

EUROPE

Grow Up, Old Continent

By Elisabeth Neu

Germany and Europe have come to the conclusion that they need to take their fate into their own hands. And indeed, they should seize the opportunity. Donald Trump's "America first" policy has forced the nations of the Old Continent to grow up and stand in defense of their own interests – which, of course, vary among the 28 EU states. This means we must negotiate common positions within the EU community, lest the European Union disintegrate and its member states decline into obscurity. As the EU's largest exporting country, this would be particularly painful for Germany.

International solidarity

After meeting with President Trump at the G7 summit of leading industrial nations and at the NATO summit, German Chancellor Angela Merkel commented: "The times in which we could rely fully on others – they are, to an extent, over." And even apart from Donald Trump's at times uncouth manner, this is a conclusion that has been long overdue.

Almost 70 years ago, the catastrophe of the Second World War, which had been launched by Germany, brought Europe

to the brink of destruction and Germany past the point of moral collapse. In the wake of this devastation, the countries of Western Europe chose to relinquish a significant portion of their independence. Like Romulus and Remus, they found a safe harbor and succor under the teats of America. American money was crucial to the reconstruction of the European economy. The shield of US military power, including the presence of millions of GIs such as Elvis Presley, helped secure the freedom and independence of Western Europe.

After just a brief tenure in office, President Trump has already decided to withdraw the United States from the Paris Climate Agreement. This is a catastrophe of unforeseeable dimensions, both for the US and Europe, and for the world. And Germany's Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel is correct in his statement that anyone who does not stand in opposition to US policy shares some of the blame. But transatlantic relations are complex. One of the key aspects is the question of security. In this respect, Trump's demand

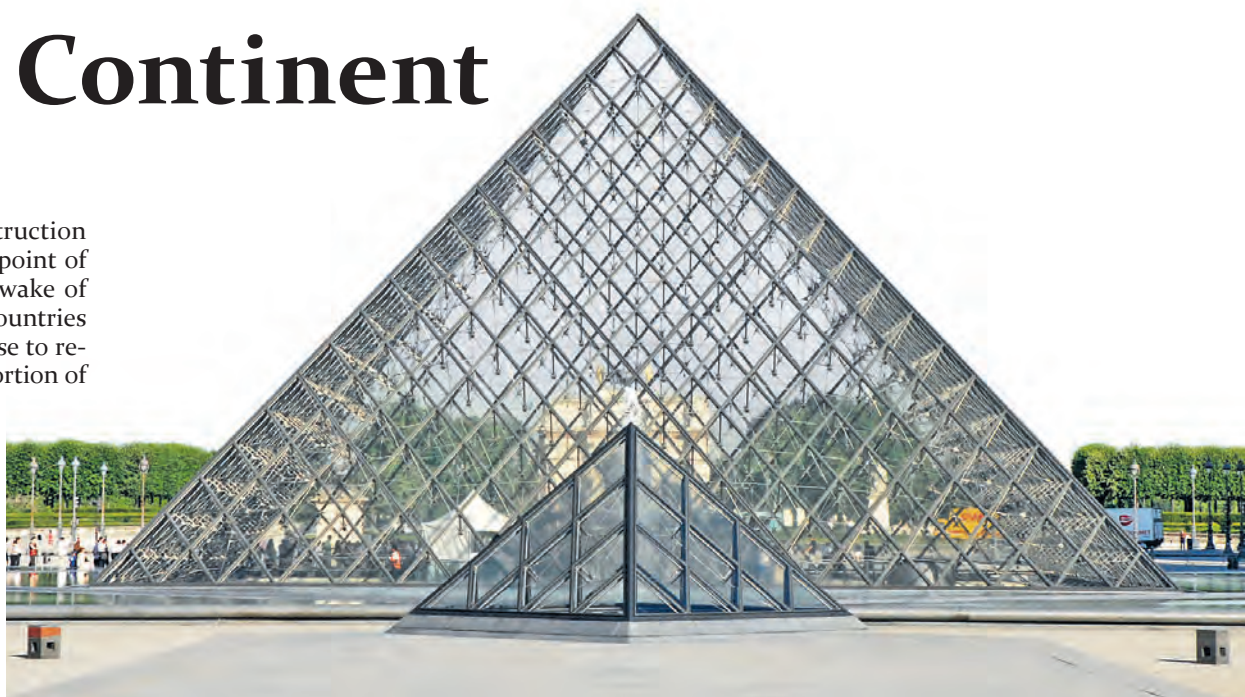
that each NATO member spend at least 2 percent of their GDP on defense is a reasonable one. More than seven decades after the end of the Second World War, it is unreasonable to expect that the United States continue to bear the larger share of the burden of ensuring Europe's security. The EU must do more in this respect. At the same time, we must acknowledge the aid and support that Europe provides to the poorer countries of the world. EU countries provide this aid not simply out of international solidarity, but also as a matter of self-interest. Hunger and underdevelopment outside Europe's borders is a driving factor in violence and war. This

in turn has helped spur mass migration of people to the EU, who often struggle to integrate and assimilate here.

For highly developed economies such as the US and the EU states – and Germany in particular – free trade is a matter of vital concern. Donald Trump has signaled that he plans to call this into question. But "America first" should not mean that Washington gets to dictate all the rules. Balancing the interests of all sides will be key. Google, Facebook, and Amazon are just as reliant on global trade as Mercedes, SAP, and Airbus.

The election of populist Donald Trump has dismayed many Europeans. They are ignoring

the fact that this tendency is gaining root here as well. And not just in Hungary and Poland, but also in France, Austria, Britain, and the Netherlands. There is no easy solution to this mood and policy of chauvinism. But Donald Trump, Hungary's Viktor Orbán, Poland's Jarosław Kaczyński, and Austria's Heinz-Christian Strache would be well advised to remember that they will be leaving office one day. Their countries, however, will remain, as will the desire of their citizens for freedom and openness to the world. These values can best flourish in countries whose citizens and politicians are prepared to assume responsibility for their actions. ■



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QATAR CONFLICT

Saudi Arabia and Egypt Want a Stable Middle East

By Rafael Seligmann

The confrontation between Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain with Qatar is a serious one. At stake is the future direction of politics in the Arab world, including its position on Israel and Western states. In terms of strategies for the future, the conflict is also an exceptionally important one for the NATO member states, particularly the United States and also Israel. Western democracies would be well advised to realize that the conflict with Qatar is not simply a diplomatic skirmish, but a dispute over the leadership and position of the Arab world and the events taking place in the whole of the Middle East.

In the early 1980s, in the wake of the war between Saddam Hussein's aggressive Ba'ath regime in Iraq and the equally aggressive Shiite revolution of Ayatollah Khomeini's Iran, the Sunni states, led by Egypt and Saudi Arabia, came to realize that policies of belligerence posed a risk to the entire Arab world. The region's oil and gas wealth was being used to fund destructive conflicts rather than to promote development. These conflicts posed a threat to the fragile balance of the entire region.

Since then, the moderate Sunni countries of Egypt and Saudi Arabia have increasingly come to pursue a policy of stability. A clear signal for this policy of equilibrium was the Arab Peace Initiative, launched by Saudi Arabia in 2002. The initiative called for the recognition of Israel in return for the Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 Armistice Lines, as well as the creation of an independent and sovereign Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital. Ultimately, this initiative foundered on the question of Palestinian refugees.

Policy of rapprochement

After the defeat of Iraq and the destruction of Saddam Hussein's dictatorship, Iran sought an expansionist role in the Gulf region. The Iranian government under the mullahs obtained decisive influence over Iraq, which for a time remained under US occupation. At the same time, Tehran began providing weapons and financial support to the Shiite Hezbollah militia in Lebanon. Finally, Iran established itself as the key source of support for the embattled Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad. At the same time, Iran systematically pursued its nuclear weapons program and continued



Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman

to call for the destruction of Israel. Iran also lent support to the Houthi rebels in Yemen. All of this made Iran a thorn in the side of Saudi Arabia.

The wealthy oil-and-gas emirate of Qatar, which is situated on the eastern flank of Saudi Arabia, pursued a deliberate *Schaukelpolitik* or policy of oscillation. The Qataris hoped to ingratiate themselves with all sides, including the

aggressive regime in Iran. Qatar has thus supported the Shiite Hezbollah militia in Lebanon, the radical Sunni Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, and Hamas, the Muslim Brotherhood's Palestinian offshoot in Gaza. In the Syrian civil war, Qatar is supporting dictator Assad and his allies.

Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the Gulf States have now lost patience and are no longer prepared to tolerate Doha's dangerous policy of appeasement. Saudi Arabia's newly proclaimed Crown Prince, and Defense Minister, Mohammed bin Salman, son of King Salman, is waging an energetic policy of stability – aiming to quell belligerent Iran, de-escalate the Israel-Palestine conflict, and support Egypt in its independent development. This policy will require good relations with the United States, Germany, and other western countries, and a credible but not expansive defense policy. Riyadh's clear political line is being thwarted by Doha's policy of oscillation. Doha would be well advised to take Riyadh seriously and to shift toward Saudi Arabia's policy of rapprochement. The western democracies should attempt to convince Doha to join forces with Riyadh's policies of stability, which offer the only reasonable course action in the region. ■

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MEIR SHALEV

Stories of Love and Imagination

Israeli writer does not want to improve the world – just tell good tales

You are an expert in matters of love. Is the German-Israeli relationship a love affair?

I have many readers in Germany and I feel great sympathy for them. I first travelled to Germany after my first novel *Roman Russi* was translated [1993, in English *The Blue Mountain*]. It was not an easy visit. I do not come from a family of Holocaust survivors, most of my family came to Palestine during the Second Aliyah [before WWI]. I remember people asking me at readings how I felt having my books translated into German. I said then and I say now: This is my way to tell the German people that I am alive. And that I am doing what Jewish people have done throughout their history – I tell stories...

ferences in politics only started after the Six Day War. Before, the whole idea of left and right was theoretical...

What drives you to write?

I started writing late. My first novel was published when I was 40. Before, I had written two children's books. I had started making up stories for my two kids and one evening, my wife heard me telling them a story and she said: It's a good story, why don't you write it down. Then I wrote a collection of essays about the Bible – very political and literary and not religious at all. I was working for Israeli TV, had my own talk show. I was quite successful but I felt more and more disappointed in what I was doing. I knew I could teach, but I



mission. My book *Shtaim Dubim/Two She Bears* was criticized by some as being immoral. There is a murderer in the book who goes unpunished, moreover, the man who takes revenge is mentally healed by killing other people. I don't think literature or any art should be moralistic or anti-moralistic – it can present a moralistic situation and ask the reader to think about it. When I wrote the book, I was thinking what I would have done if I were in the shoes of my characters. Would I take revenge like that? Honestly, I don't see myself murdering the lover of my wife ...

... but you invented the story – so it is in you –

It is in me as a writer, not in me as a person. But the thing that is in me as a person is the blood revenge which is in the book when Eitan kills the criminals who killed Zeev, the grandfather. This Biblical *nekat dam*, killing someone who killed a member of your family, is in me, though I would not do it because I am afraid of the law ...

... not like the good Christian who turns the other cheek ...

No. In my book about my garden I tell of the war I waged against the mole eating my plants – I hate moles, I am not a pacifist, I will not turn my other cheek to this mole ...

Any plans for a new book?

Currently, I am writing a novel, again a love story. Part of it will be set in Europe ...

... perhaps in Germany ...

Maybe. I don't know yet. It is about a man who is following his love. Most of it will take place in Jerusalem and the Galilee, and part of it in Europe. Some of my book *Esav* takes place in the United States... Usually, writers don't tell you such things, but *Esav* is my favorite amongst my novels. I simply love *Esav* more than the others. ■

Meir Shalev talked to JVG editors Elisabeth Neu and Rafael Seligmann in Berlin

“I don't think literature or any art should be moralistic

Israel is full of stories ... in a bus or a cab, the driver will tell you the story that his family came from Baghdad ... but that a grandmother came from Vitebsk ... Your father was also a writer...

