JEWISH VOICE FROM GERMANY

SUPPLEMENT OCTOBER 2016

Challenges and Opportunities
Jews and Germans in the 21st Century

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Auswärtiges Amt, JVG(6), German Embassy Washington, Tobias Barnikse, Gilad Hochman, IsraAID

The Backbone of Jewish-German Relations

By Peter Wittig

Fifteen thousand survivors – that is all that was left of the Jewish community in Germany in May 1945. A terrible figure, which, however, does not even come close to expressing the grim atrocities and barbaric brutality of the Holocaust; it does not even come close to capturing the millions of crimes committed by ordinary Germans during the Nazi reign of terror. The 12 years that encompassed this darkest chapter in our shared history have since shaped the centuries-old German-Jewish relations.

Against this backdrop, it is something of a miracle that German-Jewish relations have grown and flourished in the ensuing years: Berlin is today home to one of the most dynamic Jewish communities in the world and has become one of the most desirable places to live for young Israelis. Indeed, Germany as a whole is experiencing a renaissance in Jewish life – with a strong community organization, the Central Council of Jews in Germany, representatives from various Jewish denominations live here and actively participate in public life.

Past and present of German-Jewish relations bring special responsibility – a special responsibility for Jewish life and the State of Israel. This responsibility forms a cornerstone of our foreign policy. It is central to our cultural remembrance and reconciliation. And it remains a focal point of German historical and civic education. Anti-Semitism, however, has not been eradicated either with the fall of the Nazi regime or in recent years. On the contrary, resentment and violence against Jews are on the rise again. That is why we need to remain vigilant and actively fight against all types of anti-Semitism; we need to engage on a people-to-people level, in an exchange between Jews and non-Jews – so as to foster greater understanding of Jewish life.

I therefore welcome the extraordinarily lively and intensive exchanges, not only on the political level but also in the spheres of business, academia, culture, and civil society, which are the backbone of German-Jewish relations today. Part of my work here, too, in the United States is to foster deeper relations to the Jewish community. Our cooperation and joint events with the Holocaust Museum and various Jewish organizations are highlights for my wife and me. The recent celebration of 50 years of diplomatic relations between Germany and Israel was one particularly important and moving event for me.

One central messenger for new Jewish life is the *Jewish Voice from Germany*. I commend this bridge between Germany and Jews all over the world for getting the message out through this unique publication. The projects and initiatives portrayed not only lead to a better understanding of Jewish life in today's Germany but will also spark stronger interest around the world in the thriving Jewish community and culture in my home country. ■

Peter Wittig

The German Ambassador to the United States of America

Bridge over Troubled Water

For a long time after the Shoah, it looked as if the Nazis had at least achieved one lasting success: the extinction of the Jewish community in Germany. After 1945, only several thousand Jews lived in German cities, as discreetly as possible. Trapped in the ghetto of their fears. The Germans looked upon these Jews as mere survivors.

Yet, even before Germany's reunification in 1990, a German-Jewish renaissance emerged. A new, independent German-Jewish culture and literature developed. And the German majority recognized that the Judaism they found in their midst was and is more than just a relic from the past. German Jewry represents a bridge between a great past and a promising future. This supplement aims to contribute to mutual understanding. We thank the Federal Foreign Office for its generous support.

JVG ■

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TRANSATLANTIC DIALOGUE

Remembrance and Hope

A journey of Boston rabbis to Germany

By Ralf Horlemann

"We have seen the horrors of the past, the Jews of the present and the hope for the future." This account of David Lerner, rabbi at Temple Emunah in Lexington, MA, sums up perfectly both the aspirations and the results of this visit. He was one of twelve rabbis from the greater Boston area – Orthodox, Conservative and Reform; young and old; men and women – who went on a one-week trip to Munich and Berlin in July of this year to see and hear for themselves about the culture of remembrance as well as Jewish life in Germany.

When I took the initiative for this visit, I was all but certain how the response would be by the rabbis, some of whom had never visited Germany before, one being a child Holocaust survivor. Too present seemed the legacy of the Shoah, too disturbing the fact that anti-Semitism and xenophobia are not only a recurring but growing phenomenon across Europe, also in Germany. On the other hand, Germany's dedicated efforts to face its own history, the thriving Jewish communities in Germany in recent years and Germany's struggle with migration, and its role as a safe haven for refugees were convincing arguments to embark on this exciting journey.

"I went as a survivor, as a reminder to Germany of what it had wrought, and found that it didn't need any reminders." For Joseph Polak, rabbi at the Rabbinical Court of Massachusetts, as for all the other rabbis in the group, this journey was about building a bridge between the horrors of the past and hopes for a common future. Remembrance and hope was its motto, and it started with a visit to the Dachau concentration camp near Munich, where more than 40,000 Jews were killed and from where tens of thousands were deported to extermination camps and certain death. 800,000 visitors come to the memorial site every year, half of them youths from schools and universities from Germany and around the world. Just as education on the Holocaust is an integral part of the curriculum in German schools, a visit to a concentration camp is part of this education.

