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JEWISH LIFE IN GERMANY TODAY



EXHIBITION

EXHIBITION TRAILER

Open for general public: Sunday, 18th June, 10 am until 2 pm
Sunday, 9th July, 10 am until 2 pm

Otherwise, viewing by appointment only.

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17 Barker St, Kensington NSW

16th June – 30th July 2017



<http://bit.ly/2pcGfWt>

VIC ALHADEFF

Chief Executive Officer of the NSW Board of Deputies



Ladies and Gentlemen, good evening and welcome.

My name is Vic Alhadeff, chief executive officer of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, and it is my honour to be the MC for this evening's proceedings.

In that capacity, I wish to acknowledge that this event is being held on land whose traditional owners are the Gadigal clan of the Eora nation, and we therefore pay our respects to their elders, both past and present.

I would like to particularly welcome -

The Governor of NSW, His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley, and Mrs Hurley

Bruce Notley Smith representing the Premier and the Minister for Multicultural Affairs

Her Excellency, the Ambassador for the Federal Republic of Germany, Anna Prinz

Dorit Herscovici, Cultural Attache for the Israeli Embassy

Twenty years ago, I visited the site of the Nazi concentration camp at Sachsenhausen. I took the hour-long train ride from Berlin to the town of Oranienburg, and was almost the last person on the train by the time I arrived. I then walked through the forlorn-looking town to the site of the camp, where I spent the next few hours - one of a tiny handful of people visiting the site. The overwhelming sense of bleakness and isolation added to the acute awareness of the horrors of what had transpired there.

Twenty years later, I again visited Sachsenhausen. The day before, I had undertaken a cycling tour of Berlin, and the cycling company had distributed brochures encouraging people to visit Sachsenhausen. On arrival this time, there were guides, there were tour groups, there were carefully-built points of reference at the site to facilitate orientation. While the history was what it was, the visit was a different experience.

It was an indication that the German government had acknowledged what had transpired there, and was owning and presenting it to the world.

In that same spirit of openness, the German Foreign Ministry has organised this exhibition on "Jewish Life in Germany Today".

This exhibition is co-hosted by the Consulate-General of Germany, B'nai B'rith NSW and the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, and it is now my pleasure to call on Anna Marks OAM, President of B'nai B'rith NSW, to deliver a formal welcome.

Thank you Anna.

I now wish to invite Jeremy Spinak, President of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, to address us.

Thank you Jeremy.

Ladies and Gentlemen, a number of us have been working with the Consul-General of the Federal Republic of Germany, Lothar Freischlader on this excellent initiative for the past six months, and I wish to acknowledge the immediate receptiveness on his part and on the part of his colleagues at the German Foreign Ministry to the constructive suggestions from the Jewish community in regard to the content of the posters, and say what a pleasure it has been working so collaboratively on this venture.

Please welcome Consul-General Lothar Freischlader.

VIC ALHADEFF

Chief Executive Officer of the NSW Board of Deputies

Ladies and gentlemen, we now have a presentation titled “The Jews of Germany: The Majesty and the Tragedy of 1,000 Years of History.”

It will be delivered by Dr Michael Abrahams-Sprod, Roth Lecturer in Israel, Jewish Civilisation and Holocaust Studies in the Department of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies at the University of Sydney.

Dr Abrahams-Sprod teaches medieval and modern Jewish history, with focuses on the Holocaust, Israel and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

He is currently embarking on a project involving the school curriculum and experience of young Jews in Nazi Germany. Please welcome Dr Abrahams-Sprod.

Thank you Michael.

We will now have a musical interlude by Victor Avila, who will play a violin sonata by Erwin Schulhoff.

Erwin Schulhoff was a Czech composer and pianist born in Prague to a German-Jewish family. He displayed extraordinary talent at an early age, picking out tunes at the piano by the age of three. After serving in the Austrian Army in World War I, he and his works were labelled degenerate and blacklisted by the Nazis in the 1930s because of his Jewish identity and his left-wing politics. It meant he could no longer give recitals, nor could his works be performed publicly.

He moved back to Prague, where friends warned him to leave because as a Communist and a Jew he was doubly at risk. He obtained Soviet citizenship for himself, his wife and son, but was arrested for being a Soviet citizen, rather than for being a Jew.

He was deported to a concentration camp in Wülzburg, Bavaria, where he died from tuberculosis.

Please welcome Victor Avila.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is now my honour to invite the Governor of NSW, His Excellency The Honourable David Hurley AC, DSC (retired) to formally open the exhibition.

Please welcome the Honourable David Hurley.

Ladies and Gentlemen, that concludes the formalities. Please enjoy the refreshments and be sure to view the exhibition.

I wish you a very good evening.

ANNA MARKS OAM

President of B'nai B'rith NSW



It is my great pleasure and honour to welcome

His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd) Governor of NSW and Mrs Hurley, The Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Mr Ray Williams MP, representing Premier Gladys Berejiklian, M/s Dorrit Herskovitz, representing the Ambassador for the State of Israel, Shmuel ben Shmuel, Her Excellency, the Ambassador for the Federal Republic of Germany, Anna Prinz, Lothar Freischlader, Consul-General of The Federal Republic of Germany (NSW), The Member for

Heffron, Mr Ron Hoenig, representing Opposition Leader Luke Foley, The Member for Randwick, Mr Bruce Notley-Smith, Members of B'nai B'rith, Honoured Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I would like to give you a very brief introduction to the history of B'nai B'rith in the USA and subsequently in Australia.

B'nai B'rith was the first Jewish social and welfare organisation started in America in 1843. Its aim was to help destitute widows and orphans.

The organisation became a strong social force and spread to Europe and the first European Lodge started in Berlin in 1882. Its members included the medical profession, intellectuals and business people.

As we all know, there were many Jews who fled from Germany and Austria in the early 1930s and many of them were fortunate enough to settle in Sydney before the war and were then joined by survivors after the war.

Then came the next wave of refugees from the Hungarian revolution in 1957, many of whom also joined B'nai B'rith.

The first wave of immigrants and refugees who came to this wonderful country wanted to recreate something from their previous lives where they were members of B'nai B'rith, and with approval from the USA started B'nai B'rith in Sydney in 1945.

Of course the common language spoken was German, and the early newsletters were written in German. Trouble started when the Hungarians joined ..the older members all said the new members spoke Hungarian together.

In fact Ruth Wirth, the granddaughter of the original founder, Ernest Goldschmidt, is still a B'nai B'rith member. Unfortunately she could not be with us this evening.

The members wanted to establish with B'nai B'rith a familiar social and intellectual atmosphere in their new homeland, to create new friendships and business networks that were lost because of the war.

It is in that spirit of continuing association between Germany and B'nai B'rith that B'nai B'rith is pleased to be hosting this exhibition of Jewish Life in Germany Today, with a number of associated functions over the duration of the exhibition and we look forward to welcoming you to those as well.

Paul Green Video Art created video interviews with Australians who have experienced life in Germany today. To view these interviews click the link https://youtu.be/ex7xvA5gh_Y.

JEREMY SPINAK

President NSW Jewish Board of Deputies



Your Excellency and distinguished guests.

It is a great pleasure to be here today representing the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies as we open an exhibition that looks to the future with hope and promise.

German Jewish history has always been fraught, even before the 1930s. I remember one of the first essays I ever wrote at university was an attack on the so-called German-Jewish symbiosis that supposedly occurred during the years of the enlightenment.

I could not believe the naivety of those who thought such a symbiosis existed..couldn't the German Jews see that their so called "dialogue" was always one-sided....that they were never truly accepted... how tragic that they only awoke from this delusion after Hitler's rise to power.

But the German-Jewish relationship has always been a complex one.

My Polish grandmother not only refused to ever go to Germany, she wouldn't even get on a plane that would fly over Germany.

But my German grandparents loved the country all their lives. They would return every year from the 1960s onwards for two months at a time. They still considered themselves German and my ailing grandfather, refusing to miss his yearly trip, died in Baden Baden in the early 90s. I could never understand how they could have felt this way considering what happened to their family members who weren't lucky enough to escape.

As the exhibition demonstrates, a new chapter is now being written in the complicated history of German-Jewish relations and it appears there is now so much to be hopeful about. 250,000 Jews are freely living their lives in a welcoming and tolerant society that seeks to send a signal to the rest of the world that its history should serve as a warning about man's capacity for wrong. Just yesterday Angela Merkel spoke at a Jewish synagogue in Argentina and noted that Germany's past is a reminder of the need to fight against antisemitism and for freedom and democracy. She implored the international community to fight antisemitism where it is present.

This exhibition speaks of reconciliation, of lessons learned, of hope and it shows that it is possible to completely embrace a dark past while still striving for a bright future. The renaissance of Jewish culture in Germany is as moving as it is powerful. What better way to show that the Nazis failed than for Berlin once again to become a hub of international Jewish life.

If I was to write that university essay again I would say that, unlike old times, today's German-Jewish dialogue is no longer one sided, the Jews are not talking to themselves but to a nation happy to receive their entreats. The exciting possibilities of the beginnings of a true partnership are there for all to see in this exhibition and we are very proud to be here today to join in its launch.