My father was a well-known poet, very popular in the 1950s and 1960s. He wrote three novels, two are forgotten. But one, *The Gabriel Tirosh Affair* of 1964, is still being printed and sold. It is a very political book. My father was a strong right-winger. He would fight for human rights for everybody but, long before 1967, he preached we have to liberate the territories. Take Jerusalem, take the cave of the Patriarchs, he said, even though he was a secular person. My mother, on the other hand, came from a socialist family. My parents' marriage was a big thing in Israel when it happened: She was from the moshav, he was from the city, she was from the left, he was from the right. But our dif-

ferences in politics only started after the Six Day War. Before, the whole idea of left and right was theoretical... ferences in politics only started after the Six Day War. Before, the whole idea of left and right was theoretical... did not have enough patience to become a good teacher. And as for science, it is rather difficult to start a scientific career at the age of 40 ... So I decided to take a year off and try to write a novel. This is when I composed *Roman Russi* which is based on some of my family's stories and the atmosphere in my family. I found out: I can write and, I can write a book. It was a big surprise. I always knew I could put words one next to another and one sentence next to another but I found it quite difficult to create a structure which a novel also needs. With a book, you have to be an engineer, not only an architect ...

Your characters often have special gifts and talents, they can see more, have a better sense of smell, can anticipate events ... a supernatural touch?

Some say *Roman Russi* is magic realism – a terminology I do not accept at all. Quite sim-

ply, the narrator in the book is a naive boy who believes the stories told to him by his grandparents, by his uncles – as I did. All my mother's family were great storytellers. They told beautiful stories about their donkey which could fly and about a man who was riding rabbits at night.

You are a keen observer of nature – in Fontanelle, the twins look at each other with the mischievous grin of cuckoos' chicks who have been placed in the wrong nest ...

I love nature and use it a lot in my books, both as a stage and also as a metaphor. I am, by the way, the only author in Israel and perhaps in the world who received a prize from the Israeli Entomological Society for describing insects in *Roman Russi* ... And the Department of Zoology at Tel Aviv University gave me a literary prize for describing animals. Nature is always present in my novels, but in my new book, *Ginat ha-bar, The Wild Garden*, it is the main character, the real hero.

The role of love? In your books, love is not always connected to eroticism ...

Yes. I write about erotic love, but in my private life as well as in my books I am in love with

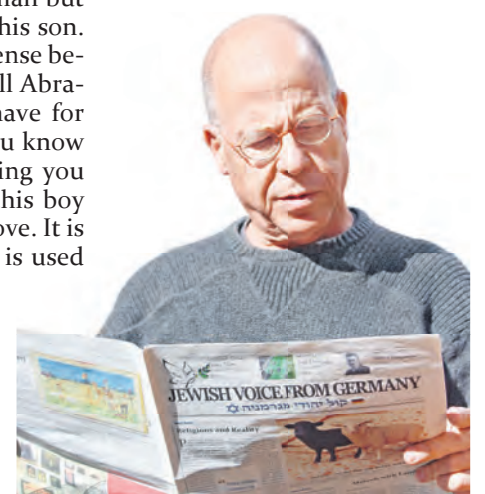
love itself. I am not only in love with a woman, but with love itself. That can make life difficult sometimes ...

Is one motive for writing books the need to feel loved by your readers?

This is a completely different thing. This is not the kind of love I am writing about. Everybody knows what love is. It may be difficult to put into words but we know what love is when we have it and we know what it is when we don't have it. When God tells Abraham to take his son, He says: *Ahavta* – in the past tense “the one you loved.” This is the first time the word love appears in the Bible – it is not the love between a man and a woman but the love of a father for his son. I think it is in the past tense because God wanted to tell Abraham: the feeling you have for this boy, this feeling you know from the past, the feeling you had and you have for this boy from now on, is called love. It is the first time the word is used in Hebrew.

Can writers improve the world?

It is not my objective, and I don't want to take on this role. I do not feel I have a social or moral



By Siegfried Guterman

Les Français, ils sont des raleurs,” says Catherine Tombois, who is a dedicated follower of France’s Parti Socialiste. But this time she cast her vote for Emmanuel Macron in order to block the rise of the far-right. “Les Français, ils sont des voleurs,” says Pierre Lambert about the country’s political class; he cast a Carte Blanche – an invalid vote. The political mood in France after the elections of May and June 2017 seems lodged somewhere between complainers (raleurs) and thieves (voleurs). And then of course there are the men of the right and left – Marine Le Pen and Jean-Luc Mélenchon – who want the French to believe that they will restore France to the days of the Grande Nation with their policies of isolationism and social benevolence, a return to the nation-state, retirement at age 60 and a universal basic income. In the first electoral round – for both the presidency and the legislature – they managed to win nearly half of the French vote.

France is in the midst of major conflict, both with itself and with Germany. For Macron and many French, Germany is a blueprint to French recovery. For the extreme left and the extreme right, by contrast, Germany is once again the traditional arch-enemy that is pushing their country up against the wall, both economically and politically. Le Pen’s argument that France would one way or another be ruled by a woman – either by her or by Madame Merkel – has taken root in the minds of many French citizens. And Jean-Luc Mélenchon has named his party “La France insoumise” (France unbowed); he wants a France that opposes the German version of neoliberal capitalism.

Dismaying comparison

For the French, the comparison with Germany is a dismaying one: everything seems to be better in Germany. Germany’s Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble – proponent of the balanced budget and of austerity policies – and the invulnerable Angela Merkel, are a team of which France can only dream. Germany’s success has helped further erode the French political landscape. One result is the decline of France’s traditional mass parties. In the second round of the presidential election, newcomer Macron stood



FRANCE AFTER THE ELECTIONS

An Attempt at Bridging the Gaps

The French in search of a lost nation

against populist Le Pen. Without Macron, France would have drifted to the far right.

In the parliamentary election, Emmanuel Macron and his REM movement won some 350 seats, an impressive success. In France’s first-past-the-post system, some 30 percent of the votes during the first round translated into an absolute majority in the second. Unlike his predecessor François Hollande, who was forced to join a coalition in the National Assembly, Macron will be able to rely on his own movement. After his presidential victory, Macron drew on the camp of the Republicans to reappoint Édouard Philippe as his prime minister. Economics Minister Bruno Le Maire and Budget Minister Gérard Darmanin are also from the conservative right. The Gaullist movement subsequently removed the two ministers from their party. But even this maneuver did not give the Republicans a legislative majority. The Republicans do not possess a platform that distinguishes them from Macron’s policy aims. And the Parti Socialiste as well as the left radicals and right radicals will

have only a minor voice in the National Assembly.

Macron has succeeded in bridging the ideological gap between left and right in France. During his first weeks in office, the new president already succeeded in restoring some confidence to France. Macron’s interactions with Presidents Trump and Putin were self-assured and full of élan. This, too, won him admiration at home.

Macron’s election has laid the groundwork for political renewal in France. He has set himself five ambitious challenges. First, he aims to reunify the divided nation. This could take place through economic and political success; the long-overdue restructuring of the French economy represents both the greatest opportunity and the greatest risk for Macron’s rule. The question of security also plays a very important role in French politics. Among the first decisions of the government are measures to make the political class respectable again; the possibility for members of parliament to employ family members will be a thing of the past. And finally, Macron will have to play a decisive role in European reform.

Nepotism and bureaucracy

Macron hopes to demonstrate strength by basing important decisions on the system of ordonnances. By this fall at the very latest, the French president and his newly elected government plan to employ ordonnances (statutory instruments issued by the Council of Ministers rather than

by the parliament) to modernize French labor law. Macron’s aim is to implement reforms as quickly as possible. Ordonnances permit the government to act as lawmakers for a limited period of time, thus blurring the distinction between the executive and legislative branch. It is an instrument that is anchored in Article 38 of the French constitution, and has been repeatedly employed by both the left and the right.

However, the use of ordonnances is not a means by which the nation can be reunified. The divisions that must be bridged are deep and multi-layered. They involve the relationship between rich and poor and the fears of the middle class that they are also headed for decline. The divisions also encompass the social isolation of the French elite, as well as the problems of nepotism and bureaucracy. France will also need to address the integration of immigrants from North Africa, who all speak French but still do not identify with the country. The fears of French Jews also play a role – France is home to the second-largest Jewish community in the world outside Israel. Fearing Islamist anti-Semitism, some 30 percent of French Jews cast their vote for Le Pen’s National Front. Another issue on the table is the regional reorganization of France, which includes healing the division between urban and rural areas.

But even with all the difficulties that lie ahead, France remains one of the world’s wealthiest industrial nations and possesses an infrastructure that is significant-

ly superior to that of Germany. Above all, France is a democratic country, a country in which the rule of law, the desire for shared values, and the significance of its present and future role within Europe are matters of fundamental national importance. The new government would be well advised to encourage all its citizens to remember the positive sides of the Grande Nation. ■

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...and in the Banlieues

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The background of the advertisement is a photograph showing a large container ship with many colorful cargo containers sailing on a body of water. Above the ship, a large suspension bridge spans the water, and a small airplane is visible in the sky. The scene is captured from a low angle, emphasizing the scale of the infrastructure.

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ALLEZ LA FRANCE

Reforms Urgently Needed

Implementing Macron's election manifesto would cost €100 billion



Oh là là: French world market leaders make for a quarter of global sales of luxury goods

By Siegfried Guterman

Economic success will largely determine whether the French president will be standing for election again in five years' time. Emmanuel Macron has ushered in an era of political renewal in France. He represents a young generation that feels as little bound to old concepts such as "planification" (a state-planned economy) as to neoliberal and post-capitalist strategies of an unbridled market economy. Macron's overwhelming success in the presidential election and in the legislative elections held in mid-June has granted him an economic and political latitude that is far greater than that enjoyed by his predecessors Nicolas Sarkozy and François Hollande. Macron's election manifesto, called "Contrat avec la Nation," is a collection of proposals for change and an appeal to the capabilities of the French nation. But the young president does not have unlimited scope to shape his economic and political agenda. For one, the weakness of the parliamentary opposition could give rise to an extra-parliamentary opposition that will be carried out on the streets of Paris and Lyon, and in the large departments, which are mostly rural in character.

For another, the economic policies of EU governments remain subject to the EU regulatory framework. The Maastricht rules on public debt and the euro system pose a significant obstacle to a president who is bent on renewal, both in terms of policy and of personnel.

Macron has assumed office at a time when France is facing serious economic difficulties. In recent years, France's economy has lagged behind that of the rest of Europe. France's unemployment rate is nearly ten percent. At almost 25 percent, youth unemployment is also far too high. France's state ratio – meaning the ratio of government expenditures to GDP – is about 56 percent. In Germany, by contrast, the state ratio is 44 percent.

These budget woes will further limit Macron's hand. France's public debt is at 96 percent of GDP and its budget deficit is slightly over three percent of GDP.

But the reforms initiated under François Hollande are beginning to show an effect. The unemployment rate is slowly declining; France is projected to have a growth rate of 1.4 percent and 1.7 percent for 2017 and 2018 respectively, even under a "no policy change" scenario. But this scenario is highly unlikely. Macron is planning to quickly launch his planned reforms and is counting on the momentum that transformation could bring to a country that has largely been paralyzed for years.

Threefold resistance

Macron can anticipate resistance in three areas: in financial reform, pension reform, and in amendments to labor law. His tax policy envisions a €500 net tax reduction for taxpayers who earn €2,200 a month. This is to be achieved by, among other things, exempting 80 percent of lower-income taxpayers from the "taxe d'habitation" or local property tax. How-

ever, this tax is an important source of funding for cities and local communities, so local mayors and municipal leaders can be expected to oppose this plan.

Sought after but problematic: arms exports

ever, this tax is an important source of funding for cities and local communities, so local mayors and municipal leaders can be expected to oppose this plan.

Pension reform will be another mammoth task. For the time being, Macron does not plan to change the retirement age of 62 years. But the various calculation methods for pensions are to be gradually shifted to a universal point system, based on the Swedish model. The proposed reforms to labor law will encounter the greatest resistance. The changes are largely aimed at providing employers with greater flexibility. Sector-wide wage agreements, negotiated with the trade union, may in future be replaced by internal company negotiations on wages and work conditions. The president hopes that his proposed measures will unshackle the French entrepreneurial spirit and economic vigor.

Macron's core program of reforms is rounded out by a new model of growth.

“

Striving to unshackle the French entrepreneurial spirit and economic vigor

His call for €50 billion of public investment gives priority to environmental protection measures. Private investment is to be spurred by lowering the corporate tax rate.

