The Berlin Times

A special edition of *The German Times* marking thirty years of the fall of the Wall

30 CLIMBING WALL

An American diplomat, a Russian scholar, a TV reporter and two generations of East Germans: *The Berlin Times* asked people with unique viewpoints to recount their experience of the fateful night the Berlin Wall came down

30 YEARS FALL OF THE WALL

Exit, left

Germany is celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Peaceful Revolution against communist rule – yet the debate rages on about who exactly is responsible for making it happen

BY ILKO-SASCHA KOWALCZUK

In the fall and winter of 1989–90, the entire world watched in anticipation as events unfolded in Germany. It seemed that every day brought something that would have been considered impossible only a day earlier. The highpoint was the evening of Nov. 9, 1989, when the Berlin Wall – that decades-long symbol of communist rule over half of Europe – came tumbling down.

Today, individual pieces of the Wall can be found everywhere in the world. They remind people of the boundary that once divided Berlin, Germany, Europe and the world, a border that functioned as a symbol of bondage and dictatorship. The word *Stasi* – shorthand for *Ministerium für Staatssicherheit*, or the East German secret police – has entered many languages across the globe as a synonym for police oppression, and it continues to this day to symbolize communist dictatorship and its apparatus of oppression and surveillance.

The Wall was the most visible expression of an all-encompassing police state that imprisoned an entire population behind a concrete and barbed-wire fence. Several sections of this Iron Curtain were preserved and set up in the United States, as well; for example, in the park belonging to the presidential library of Ronald Reagan in Simi Valley, California.

It was Reagan who spoke those famous words on June 12, 1987, at the Brandenburg Gate in West Berlin: "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!" Reagan inspired millions of people held captive behind the Wall and assured them that the free world had not forgotten them.

The Wall was ultimately torn down by East Germans, but also by citizens of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. The Poles were the first to start chipping away at the Wall in 1980 by means of their anti-communist Solidarity movement.

When East Germans finally tore down that Wall on the night of Nov. 9, leaders in London and Paris hesitated to support the prospect of German reunification. Poland and the US took a different stance. President George H. W. Bush immediately assured the Germans that the US would stand at their side as a reliable partner and do everything possible to make sure they regained their state sovereignty and unity as quickly as possible. Bush was Germany's most important friend in this moment, and his steadfast policy toward the country quickly forced the remaining former allies, including the Soviet Union, to abandon their blockade stance toward German reunification.

Although these foreign policy developments were indisputably important factors in the realization of German unity, a passionate argument is currently being waged among the country's historians and historical witnesses as to who exactly in the GDR was most responsible for the success of the revolution against the dictatorship overseen by the Socialist Unity Party (SED).

Oct. 9, 1989, one month before the Wall would fall, is the symbolic day of the East German revolution. On that day, more than 70,000 people took to the streets in Leipzig to demonstrate against the communists. The state did not intervene, and the massacre that many feared did not take place. Just days prior, high-ranking SED functionaries had expressed admiration for their Chinese counterparts for their handling of the opposition movement in that country, where hundreds of civil rights activists had been massacred and thousands others arrested in Beijing and elsewhere in early June 1989. In East Germany, by contrast, the SED leadership capitulated in the face of the unexpectedly large masses of people on the Leipzig streets. After all, revolutions never succeed in strong regimes.

Roughly five decades ago, Albert Hirschman (1915–2012), a German-born economist and social scientist who taught in the US, described the charged relationship between involvement and migration using the terms "voice" and "exit." And it was precisely because these two forces of "speaking up" and "leaving" came together in the GDR that the East German dictatorship fell. In fact, research has long since shown that there was more than simply one trigger for the East German revolution. The system was ailing; the economy was running on empty; the political elites were incapacitated; the loyalty of followers had cracked; and Gorbachev in Moscow was no longer willing to sustain the status quo.

But the SED regime did not fall all by itself. A collapse of this nature requires the active participation of individuals. Some left, some fled. Either way, they contributed considerably to the destabilization of the system. In response to the waves of people attempting to leave the country, the active opposition called out in a defiant tone: "We are staying!" And, indeed, most people did stay, that is, they stayed in their homes and waited – as is the case in every revolution, because otherwise there would be no one left to revolt. The ones who stayed at home would turn out to be the benefactors; they were given democracy, freedom and the rule of law without having lifted a finger. Historically speaking, this, too, is quite normal.

The New Forum, founded on Sept. 9–10, 1989, along with other new citizens' movements, offered a space for public communication for the first time. Within only a few weeks – by the beginning of October – thousands of people had started taking advantage of this opportunity, yet all at great personal risk. The GDR was changing from below.

People weren't taking to the streets by accident. Those who succeeded at bringing the Leipzig Monday demonstrations out of the churches and into broader society were oppositionists who had organized themselves illegally years prior to 1989 in Leipzig. Without their idea of taking to the streets after Monday prayers, which they began doing in early September, the famous Monday demonstrations most likely would never have occurred.

No one is claiming that the civil rights movement alone led to the revolution. However, for a revolution to unfold in the first place, a pool of like-minded people has to form. The founding of the New Forum created the space for such a reservoir of individuals. The idea of moving from the churches and onto the streets was an offer they made to society – an offer so broadly worded that it was able to reach even critically minded members of the SED. Within only a few days and weeks, tens of thousands of people had joined the New Forum.

There were massive police attacks and many arrests at the demonstrations. The people chanted "No violence!" in defiance of the powers of state and called on those of their fellow citizens who were still hiding out at home: "Fellow citizens, stop watching TV and come out and join us!" Most people who didn't refrained, which was understandable considering the intimidating police presence.

Word of the events quickly spread around the globe. But how did the word get out in the first place? The East Berlin oppositionists Aram Radomski and Siegbert Schefke are to thank for that. They shook off the Stasi guards following them, drove to Leipzig and filmed the mass demonstrations at great personal peril. They then smuggled the footage to West Berlin via a Western correspondent with whom they were friends. The footage then began its iconic march around the globe. Without this footage shot by these two men and without the initiative of the Leipzig-based oppositionists at the Monday demonstrations, the revolution would likely have taken a demonstrably different path. It was this footage that turned the mass demonstrations into an irreversible event that could no longer be denied. And above all, it served to motivate thousands of other people.

Perhaps the revolution in the GDR might have taken place even without the oppositionists. Who knows? But one certainty is that it played a decisive role. We also know that communism did not simply disappear, not in Romania not in Bulgaria and especially not in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and the Baltic states, where organized oppositions were critical to it being overthrown.

There are two erstwhile examples that prove that it's not always so easy to bring down a dictatorship. In Cuba, which is just as rundown as the GDR was, absolute rule shows no palpable signs of being dismantled. North Korea is an even more drastic example – the state remains so strong that a breakdown seems inconceivable. However, as history teaches us – even in North Korea, and just like in the GDR – should the state show signs of wavering, a revolution will remain out of reach but for the infectious courage of those few individuals who motivate the larger population to rise up. ■

The people chanted "No violence!"

Ilko-Sascha Kowalczuk is an author and historian at the Stasi Records Agency. This month, he published *Die Übernahme. Wie Ostdeutschland Teil der Bundesrepublik wurde* (The takeover. How East Germany became part of the Federal Republic). Kowalczuk is also on the national commission to mark the 30th anniversaries of the Peaceful Revolution and German reunification.

BACK ON CENTER STAGE

BY MICHAEL MÜLLER, GOVERNING MAYOR OF BERLIN

Berlin was an eminent spot in the world of academia in the Roaring Twenties and is again becoming the place to be for young talent and top-notch scientists. One in three newly enrolled students at our universities and colleges comes from abroad, and the percentage of international faculty in the city is on the rise. From artificial intelligence and cutting-edge medicine to the worlds of literature and ancient civilizations – few other locations can offer such a wide range of leading expertise and state-of-the-art research. You wouldn't expect the city's mayor to say anything else, of course, so I'll let the facts speak for themselves.

Berlin? A global top-ten destination, says the UK-based QS Best Student City listing. The city boasts a unique density of excellent universities, according to the Times Higher Education international ranking, on a level with the likes of Boston, London, Paris, Hong Kong and Los Angeles. Berlin's newest flagship enterprise, the Berlin University Alliance, formed by the Freie, Humboldt, and Technische universities, was recently distinguished for its excellence in a tough national competition, together with the Charité, which itself was just named Europe's best university hospital, scoring fifth worldwide in the Newsweek's recent evaluation of a thousand university hospitals around the globe.

CAROLIN WEINKOPF

Governing Mayor of Berlin: Michael Müller

This time-honored institution is now an acclaimed TV star, too, with its three centuries of history and an audience of millions on all continents. Check out the first two seasons of *Charité* on Netflix, if you haven't seen it yet. No doubt about it, 30 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, higher education and research are playing a key role in the German capital and enjoying high priority for its government. They are back on center stage.

"Brain City Berlin," as it's known in an information campaign, is now home to a quarter-million students, researchers and staff employed by the 30 academic institutions and over 70 research institutes across the entire city. And with the bright minds come the companies, making Berlin one of the world's most attractive locations for tech-savvy entrepreneurs and investors on the lookout for the next big thing.

A true boomtown for young startups and the ideal foundation for established multinationals like Siemens seeking to reinvent themselves in the digital age. This unique environment is the key to Berlin's positive economic development of the past few years, with tens of thousands of new jobs, continuously shrinking unemployment rates and steady budget surpluses in a city formerly dubbed "sexy, but poor."

But it's not just its size and the sheer numbers that do the trick. One of Berlin's most attractive features is its distinct culture of cooperation, both among the institutions within the city and even more so with the world surrounding it. Oxford University's decision to form a strategic alliance with our universities and its plans to establish a presence here is just one recent example. Likewise, international funding heavyweights such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Wellcome Trust and George Soros' Open Society Foundations are moving to the city to be part of its dynamic environment, and not least for the promise of a place that breathes freedom and stays true to the ideals of openness and tolerance.

It is important that we keep our doors open wide and welcome people from all over the world with joy and hospitality, whether they are Nobel Prize winners or people seeking refuge from oppression. Any calls for limiting the number of people who move to Berlin are absurd and harmful. Berlin is and will remain a place of openness, a place where borders are overcome and walls are broken down. The German capital is a center of intellectual life and a modern marketplace of ideas, guided by international dialogue and exchange, and with the ambition to contribute to solving the challenges that face our societies, be it climate change, the impact of the digital transformation, questions of social cohesion or global health.

The very week in which we celebrate the 30th anniversary of the crumbling of the Berlin Wall will also feature the Berlin Science Week and the Falling Walls Conference. Both annual international events offer a stage for young talent and top-notch scientists – and myriad opportunities for Berliners to dive into the world of research and innovation. I look forward to seeing you there.

Can't we just stay poor?

Berlin is – famously – poor but sexy, yet the city is now booming. Its tens of thousands of new arrivals could renew the German capital, but Berlin's older established residents see it all as a plague

BY JAN-PHILIPP HEIN

There are few places in Berlin where one can simultaneously experience prosperity and misery better than around the Schönleinstraße subway station. Anyone exiting a subway train at this stop on the German capital's most notorious U-Bahn line – at any time of day or night – has a good chance of seeing a junkie working his or her needle. Then, by climbing the south staircase and walking a few steps to the right, the contrast could hardly be greater. Dieffenbachstraße is now considered one of Berlin's most beautiful streets, lined on both sides with crisply restored turn-of-the-century façades and rows of sycamores providing shade.

It's the happy few who can live here, as it now requires either a generous income, substantial savings or a big inheritance. For €12 per square meter, it could be yours. That might sound like a steal for residents of Paris or London, but the Berliner's perspective is a different one. Since 2009, rents on Dieffenbachstraße have nearly doubled. And this leafy lane in Kreuzberg is far from an exception.

In no other German city – let alone the countryside – have real estate prices risen as drastically as in Berlin. The reason is simple: The city's population grows by 40,000 every year, with nearly all new arrivals coming from abroad. Berlin has a global reputation for being particularly authentic and raw. A cynic might say that only the German capital still has junkies in its finest neighborhoods.

Berlin is taking a rather passive approach to the influx. Twice in a row, the number of newly approved apartment development projects has fallen. Any investor with ambitious plans can expect protests from the start. Wherever construction machinery is visible, a citizens' initiative is sure to follow. Berlin wants to stay as it is, damn the consequences.

Keep in mind that the exploding rents chiefly affect those who want to move in but haven't yet; those who have lived for decades in Kreuzberg's old leftist "36" neighborhood, on the more upscale streets around Bergmannstraße or any of the other hyper-cool prewar neighborhoods pays a couple hundred euros for a few rooms with creaky floorboards, ornate stucco and French doors and has no wish to see their neighborhood change, thank you very much.

Most native Berliners and those who assimilated here long ago thus experience the city's current boom as a kind of plague. The surrounding misery, meanwhile, is for them a kind of romanticized urban backdrop that should just be left the way it is, free of private sector interference and – worst of all – modern apartment buildings.