LOTHAR FREISCHLADER

Consul-General of The Federal Republic of Germany (NSW)



Your Excellency (General The Honourable David Hurley AC DSC), Mrs. Hurley, The Hon Bruce Notley-Smith MP, representing the Premier of NSW, Gladys Berejiklian, and also representing The Hon Ray Williams MP, Minister for Multiculturalism and Minister for Disability Services H.E. Dr Anna Prinz, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to the Commonwealth of Australia Anna Marks OAM, President of B'nai B'rith Council NSW and our host, Jeremy Spinak, President of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, Dr Michael Abrahams-Sprod, lecturer on Israel, Jewish Civilization and Holocaust Studies at the University of Sydney – our lecturer tonight.

Distinguished members of the Jewish community, distinguished members of the German community and institutions in Sydney, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure and honour to welcome you all to tonight's opening ceremony of the exhibition "Jewish Life in Germany Today". I am extremely delighted that His Excellency - despite his very busy schedule - accepted our invitation to open this exhibition. And to Anna Marks and her entire team I should like to extend our heartfelt gratitude for hosting this exhibition at B'nai B'rith!

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to several personalities and institutions for their outstanding support in the preparation of this exhibition. I will just name a few: Dr Michael Abrahams-Sprod, Vic Alhadeff, Anna Marks, Norbert Schweizer, my deputy Mr. Jürgen Kurzhals and some generations of interns of the German Consulate General.

What is the reason for this exhibition about Jewish life in Germany today? After the atrocities of the Nazi regime in Germany between 1933 and 1945, after the Holocaust in which 6 million Jews were killed in the most barbaric way and after Hitler and his supporters tried to exterminate the existence of the Jewish people, it has not at all been "normal" that Jewish life flourished again in Germany.

Federal Chancellor Konrad Adenauer signed the compensation contracts with Israel in 1952, seven years after the fall of the Nazi regime, the Federal Republic of Germany had been just three, the State of Israel only four years old. Eight years later, in 1960, the German Chancellor and the former Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion met for the first time in New York.

And in 2008 Chancellor Angela Merkel stated in the Knesset: "the commitment to the State of Israel's right to exist is part of Germany's *raison d'être*".

In 2015 Israel and Germany celebrated on all levels of society the 50th anniversary of establishing diplomatic relations between the two countries. And still: given the horrific historical background these relations are still not "normal" but are "of a special nature".

It would take by far too much time and I think I do not have to elaborate to this distinguished audience on how Germany dealt with the Holocaust in the last decades. And the remembrance does and will continue – also for the sake of future generations.

During the celebratory year 2015 in Germany and in Israel the question came up how much do Jewish communities around the globe know about Jewish life in today's Germany?

Nobody seems to be well informed, including Germans themselves. So the idea was proposed to set up this exhibition. It has already been displayed in a similar way in the USA, Sydney could very well be the number two.

LOTHAR FREISCHLADER

Consul-General of The Federal Republic of Germany (NSW)

In this exhibition Jews with very different backgrounds who live or lived in Germany have been given a voice: Rabbis, artists, media persons, consultants, writers, the former director of the Jewish Museum Berlin Michael Blumenthal and the President of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, Dr. Josef Schuster.

Just one example: the writer and publicist Rafael Seligmann says: “You shall not forget the Shoah. But you should also consider the 1,600 years of German-Jewish history before the Shoah, and the 70 years of Jewish life in Germany after.”

Rafael was born in Tel Aviv in 1947 and emigrated to Germany with his parents ten years later. He studied in Munich and Tel Aviv political science and history and wrote his PhD on Israel’s security policy in 1982. Today he lives in Berlin and has published “The Jewish Voice From Germany” since 2012. This quarterly, published in German and English, has a circulation of 250,000.

We are proud that Rafael Seligmann and many thousands of other Jews living in Germany thus demonstrate that Hitler failed to extinguish Jews from Germany and beyond.

This exhibition is dedicated to all Jewish citizens in Germany, they speak for themselves and talk about their life and work.

The non-Jewish majority in Germany owes to German Jews and all Jews living in Germany gratitude and respect for there is no “last victory” for Nazis to have a “Judenrein” Germany.

Jewish citizens again have become an integral part of German society and contribute to its enrichment. Jewish life in Germany is alive!

Thank you very much.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to express my sincerest thanks and gratitude to the President of B’nai B’rith, Mrs. Anna Marks.

Your support and assistance has been outstanding. Without you this evening would not have been possible.



L-R Her Excellency, the Ambassador for the Federal Republic of Germany, Anna Prinz, Consul-General of The Federal Republic of Germany (NSW) Lothar Freischlader, Mrs Hurley, His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd) Governor of NSW, Anna Marks OAM President of B’nai B’rith NSW and Mrs Freischlader

GENERAL DAVID HURLEY AC DSC (RETD)

Governor of New South Wales



I am delighted to be here for this exhibition opening and to hear this very informative lecture by Dr Michael Abrahams-Sprod. I commence by acknowledging the traditional owners of this land on which the university stands and their elders, past and present.

When I was invited to open this exhibition, the first thought that crossed my mind was: Why is it important for the German Government to launch this exhibition?

I lived in Münster for 2 years from 1982-3. In a microcosm, this city showed the rebuilding of the German nation and society, part of which was the grappling with both its recent history and Jewish genocide under the Nazi regime. This was highlighted to me through visits to Dachau and Auschwitz.

In the 1990s, the influx of Eastern European migrants after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reintegration of Jewish people posed a major policy task for the German Government.

This is a story worth telling.

It is also important as there are still many challenges for Jews living in Germany, and many challenges for German policy makers.

Many Jews that did survive the Holocaust emigrated to other parts of the world including Australia, the United States and the newly-proclaimed State of Israel. Australia hosted over 170,000 refugees from all over the world, including Jews from Europe and Germany during and after WWII.

Within a generation, continental Europe, and especially Germany, had, to a large degree, seen the loss of its Jewish population.

I understand that over the past two decades, primarily as the result of the 1991 Quota Refugee Law, the Jewish population in Germany has grown from fewer than 30,000 in 1990 to more than 200,000 today. This exhibition “Jewish Life in Germany Today” brings these numbers – indeed, these faces - to life.

In my work as Governor of New South Wales, I aim to promote understanding of and between cultures, groups and organisations in our community. So I am delighted to say that I believe that this exhibition achieves the very valuable goal of bringing to our attention the historical and the contemporary aspects of living as a member of the Jewish community in Germany.

Through explaining what living in Germany means to them, how the history of the Holocaust influenced their personal and family lives and what dreams they have for their future in Germany, we gain rare insights from students, best-selling authors, Rabbis and entrepreneurs, reflecting the diversity of the German-Jewish community today.

This exhibition, I feel, confronts the challenges of Germany today. There are three issues that have a strong influence on Germany and which other nations also deal with, in varying degrees:

1. The ‘finish-line sentiment’
This raises the question – When do we stop feeling guilty? And move on from our guilt about the past to building the future? When do we draw a line under history?

GENERAL DAVID HURLEY AC DSC (RETD)

Governor of New South Wales

2. How does a nation tackle the emergence of far-right extremism and anti-semitism?
3. How do we successfully integrate Muslim immigrants, as Germany has largely done, and combine this with Jewish reintegration, in a nation in which there are more Muslims than Jews?

This exhibition helps to provide a context to these broader social and political issues through the eyes of individuals.

There is another audience for this exhibition and that is the wider Australian community and especially our young people. This exhibition is important for their understanding.

Many of them may not realise that until the Nazis came to power in Germany, there had been for centuries a vibrant Jewish culture in Germany and Central/Eastern Europe. Few people know about Jewish life in today's Germany; this exhibition sheds some light on the positive developments in the past two to three decades, after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. It sheds light, too, on the importance of culture to our understanding of who we are.

I would like to congratulate those who have brought this exhibition to life:

- The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany for their sincere and deeply-held commitment to the commemoration of culture for the education of contemporary society;
- The German Consulate in Sydney, for staging this exhibition in conjunction with: B'nai B'rith and The NSW Jewish Board of Deputies – both organisations which represent, advocate for and assist Jewish people in New South Wales.

When the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum was dedicated in 1993, these words of Holocaust survivor and author Elie Wiesel, were inscribed in stone at the entrance:

'For the dead and the living, we must bear witness.'

But Mr Wiesel's words go further ...

"For not only are we responsible for the memories of the dead, we are also responsible for what we are doing with those memories."

These remarks signify to me the importance of integrating past history with our contemporary life and our plans for the future.

Through learning about the past, we can learn lessons for the future about the value of human life and cultural institutions, about the importance of respect for each other and harmonious relationships, while acknowledging the diversity of who we are and what we believe; and the value in upholding our free and democratic traditions.

I invite you to spread the word about this exhibition. I hope that it will attract many people, including school classes, high school and university students and members of the general public.

It is my privilege to now declare the 'Jewish Life in Germany Today' exhibition officially open.

DR MICHAEL ABRAHAMS-SPROD

Roth Lecturer in Israel, Jewish Civilisation and Holocaust Studies,
Department of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies, The University of Sydney

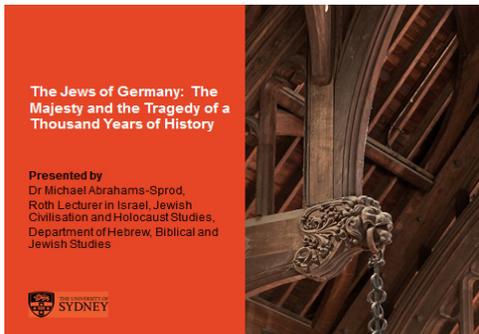


The Jews of Germany:

The Majesty and the Tragedy of One Thousand Years of History

Your Excellencies, members of the diplomatic corps, distinguished guests and ladies and gentlemen, my connection to the story of the Jews of Germany is both personal and professional. Personal in that it is my heritage and professional in that as an academic, my encounter with the history of the Jews of Magdeburg, when

writing my PhD and publishing the history of this community under Nazism as my first book, also led me to explore the richness of a community which dates from 965 CE. This evening I will be presenting you with an overview of the history of the Jews of Germany – a community rich in its history and legacy and also representative of the triumphs and the tragedies of the Jewish people.