Implementing his election manifesto would cost up to €100 billion. Macron plans to save €60 billion through cuts to government spending. Every ministry will be asked to present detailed plans for potential cuts, with the aim of reducing the ratio of government spending to GDP to 53 percent. The number of state employees is to be reduced by 500,000 over coming years, and positions that become vacant will not be filled.

If we reduce Macron's economic policy to the core ideas of shrinking the state, lowering taxes, and easing restrictions on redundancies, they are reminiscent in their neoliberal impact to Germany's Agenda 2010. But he remains committed to much of the French social welfare state, including the 35-hour week, early retirement age, a high minimum wage, and so forth. His electoral agenda is guided by the conviction that the

state has an important role to play in determining the conditions of life in France; while this role is founded on centralized control, the regions and departments are also accorded clearly defined responsibilities.

EU integration offers new opportunities for responsible economic policies, but it also places limits. Many hope that Macron will also help stabilize the EU. And Macron himself has promised to help create a Europe that will allow em-

ployment and the economy to thrive. His European economic agenda rests on three proposals: he has called for a Eurozone finance minister and a common budget, and he wants to create a Eurozone parliament with authority to make economic and political decisions. Taken together, these proposals endorse the concept of a "multi-speed" Europe, a concept that Germany is likely to welcome. At the same time, however, Macron's ideas also do not accord completely with the "doctrine of the balanced budget." Instead of instinctively rejecting further integration of the Eurozone, Berlin would be well advised to deliberate these proposals with Macron on their own merits. The Eurozone needs its own federal structure with a parliament, governing body, and its own finances in order to be able to act with credibility, speed, and purpose. The prospect of a "transfer union" can only be held in check if the redistributions associated with Macron's proposals are carried out according to clear rules, and according to the principle of responsibility. The French ideal of "égalité" must also apply to the Eurozone.



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JEWISH VOICE FROM GERMANY

Special Report on Thuringia

2017

Living Traditions and Lasting Visions

The green heart of Germany invites you to explore its cultural treasures



**Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Readers,**

Thuringia has a rich Jewish heritage whose origins date back to the 11th century. Particularly in Erfurt's historic district, much of which remains intact, many architectural and cultural traces bear witness to the city's first Jewish community, which flourished there until the 14th century.

These include the Old Synagogue – one of the oldest, largest and best-preserved medieval synagogues, which also has a mikveh – as well as a large number of material relics such as gravestones, manuscripts, and of course the unique Er-

furt Treasure, which dates back to the 13th and 14th centuries. The Erfurt Treasure comprises more than 4,000 items, including silver coins, tableware and jewelry. The most important object is a Jewish wedding ring from the early 14th century; in 2015, a replica was given to the Beit Hatfutsot Museum in Tel Aviv. The Erfurt Treasure was discovered in 1998 during archaeological excavations and has since been displayed in New York, Paris, London among other locations. In 2009, it was installed in a permanent display in the Old Synagogue.

“**Thuringia is brimming with discoveries – come take a look**

Taken together, these witnesses offer a unique glimpse into Jewish daily life and communal existence as well as the coexistence of Jewish and Christian life in medieval European towns – with a wealth of detail and an intensity that is virtually unmatched elsewhere. In Erfurt we can retrace the blossoming of Central European Jewish culture. That is why with the sup-

port of the state of Thuringia, the state capital of Erfurt is applying for recognition as a UNESCO World Heritage site.

These efforts are accompanied by many other activities that make Thuringia one of the most important and exciting destinations for everyone interested in Jewish culture and history. For example, Weimar's University of Music has a chair dedicated to the history of Jewish music, while a research center at the University of Erfurt is dedicated to the study of religious practices and rituals. On the cultural side, the spectrum ranges from

– deserves its place at the top of the list of everyone interested in European culture and history. This year marks the 500th anniversary of the Reformation and the year in which Martin Luther made his 95 theses known in Wittenberg. 2019 will mark the 100th birthday of the Bauhaus movement, which was founded in Weimar and went on to become what is arguably the most influential art and design school in the world. This, too, will be celebrated in Thuringia in grand style.

From the Bauhaus movement, to the Reformation and Jewish culture, Thuringia offers a wealth of history and culture to explore. We would like to extend our warmest invitation to visit Thuringia and enjoy our famous hospitality. There is no other place in Germany or Europe where you will be able to find this unique combination of nature and culture, relaxation and excitement, as you will here. Thuringia is brimming with discoveries – come take a look at www.visit-thuringia.com

With warmest regards,

Wolfgang Tiefensee

*Thuringian Minister for
Economic Affairs, Science
and Digital Society*

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Brotherhood

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THEN AND NOW

Traces of Jewish Life in Thuringia

Embracing a rich tradition immigrants today secure the community's future

By Hartmut Bomhoff

About 600 years ago, Hillel of Erfurt, a Talmudic authority, left for Palestine to spend the remainder of his life in the Holy Land, thus fulfilling a vow he had made. When he had reached Vienna, he was seized by a longing to return to Thuringia because he was convinced that the Talmudical school of Erfurt would suffer through his absence. He then turned to the rabbis of Vienna who absolved him on the grounds that he had a greater task to perform in spreading Torah to the Jews of Erfurt.

Jewish merchants have been recorded in this part of Central Germany as early as the 10th century. The presence of Jews in Erfurt has also been documented during the 12th century. During the Middle Ages, Thuringia produced many scholars who contributed significantly to Jewish learning. The majority of Jews lived in free cities, which did not recognize the authority of the landgrave. After the Black Death pogrom, Erfurt became again the largest Jewish community at that time in Germany. At the end of the 14th century, Erfurt's Jewry called four or five synagogues their own, as well as four ritual slaughterhouses. However, in 1458, they were expelled from Erfurt, and in 1536, landgrave John Frederick the Brave, a fervent supporter of the Reformation, ordered the total expulsion of Jews. An act which was enforced in 1559.

The landgraviate of Thuringia subsequently experienced a period of disintegration and was divided into a large number of minor duchies and principalities. While prohibited from living in cities, as of the latter half of the 17th century, Jews were allowed to settle on the estates of the nobility, with a few rich court Jews granted protection by



The Old Synagogue of Erfurt

and Walldorf, the Jews are very fervent in their religious devotions!"

It was not until the first decades of the 19th century, that Jews in the four duchies received charters, with the community of Saxe-Meiningen becoming the largest one. In the early 1800s, Jews were permitted to live in Erfurt again, which then had become Prussian. A new synagogue was built in 1840, and eventually a larger one was built to replace it. The opulent domed structure of this Great Synagogue with seating for 500 stood until 1938, when it was destroyed in the Kristallnacht pogrom on November 9.

During the 19th century, numerous new synagogues and Jewish schools were built in small towns and villages, for example in 1842 in Mühlhausen, followed by Aschenhausen in 1843, and Berkach in 1854. In 1938, the latter, together with the neighboring school building, was spared from arson by intervention through local residents.

In the following year, the buildings were sold to the municipality. Renovated in the 1990s, the synagogue of the small city of Mühlhausen is now a listed monument and serves as a cultural center.

Rapid growth

Another Jewish site nearby is the mansion of the Oppé brothers on Lindenbühl, a street near the center of town. These industrialists had a decisive influence on

the development of Mühlhausen as they were one of the largest employers in town. Today, the Jewish community of Erfurt is responsible for the two restored historic synagogues but doesn't own the Aschenhausen synagogue. The first two are used occasionally for worship, a concert, or other events, but are mostly maintained and kept open to the public by volunteers.

150 years ago, in December 1867, the "Israelite Community of Eisenach" was

founded in 1856 by Löb and Moses Simson in the city of Suhl. In the beginning, a steel hammer formed the basis of the company which would become known as a manufacturer of weapons and vehicles – mainly for the Prussian Army. From 1896 onwards, Simson expanded its product line into the civilian sector and built its first bicycles. Simson soon became one of the largest bicycle manufacturers in Germany. After World War I and the Treaty of Versailles, the factory was one of the few armaments plants in Germany permitted to continue operation. With over 4,000 workers, Simson produced small arms, automobiles – including the Simson Supra racing car – and other metal goods. In 1935, the factory was "Aryanized" in a particularly aggressive and public way. The owners were arrested and first escaped to Switzerland and later to the United States. Today, Simson vehicles are collector's items, but hardly anybody knows about the company's Jewish past.

Another example is the success story of Hermann Tietz, a merchant in Gera, a textile center in Thuringia. A Jewish community was formally founded in 1885, and in 1895, there were 90 Jews in Gera engaged mostly in commerce. Hermann Tietz and his nephew Oskar Tietz, who came to Gera in 1882, were the founders of Hertie, a department store chain with stores all over Germany.

Towards destruction

In Erfurt, Jewish entrepreneurs belonged to the city's establishment, among them shoe manufacturer Alfred Hess, who made many generous donations of Expressionist paintings to the Angermuseum, financier Wilhelm Moos as well as horticulturalist Ernst Benary. "We bring beauty to the world" was the slogan of the seed and breeding company, founded in 1843 by Benary in Erfurt. It quickly became a household name in horticulture and counted Gregor Mendel among its prominent customers. Under



Community president Reinhard Schramm

the various princes. In consequence, Jewish life in the "green heart of Germany" became more rural, with peddling and cattle trade as the main source of income.

In 1783, German national poet Friedrich Schiller gave an account of Jewish life in the countryside. Staying at the Bauerbach estate near Meiningen, he remarked, "I'm just annoyed that so many Christians make so little out of their religion, while, as I see in Bauerbach

“

Neither Hitler nor Stalin should have the last word. That's why I'm committed to help build a dynamic Jewish life

founded – which by 1904 reached a membership of 422. By 1869 the last restrictions were cleared and Jews moved back into the cities of Thuringia, gaining their much wanted and scarcely contested recognition and equality. However, a significant decline in the Jewish population was caused by anti-Semitism in the countryside which encouraged Jewish emigration.

In the second half of the 19th century, Thuringia's economy saw a period of rapid growth. An example for innovative Jewish entrepreneurship is the story of the Simson brothers. Simson & Co. was

Nazi rule, many members of the Benary family who had converted to Christianity, signed up for the German army to avoid anti-Semitic persecution. Today, Benary is an independent family business in its sixth generation and operates three breeding facilities in the United States, the Netherlands, and Germany. Their core business is the development and distribution of flower varieties for the professional bedding plant market.

After World War I, the many principalities were amalgamated into one state, Thuringia, with a Jewish population of about 3,600. On June 23, 1930, the Jew-



Non-Jewish pupils get immersed in the history of Erfurt's Old Synagogue

ish Telegraphic Agency reported: "Jewish visitors to the summer resorts of Thuringia are urged to disregard the warnings and threats of the anti-Semitic National Socialists against coming to Thuringia this summer in a published appeal by the Thuringian Tourists' Union, hotel proprietors, and owners of health resorts. A member of the anti-Semitic National Socialist party, Fritz Sauckel, recently declared in the Thuringian parliament that the Jews are not wanted at Thuringia's summer resorts. The appeal points out that Jews are never molested in Thuringia." Nevertheless, Thuringia fell under Nazi rule even before Hitler's appointment as chancellor, with stridently anti-modernist policies receiving considerable public support. In 1933, when Adolf Hitler assumed power, Thuringia was home to 4,500 Jews in 37 communities. About 650 Jewish family businesses fell victim to "Aryanization". As of the summer of 1937, the Buchenwald concentration camp near Weimar became the epitome of Nazi atrocities, and on May 10, 1942, the first transport with 515 Thuringian Jews departed from the Weimar train station to the Belzyce ghetto near Lublin. During the Shoah, the principal Jewish communities of Thuringia – Altenburg, Aschenhausen, Arnstadt, Eisenach, Gotha, and Meiningen – as well as many rural Jewish settlements were annihilated.