This attitude is not subversive. In Berlin, it is canonized as official policy. Some months ago, Kreuzberg's commissioner for construction, Florian Schmidt, publicly celebrated having successfully fended off the establishment of a Google campus in his district. Schmidt, a Green Party member, knows well the reactionary instincts of his constituents. A citizens' initiative had been warning tirelessly that the mere presence of the California-based tech giant would instantly turn the hood into a turbo-capitalist antechamber of hell.

In other words, at the moment, an investor run on the city is cohabiting with the old established Berliners' concrete resolve to keep everything as is. The trouble with emotions, though, is that they rarely allow for second thoughts.

The city needs the new arrivals and their new ideas. They hold the key to restoring the economic backbone Berlin lost after World War II and has been unable to regrow ever since.

Not one corporation on Germany's blue-chip DAX stock index is based in the capital. Siemens, for example, fled to Munich after the war. Unlike other European capitals, Berlin is like a boarder living off the rest of the country's wealth. Every year, Berlin is subsidized to the tune of billions of euros through Germany's state compensation scheme. The city's biggest companies are the state-owned Deutsche Bahn, the state-owned Charité hospital, the publicly owned Vivantes healthcare group and the BVG transit authority, which indeed also belongs to Berlin.

Of course, unleashed construction and private sector growth would not directly help the junkies in the subway. But the city's disastrous school system and its snail-paced administrative structure – one that can hardly keep up with its duties, including the issuance of construction permits – are the result of Berlin's economic weakness, which in turn has much to do with the mentality of its people. The city could do much more to care for its neediest if it were not a welfare case itself.

One can assume that a man like Michael Hüther would be an unwelcome guest at most homes in the former Cold War poster child. The professor of economics and director of the German Economic Institute, which is frequently labeled "employer-friendly" – an insult almost as grave as "investor" – certifies that Berlin has the "stamina of an island." Its "conservationist structures" are substantial, he writes, and he means more than just the district of Kreuzberg.

Those reflexes work just as well in parts of the city's former east. While much of the Prenzlauer Berg district has become a world of its own and, through inattentive urban planning, has irrevocably become a postmodern Green bubble of prosperity, Friedrichshain, like Kreuzberg, is a hotbed of urban conservation – and also under the authority of construction commissioner Schmidt.

At some point, however, Berlin is going to have to finally grow up. And Hüther, an economist, says the conditions for that upcoming spurt of maturity are not at all bad. "The fact that it has next to no industry makes Berlin less dependent on economic cycles," he writes. That a city that happens to be the nation's capital also sports a big administrative sector is hardly surprising. Berlin dynamic culture, including oodles of restaurants and hotels, Hüther says. But especially important and an essential part of the current boom is the startup sector. And this, he stressed, is where problems need to be solved.

These problems extend beyond the capital; they affect the entire country, Hüther says. Entrepreneurs receive support only at the outset. Subsequent rounds of financing for startups are a taboo in the land of Benz and Daimler, he regrets. Good ideas can be hatched in Berlin but not carried forth to the point that they become real money-spinners and underpin new global players. Mail-order giant Zalando's status as a veritable force in the city is the exception that proves the rule.

Of course, Germany can do little to stimulate the country's venture capitalists. But the signals emanating from the capital point in the opposite direction and serve only to reinforce the already extremely risk-averse – that is, innovation-averse – stance of this city's idea financiers.

Instead of encouraging the many people and ideas that flock to Berlin, the city prefers to curl up into a ball and tolerate these people only as long as they are not too successful. If this dynamic ever changes, the possibility that the city, too, will change is sure to trigger a fresh wave of citizens' initiatives.

According to Hüther, Berlin has a "backward-facing cultural substrate" that prevents the city from growing beyond its current guise. The potential that this city deliberately wastes has practically no comparison, he writes. People here even seem proud of this fact.

One day, the boom will end. When several generations of successful entrepreneurs experience Berlin as a city with forcibly imposed restrictions, they will say so. And when that happens, the residents of Kreuzberg will again find themselves completely undisturbed in their habitat, with a bit of misery as decoration – after all, it's authentic, right?

IMAGO/CHRISTIAN MANG

Sellout: Tenants in Berlin's hip district of Kreuzberg protest against the sale of their building to a real-estate financier.

Jan-Philipp Hein is a Berlin-based freelance journalist and founder of the writers' platform Salonkolumnisten.

DPA/JÜRGEN HELD

Mug shot: Nidal R. as a mural in Neukölln

Let us prey

Arab clans control many Berlin streets where the police dare to patrol only in squads of multiple officers. Berlin Interior Secretary Andreas Geisel wants to finally combat the criminals in earnest

BY ANDREAS KOPIETZ

An August evening on Sonnenallee, Berlin-Neukölln: Tires screech as police vans come to a sudden stop. Officers enter hookah bars and cafés. Men sitting at tables look surprised. The officers are accompanied by tax investigators and employees of the public order office. They're controlling whether bar owners are following industrial codes, whether their accounting checks out, whether they've installed more slot machines than are permitted. What's happening here is what's called a "coordinated deployment" targeting the criminality of Arab clans. In 2018, such large-scale group deployments still drew quite a lot of public attention. They've since become commonplace and now happen on a weekly basis.

These operations involving several different authorities are intended to get a leg up on something long neglected – the state's battle against the criminality of Arab clans, which have become ever more powerful in Germany in recent decades and now control the underworld of many major cities.

Over the past few years, "clan crime" has become a significant public issue. Politicians and media outlets had long avoided the topic for fear of accusations of xenophobia. For as many as 20 years, members of several large Arab families have earned their livelihood exclusively through social welfare and crimes such as theft, robbery and extortion.

But then the Arab clans started making headlines. In 2010, a group of brothers and cousins robbed a poker tournament at Potsdamer Platz. In 2014, in the middle of the Christmas shopping season, members of a large family known to the police looted a jeweler in the posh department store KaDeWe. That same year, clan members cracked open safe-deposit boxes at a Sparkasse in Berlin-Tempelhof and then blew up the entire bank. Members of a clan are currently standing trial for stealing a 100-kilo gold coin from the Bode Museum in 2017. In 2018, a clan is alleged to have robbed an armored car near Alexanderplatz; several Lebanese nationals are currently in custody for the offense.

"The increased public interest was driven by the criminals' own insolence," argues Ralph Ghadban, a Lebanese-born Islamic scholar living in Berlin. "Their arrogance reached such a degree that no one could overlook it. Last year, Ghadban published a best-seller titled *Arabische Clans – Die unterschätzte Gefahr* (Arab clans – the underrated danger). "If the media covers it," he says, "it influences policy. Politics reacts, but it's not proactive."

The funeral of a felon also attracted attention last year. Nidal R. had spent 14 of 38 years in prison. By his 20th birthday, the police had prosecuted him for 80 different crimes. When frustrated police officers publicized the extent of his law-breaking background, he became known nationwide as "Berlin's youngest career criminal."

The case became a prime example of a "feeble and helpless" justice system that could not fulfill its mandate. In September, Nidal R. was shot in Neukölln, most likely by rival gangsters. His funeral was attended by more than 2,000 mourners, including all clan chiefs from all over Germany who were intent on demonstrating unity above all else. Hundreds of police officers stood guard at the ceremony; traffic came to a standstill.

These incidents serve to show that politicians in Berlin and other German states like North Rhine-Westphalia have started to engage more intently with the clans. Police authorities are now coordinating across state borders, as criminal clans are not only networked within Germany, but all across Europe and the world.

A dozen clans, each with several hundred members, supply the Berlin police with a constant flow of work. It's always the same figures committing the same offenses, small and large, with names like Al-Zein, Remmo or Ali-Khan.

Not all members of these families are criminals. But many of them help cover up the dark deeds of their fathers, brothers and cousins. If they are questioned by police or in court, they just can't seem to remember. Or in the words of mafia expert Sandro Mattioli: "The clans are male associations; there is a vow of secrecy. Members find it extremely difficult to break out of the societies."

In the meantime, people outside of Berlin have developed a gruesome fascination with the German capital. Two Berliners have even started selling what they call a "Clan Map," a guide to locating the homes and favorite bars of clan bigwigs as well as the cemeteries harboring the gravesites of certain dead criminals. These "city maps for Berlin's parallel world" are hoped to be boon with tourists. The clans, a Berlin paper recently wrote, are "part of local pop culture."

This pop culture also includes peculiar scenarios, such as the well-known rapper Bushido being protected by the Abou-Chaker clan in return for a share of his music profits – that is, until their relationship recently broke down. Bushido, who regularly insults the police in his songs, is now obliged to live under police protection himself.

Successful television series like *Dogs of Berlin* (TNT) and *4 Blocks* (Netflix), each of which portrays a rather kitschy image of clan life in Neukölln, are profiting from this pop culture. The shows swim in glamour and are now facing accusation of elevating criminals to cult status.

"The true image is anything but romantic. Most members of these families are sorry failures, and were already losers as school kids," says one police investigator who has spent years immersed in this milieu. He won't reveal his name, as many officials' fear of threats is both considerable and fully justified.

DPA/PAUL ZINKEN

At Nidal R.'s funeral

People outside of Berlin have developed a gruesome fascination with the German capital

There are streets in Neukölln, Kreuzberg and Gesundbrunnen where police will only dare to tread with a squad. Even during routine actions like citing a clan member for parking in a bike path, police officers are often surrounded and threatened by relatives and associates. "Clan members stand out for the way they act on their territory," says a police spokesperson. "Their message is: 'Scram! This is our street!'"

Clan crime has grown slowly and furtively in Berlin. Many clans belong to the Mhallami ethnic group, which lived in Turkish East Anatolia, spoke a dialect of Arabic and began migrating to Lebanon in the 1920s. They tend to belong to the lower class and live in comparative isolation. Some, such as those in the Abou-Chaker clan, hailed from Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon.

The first families from Lebanon came to West Berlin and West Germany as civil war refugees in the mid-1970s. Integration was not a top priority for the destination country, as it was hoped that the refugees would return to their homeland once the war was over. But that's not what happened. Because they didn't have Lebanese papers, Germany could not send the refugees back.

As the Mhallami refugees transferred their lives to Germany, they of course brought their clan relationships along with them. They closed themselves off from those around them and created a parallel society – not only in Berlin, but in the Ruhr Valley and in Bremen as well. They tend not to interact with the police and settle their conflicts among themselves, either through their own magistrates or through agreements worked out by clan elders. Insults or failed businesses are compensated through cash settlements.

But it also not uncommon that conflicts are resolved in the street. In the Britz section of Neukölln, a 43-year-old was clubbed to death by two masked men with baseball bats. The police suspect that it concerned a debt of up to €200,000.

In Gropiusstadt, another area of Neukölln, a 42-year-old man was shot in the leg – a warning for having come too close to the wife of a clan member.

In the last week of August, the police in Neukölln were again involved in a major operation to separate two groups. On two consecutive days, youths from two clans had engaged in street fights using knives, clubs and even traffic signs. Police do not know what triggered the battles and will probably never find out. The families will not say a word. Clans see the police and the institutions of state as their enemies.

"Clans behave in their German surroundings as if they were tribes in the desert. Everything outside the clan is enemy territory and available for plunder," says Ghadban. Germany is seen as simply a society to take from.

And so it is that clan members receive full social welfare while driving an expensive AMG Mercedes they bought with money they stole or got for selling drugs. Four years ago, a 19-year-old welfare recipient showed up at a municipal housing association. He dropped €200,000 on the table and wanted to buy a home. The employees registered no suspicions of money laundering and agreed to the sale. Only later did it become known that the money was probably from the heist of the Sparkasse that members of his family had blown up.

Prosecutors then began to investigate and in summer 2018 seized 77 properties that belonged to the clan and were allegedly purchased to launder money. A new law has been passed that facilitates the recovery of assets. Owners must now prove that money used for purchasing property was acquired legally.

It's the first seizure of this sort in Germany, and it's unclear whether it will withstand judicial scrutiny. As a spokesperson for the prosecution admits, the legal situation is precarious. This law came into being because organized gangs and clans are increasingly often investing their ill-gotten gains in real estate and legal businesses like hookah bars.

Authorities cooperate only cautiously to uncover and expose connections between social assistance abuse and large-scale transactions. Data protection laws are a further obstacle.

According to Neukölln's deputy district mayor and district councilor for youth and health, Falko Liecke (CDU), if the vehicle registration office, job center and police were to systematically share data, abuse of the welfare system could be significantly curtailed. "If a clan member is stopped in a Mercedes S-Class, the police could immediately determine whether he receives social welfare and to whom the car is registered. A similar system could be implemented for real estate. The tax office would then have to log the land register entry."

Liecke believes that criminal clans are scoffing at the state. "In their eyes, it's an object of ridicule, a target for exploitation. They see unemployment benefits for as a source of income to supplement all their other sources. They're not uncomfortable with welfare assistance. After all, they don't have to rely on it to get by. They're not interested in laws. They try only to extract gains from what the state and society can offer."

For some time, Liecke has been advocating for a city-wide concept to address the clan problem similar to that which has been implemented in Neukölln, where authorities have long been pooling resources, where juvenile legal support agencies, magistrates, district attorneys, the police and schools work together to discourage potential future criminals.

Something in this direction was proposed by Berlin Interior Secretary Andreas Geisel in November of 2018. The Social Democrat presented a five-point plan designed such that gang members will have to face stricter commercial and financial controls. The authorities' goal is to inhibit money laundering.