Besides other major memorial sites like the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe or the Jewish Museum, both in Berlin, the group could also witness how the culture of remembrance is deeply rooted in everyday life of Germans. "Stolpersteine", which means "stumbling stones", are a perfect example. These commemorative brass plaques, which are placed in the pavement in front of the last address of choice of victims of National Socialism, make passers-by stumble – literally and emotionally. There are now over 6,500 Stolpersteine in Berlin alone, where we saw many of them.

In Munich as well as in Berlin, the rabbis were struck by the vitality and size of the Jewish communities. Today, over 200.000 Jews call Germany their home. This number would not have been reached without the Jewish immigration from the former Soviet Union starting in 1990. This was the beginning of a major influx. Until 2010, 212.000 people have come to Germany. Many of them went on to other countries like Israel or the United States, but many stayed. In recent years, an estimated 50,000 Jews – mostly younger people and families – have come from Israel to settle in Germany, about half of them in Berlin.

Jewish communities thrive in more than 100 German towns and cities. Munich is one of them, with more than 9,000 members of the Jewish community, and a new synagogue, built in 2006, right in the center of the city. The center of Jewish life in Germany, however, is Berlin, with approx. 50,000 to 70,000 Jews, eight synagogues, various Jewish kindergartens and schools, Jewish newspapers, and even centers of Judaic studies including rabbinic training. While we walked the streets of Berlin – in Mitte, the Bavarian Quarter and many other places – we realized that it has once again become very common to hear Hebrew spoken in Berlin.

"I went to see Germany's struggle with its present; its refugees, its role as a sanctuary for people who are lost politically and existentially, and I was deeply moved," said one participant. Germany was the destination of choice for more than one million refugees last year, posing enormous challenges to the government, but also to society as a whole. And it's the reaction and support of civil society that has made a real difference in tackling this challenge, like the Berlin based NGO "Welcome to Reinickendorf" (WIR), where we met Syrian refugees to hear from them how they see the challenges and opportunities of integration into German society. WIR started as a private initiative of a handful of people two years ago and is today supported by more than 700 active, volunteer citizens who are committed to the reception and integration of refugees and the creation of a "welcome culture" for them.

When we returned to Boston after one week of extensive travelling and intensive discussions, the rabbis realized that there is indeed a real opportunity to build this bridge between remembrance and hope. And between Germans and the Jewish community. If we face the legacy of the past and pass on the memory to future generations, there is hope that we can have a future together, in friendship and peace. ■

Ralf Horlemann is Consul General of Germany to the New England States in Boston


Visiting the Holocaust Memorial in the German capital

Auswärtiges Amt

A NOTE OF THANKS

I am very grateful that 12 Rabbis from the greater Boston area accepted the invitation of the Federal Foreign Office to visit Germany and to get first-hand information on Germany's culture of remembrance of the Holocaust as well as modern Jewish life in Germany. Their program in Munich and Berlin included visits to memorial sites, meetings with representatives of Jewish life in Germany and discussions with German partners, both from the government and from civil society organizations. We discussed our relations with the growing Jewish communities, our culture of remembrance, and how Germany combats anti-Semitism.

Michael Reiffenstuel
Director for Cultural Relations Policy at the German Foreign Office


www.Germany.info

ISRAAID

Just Like The Champ Would Have Wanted It

Israeli NGO received Muhammad Ali Award for outstanding humanitarian action

By Franziska Knupper

Rescue operation in the Mediterranean

Israaid http://www.israaid.co.il/(2)

Muhammad Ali had many faces. Professional boxer and American Olympian. Black rights activist, admirer as well as opponent of Malcolm X. Humanitarian, rapper, poet, writer. Member of the Nation of Islam and devout Muslim, constantly "ready to meet God" as he put it in 1977 during an interview in the United Kingdom. As one of the most celebrated, most versatile sports figures of the 20th century, Ali is remembered for many things, including his efforts as a social activist. Among his greatest philanthropic accomplishments was the foundation of the multicultural Muhammad Ali Center, a charity fund and museum devoted to humanitarian projects the sportsman carried out during his lifetime. Since 2013, the fund awards and celebrates social contributions from around the world that have proven to pay tribute to Ali's values and actions. During an annual awards ceremony, hosted in Ali's hometown Louisville in Kentucky, the Muhammad Ali Humanitarian Awards publicly recognize outstanding individuals who pass on and keep the athlete's legacy alive.

This year, Navonel Glick, chief operating officer of the Israeli non-governmental organization IsraAID, has been selected to receive the praise at the center's recent annual gala dinner. Glick was among five other young professionals, age thirty and under, who have been serving as advocates for positive change in the world and as role models that might ultimately transform communities for the better. The six winners are supposed to represent Muhammad Ali's six core principles of Confidence, Conviction, Dedication, Giving, Respect, and Spirituality.

