T H E H A N S - A L B E R S - V I L L A



A GERMAN-JEWISH PLACE OF REMEMBRANCE

AND

AN INTERNATIONAL MEETING CENTRE FOR TOLERANCE

HANS ALBERS

Hans Albers was born on September 22nd, 1891 in Hamburg and died on July 24th, 1960 in Berg, Lake Starnberg. He was a German actor and singer, who became an idol as "Der blonde Hans" (The Blond Hans).

"Every Albers film generated booked up shows in the proletarian quarters as well as on Kurfürstendamm. In his films this human dynamo with the golden heart embodied what everyone longed to be in real life." (Siegfried Kracauer)

"Everytime they want me to play those violent roles but I do not want to play these at all [...] You want to know what kind of role I would love to play? I doesn't necessarily have to be the ,winner' or ,daredevil'. No, I am happy with playing a human who lives and fights as everyo-



ne else does ... " (Hans Albers, cited in Knuth Weidlich: Der blonde Hans Albers (1930)

Hans – Mosaiksteine eines Lebens. Hamburg 1992.) Having starred in more than one hundred silent films, Albers ac-

complished his fulminant breakthrough in 1929 in one of the first German talkies *"Die Nacht gehört uns"* (The Night Belongs To Us). 1930 he played a leading part in the legendary film *"Der blaue Engel"* (The Blue Angel) together with *Marlene Dietrich*.

Albers, whose career had originally started at the theatre, celebrated his biggest stage successes with Franz Molnar's "Liliom", including the popular hit "*Komm auf die Schaukel, Luise*" (Join Me On The Swing, Luise).

During the Nazi era, Albers wouldn't sing except for his performance of three hit songs in the movie "*Große Freiheit Nr. 7*", which was released by the Allies only after the end of the war. Goebbels had censored this creation as he perceived the image of the sailor conveyed by Hans Albers as not being "German" enough. The film was only released in cinemas 75 years ago, on September 6th, 1945.

Between 1933 and 1945 Albers did not keep quiet about his reluctance of the regime and the accompanying racial fanatism. He kept his distance towards the Nazi representatives. He refused the duty of joining the ,Reichsfilmkammer', the state organization for movie actors and director, avoided a membership in the NSDAP and did not visit any public events. There is no single picture of Albers together with any Nazi deputies. He always remained loyal towards his Jewish colleagues.

The celebrated performer of movie hit songs recorded dozens of records, among them *"La Paloma*". Until his death in 1960 he enthused the audience on countless theatre stages.

The life and career of Albers were strongly connected with his partner, *Hansi Burg.* Although the characters of the couple were very different, they still lived out many similarities. Their love for art and culture, dedication for acting, music and literature strongly tied them together. Furthermore, they were fond of company, enjoyed good food, fashion and elegance as well as their dogs and their garden.

HANSI BURG

Hansi Burg was born in 1898 in Wien as the daughter of a wellknown Jewish family of artists. Her father *Eugen Burg* was one of the most sought-after theater directors and producers of this time. Her mother *Emmy Burg-Raabe* delivered a brilliant performance at playing the piano. Later on she was known as a celebrated coloratura soprano singer with international engagements. Hansi Burg and her two sisters were actresses.



In the middle of the twenties Hansi Burg met Hans Albers who was seven years older. It was love at first sight. Hansi placed back her own artistical work for Hans Albers and became his very successful agent. Hansi Burg's Jewish roots and und Albers' refusal to break up with her and become member of the ,Reichsfilmkammer' became an increasing problem from 1933 on. Due to the Nuremberg race laws of 1935 their love and life was threatened. They were on a watch of ,Reichspropagandaminister' Joseph Goebbels. To get out of this line of fire, in 1935 Albers bought a house with a huge garden in Garatshausen at Lake Starnberg. Under the pressure of the November Pogroms, Hansi Burg escaped to Great Britain in the beginning of 1939. Hansi Burg was the only one of her family who survived the Holocaust. Her father and her sisters were murdered in the concentration camps Auschwitz and Theresienstadt. In May 1945 she returned back to Albers to Garatshausen. After that, nobody was able to separate them again.



Hansi Burg (1921)



In Zürich at the premiere of "Liliom" (1947)

Hansi died in 1975 and was buried in Tutzing. Four years prior to her death, in 1971, the free state of Bavaria bought the property of Hansi Burg. It was notarially certified to make the acquisition of the property serve *"public recreational purposes*".



THE PROPERTY, HANS-ALBERS-VILLA

Hans Albers-Villa (in the lifetime Hans Albers und Hansi Burg)

The *Hans-Albers-Villa* exemplifies a German-Jewish fate during the Nazi era. The property with the two adjoining buildings as well as the boat house with its impressive thatched roof and the corresponding park have a long history. In 1865, *Dr. Ludwig Loé*, chief staff surgeon of the des Bavarian *King Maximilian II.*, ordered the construction of the villa on a former Calvary with breath-taking panoramic view over Lake Starnberg and the Alps.

