Welcome to Saxony-Anhalt – Germany’s youngest federal state. But Saxony-Anhalt is only young when it comes to its status as a state in the Federal Republic of Germany. The history of the region itself is a far older and a far richer one.

In 900, upon re-unification Saxony-Anhalt was founded as one of five new German states. At the time, the state faced major structural challenges. The process of economic restructuring was exceptionally difficult, not least because the state was dominated by large industrial combines, particularly in the Leuna, Halle and Bitterfeld "chemicals triangle" and in the machine-making area around Magdeburg. But ultimately the leap from Marx to market economy was a successful one. Today, Saxony-Anhalt’s economy has made great progress in terms of stability, dynamism and competitiveness. The inefficient state enterprises are a thing of the past, replaced by modern and competitive companies. Many of these enterprises are operating successfully on the global market. Unemployment in Saxony-Anhalt has undergone a significant decline, also in relation to the national average. Just eight years ago, Saxony-Anhalt’s unemployment rate was 20.2 percent. In October 2014, it fell to under ten percent for the first time.

The chemicals industry is one of Saxony-Anhalt’s leading sectors. Today, Bayer produces aspirin for the global market in Bitterfeld, the Total refinery in Leuna supplies fuel to much of Germany; and Schkopau has become an important center for Dow Chemical Company.

The revival of Saxony-Anhalt as a center of research and innovation is another one of the success stories of post-reunification Germany. The state is now home to numerous cutting-edge enterprises and important research institutes. Saxony-Anhalt enjoys an outstanding reputation in the area of new technologies, and we have a long tradition of science and research. The region around Magdeburg is known as a cradle of German engineering. In 1876, the renowned Association of German Engineers was founded in Alexishofen in the Harz region. In 2008, Leopoldina was named the new German National Academy of Sciences, further strengthening the state as a center of science and research. The Academy, which has been located in Halle since 1878, has brought further prestige to the state of Saxony-Anhalt.

Saxony-Anhalt is also a center of music. To this day, a rich musical tradition can be found across the state, which boasts many illustrious concerts and music festivals, including the Handel Festival in Halle, the Telemann Festival in Magdeburg, the Bach Festival in Köthen, and the Kurt Weill Festival in Dessau. Moses Mendelssohn, who was born in Dessau in 1729, was a leading representative of the educated Jewish middle class, which was shaped by emancipation and enlightenment ideals. Not far from Dessau is the town of Coswig, birthplace of Hermann Cohen, a philosopher and founder of the neo-Kantian Marburg School. And Friedrich Nietzsche was born in Röcken. Saxony-Anhalt also boasts a wealth of culture and history. The Old Town of Quedlinburg, the ‘Luther cities’ of Wittenberg and Eisenach, the Dessau-Wörlitz Garden Realm, and the Bauhaus Dessau complex are all UNESCO World Heritage sites. The Francke Foundations in Halle are on the proposed list of sites. The fabled Bronze Age Nebra sky disk and the Hornhausen rider stele dating from the eighth century BC are also among the national treasures located in the state.

In addition, Magdeburg is of exemplary importance to the early history of the Holy Roman Empire. No other city is more closely associated with the legacy of Otto the Great. And 2015 will mark the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther’s posting of the Ninety-Five Theses. Wittenberg is an important center in the history of the Reformation and the city is home to many of the most notable Lutheran memorials, including the Castle Church and Parish Church St. Marien, the historic Augusteum college, the Luther House, and the old university. The “Decade of the Reformation” was launched in Wittenberg in 2008. In 2017, the city will be one of the central sites of the celebrations. Just two years after that, the Bauhaus will celebrate its 100th anniversary. The history of the Dessau Bauhaus is closely tied to the political and cultural history of the first German republic. The Dessau Bauhaus helped shape classical modernism and proposed the most radical critique of design as a means of mastering the challenges of modernity. The Bauhaus went on to become one of the most important German art movements of the early twentieth century. And after classical music, Bauhaus design is arguably Germany’s most important cultural export.