> "We have not had any negative experience assisting refugees of Muslim belief while being Israelis

Global disaster-response missions

Prior to his current role, Glick served as IsraAID's programs director, leading disaster-response missions across the world, including the Philippines after Typhoon Haiyan, Sierra Leone after the Ebola outbreak, and Northern Iraq since the emergence of the Islamic State. With IsraAID, Glick is working for Israel's leading humanitarian non-governmental organization, being committed to providing first-response emergency relief and durable solutions for populations affected by natural disasters, epidemics, and post-conflict situations. In one decade, the initiative has responded to numerous crises in 35 countries and trained more than 5000 local professionals as well as international volunteers. Since its inception in 2001, IsraAID has become synonymous with rapid, immediate, and life-saving emergency assistance in the first instant when a humanitarian crisis occurs. In addition to this first response crisis relief, the non-governmental organization has expanded its capacities in the field of long term support, currently trying to offer relief in the refugee crisis taking place in Germany. "Our efforts in the on-going refugee crisis initially started in Greece, mostly on the island of Lesbos, and in the border regions of the Balkans. But we quickly understood that Germany will have to assemble great manpower in order to deal with such a high influx of refugees and is still lacking professionals in specific fields," says Mickey Noam-Alon, Media Director and Emergency Team Leader at IsraAID. In 2015 alone, more than one million asylum seekers made the journey from war and starvation seeking refuge in Germany. The vast majority arrived from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan, with 80% of them under the age of 35 and with about one in five of them children. "This is a massive challenge for the German government and society to address," continues Noam Alon, "IsraAID has thus agreed to send professional support. A lot of the people we chose are Arabic native speakers who are desperately needed to fill the current gap of miscommunication and to assure efficient bureaucratic processes."


Caring for the new arrivals

Relief in Germany's refugee crisis

In 2015, IsraAID responded to the request of the German government by deploying a team of Arabic and English speaking psychosocial specialists to help support the refugee resettlement. In cooperation with representatives of both the local government and the Federal Ministry of Health, local NGOs, Muslim and Jewish community organizations, the organisation quickly established a net-work of well-trained professionals and volunteers. "The NGO's main concern is both psychological first aid for asylum seekers as well as stress management training and peer supervision for aid workers," says Noam-Alon. Since April 2016, IsraAID has been instructing aid workers and volunteers with their Mobile Specialist Trauma Unit. Psychologists have been visiting refugee shelters in Berlin and Hanover and reporting to the German government and to local NGOs specialised in mental health. Additionally, IsraAID offers tools to combat gender-based violence for local volunteers, counselors, and other key stakeholders in order to address issues of cultural differences and mistreatment in refugee camps. Right now, IsraAID's members are preparing long-term sustainable support for ten different shelters all over Germany, focusing on hot spots, such as Berlin, Frankfurt, and Brandenburg with a total of 9,500 refugees.

The fact that a high amount of refugees are of Muslim faith apparently is of no concern, according to Noam-Alon: "We have not had any negative experience assisting refugees of Muslim belief while being an Israeli NGO. Or let me put it this way: If you are being pulled off a boat after several hours on the ocean and in constant fear of death, you do not care if the person carrying you is a Jew or a Muslim." Noam-Alon believes that IsraAID's involvement in the refugee crisis in Germany could possibly facilitate peace processes among the nations and faiths. According to the NGO's official statement, it could "become a game changer and serve as a key component in building trust and relations between Jews, Muslims, and Christians, Israelis, Germans, and Syrians, and by doing so reduce both anti-Semitism and Islamophobia." Probably just like Muhammad Ali would have wanted it. Or as he once said: "Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on earth." ■

JEWISH VOICE FROM GERMANY

JEWS AND GERMANS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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TRADE RELATIONS

From Rejection to Partnership – Hidden Champions for Israel

Chamber of Commerce and Economic Association as matchmakers

By Grisha Alroi-Arloser

Seen from a historical perspective, half a century is but the blinking of an eye – especially in the context of German-Jewish history, which spans two millenia. The bonds between Germans and Jews are so strong that they have even withstood the unspeakable crimes of the Shoah. Yet the pain ran so deep that diplomatic relations between the new state of Israel, founded in 1948, and the new Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany), founded in 1949, were, to begin with, out of the question.

A turning point came in 1952 with the reparations agreement signed in Luxembourg between West Germany, Israel and the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany. The agreement initiated some measure of material restitution and compensation for the material losses incurred by Jews under Nazi domination. Germany provided Israel with goods worth billions to improve its infrastructure. Israel upgraded its merchant navy, its railway, and other aspects of its infrastructure with high-quality German equipment and machinery. This was also a stimulus program for the German industry, because all those items would need spare parts and would eventually have to be replaced.

