland. As such, the current European Capital of Culture reflects the Continent’s situation at the moment – it has great potential that can be undermined by its social problems.”

Entrepreneurial spirit

Despite a number of anti-Semitic incidents, Oded Noyfeld, an Israeli from Kibbutz Atika who moved to Wroclaw after spending six years in London, feels very much at ease: “By and large the Jewish community is respected, and I as a foreigner feel much more welcome and appreciated here than in London. There are no BDS movements here. Even at the peak of the recent Gaza conflict, there was only a small six-person protest against Israel.”

For Noyfeld, who holds a MSc in Technology Entrepreneurship, it is interesting to see in Wroclaw “the same entrepreneurial spirit that Israel is well known for. In some respects, I think Wroclaw is where Israel was 10 years ago in terms of the Hi Tech sector. A MSc in Technology Entrepreneurship can be a unique step in the career of a high-tech engineer or entrepreneur.”

And in fact, Wroclaw has become a Hi Tech sector. It is not only the university of Leobs in eastern Poland (now Lwów in Ukraine) that was settled here. Breslau became Wroclaw, but it took a while for the new citizens to build, or regain, the city’s identity and to embrace its heritage. Maciej Kirschenbaum, whose grandfather Salomon arrived at Wroclaw in February 1946 and was among the founders of the city’s postwar Jewish community, has witnessed the rapid changes: “When I was a child in the early 1990s, Wroclaw was Poland’s fourth largest city, but had the tenth largest budget. Wroclaw’s Old Town, my neighborhood, was full of dilapidated tenement houses waiting for a better time to come. And come it did. I saw the center of Wroclaw transformed into its vibrant, manicured self, once again claiming its places among most-visited destinations in Central Europe.”

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We who live here today as Jews in Wrocław keep alive the memory of the German Jews of Breslau

Alessander Gleichgewicht

Bente Kahan, whose foundation runs the synagogue which underwent extensive reconstruction before being re-opened in 2013, is proof for lots of visitors every day: “I’m very happy that we have this foundation, it provides a link to the German Jews who are rediscovering our wonderful town. As for our Jewish Wroclaw, it also means a great promotion and the possibility to do our Yiddish and Ladino project.”

May, a huge crowd experienced a unique concert celebrating Yiddish and Ladino, featuring international performers in an international festival. “Creating Alternatives for Jewish Women in Europe,” will host an international conference in the Hub of Jewish culture.

A special way to discover the city and its many gems is to follow the more than three hundred dwarf statues adorning the main tourist sights of Wroclaw’s Old Town. There’s a particular story behind them: back in the 19th centuries, when communism ruled and all kind of meetings and manifestations were monitored, an anarchist group called the Orange Alternative created a dwarf, with dwarves appearing in numbers all over Poland. Today, they represent the transition of Wroclaw with a smile and add a hidden meaning to “the most important year in Wroclaw’s post-war history,” as Rafal Dudkiewic put it.
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BERLIN

Pride of the Jews and Ornament to the City
150th anniversary of the grand New Synagogue

By Fanny Schlesinger

When the New Synagogue was inaugurated on September 5, 1866, it was an immediate sensation, described as a fairy-tale structure. ‘The new house of worship is the pride of the Berlin community’, wrote the critic of the Berliner Volkszeitung, even more, it is an ornament to the city,” it was praised in the press reports of the day. ‘In the middle of a plain part of the city we are led into the fantastic wonder of the Alhambra, with graceful columns, sweeping arches, richly colored arabesques, abundant wood carvings, all with the thousandfold magic of the Moorish style.’ The architecture was a reminder of the Golden Age of Jews in Spain.

With seating for 3,200 people, it was the largest synagogue in Germany, planned by Eduard Knoblauch and completed by August Stüler. The sanctuary was 188 feet long and 126 feet wide, soaring to a height of 87 feet. “What was read was all in German,” noted Lewis Carroll after attending a service in 1867, “but there was a great deal chanted in Hebrew, to beautiful music.”

