

# GDR REVIEW

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On International Women's Day

## Equal Rights— Also Equal Conditions?

SINCE the French Revolution, when the poetess Olympe de Gouges demanded equal rights for women and as a result lost her pretty head on the guillotine, we have travelled a long and very arduous road in order to achieve equality. As a consequence our attitude to many small and large problems is very much different to that of our mothers and grandmothers.

We come across the concept of "equal rights" almost every day, not just once a year on International Women's Day. In the last two centuries the struggle for women's equality has clearly changed. It had different meanings and purposes under various historical conditions. One thinks, for example, of the long fight for women's right to a profession, or female suffrage.

In the GDR women have had the same rights as men for almost four decades—as is to be expected under socialist conditions. Approximately nine million women and girls live in our country and everywhere they have secured themselves a firm place, in the professions, as deputies, as teachers, students, etc....

But how do they manage to combine the various tasks which confront them daily? This double burden which applies specifically to women, namely, on the one hand, their profession, on the other the children, the family, the household. Nevertheless, we women want to be involved in the work process. We find it quite natural, indeed almost a need, that we should have a job and be able to study. We have recognised and accepted this and consciously arranged our lives to suit. For many of us a job is a very important means of obtaining recognition and maintaining contact with society.

Every second worker in the GDR is a woman. They are represented in all branches and spheres of the economy. They are successfully coping with the demands of the scientific-technological revolution, although this brings a number of problems. Retraining and an increasing switch over to shiftwork must be reconciled with the demands of the family. With a 30 per cent female participation in the technical professions our country has

already achieved a high level. Nevertheless, the old, traditional idea that women have a "special" aptitude for the teaching and caring professions means that many of them still end up working in the health service, education or shops.

And what is the situation at the managerial level? In former years the main arguments against women were lack of qualifications and self-confidence, plus male reservations and scepticism. Today, some women still express concern that such work would limit the time they have for the family. This problem cannot be solved solely through the better material conditions which society is increasingly offering, such as more favourable shop-opening times or more comprehensive and varied service facilities. Apropos, in the latter sphere especially there is still much scope for easing the household work of the working woman and thus allowing her more leisure time. The subjective aspect is another decisive factor for women going into management: the attitude of the women and that of their husbands and heads of department. In our country there have long since been numerous examples of the "fair sex" proving their skills in the managerial sector and I'm quite convinced that there will be many more in the future.

*Doris Slonina*

Doris Slonina

# A Heart For Weissenfels

Local Government In A Small Town



*Around one table, for the well-being of the people: the mayor and shoe-producers.*



*Richly decorated facade, painstakingly restored.*



*One of the new private businesses in Nikolai Street.*

THE MAYOR of Weissenfels doesn't wear a hat. Not even in the worst weather. It would be totally impractical anyway. Because when Klaus Stephan walks through his town he never gets very far without greeting someone or being greeted himself. And politeness being what it is ... The mayor must always allow himself plenty of time, however, because the greetings don't always stop at a mere "Good morning". A quick word, a question in passing, a chat lasting somewhat longer.

A typical small town, some might say. But

*Footwear from around 1700 can be seen in the Shoe Museum.*

*Below: The town-centre boulevard invites the 39,000 residents of Weissenfels for a stroll, for shopping or for a pleasant rest.*

that is only half the truth. Good understanding between citizens and local politicians in Weissenfels is based on a trustful relationship in all matters of local government. When it comes to the erection of new residential areas, the reconstruction of whole streets, the laying out of green areas, the solution of traffic problems, to the discussion of what should be included and how in new shopping developments or of an artistic detail, the citizens of Weissenfels are asked for their advice and opinions. "We also want their ideas and suggestions", explained Klaus Stephan, "and so we don't just invite them to forums, we also take our models and plans to residents' meetings. That was also the case when we began to reconstruct Nikolai Street. Several useful tips were incorporated into the plans. The citizens told us: 'We'd like a green area here and a butcher's there. Include a hair salon, and a beautician's, too.' Today it's all reality—22 shops, workshops and restaurants."

It was an example of urban construction par excellence. With houses in narrow gaps and half-timbered buildings which lack none of the comforts of the most modern ones. Living and working conditions are good in the street, which, after its completion, is said to be the most attractive in Weissenfels. And even so: it is not a privileged minority which lives here. A pleasant home is not dependent on the size of one's purse. The people living in Nikolai Street pay no more rent than those elsewhere, that is to say between three and five per cent of the family's monthly income—the heating engineer, the computer programmer, the sales assistant and the cobbler, who has his workshop opposite.



*Men's and ladies' hairdressers and a beautician's were set up in Nikolai Street at the wishes of the citizens.*



*Everywhere you can see the craftsmen's signs.*



*Photos: Olaf Hanns, ADN-ZB (1)*



## Shoes And Famous Names

Weissenfels is an old town. Three years ago it celebrated its 800th anniversary. Its walls have housed many famous people and it is for this reason that the Weissenfels people mock-tongue-in-cheek-the pride shown by the people of Weimar for their town as a centre of poetry. In Weissenfels stands the house in which the most important poet and one of the most original thinkers of early German Romanticism was born and died: Friedrich von Hardenberg, known as Novalis. The composer Heinrich Schütz spent his childhood here and in 1651 bought the house at 13 Nikolai Street, where he lived until his death in 1672. Johann Sebastian Bach was court music master to the Duke of Weissenfels, and the musical talents of a certain George Frederick Handel were discovered at the organ in the chapel of the Weissenfels Palace.

The town received its name, which means "White Rock", from the white sandstone cliffs which were for centuries crowned by a castle. The massive Baroque palace now stands in its place.

But above all Weissenfels is known as a shoe-making town. In 1816 139 cobblers lived here. The town chronicle records this fact. And at the beginning of this century small shoe factories sprang up like mushrooms. Today shoes are the town's trademark. Around 12.5 million pairs leave the local parent enterprise of the National Shoe Combine every year.

## An Important Agreement

Klaus Stephan has been mayor in the town for 14 years. His experience: nothing affects the everyday lives of the people more than the results of local government policy. And a lot goes into a feeling of well-being in a town. Much more than it itself has available in terms of labour capacity and means. What can be done? The answer is to join forces. Since 1974 the council has concluded agreements with local enterprises whereby free craftsmen's time and financial means are used to contribute to an ever more beautiful and comfortable Weissenfels. In the interim there are 43 such community contracts, 43 cases of benefits for the residents' working and living conditions. And so the local officials and the enterprises come together more than once a year to discuss plans, to evaluate past achievements and to test further, new possibilities for cooperation.

19 January, 8.00 a.m., in the mayor's office: Klaus Stephan welcomed representatives of the shoe factory—the First Deputy to the General Manager of the Combine, Karl-Helz Küpper, the manager of the Shoe De-

sign Enterprise, Günter Hundertmark, and the Chief Accountant, Erhard Endt. The 1987 agreement lay on the table. What was achieved? The results were up for discussion point by point.

The number one task is the solution of housing and building problems. There are still not enough homes in Weissenfels. Some workers at the shoe factory are still waiting for a bigger home. But one form of cooperation between the factory and the town hall has proved itself: teams of craftsmen from the factory with spare capacity take on reconstruction projects. The town council chooses appropriate buildings and hands them over to the factory. Of course the enterprise then has the right to allocate the modernised homes to its employees. "Reconstruction is not coming along fast enough", said the mayor. "Why not, and how can we help you as the council?" This is also a sign of partnership: no demands but a common search for ways and means, for the most effective solutions.

Klaus Stephan presented the council's wishes for the new agreement: further beautification of Robinson's Island, renovation of the Mühlberg Steps, the provision of garage spaces. And a further topic for discussion: Is there any spare capacity in the enterprise canteen? Because the number of pensioners who receive an inexpensive meal there is set to rise.

Also anchored in the new community contract is the duty of the shoe factory as industrial sponsors of the comprehensive school. The factory will of course take on the laying out of the new school garden. And in a few weeks the new computer club will meet for the first time. National Prize winner Klaus Friedrich, who works in the research department of the Shoe Combine, will be in charge.

## Craft Skills In Demand

Bustling activity in the narrow winding streets, a lively market, a busy to and fro on the pedestrian boulevards—serene quiet at the Heinrich Schütz Memorial, a never-ending stream of curious visitors to the Shoe Museum in the Palace.

Christine Löbnitz, a councillor for 20 years, enthuses about her Weissenfels. She is Chairwoman of the Town Council's Permanent Commission for Supplies and Services. She knows only too well how significantly this area contributes to the well-being of the people. "We are pursuing a policy centering on craftsmen," she said, "with which we hope to make up the shortcomings of earlier years." It has become evident during the further development of our socialist society that many little everyday tasks can only be partially solved by the nationally-owned enterprises and the cooperatives. This problem has had its effects: much too long waiting times for repairs and other services. But for the citizen a sense of well-being and security

in his town is measured by how promptly and attentively he is provided with basic services and by whether or not individual wishes can also be taken into consideration.

Wherever you go in Weissenfels today you come across traders' signs which reveal the presence of a private craftsman: book-binder, television repairer, glazier, goldsmith, hairdresser, photographer, umbrella-maker, carpenter ... the town has 118 independent master craftsmen working in 38 different trades. And the demand has still to be satisfied, especially for bakers, butchers, tailors and dressmakers, car mechanics and upholsterers. Whether the businesses are cooperatives or private—the latter with a maximum of ten employees—they all receive generous support from the state. The appropriate regulations range from the provision of low-interest credits for modernisation to tax relief and trading licences.

Craft work is in demand and the local government officials in Weissenfels are creating the best possible conditions for it. For example, they helped to find and renovate suitable shop and workshop buildings for cobbler Heinrich Mann and coppersmith Klaus-Dieter Arendt. "The council even reimbursed me for the loss of earnings during the move," said the 58-year-old cobbler.

"Rolf Penndorf and Son" announces the sign above the car wash and valeting service between the local park and Nikolai Street. The workshop will have no option but to give way to the town's new traffic system. "We've known for years," confirmed Rolf Penndorf. "The council took up the case and suggested various new premises to us. Then we made up our minds. The new workshop will be more spacious and the project was designed according to our wishes. The Town Council will be covering the costs. And the mayor personally made sure that we would be able to build the family home near the workshop again." The Penndorfs will be moving in 1990.

\*

Two years ago Mayor Gérard Hassebrock and four of his councillors from Weissenfels' French twin town Armentières visited the town. For the mayor it was his first visit to the GDR. "I had a false impression of your country," he admitted after his six-day visit to Weissenfels. "I take off my hat to the citizens and what they have achieved."

*Brigitte Riedel*

# GDR REVIEW

PEOPLE AND EVENTS

**Prof. Wolfgang Hartig (55), Surgeon**

The 9th Congress of the European Society of Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition, held in Barcelona, elected him President of his medical association. Professor Hartig, who is senior consultant in the surgical clinic at the St. George Leipzig County Hospital, has become internationally known through numerous publications and clinical successes in the field of artificial feeding. He is head of the preparatory committee for the 10th European Congress on Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition which is scheduled to take place from 24 to 26 August 1988 in Leipzig.



**Manfred Jendryschik (44), Writer**

This author from Halle received the 1987 "Heinrich Heine Prize" which is annually awarded on the occasion of the anniversary of the great German poet's birthday. In his encomium the preceding year's prize winner, Landolf Scherzer, praised the serene, gentle style of Manfred Jendryschik, saying that in his books he was always looking for the truth and never posed as a know-all. To date twelve books by Manfred Jendryschik have been published, four others were edited by him. His latest work is entitled *Between New York and Honolulu. Letters of a Journey*.

*Photos: Olm, AdW/Fröbus, private*  
*Reproduction: archives*



**Prof. Bernhard Graefrath (59), Specialist on International Law**

He was the first such specialist from the GDR to be elected, in 1986, by the UN General Assembly to the International Law Commission (ILC), which held its 39th session in Geneva last year.

Prof. Bernhard Graefrath is head of the International Law Department at the GDR Academy of Sciences' Institute of State Theory and Law. He was a member of our country's delegation to the UN on the occasion of the German Democratic Republic's admission to this organisation in 1973. From 1976 until 1986 he sat on the international human rights committee.

**Simone Dietrich (24), Typist**

The young woman from Berlin gained two victories at the national typewriting championships in Erfurt at the end of last year. She won the 30-minute high-speed event with the best performance ever achieved by a GDR typist: she reached a total of 18,072 strokes or, in terms of points, 17,172. Simone also was by far the best in the 10-minute competition in which perfection was requested, managing 5,005 strokes without a single mistake which earned her as many points.—Simone Dietrich is a member of our country's national team and will participate in next year's world championships in Dresden.



**Recalling August Hermann Francke**

IN 1687 many students at the Leipzig University burned their notebooks, wigs and embroidered scarfs. They did this because of a 24-year-old student of the theology—August Hermann Francke. Born on 22 March 1663, his views were largely influenced by the theologian Philipp Jakob Spener. The pietist Spener responded to the misery of the Thirty Years' War and the inability of the bourgeoisie to mount revolutionary action with



the call for practical Christian charity.

Francke translated this idea into practice when he was both professor at Halle University and vicar in the small town of

Glauchau. There the 29-year-old saw himself confronted with a community which had suffered heavy losses during the war and from the plague. First of all, Francke took care of the children, founding an orphanage and a charity school. In order to raise the necessary money he ran several establishments. The farms, brewery and bakery delivered the foodstuffs, while the dispensary, printing works and bookshop yielded rich profits. Tailors, dressmakers, carpenters, coopers, cobblers and blacksmiths worked in his school complex. Orphans received free lodging and education. In addition to religious instruction, the youngsters from all walks of life and both sexes were also taught

In such, at that time new, natural-scientific subjects as geography, physics and astronomy, as well as in history. Francke was also one of the first to insist on an adequate training of teachers.

