

ANGELA MERKEL'S NEW TERM

Germany's Challenges Will Grow

Populism, Europe's excessive debt, Trump, climate change, international terror

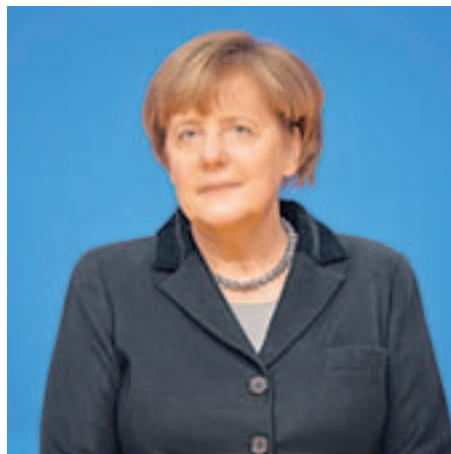
By Rafael Seligmann

Angela Merkel has the chance to become Germany's longest-serving chancellor. The Christian Democrat received the people's mandate to form her fourth cabinet. That puts her in position to equal Helmut Kohl's sixteen-year tenure.

Angela Merkel and her Christian conservatives have suffered heavy losses at the ballot box. As has the SPD, which will now go into opposition. The winners, as in the U.S., are the right wing populists. Now, for Merkel to govern another four years, she will have to forge a coalition with the free-market FDP and the Greens.

Merkel faces daunting challenges at home and abroad. Germany's economy – the economic locomotive of the European Union – is booming. But many of Europe's other economies are being kept under steam using borrowed fuel. The European Central Bank is lending money interest-free. In addition, the ECB is purchasing state and corporate bonds to the tune of \$70 billion every month. The total volume of these asset purchases has reached \$2.4 trillion.

This era of free money will inevitably come to an end. Less robust national economies, especially that of Italy, rely on the interest-free cash injections like junkies. Once free credit is gone and



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reasonable interest has to be paid once again, Italy's economy will be thrown into crisis. France, too, will face instability. That, in turn, will weigh heavily on Germany's export-oriented economy. And recessions generally lead to political turmoil – not only in Germany. The successes of populist movements in France, Italy, Hungary, Poland, and even the U.S. demonstrate as much. Germany is no island of the blissful. One voter in ten opted in favor of the far-right populist AfD. In parts of the east that figure was one in four.

Meanwhile, however, the populist, nationalist and/or putatively devout governments of some European countries and

the U.S. have big issues with Germany's democratic, liberal values. Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan keeps trying to pressure Germany because Berlin needs Ankara's cooperation to keep an EU-Turkish refugee deal operating. The governments of Hungary and Poland, meanwhile, refuse to take in the share of refugees assigned to them by the EU.

Russia refuses to hand the occupied Crimean peninsula back to Ukraine. Moscow supports pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine militarily. The Kremlin also rejects the NATO memberships of the Baltic States. Indeed, Moscow continues to try to re-establish its political and economic hegemony over all these states, belonging as they once did to the Soviet Union. Neither Berlin

with the United States under the administration of Donald Trump. He claims to represent "America first." Trump launched his presidency by declaring NATO obsolete and ridiculing the EU. These two institutions are pillars of German policy, as is free trade for the German economy. Trump's mockery of civil rights and his tolerance of fascist and racist agitation directly violates the principles of Germany's democracy. Here, Berlin had to react. Doing so publicly, however, by lecturing the U.S. president on democracy and human rights as Chancellor Merkel and her challenger Martin Schulz did, was no example of far-sighted diplomacy.

Donald Trump has three years left in his current term as president. Berlin will have to find a way to co-exist with Washington during the Trump era and, especially, thereafter. The United States is and will remain Germany's strongest and most important ally.

Threats at home and abroad stemming from

climate change and international terrorism will rise in an unstable world. To come to grips with these and other threats, Merkel will need a clear political concept, good luck and, first and foremost, the loyalty of the democratic German citizenry. ■

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The United States will remain Germany's strongest ally

nor NATO can accept Russia's conduct without losing their credibility as reliable partners and the legitimacy of the transatlantic alliance. The result is a latent conflict between Berlin and Moscow.

Even more profound is Germany's sudden but now ongoing verbal confrontation

NUCLEAR THREAT

North Korea's and Iran's Blackmail Strategy

A political settlement guaranteeing peace must be found

By Elisabeth Neu

Pyongyang's ambition of becoming an "invincible nuclear power" is spreading fear. The latest causes for concern were the dictatorship's missile launches and a hydrogen bomb test. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said Japan would not tolerate the threat from Pyongyang. The UN Security Council unanimously condemned North Korea's missile tests and tightened sanctions on Pyongyang.

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The deal with Iran does not mention Israel's right to exist

The U.S. president reacted forcefully, threatening North Korean dictator Kim Jong-un with "fire and fury." Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese leader Xi Jinping, on the other hand, squarely back a political solution. Germany supports a similar approach. Chan-

cellor Angela Merkel has cited the 2015 Iran Nuclear as a possible template.

In that treaty, Iran committed to decommissioning part of its centrifuges for enriching uranium and transferring already highly enriched uranium – which is essential for building a nuclear weapon – to Russia. Also, international observers would be permitted to inspect production sites for potential nuclear weapons zones. In return West-

ern states agreed to release frozen Iranian assets. The treaty has an effective lifespan of ten years.

From the beginning, Iran's neighbors expressed reservations over the deal, and with good reason. The clearest condemnations have come from Israel and Saudi Arabia, but other Gulf states have also expressed serious doubts. Even under so-called "moderate" presidents, Iran's clerical regime has always espoused the goal of destroying the Jewish State. Iran also treats the majority-Sunni



Afp/Ima

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as an enemy power. The nuclear deal with Iran makes no mention of neighboring states' right to exist, neither Egypt, Israel, Saudi Arabia, or the UAE.

Some breathing space

In Washington, congressional Republicans were joined by some Democrats in expressing serious doubts about the deal. In the end, the treaty was ratified. Iran ceased production of highly enriched uranium. Western states lifted sanctions against

Iran and unfroze Iranian assets. Yet Tehran keeps developing and testing medium-range missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads. The country has redoubled its sponsorship of terrorist groups such as the Shi'ite Hezbollah militia in Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza. Iran is propping up the Assad regime militarily in the Syrian civil war. And, Iran arms the Shi'ite Houthi militia in Yemen, which is fighting the Saudi-backed government there and seeks a guerilla war against Saudi Arabia. All this springs from Iran's unabashed objective

of eradicating Israel and destroying Iran's Arab rivals Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Also, Tehran keeps threatening to walk away from the nuclear treaty and relaunch its military nuclear program.

When Donald Trump called Iran a 'rogue nation', Tehran demonstratively started a new test missile. Berlin voiced protest.

The nuclear deal with Iran has given the rest of the world some breathing space. However, it is not a role model for resolving the Korea crisis. Indeed, the

North Korean nuclear threat is ample reason for the international community to remind Iran and North Korea that they must uphold the 1964 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty – and that the rest of the world refuses to be blackmailed any longer. The best instruments for this continue to be diplomacy and economic pressure. If world powers neglect to resolve this threat today, it will continue to fester tomorrow. The nuclear blackmail will go on – or even lead to war, with unforeseeable consequences. ■

ANTON HOFREITER

Laws of Nature Are Non-Negotiable

Green Party parliamentary co-leader on dishonesty in politics, the climate crisis, and Israel

You are a biologist, Angela Merkel is a physicist. What does that mean in practical terms for politics?

The special thing about biology is that it functions in extremely complicated, integrated systems, namely ecosystems, which display a high degree of complexity. What bothers me about Mrs. Merkel is that, as a physicist, she knows what the climate crisis is going to mean for us, what these scientific numbers mean and that one cannot negotiate compromises with laws of nature. By the way, in politics I do not like the expression “no alternative.” In politics one finds alternatives around every corner. We have to fight the climate crisis now and stop just talking about it. Merkel talks a lot about the climate crisis but she doesn’t do anything. In 2016, Germany’s CO₂ emissions were as high as in 2009. We have made no progress in Germany in the fight against the climate crisis.

The dieselscandal, climate change, faulty nuclear reactors – all these



are core Green issues – but at the federal level the Greens cannot get the same results that Baden-Württemberg’s premier Winfried Kretschmann and Tübingen’s mayor Boris Palmer achieve at the regional and local levels.

One reason is that there is a large measure of dishonesty in government policy today. I grew up in Bavaria when Franz

Josef Strauss was the regional premier. A difficult person, but when he said, “I support nuclear power,” he supported nuclear power. Merkel, on the other hand, says, “I support climate protection,” but she doesn’t do anything about it. We Greens have not yet succeeded in convincing German voters of the contradictions between what

she says and what she does. We have to make the difference between talking green and acting green even clearer.

Your goal is to phase out internal combustion engines by 2030.

I am firmly convinced that the German industry has to be given clear requirements to move toward zero-emissions vehicles by 2030, otherwise the companies will not invest enough and not move fast enough. In the end they won’t only be causing serious health and climate problems; they’ll have made themselves obsolete and put hundreds of thousands of jobs in Germany at risk.

Policy is communicated by people. Why is it that Green leaders at the federal level cannot achieve the same feedback for their talking points as a mayor in Tübingen does?

You cannot compare a mayor’s job with federal politics.

Or a state premier. Or, in his time, Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer.

Joschka Fischer never got more than 8 percent of the vote either.

Is the state of Israel disproportionately criticized in public in Germany?

On the one hand there is, I believe, justified criticism of the Israeli occupation and the ever-tighter rules in Israel on the activities of critical non-government organizations. On the other hand, we in Germany have an anti-Semitism problem that should not be underestimated. Criticism of Israel is often used as a gateway for anti-Semitism. It often comes in the guise of claims that one cannot legitimately criticize Israeli policy without being called an anti-Semite. These cases do exist, but of course they are not prevalent. We’ve been watching it closely. Here in Germany we have the classic brand of homegrown anti-Semitism, in addition to another form that should not be neglected, namely that held by some people calling themselves leftists and claiming solidarity with Palestine. And then we

• PAGE 4



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MENTSSEN

Hannah & Hannah



Hannah born in 2017

By Rafael Seligmann

Hannah is my first granddaughter. She was born in Rosh HaAyin near Tel Aviv. Hannah is named after my mother. That Hannah was born in 1905 in Galicia, in the east of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. Her life spanned 85 years, to 1990; in other words, almost all of the 20th century, with its tragedies and triumphs. My mother took part in both.

When Hannah was nine years old, the great war that would become the World War broke out in Europe. Months later, Russian troops shelled the house in which Hannah, her sister Esther with her family and their mother Malka were staying. When the shell hit, Esther and

her family were killed instantly. Malka extinguished my mother's burning hair, saving her life. At the war's end, Hannah went with Malka to Berlin. She worked as a seamstress and cared for her sick mother until her death in 1924. Then Hannah lived with her sister Sima and her family. Besides her job she had to do domestic work for her relatives. Following the brief hiatus of the 1920s, hard times returned with the Great Depression. Hannah lost jobs repeatedly and had to keep looking for work. The economic disarray sent unemployment soaring. That led to political radicalization. More and more Germans turned to the Nazis. The party's leader in Berlin, the future propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels, actively incited anti-Semitism among the people. Hannah watched as more and more Jews were persecuted in public, on the streets. When Hitler became Reich Chancellor in 1933 and the Nazis seized power, Hannah fled to Palestine. The British Mandate administration turned down her application to emigrate legally, so she acquired forged papers. That made it harder to find work. Delicate Hannah had to take any job she could. Once Hitler started World War II, her illegal existence in Palestine became potentially life threatening. The British were deporting Jews back to Europe. But Hannah was lucky. She fell in love with Ludwig Seligmann who had emigrated from Bavaria and married him. Finally, she could reside legally in Tel Aviv.

After the war ended in 1945, Hannah learned that nearly her entire family had been murdered by the Nazis. She was left traumatized. Yet, two years lat-

er, Hannah became a mother at age 42. She loved me with all her strength. In 1948 war came to Israel. In the space of a few years, the young state of Israel took in millions of Jewish refugees. That threw the economy into crisis. My father lost his job. He wanted to return to his German homeland. My mother refused to go back to the "land of the murderers." In the end, it was necessity that prevailed.

Peace and security.

Hannah and Ludwig immigrated again, to West Germany. In Munich, my father found professional esteem. For the first time in years, he and my mother lived something other than a hand to mouth existence. Yet the old wounds remained. Hannah never warmed to Germany. When, however, following my father's death in 1975, I suggested we return to Israel, Hannah was afraid. She feared even more difficulties. She kept clinging to me and forbade me to go to Israel.

However, my daughter Yael performed Aliya, the emigration to Israel. She served her time in the army, studied IT at Beer Sheva University, married a Zabar, an Israel-born man, and works in a startup. Hannah is Yael's second child. Since its inception, Israel has fought a permanent struggle for its existence,



Hannah 1905–1990

through wars and terror. Yet a new generation of self-assured Jews is growing up. These Zabarim know neither the constant hostility of anti-Semitism nor the diaspora Jews' pleading for recognition. Israel has achieved amazing things. It will, in the end, make peace with its neighbors. It is my wish that Hannah – unlike her great grandmother – grows up in peace and security. ■

◀ **PAGE 3** have the problem with anti-Semitism found in areas with a big share of migrants.