The district attorney has now created a special department to seize illegally purchased assets. Statutory violations will consequently be punished. Moving forward, authorities will cooperate interdepartmentally: job centers, tax offices, immigration authorities, youth welfare offices and offices of public order.

With this aim, Geisel established a coordination unit at the state office of criminal investigations in December. As the interior secretary explained, "There will be many opportunities for individual offices to play their part."

This is what interior ministers and officials in Berlin and North-Rhine Westphalia call "pinprick policy," that is, a policy designed to hamper clans in carrying out their endeavors. "No stone is left unturned," says Geisel. "Double-parking is fined, and if the kids don't attend school, we step in. Rotten orange juice in the hookah bar is subject to inspection. Petty crime does not go uncharged. And if we can terminate their right to stay in this country, then we do that, too."

However, Geisel warns against unrealistic hopes of a quick success. He assumes that the struggle against clan crime will take decades. "It's a marathon, not a sprint."

The August crackdown on Sonnenallee – including the former haunt of Nidal R. – was one such pinprick. The police officers uncovered violations of tax law, gambling ordinances and commercial regulations. They also found evidence of tax evasion and money laundering and confiscated untaxed hookah tobacco. And yet, the next morning, all the shops were open again for business. ■

Andreas Kopietz is an editor at the *Berliner Zeitung*.



PETER ZEHNER (6)

Your friendly neighborhood cleaning men and women, global edition (from left to right): Ben and Amanda Hopewell; Sorvina Carr, Jialong Kang, and Catherine Knight; Matt and Caroline Sullivan

Trash tourism

A popular new activity for Berlin visitors: picking up garbage with friends

BY PETER ZEHNER

Germans used to be undisputed leaders in the global export of goods, and they've been world champions several times in soccer. In each case, whenever they noticed that their own skills weren't going to be enough, they simply procured foreign muscle to get the job done. In the 20th century, they brought in "guest workers" from Italy, Greece and Turkey to accomplish their "economic miracle," and in the 21st century, they invited talented foreign-born soccer players like Miroslav Klose and Lukas Podolski to help win a World Cup.

These days, Germans are eager to set standards in a new realm: environmental protection. And it would appear they've already started – with garbage in Berlin. Apparently, even the capital's highly capable sanitary workers alone are not able to handle the full extent of the litter left behind by sloppy locals and visitors, which is why a Berlin company, East Berlin Park Cleanup, has come up with a clever idea to help. Sandemans New Europe is a tour company that invites tourists on a tour where participants collect detritus in parks. The district offices of Mitte and Pankow are more than delighted to support the "event," as the company calls it.

In the shining sun of a hot Monday afternoon in late August, 80 people from around the world have come together to clean up Mauerpark, a popular Berlin location for young people looking to party, enjoy open-air karaoke, play some soccer and basketball, or just take their babies and dogs for a walk.

Matt and Caroline Sullivan are among those who have gathered at the meeting point today, in their case with slightly sweaty and sunburned faces. What prompted them to show up? Why did they come here to pick up other people's trash? "'Cause we're mad," they say, laughing, before explaining that they do the same thing at home on the beach in Perth, Australia. "You can't just leave garbage lying around like that," noting that plastic gets flushed into the sea and then eaten by animals. As Matt points out, lobsters eat everything: "These days, people at the Barrier Reef call them sea cockroaches."

Today's event starts with a short, guided tour along the Wall Memorial, an open stretch of terrain with lines marking where the Berlin Wall, the signal fence and the no-man's-land once stood. Participants are told stories and shown where daring East Germans dug tunnels under the Wall and where some people were killed trying to escape.

Then it's on to Mauerpark, where the real fun starts. At the entrance, the organizers hand out vests, plastic bags, gloves and outsized wooden pincers. Participants then set out, usually in small groups of two or three people. "One person to scout, one to pick up the trash and one to hold the bag," recommends Sandemans CEO David O'Kelly. The groups of young men and women disperse quickly, like ladybirds in search of a place to spend the winter.

Basia and Thomas from Kraków have already participated in a Sandemans tour that morning and immediately accepted the invitation to take part in the current one. Why? "It's free and you get to do something good in the process" – a win-win, they say.

Jialong Kang is from China but lives in Switzerland. "I love Berlin, and I want to see it clean," he says. One of the other members of his trash-collecting group is 20-year-old Sorvina Carr from Boston. She's been traveling alone through Europe for the past four weeks. "This is a good opportunity to get to know people," she says, picking up a discarded bottle cap.

Amanda and Ben Hopewell are spending part of their last night in Berlin in the park. They laugh a lot. "We're having fun!" they say, noting that the tour only lasts an hour, which means one less hour in the pub. More laughter. Amanda is a teacher, and she's always telling her pupils to "pick up your garbage!" She simply can't ignore it. The two of them shoot a short video of themselves working in their red vests and send it to their friends, who are obviously already at the pub back in Manchester. Seconds later, they receive a two-word response: "What the...?"

These do-gooders are indeed a jovial and multicultural pack. And lo and behold, there are even some born-and-bred Berliners among them. Elisabeth Okunrobo and her two friends came all the way from the southeast district of Neukölln. The 20-year-old poli-sci student intends to pursue a career in climate and environmental protection when she's older. At the moment, however, she's busy despairing about all the packaging and shards of glass left by people who – it would appear – love to watch empty beer bottles get smashed on the ground. Elisabeth can't stand all the carelessly discarded cigarette butts either, it's those small pieces of glass and all the other litter that Berlin's motorized garbage sweepers obviously have a hard time collecting that are, she says, "extremely damaging to the global system." Cigarette butts eventually get swept away, she points out, just like the plastic, with all their pollutants being released. It takes 40 liters of water to dispose of a cigarette butt, Elisabeth argues, which is why no one with a conscience can just stand by and let this happen: "We all have to do something to keep Berlin clean."

Sheiku Kabba crouches down and glides his gloved hand over the dry grass and sand. He's originally from Sierra Leone but has been living in Berlin with his German family for almost 20 years. Like on most other nights, he's just been playing soccer, and sometimes he plays basketball here, too. He's seen the red-vested people earlier and decided "to leave my soccer ball with the others and come over to help out. I couldn't just stand around watching foreigners pick up garbage on my field."

Peter Zehner is a freelance journalist based in Berlin.

Futures market

The new Futurium in Berlin wants visitors to reflect on the world of tomorrow

BY KLAUS GRIMBERG

IMAGO IMAGES/EPD

Shiny new object: The Futurium in Berlin

Can trees grow out of houses? Are robots taking over? Are we done with globalization? At first glance, these three questions have nothing in common. If we take a closer look, however, we see a shared theme: the future.

At their core, the questions revolve around future scenarios of human life on planet Earth. How are we going to live in the future? And, more importantly, how do we *want* to live in the future?

These and many other future-related issues are the key themes being examined at the new Futurium in Berlin. This "House of Futures" is the only one of its kind in Europe and has three interactive "thinking rooms" that focus on the realms of technology, humans and nature respectively. The goal and purpose of the Futurium is to discuss current ideas and blueprints for the coming decades and also to weigh the risks and opportunities involved.

In previous centuries, human beings saw the future as something immutable, that is, as either a favorable or unfavorable destiny we were obliged to accept. In the 20th century, this perception changed; in a technologized and ever-more digital world, we human beings are increasingly seeing ourselves as designers capable of having a decisive impact on the woes and well-being of the Earth.

Scientific and technical advances have raised the stakes, both good and bad. We have to keep up, in other words, with the possibilities come more responsibilities.

This shift in consciousness forms the conceptual foundation of the Futurium. Its function is not only to convey knowledge, but also to stimulate people to reflect on the world of tomorrow at every turn. The Futurium wants us to think about the contributions each one of us can make in our common quest to find answers to the most pressing challenges we face.

Back to the first question: Can trees grow out of buildings? Well, it might look a bit odd, but it actually works. The GraviPlant, created by a small Stuttgart-based startup, has the potential to revolutionize the greening of high-rise façades. A one-to-two-meter tree grows horizontally out of a fixed façade element with the help of a rotating plant unit. The façade is then able to provide better heat and sound insulation while also fostering better filtration of harmful substances and more oxygen for cleaner air. What more can we expect from a building?

The GraviPlant is only one of many ideas aiming to expand nature's presence in big cities. Green roofs and vertical gardens, renaturated rivers and protected wastelands can also help to improve the microclimate in urban areas by adding trees, flowers and herbage to steel, glass and concrete. The greener the city, the more hospitable it is for human beings to live and work in.

Second question: Are the robots taking over? Well, it's already clear today that robots are going to be natural companions in our everyday lives at some point in the future. In many areas, they already are; for example, in heavy industry and medical technology, robot-like machines already perform tasks with a level of precision that no human being could even dream of. But what happens when robots start to take on a more human likeness and carry out simple activities and services in areas in which only human beings have worked up to now, such as nursing and homecare?

Indeed, one of the biggest challenges facing us in the coming decades is the task of determining the nature of the coexistence of human beings and machines over the long term. Are we human beings even going to need to work in the future, that is, if robots start to take on more and more jobs? And what are we going to do if artificial intelligence starts to exceed the intellectual capabilities of human beings? If we want robots to become our companions rather than threats or even enemies, we have to do a lot of thinking about our relationship to them.

Is globalization coming to an end? Even far into the 20th century, it was normal for people to both live and work in one neighborhood. For example, the factory owner lived in the front building, the factory space was in the rear buildings and the workers lived in the workers' settlements nearby. Over the past decades, industrialization and globalization have completely separated these former worlds of living and working.

Today, however, there is a tangible countermovement visible in more and more cities. Old craft shops and new tech labs are emerging side-by-side; open workshops and co-working spaces are bringing together human beings with different skills; and new technology such as 3D printers can make do with much less space. The motto is "Think global, work local." Why send ideas, human beings and goods around the world when local experts and trades can work even more closely together in effective on-site networks?

These three examples make it quite clear: the Futurium is not a museum that provides all the answers, but rather a place that asks us to come up with the best questions we can. The Futurium challenges every visitor to provide input on how to design and determine the future. It's impossible for a visitor to leave this unique museum without at least one new insight, especially as arriving visitors are given a take-home data chip with which to access background information at the museum's countless media stations – and later deepen their knowledge on their own computers at home.

The Futurium refuses to allow any of its guests to be passive or indifferent. It entices them to think hard and actively participate in the future. What else can you expect from a museum?

Klaus Grimberg is a freelance journalist based in Berlin.

Subway series

Berlin finally has two clubs in the Bundesliga: Hertha BSC and 1. FC Union.
Does this mean the city is on its way to becoming a global soccer capital on par with Madrid, London and Milan?

BY MICHAEL JAHN

This summer, two major events caused a sensation in the world of soccer in Berlin and throughout the country. First up was the fact that 1. FC Union, the eternal second-division club from the eastern Berlin district of Köpenick, finally made it to the Bundesliga, thus becoming the second Berlin team in the league's top tier. The city-wide celebrations surrounding the ascent of the "Unioners" were almost as euphoric as FC Liverpool's triumphant revelry after winning the Champions League. In Berlin, the jubilation lasted for days, with a procession of ships on the River Spree marking one of the emotional highlights.

The second event took place over at Berlin's other Bundesliga team, Hertha BSC, where the 127-year-old club – German champions in 1930 and 1931 and the undisputed top team in Berlin's soccer universe until now – celebrated a financial coup. The club announced that it had successfully attracted entrepreneur Lars Windhorst, 42, as a new investor and strategic partner. Celebrated as a *Wunderkind* during the era of Chancellor Helmut Kohl (CDU), Windhorst has founded both successful and unsuccessful companies and always managed to land on his feet.

And now, with the help of his global investment firm Tennor Holding B.V., Windhorst was set to fill Hertha's coffers with €125 million, acquiring in return a 37.5-percent share in Hertha BSC GmbH & Co. KGaA. Windhorst is eager to finally make a "big-city player" out of Hertha, he argued, perhaps as big as Paris Saint-Germain and Arsenal in London. It's an ambitious goal – and most likely still a long way off.

And yet: Does this mean that Berlin is on its way to becoming a globally recognized and respected soccer city on par with Madrid, London and Milan?

At least the first step has been taken. This Bundesliga season marks the first time in 43 years that the capital has two teams playing in the top league. The last time that happened was in the 1976/77 season, when Hertha BSC and Tennis Borussia were among the national elite, of course both from the west side of the city.

Today, however, the cross-town duel is between 1. FC Union, a highly popular club from the east side of Berlin, and Hertha BSC, an old stalwart once based in the worker's district of Wedding and most recently anchored in the bourgeois western district of Charlottenburg. In other words, these are two clubs with highly different origins, histories and messages.

From 1961 to 1989, both clubs went through different phases of existence in a city divided by the world's most famous concrete wall. The teams were often sympathetic toward each other, sometimes paying little attention to one another, and on occasion had an active mutual dislike for the other. Today's dynamic is shaping up to be a healthy rivalry.

To be sure, there is a great deal of symbolism in that fact that this season – 30 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall – the two clubs will play against each other twice in the top-tier Bundesliga. This has never happened before.