The congregation was Reform-oriented and installed an organ in 1868, and it was none other than Louis Lewandowski, who has gone down in music history as the greatest reformer of Jewish liturgical music, whose former of Jewish pride in Germany. “The biography of the New Synagogue is the history of the emergence of Reform Judaism in Germany,” it has been said.

The street in which the New Synagogue is located is himself a monument; he is known as one of the most important rabbis who made the New Synagogue a center of liberal Judaism. The speaker talked for one hour, with warmth and much eloquence.” Among the many eminent rabbis who made the synagogue a center of liberal Judaism was the first ever woman rabbi, Regina Jonas. She witnessed the alleged end of a Jewish presence in Oranienburger Straße when on 5 April 1940 it was announced that services in the New Synagogue were not to be held any more until further notice. The grand building, which was spared major damage during the pogrom night of 1938, was seized by the German Army and severely damaged by Allied air raids in 1943. In 1958, the remains of the sanctuary were blown up. Only its façade and some adjoining rooms remained.

New beginnings

That we can celebrate the 150th anniversary of the New Synagogue under its fully reconstructed golden dome later this summer is nothing short of a miracle.” In May 1995, the front building was reopened as Centrum Judicum along with the permanent exhibition of German Jewry, referring to the words cited above its main entrance, “Open the gates, that the people may enter, the one that remains faithful” (Isaiah 26:2). The vast sanctuary was not rebuilt, but the void gives the many visitors drawn to this Berlin landmark a profound impression of its enormous scale.

In conjunction with the Day of Open Monuments, the Centrum Judicum invites the public to mark this very special anniversary which symbolizes the continuation of Jewish life and Jewish pride in Germany. “The biography of this house conveys a major part of Berlin’s Jewish history and thereby the German Jewish experience at large,” explains Anja Siegemund, the new director of the Centrum Judicum. “We also maintain the most important archive focusing on German Jewish history at a miracle.” On September 11, for the first time in decades, at least five entrance gates of the New Synagogue will simultaneously open for the public.

Who Should Adequately Represent Muslims?

By Ibrahim Negm

When the UN Secretary General’s Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism was launched early this year, it was flanked by the Initiative of the Grand Mufti of Egypt. The joint message is: “We are all united in our efforts to and desire to end violence.” A new report focuses on the initiative of Grand Mufti Shawky Allam and examines the perception of religion, looking at ways to increase dialogue and trust across faiths. Questions of authority and authenticity play also an important role in the current debates in German society. That’s why we take up one of the many issues addressed in the Annual Dialogue Report on Religion and Values 2016, published by Media Tenor, presenting excerpts from a contribution by Ibrahim Negm, a Senior Adviser to Sheikh Allam.

This spirit of moderation, tolerance and flexibility is well reflected in the paradigm of Al-Azhar University which has long served not only the Egyptian people but the Muslim world at large, by not only producing first-rate scholars, thinkers and intellectuals, but also by providing educational opportunities for men and women, instilling in them an ethic of integrity, leadership and service and devoting itself to spreading a balanced vision of Islam based on recognized and orthodox ideals infused with spiritual depth. We are confident in this great institution’s ability to restore its status as a historical giant, and exert its influence on the articulation of Islam in Egypt and throughout the Muslim world. Now is the time to support institutions that seek to articulate an Islam suitable for the modern world, with impeccable scholarly credentials, and the worldwide prestige necessary to succeed in creating a better world. … The Azhar has been blessed throughout the centuries to have met with the acceptance of the masses of Muslims, the umma or the Global Muslim Community at large. In addition, its central location between the Muslim East and West, and North and South has put Al Azhar University at the heart of the Muslim world has passed through it. This has resulted in a cosmopolitan outlook, open-minded and respectful of the various particularities of Muslim scholarship in its various geographical areas …
Sunny Side Up
Israeli photographer captures his country’s fire

By Elisabeth Neu

A sheepdog circling its herd on scorched soil, a red-head squinting in the light, a burning car, dazed people making their way through hazy streets – the narrative that binds landscape, man and beast together is heat. Daniel Tchetchik’s pictures make you feel the burning, scorching, searing sun but also depict a sun giving life and inspiration. Through his lens, the Israeli photographer is investigating, as he puts it, “the effect of the Middle Eastern heat on the human condition.” Or as writer Meir Shalev, who penned a postscript to Tchetchik’s new book Sunburn, says: “There are places in the world where the sun is soft and good … Here the sun is hot, for better and for worse, and the people are also hot, for better and worse.”