Geographically and culturally, Saxony-Anhalt is situated at the heart of Germany and Europe. This in turn contributes to the unique character of the state as a center of culture and history. Taken together, Saxony-Anhalt is a place with both a rich past and a bright future.
**FACTS & FIGURES**

**THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE WE GO**

**UNESCO**

Saxony-Anhalt has the largest density of UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Germany

- Old Town of Quedlinburg
- Bauhaus sites in Weimar and Dessau
- Luther Memorials in Eisleben and Wittenberg
- Dessau-Wörlitz Garden Realm

**Tradition**

**Sympathy for the Devil...**

Since days of old, during the night of April 30, Walpurgisnacht (Night of Walpurgis), witches convene on the Hexentanzplatz (Witches’ Dance Square), a plateau perched high above the Boden gorge. From here they fly to the Brocken, the highest peak in the Harz mountains, for a night of reveling and mischief – with the devil. The tradition still draws tens of thousands to this day. They gather on the Harz peak, bonfires are lit, wild dancing and merry-making ensues. For those who have forgotten their broom, the Hexentanzplatz can also be reached by cable car. The Brocken can be conquered on foot or with the Brocken Railway.

**Great Outdoors**

Saxony-Anhalt is proud of its more than 200 nature sanctuaries and landscape conservation areas. In the Harz National Park (24,700 hectares) mountain peaks, spectacular rock formations and deep forests await the visitor. With a bit of luck, you can observe black storks, lynx and European wildcats here. Why not wander through Europe’s largest lime tree forest in the park Colbitz-Letzlinger Heide? Nature park Drömling, also called the “Land of the 1000 Ditches”, is home to endangered species. Or you can watch cranes and sea eagles and catch a sight of beavers at work in the fluvial topography of the Dübener Heide nature reserve.

**Arts & Culture**

**In Touch With Heaven**

The Neba Sky Disc

In 1999, a spectacular archaeological find was made – only to immediately disappear again: treasure hunters excavated a disc, weapons and artefacts dating back some 3,600 years. They sold their find right away immediately disappearing again: treasure hunters excavated a disc, weapons and artefacts dating back some 3,600 years. They sold their find right away but it was restored to its rightful owner Saxony-Anhalt in a spectacular operation. The Neba Sky Disc, a bronze disc with gold insertions showing the sun, the moon and stars, is the oldest concrete depiction of cosmic phenomena. According to the UNESCO Memory of the World Register, the Neba Sky Disc is “one of the most important archaeological finds of the 20th century.” It can be seen in Halle’s State Museum of Prehistory. www.himmelsscheibe-erleben.de

**Solar Observatory Goseck**

It seems that the people of Saxony-Anhalt have almost always had a special affinity to celestial spheres: The Solar Observatory of Goseck, a monument of the Neolithic age, dates back 8,000 years. Discovered in 1991, it is one of the earliest sites testifying to man’s observation of the skies. www.sonnensubturm-goseck.info

Find out more about archaeology in Saxony-Anhalt: www.himmelsswege.de

**MELT! Festival**

– The location near Gräfenhainichen is breathtaking, the music intoxicating: Melt, the festival – the famous Baroque composer. World-class musicians perform music by Handel and his contemporaries. Tickets for the next festival (June 4–15, 2015) are already on sale: www.meltfestival.de

**Food & Drink**

**Baumkuchen** – “Tree Cake”, the “King of Cakes”, is a specialty from Salzwedel. The delicate cake is baked layer by layer on a spit over an open wood fire. When sliced later, the cake resembles the growth-rings of a tree – hence its name. Between 15 and 20 layers of batter make a Baumkuchen.

**Saale-Unstrut Wines** – Germany’s northernmost wine-growing region produces exquisite, mainly dry wines. Beautiful landscapes, ancient castles and traditional wineries with wine-tasting facilities make for a memorable journey. The area is also the home of Germany’s most popular “sekt” – sparkling wine – called Rotkäppchen (Little Red Riding Hood).

**Mühlkäse** – A rarity these days, this cheese from Würchwitz is made with the help of cheese mites … The traditional way of manufacture and its distinctive slightly bitter taste makes this cheese so special. The trusty mites in the cream and chocolate, more than 180 million Halloren are sold each year.

