

# On music, Judaism, and Hitler

*A personal statement from Lyndon LaRouche, issued through his Presidential campaign committee, LaRouche's Committee for a New Bretton Woods, on Sept. 3.*

On the account of what is commonly called today, the Nazi regime's Holocaust against the Jews of Germany, Poland, and elsewhere, there is an overdue debt to be paid. I submit herewith the bill demanding the payment of that debt.

The greatest contributions of the Jew to European civilization, was the movement generated by the work of one of the greatest individual geniuses of modern (extended) European civilization as a whole, Moses Mendelssohn. Mendelssohn was not merely a Jew who contributed to modern civilization; he was a leading, integral part of the late-18th-Century revolution, without which there would have been no modern European science, no modern Classical musical or other artistic composition, and without which freedom and the Federal Constitution would not have been possible.

Not only did Moses Mendelssohn, as a German, play a leading role in creating modern Germany and modern European civilization of the 18th Century onward; as a German of Orthodox Jewish faith, he, like Martin Luther King in our own time, freed the Jew by freeing the German to become part of an ecumenical system of justice under the supreme rule of nothing but reason itself. In that process, he mobilized from among German Jews, and, by implication, the Yiddish Renaissance of Poland, Ukraine, and Russia, to make a contribution to modern civilization way beyond all proportion to their relative numbers among the populations within which they lived as part.

Thus, that German Jew, complemented by the forces of the Yiddish Renaissance, is an expression of the soul of the Jew: In the simultaneity of eternity, the Yiddish Renaissance of Germany and Eastern Europe bequeathed to posterity great gifts to which posterity must turn fond attention whenever the name of "Jew" is spoken. With that, every Christian bearing the legacy of Augustine must concur. To deny the Jews hated by Adolf Hitler their claim to that honor, is to subject those who suffered to a virtual second Holocaust, a holocaust of deadly silence, a virtual denial that those millions of victims ever existed except as a mass of nameless dead.

The factual point to be made on this account, is illustrated with the greatest force by one of the most characteristic features of the musical work of Moses Mendelssohn and members of his extended family in Germany and Austria. All that we have today of Johann Sebastian Bach and such direct followers of Bach's as Wolfgang Mozart, Ludwig van Beetho-

ven, Franz Schubert, Robert Schumann, Johannes Brahms, and others, was the direct result of the active role of the extended Mendelssohn family in that family's rescue of Bach's work from virtual oblivion, and that family's direct collaboration with the greatest musical composers of the late 18th and 19th Centuries.

For example, when Felix Mendelssohn's friend Robert Schumann visited the home of Franz Schubert's brother, the brother gave Schumann the manuscript of Schubert's great symphony, the C Major Ninth. Schumann delivered this to Felix Mendelssohn, the grandson of Moses Mendelssohn, who gave the work its first performance. Schubert, like Beethoven,



*Moses Mendelssohn*

was a follower of Friedrich Schiller in the matter of the philosophy of poetry and musical composition, which both explicitly preferred to Goethe. Schubert, like Mozart, was a collaborator of the extended family of Moses Mendelssohn in musical and other matters. Schubert contributed a key part in the development of the musical Jewish liturgy. Earlier, Mozart had been a protégé of the Austrian Emperor Joseph II, who pioneered in establishing Jewish political citizenship rights in Europe. There is no part of the leading Classical literary and musical culture of the German-speaking world without the leading role contributed by Moses Mendelssohn and his extended family.

Look to the rosters of not only the leading performing musicians of 19th- and early-20th-Century Germany, for example, and note the disproportionately large representation of outstanding German Jewish professionals, for example. Look at the tradition, among violinists, and others of the legacy of Beethoven's collaborator, Boehm, and the legacy of the Boehm-Joachim-Flesch tradition and its impact upon musical

excellence over nearly two centuries to date. Accept with silence, Hitler's intent to wipe the contributions of these Jews to Europe from memory, and you have killed the victims in a second holocaust, a holocaust of silence, to make it appear that they had never lived.

A related point must be made for the case of German-speaking contributions to modern science. Look among the roster of pre-Hitler German scientists of note. It was the legacy of Gotthold Lessing and Moses Mendelssohn, who defended not only the musical compositional principles of J.S. Bach, but also the principle of reason in science itself, from the sterility of the 18th-Century Enlightenment. This made possible the science of Gauss, Riemann, and others. Look at key figures such as AEG industrialists Emil and Walter Rathenau.