The first cross-town derby will take place in November at the Alte Försterei, home of 1. FC Union. This event will no doubt electrify the capital.

When that day comes, there is one famous photo almost guaranteed to be printed in many newspapers. The photo shows the historic handshake between two professional soccer players, Union captain Olaf Seier and Hertha captain Dirk Greiser, at the "reunification game" at Olympic Stadium in January 1990, which Hertha won 2:1. On that day, over 51,000 fans from both clubs celebrated their teams and themselves in the stands. The Berlin Wall had fallen only a couple of months prior and the entire city was in a state of both chaos and euphoria.

Seier, who is now 60, recalls that moment with a smile: "It was a very big event in my life, truly the fulfillment of a dream. For the very first time, I was standing on the grass in the huge Olympic Stadium and was just totally amazed at the incredible panorama. At the time, I had to ask myself: Is this real or am I dreaming?"

DPA/JANNEGRET HILSE

Heads up: With Hertha and Union now in the Bundesliga, Berlin could become the nation's *soccer* capital, too.

Greiser, who is now 56, also has fond memories of the day: "For me, it was quite an extraordinary and moving experience at a very turbulent time. We were able to get to know the players from Köpenick and really enjoyed playing the game together."

Until today, Hertha BSC saw itself as the biggest and most important soccer club in Berlin, a self-image it has enjoyed since the 1920s and 1930s. After all, the team under club icon Hanne Sobek managed to reach the finals of the German Championships six years in a row, and on two occasions was victorious. Since those glory days, the club has experienced a number of major breaks and fractures, much like the city of Berlin.

The people most affected by these events were the fans themselves. While the Berlin Wall still stood, Hertha lost many of its fans from the east of the city, who had to watch West Berlin television if they wanted to watch their team.

Hertha fans showed as much solidarity as they could with the fans of 1. FC Union, a club many saw as an underdog in the GDR's upper league. Indeed, Union's greatest foe was BFC Dynamo, the Berlin-based soccer club that enjoyed state support and pampering from East German security forces. Hertha fans often traveled to the Alte Försterei in the east to shout defiantly and in unison: "Eisern Berlin!" (Iron Berlin) and "Es gibt nur zwei Meister an der Spree – Union und Hertha BSC!" (There are only two champions on the Spree, Union and Hertha BSC). For West Berlin fans, the trip to Köpenick was certainly an adventure, a thrill ride of sorts. It was a journey into another world. Both fan groups espoused a joint dislike and rejection of state restrictions, which was likely an important impetus for the teams' nascent fan friendship.

In turn, Union supporters made their way to Hertha games in socialist countries, that is, to international duels in Prague and Plovdiv, where they joined with their Hertha friends to form an ideologically diverse yet athletically unified wave of support. This occurred, for example, in 1978 and 1979, when Hertha made it to the semi-finals of the UEFA Cup. But the peak of the Hertha-Union fan friendship came in April 1978 at one of the so-called German-German encounters, in this case Dynamo Dresden hosting Hertha Berlin for a test match. Long convoys of East German Trabants and Wartburgs set off on highways to Dresden. East Berlin fans, many of them followers of 1. FC Union, were eager to catch a glimpse of Hertha BSC. In May 1979, there was a return leg at Olympic Stadium in Berlin. Dresden won both bouts by a score of 1:0.

In many ways, the two fan groups were never as close as during the era when the Berlin Wall stood firm and seemingly eternal. Indeed, only a few months after that big match at Olympic stadium in January 1990, the alienation began. East Berlin soccer fans became preoccupied with things bigger than soccer. They were struggling with new social demands and "forced to learn the world anew," says one Hertha fan, who still has friends at the Alte Försterei.

Union has started displaying a great deal of confidence, and rightfully so, beating the top team Borussia Dortmund in just their second game in the Bundesliga in late August. The club is riding a wave of euphoria from its rise to the top league. In the past two months alone, the club has registered thousands of new supporters, and the association now has a good 31,000 members. At the Alte Försterei, they continue to project the image of a "somewhat different club" – one that resists what they see as the total commercialization of the sport. We'll see how far this approach takes them in the hard-hitting world of big-money professional soccer.

In contrast, Hertha BSC, which currently comprises 36,500 club members, is performing that difficult balancing act of managing modernity and tradition. They certainly want to defend their status as the number one club in Berlin, and to win both of this year's derbies against Union.

The two team captains from 1990, Olaf Seier and Dirk Greiser, are looking forward to these two soccer encounters. In recognition of his services to Union, Seier has the privilege of a season ticket for life, which means he's certain to be watching from the stands. Greiser likes to talk of a "healthy rivalry in a big city," claiming: "The most important thing is that both clubs meet one another with respect." Let's hope this cross-town esteem is the prevailing sentiment for the season, regardless of who wins the derbies.

Michael Jahn covered Hertha at the *Berliner Zeitung* for more than 20 years. He now writes a column for that newspaper under the name Ha-Ho-He, a popular Hertha club chant.

DPA/ZDB/BILDARCHIV

Berlin Alexanderplatz, with its TV Tower and Hotel Stadt Berlin scraping the sky

IMAGO/PETER HOMANN

Sunset in the east

The culture of the GDR is fading with time

BY LEONID MLECHIN

November 9, 1989, was the day the world first experienced sympathy for the Germans. In fact, the international community was surprised to find out that that the Germans were even capable of experiencing deep human emotions. And it seems to me that East and West Berliners had never – neither before this day, nor after – been so truly happy for each other.

East Germany disappeared within a matter of days. No one from the GDR could have seen this coming. It had been the poster child for success and prosperity in the Eastern Bloc. Soviet leaders loved traveling to thriving East Germany, so that upon their return they could triumphantly proclaim: "Now that's how the socialist model is supposed to work!"

Then, suddenly, that modern-day Atlantis, that tangible proof of the righteousness of innovative ideas, disappeared from the political map of the world – not by will of celestial forces, not via natural disaster, not due to the guile of an insidious enemy, and not even through the fault of the few East German dissidents whom the authorities saw as their main enemy.

The fall of the Berlin Wall was a particularly significant event for our family, as my mother, Irina Mlechina, had devoted her life to 20th-century German literature. It was also the moment when my mother found herself on Alexanderplatz, the square she knew like the back of her hand.

She still remembered it as nearly empty, gloomy and bearing the wounds of war. Gradually, the square grew prettier, more developed and, perhaps in line with the architectural preference of the day, not very elegant. A huge hotel appeared, Hotel Stadt Berlin, where she stayed many times; the large Centrum department store was constructed, and filled predominately with visitors from socialist countries. Most of them were Poles and Russians, and there was even a joke that went around: "There's a shootout at Alexanderplatz. The Poles are defending their department store."

It does not mean that it was better then, nor does it mean that it's better now

But now the square looked completely different. It sparkled and shone!

The GDR collapsed overnight, yet the East German citizens themselves, in essence, regretted nothing, although still to this day part of the population of the "new German states" recalls that time with little or no remorse – Ostalgia, it's called, as Ost is German for "east." Like many Russian citizens who had wholeheartedly embraced perestroika, they became convinced that real democracy has failed. But something has in fact changed. And my mother misses that which has departed. She did not forget that in those bygone days, relations between people were structured along slightly different lines. This does not mean that it was better then, nor does it mean that it's better now. For her, it was always the individuals themselves and their own integrity that ultimately meant the most. She could only befriend decent people, and never could conceal her likes and dislikes.

But if decent people were forced in those – and these – times to play a specific social role imposed on them by time and history, from which they could not escape without heavy casualties, then how can we relate to this now?

It's not about executioners and murderers, nor those who marched over the corpses. It's about the people who did not do any harm, the people at Alexanderplatz on Nov. 4, 1989, who copied down the iconic author Christa Wolf's speech in their notebooks. Shortly thereafter, these same people would write her furious and threatening letters as she tried to explain away her associations with the Stasi and prove her identity as a true East German.

Freedom, guilt, responsibility – German literature in the second half of the 20th century offers the most brilliant and valuable material for reflecting on this theme. But then who will take upon themselves the mission of delivering the singular proper judgment? This is all just to say that, for my mother, people like her old friends Christa Wolf or Günter de Bruyn, whatever others may say about them now, remain friends.

It is difficult to understand all this today, as there is neither the GDR itself, as if having crumbled into the abyss of history, nor many of those who with genuine enthusiasm accepted the changes instituted after the defeat of the Third Reich. In the years of the GDR, especially until the 1970s and 1980s, these individuals lived with the belief that they were building some kind of new and more just society. For them, this passion of the first years was doubly justified by the fact that in their youth or adolescence, they had survived fascism, war and then discovered – as many truly had not previously known – the horrific crimes of the Nazi regime.

Mother lived in an era that, after a number of years, no one will understand, with the exception of those who also lived through it. And even those who were alive in this era are beginning to have doubts: Is it possible that none of it happened? Was it all a figment of the imagination?

These days, my mother is filled with regret that the literature of the GDR, like the GDR itself, this new Atlantis, no longer concerns anyone. Perhaps interest in the topics of war and fascism will again flare up, subjects about which today's younger generation has but a superficial, meager and inaccurate awareness. And sometimes they are deliberately misled. As for Nazism, it is currently enjoying an undeserved level of respect among segments of the Russian population, and even has emulators. But this is a separate issue.

Leonid Mlechin is an award-winning Russian journalist and film producer. He has written several history books, including a biography of Leonid Brezhnev. He lives and works in Moscow.

Effective immediately

The night my scoop evaporated. Deputy Ambassador James D. Bindenagel recounts the night the Wall came down when he was a diplomat in East Berlin

BY JAMES D. BINDENAGEL

On that fateful night of November 9, 1989, there was no sign of revolution in the air. Sure, change was coming – but slowly, we thought. As the US Deputy Ambassador to East Germany at the time, I lived on the communist side of the Berlin Wall, but I was spending the afternoon in West Berlin at an Aspen Institute reception with leaders from both sides of the divided city. We were absorbed in our day-to-day business; there was no whiff of the excitement that would soon engulf Berlin. Not one of us had an inkling of the events that were about to turn the world upside down.

When the event came to a close, Wolfgang Vogel, the famous East German spy exchange lawyer, asked me for a ride. I was happy to oblige as I hoped to discuss changes to the GDR travel law, the target of his country's widespread demonstrations for freedom. As I dropped him off at his golden-colored Mercedes, Vogel told me that the Politburo, the executive committee of the socialist party, planned to reform the travel law and that the Communist leadership had met that day to adopt new rules to satisfy East Germans' demand for greater freedom of travel. Happy about my scoop on the Politburo deliberations, I headed to the US Embassy. Vogel's comments would make for an exciting report back to the State Department in Washington.

I arrived at the embassy at 7:30 p.m. and went directly to our political section, where I found a much-excited team of diplomats. At a televised press conference, government spokesman Günter Schabowski had just announced the Politburo decision to lift travel restrictions, leaving everyone at the embassy stunned. East Germans could now get visitor visas from their local People's Police station, and the East German government would open a new processing center for emigration cases. At that point, an Italian journalist asked Schabowski when the new rules would go into effect. Schabowski fumbled with his papers, unsure – and then mumbled "Unverzüglich," that is, immediately. With that televised statement, my Vogel scoop evaporated.

Excitement filled the embassy. None of us had the official text of the statement or knew how East Germans planned to implement the new rules. Although Schabowski's declaration was astounding, it was open to widely varying interpretations. Still dazed by the announcement, we anticipated the rebroadcast the next hour.

At 8 p.m., Jon Greenwald, our political counselor in East Berlin, and I watched as Tagesschau, West Germany's news program, led with the story. By then, Imre Lipping, a political officer at the embassy, had gathered the official statement and was prepared to report back to Washington. Heather Troutman, another political officer, wrote an on-the-ground report on the guards at Checkpoint Charlie telling East Germans to get visas. Mr. Greenwald cabled the text of Schabowski's announcement to Washington: East Germans had won the freedom to travel and emigrate.

As the cable arrived in Washington, I called the White House Situation Room and State Department Operations Center to discuss the report and alert them to the latest developments. I then called Harry Gilmore, the US Minister and Deputy Commandant of the American Sector in West Berlin. "Harry," I said, "it looks like you're going to have a lot of visitors soon. We're just not sure yet what that rush of visitors will look like."

We assumed that, at the earliest, East Germans would start crossing into West Berlin the next day. In those first moments, the Wall remained impassable. After all, these were Germans – and they were known for following the rules. Schabowski had announced the visa rules, and we believed there would be an orderly process. East

DPA/ZENTRALBILD

Günter Schabowski during his history-making press conference

30 YEARS FALL OF THE WALL

Oh, what a night! A police officer from West Berlin awards his eastern colleague a peace medal as the people around them celebrate.

The checkpoint at Bornholmer Straße

And the border guard wept

How we came to film the decisive moments of the fall of the Wall at Bornholmer Straße

BY GEORG MASCOLO

I remember the feeling well – a mixture of frustration and disappointment. It was the morning after we'd shot what we thought was going to be some incredibly exciting and spectacular footage of the opening of the Berlin Wall. November 9, 1989, marked the climax and the grand finale of a peaceful German revolution – and it had been a Thursday. But the *Spiegel TV* news magazine I was working for at the time was only going to broadcast our images three days later, on the following Sunday.