**Find out more about archaeology in Saxony-Anhalt: www.himmelsswege.de**
When Italian philosopher Umberto Eco was asked which woman from European art he would most like to spend an evening with, he answered: “In first place, with Uta von Naumburg.” Uta’s statue is a highlight among the medieval Naumburg Master’s depiction of the twelve cathedral founders. There is much more to discover in this impressive church, its adjoining cloister, gardens and castle. During a tour of the historic old town, tasting specialties of the near-by wine-growing Saale-Unstrut area is a must.

The Harz mountains and their Brocken peak are steeped in legend and were a source of fascination even to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Heinrich Heine, prompting them to explore this mountain landscape of forest, moors and flowing rivers. Today, the Harz National Park and Nature Reserve is an important habitat for rare animals. It offers hiking routes, many ski slopes and perfect cross-country skiing conditions – and the legendary Brocken Railway.

“Painting is the ultimate goal of all fine art,” the Bauhaus manifesto proclaimed back in 1919. As a school of design, the Bauhaus revolutionized artistic and architectural thinking and production worldwide, and is considered a headstone of the modern age. Today the cultural inheritance of the Bauhaus is preserved and carried forward by the Dessau Bauhaus Foundation. There are tours of the Bauhaus and the Masters’ Houses; one building in the Gropius estate is dedicated to the life and work of Dessau born philosopher Moses Mendelssohn.

“It is now endlessly beautiful here,” wrote Goethe in 1778 about the “new” he found all around him in Wörlitz Park. Laid out in the late 18th century, with an extent of 277 acres (112 ha) it is not only one the largest but also one of the first and most distinguished landscape parks of continental Europe. A garden for the people, it is cluttered with follies and artistic arrangements. Once a haven for the enlightened, the unrivalled Garden Realm was designated a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 2000.

Saxony-Anhalt and its capital Magdeburg are always worth a trip. Here one can experience central Europe’s cultural traditions in their purest form. More than 1000 years ago, it was from Magdeburg that emperor Otto the Great set out into the world; he is regarded as the founder of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, which existed until 1806. Magdeburg Cathedral is the oldest Gothic church in Germany. It houses a great number of treasures and to this day shapes the silhouette of the city on the river Elbe.
George and Matt in Halberstadt

Saxony-Anhalt has become a major player in the international movie industry

By Rainer Robra

In 2014, twenty feature films and television movies were made in Saxony-Anhalt. The year before, “Monuments Men” was filmed in Halberstadt, Merseburg and Os- terwick to worldwide acclaim. One example is the Studiopro- duktionsfilm, “Monuments Men” produced, directed and starred in the film. He invited the Hollywood star to return to Saxony-Anhalt, where his film crew had spent what was by all accounts an enjoyable three weeks in the idyllic town of Ilsenburg in the Harz region.

Courageous and forward-thinking

But even before George Clooney, many other producers staged their films in Saxony-Anhalt. And other exciting projects are in development for the coming year. The small state in the heart of Germany seems to be a contender among film locales Ber- lin, Munich and Hamburg seemed entirely out of reach, and Holly- wood seemed but a distant galaxy. In the mid-1990s, the new state of Saxony-Anhalt, which had only been called into existence after German reunification, was faced with difficult economic and social challenges. In statistical compari- sons with other German states, Saxony-Anhalt could often be found languishing at the bottom. Its public image was equally unfa- vorable. The great historical and cultural achievements of the state and its beautiful landscape were rarely mentioned in the media. Nor were the many accomplish- ments that had been achieved since reunification, such as the reversal of much of the environ- mental damage which had been wrought in the former East Ger- many, and the construction of new infrastructure.

The decision of the state gov- ernment to take part in what was then still at best a fledgling media industry was both courageous and forward-thinking. This political decision helped se- cure Saxony-Anhalt its place in what is today one of our leading social, cultural and economic in- dustries. But in the late 1990s, when the analogue age was only just drawing to a close, no one could have anticipated that the production and distribution of digital audiovisual works would become one of the world’s most dynamic economic sectors.