When August Hermann Francke died on 8 June 1727, his school had a total of 2,300 pupils. Many of them carried his concepts out into the world. They worked as doctors, pastors, teachers and advisers not only in German-speaking lands but also in Russia, England, Slovakia, India and America.

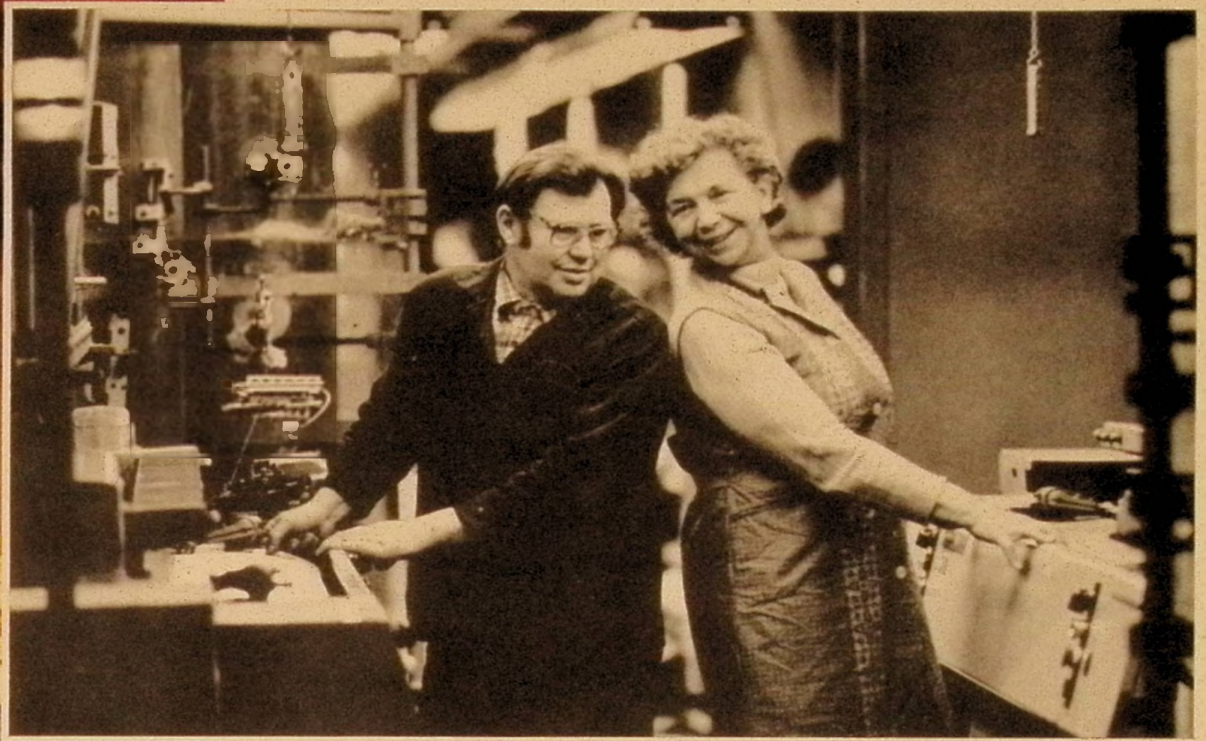
Today two schools in Halle bear Francke's name and the University cultivates in manifold ways the legacy of its one-time professor and rector.



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# THE SILK WEAVERS OF MÜHLTROFF



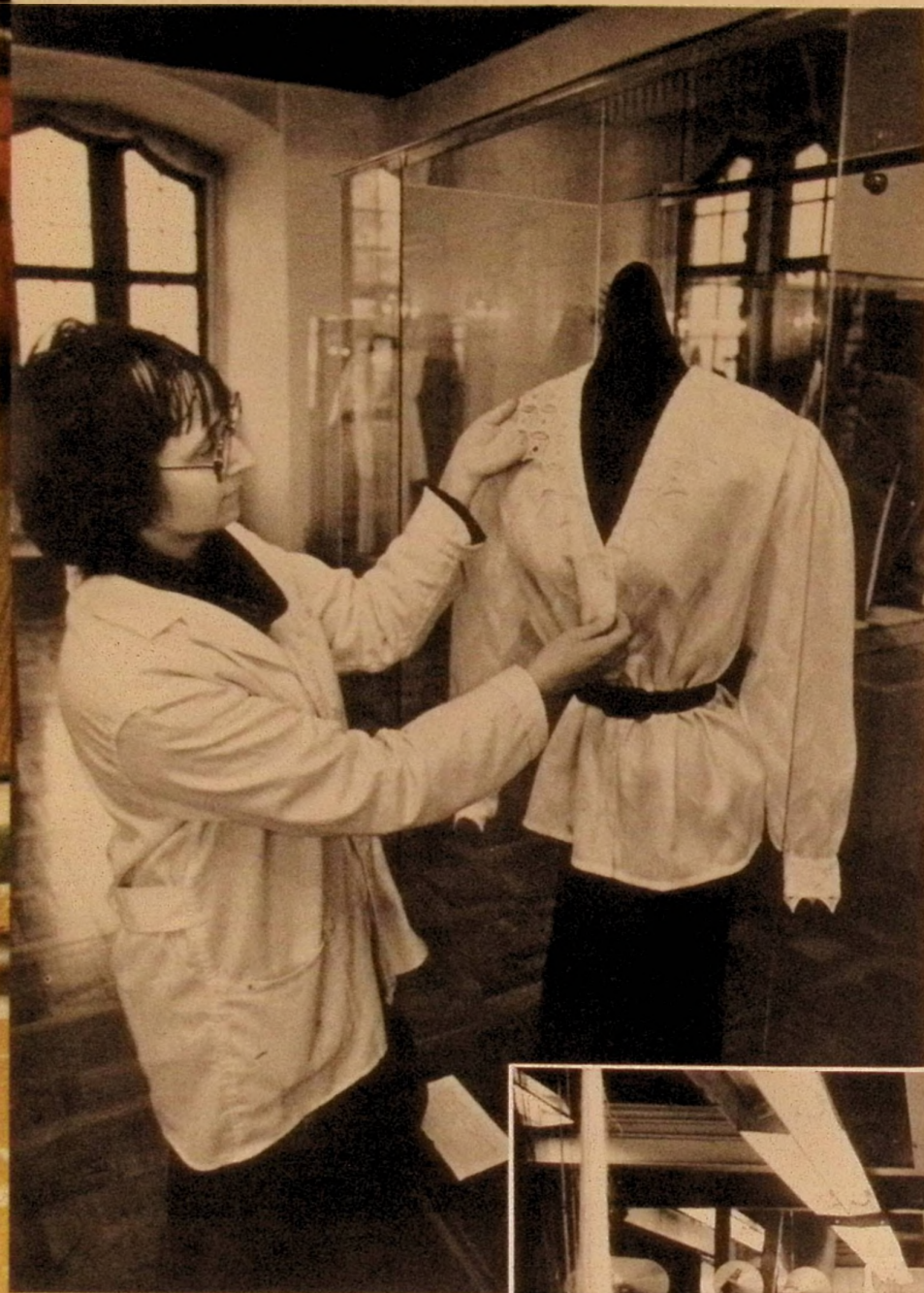
VOGTLAND—a scenically attractive region in the far south of our country. It has been home to weavers for at least the last 120 years. A guild of craftsmen who, even at the end of the last century, were forced to live in modest circumstances, some would say poverty. But even so, the old Vogtlanders passed on the proverbial industriousness of the weavers to their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, as indeed also the pleasure at being able to produce new and ever better materials.

## Blouses, Costumes, Silk Wallcoverings

“The tailor makes the man”. An old proverb which still remains valid today. Only the sense of the saying has changed. Good materials and clothing are today clear proof of the skills of the people ... In the south of the GDR a modern textile industry has developed with high productivity and high-quality products. Materials and textile machinery from our country are internationally recognised. The people living in this area of undulating countryside between the Thuringian

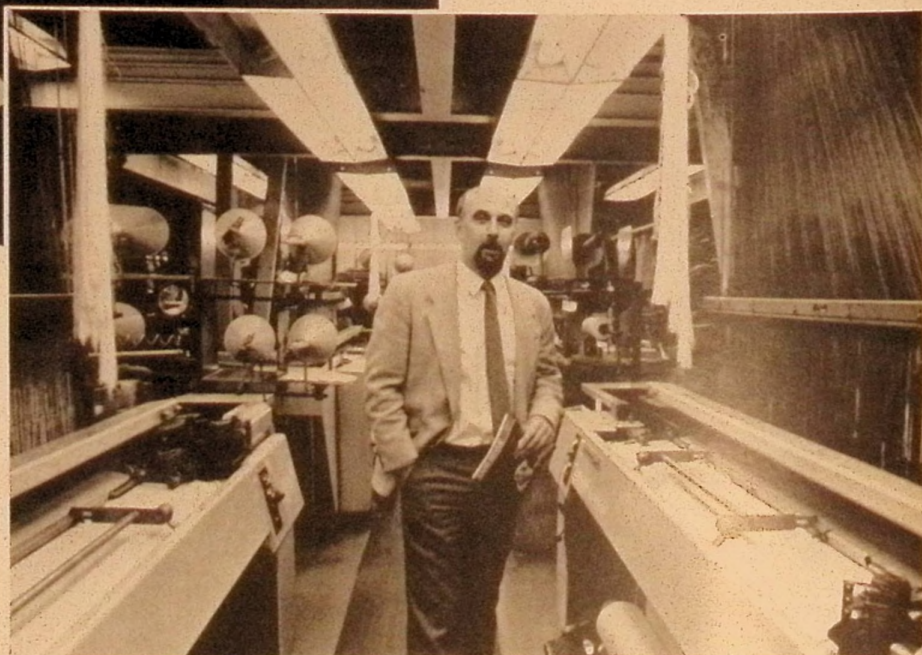
Forest and the Erzgebirge Mountains have not failed to make use of their opportunities and they are proud of the products of their skills. Fine silk fabrics regularly clothe the fashion models on the catwalks. It is not unusual for the young girls who model for the fashion shows to work themselves in the weaving enterprises of the Vogtland, for example, in the enterprise “veb brokat mühl-troff”.

With 170 employees the enterprise is relatively small compared to the other 20 enterprises which together make up the Wool and Silk Combine. But the trademark “brokat” en-



*Final preparations for an exhibition: Erika Enke, from the advertising department of the Plauen Lace Enterprise draping a festive blouse. The silk fabric was manufactured in Mühltruff; the trimming is Plauen lace.*

*In the enterprise: director Wolfgang Eschke.*



joys a very high reputation. The Mühltruff enterprise produces festive materials for light ladieswear—delicate fabrics in natural and synthetic silk for blouses, dresses and skirts for all occasions. Often they are further refined by the addition of Plauen lace.

Right alongside modern machines weave glittering, silver and gold-threaded theatre brocades, which are used as costume and decoration materials on the opera stage, in films and for television plays. Since 1969 there has been a further production line in Mühltruff which is to date unique in the GDR: its name—"Sanssouci Silk Manufactory". "Historical" textiles from the 18th and 19th centuries—silk wallcoverings, upholstery and other decorative materials—are recreated exactly down to the last thread with regard to both colours and patterning ...

To find out more about this and the silk weavers of Mühltruff, we decided to visit this community of 2,000 "souls" between Plauen and Schleiz and take a look at the enterprise for ourselves.

### The Fourth Generation

When the then 28-year-old economist and textile engineer Wolfgang Eschke took over the position of director 16 years ago, he was able to build on traditions stretching back over 100 years at the Mühltruff Silk Mill. His great-grandfather Robert Eschke founded a handweaving business here in 1868. He began by employing outworkers, soon concentrated on special silk fabrics and rapidly increased the size of the business. For a long time Mühltruff also manufactured brocades for the decoration of Greek Orthodox churches. The firm's name still reminds us of this fact today. It was a chance to survive the immense competition in the textile region of



*Samples of brocades from the most recent production, destined for costumes and decoration on theatre stages and film sets. Mühltröff brocades have twice received gold medals at the Leipzig Fair.*



*In the stores: Textile engineer Ulrich Albert and his colleague Lucia Rüdiger checking the quality of rolls of silk damask. Both have worked here for many years.*



*The reception room in Sanssouci Palace; in 1979 the room was reopened with "new" silk damask fabrics from Mühltröff.*

Saxony. Son and grandson continued the work and now it is the great grandson who is at the helm. But everything was not as easy as it sounds ...

The preparation department, the stores, the dining hall and the administrative offices are still today housed in the original building. But the workshop has since grown into a modern, efficient industrial enterprise with a respectable annex. The private firm has become a nationally-owned enterprise. The business belonged to the family until 1969. In order to finance investment in urgently necessary machinery, a state grant was taken and the business became semi-nationally-owned. Full nationalisation followed in 1972 when all the remaining private capital was sold to the socialist state.