Who would possibly want to see the footage we'd shot that night, three days after the fact, I asked myself. By that time, people all over the world would have already been shown countless images of that historic event over and over again on their television screens.

My trusted colleagues, cameraman Rainer März and his assistant Germering Biester, were both seasoned professionals and had a better sense of things. "What we just experienced," Rainer insisted, "was something incredibly special."

It was only in the days thereafter that I began to have hope, especially as I sat in the hotel watching all those special broadcasts and seeing almost identical images of lines of Trabants and jubilant Berliners. Maybe Rainer was right; maybe we truly had gotten lucky that evening.

As it turns out, the images we captured of the opening of the border crossing at Bornholmer Straße in Berlin are indeed exceptional. UNESCO has even declared them official World Heritage documents, just like Goethe's oeuvre and Beethoven's 9th Symphony.

The footage is unique because Bornholmer Straße was the first border crossing to open on that historic night, and because the images provide proof that the end of the brutal Berlin Wall was not the result of a well-calculated plan devised by the East German Politburo. No, it was something forcibly accomplished by the citizens of the GDR. In fact, the fall of the Wall was the result of citizens pushing aside and storming through an unjust border. To this day, our images show the drama of those hours, the courage of the people gathered there as well as the uncertainty and instability of an oppressive state apparatus teetering on the brink of collapse. Our images document the very moment when fear changed sides – from the people to the state behind the East German dictatorship.

Among the individuals who ventured across the border to West Berlin that night was a young woman who had come directly from a nearby sauna to the checkpoint at Bornholmer Straße. At the time, she was an unknown physicist. Today, everyone knows her name: Angela Merkel.

If we had stayed sitting in the hotel bar of our East Berlin hotel near the Brandenburg Gate – a hotel designed exclusively for foreign guests – those legendary images would simply not exist. Just a couple of hours prior, Politburo member Günter Schabowski had held a press conference in which he had uttered the now-famous words that, as far as he knew, the new visa rules for GDR citizens wanting to travel to the West were effective "immediately."

What exactly did he mean by that statement, and who exactly was allowed to cross the border? Well, these were exactly the questions that I, a freshly arrived newcomer, was debating with my more experienced GDR-correspondent colleagues as we drank our overpriced Radeberger beers on tap in the hotel bar. As far as I can remember, even the most daring and opinionated of my colleagues did not predict that the Berlin Wall would fall and the division of Germany would end that night. As for me, I was just 25 years old and hadn't a clue about anything.

We sat there, baffled by what was going on and uncertain about what would happen next. That is, until it became clear to us that a hotel bar in Mitte was probably not the best place to carry out our best research. So we packed our things and drove to Prenzlauer Berg, a stronghold of the resistance. Anyone in East Berlin who was dissatisfied with the GDR, and anyone who belonged to the opposition, lived in this area where residential buildings reached right up to the Wall. If anything was going to happen, I thought, it was going to happen here.

It was quiet on the streets, so we ended up at a bar again. There, too, the only topic of discussion was the Schabowski press conference. Nobody knew what it all meant. Soon, however, the first reports started coming in that the Wall was open. It wasn't actually open yet, of course, but many people in Prenzlauer Berg were curious, impatient and increasingly fearless. So they made their way to Bornholmer Straße. And we went with them.

Thousands of people were already standing at the border crossing. They were restless and jostling to see what was happening at the gate. Eventually they broke into a chorus of chants including "Open the gate, open the gate!" and "We'll come back, we'll come back!"

My colleagues and I made our way through the crowd until we found ourselves directly at the boom gate, which was still firmly in place. We immediately got into trouble with the border guards, because to film what was going on, we had stepped over the barrier and were now standing in the transit area. This was an absolute affront to any GDR border guard. One of them demanded to see our passports and threatened to deport us back to the West. I was arguing with him when the bolt on the barrier right next to us suddenly released, the boom gate moved to the side and waves of cheering people made their way to freedom. It was the first hole in the Wall. Only later did the guards at other German-German border crossings start letting people through without any kind of inspection.

And only later did I begin to comprehend what had really happened that night. Together with my team, I conducted interviews with all of those border guards and Stasi officers who had been on duty that night at Bornholmer Straße. I learned that they'd sent a constant flow of urgent requests to Stasi headquarters for some sort of guidance. They didn't know what to do; they were scared and alarmed. Nobody had any desire to use force, and everybody in the GDR was already familiar with the meaning of the term "Chinese solution." The first command that came through from the Stasi leadership was to place the official GDR exit-stamp directly on the passport photo of any person particularly eager to leave; this mark would allow them to identify these individuals at a later date – and provide justification for not letting them back in the country. It was perhaps the last scam visited upon the people by a sinking regime.

I still have contact with some of the officers who were on duty that night, like Lieutenant Colonel Harald Jäger, who ultimately gave the order to push the boom gate aside. This past summer, when Germany's president invited me to tell the story of that night, Lieutenant Colonel Jäger was in the audience. There have been a number of calls to award him the Bundesverdienstkreuz, Germany's Federal Cross of Merit. That medal has already been given to the Hungarian Lieutenant Colonel Árpád Bella, who opened the Iron Curtain at the Austrian border in August 1989, thus enabling hundreds of GDR citizens to escape to the West.

Late on the night of November 9, 1989, Lieutenant Colonel Jäger went looking for a quiet place at the Bornholmer Straße border crossing to have a good cry. He made his way to the processing barracks, only to find a captain already sitting there, head in hands, crying. Jäger is still proud of his decision to open the gate. "Providence brought you there that night," Jäger's wife once said to him. "Nope, it was actually the duty roster," he replied.

Georg Mascolo iis an editor at the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (SZ) and head of the SZ, NDR and WDR research network. From 2008 to 2013 he was the editor in chief of *Der Spiegel*.

Germans, however, were following West German television coverage as well and, as it turned out, decided to hold their government to its word "immediately."

I headed home at around 10 p.m. to watch events unfold on West German television. On my way to Pankow, in the northeast of the city, I was surprised by the unusual amount of traffic. The Trabant – with its two-stroke engine spewing gas and oil smoke and a body made of duroplast, a sort of plasticized pressed-wood – was always in short supply. But on this night, these iconic "Trabis," as they were lovingly nicknamed, filled the streets in droves despite the late hour. And they were all headed to the Bornholmer Straße checkpoint, where these same Trabis were being abandoned left and right.

Ahead of me, the blazing lights of a West German television crew led by *Der Spiegel* reporter Georg Mascolo [see adjacent article] illuminated the checkpoint. The TV crew, safely ensconced in the West, was preparing for a live broadcast. Despite the bright lights, all I could make out was a steadily growing number of demonstrators gathering at the checkpoint. From the tumult, I could faintly hear shouts of "Tor auf!", or "Open the gate!". Anxious East Germans had begun confronting the East German border guards. Inside the complex of the crossing point, armed border police waited for instructions. Amid a massive movement of people, fed by live TV, the revolution that had started so slowly was rapidly spinning out of control.

The question running through my mind was whether the Soviet Army would stay in its barracks. There were 380,000 Soviet soldiers in East Germany. In diplomatic circles, we expected the Soviet Union, a military superpower, would not give up East Germany without a fight. Our role was to worry – the constant modus operandi of a diplomat. But this time, our concern did not last long.

When I arrived home at around 10:15 p.m., I turned on the TV, called the US State Department with the latest developments and then called Harry Gilmore again. "Remember I told you that you'd be seeing lots of visitors?" I said. "Well, that might be tonight." Just minutes later, together with my wife Jean, I witnessed on live television as waves of East Berliners broke through one checkpoint after the other on their way across the Wall to the West. Lights came on in the neighborhood. I was elated. East Germans had made their point clear. After 40 years of Cold War, East Berliners were determined to have freedom.

James D. Bindenagel was Deputy US Ambassador to the German Democratic Republic from 1989–1990. He is a former US ambassador and currently the Henry Kissinger Professor for International Security at the University of Bonn.

30 YEARS FALL OF THE WALL

"People in the GDR took collective leave of each other every evening via West German TV"

The German Times: Ms. Lakomy, on November 9, 1989, you were a little girl. What do you remember about that night?
Klara Lakomy: I remember that I was put to bed like always after *Sandmännchen*, the kids' TV show, but strangely, it was my grandparents who put me to bed, as my parents weren't home. I was shocked; I was really spoiled and my parents always put me to bed. That's why I can remember it all so clearly. I was outraged that they had gone out and were neglecting me. I was later told that they had wanted to go to the Wall, to the border crossing at Bernauer Straße.
Family legends of this night only started later: that my parents had put together a basket of food and water in case they were arrested that night and I would have to wait for a long time without them; that they got hold of one of the first of those prized bricks from the Wall that a bulldozer had knocked out of it. A BBC camera team is even said to have filmed this scene, but unfortunately, I've never seen the video of it. (laughs)

And what became of this memory?
Lakomy: The interesting thing is that you see how your memories develop. November 9 was also extremely important to my parents because that day resulted in a traumatic loss of their prestige that would not be regained for years.
At first glance, my parents didn't look like typical victims of the fall of the Wall. They kept their jobs and their audience and they were financially better off. They did lose some of their importance and privilege, but they still had their fans in East Germany, who stayed true to them, especially to my father, their idol.

***Traumzauberbaum* was *the* GDR musical "Singspiel" recording for children. Every child knew it. Why was it so important?**
Lakomy: I would say that *Traumzauberbaum* [magic dream tree] is almost like a musical drama by Richard Wagner, but for people from the GDR it was much more, especially after the fall of the Wall. I got to see how it became cult, part of East German identity. For certain people, it's extremely important; it's their proof that they had something really good in East Germany, something the "Wessis" didn't have. And the author, my father, wasn't in the Stasi and my mother probably wasn't either. You could still like it. It was still good.

Mr. Havemann, you escaped from the GDR when you were 19 and experienced the fall of the Berlin Wall in the West. What was the GDR for you at the time?
Florian Havemann: My time as a constitutional judge in Brandenburg has made me a "legitimist." The GDR had a certain degree of legitimization or justification, which was simply this: it is better to be ruled by German communists than by Soviet officers. Some people were still hoping that this state would have something to do with socialism. But by 1989, that line of thinking no longer worked as a form of legitimization. When Mikhail Gorbachev said that no more Soviet officers would be coming, it was all over.

So the GDR's disappearance was just a question of time?
Havemann: I felt it just had to happen. I didn't know, when and I didn't know how a revolution might happen, but I asked myself these questions. Things would be destroyed until a new state could emerge. But I also asked myself who would create this state: the military, a leader, a bureaucracy? In the case of the GDR, it became clear what would replace it; the West German republic. That was a recognized point of orientation, a nation state.


UWE HAUTH
Klara Lakomy and Florian Havemann

What was different about the fall of the Berlin Wall, compared with other revolutions?
Havemann: The revolution in the GDR spared the people one thing, namely having to eliminate each other, be it physically or politically. You could just move to the West. You didn't have to invent anything; there was something already there. For most people, it was certainly a blessing that you didn't have to spend a lot of time trying things out. For those who would have liked to try other things out, those in the opposition, it was, of course, terribly annoying. Their "moment" lasted only a historic millisecond, no more.

Between 1989 and 1991, communist governments in all the former Eastern Bloc countries fell. How were the situations in those countries different from that in the GDR?
Havemann: In contrast to the opposition in Poland and Czechoslovakia, the opposition in the GDR was not at all prepared. They had nothing up their sleeve when the Berlin Wall fell. A flood of people leaving in the summer months of 1989 triggered the fall of the Wall. The opposition founded the Neues Forum, which was the only organization independent of the state, but it had no real political substance. It was designed to be a space in which people could talk and exchange views and ideas. That was enough. Just founding an independent organization in a state like the GDR was an achievement. That was already a huge step.

Ms. Lakomy, in Jana Hensel's book *Zonenkinder*, the definitive book on the generations living through and after the fall of the Berlin Wall, she describes East German teachers' profound insecurity in those years. They no longer knew what was right, where their authority came from, what they should do. What was your experience of this time?
Lakomy: I can well imagine that situation. But my first years at school were fairly idyllic. In elementary school, the only uncertainty was whether we would really have to be able to read after first grade, or whether it would be enough for us to just be able to identify syllables, which was all that the Western curriculum required. The upshot was that I really enjoyed the second grade, because we had already learned half the required materials. We went on so many hikes, had wonderful teachers and went on lots of class trips to Brandenburg, because it all cost so little. It was only later that I experienced the ways in which politics could intrude into our lives. One of our teachers was the sister of Heike Drechsler, the famous track-and-field athlete and member of the Volkskammer, GDR's "parliament." Everyone loved her, but she had been in the Stasi, so she was fired. We children couldn't comprehend it. We were all so sad, especially the children who had known her for longer. Everybody in the school was crying because this wonderful woman had to go. Everyone asked themselves whether it really had to be that way. So our parents had to explain to us what the Stasi was, but at the time I didn't understand it.
Havemann: The whole Stasi business played a huge role in the lives of people in the East. But when I arrived in the West in 1971, nobody was really interested in it, or in the GDR in general. Nobody asked me what it had been like.