Thirteen years after the Luxembourg Agreement, diplomatic relations between West Germany and Israel were established in 1965. By that time, economic ties between the two countries were already flourishing. (jvg)

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Train Made in Germany, 1956

Public Domain/Moshe Pridan

To honor the long-standing diplomatic relations between the Federal Republic of Germany and Israel and to mark the fiftieth anniversary in 2017 of the creation of the German-Israeli Chamber of Industry and Commerce and of the German-Israeli Economic Association, the Chamber has created an exhibition on the history of German brands and products in Israel. It charts the transition from rejection of and ambivalence towards Germans and German products to acceptance and, ultimately, to trusting partnership. At the same time, this exhibition also documents the history of the chamber.

The key development in the first two decades of the past half century was the overcoming of barriers for Israeli agricultural exports, foodstuffs, plastics and textiles. The next two decades saw increasing interest in the growing Israeli market on the part of German companies such as Siemens, Volkswagen, Henkel and Daimler – developments in which the chamber was closely involved.

Over the past decade the chamber – also known as AHK Israel – has become increasingly involved in high-tech industries and technology transfer and has become a springboard for German industry in the start-up nation Israel.

What fascinates official delegations and entrepreneurs about Israel nowadays are its high-tech, entrepreneurial spirit and modes of technology transfer, as well as the role of the military; they are interested in ways to co-operate and share in the astounding developments underway in Israel's Silicon Wadi.

Mutual strategic investment

Against the backdrop of a decline in exports from Israel to Europe and in particular to Germany, co-operation in research and development and mutual strategic investment are of particular long-term importance. Many German technology scouts are out and about in Israel these days, looking for breakthrough technologies for their companies back in Germany. They are frequent guests at incubators, accelerators, joint workspaces, venture capital funds, university technology transfer offices, meet-ups, start-ups, and grown-ups, and have become an integral part of the system. The scouts represent not only pure tech firms such as SAP, Deutsche Telekom and Bosch, but also and increasingly finance, insurance and energy companies looking for new business models, new ways to work with big data, alternative models for enhancing customer loyalty, as well as solutions to urgent cybersecurity issues.

Our chamber has created a range of platforms to enable and enhance this exchange – in biosciences, software and internet, renewable energies and energy efficiency. We advise German firms, associations, and government representatives at both national and state level, and assist them in their dealings with Israel. We organise customized visits, place German interns in Israeli technology firms, and help Israeli start-ups access German support programmes.

> Increasingly German finance, insurance and energy companies are looking for new business models in Israel, for new ways to work with big data, alternative models for enhancing customer loyalty, as well as solutions to urgent cybersecurity issues

Over the past five decades our chamber has morphed from a traditional service-provider in the realm of the bilateral exchange of goods and services to a hub for knowledge and skills transfer, technology scouting, and bilateral investment flows. In these areas Germany and Israel deal with each other as equals; what counts are excellence, innovation, dynamism, and human capital; the difference in size of the two countries is of little significance.

Identifying potential partners

The chamber still has a lot to do. While Germany's Fortune 500 companies are already engaged in Israel and are in regular contact with our chamber, small and medium-sized firms need more assistance. The chamber can alert them to the potential to be found in Israel, help them identify possible partners, find the right technology, and develop the best business model.

The central task of the next decade will be to bring together German hidden champions and Israeli innovators. The range of themes is growing all the time: machine learning and machine vision, the industrial internet of things, autonomous robots, big data analytics, simulation and augmented reality – topics that together fall under the heading of Industry 4.0. But there is more: autonomous driving, unmanned vehicles, and the corresponding new models of mobility are also on the agenda, as are developments in the management of resources, particularly water and energy, that are urgently needed in the face of climate change.

At the same time, as a bi-national bilateral chamber, we also support Israeli firms seeking German business partners, helping them to overcome cultural barriers and find their way into the German market, the most important single market in Europe.

With its command of the German and Hebrew languages, intimate knowledge of the business communities and cultures in both countries, the German-Israeli Chamber of Industry and Commerce has become an indispensible facilitator and bridge-builder – bringing together entrepreneurs and matching ideas and individuals in such a way that one plus one yields much more than two. ■

IT hub Israel

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Grisha Alroi-Arloser has been the managing director of the German-Israeli Chamber of Industry and Commerce (AHK Israel) since 2008 and has headed the German-Israeli Economic Association since 2002

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YOUTH EXCHANGE

Ambassadors of Diversity

New German-Israeli volunteer service

By Elena Witzeck

When spring arrived Orel noticed a change in Germans' behavior. Suddenly they smiled more, engaged in chance conversations with one another, were out on the streets more. Frankfurt became louder and livelier. Orel was fascinated, not being familiar with such mood changes from Israel: it's astonishing how the weather can influence people's love of life.