In Berlin schools Jewish kids are bullied mainly by other kids from Muslim families whose parents are exposed to anti-Jewish propaganda. Their children are being incited against Jews.

This is where schools, parents, all of us are called upon to reject anti-Semitic prejudice, incitement and violence. We must act resolutely against all these forms of anti-Semitism.

There is no criticism of China, no criticism of Russia, no criticism of Syria – yet we constantly hear that criticism of Israel is legitimate. Should not you, as a leading Green lawmaker, point out that criticism of Israel opens the gates to delegitimizing Israel?

That is something that one should always be aware of. Israel's right to exist is repeatedly called into question explicitly or implicitly. That's not the case in criticism of the U.S. In general, and using the example of Israel, one should be careful how one formulates. There is a big difference between saying, 'I criticize Israel'

and 'I criticize the policies of Mr. Netanyahu' or 'the current government.' When I watch how Netanyahu acted in Hungary with Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, then I have some criticism for Mr. Netanyahu. But that has to be worded precisely.

In 2008, Chancellor Merkel told the Knesset that Israel's security was a tenet of German statehood and non-negotiable. Later, negotiations came after all. The nuclear deal with Iran is purely

technical in nature. Nowhere does it mention the right of all states to exist. The treaty is effective for another eight years. Once again, no mention of Israel's right to exist. Where is the criticism by the Greens?

I do not believe that during the negotiations over Iran's nuclear program that Israeli security was disregarded. On the contrary, we seem to have succeeded in preventing Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons. When we look at the cri-

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We must act resolutely against all forms of anti-Semitism

sis with North Korea, it was a big step. I also believe that for the states of the region it strongly helped ease tensions. The treaty certainly changes nothing in the systematic violations of human rights in Iran and Iran's problematic role in the region, but in view of the great threat I believe it was a step in the right direction – including for Israel's right to exist.



Missiles were not part of the negotiations. Indeed, the deal does not solve all problems, but we are convinced it was a step in the right direction. Of course, more steps need to be taken, so that the states of the region – and ideally beyond the region – recognize Israel's right to exist.

One of our concerns is that the Jewish community in Germany and the state of Israel receive more than lip service. We want people to stand up for the human dignity of the Jewish people and actively promote the Jewish community.

That is a matter of course for us. ■

Anton Hofreiter talked to JVG editors Elisabeth Neu and Rafael Seligmann in his office at the Bundestag in Berlin





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AN ANGLO-GERMAN FAMILY

We Cannot Afford Brexit

Personal reflections on economic and political blessings at stake

By Christian Lawrence

Here's an anecdote from the height of the Empire that offers a revealing view of the British soul. A French diplomat, trying hard to be polite, told Prime Minister Lord Palmerston, "If I were not French, I should want to be an Englishman." Palmerston replied, serenely, "If I were not an Englishman, I should wish to be an Englishman." To be sure, this kind of self-assurance could be found not only in the United Kingdom especially in the 19th century, the age of the nation state. Probably in no other country has this sense remained as unshakable as in the UK, and by no means just among societal elites. One small but revealing sign of this is the box office success of the evacuation drama *Dunkirk*. The mystique of the British Isles as a sanctuary, a safe haven from the threat of persecution by alien powers holds its sway to this day. And haven't we Germans always envied the Brits for this very reason? Is not this ever-redoubtable Britishness that we have always acknowl-



John Lawrence's grandson John served in the Imperial German Navy during WWI

at home and abroad, this is a luxury we can hardly afford. I feel this looming loss personally not only because my family's origins are in Britain but also because it was marked by the British-German rivalry and two world wars.

My great-great grandfather John Lawrence was born in the London borough of Southwark, the sixth of eleven children. His father painted houses for a living and the family lived a mostly hand-to-mouth existence. A family friend, a Jewish merchant named Moses Nathanson, organized an apprenticeship with his son Isaac, an importer of British goods based in the town of Güstrow in Mecklenburg. Seventeen-year-old John moved there in 1830. In later years he set up his own business as a watchmaker in Stettin, which was then the capital of the Prussian province of Pomerania and today is called Szczecin, the capital of the Polish administrative district of West Pomerania. Surviving letters confirm that he kept contact with the family he left behind in London. Then, the paths diverged. The emigrant's grandson,

likewise named John, joined the Imperial German Navy in 1898. He spent the First World War as an officer on various big warships. His son – my father Peter (born 1920) – joined the German Kriegsmarine in 1939 and, as a U-boat commander in World War II, was intensively engaged in the struggle against the chief enemy, the Royal Navy. In Norway when Germany surrendered, he spent two years in English and Scottish POW camps before

returning to Germany and, in 1956, became one of first officers in the newly founded West German Bundesmarine. In the 1990s, the British-German family circle began to close again. I was transferred to London by a German company; my son John was born in the city and holds German and British dual citizenship. There is no more contact, however, to the surely abundant and far-flung family in the UK.

This single example among millions reveals the kinds of subtle cross-cultural influences and undercurrents that so many people in Europe carry within them. From our joint history we can readily conclude that any weakening of Europe's powers of keeping peace must be avoided. In his day, Helmut Kohl was laughed at for his remark that the unification of Europe was a choice between war and peace. Today, we would not be laughing. None of this, of course, lessens the referendum choice for or against the EU – such a referendum was already held once before, in 1975. What matters is the style and substance of the debate. It is grossly negligent to reduce Europe to an assemblage of grievances, the pre-Brexit public discussion in Britain often did. The oldest trivialities were trotted out – about EU regulations on how bent cucumbers could legally be, or the idea of classifying Scotch whisky as a "flammable liquid" and therefore dangerous chemical, requiring drastic safety precautions, to name but a couple of examples.

Dismissive media

This is where the role of the media – which is and remains a chief influence on the forming of public opinion – comes in. By a lopsided majority, the British media supported the agenda of the pro-Brexit camp. For decades, the terms "Brussels" and "Europe" were deployed as defamatory shorthand for bureaucracy and the nanny super-state that would like nothing better than extinguish the British people's cultural identity. In the echo chambers of social media, these negative impulses were massively amplified; a dynamic also recognizable among populist movements elsewhere. Notwithstanding the axiomatic avowal of freedom of speech and the press, previously in Great Britain there was also always a tacit consensus regarding the role of the media. It was always accepted that the media are there to give people orientation, show the opportunities and risks bound up with change and, when the time came, to enter into a skeptical exchange with

those offering solutions. Many media outlets in the UK no longer provide this orientation. "Europe" was denigrated and dismissed. The result was a public unease that was left unaddressed by any constructive summation of what the people want. Brexit has come because in the UK – as well as in parts of continental Europe – there was no vision for Europe that people could make their own. People do, however, want to do their part in working toward a better world, simply put. After the referendum, when the European idea seemed headed for the abyss, that message was heard once again, first in France. The result: Emmanuel Macron.

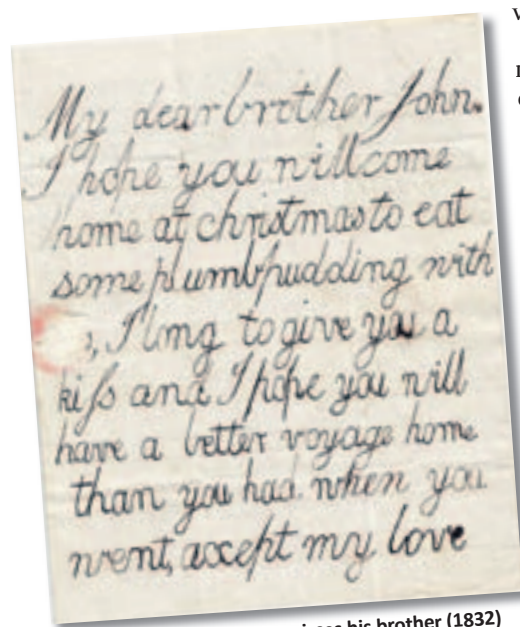
Today, the UK seems left behind and saddled with years of ultimately unproductive damage limitation. The Brexiters have long stopped citing the supposed economic and political blessings they once touted so highly. Today, the

job is simply to deliver "the people's decision" for Brexit. Yet the interests of Europe – very much including the UK – lie in finding responses to the four truly great challenges of our age, namely globalization, climate change, terrorism and migration. With the triggering of Article 50 of the EU Treaties last spring, all visible efforts on the part of the British government regarding these challenges have ceased. The country's

entire political capacity is currently occupied by merely gaining an overview of the countless follow-on problems that Brexit will bring, without managing to convey even a halfway cogent blueprint for the future. Brussels is impatiently waiting for the British negotiating positions that do not yet exist – because the British themselves cannot reconcile the mutually exclusive demands of restricting the movement of labor and keeping maximal access to the European market.

A growing chorus of voices is demanding a second referendum in 2019 once the framework conditions for Brexit have taken shape. What shape that will be is something no one knows today. Every effort should be made, however, to keep British political values, British economic principles and British pragmatism in Europe. Europe's past, future and, very immediately, present predicament all call on us to do so.

In history as in life, nothing is over until it's over. Perhaps there can still be an exit from a Brexit that would harm all of us. We and our governments should try to find that exit. ■



Young Campbell Lawrence misses his brother (1832)

edged as the most elegant example of the national self-esteem so essential to every society? While in Great Britain a blend of confidence, irony, and common sense has found pragmatic solutions for mending the fabric of society, the in-group/out-group tension that sociologists have identified in Germany can apparently be resolved only through the periodically recurring, awkward debate over what "German culture" really is and should be. This takes place mostly without any new insights, and results instead in a measurable rise in popular alienation from establishment politics.

Cross-cultural influences

The close-run Brexit referendum result of June 26, 2016 – even if it does not result in a "hard Brexit" – deprives Europe of this specifically British brand of political culture. In a Europe currently facing an array of uncertainties



John Lawrence had left England



Peter Lawrence, the author's father



John Lawrence was born in London

Christian Lawrence is a partner at the strategic communications consulting firm Brunswick Group. The article expresses the author's own personal opinions



Revival: The Old Elbe river near Klieken has been renaturated

For Each Drop We Use We Give One Back

By Leane Zaborowski

The reporter is amazed as he stands in front of her hut. The young woman is illiterate. Anju Devi is considered to be a world-renowned activist, a campaigner for the right to water and an opponent to the Coca-Cola global corporation. And yet Anju Devi is curiously unaware of this. Research by the daily paper *Die Welt* reveals this.

Mehdiganj, a village in the north-east of India. Coca-Cola operates a bottling plant here, which was repeatedly the target of protests. The drinks manufacturer, it was alleged, took the groundwater from the farmers. Their crops withered, their cattle died of thirst.

Water neutral manufacturing

Anju Devi sits on the village council. One day, she tells the reporter, a man came to the village and asked her for a signature. She didn't know what she

was signing. But that document spread around the world. An organization put it on the internet. Stubborn Indian farmers against a global company. Sounds good. Unfortunately, the story is too good to be true. And it just shows the means by which not only the battle for water is conducted, but also the battle over opinions. The reporter enquires further. Development workers confirm this to him: Just a few meters away from the factory walls, the grass is lush, and the ground is damp. Wholesale water theft? "A myth". Even the activists admit: People are always looking for someone power-

ful to blame. It is the only way to gain the necessary attention. It had already previously been proven that the allegations against Coca-Cola were unfounded. Nevertheless, the company not only took the protests seriously, but also set itself an ambitious goal: By 2020, Coca-Cola's manufacturing must be water neutral. That means returning to the environment at least as much water as it has used. Muhtar Kent, Coca-Cola's Chairman of the Board, talks of a "wake-up

“Ensure access to clean water and sanitation facilities in particularly poor regions of the world



Providing precious commodity to those most in need

call." "In the future, anyone who does not deal with water responsibly will no longer be in business," he says.

In 2015, Coca-Cola was the first Fortune 500 company to fully offset its water consumption. Five years earlier than planned. "Water is the most precious resource on earth. It is our responsibility to safeguard it for future generations," says Ulrike Sapiro, the company's Sustainability Director for Western Europe. "For each drop that we use, we give one back."

The consumption per liter of beverage alone has declined by a quarter since 2004. Bottling plants in more than 200 countries have analyzed the regional water resources and more than \$300 million have been invested in community water projects in over 70 countries. Even in Germany. For example, the renaturing of the Old Elbe river near Klieken in the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve of Central Ger-

many. The Coca-Cola Foundation invested 850,000 euros in order to revive the silted-up branch of the river. This hasn't just pleased around 240 species of breeding birds. In the long term, everyone benefits from a healthy ecosystem. The groundwater of the region is thus naturally filtered and stabilized. Last but not least, a local recreation area was also created.

Programs in Africa and India

By 2020, Coca-Cola has pledged a further \$35 million to support programs across the entire African continent to secure access to water. Since 2007, in collaboration with UN-HABITAT, Coca-Cola has enabled access to clean water and sanitation facilities in particularly poor regions of the world. Any by the way, this program was established by Coca-Cola right here, where the reporter met the activist Anju Devi: in India.