Was there a lack of interest in the GDR, apart from a tendency to either denounce it or romanticize it?
Havemann: Complete disinterest. When people asked me why I had left, I used to say that "I was imprisoned in the GDR in 1968 for political reasons," and that was usually enough. No one wanted to know more. People weren't interested in hearing about what it was like in prison, or why I had been there. Not a bit of it. No one wanted to hear about what the consequences had been.
Lakomy: It was a state in which you could be imprisoned for things that were mere trifles in Western democracies.
Havemann: There really was no interest in the GDR. I interacted with people from all social classes – workers, intellectuals, artists – because for a long time I worked as an electrician. There was no difference at all between left and right. Shortly before Günter Gaus was made West Germany's Permanent Representative in the GDR, a de facto ambassador, in 1974, he invited me and some other GDR refugees to his house. Gaus wanted to know what the GDR was like, how it worked and how political decisions were made in the country. He was the editor-in-chief of *Der Spiegel* and even he had no idea about the GDR. Most people were just not interested in the GDR. My individual experience then became the collective experience of the entire population of the GDR after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Lakomy: It really hurt people like my parents, who were artists and thus craved attention and lived for applause. They took it really personally; to them it felt like malicious disinterest. But it was simply their naïveté. They were so interested in the West, so they somehow thought that the West would be interested in them. People in the GDR knew all about the West; they all watched West German TV and everyone knew the host of the talk show on channel three in the West.
Havemann: it's true, they couldn't have told you who the members of the East German Politburo were, but they knew all the West German government ministers. People in the GDR took collective leave of each other every evening via West German TV.

Is that the main reason for the resurgence in feelings of division, for the more recent feelings of resentment and dissatisfaction?
Lakomy: Lots of East Germans are clinging to the niche they've spent all their lives in. They've all had to cope with a massive rift in their biographies. Very few people could just go on with life as before. That's the difference between the normal average citizen from the West and one from the East. Their whole lives were turned upside down. At the time, many of them were intellectually very active; they read a lot, discussed a lot and got involved in politics with friends because they felt like they had to be.
Over the past couple of years, though, a certain degree of exhaustion has set in; it's as if people have used up all their intelligence, all their energy. Now all they can talk about is the fall of the Wall, even though it's now been gone for longer than it stood. But they're trapped in the past and overwhelmed by everything they have to deal with now and everything that's still to come. The fall of the Wall was energizing. It gave them lots of energy, but that's all been used up now, and it's left only exhausted people in its wake.

Lutz Lichtenberger spoke with Klara Lakomy and Florian Havemann.

Klara Lakomy was born in East Berlin in 1984. She is the daughter of Reinhard Lakomy and Monika Ehrhardt. In 1980, her father composed the music and her mother wrote the lyrics for the *Traumzauberbaum*, an iconic East German musical comedy still widely appreciated today. Every child in the GDR could sing along to it. Lakomy, a Berlin-based entrepreneur, is a poet and has also written a novel.

Florian Havemann, born in 1952, escaped the GDR in 1971 and became a writer, painter and composer in the West. He is the son of Robert Havemann (1910–1982), a famous East German dissident who was expelled from the ruling socialist party and spent the last six years of his life under house arrest. Florian Havemann's new gallery – Berlin, Friedrichstraße 119 – shows a collection of his paintings.

The lost world

Gabriele Tergit's epic novel about a Berlin family dynasty is being rediscovered. It is a literary triumph

BY ROBERT NORMEN

This is Berlin, that pulsating cosmopolis: parties and clubs, the fables and follies of dating life, a bustling startup scene with new technologies bringing riches to self-made entrepreneurs, female empowerment and culture wars where big-city liberal lifestyles clash with right-wing populism.

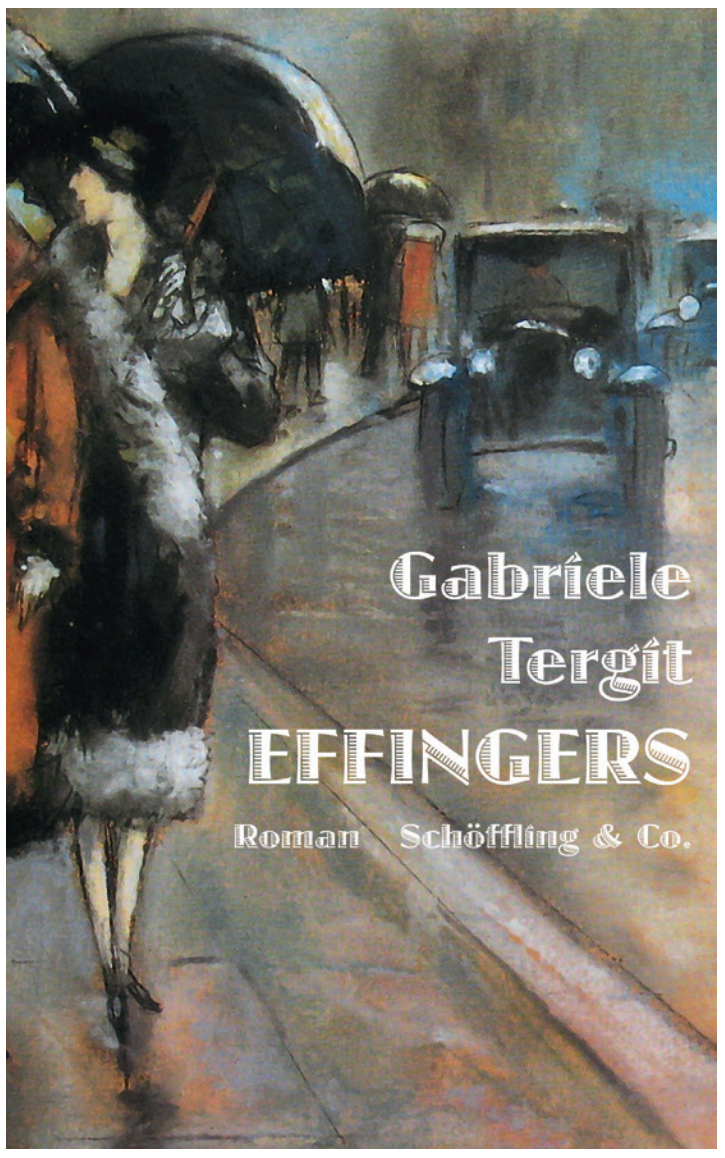
But this is not the Berlin of 2019. No, indeed. It is the thematic outline of life in the city between 1878 and 1948. It is the Berlin of *Effingers*, the majestic and monumental novel by Gabriele Tergit, published in 1951. The book was re-issued in Germany this year and instantly became the hot read of the summer. It's the novel the reading public is talking about.

Tergit, born in Berlin in 1894, tells the story of four generations of two intertwined Berlin families. The banker and patriarch, Emmanuel Oppner, arranges a marriage between his daughter Annette and Karl, a rising young industrialist, whose brother Paul marries Annette's sister Klärchen. The dynastic arrangement is set.

Tergit's cast of intriguing characters – parents, children, lovers, friends, foes – would make even the best Netflix show blush. We follow Annette as she claims her spot in high Berlin society like a Silicon Valley mom in *Big Little Lies*, Paul as he ascends from toolmaker apprentice to car manufacturer, their children as they flower into idealists, dreaming of a new century, breaking with norms and forging their own paths before World War I stops them in their tracks, transforming them into either conventional, responsible citizens or disillusioned PTSD libertines.

In the best way, this epic 900-page novel resembles another historic family saga: Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks*. Mann's story of four generations runs from 1835 to 1877. It may be no coincidence that Tergit's book begins the very next year. *Effingers* is set against the backdrop of a changing German society steeped in the comforts of Bismarckian Prussia. Modernization and an economic boom bring affluence and changing norms, which are reflected in the contrasts between the city of Berlin and Karl's and Paul's small hometown in southern Germany. After World War I, anti-Semitic sentiment slowly but surely takes hold and the Effinger family must reluctantly learn that they are not the German clan they aspired to be. What starts out as a domestic novel becomes a highly politicized book, but the author is careful never to speechify.

It is a telling sign of both the course of German history and of Tergit's masterful storytelling that the word Jewish does not appear over the first 200 pages of the novel. Just about all of the major characters in *Effingers* are Jewish. Far from neglecting anti-Semitic stereotypes in the 19th century, Tergit exercises striking sublimity in showing how being Jewish did not play a predominant role in Germany before the early 1930s. It is not until the Nazis are at the doorstep of power that everything changes dramatically. Tergit does not spare the reader what happens next, but it is not the sweeping description of the horrors of Hitler's henchmen that give readers pause; it's rather the renewed realization of the sheer madness behind it. Only those equipped with supernatural reserve can withstand being taken in by the Effingers after spending 800 pages sharing in their unadulterated human hardship and joy. By taking part in their anything-but-boring lives, readers come to re-experience much of what Germany lost in the 20th century.



Gabriele Tergit
Effingers
Schöffling & Co., Frankfurt, 2019

The author herself argued that she had not written "a novel about the Jewish fate, but a novel about Berlin that portrayed a lot of people who happened to be Jewish."

Tergit began writing the book in 1932 at the highpoint of her career as a journalist and author. As a trailblazing court reporter, she had gained tremendous insights into the stories of people from all rungs of life. She had just published, to great success, her first novel, *Käsebier takes Berlin,* a wickedly crafty and funny book about the roaring twenties in the German capital. On March 5, 1933, during the night of her 39th birthday, a Storm Trooper commando broke into her apartment in an attempt to arrest her. Tergit was able to flee, first to Czechoslovakia and then to Palestine before settling in London, where she lived until her death in 1982. She wrote *Effingers* over the course of 18 years, in hotel rooms in Prague, Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and the British capital, trying to recapture the lost world of her youth.

In 1948, she returned to Berlin for the first time – a visit that is alluded to in the novel's somber epilog. Tergit carried with her the last of five manuscripts of the novel. Two had been destroyed in bombing raids while one had been lost in Paris, the other in Munich.

Effingers was published in 1951 by Hammerich & Lesser – and sold a mere 2,000 copies. German society was not ready for her nuanced and confident voice. Many German publishing houses labeled her book "Jewish," believing it wouldn't sell; the publishers at Ullstein rejected the book, arguing that after the war, Jews should only be portrayed as purely noble people. Tergit considered all of it "untenable" and "ridiculous," according to her biographer, Nicole Henneberg. And indeed, the members of Effinger family are vividly drawn, three-dimensional characters that come alive on the page in all their glamour and gloom.

Gabriele Tergit, née Elise Hirschmann, portrayed her parents as "ardent patriots" and remembered her father insisting that "the government doesn't lie." She was a woke woman long before that word became fashionable and strived to tell her story with the historical autonomy characteristic of truly great novels. Such books accomplish more than capturing the zeitgeist; they let us understand and live in a world both lost and very much alive.

Gabriele Tergit's first novel, the highly entertaining *Käsebier takes Berlin*, was just published this summer by New York Review Books Classics, translated by Sophie Duvernoy.

Robert Normen is a freelance journalist based in Berlin.

IMAGO/IMAGEBROKER

Everything is illuminated: the James Simon Gallery

Island mentality

The James Simon Gallery has finally opened its doors

BY NICOLA KUHN

It is the cornerstone of Berlin's Museum Island. But what may sound like a dotting of the "i" in "island" is in reality an imposing 10,900-square-meter edifice that, after 180 years, has now brought the final touches to a unique architectural ensemble in the center of the city. The James Simon Gallery – the new entrance building for Museum Island – is the sixth and final element in the ensemble, complementing the Altes Museum, Neues Museum, Bode Museum, Pergamon Museum and the Alte Nationalgalerie.

The construction, which took place on the area's only remaining soil, is intended to serve as a central connecting point for visitors, of which there were 2.5 million in 2018. The new building houses ticket offices, cloakrooms, toilets, a shop, restaurant, lecture hall and spaces for special exhibitions and events.

The James Simon Gallery, designed by British architect Sir David Chipperfield, is also a signal for the new 21st-century era: a resolutely modern architecture which, with its slender white pillars as its defining feature, seeks to build a bridge to the surrounding buildings that likewise feature columns, pillars and pilaster strips as architectural forms. Nevertheless, for anyone approaching Museum Island from the Kupfergraben canal or Lustgarten, the first perceptions of this bright white building, which achieves its light materiality from concrete mixed with marble dust, will be of a foreign object.

The building's massiveness and minimalist severity clash strongly with the neighboring Pergamon Museum, and even obscures the Neues Museum. The elevated ground level, appended at a very late stage with two windows aimed at breaking up the sleek surface, drops abruptly to the water surrounding Museum Island. By contrast, the pillars of the colonnade rising up from this level appear like a line of quills, even when set against the towering pillars at the front of the Pergamon Museum. And yet, by referencing the classicist 19th-century colonnade, and by extending these optically into the present, the building manages to blend in.

The James Simon Gallery is the final new building on Museum Island and, as such, was obliged to speak with the clear voice of modernity. No new buildings had been added to the site since the opening of the Pergamon Museum in 1930. Instead, efforts since then had focused on the painstaking repair of war damage. During the GDR era, attempts were made, for better or worse, to conserve something of the remaining structures, with the long-term dream of creating the most beautiful of showcases for Berlin's vast collection of art and cultural artifacts.