Even the German General Staff's existence was greatly indebted to the Moses Mendelssohn, who advised Count Wilhelm Schaumburg-Lippe on the design of educational program which produced the great Gerhard Scharnhorst. It was the counsel of Mendelssohn which led to the development of the policy of *Auftragstaktik*, which supplied the German military its man-for-man superiority continued through World War II. Yes, the German military of that period failed to stop Hitler while they still could, during the crucial period of 1932-1933, but in that they failed to meet the standard set by Scharnhorst and the other great reformers of the 1806-1813 period, who acted according to precisely that moral standard which the German military leaders of 1932-1933 failed to meet.

Look similarly to the legacy of the Yiddish Renaissance in Eastern Europe.

We can not allow 2,000 years of Jewish survival in Europe to be buried under the faceless stone epitaph which speaks only of a bare 13-odd years of Hitler's Holocaust. Shall we remember the honorable living, or shall we think only of the ogre who tormented and murdered them, instead? What sort of justice for martyrs, is that?

Indeed, when all leading factors are taken into account, a free and unified Germany could never have been brought into being but for the crucial role of those German Jews who followed in the footsteps of Moses Mendelssohn.

In the case of our ally Germany today, we see that Germany can never be truly freed from the legacy of Hitler's crimes, until the contributions of German Jews, in particular, are celebrated as an integral part of the honorable history of Germany. Otherwise, how could a Germany claim its own true identity in history? Is it not time that Germany be allowed to do just that? How long shall we, in the U.S.A., pretend that the European Jews of Germany and elsewhere, did not actually exist as anything but the virtually nameless, faceless victims of an Adolf Hitler?

Yes, Hitler killed millions of Jews (among his numerous other victims), but how many today, in the name of Holocaust, subject those victims to a second holocaust, by implicitly

## The Mendelssohn tradition

The Summer 1999 issue of the Schiller Institute's *Fidelio* magazine features the work of Moses Mendelssohn, providing extensive documentation of his political, philosophical, and cultural role in shaping the Yiddish Renaissance and the German Classics.

Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. characterized the issue as "an international political bombshell." He continued: "The only way to free Germany to act as a nation, once again, is to give long overdue recognition of the loss to all humanity of that Yiddish Renaissance set into motion by the collaboration of Lessing and Mendelssohn around the heritage of Leibniz and Bach. It was the Jewish bearers of that noble legacy, in Poland and elsewhere, who were the true victims of Hitler. This horror killed Germany and Poland, especially Germany, as much as it killed those Jews who typified the bearers of that Yiddish Renaissance tradition.

"The new *Fidelio*, as a package, puts that issue into the only right choice of perspective. To do justice to the victims of Nazism, one must restore that German Classic which Mendelssohn and his collaborators contributed so much to building: at the expense of all the enemies of Mendelssohn, including Kant, Voltaire, and Leonhard Euler, as much as Adolf Hitler."

Articles include "What It Takes To Be a World-Historical Leader Today," a speech by Helga Zepp-LaRouche on Feb. 14, 1999; "Philosophical Vignettes from the Political Life of Moses Mendelssohn," by David Shavin; and "Moses Mendelssohn and the Bach Tradition," by Steven P. Meyer.

*Single issues are \$9 (postpaid), and can be ordered from the Schiller Institute, Inc.; P.O. Box 20244; Washington, D.C. 20041-0244 (or call EIR News Service, toll-free, at 1-888-EIR-3258). Subscriptions are \$20 for one year (four issues).*

effacing the faces of the victims even from their own tombstones? The only remedy for that orgy of hatred, is to supplant it with loving regard for the honorable preciousness of those victims' lives for the nation of which they had been a part, and which they had served so well. To give justice, is to give justice to the victim, to honor the victim of injustice for his or her contributions to society, to mankind, and even to honor what they might have accomplished had they not been ground into ashes by injustice. Unless we remove the fishbone of blind hatred from our gullets, and celebrate the honor of the

victims instead, the possibility of justice anywhere on this planet remains in jeopardy.