RESTITUTION

World Politics and Compensation for Nazi Victims

To this day the Claims Conference fights for justice for Holocaust survivors



Survivors of Bergen-Belsen

Yad Vashem Photo Archive, Jerusalem, 1945/9

By Rüdiger Mahlo

Today, compensation for Nazi injustice is considered an outstanding achievement both within Germany and abroad, and for decades has been an integral part of the country's coming to terms with its Nazi past. It therefore comes as a surprise that Holocaust survivors received their compensation at very different points in time. Survivors with similar histories of persecution were compensated as early as the mid-1950s, yet others had to wait decades longer. The gradual expansion of compensation for victims of Nazi persecution was closely linked to German foreign policy and always inextricably bound to macro-political trends. In other words, the Cold War

he publicly declared that the unspeakable crimes committed in the name of the German people compelled both moral and material compensation.

In Israel, the opening of compensation negotiations with the Federal Republic was the subject of an emotionally charged discussion. Tumultuous scenes played out during a two-day Knesset debate on the issue. There were mass demonstrations and street riots in front of the Knesset that could even be heard in the plenary chamber. Nevertheless, Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion finally secured approval for negotiations with his parliamentary majority.

The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (JCC), founded in 1951 as a governing body of 23 inter-

ernment to regulate individual compensation. To push this project, controversial in Germany as it was, through parliament in 1956 under the name of the German Restitution Laws (BEG), Adenauer had to resort to the votes of the opposition, mainly the social democrats. Initially intended solely for Jews born in Germany, the BEG was expanded through the intervention of the Claims Conference to include the entire area where German was spoken and German culture prevailed, as well as stateless displaced persons. For Jewish victims of the Nazis who did not have German citizenship before the Shoah, that meant having to prove they belonged to the area of German language and culture. If that was not possible, they had to pass a German language test in a foreign mission of the Federal Republic.

Despite this considerable expansion at first, a great many survivors from Western and Eastern Europe were excluded from those entitled to compensation. Following the expiration of the deadline for applications on 31 December 1969, no more claims could be filed. For the group called the "western victims," the Federal Republic attempted to provide compensation through global agreements with individual Western European states. Most of these people, however, received small, one-off payments or nothing at all. Part of the funds were transferred to these states' general social welfare systems and thus did not serve their purpose of indemnifying Nazi victims. Against the backdrop of the Cold War, however, West Germany refused to pay compensation to Eastern Bloc states. For this reason, a considerable number of Jewish victims of the Nazis died without any material acknowledgement of their suffering.

The situation compelled the Claims Conference to reopen negotiations. In 1980, following difficult talks, agreement was reached on guidelines for the West German government to make one-time payments to Jewish victims of the Nazis from Eastern Europe who had emigrated to the Western Hemisphere. Survivors in Eastern Europe as well as most western victims were still excluded.

Once the Wall had fallen and German reunification was becoming a foreseeable reality, the Claims Conference brought the matter of compensation and restitution by East Germany to the table. It demanded monthly pension payments including for those Jews who suffered most under persecution but who, as a result of failing to satisfy residence requirements, had previously been excluded. The Federal Republic finally conceded to the establishment of a new fund from which Jewish applicants who fulfilled so-called minimal persecution periods in concentration camps, ghettos, in hiding, or illegal ex-

adjusted to those in the West. In 2013, the German government approved one-time payments to those Jewish victims in Eastern Europe who had fled Nazi persecution. Almost 70 years after the Holocaust, nearly 100,000 Jewish victims of the Nazis received a one-off payment of 2,556 euros for their suffering.

A dignified old age

To this day, the Claims Conference continues to advocate liberalization of the strict inclusion criteria to its fund. For example, minimal incarceration times in concentration camps have been reduced from 18 months to three. This extended the number of people entitled to compensation.

Today, nearly all major gaps in the compensation system have been closed. Meanwhile, however, the in-home care urgently needed by the aged and often sick and infirm Holocaust survivors, is increasingly coming to the fore. Today, many of the Jewish victims of the Nazis live below the poverty line. The Nazi

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By now nearly all major gaps in the compensation system have been closed

influenced compensation policy just as much as the rapprochement between East and West, the fall of the Iron Curtain or German reunification. Compensation for Nazi injustice was apparently a pawn of top level politics.

Bureaucratic obstacles

The acceptance of Germany into the international community following the genocide, was only conceivable once the Federal Republic had accepted responsibility for the crimes against European Jews. It was Chancellor Konrad Adenauer who opened the path for reparations when in a 1951 speech to the Bundestag,

national Jewish organizations representing Jewish Holocaust survivors in their claims for compensation against the Federal Republic, was strongly committed to negotiations with Germany. If negotiations were focused on atonement on the German side, the emphasis was placed on the legal and material character on the Jewish side; they were neither willing nor able to speak about moral and ethical principles so soon after the Shoah.

The roadmap for negotiations between the Federal Republic and Israel as well as the Claims Conference was thereby laid out. One preliminary result was the commitment of the German gov-



Marco Limberg

Aged victims of the NS-regime like Auschwitz survivor Eva Szepesi have different needs today than in the first decades following liberation

istence, could receive a monthly pension. Victims living in Eastern Europe continued to be excluded.

Only in 1998 did negotiations by the Claims Conference secure pension payments for Eastern European Jews. Yet the pension level was only 50 percent of the amount paid in the West. Victims from Eastern Europe who had escaped by fleeing, for example, from being murdered by special SS death squads, were not included in this enlargement.

In 2012, following pressure by the Claims Conference, compensation levels in the East were

persecution that destroyed their families also deprived these people of possibilities for professional training that could have guaranteed sufficient income later in life. In collaboration with the German government, the Claims Conference is working to ensure that these people are not abandoned – as was the case over 70 years ago – and can at least live out their lives in dignity. This joint mission has not yet been accomplished. ■

Rüdiger Mahlo is the representative of the Claims Conference in Germany

VALUES, CHALLENGES, PERSPECTIVES

Transatlantic Relations



Brooklyn Bridge was designed by German émigré Johann August Röbling

Dear Readers,

It is an honor to present today's edition of the *Jewish Voice from Germany*. When this paper first saw the light of day five years ago, the publisher and executive editor Dr. Rafael Seligmann had one precise intention: building bridges between Germany and Jews across the world. The *Jewish Voice from Germany* has been raising its voice ever since, thus creating links between communities and consciousness of a new reality where Jewish life in Germany blossoms again: Over the last decade, Berlin has become one of the most desirable destinations among



Israelis who choose to live abroad. In 2012, the Israeli Embassy in Berlin estimated the number of Israeli residents in the German capital between 10,000 and 15,000. When we look at Jewish communities in Germany on the whole, their number has steadily continued to grow. Today, there are about 100 communities whose more than 100,000 members have made Germany their home. Jewish culture has therefore increasingly contributed not only to Berlin's but to the entire country's international, multi-faceted face. This edition of the *Jewish Voice from Germany* revolves around relations between

Germany and American Jews. Jewish organizations and the Jewish community in the United States are key partners in our relations and play a vital role in discussions about our partnership, open societies, free trade, and free science, as well as the fight against racism, populism, and xenophobia. Distinguished leaders of the Jewish community visit Germany regularly to get a first-hand impression of modern Jewish life in our country. Over the past years, groups including Rabbis from the Boston area, from San Francisco and from Los Angeles came to Germany to meet with our growing Jewish communities and to experience today's Jewish life in Germany as well as our deeply-rooted culture of Holocaust remembrance.

I am very grateful to see that more and more bridges are being built day after day and I congratulate the *Jewish Voice from Germany* for its fabulous work. I hope that it will continue to raise its voice in the spirit of a peaceful and common future on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean.

Sigmar Gabriel

Sigmar Gabriel, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany

German Jews in America

The United States has provided opportunities to live and prosper

By William H. Weitzer

The Leo Baeck Institute-New York|Berlin maintains an archive that documents the lives of Jews in Germany and throughout the German-Jewish diaspora, including Jews from German-speaking lands who played significant roles in major chapters of Jewish history and American history. As America's first large-scale surge of Jewish immigrants, after a small initial community of Sephardic Jews, German-speaking Jews built many of its signature Jewish institutions and gave shape to their new country. In adapting and contributing to their new home, they utilized traditions, education, and cultural ideals brought from their homelands. Their backgrounds and experiences laid the foundation for what it meant to become an American Jew. An overview of the impact of German Jews on America might be divided into three periods: the late 18th century and most of the

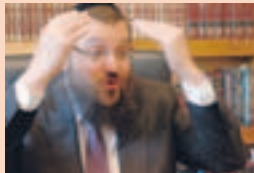
19th century when German Jews were the largest percentage of American Jewry; the late 19th and early 20th centuries when German Jews continued their influential role but were outnumbered by immigrants from Eastern Europe; and, the German Jews who escaped Nazi Germany. In the 19th century, German-speaking newcomers were one of the country's largest immigrant groups. Roughly 5.5 million arrived from Central Europe, some 140,000 of them Jewish. As the only major country to recognize the German revolutionary parliament during its short existence (1848-49), America became a destination for immigrants and political refugees. For Jews, the allure of America was particularly compelling: they could literally emancipate themselves by stepping onto America's shores. Jews arriving in America from Germany brought with them a host of cultural influences and



desires. Some came from a broad education shaped by Enlightenment ideals that prized *Bildung*, which valued self-education, critical reflection, and openness to new ideas. While these underlying values were German in origin, America was a perfect canvas for their expression. Immigrants embraced the economic opportunities of America, usually with modest beginnings. They worked in trades they knew well: peddling goods, tailoring clothes, making cigars, selling cattle, horses, grain, and wine. The American economy

offered lucrative opportunities for the skills and instincts that had sustained them in their homelands – entrepreneurship, making connections, and navigating from the margins of society. Many Jewish businesses took root and flourished, and Jews occupied an important place in the burgeoning economy. When the American Civil War broke out in 1861, many immigrants were eager to join the war effort. The war provided opportunity for civic engagement and for making their commitment visible to America. German Jews participated not only on the battlefields as soldiers and officers, but also in the public debates and business endeavors that shaped the war's outcome and the era of reconstruction to follow. The Civil War brought German Jews into a passionate, national conflict and allowed them to play a role in the shaping of America's future.

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US-GERMAN RELATIONS

Don't Get Carried Away by Irrationalism

Checks and balances are still working

By Daniel Killy

We are still alive. We survived. It truly is a miracle. We were preparing for the worst, those who are religious and even those who are not called for their rabbi, priest or pastor respectively – the others called for mercy in that last hour of civilization approaching. What is the issue here, Irma or any other major natural disaster? No. We are talking about an election and its outcome – the victory of Donald Trump. However, has destiny struck or are we just hysterical over here in Germany? Let us have a closer look on what really changed during the last nine months ...

As a German-American who already personally is torn between Europe and the U.S., the worst nightmare has come true for the author. Having spent all his life in building bridges across the pond, defending the United States among his friends in Europe has even become harder. Everyone among those slick liberal German friends had fallen in love with the all so refined and intellectual Barack Obama – finally some wit in the White House again. While his second term was ending and the campaign turned rougher, people here got more and more hysterical. Nobody liked Hillary, and nobody ever imagined that a ridiculous figure like Donald Trump could possibly make it to the White House. Well, he did – and no, it was not fake news or a manipulated election after all. Trump won the majority of the electoral votes. Blame it on the ballot system that Hillary Clinton got more voters, but do not blame it on Trump. By the way, all of the author's



Like American democracy, the Liberty Bell has weathered threats, and it has endured

hero of postmodern political romanticism, it was his policy and the Democrats' failure to nominate a valid candidate that made Trump possible. In a democratic system, voters punish failure. In addition, the lack of consistency of the Obama administration – aside from all the international obstacles he had to face – was the luck of

able to leverage these structures; the court verdicts and other legal decisions against Trump's government are already legion. Democracy is working seamlessly, although the White House permanently seems to be throwing wrench in the works. But apart from all the Flynns, Bannons, Spicers, Sessions' and Scaramuccis there is something you might call a government; considering the fact that most of the experts' jobs still are vacant, the administration is working.

A welcome demon

Moreover, some of the decisions Trump has been announcing during his first months are not even that farfetched. Deploying more troops to Afghanistan and Africa might be a wiser decision than having withdrawn them. Using some explicit language towards North Korea sounds more feasible than declaring red lines every second month and not acting when somebody is crossing them and it was high time to come clear with the United Nations. Furthermore, at least the Democrats seem to have finally comprehended the Trump principle – first articulating a maximum demand, be it concerning Obama Care or a legal foundation for the "Dreamers," and then starting to negotiate a realistic outcome. After all, once you have adjusted to this way of thinking, it is a pretty predictable way of doing politics. As mentioned before, the Democrats finally seem to have gotten the message as they are currently sitting down with Trump negotiating a legal successor for the Obama-era executive order called Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). Trump had previously criticized DACA as executive overreach, but the President has also expressed his empathy for the young immigrants it protects. In addition, a deal might not even be too far away. "We thought we had an opportunity to get something good done, and let's see what happens. We're very hopeful that they will keep their word. I'd like to see

it within the next little while. Look, I don't want to set a date. Soon. Soon is the right word," the *New York Times* quotes Charles Schumer, the Senate Minority Leader.

