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Tired of winning

Who bears the consequences of President Trump's tariff policies?

BY NIKOLAUS PIPER

In early August, President Donald Trump was able to celebrate a small yet tangible success in his beloved trade war. The European Union and the United States had just signed an agreement on the import of American beef to Europe – one in which the EU committed to accepting up to 35,000 tons of hormone-free beef from American suppliers over the next seven years. As the total of EU imports is not allowed to exceed 45,000 tons per year, the agreement is basically a deal that will be carried out to the detriment of other supplier countries, such as Argentina and Uruguay. In the future, they will have a quota of only 10,000 tons.

Welcome to the brave new world of Trumpism. As seen from Brussels and Berlin, the agreement is the price they needed to pay for a kind of cease-fire in Trump's trade war against Europe. The president postponed the decision on whether he wants to levy new tariffs on European cars – that is, on German cars – until Nov. 13. Prior to that, the EU had also already pledged to promote the sale of American soybeans and liquefied natural gas (LNG).

Agreements such as these seem to confirm Trump's belief that trade wars are "good and easy to win," and thus that protectionism pays off. Either way, he appeared conciliatory at the latest G7 summit, where he said he did not need any tariffs on cars and that he was hoping for a good trade agreement.

In other words, Trump has actually achieved something with his policy of threats. The only question is how the citizens of the US actually benefit from this approach – at least beyond narrowly defined interest groups, such as cattle breeders. Indeed, it is ultimately American consumers who are going to bear the cost of tariffs by having to pay more for imported consumer goods. When trading partners defend themselves and retaliate against Trump, US industry also ends up suffering.

In this context, it can be instructive to look at the indirect consequences of these actions, that is, at the collateral damage associated with customs duties. The Kiel Institute for the World Economy recently presented a study in which experts pointed to the fact that today's industrial products are manufactured in long supply chains, which means that those primary products entering the chain at almost any

point will now be subject to Chinese or US customs duties. This, in turn, has an effect especially on countries not involved.

Today, Canada has \$648 million in customs costs as a result of the Chinese-US trade war; Mexico has \$522 million and the EU more than \$1 billion. The chemical, electrical and automotive industries are the sectors most affected.

However, the victims also include – and this might surprise Trump's trade policy experts – the US itself, which now has to pay \$415 million more for primary products. The damage is almost the same level as in China.

And this is just the short-term view of things. The long-term perspective makes everything even clearer. Economists at Germany's Commerzbank are now referring to a "new cold war" having broken out between the US and China. As a consequence, US imports from the People's Republic have plum-

In an ironic quirk of fate, America's current accounts deficit has continued to rise during Trump's term in office

meted by 10 percent over the past three months, and China's imports from the US have fallen by as much as 20 percent.

In an ironic quirk of fate, America's current accounts deficit – which, in Trump's view, illustrates the US disadvantage in world trade – has continued to rise during his term in office. In fact, the US deficit in trade with China rose to \$420 billion last year, from \$375 billion in 2017. It has grown not despite, but because of his policies. Indeed, the uncertainty that Trump engenders tends to weaken the global economy, which means that the EU and China – as trading partners – start to suffer; today, their currencies, the euro and the renminbi, are coming increasingly under pressure, the dollar is getting stronger and American exports are becoming more expensive.

However, the worst consequences of Trump's economic nationalism are political and strategic in nature. In a recent article in *Foreign Affairs*, US economists Chad P. Bown and Douglas A. Irwin accuse the president not only of being openly protectionist, but also of having launched an "attack on the global trading system." In other words, the multilateral trade system that existed for 75 years under US leadership is now up for grabs.

Take, for example, the World Trade Organization. Founded in 1994 in Marrakesh with strong involvement from the US government under Bill Clinton, the WTO has played an important role ever since as a referee in trade disputes among its 164 member states. If one country believes that another has violated its rights through some form of tariff or trade restriction, it can file a lawsuit at the WTO, where arbitration tribunals ("panels") – made up of equal numbers of member representatives – decide on each case. If the verdict comes down in favor of the plaintiff country, then that country is permitted to raise tariffs to protect its economy, as long as the defendant government refuses to change its policy. So far, the US – as the world's largest trading nation – has effectively been the WTO's guarantor, while itself following the rules of the multilateral organization.

This system would seem to be pretty much over. The US is actively sabotaging the WTO by no longer appointing judges to the arbitration panels. The tribunals must be filled according to a fixed country key, which means that other countries are not permitted to intervene. This is why everything is likely to come to an end on Dec. 10, which is the last day in the tenure of the two judges Ujal Singh Bhatia (India) and Thomas R. Graham (US).

If the US does not submit the names of the new judges to which they are entitled to as part of these WTO tribunals – and no one is counting on this happening – then the tribunals will no longer be able to function. Trump even tweeted that the US might quit the WTO altogether.

The US president has been violating the spirit of the organization for a while now. In 2018 he justified the tariffs he imposed on steel and aluminum by referring to a supposed threat to national security. While it is true that WTO rules allow trade to be restricted when the security of a country is threatened, the reasoning in the case of steel and aluminum was declared by many, including the Federation of German Industries (BDI), to be "absurd." In fact, roughly 70 percent of the steel and aluminum used in the US is actually produced in the US anyway. In other words, the duties were a purely arbitrary act.

The departure of the US from the WTO's disciplinary reach will no

FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY

By publisher Detlef W. Prinz

World conflicts continue to grow in both number and ferocity. Politics, economics and society are changing at a rapid pace. In this uncertain environment, there are two democratic principles to which we must remain steadfast: freedom and responsibility.

The gradual shift of power, influence and wealth from the Atlantic to the Pacific is having a growing impact on Europe. Economic dependence on China, the ASEAN states and the entire Indo-Pacific region is increasing. Global business leaders, such as Siemens CEO Joe Kaeser, are already warning of a division of the world into a US and a Chinese sphere of influence.

As a major exporting nation, Germany has a lot to lose. Hundreds of thousands of jobs depend on trade with the People's Republic, particularly in the automobile and textile industries. Nevertheless, German Chancellor Angela Merkel recently admonished the government in China to resolve the Hong Kong issue peacefully and without the use of violence. In this case, we carry a double responsibility: to maintain our prosperity while also ensuring freedom and the observance of the rule of law.

The two principles of freedom and responsibility are also affected by today's pernicious tendency toward protectionism. This trend, too, holds the potential to have a particularly strong impact on an export nation like Germany.

If Europe wants to play a continued role – both politically and economically – it will have to establish a common voice and assume more responsibility in the realm of foreign affairs and security policy.

However, in order to prevent the EU from playing a second-tier role on the world's political stage, Germany will have to strengthen the social, political, economic and technological forces that bind the European Union. In a Europe threatening to drift apart, Germany must insist that the EU be able to safeguard its interests by enabling majority decision-making rather than unanimous votes.

If we German Europeans – and we European-minded Germans – choose to see this transition to a new world order as an opportunity rather than a threat, then we will have little to worry about with regard to the future of Europe. Indeed, this approach would allow us to infuse the principles of freedom and responsibility with fresh vigor so that subsequent generations can meet the challenges of the new era and enjoy their own freedom, prosperity and open ways of life.

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doubt trigger counter-reactions from trading partners, and these moves are going to be hard to calculate. Indeed, arbitrariness often produces its own unique dynamic. The *Süddeutsche Zeitung* recently reported on comprehensive plans coming out of Brussels with regard to a trade policy upgrade at the European Commission. According to this plan, the EU would be able to immediately impose punitive tariffs in the future, that is, without WTO approval. And they would be able to launch these punitive tariffs against states that obstruct the WTO arbitration courts.

It should be noted that the only such state at the moment is the US. In other words, Europe's most important partner to date has now become an opponent. Incoming European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen will have to decide whether these EU plans actually become a reality.

So far, Trump and his team have tended to underestimate the counter-reactions coming from foreign countries. In an interview with Fox News last year, one of Trump's radical protectionist economic advisers, Peter Navarro, said the following: "I do not believe there's any country in the world that wants to retaliate for the simple reason that we're the biggest and most lucrative market in the world."

This hubris has consequences. Of course, the victims of US protectionism – China, Mexico, Canada and the EU – have long since started fighting back, and by 2018 they themselves began charging tariffs on US agricultural products. As Bown and Irwin write in their article, those US tariffs designed to protect the jobs of 140,000 steel workers are now threatening the economic well-being of 3.2 million farmers.

Finally, it is quite possible that Trump's trade policy will end in a global recession. The only question is whether this happens before or after the 2020 elections in the US.

Nikolaus Piper is an author for the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. His book *Wir Untertanen* (We the subservient) was published by Rowohlt in April 2019.

BY ERIC BONSE

When Jean-Claude Juncker assumed leadership of the European Commission in Brussels in autumn 2014, the world was more or less united; Washington and London issued good tidings, not stink bombs. And Juncker could rely on German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who was at that time riding the height of her power.

Five years later, Juncker's successor, Ursula von der Leyen, faces an entirely different terrain. The economic situation has worryingly deteriorated as the US-Chinese trade war and the looming hard Brexit have stirred fears of a recession. The West is in crisis; Washington and London are no longer reliable partners. Even Merkel is showing signs of weakness.

But von der Leyen appears undaunted. In mid-July, as part of her campaign speech in the European Parliament in Strasbourg, she only touched on the problems and risks she would face. Her focus lay on opportunities and promises: "Anyone that is with me in wanting to see Europe grow stronger and to flourish and blossom can count on me as a fervent supporter."

Awaken, not abandon – that was the message. Europe must trust its own strengths and assume more responsibility in the world, the incoming commission president urged. Above all in terms of climate protection, von der Leyen wants to lead the way. In the first 100 days of her term, she will propose a statute that will make Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050.

She is also proposing to transform the European Investment Bank into a Climate Bank. A "Sustainable Europe Investment Plan" will underpin investments to the tune of €1 trillion over the next 10 years. With this move, von der Leyen would build on the Juncker Plan – which has been sponsoring investment since 2015 – and thereby burnish her green image.

Another of her emphases will be foreign and security policy.

The former German defense minister has pleaded for an "army of Europeans" that can allow the EU to intervene militarily when necessary. Furthermore, she speaks in favor of majority decision-making in matters of foreign policy. Still, she argues, resolutions concerning "dangerous" missions should

two EU member countries have fulfilled the requirement of putting forward one man and one woman for the new commission. After the first nomination deadline expired, men still constituted a majority. Von der Leyen then felt forced to keep the provisional list under wraps – and to call for further nominations.

ment and climate be merged to facilitate implementation of the promised Green Deal? Or would it be more effective to distribute the weight of these important departments across several shoulders? Does the European Commission need a defense commissioner – which would be a first – or should such responsi-

pean People's Party, which won the closely contested July election that landed von der Leyen in her new job, the process is fraught with risks not only for the commissioners, but their boss as well. She can ill afford a "no" for her team; this would further undermine its already weak legitimacy in the wake of the wrangling during the European election. Consent from Europe's heads of state and heads of government is not enough; the new commission must also receive the backing of the European Parliament.

In Brussels, therefore, the conventional wisdom is that von der Leyen will make overtures to her critics, the Social Democrats (SPD) and the Greens, as European Council President Donald Tusk has suggested. Jens Geier, the head of Germany's SPD delegation to European Parliament, is demanding concrete social policy plans; the Greens, for their part, are applying pressure on climate issues. And all the while, the commission president must also cater to the conservative and liberal camps in her own party.

This is no small balancing act, and it comes at a difficult time to boot. It is already foreseeable that the start of the new European Commission will be overshadowed by Brexit and fears of further crises. The UK is slated to leave the EU on Oct. 31, one day before von der Leyen takes office. But what happens in the event of a hard Brexit? Or even another postponement?

Under the current constellation of factors, so say insiders, nothing at all is certain – not even that the new European Commission will begin on Nov. 1. Perhaps as late as Christmas? And perhaps the prime focus will not be the climate, but rather the economy, as was the case five years ago at the start of the Juncker Commission. But there is one thing that is indeed certain: the notion of an ideal world is gone for good, even in Brussels.

Eric Bonse is a political scientist and journalist. He works as an EU correspondent in Brussels.

Certain uncertainties

What awaits incoming European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen



A more perfect union: Ursula von der Leyen speaking in front of the European Parliament in July

be ratified at the national level.

Another von der Leyen promise is to expand upon the Juncker idea of a European Pillar of Social Rights as well as the promotion of democracy and equal rights within the EU. In this vein she is urging the adoption of a "fair minimum wage" in all member states of the EU as well as a proposed European Unemployment Benefit Reinsurance Scheme that would help financially burdened states in crisis. She also announced that her team would comprise an equal number of men and women.

However, implementing this highly symbolic promise has already proved vexing. Only

Yet the gender parity issue may still turn out to be her easiest task. It may prove more difficult to assign the new commissioners their posts. Von der Leyen must tread lightly not only around the heavyweights Frans Timmermans and Margrethe Vestager, her recent rivals who are still in the game and are demanding first-rate appointments; she must also appease the governments in Warsaw and Budapest, which expect something in return for lending her their votes.

It is also necessary to make a number of strategic preliminary decisions: Should the responsibilities for the economy, invest-

bilities fall to Josep Borrell, the new High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy?

The awarding of posts is expected to result in a heated tug-of-war. But even if von der Leyen succeeds in solving the unusually complex personnel puzzle and establishing gender parity within her team, she will not yet have reached her goal – first come the hearings at European Parliament, whose members must approve the entire new commission, and could use the hearings to shoot down individual candidates.

In light of the modest majority enjoyed by her party, the Euro-

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Publisher
Detlef W. Prinz

Executive Editor
Theo Sommer

Editor in Chief
Peter H. Koepf
redaktion@times-media.de

Senior Editor
Lutz Lichtenberger

English Language Editor
Jonathan Lutes

Art Director
Paul M. Kern

Layout
Johanna Trapp, Gordon Martin

Advertising
Janine Kulbrok

Strategic Advisor
Oliver Rolofs

Washington Office
The German Times
A Trans-Atlantic Newspaper
4200 Wisconsin Ave NW #106-381
Washington, DC 20016

Office Manager
Alice Gallasch Kelley

Contact
washington@german-times.com

Publishing House
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Wunderbar together | Germany and the US.

BY PETER H. KOEPF

In the past several years, Görlitz, a picturesque town on Germany's eastern border with Poland, has functioned as the backdrop to several major Hollywood films, including *Around the World in 80 Days* starring Jackie Chan and Arnold Schwarzenegger, *The Reader* with Kate Winslet and David Kross and *The Grand Budapest Hotel* featuring Tilda Swinton and Bill Murray. However, the town's elegant façades conceal a weak economy and scores of elderly and discontented individuals who have lost faith in the future. In fact, so many "Görlitzwood" residents reject the EU and the political establishment in their nation's capital that more than two-thirds of them voted for the far-right AfD party in elections held this past Sept. 1.

Nearly a million people in the states of Brandenburg and Saxony cast their ballots for the party called Alternative for Germany (AfD); that's more than a quarter of all voters there. One out of four rallied behind politicians – both men and women – who have shocked the public with right-wing extremist, anti-Semitic, racist or otherwise inhuman remarks. Is Germany on a path back to its past?

In short, no. In the more heavily populated west, the AfD attracts far less support. Even in the AfD-friendly eastern states, nearly three-quarters of the electorate backed other parties. The AfD won neither Saxony nor Brandenburg. Plus, no other party wants anything to do with them.

The AfD had hoped and even expected to become the top vote-

getter in these elections, which could have set the stage for Angela Merkel's ouster. "Complete the revolution" was an AfD poster slogan during the campaign. To the outrage of many, the party claimed that the Peaceful Revolution, which had led to the fall of the Berlin Wall, had been betrayed and that conditions today resembled those of the communist past.

Luckily, the worst has been avoided, at least for the moment. Brandenburg will once again have an SPD minister president and Saxony one from the CDU. In Berlin, Merkel will remain chancellor, probably to the end of her term – if not even longer. The CDU might need her, for lack of any charismatic successors.

But what about the claim that the revolution remains incomplete? And why do so many former East Germans believe they are being shortchanged, ignored and treated like second-class citizens?

The *New York Times* described a "lingering inequality between East and West three decades after the Berlin Wall fell." The *Washington Post* wrote that the east of Germany "still suffers from higher unemployment and lower wages and pensions than the West, about 30 years after the country's reuni-

Loaded language

The AfD's populist rhetoric attracts those who are traumatized by the past and scared of the future

fication." But the truth is more complex.

Saxony's unemployment rate is 5.7 percent, and Brandenburg's is 5.6 percent, while the national average is 5.1 percent. In the western state of North Rhine-Westphalia, the rate is 6.7 percent, with peak levels of 13.4 percent in Dortmund. However, average wages in the east continue to lag

Is Germany on a path back to its past? In short, no

behind those in the west. Last year, people in Saxony and Brandenburg earned 20 percent less than the German average. There are many reasons for these discrepancies. One-third of eastern Germany's full-time employees work in the low-wage sector – that's twice as much as in the west. More eastern German women work than do their western counterparts. These women earn on average 20 percent less than men. Eastern Germany has few big corporations and many rural, structurally weak

and depopulated regions.

On the other hand, wherever corporate headquarters are, rents are rising and so are other costs of living. Pensions, meanwhile, are based on wages – including those earned during the Communist days of old. Meanwhile, pensions in the east have risen to 96 percent of those in the west. A complex compensation scheme has now been put in place to balance pension levels by 2024.

Low income does not automatically predispose people toward the AfD. The fact that most welfare recipients in Saxony live in Leipzig – where the party scored well below its average for the state – illustrates this simple insight. There are more important reasons for the rejection of "the system" and "the establishment" than empty wallets. One such reason lies in the past, another in the present.

Even 30 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the subsequent incorporation of East Germany in the Federal Republic, many eastern Germans still feel betrayed and sold out. Their industries, which were no longer competitive, were handed over as gifts to west-based corporations; barely 10 percent of all jobs survived; and with no savings to speak of, many slid toward

poverty. Whereas in the GDR they had steady jobs, they now found themselves in long queues at the unemployment office.

To the present day, many eastern Germans also feel that their own historic achievements have received inadequate acknowledgment and appreciation. Indeed, this is a people who liberated themselves from an oppressive system without a shot being fired or any blood being spilled. In contrast, western Germans tend to regard the incorporation of *Ossis* as an act of West German charity and kindness. And it's not untrue that West Germans quickly began scouring the east for a quick buck after the Wall came down, and soon found they could easily take their eastern brethren to the cleaners.

All this evolved into a chronic sense of inferiority. However, those who were able to turn their lives around and make a new start now fear they could lose everything again. The Brandenburg village of Hirschfeld, located at the Polish border, gained notoriety this September when more than half its voters, 307, cast their ballots for the AfD. Journalists describe the place as a charming village with decent infrastructure – and not a refugee in sight.

With its brash, loud and xenophobic populism, the AfD is sweeping up those individuals who are traumatized by the past and fearful of the future. The majority of voters are men between the ages of 30 and 60, without high school diplomas, let alone university degrees, and workers worried about their jobs. The fact that the AfD stands far to the right does not bother them, nor do the par-

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Democracy for grown-ups

Live to debate another day – not having easy answers is a liberal asset, not a moral failing

BY LUTZ LICHTENBERGER

Jeremiads about the state of liberal democracy and its institutions have been the dissonant theme of 2019. The West as a whole is in decline; NATO is obsolete; once proud and powerful parliaments and congresses have been rendered superfluous. Autocratic rulers like Russia's Vladimir Putin, China's Xi Jinping and North Korea's Kim Jong-un seize the day while Donald Trump, Boris Johnson and Jair Bolsonaro seem more inclined to emulate their governance than to stand up for the idea – and the practice – of liberty and a pluralistic society.

In Germany, the parties at the center are struggling to deal with the growing appeal of the Alternative for Germany (AfD), which is less a political body than the manifestation of a hodge-podge of racism, resentment and radical right-wing ideas. The party, barely six years old, has made considerable gains in recent regional elections, finishing second in two states (see page 1) without offering any coherent ideas of how to govern. Their slogans follow the drumbeat of most international far-right movements; they target immigrants and perceived elites while railing against what they refer to as the establishment's tyranny of political correctness.

The AfD is built on the cult of the strongman, the crude longing for an "authentic" leader able and willing to put an end to the tedious game of politics and all the never-ending debating, negotiating and countervailing. They want their followers to believe that politics, the ever-muddy practice of true democracy, is practically and morally depraved and should be replaced by the dogged determination of a "chosen one."

Sure enough, the dualistic conception of politics as either a game of eternally bound-to-fail compromise (played by those driven by the desire to debate another day) or ruling by fiat and forever – is not an autocratic fad of 2019.

This dualist view of politics is reflected in Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary of the English*

Language, published in 1759, which describes politics as "the Science of Government, the art or practice of administering public affairs." Elsewhere in the dictionary, Johnson describes the politician not as an artist but one who is "cunning" and "a man of artifice."

The contemporary German philosopher and political scientist Wolfgang Fach takes a modern view of Johnson's dichotomy. "The contrast couldn't be greater: there the divine action, here the devilish actors," he writes in his treatise titled *The Disappearance of Politics*. Fach denotes the difference as "POLITICS (in all caps, because of its quasi-divine nature), understood as the transcendent care of and for the entirety; on the other hand, common politics, engaged in by self-appointed Machiavellian men, whose thinking is engulfed by immoral haggling without prospects."

Fach diagnoses this tendency in all people, no matter their political affiliations: we want to believe in POLITICS, yet we despise the rigmarole of politics – and find ever-new ways of forgetting or suppressing the latter, without acknowledging the intertwined nature of the two concepts. We are blinded, Fach notes, by "the magic effect" of the otherworldly promise.

In this vein, countries long proud of their mature democracies, including Germany since 1949, may be said to be witnessing a rather vulgar re-enchantment of the great political idea by a faction of strongmen in the last 10 years. The promise of transcendence through political action is increasingly secularized. The aspiration to lift up every citizen – not to mention refugees from war and poverty around the world – is discarded in favor of a more particular promise of salvation. Or, as Adam Gopnik writes in his recent book on the "moral adventure of liberalism," *A Thousand Small Sanities*, "everywhere we look, throughout Europe as much as in America, patriotism is being replaced with nationalism, pluralism by tribalism, impersonal justice by the tyrannical whim of autocrats who think only to punish their enemies and reward their hitmen."

Deprived of its universal claim, something once upheld by both liberal and conservative notions of democratic politics, today's strongman politics has embraced and indeed relies on simplistic concepts.

This is not just the ordinary argument for the necessity of expertise, impact analysis and inclusion of a plethora of perceptions in policymaking. The tax code, environmental regulation and government programs of all stripes rarely fit neatly into even the traditional categories of left and right, let alone the cruder ones of good and evil.

Nor is it the assertion that politics just happens to be a complicated technical affair better left to the elites and their dabbings in obscure jargon. The disapproval of political huskers and industry proxies rigging the game for the various 0.1-percenters can be spot-on; look no further than the global financial crisis of 2008, which was brought on by too much deregulation and unsound safeguarding by the state.

What appears to be perplexing about the electoral success of the strongmen is that few of their supporters actually believe their proposed policy ideas will help make their lives better. They share the oft-repeated grievances, the feeling of neglect, the perceived slights by proverbial liberal elites, the assumption that immigrants and minorities have been moved ahead of them to the top of the queue – a version of this story is told in the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany and elsewhere.

The proposed countermeasures, if there are any, like walls, mass deportation or no-deal Brexit, are too expensive, impractical or sometimes even counterproductive.

And yet today's autocratic appeal, following Wolfgang Fach's theory, lies not in the actual substance, and not even in symbolic meaning – that is, "owning the libs" or any other right-wing armchair battle cry.

In 2018, the historical anthropologist Thomas Bauer published a short yet weighty essay on the loss of ambiguity and diversity, *The Disambiguation of the World*. He traces the story of how modern societies lost their will and their ability to handle

or even tolerate pluralist meanings from religion to the arts and politics. "In many areas of life, the most attractive spiritual offerings are those promising release from the unnavigable ambiguity of the world," Bauer notes all the impersonal factors for this tendency: bureaucratization, technical advancements, mass-market consumer culture. But he also sees an express will of people to live in a more conclusive world.

Translated back into the world of democratic politics, it becomes clearer why a growing segment of the electorate in Western societies *chooses* to deny or obfuscate the science of climate change, the fact that minorities still face discrimination or that a strong government must level the playing field of the so-called open market in myriad ways.

In other words, what's needed is the normal, untidy and always tentative business of democracy. Democratic decision-making cannot claim to embody the sole truth – such a claim would be counterintuitive to the essence of its undertaking. It is a series of temporary fixes, good only for as long as a new – and hopefully better – solution doesn't come along.

"Compromise is not a sign of the collapse of one's moral conscience. It is a sign of its strength, for there is nothing more necessary to a moral conscience than the recognition that other people have one, too," writes Adam Gopnik. "A compromise is a knot tied tight between competing decencies."

On the face of it, this version of democracy will always be less sexy than the siren songs of the strongman. In the struggle for democracy – one might say the idea of the republic – there is no reverse-engineering the transcendent act of turning politics into POLITICS. Democracy's advocates – politicians, voters and citizens – can only engage in the conciliatory manner that has been lying at the core of the concept since its inception.

Lutz Lichtenberger is senior editor of *The German Times*.

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Loaded language

ty's various other scandals, financial embezzlement, public squabbling and internal party feuds.

Party head Alexander Gauland, who until 2013 was a member of Chancellor Merkel's CDU with a respectable career in politics and the media, calls his new political home a "middle-class people's party," although its leaders attract attention through extremist remarks and crude language and frequently lack any kind of middle-class manners.

It would be a mistake not to recognize that it's the rank and file that is steering the AfD leadership. The functionaries fulfill what their voters expect of them. Compromise with the established parties is considered treason. Anyone calling on the angry mob to calm down is accused of being a traitor out to curb freedom of speech.

Many of the AfD's free-market and nationalist founders have since abandoned the party, leaving gaps for right-wing extremists to fill. The far-right wing is growing, taking the rest of the party with it. Countless right-wingers have made a career in the party and now sit in the Bundestag or in Germany's regional parliaments – not to mention in the town halls, where funding for clubs and cultural associations is distributed. Gauland has resisted neither this drift to the right nor its radicalized rhetoric. He has adapted to it.

Following the killing of the Hessian CDU politician Walter Lübke in June, the Berlin correspondent of the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, Marc Felix Serrao, quoted Bundestag President Wolfgang Schäuble's verdict that language had in the past already been a "breeding ground for violence and even murder." The "uninhibited language" of the AfD, Serrao wrote, is like a smeared bathroom wall. Nothing about it is middle class. The language of the AfD, he wrote, can "make murderers."