For example, with the establishment of a new Ehud Barak government in Israel, we have again the possibility of a just solution for the prolonged Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the Middle East. Prime Minister Barak carries the legacy of Moses Mendelssohn from Europe to the Middle East. His enterprise is threatened both from within the region, and by diabolical meddlers from outside it. His effort is besieged by the apostles of hatred within Israel, and by the fires of hatred stoked among Palestinians and other Arabs over the entirety of the existence of modern Israel, and even earlier.

In this situation, nothing is more specifically appropriate to the Middle East situation than the memory of the wisdom of the great Moses Mendelssohn, who remained always an Orthodox Jew, but whose ecumenical doctrine of reason, is the only formula for securing a durable peace among those who have been embittered combatants for these many decades.

The danger is, that looking back to the period from the Versailles Treaty to Hitler's accession to power, we must recognize that, today, once again, we have come into a period of such widespread, almost global cultural pessimism as we have not seen since that epidemic of cultural pessimism which produced the Hitler movement. Today, looking at each of the nations around the world, we find, in most cases, that each population has lately descended to a moral condition worse than at any time since the close of World War II.

There can be no remedy for such a state of affairs, but to bury a sea of hatred under an ocean of love. The place from which such a needed initiative must come, is the United States, especially from the President of these United States which were created to provide the spark for a community of principle among all mankind.

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## Documentation

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### Remembering 'the great past of German Jewry'

Robert B. Goldmann, the former chairman of the European Anti-Defamation League, wrote a commentary in the daily *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* on Sept. 14, which addresses many of the same issues raised by Lyndon LaRouche in the accompanying memorandum. Goldmann's article is titled "The Great Gap: On Jewish Life in Germany Before and After the Holocaust."

Defining himself as a "pre-war German Jew," Goldmann makes the following recommendation: "Teach the history of

German Jews and of the Jews in the German-speaking areas thoroughly, from the lower schools to the universities. Not only Jewish students should learn what Jews in Germany achieved in some 100 years, even the general study of German history should include this chapter."

His article addresses the "historical and psychological problems" which the recent death of Ignaz Bubis, head of the Central Committee for Jews in Germany, has posed for Jews and in German-Jewish relations. The intellectual, social, and creative significance of pre-World War II Jewish society in Germany is either "unclear or even unknown" to many Jews today in Germany, but also outside of Germany and in America, where the Holocaust is viewed from an east European perspective.

The question discussed in diaspora communities — how it is possible that Jews still live in Germany today — stems from this prevailing ignorance, Goldmann writes. "In fact, most Jews in the pre-war period could not have imagined that they could have lived anywhere else. That touches on the question of how it could be that Jews stayed in German communities for so long, although they were headed for their annihilation. More pointedly: It is not possible to understand that Jews stayed in Germany after the seizure of power [by Hitler], and that is turned into a reproach against those who live there today."

These questions and reproaches stem "from an ignorance which threatens to make the great past of German Jewry and especially that of the some 100 years between Moses Mendelssohn and 1933 sink into oblivion. It hinders also the development of a new Jewish life and a new Jewish culture in the Federal Republic of Germany. . . . Jewish history in the German-speaking areas prior to 1933 is also important outside of Germany, especially in the diaspora communities, and most especially in America, where the gap in education is the greatest."

A German-Jewish culture emerged in the 100 years before 1933 "which was unprecedented," Goldman writes. The purely Jewish side of that culture is associated with the names of Martin Buber, Franz Rosenzweig, Heinrich Grätz, Samson Raphael Hirsch, and Leo Bäck, and it led to the development of a religious-pluralist structure of Jewish faith. "A new music of the synagogues was created (associated with the names of Lewandowski and Sulzer)," and Jewish prayers were translated into German for those who had distanced themselves from Hebrew. "This Jewish culture was strongly influenced by the German surroundings. The translations for the prayer books had a literary quality, and the synagogue music was influenced by German Classical music. But perhaps the most important was the development of the pluralist structure of religious life. For this was the expression of liberalism in Jewish life, which many politicians, organizations, and intellectuals in society represented. It was an expression of the freedom of thought, for which the Germany of the first part of our century, especially in the Weimar Republic and in

Berlin, was famous, and, in the eyes of many, even notorious. (Without this structure, it is impossible to imagine Jewish life in the diaspora countries and especially in America. It allows many who would otherwise have turned their backs on Judaism, to remain true to their community of faith, because it extends the 'either/or' of orthodoxy with other possibilities of practicing religion.)"