Other maximum demands like building the "beautiful wall" between Mexico and the USA and exiting the Paris Agreement seem to have evaporated into thin air for now. The harshest political enemy Trump is facing is called reality, the second fiercest answers to the name of democratic structures. It is about high time for Germany and Europe to understand that Donald Trump might be one of the worst and poorest educated presidents in modern American history but that he is by no means a monster or supernatural destiny bringing the seven plagues into the world. For many a complacent German, Trump is a highly welcomed demon to reinvigorate their anti-Americanism barely buried by Barack Obama. You can only counter irrationalism with rational behavior. So let's give it a fresh start, Germany – the earth is still turning ...

Daniel Killy is a renowned Jewish-German journalist

American democracy rests on firmer foundations than that of Germany

American friends and acquaintances denied knowing anyone having voted for Trump – except one geologist from Houston, a Democratic base voter who openly expressed his disappointment with the Democratic establishment.

The whole of Germany seemed to suffer from a collective hangover the morning after – TV-anchors and other colleagues projected the worst scenarios. In addition, all of them seemed to be right when the great Trump show kicked off. Weird right-wing creatures in the White House's situation room, family business in the Oval Office, erratic tweets from the Commander in Chief – it felt like the end of the world as we know it. The reign of intellect made way for the terror of oversimplification.

Ignoring democratic results

Of course, Obama was more charming; of course, he made it more comfortable for Europe and the Germans to close ranks as one big family of man. However, outside of the intellectual comfort zone of world peace and understanding, Obama's foreign policy record was one of the worst in modern history. His political legacy is still hazy and although he might be the unsung

Trump. In the multidimensional charade called politics, the one-dimensional bluntness of the candidate was refreshing for a good amount of voters disappointed with Washington's divorce from reality. Therefore, Donald Trump was not just a product of the Rust Belt's redneck revolution – he was the logical consequence of a presidential system running on its own.

That being said, Germany remained in total shock. Losing all of their diplomatic distance, politicians of various colors expressed their disgust and disappointment over the election's outcome – totally ignoring the democratic result of a free and fair election. No one gave Trump the benefit of the doubt, and doubtlessly, the president behaved like a bull in a china shop. Chaos in the White House, the Free West without a leader, Merkel as the new leader of the free world, there were zillions of premature headlines in German and European papers. If Trump's first year in office were a movie, a proper title would be "The Rage of the Clichés." Nearly all of public Germany was paralyzed by the bluntness and the lack of manners Trump consistently showed. However, no one ever considered the fact that American democracy is resting on a firmer foundation than Germany. No one is

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JEWISH LIFE

A New York Rabbi in Berlin

The secret of continuity is education and learning

By Rabbi Yehuda Teichtal

Just recently, my wife Leah and I walked our daughter to the chupah. Here in Berlin. Right in the heart of the city, at the Tiergarten. Just yards away from sites where the Holocaust was planned, centers of darkness and evil. Yet we had made a conscious decision to celebrate our daughter's wedding in Berlin. Because we are here to stay. Because we believe in Berlin, we believe in the future and we believe in the people and there is no better way than being here. And there is hardly a more powerful message that Jewish life is here to stay than a wedding.

But let's look back. In the summer of 1996, Leah and I were packing our bags to move to Berlin. We were very excited to come here as Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson (1902–1994), the Lubavitcher Rebbe, had lived in Berlin before the Second World War. Moreover, the Teichtal family has roots in Germany dating back some 500 years. Many members of my family were killed in the Holocaust. I was born in the U.S., and Germany was far to us, it was not something we related to neither individually nor as the Jewish community. But the Rebbe said that we should not ignore Germany. We should go there and build up with the people there. When I told my grandfather, a Holocaust survivor, that we were off to Berlin, he hesitated for a split second. Then he blessed me and said: "You have to go, Yehuda. It is God's will. And our answer to the greatest atrocity in the history of mankind. Go." So Leah and I got a one-way-ticket. We arrived in Berlin in August 1996. And we have never looked back. Berlin is our home.

Bring out the good

"Build ye houses and dwell in them." Building is an expression of trust. Be it building houses, a family, a community. We started building in Berlin, in Germany. Today, I am deeply touched when I walk into our school. Some 200 children are studying here or being cared for in the kindergarten. You see them playing, learning, Jewish children discussing Jewish thought. Our tradition lives.



“We must step out, reach out to others, fulfill our responsibility in this society because we are here to stay

Right here in Berlin. I am deeply touched during the services at the synagogue we built, at each bar and bat mitzvah ceremony. I am deeply touched when I see our young students engrossed in debate at our student's center. I am deeply touched when I see Leah baking challot with 150 women. Recently, we distributed food packages to over 1,000 families from socially weak backgrounds to help them through the High Holidays – that's what Yiddishkeit is all about.

I am deeply touched when each December we light the big Hannukiah at the Brandenburg Gate. And I am deeply touched when I open the Siddur we have just published, complete with new German translation and transliteration which guides us through 362 days of the year – the prayer book for the High Holidays, Rosh Ha-Shanah and Yom Kippur, will make a separate volume.

Memorials not sufficient

We are full of positive energy which brings people together, working for a common goal: a free and tolerant society. We are aware that there are problems. We are shocked by the rise of the right-wing AfD party in Germany.

But: we are not disheartened by this. Rather, it shows us how important it is that we are here, integrated in society and proud of our heritage. Some say we should do less, we should not say that we are Jews, we should not have our Jewish Parade on the holiday of Lag Ba-Omer, we should not make ourselves heard because then we would be accepted more. No. On the contrary. We will be respected more if we stand up and say: this is our culture and we are here to stay. We will be respected even by those who may not like the idea of having a multicultural society. We stretch out our hands because we can all be different but equal. This is what makes for a healthy society: not everybody is the same but we all are part of something much larger. We are reaching out to all, whether they are Jews, Muslims, atheists. It is up to us to create a strong Jewish life and a strong society where Jews have a good Jewish life, Christians a good Christian life, Muslims a good Muslim life – and at the same time be open and respect one another.

Memorials are important. We must always remember the past. But memorials are not sufficient. We cannot live, we cannot educate a new generation only through memorials, looking at the past. Instead we must live our tradition, fill it with life. The Jewish people have survived nearly three millennia – not because of our language, not because of our land, but because of our tradition. And because of education and learning.

A friend complained recently that his children want little to do with Judaism. I asked him what he had taught them.

"It's schver zu seyn a Jid", he said. "No," I answered: "It is good to be a Jew. The secret of Judaism is education. Teach your children that it's good to be a Jew! Teach them that being Jewish is joyful and positive." People, especially young people, are looking for an identity. We must give them a strong, clear Jewish identity.

Our goal is to inspire people so that they may inspire other people. Everybody has the ability to do good and we have to help the person bring out the good in them.

Just before Rosh Ha-Shanah, many people have come to me to express their worries and concerns. What will the new year hold in store? Time and again, I heard, we have put trust in this society we have built our lives here, our jobs, our families. They are worried about the impact the refugees will have on German society. Let's be clear about this: It is a good thing that Germany took in the refugees. But many refugees come from countries where they were breastfed with hatred of the Jewish people. They do not feel the historic responsibility towards the Jewish people that is part of German life. It is not their fault. But we have a collective responsibility as a society and make sure – here in Germany even more than elsewhere – that there is tolerance for all people. We have to demand from the political leadership that they make it very clear to any refugee who comes to Germany that part of the package of responsibility is to respect religious freedom, respect others, respect the Jewish past and the Jewish present in this country. We must make this clear from the beginning – one does not have a second chance to make a first impression. But let's also be clear about this: We Jews must be vigilant, awake: but that does not mean we have to hide ourselves. On the contrary, we must step out, reach out to others, fulfill our responsibility in this society. Because we are here to stay.

Soon we will be laying the foundation stone for the Jewish Campus here in Berlin. It will rest on three pillars: education, culture and recreation. The

“Our goal is to inspire people so that they may inspire other people

building will house a nursery, a kindergarten, a state recognized elementary and high school for more than 400 children. The cultural center will comprise a movie hall and a dance room. And we will have a state-of-the-art sports arena. The building in the heart of Berlin will be transparent, open, inviting everybody to join us. Two thirds of the funds have been raised so far. We are building again in Berlin, in Germany. Because we are here to stay.



Letter From Philadelphia

By Itai Abelski

The German Jewish view of relations with the United States might differ from mainstream perspective. Born and raised in Germany, I remember throughout my upbringing a particularly positive perspective on the U.S. This is due to the fact that I come from a family of Holocaust survivors liberated by the U.S. Army, with a father born in a DP Camp that was both established and operated by U.S. Allied Armed Forces. As a child, I had this idea of a country of “endless opportunity.” This particularly positive perception is reflected in the gift my brother and I each received for our Bar Mitzvah: a trip across America. Here was my chance to verify my assumptions... But I was 13 years old at the time and probably didn’t quite grasp the characteristics of U.S. society and culture.

A few years later, I moved from Germany to Israel. Here, I gained a whole perspective on the U.S., in part through new friendships with American Jews who had recently immigrated to Israel. I started to learn more about the history of U.S.-Israeli relations and the strong alliance

between the two countries. I also learned about the lively Jewish communities there and slowly started to get the feeling this was a place where being Jewish would be anything but extraordinary. This was something I had been yearning for during my upbringing in Germany, where being Jewish meant carrying a heavy load.

During my studies in Israel, I finally got the chance to really discover the U.S. for the first time. I moved to California, to be an exchange student in UC Berkeley’s economics department. Post-college, I settled in Zurich, Switzerland, and after a couple of years as an associate in banking, I decided to move to the U.S. to pursue an MBA. Currently, I am in my second year at Wharton School, studying for a double degree in International Studies through the Lauder Institute. The recent heated U.S. presidential election campaign made me want to learn more about the internal workings of the U.S. While the American dream is aspired to by so many, it seems to be unattainable for the majority of Americans.



Itai Abelski (Photo)

Furthermore, the equality gap has continuously been increasing over the last decades, a development that is detrimental to the health of any society. I am also concerned about the ongoing racial tensions. The recent nationalistic rallies are just a small indication of developments in which African Americans, Muslims, and Jews share the same side of the coin. While the U.S. is unique in its ability to unify all its citizens under one flag and instill national pride among all, regardless of differences, the image of “the American” is actually built of individuals between whom traces of discrimination still persist. As a first step, societal tensions need to be addressed more openly, since only a society of open and healthy debate will gain the strength it requires to unite around common values.

Therefore, a strong stance must be taken against all forces threatening the values of an inclusive, open, and caring society and hopefully the administration will remember the weakest of its citizens, who deserve its attention the most. ■

German Jews in America

PAGE 1 The years following the Civil War provided great visibility for German Jews in America. Many working in textiles went on to become major manufacturers, buyers, and bankers. Others opened grand shopping emporiums that reflected not only their success as immigrants but their status as Americans.

One of the trademark characteristics of German-Jewish culture in America was its association with “modern” Judaism. Many fundamental ideas for new Jewish practice were born in the German states in the early 19th century. But it was in America that the Reform and Conservative movements found exceptional opportunity.

Philanthropic muscle

When newer immigrants crowded the Lower East Side of New York City, the more established and successful of the German Jews moved to the Upper East Side where their desired social status was largely reinforced by their surroundings. Socially and symbolically, German Jews had become an established set.

By the 1890s the American Jewish community overtook that of Germany, becoming the largest center of Jewish life outside of Eastern Europe. The overall heightened status of German Jews brought with it philanthropic muscle, and many became leaders of aid societies and benevolent organizations. Philanthropic entities were created to assist Jews in need, including the American Jewish Commit-



Tobacco store, 1880

tee founded by Oscar Straus, Jacob Schiff, and Cyrus Sulzberger to raise funds for victims of anti-Jewish pogroms in Tsarist Russia.

In August of 1914, Henry Morgenthau, a German-Jewish immigrant to America, was serving as U.S. ambassador to the Ottoman Empire. With the outbreak of World War I, Jews in Ottoman-ruled Palestine were cut off from their traditional sources of support in the European Jewish community. In response, Morgenthau immediately sent a telegram to his friend Jacob Schiff that prompted an outpouring of aid to Jews in Palestine. Subsequent pleas for help from war-torn Europe led to the founding in New York of the

Joint Distribution Committee of American Funds for the Relief of Jewish War Sufferers.

After World War I, German cultural ideals and influences endured. Reform and Conservative Judaism remained forces in American religion and Jewish life. Many families of immigrant industrialists, bankers, philanthropists, and intellectuals remained influential throughout the 20th century. The ideals of *Bildung* – openness, self-education, and reflection – helped create a shared language for the Jewish community for decades to come.

Like the German Jews who arrived before them, the émigrés and refugees who escaped Nazi Germany during the Holocaust brought their education, skills, and knowledge with them to America. They contributed to American society, often shaping 20th century culture by combining European approaches with distinctly American modes.

