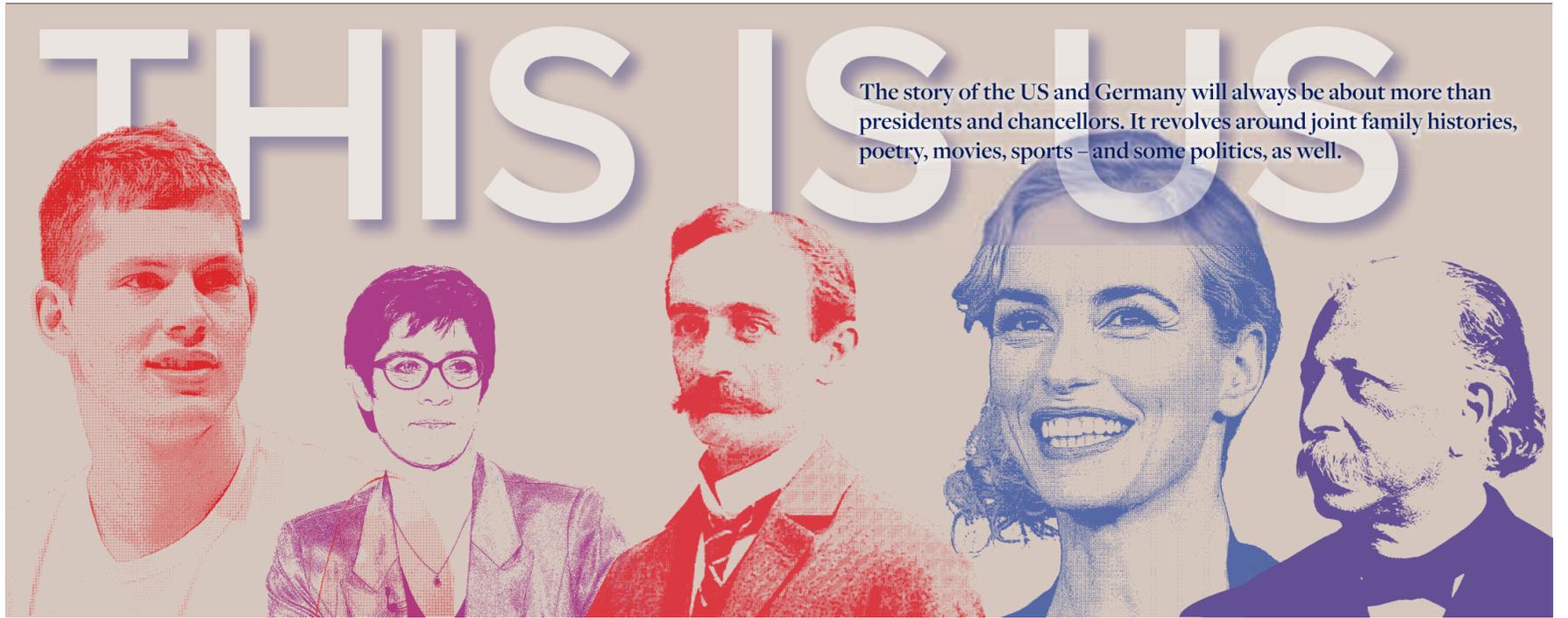


The German Times

A TRANS-ATLANTIC NEWSPAPER

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THIS ISSUE ...

... of *The German Times* tells the stories of people that make up the past, present and future of the “special relationship” between the United States and Germany.

From left to right: Sharp-shooting big man **Moe Wagner** is trying to find his role alongside LeBron James with the NBA’s Los Angeles Lakers (page 19). **Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer**, the new chairperson of the Christian Democrats, could succeed Angela Merkel as chancellor (page 3). **Frederick Trump** was born in the small German town of Kallstadt, which is bracing for a possible visit by his grandson Donald (page 20). The actress **Nina Hoss** is the star of many of Christian Petzold’s movies. The director was recently invited to become a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (page 18). And every German child knows the American John Maynard – the heroic helmsman in the eponymous poem by **Theodor Fontane**, author of the novel *Effi Briest* and the greatest German writer of the 19th century. He was born 200 years ago this coming December (page 23).

Swan song and legacy

Angela Merkel in Munich:
“Only together can the West survive!”

BY THEO SOMMER

This year’s Munich Security Conference (MSC) – the security and foreign policy twin of the Davos World Economic Forum – convened under dark clouds of doom and gloom. The over 800 participants – among them 19 presidents, 13 heads of government, 83 ministers of defense and foreign affairs, a 50-person US congressional delegation, high-ranking diplomats and military officers from all over the globe – came together at a time when the world order is in utter disarray. Wolfgang Ischinger, chairman of the MSC, made no bones about it. As he put it in his welcoming remarks, we are currently witnessing “a reshuffling of core pieces of the international order... The kind of new order that will emerge remains unclear.”

Not only is the world economy weakening, as tariff conflicts herald a pernicious trade war, but the certainties of international cooperation are also waning and vanishing in the political realm, as America’s retreat from global leadership and the rise of Xi Jinping’s China upend the prevailing power patterns of the past 70 years. Geopolitical conflict has become thinkable once again. “We find ourselves in a situation potentially more dangerous than at any point since the end of the Cold War,” said Ischinger. The *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* has once again set its Doomsday Clock to 11:58 p.m. – two minutes before the symbolic midnight apocalypse, the same this year as back in 1953.

The worst feature of this depressing picture is the fraying of what used to be called the West, the free world or the liberal international order, a fraying to the point of dissolution. Roger Cohen, the perspicacious international correspondent for *The New York Times*, felt justified after the Munich conference to compose a “requiem for the West.” Like most Europeans, especially the Germans, he puts the

blame squarely on the shoulders of US President Donald Trump, his relentless Europe bashing and his disrespect for allies, international institutions and anything that reeks of cooperation and compromise; in other words, for multilateralism. A collaborative approach is not his cup of tea.

In the spirit of reckless unilateralism, Trump has been shedding America’s global commitments. He withdrew from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), the Paris Climate Agreement, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) – commonly known as the Iran nuclear deal – and, most recently, from the INF arms control treaty with Russia. Having called Europe a “foe” and welcomed the EU’s breakup through Brexit, he has also repeatedly questioned the US commitment to defend NATO partners; reportedly he has privately told aides that he wants to leave the “obsolete” alliance.

In the spirit of reckless unilateralism, Trump has been shedding US global commitments

In Munich, the dissent within the trans-Atlantic community found its clearest expression in two speeches. German Chancellor Angela Merkel passionately invoked the spirit of multilateralism and togetherness, whereas US Vice President Mike Pence delivered a stilted teleprompter presentation of undiluted Trumpism.

Merkel’s message was clear. The world order shaped by the US after World War II is “coming under incredible pressure,” but we must not let it be smashed; rather, we must reform it. In meeting the enormous challenges facing mankind, one should not think “that each of us can best solve the problem single-handedly.” With approval she quoted Senator Lindsey Graham’s statement that “multilateralism may be complicated, but it’s better than staying at home alone.” Cooperation and compromise, she argued, are the order of the day.

Without ever mentioning Trump by name, the chancellor turned her fire on several aspects of the president’s America First policy.

Fusions and confusions

Germany is going to promote and protect industrial champions

BY NIKOLAUS PIPER

In late 2018, one of Germany’s most venerated and long-standing companies stopped being German. Linde AG was founded in 1879 by Carl Linde, the inventor of the refrigerator, and rose to become the world’s largest supplier of industrial gases, including oxygen and nitrogen. Late last year, it merged with its US competitor Praxair. Today, the new company, Linde plc, has its head offices in Dublin instead of Munich – for tax reasons.

In fact, what is officially being called a “fusion” is actually an outright takeover, and the German industry icon is now poised to become American. The transaction is not without historical irony, as Praxair was once the US subsidiary of Linde AG. During World War I, Linde assets in the US were confiscated and sold to a US company, which ultimately renamed

Germany’s agnostic attitude with regard to national industrial policy could be over

it Praxair and listed it as such on the New York Stock Exchange starting in 1989.

This is all interesting to historians and perhaps a few analysts, who question the business logic behind the takeover of one entirely healthy company by another. Politicians and the public, however, rarely take interest in the matter, which is not surprising. After all, the question of whether a company is “German” is usually irrelevant in Germany – the world’s export leader – as long as the jobs stay in the country.

The idea of fostering “national champions” has been a foreign concept in German politics for many years. When Siemens (Germany) and Alstom (France) sought to merge their rail operations in an attempt to create a European champion of railway technology, the European Commission disallowed the merger over concerns as to how it would affect competition. There was very little protest to this decision, except among those directly affected.

Similarly, nobody stepped in when Germany lost its leading market position in solar tech to the People’s Republic of China. In Germany, it doesn’t seem to matter whether a company is German or not – at least when it comes to investments.

We might soon have to say it *didn’t* seem to matter. It is possible that Germany’s agnostic attitude with regard to national industrial policy will soon be coming to an end. In early February, Peter Altmaier, Germany’s current minister for economic affairs and a close confidante of Chancellor Angela Merkel, presented a “National Industrial Strategy 2030” in Berlin. This plan foresees Germany using state funds to support, for example, a European factory for car batteries, with one billion euro coming from Berlin and 700 million from Paris. It would also create a fund that invests in companies vulnerable to takeover, thus protecting them from being swallowed up. Altmaier is even

thinking about easing antitrust laws, with the aim of lowering the barriers to company mergers.

At the moment, there is much debate as to whether or not all of this makes any sense. Much more important, however, is the fact that the Ministry for Economic Affairs published such a paper in the first place. Since the days of Ludwig Erhard, West Germany’s first post-war economics minister and the architect of its “economic miracle,” stewards of the German economy have consistently promoted – in theory, not always in practice – a classic, economically liberal position; that is, decisions with regard to investments are made by companies, not politicians. It would appear that this is about to change.

There are three clearly identifiable reasons for this paradigm shift. First is the presidency of Donald Trump in Washington. His aggressive rhetoric against German export

continued on page 2

continued on page 4

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Read & greet

Gearing up for the Munich Security Conference (MSC): On the eve of the world's most prestigious international foreign policy conference, Detlef Prinz, publisher of *The Security Times*, hosted the Security Times Press Lounge. MSC Chairman Wolfgang Ischinger spoke about a troubling development, namely that more and more politicians are making specific demands before agreeing to attend the MSC. Some refuse to sit on panels with certain other guests. Others are willing to give a speech, but will not take part in the debate that follows. These new grievances run counter to the spirit of the MSC, which was founded for the express purpose of enabling the highest level of dialogue on all matters of security policy.

At the conference on Feb. 22, publisher Prinz handed Ivanka Trump a recent copy of *The German Times* with the US president on the cover. "This photo symbolizes the real balance of power," said Prinz. "Your father is sitting while all others are standing. It becomes immediately clear who the boss is." Ivanka Trump let out a hearty laugh and promised to put the paper on her father's desk in the Oval Office.



MSC Chairman Wolfgang Ischinger (left) and publisher Detlef Prinz present *The Security Times*.



All the security policy news that's fit to print: *The Security Times*, a special issue of *The German Times*.



Detlef Prinz gives Ivanka Trump a copy of *The German Times*.



Expert talks at the Security Times Press Lounge: Minister of Economic Affairs and Energy Peter Altmaier (left photo), Executive Editor Theo Sommer (left) in conversation with former Austrian Chancellor Christian Kern (right) and Jürgen Rahmig of the daily *Reutlinger Generalanzeiger* (middle). Right photo: Detlef Prinz with Vice President Mike Pence and Wolfgang Ischinger.

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas (left) and Bavarian Minister President Markus Söder (right) during a ceremony for the Prime Minister of North Macedonia Zoran Zaev (center left) and Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras of Greece (center right). Together they were awarded the Ewald von Kleist Prize for their efforts towards resolving the dispute over the naming of North Macedonia.



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continued from page 1
Swan song and legacy

■ She expressed her concern about the US withdrawal from the INF treaty, a pillar of Europe's security: "With our elementary interests, [we] will do everything in our power to facilitate further steps towards disarmament. Blind rearmament cannot be our response to this." She said that defense spending to the tune of two percent of GDP is a benchmark – Germany already raised its share from 1.18 percent in 2014 to 1.35 and will reach 1.5 percent by 2024. "For many, this is not enough, but for us it is an essential leap." And Germany is proud of its contribution to the defense of the Baltic Republics as well as to numerous NATO missions (e.g. Afghanistan, Horn of Africa, Mediterranean) and non-NATO missions (e.g. Mali).

■ She found America's non-transparent strategy in Afghanistan disquieting. The allies need to talk about "further development"; she would hate to have to abruptly withdraw the 1,300 German soldiers stationed at the Hindu Kush simply because there were no more "interconnected capacities," meaning American troops.

■ She pulled no punches about Washington's withdrawal from the nuclear deal with Iran: "Does it serve our common cause, our common goal of reducing the harmful and difficult influence of Iran by terminating the only agreement still in force, or would we help our cause more by keeping hold of the small anchor we have in order to perhaps be able to exert pressure in other areas?"

■ It does nobody any good, the chancellor argued, if everybody imposes their own sanctions on Russia. While castigating Moscow's annexation of Crimea and its support for the Donbass separatists, she remarked "things may look completely different again in a few years from now." She defended the Nord Stream 2 oil pipeline: "A Russian gas molecule is a Russian gas molecule, whether it comes via Ukraine or via the Baltic Sea.... But seeing as we imported Russian gas even during the Cold War... I don't know why the situation today should be so much worse that we can't say that Russia remains a partner."

■ Last but not least, Merkel poked fun at Washington deeming German automobiles a national security threat. BMW's biggest plant is in South Carolina, she pointed out, not in Bavaria. "If these vehicles... suddenly pose a threat to US national security, then this comes as a shock to us."

The motto of this year's Munich Security Conference was "The Great Puzzle: Who Will Pick up the Pieces?" Chancellor Merkel gave her answer in the last sentence of her address: "Nur wir alle zusammen – only all of us together!" A storm of applause was the reaction of the audience, a standing ovation lasting several minutes.

The next speaker was Vice President Mike Pence. His speech seemed to be geared only to one single listener, wrote the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, that is, President Trump, whom Pence obsequiously mentioned once a minute – 34 times all told. In fact, his speech was calibrated to suit a campaign rally rather than an international audience. And unlike Chancellor Merkel, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and the other speakers, upon finishing he cut and ran without taking any questions.

The vice president extolled the achievements of the Trump

administration with fulsome repetitiousness. "Today, America is stronger than ever before, and America is leading on the world stage once again," was the thrust of his address, neglecting the fact that it is leading largely without followers. His vision of US leadership appears to be telling other nations what to do. "The time has come for our European partners to..." he kept repeating; time to withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal, time to stop undermining US sanctions, time to take a strong stand against Nord Stream 2, time to do this and that. It sounded like a *Befehlsausgabe*, commented *Der Spiegel* – barking orders. Allies he treated as vassals. Common solutions? No way. Referring to Nord Stream 2, Pence even threatened putting an end to alliance solidarity: "We cannot pay for the defense of the West if our allies grow dependent on the East."

The reaction of the audience was more than tepid. This was not an expression of anti-Americanism. Indeed, there is a rift between most of Europe and his administration, but no animus against the United States as such. This became overwhelmingly clear when former Vice President Joe Biden stepped up to the rostrum. He repudiated Trump's go-it-alone politics, assuring the audience that the US will remain committed to its allies despite a perception that the country is pulling away from the world and its leadership responsibilities. "The American people understand," he said, "that it's only by working in cooperation with our friends that we are going to be able to harness the forces of a rapidly changing world, to mitigate their downsides and turn them to our collective advantage."

Referring to the isolationist policies of the current administration, Biden ended his speech: "I promise you, as my mother would say, this too shall pass. We will be back. Don't have any doubt about that." It earned him, too, a storm of applause. It gave the participants hope that the current alienation won't last. Discord won't be forever. Germany will do everything to make Europe a stronger partner in the trans-Atlantic community of the future.



Pulling no punches: Chancellor Angela Merkel

IMAGO/PHOTOTHEK

Old deals, new deals

Caught between the past and the future, the parties of Germany's grand coalition are arguing amongst themselves

BY LUTZ LICHTENBERGER

For the third time in four terms, Germany is governed by a grand coalition. Grand – that means the center-right CDU/CSU and the center-left Social Democrats create a government together. Under the leadership of Chancellor Angela Merkel, they must cooperate in the cabinet and in the Bundestag while at the same time thinking about the next election in two years – or should we say, in two years *at the latest*.

All three parties have experienced significant turbulence in recent weeks. New individuals have taken over leadership roles and are now looking to secure their positions and set themselves apart from their predecessors.

The Union parties as well as the SPD are openly sparring more within their own ranks than with their political opponents. And they're doing so over issues of the past: earlier decisions regarding migrations issues (in the Union) and over social policy (in the SPD). At stake here are the domestic issues that, more than any others, have defined the identity of each party.

In December, Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer – now affectionately referred to as AKK – won the chairpersonship of the Christian Democrats, taking over for Angela Merkel, who had held the post for the past 19 years. Although her title of chairperson may sound like she is the equivalent of the national chairman or chairwoman of the Democratic or Republican Party in the United States, in Germany's political system, the role is immensely more important.

Kramp-Karrenbauer's victory over her two conservative opponents, Friedrich Merz and Jens Spahn, is comparable to winning a US presidential primary. Under normal circumstances, a party in Germany is almost universally expected to be the party's candidate for chancellor.

However, the vote was rather tight, with 51.8 percent of ballots cast for AKK and 48.2 percent for Friedrich Merz, Merkel's long-time rival. Merz's supporters are reluctant to admit defeat, as AKK must face EU parliament elections in May as well as a whole series of difficult regional elections over the next two years in former East German states,

where the far-right party Alternative for Germany (AfD) can dare to hope for some positive results.

Merz supporters are demanding a clean break with Merkel's refugee policy in hopes of winning back AfD voters. At a Union party congress in February, the new chairman uttered exactly the words the more conservative half of the party wanted to hear. In reference to the 2015 refugee crisis, she said: "We

and sometimes quite liberal, yet tended to govern with a heavy dose of pragmatism, is threading the political needle as she attempts to solidify her support among centrists. She did not classify Merkel's humanitarian act of accepting hundreds of thousands of war refugees in autumn 2015 as the real problem; instead, she seemed to adopt the widely shared CDU interpretation that the indiscriminately open-door

her party. AKK must hold together the two wings of the party, whose disparate takes on Merkel and her *annus horribilis* of 2015 have less to do with policy issues and more to do with a symbolic, emotional and historic sentiment. This is not only an imperative for the good of her party, but also for her ultimately locking down the official nomination to succeed Merkel as chancellor.

following this ill-fated legislation, the party has suffered one defeat after the next. After receiving 38 percent of the vote in the federal elections of 2002, the SPD has been on a consistently downward trajectory – in the 2017 elections the party earned a mere 20.5 percent of ballots cast.

Andrea Nahles, chairperson of the SPD for just under a year, is seeking to appeal again to her party's tra-

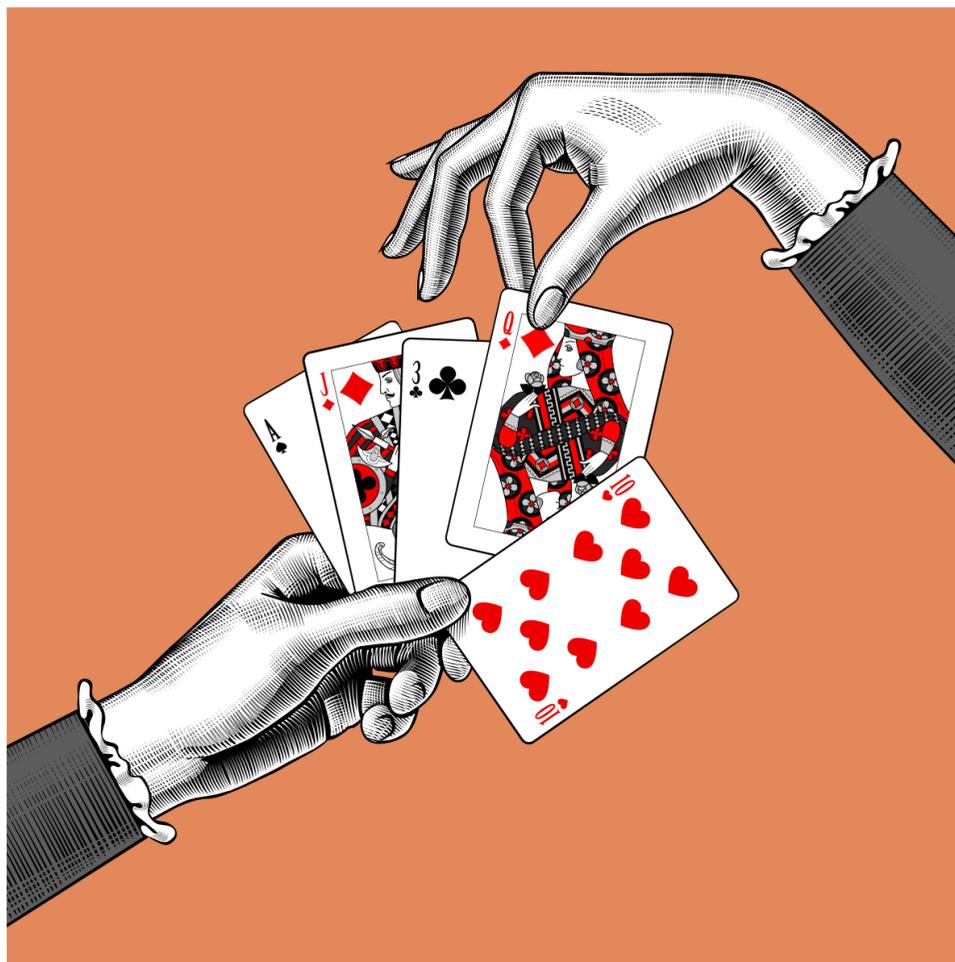
pay, fewer penalties for those reluctant to seek jobs, earlier and better advanced training and qualification programs, the right to work from home, the right to disconnect, an improved basic pension and raising the minimum hourly wage from €9.19 to €12.

Nahles is the first woman to lead the SPD, and she is seeking to become its first first candidate for chancellor. While no one is really supposed to contest her for the nomination, she has no shortage of opponents within the party, including retired former chancellor Gerhard Schröder, the man responsible for Agenda 2010. In a widely read interview with *Der Spiegel*, he openly disputed Nahles' suitability as the SPD's candidate for chancellor, arguing that the party needs someone with significant economic expertise. When asked whether Nahles has what it takes in this regard, he responded: "I doubt even she would claim to have such expertise" – a vile insult.

He then floated the idea of Minister of Finance Olaf Scholz, whose indubitable credentials cannot compensate for his dearth of charisma. The former Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel may also still lurk in the wings, despite having been shunted aside last spring by Nahles and Scholz in a maneuver worthy of *House of Cards*. Gabriel believes the party cannot continue to indulge in identity politics debates, which tend to alienate the ordinary workers the SPD so desperately needs. The 59-year-old is champing at the bit to get back in the game, and as long as the party's polling numbers remain so dismal, Schröder's feisty, rhetorically gifted friend cannot be counted out.

Despite the intra-party disputes in the Union and SPD, the coalition is stable as the parties remain preoccupied with themselves. Their conflicts, however, can be seen as a prelude to the next elections. Party headquarters may even be rife with deliberations on whether there just might be an opportune time to end the coalition and call for new elections. The house of cards may topple, but German politics is sure to be dealt a new hand.

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



must do everything we can to prevent this from happening again." Germany must act "humanely and consistently." She was not exactly abandoning the idea of receiving asylum-seekers, yet she made clear that "we are not a country that will be taken advantage of."

Kramp-Karrenbauer, who as Saarland's minister president was sometimes considered conserva-

immigration policy that initially followed Merkel's gesture had been misguided.

As Merkel's tenure as chancellor comes to an end, the scars acquired over her 14 years in office are becoming ever-more visible. But she remains a popular political leader, whose consistently objective, measured and unpretentious style still appeals to the majority of

Meanwhile, the other coalition partner, the SPD, is preoccupied mainly with its own internal struggles and some demons from the past. The mother of all problems facing the Social Democrats is the dispute over the social reforms referred to as Agenda 2010, which the party adopted in 2003 under the then-Chancellor and SPD chairman Gerhard Schröder. In the 16 years

ditional voter base – lower-middle class wage and salaries earners – by shifting its platform sharply to the left. In recent weeks, the party has passed a series of resolutions that was conceived less as a legislative program for the next two years – the CDU/CSU would never play along – and more as an unadulterated election platform: longer periods of unemployment

Hereditary friends

From Élysée to Aachen, the bond between Germany and France is holding firm

BY CÉCILE CALLA

Will France and Germany be able to revive the European machine in these troubled times? On the eve of crucial European elections, the two countries sought to reaffirm their unflinching bond and renew their relationship by signing a new treaty on French-German cooperation and integration, already known as the Aachen Treaty, on Jan. 22, 2019.