Taken at the time leading up to the 2014 war in Gaza, during operation “Protective Edge” and after, Tchetchik, also staff photographer with Israeli daily Ha’aretz, draws you to the sun in all its beauty and mercilessness. Fun and despair, life and death, plenty and barrenness, darkness and light merge. The situations captured are extreme: people line up on gigantic slides waiting to cool off – but there is no water in sight. Others take a dip in the Mediterranean – at once refreshing and dangerous. A green sports ground is located in the midst of the desert. Some folks bask in the sunshine whilst others are desperate for a spot of shade. A dead pigeon pinned to the ground like a fallen Icarus.

The sun has long cast its spell over Tchetchik: “When I was a child, during endless summers, I used sun beams to burn holes and shapes on to old newspapers...” Today my magnifying glass is my camera, with every situation I encountered while creating Sunburn, I searched for the distance from the subject that would create the same intense heat that would burn the narrative into this body of work.” Tchetchik was successful; this burn you can feel, just by looking at the pictures.

Some photographs appear to have “scars”. A mishap turned out to be a departing point for new ways of seeing and preserving: “After a long day of shooting, I forgot several rolls of film in my car. After developing them, I discovered that the sweltering heat had left severe burns on my negatives,” explains Tchetchik. “I began experimenting and integrating the sun’s physical effects on my film with the metaphysical attributes I sought to convey.”

But Tchetchik, whose works are part of the collection of The Museum of Tel Aviv and have been shown in the US as well as in India and can be seen in Hamburg and Berlin this summer, also wants to raise questions about the environment, about the way we handle our dwindling resources.

Tchetchik’s book Sunburn, recently launched by Kehrer art publishers, is a hot item in itself: beautifully designed, lavishly finished, with the French flap cover unfolding into a poster – or a sunshade...
Something Just Doesn’t Feel Right

The difficulties of maintaining balance in modern Jewish lives

By Franziska Knupper

Raz is disappointed. It is Friday evening. Shabbat has just begun, and he is alone at home. “It’s a very strange feeling,” says the young graphic designer. “I am used to having the entire family present, having a big Shabbat dinner on Fridays. Now I’m finally living in Israel but I’m alone at Shabbat. This isn’t how I pictured it.” Raz, who is 27, emigrated from France to Israel a year and a half ago. A native of Nantes, he had a hard time getting used to Tel Aviv – the heat, the Mediterranean temperament, the language, the prices. But as an observant Jew, Raz has never regretted his decision to leave for the Holy Land. He’s glad he can take Shabbat off work without having to make amends to his employer and he likes being able to wear the kippah everywhere without drawing awkward glances. All of this was more difficult in Nantes. “And there’s a kosher restaurant on every corner here,” he adds.

Weekend leisure

Raz’s happiness was completely altered when he met his Israeli girlfriend – Iris, who has long red hair and limbs dotted with freckles. Raz and Iris also feel at home in the bohemian atmosphere. Raz says he does not need to live next door to a yeshiva. But he does want to be able to live an observant lifestyle within the modern world, openly and without inhibition. Raz rises from the white rat-tan chair and sets out bread and wine. There’s also a casseroles, prepared by Iris the day before. “I’m happy to make an effort,” Iris says. “But I’m not prepared to change who I am for the sake of a man.” In her industry, weekends are key; they’re the time when important events take place, a time for networking and forging new contacts. “Our startup deals with recreation and leisure activities. So of course I need to know what Tel Aviv has to offer on the weekend.” Saturdays are Iris’s only day off during the week, so she doesn’t want to be tied up at home.

Iris’s friends are constantly asking her where her better half is hiding. “And I always give them the same answer: he’s at home, keeping Shabbat.” She does appreciate her fiancée’s religious faith, she says. In today’s world, it’s a sign of seriousness and self-confidence to be able to live according to one’s ideals, without compromise. “But doesn’t every relationship entail compromise?”