A Letter from Thuringia, July 1948

In July 1948, the London-based Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR) published a sobering report on the situation of their brethren in the Soviet occupied zone: "Altogether there are 350 Jews living in Thuringia. Communities exist in Erfurt, Eisenach, Jena and Gera. The 'Landesverband Jüdischer Gemeinden in Erfurt' is the successor organization of the dissolved former communities in the district. Most of the employable Jews have found work, by which, under prevailing circumstances, they just earn their living. There are, however, many old, sick, and widowed persons, and the communities are overaged. Religious service and tuition is only provided for in Erfurt (160 Jews). It is especially depressing that the Jews there are treated like the defeated majority and not as liberated

“Our congregation is a community of a shared destiny with a growing sense of religiosity, and we are in the process of creating a spiritual home for both the non-Orthodox majority and the Orthodox minority

victims. Former Nazis, unless they were particularly prominent, have the same opportunities as the Jews whom they wanted to exterminate. The members of the Jewish congregations feel themselves united by their common fate, though there are, of course, also some amongst them who, in the past, were less keen to be considered as Jews. The internal organization of the Erfurt Community (religious service, youth, and social work) is satisfactory. In normal times, Erfurt had 600 members; of these, only six are left. All the others have come, nearly without exception, from Breslau, from where they had been evacuated. It is due to the experience of the former large Breslau Community that the Erfurt congregation could be reorganized. The old tradition and culture is being kept alive in modest religious services without rabbi or chazzan.”

Troubled new beginnings

Shortly after liberation, the Jewish community of Erfurt, a mere handful of 15 people, re-established itself under the leadership of Max Cars, a survivor of the Theresienstadt ghetto. Later in 1945, between 400 and 1,000 German Jews – the data vary – transferred there from Breslau (meanwhile the Polish city of Wrocław). By August 1949, the number of affiliated Jews in Thuringia had shrunk to 130, signifying that only a few of the survivors identified as religious, or wanted to stay for good. One of them was Wolfgang M. Nossen, who was born in Breslau in 1931. However, after the founding of the Jewish state, he left Erfurt for Israel. In 1977, unforeseen circumstances led him to West Germany, where he somehow settled. In November 1989, the fall of the Berlin Wall opened new opportunities for him. After a short visit to Erfurt, he decided to stay, and in 1995, Mr. Nossen was elected president of the Jewish Community of Thuringia – an office he would hold for seventeen years and during which he witnessed the consolidation of Jewish life. However, it was a long and bumpy road to accomplish, and for many years, the prospects remained poor.

In March 1947, the city council of Erfurt granted a request for the restitution of the site on which the Great Synagogue had stood until 1938. The community immediately began planning the construction of a new synagogue, the only one to be built in the German Democratic Republic (GDR). However, shortly after the inauguration of the New Synagogue in 1952, a decline in membership began. In the same year, an anti-Semitic show trial against leading state and party functionaries of Jewish origin took place in Czechoslovakia. Also, in East Germany, many members of the Jewish community were interrogated, detained, or harassed. Jews were accused of "cosmopolitanism" and defamed as "agents of the West," "Zionists" and "traitors" intent on undermining the socialist state.

In 1953, around two thirds of all Jews living in the GDR fled, many of them to West Berlin. The Jewish community in Erfurt survived these troubled times, but the communities in Eisenach, Gera, and Mühlhausen vanished. With the dissolution of East Germany in 1990, only 26 Jews were registered with the Jewish community in Erfurt. Since 1990, the Erfurt community has had an influx of new members, primarily immigrants from the FSU. In April 2013, the ordination of two rabbis and the investiture of two cantors by the Abraham Geiger College marked a milestone in the Jewish revival in Thuringia. Today, the Jewish Community numbers around 800 members of whom about 500 live in the capital. Professor Reinhard Schramm, president of the *Jüdische Landesgemeinde* since 2012, puts it bluntly: "There would be no Jewish community here without the Jewish immigrants from the Soviet Union. I hope that the human and financial resources will be made available to build a children's and youth center with an integrated kindergarten."



Gravestone of David, the son of Tsadok (1250)

ACHAVA FESTIVAL

A Vision Come True

Erfurt is a hotspot for connecting diverse traditions and people



The fabulous three sisters of A-Wa-Yemen-Tel Aviv performing in Erfurt

Stefan Kranz

JVJG

In 2015, the Hebrew word *achava* (“friendship” or “brotherhood”) became the name of a new festival in Erfurt, ACHAVA-Festspiele Thüringen. The name reflects the agenda: ACHAVA aims to convey concepts of understanding, tolerance and mutual respect to the general public. From August 31 until September 10, 2017, the festival – in its third year – will not only enrich the cultural landscape in Thuringia, but also set standards for interreligious dialogue. “The Jewish symbol of the fig tree, in the shade of which there is room for every-

each other with respect and attention,” explains artistic director Jascha Nemtsov.

The broad spectrum of topics and events is also reflected both by the festival’s venues and supporters. The crowds gather in churches, synagogues, public spaces, including a former heating plant, or in the open air. Among the many festival supporters are the Thuringian State government, regional businesses and media, as well as the Erfurt municipality, the Israeli Embassy in Berlin, and the Central Council of Jews in Germany to name but a few. Addressing and integrating more and more different social groups, including the Muslim

than 30 countries. In Erfurt, the day provides both a platform to combat indifference and prejudice as well as lots of fun and entertainment in a picturesque medieval setting.

Indeed, last year’s festival could already double the number of visitors compared to the first ACHAVA Festival in 2015 – a challenge this year’s program is glad to take on with a wide variety of concerts, dance performances, panel discussions, exhibitions, a street festival, children’s activities, films, and religious services.

The name “MoZuluArt” is already intriguing – and the festival’s opening concert of this Austrian-African band is bound to be electrifying with its synthesis of 18th century European music and traditional rhythms from Zimbabwe. The “Gypsy Soul and Jewish Heart” concert will also testify to a musical symbiosis of a special kind, whilst the Tatar Monks choir from Kazan introduces sacred music of the Christian Orthodox tradition. Jazz connoisseurs have the Erfurt festival firmly on their agenda already, but this year is special as the First ACHAVA Jazz Award will be presented. It goes to the duo “Fractal Limit”. Brazilian singer Tatiana Parra and pianist Vardan Ovsepian from Armenia quite simply convinced the jury with their music’s “magic and depth”. Of course, they will grace the award ceremony on September 9 with a performance – their first in Germany! “New projects like the ACHAVA Jazz Award open doors for further intercultural exchange,” says Kranz. Another jazz highlight will take place the following evening when Omer Klein and his trio will perform at the Heizwerk, the former heating plant and now one of the hottest venues in

town. Klein and his band will introduce the audience to Israel’s lively jazz scene.

Examining the Reformation

The exhibition “Music. Resistance. Extermination” at the Erfurt memorial site Topf & Söhne will be dedicated to the Theresienstadt musicians who performed Verdi’s “Requiem” a number of times in the ghetto. The exhibition also traces the fate of Jewish musicians in the town of Weimar. The Staatskapelle Weimar and the MDR broadcast choir will dedicate their performance of the “Requiem” at St. Marien, Erfurt’s cathedral, to the memory of the murdered musicians. A concert and discussion entitled “The Violin of Buchenwald” explores the dramatic story of a unique collection

of instruments and the fate of their owners.

As 2017 also marks the 500th anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation in Germany, the “Erfurt Colloquies”, three panel discussions during the festival, will examine and evaluate the contemporary relevance of reformer Martin Luther. “Religious Freedom and the Secular State”, “Freedom and the Rule of Law” are topics which will certainly draw large audiences. “Luckily, people want to make up their own minds and take time to do so,” says Kranz.

Poet Heinrich Heine once said that the book is the Jews’ “portable homeland”. Israeli artist Nechama Levendel offers a fascinating new interpretation of this dictum. She collects discarded books from different civilisations, languages, and subjects, tears them apart

“

People want to make up their own minds and take time to do so

one, is our programmatic basis. As one of the oldest world religions Judaism has, so to speak, great experience in analyzing man’s weaknesses and strengths,” says event organizer Martin Kranz. In the past, he has succeeded in bringing renowned Israeli musicians like Avishai Cohen, Ravid Kahalani, and Idan Raichel to Erfurt to perform at the festival. However, the ten days program is much more than an opportunity to promote artistic quality outside off the world’s large concert halls. “We are committed to engage in dialogue and debate, to accept dissent and to encounter

community, churches, teachers, and organisations from the adult education sector, the festival helps foster a sense of cohesion and community beyond religious and political boundaries and lives up to its name.

Insight into Jewish culture

The main focus was and is to provide insight into Jewish and Israeli culture at large. ACHAVA Festival takes the opportunity to mark the European Day of Jewish Culture, a continent-wide Jewish culture and education festival that encompasses hundreds of events in more



Mozart meets Zimbabwe: Austro-African band MoZuluArt

Lukas Beck

and reassembles them. In this new synthesis she expresses her desire to act as a mediator between different cultures. The festival dedicates a special exhibition to Levendel's very own art of the book.

Martin Kranz knows that the festival is at the right place and comes at the right time:

"Thuringia is an excellent basis. Luckily, a number of gems of Jewish cultural history have been preserved here, especially in Erfurt. This is also why the concept of the ACHAVA Festival contributes to the city's current application for UNESCO World Heritage status. And, people from all over Germany come to our festival."

And Kranz is not the only one with this conviction: "Our first and foremost partner was the state of Thuringia, in the person of Prime Minister Bodo Ramelow. He immediately recognized the potential and current relevance and has sup-

ported the project with great enthusiasm and cooperativeness. Reinhard Schramm as president of the Jewish Community of Thuringia has also been with us from the beginning and every year helps to mobilize members and partners. In addition, we have programmatic partners such



Winners of ACHAVA Jazz Award: Fractal Limit

as all political foundations in Germany and, of course, corporations and individuals acting as sponsors."

What does the future hold for the festival? "Of course I wish ACHAVA Festival *mazal tov till 120 ...* but I know it's no good resting on one's laurels. Thus, I am looking forward to lots of constructive feedback so that



“The festival helps generate a sense of Jewish normality

we can ensure future ACHAVA festivals will be lively, up-to-date, and interesting. A festival for the people can only be done with the people."

Professor Reinhard Schramm adds: "The ACHAVA Festival

enriches everyday life in our Jewish community and in society at large with Jewish culture at its best. We are involved in the preparation and the conduct of Shabbat services and of cultural and political events.

The festival is complemented by the Jewish-Israeli Cultural Days and the program of the Yiddish Summer Weimar, as well as our own cultural activities. Together with government commitment for preserving Jewish heritage, this generates a sense of Jewish normality in Thuringia." Is there any better way to promote *achava* – friendship and brotherhood? ■

ACHAVA Festival starts on August 31, 2017.
www.achava-festspiele.de

MEMORIAL SITE TOPF & SÖHNE

Remembrance for the 21st Century

Former headquarters of the "builders of the Auschwitz ovens" is now a museum

By Dieter Sattler

Always glad to serve you..." This was how the Erfurt businessman Ernst-Wolfgang Topf concluded a letter to the SS construction management at Auschwitz. This cynical salutation is now inscribed on the exterior of the former administrative building of Topf & Söhne, the company that built crematoria ovens and ventilation systems for Auschwitz-Birkenau, Mauthausen, and other German concentration and death camps. For decades, the history of this factory facility was largely ignored. After the successor company, a storage and malting equipment manufacturer, went bankrupt in 1996, the premises remained unused until 2001, when it was occupied by squatters. However, two years earlier, a society had been founded to research the history of J. A. Topf & Söhne. In 2011, the state of Thuringia took up this initiative, establishing a memorial and permanent exhibition in the former administrative building. The exhibition includes many documents that show how the organization and implementation of state-organized mass murder could only be carried out with the assistance of ordinary Germans. The history of Topf & Söhne thus serves as an instructive example for the complicity of the broader population. In her book *Industrie und Holocaust*, Annegret Schüle, who is also curator of the memorial, writes: "With Topf & Söhne, we encounter the ordinary face of Auschwitz's machinery of destruction, right in the midst of everyday German society." During the Nazi era, the Erfurt engineers served as veritable technicians



Kastner Pichler Architekten / Köln

of death. They delivered the crematoria ovens and other technology needed to carry out murder on a mass and efficient scale. Their expertise helped the Nazis implement their murderous plans quickly and efficiently. And they knew exactly what they were doing. Company employees spent months on-site, observing and monitoring the "operational reliability" of their systems, in the process becoming witnesses to mass murder.

The moral debasement that resulted from this willing complicity is exemplified by Karl Prüfer (1891–1952), Topf & Söhne's head engineer. In his early career, Prüfer had worked in the areas of waste disposal, cremation of animal corpses, and the design and construction of municipal crematoria. In 1931, Prüfer would still write, "cremation should not be debased simply to a



Dirk Urban

means of cadaver disposal." But the ovens that he would later design for the SS were intended for one purpose only: mass disposal of human beings.