Initially planned for the 50th anniversary of the Élysée Treaty in 2013, the text arrives five years late and, according to many experts, falls short, trailing far behind the resolutions that were made one year earlier in January 2018. It's "a masterpiece of concluding statements," joked the former Social Democratic Minister of Foreign Affairs Sigmar Gabriel. The French daily newspaper *Le Monde* denounced the treaty for its "lack of ambition." Many observers expected advances in social policy, among other things. But "it is not only symbolic," retorts Julien Thorel, political scientist at the German think tank Center for European Policy. According to this expert, the treaty improves and intensifies coordination between the two countries to avoid awkward situations such as France's Mediter-

ranean Union initiative or Germany's hasty nuclear power phase-out without French consultation. Above all, this treaty could make the most of the future French-German parliamentary assembly that, even without decision-making powers, will give the two parliaments a stronger voice. Made up of 50 German and 50 French members of the European Parliament, the assembly will convene four times a year. In the words of the French-German entrepreneur Sabine Thillaye, a LaREM member of the French National Assembly and Chair of the European Affairs Committee, the treaty will "lead to a genuine culture of discussion and compromise."

The Treaty of Aachen extends the 1963 Élysée Treaty, which sealed the reconciliation of the two former "hereditary enemies" and only saw the light of day thanks to the political will of French President Charles de Gaulle and German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer. At the center of the Élysée Treaty was a vast consultation system between the French and German govern-

ments on foreign policy, defense and the development of youth exchanges through the creation of the French-German Youth Office. Over the years, this treaty was enriched with new mechanisms enhancing the bilateral consultation system.

The new 28-article treaty is the result of long discussions and negotiations between the two executive branches. It emphasizes the convergence of the French and German economies, cross-border cooperation and common defense and security policy – themes that were at the heart of the French president's speech at the Sorbonne in September 2017. In it, the two countries affirm their will to strengthen the "cooperation between their armed forces in order to establish a common military culture and joint deployments," a subject that has already received much critique. In this framework, the Franco-German Defense and Security Council, established in the Mitterrand-Kohler era, should become the "steering body for these reciprocal commitments." In one highly symbolic

promise – as it is already enshrined in NATO treaties – the two countries commit to providing each other aid and assistance, including armed forces, in the case of an attack on their territories.

During the signing ceremony, Chancellor Merkel strongly emphasized the importance of a European army. For the Germans, traditionally cautious in terms of military commitment, this marks an important and relatively new step. This path will nevertheless be paved with obstacles due to cultural and institutional differences between the two countries (in France, the president heads the armed forces; in Germany, it's the Bundestag). In a discussion with German and French youth, the two leaders acknowledged their divergent responses to the scandal provoked by the murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi – Berlin decided to suspend its arms sales to Saudi Arabia whereas Paris refused to do so.

Another important chapter concerns the convergence of legislation on taxation and economic development. Tensions are anti-

ciated due to divergences in the countries' economic systems (the centralized state versus co-management) and economic progression (reduced industry and high unemployment compared to a still-strong industry and very low unemployment), which give rise to many misunderstandings in interpreting and responding to economic and financial crises. Negotiations on a eurozone budget indeed continue to be bogged down. To overcome these differences, the new treaty envisages the creation of a council of experts from both countries.

Lastly, a commitment was made to eliminate the obstacles complicating the daily lives of those residing in cross-border regions. In 2015, more than 219,000 people crossed a border each day in the Greater Region (including Germany, France, Belgium and Luxembourg) to get to their place of work. This regional integration is a way for the French-German partnership to become a true European laboratory.

To bring this text to life, a list of 15 priority projects was published

immediately after the ceremony. Among them, the following stand out: increased cooperation at the United Nations Security Council, the creation of a French-German digital platform for audiovisual and informational content, the improvement of cross-border rail links and the creation of a French-German research and innovation network on artificial intelligence. The rapid implementation of these projects, especially those affecting cross-border areas, will be the best guarantee of this treaty's viability.

As the United Kingdom prepares to leave the European Union and populism gains ground all over Europe, France and Germany must show unity, without excluding their other partners, to strengthen Europe's voice in the world. The cancellation of the French president's trip to the Munich Security Conference is not a good sign, even if it cannot necessarily be blamed on tensions between the two leaders. Now more than ever, Paris and Berlin must demonstrate unwavering political will.

Cécile Calla is a Berlin-based journalist from Paris. She was a correspondent for *Le Monde* and editor in chief of the magazine *ParisBerlin*.

It's not rocket science

After scrapping INF, how might we prevent Arms Race 2.0?

BY RICHARD BURT
AND JON WOLFSTHAL

As we move into 2019, a new round of US-Russian nuclear competition – Arms Race 2.0 – is clearly emerging. The risk of nuclear conflict through deliberate action or some tragic combination of mistakes and escalation is growing. While both sides are developing and deploying new offensive and defensive strategic systems, the two governments are taking actions that could lower the threshold to nuclear use.

Amid all of this, political engagement, strategic dialogue and trust have evaporated from this complex and increasingly adversarial relationship. This dynamic not only threatens to undo 50 years of efforts to avoid the possibility of a US-Russian nuclear exchange; it also undermines attempts to slow or halt the spread of nuclear weapons globally.

Despite the crises and close calls, we survived the Cold War without using nuclear weapons. But Arms Race 2.0 is arguably more dangerous in an era characterized by cyber-enhanced information warfare and the introduction of advanced capabilities by both countries that could undermine strategic stability.

One special new problem is the extent to which Washington and Moscow have interconnected their own nuclear and non-nuclear command, communication and control systems. This mixing of capabilities, described by analysts at the Carnegie Endowment as “nuclear entanglement,” further increases the risk that conventional conflicts could escalate quickly to the nuclear level through miscalculation.

We will need to be more than lucky to manage this new competition. US and Russian leaders will need to be smarter and more focused than their predecessors to ensure that their efforts prevent any unintended or unexpected event from quickly triggering a more dangerous conflict.

Unfortunately, the toxic character of the current US-Russian political relationship will make this process much more difficult. The latest casualty in the growing freeze between Moscow and Washington is the 1987 Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF). Adopting the INF agreement banning all nuclear or conventionally armed ground-based missiles with ranges between

500 and 5,500 kilometers marked a critical step in ending the Cold War. Its entry into force ushered in a generation of nuclear transparency and reduction agreements that have served the security interests of both countries and Europe as a whole.

In 2013, Washington accused Russia of violating the treaty by testing and later deploying the 9M729

can quickly escalate will further increase.

Europe is an accident waiting to happen. The Nuclear Crisis Group (NCG), an international group of specialists tracking potential nuclear flashpoints around the globe, catalogued in 2018 alone over 170 military incidents between NATO and Russian military forces in the European region that had the

For the Trump administration, steeped as it is in the anti-arms control views of its national security advisor John Bolton, arms accords are viewed as a menace. In an environment where Russia is seen as having violated or skirted the limits on several arms control agreements, it is easy to understand how Trump could be convinced to let such agreements die or, better

benefit from a new phase of nuclear competition or, instead, seeks to negotiate new deals from a position of strength. In the meantime, however, Moscow seems intent on sowing confusion among its adversaries and leaving opaque the nature of its nuclear capabilities and doctrine.

This combination of short-sightedness and opportunism combined

In assessing where we should go from here, one thing is clear: Both the United States and Russia will, for the foreseeable future, seek to maintain nuclear arsenals that can survive any combination of a nuclear or hybrid first strike by the other. Thus, having enough survivable weapons to inflict unacceptable damage on the other remains the core of deterrence that should continue to guide strategic thinking in both countries. This means that new developments and programs perceived as undermining such a capability – whether new missile defense technologies, advanced and highly accurate conventional weapons or increasingly the possible impact of cyber capabilities – should be the subject of deep strategic consultations. Even if these talks do not produce new agreements, understanding the thinking and activities of both sides will reduce the risks of miscalculation and escalation.

The fact that neither Moscow nor Washington at this juncture seems interested in pursuing a serious and comprehensive dialogue over what strategic stability looks like in the 21st century represents a remarkable abdication of their global responsibilities.

The reality today is, as was the case decades ago, that neither Russia nor the US can outpace or out compete the other in the nuclear sphere. However, the “Russia issue” in US politics is increasingly toxic and it is unclear whether the nuclear agenda in the bilateral relationship can be salvaged. With accusations of collusion between Trump and Russia and hyper-partisanship now dominating Washington politics, anyone seeking a dialogue with Russia is accused of appeasing Putin. This has to end and real, sustained engagement between US and Russian officials and experts must get under way again.

Richard Burt is a co-chair of the Nuclear Crisis Group and the former US Chief Negotiator of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty.

Jon Wolfsthal is director of the Nuclear Crisis Group and former senior director for arms control and nonproliferation at the National Security Council.



“No puppet. No puppet. You’re the puppet.” Demonstrators protest the looming cancellation of the INF Treaty in front of the US embassy in Berlin on Feb. 1.

cruise missile and has now canceled the agreement. Russia, which denies any such violation, has, in turn, accused NATO and the United States of undermining the INF pact by deploying launchers for missile defenses in Romania that can also fire offensive missiles banned by the treaty.

Neither side has shown a willingness to compromise in order to save the agreement and the benefits it brings, although Russia has made some last-minute efforts to at least appear as though it seeks a diplomatic solution. In retrospect, it seems inevitable that the INF Treaty was to be scrapped, to the detriment of stability and predictability in Europe and elsewhere. If INF-range missiles are again deployed in or around Europe, the risk that a crisis or mistake

potential for serious escalation. Yet the refusal by Moscow and Washington to engage seriously on INF, or more broadly on political and security issues, is a symptom of the growing distrust and animosity felt on both sides of the relationship.

These strains now threaten the entire architecture of strategic arms control. The most recent pillar of this complex structure, the 2010 New START Treaty, limits both Moscow and Washington to no more than 1,550 warheads on 800 missiles and bombers and expires in February 2021. The accord built on its predecessors, including the original 1991 START Treaty that enabled on-site inspections in both countries and created a system of transparency and predictability in strategic nuclear deployments that has lasted for nearly three decades.

yet, be killed by his own hand. New START has the unfortunate additional stigma in the Trump administration of having been negotiated under Barack Obama, a president whose agreements tend to die painful deaths by Trump tweets.

For Moscow, the picture is more complex, but the INF Treaty, START and New START agreements are seen as legacies of an era when a newly independent Russia was willing to accept what are now seen by the hawks in the Kremlin as one-sided arms control deals. Not only is Moscow developing a variety of new nuclear weapons to counter its perceived conventional inferiority; it also seems ready to walk away from deals negotiated in a period of economic and political weakness.

It is unclear whether President Putin believes that Russia will ben-

with the inherent risks of nuclear weaponry and the prospect for accidental or unintended military incidents presents a troubling set of risks. The current occupants of the White House and Kremlin – and their advisors – would do well to heed the key lessons of the Cold War. Both Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev came to recognize and then openly state that a nuclear war could not be won and should never be fought. Accordingly, they turned away from nuclear brinkmanship and accepted the idea of mutual and verifiable quantitative and qualitative arms limits. In an earlier era, both Richard Nixon and Leonid Brezhnev, two hard-liners for sure, also recognized the value of détente, including strategic arms control.

continued from page 1
Fusions and confusions

surpluses, his threats with regard to punitive tariffs and the prospect that German automobile imports could be declared a danger to US national security – have come as a shock to Germans. The country's most important ally is no longer a benevolent hegemon standing for shared values; instead, it is a rude competitor that uses its political power to gain economic advantages for itself. In fact, if negotiations on Praxair's takeover of Linde were being held today, it is unclear whether German politicians might attempt to block the deal.

The second force behind the shift in opinion in Berlin is the scandal surrounding manipulated diesel emissions. Since 2015, when it was revealed in the US that Volkswagen had installed illegal defeat devices in its diesel models in order to meet the official limits for nitrogen oxide emissions, “Dieselgate” has been one of the most discussed topics in Germany. Volkswagen already paid a fine of \$4.3 billion to the US, with a number of lawsuits on behalf of motorists in several countries still pending. Stuttgart and other German cities have even had to impose driving bans on diesel cars for some roads. The diesel scandal rocked the

very core of the German auto industry, which had until recently been the pride of the country. Is it possible the industry is facing massive technical and economic problems? In Germany, more than 820,000 people are employed in the development and construction of automobiles, contributing 7.7 percent to the gross domestic product. The suspicion plaguing Germany's general public today is that the industry has missed the boat on important technical trends and might, for example, no longer play a meaningful role in battery technology development for electric cars, which is exactly where Altmaier has called for action.

The third and perhaps most important reason for the novel involvement of politicians in the German economy is the rise of China or, more precisely, a changed assessment of that country's economic ascent. Until recently, Germans have only benefited from China's successes. The People's Republic is Germany's most important trading partner, ahead of both the Netherlands and the US. For 2018, the total volume of trade with China reached €200 billion, with Germany exporting goods worth €93

billion euro to China and importing goods totaling €106 billion. No other European country enjoys a position comparable to Germany's status in China. Today, however, an increasing amount of skepticism is diluting that enthusiasm. After all, the Asian giant remains a communist dictatorship and continues to pursue an aggressive foreign policy increasingly characterized by the aspiration to achieve dominance. In the context of the fundamental shift toward the digital age, this behavior serves to cause anxiety and fear.

The first wake-up call that prompted Germany to rethink its policies toward China was the Kuka case. In 2016, the Augsburg-based industrial robot manufacturer was sold to the Chinese Midea Group. Prior to that, Sigmar Gabriel – a Social Democrat and then-minister of economic affairs – had tried in vain to prevent the deal and shield Kuka's strategically important robot technology. Now the technology is gone, and Kuka might even become a victim of the current Chinese-US trade dispute; as the economic climate worsens, Chinese industrial companies are buying fewer robots.

More and more Germans are worried about issues that go beyond the possible loss of a key technology. Concerns about data protection and national security are on the rise. In this realm, the focus is on the Chinese tech giant Huawei, the second-largest provider of mobile phones worldwide. Huawei is currently expanding its market strength in Europe at a rapid pace. Deutsche Telekom, for example, is an important Huawei client. Huawei equipment is also set to play a key role in the expansion of Germany's infrastructure for the new generation of 5G mobile communications; that is, unless the federal government intervenes at the last moment and puts a stop to Huawei's plans.

And this is precisely what the US government would like to see happen. Officials in Washington fear that when push comes to shove, China could use Huawei components as tools of espionage. Meng Wanzhou, Huawei's CFO and daughter of the company's founder, was arrested recently in Canada on a warrant from the US.

Concerns over the loss of data security as a result of the use of Chinese technology are likely justified, especially considering the nonchalance with which the Bei-

jing government uses the data of its citizens to carry out comprehensive surveillance. For European governments eager to protect their own citizens' freedoms, it would not be wise to give Huawei unprotected access to sensitive data. However, in light of the aggressive behavior exhibited by President Trump, it looks like these legitimate concerns might also be used as weapons in a Chinese-US battle for supremacy over the technology of the future.

This is the backdrop against which Germany's minister for economic affairs is now attempting to intervene in industrial policy – an approach that is very unusual in the country's economic history. Still, one of Altmaier's areas of concern is right on the nose: no new global corporations and no world market leaders are emerging in Germany anymore, or, for that matter, in the EU. The only exception to this rule is the Wall-dorf-based software company SAP. Almost all other globally operating companies in Germany can be traced back to the early days of industrialization: Siemens, Daimler, Thyssen-Krupp, Bayer, BASF and even Deutsche Bank. Moreover, countless names have disappeared over the course of the

years: AEG, Hoechst and Grundig. Until recently, Germany had hoped to facilitate the growth of new companies by means of improved framework conditions. Now, however, a hands-on industrial policy is being set up to accomplish that task and generate some European champions.

But does this approach make sense? There is indeed one shining example of successful European industrial policy: Airbus. But that company required a large amount of time and money to become a serious player on the global aircraft market. Only in 2001 – more than 30 years after it was founded – did the European corporation sell more planes than its US competitor Boeing. But the digital age doesn't provide companies with as much time as that. For this reason, Peter Altmaier's industrial policy initiative could easily go down in history as one of the many missteps made in these uncertain times.

Nikolaus Piper has been a business editor for the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and reported for many years as a New York correspondent.



Godfather of social democracy:
Willy Brandt, German Chancellor
from 1969 to 1974

BY NILS HEISTERHAGEN

Germany's Social Democratic Party (SPD) was never a revolutionary force but had always been party of reformers able to adapt to new social realities with legislation designed to improve people's lives. That kind of SPD has not been seen for years.

How did this happen? By 1990, all the battles appeared to have been fought, and the political left – not only in Germany – gradually lost sight of the fact that its original purpose was to rein in capitalism and allow for more people to share in its prosperity. The political left also fell victim to the myth of the “end of history” (Francis Fukuyama). It succumbed to the liberal illusion that we were on a highway of progress (Pankaj Mishra). It let go of the “social question” and the set of economic tools it had amassed over decades that helped it resolve economic problems and stand up to the “capitalists.”

Instead, the political left devoted itself to that which Fukuyama calls “identity politics” in his new book *Identity*. Yet identity politics, which the political scientist Mark Lilla blames for Hillary Clinton's loss to Donald Trump, is not really new.

A good 20 years ago, philosopher Richard Rorty wrote in his book *Achieving Our Country*:

“Leftists in the academy have permitted cultural politics to supplant real politics and have

collaborated with the Right in making cultural issues central to public debate. They are spending energy which should be directed at proposing new laws, on discussing topics as remote from the country's needs as were Adams's musings on the Virgin and the Dynamo.”

For Rorty, the left took a wrong turn in choosing to focus on identity politics. He called on them to instead see themselves as doers. This capacity to influence the course of developments was precisely what he believed the “New Left” had lost sight of. Instead of seeking “political change,” it sought only to effect “cultural change.”

This continues to be the case today. Expressed polemically, leftist intellectuals write lovely essays about sexual morality and wage debates over correct positions on religious and ethnic issues, but pay little attention to economics. For Rorty, the political left clearly needed instead: “To talk much more about money, even at the cost of talking less about stigma.”

Since having taken this advice to heart, the US Democrats appear to have woken up, at least from the perspective of European observers. To be sure, socialism is the wrong term to use if there's any hope of making progress in the US. When Democratic Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez gushes over socialism, she means that which was once the core of European social democ-

racy. She does not mean the “state socialism” of the Soviet Union, but rather that for which European social democracy once fought: a welfare state, fair pay, secure jobs and access to a good education.

The left must “dare more social democracy,” not more socialism. We need a return to the New Deal politics of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the philosophy of Keynesian economics in which the state played a central role. The pri-

macy of policy should be wielded to change things for the better. Instead of relying on the market, we should intervene and invest. European social democrats would be well advised to embrace this approach. Only then can they find their way out of their present predicament.

The left should “get back into the business of piecemeal reform within the framework of a market economy,” Rorty prescribed. This

was once the kernel of European social democracy. As Willy Brandt, the longtime chairman of Germany's SPD, once said: “All who want to live securely tomorrow must fight for reforms today.”

The SPD appears to have rediscovered this taste for reform and recently presented its concept for a “Social State 2025.” The party and the entire left must supplement this with an “Industrial Strategy 2025” and a new leftist eco-

nomics policy infused by debates over financial market regulation and tax avoidance. The left must dare to take on contentious issues in social, tax and economic policies.

It should not exaggerate. Its benchmark should remain the social democracy of the past, which sought to reform – not abolish – capitalism.

Once the political left again becomes a force for reform that sees its core mission in creating a socially inclusive economy, it will regain the support of the broader public and deflate inflammatory tensions in migration and integration issues.

If Democrats in the US succeed in broadly ignoring Donald Trump and manage to propose coherent social, tax and economic policies, they stand a good chance at regaining the voters' trust. The same is true for Germans and Europeans with respect to social democracy. Those who restrict themselves to commenting on the excesses of the right have little chance of building majorities. It is not enough to say what you oppose. One must state what one stands for in order to win the support of the masses. ■

Nils Heisterhagen was a policy advisor for the SPD in Rhineland-Palatinate until 2018. Last year he published *Die liberale Illusion. Warum wir einen linken Realismus brauchen* (The liberal illusion. Why we need leftist realism).

Daring more social democracy

The Left in Europe and America must find the way back to their roots

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How he got away with it: *Der Spiegel* uncovers its own scandal.

Telling it like it is – sort of

The fabrications of a promising young reporter have left the German weekly *Der Spiegel* in dire straits, with its much-lauded fact-checking department being called to account

BY THOMAS SCHULER

Journalist Juan Moreno never actually met Claas Relotius. They spoke on the phone only once, and Moreno believes this is one of the reasons he was able to eventually expose Relotius' many journalistic fabrications. Everyone else at the *Der Spiegel* seems to have fallen for the charms of the award-winning Relotius, a four-time recipient of the prestigious German Reporter Prize. Relotius had been awarded several other prominent prizes, even though the 33-year-old had worked as an intern and freelancer until only a few years ago.

The whole thing started a couple of years ago when Moreno read a Relotius' story on what was supposedly the first tax consultant in Cuba, a man who advised shoe shiners. Could that be? Moreno kept his doubts to himself. Soon thereafter, *Der Spiegel* asked him to co-author an article with Relotius about groups of Central American refugees approaching the United States. He ended up researching the piece from the perspective of the refugees, while Relotius took the position of an Arizona-based vigilante border militia seeking to keep out the intruders.

When Moreno expressed doubts about Relotius' work to his superiors, he was not taken seriously and told to back off. Moreno then looked into the matter in secret and discovered that Relotius had never met his protagonists and had invented parts of their biographies. Moreno then examined earlier texts and found more fabrications. When Relotius was confronted with this evidence, he simply forged further evidence to prove his story.

Der Spiegel broke the story last December and has since been busy explaining which aspects of the 60 articles Relotius wrote over the course of seven years are fictional. Similar fabrications were found at other newspapers and magazines Relotius wrote for. *Der Spiegel* has consistently boasted that its rigorous fact-checking process makes it particularly credible, which makes it all the more unsettling to see how easily Relotius was able to hoodwink the magazine's editorial staff – not to mention the entire industry.

The scandal leaves a large stain on the reputation of *Der Spiegel*, a lead-

ing force in German journalism since 1947. The magazine held a position in Europe comparable to that of *The New York Times* in the US. Today, at a time when established media outlets fear for their credibility, Relotius' lies provide critics with a welcome opportunity to question the leading role of mainstream media.

Two years ago, *Der Spiegel* celebrated itself as a pillar of democracy, reminding the public that it had emerged stronger from its greatest crisis back in 1962, when founder Rudolf Augstein was imprisoned on treason charges and many Germans took to the streets to protest for his release. At that time, the magazine's circulation skyrocketed, and Augstein's "Telling it like it is" became its famous mission statement. A plaque with that phrase still hangs in the lobby of the magazine's Hamburg offices. But does the aphorism still ring true?

Why didn't Relotius' lies attract attention before? How is it possible that the jury of the Reporter Prize actually praised his transparent approach to the job? Those same jury members now own up to a profound sense of shame yet point out that it was *Der Spiegel's* job to check the facts.

A Relotius report from Fergus Falls, Minnesota, elucidating Donald Trump's election victory makes the much-praised *Der Spiegel* in-house fact-checking look particularly bad: Again, how is it possible that not one of the more than 60 fact-checkers noticed that the distances, landscape descriptions and percentage of Trump voters were incorrect? They failed to notice that Relotius had no evidence for many of his claims, including that there was a sign at the entrance to town banning Mexicans from entering.

Relotius later told his colleagues that his fabrications were the result of the pressure he felt to repeatedly deliver top-notch reports, even though *Der Spiegel* gave him several weeks to do research in Fergus Falls. In the time since the scandal broke, a colleague traveled back to the site to apologize to the people there. Hans Leyendecker, himself once a reporter for *Der Spiegel* and now a respected writer for the Munich-based *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, called journalists like Relotius "damn privileged. [...] In my opinion, someone like Relotius has no idea what pressure even means."

US Ambassador Richard Grenell expressed that "we are concerned these narratives are pushed by Spiegel's senior leadership and that reporters are responding to what the leadership wants." In other words, he sees the forgeries as not the unpleasant act of one individual, but "fake news" ordered from above. The ambassador insisted that "a thorough investigation be conducted by an outside, independent organization to determine exactly how Spiegel violated journalistic standards and how it can reform internal processes."

This demand for external clarification is justified, but it would be taken more seriously if it weren't coming from a diplomat looking to prevent critical reporting of his president. In response to Grenell, *Der Spiegel* noted that criticism of the president did not constitute anti-Americanism, but rather criticism of his policies.

Steffen Klusmann, who took over as editor-in-chief of the magazine in January, said the scandal "has shaken us all to the core. We have high standards when it comes to the credibility of the *Der Spiegel* brand. We have to get our credibility back." Klusmann added that he and his colleagues are going to have "work through this in such a way that leaves as little room for skepticism as possible." *Der Spiegel* admitted: "The system failed." But is this enough to explain what happened? Why did the system fail? How can it be improved?

In response to criticism that *Der Spiegel* covered its own fabrication scandal in the style of an exciting news item, Klusmann said: "This approach is entirely appropriate when exposing a reporter who falsifies stories," adding: "We're not looking to win the next prize for it."

And what about Relotius? He returned his prizes and recently called into a radio program, acting as if he wanted to explain himself to the public. But when one of his former bosses joined the live interview, he hung up. The boss then pointed out that the caller had not, in fact, been Relotius. Apparently, a fake journalist had hoped to impersonate the real fake journalist.

Thomas Schuler is a freelance media journalist based in Munich.

In the name of freedom

Truth and enlightenment beyond the *Der Spiegel* case: Doing more to protect the work of journalists worldwide

BY DETLEF PRINZ

The year 2018 has marked a turning point in several respects. We Germans in particular must be quick to bid farewell to cherished certainties and the thorough dependability of our multilateral system of order. This much we know: achieving new safeguards and reinforced stability on the domestic and international front demands we restore our resolve to assert our model of a liberal, democratic and open society and thereby bolster Western democracies. A better world will not come on its own. We must be determined to advocate for such a world – together.