Artistic and technical qualities

All national and international media platforms are always on the lookout for new content. Productions from Saxony-Anhalt are known for their high artistic and technical quali- ties. The Studio Halle group has an ana- logue and digital archive encompassing thousands of film titles, which are being restored, digitized and reissued.

But media technology is only one component of Halle’s suc- cess as a media locale. The Moti- on Works animated film studi- o, for example, offers an outstanding example of the ar- tISTIC potential of modern me- dia. The company was the first to move to Halle after the state government decided to pro- mote the media sector. Today, Motion Works is one of Eu- rope’s largest animation stu- dios, known for its work in tele- vision and feature films for children including “The Little Pol- lar Bear and Laura’s Start.”

Public broadcasters are another important partner for the state. Together with the states of Saxony and Thuringia, Saxony-Anhalt founded the Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk (MDR). The broadcast- er has seen nationwide acclaim for its films, television series and feature film coproductions.

To mark the 25th anniversary since the fall of the Berlin Wall, German public TV produced the film Bornholmer Strasse. In a memorable performance, Charly Hübner in his role as the border police officer responsible that night captures the inner conflict of the guards between the tragic and the grotesque. Director Chris- tian Schwochow shot the film at a former border inspection post. It was a fitting locale, which still gave off the forbidding air of former East Germany. This air of authenticity is crucial for many produc- ers, directors and set de- signers. While director George Clooney turned to Osterwieck to Osterwieck for the filming of “Monuments Men” at locations in Saxony-Anhalt clearly enjoying working here: Damon and Clooney

The people of Saxony-Anhalt are not only media consumers; they are producers and important contributors to the state’s creative economy

Christian Schwochow went to Marienborn inspection post. Actor and director De- tlev Buck has twice chosen Wittenburg Castle near Na- umburg as the backdrop for his successful Bibi and Tina children’s films. In 2012, the Munich based production company Clasius-Wöbke- Pumps flew to Quedlinburg to film the movie version of Ortfried Preysler’s The Little Ghost. This past summer, they returned to the UNESS- CO World Heritage City to film several scenes for Heidi. This time, however, the scenes were shot in Saxony-Anhalt have been a boon to the econom- ic potential of the state. FM has provided in film and media funding has been re- paid many times over, bringing jobs to the state and boosting demand for goods and services, includ- ing catering for the film crews. In 2014, the regional effect was pegged at 41 percent; in concrete terms, this means the state provided about 2.4 million euros in financial support, and gained about 7.5 million euros in re- turn. This is evidence of the positive economic impact of the film industry.

But the cultural impact and value is also important. Films made in Saxony-Anhalt have garnered countless nominations and award wins in international film festivals, with films sponsored by MDM receiv- ing frequent accolades. In 2014, the drama In Darkness, a co- production by SchmidtzKatze- Filmkollektiv from Halle, re- ceived an Academy Award nomi- nation in the category of Best Foreign Language Film. The film by Polish Director Ag- nieszka Holland is based on a true story: that of a group of Jews who escaped the ghetto in Lviv and then hid in the city’s sewer system. The rising pro- duction company 42 Film, also based in Halle, hopes that its co- production Corn Island, which was nominated by Georgia, will take the coveted Oscar in Los Angeles.

Saxony-Anhalt has success- fully established itself as a cul- tural and economic institution in the state. And now the people of Saxony-Anhalt are not only media con- sumers; they are pro- ducers of media and important contribu- tors to the state’s cre- ative economy.

Minister of State Rainer Robra is the head of the State Chancellory of Saxony-Anhalt

The TV-production “Bornholmer Strasse” with Charly Hübner as patrol officer on November 9, 1989 was shot at former border inspection post Marienborn
INDUSTRY

Germany’s Chemistry Lab

Innovative spirit and modern infrastructure make Saxony-Anhalt attractive to investors

By Dominik Bath

In the former East Germany, the city of Bitterfeld was known for the stretch of its chemicals industry. Aging and outdated chemical facilities polluted the air. But those days are a thing of the past. Now, the chemistry company helps perfume the air. As managing director Peter Müllring states: “We sell scent.” And in that, they’re a success. The mid-sized firm based in the Bitterfeld-Wolfen chemical park has customers in nearly 30 countries. From Dior to Gucci to Joop and Jil Sander, nearly every slacon of perfume contains aromatic scents made by the family-owned firm.