Alongside historical documentation, the memorial center also focuses on questions of remembrance work and engagement with current issues. Among its notable initiatives was the November 2011 public commemoration of

the victims of far-right murders, as well as several events held in commemoration of the genocide in Rwanda. The numerous educational activities of the center include eyewitness testimony such as the accounts of Hungarian Auschwitz survivor Eva Fahidi-Pusztai, discussions about recent developments in right-wing populism and extremism as well as media reports on the topic, and discussions of the nature of complicity and business ethics as a whole. The center also hosts workshops for refugees living in Thuringia and for Muslim university students on topics such as human rights and democracy. The

memorial website includes a "web dialogue" section where online visitors can post their own contributions.

In the early years, there were some who argued that the memorial was harming Erfurt's image

and "soiling its own nest." An argument to which then-head of the Jewish community of the state of Thuringia, Wolfgang Nossen, commented: "You should have given some thought to the city's image 80 years ago!" Today the memorial is welcomed by the city and its citizens, as is also evident by its close collaboration with other local institutions. One teacher from Norway commented: "When I go home tomorrow, I'll have questions, questions, questions." The exhibition "Industry and Holocaust" is shown at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum until the end of October. For American audiences, an English and Spanish language version is available. ■

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ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN

The Bauhaus: From Weimar into the World

Pioneer of modernity still shapes our daily lives



Haus am Horn in Weimar, built for the Bauhaus exhibition in 1923

By Elisabeth Neu

The story has a happy end. Although, for a while, it seemed unlikely. In 1919, all eyes were on Weimar, the tiny town in the heart of Thuringia. The German National Assembly had withdrawn here from the revolutionary hotbed of the Capital, Berlin. It had gathered to draw up a constitution in the “Spirit of Weimar” – home of venerated poets and thinkers like Goethe, Schiller, Wieland, and Herder. It was a spirit Germans conjured up to contrast the monstrosities of WWI. The constitution was to be that of a republic, the first on German soil.

Whilst the assembly noodled over details, Walter Gropius, a 36 year old architect, signed the contract making him director of the new Weimar Art School, the State Bauhaus. Weimar democracy was to last a mere 14 years before it was strangled by Hitler’s Nazis. Its demise was also to be the end of the Bauhaus. As a flagship of modernity this school was anathema to the Nazis. But German democracy came back to stay. And after its closure in Germany, the Bauhaus went global. It, too, is here to stay – defining style, taste and everyday life worldwide. And in 2019, the Bauhaus will be celebrating its centenary!

Its founding director Walter Gropius had dropped out of architecture school. Good looking and highly-decorated in WWI for valor at the front, Gropius had already made his mark with revolutionary designs like a factory building for shoe last producer Fagus in Alfeld

near Hanover. Now, Weimar was calling. In early 1919, the local Art School and the School of Arts and Crafts, both renowned institutions, had merged to create what would later become known as “the Bauhaus.”

This clearly called for a manifesto. Its opening sentence was a bombshell: “The ultimate goal of all art is the building!” Gropius went on to demand: “Architects, sculptors, painters – we all must return to craftsmanship! For there is no such thing as ‘art by profession’. There is no essential difference between the artist and the artisan. The artist is an exalted artisan.” Expressionistically intoxicated, he continued: “Let us strive for, conceive, and create the new building of the future that will unite every discipline, architecture and sculpture and painting, and which will one day rise heavenwards

from the million hands of craftsmen as a clear symbol of a new belief to come.”

Well, reality was a different thing. 1919 meant hard times. The economy was stalling, provisions were scarce. Soon students and teachers complained about the lack of materials, freezing cold working spaces, frugal meals. But Gro-

“

Clear lines, geometrical shapes, modern materials were the basis for functional, simple furniture and everyday objects

pius was a highly gifted administrator, fund raiser, and organizer – and a talent scout. Within a very short time period, he persuaded the crème de la crème of the avant-garde to sign up as Bauhaus teachers: Lyonel Feininger, Johannes Itten, Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, Gerhard Marcks, Oskar Schlemmer, and László Moholy-Nagy rushed to Thuringia to work as “Masters of Form.” “Workshop Masters”, on the other hand, were to teach the students the skills of crafts.

Committed to multidisciplinary and pedagogics, Gropius also drew up the Bauhaus curriculum: “The students will be instruct-



The Wagenfeld lamp

ed in crafts and drawing, and painting, as well as scientifically-theoretically too.” Sculptors, stone masons, smiths, wood cutters, and weavers and many more were to be instructed here. Likewise, composition and drawing, as well as designing furniture and everyday objects were to be taught. Theoretical lessons entailed anatomy, history of arts, materials science. But the curriculum also included nitty gritty such as “basic knowledge of bookkeeping, contract closing, professional fees.”

Form follows function

Top priority at the Bauhaus: Versatility! Love of experimentation! A laboratory of modernity had sprung up in Weimar. Henceforth, form had to follow function. Gone were the fussy interiors of the turn



Cradle designed by Peter Keler

of the century, the over-ornate facades, and cumbersome architecture. The new man – his creation was also an ambition of the Bauhaus program – demanded transparency, fresh air, and sunlight in his living and work space. Clear lines, geometrical shapes, modern materials were the basis for functional, simple pieces of furniture and everyday objects like crockery and cutlery, lamps and multi-coloured abstract tapestries. The steel tube chair “Wassily” designed by Marcel Breuer, Josef Hartwig’s chess set, Peter Keler’s cradle, Marianne Brandt’s tea set, the Wagenfeld and Jucker lamp have long become icons of style and design. In the 1920s, they were revolutionary. Also with houses, factories, and apartments form was now to follow function. Glass and steel constructions substituted heavy brick-work. The Golden Twenties craved innovation, provocation – the unconventional.

And now it was party time, too. Extracurricular activities were written law

U. Pohlmann

Samuel Zuder / Thüringer Tourismus GmbH

Alexander Burzik / Klassik Stiftung Weimar

at the Bauhaus: “Friendly intercourse between masters and students outside work; theatre performances, lectures, poetry, music, fancy dress parties. Building a buoyant ceremonial at these gatherings.” A famous photograph showing a group of Bauhausers in high spirits, bursting out of a door laughing and smoking testifies to the buoyancy, if not the ceremonial. Bauhaus parties quickly became legendary.

Art and technology

And how did the good people of Weimar react to all this? Not just the revealing was observed with suspicion – would these young wild things also rob the local craftsmen of their livelihoods? Were perhaps communists at work there? Early on, Gropius was forced to assure that all Bauhaus students were “Aryans”, of German origin, German speakers and that the 17 students of Jewish origin had mostly been baptized and were not receiving grants... However, two of the Bauhaus masters were of Jewish descent: László Moholy-Nagy and Marcel Breuer.

As for sustenance: The Bauhaus lot favoured healthy and communal fare. Home-grown vegetables were pureed, but the mash needed spicing up. Alma Mahler – later Werfel, in the interim also Mrs. Gropius – as vicious as she was beautiful, remarked that the one unforgettable characteristic of the Bauhaus was that its members “reeked of garlic.”

In the summer of 1923, the Bauhaus presented the fruits of its endeavors to the public in a large exhibition. In its epicentre: The Haus am Horn, a residential house built especially for the show. On a footnote: Gropius’ original design for the house had been rejected. Instead, Georg Muche, a young painter, woodcutter and weaver, received the commission. Comfort, functionality, and efficiency were the masters of this house. The interior, carpets, radiators, tiles, furniture had all been manufactured in Bauhaus workshops. The Haus am Horn has recently been lovingly restored to its original glory and is now part of UNESCO World Heritage sites in Weimar. If you happen to be in the area, don’t forget to take a peek into the kitchen –Theodor Bogler’s storage set is a must have for design lovers ‘til this day.

Never at a loss for a grand statement, Gropius pronounced “Art and Technology – a New Unity” at the opening of the show. This was a new departure for the Bauhaus since thanks to modern assembly methods and materials, objects designed in its school



In the White City Tel Aviv

could now be produced in large numbers. Good (Bauhaus) design became accessible to many people. The exhibition was a huge success with visitors, critics, and the press alike – also internationally.

But dark clouds had been gathering over Weimar’s Bauhaus for some time. Finances were a problem from the beginning although Gropius had somehow always managed to scrape by. Now in 1924, Thuringia’s social democratic government, which had been in favor of the Bauhaus, was superseded by conservative-nationalistic powers. Gropius was informed that not even half of the required means

would be available. Cautionary notice was given to Bauhaus teachers.

And thus, the odyssey began. In 1925, the school moved to Dessau. Three years later, Gropius left. His successor Hannes Meyer was director for a mere three years when he was given notice for political reasons. He was succeeded by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, an architect like his predecessors. Then, the 1931 elections made the Nazis the largest party in Dessau. They immediately chased the Bauhaus out of town. The school continued as a private institution in Berlin; in 1933 it was dissolved under Nazi pressure.

Consequently, many Bauhausers left Germany. Walter Gropius emigrated to England, then to America where he was welcomed by the Graduate School of Design at Harvard. László Moholy-Nagy who had joined the Bauhaus in Weimar in 1923, set out to found the New Bauhaus in

Chicago. Here, the Weimar curriculum was developed further. A pioneer in architecture, design, and photography in North America, the New Bauhaus is currently celebrating its 80th anniversary.

Mies van der Rohe also left Germany for the United States; in the late 1950s he was to design the famous Seagram Building in New York. Naum Slutzky, Bauhaus master goldsmith, made England his home. He was to found the department of industrial design at the Royal College of Art in London.

World Heritage sites

But not just the teachers disseminated the Bauhaus spirit all over the world. Many of those who had studied there and left Germany took it with them. One of them was Arie Sharon. A student of Gropius, he was to become one of Israel’s leading architects.

Today, Tel Aviv boasts the largest assemblage of Bauhaus architecture worldwide. The “White City” is proud of its 4,000 buildings in the International Style, as Bauhaus

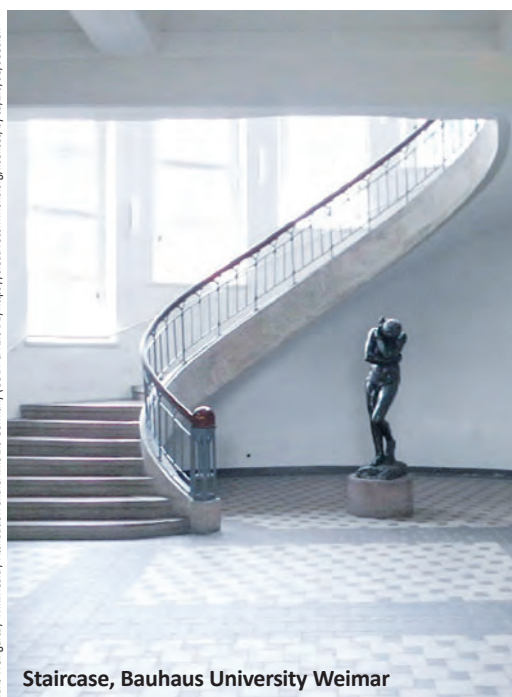
is called here. The original German architecture had to pay tribute to the climatic conditions of the Holy Land. Large glass fronts were replaced by small shutter like windows; narrow canopied balconies protect from the fierce sun and heat. Over the decades since they were constructed, most of the buildings have become the worse for wear. A UNESCO World Heritage site since 2003, Tel Aviv has begun tending to its Bauhaus treasure. Substantial renovations are being carried out. The German federal government supports the sprucing up of these buildings which are much loved by their inhabitants.

From Thuringia into the world – since 2009 Berlin photographer Jean Molitor has been following Bauhaus traces. His work beautifully documents Bauhaus inspired buildings, i.e. in Cuba, Turkey, Morocco, Tartastan, and Burundi. And Christian Benimana, director of the African Design Center in Kigali, thinks that today Bauhaus should serve as an inspiration for modern African urban planning.

But not all made it out into the world. One of the most talented Bauhaus students, Friedel Dicker, who had followed Johannes Itten from Vienna to Weimar, could not build a new life for herself in a distant land. Born in Vienna, the all-rounder had joined the Bauhaus in 1919. She was a photographer by training but also carved puppets, designed stage sets, costumes, jewellery, stackable chairs, kindergarten interiors. In 1942, she was deported to Theresienstadt. There she dedicated herself to caring for the children. During lovingly equipped theatre performances and painting lessons she granted the little ones short respites of normality and joy in the hell they were living in. In 1944, Friedl Dicker was killed in Auschwitz.



