



ISRAEL
Coolness
WITH HELP OF
TRANQUILIZERS
PAGE 7



ECONOMY
China's Hunger
BUYING GERMAN
HIGH-TECH
PAGE 11



BERLIN
New Synagogue
150 YEARS OF
JEWISH PRIDE
PAGE 18

JEWISH VOICE FROM GERMANY

קול יהודי מגרמניה

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WESTERN DEMOCRACIES

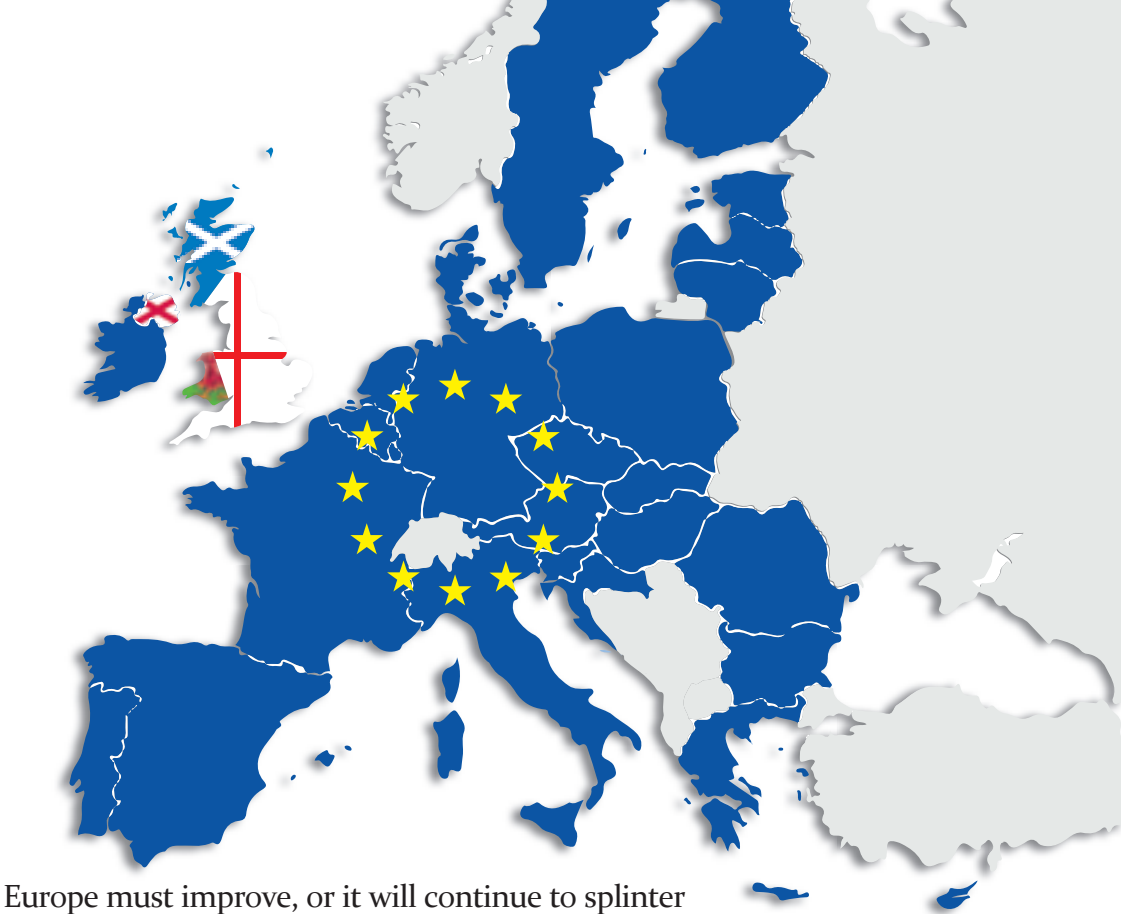
Courage, Not Fear

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 populist Austrian presidential candidate Norbert Hofer. And most recently at the diffuse and chaotic heap that makes up the adherents of the German AfD party, variously 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 and Mr Höcke? It is not Madame Le Pen, Frau Petry or Mr Farage who wield the true power. Rather it is the support of millions of vot-

ers for these muddled, egotistical and destructive ideas that has allowed these political factions to gain such influence. It is this knowledge that explains why so many Europeans are so terrified of these parties and movements that they have been sapped of all political self-confidence. But there is no cause for fear. Neither here in Europe, nor in the United States, where some regard Donald Trump as the embodiment of Charles Lindbergh, a central figure in Philip Roth's novel *The Plot Against America*, if not as the beginning of the end of democracy. But rather than wallow in neurotic fear, the like-minded democracies of the EU and the US would be better served by reflecting upon what their states and societies have achieved since 1945. After years of appeasement, Nazi Germany's war of aggression and the collaboration of the Soviet Union left the western democracies no choice but to take up arms against Germany in 1939. Two years later, Imperial Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor forced the United States to enter the war. With the support of the US, after 1949 a European community gradually emerged, first for industry and steel but quickly also extending to the political sector, which would soon reward the democracies of Western Europe with increasing affluence, stability and political influence. In 1973, after initial reluctance, the United Kingdom celebrated the opportunity to join the European Community. As a consequence of the collapse of the Soviet Union, its former satellite states considered themselves fortunate when they were able to join the EU. Brussels does mean bureaucracy as well as over-regulation and inefficiency. But the European Union is the world's largest economic zone. It is a guarantor of affluence, freedom and democracy. That is why people from all over the world seek to come here. United Europe may take justified pride in these achievements. We have no grounds for fear. Especially not of charlatans. And in the end, England will be knocking at our door again.

“No need for charlatans”

LOST IN TRANSITION



Europe must improve, or it will continue to splinter

SPD

Support for Israel

Though critical of some of the policies of the Netanyahu government, in an emergency situation, Germany's 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 populists 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. **PAGE 3**

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 bureaucracy and regulation. Otherwise economic isolationism could lead to the return of nationalism – with potentially deadly consequences. **PAGE 8**

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 problems of waste and inefficiency. But this friction is the price for a unified Europe – a unified 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 in the heart of our continent. An extended period such as this one, without war, has never before existed in Europe. That alone should be worth something. Nonetheless, anti-EU sentiments are on the rise. The majority of the vote for a Brexit is an undeniable testament to that fact. Where does this senti-

ment come from? It comes from inexperience and recklessness. It is not unlike what Europe witnessed in 1914, when the German Reich dreamed of more power and a “place in the sun” while at the same time, in France, politics and popular sentiment were clouded by the desire to avenge the defeat of 1870–1871. The result was the Great War followed by the Second World War. Today it is not war that is the issue, but “only” national egotism. But the result might well be as disastrous as a century ago. Even though three generations have passed, that trauma still remains deeply rooted within Germany. Those others should ask Eastern Europeans what it is like to be fragmented and ruled by a foreign power. Then they, too, might also prefer to remain a part of Europe.