Goldmann describes the "symbiosis," the process by which the Jewish minority integrated itself intellectually into its surrounding society. "Names such as Heine, Rilke, and Kafka in literature, Haber and Ehrlich in science and medicine, Rathenau in politics, Bleichröder and Warburg in finances, Schönberg, Bruno Walter, Otto Klemperer, Irika Morini in music, are testimony to it."

Today, Goldmann notes, Germany has become a country of immigrants, whether it wants or not. Jews in Germany also have their opportunities to build and shape the country, and the changes will probably bring about something which differs from the time prior to 1933.

Goldmann says that it is important that Jews and non-Jews alike be taught the history of German Jewry, not only because of the richness of the history itself, but also because people have spoken about, read about, and been taught about dead Jews in the last several decades, where little is said or written or taught about the *lives* of Jews in Germany prior to National Socialism. "One speaks more about the perpetrator than about his victim. One researches and knows more about the mentality of the killers and their accomplices than about the minds of the people who died. The Jews who died, deserve to have their lives remembered. Moreover, knowing about the achievements of the Jews before Hitler can be a source of inspiration for young people who are about to shape their identities as Jews. The issue here has nothing to do with imitation: What is at issue is the understanding of a culture which was unique, but which can serve as a stimulus for creative work in a new world—for Jews in their own community life and as citizens of a new German society."

Goldmann tells a story: He attended a synagogue in New York, where the rabbi spoke about the difference in the lives of European and American Jews. While American Jews had developed impressive networks of religious association, social work, and support for Israeli institutions, their intellectual life lagged behind that of European Jews. Goldmann approached the rabbi after the services and said, "I felt overlooked," because the rabbi had spoken as if European Jews only came from eastern Europe. "Where are Buber and Rosenzweig, Hirsch and Herzl?" he asked. The next time, the rabbi corrected his oversight. The same ignorance is also prevalent in Israel.

"What is at issue is to keep in memory the Jewish culture and the general culture to which Jews have contributed so much, and to shape it in a living way. And even if one studies the tragedy of the Holocaust, one can only comprehend the dimension of the destruction, of the 'gap,' if one knows some-

thing about the lost, past culture."

"In the development and shaping of a new Jewish life," writes Goldmann, "the issue is to celebrate the rich life of that time, and not only to mourn its loss."

## 'A village idol'

by Dr. Joseph Ransohoff

*Dr. Ransohoff wrote the following autobiographical sketch about his German uncle Sigismund sometime in the early 1900s. As the reader will see, it is a testimony to the breakthroughs made by Moses Mendelssohn and others in integrating Germany's Jews into the nation, through their crucial contributions to its Classical culture. As other of Dr. Ransohoff's speeches and stories attest, this outlook was carried into the United States, where he was of the first generation of that family to be born.*

*The story appeared in the posthumous book Under the Northern Lights and Other Stories, published in 1921 by his widow, and came into the possession of Dr. Ransohoff's great-granddaughter, EIR staffer Katherine Ransohoff Notley, on Oct. 2, 1990, just hours before Germany was finally reunited.*

I learned to know him about the mid-seventies. A student friendship, cemented in the hospitals, brought me to the little Westphalian town where he had lived and worked for nearly two generations. It was on the Day of Atonement, and he was on his way to the modest little synagogue the first time I saw him. The tall, slightly bent figure was clothed in genteel broadcloth, the coat tightly buttoned and on its wide lapel was the Order of the Iron Cross. The face was clean shaven and showed about the chin and the mouth and eyes the lines and furrows that come to us all if life holds out. Over the square chin the lower lip projected out covering its upper mate, as one often sees it in persons of strong mind and given to thinking much and deep and hard. His forehead was shaded by the broad rim of his silk hat which was of a fashion I did not know, but it was not modern. As he walked rather briskly along, feeling the well-known way with his heavy stick, the first glance told you that he was blind. Such was my first impression of the octogenarian, village doctor of P[eckelsheim] who with his Iron Cross had gained the title of Privy Counselor to the King.

Because I spoke English, I gained ready access to his modest home, for he revered his Shakespeare as perhaps only German scholars can. I was a willing foil for the soliloquy and Anthony's oration which he recited with verbal accuracy but execrable pronunciation. Over the low bookcase were little busts of his favorite Shakespeare and Goethe. Between