Wolfgang Eschke himself originally had no intention of becoming a weaver. After completing his school education he studied building economics and wanted to make his career in that branch. But one day, however, all that changed. In 1966 Wolfgang began as an unskilled worker in the family business. He learned the trade of weaver and later completed a course of studies to become a textile engineer. He gradually progressed to being a recognised expert at the side of his father, who was then forced to concede his advancing years and hand over the reins. The good reputation of the Eschkes, their experience and many new ideas were finally enough to persuade the enterprise's administrators that Wolfgang Eschke was the man they needed to be the director of the new, nationally-owned enterprise "brokat". And so he of the fourth generation began with the continuation of his forefathers' work ...

### Responsibility At Work And In the Community

Around 630,000 square metres of fabric run off the machines every year. The production is soon to be doubled—an ambitious goal which the director can only achieve with an experienced workforce. Highly qualified skilled workers and master craftsmen have remained loyal to Mühltruff for many years, some of them already second or even third generation. Modern French weaving machinery is in use and a new generation of automatic machines is currently being set up for production. In the subsidiary enterprise in Plauen, too, where the fabric is further refined, modern machines from the GDR stand alongside those from abroad, for example, from Italy, Denmark, Czechoslovakia and the Federal Republic of Germany. The small enterprise is banking on modern textile technology. There is no end to the orders and the customers' enquiries from home and abroad are almost too numerous to deal with.

It is a good time for the Vogtland weavers ...

Wolfgang Eschke also carries responsibility in the community. As an elected deputy for the Liberal Democratic Party of Germany

(LDPD)—he is, by the way also a member of the LDPD Central Executive—and as the local council member responsible for housing he knows especially well what concerns his employees. Personal relationships are of long standing. The enterprise helped to build homes, a local Health Services dentist's practice and was also involved in roadbuilding. Word of this has spread a long way between Plauen and Schleiz. Young people, too, are curious about training possibilities at the enterprise. Furthermore, it must be added that just about every machine produces a different material. Variety is the order of the day. There thus seems to be no worries about getting enough people to work there. "In 1987 just two workers left," the director told us. "They were two young women who had married and were moving away from the area with their husbands ..." However, shift work—28 women currently work in a three-shift system—also brings certain problems: the new, highly automated weaving machinery has to run around the clock, if it is to be operated efficiently. For the women concerned, though, having to work night shifts is hard in the long run, even with special rates of pay and longer holidays ...

### "Sanssouci Silk Manufactory"

And now a word or two about Mühltruff's speciality. When in the sixties the Potsdam-Sanssouci Palaces and Park Administration began to reconstruct their world-famous buildings room by room, special attention was paid to the textile decoration. A GDR enterprise was sought, which would be able to recreate the 18th century silk wallcoverings true to the original, even though these were often only hanging in scraps from the walls. The last restoration in the 1930s had brought little joy. The awareness for monument preservation had grown significantly in the meantime. Finally the textile restorers discovered the small business in Mühltruff, at that time still a private firm. An agreement was reached to attempt the restoration together.

1969 is recognised as the year in which a highly qualified special Vogtland production was born: the true-to-the-original, thread-for-thread reconstruction of silk fabrics from the 18th and 19th centuries. Such textiles have been known in Europe as upholstery materials since the 14th century, but it was not until the Baroque and, above all, the Rococo periods that it became fashionable to use matching fabrics for the wallcoverings, for curtains at windows and in alcoves, for furniture and for bed coverings. The French city of Lyons developed into the centre of silk weaving for the royal courts of Europe; names such as Tassinari and Chatel are still famous today. In Prussia, too, silk manufacturers sprang up like mushrooms ...

But back to Mühltruff: Right from the beginning this special task was entrusted to textile engineer Ulrich Albert (44). He is today

head of the "Silk Manufactory". The title "manufactory" is indeed correct, because it is in great measure manual craft skills which are required for the recreation of natural silk fabrics. The first product was a satin, a so-called banded satin for two guest rooms in Sanssouci Palace. Gradually production was extended to silk damask, which was to be manufactured with original, complicated large-format motifs. There were of course setbacks, but about ten years ago the Mühltruff workers finally managed it.

### Quality—Thread For Thread

"Historical" damask is characterised by a particularly high warp density. Up to 130 delicate silk threads are set next to each other per centimetre. By using a special weaving technique, figures, flowers, ornaments or landscapes can be brought into relief. Age-old craftsmen's skills were once more in demand; they had to be learned anew.

The natural silk still comes from China today, just as it has done for centuries. A special enterprise in Sehma in the Erzgebirge Mountains refines the silk for other enterprises in the GDR and dyes the skeins of yarn. It is not seldom for the textile restorers from Potsdam and the silk weavers from Mühltruff to meet here to check the exact nuances of the dyes. Their responsibility for exact monument preservation dictates their actions. The weaving looms are only set in motion after samples of the genuine, original fabric for the palace or museum in question have been very closely analysed, either on-site or in the stores of the textile collections in Dresden-Pillnitz or Karl-Marx-Stadt. After all, Mühltruff has a very high reputation to consider.

Every year new orders are completed for halls and rooms in the Sanssouci palaces. This soon became known. The result was further orders for palaces in Schwerin and Gotha, in Burgk-on-Saale, Granitz on the Isle of Rügen and for the Wartburg Castle. The GDR's theatres also discovered the Mühltruff enterprise. In the recently renovated German State Opera House in Berlin, in the Schauspielhaus Concert Hall, in the new Friedrichstadtpalast Variety Theatre and elsewhere silks from Mühltruff are to be found adorning the walls and setting the mood for the evening's cultural experience. It was not long before the first orders arrived from abroad.

If you ask the Mühltruff people today whether the painstaking, thread-by-thread work is really worth it, the reply is an immediate look of astonishment: Of course it is worth it. It is a joy to master something unique in the whole country. The silk weavers' commitment has earned them the official honorary title of "Outstanding Artistic Textile Production Enterprise". Vogtland weavers' industriousness, which has been inherited from generation to generation, lives on today at a qualitatively new level.

Herbert Landsberg

NO DOUBT the signing of the Soviet-American treaty on the elimination of the two countries' land-based medium and shorter-range missiles was a heavy defeat for all those in the West who have to date seriously tried to convince the world public that the existence of nuclear weapons is irrevocable, even that they serve to maintain peace and that disarmament is thus impossible and dangerous.

There is no way we should believe, however, that following Washington, these people have been forever silenced, that they will respect the desire of the overwhelming majority in the world for further deep incursions into nuclear arsenals. On the contrary. The *Washington Post* has already indicated what these forces are planning. The opponents of arms control will, according to the newspaper, "throw the greatest weight against a Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty and the consequent limitations for strategic defence".

But neither have the attacks on the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty halted. Attention must be drawn to those attempts to overcome or undermine the treaty by warning continually of so-called negative consequences of the agreement and by demanding "compensation" in those areas not touched by the treaty, namely sea-based and air-based nuclear weapons.

Just imagine for a moment that such "considerations" were to be expressed in the Soviet Union. The outcry in the Western media would be deafening.

The opponents of the Washington Treaty are not only to be found in the United States. They are not missing in just about every West European country. The motives may vary slightly here and there, but one common factor is the uneasiness that, if there is yet more understanding between East and West on disarmament, the socialist states may one day suddenly be no longer viewed as an enemy by the Western public but rather as a partner. A fatal situation, because without an effective picture of "the enemy" it would no longer be possible to justify further stockpiles of weapons. And what would then become of that lucrative source of profit in arms production?

# Vigilance Still The Order Of The Day

Naturally these people are not interested in speaking or writing in clear terms on this matter. Instead they philosophise about dangers which allegedly loom up as a result of disarmament. In the bourgeois daily newspaper *Die Welt* in the Federal Republic of Germany it could be read, for

example, following the signing of the treaty in Washington: "The consequences of the treaty are disputed among experts independent of public opinion." Experts independent of public opinion—in other words: Those who ignore the opinions of the peoples and want to tighten the

arms spiral still further are the people with the greatest understanding. Everyone else is simply bowing down to the peace movement or (even worse) to Moscow.

The core of the "concern", as it continually shines through in such commentaries, is as follows: Following the INF Treaty, and especially after any further zero options, Western Europe would be left standing naked and undefended against an omnipotent and omnipresent Soviet invasion with conventional equipment. Of course, nobody bothers to consider that the Soviet Union, and with it the other socialist countries, might actually rather be interested in making Europe and the world safer with fewer weapons. No, that would be too simple—and too easy to understand. Preference is given to such sand-table exercises with Russian soldiers on the Rhine, tanks laying siege to Paris and bombers with red stars flying over the British capital.

A specific method with which to defeat the Washington agreement, simply marking time and keeping the process in one spot, is that of so-called strategy discussions, which have been enjoying a heyday in NATO for some time now. As to be expected they have so far only led to gap after gap being discovered in Western Europe's defences. And of course this automatically suggests the need for an arms build-up or modernisation.

Such strategy discussions among "experts" who pride themselves that only they are competent to deal with questions of security also have another goal: to regain the sole right to decide on essential questions which actually affect everyone today. Politics is to be taken off the streets, so to speak, and returned to offices and staff-headquarters where it can be shielded from the eyes of the public.

The peace movement will have to fight against this. Otherwise the whole process will be put into neutral gear and we will have a situation in Geneva and elsewhere which has always been a favourite for opponents of disarmament: negotiations for negotiations' sake—and no progress. Vigilance, therefore, remains the order of the day.

Peter Ehrlich



"Not so quick!—Before we start chopping them all down we have to consider whether we shouldn't leave a few standing as seed plants ..."

Cartoon: Peter Dittrich

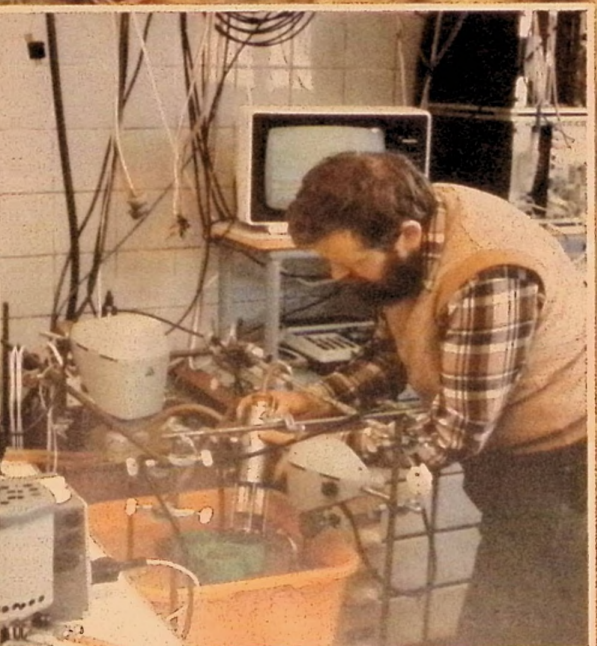
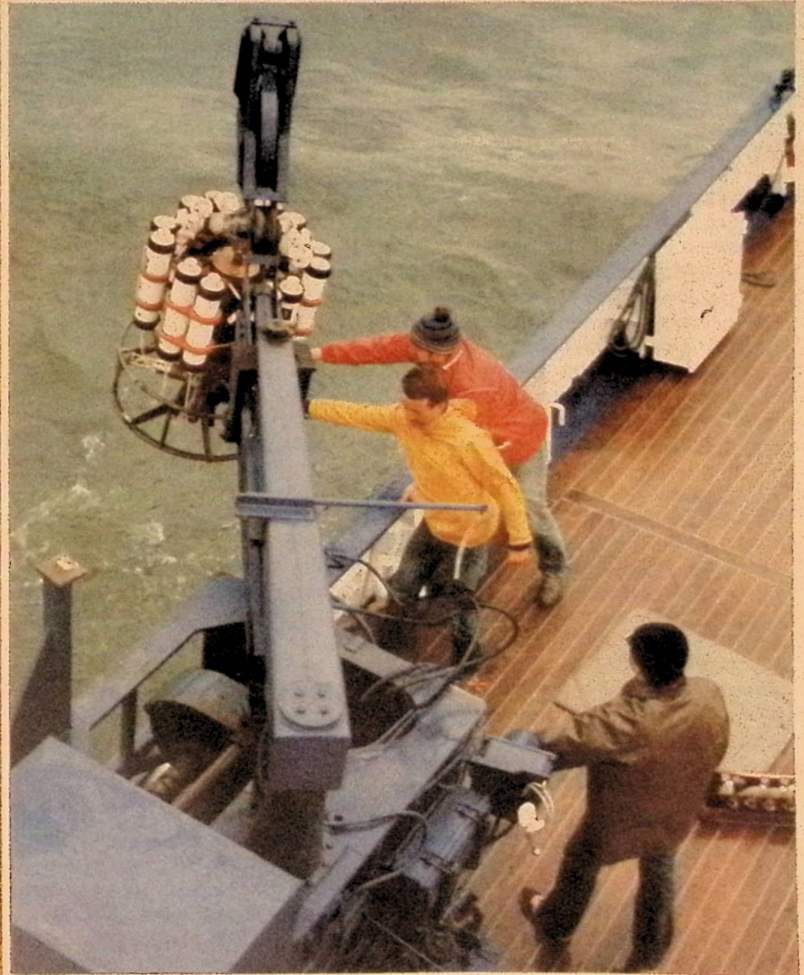
# CARE FOR THE SEA





THE BALTIC SEA is one of the busiest in the world. About sixteen million people live on the coasts of this 420,000 square-kilometre body of water. If you include the catchment area of the rivers which flow into it, you have a zone populated by about 150 million people. This zone can only be protected from irreversible environmental damage and developed for the benefit of its inhabitants on a joint basis. Hence, in 1974, all the littoral states of the Baltic, i.e. Poland the Soviet Union, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, the FRG and the GDR, adopted a convention in Helsinki which took effect in 1980. This Helsinki Convention is the first international agreement on the protection of a sea against pollution from the land, the atmosphere and shipping.