Jewish Voice

POLITICS



Erdogan's Megalomania
No longer a reformer
PAGE 4

ECONOMY



Munich Re
Learning from the past
PAGE 14

HISTORY



Jewish Intelligence
Philosophers against Hitler
PAGE 22

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BREXIT

A Future Option for England and the EU

Isolation would deepen the division of Europe

By Elisabeth Neu

The decision of the United Kingdom to withdraw from the European Union reaffirms Albert Einstein's despondent conclusion: "Two things are infinite: the universe and human stupidity; and I'm not sure about the universe." At this point, there is little sense in seeking an explanation for the bravado of British voters. Instead we must now address the consequences. How can we minimize the negative impact for all sides while finding a new way forward?

The Brexit vote has unleashed euphoria among Europe's populists and chauvinists. Boris Johnson's triumph has bolstered the hopes of his spiritual kin, including Marine Le Pen and Geert Wilders – but also Iglesias, Stache, Gauland, and Höcke, to name but a few. It has also lent strength to the presidents at the periphery – Vladimir Putin and Recep Tayyip Erdogan. They all hope that Brexit will have a domino effect, ultimately ushering in the demise of the European Union. If that happens, the nationalists will once again be victorious. It was their visions of "a place in the sun," "revenge for Sadowa" and

pan-Slavism that repeatedly brought calamity to Europe in the past.

The EU must ensure this past is not repeated – and that means avoiding the pitfalls of nationalism. We must not succumb to the temptation to punish the United Kingdom – whether by imposing barriers on its trade with the continent, offering Scotland generous incentives for its own "Scotxit" from the United King-

dom, or attempting to isolate Britain within international institutions. This would be fatal, serving only to deepen the rift between the UK and the continent.

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

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 egotism, 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 pro-Brexit forces, while leaving its critics in the lurch.

Instead, the European Union must focus its efforts on highlighting its strengths.

The EU has brought us an unprecedented era of peace, prosperity and freedom. We must emphasize these achievements and reinforce their foundations. And we must ensure further progress in the integration of the EU

and NATO. Taken together, these measures will help us safeguard peace – and in a welcome side-effect, help us maintain ties with Britain.

The European Union must also ensure that liberty and freedom of movement is preserved. At the same time, however, the EU must recognize that more work must be done to win the European public

over to the benefits of these principles. A free Europe must remain a place of refuge for those who are politically persecuted, but the economic and social costs must also be shared fairly. To do otherwise would further erode public support for such policies, both within Europe and in Germany. The rise of the populist AfD party is but one vivid example.

Last but not least, Europe must improve economic prospects for ordinary people – and especially young people. Countries such as France, Spain and Italy are suffering from intolerable levels of youth unemployment, ranging from 25 to 50 percent. The European Central Bank's monetary policy of "quantitative easing" is not a sufficient remedy, and in many ways is even counterproductive. People who set aside money for a rainy day must once again receive interest on their savings.

The central challenge now facing Europe is clear: it must launch a labor-intensive investment initiative that will provide a stable economic foundation for its citizens, and especially for its young people. It is this foundation that will ensure their support for a unified and shared European democracy. ■

ISRAEL

Danger of Extreme Nationalism

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



Moshe Ya'alon

Mark Miller (Wikimedia) Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Germany (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/de/deed.en)

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 crosshairs 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 initially stood behind his defense minister. But as pressure from the far-right mounted, Netanyahu paid a visit to the family of Elor Azaria, the soldier then in custody pending trial. Although Netanyahu took care to offer no legal or political appraisal, his visit was seen as a concession to the far-right. Israel's military leaders, who follow a tradition based on the principles of humanity and political loyalty, were alarmed. IDF Deputy Chief of Staff Yair Golan warned dur-

ing a Holocaust Remembrance speech of the rise of fascistic tendencies within Israeli society. This warning was apparently issued with the agreement of Moshe Ya'alon and IDF Chief of Staff Gadi Eisenkot. The far-right erupted in outrage, recognizing that the Israeli military and the minister of defense were refusing to countenance their influence.

Prime Minister Netanyahu solved this escalating conflict by replacing Ya'alon with Avig-

“

Support of a humane Zionism is required

dor Lieberman, thereby solidifying his fragile majority in the Knesset – and shifting it further to the right. Ya'alon was offered a different Cabinet position, but he refused to be bought off. Instead he resigned from both the Cabinet and the Knesset. His announcement made his position clear: "I fought with all my might against manifestations of extremism, violence and racism in Israeli society, which are threatening its sturdiness and

trickling into the IDF, hurting it already." Indeed, according to Ya'alon, this tendency was also evident outside the military: "To my great regret, extremist and dangerous elements have taken over Israel and the Likud Party..."

Ya'alon's resignation and his speech have reverberated through Israeli politics – after all, 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 the 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 must remain democratic and pluralistic. This can only succeed if all cosmopolitan and open-minded forces acknowledge the looming danger and take active steps to support a humane Zionism. ■

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 Beiteinu

(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 case, something fundamental is at stake. Moshe Ya'alon is a man of steely resolve who rejects the idea of a Palestinian state as unrealistic and as a threat to Israel's existence. But even his fiercest opponents concede that Ya'alon is honest and

SPD SECRETARY GENERAL

I Want to Make the World a Better Place

Katarina Barley on German elections, the female approach to power, Israel and Iran

Jews have always played an important role in the SPD ... also after 1945, with Hamburg Mayor Herbert Weichmann, for example. Today only one Jew occupies a prominent position within the SPD, Mayor Peter Feldmann of Frankfurt ...

We are the only political party in Germany that has an active working group of Jewish members. Their concerns are accorded a visible place within the SPD. That's important to us.

Jews have traditionally been SPD voters, and in the US they have traditionally supported the Democratic Party – that's now changed. Taking a look at Sweden, for example, the first act of Prime Minister Stefan Löfven was to extend unconditional recognition to Palestine, unconditional ... Israel's popularity in Europe is very low ...

Of course, within our party there isn't only unconditional support for Israel's policies. And there doesn't have to be. But that has nothing to do with the Jewish people. Within the SPD, there is a very clear differentiation on this issue, on the level of both the political leadership and at the base.

The nuclear non-proliferation treaty with Iran is a purely technical contract. Is it not a black mark that Germany, of all countries, which bears a special responsibility for the existence of Israel, did not insist that the deal include a "right to exist" clause for all states, including Israel? The "moderate" Iranian President Hassan Rouhani continues to pursue the destruction of Israel ...

Israel's right to exist is something that our party defends everywhere and against everyone. In terms of the deal with Iran, I am confident that our minister for foreign affairs Frank-Walter Steinmeier has carefully considered what is defensible and what is not. We should also recall Willy Brandt, whose motto was change through rapprochement. The choice we face is between taking small steps or holding fast to our current position.

Would the SPD be prepared to defend Israel with all its might in the event of an emergency?

Yes, absolutely.

Otto Wels' 1933 speech against the passage of the Nazi's Enabling Act, the introduction of women's suffrage, which had a negative impact for the SPD ... is the SPD at its best when it occupies a position of martyrdom?



With Willy Brandt in the background

The SPD was always strong during times of social transformation. We're experiencing such a situation right now. And it's times like these when Social Democracy is needed most.

For example ...