The New Bauhaus in Chicago: Illinois Institute of Technology



Staircase, Bauhaus University Weimar

A CONVERSATION WITH THE PRIME MINISTER

We Embrace Our Responsibility

Bodo Ramelow on his commitment to Jewish affairs

Your first journey abroad as prime minister of Thuringia led you to Israel. It was however not your first visit. Why?

Israel is an exciting and fascinating country. You can say without a doubt that Israel is the country where world history began. Also, the world religions have their roots in Israel and its neighboring regions. As I am personally devoted to the training of cantors and rabbis in my function as a foundation board member of Abraham Geiger College, I have long been curious about Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and the whole of Israel. So I first visited Israel to attend the 2008 ICCJ interfaith congress and returned to Germany full of new impressions and a huge curiosity to come back again.

I also met Avital Ben-Chorin who was born in Eisenach and escaped Nazi terror with a Kindertransport [a rescue mission for Jewish children] to Palestine. It was my special wish to help in adopting a resolution across party lines in the city council of Eisenach to grant Avital Ben-Chorin honorary citizenship and to accompany this process.

What is unusual about your first journey is that it had Israel as its sole destination.

My first journey abroad as newly elected prime minister in 2015 was focused solely on Israel especially because Thuringia with the concentration camps and Dora has an

obligation not to forget or relativize Nazi terror or the Holocaust. I wanted to make a point with my journey and had a Buchenwald survivor, Natalie Fürst, accompany me throughout my entire journey. With a large business and scientific delegation we visited many universities and companies in Israel and made new contacts. The first journey was a great success and we promoted Thuringia specifically in Israel to make people curious about our state.

What makes the relationship between Erfurt and its partner city Haifa so special?

Haifa is a beautiful city on the sea. Cosmopolitan and modern, relaxed and curious, and fits to Erfurt. The partnership has been alive and well for a long time. For instance, the Leo Baeck Education Center has visited Erfurt with its great musical program "Step by Step – Sauwa Sauwa". Thus, during my Israel journey, it was a pleasure for me to visit the mayor of Haifa together with the mayor of Erfurt to also set a sign of friendship.

You emphasize time and time again how important it is for German-Jewish reconciliation to cope with the past.

Definitively. From our perspective it is more than important to emphasize that Erfurt embraces its responsibility for its past during the Nazi era. Thus, the memorial

Topf & Söhne, the place where the incinerators were built, plays an important role in Erfurt as a place of gathering, as well as the Old Synagogue where the Jewish gold treasure is on display. History, the present and the past, is together connected with the UNESCO World Heritage proposal for Jewish life in Erfurt. The bright and the dark sides are connected in Erfurt so that we actively live with this responsibility, so that a "Never Again" to anti-Semitism has a lively home in Erfurt. We are happy to welcome guests from Haifa but also Jewish visitors from all over the world.

What significance does the fostering of and support for Jewish life in Thuringia have for you and the state?

We are grateful for the new Jewish life that enriches our cities and communities. It gives our home state Thuringia a fresh and sappy thrust of vitality, dynamics, future, and perspective. Every year we celebrate Jewish-Israeli cultural days in Thuringia that attract a growing audience. Thanks to the general enthusiasm for klezmer the Yiddish Summer Weimar has become one of the most renowned festivals for Yiddish music and culture worldwide. The Achava Festival that in 2015 took place in Erfurt for the first time has become something of a tradition. Dialogue stands at the center of the festival and allows for many interfaith and



TSK / Barbara Neumann

intercultural encounters. I am pleased that at the beginning of the 21st century we can witness how in a new, democratic Germany Jewish culture and Jewish faith are taking root again.

What role does the Jüdische Landesgemeinde [the Jewish community in the state] already play and what role will it play in the future?

For me as prime minister it is especially close to my heart that the Jüdische Landesgemeinde can shape Jewish life in freedom, protected as best as possible by the state and supported by society. The state government supports the state community in its efforts to preserve Jewry in all its traditional diversity and identity, is committed to the principles of the Torah as well as to a cosmopolitan understanding of Jewish life and culture.

Bodo Ramelow is the prime minister of Thuringia

MUST-SEE FINDINGS

Testimony of Medieval Ashkenaz

The Old Synagogue of Erfurt hosts a unique treasure



Papierius / Atelier für Gestaltung

the so-called Erfurt Treasure is on exhibit, a trove of gold and silver jewelry, tableware, and rare coins discovered about two decades ago. It was concealed within the foundation of a 12th-century house in the medieval Jewish quarter of the city and was in all likelihood buried by Kalman von Wiehe, the Jewish house owner, just before the Black Plague pogroms devastated Erfurt's Jewish community in 1349. In the same year, with the Jews being killed or expelled, the synagogue next door was converted into a storehouse.

The treasure, which has a total weight of about 28 kilograms, comprises more than 3,000 silver coins, 14 silver ingots, and over 600 pieces of jewelry and has been on display since 1999. The most prominent piece is a golden Jewish wedding ring from the early 14th century. Designed in the shape of a tower, its raised inscription reads *mazal tov*, good luck. The find was in several respects sensational. First, very little jewelry or artwork from wealthy private households of the Middle Ages has survived. Its non-ecclesiastical Gothic style goldsmith's work makes the treasure a



B. Stefan, Thüringisches Landesamt für Denkmalpflege und Archäologie, Weimar

unique collection. Second, the vast number of coins and ingots demonstrates Erfurt's status as a medieval center for trade and commerce. In addition, the exhibition offers a glimpse into Jewish life and culture in Central Europe, Ashkenaz, before the Black Death.

Another focus of the exhibition is a collection of medieval Jewish manuscripts that documents the highly developed intellectual life of the Erfurt Jewish community. Originally, a bundle of 17 manuscripts, they ended up in the hands of the municipality during the plague pogrom of 1349. The valuable

manuscripts were locked away until the second half of the 17th century, and then appeared on the inventory list of the library of the Evangelical Ministry in the Augustinian Monastery, from where they were sold in 1880 to the Royal Library in Berlin. The manuscripts consist of three very valuable Bible manuscripts, four Torah scrolls from the 13th and 14th centuries, and a number of other writings. The most impressive piece is the Giant Erfurt Bible, copied in 1343. Scholars say that the collection holds numerous clues to its reception after 1349 in the form of apostils and comments and

thus constitutes an important testimonial for early Christian Hebraism. In Berlin, the precious convolute eventually became an object of research for Jewish scholars.

It was only after 1990 that the original structures and the unrendered West facade of the Old Synagogue, were discovered and salvaged, and it took special restoration measures to preserve the traces of time. Together with the Stone House – a private building dating back to 1250 which can be related to Jewish owners – a medieval ritual bath, gravestones from the 13th century, the Old Synagogue forms a unique testimony to Jewish life and culture in Central Europe. It is only natural that the city is applying for UNESCO World Heritage status. The Small Synagogue, inaugurated in 1840 and today a museum devoted to the local Jewish history of the 19th and 20th centuries, adds considerably to this ensemble. No question, Erfurt has become a must-see destination for the traveler interested in Jewish history. Next spring, Rabbi Steinberg will be back – bringing with him a large group of synagogue members.

By Gideon Wollberg

We had an amazing time," said Rabbi Richard Steinberg of Orange County in California, after a rather spontaneous stop-over in Erfurt. "We thoroughly enjoyed ourselves and learnt a great deal." The Steinbergs were absolutely enthralled by their visit to the Old Synagogue, a medieval gem in the townscape of Thuringia's capital. The Alte Synagoge with parts dating from the 11th century is the oldest synagogue in Central Europe that has been preserved from its foundation to its roof. In its cellars,



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INNOVATION

Germany is Stepping Up E-Mobility

Range still remains the thorniest issue

By Klaus Dieter Oehler

Elon Musk is known as a visionary. As an engineer he firmly believes in innovation and entrepreneurship. Making transportation sustainable and powered by clean energy has been on his agenda for over a decade. While he did not invent the electric car – that honor goes to 19th century Scottish inventor Robert Anderson – Musk, in his role as product architect and CEO of Tesla, has certainly helped make e-mobility a reality while many European car makers were still experimenting. It wasn't until Chancellor Angela Merkel announced in 2013 that she expected at least one million electric vehicles on German roads by 2020 that executives at Daimler, BMW, Volkswagen, and others started to up their game. Now, a recent study by Swiss bank UBS predicts that by 2030, 23 percent of newly registered vehicles will be electrically powered.

While German car makers have for decades been at the forefront of automotive technology, for a long time they seemed to resist the idea that electric motors might one day entirely replace combustion engines. Thus, the popularity of Japanese built hybrid and electric vehicles caught their attention but did little to speed up market entry. Instead German engineers continued to focus on the reduction of fuel consumption – with success. Only in 2012, did Mercedes begin mass production of the Smart Fortwo Electric Drive, the first German model to be available to the public.

But technology has continued to develop apace. Battery technology in particular has made great strides in recent years. Tesla's new batteries, which cost less than €200 per kWh, will make it possible to utilize solar energy at a low cost, even at night. This development has been driven by a rapid reduction in costs. High-quality batteries produced on a large scale for electromobility can also be used in stationary systems for storing wind and solar energy. Battery performance, both during the day and overnight, will be a key factor in the rise in electromobility. In light of climate change, some countries have already announced ambitious programs. Norway and several US states, for example, have announced plans to eliminate new registrations of combustion-powered vehicles as early as 2030.

A tough sell

The question of e-mobility has thus become a pressing one for the German auto industry. Some years ago, German automakers began investing heavily in R&D, developing fuel cells and even hydrogen combustion engines alongside battery-powered e-mobility solutions. Daimler is said to be working on six electrically powered model lines.

But it's still unclear where the market for e-mobility will be. Germany will likely fall far short of its ambitious goal of one million electrically powered vehicles by 2020, probably achieving only about 10 percent of that goal. Battery-driven vehicles are a tough sell in Germany. They are more expensive



than gasoline and diesel vehicles, and they require recharging after only a few hundred kilometers. The network of quick-charging stations is still far from adequate. President of the German Automobile Industry Association (VDA) Matthias Wissmann says that currently only about 55,000 electric vehicles are registered for use in Germany. Wissmann believes that the purchase premium and tax benefits introduced in early July 2016 could serve as a spur to sales. But the charging infrastructure continues to pose an obstacle. Currently, Germany has only 7,407 regular charging points and 292 quick-charging stations. A federal investment of 300 million € could raise that figure to about 15,000 regular public charging stations and several thousand quick-charging

“**Battery technology has made great strides recently**”

ones. Wissmann also argues in favor of eliminating the hurdles to the establishment of private charging stations. Moreover, Ford, Daimler, BMW, and Volkswagen have announced plans to establish a quick-charge network along European highways. According to Wissmann, this demonstrates “how seriously German manufacturers are taking electromobility, and their determination to team up to tackle this joint project, along the lines of the Nokia Here purchase.”

Wissmann emphasizes that electromobility is an important force for Germany as a center of technology and industry. E-mobility will help pave the way for a further expansion of the high-tech and industrial sector in the country. Worldwide, some 34 percent of patents in the area of electromobility and 32 percent of patents in the area of hybrid drives come from Germany. After China, Germany is currently the second-largest producer of electric vehicles. According to Wissmann, McKinsey market analysts predict that within five years Germany will be the world's largest producer of electric vehicles, with approximately 1.3 million such vehicles rolling off German production lines each year.

The purchase of data specialists Nokia Here by Audi, BMW, and Daimler shows that German carmakers are keen to maintain their technological edge, including against Silicon Valley heavyweights such as Google. In the early years, both Daimler and Toyota had looked to Tesla entrepreneur Elon Musk for ideas, but meanwhile they are pursuing their own strategies. Although Germany's reputation in the technology sector has suffered somewhat of late, German engineers still have plenty to offer when it comes to e-mobility. Automotive supplier Continental, for example, has developed the first-ever system for wireless charging of electric cars and motorcycles. Volkswagen is aiming to become the global market leader in e-mobility, while BMW has promised that by 2020, e-vehicles will cost the same as combustion-powered models. Daimler is partnering with BAIC to take on the Chinese market.