“The wise men of Ashkenaz ... were handed down the Torah by their forefathers in the days of the destruction of the Temple”, wrote the Talmud scholar Asher ben Yehiel, a recognized authority on the Jews in Germany. This is one of the earliest references to the Ashkenazim as a religious and cultural entity in Europe, whose presence extended from France across the Holy Roman Empire and into Russia. The “days of the destruction of the Temple” described by Asher ben Yehiel referred to the destruction of Herod’s Temple in Jerusalem by the Roman legions under Titus in the year 70 CE. This date marks the end of the Jewish state and the beginning of the Diaspora, the dispersion of the Jews to other lands.

As early as in the 4th century CE Jews lived in the German provinces of the Roman Empire.

In 321 CE a flourishing Jewish community existed in Cologne. The Roman emperor Constantine indeed may have already become acquainted with the community when he erected a bridge over the Rhine at Cologne in the year 306. As emperor, Constantine sent decrees to the Cologne city council in 321 and 326. These dealt with the Jewish councillors of the town and represent the earliest reference to the presence of a Jewish community in the German provinces of the Roman Empire. Sources from the sixth to the eighth centuries provide firm proof that there were Jews

living in the territories of the Frankish kings, and that they were earning their living as merchants, landowners, customs officials, doctors and master-coiners.

With the spread of Christianity, Jews were increasingly ill-treated and persecuted, particularly in the western part of the Frankish kingdom. There are no surviving documents about their life in the eastern part before the time of Charlemagne, king of the Franks, and after 800, the first Holy Roman Emperor. Charlemagne united a large part of western Europe under his rule. Under his protection, his Jewish subjects were granted equal rights as citizens, enabling them to devote themselves to their religious, cultural and economic life. Jewish seafarers and long-distance traders undertook trade expeditions to Egypt, the Middle East, Persia and India. Trade caravans left Persia for China where there were also Jewish communities.

DR MICHAEL ABRAHAMS-SPROD

Roth Lecturer in Israel, Jewish Civilisation and Holocaust Studies,

Department of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies, The University of Sydney

During the Middle Ages from the 10th to 15th centuries in spite of dreadful persecution, the German Jews experienced a religious and cultural revival which made them the legitimate and authoritative successors to the religious centres of Babylon and Spain.

Under Charlemagne numerous Jewish communities were founded and existing ones were consolidated. It was this atmosphere of widespread religious freedom that laid the foundations of German Jewish culture which was to flourish over the following centuries. Between the tenth and thirteenth centuries there were hundreds of Jewish communities both in small villages and in towns such Bamberg, Erfurt, Regensburg, Vienna, Prague and Cologne. The three municipalities of Speyer, Worms and Mainz, known as the SCHUM municipalities after the initial letters

of their Hebrew names, were the focus of a vibrant cultural and spiritual way of life. The centres of Jewish life were now no longer Babylon and Jerusalem, but Spanish, French and German communities in Europe such as Troyes and the SCHUM municipalities. Ashkenazi Jewry finally now became the decisive influence among the Jews of the western world.

The Bible, the prayer book, the Talmud and the commentaries were and still remain the pillars of Judaism. It was Solomon ben Isaak, known as Rashi, who wrote the commentaries to the Bible and the Talmud. He had studied in Worms and at the age of twenty-five founded a Talmud school in Troyes. The Ashkenazi communities also developed the *kehillah* (community), an institution of self-administration which was recognised by the Christian authorities.

The chief administrative officers and the wise men worked out the regulations and statutes (*takkanot*) for all communities. Above all, the statutes became the common property of Ashkenazi Jewry. Despite the persecution and destruction of many communities, Jewish cultural and religious life enjoyed a golden age between the tenth and fourteenth centuries.

As a rule, kings and emperors took a benevolent attitude towards the Jews during this period. Nevertheless their power during the Crusades mostly proved too weak. In 1096 bands of marauders moved into the Rhineland killing thousands of Jews. The church had sown religious hatred. Greed fired the fanatical crusaders in their belief that, to please God, their armed pilgrimage to conquer the Holy Land should include the murder of those Jews who refused to be baptized. Nearly all Jews preferred the alternative, the act of *Kiddush HaShem* (the sanctification of the name of God), and committed suicide or had themselves killed, in order to prove their faith. Despite the Crusades, the Jews always built up their communities again; scholars and their schools continued to compile religious writings and develop the ethical principles of Ashkenazi Judaism.

In 1215 Pope Innocent III, merciless enemy of the Jews, convoked the fourth Lateran Council. It was here that this pope pushed through the antisemitic regulations which formed the basis of the humiliating living conditions and slandering of the Jews that has endured to the present day. Innocent III prohibited the charging of interest by Christians and shifted the blame for the exorbitant interest rates onto Jewish greed. The hostile laws of the Lateran Council were to expose Jews to widespread humiliation. Henceforth they were excluded from all public offices, had to sew a piece of yellow cloth on their clothing as a sign of their social degradation, and were not allowed to show themselves in public during Holy Week. Simultaneously Jews were offered special rights and protection in exchange for payment and therefore were caught in a vicious cycle.

During and after the last Crusades, there were renewed massacres of the Jews in Germany. The accusation of ritual murder and host desecration were revived and in the years of the Black Death from 1347 to 1352, when the plague killed a third of Europe's population, the Jews again were scapegoated. Many Jews succeeded in fleeing to Poland, where they were welcomed. By the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth centuries the Jews in most German cities had been killed or driven out. There now began a decline in the Jewish communities and their scholarship. The cultural consequences of this development and the widespread stagnation and ossification of German Judaism were to last until the end of the eighteenth century.

DR MICHAEL ABRAHAMS-SPROD

Roth Lecturer in Israel, Jewish Civilisation and Holocaust Studies

Department of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies, The University of Sydney

The beginning of the sixteenth century marked a milestone in Christian-Jewish relations, in that after this time the Jews rebelled openly against the attacks of their enemies. This was above all possible because the honorary position of *shtadlan* (intercessor) was set up, a spokesman for Jewish community affairs before the gentile authorities. The most famous *shtadlan* was Josel of Rosheim, initially head of the Jewish community in Lower Alsace, then, on his own initiative, the champion of the Jewish cause in the empire. Josel of Rosheim's stance signified a turning point in the legal and social position of the Jews in Germany. The legal status of the Jewish communities began to consolidate and become more secure.

One of the most bitter opponents of the Jews was the reformer Martin Luther, who whilst attacking the Jews was translating the Bible into German with love and reverence. The Bible became an inspiration for artists, poets and musicians. In the world of the Christian scholars the study of the Hebrew language and the interest in Hebrew literature had steadily begun with the spread of humanism. The Hebrew Bible, the Talmud and Kabbalah thus aroused considerable new interest.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the legal situation of the Jews gradually improved. Nevertheless, they had to put up with humiliating regulations and oppressive taxation. In towns they lived mostly in isolated areas, occasionally behind ghetto walls. In a century of merciless civil wars, the towns knew how to make use of the Jews – who were neutral in the conflict between Catholic and Protestant – as traders and moneylenders whose horizons extended beyond regional boundaries. In the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648), in which a large part of central Europe was devastated, Jews were welcomed as sutlers, peddlers and money-changers, horse and corn traders, smugglers of foodstuffs and war material, and obtainers of ransoms. Of greater significance for the Jews were the efforts of the German princes after the end of the war to revive the depressed economy of their territories as quickly as possible.

In 1648 thousands of Jews escaped from the massacres of the Cossack Commander Chmielnickji and fled westward. The refugees were totally without means to support themselves. Some could be absorbed into already existing communities. Some, however, without the right of abode, sank to the level of vagabonds and beggars and even fell in with bands of thieves. It took almost two hundred years before the descendants of these refugees found a normal existence. Many of the arrivals were scholars who gave a new impetus to rabbinical study in Germany. This intellectual and cultural activity in the Jewish communities of Germany had never actually been interrupted. Even in the seventeenth century there were outstanding scholars at work.

The reconstruction of Germany in the seventeenth century gave many local Jews the opportunity to achieve economic wealth, especially in the new sectors of manufacturing and trade. In the eighteenth century there was a considerable and very influential number of Jewish army suppliers, moneylenders, court bankers, and agents, the so-called court Jews, who were also mostly close friends of their rulers. Highly regarded court Jews, such as the Oppenheimers, Rothschilds, Behrens-Lippmans, Ephraims, Itzigs, and Liebmanns, nevertheless often remained very protective of their Jewishness. Many schools, hospitals and synagogues owed their existence to such court Jews, who in this way contributed to the economic and cultural flowering of the Jewish communities. Despite the more stable status of many Jewish communities, the majority of the Jews remained poor and found it difficult to do more than eke out a paltry existence in thoroughly miserable conditions.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century German Jewry consisted of three economic classes. The large majority belonged to the lower and lowest classes, a fair-sized minority to the well-off middle class, and finally there was the small upper class made up of the rich merchants, Jews attached to the court, and the many community heads who were often both scholars and merchants. It was above all in Berlin that their elevation into Germany's cultural elite happened. It was not only wealth and knowledge of the manufacturing sector that those immigrants brought with them, for they were also integrated to a certain extent into German culture. One of these Jews was Moses Mendelssohn. He became famous as a German philosopher of the Enlightenment and as a pioneer and symbol of the emancipation and acculturation of the Jews in Germany.