“Leaving the perfume business is another way we can promote economic development in our state.”

Leuna: once belching pollution, today state-of-the-art chemicals park

Today, many companies from Saxony-Anhalt are powerhouses in the European and global market. Engineering made in Saxony-Anhalt has also found its way into the new One World Trade Center in New York. Special glass made by F-Glass from Osterweddingen was used on the lower 20 floors of what is now the tallest building in the United States. F-Glass won the contract due to its technological innovation—a colorless float glass that until now has mainly been used in solar energy units. “The contractors wanted the glass in the concrete wall to have a metallic sheen to it. And our glass was the only one that could provide that,” says managing director Dominik Waldeyer. The windows in the remaining floors were provided by US-based companies. “Obtaining this commission was a real compliment for us. We’re all very proud,” Waldeyer says.

Strong partners

F-Glass has a staff of 230, and produces 70,000 tons of glass a year. Last year, the company had a turnover of about 70 million euros. But this success has been somewhat dimmed by a current slump in orders. “The glass market is quite difficult right now,” says Waldeyer.

Special glass from Saxony-Anhalt was used in the construction of the One World Trade Center

Demand from the solar industry, which is in the throes of a crisis across Europe, is down sharply. Some companies in Saxony-Anhalt also have been forced to close or undertake layoffs. But F-Glass will weather the crisis. “We have a strong partner,” Waldeyer notes. That’s the Japanese company Asahi Glass, which is the majority shareholder in F-Glass. “We have good contacts in Asia,” Waldeyer says. And in Asia, the solar industry is still booming.

According to a study by Ernst & Young consultants, Saxony-Anhalt is attractive to foreign investors. The study revealed that local branches or divisions of 30 foreign companies have created 3,500 jobs in the state, a number second only to North Rhine-Westphalia. But Saxony-Anhalt is still a relative unknown when it comes to industry decision-makers. The study surveyed 200 international executives about business locations in Germany. The executives cited Bavaria, Berlin and Baden-Württemberg as top locations, with Saxony-Anhalt receiving no mentions. But Economics Minister Hartmut Möllring is undaunted: “Our state is better than many people think. And more and more decision-makers know that.”

Dominik Bath is economics reporter at the daily Magdeburger Volksstimme

Leuna: once belching pollution, today state-of-the-art chemicals park

Currently the 560 companies with facilities in Bitterfeld-Wolfen employ about 12,000 people in all. According to the chemicals industry association, the Bitterfeld-Wolfen chemical and pharmaceuticals plants are among the most modern facilities in Europe. But that is not always the case. After German reunification, Bitterfeld was ranked among Europe’s most polluted cities. The industrial plants were outdated and in disrepair, and their products could not compete on the open market. Thousands of employees lost their jobs. The post-reunification process of economic integration in the area was a slow one. But by the mid-1990s, investment had increased. Meanwhile more than 600 companies have moved to Bitterfeld-Wolfen, Leuna, Zerbst and Piesternitz. Nearly 2 billion euros have been invested in southern Saxony-Anhalt, creating a wealth of new jobs. Over the past years, the unemployment rate has continued to decline. In October, it fell to under ten percent for the first time since reunification. Now the problem in Saxony-Anhalt is demographic change and a shortage of skilled workers.

Today, many companies from Saxony-Anhalt are powerhouses in the European and global market.