Burden of observance

It was questions such as these that led Dimi to arrive at his decision. Three years ago, he left Israel for Berlin to pursue a career as a jazz musician. And to forge his own path, away from the confines of Judaism. “My family isn’t strictly observant, but the emotions and traditions surrounding the entire topic were practically suffocating me.” Dimi’s parents emigrated from Russia to Israel in the 1980s; the Holy Land and religion occupy an important place in their day-to-day lives, their home is a place of refuge, a sense of freedom. “In a big family like mine, all the obligations were almost like a second job – bnei mitzvot, birthdays, funerals, weddings, and then every meal; who would invite friends and family, who would attend different festivities. He has to make that appealing to me, and he’s got his work cut out. I really hate sitting among those women in the galery,” Iris complains. “If he takes the initiative, maybe I’ll follow him. But he shouldn’t expect that the initiative will come from me.” Iris is opposed to the traditional gender roles of observant Judaism. On Passover, Raz took it for granted that as a woman, Iris would scour the house from top to bottom, sweep the crumbs out of every corner, and purchase new Passover dishes. “I didn’t do that. So on the holiday we didn’t have so much as a knife and fork that he was willing to eat with.”

In Iris’s view, many Jewish men are looking for something like a second mother, a woman who will maintain the traditions of their childhoods. She doesn’t want to be pushed into that role. “I’m prepared to advise him for his commitment to a way of life, as long as he does the same for me.”

This summer, Dimi plans to once children arrive, the potential for conflict becomes even more pressing. What school will the children attend? Will daughters be required to marry? Will there be a big bat mitzvah celebration? Iris knows that the future will bring difficulties. “Of course I ask myself how we’ll manage to raise children, with our differences. I’ve done everything I could to emancipate myself from religion. Should I give all that up now? For love?”
The Face and Voice of Ashkenaz
A festival explores European legends and Yiddish crossovers

By Robert Kahn

The Yiddish Summer Weimar Festival celebrates the 250th anniversary of Moses Mendelssohn (1729–1800). This festival offers an opportunity to experience Yiddish culture and its influence on European art and society.

In Yiddish, boke is an affectionate name for grandmother, and mayse means tale or story. In this book, the term boke mayse, however, probably derives from this very book. It is only fitting to start this year’s festival with a music project that reinterprets a shared tradition of Yiddish and German folk songs as part of a rich cultural matrix.

A turning point
For the past 15 years, the Yiddish Summer Weimar Festival (YSW) has brought Yiddish culture to this historic site of German Classicism. Evolving from summer klezmer workshops conducted by the international klezmer band Brave Old World, the program has developed a reputation for being one of the most intense learning experiences among Yiddish cultural events worldwide.

Every year, artists, scholars, and participants from two dozen countries meet at festival events and workshops over a period of several weeks, and many of the dedicated students who returned year after year have become teachers; for example, Janina Wurbs, one of the leading experts on Yiddish language and culture. She has a special knowledge of different Yiddish dialects. "For many of the participants, including myself, the YSW workshops with Alan Bern became a turning point in our lives, both professionally and artistically," she says.

The Yiddish Summer Weimar Festival is funded by the German Federal Cultural Foundation, includes a conference on "Historically Informed Performance Practice," figure theatre performances and a dance piece; "Gilgul" plays on the tradition of modern stage dances based on a Yiddish vocabulary of movement. The musical director of Brave Old World, Alan Bern, serves as the artistic director of YSW and has from the very beginning aspired to a high standard, seeking a deeper understanding of Eastern European Jewish expressive culture based on the shared cultural traits of all European cultures.

He and his team are in tune with today’s Jewish landscape, and one of this year’s highlights is a Yiddish Song concert in the Jewish Culture Center of Erfurt, home to a 750-member-strong Jewish community.

A Turning Point
This summer, Berlin-based klezmer band Brave Old World, led by Mendelssohn’s home the silhouette of what was once the house facade with its twelve windows, the status of “Protected Jew” which was not only given his revocable privilege of residence only in 1763, when he had to make a living as share-holder in a silk factory, was admitted to buy the building. The building, however, was demolished in 1887. Only in 2007, when about 280 descendants of Moses and Fromet Mendelssohn met for a family reunion in Berlin, was the initiative taken to promote a memorial to his pioneer of modern Judaism himself.