DR MICHAEL ABRAHAMS-SPROD

Roth Lecturer in Israel, Jewish Civilisation and Holocaust Studies,
Department of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies, The University of Sydney

In his private life he was an Orthodox Jew. He recommended a German education for all Jews as a preparation for being useful members of German society. Mendelssohn had little sympathy and understanding for the traditional way of life of Jewish communities and for later generations became the model for those Jews who hoped that their Jewish belief would be respected as part of their legal rights as equal citizens.

It was also at this time that the split between Eastern and Western Jews occurred. In Berlin the salons of Henriette Herz, Rahel Varnhagen and the de Beers became cultural centres of the German intelligentsia and the educated aristocracy. The majority of urban German Jews during Mendelssohn's lifetime were influenced by the intellectual representatives of the Enlightenment. The Jews on the land, on the other hand, continued to cling to their traditional way of life. After a long period of stagnation this traditional Jewry was reinforced by Polish Jews from the new Prussian provinces and Silesia.

The early modern age did not begin for Jews until the Enlightenment and the conquests of Napoléon.

The ideas of the Enlightenment, the revolution in America and France and the Napoleonic era led the Jews in western and central Europe being liberated. With King Frederick William's edict of 11 March 1812, the Prussian state declared the Jews to be its national subjects and citizens, a right that France had granted twenty years earlier to its own Jewish population. There were, however, two qualifications: the offices of state remained closed to them, and the stipulations of the edict did not apply to the new or regained territories. As a result there were still Jews without

rights of nationality in Prussia in 1848. However, most states of the German Federation began to reverse the concessions granted in 1812. A wave of antisemitic laws paved the way for a period of moral depression for Jews.

The disappointing encounter of young Jews with the German Enlightenment and the subsequent wave of jingoistic German nationalism sparked off a period of self-reflection, and an intensive debate within the Jewish community on the problems of Jews in a modern society. Notable in this discussion was Leopold Zunz who founded the study of Judaism as a scholarly discipline. Zunz and his friends researched in all areas of Jewish culture: its historical development, the history of the Jewish people, rabbinical literature and the philosophy of religion, Jewish literature and poetry, and folklore and liturgical music.

Around the middle of the century, Abraham Geiger, the pioneer of Reform Judaism began to make his mark as one of the most important representatives of Jewish learning together with Zunz. The first Jewish history writer on a grand scale was Heinrich Graetz from Breslau, with his eleven-volume *History of the Jews from Ancient Times to the Present Day*. Represented here for the first time was the complete story of the Jews.

In the years between 1810 and 1850 decisive internal Jewish struggles took place between Orthodoxy and the Reform movement. The success of the Reform movement in turn sparked off a modern Orthodoxy, as represented by the rabbis Samson Raphael Hirsch in Frankfurt am Main and Esriel Hildesheimer in Berlin. They wanted to preserve a Judaism which was true to the Law, while supporting the use of the vernacular in teaching, along with secular upbringing and modern dress. A further reaction to the Reform movement also led to the birth of Conservative Judaism in Germany – a movement which aimed to position itself midway between Modern Orthodoxy and Reform.

The Imperial Germany of the Kaisers brought full equality of rights to the Jews.

During the period up to the founding of the German Empire in 1871 Jews achieved respected positions in the economy and politics of the now increasingly industrialised country. Ultimately, it was not until after its foundation that all Jews achieved equal rights. The freedoms of trade and profession since 1848 and their almost complete legal equality gave the Jews opportunities to develop in all areas of public life, except for the army and civil service.

DR MICHAEL ABRAHAMS-SPROD

Roth Lecturer in Israel, Jewish Civilisation and Holocaust Studies,
Department of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies, The University of Sydney

They soon attained leading positions in banking, transport and the newspapers. In industry Jews rose to become leading entrepreneurs through new types of organisation, the introduction of modern technology and the production of new goods. In Germany, Jews, above all, developed the setting up of department stores, the manufacture of ready-made ladies' and gentlemen's clothing, the tobacco, leather, and fur industries. Jews also took up academic posts and became scientists and above all, teachers of law. While in earlier centuries as many as half of all Jews would be peddlers or beggars, the number in 1895 amounted to no more than twelve percent of a total Jewish population of 600,000.

Simultaneous to this assimilation – which they did willingly as they considered themselves German patriots – a new wave of hatred for the Jews swept across the country. Traditional antisemitism was now combined with a pseudoscientific race theory which postulated the superiority of German blood. Political antisemitism rallied for de-emancipation of the Jews. This was not taken seriously by the majority of the Jews. At the same time Jewish existence in all its forms experienced a new lease of life. Moses Hess's idea of a Jewish renaissance and a return to the country of their fathers was kept alive and although he had not read Hess before, it was Theodor Herzl who finally found enthusiastic support amongst the Jews of Eastern Europe whereas, with the exception of a few academics, the great majority of German Jews were skeptical toward political Zionism. Most German Jews still believed in merging with the German people whilst still retaining their Jewish culture. In 1897 the First World Zionist Congress took place in Basle, Switzerland and scarcely fifty years later the State of Israel was founded.

The Weimar Republic was a climax in the history of Judaism. Despite growing antisemitism, the German Jews were able to operate in all areas of public life; of equal importance was the combination of an inner Jewish renaissance, an orthodoxy which was close to life, and the ideas of Zionism which had given the Jews a new self-confidence.

Over 12,000 Jews sacrificed their lives in the First World War for the German fatherland. However, this proof of their patriotism was barely acknowledged. In the years of the Weimar Republic the Jews enjoyed complete equality before the law for the first time. Many were thrust into the limelight in the fields of the arts, economics and politics. German Jews believed that their work and achievements were their contributions to a free society. Many non-Jews however saw it as the Jews imposing their will and culture on German society. Even though it should have been considered an enrichment, it aroused hate and aversion in a country lacking self-confidence.

The Zionist movement in Germany grew as did student societies and fraternities. Their representatives, such as Martin Buber, warned against overzealous assimilation and the abandonment of Jewish values. Before and after the First World War a new influx of Eastern European Jews had arrived in Germany. They thereby strengthened the otherwise dwindling number of German Jews. This wave of immigration also aroused fear and aversion, not only amongst right-wing non-Jews but also within the German Jewish community.

The majority of German Jews belonged to the Central Association of German Citizens of the Jewish Faith, or at least identified with its aspirations. In the manner of Moses Mendelssohn, they saw themselves primarily as Germans who belonged to the Jewish religious community. However, rising antisemitism proved to be a stronger force. Despite rising unemployment and poverty, Germany's Jews regarded the Weimar Republic as a high point in the history of the Jewish people. As early as 1923 however, Hitler and his followers had attempted their putsch in Munich with the aim of seizing power. The years of the world economic crisis then helped his movement to grow at an astonishing rate. From 1933 onward Germany's Jews were humiliated and deprived of their rights.

DR MICHAEL ABRAHAMS-SPROD

Roth Lecturer in Israel, Jewish Civilisation and Holocaust Studies,

Department of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies, The University of Sydney

The process of humiliation, segregation, economic impoverishment, forced emigration, physical violence and ultimately dehumanisation and extermination put an end to the rich historical experience of German Jewry.

The renaissance of Judaism persisted and became most tenacious in the face of National Socialism and the institutions and ideas of the 1920s helped the Jews to resist Nazi isolation and tyranny through a remarkable commitment to their own communal organisations as well as the values of both German and Jewish culture, as exemplified by the German Jewish leader Rabbi Dr Leo Baeck. Yet, these were no match when faced with the brutality of the regime. From 1933 Jews were targeted and from 1935 defined racially and stripped of all legal rights. Still, emigration

did not peak until the November pogrom of 1938 which led to mass emigration and sadly for many the impossibility of escaping. By the time of the outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939, few Jewish organisations remained and the community had been reduced to poverty. With the conquest of territories in the east and the unleashing of the Final Solution, German Jews were sent on to various holding centres, killing sites and eventually purpose-built extermination centres. By April 1945 in the shadow of the Holocaust, the only Jews remaining in Germany were those in hiding, of mixed parentage, in so-called privileged mixed marriages or those in camps. The process of economic impoverishment, forced emigrations, physical violence and extermination put an end to the rich historical experience of German Jewry. Approximately 500,000 Jews lived in Germany at the onset of Nazi terror. Only 12,000 remained after the liberation of the camps in May 1945.

A growing trust in German democracy, connections to the country and both the honest efforts of institutions and the general population in responsibly and thoroughly coming to terms with the past have enabled Jews to consider Germany as their home.