Innovative spirit and modern infrastructure make Saxony-Anhalt attractive to investors
The Two Sides of Luther
Wittenberg celebrates and wonders

By Michael Dultze

It was the evening of September 24, 1525. Stefan Nau, a craftsman who worked with metals, was about to raise the hammer to turn a sword he had made into a plowshare. About 2,000 spectators were on hand to applaud him and sing church hymns. The event was part of Wittenberg's 500th anniversary celebrations of the birth of reformer Martin Luther, held in conjunction with the German Protestant Church Congress in the former East Germany. The slogan of the event was “Dare to True.” The festivities in the Luther complex had not been officially approved. But the authorities did not intervene – even though the “sword into plowshares” slogan of the German peace movement had already been banned by the East German regime.

95 theses
466 years earlier, on October 31, 1517, another defendant Wittenberg resident set to work with his hammer. Martin Luther, an Augustinian monk, priest and professor of theology, nailed his “Ninety-Five Theses on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences” onto the wooden door of the northern portal of the Castle Church. Whether this is fact or legend remains a matter of debate. Although Philipp Melanchthon, a later confidante of Luther’s, claimed to have documented the event, he would not arrive in Wittenberg until some time afterwards. Either way, Luther’s Theses exorcising the abuses of the Roman Catholic Church and its sale of indulgences (“When the coin in the coffers rings, the soul from purgatory springs”), which he had penned in Latin, spread across the empire. Ultimately this act marked the beginning of the Reformation, leading to the split of Christianity in the West.

In 2017, the 500th anniversary of the Reformation will be celebrated around the world with extraordinary believer. Luther preached salvation through faith – which could be achieved through faith alone, and not by deeds. No clerical intermediary was necessary between God and the ordinary believer. Luther preached the freedom of all Christians, and went on to defend his teachings in 1521 at the Diet of Worms. He was declared a heretic and an outlaw, but with the protection of Frederick the Wise, he sought refuge at Wartburg Castle near Eisenach, where he translated the New Testament into German in just eleven weeks. Later he also translated part of the Old Testament into German. Both appeared in print, which made the Bible available to ordinary people. The importance of Luther’s life and work for the Protestant reformation to life for a contemporary audience. This includes maintaining the collections belonging to the Four Fine museums: the Luther House and the Melanchthon House in Wittenberg; Luther’s Birth House and Death House in Eisleben, and the house where his parents lived in Mansfeld, where Luther spent part of his childhood.

Renovation and restoration
Luther City Wittenberg is sprucing up for the big event. Across the city, renovation and restoration work is underway, and sculptors, artists and diggers are everywhere. Scaffolding and tarpaulins still cover the Parish Church of St. Marien, where Luther held many of his sermons; the church also holds the newly restored Reformationsaltar, designed by Lucas Cranach the Elder. Still under renovation is the Castle Church, its faded doors now preserved in bronze, which also holds the burial places of Luther and Melanchthon.

Today, it is hard to believe, but when Martin Luther arrived in Wittenberg in 1508 to study theology, the town had just over 2,000 residents. And a university, of course. Frederick III, Elector of Saxony, had appointed as Frederick the Wise (1463–1525), made Wittenberg his residence. In 1502, he founded the University of Wittenberg, which was the first university in the empire established by a secular ruler rather than by Papal sanction. This was also where Chairwoman of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany and currently the Special Envoy to the Luther anniversary of 2017.

Shameful legacy
This is evident in Luther’s 1543 treatise “On the Jews and Their Lies,” by Thomas Murner, who somewhat surprisingly is a Catholic. According to Rhein, the foundation aims to “bring the religious and spiritual legacy of Luther and the Reformation to life for a contemporary audience.” This includes maintaining the collections belonging to the Four Fine museums: the Luther House and the Melanchthon House in Wittenberg; Luther’s Birth House and Death House in Eisleben, and the house where his parents lived in Mansfeld, where Luther spent part of his childhood.

Wittenberg Castle Church
Luther received his “Doctor Theologiae” in 1512, after which he assumed a post as professor of biblical theology, a position he held until his death.