But to repeat: The AfD is a small minority. In the European elections last spring, it polled only 11 percent of the vote. Unlike Marine Le Pen in France, the AfD in Germany is considerably further away from power. The classical parties, troubled though they are, are still the pillars of German democracy.

Peter H. Koepf is editor in chief of *The German Times*.



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BY JOHANNES LEITHÄUSER

When US President Donald Trump and German Chancellor Angela Merkel met in Biarritz, France, in August, it marked the first time the two had ever held a meeting at which the dominant theme was *not* their dispute over the level of German military spending.

Trump has visited Paris, London and Warsaw twice since coming to office, but has not yet made the trip to Berlin. This, in turn, highlights the extent to which Germany has persistently drawn the ire of the president in a number of different ways.

First, Germany is home to successful carmakers. The impressive numbers they post in terms of exports to the United States have always been a thorn in Trump's side. They symbolize Germany's foreign trade surplus in contrast to America's deficit.

Second, in alliance with London and Paris, Berlin is seeking to create a counterbalance to Trump's harsh policy of sanctions targeting Iran. Germany is also working hard to keep the nuclear agreement with Tehran alive – the deal the US pulled out of one year ago.

Third, Trump resents the German government for not raising its defense spending to the equivalent of 2 percent of GDP by 2024 as stipulated for all NATO countries.

Shortly before Trump and Merkel met in Biarritz, the US ambassador in Berlin, Richard Grenell, used the strongest of terms to express America's overall displeasure with its German ally in a complaint that united the issues of trade surplus and military deficit. The ambassador argued that he actually found it offensive to expect US taxpayers to continue to have to pay for the more than 50,000 Americans stationed in Germany, while the Germans get to spend their trade surpluses on domestic projects.



Flyover state: An F-16 Fighting Falcon over Sprangdahlem Air Base in southwest Germany

The 2% truthers

Donald Trump wants Germany to beef up its military spending. But the real numbers underlying the dispute don't add up

Grenell even hinted that the US could redeploy its troops stationed in Germany to the neighboring country of Poland, which has long sought to host a greater US military presence and which actually meets its NATO pledge to spend 2 percent of GDP on defense. Of course, Poland's smaller GDP means that the amount it spends on defense is much lower; calculated in US dollars, the Polish military budget is just under \$12 billion, while Germany's defense budget for the current year is almost four times higher at roughly \$54 billion.

At the moment, however, Germany is still only achieving a budget quota of 1.36 percent.

Continuous economic growth is one of the reasons why the German defense-spending quota has grown only moderately since 2014, even in the face of sharply rising budgets for defense and procurement. In 2014, the share of GDP was just under 1.2 percent, and the budget was around \$46 billion, that is, roughly \$8 billion lower than it is today.

Chancellor Merkel (CDU) managed to get the okay from her SPD partners in the governing coalition to increase the defense budget to 1.5 percent of GDP by 2024. That would mean a sum of more than \$60 billion, depending on the growth of the German economy. Ironically, if a recession set in, the

2-percent mark would be reached more easily.

If Germany achieved the 2-percent NATO pledge in 2020, the government would have to spend well over \$80 billion on defense. In that case, Germany's military budget would be one-quarter or even one-third higher than the budgets of the UK and France, two European countries that can afford to maintain an expensive nuclear deterrent program alongside their own conventional forces.

It should also be noted that there are a number of defense-related costs that are simply not included in the calculation of Germany's military spending. This is

especially true with regard to the expenses associated with stationing troop units belonging to NATO allies on German soil; these costs are paid for by Germany and benefit, in particular, US forces.

According to a statement by Germany's Ministry of Finance, a total of approximately \$800 million has been spent over the past seven years alone on utilities and building planning services associated with property owned by NATO allies. Again, the lion's share of these services benefited American troops.

At present, roughly 35,000 US soldiers are stationed in Germany along with 12,000 civilian employees. That is but a fraction of the troops stationed in the country

during the Cold War. At that time, up to 300,000 men were stationed on West German soil. Still, the current presence of US troops in Germany is by far the highest in Europe.

This has less to do with a direct threat scenario than with the fact that the military infrastructure set up during the Cold War is still in place and is therefore available and affordable to US forces. It includes not only military training areas and several large Air Force bases (such as in Ramstein and Spangdahlem), but also staff compounds for several European headquarters. The Americans have also set up their Africa Command headquarters in Germany. And, finally, the US military hospital in Landstuhl performs a function that extends well beyond Germany; it is the place where seriously injured military personnel were taken during both US campaigns in Iraq and the war in Afghanistan.

In light of these facts, German politicians tend to remain unruffled by threats of withdrawal. In actual fact, it would be impossible to remove large-scale US military facilities in Germany and relocate them to another country without incurring high costs. Poland has announced that it intends to spend up to \$2 billion in an attempt to foster US readiness to station soldiers on its territory over the long term.

At a visit in June, Trump told Polish President Andrzej Duda just how many soldiers could be involved in such a move: 2,000. The Polish people would then be invited to express their gratitude by naming the barracks Fort Trump. The White House later corrected the number given by the president, insisting that discussions so far involved the transfer of only 1,000 soldiers.

Johannes Leithäuser is a politics editor and writer at the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*.



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You will benefit from the robust economic framework that Germany has to offer, which encompasses a great degree of legal certainty, competitive corporate tax rates, and a stable yet flexible labor market that serves to continuously produce, develop, and attract highly qualified professional specialists. These outstanding qualities have undoubtedly made inroads with investors from across the world, who are increasingly selecting Germany, and particularly Hessen, as the prime location to establish business operations.

Decisions made by more than 1,000 international companies since 2013 to establish operations in the region have served to clearly demonstrate Hessen's

allure, with a large number of these companies having since further expanded their existing operations. 133 companies from the United States alone have invested in Hessen over the past three years. Furthermore, international market players have established valuable networks in Hessen generations ago which profit new investors like you.

The total number of foreign direct investments reached a record high in Germany in the past year: Over 2,000 companies, spanning all regions of the world, established business operations in Germany in 2018, with US based investors accounting for 345 successful stand alone projects. Just over one in seven of these companies (54) decided in favor of Hessen.

This certainly should not come as any surprise, however, as no other German economic region compares with the state of Hessen's exceptionally high degree of internationalization. An extensive economic framework, featuring an extraordinarily diverse range of industries with an international strategic focus, defines the Rhine-Main region.

Finally, the state's numerous international communities place Hessen a head above the rest of the German states. Hessen is currently home to people of more than 190 different nationalities, including approximately 15,000 Americans, who have learned to value and proudly live the Hessian way of life.

So what are you waiting for? Invest in Hessen today!

BY JOACHIM MÜLLER-JUNG

The warming of the Earth's atmosphere and oceans is wreaking havoc in the Arctic, where the summers used to be short and cold and winters prohibited any type of commerce – and any type of war, for the temperature was unthinkably cold and storms punished anyone bold enough or unlucky enough to be there. It used to be unimaginable that the Arctic would ever thaw, but today's say that it will be on average three to five degrees Celsius warmer by the middle of the century, no matter whether the world adheres to the Paris climate accord or an even more stringent agreement.

The ice is now melting away – and along with it any prior reluctance to take political action in both the East and the West. Donald Trump's recent failed attempt to camouflage his geostrategic power game as a "generous" offer to buy Greenland has shined a global spotlight on the Arctic. The question now in diplomatic circles is whether an ecologically destabilized Arctic could become the theater of a new Cold War.

There's a good argument for this being the case, and it could have fatal repercussions for climate change. For years, the nearly four million people that have lived within the Arctic Circle have conducted a sort of long-distance relationship with the rest of the world. The less than 60,000 Greenlanders, for example, two-thirds of whom are indigenous citizens, have achieved far-reaching domestic autonomy, and even if they live mainly off of annual subsidies from Denmark to the tune of \$700 million, plus some income from deep-sea fishing, their ambition to achieve quick and complete independence has remained steadfast.

The Arctic policy of eight littoral countries – Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Russia and the US – which joined forced in the mid-1990s to form the Arctic Council, is still ostensibly defined by a strong desire for neutrality and cooperation. But behind the scenes, they are sharpening knives. And they're not the only ones. In the first years of the new millennium, more and more non-neighboring states, including countries that lie



Whose Arctic is it?

Donald Trump's offer to buy Greenland is a sign that an ecologically destabilized Arctic could become the theater of a new Cold War

thousands of miles south of the Polar Circle – like China, India and Brazil – have pressed for observer status. Although it doesn't come with any official voting rights or even voice, it will allow them to influence decisions about the use of the Arctic region.

Beyond the 200-mile zone that the Arctic neighbors in Europe, North America and Russia have sovereign rights to use economically, there exist several established multinational agreements. One is the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which seeks to regulate the handling of usage requests and environmental protection issues. However, there are significant gaps to fill. In distinction from the Antarctic, the political status of large swaths of the Arctic Ocean is unsettled. Russia's foray at the North Pole more than ten years ago made this fact patently clear for the entire world.

Under international law, Russia's planting of its flag in the seabed at the North Pole – an event captured on video – is of no significance, but the action's inherent claim to expand Russia's continental shelf to include 1.2 million square kilometers of the deep-sea floor beyond the Siberian coast

has certainly resonated. Along with the thawing of glaciers and the sea ice cover in the Arctic, the geopolitical contest for the resources of the far north has reached a fever pitch.

Denmark and Canada have also claimed rightful expansions to the continental shelves. At stake

The Northeast Passage between Europe and Asia – climatologists predict that it will be free of ice all year around by mid-century – could reduce the length of commercial routes by a third. For this reason, China is negotiating with Russia about the use of the Northeast Passage and has begun pur-

Growth-driven economies have been a big factor in accelerating the ecological downward spiral at the polar circle

is a tremendous amount of oil and gas – experts estimate that one-third of the world's resources lie under the Arctic Ocean – but also zinc, iron, copper, nickel, diamonds and rare earths, a critical element in the manufacturing of smartphones. Not to forget fish, half of whose catch is ultimately consumed by Europeans. Last but not least among the issues driving tensions in the Arctic are the melting polar trade routes and a slew of military strategic goals.

chasing land and investing in ports and mines in Greenland.

Under US pressure, Denmark took over the construction of several airfields that the Chinese had wanted to finance and build. At an Arctic Council meeting in Greenland in May, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo became hot under the collar when he warned China to keep its "aggressive Arctic policy" in check.

Germany, which has held observer status for quite a few

years and has even hosted several major conferences on the Arctic, steers a more diplomatic course through these contentious waters, but one would be hard-pressed to describe it as restrained. The Federal Government's "German Arctic Policy Guidelines" adopted in August explicitly outlines an active role. Its aim is to "seize opportunities" and "assume responsibility." Multilateralism, openness to dialogue and joint solutions including all participants remain the ideal configuration for Berlin.

This applies above all to Arctic research, in which Germany enjoys a prominent role internationally. Berlin is concerned about the shortage of international agreements and the geostrategic contests between China, Russia and the US, which ultimately could impair German and European interests. Thus, the idea of "seizing economic opportunities" is the order of the day. German marine technology must step up – "new perspectives are opening for German companies."

It is precisely these perspectives that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) vehemently warns against in its recently published special report

on the oceans and the cryosphere – the areas of the Earth covered with ice. Growth-driven economies have been a big factor in accelerating the ecological downward spiral at the polar circle. Perilous feedback effects hold the potential to further destabilize the region. Soot emissions darken the ice, which then absorbs more heat and leads to more melting.

But less ice does not mean greater stability. The disappearance of Arctic ice destroys the livelihood of polar bears, fish and plankton. Food webs are also destroyed much too quickly. Already, the weather machine for all of Europe – i.e. the vast air and ocean circulation in the Arctic – no longer works the way it once did. Extreme weather events are becoming ever more frequent. The ocean pump south of Greenland, "Europe's heater," which transports the warm surface water of the Gulf Stream deep into the sea, has already noticeably diminished. The result is that the global conveyor belt of the ocean currents is weakening much faster than expected. The extent of the dangers this brings is not being openly and earnestly discussed – neither in the "German Arctic Policy Guidelines" nor by the great powers.

And, as always, if moneyed interests get into the game and environment policy is marginalized, the security issues will howl the loudest. Military strategies will take center stage. The Russians have recently strengthened their weaponry and troop presence in the north; they are conducting more frequent military exercises; and their ports are being refurbished or expanded. Their North American opponents will not let these measures go answered.

In the short term, of course, investment and military adventurism remain extremely expensive and risky for all countries. But as for the long term, let there be no doubt: there's a strong headwind beating back any sensible, environment-oriented policy for the Arctic.

Joachim Müller-Jung is director of the science department at the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*.



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The Kremlin at dusk

Putin's popularity is waning

BY GEMMA PÖRZGEN

It's still too early to bid farewell to the era of Russian President Vladimir Putin. Yet there are increasing signs that his power is weakening. The next presidential elections are in 2024, but they appear to be already casting a long shadow. A power struggle for the country's future seems to be breaking out and its outcome is entirely uncertain.

Although Putin succeeded in achieving high approval ratings after annexing Crimea in 2014, Russian pollsters have long been noticing a very different trend. A lack of economic growth and falling wages have caused Putin's popularity to decline, says Lev Gudkov, director of the Levada Center, an independent public opinion research institute.

The president had promised to reduce the Russian economy's dependence on raw materials such as gas and oil, but this reliance is now as great as it ever was. In addition, emerging innovative sectors, such as Russia's groundbreaking IT industry, are in danger of falling victim to the country's authoritarian power elite's mania for regulation. Despotism bureaucrats are also making the lives of entrepreneurs running medium-sized companies unnecessarily difficult.

Activist Alexei Navalny seems to have struck a chord with many of his fellow citizens through his highly politicized YouTube videos, in which he denounces the widespread corruption of those in power. Internet images of the mansions and yachts of leading politicians, such as those of Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, have reached a large audience, reinforcing the people's fundamental mistrust of their rulers. Many in the Russian population have long had the feeling that their society's wealth is unfairly distributed and that the power elite has been fleecing the people.

One major turning point has been the pension reform the Duma passed in 2018, which is deeply unpopular and has caused great resentment. It stipulates that men will receive their pension five years later than was previously the case and women eight years later, although the latter was reduced after fierce opposition to the regulation.

Along with taking to the streets in protest, millions of outraged Russians expressed their anger at the new regulation in online and paper petitions so that their president was obliged to address the people directly, explaining that there was no alternative to his reforms, because there are already too few workers and too many pensioners.

against the building of churches on green spaces have become more frequent in various Russian cities, including Nizhny Novgorod, Krasnoyarsk and Chelyabinsk.

This unrest increased in the run-up to the regional elections on Sept. 8, 2019; and the Kremlin has grown increasingly nervous. A decision not to allow prominent opposition politicians to partici-

six million Russians were eligible to cast ballots – almost half of all voting-age citizens. Elections were also held on the Crimean Peninsula, which was annexed in 2014 and under international law belongs to Ukraine.

Navalny's plan of recommending his followers to vote tactically in the regional elections seems to have worked. His recommenda-

processes and prevents any real involvement by its own citizens. Many prefer to stay home at election time; as far as they're concerned, there's nothing to vote for anyway.

No one can say whether Putin will one day be replaced peacefully through either elections or retirement. At the end of President Boris Yeltsin's time in office, Putin

originated from the security services and the military, is growing in Moscow. They could set Russia on an even more authoritarian course in coming years, which would be sure to exacerbate the situation. They are an unpredictable force, not least because they are frequently in conflict with each other and this conflict often results in violence.

In addition to these internal rifts, the ongoing war in Eastern Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea have shown that Kremlin leaders won't shrink from an aggressive expansionist foreign policy to secure their own domestic power base. Annexing Crimea made Putin very popular in 2014. According to polling data from the Levada Center, his approval ratings peaked at 89 percent in June 2015. This figure was still sustaining Putin through the 2018 presidential elections.

Russia experts fear that Putin could use a similar scenario in neighboring Belarus. The former Green party member and foreign affairs committee member Marieluise Beck and her husband, Green politician Ralf Fücks, expressed this concern recently in a widely read article in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*.

"The country has become the newest arena for Russia's global power ambitions," warn Beck and Fücks. Largely unnoticed by the West, Putin is increasing pressure on Belarus, trying to force it into a union of states, they argue. "That would mean the end of Belarusian independence and would radically change the strategic situation in Central Eastern Europe." For Putin, a union of states with Belarus might comfortably pave the way to another term as president, they note.

Other observers may find such scenarios far-fetched, but recent history has shown that they fall within the realm of possibility for the near future.

The next few years will reveal the direction Russia takes in the dying days of the Putin era. But one thing is now certain: Not even this president can make promises for Russia's future.

Gemma Pörzgen is a Berlin-based journalist specializing in Eastern Europe.



Uprising: Police officers take a protester into custody in Moscow in August 2019.

Raising the retirement age triggered so much outrage among people all over the country because the reforms mean that very few men will ever actually reach retirement age, even though life expectancy is increasing. In Russia, roughly half of all men live into their 65th year; the equivalent figure for Germany is 85 percent.

The result was repeated protests across the country. A range of different topics has since caused more occasional protests to flare up at the local and regional levels. Many Russians are unhappy and are venting their rage at their rulers in public demonstrations. There have been protests against waste dumps in northern Russia and around Moscow as well as public opposition to a church that was to be built in a park in Yekaterinburg. Sporadic protests

pate in the elections resulted in countless further protests in Moscow and other Russian cities.

Around 50,000 people took to the capital's streets to protest almost every weekend throughout July and August.

Shocking pictures of police violence against peaceful demonstrators were broadcast all over the world, images of armed members of the security forces beating and arresting large numbers of young people. These images spread quickly over the internet, which succeeded in increasing solidarity among many Muscovites and drawing more protesters to the demonstrations.

For the Kremlin, the Sept. 8 elections were a test of the electorate. The citizenry was called on to vote for 11 regional parliaments and more than 16 governors. Fifty-

tion was that they give their votes to those opposition politicians most likely to win against United Russia candidates.

Moscow mayor Sergey Sobyanin declared himself satisfied, writing on his website, "In the end, it was a real political competition and one of the most emotional elections in all of recent history."

For the Kremlin, the regional election results do not justify much optimism regarding the Duma elections in 2021. Despite state propaganda in the media, the pressure on companies to force their employees to vote and the refusal to allow many opposition candidates to take part, Kremlin candidates are no longer guaranteed positive election results.

Growing numbers of Russians refuse to participate in a system that merely imitates democratic

succeeded in protecting his predecessor and his family from criminal prosecution and in seizing control of compromising material, which allowed for a peaceful transition of power. Whether Putin can be peacefully replaced in a similar way and how that might happen is entirely unclear.

The direction the country will take in coming years is equally as uncertain. There are occasional moments of hope, such as the surprising June release from prison of investigative journalist Ivan Golunov. The exchange of prisoners with Ukraine is also creating expectations that the governments in Moscow and Kiev could resume talks and find compromises, and perhaps even solutions.

On the other hand, there are indications that the influence of *siloviki*, that is, men in politics who

To talk or not to talk

Iran after the G7

BY CORNELIUS ADEBAHR

Recent meetings of the Group of Seven (G7) have been rather ominous affairs. One never knows what US President Donald Trump will make of these summits, which he regularly and openly disparages. To agree on an initiative for talks between the United States and Iran, of all countries, at the meeting in Biarritz was therefore even more surprising, including to many of those present at the posh Atlantic seaside resort.

Yet French President Emmanuel Macron's coup of inviting Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif to town paid off. Importantly, he had secured Trump's approval for this move during a tête-à-tête over lunch before the summit's official opening. Iran, in contrast, now appears to be confused as to what it can expect from the initiative, given that any high-level public meeting with a US representative is considered taboo in Iran as long as US sanctions are crippling the country.

"To talk or not to talk," that is the question for policymakers in Europe, Iran and the US. And what should they talk about? The nuclear deal and regional issues top the agenda. But is talking really worth it?

Regardless of the flurry of comments on possible talks, Iran has stuck to its policy of gradually reducing its commitment to the nuclear deal. One year after Washington pulled out of the agreement, Tehran has begun to disregard some of its limitations. After passing the agreed threshold for low-enriched uranium stocks as well as the level of enrichment itself, Iran began its "third phase" of non-compliance by engaging in previously banned areas of centrifuge research and development.

These purportedly reversible steps are meant to put pressure on the remaining parties to the deal – the EU, France, Germany and the United Kingdom as well as China and Russia (EU/E3+2) – to stick to the promises made to Iran involving oil exports and financial transactions. While the E3+2 countries maintain that the deal can be saved despite US withdrawal and Iranian (partial) non-compliance, none of the agreement's signatories has thus far triggered the official complaints procedure.

Over the summer weeks leading up to the G7 summit, the Persian Gulf was the focus of world attention. A string of attacks on tankers, often attributed to Iran, brought tensions to a boil. When Tehran downed a US drone in its airspace – so it claimed – President Trump ordered an aerial attack in response, only to call it off at the last moment. Meanwhile, Washington has begun its Operation Sentinel to patrol ships through the Strait of Hormuz, with the support of Australia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the UK.

The latter became embroiled in a tanker standoff closer to home, when it had an Iranian vessel seized for breaking EU sanctions on oil trade with Syria (the ship's destination after passing the Strait of Gibraltar). Iran retaliated by compounding a British tanker in the Gulf, and while the UK ultimately released one ship, Grace 1 (now renamed and reflagged as Adrian Darya 1), the Stena Impero is still being held by the Revolutionary Guard.

This comes as Israel has widened its attacks on Iranian-supported

groups in Syria, but also in Lebanon and – most worryingly from an American perspective – Iraq. At the same time, the Arab anti-Iran front seems to be weakening, with the UAE making the boldest moves: It has tacitly withdrawn from the Saudi-led coalition in the Yemen Civil War and sent an official delegation to Tehran to discuss maritime security, after refusing to blame Iran for sabotaging one of its tankers in May. As it happens, despite being staunchly opposed to Iran, Arab Gulf states have no inclination to go to war with their neighbor.

By maneuvering to organize direct talks between Iran and the US, the French are running a risk. Not only have other intermediaries been rebuffed before – Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe comes to mind – but now their European partners are also miffed. They fear that whatever comes out of the talks may actually weaken the current inspection regime without getting a nod from Washington for the existing deal.

Such a reversal of the American position is precisely what would

be needed to facilitate a historic encounter between the two presidents – think of Macron standing between Rouhani and Trump like Carter did between Begin and Sadat at Camp David. Could Trump really enforce a U-turn against his own advisors and dial down the "maximum pressure" campaign to help Iran "over a very rough patch," as he said after the G7 summit? No doubt, many in Israel are worried about such a change of heart, in particular Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who made his close relation with the US President a focus of his election campaign.

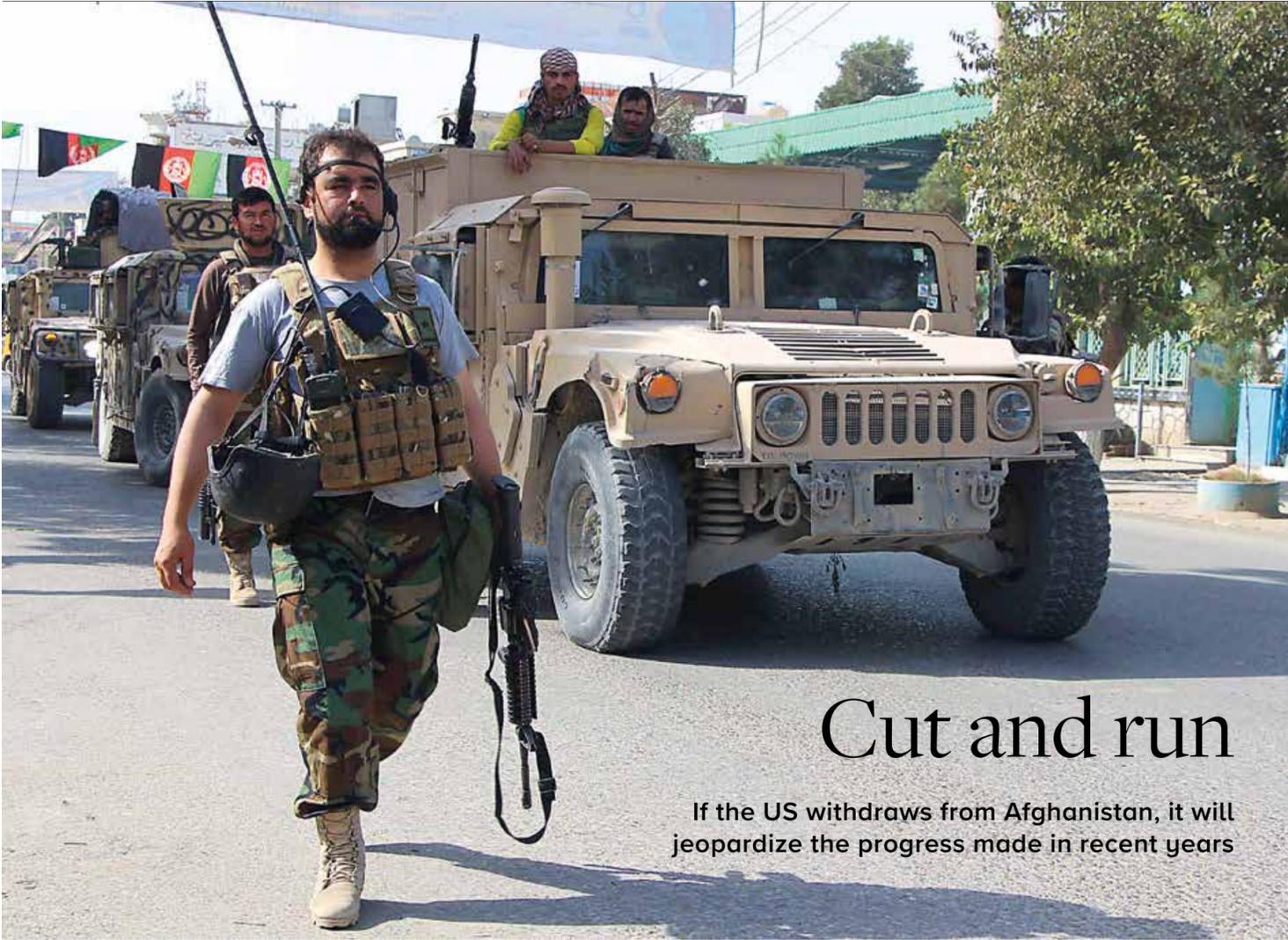
The greatest resistance, however, is coming from Iran itself. Immediately after Zarif's surprise visit to France, a fierce domestic debate erupted over the issue. Hardliners of all stripes lambasted Rouhani for trusting the US by signing the nuclear deal in the first place. Dismissing talks as a mere photo op without the prior lifting of US sanctions, they have boxed the president in. Not talking to the "Great Satan" has been

established policy for 40 years, so it has become a question of national pride whether – and under which heavily circumscribed conditions – such an encounter could take place.