In the aftermath of the war the number of Jews living in Germany remained constant at 30,000 for decades. German reunification did little to change this as there were only about 350 members of the small Jewish communities in the former East Germany. It was the commencement of Jewish immigration from the former Soviet Union beginning in 1990 that served to revive and transform the community, with its population reaching 100,000 in 2000. For a long time, Jews living in Germany refused to define themselves as German Jews and insisted instead on the proverbial 'sitting on packed luggage'. A growing trust in German

democracy and connections to the cities in which they lived led many to accept Germany as their home. Despite antisemitism and the exclusionary views of some, Jews of the new Germany have found new trust and it has not been shaken easily. Germany has undergone a transformation – in spite of its Nazi past and the persistence of right-wing extremism in every-day life – as the result of the honest efforts of German institutions and the general public in responsibly and thoroughly coming to terms with this past. The most recent addition to the Jewish community are Israelis, who now form part of the approximately 250,000-strong Jewish community of Germany in 2017 – which still continues to be the fastest growing Jewish community in the Jewish diaspora today.

As exemplified by the long-standing former president of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, the late Ignatz Bubis, Jews in Germany once again are proud to identify themselves as German citizens of the Jewish faith.

From beginnings in the German provinces of Rome through to the present day, Jews paved the way for the foundations of the Ashkenazi tradition and contributed disproportionately to the evolution of modern Germany, ultimately ending in their physical destruction during the Holocaust. Yet, through all of the majesty and tragedy of this epic story, the Jews of Germany have prevailed and are once again are vital and important fabric of German society.



JEWISH LIFE IN GERMANY TODAY

In the aftermath of World War II and the Holocaust, there were doubts that Jewish life in Germany would have a future. The idea of rebuilding a Jewish community in the country of the perpetrators seemed far-fetched for most people. Today, Germany is fortunate to once again be home to a vibrant and thriving Jewish community. There are contemporary German Jewish magazines, newspapers, restaurants and community centres. This transformation is nowhere as visible as in Berlin, Germany's multicultural capital. The city is home to more than 40 memorial sites and museums that pay tribute to the victims of Nazi-era crimes. About 20,000 Jews – most of whom are young Israelis – currently live in Berlin, and the city has become a popular travel destination for Jews from all around the world. That the Jewish community again shapes the social life and local culture is an achievement which is due at least in part to the influx of Jewish immigrants in recent years. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, more than 220,000 people of Jewish descent have settled in Germany. In the last two decades alone, the Jewish population increased considerably, growing from fewer than 30,000 in 1990 to more than about 250,000 today – making it the fastest-growing Jewish community worldwide.

The exhibition, originally established in 2014 by the German Information Centre of the German Embassy in Washington D.C., brings these numbers to life. In concise and striking statements, Jews explain what living in Germany means to them. From students to best-selling authors to rabbis and entrepreneurs, their biographies reflect the diversity of the German-Jewish community today. And while they all agree that history plays an important role for Jewish life in modern Germany, they also share an optimistic mindset: there is a renaissance of Jewish culture in Germany and it is welcomed as an enriching contribution to an open and diverse society. The relationship of the Jewish community to Germany will always be influenced by the past. But as W. Michael Blumenthal, former Director of the Jewish Museum Berlin, states, "Today, the Jewish population of Germany consists of many young people from all parts of the world who practice their religion very freely" – just as freely as they do in Australia.

WALTER HOMOLKA > RABBI



Homolka's student identity card from 1989, issued in London where he did his Jewish & Rabbinical studies at King's College London and the Leo Baeck College from 1986-1992.



“An important task of a rabbi in modern Germany is to make sure that religion remains a dominant part of daily life in the Jewish community – a community that primarily consists of people who have emigrated from the former Soviet Union. The future of Jewish life will depend on our success in this effort. The supportive framework provided by Germany makes me optimistic!”



RABBI WALTER HOMOLKA, born in Lower Bavaria in 1964, is the founder and rector of the Abraham Geiger College in Potsdam, near Berlin. The institution is Germany's first rabbinical seminary since World War II. Rabbi Homolka is also an executive board member of the World Union for Progressive Judaism, executive director of the Conservative Zacharias Frankel College and CEO of the Ernst Ludwig Ehrlich Scholarship Foundation for gifted Jewish students.



WALTER ROTHSCHILD > RABBI



Walter Rothschild is the founder and editor of "HaRakevet," a quarterly newsletter specializing in news and historical material about railways in the Middle East – especially those in Israel.

“For me, personally, the past plays an enormous role – that’s after all one of the reasons why I originally accepted a job in Germany. My father came from Germany and it felt like the right thing to do to come back and close the circle.”



RABBI WALTER ROTHSCHILD, born 1954 in Bradford (UK), is a rabbi, author, railway expert and member of the Board of the Union for Progressive Judaism in Germany, as well as the singer of the jazz band, Rabbi Walter Rothschild and the Minyan Boys. He regularly intervenes in societal debates concerning Judaism, such as the 2012 debate on circumcision in Germany. In 2001, three young men insulted and attacked Rothschild in the subway in Berlin. Despite this experience, he says, “I’m not afraid to live here. Overall, Germany is a very tolerant country.”



YouTube Playlist
"The Minyan Boys"

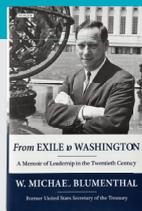


W. MICHAEL BLUMENTHAL

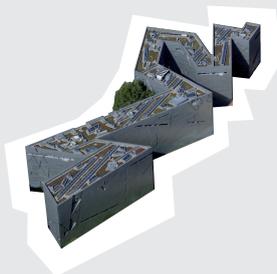
➤ FORMER DIRECTOR OF THE JEWISH MUSEUM BERLIN AND RET. U.S. SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY

“Today, the Jewish population of Germany consists of many young people from all parts of the world who find Germany an attractive place to live and who practice their religion very freely, just as freely as we do in the United States.”

In his book “The Invisible Wall: 300 Years of a German-Jewish Family” (published in 1998), Blumenthal traces the lives of his ancestors and the difficult relationship between German gentiles and Jews since the 17th century. Based in part on this written exploration of how the Holocaust could have happened, the German government considered Blumenthal to be an appropriate director of the newly built Jewish Museum Berlin.



W. MICHAEL BLUMENTHAL was born in Oranienburg (near Berlin) in 1926. His family was able to escape to Shanghai in 1939, where he survived World War II. In 1947, Blumenthal immigrated to the US and pursued a career as an economics professor, politician, manager and author. During the Carter administration, he served as Secretary of the Treasury between 1977 and 1979. Blumenthal served as director of the Jewish Museum Berlin from 1997 to 2014.





VIVIAN LEA ROKEACH
> ENTREPRENEUR

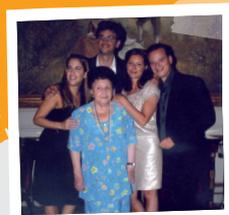


“My generation is happy to live in Germany! There are a lot of Jewish people moving especially to Berlin because this is an incredible city where we feel safe.”



“I mainly use my smartphone to catch up with my family and friends. To me, family is definitely the most important thing in my life: we do and own everything together.”

VIVIAN ROKEACH was born in Berlin in 1982. Her grandparents survived the Holocaust in occupied Poland. After the war, they came to Berlin and founded a paint factory in 1952. Today, the company is operated by Vivian and her father. The family also owns real estate and runs several hotels in Berlin.



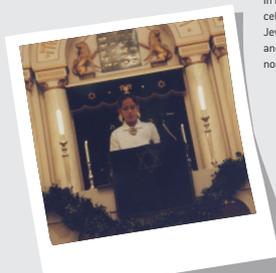
Grandma

Vivian's grandmother surrounded by her grandchildren. “It is only due to the incredible story of my grandparents that I can be here today! My grandmother jumped out of a train which was going to Auschwitz. From there she managed to go back to her hometown and survive the war,” tells Vivian.



me

Twelve year old Vivian celebrating her bat mitzvah in Berlin. “Me and my family celebrate all the major Jewish holidays together, and we invite our Jewish and non-Jewish friends over.”





ADRIANA ALTARAS

> ACTOR, STAGE DIRECTOR, AUTHOR

"I admit, it is very particular to live in the country of the perpetrators. But Germany is the country which has tried hardest to deal with the past. Today maybe not every problem is solved in Germany, but there is a lot in motion here, much more than in other countries. And this is great!"

THE ACTOR

In 2014 Adriana Altaras performs in the musical "Anatevka" in the St. Pauli-Theater in Hamburg. The American original version of "Fiddler On The Roof" is based on the stories of Yiddish bestselling author Sholem Alechem.



THE AUTHOR

In her book "Titos Brille" (Tito's glasses), published in 2011, Adriana Altaras tells the story of her "strenuous" family



ADRIANA ALTARAS is an actress and stage director. She was born in 1960 in Zagreb (former Yugoslavia, present-day Croatia) and grew up in Italy and Germany. She later studied acting in Berlin and New York. She also conducted interviews with Holocaust survivors on behalf of the USC Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education, founded by Steven Spielberg. Today she lives in Berlin with her husband and two sons.



RAFAEL SELIGMANN

> WRITER AND PUBLICIST

“You shall not forget the Shoah. But you should also consider the 1,600 years of German-Jewish history before the Shoah, and the soon to be 70 years of Jewish life in Germany after.”

RAFAEL SELIGMANN was born in Tel Aviv in 1947, and immigrated to Germany with his parents ten years later. He studied political science and history in Munich and Tel Aviv, and wrote his doctoral dissertation on Israel's security policy in 1982. Today he lives in Berlin and works as a freelance journalist, writer and publicist. His debut novel, “Rubinsteins Versteigerung” (Rubinstein's Auction, 1988), was the first work of contemporary German Jewish literature. Seligmann's writings continue to explore the relationships between Germans, Jews and Israelis.