The referendum in the United Kingdom demonstrates the fragility of conditions in Europe. Eurosceptics have been gaining force in many nation states. The outcome of the UK referendum is new grist to their mill, and it is now our duty to stand firm. Our message must be that the UK cannot cast off its obligations while preserving its privileges. The UK must bear the consequences of its decision and leave the European Union. We must give a show of strength. Otherwise Europe will be transformed within short order, with a profound impact for all who live here. These are big questions that, I believe, some people still haven't fully grasped. The SPD has an important role to play. We need to counter the diffuse fears and anxieties within our society by putting forth a positive and forward-thinking vision. We need to make it clear that the changes that currently are arousing these fears and anxieties also pose opportunities: for example, an opportunity to reconfigure our conception of men's and women's roles, including within the family, to make the workplace more compatible with family and personal life, and to better take advantages of the many opportunities digitization offers us. This would also allow us to take the wind out of the sails of the simplistic slogans being bandied about by parties such as the AfD. Such parties survive and thrive by stoking people's fear of change.

They try to fool people into believing that we can turn back the clock. We can't allow our society to be split and divided by ideas such as these. That's also where the SPD has a role to play.

During the first round of elections for the presidency in Austria, the SPÖ and ÖVP candidates each received 11 percent of the vote; the rightwing candidate Norbert Hofer received 36 percent ...

The situation in Austria is completely different from what we have here in Germany. Austria has been ruled for decades by grand coalitions, in various configurations of primacy between the coalition parties. For voters, that also leads to a kind of fatigue. In Germany, by contrast, there is resistance to grand coalitions, among both the political parties and the population. For this reason, grand coalitions are always a solution borne of necessity in Germany ...

When it comes to people who may be voting for the AfD or not voting at all, how do you plan to win them over to the SPD?

This has to happen on two levels. The first is in terms of content, our political agenda, where we're doing quite a bit, even though it's a long-term process. These are people who are mistrustful and who are at least somewhat alienated from the political process. You can't change that with a single political measure or policy. We're examining very closely what it is that people need, and what will make their lives better.

So for example, we are working on issues such as pensions on account of reduced earnings capacity, childcare opportunities that would also help single parents remain in the workforce, and other similar issues. These are long-term measures that are urgently needed, and they will also help rebuild trust.

The second aspect is how to convey our agenda. That is becoming more and more difficult, because the way people are obtaining information nowadays has changed. We need to become more innovative and take better advantage of digital channels such as Facebook. It's easier for parties such as the AfD, for example, to take advantage of such channels, since they trade in simplistic slogans, fearmongering and other negative emotions. It's easier to play on such emotions, but we're aiming for something different, which is to foster a sense of confidence and trust and to promote personal initiative. For that, we have to have endurance and staying power.

Before Sigmar Gabriel was elected head of the party in 2009, he said that the party should also be willing to wade into places where, in his words, there's a slight whiff, or even a stench. ... Is the SPD doing that?

Yes, we are doing that. We put a lot of effort into policies on behalf of people who are genuinely struggling, even if we know that they won't necessarily vote for us in return. One example is minimum wage, which is not an issue that affects the majority of our voters and party members. But we believe this is a matter of urgent necessity. For one, because it's an important part of the basic values of our party. But it's also an issue of great importance for our society as a whole. Establishing a minimum wage also helps to raise wages up the ladder.

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 22 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 this opportunity to shape things 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. ■

Katarina Barley talked to JVG editors Elisabeth Neu and Rafael Seligmann at the SPD headquarters in Berlin

TURKEY

Erdogan's Megalomania

The precarious balance with Europe's neighbor



By Stephan Webinger

The strategy for engaging with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan depends a great 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 conservative 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 is 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 parliamentarians emphasized Germany's complicity in the genocide, noting that Germany had watched and allowed the massacres to happen. A quarter-century later Hitler would cynically cite this as justification for 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. President of 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 fighter 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 continues to stick to his side of the refugee bargain, despite his anger at Germany. Of course, Turkey is also benefiting financially from the agreement, since billions of euros are flowing to Ankara.

We must remember that Erdogan largely owes his electoral successes as prime minister and president to the economic boom which Turkey experienced under his aegis. And this is where Erdogan is most vulnerable. Erdogan once had a reputation as a reformer. He and his AKP party gave voice to millions of

those who are dubbed the “black Turks” (people who come from the urban outskirts and rural Anatolia), ended de facto military rule in Turkey, embarked on peace negotiations with the Kurds, and brought Turkey closer to the EU. But Erdogan has long since gambled away that reputation.

During Erdogan's early years in politics, many feared that he would be revealed as a wolf in sheep's clothes, someone who intended to gradually transform Turkey into an Islamic republic. A tactic that Erdogan appeared to confirm with statements such as this one: “Democracy is like a train. When you reach your destination, you get off. The mosques are our barracks, the domes our helmets, the minarets our bayonets and the faithful our soldiers.”

Surpass Atatürk

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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Erdogan has gambled away his reputation as a reformer



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Populism Sweeps Europe

France

Front National gambles away cultural values

By JVG

The significance of the Front National is reflected in the biographies of Jean-Marie Le Pen and his daughter Marine. The elder Le Pen, who was born in 1928, openly professed his far-right extremism and racism. He also candidly admitted his anti-Semitism, calling the gas chambers 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 slandered Muslims and Arabs. Such incitements brought the senior Le Pen modest political success. In 1984, he was elected a member of the European Parliament; in 2002, Le Pen succeeded in forcing Jacques Chirac into a second 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 image is not one of a “grubby” far-right extremist but rather of a mainstream politician who is at the very least tolerated by polite society. For this “moderate” image, Marine Le Pen is prepared to sacrifice everything, even the party membership of her blustering father, who with age is increasingly descending into obstinate irrelevance.

Marine Le Pen by contrast is gaining in stature, even as the traditional middle-class French parties 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 failures. Hollande’s approval ratings are a disaster, at times hovering around five percent. Even though more than 70 percent of French voters say they want neither Hollande nor Sarkozy, both are currently planning to compete in the next presidential election. In so doing, they are forcing voters to

choose between the deeply unpopular 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 meet the desire for security among rural and suburban voters in particular. France has also been unable to integrate young

people of Maghreb descent and to effectively counter the resulting 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 National. But this would be a mistake.