The UN General Assembly in late September has been mooted as a possible occasion for a meeting of the two presidents. Providing an off-ramp from the current brink would be a good start, and could be achieved by suspending US sanctions in return for Iran's renewed compliance with the deal, a move that could possibly be sweetened by a credit line from EU countries to give Iran immediate economic relief. Yet the parties would also have to address more substantive issues of regional security, from commercial shipping in the Persian Gulf to the defense postures of littoral states.

Once you start talking, there's always more to discuss.

Cornelius Adebahr is an independent political analyst and consultant. He is a non-resident fellow at Carnegie Europe in Brussels and an associate fellow of the German Council on Foreign Relations in Berlin. He is the author of *Europe and Iran: The Nuclear Deal and Beyond* (Routledge 2017).



Let alone: Afghan National Army soldiers take part in operations against Taliban militants in Kunduz in late August.

Cut and run

If the US withdraws from Afghanistan, it will jeopardize the progress made in recent years

BY LORENZ HEMICKER

The future of Afghanistan is obscure. Nobody can say what it is going to bring for the people of the Hindu Kush, but all signs point to the beginning of a new chapter in the country's long and bloody history – a chapter in which the role played by Western countries shrinks until one day in the not-too-distant future, when they will have disappeared from the country entirely.

Withdrawal is becoming more likely with each passing day. Almost two decades after the terror attacks on New York and Washington, when Al Qaeda fighters flew hijacked civilian planes into symbols of America, destroying them and killing thousands of people, calls for retribution in the US have become muted.

Other issues have now come to the fore, in the US and among its Western allies in Europe. Afghanistan has once more become a secure harbor for terrorists, or perhaps it never stopped being one.

Although Osama bin Laden is dead, the Al Qaeda network lives on and another, no less dangerous organization, the Islamic State (IS) terror militia, has become established in the Hindu Kush. And the Taliban, which once hosted Osama bin Laden, is again gaining ground. A broad alliance of countries, supported by the Americans after Sept. 11, 2001, had swept them away and even driven them out of impassable mountain regions, but by now they once again control more than half the country. Eighteen months ago, they had only around a third.

The Taliban control mainly rural areas, from which it repeatedly makes incursions into cities and attacks state security forces. No army base is safe from these attacks, which are now part of everyday life, even in the capital of Kabul.

In recent weeks, the Taliban even stepped up its activities, carrying out a spate of high profile attacks, including one that killed a US soldier in early September of this year.

The US had been negotiating with the Taliban for a year now. The ninth round of talks between the self-proclaimed holy warriors and US special envoy Zalmay Khalilzad went down in Doha.

On Sept. 9, Trump cancelled the peace talks with Afghanistan's Taliban leaders scheduled to take place at Camp David following Khalilzad's preparations in Doha. "They're dead. They're

dead. As far as I'm concerned, they're dead," Trump said about the talks. The US general in charge said the military was likely to ramp up operations in Afghanistan to counter the increase in Taliban attacks.

The plan for a treaty that would bring Afghanistan something resembling peace after decades of war and bloody conflict is thus hanging in the balance once again.

This treaty was meant to give the US government an opportunity to withdraw from the Hindu Kush, quickly and without losing face.

President Donald Trump took office with a promise to bring US troops home after what was then 15 years of fighting. In the fall of the coming year, he will seek reelection. By then he will have to show some degree of success and somehow keep his promise to his voters, at least as far as the Hindu Kush goes.

This could mean a swift reduction of the 14,000 troops in the US contingent. Perhaps even more. Although Trump recently announced that 8,600 US soldiers are slated to remain, his lack of reliability as his own spokesman suggests that we take this information with a grain of salt.

In many capitals across Europe, the talks and intention to withdraw from Afghanistan were being observed with mixed feel-

No one wants more decades of military engagement in the Hindu Kush. At the same time, hopes for an end to the fighting are mixed with skepticism, given the manner and speed with which the US government is currently pursuing both talks with the Taliban and its plans for withdrawal.

The question of exactly what the Americans are planning is being posed with increasing volume at NATO headquarters in Brussels and in the German defense ministry. The answer has more than diplomatic significance for US allies, as they rely heavily on the Americans.

Without Washington, they would be forced to withdraw quickly from Afghanistan, especially the Germans, who have around 1,300 soldiers in the north of the country. Germany's army relies on the US for strategic air transport, combat helicopters and targeted drone missions as well as for air support for troops on the ground.

Another 20 allied states operating in the north also rely on Germany and would not be able to continue their missions without its army, so simply withdrawing is not an option for the Germans.

The security situation in the north is also far too fragile. The German army's soldiers go to training missions almost entirely by air.

If the Americans leave and withdraw their key capabilities "overnight," they would leave their allies in an extremely difficult situation. It would also be a unique occurrence in the history of NATO.

When asked to comment on the security situation in and around Mazar-i-Sharif, the location of the Bundeswehr's largest base in Afghanistan, a spokesperson for the German Operations Command there responded that it is "mainly under control." He went on to say, however, that the "presence of armed groups, some of them terrorists, and their activities cannot be completely prevented or stopped. In this context, the possibility of a temporary and significant deterioration of the security situation in urban areas of Mazar-i-Sharif, possibly without warning, cannot be excluded."

Even more worrying was his statement on conditions outside the extended urban areas of Mazar-i-Sharif, especially in districts in the province of Balkh to the west and southwest: "The security situation [there] has undergone a qualitative deterioration to varying extents in the past 12-18 months. Despite the various efforts of the Afghan National Defense Security Forces (ANDSF), it can be assumed that

the security situation here is generally no longer under control in large contiguous areas. An improvement in the current situation is not likely in the long term."

The strategic risks of withdrawal would be more serious for the Europeans than for the US. An agreement with the Taliban to not shelter global terrorists may be achievable, but given the country's history, the promise of a durable peace is of little value. The West would leave behind a power vacuum that the Afghan govern-

ment could never fill on its own.

Every year, around a quarter of the Afghan army's soldiers either desert or join the enemy. Without the help of the NATO mission Resolute Support, they would not be able to carry out most of their military operations.

It is hard to imagine what might happen after a treaty. The Taliban is no more a solid block than any other warring faction. If there is a treaty with the US, some of them may well splinter off and start fighting their former comrades in

arms, cheered on by their regional supporters.

With the risk of a new civil war, any progress made in recent years would be completely undone. The flow of refugees from the Hindu Kush would become a flood and the consequences would dwarf the refugee crisis that destabilized Europe in 2015.

Lorenz Hemicker is a political editor at the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*.

No army base is safe from the attacks, which are now part of everyday life, even in the capital of Kabul

ings. Several partners joined the mission in the Hindu Kush out of solidarity with the US. Some have now left it, but 39 nations are still involved in military operations there. They all know the many strategies and operations designed to bring Afghans peace, ranging from driving the Taliban out – then stabilizing Afghanistan and getting involved in the war against the rebels with a presence of 220,000 foreign soldiers – to subsequent repeated restrictions on support for Afghan security forces.

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BY STEFAN LOCKE

Eastern union

The Solidarity Pact that provided cash and financial stability to the eastern German states following reunification is about to expire

It was mid-August, just before regional elections in Brandenburg and Saxony, when German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier called for a “new solidarity pact.” What the president was demanding was not more money, but a “solidarity pact of appreciation,” especially for achievements during eastern Germany’s peaceful evolution and the transformation of its economy from socialist planning to the capitalist market.

The transformation of eastern German that began in 1990 was an immensely painful one. The de-industrialization of entire regions, mass unemployment and subsequent exodus of more than four million people, most of them well-educated and trained, were a heavy blow for Germany’s east – and one that, even 30 years later, has yet to be overcome. Indeed, the “wounds of the post-revolutionary period,” as Saxony’s integration minister Petra Köpping calls them, are now re-opening in earnest.

The original Solidarity Pact is a financial aid scheme for the eastern German states initiated by the federal government and Germany’s west. The funding was meant to help the financially weak “new” states tackle infrastructural neces-

sities caused by Germany’s post-WWII division, such as replacing old bridges and roads, modernizing the east’s antiquated towns and removing hazardous waste. The Solidarity Pact will end on Dec. 31, 2019, having run for nearly 30 years – which is far longer than anyone originally thought.

In 1995, it replaced the German Unity Fund, which provided the eastern states with a new financial foundation beginning in 1990. It quickly became clear that their financial needs were bigger than expected and that it would take longer to get the region back onto its feet economically.

That was why Germany and its federal states created the Solidarity Pact. It took effect in 1995, the same year the eastern German states were incorporated into the Federal Republic’s equalization payments scheme. To finance it, the federal government contributed a bigger share of the sales taxes it collected and also agreed to compensate those states with sub-par financial resources through a special fund.

Western states such as Saarland, Bremen, Rhineland-Palatinate and Schleswig-Holstein benefited from the scheme, but above all it helped the eastern states.

In addition, up until 2004 the federal government transferred €20.6 billion annually to the eastern states and Berlin. Those states’ economies grew quickly in the 1990s, thanks to the post-reunification construction boom, but since the year 2000 have been stuck at only about 75 percent of their western counterparts’ average economic output.

It quickly became apparent that a second Solidarity Pact was needed. It was agreed after long negotiations between the federal government and the states, to run for an additional 15 years – through 2019 – and to deliver a total of €156.5 billion. Two-thirds were supplied through the equalization payments scheme, and the rest directly by federal coffers.

As with the first Solidarity Pact, the eastern states had to provide annual accounting of how

they used the funds, which were intended mainly for investment. Critics pointed out that some states were using the money to plug their own budget deficits. According to the accounting reports, only Saxony used all its funding as intended.

Today, as the eastern states continue to lag far behind their western counterparts in terms of economic and financial resources, some political leaders have called for a third Solidarity Pact. But, once again through difficult negotiations, the federal government and states found an alternative. Now, the equalization payments scheme will instead provide more money. Special payments to the east will be a thing of the past – an important sign, not least of self-assurance – 30 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

The sum of the two Solidarity Pacts has totaled around €300 billion. Anyone visiting eastern Germany today can see where the money went: Autobahns and other roads are mostly up-to-date, towns

with their (often historic) urban ensembles have been modernized and contaminated environments are a thing of the past. The most important goal, however, that of a self-sustaining economy and, thereby, self-sustaining finances for the eastern states, has not yet been achieved.

This is partially because companies once based in the east – whether corporations, family-owned firms or skilled trades – headed west following World War II and the subsequent division of Germany. Audi, Siemens and Zeiss are but three prominent examples. Some companies established subsidiaries in the east, but the tax revenue they generate gets sent west, to the company’s headquarters.

The immense transfer of property (companies, buildings, land) from east to west following 1990 is likewise reflected in tax revenue. Today, much eastern German property is inherited by individuals living in western Germany, where the inheritance tax is 15

times as high as in the east. This has given rise to new initiatives, such as one by the premier of Saxony-Anhalt Reiner Haseloff, who is demanding a new distribution of tax revenue.

But the costs of the Solidarity Pact cannot be understood as a purely east-west invoice. The former president of the Halle Institute for Economic Research, Ulrich Blum, pointed out years ago that the millions of eastern Germans who today work in the west have generated about half of the transfer payments themselves, through the taxes and social contributions they pay. The other half is generated by additional growth in the west, as western German companies sell far more in the east than vice versa. Western Germany, Blum said, began profiting from reunification long ago.

The issue of funding for the east remains a sensitive and potentially polarizing one. Yet former German Finance Minister Theo Waigel has urged his compatriots to take a quote by Ernst Jünger to heart: “When your brother is standing at your door, you take him in without asking what it costs.”

Stefan Locke is the political correspondent for Saxony and Thuringia at the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*.

BY THEO SOMMER

Trade wars are good and easy to win, US President Donald Trump boasted in one of his toxic tweets. He confirmed his message last month: “We will soon be winning big on Trade and everyone knows that, including China!”

Yet in reality, the grand deal with the People’s Republic, which has been Trump’s target for more than two years, has turned out to be ever-more elusive. The tariff dispute has tipped over into a full-blown trade war, a currency war and an incipient Cold War between the incumbent superpower United States and the rising superpower China. Their rivalry may well dominate global geopolitics in the next three decades.

In his first foreign policy speech, back in 2016, presidential candidate Trump bragged: “We have the leverage. We have the power over China, economic power, and people don’t understand it. And with that economic power we can rein [them] in and we can get them to do what they have to do.” Reducing the huge US trade deficit with China – which actually grew from \$375 billion in 2017 to \$440 billion in 2018 – was his main concern. To bring it down, he thought – vainly, as it turned out – imposing punitive tariffs was the most efficient lever. A barrage of tariff increases has become the hallmark of his administration.

He started in January 2018 by raising levies on washing machines and solar panels. In March, he slapped 25 percent on steel and 10 percent on aluminum. In July, a 25-percent tariff was imposed on Chinese import goods worth \$50 billion; in September, the US announced a 10-percent tariff on \$200 billion worth of goods, increasing to 25 percent at the end of the year. This hike was postponed temporarily to give the negotiators a chance to reach agreement but put into effect in May 2019, with Washington claiming that China had reneged on deals already agreed upon. In July, Trump tweeted that “China is letting us down in that they have not been buying the agricultural products from our great Farmers that they said they would.” In August, he announced on Twitter that an additional 10-percent tariff would be levied on the “remaining \$300 billion of goods.” Some of them were postponed in order to avoid harming American Christmas shoppers, but about half were imposed on Sept. 1. Beginning on Oct. 15, tariffs on \$250 billion worth of Chinese goods will be ratcheted up from 25 to 30 percent, and from 10 percent to 15 percent on the remaining \$300



billion by Dec. 1. As Beijing has imposed retaliatory tariffs on US imports each time and 12 rounds of negotiations have not brought a solution any closer, China and the US are now embroiled in a full-fledged trade war. Neither Trump nor Xi Jinping is showing signs of backing down.

Trump is still tilting more toward escalation than accommodation. Last month he had China designated a “currency manipulator.” One Friday in August, he called Xi Jinping an “enemy,” and the following Monday praised him again as a “great leader” and a “tough guy.” He regretted that he had not raised tariffs even higher. (“Our country has been losing HUNDREDS OF BILLIONS OF DOLLARS a year to China, with no end in sight.”) Defiantly, Trump told reporters: “If they don’t want to trade with us anymore that would be fine with me.” He is confident of winning the trade hostilities. And not only did he order Amazon, FedEx, UPS and the US Postal Service to “search for and refuse” deliveries of fentanyl, a murderous opioid pain killer that caused the death of 30,000 Americans last year, his administration also banned the import of Huawei products (worth \$11 billion in 2018). The ban will enter into force after a few months.

But China’s strongman Xi Jinping is not buckling. The damage done so far to the Chinese economy is less than feared; the country’s exports are up and the weakened yuan is cushioning the effect of the tariff increase. Beijing’s line remains unchanged: US tariff hikes will be answered by Chinese

retaliatory raises. Quoting President Xi, the *People’s Daily* underscored: “China’s will to defend the core interest of the country and the fundamental interest of the people is indestructible.” It will “fight to the end.” Obviously, the regime expects Trump, who is gearing up for next year’s presidential election, to run increasingly into domestic resistance once the heightened tariffs kick in and China’s refusal to buy US corn, pork, beef and soybeans will hit his farming voters in the

Midwest particularly hard. If push comes to shove, a ban on the export of rare earths to the US or an accelerated drawing down of China’s \$1.1 trillion US treasury holdings could dramatically boost the impact of China’s reprisals. Just a few weeks before the 70th anniversary of the PRC’s founding on Oct. 1 and only two years before the Chinese Communist Party celebrates its 100th birthday, Xi Jinping cannot show any sign of weakness. The nationalism he has fueled will stiffen his resolve not to bend to Trump’s quixotic policy.

Negotiations are scheduled to resume in October. But even if a mini-deal could be achieved, with China pledging to buy more

American farm products and the US lifting its ban on Huawei, the fundamental confrontation between the antagonists would persist for the simple reason that the trade hostilities are not only about trade. Behind them lurks the specter of decoupling the two largest economies of the world – and behind that the scenario of another Cold War fraught with danger, this time pitting the United States against the People’s Republic of China in a geopolitical, geostrategic and ideological

war over the shape of the world in the 21st century.

David Shambaugh, the American sinologist, has called the two powers “The Tangled Titans.” And tangled they are. For all practical purposes, their economies have been fused over the past few decades. Their supply chains are deeply enmeshed. Mutual investment reached many tens of billions before it fell sharply as the trade war intensified. America’s semiconductor industry is heavily exposed to China, while American consumers contributed significantly to Chinese growth. But now the hardliners in Washington are trying to disentangle the two titans. Decoupling seems to be the order of the day in the White House:

Trump is still tilting more toward escalation than accommodation

Power rankings

Bill Gates is wrong. Nuclear power will not save the climate. Beyond Chernobyl and Fukushima, there’s too much speaking against it

BY CHRISTOPH VON EICHHORN

Nuclear power? No, thank you! “That chapter is over,” a spokesperson recently proclaimed. Nuclear power isn’t even a topic anymore, she argued. And this spokesperson wasn’t from some environmental organization or the like; she was representing RWE, one of three large corporations in Germany that still produces electricity from nuclear energy. The two other companies, EnBW and Eon, have issued similar sentiments, pointing to the fact that their priority is now the decommissioning

of nuclear power plants and the switch to renewable energies.

Just prior to those comments, members of Germany’s industrial community had joined up with the WerteUnion – a group of conservative parliamentarians from the CDU – to suggest longer running times for the remaining German nuclear power plants. But this suggestion was greeted with a unanimous negative response from electricity corporations: the use of nuclear energy in Germany was over, they argued. Period.

In 2011, after the nuclear catastrophe at Japan’s Fukushima Daiichi power plant, Germany decided to phase out nuclear energy production for good by

2022. With its clear pledge to abandon nuclear technology, the country has remained an exception on the international stage.

Today, nuclear energy is experiencing renewed momentum worldwide as a result of the climate change debate. In January, for example, in the journal *Science*, energy experts called for a “transformation in our thinking,” arguing that it would be a serious mistake to shut down nuclear power plants, because it would lead to an even greater increase in climate-damaging greenhouse gas emissions. “We should preserve existing nuclear power plants and reimagine how new plants can be delivered.”

One of the most prominent advocates of a nuclear renaissance is Bill Gates. Late last year, in an open letter to employees, the Microsoft founder wrote: “Nuclear is ideal for dealing with climate change, because it is the only carbon-free, scalable energy source that’s available 24 hours a day.” The problems associated with today’s reactors, he argued, “can be solved through innovation.”

For decades, the idea of being in favor of nuclear energy for environmental reasons would have seemed a contradiction in terms

to many people. In Germany, the environmental movement and the political party known as The Greens have their very roots in the resistance to nuclear power.

Today, however, the climate crisis is causing this united front to crumble. Groups like Environmental Progress and the Ökomodernisten (Ecomodernists) no longer see nuclear energy as an ecological evil, but as a climate-neutral solution to energy problems. These groups advertise nuclear energy vociferously on the internet and at public “Nuclear Pride” festivals.

Bill Gates has moved beyond the advertising phase. The Microsoft founder now owns a company called TerraPower, which performs research into novel nuclear reactors including the “wave reactor.” Gates wants to invest \$1 billion of his own funds in this particular technology, while raising the same amount from private investors. He also wants to get state funding for the technology, if possible. According to the *Washington Post*, Gates even met with US Congressmen to convince them of the benefits of nuclear energy.

In the United States, the question of what to do with nuclear energy is particularly acute. Nuclear fission currently accounts for roughly 11 percent of global electricity, and for

breaking up a relationship that is seen as posing a long-term strategic threat to the US and stopping China from modernizing its economy and achieving technological leadership.

And clearly the trade hawks have the ear of the president. In a fit of presidential megalomania, Trump tweeted on August 23: “Our great American companies are hereby ordered to immediately start looking for an alternative to China, including bringing your companies HOME and making your products in the United States.” If he were to follow through on this, the ensuing global disruption would entail grave uncertainties and perils.

For John Bolton, the president’s recently fired national security advisor, trade was but one facet of China’s threat to American national interests. He belongs to the school of thought that not only resents China’s aspiration to economic primacy but views China as an adversary seeking regional and global dominance. Bolton’s posture was that of a hardheaded *realpolitiker*, a stance already foreshadowed in the “National Security Strategy of the United States” published in December 2017. This fact, coupled with reports that Bolton had already lost the president’s ear, makes it unlikely that Bolton’s departure will have much effect on US policy toward China.

The document described China as a “revisionist power” seeking to replace the United States in the Indo-Pacific region and to “shape a world antithetical to US values and interests.” Pulling no punches, it argues: “Contrary to

our hopes, China expanded its power at the expense of the sovereignty of others. China gathers and exploits data on an unrivaled scale and spreads features of its authoritarian system, including corruption and the use of surveillance. It is building the most capable and well-funded military in the world, after our own. [...] China’s infrastructure investments and trade strategies reinforce its geopolitical aspirations. Its efforts to build and militarize outposts in the South China Sea endanger the free flow of trade, threaten the sovereignty of other nations, and undermine regional stability.”

In case anyone missed the point – that “a geopolitical competition between free and repressive visions of world order is taking place in the Indo-Pacific region” and that China and the US are headed for confrontation – US Vice President Mike Pence, rattling off a comprehensive list of China’s unacceptable policies, said in a speech at the Hudson Institute: “This president will not back down... America will stay the course.”

As it stands, the world does not know where this course will take us. According to Graham Allison, the founding dean of Harvard’s School of Government, armed conflict is possible. In his essay “The Thucydides Trap,” he asks: “Are the US and China headed for War?” Writing about the conflict that devastated Athens and Sparta 2,500 years ago, he concludes: “When a rising power threatens to displace a ruling power, alarm bells should sound: danger ahead.” He has since expanded his thesis into a book titled – with an echo of President Trump’s erstwhile advisor Steve Bannon – *Destined for war*. Some retired Chinese generals also make equally belligerent comments. “If the Bannons of this world are determined to stop China’s rise, they will likely push China and America into a military showdown,” wrote the *Global Times*.

Europe, while not sharing Trump’s protectionist leanings and his trade war strategy, also wants a level playing field, reciprocity of market access and equal investment opportunities in the People’s Republic. It banks on cooperation, however, not on extortionist confrontation. It will assert its interests, but above all it will want to influence the United States and China not to turn “a manageable, albeit vexed, relationship into an all-embracing conflict,” in the words of Martin Wolf. The highly respected *Financial Times* commentator pointedly added: “for no good reason.”

Theo Sommer is executive editor of *The German Times*.

around 20 percent in the United States. As the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) points out in a recent study, one in every three of the approximately 60 nuclear power plants in the US might have to be shut down in the next few years because they are either too old or are already losing money today.

According to the scientists, this would become a problem if the decommissioned capacities were replaced by fossil fuels such as coal and gas, which would increase greenhouse gas emissions. This scenario, however, is not guaranteed. Indeed, although the price of natural gas has fallen in recent years, due to booming shale gas mining, for example, the costs of photovoltaic and wind energy are also falling.

This decline in the price of renewables is seen as one of the major reasons why nuclear energy is less and less viable. Some states in the US, including Illinois, New Jersey and New York, have nonetheless subsidized unprofitable nuclear power plants in order to secure their operations.

This is by all means a daring investment. The UCS estimates that it takes an average of \$4 billion to make an unprofitable power plant profitable again. Equipping

nuclear reactors to continue running only 20 years longer than planned usually requires expensive modernization measures designed to keep the aging technology in good condition, says Frank Peter, co-head of the think tank Agora Energiewende. “These investments often make no economic sense.”

UCS researchers advise against the construction of any new power plants due to the high investment costs. “The fundamental problem is the cost,” says a recent report by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology on the future of nuclear energy. While technologies such as photovoltaics and wind power have consistently become cheaper, new nuclear power plants have become more expensive.

The MIT researchers calculated the costs of nuclear energy for several regions and came up with very clear results: In terms of the cost of generating energy, wind and photovoltaics always beat nuclear power. In order to make nuclear competitive again, there would have to be massive changes in the way the technology is developed and managed. To this end, the MIT experts suggest producing components on an assembly line and testing innovative new reactor prototypes in

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Petromelancholia and its discontents

Fossil fuels have driven prosperity, technology and politics but have also created dependencies as well as new possibilities for waging war and destruction

BY BENJAMIN STEININGER

In 1944, one year before the end of World War II, the Russian-Ukrainian biogeochemist Vladimir Ivanovich Vernadsky (1863–1945) published his final paper. The text, titled “Some Words on the Noosphere,” holds that science and technology have created a new, geohistorically significant layer: the noosphere. Although “knowledge is not a form of energy,” mankind has become the Earth’s “greatest geological power,” and the world war is evidence of this to a drastic degree.

Vernadsky’s diagnosis is being widely discussed in today’s political circles, wherein the climate crisis and biodiversity are but two catchwords. Geologists and cultural theorists speak of the “technosphere” and the “Anthropocene,” a new geological era that follows the Holocene and denotes the period beginning when human activities have first been determined to have had a noticeable and significant impact on the Earth. And it is clear that the industrial use of geohistorical energy in the form of coal, oil and gas has transformed humankind into a geohistorical force.

The ability to think in biogeochemical terms is thus no longer a privilege reserved for scholars such as Vernadsky. Today, CO₂ is much more than just a molecule studied by chemists; it is a symbol of the dire need for political decision-makers to think in terms of chemistry. After all, chemical processes in refineries and engines have defined the process of history in the modern age and will continue to resonate in our planet’s biogeochemical processes. Politics, science, industry and societies across the globe are facing the challenge of changing the course of history.

Historically speaking, this situation is new. Neither the taming of fire, nor Europe’s plundering of the Americas, nor the advent of industrialization nor the Manhattan Project were considered to have exceeded planetary boundaries. In those cases, we humans sought to achieve whatever appeared feasible to us. Today, however, it is vital that we rethink our actions, not because our resources are running dry, but because the consequences of the unrestrained burning of coal and oil will ultimately be fatal to us all.