Orel came to Germany seven months ago with the new German-Israeli Volunteer Service (DIFD) to work for a social and a Jewish organization in Frankfurt. She is participating in the first year of the program, which was launched in May 2015 to mark the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Israel and Germany. With this initiative the Federal Government aims to encourage above all young people from Israel to live in Germany for a time. There were ten participants in the first year. They worked for six months or a year in placements at charitable institutions in Germany arranged by the Central Board of Jewish Welfare in Germany (ZWST) on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. "There is a long tradition of German volunteering in Israel," says Laura Cazés, who coordinates the program for the ZWST. "Until now we didn't have a similar structure for volunteers from Israel."

Tim Wegner/DE Magazin Deutschland

At work in an art studio for people with special needs

Third generation

Diplomatically, the two countries have close relations, and social exchange has also been promoted for some time. But as Federal President Joachim Gauck emphasized in his speech in May 2015 in Berlin at the ceremony marking the 50th anniversary, there is still scope for further involvement. He cited a study by the Bertelsmann Foundation which found that reservations had become cemented in Germany as a result of perceptions of the conflict between Israel and the Palestinian territories.

That is the starting point for the volunteer program, which also sends Germans to Israel: personal and cultural exchange is intended to promote understanding and tolerance – across religious divides. Young people of all faiths from both countries can take part. The ZWST regards them as ambassadors. What is more, the program is also in keeping with the zeitgeist: young people from Israel see Germany as cool. The capital in particular, Berlin, considered as the centre for creatives, has developed a magnetic attraction for Israelis in recent years. According to the ZWST, however, cities like Cologne, Leipzig, and Frankfurt are now also becoming more popular for short or longer stays. The third generation after the war would like to get to know and understand the country that drove their grandparents out. People like Gaya, for example, who was a social worker at a school during the program's three-month pilot phase. Meantime she has returned to Israel. "I wanted to complete a circle by daring to come here," she says.

Orel opted for volunteer work in Frankfurt because she was curious to know whether the connection with the Germans that is felt in Israel also exists in the opposite direction. And it is. Orel quickly found two language tandem partners for German and Hebrew. Now the 23-year-old is happy to have been placed in Frankfurt, where she shares a flat with other young people and where her country of origin interests people. She does admit however, that she "initially wanted to go to Berlin." When she is not looking after children in a Jewish institution, Orel works in an art studio for people with disabilities. "Everyone there speaks German. I'm always surprised that I manage to have conversations with them." Because of the new language, it took some time for her to get used to things. There were also the many cultural peculiarities of the Germans: expected polite phrases, everyday rituals like waste separation, and a kind of demonstrative silence in lifts. Today, Orel feels at home in Frankfurt: "Because it is tolerant. Everyone can be as they are."

The ZWST, which has contacts with large German charitable organizations because of its focus on youth and social work, places 18- to 27-year-old volunteers in various organizations, depending on their interests: all-day schools and youth education centers, Jewish communities, and social facilities. Many of the participants work with refugees. Thanks to the new challenges, their placement is more relevant, says Cazés, because many of the Israelis are a great help in taking care of refugees due to their knowledge of Arabic.

Yet it is not always easy to find a suitable placement, as this must correspond with the abilities and interests of the participants, and a lot of Germans also want to do a voluntary social year. The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs bears the cost of a 250-euro allowance and social insurance for the DIFD volunteers, while accommodation and meals have to be paid for by the placement organization. Educational cooperation activities and town twinning arrangements with Israel have allowed the ZWST to create several opportunities, and even more should become available by the autumn of 2016.

Rising to the challenge

Roman belongs to the small group of Germans who have so far been in Israel with the new DIFD. He completed a six-month care placement there in the context of his medical studies. The 19-year-old has been back in Munich since the end of March. At first, things in Jerusalem were not easy for him: "Suddenly you are totally responsible for yourself." But realizing this meant rising to the challenge. People's mentality, open-mindedness, and everyday optimism impressed Roman greatly. In Israel the Ministry of Welfare and Social Affairs is responsible for the volunteers and also selects the participants for the visit to Germany.

In the first year, fewer Israeli volunteers than planned came to Germany, so the ZWST aims to underscore the socio-political relevance of the exchange even more. "Particularly now, when there is a tangible shift to the right among Germans, our volunteer service can achieve a lot," says Laura Cazés. The participants have succeeded in highlighting the diversity in Israeli society: Druze and Muslim-Arab, secular and traditional Israelis have been involved. In the second year, about 40 participants should be coming to Germany. Orel hopes that future volunteers have as perfect a stay as the one she had in Frankfurt. ■

FOUNDATIONS

Intellectual Sources of Jewish Renaissance in Germany

The long tradition of patronage is filled with new life

By Hannah Thiel

Tzedakah, the law of righteousness and mercy, is a core value of Judaism. Caring for fellow humans in need, eventually enabling the recipient to become self-reliant, is an important mitzvah. There is a long and fruitful tradition of patronage in Jewish-German relations. And this very special furthering of arts, sciences and of social projects is very much alive today.