No, Marine Le Pen is no open anti-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 Erdogan. Their authoritarian worldview, which is driving their countries into isolation, is contrary to the French spirit that all enlightened nations still cherish: the spirit of liberté, égalité, fraternité. ■

Poland

Success at stake

By Robert Kahn

The 70th anniversary of the post-Shoah pogrom of Kielce, where locals murdered 42 Jews on July 4, 1946, has not only spurred a complicity debate but also sparked national identity tangles. The discussion focuses on a blame game and is just one expression of the deep divisions of Polish society today. Poland’s lurch to the right began years ago when a major sector of its population didn’t come to terms with the rapid transition from the old communist era to one of the greatest success stories of the European Union. The rightwing nationalist PiS (Law and Justice) party owed its sweeping election victory in October 2015 above all to the many Poles who have not benefited from the country’s strong economic growth. Since PiS party leader Jarosław Kaczyński has returned to office, he has been striving to accumulate power by stigmatizing and removing political opponents, putting pressure on media outlets and escalating eurosceptic rhetoric. His vow to roll back previous legislation culminated in the announcement 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 systematically undermining the system of checks and balances. Kaczyński 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 opposition lacks vision and a positive agenda, while the silent majority appears to be tired of gender issues dominating politics, fears the loss of sovereignty to the European Union, and moves closer together in the face of outside interferences and criticism. If the attempts of Poland’s populist government to debilitate the country’s democratic institutions are successful, this will encourage groups with more radical policies to crack down on everything that stands for an open society. A bitter foretaste of such a regression was provided by some incidents in the western Polish city of Wrocław: 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, Ultranationalists burned the poster of the Mayor of Wrocław, Rafał Dutkiewicz, who was shown wearing a kippah. Dutkiewicz is a staunch supporter of Poland’s liberal political camp which is now under threat. ■

Hungary: Nepotism meets poverty

By Hartmut Bomhoff

When the Left doesn’t respond to people, they turn to the Right,” admits an opposition representative with a shrug. Six years after Viktor Orbán won his first supermajority, right-wing nationalist 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 government’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 2009, his socialist-liberal coalition faced a pile of shards. Its incompetence in matters of administration, 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. Budapest looks good and prosperous today, with its new metro line, new pedestrian zones and lavish development projects, but more and more locals question this happy narrative. The ruling Fidesz party has come under

fire for using its constitutional majority to push through legislation and constitutional changes that solidified the party’s control over the country – rewriting the election laws, Fidesz

managed to win a 2/3 majority in 2014, despite obtaining less than 50 percent of the popular vote –, and Orbán has to face allegations of crony capitalism. With an average income level of allegedly 800 euros per month (500 euros might be more realistic) and high taxes, long run wages and living standards which haven’t improved over the years, poverty is more visible than ever. And yet people

cry “And the Gyurcsány-crew? They were the real thieves!”

Policy isn’t necessarily decided through open debate, but rather by political connections and loyalty, or by the wealth of the new elite. One of the startling aspects of these policies is the Hungarian right’s belief in a close relationship between church and state. Some weeks ago, the Prime Minister pointed out that “that the heritage of the Hungarian Reformed Church, which is so important for the Hungarian nation, may be a continuing source of strength.” Orbán’s Minister of Human Capacities, Zoltán Balog, is a minister of the Reformed Church, and so is the openly anti-Semitic László Kőrösi, who has close connections to the far-right Jobbik party. Viktor Orbán

has to compete with Jobbik for the nationalist votes and finances his anti-EU propaganda with public funds, distracting his followers from the dismal state Hungary is currently in. The opposition parties, however, appear much too weak to join forces in order to beat Fidesz. ■

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 im-



Israelis are the highest per capita users of tranquilizers in the world

mediate 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. ■

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WHAT'S GOOD?

Back to Free Trade

Tariff reduction stabilizes prosperity and peace

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 world. What began in 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 inability to muster public support. Instead, politicians on both sides 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 "nexit". 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 promise of liberation from the narrow confines of the nation-state – this narrative has lost its cultural hegemony. As described by the Marxist theorist Antonio Gramsci, this cultural hegemony is not a matter of force, but is something that resides in the conviction imparted to ordinary people that they live in the "best of all possible worlds".

Brexit and Nexit

This best of all possible worlds began in 1947 with the GATT multilateral trade agreement, in which tariffs were lowered by nearly 25 percent. GATT thus helped establish the framework of the postwar global economic recovery. Over the next 60 years, this recovery brought with it an ever-expanding process of globalization, growth in international trade and ever-increasing international cooperation. Of course, this was not a straightforward story of progress; these years would also witness a host of setbacks, crises of decolonization, and the entry of China and finally also the Soviet-ruled East bloc into the globalized world.

Over the long term, however, these were years of steady improvement, measured in terms of the global decline in the proportion of people living in absolute poverty, decreasing infant mortality rates, and greater access to ba-

sic civilizational achievements such as education. But perhaps it will not be the collapse of the Doha rounds that historians of the future will cite as the turning point, the moment in which our present-day cultural continental drift commenced on a global scale. Perhaps it was instead September 11, 2001, the day on which the dramatic escalation of archaic conflicts would bring down both the World Trade



Hamburg port: Germany's gateway to international trade

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Regulations are imposed in a self-justifying process, deregulation has fallen by the wayside

Center as well as the symbolic edifice which it represented.

Gramsci died in 1937; philosophical questions, however, have no expiry date. The historic postwar forces of economic development, free markets, liberalism, world trade, and the dismantling of trade restrictions have been suspended, step by step. Europe is suffering under the embargo imposed on Russia and under the cultural hegemony of bureaucracy. New regulations are imposed in what has become a nearly self-justifying process, while deregulation has fallen by the wayside. Are we witnessing the death of the golden years of global liberalism?

Before answering this question, I will take a step back in history. The postwar era was not the first era of global liberalism. Free trade was also ascendant in the decades leading up to 1914.

"German cattle are grazing on the la Plata River," Reich Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg is supposed to have said. Even today, this slogan would bring German and French farmers out on the streets and the barricades. The gold standard functioned as a global single cur-

rency; any national currency linked to the gold standard could be printed under the rule of three and could compensate for appreciations or depreciations, a regime which was a boon to international trade. Transatlantic trade was brisk. Passenger steamers crossed the ocean like long strings of pearls, one after the other with such matter-of-fact confidence that the Titanic would assume that lifeboats were superfluous – after all, in the event of an emergency, another steamer could not be far away. According to economic historians, this global trade would remain unmatched in its intensity until well into the 1990s.

In between came the dark years of the great wars, and the almost equally gloomy interwar years. From the perspective of a free trade advocate, WWI brought with it one major result: the rise of new borders. Old empires had collapsed. The German Reich and Austria-Hungary shattered into a multitude of small Eastern European states, rife with border conflicts. The Ottoman Empire was overthrown, and the borders drawn with a ruler on the map of the Middle East would give rise to the brutal religious and territorial conflicts that are tearing the region asunder.

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

One of the first to recover was the British Empire, which presided over a market that spanned the globe, extending from Europe to Africa, India and Australia; another was the North American economic continent, which like the British Empire was large enough to support

TICHY'S COLUMN

a kind of "domestic international trade" within its own sphere of influence. Italy and Germany – two states which were imprisoned by particularism and autarchic ambition and decoupled from the global markets – sought to cast off their shackles through violent expansion. As we know, this did not end well.

Desire and will as catalysts

The GATT negotiations of 1947 were a return to reason and an acknowledgment of global necessities. "The world is flat," Thomas Friedman wrote, describing the new globalization that has become reality over the past several decades. But it would appear that the global pizza contains numerous hills, valleys and unbridgeable divides. In *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, Friedman argues that global technologies will necessarily win out over the human tendency to hold fast to tradition and tribal loyalty. Globalization, Friedman believes, is inevitable. But at the start of the nineteenth century, the global rise of the telegraph, photography, steam engines, steel manufacturing and chemistry was no less spectacular and all-encompassing than what we are witnessing today – and it stoked similar fears. The world order is not determined by the achievements of scientists and engineers, but by the desires and the will of people and politicians. Free trade and liberalism are not an inevitability, nor are they the outcome of technological revolution. As history has shown, the archaic revolutionaries of yesteryear were unmatched in their ruthless use of technology. What began with Hitler has now culminated in the Islamic State, which employs both mobile networks and crowd-mobilization techniques to control and guide its band of murderers. Free trade and liberalism are cultural values. Without their cultural hegemony, 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 "Tichys Einblick" (www.rolandtichy.de)



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GENDER AND BUSINESS

Where Have All the Women Gone?