In this era of upheaval and disruption, our field, the media industry, is breeding its own brand of distress, as evidenced by two things that may seem at first glance to have little to do with one another – the Relotius *Der Spiegel* affair and the 2018 results of the Press Freedom Index – but in which truth and enlightenment clearly play a role. The first tells the story of a young, highly decorated journalist who strays from the principled world of investigative reporting and into the realm of sensationalism. The full impact this will have on the reputation of Germany's most authoritative news outlet – *Der Spiegel* – and on the credibility of our quality journalism more broadly has yet to be felt. The second bears the tragic news that in the past year, more than 80 journalists were killed, 60 were abducted and 348 have been imprisoned, while three remain unaccounted for. All of these individuals are colleagues whose search for the truth led them to countries without a democratic constitution comparable to the one we enjoy.

The Relotius affair has become a *Der Spiegel* affair – and not only because it has exposed the failure of perhaps all of the Hamburg weekly's quality controls. The affair has also shown how the self-declared "assault gun of democracy" is becoming a reporting factory of aesthetic-driven stories no longer anchored in the publishing house's promotional pledge. For me personally, this case is simply mind-boggling. Just the other day, I saw a customer in a magazine shop with a slender shopping bag covered in repetitions of the slogan "DER SPIEGEL – No fear of the truth." A number of potential aphorisms sprang to my mind that we might mockingly suggest as replacements, were the

matter not so dire: "No shying away from consequences," "No hesitating when questioned," "No wavering in the face of change," "No self-censorship," and so on. We wait with bated breath to see how the magazine might extract itself from this scandal. The expeditious shredding and recycling of all their shopping bags may be the smallest problem facing the boss at *Der Spiegel*.

A free, democratically minded and independent media's constitutive role in the liberal, democratic and open societies of the West has been anchored in Germany's constitution – or Basic Law – for nearly 70 years. It is thus all the more worrying that across the globe, tens of thousands of women and men – whether salaried or freelance journalists, citizen journalists or bloggers – are at constant risk of persecution, imprisonment, abduction, abuse and murder. Germany's Basic Law guarantees the absence of such perils, providing for a state of affairs that we have the luxury of taking for granted. Yet the fact that journalists in member states of the European Union must live in fear for their lives is intolerable. The murders of the Maltese journalist Daphne Galizia in 2017 and the Slovak journalist Ján Kuciak in 2018 are evidence of how high the price has become for seeking the truth, even in parts of Europe.

In today's world of global "fake news," internet-aided disinformation campaigns, hate-mail mobbing and cyber trolls, the call by Reporters Without Borders for a UN special representative for the safety of journalists, a demand echoed by the German Bundestag in June 2017, marks a first step in crystallizing the importance of the international community's protection of free and independent journalism.

Yet this alone will not suffice. The EU and its institutions must also take decisive, visible steps to protect private and public-service media and the work of journalists while guaranteeing their independence and, indeed, their social and physical security in all EU member states. For our many imprisoned colleagues across the globe, our hashtag of past years continues for 2019: #FreeThemAll! We will not relent until this hashtag ceases to apply.

Detlef Prinz is publisher of *The German Times*.

THOSE WE MOURN FROM 2018

AFGHANISTAN: April 25 **Abdul Manan Arghand**, Journalist | April 30 **Yar Mohammad Tokhi**, Cameraman | April 30 **Ghazi Rasooli**, Cameraman | April 30 **Abdullah Hananzai**, Journalist | April 30 **Sabawoon Kakar**, Journalist | April 30 **Maharram Durrani** | April 30 **Nowroz Ali Rajabi**, Journalist | April 30 **Shah Marai**, Journalist | April 30 **Saleem Talash**, Journalist | April 30 **Ali Saleemi**, Journalist | April 30 **Shah Ahmad**, Journalist | July 22 **Akhtar Mohammad**, Media Assistant | Sept. 5 **Samim Faramarz**, Journalist | Sept. 5 **Ramiz Ahmadi**, Journalist | Oct. 18 **Mohammad Salim Anghar**, Journalist | Dec. 4 **Kandehar**, Media Assistant | BANGLADESH: June 11 **Shahzahan Bachchu**, Local Journalist | BRAZIL: Jan. 16 **Ueliton Bayer Brizon**, Journalist | Jan. 17 **Jefferson Puraza Lopes**, Journalist | June 21 **Jairo Sousa**, Journalist | Aug. 16 **Marlon de Carvalho Araújo**, Journalist | CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC: July 30 **Orkhan Dzhemal**, Journalist | July 30 **Kirill Radchenko**, Cameraman | July 30 **Aleksandr Rastorgujev**, Documentary Filmmaker | COLOMBIA: April 12 **Juan Javier Ortega Reyes**, Journalist | April 12 **Paúl Rivas Bravo**, Photographer | April 30 **Efraín Segarra**, Media Assistant | INDIA: March 25 **Vijay Singh**, Journalist | March 25 **Navin Nischal**, Journalist | March 26 **Sandeep Sharma**, Journalist | June 15 **Shujaat Bukhari**, Journalist | Oct. 30 **Chandan Tiwari**, Journalist | Oct. 30 **Achyutananda Sahu**, Journalist | INDONESIA: June 10 **Muhammad Yusuf**, Journalist | MEXICO: Jan. 13 **Carlos Domínguez Rodríguez**, Journalist | Feb. 5 **Leslie Ann Pamela Montenegro del Real**, Journalist | March 21 **Leobardo Vázquez Atzin**, Journalist | May 15 **Juan Carlos Huerta**, Journalist | May 29 **Héctor González Antonio**, Journalist | June 29 **José Guadalupe Chan Dzib**, Journalist | July 24 **Rubén Pat Cauch**, Journalist | Aug. 5 **Rodolfo García González**, Blogger | Sept. 21 **Mario Leonel Gómez Sánchez**, Journalist | NICARAGUA: April 21 **Ángel Eduardo Gahona**, Journalist | PAKISTAN: March 27 **Zeeshan Ashraf Butt**, Journalist | Aug. 23 **Abid Hussain**, Journalist | Oct. 16 **Shahil Khan**, Journalist | PALESTINE: April 7 **Yaser Murtaja**, Journalist | April 25 **Ahmed Abu Hussein**, Journalist | PHILIPPINES: May 1 **Edmund Sestoso**, Journalist | June 7 **Dennis Denora**, Journalist | July 20 **Joey Llana**, Journalist | SAUDIA ARABIA: Oct. 2 **Jamal Khashoggi**, Journalist | SLOVAKIA: Feb. 25 **Ján Kuciak**, Journalist | SOMALIA: July 26 **Abdirizak Kasim Iman**, Journalist | Sep. 18 **Abdirizak Said Osman**, Journalist | SYRIA: Feb. 6 **Fouad Mohammed al Hussein**, Blogger | Feb. 18 **Khaled Jamal Hamo**, Sound Engineer | Feb. 20 **Abdul Rahman Ismael Yassin**, Freelance Journalist | March 12 **Bashar al-Attar**, Photographer | March 14 **Ahmad Hamdan**, Blogger | March 22 **Sohaib Ayoun**, Freelance Journalist | May 30 **Moammar Bakkor**, Blogger | July 16 **Mustafa Salamah**, Journalist | Aug. 10 **Ahmed Azize**, Blogger, Nov. 23 **Raed Fares**, Blogger | Nov. 23 **Hamoud al-Jnaid**, Blogger | USA: May 28 **Michael McCormick**, Journalist | May 28 **Aaron Smeltzer**, Photographer | June 28 **Gerald Fischman**, Journalist | June 28 **Rob Haaesen**, Journalist | June 28 **John McNamara**, Journalist | June 28 **Wendy Winters**, Journalist | YEMEN: Jan. 22 **Mohammad al-Qadasi**, Journalist | Jan. 27 **Oussama Salem Al-Maqtari**, Blogger | April 13 **Abdullah al-Qadry**, Journalist | May 17 **Ali Abu al-Haya**, Blogger | June 2 **Anwar al-Rakan**, Journalist | Aug. 1 **Issa al-Nuaimi**, Journalist | Aug. 30 **Ahmed al-Hamzi**, Journalist | Sept. 20 **Omar Ezzi Mohammad**, Media Assistant.

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The might of multilateralism

Christoph Heusgen, German ambassador to the United Nations, talks about Germany's goals, Donald Trump and German blue helmet missions

On Jan. 1, 2019, Germany took its two-year, non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council. What are your goals in the coming years?

We're eager to make our own contribution to the regular issues on the Security Council agenda. These include giving new mandates to various peacekeeping missions and processing reports from the UN's Special Representatives. We also want to bring our perspective into the debate on contemporary crises, including those in Myanmar, Syria and Yemen.

Do you have any particular goals?

We definitely want to accentuate our own ideas, particularly with respect to crisis prevention. The Security Council should seek to tackle crises while they are still manageable. We also intend to raise the issue of human rights as often as possible. In particular, we are going to address the issue of sexual violence against women in conflict areas, as well as the link between security and climate. Overall, our goal is to establish a broader notion of what constitutes security.

What would have to happen for you to feel like you have achieved your goal?

I would be very happy if we managed to bring a number of key crisis prevention issues to the agenda – for example, if we were able to pass a substantive resolution on sexual violence against women. Sexual violence is used as a means of warfare in many contemporary conflicts. We have to take a firm stand against this, alongside taking care of the victims and survivors and calling to account all those who are responsible.

This is the sixth time Germany has had a seat on the Security Council. What's different this time?

The difference is that the Security Council and its underlying concept of multilateralism – indeed, our entire rules-based world order – is under attack. Russia and China have repeatedly called multilateralism into question, and now our close partner, the United States, is doing the same.

According to polls, Germans view the US under President Donald Trump more critically than they view Russia or China.

I've seen those surveys, too. But we really need to clarify that the latter are two countries that break international laws and endanger security. One example would be Russia's involvement in Ukraine. This should worry us much more.

Still, the US under Trump continues to cast doubt on our current world order. How openly is Germany able to express criticism of the US government in the framework of the UN?

We stand for a rules-based order. This means that when the multilateral system embodied by the UN comes under attack, be it from Russia, China or even the US, we don't seek to differentiate as to where the attack originates. When countries do not follow the rules, we criticize them. Any other reaction would undermine our credibility.

What dangers arise when the US withdraws from institutions such as the UN Human Rights Council?

We should never underestimate the impact of such behavior. The US also withdrew from UNESCO, the Iran deal and the Paris Climate Agreement, and it is no longer participating in the Palestinian relief agency (UNRWA), the International Court of Justice and the UN Global Compact for Migration. When an important partner like the US refuses to participate, it weakens the multilateral system. Plus, it makes it much easier for other countries to follow suit. Our job is to convince the US and other countries that it is in their interest to bolster multilateralism. By the way, there are situations in which the Americans are actually pushing for multilateral decision-making.

Such as?

Last year, the Security Council issued severe sanctions against North Korea. That move was only possible because everyone played along. Germany now holds the position of chair of the Sanctions Committee for North Korea. The

US-Americans are very grateful for that. It was important to them that multilateralism actually worked in this case.

With regard to the diplomatic confrontation with China: What, if anything, can the UN achieve in that realm?

We have to keep pressuring the Chinese to abide by international rules. When they are rebuked by an arbitration tribunal for their behavior in the South China Sea, they need to be able to endure the criticism and comply with the ruling. Also, minorities such as the Tibetans and the Uighurs in China are subject to treatment that violates the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In this case, we simply have to call a spade a spade.

At the recent Munich Security Conference, Angela Merkel was celebrated as the quasi leader of the free world. Rightly so?

Many people see Germany's noble intentions and say: This is a country that supports multilateralism. As the second-largest contributor to the UN system, we are well-known for following up our words with actions. People also recognize that our work on the Security Council does not involve one-sided criticism.

Financial expenditure is one thing. Still, Germany has sent no more than 600 blue helmet peacekeepers on military missions. The number of police officers dispatched to international missions is less than a hundred. Aren't these numbers too low for a country striving to be a leader of the free world?

Germany has more soldiers participating in UN missions than ever before. We have more than 1,000 soldiers in Mali and several hundred in Lebanon. Some of them don't count as blue helmets, but as national support forces. Germany supports the UN in highly substantial ways with these blue helmets. But Germany and other European countries cannot tackle the crises of this world merely by sending out troops on blue helmet missions. It's more about strengthening regional organizations such as the African Union.



Christoph Heusgen

Indeed, military means are not enough to solve many of these crises.

You mentioned Europe. Is a joint European seat on the Security Council still a goal at this point?

The idea of a seat for Europe on the Security Council is incompatible with the Charter of the United Nations, and trying to reform the Security Council is laborious enough as it is. I can't see us being able to change the Charter in such a way that regional unions rather than individual states can be members of the Security Council. Our goal is for we Europeans to speak with one voice at the UN offices in New York. And this is exactly what we're doing at the moment.

The president just announced Kelly Knight Craft as his choice to be the next US ambassador to the UN. What do you expect and what do you hope from her in that post?

I hope she will be someone we can really work with. And I would like for her to join us in an effort to convince the entire US that the UN is a tremendously valuable institution and that bolstering it is also in the interest of the US. ■

This interview was conducted by **Juliane Schäuble**, US correspondent for the Berlin daily newspaper *Der Tagesspiegel*.

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The war in Afghanistan began on Oct. 7, 2001. It's 2019 and it's still going on. Will it be over by 2037?

BY HERFRIED MÜNKLER

In the grand scheme of European history, the 19th century stands out as an era of peace. However, this characterization of the epoch – defined by historians as spanning the Congress of Vienna and the start of World War I – rings only partly true. A whole series of wars dotted Europe at the time, like the Crimean War and the Italian and German wars of unification, just to name a few of the most significant conflicts. But these were limited both in space and time, and usually ended with one decisive battle after which peace was declared. The wars almost always lasted just a few months while never posing a significant threat to the social order or having greater consequences than the shifting of political frontiers. Spatially and temporally constrained and legally regulated wars seem to correlate with overall periods of prolonged peace.

However, it's an altogether different picture when conflicts drag on, cannot be localized and become dictated not by the pursuit of decisive victory but rather by survival in a war of attrition. Such was the case with the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648) and then again in the two World Wars of the 20th century, after which thinkers and laypeople alike came to the conclusion that war ought to be forever removed from the tool chest of politics.

In 1648 and in 1815 – at the Peace of Westphalia and at the Congress of Vienna respectively – observers still had confidence in the idea that war could be regulated solely by limiting its scope. The means to this effect was the state monopoly on the right to wage war. The people left the issue of war to the prudence of their rulers, trusting that they would approach it with restraint and in accordance with sound cost-benefit analysis.

This trust had become a thing of the past in 1918 and 1945. At issue now was nothing less than

the elimination of war. This would require an authority to ensure that any state or entity acting in violation of this ban on war would not benefit from doing so. Yet neither the League of Nations nor the United Nations developed into such an authority; the great powers only took action against those who violated the peace if it served their immediate interest to do so. Likewise, the 2005 global commitment to embrace the “responsibility to protect” has had no discernible effect. This is the first answer to the question of why today's wars never end: as a general rule, no state is prepared or in a position to enforce the termination of a war. Those concerned must content themselves with requests to warring parties – requests that either fall on deaf ears or achieve zero effect.

So, why does that rational calculus not apply today, the thinking in most cases ensured that wars were ended when the prospective harm exceeded the verifiable benefits? After all, in several regions of the world, we are facing wars

in which the harm far outweighs the benefits, for instance in the now four-decade long war in the Horn of Africa, or the wars that for 30 years have continually reignited around the African Great Lakes, or finally in the wars in and around Afghanistan and those that developed in the wake of the Arab Spring.

These conflicts are all marked by the fact that they only marginally pit one state against another; they are essentially civil wars, to which a different rationality applies than does to wars between states. If the latter follow instrumental guidelines, the first have an existential dimension that renders any compromise impossible. Yet peace treaties have always relied on compromise, even if there are clear winners and losers. Where this is not the case, a peace treaty proves to be little more than a ceasefire and, after a period of time, the war begins anew.

That is the second answer to the question of why today's wars no longer end. The dichotomy that developed under the West-

phalian sovereignty established in 1648 – wherein a sharp distinction was drawn between interstate war and civil war, which third parties are forbidden to join – no longer applies. Indeed, with increasing speed the two types of war are coalescing into one.

Wars may begin as civil wars, but soon adjacent or nearby states play an important role, thus fomenting transnational wars in which internal intrastate and interstate conflicts blur into one. These can be so complex that they may no longer be resolved through straightforward peace treaties; what is required are protracted peace processes.

Since the end of a clear distinction between interstate war and civil war, closed war economies have been supplanted by open ones. In a closed war economy, the warring parties only have access to resources within the territories they control – when these resources expire, so does the war. Carl von Clausewitz likened this process to a volcano becoming extinct. Open war economies possess an altogether

different dynamic, one characterized by the permanent influx of money, weapons, relief supplies and combatants from outside the war zone. Although the world community may establish arms embargoes and monitor money flows in attempts to close an open war economy, our age of back-channel commerce allows these efforts only a meager chance at success.

This was already the case with the proxy wars of the East-West conflict. But since the end of the Cold War, this phenomenon has taken on even greater dimensions. The external backers have now diversified; and, accordingly, more actors now pose as external supporting powers while the number of parties to the civil war has multiplied. This is the third reason.

Presumably, the most significant reason for the extended duration of new wars is the fact that there exist numerous actors whose lifeblood is the wars themselves; they have transformed violence from a political instrument into an economic resource. Thus

they have no interest in ending the war – not the warlords, for they would lose the opportunity to amass great wealth through the conflict, and not their followers, who would then recede into social marginality. Herein lies the rub: the longer the war wages on, returning to a peaceful life becomes all the more difficult. When entire generations have grown up knowing nothing but smoldering war and having learned little more than how to use violence to survive this war, it becomes close to impossible to end an armed conflict via peace treaty. This is the fourth reason.

Not all the factors identified here are always visible in the war zones themselves. Often, one factor plays only a minor role while another bears outsized influence. Moreover, the constellation of factors is subject to constant change. If classical warfare was marked by the fact that certain notions of order became elements in the regulatory framework for conducting wars (even if the warring parties did not always defer to this system of order), then our new wars are marked by the sheer lack of such regulation, which brings with it a higher level of cruelty and a greater number of atrocities. Breeding revenge and counter revenge, this cannot be dispelled through legal intervention by a neutral third party, for there are no neutral third parties in civil war. Violence must be returned and humiliation must first be avenged before any peace negotiations can begin.

There is always one party with a score to settle, which will then lead to new scores and new determination to settle them. This is the fifth reason why today's wars do not end on their own – and indeed have little chance of ending at all.

Herfried Münkler is a political science professor at Berlin's Humboldt University. His history of World War I has become a standard work. In 2017, he published a study of the Thirty Years' War.

BUSINESS



Everybody hurts

Businesses will learn to cope with Brexit, and EU member states will do everything they can to avoid complete chaos

BY MARK SCHIERITZ

If the past few years have taught us anything, it's the wisdom of taking predictions with a grain of salt. When Donald Trump was elected president of the United States, it was said the US economy would collapse. That has not happened. It has, in fact, grown at a healthy clip. In a similar vein, the argument went that if the British chose to leave the European Union, prices on the London Stock Market would nosedive. This has also not taken place. British stocks remain buoyant.

And here's another prediction to consider: If Brexit occurs at the end of March – which seems increasingly likely, though still not inevitable – Europe faces months, perhaps even years, of turbulence.

The exit's immediate effects will most likely remain limited. Of course, economies on both sides of the English Channel will suffer when long-established supply chains are disrupted and border checks come into force, especially in the case of a disorderly Brexit, i.e. a divorce without the two parties agreeing on its terms. After all, the British and continental European economies are deeply intertwined.

Yet we should not underestimate the adaptability of businesses. They will somehow cope with

the situation, and both the British government and those of the EU member states have a strong interest in minimizing potential chaos. No one benefits when, for example, airplanes remain grounded because overflight rights have yet to be clarified.

But then what? For British supporters of Brexit, it is an act of restoring national sovereignty. Without the EU – so the argument goes – the British will again become masters of their own fate. They would be free to negotiate trade agreements with states of their choice without submitting to Brussels. The question is: Will other states play along with this script? I doubt it.

Japan, for instance, has just signed a free trade agreement with the EU. The government in Tokyo has signaled its unwillingness to grant an independent UK the same conditions. Most states see the UK market, with its 66 million consumers, as far less attractive than the EU's 400 million consumers. These states will leverage that gap to draw concessions from the British they could not get from an economic heavyweight like the EU.

So far, the tally has been disappointing for the British government. It must now renegotiate more than 40 trade agreements with third countries following Brexit. Four are thus far in place: with Switzerland, the Faroe

Islands, Chile and the East African trade association ESA. The British government is gradually realizing how complicated the matter really is.

Joy at the UK's regained sovereignty could quickly dissipate once it becomes apparent that, in material terms, one dependency replaces another – yet without the right of co-determination that the UK once enjoyed within the institutions of the EU. The great failure of the Europeans may be

Most states see the UK market, with its 66 million consumers, as far less attractive than the EU's 400 million

that they did not make clear to the British people that European integration, at its core, is a project that strengthens, not weakens, the sovereignty of the state. It rests on the idea that when dealing with other economic regions and forces on the free market, the states of Europe can achieve more if they are united.

But the EU, too, will emerge weakened from Brexit. To be

sure, it conducted its side of the negotiations as a relatively solid bloc. And given what the British are currently experiencing, their example may strongly dissuade other European states from leaving the club. In addition, the days when British negotiators managed to torpedo joint European projects such as taxation policy and financial market regulation with their veto will be over once Brexit comes to pass. That will open up opportunities to complete Euro-

pean integration. Hence, some continental European states argue that, in the end, Brexit will actually push the EU forward.

Yet this argument falls short. For example, with Brexit, the EU will lose a pragmatic, solution-based actor, thereby upsetting the balance of power within the Union. Germany, in particular, looks set to lose an important ally. The weight of the southern European,

state-aligned economies will likely grow. This will be a source of new conflicts regarding the economic direction of the EU.

Finally, and especially if the British and the EU fail to part in amity, the era of stability in Europe – hard-won in the years following World War II – could come to an end. This applies primarily to the relationship between the Republic of Ireland (an EU member) and Northern Ireland, a part of the UK. Furthermore, one cannot rule out that, sooner or later, two power blocs will arise in Europe: one in the EU, with its 27 member states, and one based in London, possibly in coalition with other non-EU states such as Switzerland or Norway. Most likely, these two blocs would make political decisions according to their current situations and interests, which would likely complicate any European consensus in external policy.

What does all this mean for the rest of the world? That depends on one's perspective. If Europe loses influence, that would mean more influence for the other great powers. Trump recognizes that. His animosity toward the EU can be traced not least to the realization that, in bilateral negotiations, the US can assert its interests more effectively without a partner of comparable economic heft. The Chinese can likewise be expected to drive a wedge between the Brit-

ish and the rest of Europe in order to push forward their own agenda.

Yet when the big players extend their spheres of influence, it will be mostly at the expense of the little guys. A weaker Europe would be bad news for most countries that have generally benefited from the rules-based system of international relations the EU has been pushing forward for decades. And perhaps even Washington will come to recognize that peace and stability in Europe are very much in the long-term interests of the US.

What, then, should be done? As matters stand today, a complete reversal of Brexit appears unlikely, high impossible. There are simply no political majorities for it. Hence, the goal must be to organize the separation in such a way as to enable coexistence in partnership and, perhaps, another accession further down the road. The United Kingdom is part of Europe. This is not only a geographical reality; it is also a statement accepted by most people on both sides of the English Channel. We can only hope that politicians do not jeopardize this common ground through rash decisions.

Mark Schieritz is the economic policy correspondent in the Berlin bureau for the weekly *Die Zeit*.

BY ERIC BONSE

For Cecilia Malmström, it was an unpleasant yet necessary task.

On Jan. 19, as the Swedish-born European Commissioner for Trade was presenting her draft mandate for new negotiations with the United States in Brussels, she visibly sought to not raise expectations. “This is not a traditional, comprehensive trade agreement,” Malmström explained. She also stated that there would be no revival of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), that controversial and never-signed trade agreement with the US. Even a “TTIP light” was not in the works, she insisted.

Instead, Malmström explained that the goal is to achieve rapid results in specific areas. Industrial tariffs in particular are one area where she hopes to see progress. The commissioner believes that a speedy agreement is the only thing that can prevent President Donald Trump from going ahead with punitive tariffs on European automobile exports.

In other words, the emphasis now lies on confidence-building measures rather than a large-scale trade deal. Malmström is especially eager to implement the agreements reached by EU Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker and Trump at their meeting in the White House in July 2018. The goal is to avoid a full-blown trade war similar to that under way between the US and China.

But even this measured approach goes too far for some in the EU. In the European Parliament, Malmström faces fierce resistance. “As long as there is pressure from the US, we will not negotiate,” warns Bernd Lange, chairman of the powerful Trade Committee. “You won’t see us waving the white flag,” adds the SPD politician.

The tariffs imposed in the spring of 2018 on steel and aluminum are just as unacceptable as those threatened by the US on automobiles, says Lange, justifying his hard stance. He also points to the US negotiating mandate, which names an equal trade balance as its goal. This is utterly unrealistic, argues Lange, noting that it goes well beyond the planned EU mandate.