The Oceanographic Institute of the GDR Academy of Sciences has extensively contributed to the research programme concerned with marine chemistry.  
Photo right: Dropping a submersible probe from the oceanographic research ship.  
Photo below: Modern analytical equipment at the Institute's laboratory in Rostock-Warnemünde.







### Major economic importance

Most citizens of our country associate the Baltic Sea mainly with holidays and recreation. Being a favoured holiday place, the Baltic coast is frequented all the year round. Moreover, the Baltic Sea and its coast are of major economic importance for the GDR. Every year more than 5,500 merchant ships call at our ports. The volume of goods amounts to more than 25 million tonnes annually. However, the Baltic Sea is not only a shipping area but also a food source and a reservoir of water and raw materials. Nearly one third of the fish landed by GDR deep-sea fishermen come from the western and central parts of the Baltic and its coastal waters. Low-salt sea water also constitutes a reserve for agriculture and industry. What is more, for several decades now the GDR has been excavating about 400,000 tonnes of valuable gravel annually from the Baltic seabed for its building industry. The demand for gravel is growing owing to our extensive housing construction programme. Thus our national economy is linked in a number of ways with the utilisation of the Baltic Sea.

### Only treated effluents to be discharged into the sea

In February 1988 the Commission for the Protection of the Baltic Environment sat in session in the Finnish capital. The participation of the competent ministers of the seven littoral Baltic states especially underscored the significance of this conference. It discussed the results achieved as well as future projects and tasks.

How is the GDR meeting the demands for a clean sea and coastal regions? What have we done to comply with the Helsinki Convention?

Over the past years our country has implemented a number of relevant measures. At the beginning of the 1970s it could still be shown that 2 per cent of the total harmful substances in the water came from the GDR. Today this figure has dropped to 1.5 per cent. This places the GDR among those littoral states which contribute least to the pollution in this almost landlocked sea.

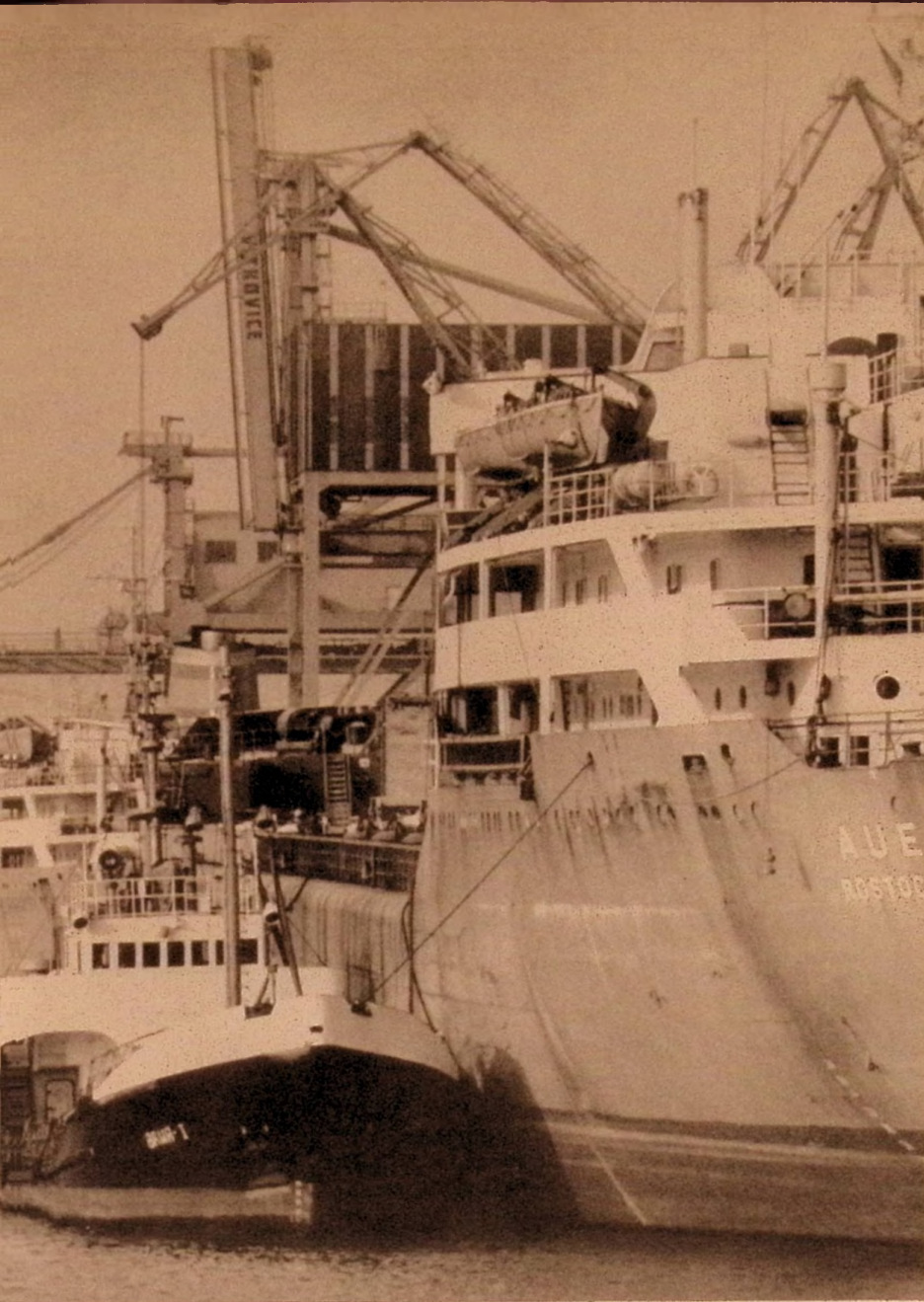
Every hour the rivers carry about 325,000 cubic metres of water into the Baltic. Hence the care for its cleanliness begins in the industries deep in the hinterland. The application of the most modern production methods, of low-waste and non-waste technologies is the best way of protecting the sea. Between 1973 and 1985 the GDR has built twenty big sewage purification installations in its coastal factories and towns including

*Every year about 200,000 cubic metres of oil-contaminated water is sucked up by cleaning ships in the harbours of Rostock, Wismar and Stralsund and purified at this plant in Rostock Harbour.*

*Photos: Carla Arnold (1), ADN-ZB*

Stralsund, Wismar, Kühlungsborn and Sassnitz. We have set ourselves the goal of further reducing effluent levels by 1990. For this purpose biological sewage treatment plants are to be put into operation in the towns of Schwerin, Güstrow, Rostock, Barth, Stralsund, Ribnitz-Damgarten, Bergen and Wismar. A total of fifty additional sewage treatment plants are to be made operational or commence construction.

Numerous such plants have also been built along the tributaries of the main rivers flowing into the Baltic Sea, for example, in Neubrandenburg, Eberswalde and Görlitz. In this way we have considerably reduced marine pollution coming from our territory. For



treating the oily bilge water. Not a single GDR ship leaves the dockyard without being fitted with waste and sewage treatment installations.

### Scientists check the water quality

Since as early as the mid 1950s, Institutes attached to the GDR Academy of Sciences, the Rostock and the Greifswald Universities and also the water management office responsible for the coastal area, have been monitoring the conditions and changes in the Baltic Sea. Particular attention has been devoted to studies on the concentration of nutrients and the distribution of pollutants such as heavy metals, oils, and chlorinated hydrocarbons. Special study is being made of the exchange of water with the North Sea. The so-called Darsser Threshold, an elevation on the seabed, is the area where 70 per cent of this exchange takes place. This process, which is extremely important for the biological equilibrium of the Baltic, has been jointly explored for many years now by the GDR's Oceanographic Institute and Leipzig's Karl Marx University.

Within the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, too, GDR scientists are helping to draw up a model ecological programme for the Baltic Sea up to the year 2000 and beyond, giving the littoral states further exact information on how to rationally exploit and at the same time preserve nature and its resources.

### Preservation of the seashore is a constant task

The Baltic coast of the GDR is 340 kilometres long. Only a small stretch of this predominantly flat coast is being built up while, on the other hand, 90 per cent of it is being eroded by the sea. On average the coast retreats by about 25 centimetres per year. Hence, preserving it is a constant task. About 25 kilometres of it has been protected by groyne, dunes are being secured with marram grass, breakwaters are being built with granite and sand pumped from the seabed onto the beach. In 1983 the GDR government decided to take special measures for the protection of the coastal cliffs, many stretches of which are nature conservation areas.

\*

The GDR has completely fulfilled its obligations as a party to the Convention and has followed all the recommendations of the Baltic Commission. However, the good results achieved are no reason for us to become unconcerned. We will continue our efforts to reduce pollution and the emission of harmful substances and to monitor the entire Baltic environment.

A. G.

years now an entire range of harmful substances from the GDR chemical production industry, such as mercury and cadmium, have no longer ended up in the Baltic. There are strict controls in this sphere. For instance, no newly-built factory is allowed to start production until its effluent treatment installation has become operational.

### Modern ships and clean harbours

Protection of the sea also involves clean harbours. On the recommendation of the Baltic Commission, equipment has been introduced which cleans the water of oil spills, faeces and shipping waste. Rostock's deep-

sea harbour installation for the purification of bilge and ballast water alone treats more than 100,000 cubic metres of water a year removing about 7,000 tonnes of oil which is then recycled into the economy. The harbours of Rostock, Wismar and Stralsund are kept clean by special boats. Bases have been set up in Rostock and Sassnitz for vessels combating marine pollution caused by shipping accidents.

Such a vessel equipped with salvage and pollution control facilities is now under construction for the Rostock harbour.

Today nobody is allowed to throw waste overboard. All GDR ships are fitted out with faeces collection tanks and installations for

WITHOUT HASTE he has changed his clothes, scrubbed his hands and put on his face mask. It is only a few yards to the operating theatre. The sobriety of the room with its modern medical technology is broken by quiet, relaxing music. Waiting for him, the internationally acclaimed surgeon, the patient is already on the operating table, all her hopes pinned on his conquering the tumour. The anaesthetist, the senior consultant, the assistant surgeon and the theatre sister have already made all the preparations for the decisive phase of the operation.

### Every Operation Is An Hour Of Truth

As Prof. Helmut Wolff, who carried out both the first liver transplantation and the first heart transplantation in the GDR, leans over the patient and sees the diseased organ in front of him in the floodlight of the theatre lamps, he has to face up to the deadly disease. It is a difficult moment; as he says, the hour of truth.

Even the best diagnoses and the clearest x-ray and scanner images are unable to provide exact information on the full extent of the disease. It is only now that he can decide how much tissue needs to be removed. He gives concise instructions to his assistants. Surgical instruments are passed to him and his work is quick and precise. Despite the intense concentration his face remains relaxed, determined and purposeful, his movements are careful.

After three hours the professor and his assistants are able to peel off their rubber gloves—happily, because they know that the patient will soon recover and be able to leave the Charité Hospital. Spontaneously the surgeon lays an arm of warm thanks around the shoulders of those who stood at his side during the operation.

Who is this doctor, who is worshipped by his patients and about whom experienced surgeons, doctors and nurses say that operating with him and

learning from him brings happiness and fulfillment, that they admire the way he stands by his patients? No, he is not an easy boss. He can be impulsive, rude and loud if anyone in his operating team lacks the necessary care and attention. He is incorruptible and steadfast. There is meticulous accuracy to both his preparation for an operation and after-care on the wards. How did he become the doctor, and person, who says of himself: "I can't do otherwise. My patients are everything ..."

### Search For An Own Way

The Wolff homestead was situated not far from Lublin in Poland. The farmer's wife was no longer the youngest—the eldest of her four children was already 18 years old—when her fifth child was born in 1928. When Helmut Wolff looks back at his childhood he can still today taste the sweetness of the bonbons he was given, sometimes, because a bonbon was something special—the money was never enough for chocolate. When he came home from school he had to help with the animals and in the fields. It wasn't long before he was guiding a plough across the land. But only twice was he able to tie the sheaves at harvest-time.

The war reached the Wolff family. Like chaff in the wind the 16-year-old was driven along a bitter path across the country. He managed to reach some friends of his missing parents in Calnsdorf near Zwickau. That he was able to stay was due to the fortunate fact that he did not receive his call-up papers until the day before the war ended.

Elisabeth Heidel, who ran a small grocer's shop, accepted him as if he were a son. Hard-working, as his parents had taught him to be, he worked in the market hauling crates. But inside he hungered for a more meaningful life. A lot of the old ideas were still fixed in the minds of the local people. He felt their rejection. With his accent, which sounded a little different, he remained an outsider here, too. He dreamed of a time without the arrogance of the rich, and above all without war.

His ideals led him to the antifascist youth movement. With

# "I Can't Do Otherwise ..."

## An Encounter With Surgeon Prof. Helmut Wolff



like-minded contemporaries he filled in bomb craters and sang the new songs at cultural events.

In the Free German Youth (FDJ) he won the trust of others and soon represented the young people's interests on the local council. He met people who had been persecuted by the Nazis.

Helmut sought their companionship and they took him under their wing. One of them, who under the new order had been appointed "community director", spent many evenings answering the young man's questions, explaining to him the connections between war and fascism. In 1948 the now



20-year-old Helmut joined the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED). When he later discovered his parents, who had ended up in the Federal Republic of Germany, he was so strongly rooted in the first German workers' and farmers' state, that nothing could tear him away.