But Henning Kagermann, chair Germany's National Electromobility Platform and former co-chief of the German software giant SAP, remains disappointed by the pace of development. At a recent conference, Kagermann noted, “It would be better if things were moving more quickly.” For Kagermann, who commutes about 80 kilometers a day, an electric vehicle would be the perfect solution.

Thus far, however, range remains the thorniest issue. Here, too, Elon Musk is promising a “revolution.” Tesla is pinning its hopes on the battery powered Model Y crossover SUV, which is scheduled for a 2019 market release. Musk believes that the electro-SUV will prove even more popular on the mass market than current electric vehicles. The carmaker plans to produce 500,000 vehicles per year by 2018, with that figure set to rise to one million by 2020. But the company still has a long way to go. Last year, only around 84,000 vehicles rolled off the Tesla production lines. In the first quarter of this year, Tesla achieved new records in production, deliveries, and turnover, but the company still slid further into the red.

Klaus Dieter Oehler is financial editor at the daily Stuttgarter Zeitung

THE SPUDY COLUMN

Sustainable Investments

It was a bombshell, or as Mexico's former President, Vicente Fox, dramatically phrased it, a “declaration of war against the entire planet,” when US President Trump announced Washington's withdrawal from the Paris Agreement. It was not until the end of 2015 that the two largest national economies, China and the USA, joined the global climate agreement, which aims to limit global warming to less than 2°C compared to the pre-industrial era. This historic step had ensured the niche topic climate change the necessary attention. It was now discussed more widely and anchored the environment, social responsibility and good corporate governance (known as the ESG Criteria) in the minds of investors. Sustainability was suddenly in vogue, and corresponding investment opportunities sprung up like mushrooms.

It's no wonder that the US' exit is now arousing concern. But when looked at more closely, it quickly becomes apparent that there is no reason for the world to be paralyzed with shock – on the contrary! In many countries that have pursued their climate goals half-heartedly until now, Trump's decision has acted like a wake-up call. And even in the US itself, it is far from clear whether the economy and industry will actually say goodbye to future technologies. After the presidential election, more than 300 US corporations and 280 major investors wrote an open letter urging Donald Trump not to pull out of the climate agreement.

A number of large cities and even US states, including economic heavyweight California, want to proceed on their own initiative. Although Trump's abandonment of renewable energies has given fossil fuel dealers and users some breathing space, no one really expects these effects to last. Stock market performance is interesting: While the Dow Jones Sustainability US Index has risen by only twelve percent since Donald Trump's election, the Dow Jones Industrial grew 16 percent. In the same period, however, global-oriented sustainable investments performed even better. This reflects the expectation that Europe, China, and India will take on the role of pioneers in the near future.

It's not yet certain what exactly this will mean for investors. Markets have clearly become more uncertain and volatile, and this will continue in the near future – that also goes for really robust ESG investments. Anyone who wants to make an impact by directly investing in companies with sustainable business practices has no choice but to seek advice from specialists. Analyzing investment in companies using ESG factors is a very complex task that should not be underestimated. Thorough due diligence is just as important as ongoing systematic controlling and reporting. This is the only way to ensure that investments in sustainability are also sustainably successful – especially in politically uncertain times.



Spudly Invest

Karolin Övünc, production planning and materials manager, makes sure that all reusable materials are recycled



RESOURCES

Everything Has a Value

Corporation implements the principle of circular economy

By Leane Zaborowski

99 percent. Karolin Övünc is proud of this number. She points to the board hanging above the containers: “Everything has a value.” This was the thought behind it all.

Coca-Cola has been producing at Genshagen near Berlin, in the district of Teltow-Fläming, since 1998. The plant is one of the most modern in the entire Federal Republic and certainly the most water efficient in the company. As with all of Coca-Cola’s bottling plants in Germany, it is run exclusively on energy from renewable sources. On average, 94 percent of the reusable materials generated on the premises covering 158,000 square metres are recycled, as at all of Coca-Cola’s locations in Germany. A good value. But good is sometimes not good enough.

Karolin Övünc has been working for Coca-Cola since 2003. After her training as an industrial manager she began a part-time course to qualify as an industrial engineer. Today, she is in charge of production planning and materials management in Genshagen. In 2015, she took on the pilot project for the circular economy at the Genshagen location, working closely with recycling expert Interseroh. Her target: To further optimise the recovery of any reusable materials left over after the production process. Since then Karolin Övünc has identified more than 50 reusable materials, including four types of paper and eight types of foil and plastics. There are more than 300 containers



Bottle tops on the brink – of being used again

for different reusable materials on the company’s premises and 99 percent of all the production waste is now recycled or upcycled. She has also gotten rid of the words “waste” and “trash”, as the incidence of residues that require thermal recycling has dropped by three quarters. Karolin Övünc and the whole plant are proud of these figures, which have also been certified by bifa, an independent environmental institute.

Save raw materials

Increasing the responsible treatment of resources is a central topic for Coca-Cola. Ulrike Sapiro, the company’s director of sustainability in Europe says: “How would it be if we started to see the collection of reusable materials as a new way of extracting raw materials? Our packaging should not only be lighter and simpler but should also be part of the value chain.”

In 2015, Coca-Cola introduced a new form of packaging in Germany made entirely from recycled PET bottles. In other words: a bottle becomes another bottle, without the need for new raw materials, an innovation for which Coca-Cola won the German Packaging Award.

Already, 95 percent of Coca-Cola plastic bottles are recycled in Germany, also thanks to the deposit. Thus, the materials cycle continues to close. “We have already achieved a great deal,” says Ulrike Sapiro. “But our aim is to require even less raw materials, possibly none at all.”

Coca-Cola produces and fills up to 76,000 bottles an hour in Genshagen, around 250 million per year. “Sustainability is a clear area of responsibility for Coca-Cola,” says Karolin Övünc. When she started the project looking for alternative recyclable materials, there was one sentence that she heard particularly often from suppliers and disposal companies: “No-one’s ever asked that.” In the future, this process for optimising the recycling of reusable materials will be adopted by other Coca-Cola plants. A team in Karlsruhe has already started implementing it. And Karolin Övünc looks forward to sharing all the answers she has found in the meantime.



Cardboard cores waiting for new tasks

The good ones go into the pot ... recycling containers for different materials



BERLIN 1937

In the Shadow of Things to Come

An exhibition examines life in Germany's capital under Nazi rule

By Hartmut Bomhoff

In a pharmacy toothpaste with a swastika. A mood of fear such as must have existed in France under the Jacobins," noted Victor Klemperer in March 1933. "No one fears for their lives yet – but for bread and freedom." The diaries of the scholar provide an exceptional account of day-to-day life in Nazi Germany. Some weeks before, in a radio speech on February 10, Hitler had pledged to turn the economy around: "People of Germany, give us four years and then pass judgment upon us!"

"Give me four years' time" – with this slogan, the newly appointed chancellor had promised a total transformation of German society. In the spring of 1937, an exhibition in Berlin showcased recent achievements of the regime, for example increasing employment and rearmament. By that time, the National Socialist dictatorship had permeated all aspects of German everyday life. The previous year had been shaped by the Wehrmacht's invasion of the demilitarized Rhineland and by the Olympic Games. Soon to follow were the "Anschluss" of Austria, the Sudeten crisis, and the November pogroms of 1938.

1937, however, was characterized by a false sense of calm in Germany – including Berlin. What was the city like for its residents as they went from their homes to school or to work, to church or to synagogue, to air raid exercises or to a dance? What changed under Nazi rule, what remained the same? What were the consequences for individuals and for societal groups? And: To what degree was it possible to recognize the system's criminal nature before the war and the Holocaust began?

In its special exhibition "In the Shadow of Things to Come" ("Im Schatten von morgen"), Berlin's Märkisches Museum, which explores the history of Berlin from its origins to this day, presents a collection of unique, never-before displayed original objects, historical photos, documents, sound recordings, and film ex-

cerpts which bear witness to the deceptive normality under the Nazi regime. The exhibition takes a multi-media approach to give deep insights into life in the city at the time from a wide range of perspectives.

Censorship and conformity

Diplomats, businessmen, and artists from all over the world were stationed in Berlin, providing a broad international view. However, even foreign correspondents were not free to report as they saw fit. "I myself was to experience how easily one is taken in by a lying and censored press and radio in a totalitarian state," remembered American journalist William L. Shire, who became known for his broadcasts from Berlin. "No one who has not lived for years in a totalitarian land can possibly conceive how difficult it is to escape the dread consequences of a regime's calculated and incessant propaganda." In 1937, Berlin was still Germany's newspaper capital. Newspaper bans and closures, as well as the lack of critical reporting due to political pressure, had substantial impact on the press, which was forced into complacency and conformity. Most foreign correspon-

dents had realized how bad things could get, though there were infamous exceptions: In February 1937, *National Geographic* published "Changing Berlin." In his 47-page feature story, a loving paean to a regime considered as efficient and benign, Douglas Chandler painted a happy portrait of Berlin. By that time, the Nazi regime had completed a period of power consolidation and was yet to begin preparing for war – it was a phase of relative calm for Germany, both domestically and in international relations. This comparatively uneventful time is the focus of the exhibition's analytical depiction of everyday life in the city. The show has been conceived as a walk-around tour that encompasses views of the urban landscape, representations of everyday life, special displays, places of fear, and historical themes on a wide range of subjects.

In 1937, the Jewish Community of Berlin numbered about 140,000 members. The ever-more prevalent anti-Semitism awoke a growing desire for re-orientation. Many of Berlin's Jews still believed a sense of solidarity would allow them to deal with isolation, loss, and humiliation, and that a return to religious values would help to foster a sense of identity and community. Force and deceit were used to drive German Jews out of professional and economic life. Self-employed, middle-class Jews, particularly doctors and lawyers, found their livelihood threatened, and more and more Jewish families had to take advantage of the offerings of Jewish relief agencies to fight social decline. In an increasingly hostile environment, Jewish schools provided one of the last refuges for children and young people, who had very little chance of entering skilled professions after completing school. The Reich Federation of Jewish Cultural Association, which had been founded in 1935, in July 1937 was comprised of 122 independent organizations throughout Germany and had to cope with emigration, poverty, and the state's attempt of ghettoization. To foster Jewish pride, the Jewish Community marked the 500th birth-

day of Don Isaac Abravanel, a Jewish leader in fanatically Christian Spain, with a commemorative medal and a series of public events.

In August 1937, Berlin's district of Prenzlauer Berg had the inscription "Für Juden verboten" ("Off limits for Jews") painted on 92 of 100 park benches, and local authorities did not intervene but discussed the possibility of expanding the measure into a citywide regulation. It was not only the Reich institutions located in Berlin that contributed to making the German capital true to the Nazi line. Especially the local administrative apparatuses were a driving force of the dictatorship. Berlin's government agencies supplemented the Nuremberg race laws with additional regulations that targeted the Jewish population and insti-



Detail of typewriter "Olympia", Europa Schreibmaschinen AG Berlin, after 1933

Stadtmuseum Berlin / Oliver Ziehe



Stadtmuseum Berlin / Oliver Ziehe

tutions, including day care centers, book shops, and housing. The approval level of Nazism was very high among Berlin police officers, who investigated and arrested regime dissidents, Jews, homosexuals, Sinti and Roma, as well as socially marginalized groups, and turned them over to the SS or the Gestapo.

"No people ever recognize their dictator in advance," reflected US journalist Dorothy Thompson in 1935. The actual impact on society was often apparent only at second glance. Amateur photographs, passed down through family narratives, evoked and still evoke both empathetic identification and a critical distance. In the cultural sector, Nazi influence was apparent not so much in what the spectators were presented, as in what was not shown. The exhibition space itself is also an object of critical reflection. In 1937, the Märkisches Museum took part in Berlin's 700-year anniversary celebrations, which were exploited by the Nazi regime. "It is time that we confront this era more intensively," says Director Paul Spies. "This is especially important in times when facts, values, and political positions are changing and society is in the midst of a transformation."