The EU cannot conclude a new trade agreement without the approval of the European Parliament. And the conflict over cars is not the only one. France, for example, wants to wait until May – after the European elections – to start negotiations with the US. And Spain is calling for an end to the new special US tariffs on Spanish olives.

This shows that the EU will be anything but united as it enters talks with the US. The threats and baiting characteristic of Trump’s “salami tactics” have succeeded in breeding divisions within the 28 EU states. He has also succeeded in pressing the European Commission to make concessions. As recently as six months ago, Malmström was still



Cecilia Malmström, European Commissioner for Trade

Putting on a good face

The United States is no longer abiding by the rules of international trade. Brussels is eager to use negotiations to defuse the conflict

refusing to negotiate “at gunpoint.” Now, it seems she’s ready to do just that.

Several members of European Parliament are now complaining that the EU is flouting its own fundamental principles and opening itself up to blackmail. “This is the first time that there is such a great distance between opinions at the beginning of trade talks,” notes Luisa Santos from the lobbying group Business Europe. The whole thing is one big “farce,” argues the news site *Politico*. It seems that failure is inevitable.

Germany may be able to leverage something positive from the new and chaotic situation. The situation is quite different for France, Spain and Italy. These countries fear that they will come out on the losing side in talks with the US. Indeed, the Trump administration is also eager to put EU agricultural subsidies on the agenda. That would hit agricultural countries hard and divide the EU even more.

Of course, the European Commission is acutely aware of this. And for this very reason, Malmström explicitly

excluded the agricultural sector from the planned negotiations. At the same time, she called for discussions on the controversial automobile tariffs as well. In fact, according to Brussels, a trade agreement would comply with the rules of the World Trade Organization (WTO) only if the automobile sector were included.

But will Malmström be able to prevail against the US president? Or is Trump going to give the Europeans – all of whom are dependent on open markets – a glimpse into the abyss of a trade war? Does the US even have any interest in open and free markets? Does it perhaps want to get rid of the WTO and its rules altogether?

These are the questions on the minds of the EU. With the new trade mandate, they are walking on thin ice, a fact that is clear to policymakers in Brussels. Two recent examples show just how significant the risk of the US going it alone is: the US sanctions against Iran and the threats against the German-Russian gas pipeline Nord Stream 2.

With the Iran sanctions, Trump is aiming directly at European trade with the Mullah regime. In turn, the EU has set up a new body in Paris, a so-called Special Purpose Vehicle, to circumvent US sanctions: INSTEX (Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges), which is intended to finance small transactions. Still, large European companies have long since withdrawn from doing business with Iran for fear of sanctions. In other words, Trump’s threats are having their desired effect.

The US president was less successful with his attacks on the Nord Stream pipeline. Washington argued that Germany is making itself highly dependent on Russia by building the second pipeline and simultaneously endangering the EU’s energy security. Many Eastern European states share this opinion. Even the EU Commission has significant reservations with regard to Nord Stream 2.

Nevertheless, the German government has so far succeeded in moving the project forward. In early February, Chancellor Angela Merkel stepped in to make sure that EU states do not impose conditions and render the pipeline unprofitable. After some back-and-forth, French President Emmanuel Macron helped Merkel gain a majority in the Council of Ministers.

But this success could be short-lived. The Bundestag and European Parliament are also having growing concerns about Nord Stream 2. It would be easy for Trump to divide Europe on this issue as well. In fact, he is already hounding Merkel. His ambassador in Berlin, Richard Grenell, never misses an opportunity to openly criticize the chancellor’s policies.

The ambassador has even taken to giving Merkel advice, as he did in a recent discussion with the German newspaper *Die Welt*: “Imagine if the chancellor got up and said, ‘Considering the way the Russians are behaving now, with all of their evil activities and repeated offenses, we simply cannot grant them any more influence by buying their natural gas.’” According to Grenell, this would be the correct policy approach.

And these persistent needle pricks have already started to take effect. For example, Germany has accelerated the expansion of liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminals through which LNG can be imported from the US. If Russia misuses its gas supplies for political purposes, at least according to Berlin, the switch to American liquefied gas could be undertaken at any time. Until then, however, decision makers are holding firm to the construction of Nord Stream 2.

At this point, no one can say how this dispute is going to end. However, it is already clear that the US is not afraid to push through its trade and geopolitical interests using all the means it has, including, if necessary, sanctions. In other words, the EU can no longer be sure that trade policy conflicts will be addressed by applying trade policy instruments in compliance with the WTO rules.

Officials in Brussels are preparing for a worst-case scenario. If the Trump administration decides to go ahead with punitive tariffs on automobiles, the EU has indicated that it will retaliate in kind. Included in the package of massive retaliatory measures are special tariffs on American vehicles and other US products, a WTO lawsuit and a safety net designed to prevent trade shifts that would prove detrimental to Europe.

At the same time, the European Commission is trying to make virtue out of necessity. It is taking advantage of Trump’s isolationism to open up new markets and create the “largest free trade area in the world.” If one follows the line coming from Brussels, this is the result of the new trade agreement with Japan, which went into effect in late January. Taken together, the EU and Japan are responsible for almost one-third of global economic output.

Germany’s Minister of Economic Affairs Peter Altmaier argued that the agreement was “an important gesture in favor of rules-based trade and a clear signal against growing protectionism.” The Cologne Institute for Economic Research spoke of a “great day for free trade,” arguing that Trump’s “protectionist economic policies” had prompted “the rest of the developed world to want to expand their trade relationships even more.”

Further agreements are in the works, for example with the Mercosur states. Still, the EU also needs to prepare for a massive setback. If the United Kingdom goes ahead with its plan to leave the EU on March 29, the EU will lose trade volume with one of its key partners. At the same time, the importance of the remaining 27 EU states as a united trading partner will shrink. A hard, unregulated Brexit would likely lead to economic turbulence.

The trade war between the US and China is also creating uncertainty. The Middle Kingdom is Germany’s largest trading partner in terms of total trade volume, and trade with China has also gained in importance for the EU. The conflict has already put a damper on the economic outlook in the EU; the Commission had to revise its forecast for 2019. The eurozone is expected to grow by only 1.3 percent; last fall, expectations were still as high as 1.9 percent.

Against this backdrop, Brussels can no longer afford to engage in an open confrontation with Washington, particularly not before the European vote in May, which is already being referred to as an “anxiety election.” For this reason, as well, Malmström will continue to take a cautious approach – and put on a good face.

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

Baby talk

US Ambassador Richard Grenell’s threats against German companies make waves, but produce little more than petty victories

BY PETER H. KOEPF

In the dispute over the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline, German Minister for Economic Affairs and Energy Peter Altmaier is openly seeking a compromise with the United States. The German government will ensure that there is a liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal in Germany, he said. American LNG – albeit expensive – could then be brought into the country. Europe cannot be “susceptible to blackmail,” Altmaier said on Feb. 13 in Berlin, in the presence of US Deputy Secretary of Energy Dan Brouillette.

That was largely a response to the increasingly vitriolic dispute over the construction of the 1,230-kilometer pipeline, one-half of which is paid for by Gazprom, while the other half is billed to five Western European companies – two from Germany, one from Austria, one from France and one British-Dutch enterprise.

In mid-January, Richard Grenell, US ambassador to Germany, caused a stir with a series of threats that were quite unusual for a diplomat. Through a series of letters, he made an appeal to German companies “operating in the Russian

energy export pipeline sector,” explaining that involvement in the construction of Nord Stream 2 will “carry significant sanctions risk.” In fact, the project is “actively undermining Ukraine and Europe’s security.”

It is no surprise that Grenell’s provocation was met with firm objections in his new country of residence. German Minister of Foreign Affairs Heiko Maas countered with a statement explaining that questions of European energy policy must be decided in Europe. The chairman of the Chemistry, Mining and Energy trade union matched Grenell’s effrontery with a bit of his own, comparing the ambassador to a representative of an occupying force, and claiming that the US was not engaging in foreign policy but rather flooding us with American gas.

Furthermore, the construction of the pipeline has been met with controversy within the EU as well. Ukraine is fearful of losing its transmission tariffs, but Altmaier has also vowed to make sure that Russian gas can be piped through Ukraine and Poland and into Germany. Others, including German politicians, are wary of growing too dependent on Russian gas, despite Russia’s dependence on foreign currency. And Poland

is against the construction as it conflicts with its own interests; it is seeking to become a location for a distributor hub.

Considering Altmaier’s statement, Grenell could now declare a victory of sorts. And yet, Grenell’s meddling could actually achieve the opposite of its desired effect, namely mistrust and opposition. The US is increasingly wielding its market power not only against its opponents, but against its friends as well, wrote Georg Mascolo in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. It’s not always clear “where politics end and US economic interests begin.” In lieu of Russian gas, the US would like to hawk its LNG in Europe. Former German Ambassador in Washington Wolfgang Ischinger advised Grenell: “Never tell the host country what to do, if you want to stay out of trouble. Germans are eager to listen, but they will resent instructions.” EU parliamentarians eventually entertained the question of how it would play out if the EU sanctioned American companies that are continuing to do billions of dollars of business with Saudi Arabia after the murder of Jamal Khashoggi.

Grenell began earning his reputation in Germany as a diplomatic bad boy on his first day in office. Like a journalist, he took to Fox News to weigh in on German politics and to upbraid his host country for its



Richard Grenell

meager military spending and big trade surplus. And after Donald Trump withdrew the US from the Iran nuclear deal, he tweeted: “As @realDonaldTrump said, US sanctions will target critical sectors of Iran’s economy. German companies doing business in Iran should wind down operations immediately.”

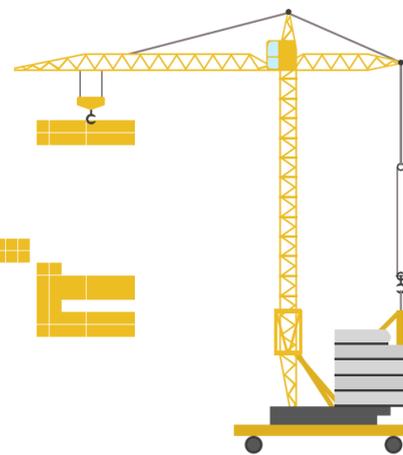
In the mean time, the German Federal Office of Aviation has revoked take-off and landing rights for Mahan Air, the Iranian airline on the US sanctions list. As did US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Grenell praised this as a “großartiger Schritt,” or

terrific step. But in order to enable European companies to continue doing business with Iran, Germany, France and the United Kingdom have established a special purpose vehicle through which payment transactions can pass if private banks’ fears of punitive measures by the US force them to reduce their selection of clients. This entity, named INSTEX, or Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges, will offset claims by European and Iranian companies – e.g. oil will be paid for with other commodities. Europeans hope INSTEX will help them save the Iran nuclear deal, even if quite a few large corporations are already withdrawing from the Islamic Republic.

Politico recently editorialized on Grenell’s performance thus far: “The man whom critics dismiss as ‘the little Trump’ may not have captured many hearts and minds in Germany, but more often than not, he has succeeded in winning the argument.” At the very least, he is a diplomat who is heard of more than any of his colleagues.

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

USING IS SWEET, OWNING OBSOLETE



Germany's sharing economy is catching on

BY MANFRED RONZHEIMER

If you want to build a building, you need construction machinery and industrial cranes. When the work of those excavators and wheel loaders is done and the building is standing erect, the machines are taken back to the depot. In fact, a large portion of building equipment is active on construction sites for only 50 percent of its "lifetime." In the case of cranes, that number sinks to only 25 percent.

These figures were ascertained by Manuel Kimanov and Rezi Chikviladze, two business students at Jacobs University, a private educational institution in Bremen. Their original assignment had been to develop new business models for the "sharing economy." After looking at the numbers, they were able to put their findings to almost immediate practical use in the form of Sharemac (www.sharemac.de), their online platform for construction equipment rental, which premiered in January 2019 at the hanseBau tradeshow. The database contains more than 32,000 pieces of construction equipment of different brand names, including their performance data. Booking online is easy, and there is a 4 to 8 percent per-transaction rental fee, which is shared equally by the renter and lender.

For Sven Voelpel, an economics professor at Jacobs University and the academic mentor to the Sharemac founders, it's a win-win situation for both sides: "Construction equipment lenders gain an additional source of income; renters are given cost-effective opportunities to rent; and it's easier to overcome bottlenecks, for example, in the case of short-term orders."

"Don't buy it, use it" is the motto of the "share economy," a new, solidarity-driven way of doing business that is now catching on in Germany. Sharing, renting, swapping, leasing and joint use are common today in many areas of application: cars, apartments, clothing and music are shared, as are a number of key technical devices, such as drills, which some users need only once a year.

Perhaps the most important aspect of "shared use" is the cost savings, but the environmental impact of such sharing is also growing in importance, for example via the reduced use of resources for product manufacturing. A third aspect is the social nature of sharing, which encourages the capacity of a product to bring people together, not separate them.

Still, not everything about the sharing economy is positive. There

are some unwanted side effects, as Gerd Scholl from the Berlin Institute for Ecological Economy Research (IÖW) noticed. He was involved in a research project examining the environmental impact of peer-to-peer sharing in the realms of private car sharing, private carpooling, private apartment sharing and the online trading of used clothing between private individuals. As Scholl notes: "The focus was on the sharing done between private individuals, because this area had emerged only a few years prior and created entirely new markets that did not exist before."



Bob and his software builders: The Sharemac student entrepreneurs and alumni of Jacobs University in Bremen alongside their professor.

Scholl's team ascertained that the greenhouse gas potential – the generation of climate-damaging gases – was reduced by 40 percent when individuals purchased secondhand T-shirts as opposed to new ones. "In addition, if the T-shirt was purchased via an online platform such as Kleiderkreisel, the reduction in green-

house gases would be further enhanced to 47 percent, as calculated in terms of an average female user," reports Scholl, rating the additional ecological gain achieved as "rather moderate." The is due to what is called a boomerang effect: while the sharing platform did indeed reduce the consumption of new products, it nevertheless also increased the purchasing of clothes as a result of "low prices and clearer market transparency."

Scholl also criticizes the fact that

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Manfred Ronzheimer is a freelance journalist based in Berlin.

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The Accidental American

Many Americans abroad face an increased tax burden as a result of President Trump's tax reform. Dual citizens are renouncing their US nationality at record rates

BY KATJA RIDDERBUSCH

Ole Wald* has mixed feelings looking back at his years as a United States citizen. "It hurts my heart that I'm no longer an American," says the 54-year-old Berlin-based co-founder of an industrial real estate development firm. "Being a US citizen has been part of my identity forever." On the other hand, he's relieved to be rid of his American passport. "It would have been much more difficult to cut ties right now" – more difficult, more burdensome and definitely more costly.

Until six years ago, Wald was a dual German-American citizen, one of about nine million Americans who live abroad, according to the US State Department – and one of just over 100,000 individuals with a US passport living in Germany.

He is what's called an "Accidental American," someone who has little or no direct ties to the US other than having been born there. The US is among only a few countries in the world to have birthright citizenship, or jus soli in Latin, the automatic right of anyone born in the US to be an American citizen.

Wald is also one of a growing number of dual citizens who have renounced their US nationality. According to the US Treasury Department, over 5,000 people chose to give back their American citizenship in 2017, nearly a tenfold increase from the 530 who did so in 2007.

Teri Simmons expects those numbers to continue rising. "But only part of it is due to President Trump, his rhetoric and his policies," says the immigration attorney and partner at the Atlanta law firm of Arnall Golden Gregory.

Americans living abroad have long shouldered a heavy tax burden and dealt with stringent banking restrictions. And now they face further financial liability because of the new tax law signed by the president in 2017.

Trump hailed the Tax Cut and Jobs Act as "a historic victory for the American people." Most enterprises in the US – American as well as foreign-owned – benefit from the reform, which has reduced the corporate tax rate from 35 percent to 21 percent while expanding tax deductions.

But the new law also introduced a so-called repatriation tax: a one-time, retroactive tax on all retained foreign earnings of US companies that is levied on corporations as well as individuals and goes back more than 30 years to 1986. According to the law, foreign earnings held in cash and cash equivalents are taxed at a 15.5 percent rate, and the remaining earnings are taxed at eight percent. The retroactive tax can be paid over the course of eight years or as a lump sum. The first payment was due last April.

Individual dual citizens were not excluded from the repatriation tax, which was aimed at big US multinational companies – like Apple, Google and Starbucks – that have

long been accused of parking billions of dollars in offshore subsidiaries.

"Whether that was on purpose, or just because the law was hastily drafted, dual citizens are a group that just falls through the cracks," says Kristin Maeckel, a German-born CPA and partner with the international business advisory firm Aprio in Atlanta. "Dual citizens who live abroad are clearly the losers in the tax reform."

Some experts, like Kevyn Nightingale, a partner at the Toronto-based accounting firm MNP, calls dual citizens "collateral damage in what overall is a very good tax move by the United States."

Take, for example, the 38-year-old Michael Renner.* He was born to and raised by American parents in Munich, got his engineering degree in the US, but then decided to live and work in Germany. Today, he's the owner of a successful software company near Stuttgart. With the help of an American CPA, he's trying to figure out how much he owes to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), the US government's tax collection agency; how he should structure the payments; and how he will come up with the money, which may be well over a million dollars.

"This new tax hit me completely by surprise," he says, and the timeframe to make the first payment – four months – was extremely tight.

That was by design, says Maeckel, because the US government wanted to make sure people didn't renounce their citi-

zenship on short notice to avoid payment. She adds that some of her German-American clients, in order to come up with the necessary funds, have to withdraw money from their companies in Germany, which can result in a higher German tax bill. "It's kind of a mess," Maeckel says.

Charles Bruce, a US tax attorney affiliated with the American Citizens Abroad advocacy group, agrees. "Most individuals do not have a clue as to how to develop a number for their accumulated earnings or how to do the calculation for the tax."

A heavy tax burden is not an entirely new problem for dual citizens, or for Americans and green card holders living abroad. Unlike the majority of countries that impose taxes based on residency, the US taxes individuals based on their citizenship, regardless of where they live. The only other country with a similar tax regime is Eritrea.

The system is a relic dating back to the American Civil War, which ended more than 150 years ago. It was invented as an effort to tax draft dodgers who had fled to Canada.

According to US law, every American citizen has to file an annual tax return on their global income, starting at age 18. But many, especially Accidental Americans who are unfamiliar with the US tax system and have never lived or worked in the US, simply don't know.

Ole Wald was one of them. Born in New York to German expat par-

ents, he was only four years old when his family moved back to Germany. From then on, Wald's life was in Germany – it's where he went to high school, did his mandatory military service, went to university to pursue a PhD in economics and started his own real estate development firm.

"I went back to the United States on a very regular basis," he says, to visit his godmother in New York, a friend of his parents who over the years became extended family, and later to vacation all over the country. "But I was always a tourist in America."

While he was proud of his US passport and considered it a privilege to have one, he says he "didn't even think about the civic responsibilities, like paying taxes, that come with my civic rights." He always paid his taxes in Germany diligently and says he was not aware of being at fault with IRS.

That changed in 2002, when an attorney working for one of his company's US affiliates told him that not paying his US taxes could make him a felon, and urged him to clarify his tax situation.

And so he did. He hired a highly specialized American tax attorney who negotiated his original IRS assessment of 10 years in back payments down to five.

There is a double taxation agreement between the US and Germany (as well as many other countries), but that does not mean there's no additional tax burden for dual citizens.



"It's not like the overall tax bill in one country can be offset against the overall tax bill in another, and you are either credited or debited," says Wald. It goes line item by line item, "and then you typically end up paying the maximum tax rate, and more."

That's especially true for wealthier Americans abroad, who own real estate or who draw dividends from their own companies or from investments, says Maeckel.

Between back payments, penalty interest, late interest and attorney fees, Wald ended up paying over \$2 million to amortize his debt with the US government. That was in 2004. He kept filing annual tax returns with the IRS for another nine years, until he felt that he "just could not justify this any longer."

Married and a father of two, he says each year his income was reduced by the double burden of filing taxes in Germany and the US. He also says that "at this point in my personal and professional life, it became clear that we most likely wouldn't be living in the United States."

In 2013, he finally decided to renounce his US citizenship.

It was a straightforward process for Wald. But in general, the effort leading up to the actual act of renunciation can be protracted and pricey.

"Before you renounce, you have to clean up your tax act," explains Maeckel, and certify that you have filed taxes in the previous five years. There's also an additional filing fee of \$3,000

for people wishing to renounce their US nationality. Since 2008, Accidental Americans who have never lived in the US are exempt from the fee. Finally, all candidates must appear in person at a US embassy or consulate, stand next to the flag and say and sign an oath of renunciation.

In order to provide as much transparency as possible, the IRS publishes a quarterly list with the names of people who have recently renounced their citizenship. There's also a State Department advisory that warns: "The act of renouncing US citizenship does not allow persons to [...] escape the repayment of financial obligations."

All these provisions have been put in place by the US government as safeguards, explains immigration attorney Teri Simmons, with the intention of deterring people from renouncing their citizenship for the sole purpose of avoiding taxation.

She adds that taxes are not the only financial burden weighing heavily on many dual citizens; banking has also become more difficult. Since 2010, the Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA) requires all foreign financial institutions to search their databases for account holders who are "US persons" – a distinction that includes American citizens, dual citizens and green card holders – and report them to the IRS. As a result of the new reporting requirements, more and more banks have decided to stop

accepting this group of people as customers altogether.

"Being a US citizen outside of the United States has become a tremendous liability," says Simmons. "It's tough just finding a financial institution that will work with a US passport-holder these days."

There's yet another reason why Simmons expects the number of people no longer wishing to be Americans to rise in the coming years. "There's an ever-growing population of dual citizens now, because the world has become a global place, and a lot more kids are being born in the US," she says. But many of them do not have any ties to the country, neither professionally nor emotionally.

There seem to be only two solutions to the problem. One is to end birthright citizenship, a proposal that President Trump has brought forward but that many legal experts say is unconstitutional and a violation of the 14th amendment.

The other is to change US tax law from a citizenship-based to a residency-based system. "To have a system in place that's universal, simple and fair, and that truly avoids double taxation, would certainly benefit the global economy," says Ole Wald, adding: "In that case, I'd still be an American citizen, for sure."

* Name has been changed

Katja Ridderbusch is a German-American independent journalist based in Atlanta.



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PIONEERING UNDERGROUND TOGETHER

BY HEIKE HOLDINGHAUSEN

It's an ambitious goal: By 2022, Germany will close its last nuclear power plant and, only 16 years later, stop burning coal altogether. Too slow or too ambitious? It's a hot debate in Germany, at the moment. Nevertheless, the federal government plans to follow the recommendations of the so-called Coal Commission, and to codify it in law by May. It will also stipulate which regions and companies directly affected by the fossil-fuel phase-out will receive government aid – and how much. There's a lot of money at stake here.

The Coal Commission comprises politicians, company representatives, advocates for environmental organizations and scientists. After months of consultations and one final overnight negotiation marathon at the end of January, a compromise was reached: By 2030, the output for power plants burning lignite and bituminous coal will be reduced to 17 gigawatts – less than half of today's installed capacity. And Germany will quit coal altogether by 2038; in 2032 it will be determined whether it's possible to shift coal's termination year forward to 2035.

The environmental organizations issued a dissenting opinion in which they stated that, in terms of climate policy, Germany must quit coal by 2030. Commission member Karsten Smid, an energy expert at Greenpeace Deutschland, claims that "from a technical standpoint, it's easily achievable."

Representatives of the pro-business wing of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) voiced their skepticism about 2038 as the target year for quitting coal. While Ralph Brinkhaus, the CDU caucus leader, conceded to the *Welt am Sonntag* that "there's wide societal consensus that something must be done to address the climate," he claims that whatever action is taken must also guarantee the security of Germany's energy supply. And furthermore, consumers and businesses should not be unduly burdened by the government's fossil-fuel phase-out.

The minister-presidents of Germany's federal states that would be particularly affected by quitting coal are demanding a certain measure of planning security. In other words, the recommendations of the commission must be implemented and the €40 billion promised by the federal government must be written into law. This admittedly hefty figure should cushion – both socially and economically – the transition to a power supply based on renewable energy sources. North Rhine-Westphalia, Brandenburg, Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt,

the federal states that are home to lignite mines, are expecting aid, as are energy-intensive industries such as aluminum smelters and the fossil-fuel energy sector.

In its recommendations, the commission envisages within four years' time the removal from the grid of facilities with a capacity totaling 12 gigawatts, three gigawatts of which derive from burning lignite. The power stations slated for closure lie chiefly in the west of Germany, i.e. in North Rhine-Westphalia. The Rhineland's lignite region and its vast mines would be affected first, with the upside that the vigorously contested Hambach Forest could be preserved. This swath of land between Cologne and Aachen, with an area of no more than 500 hectares, is all that's left of a once expansive forest of beech trees; and it is scheduled to be cleared to make room for a strip mine in development by the Essen energy firm, RWE.

In autumn 2018, the Hambach Forest became a symbol leveraged by Germany's ecological movement for greater climate protection. Activists erected tree houses and occupied the forest; environmental organizations obtained court injunctions against the authorized clearings; thousands of citizens responded to appeals to take "forest walks" to save the Hambach. And on the other side of the coin, RWE employees demonstrated to keep their jobs. The police ultimately cleared the protesters from the forest, during which a young journalist fell to his death from a rope bridge.