Today's building still consists of these elements. In 1884, the *Castle Garatshausen* and the villa were sold to the exiled *King Francesco II. Maria Leopoldo of Naples*. In 1888 the ownership was passed to *Helene von Thurn und Taxis* (Sisi's sister), who left it to her son *Albert von Thurn und Taxis* in 1891. Until the sell-off to *Hans Albers* in 1935, the villa was used as residential house of the respective baronial castle managers. In the following years the actor developed the building complex with high quality technical decoration in contemporary style. The building is well preserved without any damages. The entrance is decorated with wrought-iron ornaments with fish images. On the east and south faces of the building, large balconies with beautiful views were added.

Following a petition for monument protection by Gabriella Meros—filed on December 3rd 2019 for *Respect & Remember Europe e.V.*— in early 2020. a preservation order was put on this unique property with its rich history of 160 years.

Already 500 years before, *The House of Wittelsbach* and wealthy Munich patrician families started to settle at Lake Starnberg. During the following years castles, villas and parks were created by well-known architects. In the 19th century during the reign of *King Maximilian II. of Bavaria* the first parkway of mixed style was created on the rose island by the Prussian garden artist *Peter Joseph Lenné*. Hans Albers loved nature and roses in particular. He cultivated more than 100 different species. Historic species from that time could be planted today. With its impressive old trees (some of them around 200 years old), the garden has a distinctive air. It would be our wish to inspire young families through environmental education for the topic of nature.

One of the adjoining buildings was coverted into a garage by Hans Albers as he collected special eccentric cars.

Guests were always welcome at the *Hans Albers & Hansi Burg Villa*. After the war, not only film stars like *Marlene Dietrich* and *Jean Gabin* were often visiting the hospitable couple. Well-known jazz musicians and artists as well as colleagues from the *Filmstudios of Babelsberg or Geiselgasteig*, as well as young *Romy Schneider*, loved to visit frequently.

Also children from the nearby children's home were able to spend time with the couple at the lake as social commitment was important to Hans Albers and Hansi Burg.

Besides a housekeeper, a chauffeur and make-up artist, three permanent gardeners who took care of the 27,000 square meters big estate belonged to the household Burg-Albers. The chauffeur of Albers said about the villa's atmosphere: "We were part of the household and were always able to feel the generosity of Hans Albers. It was always funny and easy and nobody sensed any kind of airs and graces or bossy behaviour."



Hans Albers with children.

RESPECT & REMEMBER EUROPE E.V. HAVE A PLAN

Hansi Burg and Hans Albers did not have their own children. Hansi Burg sold the house and park in 1971 to the free state of Bavaria with the obligation that the property should serve *"public recreational purposes*".

Until today this legacy has not been not realized. It would therefore be consistent to enliven the property in the sense of Hansi Burg and Hans Albers after a longlasting period of non-use. For future generations— sort of for the couple's grandchildren and great-grandchildren— a German-Jewish place of remembrance and international meeting centre for tolerance should be created here.

After the realization of the monument protection the association *Respect & Remember Europe e.V.* has developed a utilization concept.

In remembrance of Hans Albers und Hansi Burg the property should be restored by an architect who is experienced in monument protection and delivers valuable ideas for the quality-focused usage and interior design of the building.

The garden is a treasure of the precious historical civil parkways of the "Fünfseenland".

In 1935 Albers adapted the 1865 built *Villa Loé*. The basic historic structure of the park stayed the same. The garden stairs and long vistas partially exist. They are planned to be carved out in respect of historic garden conservation.

Of course it is planned to inform about the rich history of property. The prehistory of its different owners gives information about the erstwhile life at Lake Starnberg.

A German-Jewish place of remembrance in the *"Fünfseenland"* would be a gift to society. The confrontation with nationalsocialism would be of essential importance in this region in particular as in this rural idyllic scene to the south of Munich many local groups of the *NSDAP* were formed. Jews were segregates already before 1933. In 1934, the *"Reichsschule"* of the NSDAP (RSF) was opened. A place of remembrance could make these historical topics tangible and would encourage to rehabilitation.



A wary opening for the public is planned with the following

- A permanent exhibition about Hans Albers and Hansi Burg as well as changing exhibitions about German-Jewish couples in NS time
- Film evenings and theatre events with talks and discussions
- Seminars/workshops for teenagers about NS time, antisemitism, racism, tolerance, moral courage and democracy
- Literature evenings for young and old
- Readings
- Discussions with international guests
- Scholarships for students, research and publications

We furthermore want to enliven the property with a small café offering culinary specialties in remembrance of *"Hansi & Hans"*, who have both been gourmets. Thus we want to give visitors the opportunity to relax in this unique place, enjoying their time and the special atmosphere of this serene scenery.