“I write all my articles and books by hand using a pen!”



Rafael Seligmann has published “The Jewish Voice From Germany” since 2012. The journal is issued quarterly in English and German and has a total circulation of 250,000.





SHLOMO BISTRITZKY
> STATE RABBI OF THE FREE AND HANSEATIC CITY OF HAMBURG



My grandfather supported my wish to work in Germany: “If you contribute to Jewish life finding a new home again in the place from which I had to flee, then this is the best reply to the Holocaust!”



Grandfather Loeb Bistritzky (far left) with his family.

RABBI BISTRITZKY was born in Jerusalem in 1977. His great-grandfather, Markus, was a merchant in Hamburg, and his father, Levi, was the chief rabbi of Safed in Northern Israel. Bistritzky studied Jewish Law in New York, Manchester and Berlin. In 2003, he moved to Hamburg with his wife and two children. Since 2012 he has served as the local and state rabbi of the Jewish community in Hamburg.

Rabbi Bistritzky with his son on the staircase of the Talmud Torah School in Hamburg. The headquarter of the Jewish Community of Hamburg is also based here.





MICHAEL BIELICKY

> MEDIA ARTIST, PROFESSOR FOR DIGITAL MEDIA ART



“Paradoxically enough, I discovered my Jewish identity only upon emigrating to Germany! Here I had my coming-out, so to say. In Czechoslovakia I did not dare to talk about it at the time.”



MICHAEL BIELICKY was born 1954 in Prague, in the former Czechoslovakia. Bielicky immigrated to West Germany in 1969, where he studied medicine. From 1980 to 1982, he lived in New York and worked as a photographer and horse cab driver. From 1984 to 1989 he earned a Master of Arts degree at the Academy of Fine Arts in Düsseldorf. In 1991 he returned to Prague, where he remained until 2006. There, he founded and taught at the New Media Art department at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague. Since 2006, Bielicky has been a professor and head of the Media Art department at the University of Art and Design, Karlsruhe.



In his works Bielicky also addresses the subjects of belief and identity.

*Picture:
“Menora/ Inventur,” 1989,
1-channel video sculpture,
275 x 190 x 117 cm,
Land Baden-Württemberg*





CHICHE NÚÑEZ
> DANCER

“Everyone should accept everyone else as they are.”

TANGO ARGENTINO

Since 2003, Chiche Núñez has run a tango centre in Berlin where people can take dance classes and learn about Argentinian tango culture. He regards tango as a way of life that opens an otherwise inaccessible world to him. Chiche Núñez describes tango as a space where one encounters both artistic and human issues.



GERMAN-JEWISH NORMALITY?

Chiche Núñez has often experienced anti-Semitism in the form of sentences such as “I don’t like Jews!”. In his opinion, there needs to be far more contact between Jews and non-Jews in order to achieve a new normality between Germans and Jews.



Brief profile on YouTube

CHICHE NÚÑEZ was born in 1972 and grew up in Buenos Aires, Argentina. During the time of the military dictatorship, he and his family left Argentina and lived temporarily in Peru. He first came to Germany in 1998 for professional reasons, later settling in Berlin, where he works as a dancer, choreographer, dance teacher and director. He became a German citizen in November 2015, but retains a deep personal connection to his homeland. He also travels frequently all over the world. For instance, he often visits Israel, where he – a German-Argentinian with Jewish roots – prays at the Western Wall. Judaism also plays an important role in his daily life. He eats kosher food at home and orders vegetarian food in secular restaurants. He attends the synagogue on high holidays and also tries to observe the day of rest on the Sabbath whenever his often hectic working life allows.



“I came to Germany to reconcile the past with the present. A large part of my family was murdered here in the Holocaust, but in the meantime I like living in Germany.”

SCHLEIMHAUT

Since arriving in Germany ten years ago, Yael Reuveny has attended a total of three German courses. As she herself says, the results have been modest. However, she now has a “horrible favourite word”: Schleimhaut, the word for “mucous membrane”.

FAREWELL HERR SCHWARZ

In her award-winning documentary film, *Farewell Herr Schwarz*, Yael Reuveny explores her family's history. The film tells the story of the search for her grandmother's missing brother, who stayed in Germany after the Second World War. Ultimately, the film is about coming to terms with the Holocaust on a very personal level.



Yael Reuveny was born in Petah Tivka, Israel, in 1980 and spent part of her childhood in the United States. After attending film school in Israel, she moved to Berlin in 2005 to make a film about the history of her family. She worked on this project until 2013. During this time, she made new friends and met kindred spirits and decided to stay in Berlin. She feels a connection to Judaism for cultural, rather than religious, reasons. For example, the year begins for her with Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, which is celebrated in the autumn.



“The Jewish community in Germany has grown significantly again since the Shoah and is very diverse. That is a great gift. We feel at home in Germany and see our future in this country, whose values we support.”



DR JOSEF SCHUSTER
PRESIDENT OF THE CENTRAL COUNCIL OF
JEWS IN GERMANY

DR JOSEF SCHUSTER has been President of the Central Council of Jews in Germany and Vice-President of the World Jewish Congress and the European Jewish Congress since 2014. He has been Chairperson of the Jewish Community of Würzburg and Lower Franconia since 1998 and President of the Association of Jewish Communities in Bavaria since 2002. He served as Vice-President of the Central Council of Jews in Germany from 2010 to 2014.

THE CENTRAL COUNCIL OF JEWS IN GERMANY

In 1950, the Central Council of Jews in Germany was founded in Frankfurt (Main). The prime concern of the men and women who founded the Central Council of Jews in Germany was to promote and foster religious and cultural activities within local Jewish communities and to provide advocacy for the common political interests of the Jewish community as a whole. That has remained the case ever since.

Today, apart from supporting the regional associations, communities and the Zentralwohlfahrtsstelle (welfare organisation) in their work, one priority for the Central Council is to help Jewish immigrants from the countries of the former Soviet Union to integrate into German society. 105 Jewish communities with round about 100,000 members are affiliated to the Central Council of Jews. On January 27, 2003, Holocaust Commemoration Day, Gerhard Schröder as Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany and Paul Spiegel as President of the Central Council of Jews in Germany signed the first National Agreement between the German government and the Jewish umbrella organization in the history of post-war Germany.

The relationship between the German government and the Central Council of Jews in Germany was thereby placed on a legal basis which is intended to guarantee “continuity and partnership.”



Dr. Josef Schuster and Joachim Gauck,
former Federal President of Germany



"It happens from time to time that young American lawyers have to do with inheritance matters in Dresden or Leipzig and then visit our restaurant on the recommendation of their boss. I think it's really great to see that people are talking about us in New York and San Francisco."



"I wanted to create a place in Germany which represents Jewish life beyond commemoration days and sacred places. So I started with the simplest of human needs: wining and dining. My restaurant makes Jewish life 'tangible' for a broad audience and we do so 365 days a year."

UWE DZIUBALLA runs "Schalom", Germany's biggest kosher restaurant, located in Chemnitz, Saxony. He was born in Karl-Marx-Stadt – as Chemnitz was called in the GDR – in 1965 and grew up in the former Yugoslavia. After German reunification, he worked in a bank in New York, where he experienced Jewish life in the city. In 1994, he returned to Chemnitz, where his father was on his death bed. His mother and brother both still live in Chemnitz.



SCHALOM—ASSOCIATION AND RESTAURANT

When Uwe Dziuballa returned to Germany in the middle of the nineties, he founded the Association Schalom in collaboration with his brother. The association provides a platform for German, Israeli and Jewish encounters and dialogues through art, culture, education and social work. In 2000, the brothers opened the restaurant Schalom in Chemnitz – a certified kosher restaurant which by now is the biggest of its kind in Germany.



SHLOMIT TULGAN

> ART EDUCATIONALIST

“I am a cultural chameleon and feel most at home in a multicultural environment such as Berlin-Kreuzberg or New York. All of my friends are from an immigrant background. Although I myself am now like a stereotypical German as regards order and punctuality, I still feel a sense of separation from majority society.”



Short profile on YouTube

Shlomit Tulgan celebrating Passover with her parents.

JEWISH IDENTITY

Shlomit Tulgan had a life-changing experience at the age of 17 on the beach in Athens, Greece, when her grandmother, who died shortly afterwards, spoke with her about her responsibility as the last descendant of a Jewish family. After this conversation, Judaism became more important to her. She is now a practising, but not an Orthodox, Jew. She observes many Jewish rules and traditions, such as the day of rest on the Sabbath. She also attends the synagogue regularly and adheres to a kosher diet.



CHILDREN'S BOOK WRITER

Shlomit Tulgan also writes books for children and has published several books with Ünel and Ariella publishers. Her most successful book, *Die schlaue Esther* (“Clever Esther”), is illustrated with photos of her bubales puppets.

SHLOMIT TULGAN was born in Berlin in 1970 as the child of Turkish immigrants. After obtaining her higher education entrance qualification she studied art education and communication design in Berlin. She currently works for the Jewish Museum Berlin, where she is responsible for the programmes for children and young people. She describes herself as a “card-carrying vegetarian”. Shlomit Tulgan has a close, but critical, relationship with Israel, where she lived for some time.



Shlomit Tulgan builds bridges between the cultures through her puppet theatre, bubales.