Im Schatten von Morgen runs at Märkisches Museum Berlin until 14 January 2018



View of the synagogue in Fasanenstraße, captured by photo journalist Harry Croner in 1937

Stadtmuseum Berlin

How Germany ticks **deutschland**



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LEGAL ROADMAP

A Comprehensive Introduction to Israeli Law

An academic cooperation between Jerusalem and Potsdam closes a gap

By Gideon Wollberg

It is absolutely remarkable that a German-Israeli joint venture is behind the best overview in this field you can find on the market today," said Elmar Esser at the German Bundestag in mid-June during the book launch of *Jewish and Israeli Law: An Introduction*. The First Chair of the German-Israeli Lawyers Association explained: "This book closes a gap in publications about the Jewish and the Israeli legal system." Esser assured the two authors, Shimon Shetreet and Walter Homolka, that the time it took to work on this book was well invested. Addressing the audience hosted by MP Volker Beck, Head of the German-Israeli Parliamentarians Group, he highlighted two aspects of the



The Israel Supreme Court in Jerusalem, built in 1992

a visiting professor at the University of Potsdam. In Jerusalem, he holds the Greenblatt Chair of Public and International Law and is the head of the Sacher Institute of Legislative Research and Comparative Law. One main field he has been working on constantly for many years is judicial independence. With his background as a former cabinet minister of the State of Israel and an international expert in comparative law, the right person had been identified to extend the project into a thorough roadmap and an exciting guidebook. "I assumed the joint task of writ-

there have been several political initiatives aiming to limit its competences. Since countries like Poland, Hungary or Turkey face the same situation as Israel, the book sheds light on the role a strong and independent Supreme Court can have in a stable democracy when it comes to defending constitutional rights.

"I am pleased that we succeeded in publishing a volume on Jewish and Israeli law which provides a convenient, comprehensive monograph for scholars as well as informed readers," Shimon Shetreet sums it up. "In addition to contemporary issues we made sure that the monograph offers historical background on the issues discussed to insure deeper understanding of the wider perspectives of the topics."

We realized that this book was long overdue

600 page thick compendium: "First of all it gives a very good overview of the two main pillars the Israeli Legal System today is based on. One of them is the history of Jewish law and its role in the Israeli legal system today. For German attorneys who are

used to a legal framework that in general regulates all matters of family affairs like divorce etc. it may sound surprising that in Israel as a Jewish state all these questions are handled by the different religious communities on the basis of their own religious legal framework and jurisdiction." The second pillar, Elmar Esser emphasized, is the comprehensive description of the Israeli legal culture and the system of government in the State of Israel.

The book, which is the only English language monograph in this field, was initiated in September 2009 during the 32nd National Convention of the German Society for Comparative Law in Cologne. After Rab-

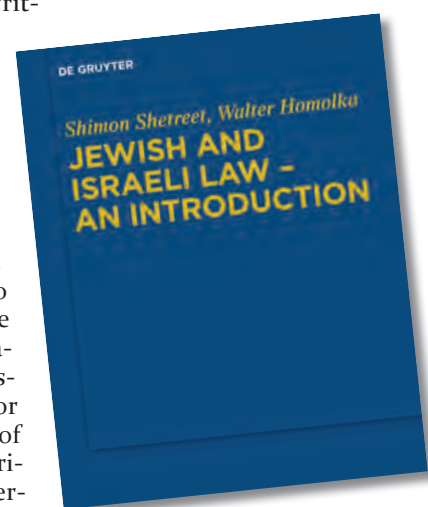
bi Walter Homolka, rector of the Abraham Geiger College at the University of Potsdam, had given a lecture on Jewish law and its interrelations with national laws, great interest was raised among the assembled experts to learn more about the origins and development of law in the State of Israel, about the whole variety of influences on Israeli law, and about its current state of affairs.

Judicial independence

Together with Rabbi Homolka, who holds the Chair for Modern Jewish Thought at the Potsdam School of Jewish Theology, Professor Shimon Shetreet of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem took on this exciting project during his time as

ing the book as I realized that it was long overdue," Shetreet explained at the Bundestag. For Elmar Esser it is certainly one of the authors' main merits that they describe this special situation very accurately from different perspectives.

The book, which was also presented at the office of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Jerusalem, addresses many current issues, for example the promotion of equality for women, minorities, and Jews from different countries, or the question to what extent Israeli judges stand for the judicial review of legislative actions. For many years there has been a discussion in Israel about the role of the Israel Supreme Court and



Shimon Shetreet / Walter Homolka: *Jewish and Israeli Law – An Introduction*. De Gruyter Berlin, 2017 XLVI, 575 pages, € 59.95

BOMHOFF RECOMMENDS

Embrace Arguments!

"But isn't he a friend of the terrorists?" was a frequent comment when one of Israel's foremost writers, Amos Oz, was announced as the recipient of this year's Abraham Geiger Award. Others dismissed him as a "naïve lefty." Bias is a convenient realm, and his critics were not around when the Israeli ambassador recently welcomed the awardee in Berlin. They missed an opportunity to make up their minds.

In his acceptance speech for the prize, which honors personalities who promote pluralism, Oz talked straight and emphasized that he does not engage in dialogue with people who deny Israel's right to existence: "If a person



says: 'And therefore there ought to be no Israel.' I would say: 'You are not a partner in argument. You are an anti-Semite; you are an enemy. I will fight you rather than argue with you. I will defend myself.'" And he continued: "Someone who says that those Jews who regard themselves

as a people have no right for self-determination, because they are ugly, or bad, or God killers, or cruel or stupid, anyone who says this is not a rival. Anyone who says this is an enemy."

Earlier, Berlin's Senator for Culture Klaus Lederer, had praised Oz for

speaking openly about social divisions in Israel, for being one of the first to recommend a two-state solution for the Israel-Palestinian conflict after the 1967 Six-Day War, and for having criticized "the dehumanization of language." In his response, the writer made clear that he knows that his country deserves better, but he didn't get lost in settling political scores. Instead, one quip was followed by another. "We Israeli Jews, we only have to make peace with the Palestinians; we don't have to make peace with their friends in Europe. Their friends in Europe are tireless and sometimes fanatic." Touché!

"I am a great believer in curiosity," Amos Oz explained. His speech then became a tour de horizon of Jewish non-conformism, argumentativeness, and chutzpah. In Jewish law, the concept of majority does apply, but that

doesn't exclude other opinions. Consequently, the Talmud is replete with undecided controversies. The examples Oz presented span the broad range from Abraham, who challenged God, to today's Israel: "We are an argumentative nation: 8.5 million citizens, Jews and Arabs; 8.5 million prime ministers; 8.5 million prophets; 8.5 million messiahs – each and every one of us with his or her personal formula for immediate redemption."

Amos Oz was honored in Berlin for "firmly believing in the ability of people to change the world for the better." He also reminded us to remain vigilant. Too often we tend to boast that biblical prophecy challenged authority and social injustice, but not always do we live up to the Torah's model of engaging with the reasonable dissenters among us.

JOHANNES BEERMANN

A Discreet Humanist

By Rafael Seligmann

Politicians enjoy good deeds. Most politicians have a desire to assist others and to be rewarded in return. This also helps explain our desire for a happy end in films and other forms of mass entertainment – even though experience has shown that the end cannot always be good.

Yet we humans do not prove our worth on screen but rather in reality, away from the public eye. When the cameras have been switched off, and when we are liable at times to face derision for our conscientious activities. When good deeds are not rewarded but judged in a negative light. The lack of earthly reward for providing aid to the weaker among us is why Judaism places such emphasis on self-effacing acts of humanity and compassion. This is also what underlies the old Jewish tradition that the fate of the world rests on the shoulders of 36 righteous people in each

generation. At least three dozen tzadikim, or righteous ones, are needed to preserve what is good in humanity.

This tradition also aligns with an old legend. An ancient story tells of a community that complained about its rabbi, saying that he neglected his religious duties and failed to tend properly to his flock. A critic of pious and romantic Hasidic tradition even went so far as to proclaim: “Your rabbi is not worthy of his

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**Staunch advocate
of freedom**

flock. Instead of preaching and living the Torah, he neglects his duties.” The man decides to spy on the rabbi. He observed the rabbi leaving his house. But rather than hurry to religious service, the rabbi left the village and went to the forest. Upon reaching a hut belonging to a widow,

the rabbi, a vigorous and robust man, removed his outer garment and began chopping wood. He brought the wood into the hut, made a fire, cooked a meal, and tended to the old woman. In shame, the spy left and returned to the village. Later, when he was asked why he had ceased his malicious complaints, the man said, “Because your rabbi is far more worthy of you than you suspect.”

Johannes Beermann also does not fit the image of a do-gooder. A lawyer by training, the burly politician is known for his ironic and even sarcastic tone. But when it comes down to it, the Westphalian native can always be relied upon. As a devout Catholic, Beermann has little need for pious remarks, preferring instead to provide practical assistance. After completing his law degree, Beermann first embarked on a legal career and worked on behalf of the Christian Democratic Party. Among his many roles, Beermann headed the office of now-deceased Christian Democratic General Secretary Peter Hintze.



Frank Rumpenhorst

Both before and after his work in Hintze's office, Beermann occupied various civil service posts, including one for the state of Saxony. There he became familiar with the local Jewish community, the majority of whom were Russian emigres. Whenever possible, Beermann provided help and assistance to the Jewish community – wholeheartedly and with a minimum of bureaucracy. After postings in Wiesbaden and Berlin, in 2008 Beermann was appointed

Chief of the State Chancellery of Saxony, where he was instrumental in implementing policies. Known as a pragmatic man of action, Beermann also lent a hand to musicians and artists – quietly and without self-aggrandizement. When the *Jewish Voice from Germany* offered to publish a supplement that would present Saxony to its worldwide readership, Beermann immediately cooperated – an offer that would earn him vilification from the far-right. But Beermann refused to be deterred, remaining a staunch advocate for freedom and mutual understanding. After his years in Dresden, Johannes Beermann was appointed member of the executive board of the German Bundesbank, one of the most eminent positions in Germany's financial economy. And once again, Johannes Beermann occupies this post without fuss and ado, preferring instead to quietly tend to the needs of others and rise to new positions of responsibility. ■

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Tzedakah

Just the right thing to do

By Rabbi Walter Homolka

With the upcoming elections, social justice has become a big issue in Germany. Media, politicians, and church leaders alike embed this cause in Judeo-Christian values and traditions, and time and again I am asked to explain the Jewish concept of tzedakah, a term derived from tzedek, “justice.” Although related to charity, the meaning of tzedakah is broader than the definition of charity: While the latter suggests benevolence and generosity, tzedakah implies fairness, justice, and righteousness, and it is a performance of a duty.

Jewish teaching ties the Biblical injunction “You shall keep My laws, and My rules, by the pursuit of which human beings shall live” (Lev. 18:5) to the Talmudic observation that the use of law should lead to life, not to its loss (b. San. 74a). Thus the provisions on workers and work contracts, as well as those on loans, liens, and the jubilee year (shemitta), all contain a wealth of social considerations that indicate a tendency to ensure settlements in favor of the economically weaker party when interests collide.

However, our sages did not envision a rose garden, and I must disappoint those

who want to enroot their call for an unconditional basic income in some alleged Jewish traditions. In fact, the very idea of an unconditional basic income contradicts the Jewish tradition which values labor. In Genesis, it reads: “God took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.” In Leviticus, we are reminded that the corners of the fields are designated for the poor,

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“On three things the world stands: On justice, truth, and peace.”

(M. Avot 1:18)

and so are grain and field crops left during the harvest. The poor, however, have to collect the gleanings themselves. As the Talmud says: “Labor is highly valuable because it brings honor to those involved in it.” [b. Ned. 49b].

Elsewhere in the Talmud it is said: “A man who lives from the labor [of his hands] is greater than the one who fears heaven.” [b. Ber 8a]. Thus, helping someone to become self-sufficient is the highest form of



JMG

The orthodox grip on society comes along with the denial of government aid to Reform and Conservative institutions in Israel. “This causes harm not only to equality, but also to freedom of religion and ceremony,” explains Shimon Shetreet, a former Minister of Religious Affairs in the Israeli government. “Furthermore, budgetary allocation to Reform and Conservative projects is minuscule, and it is difficult to sustain without budgets to construct houses of worship and furnish salaries for rabbis and cantors.”

Isn't it absurd that the exclusive recognition granted to the Orthodox rabbinate in Israel on matters of religion favors a group which reverses the concept of tzedakah as the way to fairness, justice, and righteousness? In 1948, representatives of all the population sectors signed the Declaration of Independence, forming the national consensus that is considered one of the basic principles of the state. As the Torah insists, “Justice, justice shall you pursue,” we have to make sure that the Jewish state, in the 70th year since its foundation, accommodates Jews of all religious streams. ■



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