Through the elucidation of history and this unusual love story, the *Hans-Albers* & *Hansi-Burg-Villa* in Garatshausen offers as an international place of remembrance the unique possibility to contribute to more sympathy and understanding through dialogue.

By means of this love story which existed despite all resistance, in particular young people can be brought closer to the events of the *Shoah*. The story of Hans Albers and Hansi Burg reaches the emotional level of people – which is more important than ever before today to inform adequately.

As there are hardly any contemporary witnesses still alive today, there is a strong need for lively essentially important work of remembrance. In times of increasing antisemitism and racism, this place where humanitarian topics can be discussed in an open way, would be of urgent importance.

There are plans for cooperations with the cities of Vienna, Hamburg, Berlin and Zurich – cities which have been of importance in the life of Albers and Burg respectively. Furthermore, plans for partnerships with different institutions in politics, film, music and literature already exist.

The appeal and reputation of the place, its proximity to the *Protestant Academy Tutzing* and the *Buchheim Museum* make this treasure a popular place of excursions and at the same time meeting place for people from the region.

WHY THIS IS POSSIBLE

Therefore, a publicly protected usage would be possible. And could there possibly be a better usage than a meeting place for tolerance and mutual understanding with remembrance culture regarding the darkest times in German history? Empathy can only be evoked through information. The interdisciplinary concept with film, literature, music and encounters would perfectly match the body of thought of the artist couple. A German-Jewish place of remembrance in Bavaria which reflects on an impressive love story and therefore can educate future generations about the topic of Holocaust would be a one-of-a-kind— in this breathtakingly beautiful landscape.

I am at your disposal for further information about the project.

Thank you. Shalom.

Munich, August 2020

Contact: Respect & Remember Europe e.V contact@respect-and-remember.com



Hans Albers and Hansi Burg reunited after yearlong separation in May 1945 in Garatshausen.

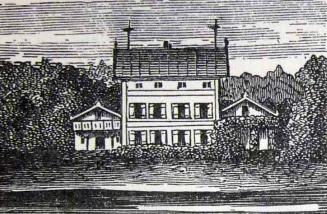


IMPRESSIONS









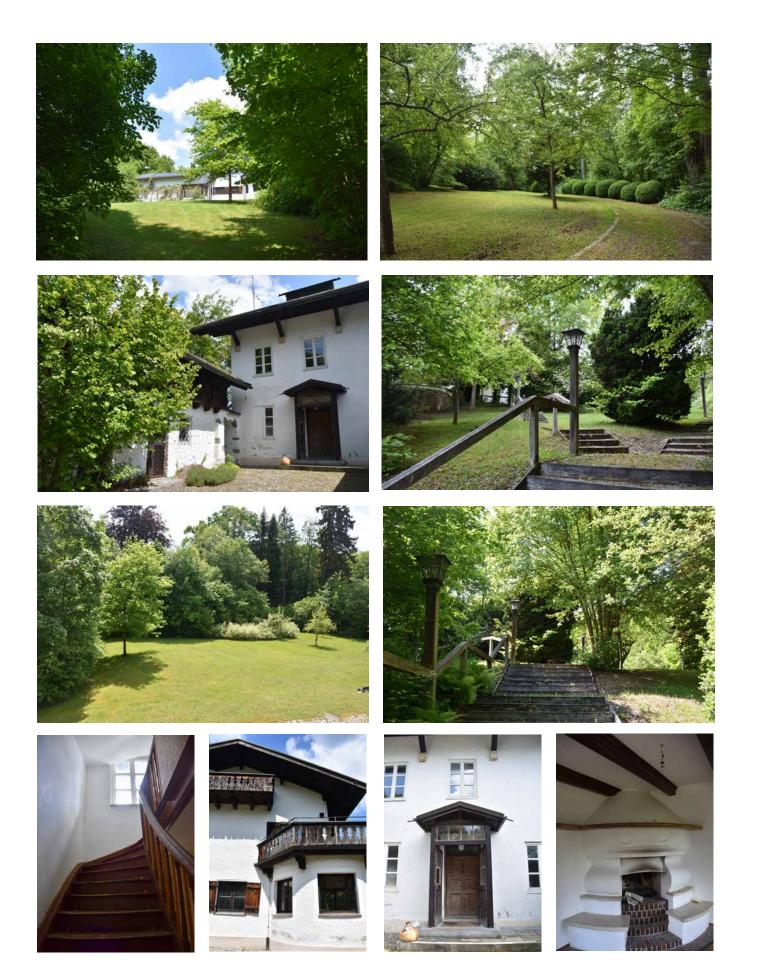






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NOW



PRESS

SM-Nr.: 106 vom 08.05.2020, Seite 5

SZ-Nr.: 22 vom 28.01.2020, Seite R 2

"Ort der Liebe"