This summer, Berlin finally received a place of remembrance. Israeli artist Micha Ullman created on the empty site of Mendelssohn’s home the silhouette...
Jewish Intelligence

Emigrant philosophers against Hitler during WW II

By Dieter Sattler

When Herbert Marcuse, one of the leading lights of the Frankfurt School, held a talk in 1966 in New York, this time the audience was not as profusely and8eed as during an earlier event in the same year. The German-French student leader, who to-day is a Green Party politician, demanded that Marcuse give an account of his “scandalous past” as a CIA operative during the Second World War. This accusation was mistaken from start to finish. During the war, Marcuse had indeed worked for the US intelligence service. The French student leader, who to-day is a Green Party politician, demanded that Marcuse give an account of his “scandalous past” as a CIA operative during the Second World War. This accusation was mistaken from start to finish. During the war, Marcuse had indeed worked for the US intelligence service.

At the time, the agency was still called the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). More importantly, however, was the fact that the work carried out by Herbert Marcuse, together with his colleagues Otto Kirchheimer and Franz Neumann, was anything but reprehensible. From 1943 on, Marcuse and his two fellow Frankfurt School theorists worked as analysts, compiling intelligence reports on Nazi Germany, evaluating the social and political mood among the German people, and analyzing the leadership structures of the Nazi regime.

These analyses, originally published as the Secret Reports on Nazi Germany and now released in a German translation published by Campus Verlag, make for compelling reading. Marcuse and his fellow scholars analyzed material made available to them by the intelligence services. This material was derived from interrogations of prisoners of war, intercepted telephone conversations, war reports, newspaper articles, and even blood samples. The sociologists and philosophers of the Frankfurt School who had ended up in the US after fleeing Nazi Germany had an understandably vital interest in taking part in the battle against Hitler. In turn, their reports and analyses were taken very seriously by US intelligence authorities, and were put on play an important role in the development of wartime strategy. After the war, Franz Neumann’s scholarship on universal law and morality also helped shape preparations for the charges filed at the Nuremberg Trials.

With only fragmentary information to work with, the reports compiled by the three analysts could not always fully capture the realities of Nazism – but they painted a surprisingly accurate picture. After Stalingrad, for example, they set out to examine whether the realization of inevitable defeat might present an opening within the regime’s leadership. Was it conceivable that the party leadership might consider removing Hitler from power and open the door to negotiations with the Soviet Union and the western Allies, in hopes of preserving the core of the Reich?

In a sense, the failed putsch of July 20, 1944 would ultimately lend support to that speculation. Although the German military was deeply implicated in the crimes of the regime, some elements within the military remained capable of oppositional thought and action.

The Frankfurt School analysts also closely observed how the subordination of the Home Army under the command of SS Chief Heinrich Himmler served to hold the “home front” together through the use of terror. And despite the rising sense of despair within Germany, the analysts cautioned against the hope that the regime could be toppled from within.

Indeed, until the bitter end, the German population would continue to mobilize all its resources in aid of a regime in which they had largely lost faith. This was in part because the regime had stubbornly stoked the fear of the Russians, but also because the entire German people knew they had become complicit in the crimes of the regime – a complicity for which they also knew they were unlikely to escape punishment. Ever perceptive, this, too, was accurately predicted by the Frankfurt analysts, even before the full dimensions of the crimes that had been committed against Jews had become known. Herbert Marcuse, Otto Kirchheimer and Franz Neumann continued their work for the intelligence services even after the defeat of Nazi Germany, submitting their final report in 1949. Their postwar analyses focused mainly on the prospects for rebuilding Germany. Whenever possible, their postwar plans for democratic revival sought to sway Germany in the direction of democratic socialism – and in this, too, they remained entirely in keeping with the ideals of the Frankfurt School.