The Island dates back to a decree issued by King Friedrich Wilhelm IV in 1841 that the location be used for the creation of a "sanctuary for art and science." And thus, a Prussian acropolis with five art temples soon rose up on the ancient trading site, directly alongside the university that had been founded 20 years prior. Today, the acropolis houses Berlin's archaeological collections, sculptures and 19th-century painting.

Any exuberance over the completion of the ensemble with the opening of the Pergamon Museum in 1930 did not last long. The outbreak of war soon necessitated the shutting down of what had taken over a century to build, each building in its own style. The damage caused in World War II was so great, and its repair so difficult, that it was not until 1989, the year of the fall of the Wall, that the foundation for the restoration of the Neues Museum was finally laid. Up until very recently, the soot-covered three-quarter ruin was a physical witness to the destruction of the wartime bombing.

David Chipperfield was commissioned as the architect for the sensitive restoration of the Neues Museum, and he later went on to win the tender for the construction of the James Simon Gallery. For Chipperfield, whose work at the Neues Museum had focused primarily on reconstruction, this must have served as confirmation that he was now permitted to leave an outwardly visible mark on Museum Island.

The architect himself speaks of working through a "wish list" for the James Simon Gallery that was provided to him by the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation. First of all, the building had to fulfill a range of specific functions, with an emphasis on channeling the flow of visitors. To this end, it accommodates the ticket offices, cloakrooms, a shop, and the counter for audio guides. In addition, it is now possible to enter the Pergamon Museum and the Neues Museum from the James Simon Gallery.

This site was also meant to house the entrance to the Archaeological Promenade, an underground passage connecting the Altes Museum, Neues Museum, Pergamon Museum and Bode Museum, but with funds not yet granted, this has yet to become a reality.

On the huge construction site that is Museum Island, commissions are completed only gradually. It is currently the Pergamon's turn to undergo renovation. In the case of the James Simon Gallery, problems arose during the course of construction, resulting in an inevitable increase in costs. The foundations submerged in water proved extremely complicated to implement, and difficulties were compounded by the shoddy execution of the some of the construction work. The opening in the summer of 2019 finally took place after a seven-year delay, by which point costs had almost doubled to €134 million.

Today, most visitors entering the James Simon Gallery will remain blissfully unaware of the pains of its birth. The only remnant can be found in the furthest corner: a mighty tree trunk – a relic from the time of Karl Friedrich Schinkel, Museum Island's original master architect – pulled from the ground in the course of construction.

Before visitors can reach this point, they must first climb a staircase to the building (or take the elevator), as most of the building consists of human thoroughfares. A restaurant with a terrace overlooking the Kupfergraben is on the upper floor.

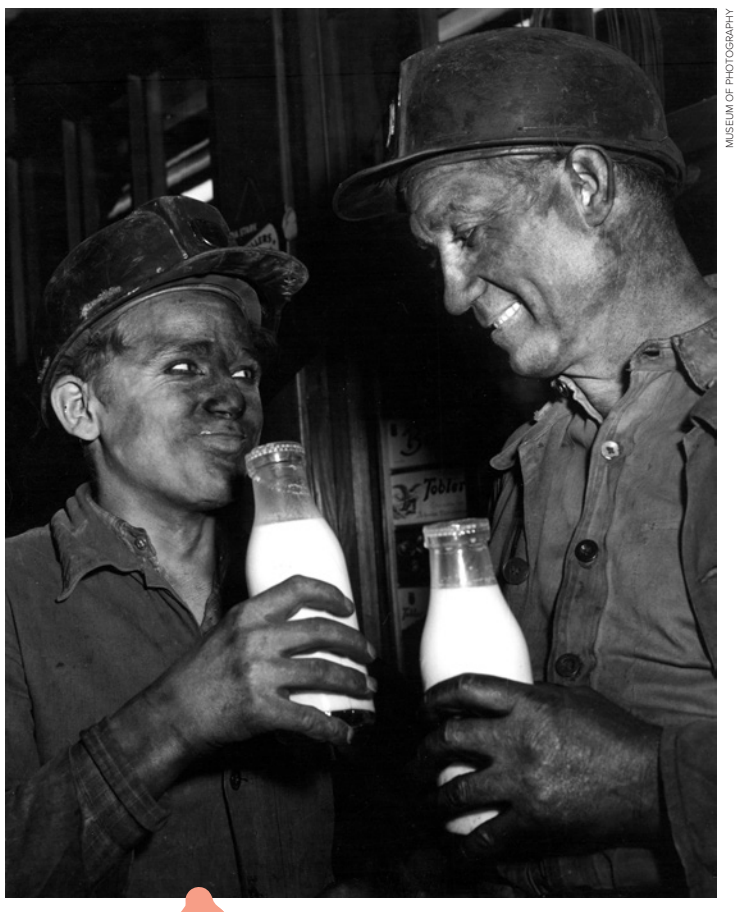
Other facilities include an auditorium for 300 people and a venue for special exhibitions with around 650 square meters of space. In the weeks following the opening, this was host to an exhibition honoring the building's namesake, James Simon, the art collector, philanthropist and patron of the arts born in 1851.

This recognition was almost sidelined due to plans by the Gipsformerei (Replica Workshop) to stage an exhibition in the space as part of their own anniversary display. Those plans were met with a hail of protest, however, and the Gipsformerei exhibition was postponed until September. And while the name of the great Jewish patron is now also inscribed on the Museum Island wall, it hasn't always been smooth sailing for the man himself: the bronze plaque dedicated to his legacy was hung only belatedly at the entrance wall.

Born into a wealthy textile dynasty in Berlin, Simon was actively engaged in a number of social causes and worked to promote education. Passionate about art, he also went on to donate extensive and significant collections to Germany's royal museums.

But James Simon became famous above all as the person who donated the Nefertiti bust to the Berlin museums. As a co-founder of the German Oriental Society (DOG), he financed numerous excavations, including in Amarna, where the bust was salvaged in 1912. Eight years later, he bequeathed the bust to the Berlin museums. James Simon sought to give people access to art, and he gave generously. A liberal supporter of the Weimar Republic, Simon died in 1932 and was buried with full honors at the Jewish cemetery on Schönhauser Allee. The Nazis' reign of terror would begin just one year later. That Berlin's museum portal now carries the name of James Simon is a symbol of – and a belated gesture of gratitude for – his great work and impressive life.

Nicola Kuhn is the Arts Editor for the Berlin daily *Der Tagesspiegel*.



MUSEUM OF PHOTOGRAPHY

PROGRESSIVES

West Germany's "Economic Miracle" in the 1950s was more or less driven by the coal and steel industries in the Ruhr Valley. The myth of the Federal Republic climbing its way out of the fiscal hole left by the war through back-breaking, honest work is based on the media imagery of the time: toilers and machines in meaningful harmony, hard-earned transformation leading inevitably to pervasive middle class prosperity. One of the photographers responsible for anchoring this breakthrough atmosphere in the country's memory was Ludwig Windstosser (1921–1983). His company portraits conveyed the era's sense of aspiration and rebirth and prompted him to become a leading industrial photographer in postwar West Germany.

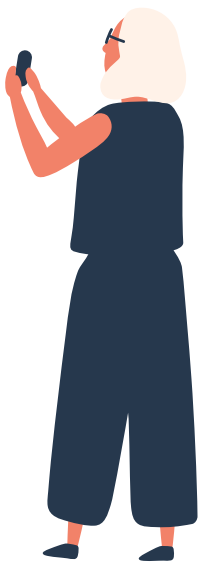
Steep perspectives, unusual detail shots and stark contrasts were the trademarks of postwar avant-garde photography, for which Windstosser may well be the most suitable poster child. Although he was the most successful industrial photographer of his day, with his style informing that of countless others, he has largely been forgotten, just 35 years after his death. Berlin's Museum of Photography now intends to rectify that situation. The museum will provide comprehensive insight into Windstosser's life and work in an exhibition set out to be more comprehensive than all previous shows featuring this influential photographer.

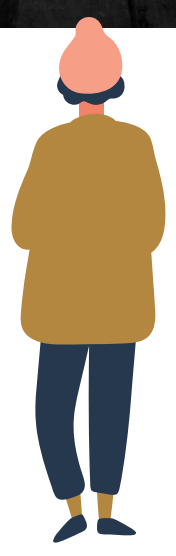
The aesthetic of Windstosser's work is born from an understated sense of optimism that pervades all of his photographs, despite the sobriety of the imagery he uses. Windstosser is far removed from the bleak, socially critical realism of earlier and later decades. His urban portraits exude their era's firm belief in progress as the subjects' increasingly confident attitude toward life in cities like Berlin and Stuttgart shines through, predominantly in black and white.

This spirit of optimism also radiates from the volume of photography Windstosser published in 1972 titled *Berlin: teils – teils* (Berlin: partly – partly). The book is a portrait of West Berlin during its reconstruction and modernization, a time marked by a strong desire for normalcy and security.

The exhibition presents more than 200 works in an attempt to do justice to Windstosser's versatility as a photographer; alongside his most familiar images of industrial West Germany, visitors can peruse his more overtly artistic work and landscape photographs.

Ludwig Windstosser. Post-War Modern Photography
Museum of Photography at Bahnhof Zoo, 10/12/2019 to 03/23/2020. **www.smb.museum**





A DAY AT THE MUSEUM

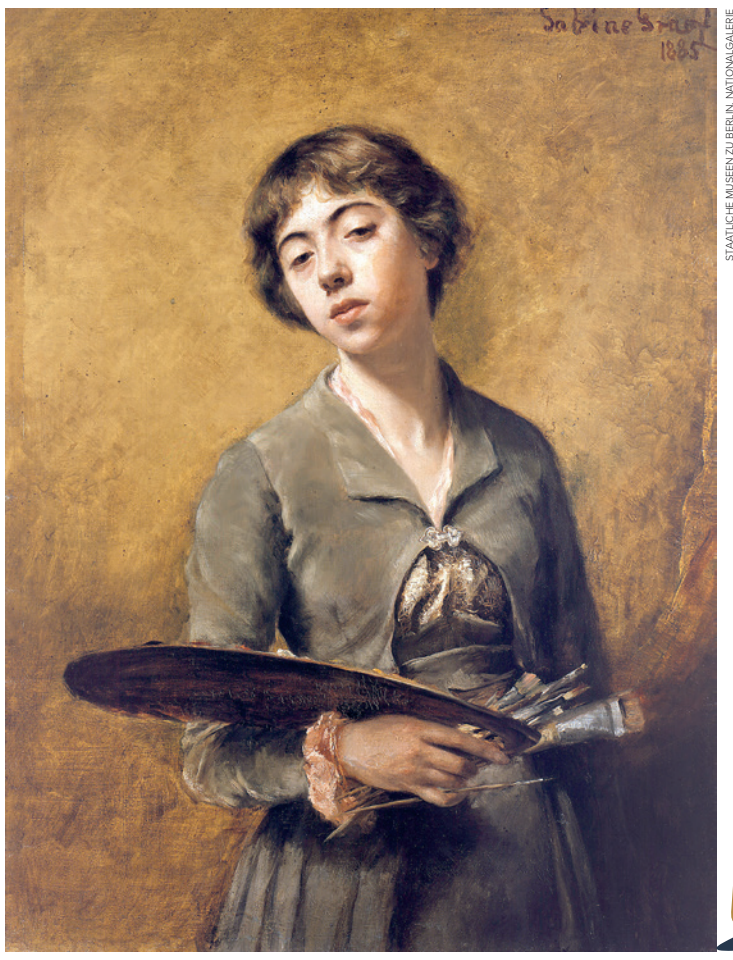
ORIGINAL EFFECT

A full day in the ancient city of Pergamon, from sunrise to sunset and deep into the night – this is the story told by Austrian-Iranian architect and artist Yadegar Asisi by way of his 360-degree panorama in the temporary exhibition hall directly across from the Pergamon Museum, which is currently undergoing renovations. The gigantic image depicts scenes from everyday life in the historical metropolis on the coast of Asia Minor during the reign of the Roman Emperor Hadrian (117–138 AD). From a lookout tower in the middle of the panorama hall, visitors can immerse themselves in the general atmosphere of Pergamon as well as in the finer details of its citizens' lives. The many scenes depicting life in the ancient city are burnished by numerous spectacular antiques from the museum's permanent collection, allowing viewers to appreciate the works of art in their historic context while conveying their original effect. A rather sophisticated lighting scheme helps visitors to focus on individual episodes and groups of figures, to follow the course of one day in the ancient city and to gain a bit more intimacy with the material on display.