Encouraged by his friends he

began to study at what was then the Workers' and Farmers' Faculty. Still influenced by his farming roots Helmut Wolff at first wanted to study biology, but finally decided on medicine. His initial thoughts were on a more theoretical career. He was not a particularly ambitious student. He was too thirsty for knowl-

edge in every possible field. He devoured works of world literature, especially the novels of Dostojevski and Gorki. He was a happy young man who loved football.

During the practical year of the course he stood for the first time at the bedside of suffering people and his vocation sud-

denly became clear to him: there could be no other way than to provide practical help as a doctor. He passed his state examinations with the grade "very good". In 1956 he completed his medical studies with a doctorate, and for his specialist training he chose one of the oldest branches of medicine—surgery.

In 1961 Dr. Wolff became a surgical consultant, two years later he completed a second doctorate and was appointed senior consultant at Leipzig Hospital. Since 1964 he has been passing on his knowledge as a lecturer at the university.

### No Success Without Disappointments

"It's alive!", "At last, at last!" Overjoyed Dr. Wolff and the doctors of his working group at the Karl Marx University in Leipzig congratulated each other. The pig they had just operated on was living with a transplanted liver. Six months of continued disappointments were behind them at last. How many sleepless nights and how much determination had been necessary in order not to give up, to pluck up new courage, to recognise mistakes and to eliminate them one by one. Soon many healthy transplanted animals were able to testify to the success of the experiments. Since the first liver transplantation on a human being had been carried out in the USA in 1963, Dr. Wolff had spent a great deal of his own time thinking over the theoretical aspects of this task. Already accomplished in general and chest surgery, and later in surgery on the venal and arterial systems, he was captivated by the idea of taking on this new challenge. The first animal experiments followed and after a lot of hard work the first success.

But initially this was as far as it went. The new director of the clinic was of the opinion that the time was still not ripe for transplantation. Even the partial removal of the human liver was considered to be too risky. Dr. Wolff was disappointed. Inside, however, he did not give up his goal and waited patiently.

### The Gift Of Life

With his appointment as full professor and director of the surgical clinic of the "Carl Gustav Carus" Medical Academy in Dresden, the fulfillment of Helmut Wolff's dream moved nearer and nearer. First of all he spent five years on the further development of the clinic. Then, in spring 1977, he succeeded with what was considered to be im-



possible. With the first liver transplantation in the GDR he gave a dying patient the gift of two more years of life. It was one of the most beautiful moments of his life, he says today.

So far he has carried out a total of 40 liver transplantations. If we compare the lifespans of all liver cancer sufferers who have received transplant organs, the GDR occupies a leading position in the world. In 1979, one year after he was appointed director of the surgical clinic of the Berlin Charité Hospital, Prof. Wolff operated on a young woman of just 21 years, for whom there seemed to be no hope of recovery. Today, already eight and a half years later, she is still leading an almost normal life. Five years ago a six-year-old child was "born again" for its despairing parents. Here, too, there is every chance that this happiness will be long term.

For Prof. Wolff it does not mean only recognition to be able to carry on the great tradition of the Berlin Charité Hospital. He also sees that in his clinic he has the best conditions to do even more. In 1986 he performed the first of now five heart transplantations here, and in the same

year the first pancreas transplantation in the GDR.

Today doctors come from all over the world to watch the work of the GDR National Prize winner, the head of the central research group into organ and tissue transplantation and Vice-President of the Scientific Council at the Ministry of Health of the GDR, the honorary doctor—since 1986—of the University of Granada, member of the Academy of Sciences in Helsinki and honorary member of the Surgical Societies in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Cuba and Greece.

Several times a year he is invited to congresses of surgical societies and universities abroad. There he is able to both pass on and acquire knowledge. And everywhere he travels, be it in Europe, Asia, America or Australia, Prof. Helmut Wolff, one of the first to sign the appeal of doctors against nuclear war, is also an ambassador for our country.

The leading principle of the internationally acclaimed scientist and doctor is respect for the patient's personality. The patient's trust must never be misused. "For this reason", he says, "a doctor must never be arrogant about his abilities, but must evaluate his performance modestly and critically." All his own cares seem to disappear the moment he enters the patients' rooms on his rounds. You feel that it is not merely a duty but also a need to offer encouragement and sympathy. He spends

a lot of time on this. Also for an honest discussion, if the illness is really serious. He interests himself for his patients' families, careers and lives in general.

### An Ever-Recurring Question

Every day a mountain of mail awaits him in the secretary's office. "Nothing must be left to one side, nothing must be put off till later. And especially not an operation, unless there is a very good reason, because waiting is a psychological burden for the patient. Nothing must be promised which cannot be absolutely guaranteed." These are rules he sets for himself and for others. The hope and the trust of the patients feed his strength, but, even so, there are often enough heavy burdens.

"Yes, I am depressed when there is nothing more I can do", he admitted. He also spoke of doubts about his own ability, the torture which is born of the great responsibility: "Is this the right decision and is it in time? There is an element of risk in almost every decision. And your conscience is always there to ask if the decision was correct,



Early morning consultation. Prof. Wolff (3rd from left) and the radiologists discuss features of the operations planned for that day.

A look at the monitor: heart rate, breathing—everything in order.



or whether more was actually possible."

Anyone who is committed to this profession pays the price with many personal sacrifices. Sometimes, Prof. Wolff thinks of his sons—one already a doctor, the younger about to become a medical student—and he hopes that they will one day understand and forgive him for always having had so little time for them. For himself, a man who enjoys entertaining guests, gaiety, but also the silent gliding of his sailing boat on the Teupitzsee Lake, there is seldom opportunity for such relaxation. He rarely leaves the clinic before 9 o'clock in the evening, and his work still accompanies him home to Berlin-Biesdorf. Telephone calls have to be made to ensure the smooth course of the following day, reports to be written, his duties as editor-in-chief of the National Surgical Journal and above all the study of specialist literature. He never stops learning and broadening his knowledge.

### Every Day A New Challenge

He is full of praise for the work of two women: his secretary, Johanna Neute, for her selfless commitment, her competence and calmness. But most important of all is his wife Dr. Karin Wolff, who also supports him in the operating theatre three times a week as his anaesthetist. They first met in Leipzig. He says that she is his great love. She knows that he needs to be always on the move, obsessed with his ideals. She looks after him, but she also tells him to go when he is unsure about having to leave her alone yet again. She places her own demands on her career and her life behind his greater abilities for saving human life. She passes her optimism on to him and gives him new strength each day.

There is still a lot he wants to achieve during the rest of his career as a surgeon. Prof. Wolff is now 59, and his dark hair is beginning to turn grey. He is confident, because he can say with certainty: "I have a very good and skilled team which helps me."

*Text: Helga Schwarz-Stötzer  
Photos: Leon Schmidtke*

# GDR REVIEW

ANSWERS READERS' QUESTIONS

You wrote in an article last year that the GDR's first independent Antarctic station was named after Georg Forster. Could you, please, tell me something about this man?

Jean-Claude Bonlieu, Rheims, France

Georg Forster and his father Johann Reinhold were the first Germans to visit and write about Antarctica. They accompanied James Cook on his second voyage around the world, which lasted from 13 July 1772 to 30 June 1775 and also took them to the southern arctic regions. Johann Reinhold Forster brought his 17-year-old son along on this voyage as his assistant.

After their return the British Admiralty prohibited Johann Forster from publishing his travel report. For this reason he gave the manuscript to his son to whom the ban did not apply. With the book "Johann Reinhold Forster's Voyage around the World—Described and Published by his Son and Travel Companion Georg Forster" he became famous in Europe overnight. Three years after his return from



this voyage Georg Forster became professor of the natural sciences in Kassel.

A fervent supporter of the French Revolution, he joined the Jacobin Club in Mainz in 1792. Forster was a co-founder of the Mainz Republic in 1793, which was the first bourgeois republic on German territory. As a de-

legate to the National Convention he obtained, in Paris, consent from the French to have the Mainz Republic associated with France. Meanwhile Prussian troops seized Mainz and defeated the republic. Unable to return and in an effort to make the people understand the French Revolution, Georg Forster issued numerous publications in which he addressed himself to the German population. He died in Paris in 1794.



During my visit to the GDR I noticed that there are bus connections to hamlets and villages. Now I wonder what role the railway plays in your country?

Jose Canelas, Lisbon, Portugal

It is true that in our relatively small country the majority of towns and villages can be reached by bus. This notwithstanding, transport by rail of both people and goods also plays an important role. This year, for example, almost 350 million tonnes of goods are to be transported by rail. Passenger transport is calculated to reach 605 million, for rail travel is cheap in our country. We pay 8 pfennigs per kilometre and many people (pensioners, pupils, students and others) even receive tickets at reduced prices. However, there are still problems when it comes to the question of the punctuality of the trains. Therefore the 250,000 railway workers are currently making great efforts to solve this

problem and considerably improve travelling comfort. To this end in 1988 a further 358 kilometres of railway line are to be electrified, 45 railway bridges reconstructed and 830 kilometres of railway track renewed. This will also help us to cope with the constantly growing demand for transport capacity by our national economy.

I would very much like to know how the reconstruction and preservation of town and city centres are being tackled in the GDR.

Alessandro Predellini, Reggello, Italy

The answer to your question, Mr. Predellini, is somewhat complicated, for each town has its own individual character and the varied types of architecture which have grown up over the decades and centuries present very different problems. However, the planning of town centres everywhere today focuses on three factors: new building, reconstruction and preservation. The concrete measures in these areas are annually determined by the respective town planning departments which—in the case of large towns—then pass them on to the various borough planning offices. The officials in these departments plan and coordinate the work. Priority is given to the building and reconstruction of housing. As you perhaps know it was decided at the 8th Congress of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, held at the beginning of the 1970s, that by 1990 every family should have a home appropriate to its needs—a huge project as you will no doubt agree. In order to realise it many new housing estates have been built and the towns have expanded. However, in recent years housing construction has moved back into the inner town centres, many of which still have free space available for building purposes. Work is also being continued on the renovation of

facades and the creation of shopping centres and pedestrian precincts.

Many cities have enclosed their quarters, for example, Prenzlauer Berg in Berlin or the Neustadt in Dresden. The majority of the buildings there date from the turn of the century, although some houses are much older. It is often more expensive to reconstruct these buildings than to erect new ones. This does not mean that everything old is simply demolished. The historically valuable houses are preserved and renovated. A combination of old and new buildings arises with the latter blending harmoniously into the former. This is particularly the case when filling in gaps caused by the war. The GDR building industry is working intensively on designing and producing attractive house types which through a combination of their various elements obtain a universal application. The new building in the town centres—which sometimes occurs in historical areas—fits in with the old architecture. However, it is not denied that these are modern buildings which have been brought into line with the overall townscape through the addition of external elements such as small towers, oriel windows and sloping roofs.

The very old towns also have cultural and historical monuments. Our state considers it an important task to preserve or—if they were destroyed during the war—reconstruct them. This is an extremely complicated and expensive venture on which millions of marks have been spent and will continue to be spent. It's not just a case of restoring those things destroyed in the Second World War, it also concerns reconstruction from a cultural-historical viewpoint. In the course of the centuries many of the old buildings have been remodelled; however, when the original blueprints are on hand, it's possible to restore them to the appearance they had during a specific historical epoch.

# GDR REVIEW

ANSWERS  
READERS' QUESTIONS



Now that the INF Treaty is signed I wonder if reliable verification can, in fact, be guaranteed?

Ferdinand Obermüller, Zurich, Switzerland

You are not the only one, Mr. Obermüller, to concern himself with this question. It is also asked by many people in our country. What can we say in answer to this question? During the seven years of complex negotiations on the treaty for the elimination of medium-range missiles both sides consulted, time and again but especially in the final stage, highly qualified specialists (physicists, chemists, high-ranking officers, technicians and others). These experts confirmed that given today's technical means an accurate control would be possible. First mentioned in this context are usually the so-called national technical means of verification. These are reconnaissance satellites which, equipped with special cameras and film, can even make out underground missile bases. However, the decisive and most reliable control is on the spot inspection. Over a period of 13 years up to 200 inspectors from each side will be able to check, in the countries which produce such missiles or on whose territories they are deployed, whether all the missiles covered by the Treaty, their operational bases and support systems have been destroyed and the manufacture of these weapons systems ceased.

Is it true that you hold sledge dog races in the GDR?

Jukka Laakkonen, Tampere, Finland

We didn't have such races in the past, Mr. Laakkonen. The first sledge dog race in our republic took place in January near Oberhof in Thuringia, on one of the few weekends this winter on which we had snow and freezing temperatures. 14 mushers, as the sledge drivers are called—including eight from Czechoslovakia—came with their dogs of the Siberian husky breed to this popular winter centre. The race attracted over 18,000 spectators from near and far who eagerly watched the exciting competi-



tions. The breeding and keeping of northern dog species, and hence sledge dog competitions, is a new pursuit in the GDR. Siberian huskies—which are descendants of wolves native to the Chukchi Peninsula (USSR)—were introduced here as late as 1982. Sledge dog races have been held in Central Europe for over 20 years now, the first took place in Switzerland in 1966. The GDR participated in such a contest for the first time in Harrachov (Czechoslovakia) in 1986.

I know that all GDR citizens are covered by a social-insurance scheme which guarantees them security in cases of illness. I wonder, though, how it is possible for your government to keep up the high level of medical care without increasing people's social-insurance contributions?