We must act with urgency to combine development goals with climate goals. But we must also understand how we became what we are now. Since their initial use around 1800, fossil fuels have defined the standards of prosperity, technology and politics in ways both positive and negative. The outlawing of slavery and child labor was not only the triumph of ethical achievement and fundamental human rights; it was also a byproduct of engines and power stations obviating the benefits for such exploitative industries. On the other hand, energy derived



Coal comfort: Brown coal mining in Welzow in Brandenburg. The mine still produces 20 million tons per year.

from fossil fuels has created new and unhealthy dependencies as well as new ways of waging war and wreaking destruction.

We are only now beginning to recognize the explosive power – both literally and figuratively – of fossils fuels, their intrinsic importance for concepts such as growth and individual liberty, and thus also for the time after fossil energies. In recent years, a new discipline called “energy humanities” has emerged – most prominently from petroleum engineering centers such as Houston, Calgary and Edmonton, but also increasingly on the international stage – that seeks to examine the interplay between energy, society and history.

Much like in a system of communication tubes, all societies are interconnected in their way. Fossil-fuel pipelines form one such system. All raw material economies, including Canada, the Gulf States and Russia, are directly or indirectly linked to the producers and consumers associated with industrial and refinery economies in Europe and Asia. And we are going to need knowledge from all strands and facets of this system in order to develop the next, essentially sustainable system.

Fossil-based energy has the effect of technologically uniting various political, economic and social systems. Capitalist and communist societies, democracies and dictatorships as well as state-supported high culture and counterculture – they are all petromodern entities.

It’s not just America’s urban sprawl and its petrochemical sector’s penetration into all areas of life that falls under the petromodern umbrella. Model social democratic countries such as Norway, which invests the earnings it receives from

its state-owned oil and gas industry directly back into the welfare of its population, also constitute the petromodern mosaic, as do despotic regimes in the Persian Gulf, where oil and gas profits cripple all social progress, as they function merely to cement the unjust conditions so pervasive in these states.

In historical terms, all parties to World War II can be described as petromodern states. While Nazi Germany managed – through considerable technological effort and

What ingredients of the post-World War II economic upsurge should we discard and which post-fossil fuel energy path do we now embark upon? The answers to these questions will vary depending on the individual society or state. It would thus be fatal for Germany’s economy – and indeed for its image as an industry-based country – if it were to ignore the planet’s shifting climate parameters and continue to rely on the combustion engine to fuel its robust economy.

Cars are bigger than ever before, air travel is at an all-time high and the production of plastic has reached record levels

innovation – to use coal to extract liquid hydrocarbons for its ships, tanks and aircraft, this process proved insufficient to sustain the needs of its military. With the US and the Soviet Union – the two most prolific oil-exporting countries during the war – as its foes, Baku remained out of reach for the Nazi war machine.

The Soviet T-34 tank, with its diesel engine, was superior to its German counterpart, as was the 100-octane gasoline used by the US air force in comparison to Germany’s liquefied coal. And the United Kingdom, whose navy, even before World War I, had switched to petroleum, which it could source from a number of countries across the globe, was indeed a prime example of a petromodern empire.

How these same issues play out in the US will be of particular interest. It’s patently clear that the wasteful, resource-intensive lifestyle that has come to define modern-day living in the West has no future. But precisely as a reaction to this diagnosis, the idea of embracing a particularly lavish lifestyle is actually gaining traction.

Cars are bigger than ever before; air travel is at an all-time high; and the production of plastic has reached record levels. Stephanie LeMenager, an American literature professor at the University of California Santa Barbara, has described the current state of affairs as a psychological crisis, that is, as an acute case of separation anxiety from a beloved historical condition – “petromelancholia.”

All economies that are currently based on the sourcing, refining and consumption of fossil fuels are now going to have to critically address their practices and cultural habits that depend on petroleum. However, this process of self-examination often touches on national self-images and their continued propagation.

It can be valuable for a country to explore its history of energy production and consumption. Still, the sense of self-assurance that comes from being a petromodern state can be hard to let go of. The linking of East and West, which currently reflects the linking of the world of mineral and natural resources with that of their chemical and industrial processing, is anchored by oil and gas – and has been since Nobel’s first pipelines and oil tankers in Baku in the 19th century, and since Brezhnev’s gas contracts. Moreover, this bond is fortified by a number of far-from-insignificant other substances.

Fossil industries are chemical industries that require a multitude of chemical elements. Almost every element from Mendeleev’s periodic table has played a role in our tech-based economy. Accordingly, all development areas for these elements have played a role in the technological culture of the world.

It is likely that a number of the milestones achieved in the realm of chemistry in 19th-century Germany would have been impossible without certain resources provided by Russia. When Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s friend Johann Wolfgang Döbereiner experimented with platinum in Weimar salons during the 1820s, thus advancing the chemistry of catalysis, the only way he was able to source those

precious metal from Colombia was through connections to the ruling house of Weimar, and then ultimately from the Urals via Maria Pavlovna, the wife of the crown prince of Russia.

Some decades later, around 1900, platinum became the key metal for the catalytic generation of sulfuric acid, a critical compound throughout the chemical industries. Platinum ultimately become on the most important catalysts in the fertilizer industry, in refineries and in petrochemistry.

Our global present, our fossil fuel-laden chemical modernity is characterized by the exchange of goods and resources between economies belonging to countries with widely varying self-images and narratives. Societies like Germany, which since the 19th century has cultivated its self-image as a country without natural resources – that is, as a country that must create all of its goods itself through chemical means, including beet sugar, artificial indigo dye, rubber, nylon and liquefied coal – can foster aspirations for the future of industrialism. Projects like the generation of artificial hydrocarbons from CO₂ and sustainable electricity point in this direction. Yet, sustainable development requires a shared perspective.

Knowledge exchange is of immense value on several levels. Of particular importance is the exchange of a variety of different political, economic and even geo-strategic experiences and perspectives, as well as the sharing of the lessons learned in victories and defeats. The gap of knowledge between the countries at the two ends of the pipeline is vast.

Our past treatment of resources should fuel the debate on the future of our resources. History reveals upheaval, and with it the possibility for change. Raw-material economies can develop into champions of high-end technology; yet, setting a faulty course can also inhibit development.

A joint departure into an uncertain future requires working together to build on our varying histories of experience and tradition to forge a new philosophy for advancing our planet. The Russian-speaking tradition holds particular potential for planetary “energy humanities.” Vladimir Ivanovich Vernadsky is already known in the West as a pioneer in Anthropocene theory as well as biogeochemistry, but he is also renowned for his historico-political forays into the geohistorical significance of science and technology. Vernadsky himself published his planetary discourses in several languages, and in so doing stimulated the advancement of science. This legacy must live on. ■

Benjamin Steininger is a fellow at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science in Berlin.

continued from page 9
Power rankings

huge “reactor parks” as quickly as possible. They even mention the idea of simplifying regulations for nuclear power plants.

Similar calls for costs savings in safety spending are coming from the Nuclear Energy Institute, a nuclear industry association that advocates replacing some external controls with “self-assessments.” They also recommend the merging of the highest safety category with the second highest, which would render the ratings virtually meaningless.

In this case, for example, the Pilgrim nuclear power plant, which has the second worst rating of all power plants in the US in terms of safety, would be placed in the top safety category. Also, at an average of 39 years, the host of US nuclear reactors happens to be one of the oldest in the world.

In the face of disasters such as those in Chernobyl and Fukushima, it is unlikely that the regimen of having lower safety standards and test sites for non-mature reactors will be able to be enforced in many countries. Even the standardization of reactors has not yet brought the savings many had hoped for. For example, European Pressurized Water Reactors are currently being built in Finland, France and the UK, and in all three cases, the costs and construction time have long since moved beyond the original scope.

Construction on the third unit of the nuclear power plant in the Finnish city of Olkiluoto has already taken 10 years longer than planned. According to calculations by Greenpeace, the British plant Hinkley Point C is set to cost €10.8 billion in subsidies over a period of 35 years.

There is one question above all that dominates the discussion, and it revolves around whether or not nuclear energy can even contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. This issue has been investigated by the International Energy Agency, among others. In order to limit global warming to two degrees higher than pre-industrial levels by 2100, world emissions would have to drop from 37 billion tons today to less than five billion tons by 2050. And, according to the International Energy Agency (IEA), the largest share of this reduction – almost 40 percent – could come from improved energy efficiency.

One third of that could be covered by renewable energies, while in this scenario, nuclear power would account for five percent. That would involve a reduction of

more than one billion tons a year, but it would still not be enough to fundamentally shift the direction in climate policy. Indeed, in order to actually deliver on such a contribution, hundreds of new reactors would have to be built. “It would involve a gigantic nuclear dimension just to make a minimal contribution to the climate,” says Manfred Fischedick, energy expert at the Wuppertal Institute for Climate, Environment and Energy.

One of the questions that has received very little attention so far is how reliable nuclear power plants will be in a warmer world. In the drought-plagued summer of 2018, several reactors in Germany and France had to be shut down because the surrounding rivers had overheated. Plant operators were no longer allowed to feed in cooling water so as not to endanger the

already stressed ecosystems. This year, reactors were again disconnected from the grid in Europe as a result of heat waves.

All we can do now is hope for new reactors, such as the traveling wave reactor sponsored by Bill Gates. Similar to the very slow burn of a glowing cigar, this type of reactor would produce its own fuel and consume it for decades. As it would use old fuel rods from light-water reactors and depleted uranium, this reactor type would be able to eliminate high-level nuclear waste, for which there are still no good solutions – even seven decades after the beginning of the nuclear age. If this concept were to actually work, it would certainly be a blessing.

But we would be well-advised not to actually rely on this approach in our efforts to stop

global warming. The concept for this type of reactor dates back to the 1950s, and the basic foundations have yet to be fully researched. For example, nuclear engineers would have to deal with enormous amounts of material that is generated in reactions involving temperatures exceeding 500 degrees Celsius.

TerraPower is aiming for a prototype by the mid-2020s, and it would most likely take another 10 years to achieve a reactor that actually produces electricity. This is a very important timeframe – one in which we will have to have already shifted gears and set a course for a climate-neutral energy supply. ■

Christoph von Eichhorn is a science editor at the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*.

Calling strikes

The German Trade Union Confederation is celebrating its 70th birthday this year at a time when representing workers' interests is as urgent as ever

BY CLAUD LEGGEWIE

It's quite possible that the German Train Drivers' Union (GDL) has made more enemies than friends in recent years. In 2014 and 2015, it repeatedly called for widespread, all-day strikes in an attempt to achieve higher wages and better working conditions for its roughly 35,000 members – locomotive drivers and other railroad personnel. "All engines cease without your elbow grease." In this case, the defiant workers' slogan was quite literally true.

The result of the union's actions was chaos in passenger transport and delays in the delivery of goods. Still, those citizens affected by the strikes displayed a degree of understanding. How else were railway employees supposed to assert their interests when the company's management refused to budge?

Strikes are the *ultima ratio* – or last resort – when attempting to push through workers' interests. And they only succeed when a large enough number of workers in a specific sector form a union and when, in addition, those unions pull together and have the sufficient means, funds and logistics at their disposal to withstand long labor disputes.

This is how unions work, at least in theory. In practice, they often function as ideological competitors. Sometimes, if they lack any real punch and financial strength, they end up squandering their reputation through crooked business deals, cronyism with employers' organizations and the general arrogance of functionaries.

The consequences of this kind of bad behavior are "wild strikes" that unions cannot control along with a reduction in the number of members and the collapse of the "tariff system." This means that workers are then left to fend for themselves on the labor market, which is an urgent problem when unemployment numbers run high and the economy falters. Then things get even worse in the case of longer-term economic crises.

The GDL, a comparably small union with only 35,000 members, just turned 100 years old. For its part, the German Trade Union Confederation (DGB), an umbrella organization of German unions (of which the GDL is not a member), was founded 70 years ago. Trade unionists in Germany were persecuted during the chancellorship of Otto von Bismarck (1871–1890) and in particular during the Nazi era, with many of them sent to concentration camps.

Still, unions have been a fundamental part of Germany's social

fabric since the mid-19th century. And it's not only at anniversary events and Sunday speeches that employers' associations and political parties praise them for their constructive contributions to the "social partnership" between workers and employers. In Germany, this partnership has often led to the peaceful handling of labor disputes, and an umbrella organization such as the DGB has been able to balance out ideological differences between social-democratic reformers, system-critical communists and Christian labor movements just as effectively as between representatives of wage earners and salaried employees – two groups that continue to march separately in other countries, such as France.

When locomotive drivers joined forces in a union 100 years ago (the predecessors of the GDL had already done so in 1867), they formed a kind of workers' aristocracy. Back then, this was generally true for all founders of labor associations, most of whom were skilled artisans and self-confident representatives of their craft looking to defend themselves and others against the increasing effects of Manchester capitalism. In the subsequent era marked by Taylorism and assembly-line work, mass organizations were essential to the livelihood of unqualified industrial workers, who often made their way to cities as migrants from the countryside. After all, only a large number of members conjuring up the threat of work stoppages was able to shift the unequal relations between capital and labor in their favor.

In the end, unions proved themselves to be organizations that functioned in the overall interest of capital. Even though they had started out as anti-capitalist bodies, it was they who dismantled the feudal structures that had reproduced themselves in large capitalist companies. For a long time, medium-sized, family owned and operated companies, in particular, fostered a strong aversion to workers' organizations. In the course of industrialization, by dint of the social welfare state, and often driven by left-wing workers' parties, labor unions fought for and achieved a relatively high level of income, job security and economic inclusion for the lower social strata. Only in this manner was it possible to secure for those people, whose manual labor and brainpower contributed significantly to the creation of social wealth, their fair share of progress, productivity and prosperity.

There are a number of other items on unions' list of things they can take credit for: long weekends – that is, Saturday and Sunday off, sufficient vacation time, sick pay, bad

weather allowances for construction workers and, last but not least, "equal pay for equal work" between men and women and a right to receive ongoing professional training. As a rule, unions are usually also strong supporters of democracy as a political system and way of life.

This idealized image of unions reflects the situation in northwestern European societies marked by a high degree of unionization, workers' parties capable of both com-

discrediting their own positions as agents of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" (which was, in fact, a dictatorship *over* the proletariat). It is no wonder, then, that the level of unionization elsewhere was and continues to be lower than in Germany.

This has always been the case in the United States, a country that has seen its share of tough labor disputes. In 1960, less than 30 percent of workers were organized in

The overall decline in union membership is a worldwide trend. In many OECD countries, and especially in France, the downturn has been particularly strong. This is also due to the fact that the labor environment is undergoing yet another significant transformation, this time as a result of automation and customization. Industrial labor is being pushed into the background, while service sector employees increasingly believe they can do without unions and thereby save themselves the membership fees.

Moreover, there have been recent phases of intense political hostility to union activities, most notably in the UK under Margaret Thatcher. Any form of worker solidarity was frowned upon in favor of a neoliberal understanding – especially in the Anglo-Saxon world – that labor relations were a private matter and exclusively the realm of individual negotiations between employers and employees. Indeed, more and more companies are turning their backs on their associations and abandoning collective agreements.

From this perspective, the social welfare state itself is seen as a bloated bureaucratic apparatus that weighs down the free play of market forces and creates privileges for some and a culture of dependence for others.

It is worth noting that real wage levels in countries without any counterforce coming from unions stagnated the most and even shrank in the past three decades. Social support in the event of illness and the prospect of decent retirement years also nosedived.

According to the latest surveys issued by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, the median salary among full-time unionized workers was \$1,051 per week and \$860 for non-unionized workers. While civil service workers, such as members of the police force, firefighters and teachers, are relatively well organized, the level of union organization in the realms of finance and food services is at a minuscule 1.3 percent. And while 22.3 percent of New Yorkers belong to a union, that number is not even 3 percent in North and South Carolina.

It is highly unlikely that workers will be able to successfully navigate the current boom in automation entirely on their own. Unions are not perfect, of course. German locomotive drivers have been accused of being responsible for another deformation of labor relations; they have the power to obstruct transportation – something that millions of people rely on every day. In a manner similar to air traffic workers and certain health care and IT sector jobs, these people can take the rest of society hostage, as it were. Some have

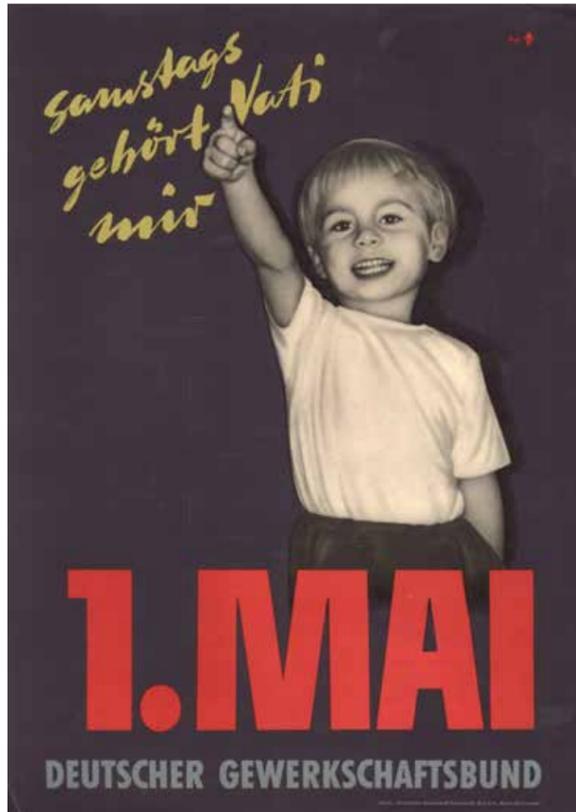
argued that this results in specific advantages for highly paid professional groups at the expense of the majority of workers and the general public.

The risk of this kind of chaos diminishes, however, when unions organize themselves into federations and workers organize themselves within their respective industries. Overall, unions are seen as positive influences, but there is still much hesitation with regard to workers' own willingness to join, just as in other mass organizations.

A global perspective reveals another problem. As solidarity today more often than not ends at national borders, the unions that are active in rich countries often react with no more than a shrug of the shoulders when confronted with the exploitation and discrimination of workers in the global South. Moreover, the inclusion of migrant workers – a long unpopular group that many felt was responsible for downward pressure on wages – has progressed very slowly. In the countries of the global South, unions are often banned and vilified, and active trade unionists persecuted, arrested and killed. Cross-regional associations such as the International Trade Union Confederation, which had 331 unions from 163 nations and roughly 202.3 million members in 2017, have not been able to effect much change to date.

This is in no way meant as an argument against trade union organization in rich countries. In addition to the social welfare state, unions have proved themselves to be one of the few forces able to counteract a further intensification of social inequality and prevent the income and wealth gap between rich and poor from becoming even greater. They provide opposition to neo-feudalistic tendencies in today's world of finance capitalism and are probably the only groups at least beginning to be concerned about ensuring decent jobs in the digital economy. This can be seen, for example, in attempts to ensure that packers and drivers working for Amazon and transport companies, as well as care workers, hotel maids and other underpaid laborers, receive adequate remuneration for their work. In this new era of massive transformation, we need unions like never before. ■

Claus Leggewie was a professor of political science from 1989 to 2007 in Gießen. From 2007 to 2017, he was director of the Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities (KWI) in Essen. He is co-publisher of *Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik*.



Poster child: The iconic slogan of the German Trade Union Confederation in the 1950s: "On Saturdays, daddy is mine!"

promise and governance as well as an unquestioned commitment to the social welfare state. Still, even in many European societies, the "social partnership" model was long frowned upon, and workers' main weapons were those "wild" labor battles carried out in confrontational class-based societies and corporative states.

It's interesting to note that unions in the former Soviet bloc ended up

unions; by 1980, that number had dropped to 20 percent and most recently it declined even further to only 13 percent, most of the remaining members being public service workers. By comparison, in Sweden, the organization rate hovered consistently at 70 to 80 percent. In Germany, the percentage was around one-third for many decades; today it is still double the number found in the US.

Unions are seen as positive influences, but there is still much hesitation with regard to workers' own willingness to join them



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Organic chemistry

How Brandenburg's farmers are striving to fulfill their Berlin customers' demands for organic fruits and vegetables

BY MANFRED RONZHEIMER

Farmer Sven Geelhaar has set up five rolling chicken coops, each with 220 hens, in the countryside around Chorin in Brandenburg. "On the upper floor, they've got nesting areas, perches for sleeping as well as food and water," says Geelhaar, who owns 97 hectares of arable land near the Chorin biosphere reserve. Every week, the chickens roll to a different meadow, where they can peck away to their hearts' content in the fresh grass as the cock struts back and forth between them. Some of them even dig small ground wells that allow them to bathe in the refreshing Brandenburg sand. In other words, compared to the mass complexes used in industrial farming, Geelhaar's mobile chicken coops are luxury homes.

And the chickens express their appreciation at the lavish amenities with more than 20,000 eggs per month. Certified as an organic farm since 2016, Geelhaar and his team's operation sells their eggs to customers in the surrounding towns of Bernau and Prenzlau, but

also in Berlin. Overall demand for organic eggs is high, and customers are willing to pay more for them.

The state of Brandenburg is home to 12 percent of the agricultural land in Germany, and it's now looking to expand this top position even further. In terms of finding actual consumers for its products, agricultural land in Brandenburg also has the most comfortable position of all the 13 states in Germany (not counting the country's three city-states). Geographically, the state of Brandenburg surrounds the bustling German capital of Berlin on all sides. With its roughly 3.7 million inhabitants, Berlin is not just a large sales market for agricultural products, it's also a mecca for vegans and vegetarian food – and thus a city with a particularly high demand for organically grown fruits and vegetables.

In the coming years, Brandenburg politicians responsible for agricultural policy in their state are eager to take greater advantage of these Berlin-related opportunities. Their goal is to increase the percentage of organically farmed land – that is, land devoid of any industrial farming or pesticide

use – to 20 percent by 2030. To achieve this goal, the state government recently adopted a program designed to encourage more Brandenburg farmers to switch to sustainable agriculture with help from EU funding.

In the Oderbruch area along the border with Poland, far away from the hustle and bustle of the big city, Amelie and Franziska Wetzlar have fulfilled their dream of owning and operating their own farm. They tend 62 sheep on their 13-hectare farm called Pimpinelle in the village of Quappendorf: "We process fresh milk from our own herd into different kinds of handmade cheeses as well as yogurt and quark," reports Amelie Wetzlar. "We then sell our products directly to customers at the farm, as well as through organic food stores and markets in the region." The two women follow the principle of sustainability and recycling in closed circulatory systems: "This includes the extensive use of pastures, our own hay production and alliances with nearby small businesses." The couple has now also received state funding to build a new stall for their herd of East Frisian and Krainer Steinschaf dairy sheep.

"Organic farming in Brandenburg needs new momentum," argues the state's current agriculture minister Jörg Vogelsänger. In order to reach the goal of 20 percent in the coming years, the state intends to attract €28 million in conversion funds from Brussels through the EU's Organic Farming Funding Program. "We will submit a new application this fall that includes a commitment for the next five years," confirms the minister. After the series of measures designed to support organic production in May, the next state government will then have to come up with a comprehensive "organic farming strategy."

New products and new distribution paths are important levers for the expansion of the organic sector. Ten years ago, in the town of Müncheberg in the Märkisch-Oderland region, the organic food manufacturer Wunsch Dir Mahl (WDM), whose name translates roughly as "wish yourself a meal," established itself as a small startup company. WDM makes delicious soups and stews in large kettles filled entirely of organic products: red lentil soup, African peanut pot and vegetarian chili. Their sales to

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organic supermarkets are doing so well that their kitchen now employs a team of 14 people.

“They must be easy to prepare, deliciously natural and have a homemade taste – this is exactly what today’s customers want in an organic convenience soup,” says WDM managing director Moritz Timm, when asked about his recipe for success. Only an hour’s drive from Berlin, this food production company in the countryside seems to have perfectly deciphered the taste buds of its big-city clientele. A company that originally began as an effort to achieve zero-waste processing by using non-sellable vegetables left over from organic food production is now celebrating its tenth anniversary.

WDM is eager to expand its business further, yet they intend to stay at their Müncheberg location. Commercial rents in the town are still affordable, and the logistics paths to bulk buyers – organic retail chains and, most recently, regular supermarkets – for the most part run smoothly.

Ökodorf Brodowin is an organic producer with its own commercial unit and intends to expand

its direct distribution channel to end customers even further. The Brodowin model represents yet another logistics possibility for Brandenburg farmers. At Brodowin, customers place online orders for organic products, which are then packed in crates and delivered weekly to over 2,000 Berlin homes. “This is our way of supporting regional cycles,” says Brodowin managing director Ludolf von Maltzan. More than 100 people work in Brodowin’s successful chain of agricultural production, processing and distribution, and this “eco-village” has long since become a high-profile brand in itself.

The company is now spending €800,000 to expand its Eberswalde logistics center by means of a new hall. “We’re getting our own processing kitchen so we’ll be able to process all parts of the animals,” says von Maltzan. The goal is to create a form of food production that is as waste-free as possible.

On the downside, alternative agriculture in the area surrounding the German capital is suffering due to the rapidly growing prices for farmland, not only in Bran-

denburg, but also in other eastern German federal states. This is why Regionalwert Berlin-Brandenburg AG, a solidarity-based public limited company, is calling for self-organized financing models in the agricultural sector. Their motto is “Support your local farmer!”

While family farms continue to go under, the pioneers of agricultural conversion are often unseasoned newcomers who fail to attract enough capital and land to build up their own operations. And yet, according to Regionalwert managing director Timo Kaphengst, it’s precisely these people who “have the potential to enrich the market and fill supply gaps with innovative ideas, concepts and new products.”

At the same time, there is also a growing number of initiatives and organizations eager to take their food supply into their own hands by means of a fundamental “turnaround in nutrition” driven by civil society groups. According to Kaphengst, these include the “market revelers” who sell their products at weekly markets, the solidarity-based farmers who follow the US model of Community Supported Agriculture

(CSA), the *Bodengenossenschaften* – or land cooperatives – and the Regionalwert public limited companies as alternative financing entities.

The establishment of a stronger connection between producers and consumers, however, does not happen overnight. Regionalwert AG, which had sought to raise €1 million in additional capital by selling shares this past spring, had only come up with €422,000 by the deadline in early September. Board member Jochen Fritz attributes this to the summer holidays: “We’re going to launch our next campaign in the winter,” he says. When the time comes, the funds will be invested at fair conditions in organic farms and small regional breweries, such as the newly founded Die Braut in the Brandenburg town of Stegelitz.