Salvation through faith
Luther believed that salvation could be achieved through faith alone, and not by deeds. No clerical intermediary was necessary between God and the ordinary believer. Luther preached the freedom of all Christians, and went on to defend his teachings in 1521 at the Diet of Worms. He was declared a heretic and an outlaw, but with the protection of Frederick the Wise, he sought refuge at Wartburg Castle near Eisenach, where he translated the New Testament into German in just eleven weeks. Later he also translated part of the Old Testament into German. Both appeared in print, which made the Bible available to ordinary people. The importance of Luther’s life and work for the Protestant reformation to life for a contemporary audience. This includes maintaining the collections belonging to the Four Fine museums: the Luther House and the Melanchthon House in Wittenberg; Luther’s Birth House and Death House in Eisleben, and the house where his parents lived in Mansfeld, where Luther spent part of his childhood.

500 YEARS OF REFORMATION
Humanism, Music, Knowledge and Freedom

Famous natives of Saxony-Anhalt and their legacy

**Hans-Dietrich Genscher** (Halle 1927)

Liberal politician. As Germany’s Foreign Minister in the 1980s he played a key role in the easing of relations between NATO and the Eastern bloc, and subsequently in the dissolution of the German Democratic Republic. His pragmatic approach led to the historic moment on the German embassy balcony in Prague. Genscher announced that GDR citizens would be granted permission to leave the country for West Germany. This was a milestone on the way to German reunification in 1989.

**Moses Mendelssohn** (Dessau 1729–1786 Berlin)

Philosopher and humanist, epitome of the haskalah, the Jewish enlightenment. The outstanding Talmud scholar settled in Berlin and translated the Tora into German. The story goes that when Moses Mendelssohn asked Fronet Gugenheim to marry him, she hesitated on account of his being hunchbacked. He thereupon told her that heaven, which makes all marriages, had once given him the privilege of viewing his future bride. And behold, she was somewhat deformed. He asked God to take the deformity away from her and give it to him, for he wanted nothing to mar her perfection. Fronet was so touched that she accepted – the beginning of a very happy marriage. Together with his friend Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, Mendelssohn is one of the icons of German Enlightenment.

**Otto von Bismarck** (Schönhausen 1815–1898 Friedrichsruh)

Politician and statesman. The “Iron Chancellor” forged German unity after the victory over France in 1871, stating that henceforth “We do not pursue power politics but security policy.” Though a staunch conservative, he was instrumental in establishing social security laws in Germany. His high art of diplomacy was brushed aside by Emperor Wilhelm II., Bismarck was dismissed in 1890, with Germany taking a course towards disaster.

**Carl von Clausewitz** (Burg 1780–1831 Wroclaw)

General and Germany’s most intelligent military theorist. His main work *On War* (1832) discusses the impact of “friction” (i.e. the disparity between the plan and reality of war) and states “War therefore is an act of violence to compel our opponent to fulfill our will ... War is a mere continuation of politics by other means.” His thoughts are taught to this day at military academies the world over.

**Georg-Friedrich Handel** (Halle 1685–1759 London)

One of the most productive composers of all times, wrote operas (*Julius Cesar, Semele*), concertos (*Water Music*) and oratorios (*Saul*). Settled in London. The Baroque giant was robust and also headstrong when it came to the performance of his works, famously threatening to throw his primadonna out of the window should she refuse to sing to his tune...

**Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben** (Magdeburg 1730–1794 Utica, NY)

Prussian officer and US general. Served as a soldier under King Frederick the Great of Prussia. As George Washington’s Chief of General Staff he was a central figure in the American War of Independence. Author of the Blue Book, a.k.a. Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States. The annual Steuben Parade in New York City is held in his honor.

**Christiane Nüsslein-Volhard** (Magdeburg 1942)

Biologist. She was the first German woman to earn the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 1995, honored for her development of fruit fly embryos, thus making genetic control of embryonic material possible. “It is tiring to be an exception, to be the first, the only,” says Nüsslein-Volhard, who has established a foundation to support young women scientists who have children. A bright star – also in the sky: main belt asteroid 15811 is named after her.

**Kurt Weill** (Dessau 1900–1950 New York)

Composer, son of a cantor. During the “Golden Twenties” in Berlin he co-created *The Three Penny Opera* and *Rise and Fall of the City Mahagonny* with Bertolt Brecht. Wrote operas, chamber music, songs. Emigrated to the United States in 1935 to become one of Broadway’s leading musical composers wowing audiences with works like *One Touch of Venus* and *Lost in the Stars*. Forever unforgettable is his “Speak Low When You Speak Love...”
FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE AND THE JEWS

This Cursed Anti-Semitism!