Most German intellectuals who escaped from the Third Reich moved to major urban centers such as New York City and Los Angeles. Certain institutions, such as the New School for Social Research in New York City, Princeton’s Institute for Advanced Study, or Black Mountain College in rural North Carolina, became hubs for



Jacob Schiff (1847–1920)

émigré intellectuals. Others found academic positions in universities across America, with many teaching in historically black colleges. Refugees established new organizations to help each other, and built organizations and businesses to serve as cultural, social, and spiritual homes for their fellow émigrés. The *Aufbau* newspaper served as a worldwide communication link.

In the United States, émigré scholars and artists were once again outsiders. They had German accents and upbringings. They were new immigrants in a new land. They were often uncomfortable in their new settings, and they sometimes encountered prejudice or bias in America as well. Nevertheless, they managed to become active participants in American cultural and intellectual life. Their insider/outsider status helped to fuel their creativity and achievements, often blending European approaches and new American priorities.

As a country of immigrants, the United States has provided opportunities for German Jews to live and prosper from the 18th century to today. Their German backgrounds combined with America’s culture allowed them to seek new opportunities for innovation and encouraged further exploration and originality. As much as America had an impact on German Jews, clearly German Jews have contributed much to America. ■

William H. Weitzer is Executive Director of the Leo Baeck Institute-New York | Berlin

LETTER FROM GERMANY

World Famous in Berlin

Mike Cullen was born in New York in 1939 and has lived in Berlin since 1964 (minus two years military service). He is best known for having suggested, in 1971, to Christo and Jeanne-Claude that they wrap the Reichstag; thanks to his efforts the project was realized in 1995.



Michael Cullen (Photo)

Although I have been honored by Berlin and the President of Germany for the Reichstag project, there are other things I am proud of. In 1983, I published a history of the Reichstag building, the first attempt about a building Germans held almost sacred. When some asked me why an American wrote about it, I replied that they should ask Germans why they hadn’t.

A few days after the fall of the Berlin Wall, an East Berlin landmarks conservator asked for my help in restoring the Brandenburg Gate – BG – and quadriga, built between 1786 and 1793, an even greater symbol of German history. The BG is in Mitte district, entirely in East Berlin until the wall fell, under the control of East Germany and closed to all traffic. It was an offer I couldn’t turn down. My fondest memory of working on the BG was suggesting a way to have the quadriga restored in West Berlin in March, 1990. The situation: East Germany still existed; much of the Wall still stood, with the BG behind it. Almost since it was put up in 1793, people thought it was of bronze – it was, however, wrought copper, and as such couldn’t be ‘exported’ to the West. Moreover, the giant figures – four horses, a ‘goddess’ – were too large to fit through Checkpoint Charlie. I suggested that the crane operator lift the figures and let them down on the west side of the wall – no ‘export’ and no problems with Checkpoint Charlie. And that’s the way we did it.

Until 1978, I operated an art gallery in Berlin (West). As a Jew, I had naively chosen to work in a profession which was known before Hitler to have been a Jewish domain: Jewish art dealers, artists thought, were always successful in trading in art. Artists came to me asking me to show them or at least represent them. I couldn’t possibly show or represent them all, and before long I developed a metric for my choices and, out of necessity, a very thick skin. I learned to say ‘no.’ It saved me from trivial choices, and the gallery gained a reputation. It had nothing to do with fame. One of West-Berlin’s most beloved entertainers, Harald Juhnke, was unknown in Hannover, Stuttgart, Hamburg, Munich – in fact, all over Germany. He knew his worth: “I’m world famous – in West-Berlin!” That fits me too – ‘to a T.’

Berlin is anything but parochial. It’s not who you are or what you believe, it’s about what you can do. If I’ve been successful, I attribute it to a combination of Jewish pragmatism and Berlin’s openness. ■

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ACADEMIA

The Best of Both Worlds

How science and education build bridges across cultures



Places of excellence: Germany's top alma mater Ludwig Maximilians University in Munich ...

By Tong-Jin Smith

Since the times of Immanuel Kant and Wilhelm von Humboldt, Germany has upheld a strong tradition in science and education. Its schools and universities have brought forth some of the most influential thinkers and scientists of their times – among them Alexander von Humboldt, Max Planck, Carl Friedrich Gauß, and of course Albert Einstein. Particularly, starting in the second half of the 19th century, German born Jewish intellectuals and scientists gained prominence in various fields, from chemistry to medicine, from philosophy to pedagogics – men and women alike.

Paul Ehrlich (1854–1915) pioneered cancer research and was honored with the Nobel Prize for Medicine in 1908. Max Born (1882–1970), a physicist and mathematician who was professor at the University of Göttingen, is most noted for his advancement of quantum mechanics. He, too, was honored with a Nobel Prize. His contemporary and fellow mathematician in Göttingen Emmy Noether (1882–1935) is considered one of the most influential scientists of the 20th century although she was never permitted to submit a habilitation treatise – women were generally excluded from professorships at most German universities until after World War I. Theodor Adorno (1903–1969), a leading member of the Frankfurt School of critical theory, along with Ernst Bloch (1885–1977), Walter Benjamin (1892–1940), Max Horkheimer (1895–1973), and Herbert Marcuse (1898–1979) is considered one of the foremost thinkers and philosophers of the 20th century. The list goes on and on.

Many of these pioneers and professors contributed not only to the advancement of science and knowledge in Germany, but also changed the face of the American scientific community. When the Nazi regime passed a law on April 7, 1933 forcing “non-Aryan” and politically critical civil servants out of their jobs, many leading Jewish intellectuals left the country to start a new life in the United States. Not that they were always welcomed with open arms – anti-

Semitism was prevalent across the Atlantic too. But at least their lives were not at stake.

By 1944, more than 133,000 German Jews, many of them highly skilled and educated, had emigrated to America. Among these émigrés were Nobel laureates and renowned scientists like physicist Albert Einstein, philosopher Hannah Arendt as well as chemists Otto Loewi and Max Bergmann. “German Jewish émigrés had a huge effect on U.S. innovation. They helped increase the quality of research by

“
Reflecting on both cultures and mediating between them

training a new generation of American scientists, who then became productive researchers in their own rights”, says Petra Moser, an assistant professor of economics at Stanford University, who has conducted the first systematic analysis of the émigrés’ effects on U.S. innovation. The data sets Moser and her team have studied reveal that U.S. patents in the particular fields of these German Jewish émigrés increased by 31 percent. In Moser’s words, “getting these highly talented refugees was a big plus for American science.”

Brain drain

Over the post-war decades, U.S. universities and research institutes have retained their attraction for German scientists. For some time in the late 1990s

and early 2000s, there was even talk of a massive brain drain from Germany to the United States. Not only were working conditions and salaries more attractive, contrary to German universities their American counterparts were offering post-doctorates and young academics a tenure track. As a result, many promising young German scientists packed their bags and moved to California, Massachusetts, Connecticut or Pennsylvania.

That trend seems to have been altered. “Today, we see a more dynamic form of mobility, where people will leave the country but also return home after a few years while remaining connected to their networks abroad,” says Katrin Amian, Head of the North America, Australia, New Zealand, Oceania Division at Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. “Of course American universities continue to be magnets for international researchers, but over the past 15 years the German system has increased its attractiveness with valuable and strong networks and solid financial support for research projects.” In fact, since the financial crisis 2008 and a noticeable decline in tenured positions at U.S. universities, Germany has become an interesting alternative for many researchers. “Germany is a place where you can find excellent research environments in many fields, from the humanities to the natural sciences, life sciences and engineering,” explains Amian.

But it is not only post-docs and established scientists who find German universities increasingly attractive. For students at both undergraduate and graduate levels Germany has become an interesting alternative. “When I first came to Germany as an au pair, I wasn’t thinking about attending university here,” says Brigid Casey, an American undergraduate majoring in art history at Freie Universität Berlin. “But when I heard how much – or should I say how little – it costs to study here, I im-

mediately started learning German and attended a *Studienkolleg*, a special preparatory college, to qualify.” Currently, she is working towards her bachelor’s degree and thinking about the future. “I miss my family but on the other hand I cannot imagine giving up the European lifestyle I have come to appreciate. And I also cannot see myself paying huge amounts of money for a good education or not having health insurance.”

“
German Jewish émigrés had a huge effect on U.S. innovation

mediately started learning German and attended a *Studienkolleg*, a special preparatory college, to qualify.” Currently, she is working towards her bachelor’s degree and thinking about the future. “I miss my family but on the other hand I cannot imagine giving up the European lifestyle I have come to appreciate. And I also cannot see myself paying huge amounts of money for a good education or not having health insurance.”

Common bond of human dignity

Before moving to Berlin, Casey spent a year at the University of Maryland. But she felt underchallenged and at times even bored. Moving to Germany was a way to satisfy her curiosity and at the same time dive into a new culture and language. Today, she moves freely between American and European or German cultures, reflects on both and even mediates between them. Like so many of her peers and professors alike who have the privilege of oscillating between home and abroad she has become an ambassador for both sides building bridges and thus putting into practice what Senator James Fulbright once accurately described as a path to a peaceful global society when he said, “the rapprochement of peoples is only possible when differences of culture and outlook are respected and appreciated rather than feared and condemned, when the common bond of human dignity is recognized as the essential bond for a peaceful world.” Something we seem to need today more than ever.

Tong-Jin Smith is an American lecturer and journalist in Berlin. She works for the Jewish Voice from Germany



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WORLD ECONOMY

Free Trade in a Time of Populism

How nationalists threaten prosperity globally

By Siegfried Guterman

A century and a half following the publication of *Das Kapital*, Marx is apparently every bit as topical as during the age of unbridled capitalism. And the idea of free trade – an important forerunner of Marxist theory advanced exactly 200 years ago – is under siege from left and right. In his 1817 work *On The Principles of Political Economy and Taxation*, David Ricardo sought to lend the free exchange of goods a new theoretical foundation. It marked the departure from the mercantilist protectionism earlier espoused by absolutist monarchs. Sober analysis of cost advantages took the place of “my country first.” Today, however, populist isolationism appears to be back on the menu.

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Isolationism and protectionism have become the bedrock of policy

The world’s first real bilateral free trade deal was reached between England and Portugal in 1353. The basic principle of such deals is a simple one. International trade is considered

“free” when it is not subjected to trade barriers such as tariffs and export regulations or import quotas. The idea of free trade is based on the theoretical expectation that unrestricted trade benefits the prosperity of a country more than protectionism would. The advantages of free trade include improved efficiency (tariffs cause distortions in production and consumption), faster attainment of optimal sizes for companies through international competition and innovation accelerated by competition.

Exchange of goods

The counter-movement of protectionism has its own logic too. It was probably first expressed by the English king Edward III when he called on his subjects to wear only English cloth. He also acted according to those words and thereby stood up to the market dominance of Flemish woven fabrics. In the 18th century, mercantilism gave protectionism a theoretical framework. Then, the elevated price of French wine in Britain set the Scottish econo-

mist Adam Smith thinking about the tariff-free exchange of goods. His theory of absolute cost advantage was finally augmented by Ricardo’s analysis of comparative cost advantage. Through in-

ternational free trade structures such as GATT in 1947 and the World Trade Organization since 1995, free trade has been institutionalized and expanded to include services and capital flows.

Yet the globalization crises of the early 21st century also brought to light the considerable downside risks of free trade. For smaller and weaker economies, especially in the developing world, free trade carries more risks than it does for industrialized states. Also, the often politically unstable developing states generally have little influence on the standards on which trade is based.

Through organizations such as Attac, criticism of free trade gained a voice and a face. It summarily declared classical trade theory irrelevant and replaced it with “strategic trade theory” that stresses the advantages of protectionist policy, for instance toward the pharmaceuticals industry. Globalization criticism has a curious attraction for both leftist and rightist politicians. It places national economic and social interests above global prosperity gains, which, it says, benefit only a small minority anyway. In France the economic policy ideas of the far-right Front National are nearly indistinguishable from those of the hard-left La France Insoumise. In Germany, too, protectionist ideas have found their way into the platform of both the Left Party and the rightwing populist AfD. However, in a country proud of



calling itself an export world champion and definitely belonging to the beneficiaries of free trade, these ideas do not have much purchase.

The U.S. is a completely different story. With Donald Trump, isolationism, protectionism, and nationalist self-exaltation have become the bedrock of policy. Trump has begun renegotiating trade deals and says he would otherwise tear them up. He has threatened a whole series of states with punitive tariffs. Trump’s chief economic punching bag is China. He says the country manipulates its currency and steals American jobs. Or, in his own vernacular, “China is killing us.” One of his core campaign pledges is to change that. Another country in Trump’s protectionist crosshairs is Mexico, and with it the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Germa-

ny, too, has a top position in Trump’s fight against “unfair” trade practices. He seems to care little that his criticism of German carmakers is aimed mainly at BMW – itself the biggest car exporter in the U.S.

Isolationist policies and expenditures are two sides of the same coin. Trump pledges to build walls and highways and invest heavily in the US’s aging infrastructure. That finds support not only among the far right, but also among leftists and organized labor. The financial basis for all these plans is a classic weapon from the arsenal of trade wars: a gigantic tax cut. According to calculations by the independent Tax Policy Center, through 2025 more than half the cuts would benefit the wealthiest one percent of Americans – while U.S. state debt would rise in the coming ten years by \$7 trillion. That equals about a quarter of America’s annual GDP.