The other day, at the book launch of a primer on Judaism, the audience was composed of people who don’t have to cope anymore with the experience of living between two worlds, ethnic and mainstream. Too much humor is sometimes bad for the Jews; some comedians can’t help staging Jewish clichés while joke collections only perpetuate stereotypes. And don’t we all know that kind of rabbi who might be a hilarious story teller, a jester beloved by non-Jewish audiences, but lacks synagogue skills and some gravitas?

In Central Europe, where people still struggle with the memory of the Holocaust and the voids and shifts it created, basic things like Jewish food, music, and jokes might serve as low-threshold opportunities for encounter and exchange. We cannot simply shrug this off as decapitalization by belated cultural recognition, but do we really have to act Jewish to fit into some comic image? The politics of laughter say a lot about the ambiguity of inclusion and exclusion. Only when people laugh with each other and at themselves, will different cultures get on together.

You Don’t Have to Be That Funny

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BOMHOF RECOMMENDS

The Frankfurt shul: the origin of Jewish learning

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Joyful Compassion
Albrecht Prince Castell (1925–2016)

By Rafael Seligmann

Throughout his life, Albrecht zu Castell was a model of joyful charity. And indeed, it was not only his many acts of charity but also the joy with which he carried them out that captures the essence of his nature. One might say that, joy or no joy, what matters is the charity is given. But love is not an economic transaction. We humans thirst for love but we can always sense whether this affection is real or a sham. With Albrecht Castell, one could always be certain that his love came from every fiber of his being. Castell’s emotional strength inspired those around him, lent them a sense of security and won the hearts of all he touched. Fate initially appeared to have cast Albrecht Castell, who came from the Franconian village of Castell, in a supporting role. Albrecht Castell was the second son of the family head. His older brother was designated to take over the estate of the old aristocratic dynasty, including its vineyards and the family bank. Albrecht would have to make his way as a pastor, a military officer, or an academic. But the Nazis caused this seemingly well-ordered world to collapse. The elder Prince Castell and his first-born son fell during the final days of the Second World War. At just 20 years of age, Albrecht, who had just been demobilized, was forced to begin rebuilding the family’s ruined estate, on which the entire village of Castell depended for its livelihood.

The young man had no business plan. Nor did he possess any formal business training; he had learned only the noxious trade of a soldier, which he would hate for the rest of his life. But Albrecht Castell did possess trust in God – and for him that also meant trust in his fellow man, and their essential honesty and dedication. Together with local laborers, he rebuilt his estate. Together with his employees, he rebuilt his bank. The physical damage to the estate and its surroundings, at least, could be repaired. But the spiritual damage could not be so easily undone – and the region’s former Jewish residents did not return, choosing instead to remain in the places where they had sought refuge. Many made their homes in Israel or in the United States – many local Jews had also been killed.

After 1945, most Germans wanted to turn the page on the past. They preferred to believe this past could simply be forgotten, even as they piously went to church every Sunday and prayed for forgiveness. But Albrecht Castell refused to participate in that deceit. “Jews are part of our faith and our history. I refuse to simply forget them. To the contrary, I wish to remember them. Without regret,” there was no sting to his words; his voice was cordial, but resolute. And even more importantly: Castell acted as he spoke.

The Jewish Community of Würzburg – those people who had returned after the war – led a very modest existence. In 1992, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, more and more Jews began to arrive in Germany. Castell was one of the first non-Jews to recognize this as an opportunity to rebuild a viable Jewish community in Germany. It was largely thanks to his energy and his sponsorship that Würzburg became home to a modern Jewish center, which meanwhile enjoys an international reputation.

A pious Christian, Castell enjoyed going to the synagogue to celebrate Shabbat with “his” community. He was also a frequent visitor to Israel, especially at times when the Jewish state was unusually beleaguered. And his acts were never one of duty, but of an infectious joy.

Several weeks ago, Albrecht Prince of Castell-Castell died peacefully at age 90. His neighborly charity will remain alive in memory.