To date, no concrete action has been taken for the coal regions in eastern Germany. It is clear, however, that quitting coal necessitates the forced expansion of renewable energy sources, which was the sticking point for finding a solution in eastern Germany. But then the German wind energy industry was hit with some bad news. According to a report issued in January by the German Wind Energy Association (BWE), in 2018 only 743 wind turbines were erected with a capacity of 2,402 megawatts – a 55-percent drop from the previous year.

Germany oversees a total installed capacity of 52,931 megawatts produced by onshore wind facilities. By midyear 2018, the BWE was still expecting an increased installed capacity of 3,300 megawatts. According to



Coming in from the coal: Protesters don't want the Hambach Forest in North Rhine-Westphalia to be cleared to make room for a strip mine.

Blackout

Germany wants to quit nuclear energy and coal, and fast

BWE President Hermann Albers, it is thus "even more important to pin down the 2030 goal as it applies to the expansion of renewable energy sources and then to adjust the prescribed paths." He goes on to portend that the 2018 slump "jeopardizes the leading position enjoyed by the German wind industry among international competition."

The German government's Climate Action Plan 2050 had laid out certain benchmarks for emissions reductions. The goal for 2030 is a 55-percent reduction in greenhouse gases compared to 1990 CO₂-output levels, as well as an even loftier aim of 62 percent in the energy sector.

Reaching this goal requires technology-specific expansion pathways as well as the dismantling of certain regulatory hurdles.

Technologies like Power2X – i.e. the conversion of electricity into a gaseous or liquid form along with industrial-scale energy storage devices – must be promoted and implemented.

Last year's low growth figures appear to be lingering. In 2019, the BWE expects only a modest increase of 2,000 megawatts for onshore wind power. However, things look a bit rosier for the offshore industry. According to the consultancy firm Windguard, 2018 saw Germany's 1,305 offshore facilities generate wind energy with a total installed capacity of 6,382 megawatts. This figure met the level of expansion predicted by industry associations, and at the beginning of the year, the Trade Association Power Systems (VDMA) announced

that the legally prescribed expansion limit of 7.7 gigawatts can be reached by 2020.

Moreover, the expansion goal of 1.9 gigawatts for photovoltaic facilities appears to be too modest. The Fraunhofer Institute for Solar Energy Systems (Fraunhofer ISE) considers it necessary to produce five to seven additional gigawatts of installed capacity from photovoltaic facilities if Germany is to meet its goal of full reliance on renewable energy sources by 2050.

Another element that is lacking is an efficient network through which wind energy from northern German and solar energy from southern Germany can be distributed. The four operators of Germany's high-voltage electric grid estimate the cost for expanding the network at €52 billion. Integrating the offshore wind farms in the North Sea and Baltic Sea into the electricity grid would require an additional €24 billion. For solar and wind energy to expand at a faster rate than predicted, two additional north-south routes would be needed. The three large-scale north-south links that are currently in planning are scheduled to be completed by 2025.

Experts have long bemoaned Germany's delays in expanding its grid. One reason is the country's tedious planning procedures, as property owners refuse to yield their land for power lines and local citizens' initiatives protest against the electric-cable super highways laying claim to the countryside.

The Grid Expansion Acceleration Act, spearheaded by Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Energy Peter Altmaier (CDU) and enacted in December 2018, provides for faster planning processes and higher compensation for property owners, who are often farmers and lumbermen. "The Coal Commission's recommendations have succeeded in initiating the withdrawal from fossil fuels," says Greenpeace representative Karsten Smid. "And we're well prepared for the disputes that are sure to follow."

HEIKE HOLDINGHAUSEN is a business and environment editor for the Berlin daily *taz*.

GERMAN ENERGY MIX AND THE ENERGY REVOLUTION

Electricity production 2017	Goals	Selected costs
Lignite: 22.5%	- Quit nuclear energy by 2022	Expanding electric grid: €52 billion
Stone coal: 14.1%	- Quit coal by 2038	
Gas: 13.2%		
Nuclear energy: 11.7%	Increase the share of renewable energies in gross electricity consumption to 50% by 2030, to 65% by 2040 and to 80% by 2050.	Integrating offshore wind farms in the North and Baltic Seas: €24 billion
Renewables: 33.2%		
Others: > 5.0%		

Source: AG Energiebilanzen e.V.

Rethinking energy security

Burning fossil fuels jeopardizes the very livelihoods of vulnerable groups and could result in a massive rise in the world's already significant number of refugees

BY SHI DINGHUAN, STEPHAN KOHLER AND SERGEI SHMATKO

The focus has shifted in debates over the security of energy supplies. While the secure supply of energy sources (coal, petroleum and natural gas) was once the central theme and will remain necessary for some time, of even greater importance are sustainability and climate compatibility. Headlines touting decisions by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries have been replaced by those citing international climate conferences and their declarations on decarbonizing the global economy.

The still readily available supplies of fossil fuels should be replaced, as the CO₂ emissions that result from burning these resources are transforming the earth's climate, which will and already is having massive negative

effects on the well-being of large population groups. This destructive trend could jeopardize the very livelihoods of these vulnerable groups and result in a massive rise in the world's already significant number of refugees.

Nuclear energy should also be ruled out due to the high risks it poses. What we need is a forward-looking policy that promotes and supplies low-risk energy solutions that are both sustainable and compatible with our climate. This "new" understanding of energy increasingly requires energy efficiency, the exploitation of regenerative energy sources and the CO₂-free burning of fossil fuels using carbon capture and storage.

A successful provisioning strategy needs a stable foundation of suitable, decentralized elements, a broad range of energy sources, innovative technologies and high intelligence. This requires well-developed infrastructure such as pipelines like Nord Stream 2 and liberalized markets that are free

of trade restrictions, which will help realize economic efficiency potentials and greatly reduce global energy consumption.

The use of regenerative energy sources is on the rise worldwide; along with hydropower and biomass, which have played an important role in energy provision for some time, solar power, wind power and geothermal energy are growing in importance. The fluctuating generation of solar and wind energy requires that we develop and deploy additional energy storage technologies to guarantee supply security. The decarbonization of fossil fuels, such as natural gas, is also needed in order to be able to use cost-effective energy sources with long-term storage capacities.

An energy-efficient and regenerative energy economy – often termed a Smart Energy System (SES) – can reduce supply problems with fossil fuel and nuclear energy sources, yet creates new challenges and security prob-

lems. Implementing an SES relies on numerous new technologies, such as photovoltaic plants, wind power stations and storage technologies, (autonomously driven) electric vehicles, smart-home and smart-grid systems as well as a high degree of web-based connectivity.

In an SES, the question of the availability of and access to raw materials like rare earths, indium, platinum group metals, lithium and cobalt plays an increasingly important role. These elements are needed for manufacturing technologies that are critical for the energy revolution, including photovoltaic plants, wind farms, fuel cells as well as hydrogen electrolysis and battery systems for electric cars.

However, these raw materials are often not sufficiently available, and deposits of these elements and minerals are found in other countries. For instance, the Democratic Republic of the Congo is home to around two-thirds of all known reserves of cobalt, which is indispensable to the manufac-

ture of lithium-ion batteries for use in electric cars. Rare earth elements, 95 percent of which are found in China, are also necessary for a number of innovative energy revolution technologies.

The ability to access such resources is critical to the technological, industrial and economic development of countries and their industries, and thus also a key element for maintaining the social stability of these states. For instance, in resource-poor, industrialized countries like Germany, access to future raw materials is essential.

Cybersecurity within an SES is becoming central to the security of energy supplies. The digital networking of millions of decentralized generation facilities with millions of electronic applications like electric cars, industrial facilities and household appliances harbors an immense risk of disruption to the systems, including a catastrophe such as a complete blackout affecting all of Europe.

While the new energy world, its challenges, dependencies and risks are discernible in outline, we do not yet have the complete picture – in all its complexities – before our eyes. The transformation from a fossil fuel-based energy economy to one centered on mineral resources (mainly metals) and a technology-driven energy world requires completely new solutions. The future security of our energy supply depends on it. We must therefore forge new bridges of cooperation in our quest for supplies of raw materials, as well as in the realm of artificial intelligence and systems optimization.

Shi Dinghuan is the former Chinese vice minister for science and technology; **Stephan Kohler** is the former chief executive of the German Energy Agency; and **Sergei Shmatko** is the former Russian minister of energy.

Highway robbery

The VW scandal just might lead to the introduction of a groundbreaking new form of lawsuit in Germany

BY ALEXANDER HAGELÜKEN

German CEOs tend to get nervous when confronted with legal problems in the United States. To be sure, class action lawsuits are often associated with major financial costs. This is exactly what Volkswagen found out when the diesel scandal broke. While there is much criticism of class action suits, primarily regarding the large sums involved in litigation, there have been growing calls in Germany for more consumer rights in the face of powerful companies.

The unique feature of a US class action is that individuals can join such lawsuits without first having to prove the extent of damages suffered. This rule applied to the half-million people in the US who bought a Volkswagen car with software rigged to conceal actual exhaust levels. It was a very expensive misstep for Volkswagen: the Wolfsburg-based automaker estimated the cost at roughly \$20,000 per customer for the repurchase of vehicles and other compensation.

In 2016, with the addition of legal fines, the sum came to more than \$20 billion. The auto supplier, Bosch, paid the owners of diesel cars more than \$300 million following a settlement. Deutsche Bank was also subjected to a class action suit and paid a total of \$170 million to institutional and private investors. In that case, traders had manipulated the LIBOR interest rate to which more than \$400 billion in worldwide financial products are tied.

One thing is for sure: None of the companies charged in these cases were innocent lambs, and all of them were called to atone for their misconduct.

In light of this, any accusations that these costly lawsuits are a politically motivated campaign waged against German companies and designed to damage rivals of US companies seem absurd. American companies themselves are subject to class action lawsuits. For example, Citigroup, the US banking and financial services corporation, was involved in Deutsche Bank's interest rate manipulation and it, too, had to pay millions to the plaintiffs.

The hefty damage claims are also a product of legal differences. In Germany, compensation serves to amend the damages suffered by the customer, but the state also tries to

ensure the safety and fundamental quality of products by means of laws and controls. In the US, by contrast, the government exercises far less regulatory intervention in manufacturing. Instead, potentially high punitive damages are supposed to keep companies in check and encourage them to produce trustworthy goods.

The criticism coming out of Germany is aimed above all at the large sums involved in some situations, such as the Volkswagen case, for example. VW sold automobiles using rigged diesel technology to a

“If the US were everywhere, VW would be broke,” wrote Heribert Prantl in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* after the settlement. “The high sums and the pressure generated by the US system are inaccurate representations of the actual quality of this legal protection.”

As Volker Votsmeier advised in *Handelsblatt*, the US legal system provides plaintiffs and their lawyers with “instruments of torture” that Germany should most definitely not import. “Companies in the US are threatened with

white knights, fighting for those who have been disenfranchised and merely helping citizens assert their rights against powerful corporations. For example, Michael Hausfeld is one of the stars of the scene, and he certainly fights for noble causes. Hausfeld represented native peoples in Alaska after the devastating Exxon Valdez disaster of 1989. He also secured \$1.2 billion in compensation from Swiss banks and financial institutions after proving they had siphoned money from Jewish clients in World War II.

law firm submitted a 70-page complaint to the district court in New Jersey.

Klaus Müller, head of the Federation of German Consumer Organizations (VZBZ), refers to such moves as “commercially driven lawsuits.” Heribert Prantl, a former judge and state prosecutor in Bavaria, seconds that motion: “An entire industry sprang up around the class action lawsuit. It is set up in such a way that lawyers do everything they can to bring together as many plaintiffs as possible and then submit the

each individual claimant receives only \$32.”

Politicians like Schwab warn against importing this system to Europe or Germany. And yet, particularly in the case of Volkswagen, it is easy to see that while companies are hit perhaps too hard in the US, the German system fails to give consumers any better opportunities. Can they hope for some sort of compensation for VW's diesel manipulation? It remains entirely unclear. The case has now prompted even louder calls to better protect consumers.

A new declaratory model action has now emerged in Germany; a *Musterfeststellungsklage* seeks to strengthen the rights of consumers in cases such as the diesel scandal without adopting the excesses of the US class action suit. For example, until now, a German VW customer would have been able to do little more than hope that a judge would classify the manipulated exhaust values as a serious deficiency; he or she would then have had to make his or her way alone through the legal system, without co-plaintiffs. Also, until recently, he or she would have had to file a lawsuit at the district court, thus facing immediate costs of €3,000 or more.

The *Musterfeststellungsklage* now lowers the threshold. For example, in the VW case, plaintiffs can put their names on a list without incurring any costs. Germany's Federal Office of Justice is responsible for collecting the applications. The idea is to have a central authority gather evidence on questions of compensation in similar cases. The risk of litigation then lies with the consumer advocates. By early February, more than 400,000 auto buyers had already entered their names on the list. “The high number of registrations proves that the *Musterfeststellungsklage* is an important instrument for many of those affected,” notes consumer advocate Klaus Müller.

Exactly when the trial against VW will get under way is uncertain. Once it does, it will become clear whether the *Musterfeststellungsklage* is a suitable instrument for giving German consumers more rights without becoming a carbon copy of US class action law suits.

Alexander Hagelüken is senior editor for economic policy for the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*.



Crash test dummies: Is the *Musterfeststellungsklage* a way out of VW's diesel calamities?

half a million customers in the US; in Europe, however, it sold such vehicles to eight and a half million people, that is, to 17 times as many customers. Following the class action logic, if VW were to agree to a settlement with customers in Europe based on the US model, it would cost the corporation up to 17 times more, i.e. over €150 billion. This would presumably lead to the largest European automobile company – which has more than a half million employees – having to declare bankruptcy. Can this be the goal of lawsuits, even when the company does not contest its misconduct?

high punitive damages that are determined by lay juries and are hardly calculable.”

But these torture instruments are not the only thing putting pressure on companies. “Even when the underlying claims are doubtful,” argues European Parliament member Andreas Schwab (CDU), “most companies are forced to engage in out-of-court settlements to avoid losing their reputation or having to pay tremendous legal costs.”

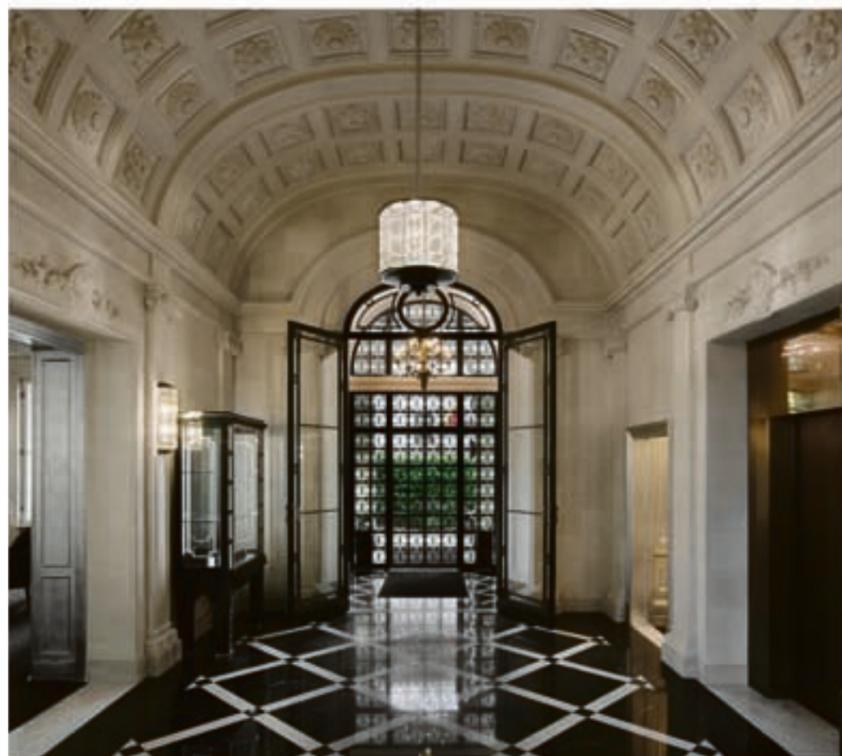
And then there are the claimant lawyers who actively seek out clients. To some individuals, these lawyers enter the scene as

Still, critics disapprove of these lawyers' business model. In contrast to their colleagues in Germany, US class action lawyers do not receive a fixed fee; instead, if they bring the case to a successful close, they can cash in big time – sometimes receiving up to 30 percent of total compensation paid. In the VW case, that would have been billions.

The approach taken by some US law firms was on display recently when news broke of a presumptive auto cartel between large German manufacturers. In 2017, four days after *Der Spiegel* had reported on the unsettled accusations, a US

highest claims possible. As their fee is based on the actual sum of the damages paid, US lawyers tend to earn far more on class action suits than their clients receive.”

Member of European Parliament Schwab criticizes what he sees as false incentives: “Lawyers on the other side of the Atlantic advertise for additional class action plaintiffs via newspapers and TV ads. After all, the more injured parties that join the lawsuit, the higher their combined threat. And, owing to the system of success-based compensation, the majority of compensation payments often lands in the hands of the lawyers. On average,



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BY DANIEL LEISEGANG

It was a loud and crashing warning shot: On Feb. 7, 2019, Facebook's business model came under harsh criticism from the Bundeskartellamt, Germany's Federal Cartel Office, which argued that the online giant was abusing its market position by collecting and exploiting the data of its users on a large scale. The antitrust office ordered Facebook to undergo an internal divestiture, meaning that the company would have to gain the explicit consent of its users when seeking to collect and link user data from its own suite of services as well as from third-party websites.

Facebook reacted immediately, announcing that it would contest the decision of the anti-monopoly office. This is not a surprising move considering that the restrictions would throw a big wrench into Mark Zuckerberg's plans for the future.

Just a few days earlier, the 34-year-old Facebook founder had announced plans to unify the technical infrastructure of its messaging platforms – WhatsApp, Instagram and Facebook Messenger – by the year 2020. This would result in the world's largest social network comprising around 2.5 billion people, that is, roughly one-third of the global population.

Zuckerberg is thereby pursuing one goal above all: these interconnected services will serve to further enlarge his wealth of data. At the same time, Facebook would be well-poised to finally take on a monopoly position; indeed, according to the cartel office, Facebook enjoys a market share of roughly 95 percent in Germany.

Elsewhere, former competitor Google+ has just thrown in the towel, and YouTube, Twitter, Snapchat, LinkedIn and Xing cannot match Facebook. In other words, if users want to interact with one another online, they will hardly be able to get past Zuckerberg's digital ecosystem.

Still, Facebook isn't the only digital powerhouse in the European market. Google covers 90 percent of the search engine market, and Amazon already commands nearly two-thirds of the online book trade.

The "platform capitalism" (Nick Srnicek) of these digital giants has its greatest impact on tradi-



Anti-social media

European policymakers are looking to punish data misuse and foster more internet competition

tional sectors. For example, taken together, Facebook and Google draw more than 60 percent of global online advertising revenue. Traditional media companies suffer in a particular way under this regime, as they are dependent on digital platforms in two fundamental ways: not only do the giants consume a large piece of the advertising cake, they also act as gatekeepers, given that a majority of online media users reach their

desired services via search engines and social media networks.

In addition, social networks and chat services have almost inevitably become monopolies. The winner-takes-all dynamic of the market, combined with the risk involved with switching to an underdog when everyone else is already using WhatsApp, for example, explains this tendency.

The fact that policymakers and public authorities have come to

the point where they no longer want to stand by and watch this development play out has much to do with the growing number of scandals associated with these otherwise invincible giants. In the past year alone, it was Facebook above all others that was forced to admit to massive security gaps, data leaks and targeted disinformation campaigns in a rapid succession of what felt like monthly incidents.

Last March's Cambridge Analytica scandal, which revealed that the company had, over several years, illegally extracted the profile data of almost 90 million Facebook users and used it for targeted election campaign advertising – including the US presidential election in November 2016 and the Brexit referendum in June of that same year – marked a watershed moment.

These revelations shocked institutions and the public into action. European governments and the European Commission are now acting in a twofold manner to counter the misuse of data – first, by introducing stricter data protection measures, and second, by enforcing stricter monitoring and regulation of hate speech and fake news in social media.

In this regard, the adoption of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) marked a milestone. The GDPR, which has been in force throughout Europe since May 2018, harmonizes the rules governing the processing of personal data by private companies and public authorities. It is ultimately designed to give consumers more control over the use of their personal information.

In response to the GDPR, Facebook, Google and comparable companies grudgingly accepted the stricter regulations, while nevertheless doing their best to circumvent them. For example, Facebook formulated the adjusted user settings for its network in a deliberately misleading manner. Now, when its users seek to protect their private sphere, a warning pops up telling them that this will limit considerably their use of the network.

It is clear that these digital platforms need to realize that they cannot get away with such methods. In early January, France's data protection authority – making use of the GDPR for the first time – slapped Google with a record fine

of €50 million. The data watchdog called Google out for not sufficiently informing its users of how Google uses their data internally. It also charged Google with failing to provide users the effective means to consent to their data being used for advertising purposes.

Google's parent company, Alphabet, which generated a turnover of roughly €120 billion in 2017, will pay the fine from its stash of petty cash. Still, the resolute action undertaken by the French data protection authority shows that the days of "anything goes" are finally over.

This new approach is proving to be important, not least in view of the coming European elections on May 26 and the overall battle against fake news. Young people, in particular, now get their news updates on social networks; but, unfortunately, not all of the reports distributed on those networks are credible. In fact, according to a recent poll taken by the Vodafone Foundation, young people are exposed to fake news and hate speech at least once a week; with as much as one-fifth of them being exposed to these things on a daily basis.

Facebook, Twitter, Mozilla, Google and YouTube have ensured the European Commission of their willingness to take targeted action against misinformation, machine-aided propaganda campaigns and covert political advertising. In return, at least for the time being, the EU has agreed to refrain from any further legal requirements and new regulations.

And yet it remains obvious that nothing much has been achieved in the past several months. In late January, the European Commission criticized the ongoing lack of transparency with regard to the identification and labeling of political advertising. The emphatic demand coming from Brussels is that Facebook, in particular, should be obliged to do more to detect false information within its network and work together with fact checkers.

The European Commissioner for the Security Union, Sir Julian King, also announced that a public "alarm system" should be in place by March 2019 that would allow member states, companies and users to report suspected fake news items. Facebook, meanwhile, announced that – starting

in late March – it would attach a disclaimer to any political advertising within its network and provide information as to who paid for each ad.

But the Commission clearly has little faith in this pledge. In the run-up to the European elections, it will be monitoring the progress made by online services every month; and then, toward the end of the year, a comprehensive report will be issued on the state of affairs. If the results are not satisfactory, the European Commission might finally take its gloves off and launch a number of legislative initiatives.

However, even though more decisive action on the part of political bodies is long overdue and would be most welcome, both Berlin and Brussels would do well to think beyond a policy of mere restrictions. In the long-standing debate over these digital giants, activists for data protection and civil rights have repeatedly raised the demand for a European alternative – in particular to Facebook and Google. One potential model might be the public service broadcasters that exist in most European states. In a manner similar to these, it would be possible to finance an alternative social network by means of fees or taxes, while also equipping it with a democratic administration. Such a body would not have to be profit-oriented, which, in turn, would render ads – and thus also commercial espionage targeting users – superfluous. Instead, a service such as this could score major points with regard to data protection, transparency and user sovereignty.

Incidentally, the startup financing for such an endeavor could even be provided by Facebook and Google themselves. They would merely have to fulfill their social responsibility in Europe and finally be obliged to pay an appropriate level of taxes, instead of moving most of their profits into tax havens. However, for that to happen, these digital giants will most likely have to hear many more loud and crashing warning shots.

Daniel Leisegang is an editor for the monthly journal *Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik*.

Up in the air

Airbus has had mixed success in North America, but its hopes are still flying high

BY JENS FLOTTAU

It was 2006, and Columbus, Mississippi, was where it was all supposed to get started. EADS co-CEO Tom Enders himself came to open a new helicopter assembly plant. His company had just won a contract to build several hundred aircraft for the US Army. The UH-72A Lakota, the military version of the EC145, was supposed to serve in a variety of roles – executive transport, search and rescue as well as troop deployment, where feasible.

Most importantly, EADS (now Airbus) hoped the contract would mark a watershed moment for its business in the United States. Its market share in civil air transport was well below the world average, as US airline fleets continued to be dominated by Boeing. And the European manufacturer was barely present in the world's largest defense market. Things could only improve.

Thirteen years later, as Enders prepares to retire as Airbus CEO, results are mixed. The Lakotas continue to be built in Columbus, but only at about half the peak rate achieved in 2011. The backlog of orders is enough to keep the production line busy for another two years or so, but then new business will be needed.

In addition to the Lakota, Airbus had hoped to be engaged in building aerial refueling tankers for the US Air Force. The company invested in an engineering center in Mobile, Alabama, and prepared for Airbus A330-based tankers to be built at the site as it bid for a large contract in 2008.

A look at Mobile today reveals the harsh business realities. There is no sign of A330s at Brookley Field Airport. After having initially won the tanker contest, Boeing protested, and after some extended back-and-forth, the US manufacturer is now building the KC-46 tankers for the US military. Airbus dominates the non-US tanker market with the A330 MRTT (multi-role tanker transport), but the world's (by far) largest air force continues to fly Boeing aircraft exclusively.

However, Mobile is also a symbol of success. Earlier this year, Airbus broke ground for a large new hangar to be used for final assembly of the A220. Formerly known as the Bombardier C Series, Airbus took majority control of the 100-to-150-seat aircraft in 2018.