In a study released in September 2017, the respected Munich-based ifo Institute demonstrated that an isolationist U.S. would be harmful for all sides. A 20% tariff on all imports to the U.S. would

result in drops of 40-50% among U.S. exports to most countries. In this globalized world, U.S. products are also made of components purchased on the open, global market. The competitiveness of U.S. industry would be massively weakened by higher import prices. U.S. GDP could fall by \$250 billion. Germany would likewise feel negative effects, with GDP – which totaled nearly \$3.5 trillion in 2016 – falling by as much as 22%.

U.S. pledges of deficit spending and protectionist policies have come in for scathing criticism in the EU. An internal Brussels paper warns of the risks for the global economy posed by Trumponomics. A global trade war and global recession as in the 1930s could result. Trump’s exhortation to “buy American” would end in “bye-bye America” – something in no one’s interest. ■

POLITICS

Countering Populists with Democratic Culture

Perverted philosophy. Setting frameworks and roadblocks

By Rafael Seligmann

A specter is haunting the world. Its name is populism. People say it threatens democracy. That conclusion is largely correct. But before we go into the relationship between populism and democracy, first let's nail down what that unclear term "populism" actually means.

Populism is derived from the Latin *populus*, or nation. But today, different politicians and parties are called populist. For example: Donald Trump, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Marine Le Pen, Viktor Orbán, Jaroslav Kaczynski, Wladimir Putin, Geert Wilders, Beppe Grillo, Rodrigo Duterte, Alexander Gauland etc. This incomplete list makes clear that highly contrasting personalities and political agendas are being put in a box together.

To understand what is happening politically today, we must arrive at a definition of "populism" that can function as the lowest common denominator. Observing politics worldwide, some similarities emerge. These include the strategy of playing on the population's fears and, where fears do not or hardly exist, of sowing them anew and even deepening them. This way, the psychological reflex of being curious about the unknown while exercising caution is reduced to simple fear. The native population is fed negative images of the putative threats emanating from minorities, migrants, and other states and told they are existential threats. Taboos are placed on the willingness to stand by one's fellows. The commandment of compassion in all monotheistic religions is replaced by exclusion.

Idealistic philosophy

Populism claims to be the authentic representation of the majority's interests. The concerns of the minority are dismissed or even condemned as a threat to the majority. Populists claim to know the majority's putative national, religious, economic and social interests. They determine the "enemy" and say how to fight it most effectively. This can reach the lengths taken by Philippine President Duterte, who incites the police and vigilante groups to kill "drug dealers." These murders are then praised in public as necessary and beneficial actions in the interest of the people.

The transformation of perfidy and crime into beneficence is an invention of early fascism that the Nazis readily copied. Benito Mussolini, the "duke" of Italy's fascists, was a fan of the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, who was given to "philosophizing with



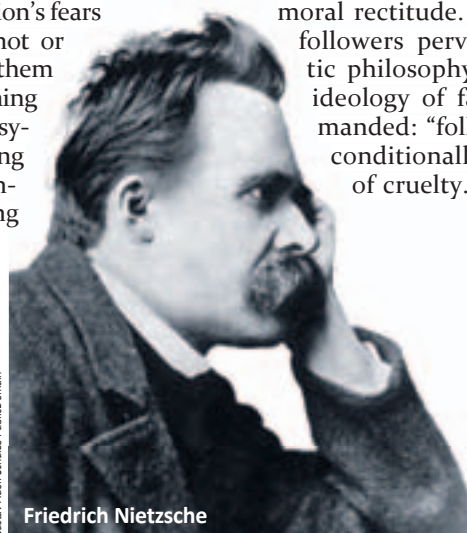
Democracy at work: March on Washington, 1963

a hammer." Nietzsche aspired to the ideal of a "superman". That was no racial or biological attribute, however. It was a call for intellectual integrity and moral rectitude. Mussolini and his followers perverted this idealistic philosophy into the tailored ideology of fascism, which demanded: "follow your duce unconditionally through all acts of cruelty. This way you will

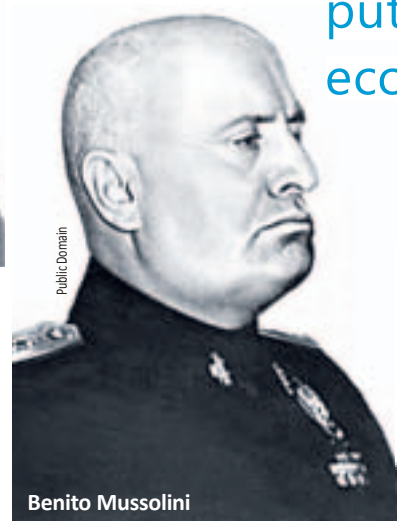
"Alternative for Germany" mainly criticized the government's financial policy. The AfD leadership around Bernd Lucke, a professor of macroeconomics, lamented Germany's abandonment of its cherished currency, the D-mark, in favor of the allegedly softer joint Euro-

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Populists claim to know the majority's putative national, religious, economic, and social interests



Friedrich Nietzsche



Benito Mussolini



Viktor Orbán

become a superman and serve the community." Hitler and the Nazis took up the fascist prescription and added a quasi-biological dimension, morphing it into a "master race."

Trump, Orbán, and Gauland are not Nazis. Yet the method of making the majority interest they themselves devised look valuable in the service of society, together with its ruthless implementation at the expense of minorities, is taken straight out of the fascist playbook of tactical manipulation. The neofascists understand that. It is why the "alt-right" in the U.S. supported and applauded Trump's election to the presidency and his contradictory yet polarizing remarks regarding the far right protest in Charlottesville, Virginia.

In Germany, meanwhile, the brief history of the AfD shows how quickly a party can drift into the far-right spectrum. When it was founded in 2013 the

pean currency, the euro, and called for a return to the D-mark.

Yet this alternative focused on finances and the economy achieved popularity only in the beginning. Then the party began falling back. In a prosperous country with nearly full employment, financial policy and macroeconomic details are not issues that generate an emotional response. Emotions are stirred far more readily by nationalist slogans and the alleged threat of foreign immigrants. This was the strategy that Frauke Petry, an AfD member of Saxony's regional legislature, considered much more promising. The influx

of refugees from Syria and Afghanistan that began that same summer appeared to confirm her nationalist course. From then on the AfD styled itself as the keeper of Germany's national interests that, it said, had been betrayed by the German government. That was because Chancellor Merkel's Conservatives and the Social Democrats had upheld the protection of human dignity and the right to asylum enshrined in the German constitution. The AfD vowed to take up the mantle of voice of the German people's concerns. In fact, however, it was generating and amplifying the people's fears of Islamic migrants who were, it said, threatening Germany's inner security.

Emotions and anxieties

The emotions and anxieties that Petry had tapped into required ever more drastic slogans to remain active and influential, much in the same way that addicts require ever-stronger doses of their drug. Since Petry was unwilling to do this, however, she was pushed out by her own party allies. In the meantime she has announced to quit the party altogether. The AfD's new leadership duo gives the radicals and fearful what they need. Also, one

of the new leaders, Alexander Gauland, demanded that the ethnic Turkish politician Aydan Özoguz be "disposed of" in Anatolia. Rightwing radicals and neo-Nazis celebrated the dehumanization of a democratic female politician. It was a similar pattern as in the U.S., Hungary, and Turkey.

However, the example of the United States demonstrates that democratic institutions can place limitations on populism. Donald Trump failed in his efforts to restrict immigration from majority Muslim countries and dismantle the

Affordable Care Act, known generally as Obamacare. Democratic culture imposes a framework on Donald Trump, sets roadblocks in his path and restricts him largely to sloganeering. In

Germany too, democratic parties, institutions and the postwar experience are showing their effectiveness. In the recent federal elections an overwhelming majority of voters cast their ballot against populism and radical nationalism. The Germans voted for freedom, dignity, and democracy. Among most people, populist slogans had no realistic chance. ■



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MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC AFFAIRS AND ENERGY BRIGITTE ZYPRIES

A Call for More Investment in R&D

On Industry 4.0, social equality, SPD, Israel and anti-Semitism

In your eyes, what were the chief reasons for the SPD's dismal election results?

Despite a successful term in office, both parties in the governing coalition suffered heavy losses, including to the AfD. For the SPD, we did not receive credit for many of the projects we accomplished, such as a minimum wage and eligibility for pensions following 45 years of contributions. In the next Bundestag all democratic parties will have to work together and with determination to win back voters and solve people's problems. That will eliminate the AfD's basis.

Franz Müntefering, an old ally of former Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, called being in the opposition "crap." Now the SPD has decided to go that way anyhow. What can the party achieve economically in the opposition?

We have excellent minds and clear positions and will remain a strong voice of democracy in the opposition. Germany needs Social Democratic policy, so that all can benefit from growth and prosperity. More investment in education, schools and digital infrastructure are only a few of the steps we need. We will continue to fight for them in the opposition.

Will the presence of the AfD in the Bundestag harm Germany's economy abroad?

I certainly hope not. We have a strong and robust economy that offers high value products that are rightly prized internationally.

The "Agenda 2010" labor market reform was arguably the most successful economic legislation in recent decades in Germany. And yet instead of taking credit, the SPD is now trying to distance itself from the reform.

It's true that Gerhard Schröder was the chancellor who took the last major step to modernize Germany. There's been no courage to continue since. The SPD is debating Agenda 2010 openly, and I think an open discussion is important and correct.

The SPD has a heroic history, for instance in 1933, when it was the only party to vote against granting Hitler dictatorial powers. Why is it having such a hard time in day-to-day politics?



For more than 150 years the SPD has been the party of social progress in the interest of the great majority of Germany's people. I do not think we are having a hard time in day-to-day politics. In the past four years we accomplished a great deal in government. And the essential achievements of this past legislative period came from us. Just remember minimum wage, pensions following 45 years on the job and – in my own portfolio – forward-looking issues such as the challenges of digitization.

Your fellow party member, Munich's former mayor Christian Ude, has warned the SPD it has to be political at the local level, then it will win more elections.

That's true. In practically all big cities, even in conservative-governed regions as well as the city-states, the SPD is in power. We do politics on the ground. Still, the image being conveyed is not what it should be. But one thing is clear: We Social Democrats have left our mark on the government's work in the past four years, and we've made sure that people in our country are doing better today.

The SPD began as a workers' party. Today, most workers vote for other parties.

Classical voter allegiances to single parties have eroded.

Switch-voters have become much more commonplace. We have identified the important issues and must keep stressing them – education, more investment in education, digitization, tax reform, better wages for nursing care workers.

The SPD pushes for more justice – but so does every other party, really.

Justice means having the same chances, services, and social equality. That is Social Democratic policy. We have made clear why we need more justice in Germany and have presented ways to achieve it, in every part of life. Everyone can read exactly what we want in each area of policy.

Germany is booming. Conventional technology, auto making, machine construction – but hardly any leading tech companies, besides SAP.

Well, we certainly do have companies that are successful in technology and software solutions, besides SAP there's Software AG from my constituency in Darmstadt. There are big opportunities for us in the "Internet of Things," the world of digitally integrated machines. "Industry 4.0" is a neologism invented in Germany and today the term is commonplace in China and the U.S. Machines and facilities made in Germany are in great demand in the U.S.

In Israel funding for research and development accounts for 4.1% of GDP, in Germany that figure is 2.9%.

During this entire legislative period, the SPD has insisted on tax breaks on research. But Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble and Chancellor Merkel have put up roadblocks. We have to invest more in research and development. We

also must create tax incentives for companies, especially small- and mid-sized ones.

What's going on in economic cooperation with Israel? What can we learn from one another?

Germany is Israel's leading trade partner in the European Union. Cooperation is especially close in high tech. We cultivate intensive cooperation with Israeli startups and encourage young Israelis to come to Germany. That's the core of our EXIST program for founding businesses. Israel is currently the only country we collaborate with in it. That includes easier access to possible German subsidies.

You were also German Justice Minister. The country has strict laws against anti-Semitism. But how can we win the minds and hearts especially of young people, and most particularly migrants from Muslim countries who have grown up with everyday anti-Semitism?

Laws are the one side. Anti-Semitic utterances or using comparable symbols can be prosecuted in this country. But we must also remain committed to an open and tolerant society in which people respect one another, regardless of what religion they espouse. And that applies not only to religions but also to other forms of discrimination, based on age, gender, national origin and discrimination against women. This is where we must make sure education and awareness in the schools are as good as they can be.

No child is born an anti-Semite. Besides schools, the family homes also play a role.

As a state we have access to the young only through the schools and that is why this kind of education must take place in the schools. For example through role-playing or discussion circles. That way people get to know and therefore accept each other better. We also see that in the refugee debate. Of course there are also people here who talk about excessive migration and who reject refugees. But, happily, there are also a great many others who actively help and support refugees.

You did no longer seek a Bundestag seat. Why would you do that, as one of Germany's most experienced female politicians?

I have decided that it's enough. But I will remain a political person and remain committed, for example as President of the German-Israeli Lawyers Association, a position I will continue to carry out.