Janusz Hradetzky and his wife Anja realized their dream of having their own livestock in 2014 and they’ve been operating their Stolze Kuh (proud cow) farm in Stolzenhagen on the Oder River ever since. They currently have 40 dairy cows and eight people earning their wages

selling milk and cheese. But it’s not easy, says Janusz: “Producer prices are still far too low, even at organic stores.” He would like to have consumers buy more goods directly from the farm. He would also like to see a reduction in the subsidies given to cheap competitors. In addition, Janusz thinks that agriculture should be “at the center of the climate debate,” arguing that “we’re the ones who can use, re-use and process the carbon.”

A farm for grass-fed cattle operated by Carsten Meyerhoff under the name Liese und Töchter is currently in development. “We’re still looking for grazing land, but property is unbelievably expensive,” he reports. Buyers are asking up to €30,000 per hectare. “We can’t manage that.” The reason for the explosion in prices is what Meyerhoff calls the “locusts,” that is, financial investors who, after the 2008 crisis, discovered property in the city and countryside as new speculative assets.

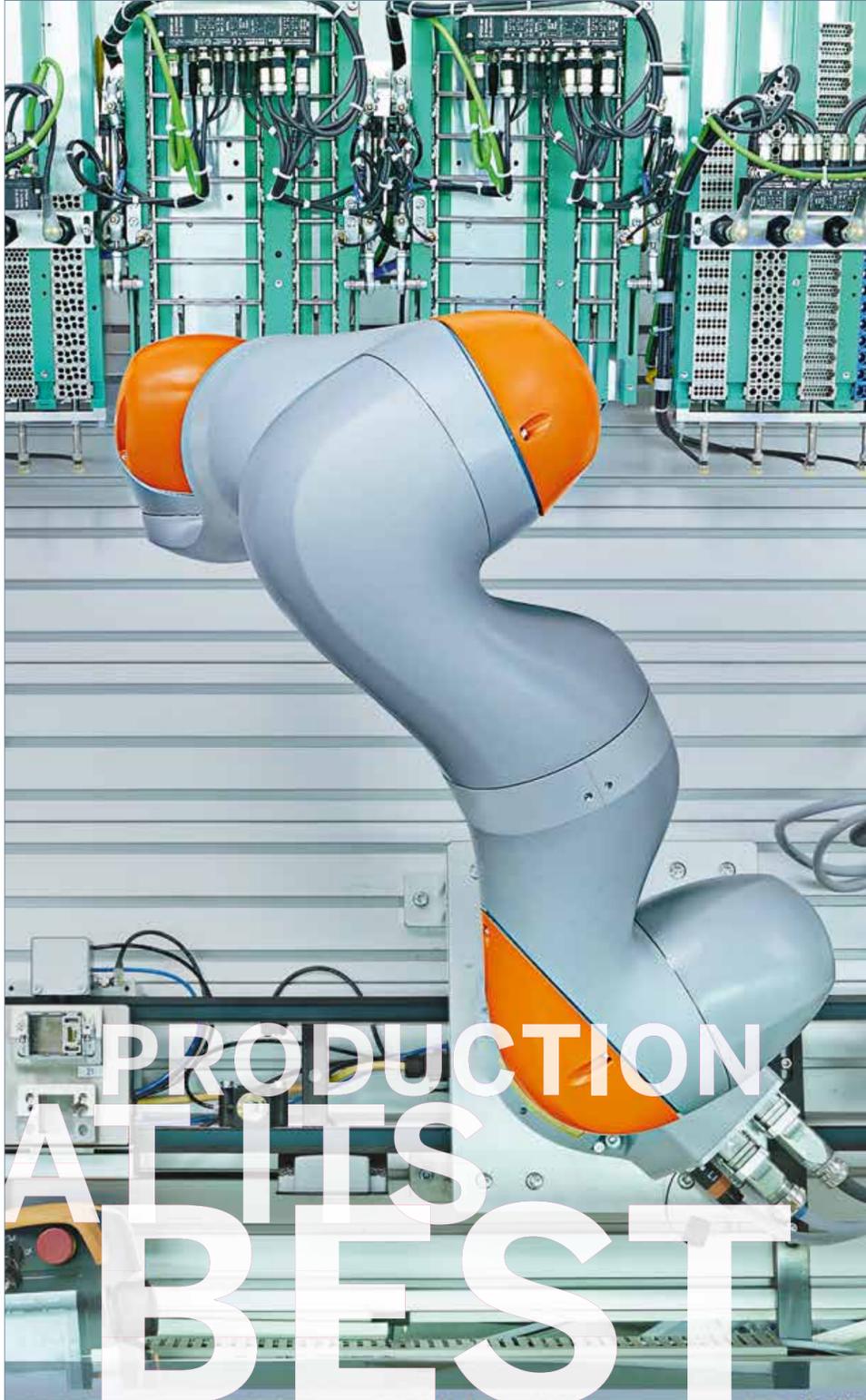
In response to this state of affairs, the group gathered at a recent discussion on agricultural policy at Regionalwert AG and called on the state’s own land management and

collecting society – the Bodenverwaltungs- und -verwertungsgesellschaft (BVVG) – to sell the roughly 30,000 hectares of former LPG land that it now owns and is set to be privatized to small farmers at an affordable price.

The state of Brandenburg could also pursue this approach with its 20,000 hectares of state-owned land. “This land should go to young agriculture founders rather than to the highest bidder on the market,” says Regionalwert board member Fritz, stressing that it’s not just consumers who can show their support for solidarity-based agriculture, but also the state.

There are obviously a lot of people in Brandenburg eager to usher in a fundamental transition in agriculture and pursue more natural ways of food production. These people include both farmers and consumers, and they represent a dynamic trend. One thing is clear, however: the road ahead is long.

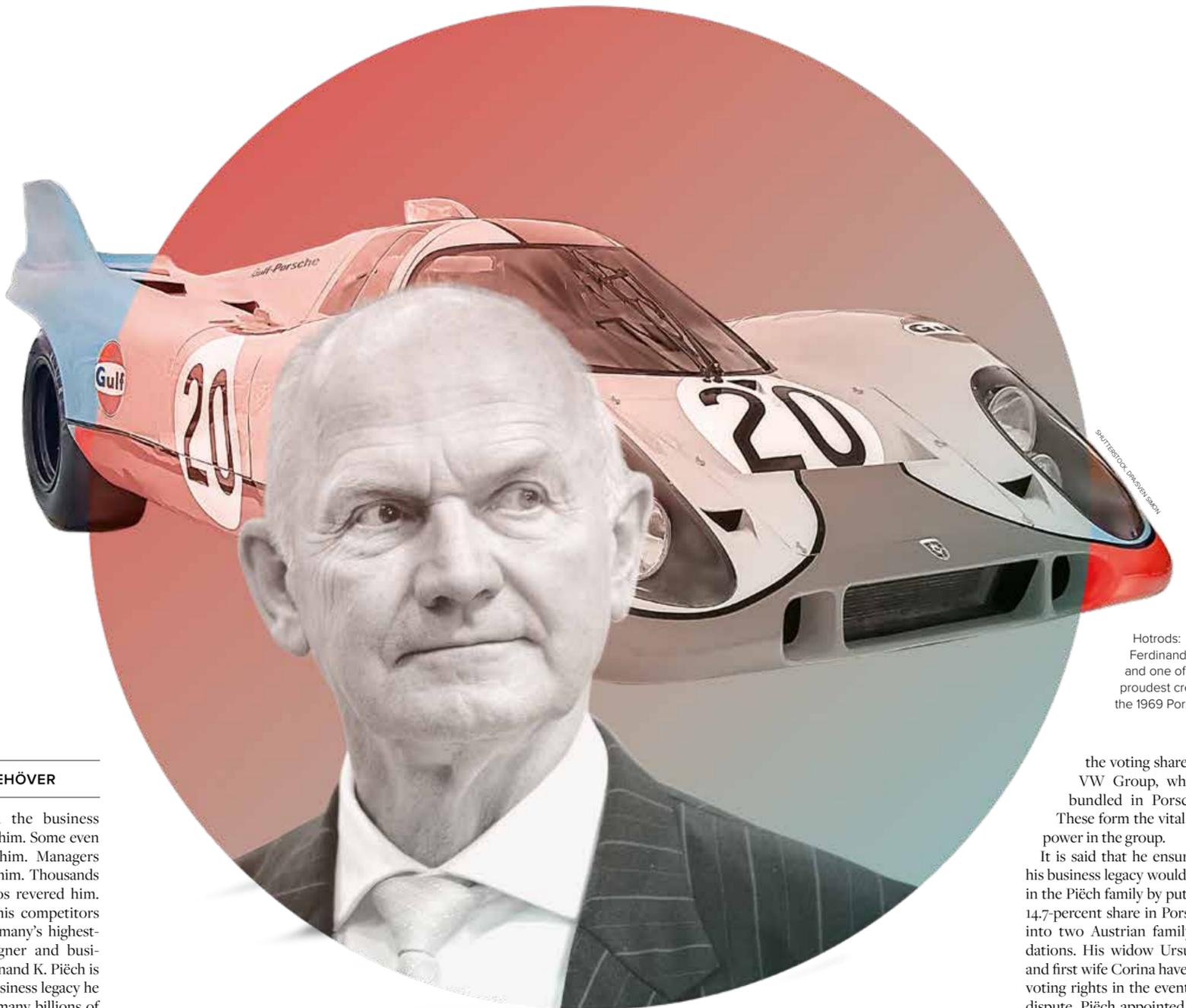
Manfred Ronzheimer is a freelance journalist based in Berlin.



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Hotrods:
Ferdinand Piëch
and one of his
proudest creations:
the 1969 Porsche 917

BY ULRICH VIEHÖVER

Many in the business feared him. Some even hated him. Managers tended to avoid him. Thousands of car aficionados revered him. And almost all his competitors copied him. Germany's highest-profile car designer and business leader Ferdinand K. Piëch is dead. Will the business legacy he left, now worth many billions of euros, disintegrate without him?

His fortune is tied in with Volkswagen and the families of Porsche and Piëch that own it. Piëch's heirs, four women and 13 children (or 14, some have claimed), will in equal parts inherit the rights to use his voting shares in VW AG and considerable financial and real estate assets. But did Piëch ensure while he was alive that his many heirs would not be able to sell their shares in the estate to buyers outside the family?

There would certainly be enough interested buyers out there in the automobile and finance industries. But Ferdinand Piëch would not have been the grandson of Porsche co-founder and VW designer Ferdinand Porsche if he had not painstakingly worked out mechanisms to protect his life's work from speculators. He put his own stamp on his huge legacy, just as he did on all his creations: his unbending last will and testament.

His colleagues and relatives in the Porsche family experienced Piëch's dogmatic rigor and obstinacy first-hand in the 1960s, when the young engineer joined the development department of his parents' company in Stuttgart-Zuffenhausen as an ordinary designer. This did not suit the ambitious young man at all. He always wanted to be first.

It wasn't long before young Piëch had battled his way into senior positions in the development, marketing and sport departments. His Porsche cousins were left empty-handed and resigned.

It was during this time that the Porsche 917 was built. Piëch, a perfectionist obsessed with details, invested energy, horsepower and endless amounts of money in the 12-cylinder racecar. His risky venture soon exploded not only the standards for race-track safety, but also the budget of what was then still just a small racecar manufacturer in Stuttgart-Zuffenhausen.

The company's head, Piëch's uncle Ferry Porsche, feared for his firm's existence, but the audacious young Piëch, supported by his

determined mother Louise Piëch, née Porsche, refused to let his uncle's minor financial difficulties slow him down.

This fight escalated into a battle royale between the Piëchs and the Porsches. The quarrel ended when all the clan members, including Uncle Ferry, were forced to withdraw from the operations side of the business, never to return to management – quite a hefty price for trying to get rid of the young Piëch. He never lost his love of speed, frenzy and high horsepower.

The four Porsche cousins and the head of the family were now "out." But Piëch, the "outsider," could never be stopped from intervening in the company and taking the wheel when he thought it necessary. And this was always the case when there were major decisions to be made on the car models and top management at Porsche. This car-mad man with "gasoline in his veins" always got his way. Although he was usually in the minority position, he beat them all in the end.

This was because he pursued a clear strategy and time and again squeezed his relatives out by using his connections in the car scene. If it seemed expedient to him, he would even join forces with unionists, whom he actually loathed.

The otherwise taciturn maverick also spread useful rumors through the press to pressure people. His "counter family," as Piëch called his Porsche relatives, could not do much to thwart his intrigues.

After throwing him out of the firm, the "outsider" did not treat his Uncle Ferry with much respect. Piëch always regarded his cousins as weaklings for having gone to a lax Steiner school. In contrast, he, dyslexic and a reluctant learner, endured a strict boarding school and university.

Piëch won all the many power struggles at Porsche and VW, as he always presented a concept and a strategy that he was able to push through with his iron will. The Porsches and representatives of the state of Lower Saxony, who are also involved in running VW, were all left out in the cold.

His personnel policy was legendary and notable. The scenario was always the same. First, there was an outcry from all the major shareholders at his ideas, but Piëch always managed to get his odd proposals accepted. One example: When Porsche was heading for the abyss in the early 1990s, Piëch, to everyone's surprise, appointed Nixdorf manager Arno Bohn, a stranger to the industry, to the top job. When he realized that his decision had been a mistake, Piëch promptly had the man fired in 1992, to the astonishment of the relatives he had steamrolled.

The puppet master also had a hand in the appointment of Bohn's successor, Wendelin Wiedeking. In 2009, however, when the successful Porsche savior became too self-confident and powerful, Piëch saw to it that Wiedeking was dumped.

Piëch then made Bernd Pischetsrieder, who had utterly failed

at BMW, the boss at VW – with the justification that he would rather trust a man who had once made a mistake in his career than a man who had never made any mistakes. But the "car king" soon saw to it that Pischetsrieder, too, lost his job. Martin Winterkorn, a more obedient Piëch protégé, was the next head of VW. As soon as the patriarch felt that Winterkorn had become too autocratic, Piëch disassociated himself from Winterkorn in the media, saying that he was keeping himself "at a distance." But this time, Piëch lost the power struggle. He withdrew from all his offices and retired to Salzburg. Winterkorn was soon entangled in the diesel scandal spanning the US and Europe.

Until the end of his life, Ferdinand Piëch regarded VW-Porsche as the Porsche and Piëch "family farm." Since 2009, the majority stake in the huge Volkswagen Group, with its 12 brands ranging from VW, Audi and Bentley to Bugatti and Porsche, has belonged to the two clans. They also own most of the voting shares in VW.

The family has been involved in VW since 1937. Ferdinand Porsche, the founder of the dynasty and developer of the VW Beetle – the car involved in Hitler's "Strength Through Joy" campaign – was the first and chief designer at the Volkswagen factory. His father, a Viennese lawyer and staunch Nazi, was one of the company's top directors in the new city of Wolfsburg.

Volkswagen is today the world's number one carmaker. Piëch's view, one shared by the

third generation of heirs, was that this weighty legacy obliges the families to keep the gigantic enterprise in their hands. So far, all of his descendants have acted in accordance with this precept. For Piëch, who was obsessed with technology, it was natural that he should occasionally just walk into Porsche's inner sanctum, the development center in Weissach, and inspect the engineers' latest creations, even when he was a top manager at Audi. Porsche was also his company, was his argument.

Shareholders, however, saw this as "industrial espionage." At every annual meeting, they demanded that he resign from the supervisory board as long as he was the head of Audi. Piëch simply smiled his demonic smile, ignored the accusations and stayed – obstinate, to put it mildly.

He showed the same lack of objectivity as the head of VW. When, for example, Eastern Europe was being opened up to Volkswagen, Audi et al. and dealer networks were being established, instead of preferring dealers from outside the family, Piëch installed his own car distribution company, Porsche Holding Salzburg, in most countries from Hungary to Romania. The firm went on to become Europe's biggest car dealer. Piëch simply swept aside any accusations of favoritism. He operated and lived in a world all his own.

Now that Ferdinand Piëch is gone, all efforts will be made to preserve his legacy, which will be shared by at least 14 people. This is especially the case with

the voting shares in the VW Group, which are bundled in Porsche SE. These form the vital core of power in the group.

It is said that he ensured that his business legacy would remain in the Piëch family by putting his 14.7-percent share in Porsche SE into two Austrian family foundations. His widow Ursula (63) and first wife Corina have double voting rights in the event of any dispute. Piëch appointed Ursula, originally a kindergarten teacher who has already been active on supervisory boards within the VW empire, to be its "legitimate administrator."

She is even allowed to change the articles of incorporation, although this is all on the condition that she does not remarry. He also left all his voting shares in the Porsche holding company, worth €1.1 billion, to his brother Hans Michel Piëch (77), probably to ensure that just one man would lead the company on behalf of the Piëch family.

His partner on the Porsche side is the head of that family, Wolfgang Porsche. Both are third generation. The two are already members of the highest supervisory boards in the family empire, in the Stuttgart holding company, in VW AG and in countless company subsidiaries. They are the group's "strong men."

These complex structures, typical for a perfectionist technocrat, may stop outside buyers and speculators from taking over Porsche-Volkswagen bit by bit. His "legacy should not be squandered," he admonished his descendants.

There are 36 children in the fourth generation plus four wives and other Porsche great-grandchildren entitled to inherit something. Altogether there are around 80 great-grandchildren remaining in Ferdinand Porsche's dynasty.

The era in which a single clan member could bang on the table and run the group seems to be ending. The group will only remain strong if the families work together, so it's a positive sign that many of the fourth-generation relatives have already taken on his responsibility and are filling key positions in supervisory boards at VW, Audi, Skoda and all the rest.

Piëch's bequest means that his family will keep control over the Porsche holding company, but only together with his "counter family," the Porsches. ■■■■■

Ulrich Viehöver is a freelance journalist specializing in the finance and automobile industries in Stuttgart.

Street-smart jump-start

The strategic partnership between Ford and VW is good for both carmakers: Ford can catch up in the realm of electromobility, and VW can profit from the expertise of Ford's subsidiary, Argo, in the field of autonomous driving

BY CARSTEN GERMIS

Almost four years have passed since the fall of 2015, and that moment when US environmental protection officials exposed the extent to which the Volkswagen Group had manipulated exhaust emissions in its cars, thereby throwing VW into the largest crisis in its history. Today, however, the German automaker is doing better than ever before.

While its domestic competitors, including Daimler and BMW, have struggled with losses in recent years, Volkswagen has surprised the troubled industry by showing an increase in earnings. In the first six months of 2019, the Wolfsburg-based company was able to increase its operating profits by 10.3 percent to €9 billion. Without the additional billions paid out in the diesel settlement, these results would have been ever higher.

VW is also increasingly asserting its pioneer status in Germany in the field of electromobility. In the coming year, its ID.3 is set to become the first all-electric car on the market, and the company intends to use its full force to get this vehicle to as many customers as possible. "By 2025 at the latest," says VW CEO Herbert Diess with confidence, "we intend to be the world market leader in electromobility."

Where is this strength coming from and how sustainable is it? The corporation has had to pay more than €30 billion in compensation and fines relating to the diesel scan-

dal – most of it in the United States – and it is still the target of civil lawsuits in more than 50 countries.

Volkswagen will continue to operate in the shadow of the emissions scandal for some time. However, unlike at the end of 2015, the company's very existence is no longer under threat. In fact, VW is better off financially today than ever before; it even expects to sell more than 10 million cars again this year.

This strength is due to the fact that Volkswagen has enjoyed tremendous success with its new SUV models. Whether in Europe, China or the US, demand for these sporty city-SUVs continues to grow in all major car markets. Today, one out of every four vehicles VW ships to its customers is an SUV – and the numbers are rising rapidly.

Although the higher profit margins that come with an increasing proportion of SUVs sold leads to improvements in the VW balance sheet, the sheer number of these vehicles also makes it more difficult to fulfill the EU's stricter climate goals and avoid billions in fines come the new year. This is precisely the reason why no other car manufacturer in Germany is propelling the transition to electromobility as vigorously as Volkswagen.

Diess even openly acknowledges that VW's behavior is a reaction to political pressure: "If we want to meet the environmental standards set by the government, and if we want to avoid paying any penalties, then there is no alternative to the electric car in the coming years," he admits.

But Volkswagen is responding

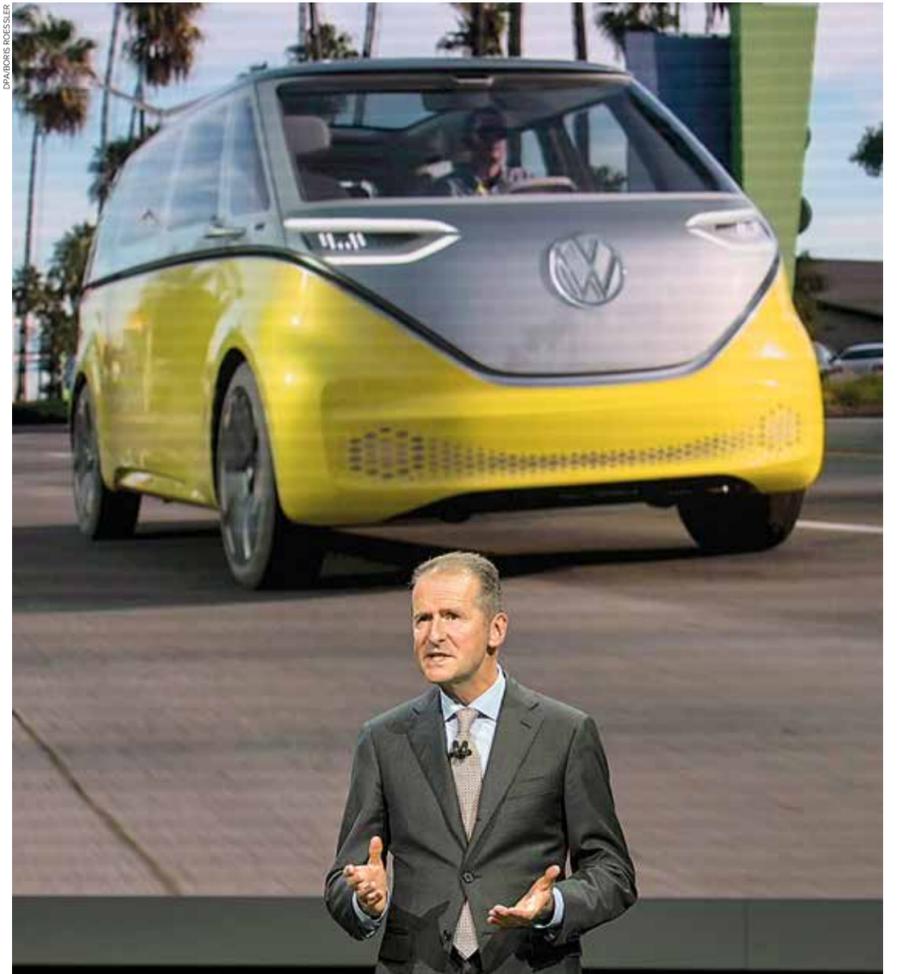
not only to political pressure from Berlin and Brussels. The government in Beijing is also setting its sights on electric cars – and China is by far the most important market for the Wolfsburg corporation. The VW logo is already on more than half of all cars sold in that country.

Diess is thus putting all of his eggs in one electric-car basket. In the next 10 years, VW intends to build roughly 22 million battery-operated vehicles on its new MEB electric platform; that's 7 million more than promised by the planners in Wolfsburg at the beginning of the year. These electric platforms represent the means by which Volkswagen intends to achieve both higher sales and lower costs as quickly as possible.

The approach is simple: the greater the number of vehicles from the corporation's various brands (including VW, Audi, Seat and Skoda) that are built on the uniform MEB platform, the faster the group will be able to achieve the desired economies of scale. This is also the reason why Volkswagen has opened up its electric toolkit to other manufacturers. For example, as part of its new alliance with VW, Ford is planning to build its electric models for the European market using technology from Wolfsburg.

For Volkswagen, joint ventures like the one with Ford are a new experience. For a long time, the attitude in Wolfsburg dictated that the company should manage any innovations in the automotive world alone and on its own merits.

Today, the forces of digitalization have forced VW to change its way



Bigger than the beetles: Herbert Diess, CEO of Volkswagen

of thinking. "The car of the future will be an extremely networked software product," says Diess. At the moment, he notes, cars have about 10 times more software than an average smartphone.

As one of the more traditional carmakers in the industry, VW has had some major catching up to do, especially compared to competitors such as Tesla, whose cars are permanently online. In order to pull even with industry leaders, Volkswagen is now working together with global platforms like Microsoft and Amazon in the realm of fully networked vehicles.

And this is precisely where the alliance with Ford dovetails with VW's overall strategy. While the US corporation will be able to catch up in terms of electromobility, the German automaker will be able to profit from the expertise of the Ford subsidiary Argo in the field of autonomous driving. The word on the street in Wolfsburg is that this will spur a "technical acceleration" for VW. The fusion of Argo and the Volkswagen subsidiary AID, a Munich-based company that develops programs for autonomous driving, will also lead

to a situation in which Ford and VW are represented together at those locations where the world's top engineers are developing essential components and overall systems to make robot cars a reality.

All of this is still quite a ways away. Starting next year, VW must first pass the practical test associated with its new ID.3 electric car; the company will have to see whether customers actually accept the new world of electric cars in spite of high price tags and other issues such as lagging charging infrastructure. Some managers in Wolfsburg are even saying that the diesel emissions scandal actually had a positive effect on VW, arguing that the company is now more open to change and the overall transformation of the automobile industry. And it's true; VW is approaching the challenges associated with electromobility, networked cars and autonomous driving with a lot more vehemence and enthusiasm than others. One advantage the corporation most definitely has in this process is its sheer size. As a volume-based manufacturer that sells roughly 10

million cars per year, VW can set standards more easily than others, and thus more quickly achieve economies of scale.

Diess is confident that VW's advantages will also soon be reflected on the stock market. He notes that Tesla, for example, is not valued on the market as an automobile company; instead, it's seen more like the tech stocks of Amazon and Google. "The market doesn't appear to believe that we're going to succeed at our intended transformation," he says. But he's sure there will be a fundamental re-evaluation of the situation next year. Indeed, in the realm of electric cars, digitalization and autonomous driving, it's all about investments in the tens of billions of euros; and these are costs that VW can now cover on its own, thanks to its success in the SUV business and in China. "It's going to take a lot of patience and staying power," Diess argues, "and a globally operating organization like ours."