Konzept für Nutzung der Albers-Villa

Verein Respect & Remember Europe aus München möchte aus der Albers-Villa in Caratshausen einen deutsch-jüdischen Erinnerungs- und Begegnungsort schaffen. Wie die Vorsitzende Gabriella Meros mitteilt, hat ihr Verein einen Antrag auf Denkmal-schutz für die mehr als 160 Jahre alte Villa gestellt, in der der Schauspieler Hans Albers mit seiner jüdischen Frau Hansi Burg lebte. Burg veräußerte das Anwesen 1971 an den Freistaat. Vorgestern hat der Wissenschaftsausschuss des landtags die Villa unter Denkmalschutz estellt- auf eine Petition des Kulturvereins Garatshausen hin (wir berichteten).

Der Verein Respekt & Remember Europe hat im Vorfeld ein vierseitiges Anschreiben an den Ausschuss gerichtet, in dem er ein Konzept für die Nutzung des Anwesens darstellt und dem Kulturverein Garatshausen mangelnde Information über dessen eigenes Konzept vorwirft. "Unser Konzept sieht eine positiv besetzte und auch internationale Begegnungsstätte mit Wissensvermittlung (Be-

Garatshausen/München – Der kämpfung von Antisemitis-Verein Respect & Remember mus, Erinnerungskultur, Wissenschaft und Kunst) vor. die aufgrund der Geschichte von Hans Albers und Hansi Burg ein Alleinstellungs-merkmal aufweist: im Gegensatz zu anderen Erinnerungsorten, die sich mit der NS-Zeit beschäftigten, haben wir es hier mit keinem Ort des Terrors, sondern mit einem Ort der Liebe zu tun*, schreibt die Vorsitzende. "Unsere Arbeit orientiert sich an greifbaren Ergebnissen: von der Ausrichtung des Projekts bis hin zur Finanzierung des Betriebes der Hans-Albers-Villa und lässt keine fragwürdigen Lücken offen." Man könnte Ausstellungen organisieren, ein Café und den Park für die Öffentlichkeit öffnen.

In Richtung Kulturverein heißt es in dem Schreiben: Da der Kulturverein Garatshausen bisher nur auf sehr eingeschränkter lokaler Ebene agierte, lässt sich nicht erwarten, dass damit ein werbewirtschaftlicher Mehrwert für die Region und Bayern entstehen könnte-geschweige denn bundesweit oder international.", schreibt Meros an den Landtag. and it



Starnberger See – Villa von Hans Albers soll Erinnerungsort werden | Mün

28.01.2020, 15:22 Stiddeutsche Zeitung

27. Januar 2020, 18:46 Uhr Starnberger See

Villa von Hans Albers soll Erinnerungsort werden

Die Liebe des Schauspielers und seiner jüdischen Lebensgefährtin Hansi Burg trotzte den Nazis, dem Krieg und der Verfolgung. Ihrer will der Verein "Respect & Remember Europe" nun gedenken.

Interviews von Jakob Wetzel

Es gehe ihr um ein Erinnern in Würde, sagt Gabriella Meros. Sie leitet den Verein "Respect & Remember Europe", der sich für das Gedenken an die Opfer der Nationalsozialisten einsetzt - und zugleich erbittert gegen die "Stolpersteine" des Kölner Künstlers Gunter Demnig gekämpft hat. Ein Gespräch über neue Ideen für München, einen Erinnerungsort am Starnberger See und über die Frage, was Wien besser macht als München, nicht nur im Städtebau, sondern auch im Gedenken.

SZ: An diesem Montag jährte sich die Befreiung des Konzentrationslagers Auschwitz zum 75. Mal. In München sind an diesem Tag eine Gedenktafel und eine Stele für vier Opfer der Nazis übergeben worden, die Alternative zu den sogenannten Stolpersteinen. Um "Respect & Remember Europe" ist es dagegen still geworden.

Gabriella Meros: Nach außen sind wir still gewesen, das stimmt. Aber wir sind sehr lebendig! Wir besuchen zum Beispiel Schulklassen mit Schoah-Überlebenden. Wir unterstützen Schüler, die Ausstellungen und Gedenk-Projekte erarbeiten. Wir zeigen demnächst Filme und machen Lesungen. Aber wir müssen damit nicht jedes Mal in die Öffentlichkeit treten. Wir haben im Stillen ein paar Projekte ausgearbeitet. Und wir halten viele Vorträge. Diesen Monat erst haben wir mit einem externen Referenten an der Universität Freiburg über Stolpersteine gesprochen.