JEWISH MUPPET SHOW

Shlomit Tulgan is the founder of a Jewish puppet theatre, and travels all over Germany putting on puppet shows. Using Jewish humour, but also fitting levels of seriousness, her 50 performances per year teach Jewish and non-Jewish children and adults about the world of Judaism in an entertaining way. Shlomit Tulgan likes to describe the puppet theatre as a “positive first contact with Judaism”.



“I think that it was a good decision to bring more than 200,000 Jews to Germany after 1991. After all, this was the only reason for me to be able to stay in Germany. Moreover, the Jews as a religious community have benefitted from it. They have become greater in number and in power, and the so-called “Russians” have founded new communities where there wouldn’t have been any earlier.”

VLADIMIR KAMINER was born on July 19, 1967 in Moscow, USSR [present-day Russia]. He trained to be an audio engineer, and later studied dramaturgy at the Moscow Institute of Theater. He has been living in Berlin since the nineties, and works as a writer, actor and DJ. He is married and has two children.



RUSSIAN DISCO

Kaminer regularly appeared as a DJ at his “Russendisko” (Russian disco) in the nineties, where he played songs by Russian bands at “Kaffee Burger” in Berlin. As a result, he titled his first bestseller “Russendisko” (2000, published in English in 2002). His collection of stories, as well as numerous other books, have made him one of the most popular and sought-after writers of German contemporary literature.



“In Berlin I enjoy meeting new people all the time, whether Jews or non-Jews. In galleries, cafes and bars I meet people from around the world and from all generations without questions about origin or religion playing a role.”



ALEXA KAROLINSKI was born in Berlin in 1984. In 2003 she moved to London to study art history. She then worked as a journalist for magazines and television. In 2011, she graduated from the New York School of Visual Arts. She married an American and lives and works in both Los Angeles and Berlin.

“OMA & BELLA” FILM

In her first long feature film from 2012 Alexa Karolinski portrays two Jewish women: Her grandmother Regina Karolinski [aka Oma, German for grandma] and her friend Bella Katz.



“OMA & BELLA” COOKBOOK

The *Oma & Bella Cookbook*, published 2014 in German and English, is a collection of recipes from Eastern Europe, as told to Alexa Karolinski by her grandmother Regina and her best friend Bella.





YASCHA MOUNK

> AUTHOR

“Growing up in Germany, I came to feel less and less German – and more and more Jewish. But now that I live in New York City, a city of one and a half million Jews, I no longer feel Jewish; instead, I’ve come to identify as a New Yorker.”

YASCHA MOUNK was born in 1982 in Laupheim, Bavaria, and grew up in various cities throughout southern Germany. His parents came to Germany in 1968 to escape the anti-Semitic purges in communist Poland. He studied history and political thought at Trinity College in Cambridge, England. He is a PhD Candidate in political theory in the Department of Government at Harvard University, where he now serves as an instructor in expository writing. He often travels to Germany, where his mother continues to reside.



AUTHOR

Mounk has published articles in newspapers and magazines including the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *The Nation* and *Zeit Online*. He is a founding editor of *The Utopian*, a web magazine on philosophy, politics and culture. His first book, “*Stranger in My Own Country: A Jewish Family in Modern Germany*,” was published in 2004. “Mr. Mounk writes that he doesn’t feel German, but he is at his best when discussing the tortured German soul,” the *New York Times* wrote.



SARA NACHAMA
> VICE PRESIDENT OF TOURO COLLEGE BERLIN

"I am promoting the need for a Jewish normalcy in Germany so that soon we will no longer need high fences and barbed wire in front of Jewish institutions."

SARA NACHAMA, the daughter of a diplomat, spent her youth in Israel and several other countries in the Near East. After studying history and geography in Jerusalem, she came to West Berlin in 1978. Today, the mother of two adult sons is actively involved in the Jewish Community of Berlin, for example, as a member of its assembly of representatives. In 2003 she founded Touro College Berlin.



TOURO COLLEGE BERLIN

140 students from various countries and denominations – many of them from the US, Israel and Eastern Europe – study at Touro College Berlin, a Jewish-American private college. The curriculum is comprised of a Bachelor's in Business and Psychology, a Master of Business and Administration and a Master's in Holocaust Communication and Tolerance, which is unique throughout Europe. The first Touro College was founded in New York in 1970 and later opened further branches in all parts of the world. "Our students learn the American way, using case studies in small interactive classes, and through a multitude of presentations and discussions."



“My generation – after the horrible 20th century – has tried to create a new positive perspective for Jewish life in Germany and Europe. This means that we gradually step out from the shadow of the Shoa. We do not forget the crimes, but in the same time we go a new way.”

ELISA KLAPHECK was born in Düsseldorf in 1962. She grew up in Germany and the Netherlands, where she studied political science. She worked as a journalist and editor for the German media. In 1998 she became the press spokeswoman of the Jewish Community of Berlin. Klapheck was ordained as a rabbi in the US in 2004. She was appointed as the first female rabbi in the Netherlands, where she led a Jewish community in Amsterdam called the “Biet Ha’Chidush.” Since 2009, Klapheck serves as liberal rabbi in the Jewish Community of Frankfurt.

FEMALE RABBI IN GERMANY

The first female rabbi was Regina Jonas – born in Berlin in 1902 and murdered in Auschwitz in 1944. At present there are only five female rabbis in Germany, including Elisa Klapheck. She is the rabbi of the “egalitarian minyan,” the liberal division of the Jewish Community in Frankfurt.



Dieter Graumann (right), president of the Central Council for Jews in Germany, participated in Elisa Klapheck’s official inauguration as community rabbi.



At a Jewish wedding, here by Lago Maggiore

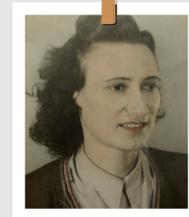
SHARON ADLER

> PUBLISHER AND PHOTOGRAPHER



“I have found it important to naturally integrate Jewish life into my online women’s magazine AVIVA-Berlin from the start. The topics of my magazine include women and work, interviews, literature, culture, public affairs and Jewish life, among others.”

Women in Sharon Adler’s family:
daughter Mara Noomi Adler,
mother Ruth Kürten,
grandmother Miriam Kopolowitz



SHARON ADLER was born in Berlin in 1962. In February 2000 she founded the online women’s magazine AVIVA-Berlin, which advocates for intercultural understanding and campaigns against racism and anti-Semitism, among other things. The photographer and journalist was a recipient of the Berliner Frauenpreis (Berlin Prize for Women). She is a member of the Jewish Community of Berlin and Bet Debora e.V. and since 2013 she is CEO of Stiftung Zurückgeben, a foundation for the advancement of Jewish women in the arts and sciences.



In 2006 Sharon Adler published a volume of photographs titled “Ladies’ Choice. Women and their Cars.” In this series, 40 very different women – among them Rabbi Elisa Klapheck, who officiates in Frankfurt – display the love of their cars, which for them symbolize freedom and success.

AVIVA-BERLIN

AVIVA-Berlin was founded at the kitchen table, where Sharon Adler had the vision to establish an online women’s magazine that reports on diverse subjects from a woman’s perspective. Around 30 journalists work for AVIVA. The site has about 800,000 monthly clicks. Online at: www.aviva-berlin.de





DAVID KAROLINSKI

> PR-CONSULTANT

“The Football World Cup in 2006 was a turning point in my identity quest. I cheered for the German team while wearing the German national soccer jersey, and I came to see myself as a ‘normal German’ for the first time.”



David in front of the Olympic Stadium in Berlin wearing the German national soccer jersey.

DAVID KAROLINSKI was born in Berlin in 1986. In 2005 he moved to Israel to study government, strategy and diplomacy. In 2008 he returned to Berlin, where he worked in the real estate business. From 2011 to 2013 he earned his Master of Arts in Public Policy at the Hertie School of Governance in Berlin. He currently works in public relations, and is an avid soccer fan.



David (at left) at the Munich Security Conference in 2014



THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE FORUM (NAFFO)

David Karolinski is a deputy board member of the association called The Middle East Peace Forum (NAFFO). This non-denominational association advocates for a better understanding of the Middle Eastern conflict in German politics. The members of the association regularly meet with members of the German Parliament and visit Israel together with them. In 2014, the NAFFO organized its own event at the Munich Security Conference, which is one of the most prominent security conferences in Europe. The association currently has 120 members throughout Germany.

Jewish culture in Germany with 1,000-year-old roots



The Franconian King Charlemagne, first emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, gave Jews legal protection and special privileges.

ROMAN BEGINNINGS

Jews were first mentioned in documents 1,700 years ago in Colonia Agrippina, which later became the German city of Cologne.



A peasant and a Jewish money changer, woodcut from Augsburg 1531

MEDIEVAL TIMES

Hundreds of Jewish communities existed in German territories between the 10th and 13th centuries. Already then, Jews were victims of pogroms and discrimination. Most trade and merchants' guilds excluded Jews to avoid competition. Thus, many Jews went into business as money changers and money lenders, something Christians could not do because they were not allowed to charge interest.



Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786), German philosopher

EMANCIPATION IN THE 17TH AND 18TH CENTURIES

In the 18th century, new philosophical ideas began to take hold. The Berlin philosopher Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786), translator of the Torah into German, was among those who were active in promoting the Enlightenment, a philosophical movement that also laid the foundations for the emancipation of the Jews in Germany.



