



**Minderheiten**

ifs Standpunkt

Sergey Kuniavsky

## **Zur Befreiung von Auschwitz**

**Ein persönlicher Kommentar**

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**Abstract [en]:**

On the occasion of the liberation of Auschwitz 75 years ago, Sergey Kuniavsky writes about his personal desire to be normal; and the question of forgiveness and oblivion.

**Abstract [de]:**

Sergey Kuniavsky schreibt anlässlich der Befreiung von Auschwitz vor 75 Jahren über seinen persönlichen Wunsch des Normal-Seins und der Frage nach Vergebung und Vergessen.

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I feel that I have to say something, on the date that occurs tomorrow. On the topic that in some way is in the background of my life, whether I want it to be or not.

On that, I feel that I have no right to forgive, nor the privilege to forget. No right to be angry with anyone aged below 90, nor the privilege to ignore the warning signs. No right to demand and no privilege to be silent. It is there, and will be even more present, when my children will have to be confronted with it.

Despite the knowledge on how things were in Germany, Poland, Russia, Ukraine, Belarus (USSR) and more states, I may not come with any demands to people of these countries, except from – prevent it from happening again. With that we certainly have a problem, where the ineffectiveness of a democracy is there, and many, to many, wish to limit it. When the problems to solve are too complex, and the various solutions in need to be deeply thought about, many wish for fast answers. Many wish for simple enemies. Many wish for simple scare-goats. Sadly, the world and its problems are not simple. The solutions proposed were tried, and brought devastating results. Yet, more and more wish to do something, anything, even if it is a step in the wrong direction. 75 years ago a symbol of darkness was shut down. Several months later a type of darkness was also shut down. All hoped forever, but sadly, not. Now, it raises its head in many places, and not only Jews, but also other minority groups all over the world live in fear.

What do I want? How long must Germans pay for their history? When is it enough? Good questions. Let me address them one by one. Note the answers are mine, and not representing the whole Jewish nation, as, well, it is probably impossible to find a single answer to any question in a way that all Jews would agree upon. Well, probably with the exception that WW2 was bad.

I want to be normal. I want to be addressed normally, ignoring my background. I want to be treated equally, as a local resident. As if I was German. Gladly, in many aspects it happens, and in many places I do not hide my background. Be it partially because of the impossibility (work that sees my CV, school since my kids would not be able to hide it, neighbors that in a small town know everything). I want to believe that I am being treated equally, note – equally means no harsher nor better – than anyone. I wish that it were true, however, a small devil in my head makes me paranoid (evolution – not paranoid Jews seem not to live that long throughout history). I never encountered direct antisemitism in Germany (lucky me), however, did I get some positive answers, or some negative ones due to my background? One can never know, as it is all deniable. I wish to be able to avoid hiding my background (note – not daily openly march with the Jewish flag, but to be able to say without fear who I am). Certain events make me sometimes afraid to do so. Can be that the problem lays in me.

How long must the Germans pay? Well, a good Jew answers with a question to a question. How must the Germans pay? The financial chapter should have been ended with the agreement in 1952 (as much as some had some harsh points against it). And, certainly, to my mind, we (said Israel) deserves no discounts in atomic U-Boats like several years ago. Therefore, I have no right to demand anything beyond what the German law gives a regular resident on the economic level. On the historic and political, which sadly, lasts far longer, Germany plays its role very well in stating – look what we were, you don't want to be that – very good. Remembering the history, in my eyes, is not to make current Germans (or Poles, Russians etc.) look like monsters, because they are not – they are as human as we all – Milgram proved it in the famous experiment. They are to be treated as warning

sings, and very seriously. For two millennia Jews were prosecuted, murdered, raped, maltreated and limited. For the first time in Jewish history a nation said "we're sorry". For the first time in history apologies were made after a genocide. Sadly, not too many examples followed, and not too few genocides happened afterwards. I respect the burden, and I respect the "don't be like we were" role.

How long? Here come the bad news. Sadly, soon it would be over, not because of good reasons, but the most wrong ones. From the way things look, the dark camps are probably going to be reopened soon, or new ones built. It is for me and you, my German friends, and not only German, to prolongue it as much as possible, and to try and withhold a repetition of this dark chapter. With that we stand united.

I wish I could end this post with "let there be no second Auschwitz ever again" but judging by what happening in some of the darkest corners of our round planet we are too late for that. In many places people of the wrong color, gender, religion, birthplace or political opinion are being imprisoned maltreated and murdered. We can only give media light to these places, and raise shame to the one responsible for it. Here I would be glad to help, in giving blame to the ones doing the crimes, and not the grandchildren of those who did. For I may not forgive, nor forget.

In hope for a peaceful life.

Dr. Sergey Kuniavsky

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