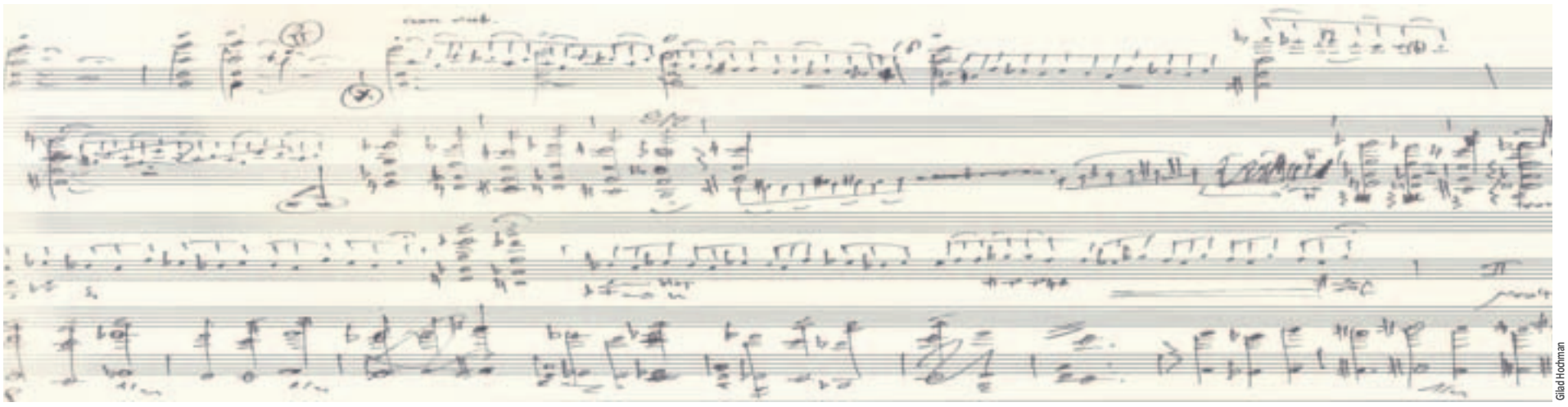
The Alexander von Humboldt Foundation's **Philip Schwartz Initiative** provides German universities and research institutions with funding to enable foreign academics who are threatened in their home countries to study and conduct research in Germany. Philip Schwartz (1894-1977) was a distinguished physician and professor at Frankfurt university and was dismissed when Hitler seized power in 1933. Schwartz immediately grasped the threat the Nazis posed to free thought and research – as well as to the Jewish people and his colleagues. Soon after arriving in his Swiss exile, Schwartz set up an Advisory Office for German Scientists, eventually enabling numerous German colleagues to take up positions in Turkey.

Thanks to the initiative named after him, academics from Syria, Turkey, Libya, Pakistan and Uzbekistan are currently continuing or furthering their work in Germany for a period of up to 24 months. This will empower them to "later take on responsibility in their home countries again", as German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier puts it. The Philip Schwartz Initiative is supported by the Foreign Office and a number of private foundations.

On the other hand, the **Ernst Ludwig Ehrlich Studienwerk** (ELES), named after the renowned historian, is one of thirteen scholarship programs supported by the German Federal Ministry for Education and Research. It provides scholarships for gifted Jewish students and doctoral candidates. Launched in 2009, ELES pursues the goals of strengthening Jewish identity, sense of responsibility and dialogue capabilities among its over 400 scholarship holders, who are thereby encouraged to actively shape the future of the Jewish community in Europe.

James Simon (1851-1932) is primarily known for one of the most generous donations ever made by a private person. Simon, a successful businessman, gave the famous bust of Queen Nefertiti to a public museum in Berlin. But Simon was not only an intellectual, art lover and collector. He supported more than 60 social institutions. He created opportunities for underprivileged children and initiated health institutions like the public swimming pool at Berlin's Gartenstraße, by the way a landmark of Neue Sachlichkeit architecture.

Since 2006, the **James Simon Stiftung** honors personalities ▸ PAGE VII



Gilad Hochman

GILAD HOCHMAN

The Sound of Silence

Young Israeli composer finds inspiration in Berlin

By Elisabeth Neu

A mandolin hovers through time and space, reluctant one moment, emphatic the next. Strings answer, alluring and disturbing at once. You sense the dynamics of motion. What kind of journey is this? Where will it take us? "Nedudim" – Wanderings – fantasia concertante for solo mandolin and string orchestra: In it, you hear thousands of years of changing places, of departing, searching, from one place to another, from one state of being to another. Forever questioning your whereabouts, your destination. This miracle of a chamber piece is the work of Gilad Hochman. Exploring the narrative of time and motion, of eternal migration, of belonging and alienation, are some of the themes of this young composer's work, whom France 24 calls "a rising star in the classical music world."