Otto von Bismarck (1815-1898), founder of the German Reich in 1871

GERMAN JEWS UNDER CHANCELLOR BISMARCK AND DURING WORLD WAR I

Equal rights were granted to all Jews in Germany in 1871. The late 19th and early 20th centuries can be seen as a successful era for German Jews, even though they were still excluded from higher ranks of military and civil service. German Jews nonetheless volunteered in the German armed forces in 1914 and approximately 12,000 Jews died in World War I.

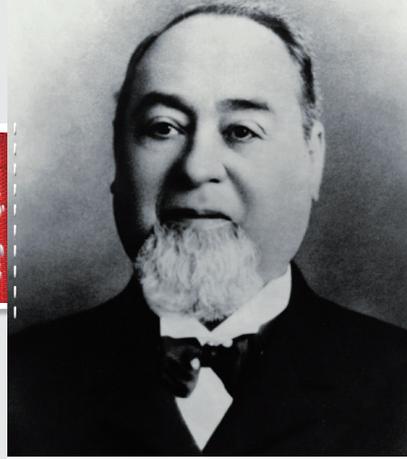
Jewish soldiers of the Imperial Army in front of a synagogue in Łódź, around 1915/16



German Jewish musicians, painters, philosophers and entrepreneurs

MAYER AMSCHEL ROTHSCHILD (1744-1812)

Born in Frankfurt am Main, Mayer Amschel Rothschild started working as a dealer in rare coins and later became the principal international banker to Wilhelm IX, Landgrave of Hesse-Kassel. Rothschild was the founder of the Rothschild banking dynasty and ranked seventh on the Forbes magazine list of "The Twenty Most Influential Businessmen of All Times."



LEVI STRAUSS (1829-1902)

Born Löb Strauß in Bavaria, Strauss immigrated to the United States at the age of 18 to join his brothers in their wholesale dry goods business. Strauss opened his own business in San Francisco in 1853 as Levi Strauss Co., today known as Levi's, where the first pair of denim pants was produced.



KURT WEILL (1900-1950)

Kurt Weill was the son of a Dessau cantor. His "Threepenny Opera" and "The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny," both set to texts by Bertolt Brecht, made him famous as a young man. The Nazis drove him out of Germany, and he eventually settled in New York.



MAX LIEBERMANN (1847-1935)

Max Liebermann was one of the leading Impressionist painters in Germany. The son of a wealthy Jewish textile manufacturer in Berlin, he studied painting and drawing at the Weimar Academy of Arts. He soon earned the reputation of being a "painter of the poor." He died two years after the Nazi Party seized power.

HANNAH ARENDT (1906-1975)

Born into an assimilated Jewish family, Arendt spent her childhood in Königsberg, today's Kaliningrad. During her university years, she was influenced by Karl Jaspers and Martin Heidegger, the leading minds of German existential philosophy. She left Germany in 1933 to work in Paris, and then immigrated to New York in 1941. As reporter, Arendt analyzed the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem, an experience that led to her widely misunderstood political theory about the "banality of evil."

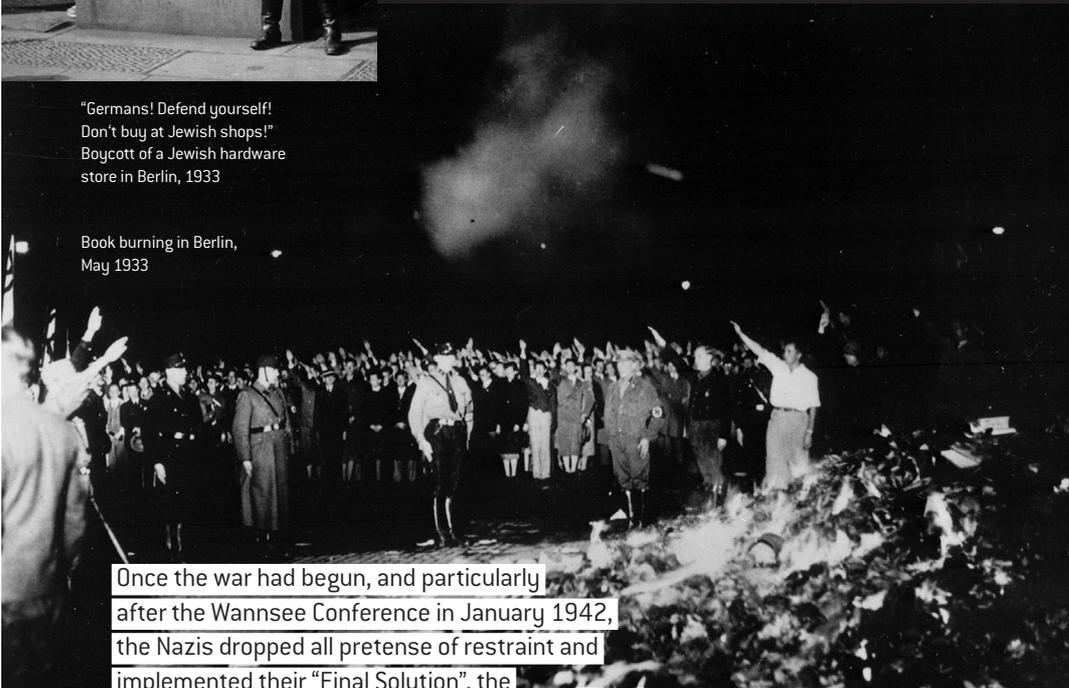


The Holocaust



When Hitler came to power on January 30, 1933, approximately 550,000 Jews were living in Germany. The Nazi takeover in 1933 led to an unprecedented deprivation of rights which was followed by terror and the persecution of German and European Jews. When World War II began in September 1939, about 60 percent of German Jews had emigrated.

"Germans! Defend yourself!
Don't buy at Jewish shops!"
Boycott of a Jewish hardware
store in Berlin, 1933



Book burning in Berlin,
May 1933

Once the war had begun, and particularly after the Wannsee Conference in January 1942, the Nazis dropped all pretense of restraint and implemented their "Final Solution", the state-sponsored, systematic annihilation of the European Jews. They came close to achieving their goal of making Europe "judenfrei" (free of Jews); only military defeat by the Allies stopped them. It is estimated that more than six million Jews were killed in the Holocaust.



U.S. troops liberate the Dachau
concentration camp, 1945

After 1945: How Germany dealt with the Holocaust



Former Israeli Prime Minister David Ben Gurion meets the Federal Chancellor Konrad Adenauer in New York for the first time. New York, March 1960

NAZI TRIALS

The public debate in Germany about the murder of European Jews began in the courtroom. In 1958, the West German states established a Central Office for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes and gave it the manpower and expertise to bring Nazi criminals to trial. In the Frankfurt Auschwitz trial (1963-1965), 200 camp survivors testified against 22 defendants. The Düsseldorf Majdanek trial (1975-1981) included 350 witness statements and was the longest trial held in German court. 16 defendants were sentenced.

A mere signature cannot heal wounds, and yet, Konrad Adenauer's signature on September 10, 1952 had enormous significance. On that day the Chancellor signed the compensation contracts with Israel. These contracts from 1952 not only contained important financial support for the escaped, destitute Jews, but also were an admission of guilt and a first step toward reconciliation. They included benefits for the integration of Jewish refugees in Israel. Israel received the lion's share, but payments were also made to Jewish refugees outside of Israel.

It has become a basic consensus of German foreign policy that the relations between Israel and Germany are of a special nature and that Israel's right to exist cannot be called into question. As German Chancellor Angela Merkel stated in her speech before the Israeli Knesset in 2008, "the commitment to the State of Israel's right to exist is part of Germany's *raison d'état*."

REMEMBRANCE



Memorial plaque at the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site. The memorial site was established on the grounds of the former concentration camp in 1965.



The Federal Republic of Germany contributes 60 million euros to the Foundation Auschwitz-Birkenau to ensure the permanent preservation of the memorial. About 30 million people have visited the museum and the memorial site in southern Poland since its opening in 1947.



Memorial sites, museums, documentation centers and online services – numerous institutions and initiatives in Germany commemorate the victims of National Socialism, offer education programs on the history of National Socialism and are committed to survivors and youth encounters. Since its inauguration in 2005, 15 million people have visited the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in the center of Berlin next to the Brandenburg Gate.

Numbers and Facts

From 1945 to the German reunification in 1989

> In the first years after WW II, some emigrants returned from all over the world to join the few Jewish survivors remaining in Germany.

They were also joined by around **200,000** Jews from Eastern Europe who would or could not return to their homelands – the so-called “displaced persons.” Camps and temporary housing served as temporary stations, and most of them eventually emigrated, many to Israel or the United States.

> At the beginning of the 1950s no more than **25,000** Jews lived in the newly founded Federal Republic of Germany.

> There were five Jewish communities in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) with a total of approximately **400** members in 1989.

The majority of them, some **250**, lived in East Berlin.

From 1990 to today

> By 1990 no more than **30,000** Jews lived in Germany.

> Between 1990 and 2010 about **220,000** Jews and their partly non-Jewish family members immigrated from the former Soviet Union to Germany.

> Today about **100,000** members are organized in **105** Jewish communities.

Berlin

> The Jewish Community of Berlin is the fastest growing Jewish community worldwide. At present it has approximately **10,000** members.

> An estimated **thousands** mostly young Israelis currently live in Berlin.







B'NAI B'RITH

**ADVOCACY
AWARENESS
ASSISTANCE**