

**“The Leaders of Tomorrow; Michael Fürst brings the 30th Nahum Goldman Fellowship to Hanover, Germany.” August 16, 2018 by Beate Rossbach. Judische Allgemeine. (This is a German Jewish newspaper; article translated from German by Google Translate.)**



*Above: Representatives from around the world met at the Nahum Goldman Fellowship in Hannover and Burgwedel.*



*Above: Kaddish in Bergen Belsen.*



*Above: Plenary session of the NGF.*



*Above: The theme of the conference was “From generation to regeneration - memory, culture and identity”.*



*Above: For the first time, the Fellows visited the Bergen-Belsen Memorial, a former concentration camp.*



*Above: Guests and hosts in the Lower Saxony state parliament.*



*Above: During the breaks, the discussions continued.*

The guests from all over the world have experienced Lower Saxony at its best. Last week, the International Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture (MFJC) met in Hanover and the neighboring town of Burgwedel. There, the seminars and workshops of the annual Nahum Goldman Fellowship were held.

After various meetings around the world, such as 2016 in Mexico and last year in Israel, the 30th anniversary conference was held in Germany, a first in the 50-year history of the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture.

The MFJC is an important international Jewish institution for young Jewish leaders. Fellowship participants are active or future leaders of Jewish life aged 25 to 40 years. ...

**DIASPORA:** The events addressed central themes of Judaism. ...the focus was on dealing with the Holocaust under the motto "From Generation to Regeneration - Involving Memory, Culture and Identity" and topics such as "Transitions and Traumas: Return to Germany" or "Today's Germany: Case Study of Robust Jewish Life in the Diaspora." ... For the first time, the Fellows visited the Bergen-Belsen Memorial, a former concentration camp.

President of the Central Council of Jews in Germany Josef Schuster addressed this topic in his short words of welcome, which he had put under the keyword identity. The Jewish identity is shown positively and impressively in the annual Jewrovision competition for Jewish youth. Common trauma is still the Shoah.

Today, it expresses itself in the absolute will of the Jewish community "to work against any form of hatred of human beings and discrimination," said Schuster. This is demanded especially in times of increasing anti-Semitism and harsh language. On the other hand, the Jewish identity in Germany turns out to be related to Israel. "Israel is our life insurance," said Schuster.

Schuster traveled to Hanover for one day to accompany the conference guests to a reception in the Lower Saxony state parliament and to welcome them at the evening event in the Jewish community in Haeckelstraße. Their presence in Hanover is due to the efforts of Michael Furst, the President of the National Association of Jewish communities of Lower Saxony.

The fact that the conference came to Germany is a commitment that Schuster expressly acknowledged. "It was Michael Fürst who exerted much energy and persuasion to get the Fellowship here. The result is an impressive and varied program that deals with memory, Jewish culture and identity. A program in which encounters and excursions in Lower Saxony are not forgotten."

**RESERVATIONS:** Some of the fellows traveled with reservations to Germany. The 27-year-old law student Joshua Todes from Cape Town revealed that his parents and grandparents were reluctant to let him travel. He tells, however, how much he was thrilled by

Munich. "It was a really good mood, a real eye-opener. It's great to see how the Jewish community, also here in Hanover, keeps flourishing."

Oshrith Gadkar, a young Mumbai manager, had no qualms: "I prepared myself for the meeting so I knew what to expect and I arrived very open-minded and receptive."

Salomon Rytz, MFJC vice-president from Sweden, who was accompanied by his wife Susanne Sznajderman-Rytz, says that he usually only participates in the annual MFJC board meeting." But this time we wanted to take the opportunity to hear the interesting lectures," he says, adding: "The fact that the seminars are now taking place for the first time in Germany is an enormous statement. And for the students it is a chance to see what makes Jewish life in Germany today and how it is integrated into non-Jewish society, which is very good. Our personal impression is that we are very impressively supported here - not only by the official side."

He and his wife have been to Germany many times. Therefore, they consider it important to carry out the event here, says Salomon Rytz, because: "Many people, the recent German history is quite unknown. But I hope that those who have hesitated to come here have now realized that Germany is different today, a country like other European countries. And one more thing: you cannot bring the dead back to life. But Germany is the only country that has asked for forgiveness."

**INFLUENCE:** Rabbi Jeni Friedman of New York, MFJC Executive Vice-President, recalled that Nahum Goldman wrote in his memoirs that there had been no contacts in the last 1,000 years of Jewish history that were so influential but so critical to Jewish destiny as relationships

with the German people. Therefore, as she noted, "We are pleased to be a tribute to these encounters of the past here in Germany, where we received so warmhearted and kindly from our hosts, the state association and the Jewish community here in Hanover have been."

Thanks to the meticulous preparation and organization planned in detail by Michael Fürst and his team, it was ensured that the guests could not only be accommodated safely but also according to their wishes. In a hotel in Burgwedel, the national association had rented the rooms, the conference area and one of the restaurants to make the conference kosher.

**KIPPA WEARING:** Burgwedel is a place where, as Fürst emphasized, it would be easy to walk with a kippa on your head. This was confirmed by Burgwedel's mayor, Axel Düker. Incidentally, he paid an official visit to the conference, together with his predecessor Hendrik Hoppenstedt, now Minister of State to German Chancellor Angela Merkel, and Hauke Jagau, President of the Hannover Region.

And then there was a sporting highlight in the program. Marlene Bethlehem, the 78-year-old MFJC president from South Africa, was a Wimbledon competitor in the 1960s. Together with former professional player Syna Kayser from Hanover, she accepted an invitation to the tennis match.

The ladies were challenged by the Burgwedel-based entrepreneurs Martin Kind and Dirk Rossmann. In stifling heat, probably nothing unusual in South Africa, the men were soon sweating, the ladies remained relaxed. And who won? "The girls did 6-1," Marlene Bethlehem answers dryly and smiles. (Full article text available online at <https://www.juedische-allgemeine.de/article/view/id/32509>)