Helping to rebuild a viable Jewish community in Germany

Saxony brings modern art to life

Discovering art and culture in and around Saxony

Where once cotton fibre was processed into yarn is now one of the hottest art centres in Europe. More than 100 artists work undisturbed on their creations in the former Leipzig cotton mill while visitors wander round the galleries and exhibition halls, enjoying thrilling insights into contemporary art. Stars such as Neo Rauch, Tilo Baumgärtel or Matthias Weischer all do their part to lend a special charisma to the picturesque site. Right next door, young graduates from the Art Academy, installation artists, sculptors and upcoming photographers are engrossed in experimenting with their ideas.

The Leipzig art factory is only one of the many cultural beacons in Saxony. Others include the Dresden Semperoper, the Gunzenhauser Museum in Chemnitz, the Robert-Schumann-Haus in Zwickau and the St Thomas Boys’ Choir in Leipzig. In the best sense of the word, Saxony is a cultural region since culture here receives the greatest promotion of all German states.

If you not only enjoy art and culture in and around Saxony and would also like to discover the Free State of Saxony for yourself, have a look at the film „Life is a Dance” by the young video artist Sebastian Linda. He shot this creative declaration of love for his adopted home at 35 locations in the free state, together with the break-dance group „THE SAXONZ“. The four-minute clip is available for viewing on Youtube channel „Simply Saxony“. You will find other exciting insights on our website, on Facebook or on our Instagram channel @SimplySaxony. Check us out!

www.simply-saxony.com

Space for creative thought in contemporary art: the art space HALL 14 in the Leipzig cotton mill.
Re repentance, Prayer and Charity
Admitting our shortcomings is the most meaningful offering

By Hartmut Bomhoff

Youg Kohanim Reenact Shavuot Temple Offerings,” was recently a breaking news-headline in Jerusalem. Marking the Yom Ha-Bikkurim or “Day of the First Fruits,” a new group of pirchei kohanim (young priests) enthusiastically practiced the first fruits ritual with their eyes on Temple Mount. Afterwards, adult kohanim demonstrated the full Shavuot service, including the Twin Loaves offering. Offerings, priests and the blazing of silver trumpets by the Levites? Why are they focusing on rituals that have not been practiced for about 2,000 years, since the destruction of the Second Temple? Haven’t prayers as the service of the heart superseded the sacrifices?

“The world has never been so ready for the rebuilding of the Third Holy Temple in Jerusalem,” commented Rabbi Chaim Richman, international director of the Temple Institute. “Today’s event was yet another sign of the spiritual awakening that is growing stronger every day.”

The Temple Institute claims to have researched all relevant halachic information and has recreated over 60 sacred vessels for use in the Temple. However, what is old is not necessarily the best. The zealots’ efforts are in stark contrast to the general reverence for the vanished Temple, explains Rabbi Lawrence A. Hoffman, who holds the Chair in Liturgy, Worship, and Ritual at Hebrew Union College: “Officially, the Rabbis hoped some day to see the Temple rebuilt, and many traditional prayers still express that wish, but in practice, they have almost never sought to act on their theory. The Rabbis justified their inaction by explaining that God would rebuild the Temple whenever history ended and the Messiah arrived. Jews were forbidden to rebuild it themselves, so until the end of time, instead of sacrificing, they would pray.”

Over the course of the summer, there is a time in which the Jewish calendar evokes historical memory for the Jewish people: it is the period leading up from the 17th of Tammuz, when the Temple walls were breached, to the Ninth of Av, when the Temple was destroyed. A mourning day, Tisha be’Av itself reminds us of a number of disasters in Jewish history, primarily the destruction of both the First and Second Temples, but also the murder of the Ten Martyrs by the Romans, pogroms during the Crusades, and the Holocaust. The Shabbat preceding the Ninth of Av is called Shabbat Chazon, “Shabbat of Vision.” The chassidic master Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev said that on this special Shabbat, every Jewish soul is shown a vision of the third Holy Temple. The purpose of this vision is to arouse within every Jew a yearning to actually see this edifice which will be built by God. For the generations struck and traumatized by the Shoah, the founding of the state of Israel brought a strong sense of unified peoplehood into the modern Jewish experience – it was a taste of perfection, with much work in the world left to bring it about: We need to build a State of Israel that is shaped by justice and peace.

Judaism has proved its ability to evolve and adapt

The Knesset Menorah dates back to the time of the First Temple in Jerusalem

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