Carsten Germis is an economics editor at the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*.

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Volkswagen

The wander years

Johanna Röh is one of the very few women ever to take up the old German tradition of the *Wanderjahre*, a custom that involves spending several years traveling the world as a craftsperson



Johanna (left) and fellow traveler Anna – in keeping with tradition they had to leave their last names at home.

BY NINA KALLMEIER

Johanna Röh had a queasy feeling. Just moments before, her friends and relatives had carried her with pomp and circumstance past the sign marking the city limits of her home town of Kassel. Minutes later, she was walking away from them with only a small pack on her back and a hiking stick in hand. The few items she had with her included a change of clothes, a toothbrush and a set of tools wrapped in the 80-by-80-centimeter cloth she had bundled on her back. No more than that. Not even money or a mobile phone.

Every step took her further away from the hometown where she'd just completed her three-year apprenticeship as a woodworker's assistant. And as she walked away and her parents and friends called out their final best wishes for her trip, she was not allowed to turn and look back. For at least three years and a day, she was not to return. She wasn't allowed to. Johanna Röh had just set out on her *Wanderjahre*, her journeyman years or, in her case, her journeywoman years. She was even wearing the *Kluft*, the traditional outfit consisting of black bellbottom pants, a white, collarless shirt, a black vest with eight mother-of-pearl buttons, a black hat and a jacket.

"I was in the second year of my apprenticeship when I first found out that woodworkers could do the *Wanderjahre* too," says the now 31-year-old Röh. "The cliché is that only carpenters can become journeyman." She hadn't originally wanted to become a craftswoman; she had more or less slipped into a woodworking apprenticeship, completing her *Abitur* (high school degree) along the way. But then she found out that woodworking apprentices could also go *auf die Walz*, as the years on the road are also often called. "At that point, I knew it was something I had to do."

Single, no debt, no kids and under the age of 30 – these are the prerequisites for being permitted to go *auf die Walz*. "The rules are firmly in place because the *Walz*

is not designed to be some sort of escape from responsibility at home," explains the woman from Althausen, a town just outside of Osnabrück in Lower Saxony. It wasn't long before Röh also fulfilled the final requirement, which was passing her apprenticeship exam.

The young craftswoman spent one year preparing for the adventure, talking to journeymen who had already completed their *Wanderschaft*. Röh didn't join any of the associations known as the *Schacht*, however. "Only two of those associations are open to women," she notes. "So I set out as a *Freireisende*, a free traveler, just like the journeywoman who mentored me in all things relating to the *Wanderschaft*."

The then 21-year-old spent her first week on the road on foot with only a map to navigate. Her first goal was to make her way 50 kilometers outside of Kassel, an area she was not permitted to re-enter until the last day of her journey. Her mentor accompanied her for the first two months and introduced her to all the official customs, rituals and behavioral code of the *Wanderschaft*.

"Some of the customs have been passed down since the Middle Ages," says Röh. But she's careful not to reveal too much about them. Indeed, the customs are also a kind of code, a legitimation that a person is a serious journeyman. For example, every journeyman is obliged to introduce themselves to the mayor of the town they want to work in. "In this case, the ritual functions as a kind of passport."

Röh took up her first position as an apprentice in a town near Regensburg in Bavaria. She walked part of the way there and sometimes hitchhiking or traveling by bus or train, which is only permitted if you're taken along for free. In this case, she was forced to recognize that there are definitely regional differences within Germany: "People in Hamburg are very open to it, but it just doesn't work in Munich."

The young apprentice traveled almost exclusively in Germany in the first year of her *Wanderschaft*. "Your encounters with other

people are very important, especially in the early days," she admits. "There really is a big difference to what you're used to." For this reason, she took part in several gatherings and regular meetings with other journeymen in this phase.

After one year in Germany, she set off for Mexico. "I've always been interested in that country and its culture," explains Röh, when asked why she chose that particular country. She didn't actually work in Mexico, how-

Single, no debt, no kids and under the age of 30 – these are the prerequisites for being permitted to go *auf die Walz*

ever; she limited herself to visiting woodshops and the like. "It was totally amazing to see how much people can achieve there with relatively little means."

The young woman with the ponytail and dark-rimmed glasses then crossed the border into the United States at El Paso. She was not permitted to work there, however: "It's really hard to get a work permit for the US," she explains, "especially when you're doing a *Wanderschaft*." Still, many businesses there were familiar with the journeyman tradition. As she made her way along the west coast up to Vancouver in Canada, she stuck to visiting woodshops, where she learned quite a lot. "That's the whole point of the *Wanderschaft*, to get to know the techniques used by others and broaden your own horizons." By the way, Röh's main means of transportation in the US was a bicycle.

She'd already obtained a work visa for Canada, having organized her first position at a woodshop in advance. "But after just two

weeks, I was on the road again." Journeymen tend not to stay long in one place, so as to avoid putting down roots. Among other things, Röh attended a course at a "school of fine woodworking," which she found very exciting. "It was so different from what we know in Germany. The training was less a preparation for working as a carpenter and more a place to hone my skills in artistic craftsmanship."

In total, Röh spent more than one year on the North Ameri-

can continent. She then chose Christchurch in New Zealand as her next stop. It was 2011, just after that country had suffered a devastating earthquake that destroyed many homes. "At the time, people were still in the process of rebuilding everything, and restoring old furniture."

Up until then, Röh hadn't spent much time restoring furniture. "In Germany, you have to actually study to be permitted to do that." The business where she found work did both: furniture making and restoration. "It was my big opportunity. I didn't even have to explain much when I arrived. As soon as they saw my outfit, my soon-to-be bosses knew that I was from Germany, that I was a woodworking apprentice and that I was *auf der Walz*."

Röh notes that she benefited on many occasions from the good reputation of German apprentice culture and the cliché of punctual and conscientious work habits. "Businesses all over the world, especially those that know a thing or two about the culture of craftsmanship and journeymen, were familiar with what I was doing."

After six months in New Zealand, she left directly for Japan, where she spent a full year. Journeymen aren't usually supposed to stay longer than three months in one place, so as not to fall into a routine. Johanna Röh broke with this tradition only once, in Osaka, where she met her Master Sensei. And she did so for a simple reason: "In Japan, time works differently. If I had moved on after only three months, I wouldn't have learned much."

Röh shines when she talks about Japan. The country and its people profoundly shaped her approach to woodworking and her understanding of her craft. For example, her time there had a major impact on her definition of what constitutes good craftsman tools: "A tool doesn't start out as good or bad," she explains. "Every person is responsible for making each tool as good as it can be." And that's exactly what Röh began to do in Osaka. For weeks, the only thing she did was sharpen and set hand planes.

A monotonous and boring task?

"Not at all," says the now master woodworker. "It was a gift. It gave me humility and respect for the craft. If I had just started making something right away, I would not have had the benefit of practice."

In spite of her inspirational experiences in Japan, Röh already knew she was going to return to Germany after a year. "I wanted to attend the *Meisterschule*, the master school," she says.

After arriving back in Frankfurt, Röh worked one last time on furniture and buildings at a woodshop before returning to Kassel. Four years had passed since she had left, and on the final leg of her journey, she was accompanied by two fellow journeywomen and her youngest sister. With a big smile, the young woman was carried past the sign marking the city limits, this time in the opposite direction.

In 2013, Röh arrived back in Kassel with no money, just like the day she had set out on her adventure. She observed the traditional arrival ceremony at

the city sign with only the three women accompanying her. As soon as she made it home, however, there was a big reception to mark her arrival. There was also a surprise guest she'd not expected to see – Master Sensei had traveled all the way from Japan to welcome her home.

Today, as she leafs through her *Wanderbuch*, her "book of wandering," Johanna Röh recalls how odd it was to no longer wear the *Kluft*. "It took a while to get used to that," she says. The outfit used to function as evidence of her journeywoman status; today, however, that role is played by her book of wandering. It's not a book that the traveler herself wrote in; it contains entries made by people she met along the way. In this sense, the book becomes a special collection of memories: sometimes in the form of images, sometimes long texts and sometimes testimonies written in different languages.

Both her mother and her friends supported Johanna Röh in her decision to set out on a *Wanderschaft* – even though they knew it was going to be hard to stay in contact over the years. "My mother made an extra effort to learn how to use email so we could stay in touch."

Unfortunately, some of her friendships didn't survive her time away, and her relationship with her boyfriend also came to an end. "When you're on the road, you're extremely busy with other things," Röh explains. "You're on a completely different wavelength."

It was only after her time as a journeywoman that she met her husband. They got married a year ago in the workshop where Röh, now a master woodworker, pursues her craft. Chalk drawings on the wall testify to that happy day. The workshop is also the place where Röh is now training the next generation of young woodworkers. And who knows, perhaps one of her own apprentices will complete their three-year training and choose to continue the tradition by setting off on a *Wanderschaft* of their own.

Nina Kallmeier is a business editor at the *Neue Osnabrücker Zeitung*.

BY MARKUS BICKEL

For seven long years, there was nothing I feared more than the annual inspections carried out by members of the Schöneberg-Friedenau Association of Allotment Gardeners. As far as I'm concerned, these inspectors are nothing more than a terror squad masquerading as two seasoned garden pros who summer after summer are intent on examining every corner of our 240-square-meter lot in the Tulpenteich garden colony in southern Berlin. Although the inspections seem designed to intimidate and drive fear into our hearts, their ostensible aim is to determine whether our use of the allotment plot is in keeping with the regulations contained in the *Bundeskleingartengesetz* (Federal Allotment Garden Act or BKleingG). According to that law, for example, at least 10 percent of the plot's surface area must be planted with vegetables or fruit.

Indeed, German law and order stipulates that an allotment garden – known as a *Datsche*, *Schrebergarten* or *Laube* – is not to be used simply for recreational purposes. No, owners must maintain the correct distance of plants from fences and even replant the vegetation in a different spot, if necessary. Vegetable cultivation is highly encouraged, and the area covered by any kind of roofed structure must be limited to 24 m² – or risk being in violation of protocol guidelines, which the garden inspectors stick to like glue.

Oddly, the inspectors are not at all interested in whether you've cleared a new bed for zucchini or planted a peach tree. But they always find some reason or another to complain, which is why for the longest time I thought the inspection was nothing more than a disciplinary measure designed to keep us hobby gardeners who happened to be academics on a short leash – and to school us in Prussian virtues.

In fact, most of my life I've been convinced that allotment gardens exist for the sole purpose of maintaining some kind of folkish-German cohesion. No matter whether in the West German town of Bottrop, deep in the old Federal Republic, or in the former GDR town of Cottbus along the Polish border: those black-red-and-gold German flags – an often arresting sight in this country where patriotism is still taboo – tend to blow in abundance over the green garden colonies there. In the 1980s, one might have occasionally even seen an imperial war flag from the era of the German Empire. To this day, some allotments carry the names of one-time colonies: *Burenland*, *Samoa* and *Kamerun* can still be found adjacent to associations with names like *Wiedervereinigung* (reunification) and *Einigkeit* (unity), which express the yearning of West Germans for unification with those “eastern states” temporarily lost to the

communists in the era before the Wall came down.

The fact that the National Socialists' virulently anti-Semitic racial guidelines were extended to cover German allotment gardens three years after the passing of the Nuremberg Laws always seemed to me to be consistent with the nationalist-leaning background of these green spaces. In March 1938, in the Reichstag in Berlin, representatives of the Nazi party determined that “only honorable comrades of German blood or similar descent may become allotment gardeners.”

Fortunately, eight decades later, there are now also Turkish flags flying over Germany's allotment gardens. One of the neighbors at our southern Berlin garden has a smiling seal on a blue background; three plots over, the flag of the Kingdom of Bavaria billows above the green. There are more than one million allotment plots between the Alps and the North Sea and the Oder and the Rhine. Most of them are in larger cities, where greenery close to one's own home is hard to come by – that is, where the longing for untouched nature is all the greater.

The first allotment gardens in Germany were created in 1865, when they were referred to as *Armengärten*, or gardens for the poor. The idea was to make it possible for disadvantaged citizens to meet their own needs for fruits and vegetables. Today, in Berlin alone, there are more than 60,000 plots that provide their owners with a beloved weekend destination, and thus a break from the gray monotony of the city. This large number of personal plots is the result of an initial boom to the gardening movement that came about at the end of the 19th century, as the German capital found itself on the path to becoming a leading industrial center.

Despite these open-minded beginnings, I was not expecting to find any progressive forces at work on that frosty winter morning when my wife – with our baby in tow – submitted our application for one of the coveted plots. Our ultimate aim was to be able to offer our young children something more than just bleak inner-city playgrounds. That day marked our fateful step into the realm of evidently petit-bourgeois philistines. The sullen inspectors from the allotment garden management board who made their annual summer rounds were living proof of what we had gotten ourselves into.

As far as I was concerned, the peak of petit-bourgeois pickiness was to be found in the bureaucratic stipulation that all hedges be pruned to exactly 1.25 meters. “Is this really the way it has to be?” I asked myself every year as the garden inspection drew closer. When we took on our plot at the beginning of the 2010s, it already featured a hedge consisting of Thuja trees along one side, and this hedge was nothing less than an abomination. It was crooked



His green new deal: The author Markus Bickel in his allotment garden in Berlin

Zee Germans & their hedges

Millions of Germans love their allotment gardens, though many consider them havens of petty-bourgeois philistinism

and wonky, full of brown spots and without any ecological value whatsoever.

But then came the moment three years ago when I finally bought an electric hedge trimmer. After several laborious summers trimming it by hand and refusing to spare my family our misery by simply clearing it away once and for all, the trimmer transformed me into a gardening master. In the space of thirty minutes, I was able to cut what otherwise would have taken me six hours. Thanks to the Bosch AHS 50-26, my self-empowerment as a gardener had begun. I was suddenly convinced that I could keep up with those gardening pros and their green thumbs, clear-cut beds and perfectly manicured lawns that somehow always looked like golf courses.

I realized quite quickly that loud and manly machines, such as shredders, hedge trimmers and lawnmowers, would not be enough to win me acceptance into the established caste of allotment garden masters. In spite of its exemplary height, the ugly hedge remained a visual disgrace, and it also blocked the view to our Polish neighbor to the north of our

garden. As he and I had exchanged no more than seven sentences over the course of seven years, it took me some time just to remember his name. In our case, there was no allotment-garden team spirit to speak of; on the contrary, it was as if the Iron Curtain had never fallen, and that ugly hedge had continued to stand between Oleg and me for years.

I'm not exactly sure why this long overdue insight prompted me to finally take action on a wet and cold winter morning this past February. But it did. I grabbed my saw and shovel and set about demolishing the 16 Thuja tree trunks along the fence with my own hands. As I worked, the pile of discarded shrubbery, roots and needles grew larger and larger, and the 12-meter strip along our two properties became more and more bare. I ultimately ended up bringing a total of six minibus loads of undergrowth to the Berlin dump. The only thing that remained along the border was the earth in the ground. When it was done, I was electrified. I felt that I finally understood a phrase often attributed to Karl Marx: “To be radical is to grasp things by the root.”

But I still had a guilty conscience. I had actually wanted to inform Oleg in advance about my radical pruning plans, but there had been no sign of him for days. In contrast to the summer months, when family parties and children's birthdays make for full colonies, people often don't visit in the winter months. He just never showed up, even as the hedge that separated us shrank meter by meter every day.

Why did I care? Well, not every gardener enjoys it when his neighbors have a direct view into their small paradise, and there are good reasons for those hedges and fences that serve as boundaries between the lots. In fact, legal battles over German fences are legendary, and some communities have even broken down over protruding branches.

On the fourth day of my personal clear-cutting mission, Oleg finally appeared. “It's much nicer without the hedge!” he said. “This way, we can finally have a conversation.” I breathed a sigh of relief and we clinked glasses of anise schnapps from the home country of my in-laws.

Incidentally, our garden neighbor to the west is also a big fan of

schnapps. He's a bricklayer, a born-and-bred Berliner who grew up in Kreuzberg when the Wall still divided the city. There was never any kind of hedge separating our two allotment plots. At most, the things that divided us were our dissimilar income levels and our differing taste in music – these are the things one notices quickly on those warm summer nights. But I saw this, too, as an exercise in tolerance.

Last July, after surviving the first garden inspection since removing the dreaded hedge, my western neighbor and I shared a Pernod-cola in celebration. And pretty soon, when I harvest my first self-grown potatoes in the fall, I'm going to ask Oleg to show me how to turn them into vodka. And when that special day comes, maybe he and I will drink a toast in honor of the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989. Of course, we'll raise our glasses across the flower bed where – up until very recently – the Thuja hedge stood.

Markus Bickel is managing editor of the German edition of the *Amnesty Journal* published by Amnesty International.



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Two worlds – one music:
Conductor Andris Nelsons

Belle alliance

The Boston Symphony Orchestra and Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra are celebrating a successful collaboration

BY KLAUS GRIMBERG

Boston can look forward to some major concerts. In late October, the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra will round off Germany Year 2018/19 in the US with three joint performances with the Boston Symphony Orchestra (BSO) at Boston Symphony Hall.

The close collaboration between the two world-famous orchestras under joint principal conductor Andris Nelsons is illustrative of the Germany Year motto of “Wunderbar Together.” The musicians have been building a cultural bridge across the Atlantic, exchanging ideas, learning from one another and showcasing the results of their cooperation to delighted audiences.

The close bond between the two prominent ensembles draws on a long tradition. George Henschel, the BSO’s first principal conductor from 1881 and 1884, had been a student at the Leipzig Conservatory.

One of his most famous successors, Arthur Nikisch, conductor of the BSO from 1889 to 1893, worked as music director at the Leipzig Opera before his time in Boston and then returned to Leipzig in 1895 as Gewandhaus musical director, a position he held until his death in 1922. And Charles Münch, who headed the BSO from 1949 to 1962, was concertmaster at the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra in the 1920s.

But above all, the Boston Symphony Hall, which opened in 1900, is virtually a reproduction of the second Gewandhaus from 1868, the unique acoustics of which were world-renowned. The original building in Leipzig was severely damaged during World War II and later demolished, although an inkling of the former listening experience remains alive to this day in Boston Symphony Hall.

In 2015, Gewandhaus director Andreas Schulz was in a position to build on all of these historical commonalities when he

reached out to Andris Nelsons in the search for a successor to Gewandhaus conductor Riccardo Chailly. Just one year earlier, the Latvian star conductor had taken up his post as chief conductor of the BSO, where his fresh, down-to-earth energy was received with great enthusiasm. “Our first cautious requests to Nelsons and the BSO focused above all on developing a vision for something that is entirely new in the international music industry,” says Schulz.

In the conversations with Mark Volpe, his counterpart at the BSO, he was quick to reassure him that Leipzig would not be taking anything away from the orchestra in Boston, but on the contrary would have something to offer: a genuine partnership in which artistic ideas and musical visions could come together on both sides of the Atlantic. Andris Nelsons was excited about this perspective from the word “go,” after which there was little else standing in the way of the “alliance” between the two orchestras, which is being

organized under the motto of “two worlds – one music” and was formally signed at the beginning of 2018.

The alliance has numerous facets. “On the one hand, the orchestras jointly commission and then perform new works from contemporary composers,” says Schulz. This approach is opening up new horizons for both institutions. Yet the collaboration has also enabled both musical institutions to highlight their historical reputation as important venues for premiering major orchestral works, Leipzig most notably in the 19th century and Boston in the 20th century. “On the other hand, with Boston Weeks in Leipzig and Leipzig Weeks in Boston, we are presenting the history of the two traditional orchestras with special concerts and lectures,” says Schulz.

The heart of this collaboration, however, is the coming together of the musicians. “We have arranged that either one or two musicians can be guests in the other orchestra for up to three months, and there are already long waiting lists on both sides,” reports Schulz.

In the US, the Gewandhaus musicians will experience a far more rigorous rehearsal and concert schedule and are immersed in a significantly different repertoire. For the guests from Boston, on the other hand, taking part in the Leipzig Opera or the cantata con-

certs by the St. Thomas Choir is an entirely new experience. Moreover, the musicians must familiarize themselves with the specific sound of the respective orchestras, which is an adjustment for everyone at first, but is ultimately highly instructive.

In addition to the members of the orchestra, young musicians from the two conservatories are also involved in the exchange program. Students from the Mendelssohn Academy in Leipzig and the Tanglewood Music Center in Boston are given the opportunity to delve into other teaching traditions and procedures. For instance, the Gewandhaus commissions an orchestral work from a participant in the Composer Masterclass in Tanglewood, which is then premiered in Leipzig by a young conductor from Boston. Each new exchange fortifies the network between Boston and Leipzig.

Beyond this professional collaboration, friendships have long since developed between the musicians of the two orchestras. The BSO toured in Leipzig in 2016 and 2018, and now the Gewandhaus Orchestra is traveling for the first time to the East Coast of the United States for a joint working session lasting about a week.

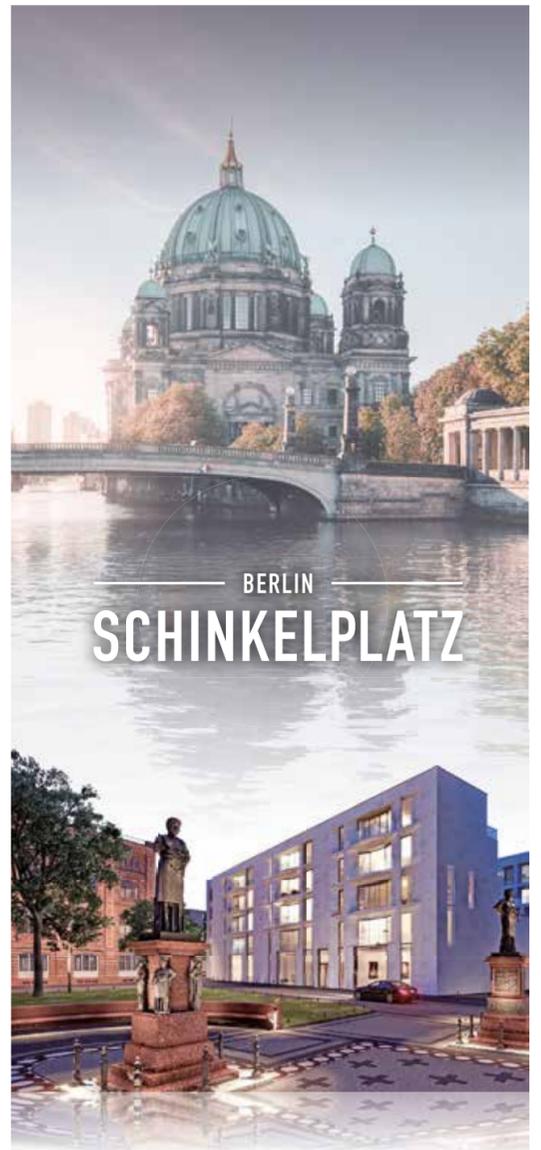
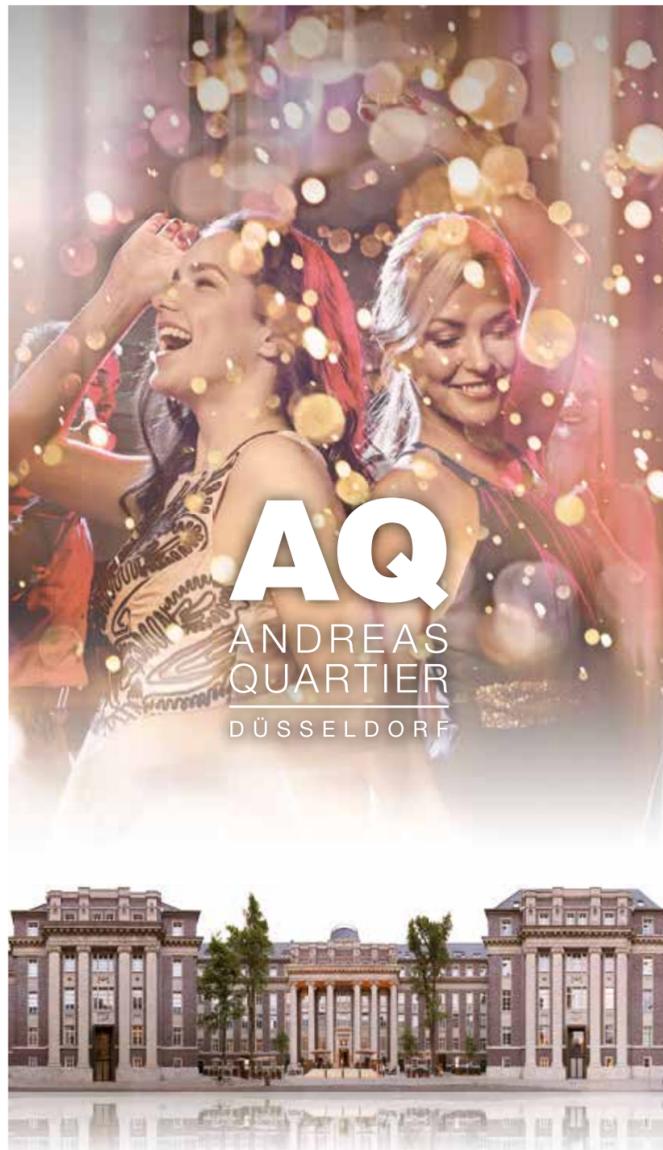
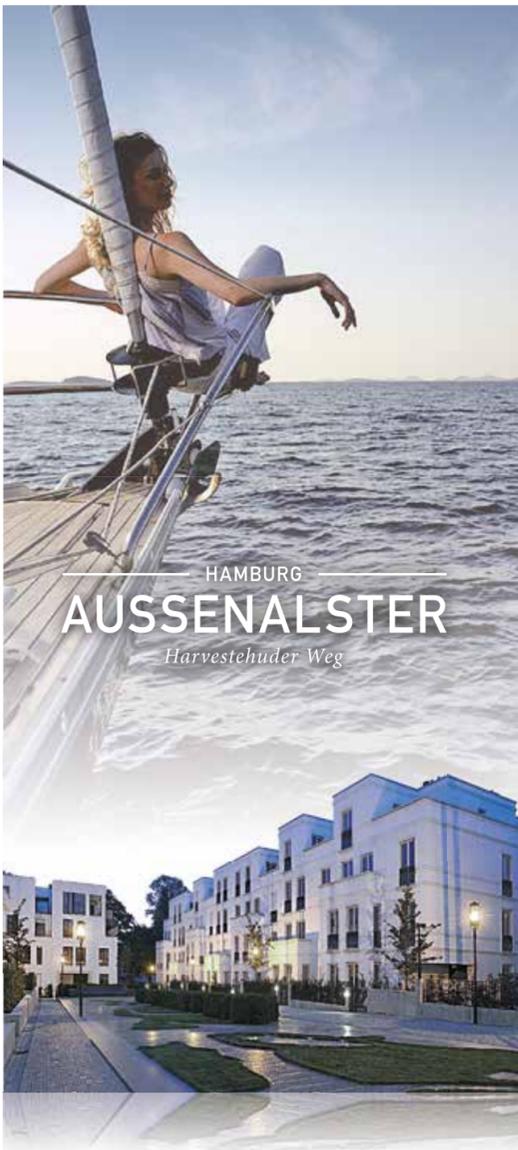
Many of the Leipzig musicians have already been invited to visit their colleagues in Boston during

this time, and some will even enjoy a stay with their musician friends instead of at the hotel. “There’s a lively email exchange between the members of both orchestras, and city tours and parties are being organized. We’re delighted with how the cooperation is being brought to life by the musicians,” says Schulz.