Boeing tried to persuade the US government to impose import tariffs on the aircraft, arguing it benefited from massive Canadian government support, which prompted the decision by Airbus to move A220 assembly inside the US and supply US airlines from the Mobile

facility. Airbus went ahead with the investment anyway, and the Boeing initiative ultimately failed. The first locally built A220 is to be delivered in 2020, and capacity will eventually ramp up to four aircraft per month.

The A220 program, long overshadowed by doubts about its true market potential, could become an important – and perhaps the most important – driver of Airbus' growth in the US market. Delta Air Lines has already received delivery of its first four A220s and began using them as part of their fleet in early February. Delta's first scheduled A220 flight took off from New York-La Guardia and landed at Boston-Logan. The airline has ordered an additional 86 A220s to replace part of its aging narrowbody fleet. Next in line is JetBlue, which bought 60 A220-300s to replace the Embraer 190. Moreover, airline investor David Neeleman, who founded JetBlue among other carriers, is using another 60 A220s to start up a new US-based airline, preliminarily called Moxey.

The A220 facility complements an existing production site for the larger A320 family. Airbus opened the final assembly line in late 2015 and delivered the first aircraft to JetBlue Airways in April 2016. Mobile has delivered four A320 family jets per month since late 2017. According to Airbus Ameri-

cas Chairman and CEO Jeff Knittel, further growth is just around the corner.

With all the major orders being filled in Mobile, Airbus is now facing the challenge of filling capacity at the original Bombardier site it took over last year at Montréal-Mirabel International Airport. Workers there are increasingly concerned that the center of gravity is shifting too far south to the bulk of the market – despite Air Canada's large order of 45 A220s.

Enders has tried to alleviate these concerns by saying Canada is now considered to be Airbus' fifth home country, in addition to Germany, France, the UK and Spain. Involvement in the sector is to include cooperation with local aerospace suppliers and universi-

ties. But it will be a long process, the success of which will hinge on the ability of Airbus to implement a financial turn-around of the A220 program.

Bombardier was unable to succeed, in part because suppliers were able to use the perceived risk in what had earlier looked to be a marginal program to secure highly profitable deals. Airbus has only just begun talks to alter the unfavorable contracts; the extent to which it can drive down costs is still unclear.

Over in the US, Airbus managers hope for another chance with the military. The US Air Force is pondering how to meet the demands of the new US National Defense Strategy, which foresees the addition of at least 14 tanker squadrons by 2030. A squadron typi-



Heavy duty: The first French Air Force multi-role tanker transport MRTT A330

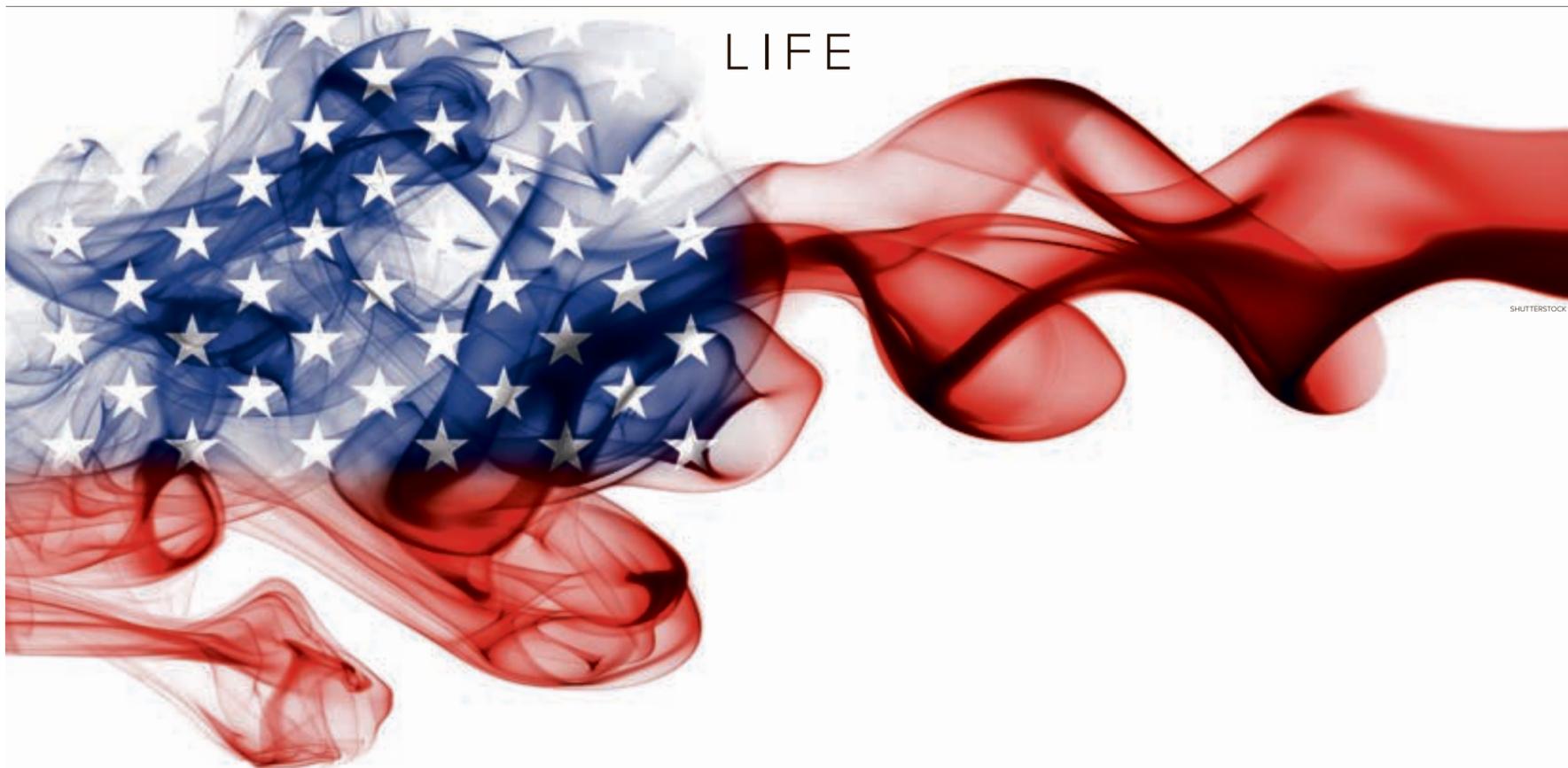
cally comprises at least 12 tankers, which means 168 new aircraft would be required over the next 11 years, none of which are covered by any existing contracts.

Consequently, Airbus announced in December that it teamed up with Lockheed Martin "to examine a broad spectrum of opportunities." Most importantly for the short term, Airbus could deliver the A330 MRTT while Lockheed contributed its system integration skills and lobbying clout in Washington, D.C., in another round of the US tanker competition. "Lockheed would have been our favorite partner ten years ago," Enders said. "And I don't understand why the world's largest air force still does not fly the world's most capable tanker."

It will likely take years before more clarity can be reached on a potentially massive order. But once it is there, and the Airbus-Lockheed venture prevails in part or in full, it is likely to be the Mobile site at Brookley Field that again will benefit. Airbus has ensured that there is enough land available for it to build another hangar for work on the A330. Just in case.

Jens Flottau is a business and aviation correspondent for the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*.

LIFE



Anti-Amerikanismus?

Berlin and Washington are not seeing eye to eye, German criticism of the Trump administration is intense and three-quarters of all Germans rate relations between the two countries as poor or very poor. But is that “hatred of America”?

Hypocrites

BY TANJA DÜCKERS

The German-American friendship has sunk so low that Germans now have more trust in China than in the United States. A recent survey commissioned by the Atlantik-Brücke and conducted by the polling firm Civey found that 85 percent of respondents rate relations between the two countries as poor to very poor.

But Germans are airing their resentment not only in anonymous polls. A number of leading intellectuals, writers, journalists and politicians are also making no secret of their anti-American feelings. Some of them are even publicly declaring their general avoidance of traveling to the US. Indeed, it would appear that a trip to the US is no longer considered an essential life experience for Germans.

A growing number of German authors have recently rejected invitations to speak publicly in the US, for fear of appearing to condone what's happening “in that fascist country.” Yet they have no qualms about traveling to Egypt, China or Russia for professional engagements. TTIP, the ultimately failed free trade agreement, brought German intellectuals to the barricades, claiming that the US intended to shove its fast-food culture down their throats. A short time ago on Facebook, the politician Oskar Lafontaine dubbed the US “the most rogue nation on earth” that “lies shamelessly to provoke wars.” The country “revealed its moral decay decades ago when it cleared the jungle in Vietnam with Agent Orange.”

Anti-American reflexes also have little to do with the myriad of concrete US foreign policy transgressions that one might go so far as to call crimes.

In fact, Germans look down on the US to a much greater degree for its embodiment of such things as capitalism, consumerism, bad taste, materialism and superficiality. Prejudice is never about facts, and always about feelings. Most Germans who judge do so about countries they have either never seen or have visited maybe once or twice. What we have here is a classic case of prejudice.

Germans' prejudices with regard to America have both a cultural and a psychological dimension. They see the US as the land of evil capitalists, of fatties and dummies, of the rude and the arrogant, of narcissists who care about nothing in the world except themselves, of women who chase after countless cosmetic surgeries, and of men who, like the character of Scrooge McDuck (an American invention), are interested only in money instead of art and moral values (as we Germans are). They see the US as the land of popcorn children and moronic Trump voters in the Midwest, where, in fact, half of the citizens did not vote for him.

Germany's long-felt inferiority complex – being the loser of the war and then a mere junior partner after that war – is offset by clinging to “higher values,” exhibiting allegedly higher moral integrity, inhabiting a higher cultural and psychological plane and embracing a better form of capitalism, namely Rhine Capitalism. This aversion also derives from the closeness of the relationship between the two countries.

Indeed, Germans are closer in culture and customs to Americans than to citizens of China or India. Yet Germans are reserved in their criticism of these “exotic” countries: When have we ever heard substantial German criticism of the over 5,000 state executions that Amnesty International says take place in China every year?

The US is like an unloved older half-brother who simultaneously does everything better and worse than his younger German sibling. Germany has long been fixated on the American way of life, and has copied it as much as it can. But there remains a deep resentment of the US as a poster child and symbol of unbridled modernism, alienation, rootlessness and acceleration.

How deeply anchored and socially acceptable this unsophisticated anti-American resentment has become is evidenced by the success of the now-disgraced *Der Spiegel* journalist, Claas Relotius, who enjoyed particular acclaim for his invented reporting on exceedingly unlikeable Americans. It went over well. (See page 6.)

Intellectuals in Germany have considerably less to say about the reasons for America's success, which is indeed not solely grounded in exploitation and imperialism. Despite all its shortcomings, the unbelievably inspiring degree of ethnic and cultural integration enjoyed by this vastly heterogeneous country, the high level of personal discipline exhibited by countless workers in the US as well as the willingness of many Americans to embrace sacrifice and risk are seldom mentioned.

Amid all the justified criticism of the materialism of US citizens, their idealistic and romantic sides are rarely appreciated. When President George W. Bush came off more as unworldly and naïve than as a classic villain when he coined the term “axis of evil,” the formulation contained traces of the values-driven idea that the US was capable of exercising a “positive” influence on the world and that Americans do not wage senseless wars primarily for “oil.”

This idea of a swan song for “America” has many fans in Germany. Unfortunately, however, no one ever thinks about what would happen if the US were to fall. Will capitalism perish if the US continues to decline? Hardly. And very little effort is being made to envisage what the alternative to the Western capitalist way of life as embodied by the US would actually look like.

Critics of America love to churn out their barbs on Apple laptops with Rihanna playing in the background. Honest and consistent criticism of capitalism and globalization would look a whole lot different than that; it also just might send us back to the dark days of nationalism.

Today, the most interesting approaches to imagining a better life are coming from people who resist focusing on unsophisticated resentments of the US and instead work at containing the anti-social excesses of capitalism and reckless gambling with the world's ecological balance. Many of these people live in the US.

Tanja Dücker is an author who lives and works in Berlin.

Realists

BY PETER H. KOEPP

According to Andrei S. Markovits, “anti-Americanism is a particularly murky concept because it invariably merges antipathy towards what America *does* with what America *is*.” In a 2004 book, he bemoaned what he called the “hatred of America.” Markovits could republish this book, subtitled *Anti-Americanism and anti-Semitism in Western Europe*, restating and updating the antipathy against America – if indeed this hate, this anti-Americanism exists.

One can heed the political theorist Herfried Münkler, who somewhat laconically opined that empires always inspire both admiration and hostility. But that, too, is too simplistic.

When an empire foments antagonism – indeed, in all four corners of the globe – are there rational reasons explaining why? Should we not at least try to speak among our partners about our accusations?

Three-quarters of all Germans rate German-American relations as poor or very poor. But do they hate an entire country along with all its people? Or would these answers have more to do with politics, that is, with political actors and their decisions. It is surely not America that is doing something, but rather people, politicians and bosses of powerful global corporation who are the actual targets of the criticism.

As for America, the country, generations of Germans have openly admired this country – and its culture – to such a degree that they have been traveling there in masses. The vast majority of Germans, including young Germans, like the American way of life. Their language is peppered with English words and phrases. A growing number of German 11th-graders spend an exchange in the US and return home the better for it. The overwhelming majority of Germans are fans of American pop music, watch American films, binge American series on Netflix, even those in which the Germans are the bad guys (usually Nazis). They gobble up the products of America's cultural industry as readily as they do the products of the US economy.

And yet, trust in Germany's greatest ally is weaker than it has been in decades, albeit with material differences than at earlier points in postwar history. What some American politicians say and do is disturbing to many Germans, and they are venturing to express it. And why not? If democracy is about the freedom of individuals, the pursuit of happiness and the good life, then it also includes the freedom of speech. Indeed, whoever believes that things are progressing in the wrong direction has a democratic duty to speak up. This is as true in the US as it here in Europe.

There have been high points and low points in German-American cooperation. When John F. Kennedy spoke in Berlin in June 1963, 500,000 people cheered him on. After the towers of the World Trade Center collapsed, a Social Democratic politician spoke for millions of Germans and proclaimed: “Today, we are all Americans.” And when Barack Obama, still a candidate for the presidency in July 2008, held a rally in Berlin's Tiergarten, he was joined by more than 200,000 individuals.

Every low, however, breeds more claims of anti-Americanism, even among Germany's self-proclaimed transatlanticists. Yet those who criticized the war in Iraq and expressed their revulsion over the excesses of many soldiers there did not do so out of hate

for America or out of frustration that Germany was defeated twice last century, as Markovits offers in his book. Nor will anyone let the crimes of the Nazis “disappear behind the monstrous perception of America.” Moreover, there was no and still is no “conformity of public opinion.” It's plain to see that those who pointed to the lies and deceit during the lead-up to the war in Iraq and now to the outcome – radical Islamic terrorism – were right in every way.

Furthermore, is it anti-American to criticize withdrawing from the Iran nuclear deal and the INF treaty if the US ambassador threatens sanctions against German companies that continue doing business in Iran or Russia? Was it anti-American to object to the American economic system for being too enthralled with the invisible hand of the market and to point out that US banks were to blame for creating turbulence in the markets? Was is anti-Americanism that led to the majority of Germans rejecting the free trade agreement with the US during the Obama administration, as market-oriented journalists, politicians and lobbyists were so eager to claim? No. Many Germans and millions of people from other countries feared the plummeting of salaries, social welfare levels and production and environmental standards as well as the loss of long-fought-for consumer protections and workers' rights.

The term “anti-Americanism” is a weapon for polemicists, a debate killer. Fundamental and collective anti-Americanism would not manifest itself in impulsive undulations. No. What they call anti-Americanism is oftentimes the result of poorly vetted survey findings in the wake of outrage over certain events – Agent Orange in Vietnam, the lies at the UN Security Council in the lead-up to the Iraq war, Abu Ghraib and the German chancellor's wiretapped phone line. And when the anger dissipates, happier polling numbers will bounce right back.

And today, there certainly are good reasons as to why “the empire” is drawing such ire. Is it fair to say that US policies in many countries across the world were “expressly negative, often exploitative and in some cases brutal and murderous”? Yes, Markovits, Michael Moore and Noam Chomsky get to say it. But if Europeans make the same claim, then these Americans are allegedly being “instrumentalized,” and serve as “a justification for giving free rein to anti-Americanism” (Markovits). In other words: Pipe down, Europeans, when it comes to the US!

But how? What should we do? The US and its representatives for the most part set global policy and determine the global economy – in pursuit of their own interests, of course. Some of these interests are not in line with those of Europe, and what results is a competition over the future of our society, or our societies. At stake are fundamental questions of great significance to each individual person as well as to the collective population of planet Earth. At stake is the question of what sort of world we want and who gets what share of the yield of our collective toils. If proponents of economic liberalism, privatization and deregulation accuse their critics of anti-Americanism, it's a bald attempt to muzzle them. And whatever it is, it's not liberal.

Peter Koepf is editor in chief of The German Times.



Raucous rally: Hitler's supporters celebrate in front of his party's unofficial headquarters, Hotel Kaiserhof, next to the Reichstag.

BY LUTZ LICHTENBERGER

Germany, November 1932. These are dark times for the Weimar Republic. While still alive, democracy is but hanging by a thread. Unemployment is dramatically high – more than five million Germans are out of work. Fights are breaking out in the streets. There's a whiff of civil war in the air. The *Reichstagswahlen* – the national parliamentary elections – already the second of the year, have again failed to yield a governing coalition. The National Socialist German Workers' Party under Adolf Hitler comes in ahead of all other parties; still, with 33 percent of the vote, it has incurred significant losses. Meanwhile, the Communist Party, at 17 percent, is gaining in popularity.

The center does not hold. Against the two extremist parties, the Social Democrats and the center-right Zentrum party are further weakened. The two moderate parties, which have been holding Germany together for the 14 years since World War I, win a mere 35

percent combined. The situation is in deadlock.

Chancellor Franz von Papen, a monarchist at heart, is able to remain in office only by way of special powers granted to him by President Paul von Hindenburg. Adolf Hitler, his cronies and henchmen are getting nervous. Just this summer, they saw themselves on the verge of seizing power, with Hitler one election away from the chancellery. Now, the party with seemingly unstoppable momentum is suddenly running out of cash, with factional divisions beginning to show within the ranks. Hitler and Gregor Strasser, his main intra-party rival, with socialist leanings to boot, cannot agree on a way forward. The old Prussian elites inside the Berlin beltway are clinging to power, and the radical Nazi upstarts cannot see how they can rise to the highest ranks of government legally, through elections, as long as Hindenburg and his constitutionally guaranteed emergency powers keep von Papen's cabinet in power. It's time to scheme their way to the top. But how?



RÜDIGER BARTH AND HAUKE FRIEDERICHS
Die Totengräber. Der letzte Winter der Weimarer Republik, Frankfurt a. M., S. Fischer, 2018

Such is the premise of a new book by two German historian-journalists that has become a surprise bestseller since its publication last April. Historians have dismissed *Die Totengräber. Der letzte Winter der Weimarer Republik* (The Gravediggers. The final winter of the Weimar Republic) as a non-scholarly book. Newspaper critics – and readers – on the other hand, have embraced the blow-by-blow account of the 75 days before Hitler become chancellor and Germany descended into 12 years of tragedy, death and destruction.

Rüdiger Barth and Hauke Friederichs tell their story in the present tense while documenting official records and quoting extensively

Endgame

Two German historians have co-written the story of how Hitler came to power, yet in the form of a contemporary political thriller. It's a disturbing and entirely intoxicating read

from diaries, letters and the newspapers of the day. And then they throw in a little trivia and few spoonfuls of gossip.

It all makes for a disturbing, and entirely intoxicating read. The authors themselves credit the American TV show *House of Cards* as an inspiration, claiming the machinations underway in Germany during the Weimar Republic were just as shifty but in fact more gripping – after all, they did actually happen. The cast of characters provides the full gamut of gruesome archetypes without any clear-cut heroes for relief.

There's the larger-than-life Paul von Hindenburg, a 77-year-old World War I field marshal who had never been a politician but was so admired for his role in the Battle of Tannenberg in 1914 that 11 years later he was called upon by still-influential monarchist elites to run for the presidency, which he won with 48 percent of the vote. In 1932, the 84-year-old head of state did not care for democratic values and sought to keep his protégé Franz von Papen as chancellor. The sharp-tongued Harry Graf Kessler quipped that von Papen “looked like a grouchy billy goat trying to snap to attention. A figure straight out of *Alice in Wonderland*.” The chancellor is backed by the fat cats and industrial elites who care not a whit about growing income inequality, people freezing in their unheated apartments and the most destitute actually starving to death. His long-time ally and Minister of Defense, Kurt von Schleicher, is well aware of von Papen's unpopularity and misguided policies. But hardly a straight-shooter,

together with his military friends, von Schleicher concocts a secret service report outlining the danger of an imminent civil war between Nazis and communists – if von Papen stays in power. Von Schleicher alone can “fix it” and save the republic! Von Papen's cabinet members defect and on Dec. 2, 1932, Hindenburg is forced to appoint von Schleicher.

Kurt Schumacher, a young, up-and-coming Social Democrat who would like to fill the role of the smart and principled politician, sees von Schleicher as “an office Napoleon, an opportunist, despite some modernist leanings, a man of the authoritarian state, an anti-democrat, a monarchist, a prisoner of his ancestry and his cast” – and someone who had to be opposed by all possible means.

The new chancellor's plan is indeed to come to the help of low-income workers – to appease the left, including Social Democrats and Communists. And to split the Nazi party apart by making Strasser, Hitler's NSDAP nemesis, vice chancellor. It is a shrewd move by a dubious character.

Meanwhile, Hitler has become restless. It has been his stated purpose to go all in, to give in to no compromise, to join no coalition without him and his party at the helm. But now he fears being left out in the cold again. He is uncertain how much support he can rally among the ranks of the NSDAP to oppose Strasser. He is so distraught that he contemplates suicide. “If the party falls apart,” Hitler confides to his sycophantic spokesman Joseph Goebbels, “I will be gone in a matter of three minutes.”

The unspoken take-away from Barth's and Friederichs' sober account is that it all did not have to happen, that Hitler's rise to power was not inevitable. The many twists and turns of the unheroic saga provide all too many moments when history – or rather upstanding, sober old white men – could and should have intervened.

But von Papen, vengeful and delusional, cannot come to grips with being ousted from the chancellery. With the help of rich industrialists, he conspires with Hitler. Von Schleicher's feeble social initiatives fail, as do his attempts to bring the indecisive and duplicitous Strasser on board. In a last-ditch effort, the beleaguered chancellor demands dictatorial powers from von Hindenburg. The president, with some influence from his close advisor, his son Oskar, denies von Schleicher and – hoping that von Papen, now as Vice Chancellor, will be able to contain him – appoints Hitler chancellor on Jan. 30.

When Paul von Hindenburg dies in 1934, Hitler assumes the presidency by fiat. That very same year, the Nazis oust Franz von Papen and the rest of the cabinet's old elite. Von Papen becomes ambassador to Turkey. Later, after being convicted as a war criminal by a German de-Nazification court, he would spend two years in prison. On Hitler's orders, Kurt von Schleicher and Gregor Strasser are murdered by Nazi henchmen during the wee hours of June 30, 1934, the Night of the Long Knives.

LUTZ LICHTENBERGER'S TRANS-ATLANTIC BOOK REVIEW

PERCEPTION TRAP

For four long chapters of masterfully even-handed historical analysis, Andreas Rödder hides his political leanings – without ever being dull. The historian from the southwestern German city of Mainz asks “Who is afraid of Germany?” (*Wer hat Angst vor Deutschland? Geschichte eines europäischen Problems*) and lays out the conflicts over the country in the center of Europe, starting with the lead-up to World War I, spanning the Weimar Republic, the Nazi era, post-war Western Germany, post-reunification and finishing with today's debate on the euro and the migration crises. The country's elites want to see Germany as a “post-classical democratic nation-state” among other nation-states and as a “non-military power.”

Rödder carefully delineates Germany's present “twofold dilemma” in Europe and the world: “German leadership is in demand and criticized at the same time.” Both the currency disputes and the refugee crisis have laid “the old perception trap.” What the Germans considered their right – demanding fiscal responsibility from Greece and others – or their moral obligation – giving shelter to more than one million refugees – appeared to outside observers a hegemonic pursuit.

The moderate conservative Rödder ultimately lays his chips on the table, forgoing flashy headlines for well-reasoned policy proposals. No country should continue playing the victim card, Germany included, while being aware of how its actions may be perceived as more aggressive than intended. The country is often in better shape than it realizes – and therefore should maintain its composure while voluntarily investing more in other countries, as did the US with the Marshall Plan of 1948. The EU would do well to adopt a more flexible approach by steering away from the elusive goal of becoming an “ever-closer union.” Rödder's book combines a deft scholarly touch with acute political realism. Any country would benefit from being the subject of such a book.

ANDREAS RÖDDER

Wer hat Angst vor Deutschland? Geschichte eines europäischen Problems, S. Fischer, Frankfurt a. M., S. Fischer, 2018

WESTERN FALLACIES

Volker Steinkamp, a professor for French and Italian literature at the University of Duisburg-Essen, had never written about international politics until he published a forceful essay titled “The West and the Rest” in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* in 2013. Six years later, he has expounded on his original idea in a slender yet historically profound volume titled *Foreign Affairs: Kritische Betrachtungen zur Außenpolitik* (Foreign affairs. Critical observations on foreign policy).