Gilad Hochman, 34, came to Berlin nine years ago. Born in Herzliya, his father hails from Odessa, his mother from Paris, her family being originally from North Africa. The East-European embraces the Sephardic tradition – in the European-Oriental mix that makes for Israel. All this you can hear in Gilad's music.

Gilad is a wunderkind. He started composing at the age of nine. 15 years later, Gilad Hochman was awarded the Israeli Prime Minister's Prize for Composition – honoring a "fascinating, original and colorful creator". In your early twenties, where do you go from there? "It was wonderful to win the award – but also a little tricky", remembers Hochman. "You know – as does the music landscape in the country – that you 'are on a good level'", as he charmingly puts it. Hochman decided to leave the path mapped out for him in Israel. "I needed a different perspective so I thought it would be best to go abroad for a while." He turned down the offer of doing an

> **Exploring the narrative of eternal migration**

American east-coast Ph.D. – and went to "check out Berlin instead". What he found was a "spaceship, a bit like Tel Aviv ... constantly work in progress and very different from the rest of the country".

Obviously Hochman wanted to learn more about German culture – "the culture that made such tremendous contributions to classical music and at the same time the culture that brought about such utter and ruthless destruction".

It seems that this tension, this "dissonance", as the composer calls it, which he experiences in Berlin serves as an inspiration. The scope of Hochman's work is impressive: chamber music, pieces for solo instruments like piano, ("Pia-No!") marimba ("Berlin Beat") or saxophone ("90 Seconds"), vocal music ("Night Winds" for soprano), to name a few, and pieces for symphony orchestra like "Suspended Reality", a haunting exploration of the feeling of nothingness and utter stillness.

"Every time I start a new piece, I start from zero. I feel as if I have never composed anything before", he says. Steeped in Jewish tradition, Gilad Hochman also takes Biblical themes like the binding of Isaac ("Akeda" for solo viola) or the Song of Songs ("Whom my Soul Loveth") as a point of departure. "I am searching all the time. I dig deep inside of me to discover whatever there is, try to make it real and express it through my music."

"I know that a piece works the moment when there is no sound, silence. When there is sound, people are with it, listening, some fall asleep – whichever way people absorb the music is fine by me – but the moment the music stops, usually at the end of the piece, but sometimes during the piece itself, there is this one instance of quiet intersubjective experience ... almost like in a synagogue." After all, says Hochman, music is the closest thing to God. ■

JVG

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Meeting of the Starck Foundation

Gerhard C. Starck Stiftung

promoting public welfare. The James Simon Award furthers patronage, commitment to and responsibility for civil society – just like James Simon did, the Berlin philanthropist who believed in social responsibility.

"Supporting academic studies and professional training of especially gifted young Jewish people connected to the German language and culture" is the aim of the **Gerhard C. Starck Stiftung**. Whilst growing up, Starck (1929-2000) had experienced the humiliations and threats his Jewish mother had to suffer in Nazi Germany. Her family in Hungary perished in the Shoah whilst Starck sen., a powerful and wealthy German industrialist, managed to save his wife. After the war, Gerhard Starck became a lawyer and helped Jewish clients in the restitution of their assets which had been expropriated by the Nazis.

In many, long conversations with his friend Icek Ostrowicz, the idea of a foundation began to take shape. Its aim was to ensure that a new generation of Jews would have a dignified future in Germany. Ostrowicz, a Shoah-survivor from Kielce, had been barred from formal education during the Nazi occupation of Poland. His thirst for learning deeply impressed Starck who decided to use his considerable means to support young Jewish people in their quest for knowledge.

For the past ten years, the Starck Foundation has been working for a Jewish-German intellectual renaissance. It supports high school and university students, Ph.D. candidates and postdocs in the arts, sciences and humanities. Alumni and current scholarship holders of the Starck Foundation gather once a year. The "Starckies", as they call themselves, are a lively and inquisitive bunch – as several Nobel prize winners from the U.S. and Israel who were invited to the meetings found out. At these gatherings, you can meet "the future of the German Jewry in person," as Icek Ostrowicz, the heart and soul of the Starck Foundation, puts it. ■

SUSTAINABLE INTEGRATION

The Transformation of German Jewry

With a new generation diversity unfolds

By Hartmut Bomhoff

Tobias Barniske

In 2010, Alina Treiger was the first woman rabbi to be ordained in Germany for 75 years

Earlier this fall, the German media called to mind that ten years ago, for the first time after the Shoah, rabbis were ordained in Germany. The founding of Abraham Geiger College in 1999, the first rabbinical seminary in postwar Germany, was indeed a historical milestone. Together with the School of Jewish Theology that opened in Potsdam in 2013, rabbis "made in Germany" have become the symbol of a significant revival of Jewish life. "Today, rabbis from all three large denominations of Judaism are trained again in Potsdam and Berlin," explains Rabbi Walter Homolka, rector of Abraham Geiger College. "Thus we could successfully reconnect with the infrastructure of prewar Germany. A vision has come true." These achievements, however, would not have been possible without the commitment of the federal government and German society at large.