Emancipation put to reality's test



By Hubert-Ralph Schmitt

Nothing is more exciting that the filling of top positions. Anything is possible; there is no absurdity that is beyond the limits of imagination. Many factors must be taken into account. The candidates must have the necessary education and training. They must possess the right comportment and demeanor, the right age, charm, experience, knowledge, contacts, and more. And then there are social constraints and pressures that need to be taken into account – like the women's quota, for example. The decision-makers are spoiled for choice – that is, if they have a choice at all.

The reality is that when it comes to top leadership positions, it is often difficult to find the perfect candidate, whether male or female. And even though both politics and popular opinion have reached a consensus, we are falling short of achieving our social policy goals. Even today, men and women do not occupy an equal share of top positions. Work-life balance and an unwillingness to assume responsibility also help to eliminate many qualified candidates.

Good marks, no careers

In nearly all professions – and especially those which over the past 30 years have introduced a numerus clausus, including the natural sciences, medicine and veterinary medicine, and even banking – women now outnumber men in university admissions. Most go on to successfully complete their degree. Here, at least, it would seem that the preconditions for achieving our social policy goals have been fulfilled.

The existence of this phenomenon is no secret. Young wom-

en between the ages of 17 and 19 tend to have better final grades than men. This is a phenomenon which the decision-makers are not permitted to question – it is what it is, and the result is that men and women are not equally represented among university graduates.

And this continues throughout their professional lives. But when it comes to career development, women do not progress as one might expect. Here the author must beg the forgiveness of the strategists of emancipation, for in many cases it would almost seem that women are still hankering after the traditional image of the family. Time and again, and once more this is no secret, many women reach a point in their lives where they wish to start a family. There have even been instances where women decide they wish to marry and then – as the laws of both nature and the emotions of men and women tend to dictate – some even choose the traditional path of child-bearing. And many even then go so far as to wish to raise their children themselves. And this happens despite every emancipatory exhortation and all education and upbringing to the contrary.

The men in the equation may devote an equal share of time in service to the family, but – and perhaps it only seems so to this author – in most instances it seems that it is the women who bear the brunt of child-rearing, while the traditional role of breadwinner falls not entirely coincidentally on the backs of men. After all, this is what most men want, right?

But this is more than just a matter of happenstance; it is even said that some women “select” men who embody

this traditional conception of the family. Men who wield sufficient status and earnings to support a family are often highly sought after, even among some highly educated and successful women.

So does this mean that at some point, reality catches up with theory? “The man tends to his career, and the woman tends to the family” – is this still the motto we live by? At least to this author, it would seem this traditional conception of family still predominates among young western European couples, all attempts

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Trying to avoid taking on responsibility, ladies?

at inculcation and emancipation notwithstanding. Even a female Chancellor has done nothing to change this.

And once these women feel they have put the years of intensive childrearing behind them, we encounter the next social phenomenon. They may no longer be interested in ascending to the managerial ranks and taking on positions of responsibility. It should be noted that this has nothing to do with education and training, or with lack of professional experience, but is purely a matter of personal choice. This is why many attempts to fulfill the desired quota of women in the boardroom are doomed to failure. This is not simply an impression; it is backed up by the numbers.

The people in charge of making hiring decisions are con-

fronted with a dilemma. They are unable to find suitable female candidates who wish to take on the day-to-day realities of life as a top executive, including between 38 and 50 hours of work. And this is not only true for traditional careers such as head physician in a hospital, or owner of a veterinary practice, but also for other professions as well. For bankers, too, this is a familiar story.

So are women simply not as good as men? Rubbish! Does the traditional family still mean women choose children over careers? Possibly. However, a lack of financial inducement is not the problem. It's not a matter of incentivizing, in other words, that keeps women out of these positions. It is family responsibilities, work-life balance, and traditional family structures that continue to play a dominant role.

Archaic trap

So what should we do if we are unable to find suitable female candidates? Or if due to misguided quota in education and training, we are unable to find suitable male candidates? Should we introduce a quota for men for university subjects that have a numerus clausus for admission? Should we forbid people to pair up, or even to have children? Or should we forbid women to choose men with high earning potential as their prospective mates and fathers of their children?

These are all questions that could prompt intriguing answers. Here again it is important to note that women are not less capable than men. In terms of their education they often outdo men, and they generally match men in their ambitions. But they often fall into an archaic trap, in which reality trumps social policy.

Are women trying to avoid taking on responsibility? No. It is reality that is causing this gender gap in top management. Family comes before professional and career ambitions. This has nothing to do with emancipation but with life – meaning nature, tradition, and social reality. Take the idea of introducing a quota for men in the numerus clausus – a demand for which the author might end up at the stake of women's emancipation. ■

Hubert-Ralph Schmitt is CEO of Bank Schilling

THE SPUDY COLUMN

Direct Investments as Attractive Alternative

By Jens Spudy

At a time of extremely low interest rates and high-valued stock markets, investors are increasingly searching for alternative high-yield investment opportunities. In such instances, we recommend taking a look at private equity investments – particularly for private investors. Compared with stocks, private equity boasts a higher average yield at lower volatilities – and this with diverging correlation to the traditional asset classes. This makes private equity particularly interesting for investors with long-term investment plans, such as those for family assets for example. With these investments, they can improve the yield-risk profile of their portfolio as a whole. Direct investments in innovative start-ups are receiving particular attention at the moment, a fact highlighted by the great response at the most recent Axel Springer NOAH 2016 internet start-up conference in Berlin.

But private equity investments have their drawbacks. The limited fungibility of the capital employed and the risk inherent to the investment, which can result in a total loss, are particularly noteworthy. Further, reporting on some private equity investments can be opaque, leaving much to be desired for the investor themselves. Finally, however, a successful selection of sound direct investments is almost impossible without a professionally structured and systematic selection process.

And yet, with private equity, investors can take advantage of opportunities to participate in the success of decidedly attractive industries, such as medical technology, or sustainable developments like digitalization. To avoid being blinded by these great opportunities and lose sight of the various risks, private investors should exercise caution and take advantage of professional services in this segment.

Professional services regarding such investments include independent consulting and expert investment management, in addition to asset controlling and compliance with tax and legal provisions. This blend provides investors with the necessary transparency to benefit from this interesting asset class over the long term. ■

Jens Spudy is executive partner of Spudy Invest



BEIJING'S TRADE POLICY

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. The flare-up, however, had little to do with the fact that the Frankfurt-Hahn regional airport is slated to be turned over to a Chinese construction firm – the airport is a loss-maker that many will be happy to be rid of. But this is not the case when it comes to the Kuka industrial robotics company. Under CEO Till Reuter, the Augsburg-based company has recently seen an upswing, and has even ascended to the ranks of global market-leader in some areas.