Saxony-Anhalt’s most brilliant thinker and a fatal misinterpretation

By Elisabeth Neu

A small town in Saxony-Anhalt produced one of the greatest and most prolific German philosophers—the author of works such as Thus Spoke Zarathustra, Ecce Homo, and Human, All Too Human. Friedrich Nietzsche was born in Röcken on October 15, 1844, the son of a family of pastors. His father died at a young age. Friedrich—called “Herzensfritz” or “Sweet Fritz” by his family—grew up in the bigoted atmosphere of a Protestant parsonage, the only boy in a household of women. “I was always sick when I was with friends,” he would remember. Eventually he enrolled at the nearby Schulpforta boarding school, more than a breath of fresh air for body and spirit.

Nietzsche went on to study philosophy and theology, although he soon abandoned the latter subject. As a young man, he absorbed the anti-Semitic sentiments of his day and time. He was also known to parrot anti-Jewish slogans from time to time, for which he later expressed deep regret.

Throughout his life, Nietzsche sought a spiritual independence—qualities that Nietzsche himself acquired “energy,” “an accumulated capital of spirit and will” and “spiritual independence”—qualities that Nietzsche both admired and emulated. Continually, Nietzsche was confronted by anti-Semitism, which he called the “great disease of our century.” And then, of course, there was the matter of Richard Wagner. What was at first an exuberant friendship and mutual admiration eventually ended, to be replaced by conflict and contempt. Nietzsche the cosmopolitan abhorred the small-minded anti-Semitism. Richard Wagner’s essay Judaism in Music was first published in 1850 under the pseudonym Karl Fröndel. The vitriolic anti-Semitic pamphlet struck a nerve and went on to become a best-seller. Twenty years later Wagner felt compelled to strike another blow, republishing the essay under his own name and with a new addendum. As Wagner warned the Jews, “But, remember, there is only one real form of deliverance from the curse that besets you—that of Ahasverus, that of the Jews, ‘But, remember, there is only one real form of deliverance from the curse that besets you—that of Ahasverus, that of the Jews...’” Nietzsche asked, “Is Wagner actually a man? Or is he rather a disease?” But the philosopher was unable to banish the composer’s pernicious thoughts. His last work was Nietzsche contra Wagner, which he penned not long before he began his long journey into the darkness of dementia.

“A heap of ruins” is how Franz Overbeck described his friend after his breakdown. Nietzsche’s illness, the precise cause of which still remains a matter of speculation, forced him to rely on the care of another notorious anti-Semite, his sister Elisabeth. Friedrich and Elisabeth were close, which did not stop them from having bitter arguments. “This cursed anti-Semitism is the cause of a radical break between me and my sister...” as Nietzsche wrote to Overbeck. To Elisabeth, he wrote, “It is a matter of honor to me to be absolutely clean and unequivocal in relation to anti-Semitism.” Nietzsche was also aware that his writings were being misused: “And that I am unable to do anything against it, that the name of Zarathustra is used in every anti-Semitic pamphlet, the name of Zaratustra is used almost made me sick several times...”

“I’ll have all the anti-Semites shot!”

Elisabeth married the virulent anti-Semite Bernhard Förster. Together they emigrated to Paraguay in order to take part in the founding of the Aryan colony of Nuevo Granada. The project failed and the “strange apostle”, as Nietzsche had called his friend and mentor Walther von Meysenburg, “...the thought still terrifies me as to how totally unsuitable people will one day invoke my authority.” And that indeed came to pass. After her brother’s death, Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche actively took up the “genera- tion of 1868”, who restored him to his rightful status as a free-thinking philosopher. But Friedrich Nietzsche did not live to see his own elevation to the ranks of philosophical greats. His last journey took him back to Röcken, in the state of Saxony-Anhalt. That is where he lies buried today.