Brigitte Zypries talked to JVG editor Rafael Seligmann

THE SPUDY COLUMN

Sustainability

These days, investors are putting a stronger focus on environmental, social, and governance (ESG) criteria. The preconception that sustainability would have a negative impact on rate of return has been definitively disproved. The economist Alexander Bassen showed recently in a meta-analysis of 2,250 studies on the impacts of ESG that sustainable investments mostly performed significantly better than traditional investments. According to this study, investment returns and ESG criteria go hand in hand in most cases, particularly in the cases of real estate, bonds, and shares. Sustainable investments are less volatile in the long run because they avoid risks to humans and the environment.

These investments support a company direction that will remain viable for the future and provide strong incentives for positive changes. And ESG strategies, which tend to have a long-term orientation, lead to long-term success, which our clients value. I find that simply excluding problematic industries such as munitions, fossil energy or GMOs is too short-sighted of an approach to ESG investing, as is the approach of looking only at best in class or best of class. Impact investing is much more interesting in the long term. This allows the investors themselves to have a direct influence. So far, this area has been in demand mainly from foundations, which are statutorily obligated to serve the common good and which will accept somewhat moderate returns in exchange for this influence. Private investors, especially in the younger generation, are also increasingly using their assets to make a positive impact. Having the support of an independent family office is thus very wise, because evaluating types of investments and companies according to ESG factors is deeply complex and a job for specialists. One seemingly simple option for getting ESG criteria and good returns in one place is through public mutual funds that focus on sustainability. But, according to Bassen, in these portfolios, in particular, the correlation between ESG criteria and investment returns is not so clear-cut. In this case, investors should focus to the actual value added and not let themselves be blinded by marketing.

Jens Spudy is executive partner of Spudy Family Office

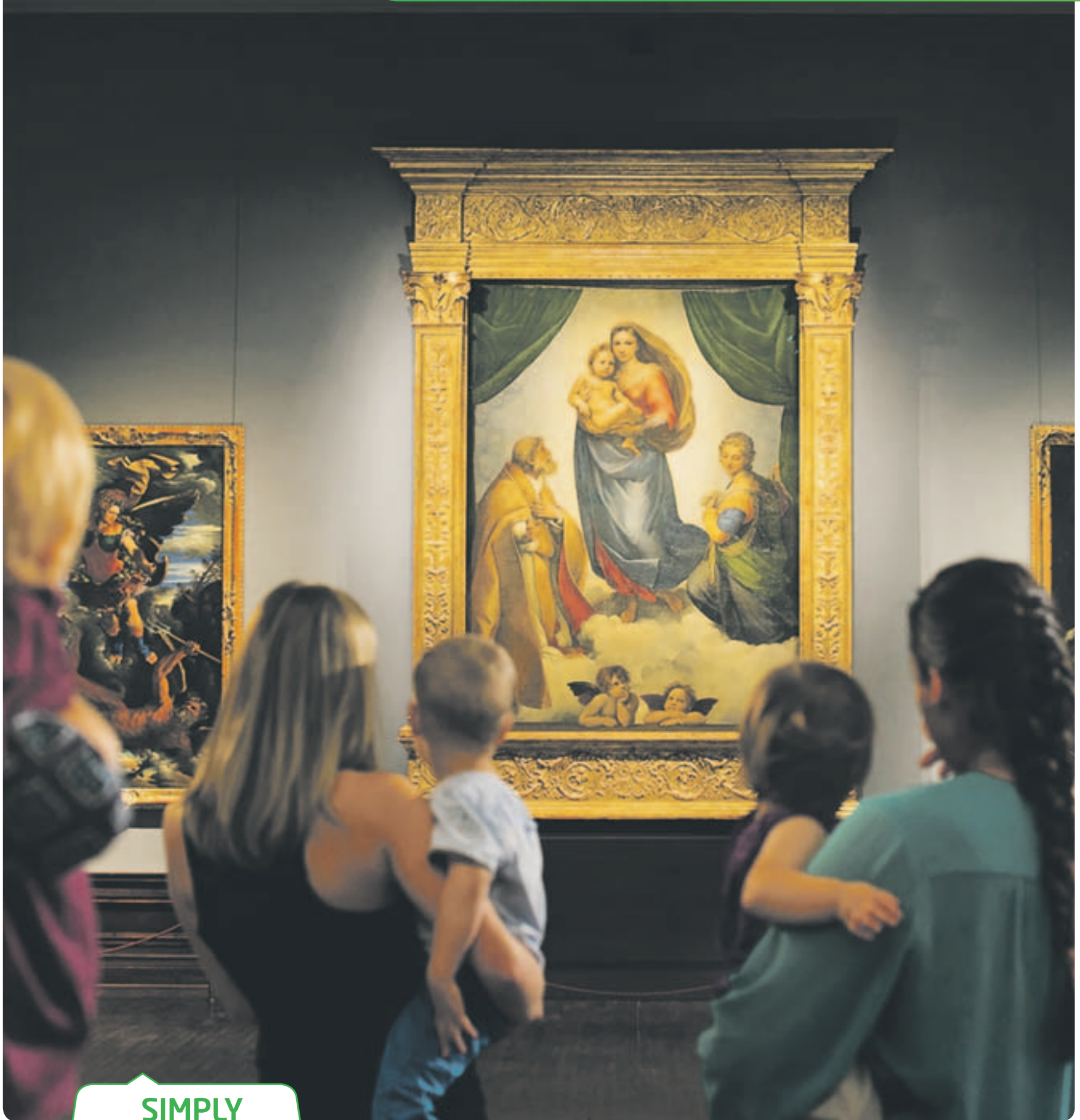


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SAXONY

JEWISH HERITAGE

Motik's Reel-to-Reel

Singer Sveta Kundish revives the story of her family

By Gideon Wollberg

A circle has closed", muses Sveta Kundish, a soprano vocalist who performs a wide variety of Jewish music throughout Europe. "Just like my great-grandfather, I stand today on a bimah and lead prayers in the synagogue, and like my grandparents, I sing Yiddish songs." Born in Ukraine and later moving to Israel, Kundish completed her cantorial training at Abraham Geiger College in Potsdam this past summer. Already holding degrees from Tel Aviv University and the Prayner Konservatorium in Vienna, she is about to earn a B.A. in Jewish Theology at the University of Potsdam. Recently, she demonstrated her talents and skills in concerts in Berlin, Erfurt, and Weimar. The program "The Two Faces of the Cantor", presenting sacred music and Yiddish song, met with enthusiastic applause. Now, she is preparing for another appearance: in October, Sveta Kundish will open the Jewish culture festival in Dresden, presenting a personal account of her family story, "Motik's Reel-to-Reel."

Shtetl memories

"All my life is now based on the roots that go back to the shtetl Ovruch in Ukraine, a small town near the border with Belorussia," Kundish explains. In the 1990s, following the breakup of the Soviet Union, hundreds of thousands of Jewish families from the former USSR emigrated to Israel, Germany, and North America. Sveta Kundish's family was part of this great wave relocating from Ukraine to Israel in 1995. Years later her parents discovered a set of reel-to-reel recordings, made by her grandfather Morduk Bezman (1919–1995) in the 1970s and '80s, which had survived for the past 40 years, and which chronicle the day to day life, songs, and stories of her family – part of a Jewish life there that has

all but disappeared. Ovruch dates back over a millennium. A sizable community must have already existed in the early 17th century as a synagogue was built there in 1629. In the late-19th century, six synagogues stood in Ovruch and the Jewish community numbered some 4,000 – over forty percent of the population.

"My great-grandfather Shimon Hersh-

and sent to the front. After five long and difficult years, my grandfather returned to his hometown, Ovruch." The vast majority of the town's Jews had fled to the interior of Russia or were mobilized; today, the mass grave where the eighty-six Jews who remained in Ovruch

were murdered upon the German army's arrival in August of 1941 is situated close to the site of the ghetto where 1,500 Jews from surrounding places were crammed until their murder.

At the end of the 1970s, Motik Bezman bought a tape recorder. And here begins the story of a unique audio recording his granddaughter owns. "My Grandpa recorded the whole family. There are more than two hours of recording, where the whole family sings in Yiddish and Russian, reads and tells stories.

The song 'Tsvey Shvester', 'Two Sisters,' impressed me especially, because through this recording I learned that my grandmother was an excellent folk singer. Yiddish folk songs and ballads were her passion, as well as mine today."

A narrated concert

Using these recordings as inspiration, Kundish has collaborated with composer and accordionist Patrick Farrell to tell the story of her Ukrainian Jewish family, from Kundish's great-grandfather through her present life in Germany as a performer and cantor herself. She met Farrell at a music festival in 2012. Since then, they have been repeatedly working as a duo. Together, the two wrote the program "Motik's Reel-to-Reel." Woven around the story are songs in Yiddish, Hebrew, Russian, Ukrainian, and German, either performed live or brought back from the

past through these rediscovered recordings. Family photos from the past 100 years, projected onto a screen next to the performers, give the audience a window into typical Jewish life in Ukraine during the years of the USSR, and into the widespread experience of emigration in the years after.

Fulfilling a dream

"Nobody stayed," says Kundish. "From time to time our family members travel back to Ovruch to visit the cemetery or to join a class reunion." An estimated 1,000 Jews emigrated from the town since the fall of the Soviet Union. Today, a small prayer house on Lenin Street serves the about 35 remaining members of the local Jewish community. "My large family, who lives in different countries around the world, is very touched that Motik's tape recordings sound on stage today," she adds. "Many relatives whose voices my grandfather recorded are no longer alive, and my parents cry and laugh every time they watch the video of our performance in which their beloved ones are heard. According to my mom, my grandparents literally join Patrick Farrell and me as artists on stage. Grandpa Motik dreamed to become an artist, and today, I follow his dream." ■



Svetlana Kundish



Manuel Methe

BOMHOFF RECOMMENDS

Cherish Life!

Life is good, death is bad. One of the themes we focused on over Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur was making life affirming decisions. In Deut. 30:19, we read "I call heaven and earth to witness you today: I have put before you life and death, blessing and curse — therefore choose life!" However, on Yom Kippur afternoon, the Torah reading from Leviticus was rather sobering, particularly those verses concerning forbidden sexual relationships. The Torah condemned homosexuality in biblical times as an abomination that carries the death penalty. The same penalty, however, applied to adultery. It seems hard to



JVG

reconcile the death penalty and our Jewish perspective on the importance of concern for our fellow man.

The Torah specifies a host of 36 offenses for which one may be put to death, including wizardry and rebelling against one's parents. While supporting the death penalty in principle, it

placed substantial obstacles to its implementation. Cain is exempted from the ultimate punishment, and later, all the stringent demands on witnesses in capital cases restricted the

very likelihood that a defendant would be convicted.

The whole tendency of the sages who wrote the Talmud was toward the complete abolition of the death penalty. The rabbis created so many barriers that in practical terms it was almost impossible to punish anyone by death. The discussion of capital punishment became one of theoretical speculation: After a long, elaborate discussion of the class of capital crime befitting the stubborn and rebellious son and a description of how the execution was to be carried out, the Talmud states: "It never happened and it never will happen." The passage then explains that the entire matter is presented purely for study.

For decades, the Jewish revulsion against capital punishment has been expressed in the values of the Jewish state. The death penalty has been

carried out only twice in Israel's history. The military conviction of Meir Tobianski in 1948 was posthumously nullified. The only civil execution took place when Adolf Eichmann was hanged in 1961. While the Knesset had voted to abolish the death penalty for the crime of murder in 1954, it was retained for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Judaism strongly focuses on the idea of *teshuvah*, repentance for one's sins, a concept in conflict with the finality of capital punishment. Furthermore, the risk of executing an innocent person shouldn't be taken lightly. Someone wrongfully put to death can never be redeemed. Each choice has an impact on other beings. When we are told to choose life for ourselves, aren't we also commanded to advocate life for others? ■

SCHIRN KUNSTHALLE FRANKFURT

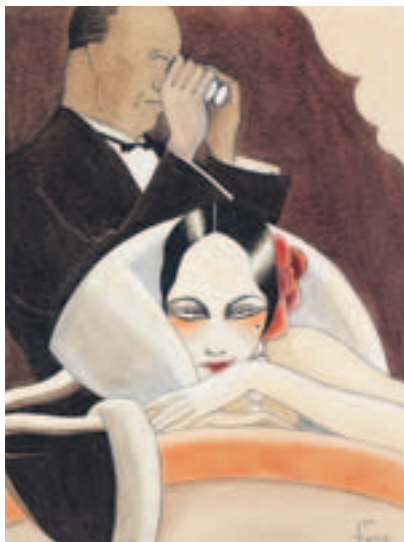
Splendor and Misery of the Weimar Republic

From Otto Dix to Jeanne Mammen: An artistic chronicle

By Hartmut Bomhoff

What do I expect for art in the new people's state? Nothing and everything: Freedom!" wrote Max Liebermann in December 1918. The years between the end of World War I and Hitler's ascension to power witnessed an unprecedented cultural explosion that embraced the whole of Europe but was, above all, centered in Germany. Born of revolutionary activity in the wake of defeat, the Weimar Republic stimulated artists whose styles ranged from realism, New Objectivity and impressionism to expressionism and abstractionism, with their works depicting turmoil and fragmentation.