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 could be found. 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.”



go to the second-favored destination for Chinese investment, Britain, when Hutchinson agreed to buy Telefonica-subsidary O2 for \$15.4 bn. The merger, however, was blocked by the EU commission.

Long-term success

According to experts, fears of a “yellow threat” are exaggerated. Thus far, most transactions have been a net positive for the target companies. One reason is that Chinese investors are operating on an entirely different timescale than Anglo-Saxon private equity funds or other large investors. Whereas American and British investors usually push for a hefty return as quickly as possible while always keeping an eye out for the most profitable moment to exit their investment, Chinese investors are more interested in long-term success. Word of these positive experiences with investors from the Far East has now gotten around to German mid-sized companies, says EY partner Yi Sun.

At the same time, Chinese investors are no longer motivated by the desire to establish a market foothold, which they have meanwhile accomplished in most areas. As Sun notes, “Many Chinese companies are now aiming to build up new business areas with higher-margin products.” This is echoed by the largely mediatory note which

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

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 EY noted. Germany remained the preferred site, with 36 companies being purchased last year. The largest deal, however, was to

Chancellor Merkel struck in Beijing. In return, Merkel was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Nanjing at a ceremony held at the Chinese Academy of Sciences. The university honored the Chancellor's commitment to legal dialogue, her attempt to find solutions to regional conflicts, her engagement in the refugee crisis, and her efforts to counter climate change. With her “determination and wisdom”, said the university president, Merkel had “made a contribution to world peace.” Her pursuit of a “pragmatic China policy” is an important contributor to promoting collaboration and mutual trust between the two nations. ■

Klaus Dieter Oehler is financial editor at the daily *Stuttgarter Zeitung*



Kuka robots at work

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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 inform the larger sphere of politics and society. This can be seen, for example, in the antipathy most Germans hold for violence and war, and the political considerations that follow from this 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 Christopher Kopper, the study is an absorbing account of Munich Re, formerly known as Münchener Rück. The account is a sweeping survey of the company's history from its early success and the effects of the San Francisco earthquake of 1906, its steep decline during the Nazi years, to its proud comeback.

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 Versicherungsgesellschaft Phönix (General Insurance Company Phoenix). It was followed by clients in England, Russia, Scandinavia, and then in the US – an expansion that was nothing 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 400. Branch offices were founded and Allianz Versicherung AG was launched.

In 1906, the Munich company was called upon to assist its US clients. A ma-

jor 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 \$175 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.

Trials 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 Kißkalt, and member of the board Alois Alzheimer all joined the Nazi party – a "brown" blemish on the company's history. But the stain went far deeper than this: Kurt Schmitt maintained close ties with the Nazi

“

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

Nikolaus von Bomhard

leadership. In 1930, Schmitt had already become a personal friend of Hermann Göring.

In 1933, Schmitt accepted Reichsführer SS Heinrich Himmler's invitation to become an honorary member of the SS, holding the rank of Oberführer. In June 1933, 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 board willingly 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 were suspended from their posts by the US military administration and taken into custody. The search for a politically untainted successor began. The appointment fell on Eberhard von Reininghaus, an Austrian with Jewish roots who had been persecuted under the regime. The hope was that he would symbolize a fresh start and embody the company's break with the past.

A new generation

Relationships outside Germany were resumed, and within a few years the company had recovered its leading position. For the time being, however, no attempt was made to come to terms with what would remain a dark chapter in the company's history. To the contrary: in writ-

ten communications with the military authorities, the company vehemently denied that it had willingly complied with the demands of the Nazi regime. When the restitution of Jewish property began and Münchener Rück was ordered to annul its purchase contracts for "Aryanized" real estate, the company displayed little by way of remorse.



Munich Re offices in 1931

Historisches Archiv München

SOCCER & BUSINESS

Money Makes the Ball Go Round

By Dieter Sattler

A few months ago, after a soccer fan died of a 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 there – 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 an investor, a member of that group which has helped leech the romance out of soccer in the country where the "beautiful game" was born. The fans,

who continue to cheer and mourn along with their teams, are now little more than but a touch of local color, a background chorus of voices and whistles, whose only true value lies in their willingness to shell out for overly expensive admission tickets, merchandising products and Sky TV subscriptions.

Investors such as Russian tycoon Roman Abramovich (FC Chelsea) and Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan (Manchester City) are not only interested in the game itself. They have also injected global financial interests into soccer. The Premier League clubs will pocket \$10.5 bn for broadcasting rights over three seasons. For each club, that entails an average 50 percent increase in earnings – for what is already the world's wealthiest soccer league. The German Bundesliga clubs are outclassed in this respect – although the Bundesliga has



managed to secure a new broadcast deal that would raise revenues from \$2.7 to \$5 bn. Currently, however, all 20 Premier League clubs rank among the 40 wealthiest clubs in Europe. The result is that a middle-of-the-pack Bundesliga player such as Augsburg defender Abdul Rahman Baba was able to se-

cure a \$23 mn deal by moving to England. Transfer earnings and increasing revenue from broadcast rights, which depend on a club's position on the table, have caused the German Bundesliga transfer market to overheat. The big clubs are devouring the smaller ones.

Big business, complete with investors, billions in broadcast rights and mega-transfer deals, is now king in all major leagues. This is part of what has made national championships and the Champions League an increasingly predictable and yawn-inducing affair. Money means goals. The same big-money clubs have dominated their respective leagues for years now. All the claims have been staked. Big business is squelching competition. The only race that's left now is the competition among wealthy investors. It is unlikely that the

Brexit will have an impact on this flourishing business.

Rather surprisingly, given our age of globalization, the romance of soccer remains alive and well among the national squads. Since British clubs have scooped up so many of the world's top players, the national team must recruit about a quarter of its squad from the Premier League. By the same token, smaller countries are gaining in strength because their players are also gaining experience in top leagues and then returning to play on the national squads of their home countries. For these international players, an added bonus 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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WROCLAW

A City of Many Colors Builds Its Identity

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

By Hartmut Bomhoff

Today Wrocław is already a different city," stated Mayor Rafał Dudkiewicz earlier this year. "I can't say if the European Capital of Culture can change the mentality and habits of the residents, but I can say that the citizens of Wrocław 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 Wrocław you will immediately understand why so many people love it. It has been voted as 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 three times the size of Trafalgar Square in London, as well as a seemingly infinite number of bars and restaurants.