Robert T. Mahnke, Willoughby, USA

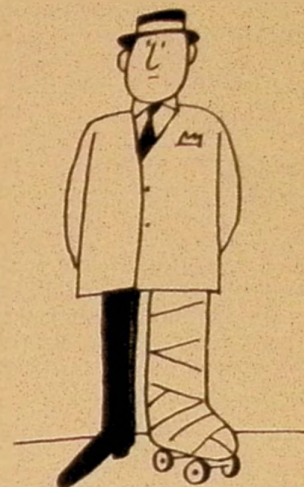
Indeed, our Social Insurance, which is run by the trade union, plays an important part in our citizens' social stability and security.

Through their work our people themselves create the preconditions for retaining the current level of health care and further improvements—for which we are aiming—for the state can only allot what has been earned. This interrelation between our economic and social-welfare policies applies not only to our social insurance scheme and the health service, but to all other spheres of life in our society as well.

In fact, our Social Insurance plans to spend 35.9 billion marks in 1988. And since we don't know cutbacks in this field and our state guarantees with its budget the provisions legally set down, it can be taken for granted that this sum will have actually been spent at the end of this year.

Where do the 35.9 billion marks come from? Almost half of it, namely 17.2 billion marks, are made available from the state budget; 10.4 billion marks are contributions from the factories, institutions and cooperatives; the remaining 8.3 billion marks are made up of the social-insurance contributions of the working people. The amount of their monthly obligatory contributions are set according to their wages or salaries but does not exceed 60 marks.

Here it should also be mentioned that owing to the constantly rising national income, the services of the Social Insurance have also been improved



from year to year. The state subsidies, for example, have increased threefold over the past 17 years.

As additional information we'd like to give you some details as to what services are covered by our social-insurance scheme:

First of all, all kinds of medical and dental treatment as well as all medicines that are prescribed to the insured people and their family members.

Necessary stays in hospital are not limited in duration and are paid for—as is spa treatment—by the Social Insurance, which also bears the costs for glasses, hearing aids, artificial limbs, dentures, walking aids, wheelchairs, etc. In cases of temporary illness the workers concerned receive sick pay from the Social Insurance and those undergoing spa treatment are paid an amount that is equivalent to the sick pay they are entitled to. And since it is illegal to dismiss anyone who is off sick, it is hardly possible for a GDR citizen to get into financial worries because of his or her illness.

In addition, the Social Insurance also pays the monthly old-age pensions for our senior citizens (women can retire at the age of 60, men at 65).





*For 75-year-old Erna Fischer (centre), Ellen Steinbach, a helper from the People's Solidarity Organisation, is always a welcome visitor.*

*In "their" district: Heinz Lindner (right) and Dr. Konrad Reuter, chairman of the local group of the Christian Democratic Union in the district, which always organises the solidarity basaar at the summer fetes.*

*There is always plenty of variety laid on for the children's party.*

Photos: Günter Ackermann, private

# WHAT DO WE DO FOR EACH OTHER?

THIS IS a question which it is hardly possible to answer comprehensively — so varied are the relationships which people enter into with each other. But even so, there are certain aspects of this topic which could provide information on many of the things which you, the readers, find interesting about life in our country. Looking through your letters I have often come across questions like "What is done to care for the elderly?" or "Is there a great problem of loneliness in new residential areas in the GDR?" — in fact, questions on every conceivable aspect of the quality of life.



Let's stay on the subject of new residential areas. We have often reported that such areas have been springing up almost like mushrooms since the beginning of the 1970s. But it is no secret that not everyone immediately feels so at home as in their more familiar former homes in the older areas, where the gnarled chestnut in the yard creaks out its well-known stories in the quiet of the night.

In the Saxon industrial city of Karl Marx Stadt the Fritz Heckert Quarter is one such enormous residential complex, where tens of thousands of local people have already found a new home. Almost on the edge of the area is Markersdorfer Road. A huge block stretches the length of the road. One eleven-storey house next to another, countless entrances which are only distinguishable through their different colours. Apart from this, all was grey on the snow-less January day I was there. The buildings would certainly not have won a prize for beauty in an architectural competition. But what is it like on the inside?

I must admit I've seen more attractive staircases — but the lift took us up quickly and effortlessly to the individual floors. And what about the flats? When you see them you cannot help but become an enthusiastic supporter of the new residential areas! Whether a two or a four room flat — everywhere is bright and spacious, with all mod cons and cosily warm thanks to the central heating. And the heating is included in the rent, which, as elsewhere in the GDR, is very low, never amounting to more than five per cent of a family's income per month. But do the residents feel at home here? An answer is not possible without turning to the subject of the National Front of the GDR. We have on many occasions given you information on this broad popular movement which brings together representatives of all classes and strata of society, members of all political parties and mass organisations. The National Front of the GDR has no members as such and no-one pays subscriptions — no, it is simply the most comprehensive form of working together in our country. It is a vehicle for friendly mutual assistance to the common good. The smallest unit of the organisation is the Residential District Committee, known here as the WBA, for short. Together with a few nearby houses, our block on Markersdorfer Road forms one such residential district within the larger Fritz Heckert residential area. The district encompasses around 3,000 residents.

Let's look back a few years. When the tenants moved in at the beginning of 1981 one of them was Heinz Lindner, a white-collar worker, with his wife and children. He was

asked whether he would be prepared to take on the chairmanship of the Residential District Committee. And because he is the sort of person who cannot say no when he is needed, he agreed straightaway. The first job was to find helpers. Soon the chairmen of the local groups of parties and mass organisations also belonged to the Committee. A few others with special skills or interests were also persuaded to join in and so in the end there were about 30 people on the committee. They have sacrificed many hours of their free time for the community in the meantime.

What exactly does this work entail? This question especially interested friends from Italy who met the Residential District Committee during a study visit to Karl Marx Stadt last year. Above all: How are young people involved in the work, and how are the elderly residents looked after? Well, at first there wasn't a lot for the young people, it must be said. Here, too, they stood around on street corners with their cassette recorders and didn't know what to do with themselves. The building for a youth club was still a thing for the future. The people from the WBA went to talk with the boys and girls on the street corners. They asked whether they were interested in joint excursions from time to time. It wasn't long before they were all off to the nearby Erzgebirge Mountains. It was such a success that they finally spent several days together on the Baltic Coast. None of the young people were left out any longer, they all felt that they were needed, that they belonged. Soon the WBA had a Youth Committee. The young people assumed responsibility for the children's playground, helped to organise the annual children's festival in the neighbourhood, kept an eye on the regular collection of reusable waste materials, etc., etc., etc. The whole thing had a "hitch" though. The young people who started everything off slowly disappeared. Some began an apprenticeship elsewhere, others went away to study. In order to make sure that all the good work which had been done was not wasted the WBA established close links with the nearby school. Now, for example, the children in the third class are tireless and regular helpers for the elderly residents in the district. And that brings us nicely to the subject of the elderly in the community. Here the cooperation with the local group of the People's Solidarity Organisation, whose special task is to care for the elderly, and with the Women's Organisation is particularly important. And it works! 132 pensioners live in the district. An eye is kept on everyone of them. The persons responsible know exactly how the elderly are coping. They know, for example, who can no longer do their own shopping and who needs help with this or any other chore. But that is not all by any means: every year on 7 October, the birthday of our republic, the 40 oldest pensioners are invited to a festive midday meal; in the summer there are trips arranged through the travel agency, no-one

forgets a Christmas party and every pensioner receives a greetings card on their birthday, with a present as well if it is a round number.

That was a brief insight into the work of the WBA. But whether it be a summer party with the neighbouring residential district or a festive midday meal — where does the money come from? Heinz Lindner explained that apart from a relatively small sum which they receive as a donation from a local enterprise the money has to be raised by the people themselves. The major source is from maintenance contracts which the WBA has concluded with the local council and the local housing department. As is the case almost everywhere in the country these bodies are short of manpower, and so the citizens themselves help to look after the urban environment, caring for gardens or the areas for hanging out washing, for example. The money which is received for this work is divided between the individual houses, which get up to 80 per cent towards financing joint purchases such as washing mangles or for club rooms, and the WBA which receives the remaining 20 per cent.

I wanted to know from Heinz Lindner what made him and the many others spend so much of their spare time on this committed work in society: "We have almost all grown up here since 1945. We were brought up in the spirit of friendship, both among ourselves and towards other peoples. It is quite simply a need to cultivate the cooperation between families and beyond. After all we all want to make our life together more beautiful, we want to live in an environment which we ourselves like. This also includes respect for the older residents, because they were the ones who created what we are able to enjoy today. The children, too, should be able to grow up in a harmonious world, and for this reason it is necessary to look after them properly." It may well have been a coincidence that all the other people I spoke to shared the same opinion: "We are happy here and we never want to leave". There are bound to be a few people in Markersdorfer Road who dream of a little cottage on the edge of the forest. But one thing was no coincidence: As everywhere else in this country there was no-one in this residential district who needed to be afraid of what tomorrow might bring, no-one who had to fear losing his or her job, or not being able to afford to pay the rent. No-one had to sacrifice neighbourly assistance in order to first make sure of his own existence. Minds and hearts were free to consider and tackle the wishes and needs of other people as well.

Inge Tost

# The Disarmament And Negotiation Proposals Of The Warsaw Treaty

- Conclusion of an agreement on a fifty per cent reduction of the strategic offensive weapons of the Soviet Union and the United States, with observance of the ABM Treaty in the form signed in 1972 for an agreed period of time
- Total ban on nuclear weapons testing as a priority measure aimed at ending the development, production and perfection of nuclear weapons
- Elaboration of an international convention for the banning of chemical weapons, the elimination of existing stocks of such weapons and the destruction of the industrial basis for their manufacture
- Mutual and simultaneous reductions in forces and conventional armaments in Europe to a level at which each side can guarantee its own defence but has no means to carry out a surprise attack or offensive operations in general

As a first step in this direction: at the beginning of the 1990s the reduction by 25 per cent of land forces and tactical-strike air forces

The elimination of imbalances and asymmetries in individual weapons types through reductions by the side holding the advantage

- Confidence-building measures (in the run-up to negotiations on arms reduction in Europe):  
Reduction of the concentration of forces and armaments at the dividing line between the two military alliances  
Removal of the most dangerous offensive weapons from this area  
The creation of a 300 kilometre-wide nuclear-weapon-free corridor (150 km on either side) in Central Europe  
The formation of nuclear and chemical-weapon-free zones and zones of reduced arms concentration and increased confidence in other parts of Europe  
Consultations between experts on the military doctrines of the two alliances, in order to reduce suspicion and mistrust and to guarantee that they are based on principles of defence

- Strict verification of all disarmament measures through the linking of national technical means and international methods, including the creation of appropriate international organs, the exchange of military information and the carrying out of on-site inspections



## Withdrawal Of Soviet Missiles From The GDR Begins

DURING his meeting with the Greek Prime Minister Andreas Papandreu at the end of January Erich Honecker announced to the world public, that the withdrawal of the Soviet medium-range missiles of shorter range (up to 1,000 kilometres) from the territory of the GDR would begin earlier than planned—that is to say even before the ratification of the Washington Treaty. (A similar agreement was also made between the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia.) In mid-February the withdrawal began. Our photo shows the Waren/Möritz base north of Berlin where the first SS-12 operative-tactical missiles—which had been sited in the GDR and Czechoslovakia in 1983 in response to the deployment of Pershing II and Cruise missiles in Western Europe—were prepared for transport to the sites in the Soviet Union laid down in the INF Treaty for their destruction. With this advance measure the socialist countries involved have underlined their desire for serious disarmament.

Photo: ADN-ZB

# ***International Meeting for Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones***

## **Erich Honecker Becomes Patron National Preparatory Committee Constituted**

In preparation of an "International Meeting for Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones" a National Preparatory Committee of the GDR was constituted on 18 February 1988 which submitted a proposal to convene the International Meeting from 20 to 22 June this year in the capital of the GDR. The Committee issued an appeal to the world signed by Erich Honecker calling for support of this meeting at which an objective and open dialogue on peace and disarmament is to be conducted.

Erich Honecker first suggested holding such a meeting in November 1987 at the Moscow meeting of parties and movements which took place during the festivities to mark the 70th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution.

The Committee includes leading figures from all spheres of public life and representatives of the people from all sections of society.

### **From the Speech by Hermann Axen, Member of the Political Bureau and Secretary of the SED Central Committee, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the GDR People's Chamber, Secretary of the GDR National Preparatory Committee**

An international meeting bringing together eminent representatives of states and broadly based social movements to discuss the specific issue of nuclear-free zones appears to be a matter of the utmost relevance today. Its importance can be gauged from the breakthrough towards nuclear disarmament which the Soviet-American treaty elimi-

nating intermediate and shorter-range missiles represents. It can be gauged from the understanding reached between Mikhail Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan on concluding a treaty providing for a 50 per cent cut in the strategic nuclear arsenals of the Soviet Union and the United States while adhering to the ABM Treaty.





As a logical implication it is necessary, in the interests of all nations, to ensure that the reduction of the existing nuclear threat potentials of the Soviet Union and the United States is not, in a manner of speaking, offset by an arms build-up in other countries or other weapons systems. This is a matter for every state and every people. Each and every one of them can and should make a contribution to freeing mankind once and for all from the nightmarish threat of nuclear war. If the arms race goes on, if increasingly dangerous weapons systems become progressively more automated and dependent on the reliability of computers, the risk of a nuclear inferno will grow once again. It will grow although common sense, the new way

of thinking, first demanded by Albert Einstein, which is to come to terms with the perils of the nuclear age, has gained in influence across the globe and continues to do so.