Frankfurt's Schirn Kunsthalle, is devoting a major thematic exhibition to the period between 1918 and 1933. Its director Philipp Demandt comments: "This fall, the Schirn is presenting a counterbalance to the exhibitions that have already been shown on many occasions on the Roaring Twenties. It takes a look at the unvarnished facts of life during

Dodo, *Box Logic* (1929)

the Weimar Republic. Some 200 works by 62 artists mercilessly hold a mirror to the society of the time. We see an era that clung to democracy by the skin of its teeth and in some respects is closer to us than we would like to believe."

Opening on October 27, the exhibition brings together paintings, prints, drawings, and sculptures by familiar and lesser known artists. Their di-

rect, ironic, angry, accusatory, and often even prophetic works demonstrate the struggle for democracy and paint a picture of a society in the midst of crisis and transition.

They captured the stories of their contemporaries with an individual signature: the processing of World War I with depictions of maimed soldiers and "war profiteers," public figures, the big city with its entertainment industry and increasing prostitution, the political unrest and economic chasms, as well as the role model of the New Woman and the public debates regarding homosexuality and abortion.

Flash points retain validity

"Splendor and Misery" traces both the rise of the artistic culture that bloomed ever so briefly in the 1920s and the advent of a new sobriety. The glittering parties came to an end with the beginning of the Great Depression in October 1929, when

poverty and despair gripped the nation, with the state being torn between the barbarism of the right and the irresponsibility of the left.

The paintings of Otto Dix (1891–1969) still shape the picture we have of the period between the two World Wars. Less popular is the oeuvre of artist Jeanne Mammen (1890–1976), who nonetheless gained a reputation beyond Berlin as a chronicler of life in the city during the 1920s. "Box Logic" by her friend Dodo aka Dorte Clara Burgner née Wolff (1907–1998) arouses ones curiosity to learn more about this little-known Berlin born Jewish artist, who fled the Nazis in 1936 and settled in Britain. From 1927 to 1933, she had provided illustrations for some of Weimar Germany's most progressive magazines. Forgotten for decades, it was only a few years ago that her life and work were rediscovered and reevaluated.

Together with historical photographs, films, newspapers and posters, the Schirn is dedicated to present an impressive panorama of the art of the Weimar

Republic. "It is essential that the inner experience gains image," painter and graphic artist Lea Grundig (1906–1977) once said. The images on show are as melodious and haunting as the era they chronicle. The focus of the exhibition lies on the unease of that particular era, which was reflected not only in the broad stylistic range of the age, but also in the topics and content.

Arranged in thematic groups, it assembles scenes that have hitherto frequently been regarded separately. The various flash points retain their validity to this day. This attests to Peter Gay, who in his book *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider* concluded: "Despite the ephemeral nature of the Weimar democracy, the influence of its culture was profound and far-reaching, ushering in a modern sensibility in the arts." One-hundred years after its advent, the artistic revolution of the Weimar Republic has lost nothing of its relevance and potential for discussion. ■

On show from October 27, 2017 until February 25, 2018



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Election night

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to Channel One's special coverage of the early election. Today, September 15, 2019, the German people voted on who will enter the 20th Bundestag. By a clear majority they decided that Hedwig Kleinert should continue to lead our country, as she has been doing for the past 14 years. However, the electorate also confirmed the continuing, international advance of populist nationalism. As in the United States, in France, the Netherlands, Austria, Hungary, Poland, and many other countries, this political movement has now broken through here as well. Compared to the last election, the German National Majority Party or DNMP has tripled its share of the vote from 9.1 to 27 percent, and is therefore the real winner of this election...

Putsch

Paul Levite, the token Jew in the populist DNMP Party, launches his grab for power...

If, in the movement's hour of triumph, Levite were to stage a coup, the Nazis would nail him to the cross as a Jewish traitor. Yet he must at least claim his share of the victory. But he felt inhibited along the way. By his upbringing? Because of the Jewish ethic that requires respect for the dignity of others as much as for one's own? Nonsense! He had entered a pact with the devil. Now, he would have to endure the fires of hell! Paul Levite recalled the verses of Heinrich Heine's *Good Advice*: Banish sorrow, courage borrow! Loudly ask and boldly woo/And the bride will be for you."

Party leader Urban Hansen peered into the circle with a mixture of bewilderment and disgust. "Comrades! Do not let yourselves be bribed! The Jew is lying! He has to lie. 'Trust no Jew's word,' warned the poet Wilhelm Busch. And now you dimwits let yourselves be duped by this traitor..."

Rising out of his seat, Paul Levite



Pascal Volz/Flickr 1620788692_3e35691741_0/Attribution-ShareAlike 2.0 Generic (CC BY-SA 2.0) https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/

Prologue

Paul Levite is a man of flesh and blood. Stab him, and he will bleed. Insult him, and he will seek revenge. Like all politicians, Levite craves power. For its sake he is willing to sell his soul. Paul Levite uses his Jewishness as a front to claim impeccable morality. The Germans believe him and follow him. The penance for the war and the Shoah, at first compulsory and then voluntary, cannot save the Germans from the fallibility that all nations share. Paul Levite's political journey is a tale of one person's desire to lead and many others' desire to follow.

drowned out Urban Hansen with his powerful voice. "Comrades! This isn't about a fairy tale by Wilhelm Busch or the Bible. And certainly not some ethics discussion. What's at stake here is our political struggle. Urban Hansen has fulfilled his mission for our movement. Now, he is damaging us, because he cares only about himself and chiefly because he's lost his mind! Hansen must go!"

"How do you intend to persuade the president to give one of us a mandate to form a government?", Hansen interjected.

"As soon as you're gone we will use the Communists!" Levite replied unmoved.

Those in the room froze. Levite had brazenly advocated fraternization

with the political enemy, thereby finally unmasking himself as Judas...

Show of force

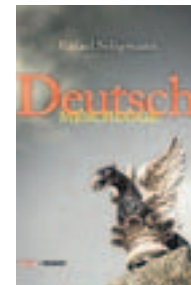
One million people have gathered in Berlin – demanding Paul Levite as Chancellor... "German men and women! You have come here to start a revolution, the first pan-German revolution for freedom and democracy!" The frenzied applause pumped even more adrenalin into Levite's blood, washing away any trace of fear. Finally, he was able to take in the cheers of the masses, his million-man army.

"All that has happened in Germany until now was just a prelude, just idle chatter. To sing you to sleep!" The crowd began roaring.

"That was yesterday! The song of freedom has faded! Suffocated in the dust of the eternal grand coalition!" A storm of applause broke out. "Germany has had enough! We finally want to breathe the air of freedom, as fresh and alive as never before in our history. You have taken the fate of Germany into your hands, you and millions of others. You want me as your Chancellor. I am prepared to lead you, lead you to freedom!"

With the U.S. president

Promptly at 8AM, the U.S. president and the German chancellor sat opposite each other at Camp



Tanet Verlag

David. Jack Barns was smaller than he looked on TV. It was because of the 62-year-old's wiry build. Not one ounce of fat to be found on his body. That spoke for discipline and clarity – as did his close-cropped, straight-parted hair. The president's features were plain. He had an average face. But his cobalt blue eyes were remarkable. They observed their surroundings at once with the clarity of youth and the detachment of old age... Chancellor Levite reiterated his "absolute and unconditional wish for peace."

"Then you'll have to do something for it!" the president said, hoarsely. "Everything has a price – including keeping the peace. I would love to pay up, but first I must be able to afford it," the German Chancellor replied. The price demanded in the U.S. memorandum was higher than Germany could politically pay, he continued. There was no German politician willing to go further to compromise than he, Levite said, adding that he loved America as long as he could remember. "But I must also be able to convince my people that this pact is worth the price. I want peace, Mr. President. I am a Jew. We know like no one else what war in Europe means. It means the end for us all."

"You have it in your hands to prevent that, Mr. Levite!"

"If we affirm our commitment, will our troops be spared from going to war?"

"You Germans seem to fear war more than the devil fears the inside of a church."

"That will continue to be so!" the Chancellor pledged.

"Okay, you reaffirm your NATO promise. Politically and militarily. We will express satisfaction with that and not ask for German boots on the ground."

Excerpts from the novel Deutsch Meschugge by Rafael Seligmann, Transit 2017

Berlin Synagogue Gets New Lease on Life

How goodly are thy tents of Jacob, 101 years ago, these verses from Num 24:5 were sung at the inauguration of the new synagogue on the Landwehr canal in the heart of Berlin. The capital's vibrant Jewish community was proud to add another temple to the city. And a mighty temple it was: there was room for 2,000 worshippers in its main building. The large complex also comprised a community center, buildings for service and administrative facilities, a synagogue for weekdays and a hall for youth services.

The ensemble was designed by Alexander Beer, the master-builder of Berlin's Jewish community. Beer's distinctive buildings can be found all over city: the Jewish orphanage in Pankow, the

Girl's School in Auguststrasse in Mitte district, the Old People's Home in Schmargendorf. His other grand synagogue in Prinzregentenstrasse is no longer extant. Beer was murdered in Theresienstadt in 1944. During the November pogrom of 1938, the main synagogue Fraenkelufer suffered severe damage. Twenty years later, in 1958, the remains were demolished. Henceforth, the small congregation gathered in the former hall for youth services with its lovely colored glass windows and its distinctive light blue columns on the outside. The atmosphere at tiny but much loved Fraenkelsynagogue had something



Fraenkelufer Synagogue

familiar and cozy about it. But of late, Fraenkelufer synagogue has been given a new lease of life. Situated within easy reach of two Berlin trendy quarters, Kreuzberg and Neukölln, a rejuvenated congregation has established itself. Many of

the synagogue attendees are from Israel. Whilst the majority of the more than 10,000 Israelis currently living in Berlin has not officially affiliated itself with the city's Jewish community, many of them cherish the welcoming atmosphere at Fraenkelufer where they have found a place to pray, get together, celebrate.

A previous prayer at Fraenkelufer has been impressively documented: In November 1945, Robert Capa shot his iconic photographs of the first services in Berlin after the war at Fraenkelufer synagogue. Nowadays, there is already talk about rebuilding the main synagogue Fraenkelufer – how goodly are thy tents!

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Welcoming Supernal Guests

The sukkah is a place to experience a ray of heaven on earth

By Rabbi Walter Homolka

You shall dwell in booths for seven days; all Israelites shall dwell in booths,” tells Lev. 23:42. In compliance with this commandment, Jews around the world erect outdoor huts in which the autumn holiday of Sukkot is celebrated. Once observed as a festival of thanksgiving for the bounties of nature, the Feast of the Tabernacles is also linked with the forty-year period during which the children of Israel were wandering in the desert, living in temporary shelters. Thus, the booth, or sukkah, itself must be a temporary abode.

“Be a mentsh and you can sit in the sukkah,” says an old Yiddish adage. It reminds the young that there is an adult ideal they should try to reach; in general, the sukkah teaches us not to put our trust in the size, the strength or the improvements of our home, but in God.

The medieval Jewish thinker Maimonides admonished that anyone who sits comfortably

with his family within his own walls and does not share with the poor is performing a mitzvah not for joy but for the stomach. This applies to meals in the sukkah as well, and it is customary to extend a personal invitation to the needy.

The huts today come in all sizes and materials and there are thriving prefab sukkah businesses in many larger Jewish communities. Throughout the ages, there has been a tendency to make this temporary home as comfortable and welcoming as

“
Extend a personal invitation to the needy

possible, accommodating family and friends who are eating, reading and even sleeping there.

However, the famous master of Zanz, Rabbi Chayim Halberstam (1793–1876), preferred a sparsely decorated sukkah to ornate dwellings. While many of the Hassidic rebbes of Galicia

would spend enormous amounts of money for such a holiday extravaganza, he explained: “There is no finer way of decorating the sukkah than to see to it that the poor are not hungry.”

Another custom is to open the hut symbolically for seven *ushpizin* (Aramaic for “guests”) to take up residence in the booth. The formula originated among the Kabbalists in the 16th century and is based on a verse in the earlier Book of Zohar which says: “When a man sits in the shadow of faith (sukkah)

the Divine Presence spreads Her wings on him from above and Abraham and five other righteous ones of God (and David with them) make their abode with him.

A man should rejoice each day of the festival with these guests.” Each one of the seven supernal guests in turn is seen as leading the others into the sukkah. They join us as we discuss their teachings and honor their contributions to our people. “The past, in this way, becomes the present,” ex-



Bernard Picart: Dinner in the Sukkah, Amsterdam 1722

plained Rabbi Louis Jacobs (1920–2006).

Especially in Progressive Judaism, it has become popular to single out female characters alongside with the seven exalted men of Israel, first of all the matriarchs and other important women of Israel: Sarah, Rachel, Rebecca, Leah, Miriam, Abigail, and Esther. Of course, it seems appropriate to grow the invite list to reflect the contemporary Jewish landscape, pairing bibli-

cal leaders with our role models of today. It is said that the *ushpizin* would refuse to enter a sukkah where the poor are not welcome, and sometimes provisions or donations are sent to the needy along with a note saying, “This is the share of the *ushpizin*.” The inspiration for this hospitality to guests goes back to the first patriarch, Abraham, who generously welcomed three wayfarers to his tent who then proved to be angels. ■



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