Steinkamp retells how Germany, after reunification in 1990, joined all other Western states in championing democracy and human rights worldwide and thus plays its part in achieving world peace.

Steinkamp is by no means against democratic values. He is merely casting doubt on whether a foreign policy based on such a universal axiom is actually an effective tool for confronting the challenges posed by 21st-century global politics.

In a sweeping tour through 18th-century France and the United States in the 20th century, he nimbly limns the shifting narratives to defend interventions on foreign soil.

Today, Steinkamp writes, “the universal imperative’ to implement the West's notion of liberty not only within one's own societies but to project them into the world” had become part of the conventional wisdom from Europe's Left all the way to US-American neocons. Steinkamp wants to remind Western politicians of an essential lesson of the Cold War: Keeping the peace while simultaneously securing one's own freedom and independence should be their “very own and most noble duty.”

Steinkamp has written an elegant treatise on the fallacies of Western thinking about the international order. However, actual decision-makers may find his laudable rationale confusing when formulating foreign policy concerning, for example, China, Russia or Venezuela, where points of contention are too complicated for the simplistic dichotomy of interventionism and non-interventionism.

VOLKER STEINKAMP

Foreign Affairs. Kritische Betrachtungen zur Außenpolitik, Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt a. M., 2019

CALIFORNIA CRIB

Thomas Mann, author of *The Magic Mountain*, winner of the 1929 Nobel Prize for Literature and “the greatest living man of letters,” as he was announced during his 1938 United States book tour, was forced to flee Nazi Germany. After four years in Princeton, New Jersey, he moved to his new home in California, where he resided for 10 years. From there, he aided the allied counter-propaganda efforts by writing his famous 55 BBC radio broadcasts, which were published by Knopf in 1943 under the title *Listen, Germany*.

The German government bought his home on San Remo Drive in Pacific Palisades in 2016. After extensive renovations, President Frank-Walter Steinmeier inaugurated the Thomas Mann House in the summer of last year as a center for dialog between German fellows and their US colleagues in all fields of science and the arts.

Mann's grandson Frido, born in the US in 1940, has now written a memoir, *Das Weiße Haus des Exils* (The White House of exile), about his childhood in Los Angeles. It is a monument to his grandfather's vocal opposition to Hitler and a passionate plea for ever-closer trans-Atlantic relations in our time of global upheaval.

Before Frido Mann gets to the more uplifting parts, he rips into the US president, calling out his “socially dangerous disregard for decency, the truth, culture and human dignity unprecedented in American history.” It is time to marshal “all remaining resources, drawn from our extraordinary cultural traditions” to counter the nationalist and fundamentalist forces willing to undermine liberal democracy. He hopes the house built “in the spirit of Thomas Mann” will play a vital part in this endeavor.

While Frido Mann's well-meaning calls for accountability and accommodation are highly laudable, his often stilted and loquacious writing does not serve his cause. Try *The Magic Mountain* instead.

FRIDO MANN

Das Weiße Haus des Exils, S. Fischer, Frankfurt a. M., 2018

The treaty of short-lived illusions

The Treaty of Versailles signed 100 years ago was not a peace agreement based on reconciliation, but rather a continuation of war by other means. However, the idea that it led to the failure of the Weimar Republic is also a historical myth

BY ECKART CONZE

There was a certain historical irony at work on that day in December 1918, when US President Woodrow Wilson boarded the USS George Washington on his way across the Atlantic to attend the Paris Peace Conference. The steamer was, in fact, a former German passenger ship built by the German shipping company Norddeutscher Lloyd; it had been confiscated in New York at the start of World War I and had been transporting American troops to Europe since 1917. Upon arriving in the French port of Brest, President Wilson was given an enthusiastic welcome by masses of cheering people. Indeed, the US president's journey through Europe – to Paris, London and Rome – often seemed more like a victory parade. Not only had US involvement decided the war, most people were also sure that Wilson would also bring lasting peace to Europe and the world.

The president himself was more skeptical. Already while crossing the ocean, Wilson had told an advisor that he felt the peace conference could become a “tragedy of disappointment.” And his premonition was proved right. On June 28, 1919, there was hardly anyone around to actually defend the freshly signed Treaty of Versailles and its related peace agreements. This state of affairs was even more pronounced after World War II, at which point Versailles and the international order created by the treaties of 1919-1920 were considered to embody an entirely failed peace.

Why was the international order that emerged from the treaty agreements so ill-received? Why did it remain so precarious and even prevent the world – not only Europe – from coming to rest?

Tremendously high expectations were placed on the peace agreements that followed World War I, for they were expected not only “to end all wars” but also to create an enduring, eternal peace. To be sure, every major peace treaty of the modern age – from the Peace of Westphalia of 1648 to the Congress of Vienna in 1814-1815 – has faced the challenge of ending a long war while establishing a new and stable order. However, never had there been such high and contradictory expectations attached to a peace agreement prior to 1919. These myriad expectations resulted in a level of complexity that the peace conference could not possibly address.

One key element of the pressure that weighed on peacemakers at the time was the tangible experience of the war itself; that is, the nightmare of a murderous war of mass destruction the likes of which the world had never known, a war lasting four-and-a-half years and producing millions of casualties. There were simply no role models for securing peace after a “total war” such as this. Indeed, war-marked societies were exhausted and literally bled-out, and especially in the final years of the war, they felt an enormous longing and a deep desire that the suffering and dying should come to an end.

And yet, at the same time, hatred among the wartime enemies also grew and even settled in people's minds. This hatred had an impact on the treaty, which, for that very reason, became not a peace agreement based on reconciliation, but a continuation of war by other means.

But the problem of the peace accord and the resistance to its acceptance were not limited to the realization of peace with Ger-



many and the specific conditions of the Treaty of Versailles. The source of criticism already aimed at the treaties by its contemporaries lay in a further perspective – one that reached beyond Germany. Indeed, the growing and increasingly shared rejection lay in the fact that the peace agreement after World War I was linked to exigencies that – strictly speaking – went far beyond those of a peace accord. These include the collapse of the multinational empires of Russia, Austria-Hungary and the Ottomans and the wave of individual nation-founding triggered by this erosion.

With regard to the question of the coexistence of different ethnicities, Wilson's principle of people's right to self-determination and his policy of nationalization did not provide satisfactory solutions. On the contrary, ethnic conflicts and minority issues were intensified, and the idea of the ethnically homogeneous nation-state contributed to an increase in conflict and violence, that is, to wars, civil wars, pogroms and expulsions that harbored genocidal potential from the very beginning.

Efforts to establish autonomy and independence movements originating in the colonial world outside of Europe – themselves

driven by the idea of people's right to self-determination – also had an influence on the Paris negotiations. There, too, the “Wilsonian moment” (Erez Manela) was a huge disappointment; it was not the idea of national self-determination that shaped the great powers' approach to the Paris treaties, but instead their imperial claims to power. In fact, the great powers' colonial empires increased once again after World War I. In other words, the re-organization of the world in 1919 was determined by the powers and power-interests of the global north.

The world order established in Versailles was unstable and short-lived. It had no decisive or especially powerful supporters, a fact that contributed to its failure and thus also enabled its unraveling. This is especially true for the US, which was unwilling to use its weight and influence to maintain the very order it had helped to create. Wherever the US engaged in the constructive implementation of the peace settlements, the positive potential held by the Versailles order became apparent. Two examples are the reparations question that lingered throughout the 1920s and, not least, the German-French policy of rapprochement

in the Briand-Stresemann era, which would not have been possible without Washington's stabilization policies.

The failure of the Versailles order led to its own discrediting. In 1945, no one was interested in taking it up as a model. Indeed, World War II ended without a peace treaty. Nevertheless, the experiences associated with Versailles echoed through to the end of World War II. For example, by pursuing Germany's unconditional surrender, the Allies had drawn on lessons learned at the end of World War I in 1918, thereby seeking to prevent a new “stab-in-the-back” myth by unequivocally demonstrating the German defeat. Against this backdrop, Versailles could no longer serve as a reference point.

This situation began to change after 1990. After the Cold War, it became easier to see that important developments – but also problems and conflict constellations of the world in the late-20th and early-21st century – can be traced back to the era at the end of World War I. This applies, for example, to the Arab-Israeli conflict, the genesis of which is closely tied to decisions made during World War I and the Paris conference, and a conflict that appears today more intractable

than ever. In a similar manner, it is possible to trace back political tensions accompanying China's recent rise to a global superpower in the Far East to developments in the years around 1919. These include the profound humiliation China experienced in 1919 in Paris, when its legitimate interests were heavily countered by Japan and the Western powers. These historical events are not at the root of today's conflict; however, they do shape the political consciousness in China to this day.

As it did in both world wars, the US also emerged victorious from the Cold War. This victory marked the country's third triumph in the 20th century, which has often been called “the American century” for this very reason. Indeed, expectations regarding a “Pax Americana” after 1990 corresponded to similar expectations of an American-shaped peace in 1918-1919. Similarly, after 1990, the concept of “the end of history” corresponded to the idea that World War I was the war to end all wars.

And yet, the US withdrawal from the global political structures that had been shaped to a large extent by Woodrow Wilson was a major factor in the ongoing instability and rife-

with-conflict interwar international order. Indeed, a common interest among the great powers, including Germany, to share and consolidate the structures that emerged in 1919 simply did not exist. The League of Nations and other multilateral structures were thus weakened; in fact, they perished for this very reason. And the subsequent result was a massive re-nationalization of politics – in many respects, and not only in Germany – paired with an aggressive nationalism.

In today's world, too, individual national interests and unilateral actions are increasingly determining the course of world politics. This applies to the US, where Donald Trump is taking to the extreme a development that goes back to the 1990s and destroying so much in the process, not only the trans-Atlanticism of the 20th century. It applies to China, which is confidently and aggressively asserting its global claim to power. And it also applies to Russia, which is pursuing a course of unilateralism marked by violations of international law, the clearest being its annexation of the Crimea and its interference in the Ukrainian civil war; the international community of nations has noticeably little to say about these transgressions and, above all, no common will to act. Contrary to expectations after 1990, the bodies plagued by this behavior are all those international structures and organizations that, much like the League of Nations in the 1930s, have grown weaker due to the fact that they stand in the way of such unilateral action.

Europe is by no means free of the dynamics of re-nationalization that jeopardize the commonality and cohesion of the EU. And such centrifugal forces are growing. Brexit is not the only evidence of this. The narrative of peace that was constitutive of the unification of Europe in the second half of the 20th century – in connection with the experience of two world wars and the crisis-ridden interwar period – is fading and losing its effect. Germany, Europe and the world have once again become susceptible to nationalism, identitarian tendencies and a desire to achieve sovereignty via isolation. That is, they have become susceptible to those “old demons” of the post-World War I era, as French president Emmanuel Macron noted on the anniversary of the 1918 armistice. Back then, those demons managed to destroy the beginnings of a peaceful international order in the space of a few years; they also destroyed, far beyond Europe, any hopes for freedom and democracy.

Today, the reemergence of nationalism, populism and authoritarianism in Europe and the world prompts us to recall the crisis of Europe and the world in the years after 1919. At that time, a mishandled war, an unwanted peace and the profound economic crisis they caused combined to call liberal democracy into question. In many countries, authoritarian governments came to power. Indeed, after World War I, the idea of a liberal postwar order in which the victors and the defeated could live in freedom and in peace remained a short-lived illusion.

Eckart Conze is a professor of modern history in Marburg. Last year, his book *Die große Illusion. Versailles 1919 und die Neuordnung der Welt* (The great illusion. Versailles 1919 and the reordering of the world) was published by Siedler.

Keeping up with the Brulljesmachers

The people of Kallstadt are known for their hospitality and open-mindedness, yet they are skeptical about a visit by the US president to his grandfather's hometown

BY DAGMAR SCHINDLER-NICKEL

When Karin Speckert is out sweeping in front of her home and gets asked by tourists where they can find the Trump house, she pretends she doesn't know. "It drives me crazy," says the 76-year-old. She lives across from the house where Friedrich Trump, the grandfather of US President Donald Trump, was born in 1869. Speckert explains that the current owners of the house have had enough problems with annoying reporters and people stopping to take selfies in front of their home.

And Speckert understands why her neighbors have completely withdrawn themselves from all the fuss. They even hung up a sign on their gate announcing they wanted to sell their house due to the siege-like conditions they now find themselves in. "If Trump actually shows up, it would probably be best to just put the trash cans out and lower the shutters," says Speckert. She is particularly concerned about the severe safety measures involved in such a visit. Still, if Trump shows up in Kallstadt, she might have the opportunity to get the autograph of a second US president; she already has the autograph of the recently deceased President George H.W. Bush. She even has the signatures of former German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Mikhail Gorbachev, the last Soviet head of state, on a bottle of Speckert wine from Kallstadt. The bottle of Burgundy – grown for the family winery by Speckert's deceased husband – was served in October 1999 at a banquet attended by the three statesmen in Berlin celebrating the 10th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. "That's history, a long time ago," says Speckert.

Even further back in history is that moment in 1885 when a young 16-year-old man named Friedrich Trump, a trained hairdresser, turned his back on his homeland and embarked on a journey to try his luck in America. By doing so, he also avoided compulsory military service duty in Germany, something that would later come back to haunt him. Having made it to the West Coast in the middle of the gold rush, Friedrich managed to make money by building hotels, brothels and restaurants. This enabled the family to lay a foundation for their real estate assets in New York.

Friedrich did not completely cut ties with Kallstadt. He came back several times, and in 1902, he even married the girl next door, Elisabeth, and brought her to New York. Two years later, when his wife became homesick, the couple moved back to Kallstadt. But Friedrich was denied repatriation due to the fact that

people stationed at the Ramstein airbase come to the region to get to know the local Pfälzer wine culture. They often bring their whole family with them on their excursions," she says. The Wurstmarkt, actually a big wine festival in the neighboring Bad Dürkheim, is a popular destination in the fall as well.

ancestors of both Donald Trump and the Heinz family came from Kallstadt. Wendel, herself a Kallstadt native, even gained admission to Trump Tower and interviewed the real estate tycoon, who had not yet announced his candidacy for US president. Wendel managed to get Trump to say "Ich bin ein Kallstadter"

whole thing: "If he wants to come, he should come."

Cornelia Seidl also attended the Steuben Parade in 2012. She is head of the local women's association and a trainer at the local gymnastics center. "He wouldn't be doing himself or Kallstadt any favors if he comes," she says with a view to 2005, when George W. Bush visited Mainz and the city was completely sealed off. Still, Seidl is convinced that if Trump actually comes, Kallstadt will take great effort to show its best side.

Already a year ago, there were rumors among the members of the Kallstadt men's choir that they were going to be asked to serenade Trump at some point soon. They didn't take the idea too seriously; however, at the end of last year, US Ambassador Richard Grenell tweeted that Trump was interested in a visit to Kallstadt. "I don't know when, but he told me he wanted to come and see his family's hometown," Grenell said. The ambassador actually intended to make the trip himself to prepare for the president's visit. This was announced by US Consul General James Herman during his own visit to Kallstadt in January 2018. An inquiry from the embassy is still pending. "We'd almost prefer it if he doesn't come," says singer Leo Möckel, who's quite happy

visit to the troops in Iraq. Trump surprised everyone by also visiting the airbase in Ramstein, 60 kilometers from Kallstadt. Still, if the president officially comes to Kallstadt, it will probably be as part of a formal state visit to Germany, which has yet to take place, even two years after taking office.

Chancellor Angela Merkel has already met Trump twice in Washington. During her last visit in April 2018, she met him in the Oval Office and presented him with a 1705 copper engraving featuring a map of the Pfalz region, on which Kallstadt is also marked. On this occasion, Merkel is said to have invited the president to visit Kallstadt together with her.

As state visits have such a long lead-up time, the honorary mayor of Kallstadt, Thomas Jaworek, is still rather relaxed. In the past two years, the 50-year-old has already answered countless press inquiries about Trump. "We treat the topic with typical Pfälzian composure," says Jaworek, who comes from Bavaria but is married to a woman from Kallstadt. Like many residents not active in the wine business, he works at a chemical site 25 kilometers away in Ludwigshafen. Of course, Jaworek still thinks about the impact a Trump visit may have. "We will showcase our town as a lovely winegrowing village that can also handle something as big as a president's visit," he says confidently.

The Christian Democrat politician sees a potential Trump visit as having a personal and a private component. Jaworek also thinks of the earlier trips by the late Chancellor Helmut Kohl, who regularly invited state guests to Deidesheim, 15 kilometers away, to establish a personal relationship with them over *Saumagen* (stuffed pig's stomach) and Riesling. These conversations were thereafter referred to as "Saumagen diplomacy."

Saumagen also exists in Kallstadt, too, even in the form of wine. Indeed, Kallstadt is known for its affinity to the "Saumagen" wine fields. This makes it possible for local restaurants and cafés, which range from small street-side shops to Michelin star eateries, to serve Saumagen as a dish and as a drink. There's only one catch: Trump doesn't drink wine. "We'll be able to accommodate that too," says Jaworek.

Dagmar Schindler-Nickel is a metro editor for the local daily *Rheinpfalz* in Bad Dürkheim, two kilometers outside of Kallstadt.



A long way from Queens: Kallstadt in Rhineland-Palatinate in southwest Germany.

he was considered a draft dodger. On July 1, 1905, the couple boarded the steamboat "Pennsylvania" in Hamburg on their way back to the US. Three months later, the father of the future US president was born in New York – not in Kallstadt.

In Kallstadt, nobody takes advantage of this famous émigré family for publicity or advertising purposes. On the other hand, the Heinz dynasty – the other expat family that went on from Kallstadt to make history in America – is immortalized by a ketchup bottle in the showcase of the Heinz winery. In contrast to the Heinz's, Donald Trump is a more provocative subject in this village of 1,200 inhabitants on the famous German *Weinstraße* (wine route). People in the neighboring villages have been known to refer to Trump as a real Kallstadt *Brulljesmacher*, or show-off. In return, the people of Kallstadt take a playful approach to their blowhard reputation, with the local youth calling themselves the *Brulljesmachers*.

Sarah Bühler has been working in Kallstadt for many years. Together with her brother, she runs a country house with a winery and is happy when Americans come to town. "Many of the



Family business: Donald Trump's relatives are buried in Kallstadt.

Bühler cannot imagine that the US president would actually pay a visit to Kallstadt. "He has so many things to take care of at home," she says skeptically. Six years ago, 29-year-old Bühler was Kallstadt's official wine princess and visited the Steuben Parade in New York with about 30 other villagers to promote their hometown together. The reason for the visit was the filming of a documentary called *Kings of Kallstadt*, in which filmmaker Simone Wendel asks whether it's a coincidence that the

and "I love Kallstadt" directly into the camera, even though he had upheld his father's version of their story – which claimed Swedish, not German ancestry – for decades prior.

This is something Kallstadt has never forgotten. "There are many people who would prefer it if he just forgets about making a visit here. They are afraid that the manhole covers will have to be welded shut and the whole place sealed off," says Bühler. But she also takes a calm approach to the

that there are no concrete plans as of yet. Still, it's hard to say "no" when it seems the plans for a Kallstadt trip become more and more feasible. "If he actually comes, we will be the best hosts we can be," says the 79-year-old, with an air of determination. After all, media interest will be very high, and if the men's choir is actually needed to perform on a certain day, you can count them in. Möckel remains open-minded.

Christmas 2018 was almost that day. On the return flight from a

A view from above, into the not-so-distant future



Alexander Gerst

The German native had already recorded his "message to my grandchildren" in November, while hovering 400 kilometers above the Earth's surface, in the Cupola View Module of the International Space Station (ISS). On Dec. 18, Alexander Gerst, commander of the Soyuz MS-09 on its 57th ISS expedition, finally posted his speech online. After 197 days in space, Gerst and his Russian colleague, Sergey Prokopyev, along with United States astronaut Serena Auñón-Chancellor, were on their way back to Earth, targeting the Kazakh Steppe, when his video went viral with millions of views.

"When I look down on the planet, I think I need to apolo-

gize to you," he said. "Right now, it looks like we – my generation – are not going to leave this planet in its best condition for you. Of course, in retrospect many people will say they weren't aware of what we were doing. But in reality, we humans know that right now we're polluting the planet with carbon dioxide, we're making the climate reach a tipping point, we're clearing forests, we're polluting the oceans with garbage, we're consuming the limited resources far too quickly, and we're waging mostly pointless wars."

He hoped, Gerst continued, "that we can still get our act together and improve a few things." He hopes "we won't be

remembered by you as the generation who selfishly and ruthlessly destroyed your livelihood. I'm sure you understand these things much better than my generation. And who knows, maybe we'll learn something new, such as: taking a step always helps; this fragile spaceship called Earth is much smaller than most people can imagine; how fragile the Earth's biosphere is and how limited its resources are; that it's worth getting along with your neighbors; that dreams are more valuable than money and you have to give them a chance; that boys and girls can do things equally well, but that every one of you has one thing that he or she can do much better than all the

others; that the simple explanations are often wrong and that one's own point of view is always incomplete; that the future is more important than the past; that one should never fully grow up; and that opportunities only come along once. You have to take a risk for things that are worth it, and any day during which you discovered something new – one where you gazed beyond your horizon – is a good day."

According to Gerst, he wanted to be able to look at the world through the eyes of the younger generation and look into the future. Until then, he will try "to make your future the best one I can possibly imagine." *KB/PHK*

Who is John Maynard?

For many Germans, the ballad of this heroic helmsman is inextricably linked to Lake Erie and the city of Buffalo. Its author, Theodor Fontane, was born two centuries ago this year



Theodor Fontane's "John Maynard," illustrated by Tobias Krejtschi, © Kindermann Verlag, 2008

BY KLAUS GRIMBERG

A paddle-wheel steamer in flames on Lake Erie – hundreds of passengers in mortal danger – the safety of the shore still far off: Ask a German man, woman or child if these fragmentary images ring a bell, and their likely answer will be the name John Maynard.

"Who is John Maynard?"

John Maynard, he was our helmsman who..."

This begins one of the most famous ballads in German literature. Upon hearing these first lines, Germans can immediately conjure the drama before their eyes – a ship in flames, smoke everywhere and a brave man remaining at the helm to guide the steamer to the shore – "Still ten minutes to Buffalo."

This heroic story in verse remains one of the most memorable works of German poetry, and is still read and discussed in schools. Perhaps this year more than usual, as it marks the bicentennial of the birth of its creator, Theodor Fontane (1819-1898), in the Brandenburg town of Neuruppin, just north of Berlin. Commemorations are planned throughout Germany, but particularly in Berlin and Brandenburg, providing an occasion to recall the life and work of the writer considered the foremost figure of 19th-century German realism.

The maritime emergency so vividly portrayed by Fontane was based on the steamer "Erie" and its ill-fated voyage of Aug. 8, 1841, when it embarked from Buffalo, destination Detroit. According to contemporary accounts, fire broke out a few hours from shore. The most likely cause was a quantity of paints and turpentine that must have ignited on board after being stowed too close to the engine room.

Newspapers reported that, because of the speed with which the flames consumed the ship, barely 30 of the 200 to 300 people on board could be rescued. Most accounts paid special tribute to the helmsman, who remained at his post to attempt to steer the stricken vessel ashore before its rudder finally jammed.

Forty-five years after the event, Theodor Fontane elevated the helmsman into the legend of John Maynard, who has lived on in schoolchildren's imaginations ever since. Fontane did not adhere strictly to the facts. His steamer sailed in the opposite direction – from Detroit to Buffalo – and all his passengers survived the inferno. He turns Maynard into a heroic figure, one who sacrifices his own life to save countless others. Very much in the spirit of his time, Fontane condensed an actual event into a gripping drama of courage, duty and devotion, extolling the protagonist as the standard-bearer of these outstanding human virtues.

For the many Germans who read Fontane's ballad in school, the Great Lakes of

North America, the backdrop of the tale of John Maynard, are transposed like maps on their minds. So it's all the more disappointing for Maynard's many fans who, after visiting Niagara Falls, travel on to Buffalo, only to be met with shaking heads and shrugged shoulders when they ask the locals about the stalwart sailor. "Who is John Maynard?" they may hear in puzzled response. Yet some, burrowing through decades of memories, can still launch into the ballad's opening lines: "John Maynard, he was our helmsman who..."

Such discussions have also likely cropped up between the respective communities of the sister-cities Buffalo and Dortmund, situated in the western German state of North Rhine-Westphalia – especially as the poem's final lines refer to a gravestone in which "cut in the marble in letters of gold; The city's debt of thanks is told." Over the decades, many Germans have scoured Buffalo in vain search of the monument. That is, until authorities in the two cities agreed to mark the 20th anniversary of their partnership with a special gesture. In 1997, at the Erie Basin Marina, right at the water's edge, a bronze plaque was unveiled with an English translation of the poem and explanations of its historical context.

In all of Fontane's works, the John Maynard ballad is the sole prominent reference to the United States – then still a faraway land. In German literature, Fontane primarily remains associated with Prussian history and his love of Brandenburg, which he preserved for posterity in *Wanderungen durch die Mark Brandenburg* (Walks through Brandenburg), a literary travelogue of his local excursions. Hardly any town in today's Brandenburg, no matter how insignificant, has an identity that omits at least a passing mention to Fontane's travels. This anniversary year is a rare opportunity for even the tiniest hamlets to draw outside attention by citing its reference in Fontane's *Wanderungen*.