People sense that their freedom and personal happiness hinges first and foremost on whether they are "freed from the bomb", in other words freed from the fear of seeing their past, present and future wiped out in the deadly glare of nuclear explosions, consigned to total oblivion. The sword of Damocles of a nuclear and chemical holocaust has been hanging over mankind all too long. Awareness of this danger has crippled too many creative and forward-looking plans and ideas.

The elimination of all systems of mass de-

struction is also the key to general and complete disarmament down to the level of an adequate defence capability. Nuclear, chemical and conventional disarmament would release the tremendous potential of human creativity and the vast material resources, so far wasted on propitiating the arms Moloch, so that they may be used in the interests of a peaceful life for all people. If the issue of disarmament, so vital for mankind, were resolved, this would open the way for coping with such global problems as pollution, indebtedness, underdevelopment, hunger, illiteracy and disease. The world's nations would coexist in a safer and freer climate. Today's young people and future generations would have wonderful prospects.

# International Meeting for Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones

The world of socialism has striven for these ideals since Lenin's famous Decree on Peace, viewing complete and general disarmament as the strongest foundation for permanently peaceful relations among nations. Since comprehensive disarmament steps do not depend on it alone, it welcomed all partial steps before and after World War II while coming up with new, seminal initiatives of its own to bring closer the ultimate goal of a world without war and violence. The advocacy of nuclear-free zones by the socialist countries since 1954 should be seen in this context.

Man devised the atomic weapon. So he can and must abolish it, he must rebottle the evil spirits he has uncorked.

When German scientists participated in the development of the first American atom bomb they did so in the belief that the Nazi regime might acquire that weapon before long to impose its inhuman principles on the world. Albert Einstein and other scientists were convinced that the United States would employ the atom bomb only in self-defence. President Franklin D. Roosevelt realized the danger that the new horrible weapon would pose for the future of the world's peoples and their peaceful coexistence unless a *modus vivendi* was reached with the USSR in good time.

The reaffirmation of the democratic tenets adopted by the Allies at Teheran and Yalta was meant to dispel people's fear of war and oppression forever. But after atom bombs had been dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, not for compelling military reasons but as an ominous warning that those interested in a nuclear monopoly were bent on world domination, the scientific community and the people at large realized that a potentially defensive weapon had been turned into an offensive weapon, a means of putting pressure on the USSR, on popular movements for national and social liberation. For the sake of survival the USSR was compelled, as indeed it often was later, to invest intellectual and material resources on an unimaginable scale to withstand the threat which increasingly dangerous weapons posed to its own existence and that of its allies.

Scenarios and doctrines for the first use of nuclear weapons on the one side have contrasted sharply with the principle of adequate defence and comprehensive proposals to freeze and eliminate nuclear armaments and to guarantee international security on the other side. In the end, the military and strategic parity achieved thanks to the accomplishments and sacrifices of the Soviet people and the consistently peaceful policies of the USSR and its allies led to the first disarmament

agreements. SALT I and SALT II and the ABM Treaty were important milestones along this road.

Yet the nuclear arms race went on, with local conflicts threatening to escalate into major ones at any time. Giant companies in the West amassed huge profits by manufacturing increasingly costly weapons systems, thereby hastening the ruin of their national economies. Ultimately, the development of science and technology resulted in such a destructive potential and in such a level of mutual threat that no one can hope to win a nuclear war today.

The conclusion drawn by Communists and Social Democrats, by realistically minded elements of the bourgeoisie, by believers of all religions, by scholars and artists, by statesmen in a majority of countries is that security can no longer be achieved and maintained against one another but only with one another, and that each and every nation, big and small, whether in possession of nuclear weapons or otherwise, should do something about it.

In 1983 Erich Honecker stated: "Never before has humankind been so directly confronted with this deadly risk as it is today, and thus perceives the need to work for peace. Even the very prospect of making profits would vanish in a nuclear world war. This creates a historic opportunity for a wide spectrum of forces to join hands in the struggle for peace and for this struggle to assume a breadth never witnessed before."

To match this the General Secretary of the SED Central Committee devised, in late 1983, a forward-looking policy for the GDR, designed to limit the damage caused by the implementation of the Brussels missile decision and its consequences, to intensify the struggle for peace and to replace military confrontation with political dialogue, common sense and cooperation. This policy has met with support throughout the world. Proving more and more successful, it reflects the spirit of the Helsinki Final Act and the desire of the people on our continent to give Europe, their common home, a peaceful and attractive character.

Precisely here where the two major mili-

tary alliances of our age confront each other eyeball to eyeball along the sensitive dividing line between socialism and capitalism, where more troops and material have been concentrated than in any other densely populated and highly industrialized region, it is particularly difficult but also particularly urgent to build confidence where it is still insufficient, to provide advance warning and possibilities for the peaceful settlement of incidents where these are still lacking, to link nuclear, chemical and conventional disarmament with each other, and to create low-armament zones. All this is of crucial significance for peace in Europe and in the wider world.

Even after the American and Soviet intermediate-range missiles have been eliminated, there will still be dangerous atomic weapons systems threatening Europe and Asia in particular. Yet the vital interests of all nations make it imperative to do away with nuclear weapons once and for all. The programme proposed by Mikhail Gorbachev on 15 January 1986 to rid the world of atomic weapons provides for several stages. But it is directed towards a final goal: to remove weapons of mass destruction from the face of the earth by the year 2000. This means all weapons of mass destruction. As far as people in Central Europe are concerned, the remaining "tactical" nuclear missiles and battlefield nuclear weapons are virtually strategic weapons. Their use, deliberate or unintentional, would annihilate Europe.

So the support of the GDR and its allies for a "third zero option" encompassing all tactical nuclear weapons and for a nuclear-weapon-free corridor in Europe is anything but propagandic. It is the practical and convincing advocacy of national and European interests. Social Democratic and Liberal politicians, statesmen such as Andreas Papandreu, Felipe Gonzalez, Mauno Koivisto, Ingvar Carlsson, Franz Vranitzky and many others are fully aware of this.

As Erich Honecker pointed out last week at a conference of the Central Committee's Secretariat with the first secretaries of the SED district committees, we consider a doctrine of collective suicide to be more irresponsible than ever, living as we do in the nuclear and space age. "We are for responsible action ... The double zero option now becoming reality has strengthened our resolve to aim for one zero option after another so that those diabolical contraptions, whatever their range, may disappear and the people may breathe freely again."

Popular resistance to the nuclear threat is not a recent phenomenon. As soon as the atom bomb came into being the battle

against it began. There is an uninterrupted line leading from Albert Einstein and J. Robert Oppenheimer, the Göttingen Appeal and the Stockholm Appeals, through Jean-Frédéric Joliot-Curie and Linus Pauling, Adam Rapacki and Olof Palme, to Mikhail Gorbachev and Erich Honecker, to their indefatigable efforts to secure the banning and removal of atomic weapons. Hundreds of millions are involved in these endeavours today. Increasingly, the world's conscience is governing the development of the world.

The Antarctic Treaty, the Outer Space Treaty, the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the 1967 Treaty of Tlatelolco banning nuclear weapons in Latin America and the 1986 Treaty of Rarotonga establishing a nuclear-free zone in the South Pacific—they all are evidence of people's and states' desire to go nuclear-weapon-free. Favourable conditions have now emerged for creating nuclear-weapon-free zones in Northern, Central and Southern Europe, in the Indian Ocean and in South East Asia, on the Korean peninsula and in the Middle East, in Africa and in the Atlantic. A growing network covering the whole globe is in the making, encouraging the nuclear powers not to allow any major pause in the process of nuclear disarmament.

The purpose of the International Meeting which is the subject of our debate is to further the dialogue and interaction taking place between the wide gamut of peace forces committed to denuclearization in their respective regions as a way of ridding the world of nuclear weapons. The German Democratic Republic, the forces involved in our country's peace movement which you represent can surely make their voice heard in the world.

Numerous queries from home and abroad addressed to the GDR Government, to parties and mass organizations testify to the great interest which Erich Honecker's proposal to hold a meeting on this subject has elicited.

As a result of preparatory talks between the GDR Government, the People's Chamber, the parties and mass organizations allied in the National Front, the Peace Council of the GDR and other sections of the commu-

nity we propose that the International Meeting for Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones should be held in Berlin from 20 to 22 June of this year.

All those present here today have agreed to participate in the work of a GDR National Preparatory Committee, to contribute their proposals and ideas within this body so that the meeting may become a success for all forces interested in nuclear-free zones and a nuclear-free world.

I should like to put forward some initial ideas on the format of the meeting:

It will be a privilege and a pleasure to welcome representatives of states interested in this issue. We call on the United Nations and the specialized agencies concerned to support this project. We call on governments and parliaments, political parties, international and national peace movements, trade unions, women's and youth organizations, towns and rural communities, scholars and artists, representatives of various religions and denominations, business leaders, indeed all those interested in zones of peace to conduct an open and constructive dialogue here in Berlin, to share experience gained in the establishment of zones of peace and to discuss concepts and proposals on how these ideas and projects can be elaborated further.

Our appeal goes out to governments and people in Europe which are seeking to establish nuclear-free zones in the centre of our continent, in northern Europe, in the Balkans, in the Mediterranean region and elsewhere.

Our appeal goes out to governments and people in Latin America and the South Pacific, in Africa and South East Asia, in the countries bordering on the Indian Ocean. To put it in a nutshell, we address our call to all regions and countries of the world which have already gained experience in establishing such zones or which are pledged to the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free regions.

It is a reflection of the new realities in the world if people representing a broad spectrum of opinions sit down together to exchange views, to discuss experience gained so far and ways of safeguarding peace. We are all aware that there is still a long way to go before the danger of a nuclear inferno has been removed, that good will, perseverance, common sense and realism must prevail to open up new vistas through joint efforts that will lead to peaceful settlements.

The Berlin meeting is to mirror all the new and positive features emerging on the world political stage these days. Let us jointly make

this meeting a forum of universal appeal, a testimony to the coalition of common sense and to the desire for peace on earth and in space.

We propose that the meeting should open with a plenary meeting on 20 June of this year. I think you will agree that we should ask the General Secretary of the SED Central Committee and Chairman of the GDR Council of State to address the opening event. We would be grateful if eminent representatives of other states and of the United Nations were also to avail themselves of this opportunity to address the participants and world opinion during this opening event.

To make for an active and productive dialogue we will propose that a number of commissions should be set up to discuss details of the issues under discussion as well as regional programmes. Then, too, it would be desirable to arrange specific meetings for government representatives, members of parliament, scholars, artists, religious circles, regional zones and various interest groups.

Since we expect all participants and a large body of public opinion to be interested in the progress and outcome of the discussions taking place in commissions and during specific meetings, we recommend that reports from these various forums for discussion should be heard during a final plenary meeting.

We should like to thank our friend Horst Sindermann, President of the People's Chamber, for making the building of our supreme representative body available for this important meeting.

There is not too much time left to prepare for such a broadly based international political gathering. But in view of the urgent need to do everything humanly possible in order to make peace more secure and to adopt further tangible disarmament measures after the Washington summit it is imperative to act without delay. We are confident that the idea of holding such an international meeting, which is of a completely new type, will fire your imagination and continue to meet with a sympathetic response abroad.





## Prominent Figures Welcome Proposal For Broad Political



**Prof. Lothar Kolditz,**  
President of the National Council of the National Front of the GDR, Member of the GDR Council of State

The proposal to convene an international meeting for nuclear-weapon-free zones is entirely in agreement with the peace endeavours of all classes and strata of the population, declared Prof. Lothar Kolditz. The parties and mass organisations united in the National Front of the GDR give it their full and unqualified support. Contacts with people from all walks of life have shown that such an initiative is regarded as a topical and welcome step. The political and community activities of the National Front of the GDR have always been based on the principle enshrined in our Constitution that war must never again emanate from German soil.



**Kurt Nier,**  
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the GDR

The deputy foreign minister pointed to the continuity of the GDR's policy for the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones and added that, today, the movement for nuclear-weapon-free regions spans the whole world. A major international meeting in Berlin would provide a forum for voices representing one of the most significant aspects of the worldwide striving for peace. The speaker expressed his certainty that the Berlin meeting would heighten international awareness of the idea of nuclear-weapon-free regions and would lead to new steps and initiatives on the way to a world without nuclear weapons.



**Dr. Bernd Seidel,**  
Lord Mayor of Leipzig

Leipzig's Lord Mayor referred to the special responsibility of the cities and towns for the maintenance of peace. A cosmopolitan attitude and international cooperation were characteristic features of this county town and trade fair city which will celebrate its 825th anniversary in 1990. This is borne out by Leipzig's international reputation as a centre of the working class and international trade, as a city of the sciences, art and culture, of sports, publishing and printing.

**Prof. Moritz Mebel,**  
Chairman of the GDR Section of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War

The renowned physician stressed that doctors have always been united in the struggle against dangers threatening mankind. In the past this meant the plague or cholera, today there are the problems of heart disease and AIDS. Doctors can only live up to their professional obligation by committing themselves to the health and life of the people, and today it is a matter of the survival of mankind.