Stories of transformation

Wrocław's history entwines the fates of Germans and Poles. Until its German population was expelled after World War Two, Wrocław (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 Lwów in eastern Poland (now Lviv in Ukraine) were settled here. Breslau became Wrocław, 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 Wrocław in February 1946 and



Under communism dwarves became a symbol of underground protest. These sisyphers were among the first

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, Wrocław was Poland's fourth largest city, but had the tenth largest budget. Wrocław's Old Town, my neighborhood, was full of dilapi-

ated tenement houses waiting for a better time to come. And come it did. I saw the center of Wrocław transformed into its vibrant, manicured self, once

again claiming its places among most-visited destinations in Central Europe." Wrocław 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

not keep up with its economic boom," notes Kirschenbaum. "Some Wrocławians 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 Afik who moved to Wrocław 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 Wrocław "the same entrepreneurial spirit that Israel is well known for. In some respects, I think Wrocław is where Israel was 10 years ago in terms of the development of a Hi Tech sector. It is no wonder to me that the city ranks

first place in terms of Foreign Direct Investment in Poland ... My main business activity is connected with real estate investments," he explains, "from residential to world-class elderly care homes. Every day I see this city becoming more global, and I expect this trend to continue as the city becomes more well-known and develops." However, being international no longer suits some Poles, and with the current shift to the right, it remains to be seen to what extent Wrocław will be able to cultivate its cosmopolitan and progressive image. For the time being, the small Jewish community and its cultural attraction, the grand White Stork Synagogue, enjoy great interest. "Wrocław can finally and proudly live its heritage as a city of many cultures, and can find a new identity as a city of mutual respect," hopes Aleksander Gleichgewicht, the Jewish Community's president.

Hub of Jewish culture

Bente Kahan, whose foundation runs the synagogue which underwent extensive reconstruction before being reopened in 2010, is grateful for lots of visitors every day: "I'm very happy that we have this focus on Wrocław, especially by the Germans who are rediscovering our wonderful town. As for our Jewish Wrocław, it also means a lot, great promotion and the possibility to do our Yiddish and Ladino project." In May, a huge crowd experienced a unique concert celebrating Yiddish and Ladino, featuring international performers in the Wrocław Center for Jewish Culture and Education. Now, Kahan and her team are setting up another unique event: From September 1-4, Wrocław will host an international conference, "Creating Alternatives for Jewish Women in Europe," marking the European Day 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 Wrocław's Old Town. There's a particular story behind them: back in the 1980's, when communism ruled and all kind of meetings and manifestations were monitored, an anarchist group called the Orange Alternative created graffiti, with dwarves appearing in numbers all over Poland. Today, they represent the transition of Wrocław with a smile and add some hidden meaning to "the most important year in Wrocław's post-war history," as Rafał Dudkiewicz put it. ■

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

Aleksander Gleichgewicht

medium sized IT companies which are Polish but serve clients across Europe, including Germany. "Unfortunately, Wrocław's social development did

dated tenement houses waiting for a better time to come. And come it did. I saw the center of Wrocław transformed into its vibrant, manicured self, once



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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 Jewish community; but 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 compositions were sounded here.

The famed music director was Rabbi Abraham Geiger’s colleague. “Dr. Geiger yesterday held his inaugural ser-

“

This house conveys the German Jewish experience at large

mon,” stated a notice dated January 23, 1870. “The large building of the New Synagogue was filled to a capacity normally seen only on the High Holidays.



Spin Hall (Flickr) 15053125789_44a7e55b3_o CC BY-SA 2.0 (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0)

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 the façade of the synagogue 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 Judaicum along with the permanent exhibition „Open the Gates,” referring to the words cited above its main entrance, “Open the gates, that the righteous nation 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.

On 11 September, in conjunction with the Day of Open Monuments, the Centrum Judaicum 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 Judaicum. “We also maintain the most important archive focusing on German Jewish history in this country.” On September 11, for the first time in decades, at least five entrance gates of the New Synagogue will simultaneously open for the public

ANNUAL DIALOGUE REPORT

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 Advisor to Sheikh Allam.

One of the most important questions that has been raised repeatedly is what role religion and religious forces will play in the still emerging political scene in the MENA region. Because MENA remains profoundly religious, the burning question is who can adequately represent the religious interests of the masses, and direct them towards peaceful and productive democratic ends? These are critical questions. Both their number and significance underscore the very large challenges ahead in this important region.

The Muslim world has been particularly successful at creating institutions and bodies whose long-standing service to the community confer upon them legitimacy that cannot be had simply by someone with access

to modern media. This is no time to abandon that example, for it is the only vehicle by which a humane understanding of Islam

is not a new phenomenon. Rather it is part of the treasures of the cultural heritage of Arabs and Muslims.



Al-Azhar University in Cairo, center of Islamic learning

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 to 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 meant that many delegations of the Muslim world have 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 ...

– opposed to terrorism, violence and discrimination – is possible. This understanding I speak of, and its attendant imperative to engage with the modern world,



(c) by Daniel Tchetchik Sunburn

DANIEL TCHECHIK

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 in-



Daniel Tchetchik Sunburn

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, al-



Daniel Tchetchik Sunburn



Daniel Tchetchik Sunburn

spiration. 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

so 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 ...

LOVE AND FAITH

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'm used to having the entire family gather at my parents' house 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 complete when he met his Israeli girlfriend – Iris, who has long red hair and limbs dotted with freckles. After just a year, he and Iris were engaged. But Iris is secular. A Tel Aviv native, Iris works for a startup, is a social media devotee, and has little interest in religion. On this Friday evening, she's again busy elsewhere. "She promised me she'd be back for dinner. But it looks like she'll be late," Raz says, adjusting the kippah on his dark brown hair. Sporting a three-day beard, white linen shirt and suede shoes, Raz already looks like a true Israeli. He and Iris live in Jaffa, the Arab section of Tel Aviv. It's become increas-



ingly popular with young people, who are drawn there by lower rents and tasty hummus. 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 life within the modern world, openly and without inhibition.

Raz rises from the white rattan chair and sets out bread and wine. There's also a casserole, 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 her only day off during the week, so she doesn't want to be tied up at home.

Iris' 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 fiancé'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 Ju-

daism. "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. Far away from home, Dimi feels 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

“**You can't just go to the synagogue every two months. It's all or nothing**”

Friday evening and ideally also Saturday mid-day. It was all too much for me." As a jazz pianist, he has many weekend performances in bars and hotels. Dimi was tired of forever having to apologize to his family.

"That constant sense of guilt is finally gone." For 25-year-old Dimi, it was impossible to escape that pressure in Israel. Leaving seemed the only option. In Europe today, religion is a purely private matter, and in Berlin Dimi has found many kindred spirits. So does he see a future for himself here? "Yes, absolutely. Here, I can live without all that pressure. And find a girlfriend who is OK with that."

Raz, by contrast, wants to give a greater role to religious obligations in his daily life. That's what motivated his decision to emigrate. "I never imagined that after finally arriving in Israel, I'd fall in love with a secular Jewish woman." He had hoped to find a woman with whom he would share a life of observance. A woman who would accompany

him to the market on Friday afternoons, and then remain at home to prepare the evening meal; who would invite friends and family, who would attend synagogue with him on holidays. "He has to make that appealing to me, and he's got his work cut out. I really hate sitting among those devout women in the gallery," 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 tradi-

tional 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 admire him for his commitment to a way of life, as long as he does the same for me."