With 28,000 affiliated members in 1990, the ageing German Jewish community faced an uncertain future. Then, the government of unified Germany opened its borders to Jews from the states of the Former Soviet Union. From 1991 to 2005, approximately 220,000 immigrants of Jewish origin (including a huge number of non-halachic Jews) were distributed all over the country according to a quota system. In 2005, a more restrictive immigration policy was designed in cooperation with the Central Council of Jews in Germany to better manage the integration of individuals into the Jewish community. By that time, many small and medium-sized communities had already massively grown their membership rosters.

Funding to restore the community

Intended as the unified political voice for all Jews in Germany, the Central Council of Jews in Germany was established in 1950. It was while the approximately 15,000 Jews who had survived WWII were establishing Orthodoxy as the national congregational norm. The rise of progressive Judaism – once the dominant denomination of prewar German Jewry – in the 1990s challenged the monopoly of Orthodoxy and caused some friction. It took two legal rulings to secure the recognition of Reform Judaism in Germany, the country of its origin. First, in 2002, Germany's Federal Administrative Court ruled that the term 'Jewish community' implies a plurality of Jewish denominations rather than a monolithic entity. In 2009, as part of a ruling on state funding of religious organizations, the Federal Constitutional Court conferred the responsibility for the distribution of public subsidies to religious organizations on the federal states, thus weakening the role of umbrella organizations in faith communities.

In addition to the public funds which come from a religious tax collected by the federal states, or Länder, Jewish communities throughout Germany rely heavily on subsidies for religious and other needs. Since 2003, a cooperation agreement between the federal government and the Central Council of Jews provides for supplements in funding received by the local Jewish communities from the sixteen Länder. The Central Council receives 10 million euros in annual funding to help maintain the German Jewish cultural heritage, restore the wider Jewish community, and support integration and social work.

> "With the wealth of our knowledge, our culture and our music, we ought to become a dynamic social actor in Germany
>
> Rabbi Alina Treiger

Since 2005, the number of new members has decreased and the Jewish population is graying fast, with 30% of elderly immigrants living below the poverty line. Almost half of the roughly 100,000 affiliated members of the country's Jewish community are over 60, with five members dying for each newborn, according to the 2015 membership statistics. Julius H. Schoeps, a prominent Jewish historian, argues that in the medium term, only the largest communities in Munich, Frankfurt, Berlin or Cologne will be able to survive. "What that means is that a hundred communities will disappear," he says. While massive immigration enlarged the communities temporarily, their infrastructure and staff did not grow accordingly. Money, energy, and time have ever since been devoted to integration work – often at the expense of other synagogue and community activities. There is still a drastic shortage of professional personnel – educators, social workers, community managers, and clergy.

As a result of the transformation of German Jewry over the past 25 years, Jewish life has become increasingly diverse, colorful, and self-evident. As the most recent comprehensive survey by the L.A. Pincus Fund for Jewish Education in the Diaspora, *Jews and Jewish Education in Germany Today*, explains, Jews in Germany do not favor Orthodox Judaism neither are they overwhelmingly secular.

They are best characterized by the notion of Jewish pluralism. Only a minority of 13.2% of the respondents feel close to Orthodox Judaism. One-fifth (22.3%) feel closer to Liberal (Conservative or Reform) Judaism while one-third (32.2%) define themselves as traditional, and another third (32.3%) as secular. "Traditional" designates those who adhere to some religious norms out of respect for traditions, but who do not consider themselves observant. This implies that a majority of synagogue members throughout Germany doesn't identify as religious. Synagogue membership, however, is granted only to halachic Jews, with patrilineal descent not yet being recognized by the rabbinate.

Identity building for Jewish pluralism

The future of Germany's Jewish community hinges on the third generation of immigrants which has overcome the language barrier, is highly flexible and mobile, and finds it difficult to adjust to given community structures and lifelong membership. Thus, a wide array of educational projects has grown from private initiatives, independently from the establishment. Some fine examples among others are the popular Jewish Learning Festival project Limmud, the *Jung und Jüdisch* youth network, Hillel Germany, and the European Janusz Korczak Academy. Young leaders are catered to by the Ernst Ludwig Ehrlich Studienwerk, the national academic excellence scholarship program for gifted Jewish students.

After their rabbinic mission to Germany last year, the conclusion of a delegation from Northern California was: "It seems there is real growth potential for Jewish life in Germany again. The questions are whose cultural and religious values it will reflect, and whether it will be possible for a pluralistic community to exist in what, until very recently, was a monolith." ■