The highlight of the Boston residency will be the three concerts that will see musicians from both orchestras perform on stage together. Andris Nelsons will work with them on what is in many respects a brilliant and challenging program, with works by Richard Strauss (Festive Prelude Op. 61 for Large Orchestra and Organ), Joseph Haydn (Sinfonia Concertante for Oboe, Bassoon, Violin, Cello and Orchestra in B-Flat Major, Hob. I:105), Arnold Schoenberg (Verklärte Nacht, Op. 4) and Alexander Scriabin (Le poème de l’extase for large orchestra, Op. 54). All in all, it will make for resounding fanfare at the conclusion of Germany Year in the US while showing that “Wunderbar Together” will not be coming to an end, but will continue in the collaboration between Leipzig and Boston, and in numerous other locations.

Klaus Grimberg is a freelance journalist based in Berlin.

RESIDENCES IN PRIME LOCATIONS, IN GERMANY’S TRENDIEST METROPOLISES



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Front runner

Biking the Iron Curtain from the Arctic to the Black Sea

BY TIM MOORE

For an Englishman the wrong side of 50, it was an adventure that seemed to tick a lot of boxes. The European Cycling Federation had just declared its latest long-distance Euro Velo route open: EV13, tracing the 9,000-km path of the former Iron Curtain all the way from the Arctic tip of Norway down to the Bulgarian shore of the Black Sea. To a child of the Cold War, reared in a climate of geopolitical fear and loathing, it still seemed extraordinary that one could now wander hither and thither across that continent-cleaving death strip, and on something as cheerfully mundane as a bicycle. And to a man of a certain age, there was the irresistible lure of proving I still had the physical and spiritual wherewithal for such an epic undertaking. Even better, I would be doing so as a trailblazing pioneer: when I contacted the ECF, they told me that nobody had yet tackled the entire route unsupported. In 21st-century Europe, untamed challenges lie very thin on the ground.

As 9,000 km was three times further than I had ever cycled in one go, there seemed no obvious need to make things any harder for myself. But on a nostalgic whim – and perhaps in a spirit of East-West rapprochement – I decided to tackle this mission on a vintage East German shopping bicycle. In 1990, driving around Eastern Europe just after the Wall came down, I had developed a deep maternal affection for the Trabants abandoned on every street, headlights shattered and plastic doors

ajar. The MIFA 900 was more or less a two-wheeled version of the Trabant, the rather flimsy, state-issued compact car that accounted for about four out of five automobiles on East German roads. Three million of each were produced, ubiquitous but unloved ugly ducklings, semi-functional, jerry-built products of the one-size-fits-all socialist experiment, which at its peak encompassed a third of the world's population. The €56 MIFA I acquired on German eBay was shoddy and stunted, in every detail abysmally suited to the job at hand. But never mind the quality, feel the symbolism: there was a little piece of big-ticket history, a link to all those childhood hours spent twiddling through eerie Soviet interval signals on my wooden-clad short-wave radio, the endearingly human face of what I'd been reared to fear as an evil empire.

In truth, the tiny-wheeled, two-gear MIFA was the least of my problems in those early weeks. I'm still not quite sure what persuaded me to start at EV13's Arctic terminus in winter, rather than finishing there in summer. The more authentic challenge of fighting my own cold war may have played a part, as did, I fear, the "idiot's gravity" of the map: if you start at the north and go south, it's all downhill – right? And so I inched and slithered through 1,700 km of Finland, most of it a yawning, snowbound wasteland. From behind a car's windscreen, that big white world would have looked beautiful. But through the frost-rimed slit of my balaclava, the hostile desolation was terrifying. Official accommodation options were often more than a day's ride apart, obliging me to seek refuge



Man on a post-ideological mission: from Nordösterbotten, Finland ...

with reindeer farmers and fishermen. One night I slept in a decommissioned village bank. Everything froze solid, even my toothpaste. Hours would go by without passing traffic or any other evidence of rival life on earth. Loneliness, cold and exhaustion coalesced into something close to madness. After returning home, I could hear my mind going in all those in-saddle Arctic voice recordings I made on my phone: repeating myself every few seconds, bellowing out surreal limericks, mumbling incoherently.

Spring kicked in halfway along the Baltic Coast, and as my mood and the skies brightened, I came to savor this expedition. How extraordinary, in the age of universal travel, that even a continent as well-charted and well-trodden as Europe could still offer up such an epic, off-piste adventure. Lithuania's Curonian Spit is a hundred-kilometer comma of sand – one of the world's longest beaches, and

I had it all to myself. Along the Polish coast I bumped for lonely hours down weed-pierced cobbles through derelict Soviet military bases. Sometimes I'd find a gap in the rusted perimeter fencing and wander dumbstruck through ghostly old barracks, fading socialist pin-ups on the walls and yellowed pages of old *Pravdas* strewn about the dusty floors. I would find myself trundling through a field of canary-colored rapeseed flanked by decommissioned watchtowers, or being ferried across the sunset-spangled Elbe in a fisherman's dinghy, and think: thank you, MIFA, for bringing us here.

One clause of my admittedly sketchy mission statement had been to prove that the bicycle, even in its humblest incarnation, was a go-anywhere, do-anything machine – a shopping bike would always get you down the shops, even if they were 9,000 kilometers away. No other means of transport grants the



traveler such full-contact exposure to evolving landscapes and cultures. Every human sense works overtime in the saddle. After weeks of smooth and sterile Finnish silence, my ears, eyes and nostrils had been abruptly overloaded by Russia, with its belching, wayward lorries, bone-shaking potholes and roadside drifts of garbage.

Every sight and sound becomes deeply imprinted in your memory bank. Three years on, I can revisit any snapshot of my ride on Google Street View and recall exactly how the road ahead will develop: a left bend through those trees, then straight on past that bus shelter where I ate my last energy bar. And somehow, reeling in the scenery under his or her own steam grants the cyclist a sense of ownership. You have conquered this – it's yours. I remain especially proprietorial over the extremely steep landscapes that characterized the southern end of my journey. I will

always think of my ride over a 1,679 m pass in Bulgaria's Rhodope range as the Ascent of Mount Tim.

Germany, the only nation divided by the Iron Curtain, presented my ride's defining experience. Sometimes it felt as if everything had changed since I drove through the country a few weeks before their reunification party in the summer of 1990. The GDR was tired and grubby back then, mired in a cancerous fug of brown-coal smoke and two-stroke exhaust fumes. Now the same territory seemed clean, fresh and stridently sustainable, with a wind farm on every other bright green hillside and a rank of shiny black photovoltaic tiles on every other roof. But after a while, I began to sense the lingering continuities, and quickly came to know which side of the old inner border I was on without checking the map. The nominal West had better tarmac, fewer cobbles, more bike paths and a surviving scatter

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... to Saariselkä, still Finland ...



... to the Bavaria-Saxony-Czechia border triangle ...



... and all the way to Rhodopen in Bulgaria

ALL PHOTOS BY TIM MOORE

of that Cold War classic, the little yellow sign telling NATO tanks how fast they could go. The east remained visibly poorer – a young “Ossi” told me later that his “Wessi” friends earned twice as much doing similar jobs – and was home to tatter cars, more Aldis and a veritable forest of “cash paid for your old gold” signs.

The watchtowers, a sinister surviving presence on plenty of hill-tops, were an obvious giveaway, but I also became adept at spotting the conspicuously Soviet-designed GDR border-guard barracks, windowless four-floor hulks half-hidden in overgrowth. And the abrupt transit from bustling suburb to houseless, rolling greenery was, I soon learned, a sure sign that the former inner border had been crossed; the GDR systematically depopulated its frontier regions, ostensibly to create a secure buffer zone against Western aggression, but in truth to hamper escape bids.

Almost every day I’d pass a plaque or memorial that marked the spot of some age-old borderland hamlet the GDR authorities had completely erased. They were still at it deep into the 1980s.

East Germans wanting to visit friends or relatives who lived near the border had to apply for official permission, which was generally refused. Perhaps this explains why the old Eastern borderlands offered me such a cheery welcome; if anyone waved through a window, or called out encouragement from a bus stop, I knew I’d strayed into the old GDR. Twenty-five years on, I guess the happy novelty of a new face still gave them a kick.

A few sections of the old east-west Wall (or “Anti Fascist Protection Rampart” in Orwellian GDR-speak) have been retained as a warning from history, and after inspecting a few I began to spot familiar bits of border defense being recycled all along

the former borderlands: a flock of sheep penned in by salvaged wall-topping mesh panels, or a length of climb-deterrent concrete pipe repurposed as a cattle trough. I could cast an expert eye across the land and chart out the border by color alone: the 25-year-old trees that had annexed the death strip were a conspicuously paler green than their senior neighbors. In another 25, the watchtowers might have all been swallowed by trunks and leaves, but for now they stood clear.

With half the ride under my wheels, I took the bike to meet its makers. Improbably, MIFA was still assembling bicycles at the same factory, on Juri-Gagarin-Straße in the old GDR mining town of Sangerhausen. I was welcomed in, but the staff proved strikingly reluctant to discuss the old days, and seemed ashamed of the clunky little reminder I rolled up on. The boss even urged me to accept a

brand-new replacement from MIFA’s current assortment, at a hastily arranged photo call with the local press by the factory gates. His bemusement at my refusal is captured in a pictorial interview that survives online under the deathless Google-translated headline, “BRITISH CYCLING IN MIFA SADDLE THE BOSPORUS,” (“Always on my little tyre,” the Englishman says with a grin. “This is simply the best.”)

Along the Czech borderlands, the road pitched ever upwards into a pine-lined mist, an introduction to the novel discipline of conquering mountains on a shopping bike. After that, the countries flew by as fast as they ever do on a MIFA 900. On a lonely Hungarian hillside, I rattled across the site of the August 1989 Pan-European Picnic, where a horde of East Germans ran through no-man’s-land into Austria. That was the beginning of the Soviet empire’s

end, and the villages around were still bestrewn with the Trabants and Wartburgs they left behind. Through the fragmented states that were once Yugoslavia, I toiled over broiled prairies into Europe’s rustic past, where few-toothed ancients drove horse carts and whisked scythes. In Serbia, economic sanctions have compelled the population to make do and mend: the Communist-era cars still rattling around the towns were complemented by plenty of very familiar Communist-era shopping bikes. It was the only country where my choice of ride didn’t raise a single eyebrow – except at the border with Romania, where the Serbian customs official came across the Russian visa in my passport, asked me to confirm where my ride had begun, and then stared back at the MIFA with frank astonishment: “But... is bicikl normalno!”

I was chased by furious dogs through much of rural Romania,

an aerosol of pepper spray always ready in my jersey pocket. My journey completed a 58-degree romp up the Celsius scale in the broiled Turkish sun, wobbling past a mosque where the imam watched me go by with yet another of those expressions of fond disbelief that had followed me since the first, frozen day. You’re never alone with a bike; there’s something disarming about them, an inherent friendliness and approachability. Everyone wants to hear your story, where you’re going, where you’ve been. And being such a small and silly bike, the plucky little MIFA seemed to arouse the maternal instinct in everyone I met. If I needed help, it was always offered, although incredibly I didn’t need very much at all; in three months, I suffered only one puncture. This was a bike that had never been expected to tackle anything more demanding than a quick ride to the bakery and back. It was doubtless made out of melted-down coat hangers, but for 9,000 km it never let me down.

At bruised and woozy length, I stumbled through damp, shingled sand and unattended sun-loungers on a beach in Tsarevo. Then, my face creased in exhaustion and bemusement, I parted the Black Sea with my MIFA’s filthy front wheel, the tepid, gently lapping brine as gray as the Arctic Ocean I had squinted at through bullets of iced sleet in some previous life.

Tim Moore is a British humorist and travel writer. His many books include *The Cyclist Who Went Out in the Cold: Adventures Along the Iron Curtain*, published in 2016 by Yellow Jersey.

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BY AGNES MONKA

People will judge you by your actions, not your intentions." So goes the adage that even well-meant behavior may result in unforeseen condemnation. Or, in other words: It's not enough just to *want* to do the right thing. In this sense, the last few months must have been rather painful for Peter Schäfer, the highly esteemed German scholar of ancient religious studies. Indeed, the former director of Europe's largest Jewish museum, himself a Catholic, has been accused of quite a few offenses of late: spinelessness, poor leadership and even anti-Semitism.

It all began with the best intentions, and in the German Bundestag, no less. In mid-May, parliament agreed – in a joint motion involving the CDU/CSU, SPD, FDP and the Greens – to resolutely oppose the BDS movement and to fight anti-Semitism, thus condemning the BDS movement itself as anti-Semitic. The resolution also demands that the German government provide no financial support to any project that "actively assists" BDS.

BDS stands for boycott, divestment and sanctions. The main goal of the movement is to use a financial, scientific and cultural boycott of Israel and/or the occupied territories to force changes to the country's occupation policy. Reactions to BDS have run the gamut, a reflection of the enormity and complexity of this issue. In Germany, historical memory of the boycotts in the 1930s make supporting BDS a particularly difficult leap.

The fact that the Bundestag motion has had an outsized impact on the Jewish Museum Berlin is a consequence of the cultural center's organizational form. While other Jewish museums across the globe tend to be municipal in structure, the JMB is a federal institution. There is a board of trustees appointed by the German president that comprises mostly politicians. Three-quarters of the museum's budget comes directly from federal coffers. So, if the federal government approves and actually implements the motion at issue, it

means that the museum may not make overtures to or support any person or project that "actively assists" BDS.

In practice, this could mean that the museum must meticulously scrutinize every potential guest – artists, politicians, athletes, Jewish or non-Jewish – to discover where this person stands in relation to the BDS movement and what form their potential connections to BDS take.

Three weeks after the vote in the Bundestag, 240 Jewish scientists petitioned the federal government not to implement the motion. They issued a statement averring that BDS is not per se anti-Semitic and that the boycott is "a legitimate and non-violent means of resistance." They expressed that the Bundestag motion does not help in the struggle against anti-Semitism and accused the body of letting itself

be instrumentalized by the Israeli government.

A day later, on June 4, the Berlin daily newspaper *taz* ran an article on the matter. Not long after, the Jewish Museum Berlin tweeted a link to the article and used wording from the letter of protest without citation or any indication of indirect speech.

Over the years, the museum has rarely trafficked in reading recommendations on political themes, and never in such a polarizing way. Was it just an oversight? Or is this the expression of an opinion that, after months, has given Schäfer's critics incontrovertible proof of their suspicions that the Jewish Museum, under his leadership, is courting anti-Semites in some mis-conceived notion of tolerance?

In any case, the muffled tweet was only the straw that broke the camel's back. The previous year, Schäfer

had already been the subject of all sorts of criticism. Under pressure from the Israeli ambassador, the museum disinvented the openly gay Palestinian peace researcher Sa'ed Atshan, presumably for his close ties to the BDS movement. Officially, however, the event was moved to a different location "for technical reasons."

In December 2018, Benjamin Netanyahu complained to the German government: "The Jewish Museum, which is not connected to the Jewish community, regularly holds events with prominent supporters of BDS." Another bone of contention was the "Welcome to Jerusalem" exhibition that, according to the Israeli prime minister, reflected a "Palestinian-Muslim view of Jerusalem." He ultimately demanded that the German government discontinue funding for the museum. Although these state-

ments were decidedly rebuffed by the board of trustees, the damage was done.

Peter Schäfer went on to commit another faux pas in March 2019, when he welcomed the Iranian cultural attaché as a guest and allowed the media to photograph them having coffee and cake. In an interview with *Der Spiegel* after the fact, Schäfer admitted the foolish mistake. He had hoped to speak with Moujani about a potential exhibit. In its official statement on the affair, the Iranian embassy, announced that Schäfer and the office of cultural affairs were in agreement that anti-Zionism does not equate to anti-Semitism.

Despite these incidents, Schäfer's contract was soon afterwards extended for a year. This shows that there is little to support the claim that it was Netanyahu that pushed Schäfer from his job.



No museum is an island: the Jewish Museum Berlin

Job vacancy

After five years as director of the Jewish Museum Berlin, Peter Schäfer is throwing in the towel – to the relief of both the Central Council of Jews in Germany and the Israeli government

After the tweet, however, the situation quickly became uncomfortable. The museum spokesperson was fired, effective immediately. One week later, Schäfer offered the chairman of the board of trustees, Monika Grütters, his resignation, citing his desire to avoid any further damage to the museum.

Grütters called an emergency meeting of the board and named Christoph Stölzl to steward the museum on a temporary basis. The founding director of the German Historical Museum is expected to calm the heated atmosphere at the JMB and to supervise the permanent collection until a new director is found.

Schäfer failed in his plan to make the museum an open forum for a diverse set of ideas, a forum in which all perspectives may be given equal merit, even those relating to the state of Israel and the conflict in the Middle East. He evidently lacked the tact and discretion required to negotiate the highly sensitive relationship between the Jewish community and the work of the museum. The Schäfer era has shown how quickly people can be misunderstood – willfully or not and despite good intentions – and then swept away by political forces beyond their control.

Acting museum head Stölzl has asserted what in retrospect appears to be a rather pragmatic truth: "One should be wary of making the Jewish Museum in Berlin a focal point of discussion about the conflict in the Middle East."

In light of this disillusioning outcome, the question again looms as to the future direction and target audience of the museum. Is it for Berliners? For tourists? Is it a museum by Jews, for Jews, about Jews or all of the above? How independent will the museum be in terms of its program? To whom is the museum accountable? Hopefully we'll have some answers from the new leadership expected in March 2020.

Agnes Monka is a features editor for the Berlin radio broadcaster RBB.

LUZ LICHTENBERGER'S TRANS-ATLANTIC BOOK REVIEW

ROBUST

There are typically two types of political books that aim to sketch the big picture of the state of the West. The elder statesmen version is full of sweeping generalities – calls for open dialogue, robust diplomatic efforts and a well-intentioned reminder of the common values *we* all share. The second type is usually written by a foreign policy specialist, and spills over with an abundance of detailed knowledge of far-flung regions, key international players and historical minutiae.

While both versions have their merits, the sweet spot may lie just somewhere in between the two.

Thomas Kleine-Brockhoff's new book comes quite close to hitting that spot. In *Die Welt braucht den Westen* (The world needs the West), the vice president and Berlin bureau chief of the German Marshall Fund calls for a "new beginning for the liberal order." Kleine-Brockhoff is a seasoned journalist and a former speechwriter for German President Joachim Gauck. He is fluent in the language of scrupulous Western self-reflection and is

adept at calling out self-victimization on both sides of the Atlantic, where every country expects greater obligations from others than from themselves.

Kleine-Brockhoff is deft at presenting wonky analysis of, for example, the legal doctrines surrounding a new international immigration regime. Yet being an earnest centrist, he never takes his eye off the realm of possibility in international politics.

Liberal democracy must not only be defended from its enemies, he warns, but also protected from the maximalists within their own ranks. Kleine-Brockhoff's notion of a "robust liberalism" – without democratic proselytizing – is refreshingly reasonable.

THOMAS KLEINE-BROCKHOFF

Die Welt braucht den Westen. Neustart für eine liberale Ordnung, Edition Körber, Hamburg, 2019

WORKING THEORY

When the algorithms come, who will be the winners and who the losers?" Lisa Herzog asks on the very first page in her new book *Die Rettung der Arbeit. Ein politischer Aufruf* (Saving work. A political proclamation). It is the opening salvo of what is both a thorough economic and philosophical analysis of the present and future of work in industrialized countries around the globe, as well as a somber, yet urgent and well-reasoned call for political action. Or, to twist Boris Johnson's catchphrase in his Brexit campaign, "taking back control" is called for, not by nationalist means but by "democratizing the realm of the economy and labor."

The 36-year-old Herzog, a professor of political theory in Munich, is not in the business of espousing dreams of a utopia where no one has to work and people live on a universal basic income promoted both by leftist politicians and Milton Friedman acolytes in Silicon Valley. Herzog warns of work becoming a fetish in the tradition of the protestant ethic and its ideological alliance with the "spirit of capitalism," as the German sociologist Max Weber famously laid out. Yet Herzog is convinced that work is more than a "necessary evil and more than a way of earning one's living"; it's a part of living that would most likely still exist even if the social order were entirely different and machines could do even more tasks.

For Herzog, the ongoing digitalization-driven transformation of the working world is no reason for fatalism – as digitalization is not a force of nature beyond our control. The author smartly lays out policy proposals to make companies more accountable, re-organize the social state and reform the tax code. Her book itself is an outstanding work of political scholarship.

LISA HERZOG

Die Rettung der Arbeit. Ein politischer Aufruf, Hanser Berlin, 2019

SPEECH IN A BOTTLE

In April 1967, Theodor Wiesengrund Adorno gave a lecture at the University of Vienna about "aspects of the new right-wing radicalism." The lecture, which was available only as an audio recording until being published this summer, is as timely as ever. Adorno talks about the populism of the right as if he were alive today. He slices through the tropes of populist propaganda with uncanny precision. Adorno points to the tendency among many on the right to not place blame for their anxieties where blame is due: on those politicians who've pushed deregulation and the corporate overlords who've created the bind we now face. He calmly assesses the diminishing sphere of influence of any single nation-state and considers this to be the very driver of our dangerous nationalistic longings. He explores a foundational element of right-wing tactics, "the anticipation of horrors," as a sort of baseless fear-mongering. Adorno calls it "a type of manipulated astrology."

Public dissatisfaction with change and what it brings – climate change, feminism, increased awareness of minority rights – have inspired something akin to a societal death wish or, in President Trump's terms, "carnage." Adorno's short tract reads eerily prescient, a letter in a bottle for our times.

The philosopher, sociologist and psychologist was a leading member of the Frankfurt School of critical theory. After being forced to leave Nazi-Germany in 1933, he lived in the US until 1949. Back at the University of Frankfurt, he was a leading intellectual in postwar Germany. *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, written together with Max Horkheimer, is considered a major work of 20th century philosophy. As his striking speech in Vienna from 52 years ago shows, he is still the man of the hour.

THEODOR W. ADORNO

Aspekte des neuen Rechtsradikalismus, Suhrkamp, Berlin, 2019

They might be giants

Borussia Dortmund is eager to break the supremacy of FC Bayern Munich in Germany's Bundesliga, and they finally have a realistic chance of doing so

BY THOMAS KISTNER

The best news from the Bundesliga, Germany's top-tier soccer league, is that it looks like there will finally be a real battle for the championship this season. Yet only two teams have greater than an outside chance to vie for the title: FC Bayern Munich and Borussia Dortmund (BVB).

In the past seven years, the league has been dominated by that perpetually number-one team, Bayern Munich, even though they finished last season only one point ahead of the runner-up. In other words, a true head-to-head race – like the ones that take place on a regular basis in England and Spain – has not been seen in the Bundesliga for what feels like an eternity. In the 2018/2019 season, Dortmund was the first club to get nine points ahead, only to then go on a terrible losing streak and allow the Bavarians to catch up. At the end of the season, Bayern was back on top; not because they were so strong, but because Dortmund was so weak.

Bayern has managed to nab the top spot for the previous six years, with the only difference being that the Bavarians were actually super strong back then. In those years, the entire Bundesliga would run out of breath trying to catch them. So great was the advantage of Munich in the first half of the season that things often got boring come Christmas time. In 2014, Bayern clinched the championship on the 27th game day, with still seven matches yet to play.

This monoculture was not good for German soccer, and the longer it lasted, the more Bayern Munich itself began to suffer from it. For years, they had been major players in the Champions League, almost always among the top four teams in Europe. But in the spring of 2019, they exited in just the second elimination round, losing 1:3 at home to FC Liverpool in a game that made them look as inferior as the final score suggested.

This is the price clubs pay for years of being under-challenged in their domestic leagues. At some point, coaches of other teams start sparing their energy in games they are sure to lose against

Bayern. Coaches sometimes even preferred to rest their best players for use in other league matches against eye-level rivals. Time and again when Bayern was in town, coaches didn't even send their stars onto the pitch, with some coaches even openly admitting as to why.

A team that has the best players but is never forced to play at full capacity will eventually lose a sense of its own abilities and performance. If such a team then enters the international arena and faces opponents that don't automatically see themselves as underdogs just because Germany's top club is on the pitch, well, this can lead to nasty surprises.

In 2013, Bayern Munich won the Champions League against – of all teams – Dortmund. Since then, they've sputtered out once in the quarterfinals and four times in the semifinals. Last year, they didn't even make it to the final eight.

Under the leadership of their long-time sovereigns, Uli Hoeneß and Karl-Heinz Rummenigge, the club has been increasingly distracted by internal conflicts. In addition, the club hired Niko Kovac, a coach who enjoys the confidence of only one of the top dogs – club president Hoeneß. Rummenigge, Bayern Munich's CEO, has repeatedly



Red giant:
Bayern's Philippe
Coutinho

and publicly expressed doubts about the coach.

Last season, as Borussia Dortmund took advantage of the situation at Bayern and pulled nine points in front and the Bavarians descended deeper and deeper into their morass. In October 2018, Hoeneß and Rummenigge attacked the media, which had criticized some of Bayern's players, and demanded more respect. It was a real-life satire whose only effect was to reveal for all to see just how massive the mess in Munich really was.

But then, in the middle of their deepest crisis in years, Bayern got some help from the very club that should have been benefiting from the turmoil: Dortmund. Bayern's rival for the championship was simply incapable of maintaining its comfortable lead through the winter break, and repeatedly lost to opponents from the bottom of the standings. And the Bavarians eventually caught up.