Not unlike Buffalo, one Brandenburg village has become identified with a Fontane ballad that, if anything, is even more famous in German than "John Maynard." In 1889's "The Squire von Ribbeck at Ribbeck in Havelland," Fontane tells the story of a generous lord of a manor who orders that he be buried holding a pear, which would then grow into a magnificent pear tree. Throughout his life, the good squire had enjoyed handing out ripe pears to the children in his village, and thus the tradition could continue after his passing. Over the years, as in Buffalo, readers flocked to the village of Ribbeck in search of the poem's traces, and the legendary pear tree in particular. But only a stump was left of the 19th-century original. In the year 2000, a new pear tree was then planted in front of the village church. Fontane lovers can now find – in Ribbeck and in Buffalo – a tangible link to the literary locations that once sent their imaginations soaring.



Klaus Grimberg is a freelance journalist based in Berlin.

"Who is John Maynard?"

"John Maynard, he was our helmsman who
Held out till he brought us safely through,
Saved us and wears a hero's crown above,
For us he died, and his reward our love,
John Maynard."

Across Lake Erie the "Swallow" wings,
Foam like snow the ship's bow rings.
Detroit to Buffalo she makes her way
All hearts aboard feel free and gay
And passengers with kith and kin
Can see the shore in the twilight dim
And chattering to John Maynard say
"Helmsman, how much further away?"
He looks ahead, then around and explains,

"Still thirty minutes... half an hour remains."

Every heart is cheerful and every heart feels free
When from below a cry suddenly:
"Fire!" was the awful shout
As smoke from cabin and hatch poured out,
First smoke, then flames, a blazing glow,

And still twenty minutes to Buffalo.

And passengers crowd around the bow,
The colorful mass pressed together now;
At the bowsprit there's still air and light
But at the helm the smoke's grip is tight;
A moan is heard, "Where are we? Do you know?"

And still fifteen minutes to Buffalo.

The wind increases but the smoke cloud stays,
Towards the helm the captain turns his gaze
He can discern his helmsman no more
But through the speaking tube implodes:
"Still there, John Maynard?" "Yes, sir, I am."
"Head to the beach! Into the surf!"
"Yes, sir, I'll ram."
And the people cheer on: "Please don't let go!"

And still ten minutes to Buffalo.

"Still there, John Maynard?" Then this reply
With a dying man's voice: "Yes, sir, I'll try."
And into the surf, amid rocks and stone,
He guides the "Swallow" steering alone.
Should rescue come it will only come so,
Rescue: the beach of Buffalo.

The vessel's broken, it smolders like coal
All have been saved, all save one soul.

All the city bells peal, their tones upswell
To heaven from each church and chapel,
A ringing and tolling, all else is silent.
Just one goal on which all are bent:
Ten thousand or more make up the train,
And none in the crowd the tears can restrain.

The coffin's lowered, upon flowers laid,
With flowers they then close the grave
And cut in the marble in letters of gold
The city's debt of thanks is told:
"Here rests John Maynard, in smoke and flame
He held onto the rudder with might and main,
Saved us and wears a hero's crown above,
For us he died, and his reward our love,
John Maynard."

Translation: Burt Erickson Nelson



Things will not go well

In 2018, German screenwriter and director Christian Petzold was invited to be a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, yet his work couldn't be less Hollywood

BY URSULA SCHEER

When Christian Petzold thinks of cinema, the image that comes to his mind is *Angelus Novus*, a print created by the Swiss-German avant-garde artist Paul Klee two years after the end of World War I. Klee's image depicts what philosopher Walter Benjamin referred to as "the angel of history" with spread wings and its eyes and mouth wide open. In an essay touching on this heavenly messenger, Benjamin writes that the angel – who is propelled into the future but whose face is steadily "turned toward the past" – is compelled to behold the ceaseless catastrophes of history hurled at his feet.

Christian Petzold would argue that the same applies to cinema. As the director and screenwriter explained in a recent interview with the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* for his latest film, *Transit* (2018): "Precisely because it looks back, cinema feels that which lies before us." *Transit* is an adaptation of the "exile novel" of the same name by German author Anna Seghers, who fled the Nazis in 1934 but returned to Germany after World War II to become one of the GDR's most important authors. Petzold's film blends and superimposes the past and the present, and the result is a timeless story about people on the run: characters that have escaped from 1940s German fascism and are now in Marseilles, where they hope to find safe passage.

Film critics have been fascinated by the way in which Petzold jumps back and forth in time in what they call his "picture puzzle," which premiered at the Berlin Film Festival. Indeed, ever since Petzold's breakthrough film *The State I Am In* (2000) – which revolves around the daughter of former RAF terrorists seeking to free herself from her parents' criminal legacy – his works have almost always elicited unanimous admiration from critics. His films are invited to international competitions and showered with prizes, including the Berlinale's Silver Bear for Best Director, the German Film Award and the



A scene from *Transit*: Anna Seghers' novel, on which the film is based, was originally published in 1944. Paula Beer and Franz Rogowski star in the 2018 adaptation.

German Television Film Prize, to name a few.

In 2018, Petzold, who was born in West Germany in 1960, received yet another honor. He was among a new group of film professionals from 59 countries invited to join the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, in his case for his work as a screenwriter. This group of fresh faces has been called to Hollywood in an attempt by the Academy to foster diversity among the ranks of its Oscar voters. And if anyone is curious as to which perspectives Petzold will bring to his new role at the Academy, *Transit* provides many clues.

Petzold conceived *Transit* with his long-time co-author Harun Farocki, who died in 2014, and it is the last film the two worked on together. For Petzold, the film marks the bringing-together of all the life themes that have accompanied him since the beginning of his career. Indeed, in many of his films, we encounter characters mired in a spiritual, personal and political no-man's-land. We watch them as they seek a path between life and death, between the past and the future, between salvation and destruction and between bourgeois existence and underground survival. Their identity is ambiguous, they have nowhere to call home and

their situation is undetermined. We watch them struggle with guilt and shame in a world in which good and evil combine, creating infinite shades of gray.

Bleak chapters of German history create the backdrops against which events are condensed into tragedies, many of which are permeated by elements of horror and the fantastical. Petzold's characters are invariably trying to assert themselves against family constellations and social systems. But their chances of success are always doubtful.

As Petzold himself notes, almost all his characters are "refugees, that is, people who have fallen out of this world, individuals who are forced to re-learn their present." In fact, he argues that everything is a journey, and that he and Farocki "only ever shot travel films." Petzold, who lives with his wife and two adult children in Berlin, has always drawn inspiration from his own family history: His parents fled to the West from the GDR in the 1950s and their son was born and grew up in North Rhine-Westphalia, but the family still paid regular visits to relatives on the other side of the Iron Curtain. This perhaps explains the filmmaker's fascination with existences between here and there. After studying at the Free Uni-

versity Berlin and the German Film and Television Academy, he started out as a documentary and short-film maker, preferring to work together with close friends and colleagues.

Petzold's go-to actor for the leading role in many of the dramas and melodramas he's shot for cinema, but also for TV, is the incomparable Nina Hoss. In *Something to Remind Me*, she plays a woman looking to avenge the murder of her sister; in *Wolfsburg*, she plays a murderous mother in mourning; and in *Yella*, she plays an East German risk capitalist.



Star line-up: Actors Ronald Zehrfeld, Nina Kunzendorf, Nina Hoss and director Christian Petzold at the 2014 premiere of *Phoenix* in Berlin.

In *Jerichow*, we see the actress bristling with intellectual coolness and restraint as a woman involved in a fatal love triangle centering on a soldier returned from Afghanistan; in *Barbara*, she embodies an East German doctor contemplating fleeing to the West; and, finally, in *Phoenix*, she is the Holocaust survivor who tries to find her way back into her old life with a face that has been altered by the deadly abuse she was subjected to in the camps – and becomes re-acquainted with her husband in a horrific way.

Actors Ronald Zehrfeld, Benno Fürmann and Barbara Auer are among the other members of Petzold's regular team. His work on *Transit* brought him to discover Paula Beer and Franz Rogowski, two artists with whom he wants to work again. Bettina Böhler is his trusted editor, and Hans Fromm his cinematographer of choice.

This team acts as the guarantor of the characteristic look and feel of every Petzold film. For example, there's not much talking, and the music is used sparingly but effectively. Images are clearly delineated, and each backdrop and setting selected in a corresponding manner. Everything is precisely choreographed. This is why Petzold is often considered one of the main repre-

sentatives of the Berlin School, a group of filmmakers inspired by the aesthetics and socio-critical approach of the German *Autorenfilme* (author films) of the 1960s and 1970s.

All that Petzold does is calculated and meticulously thought-through. His work often contains allusions to classics, such as Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo* and Mike Nichols' *The Graduate*. He also likes to organize his films into trilogies: *The State I Am In*, *Yella* and *Jerichow* compose his "ghost trilogy," while *Barbara*, *Phoenix* and *Transit* make up his "history trilogy."

Petzold directed three episodes of the German TV series *Polizei-ruf 110*, starring Matthias Brandt as a melancholic commissioner. The show is a prestige project in the world of German television. He was also involved in the crime trilogy *Dreileben*, a collaborative miniseries experiment in which three different directors portrayed the hunt for a murderer from three different perspectives. Petzold was not satisfied with the result of the experiment and soon insisted that TV series were not for him, no matter how popular the genre. His foray into the world of theater at Berlin's Deutsches Theater was also short-lived. Soon thereafter, he told the *Berliner Zeitung* in no uncertain terms: "I consider cinema to be completely superior to the theater."

In other words, Petzold's creative affection belongs to the big screen alone. His priority now is to explore and portray enmeshed webs of human relationships, rather than individual characters. Up next is *Undine*, a love fairytale for adults. The title of the film is taken from the water nymph that captivates and seduces men in a number of mythological tales. She is, of course, an elemental being, existing somewhere between land and water. So, we can be pretty sure of one thing: it will not go well.

Ursula Scheer is a television critic and arts editor for the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*.

Hitting a blow note

The German harmonica and African-American blues culture may be an odd couple. But they have come a long way together

BY HERBERT QUELLE

After the voice and the guitar, the harmonica – or mouth organ, or just harp – which was first sold in Vienna in the 1820s, is the most characteristic instrument of the blues. And the first harps African-American used to make music must have come from places that lie today in Germany, Austria or the Czech Republic. In other words, all people employed in harmonica production at the time spoke German. This mutually beneficial relationship between a German industrial product and African-American culture is a fascinating story.

During the wave of German immigration to the US in the mid 1800s, Swabians from what is today the federal state of Baden-Württemberg will most likely have carried with them harmonicas produced by Hotz, a company that was founded around 1830 in Knittlingen, northwest of Stuttgart, and stayed in business for 100 years. From 1857 on, they

could have been harmonicas made by Hohner, a firm that still exists. Saxons would most likely have toted instruments produced by Rauner-Seydel-Böhm in Klingenthal, founded in 1829 and in business until 1933, or by C. A. Seydel, founded in 1847 and still going. Hundreds of other manufacturers have long been forgotten.

First and random meetings between the instrument and African-American players may have happened as early as the 1850s. Even in the South, social contacts between African-Americans and recent German immigrants could have been facilitated by a broad abolitionist sentiment among the German speaking population.

In late 1870, with the start of industrial mass production of the harmonica at various German sites, large-scale exports to the US began. Julius Berthold of Klingenthal patented his reed-milling machine in 1878, which greatly accelerated the production process. Between 1893 and 1916, exporting was facilitated by a US consular agency in Markneukirchen, Saxony. With the estab-



lishment of American mail order companies in the 1870s, new distribution channels made the cheap harmonica easily accessible, even in rural and remote areas of the US. This is confirmed by W. C. Handy, born in November 1873 in Florence, Alabama, who observed that as a child he owned a "French harp," which he used to mimic trains and fox hunts. The archaeologist Charles Peabody from Harvard corroborates Handy's observations about the emergence of the blues toward the end of the 19th century.

Around one hundred million German harmonicas have been imported to the US since 1860. This estimate is based mainly on the total production of Hohner – the largest German producer

– which passed 1 billion in 1986, and for whom the US share was traditionally high. The US market accounted for 96 percent of Hohner's entire turnover in 1890, 45 percent in 1905 and 33 percent in 1913, when Germany exported 3.5 million harmonicas to the US, half of which were made by Hohner. The peak of German harmonica imports was in the 1920s, with 21 million in 1926, the same in 1927 and 16 million in 1928. In 1937 the total dipped to 8.4 million. From about 1890 to 2000, with a few exceptions during World War I and II, the US imported at least 1 million harmonicas per year.

If we take the first recording of a blues song with harmonica in 1924 as final proof of the successful marriage of the instrument

with the musical genre, what happened in the interval since Peabody and Handy had first encountered them

together? Were there preferred keys, possibly based on the various levels of prowess of the accompanying guitarists? When did German manufacturers become aware of the new note-bending techniques practiced on their harps? When did they learn there was such thing as a blues scale, which could easily be produced on the harp by focusing on the draw notes rather than the blow notes? What kind of harmonica music did African-American soldiers play when fighting in the trenches of World War I? Reliable answers to questions pertaining to the first decades of the proven coexistence of the blues and the harp are meager at best.

Just as the harp migrated to America from German lands, African-Americans took the harp

and their blues with them on the Great Migration north. By the end of the 1920s, Hohner had proved to be the most successful German harmonica manufacturer. In the US, a Hohner became almost a synonym for harp. Seydel, the oldest harmonica manufacturer in the world, was at a disadvantage between the end of World War II and German unification, as it lay in the GDR, and access to US markets was never easy for an East German company. Today, their harps again enjoy a proud reputation.

With the blues having earned its standing in the musical heritage of the world, it is safe to say that the blues would not be the blues without the harmonica – and the harp would not enjoy the same popularity without the blues.

Herbert Quelle is a diplomat and Germany's principal officer in Chicago. In 2017, he published the novella *Monika's Blues*, about the first meeting between the instrument and players of the blues.

Away games

Like many German athletes, Moritz Wagner had a rough go of it when he arrived in the US. Now he's a Los Angeles Laker

BY JÜRGEN SCHMIEDER

No. On a sunny morning in this beach town south of L.A., Moritz Wagner does not look much like an NBA star. He's not dressed like many of his fellow pro-basketballers – flashy designer suits, heavy gold chains, extravagant headgear. Perched on a parapet in front of a Manhattan Beach Café, his baggy green clothes paint the picture of a surfer making himself comfortable after a few hours on the water. The sun is out, as it is every day. The Pacific Ocean is less than three minutes away. “The beach and the sea have a therapeutic effect on me,” says Wagner, and so it seems. Whoever can have negative thoughts in a place like this must have something out of whack.

Wagner plays center for the Los Angeles Lakers. He's a teammate of LeBron James. The president of the club? Magic Johnson. External advisor? Kobe Bryant. Former Lakers who also played center? Wilt Chamberlain, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Shaquille O'Neal. It would be hard to imagine more prominence for the German rookie than playing for one of the most famous sports clubs in the world, and lest we forget: the world's best basketball league has about 400 players, of which only 150 are good enough to start, to call themselves regulars. “It's a game, sure, but it's also a really tough business,” says Wagner. “Everyone in the game knows that every day is about keeping your job.”

And what does this do to a 21-year-old kid from Berlin when he's suddenly playing for the Lakers and living in a city of four million people like L.A.? When, far from home, he's planning for his future in sports while also pursuing a private life? When, unlike in German sports, regulations dictate that people know you're paid \$1,764,240, and next season you'll make exactly \$2,066,040?

Germany and the United States – that still sounds like a couple of siblings, and at least in terms of pop culture, the US is still like an older brother to Germany. However, for a top athlete to make the transition to the New World can still be immensely difficult. Dirk Nowitzki wanted to flee back to Germany after his first season at Dallas; Dennis Schroeder began his NBA career by being sent to the junior league after a few sub-par games; the German soccer stars Arne Friedrich and Torsten Frings opted to return home, somewhat disillusioned, after short guest stints in Major League Soccer.

Anyone wanting to know what it's like to cross the pond to pursue a career in sports could do no better than to have a talk with Moritz Wagner. In 2015, he went from playing for Alba Berlin to attending the University of Michigan, an elite university with a legendary basketball program that boasts graduates like Rudy Tomjanovich, Chris Webber and Cazzie Russell.

Granted, it may seem to German observers that a semester abroad at an American university is nothing extraordinary. However, what German students experience during a fixed period of time in a foreign country could hardly be more different from what an athlete undergoes. How many ordinary exchange students play before a crowd of almost 14,000 spectators, as do the Michigan Wolverines in the Crisler Center in Ann Arbor? Who flies to Dallas for away games and has to work on a term paper during the flight? Who gets derided on campus by fellow classmates after a loss, yet is celebrated as the honored guest at every party after a win?

Wagner came to this college town in the Midwest and at first, so goes the tradition, had to share a room in a student dormitory with one of his teammates. The

problem was: he turned off the heat at night because he preferred the room cold – so cold, in fact, that Wagner couldn't sleep and was sick with a head cold on a regular basis. And the dining hall food was a world of difference from what his mother Beate served in Berlin. And to top it all off, the workout plan and tactical orientation of the team were nothing like with Alba Berlin.

Little things, you might think, but for an 18-year-old living more than 4,000 miles from home and trying to get used to life in the US, all these little things added up to what felt like a big problem.

Incidentally, even people who seem to have achieved everything possible in their careers have had similar experiences. Two years ago, Bastian Schweinsteiger joined the Chicago Fire, and when he was on the pitch for a game in Los Angeles, the stadium lights cut out. “That kind of thing just doesn't happen,” he would later say. “It's a very interesting experience, one you don't get to have every day.” On the quality of the MLS as a soccer league, he said: “Sometimes things happen that you just can't wrap your head around, like some decisions by the refs or the way some players move without the ball, or how they pass.” However, he also said: “I knew ahead of time what I was getting into.” That shows the peace of mind of a global star who still wants to experience something new at the end of his career.

When Wagner arrived in Michigan, his profile listed his weight at 210 pounds – a figure his coach found much too low. The model athlete in the US is a bit taller and stronger than in Europe. Let us think back to Nowitzki again, whom the experts judged to be too slender, too soft and too sensitive during his first season.

Wagner often spent entire games on the bench, but he didn't give up. It's a story commonly heard these days from German athletes who didn't flee back to Germany after only one season. It takes a while to get used to this culture, which, at first glance, seems so similar to Germany's. The actor Matt Damon once said: “There's only a five-percent difference between Germany and the US – but it seems so vast because all the similarities make the differences impossible to foresee.”

For a German athlete to feel comfortable living in the US, he or she must adapt, and accept a few peculiarities: that the model American athlete is a little taller and a little stronger than the European counterpart; that egotism is tolerated in team sports, and sometimes even encouraged; that humility and restraint can often be construed as weaknesses.

Those who learn this and know how to use it to their advantage, who don't give up but press on, can go far in this country. Over the course of his astonishing career, Nowitzki has earned close to \$300 million in salary alone from the Dallas Mavericks. Dennis Schröder currently earns \$15.5 million a year playing for the Oklahoma City Thunder. The football player Sebastian Vollmer was not even invited to NFL tryouts, but went on to win two Super Bowl rings with the New England Patriots.

Wagner pressed on. He became a key starter and led Michigan to the NCAA championship game last spring. And a few months later, the Lakers selected him in the NBA

draft with the 25th overall pick. A few weeks after that, while he was enjoying success in the Las Vegas Summer League, he injured his left knee and left ankle. “It was extremely frustrating, as I'm a very impatient person,” he says. “I was mentioned in trade rumors, but never explicitly; I couldn't sleep for nights on end, as I was always thinking they could just send me away.”

Such is the life of a modern NBA player: if the club wants to get rid of a guy, he can do nothing to stop it, unlike in Europe. He's forced to go where they send him. It says so in the rules.

The Lakers chose not to trade him when the transfer period expired on Feb. 7; he will now remain safely a Laker for at least the near future. But they didn't let him play right away after his rehab; he often spent entire games sitting on the bench, and then, after a rough start to the season, the Lakers acquired Tyson Chandler, also a center and an experienced defender who won the 2011 NBA championship with the Dallas Mavericks alongside Dirk Nowitzki. “My experience at Michigan helped me at this juncture,” Wagner says. “I know I need to be patient and continue working on my game, and that I'll eventually get my opportunity.”

At difficult moments, Wagner confides in his family. His 17-year-old brother, Franz, is already showing formidable promise with Alba Berlin, and it is thought that he, too, could have a career in the NBA. Franz and Moritz are lucky to have each other to talk to when it comes to basketball. In November, his mother Beate visited him for a few weeks, and his father Axel was in Southern California over Christmas; both parents would like to fly again to Los Angeles this season. “Sometimes they just put the telephone down next to the salad bowl so I can be there for dinner,” says Wagner. “My father understands my situation quite well and has taught me to be a bit more relaxed about things, and more patient, too.”

Something else that German athletes have had to learn in order to be successful in the US is to adapt to American sports culture without forgetting their roots. Nowitzki continues to believe in the unorthodox shooting style his mentor Holger Geschwindner taught him, and he flies Geschwindner to Dallas on a regular basis to train with him, as well as to talk to him about things other than just basketball. He never developed into a chest-thumping self-promoter; he has remained the humble and humorous guy from Würzburg. And that's just what they love in American sports – when an athlete accepts the peculiarities of America and moves within these limits, but still manages to inject a little bit of his or her home country into the mix. This is exactly what makes these players so popular and admired.

Wagner is eager to achieve that status. His model is the sharpshooter Chris Kyle from the film American Sniper: “For weeks on end he lies on a hill and waits for



Moritz “Moe” Wagner

AP PHOTO/SEBASTIAN GORON

his chance. If it comes, he must seize it, immediately and precisely.” In December, Wagner got his first chance, and now, on a regular basis, he can show that he is an able and accurate center. And this is precisely why the Lakers held on to him: to make room for the mighty James, who either goes to the hoop himself or dishes to a wide-open teammate. The world has not seen too many centers with a steady hand beyond the three-point line. Wagner is one of them, and this fact, coupled with his ambition and his enthusiasm for the sport, is why the Lakers won't let go of him. LeBron James on Wagner: “He's always present. He always wants to improve, but most importantly, he wants to help make this team better.”

Wagner has earned respect in this foreign land, in this foreign city. He doesn't believe in status symbols. “Los Angeles has so many people who simply have

to show off how rich they are,” he says. “Dear Lord, let me never become like that.”

He recently had a pair of sleepless nights: “I bought myself a car. It's crazy, I've never in my life spent so much money on something.” He never wants to read anywhere what kind of car it is, so he only spent a small amount: it's not a sports car; not a luxury cruiser; it's a car you need if you're 6-foot-11.

“I know I belong here,” Wagner says about the NBA, the Lakers and the city of Los Angeles. “And I look forward to being able to prove it.” He pauses, stands up, slides his hood over his head and sets out down the street toward the beach.

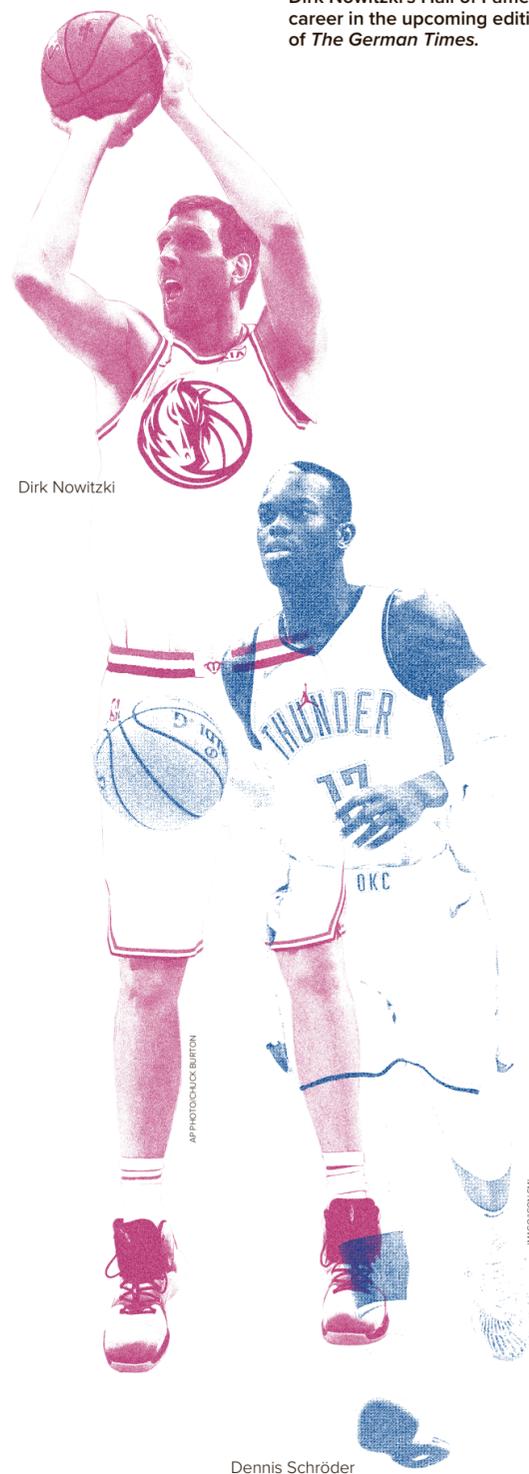
Jürgen Schmieder is a US-based sports reporter for the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*.

Read about the swan song of Dirk Nowitzki's Hall of Fame career in the upcoming edition of *The German Times*.



Bastian Schweinsteiger

IMAGOCOM/SMI



Dirk Nowitzki

AP PHOTO/BUCK BURTON

IMAGOCOM/SMI

Dennis Schröder

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