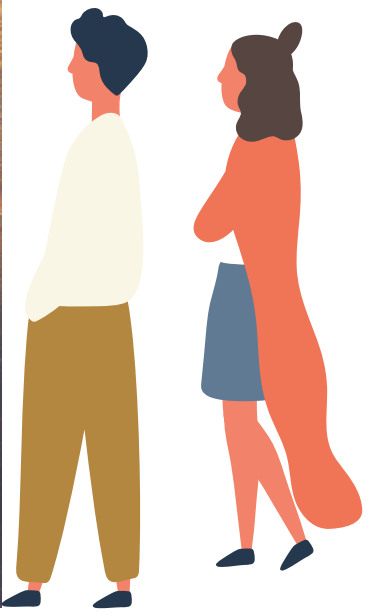
Over the past 15 years, Yadegar Asisi and his team have captured much attention for their two permanent panorama halls in Dresden and Leipzig, each of which is enhanced by a series of alternating paintings. The current Pergamon panorama is a complex reworking of a previous project that premiered to great acclaim at the museum in 2011. For the current presentation, Asisi's team conceived of an exhibition in which 80 masterpieces from the museum's permanent collection would be presented in exquisite installations. As such, visitors encounter the originals first before experiencing them in the panoramic visualization of the historic city, which is based on the fruits of years of archaeological and architectural research. The temporary exhibition project is expected to run until 2024, when the Pergamon's extensive renovation is scheduled to reach completion.

PERGAMON. Masterpieces from the Ancient Metropolis with a 360° Panorama by Yadegar Asisi
In the Panorama hall across from the Pergamon Museum. **www.smb.museum**

TOM SCHULZE



STAATLICHE MUSEEN ZU BERLIN, NATIONALGALERIE



ARRIVAL ON THE SCENE

In the late 19th and early 20th century, the idea of a woman pursuing a career as an independent artist would have been seen as next to impossible in Germany. This also applied to women everywhere in Europe, for that matter. Nevertheless, several individual women succeeded in doing just that, struggling to find a place of their own in a world dominated by men and managing to gain recognition for their work. The Museum Island's Alte Nationalgalerie has now given these artists their own exhibition: *Fighting for Visibility – Women Artists in the Nationalgalerie before 1919*.

The show's historical point of departure is 1919, the first year women were permitted to study art at the Berlin Academy of Arts. The upheaval of World War I had altered society to a degree that equal participation in a variety of fields was no longer prohibited. Just a few days after the ceasefire, women in Germany obtained the right to vote, and the following few months would see the eradication of many other limitations. From 1919 onward, women gradually achieved full access to the Academy of Arts, as well as scholarships, grants and important commissions. They had finally arrived on the art scene.

Yet the Berlin exhibition is dedicated to those women who, even in the face of mountains of resistance, asserted their artistic selves and forged their own rocky paths prior to the breakthrough year of 1919. They joined and created art associations, vied for exhibition appearances and made themselves increasingly visible and attractive to important patrons, all of which helped lead to prestigious commissions and sales. These few extraordinary and diverse artists would go on to make a critical contribution to the art scene of their day.

The Alte Nationalgalerie exhibition features more than 60 paintings and sculptures – all created before 1919 – by women artists spanning 140 creative years, including paintings by Caroline Bardua, Elisabeth Jerichau-Baumann and Dora Hitz as well as portraits and historical tableaus by Friederike O'Connell and Paula Monjé. Also on display are several successful women artists who have been mostly forgotten over time, such as the Norwegian sculptress Ambrosia Tønnesen, the salon painter Vilma Parlaghy – who was also popular in the US – and the Russian avant-garde pioneer, Natalia Goncharova.

Fighting for Visibility – Women Artists in the Nationalgalerie before 1919. Alte Nationalgalerie on Museum Island, 11/10/2019 to 03/08/2020. **www.smb.museum**

10/10

Berlin bucket list

BY SABINE BÄRENKLAU

IMAGO/ROBERT MICHAEL

01/10_ IN THE COLLECTOR'S LIVING ROOM
The Sophie Gips Höfe is an incomparable ensemble of carefully refurbished fin-de-siècle brickworks, Biedermeier-style buildings, contemporary architecture, traditional ways of life and modern art. In the mid-1990s, art collectors Erika and Rolf Hoffmann renovated a brick complex – once home to a sewing-machine factory, a bike-chain factory and other trades – and transformed it into lofts. Now, every Saturday, on the fourth floor, they invite visitors to view part of their comprehensive collection in their private rooms. Each year in July, their collection – which includes art by Frank Stella, Bruce Nauman, Richard Serra, Mike Kelly, Lucio Fontana as well as contemporaries such as Thomas Ruff, Wolfgang Tillmans, Pipilotti Rist, Julian Rosefeldt, Yael Bartana, Monica Bonvicini, Ernesto Neto and Katharina Grosse – is shuffled and presented in a different order. A very intimate art experience.

Sophienstraße 21 | 10178 Berlin-Mitte
www.sammlung-hoffmann.de

IMAGO/REINER ZENSEN

02/10_ ART AND COFFEE
My absolute favorite spot is one of the most beautiful courtyards in Mitte, where the KW Institute for Contemporary Art and its adjacent Café Bravo perfectly combine art with coffee culture. Itself a work of art, the glass-cube café designed by artist Dan Graham in the courtyard of the former margarine factory is surrounded by international exhibitions and is home to the Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art. The founder of the KW and the Biennale is Klaus Biesenbach, director of L.A.'s Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), a former head of PS1 in New York and chief curator at large at MoMA.

Auguststraße 69 | 10117 Berlin-Mitte
www.kw-berlin.de

IMAGO/KRAFT

03/10_ THE JÜDISCHE MÄDCHENSCHULE
Art and cuisine come together here in a building that once housed a school for Jewish girls. Star chef Dirk Gieselmann now serves French cuisine using regional ingredients amid the functional social realist aesthetic and under large Murano glass chandeliers in the Pauly Saal, which once functioned as the school's gymnasium. In the former classrooms now known as the Deli, Paul Mogg offers his immensely popular pastrami sandwiches. The building also features an offshoot of the Frieder Burda Museum in Baden-Baden, the Galerie Michael Fuchs and the Rooftop Playground, which is full of sculptures and installations and offers plenty of space for private parties.
The Jüdische Mädchenschule was founded in 1835 and took up residence in the building designed by Alexander Beer (1873-1944) on Linienstraße in 1930. In 1942, the Nazis closed the school as part of their plan to exterminate the Jewish people. Reopened in 1950, the school closed again in 1996 due to a lack of students. The building now belongs to Berlin's Jewish community.

Auguststraße 11-13 | 10117 Berlin-Mitte
www.maedchenschule.org

IMAGO/UWE STEINERT

04/10_ ANDREAS MURKUDIS
This used to be where newspapers were written, set and printed, but now the complex owned by *Der Tagesspiegel* is home to galleries like Esther Schipper, Blain|Southern and Galerie Judin as well as to Andreas Murkudis' stunning concept store. Anyone who walks into his store feels like they've entered a massive gallery filled with objects whose prices will in many cases blow your mind, whether it's clothing, eyewear, bags shoes, jewelry, furniture or accessories. Too much luxury? Murkudis sees it differently. "My goal is to astonish my customers as soon as they walk through the door."

Potsdamer Straße 81 | 10785 Berlin-Mitte
www.andreasmurkudis.com

KANTINE-BERLINMITTE.DE

06/10_ LUNCH AT THE ARCHITECTS
Located between Auguststraße, Rosenthaler Straße and Torstraße in a building housing star architect David Chipperfield's Berlin office, the two-story Kantine provides delicious daily meals to his staff. Anyone who lives or works in the neighborhood is welcome to drop by for a bite, and there's also a courtyard dining area for the warmer months.
The minimal interior design of the cube-shaped building features exposed concrete, wood and marble. David Chipperfield Architects designed the building themselves, while its interior, furnishings and even the china and cutlery were conceived by the Brit and his team.

Joachimstraße 11 | 10119 Berlin-Mitte
www.kantine-berlinmitte.de

05/10_ CLÄRCHENS BALLHAUS
For years, this ballroom has been the perfect spot for people who like to dance – and flirt. But its days are numbered, as the century-old building will soon be renovated but hopefully retain its 1920s charm. Among its loveliest spaces are the cozy restaurant and the hall of mirrors on the first floor. Whether frustrated hipsters or taxi drivers from abroad, young and old converge at Clärchens for a night of dancing with friends, weekend disco nights or classes in Salsa, Swing, Tango or the Waltz. As was true in the 1920s, couples at closing time simply take their canoodling to the stoops of neighboring buildings.

Auguststraße 24 | 10117 Berlin-Mitte
www.ballhaus.de

DPA/IMAGEBROKER

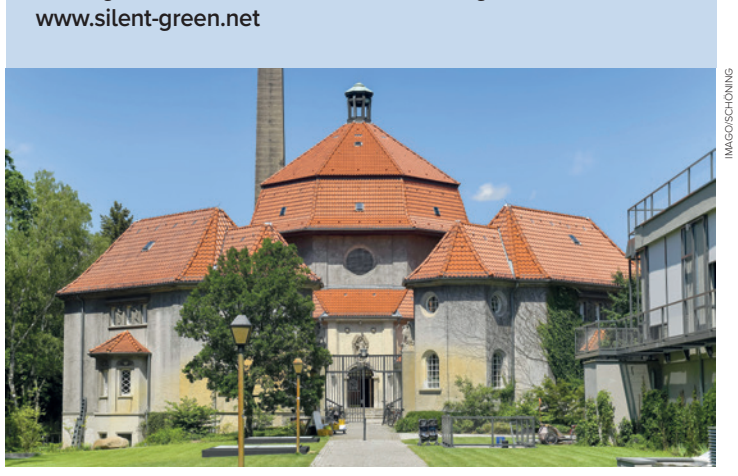
PICTURE ALLIANCE/VIEW

08/10_ FROM OLD BREWERY TO CONTEMPORARY ART
This industrial monument in a 1920s brick expressionist-style brewery recently got a new lease on life. This collection of engine house, brew house, tower and boiler house is no longer churning out beer; since 2016, the KINDL – Center for Contemporary Art has been exhibiting contemporary international art on a spread of more than 1,600 square meters. There are several large exhibitions each year here at the former brewery complex in Neukölln. Events such as artist talks, lectures and concerts round out the program. The brew house is a visual reminder of the building's former use, and visitors to the café can sip their cappuccino among six huge, shiny copper kettles.

Am Sudhaus 3 | 12053 Berlin-Neukölln
www.kindl-berlin.de

07/10_ CULTURE IN THE CREMATORIUM
You won't see any tourists at Silent Green, a secluded cultural center in Wedding. You're more likely to meet artists and locals in this enchanted garden bordering a cemetery. The Mars Café serves light, modern food – but only until 6pm! In 2013, 100 creatives took over this 6,000-m² former crematorium. SAVVY Contemporary, Musicboard Berlin, the Harun Farocki Institute and the Arsenal film archives are a few of the tenants. Art historian Jutta von Zitzewitz has published a book on Silent Green in which we learn that cremation was frowned upon under the Kaisers, but later prevailed as a progressive and hygienic alternative to burial. The Nazis designated cremation an ancient Germanic custom and turned the space into a place of worship, but it's now back in the hands of the community. Thank god.

Plantagenstraße 30 | 13347 Berlin-Wedding
www.silent-green.net



IMAGO/SCHÖNING

IMAGO/SCHÖNING

10/10_ KÖRNERPARK
Mirror, mirror, on the wall, who's the fairest park of them all? Körnerpark, of course. This small, 2.4-hectare site is a mini version of a grand palace park. Now a listed landmark, the park was set up between 1912 and 1916 in a former gravel pit, hence its low-lying setting. Its adjacent buildings peer down from several meters above, and visitors must descend stairs to reach it. The park gazes proudly back at its neighbors, knowing full well that it's the reason why the area has become a nucleus for high-scale residential living.
The park's orangery was once home to wintering potted plants and today houses the charming Zitronencafé. Contemporary art exhibitions are organized here as well as in the park itself, with a number of concerts also taking place in summer.
The park's first owner was Franz Körner, who grew and showcased his widely popular giant sunflowers here, and who also exhibited the remains of a mammoth – among other curiosities – in a museum. In 1910, Körner gifted the park to the district of Rixdorf on the condition that the space be named after him. "Why not?" said the city councilors. Soon thereafter, excavators found yet another mammoth molar tooth on site, as well as a grave in which a Hun horseman was buried alongside his horse, with his sword still lying across his body.

Schierker Straße 8 | 12051 Berlin-Neukölln
www.körnerpark.de

PRIVAT / AT THE GRAND PIANO: CATHERINE GORDELADZE

09/10_ PIANO SALON CHRISTOPHORI
The wonderful collection at Piano Salon Christophori includes a grand piano crafted by Ignaz Pleyel (1757–1831) and an almost entirely preserved 1825 artisan grand piano by Nanette Streicher (1769–1833). This salon collects and restores pianos and pianofortes and then presents them at evening concerts. Fantastic musicians and singers, many who perform for Berlin ensembles or orchestras, embrace their duty of reintroducing the pianos in this cozy workshop atmosphere. Audiences are invited to enjoy great conversation and a glass of wine – but no smoking around these old gems. Although the salon is still an insider tip, reservations are recommended.

Uferstraße 8-12 | 13357 Berlin-Wedding
www.konzertfluegel.com

Sabine Bärenklau knows her way around almost all of Berlin's hidden cultural treasures. She worked for many years at the KW Institute for Contemporary Art and more recently has organized art trips and art-themed walking tours in Berlin and throughout the world.