At that point, it was Dortmund's turn to unwittingly expose their own deep-seated flaws. On the one hand, they lacked the courage to state directly that their express goal was to win the championship. Coach Lucien Favre kept on insisting he wanted to focus "only so far as on the next game." On the other hand, the team was also unhealthily dependent on one single player: Marco Reus.

Reus is indeed one of the best soccer players in Germany, but he is also highly prone to injury. The 30-year-old has rarely been able to get through an entire season uninjured. Unfortunately, a key player who only plays 22 to 24 matches per year cannot be a true leader.

This was on perfect display last year in a game where Reus injured himself once again and almost missed the rest of the season: as part of the knock-out round for the DFB Cup tournament, Dortmund was hosting Werder Bremen; the guests took the lead but the outstanding Reus equalized just before the break. Unfortunately, he didn't return from the locker room for the second half, and Dortmund ultimately lost the game in their own stadium. They would then go on to lose other important games in the Bundesliga as well. At the end of the season, they were second to Bayern – by only a single point.



Fast forward:
Dortmund's
Julian Brandt



This season, BVB is focused on doing everything right. They've strengthened their team in a comprehensive and targeted manner, making sure to be able to compensate for the possible loss of Reus. And Hans-Joachim Watzke, Dortmund's CEO, has repeatedly expressed a clear goal: winning the title. In other words, Dortmund unashamedly wants to be the next German champion.

BVB is betting on strong young talent like Jadon Sancho, Thorgan Hazard and

Bruun Larsen, each of whom has the opportunity to greatly increase his potential – and his market value – under coach Favre. Plus, Dortmund has found in Julian Brandt the ideal backup for Reus. Brandt is a technically strong and extremely dangerous goal scorer capable of driving the play forward, and he is also much more physically robust than the veteran captain Reus. In this sense, at the beginning of the current season, BVB is plagued only by a few "luxury problems," including having a place on the bench reserved for the 2014 World Cup hero Mario Götze.

By contrast, Bayern Munich started the season in a slightly more chaotic state. They had sold one of their lead players, Mats Hummels, to Dortmund, but otherwise it was quite late before they made any moves on the transfer market. Unfortunately, none of these moves looked like the result of any type of real planning. Philippe Coutinho, the Brazilian who had been pushed to the side at Barcelona, came in at the last minute, but only on loan, as did the Croatian Ivan Perišić from Juventus Turin. The French defenders Lucas Hernandez and Benjamin Pavard joined the team, with lingering doubts

about Pavard after his disappointing season at VfB Stuttgart, which saw that team sink into relegation in lackluster fashion.

Bayern is a hard-boiled collective entirely accustomed to winning, whereas Dortmund is a sensitive team that begins trembling as soon as things don't go according to plan on the pitch. However, this is only one side – the most visible one – of the rivalry between the two teams. In a different realm, namely the management level, something very fundamental is changing. While the well-rehearsed Dortmund team unites around their CEO Watzke and general manager Michael Zorc to pursue their mission to win the championship title, at Bayern Munich, things still look rocky. There is a dispute underway at the top management level that already severely hampered preparations for the new season – and it seems this dispute will accompany the club throughout the season.

Although it can't be argued that the Bayern bosses were ever true friends, the question of how to send the club off into a new era – that is, the question of who should take over after they retire – has obviously divided the two men. At the end of August, one of Bayern's

board members, Edmund Stoiber, even spoke openly of Hoeneß and his "quarrels with Kalle." Stoiber was minister president of Bavaria for many years and belongs to the inner circle around Hoeneß, as does Herbert Hainer, the long-time CEO of Adidas.

At the 2018 general assembly meeting, it was made painfully clear to Hoeneß that he had lost the backing of many club members. There were unheard-of requests for him to leave, even whistle calls and insults. One member even brought a North Korean flag with the words "NOT MY PRESIDENT" on it. Hoeneß has never gotten over that. This dispute at the top is now poised to continue in other ways as well. It's all about Hoeneß and his legacy. Hainer, his crony, is set to take over as president of Bayern Munich and also to hold the chief executive post on the supervisory board. Hoeneß himself will remain on the supervisory board, and together they will coach a newcomer, their pick and the man set to replace Rummenigge in 2022: Oliver Kahn. The former goalkeeping hero will make the move to Bayern's board in early 2020. Kahn has signed a five-year contract and insiders expect nothing less than an all-out power struggle between Rummenigge and his soon-to-be successor. Many connoisseurs doubt that "Killer Kalle" – Rummenigge's nickname – will be able to fend off Kahn's attempts to jostle for power.

There are also plenty of other internal issues on the table, such as coach Kovac and general manager Hasan Salihamidžić. Neither of these men enjoys unlimited support from the club or the players.

The 2019/2020 FC Bayern season is not just about winning championships, it's about the future, about the final showdown between two dinosaurs, both of whom have made outstanding contributions to the club, but who are now increasingly seen as outdated models. In this light, the question is whether Borussia Dortmund will be able to profit from the self-made mess at Bayern.

Thomas Kistner is a sports editor for the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*.

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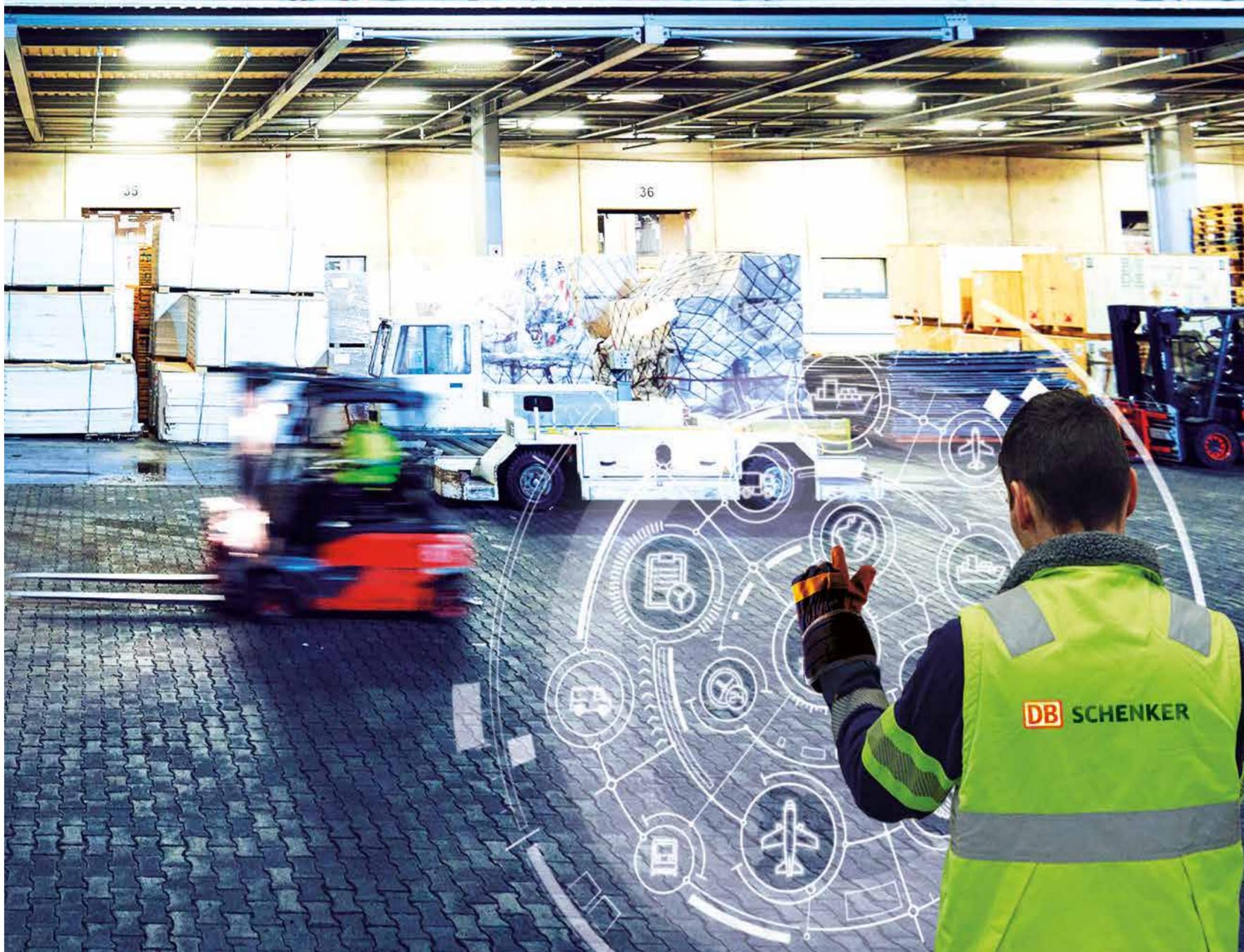
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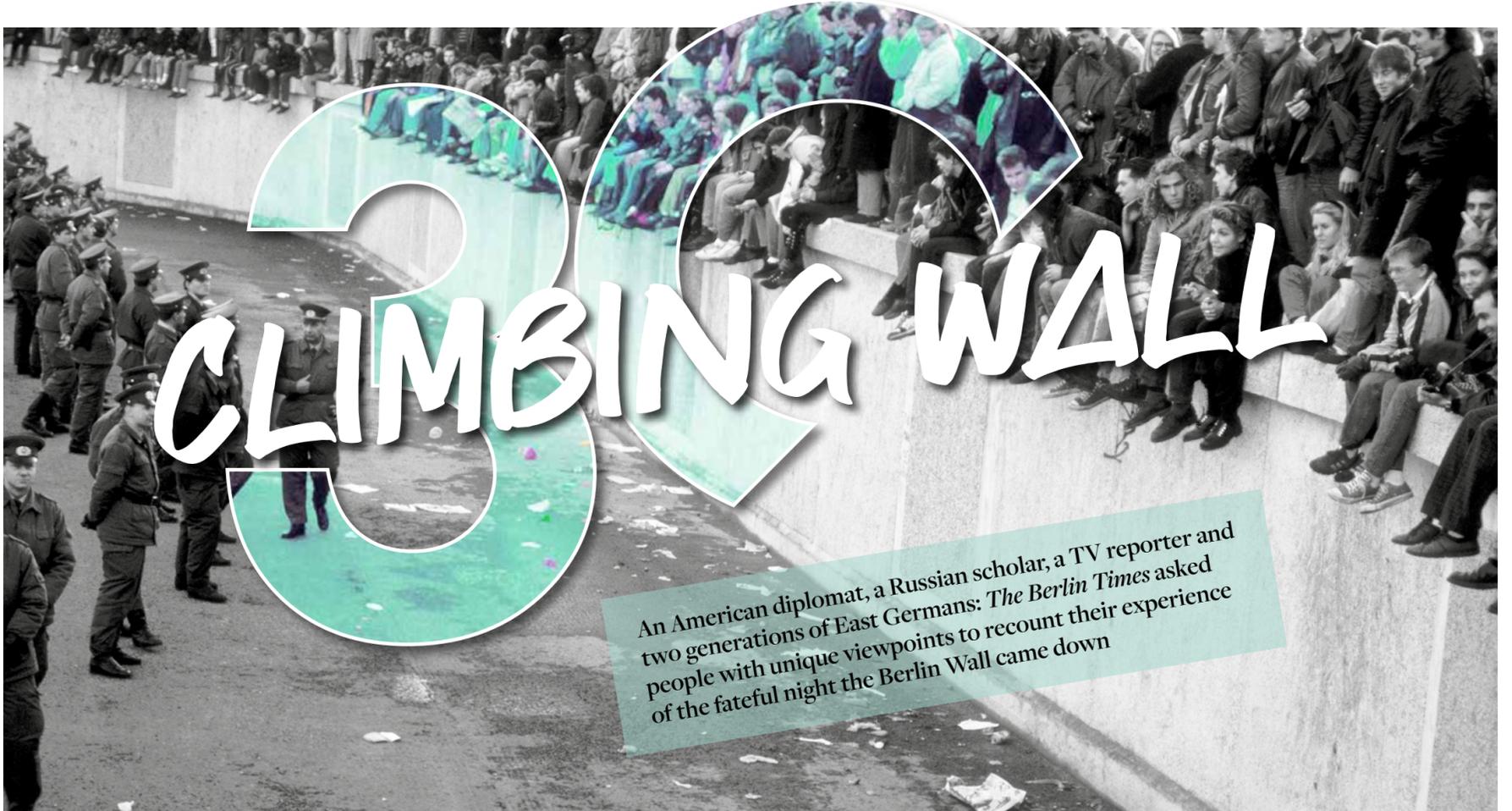
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The Berlin Times

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

GETTING TOUGH

Andreas Kopietz on the city's ramped-up efforts to fight gang violence on the streets of Neukölln [page 3](#)

GETTING TO THE BIG LEAGUES

Michael Jahn on Hertha and Union and their first year together in the Bundesliga [page 5](#)

GETTING IN

Nicola Kuhn on the James Simon Gallery, the fancy new entrance hall for Museum Island [page 10](#)

GETTING TO THE HOT SPOTS

Sabine Bärenklau on the best places to dance, dine, enjoy music or just have a good time [page 12](#)

Exit, left

30 YEARS FALL OF THE WALL

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 East German 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 rela-

tionship 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 refrain, 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 Scheffe 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 demonstra-

tions, 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 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 run-down 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. ■

Ilko-Sascha Kowalczyk 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). Kowalczyk 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.



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.

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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 re-grow ever since.

Not one corporation on Germany's blue-chip DAX stock index

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, Friedrichshagen, 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 Daim-



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

ler, 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?

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



Mug shot: Nidal R. as a mural in Neukölln

BY ANDREAS KOPIETZ

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

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.

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

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 councillor 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.



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: 'Scream! 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

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

"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*.

BY CLAUDIA
VON DUEHREN

I love New York," gushes Katharine Mehrling. The top star of Berlin's musical stage is coming to Manhattan on Oct. 5, hoping to conquer the Big Apple with her enchanting sound. The award-winning singer and actor will perform her "Streets of Berlin" act at Joe's Pub – a bow to her chosen hometown from the American metropolis that's stolen her heart.

"Over the course of the evening, I say a lot about Berlin, and the audience enjoys it," Mehrling conveys with assurance, having had her concert debut in Manhattan's East Village last year. The singer honed her excellent New York accent in the late 1990s when she attended the renowned Lee Strasberg Theatre and Film Institute. "It was an exciting time, but I also learnt how difficult it is to live as an artist in New York," she recalls. Many of her New York artist friends could make ends meet only by having three or four jobs. She readily admits: "I didn't want that, so I went back to Germany."

It was the beginning of a brilliant career. The linchpin of her success was and is Édith Piaf. The French mistress of the chanson has captivated Mehrling since she was 19 years old. Her first great love, a Frenchman named Jérôme, had given her a cassette tape of songs by Édith Piaf, which were about death, prostitution, love and the stories of simple people and their longing for a better life.

These songs managed to unleash tremendous emotion within Mehrling, so the petite artist, too, wanted to sing with such impact. She recalls: "When I would slide into this character, I would feel an unbelievable identification, a fierce energy. Sometimes it took me days to come up for air. I lived off of her experiences, her life, her travails, her successes, for at that time I was still relatively inexperienced." And so, the 5-foot-1-inch Hessen-born young woman with gobs of talent went on to conquer the German capital as Piaf, becoming the darling of the Berlin stage. This year, for the sixth time, Katharine

Mehrling has received the "Goldene Vorhang" (Golden curtain), the audience award for Berlin's most beloved stage actress.

There's no question that she inherited her talent from her mother, who died of cancer in 2001. Grit von Osthe – as she was known on stage – was a celebrity in her Hessian hometown near Frankfurt, where she ran the music club Tenne. Bands would play there and Mehrling's mother would accompany with song. "Her real name was Margarethe Mehrling," Katharine reveals with a smile. "But she never thought she could get very far with the name Mehrling." So she shortened her first name and added a version of the name of her town as her alias.

While the music played at Tenne, little Katharine would sleep in the apartment just above it, all the while absorbing the nocturnal chansons, jazz and smoky-nigh-seedy atmosphere from below. During daytime, she would sing *Heidi*, gave little performances from a young age and even sang on a Christmas album when she was ten.

Not long after that, her parents sent a demo tape to the German record producer, Ralph Siegel, which ultimately led to the schoolgirl performing at the Eurovision Song Contest Grand Prix as the mini-version of Marianne Rosenberg. After finishing school, she pursued acting and musical theater in London and New York.

But she never stopped thinking about Piaf. The young, exceptionally talented woman read everything she could get her hands on about the "Little Sparrow" from Paris, listened to one after another of her chansons, spent a half-year in Paris and never wavered from following in the footsteps of the French legend.

In the year 2000, Katharine Mehrling finally made her way back to Berlin and rose to become must-see entertainment in the German capital. There was a time when she was an integral part of three ongoing productions: As Sally Bowles in *Cabaret* at the Bar jeder Vernunft, as Judy Garland in the *End of the Rainbow* at Schlosspark Theater and as Daisy the jazz composer in the Komische Oper's *Ball im Savoy*. In 2008, she even landed a gig in

Spree in New York

Singer Katharine Mehrling returns to Manhattan in style



Katharine Mehrling

the Tom Cruise feature *Valkyrie*; Mehrling played a singer at the officers' club and can be heard on the soundtrack singing "Für eine Nacht voller Seligkeit."

Mehrling's performance in New York will feature her renditions of Kurt Weill (1900–1950) songs and Friedrich Hollaender (1896–1976) tunes from the 1920s. The two artists wrote music history with their compositions for *The Threepenny Opera* and *The Blue Angel*, respectively. Both were forced to flee Germany in the 1933 because of their Jewish heritage. Weill to New York and Hollaender first to Paris, then later to Hollywood.

But of course, audiences can look forward to hearing chansons by Édith Piaf (1915–1963) as well, not to mention songs composed by Katharine Mehrling herself. These will include her newest song "Straßen von Berlin" (Streets of Berlin), the title number for her show at Joe's Pub. The song is an anthem to the feeling of loneliness in the city on the Spree. "There are many people in Berlin who can't seem to engage. In this digital age of ours, they shy away from real communication, perhaps because they think that something better will come their way. I've even experienced this myself," she confesses. This fetching artist was single for quite some time.

Two years ago, however, Mehrling caught the love bug. In the Bar jeder Vernunft, she met her current boyfriend, the actor Tilmar Kuhn. He will accompany her to New York, just as he did last year. But this time they'll be staying at the legendary Algonquin Hotel in Manhattan's theater district. New York's oldest hotel has also played host to artists such as Simone de Beauvoir, Graham Greene, Charles Laughton, Laurence Olivier and Diana Rigg. She can't wait to check in: "We're really looking forward to the special atmosphere of this hotel." And to the question of whether she might tie the knot in the Big Apple, Mehrling laughs: "Édith Piaf also got married in New York. Marlene Dietrich was her matron of honor, but the marriage didn't last five years." ■

Claudia von Duehren is a culture editor at *Bild* and *BZ* in Berlin.

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 oversized wooden pincers. Participants then set out, usually in small groups of two or three

Trash tourism

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

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 Okun-robo 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 Kappa 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.



Your friendly neighborhood cleaning men and women, global edition (from left to right): Sorvina Carr, Jialong Kang and Catherine Knight

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?"

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,

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

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

in 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.



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

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

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

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

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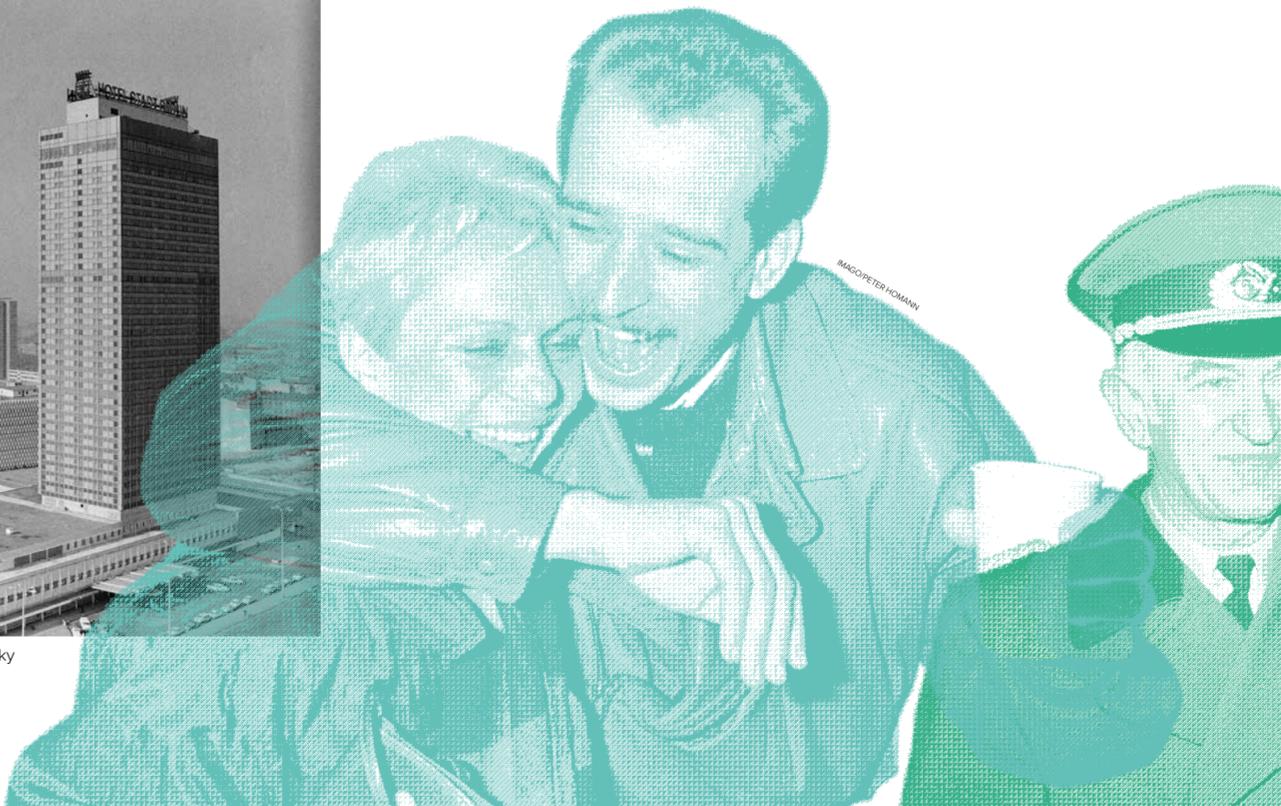
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Berlin Alexanderplatz, with its TV Tower and Hotel Stadt Berlin scraping the sky



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 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 – Ostalgie, 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,

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 demonstra-

tions 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

WRITING THE W



Günter Schabowski during his history-making press conference

30 YEARS FALL OF THE WALL

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 assis-

tant Germar Biester, were both seasoned professionals and had a better sense of things. "What we just experienced," Rainer insisted, "was something incredibly special."

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?

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 is head of the SZ, NDR and WDR research network. From 2008 to 2013 he was the editor in chief of *Der Spiegel*.



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

ING ON WALL



Harald Jäger at the checkpoint at Bornholmer Straße

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.

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

“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 was 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



Klara Lakomy and Florian Havemann

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.

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 Politbüro 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.

KÖNIGLICHE
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BERLIN

„ A KPM plate is always
a business card, too. “



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.

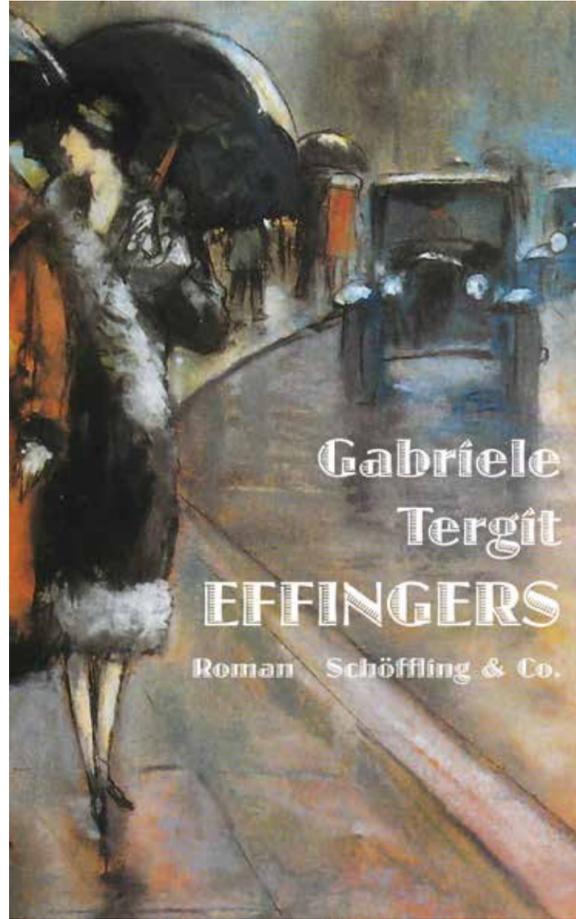
Tergit's cast of intriguing characters – parents, children, lovers,

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

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.

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 runs 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

done with walls Berlin



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Everything is illuminated: the James Simon Gallery

BY NICOLA KUHN

Island mentality

The James Simon Gallery has finally opened its doors

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 confirma-

tion 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 execu-

tion 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 dis-

play. 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*.



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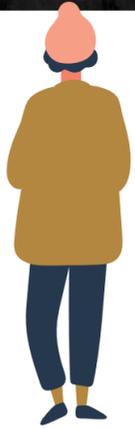
MUSEUM OF PHOTOGRAPHY

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 comprehen-

sive 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.

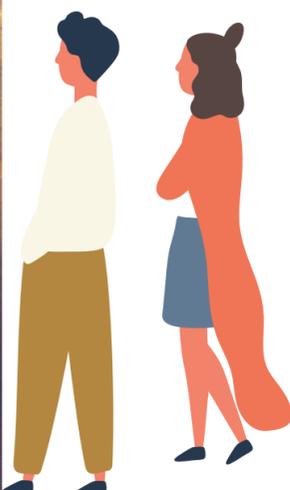
PERGAMON. *Masterpieces from the Ancient Metropolis with a 360° Panorama by Yadegar Asisi* In the Panorama hall across from the Pergamon Museum. www.smb.museum



ARRIVAL ON THE SCENE



STAATLICHE MUSEEN ZU BERLIN, NATIONALGALERIE



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



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

10/10

Berlin bucket list

BY SABINE BÄRENKLAU



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



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 Liniestraße 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



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, BlainSouthern 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



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



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



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.koernerpark.de



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.