This summer, Dimi plans to perform with various bands at different festivals. He'll spend a lot of time on the road. "If I had a religious girlfriend, I know that I couldn't expect her to accompany me." Dimi says that Judaism is not really comparable to today's moderate and measured Christianity – and it's difficult to

reconcile with the twenty-first century. "You can't just go to the synagogue every two months. It's all or nothing." He believes that a relationship like Iris and Raz's is very complicated. Especially 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?" ■



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YIDDISH SUMMER WEIMAR

The Face and Voice of Ashkenaz

A festival explores European legends and Yiddish crossovers

By Robert Kahn

The Yiddish Summer Weimar Festival for me is a place where I grow as an artist and a person, where I meet the best teachers and artists in the field of klezmer music and Yiddish song, where I create my own musical projects,” says Sveta Kundish. “It’s a place of inspiration and deep learning.” She is dedicated to a variety of Jewish music styles: born in Ukraine, Kundish began studying music when she was seven and continued her musical training in Israel. She holds a BA in musicology, studied Yiddish music in Nehama Lifshitz’s master class and graduated in 2011 from the Prayner Konservatorium in Vienna. Today, she is enrolled at the Cantorial School at the Abraham Geiger College in Potsdam. The Yiddish Summer Weimar introduces the soprano as a “rising-star singer,” and she is one of the soloists featured in the festival’s opening concert, “The Voices of Ashkenaz.”

The title of this year’s Yiddish Summer Weimar, *Bobe Mayses*, looks back to a sixteenth-century Yiddish verse romance, the Bovo-Buch by the Renaissance scholar Elia Levita, which relates the chivalric adventures of the hero Bovo d’Antona. This romance, first composed in 1507, soon became one of the most popular works of Jewish secular literature and remained so over the next five hundred years. While



Singer Sveta Kundish

in Yiddish, *bobe* is an affectionate name for grandmother, and *mayse* means tale or story, the term *bobe 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 folksongs 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 of her generation. 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 2016 festival program, which 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.

Yiddish Summer Weimar takes place from July 10-August 12, with a Festival Week featuring program highlights from August 1-6. For further information, see: <http://yiddishsummer.eu/>

A House of Hope beneath the Ground

New floor sculpture evokes historical home of Moses Mendelssohn

By Hartmut Bomhoff

Jewish tradition compares Moses Mendelssohn (1729–1786) to the biblical prophet Moses and to the medieval sage Maimonides. Indeed, like the prophet, Mendelssohn led his people to new horizons. His brethren did not have to leave Germany, “and yet Mendelssohn found a Palestine to lead them to: the cultured class,” as a family chronicler put it. Esteemed by his Christian contemporaries as much as by his Jewish ones, the merchant philosopher helped to usher in the Haskalah – the Jewish Enlightenment – and to break down barriers between Jewish and European cultures. Apart from his

into German, printed in Hebrew characters.

The city of Berlin, Mendelssohn’s home for more than 40 years, basks happily in the glory of the Jewish Socrates who served as direct inspiration for the title character of Lessing’s 1779 play “Nathan the Wise.” Since 1979, the city awards the annual Moses Mendelssohn Prize to foster tolerance towards dissident thinkers and between peoples and religions, but there was no memorial to honor the 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

Ullman has called it “House of Hope”.

Here, at the very corner of today’s Karl Liebknecht Strasse and Spandauer Strasse, stood the building which was not only home to Mendelssohn and his family from 1762 on but also the former residence of several figures of the Enlightenment, including Gotthold Ephraim Lessing and Christoph Friedrich Nicolai. While living in Spandauer Strasse 68, Mendelssohn experienced both recognition and humiliation. He, who had to make a living as shareholder in a silk factory, was given his revocable privilege of residence only in 1763, when he had won a contest held by the Prussian Academy of Arts for his essay “On Evidence of the Metaphysical Sciences,” beating out Immanuel Kant. Frederick the Great then granted him the status of “Protected Jew” but struck Mendelssohn’s name from the list of members proposed by the Berlin Academy



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of Sciences in 1771. Twelve years later, the king spoke of him as “the famous Jewish scholar” but it was not until a year after Mendelssohn’s death in 1786 that his widow Fromet was permitted to buy the building.

On Moses Mendelssohn’s 100th birthday in 1829, a marble plaque was mounted on the house, reading: “In this house / Moses Mendelssohn / Lived and created eternity”. This was the first public trib-

ute paid to a commoner in Berlin. 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 their progenitor. “I create places that are empty and allow self-encounter,” comments Micha Ullman on his memorial floor sculpture. “They force us to remember.”

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I create places that are empty
and allow self-encounter

Micha Ullman

philosophical works, he is first of all remembered for a project to help Jews relate their own religious tradition to German culture – a translation of the Torah

of what was once the house facade with its twelve windows, formed from black granite slabs that are set into the ground and reflect the sky when it rains.

FRANKFURT SCHOOL

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 Rome in 1968, he was interrupted constantly by Daniel Cohn-Bendit. The German-French student leader, who today is a Green Party politician, demanded that Marcuse give an accounting 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, though, 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 avail-

able to them by the intelligence services. This material was derived from interrogations of prisoners of war, intercepted telephone conversations, war reports, newspaper articles, and official Nazi propaganda. 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 would go on to 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 ac-

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Their reports would go on to play an important role in the development of wartime strategy

curate 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



Frankfurt's shul: the origin of Jewish learning

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 expertly stoked their 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. ■

BOMHOFF RECOMMENDS

You Don't Have to Be That Funny



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The other day, at the book launch of a primer on Judaism, the audience's comments ranged from the question of how to believe in God after Auschwitz, to Holocaust denial – but the most disturbing query was: “Why are there no jokes?” Even now, in a film production meeting, the

gentile investors ask for more humor to be added to the script. Apparently, Jews have to be droll comedians to fulfill their proper role in today's society.

No joke: time and again, we try to break down prejudices, fears and stereotypes, but we are not succeeding at making it clear that Jews are not necessarily funny. In his slim book *Smart Jews*, Sander Gilman addresses one of the most controversial theories of our day: the alleged connection between race, or eth-

nicity, intelligence, and virtue. Gilman demonstrates how stereotypes can permeate society, finding expression in everything from scientific work to popular culture, and shows how the seemingly flattering attribution of superior intelligence has served to isolate Jews and to cast upon them the imputation of lesser virtue. “There are more than a few people, especially among the cultural elite,” observed Hannah Arendt in 1963, “who still publicly regret the fact that Germany sent Einstein packing, without realizing that it was a much greater crime to kill little Hans Cohn from around the corner, even though he was no genius.” The very same applies to the allegation that the chosen people were chosen for the quality of their jokes. In her book *No Joke. Making Jewish Humor*, Ruth R. Wisse argues that there is no such thing as specifically Jewish humor, “just as there is no such thing as Jewish physics, even though Jews have won a quarter of all Nobel Prizes in the subject so far.”

Yes, there are many Jews in comedy, but that applies most of all to the U.S. entertainment industry. “Entertainment is always seized by the downtrodden and disenfranchised,” explains David Steinberg, him-

self a comedy icon, in regard to the traditional role of Jewish humor. “And that was Jews back in the day.” Today, the majority of Jews are quite ordinary 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 deculpabilization 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. ■

A MENTSH

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

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 respite." 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. ■



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Helping to rebuild
a viable Jewish
community in Germany

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

Saxony brings modern art to life

Discovering art and culture in and around Saxony

SIMPLY
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.

Repentance, Prayer and Charity

Admitting our shortcomings is the most meaningful offering

By Hartmut Bomhoff

Young *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 blasting 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, ex-

plains 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

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Judaism has proved its ability to evolve and adapt

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

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. ■



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