**Dr. Hermann Kant,**  
President of the GDR Writers' Association

It is only logical, Hermann Kant emphasised, that the Writers' Association should declare its boundless readiness to take as active a part as possible in the preparation for and the holding of the meeting in June. This stems from the traditions of the Association, from the fact that, from the very outset, it has not only been an association of literary people but always an association of peace champions. Occasionally there are differences of opinion within its ranks and fierce arguments, but there has never been hesitation, indifference, passivity or, worse still, rejection when it has been a question of using the possibilities offered by literature in the cause of peace.



**Prof. Heinrich Fink,**  
Chairman of the Regional Committee of the Christian Peace Conference in the GDR

On behalf of the Christian Peace Conference Prof. Heinrich Fink promised to assist in the preparations for the meeting. From the very beginning his organisation had consistently endeavoured to forge an alliance with all peace champions and had always come out in favour of disarmament, detente and a peaceful settlement of conflicts. Its aim was to foster among Christians a strong and reliable sense of responsibility in the struggle against the growing nuclear threat.





**Annelis Kimmel,**  
Chairwoman of the Berlin County Executive  
of the Confederation of Free German Trade  
Unions

The trade union official stated that the proposal to hold the meeting for nuclear-weapon-free zones in the GDR capital underlined once more Berlin's role as a city of peace. In this context she recalled the two latest meetings of the leading representatives of the Warsaw Treaty states and the International Meeting of Mayors — on the occasion of Berlin's 750th anniversary. Many international meetings had already taken place in Berlin, which had given strong impetus to the peoples' struggle for peace, disarmament and detente.

**Prof. Heinz Stiller,**  
Vice-President of the GDR Academy of  
Sciences, Chairman of the GDR Peace  
Council's Advisory Committee on Space  
Questions

The scientist, who is known at home and abroad for his active commitment to the struggle for peace and disarmament, argued that it was imperative to reduce and finally eliminate nuclear and conventional weapons. The creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones in many parts of the world would go a long way in this direction. Thus the proposal submitted by the GDR and Czechoslovakia on a nuclear-weapon-free corridor was gaining in importance. Such zones, emphasised the speaker, would have positive effects on confidence building in Europe and other parts of the world.



# APPEAL

The people of the world are crying out for peace. It is mankind's most treasured asset. Everything that man has wrought is jeopardized by the prospect of a thermonuclear conflict. Disarmament, and nuclear disarmament in particular, is the key to solving the global problems currently facing mankind.

The treaty signed on 8 December 1987 by the Soviet Union and the United States of America on the elimination of intermediate and shorter range nuclear missiles has been welcomed with satisfaction and confidence the world over, as, together with the planned halving of strategic weapons' arsenals, it marks a start to nuclear disarmament.

The people of the world want to see further steps along the road of nuclear disarmament, as the danger of a nuclear inferno has not yet been banished. Every path leading to a peaceful world, free of nuclear weapons, must be explored. This includes the creation of regions, zones and corridors free of nuclear weapons. Nuclear-weapon-free zones have already proved their worth in Latin America and in the South Pacific. The idea of nuclear-weapon-free zones is gaining ground in North and South, East and West.

The German Democratic Republic, which is known for its deep commitment to a nuclear-weapon-free corridor in Central Europe and to the elimination of all nuclear weapons from not only Europe but the whole world, believes that it is high time that a discussion took place

about the whole question of nuclear-weapon-free zones. This should be an international forum for leading representatives of states, governments and parliaments, political parties, trade unions, youth movements, sporting associations, women's organizations, peace movements, associations of scientists and of artists, churches and religious communities and other interested groups and individuals.

To this end a preparatory committee has been constituted in the GDR capital, Berlin, today for an International Meeting for Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones to be held in Berlin from 20–22 June 1988.

We appeal to people of all political persuasions and religious beliefs, whatever their occupation or age, and wherever they live, to support the preparation for this international gathering, that it may turn out to be an objective and open dialogue serving peace and disarmament.

*Berlin, 18 February 1988*

*E. Honecker*

*General Secretary of the Central  
Committee of the Socialist Unity  
Party of Germany  
and Chairman of the State Council  
of the German Democratic Republic*

*Patron of the GDR Preparatory Com-  
mittee for an International Meeting  
for Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones*

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*(You can order a booklet dealing with the formation of the GDR's Preparatory Committee for an "International Meeting for Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones" from Verlag Zeit im Bild in German, English, French, Spanish, Russian or Arabic.)*

## WARNINGS

## PROTESTS

## ACTIONS

**Stockholm.** Disarmament measures must not be offset by an arms build-up in other areas. This demand was made at the end of the third Swedish general assembly for disarmament in mid-February. The forum, which was attended by 500 delegates from 300 social organisations, also adopted a resolution on the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones. It reiterated the demand for a complete nuclear weapon test ban and opposed any moves towards a militarisation of outer space. The decisions will be sent to the Swedish government and the UN Secretary-General to be passed on to the forthcoming United Nations special session on disarmament.

**Cologne.** A statement issued in Cologne by the Committee for Peace, Disarmament and Cooperation condemns the commencement of the production of binary warfare agents by the USA. Once again the attempt is being

made to describe the manufacture of a completely new generation of chemical weapons as "arming to catch up", the statement says. Apart from this, the binary weapons would render the verification of chemical disarmament more difficult.

**New York.** The US Sane-Freeze peace movement has come out in favour of an early ratification of the Soviet-American treaty on the elimination of medium-range nuclear missiles. This treaty had to be followed by further disarmament agreements, said the organisation's President, the Reverend Dr William Sloane Coffin, in New York. He called it a necessary step to cut by half the strategic offensive weapons.

**Budapest.** The World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY) has called for international youth campaigns for the prevention of a nuclear war and the liquidation of nuclear weapons. A statement, which was issued in Budapest, says that the young people should add weight to their demand for total disarmament with activities arranged under the slogan "Global Youth Campaign—Away with the Nuclear Missiles". It was imperative to redouble their efforts after the signing of the encouraging Washington treaty on the elimination of medium-range missiles because of the remaining nuclear weapons arsenals and because of the adherence to the theory "nuclear deterrence".

**Tokyo.** The Socialist Party of Japan (SPJ) favours concrete steps to boost international detente. From its 53rd party congress it ad-

ressed an appeal to the Japanese public to support through a broad peace movement the drive for a turn from the nuclear arms race to nuclear disarmament. The SPJ is going to campaign, above all, for the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Asia. The Japanese Socialists will convene an international symposium in May with which they want to mobilise the world public for this idea.

**Lisbon.** In the presence of over 300 prominent personalities the new headquarters of the Portuguese Council for Peace and Cooperation was inaugurated in Lisbon in February. Marshal Francisco da Costa Gomes, the former state president, emphasised in his address that it was necessary to increase public pressure, if further agreements on nuclear and conventional disarmament are to follow the Washington missile treaty.

**Stockholm.** The head of the Stockholm-based International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Walter Stuetzle, considers a third nuclear zero-option in East and West tenable. He said in a press interview that the West should carefully evaluate whether it needs short-range nuclear missiles. It was a mistake, the peace researcher added, to try to compensate for conventional superiorities through nuclear arms. He who thinks that he could wage a nuclear war fails to take account of the fact that the escalation of nuclear weapons could not be kept in check. That's why negotiations should be conducted about both kinds of weapons.



*In late January in Berlin representatives of the GDR Peace Council and a delegation of the US organisation "Clergy and Laity Concerned" exchanged views on the tasks of the peace movements following the signing of the treaty on the elimination of the USA's and the USSR's medium-range and shorter-range nuclear missiles. Both sides stressed that it was now a matter of translating this possible turning point into reality through intensified campaigns by all peace forces. The guests from the USA were interested to learn about the activities of the GDR's peace movement, especially those concerning the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free corridor and a chemical-weapon-free zone in Central Europe.*



*On 13 February more than 100,000 inhabitants of Dresden commemorated at a mass rally the 43rd anniversary of the city's destruction. In a declaration of intent they expressed their determination to do everything in their power to ensure that the disarmament process be continued and that the world be freed of all nuclear arms by the year 2000. In the historical square between the Cathedral, the Palace and Brühl Terrace people from all walks of life pledged to wholeheartedly support the Soviet peace initiatives.*

*Photos: Günter Ackermann, Dietrich Tietz*

# Olof Palme's Idea Gains In Importance



By  
Dr. Dieter Thielemann  
of the Institute for  
International Relations  
in Potsdam-Babelsberg

IN SEPTEMBER 1987 the "Olof Palme Peace March for a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Corridor in Central Europe" took place in the GDR, in the Federal Republic of Germany, in Czechoslovakia and in Austria. Along the line of the proposed corridor the peace movements of the countries involved organised simultaneous and coordinated activities to express their support for this peace initiative, which is inseparably linked with the work of the former Swedish Prime Minister, Olof Palme. In word and deed they put themselves behind the realisation of the concrete proposals based on Olof Palme's idea, which are contained in the joint principles for a nuclear-weapon-free corridor in Central Europe elaborated together by working groups of the GDR's Socialist Unity Party and the Social Democratic Party of the Federal Republic of Germany, and which have been reflected in initiatives put forward by the governments of the GDR and Czechoslovakia to the Federal Republic of Germany.

Having been delegated by the National Preparatory Committee of the GDR I had the opportunity, together with other representatives of the peace movement in our country, to take part in a number of events on the Olof Palme Peace March in the Federal Republic of Germany. On the podium and in the auditorium of discussion events in Hamburg, Bremen, Stuttgart, Husum, Flensburg, Itzehoe and Schwäbisch-Gmünd I was able to see for myself the broad approval which the proposal for the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free corridor enjoys among the peace movement of the Federal Republic of Germany. There were many interesting and stimulating conversations on the significance of this peace initiative and its position in the longer term future of the struggle for peace, disarmament and security on the European continent.

The broad approach to the problems lent the discussions during the Olof Palme Peace March in the Federal Republic of Germany fundamental and perspective character. The initiative for a nuclear-weapon-free corridor in Central Europe was placed within the whole complex of tasks in the struggle for peace and disarmament as they stand in the light of the Soviet-American agreement on

the elimination of two categories of nuclear weapons. It was repeatedly stressed that under these conditions the initiative for the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free corridor in Central Europe will grow in importance. It affects in a special way all the main spheres of the struggle to strengthen security in Europe on the politico-military level and is from this position especially suitable to act as a catalyst for a comprehensive disarmament process.

Today, as the first treaty on nuclear disarmament already bears the signatures of Mikhail Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan, many of the ideas expressed during the Olof Palme Peace March in September 1987, then still with a view to the future, have attained immediate topicality. I would like to recall what I would consider to be the most important among them:

**First:** By its very nature the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free corridor in Central Europe would be an important measure to reduce the danger of nuclear war in Europe. The tactical nuclear weapons which are today still deployed close to the highly sensitive dividing line between NATO and the Warsaw Treaty would be removed. Thus in any kind of military conflict, including military encounters as a result of human or technical error, there would be a significant reduction in the probability of the early use of nuclear weapons. The so-called nuclear threshold would be raised considerably, the rate of escalation of a potential conflict would be held back and the possibility of a solution through political means enhanced. This effect alone would be of great importance in the region with the highest concentrations of troops and armaments in the world.

**Second:** The creation of a nuclear-weapon-free corridor in Central Europe would be a contribution to nuclear disarmament. It would make it easier to reach agreements on the reduction and elimination of those nuclear weapons which, even after the Soviet-American treaty on the elimination of intermediate and shorter-range missiles, remain deployed in Europe, and which are not the subject of any negotiations so far. If the corridor were created tactical nuclear weapons would have to be sited in areas from which it would be basically impossible for them to fulfil their specific military purpose. Under such conditions it would probably be simpler to negotiate on their elimination than it is today. It is therefore not a matter of "separating or

scrapping", but rather of the question of to what extent the withdrawal of tactical nuclear weapons from the dividing line between NATO and the Warsaw Treaty would improve the chances for further nuclear disarmament steps in Europe.

**Third:** The creation of a nuclear-weapon-free corridor in Central Europe would provide important impulses for the negotiations on a reduction in conventional forces and weapons, a mandate for which is currently under discussion at the CSCE follow-up conference in Vienna. In line with the joint proposal of the SED and SPD all weapons systems would have to be removed from the corridor which can be fitted with either nuclear or conventional warheads or ammunition. For these weapons, too, it holds true that once they have been withdrawn they could easily be eliminated as well. Since a large proportion of the heavy artillery which is situated close to the dividing line belongs to the category of dual-capability weapons systems, its withdrawal from a 300-kilometre-wide corridor would make a deep incision into the conventional potential of both sides.

**Fourth:** The removal of tactical nuclear weapons, including weapons systems with dual capability, would significantly reduce the ability of either side to launch a surprise attack. This would be an important step towards guaranteeing the defensive-only nature of forces. This effect could be even further strengthened if the corridor definitions were expanded in some way to include other offensive weapons.

**Fifth:** Finally, the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free corridor in Central Europe would be suited, above and beyond its immediate politico-military effects, to give the states in the region extraordinarily active and effective opportunities to influence the process of reducing military confrontation and securing disarmament in Europe decisively and to add to its dynamism. Above all the two German states could in this way reaffirm their historical responsibility for ensuring that never again war but only peace emanates from German soil. In these efforts they can rest assured, as the Olof Palme Peace March in September 1987 showed, of the wide support of the population in both countries.



## Dialogue In The Service Of Europe And Of Peace

THE PRIME MINISTER of Greece, Andreas Papandreou, who is also the Chairman of the Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK), came to the German Democratic Republic on 23 January for a short state visit. At the focus of his talks with the General Secretary of the SED Central Committee and Chairman of the GDR State Council, Erich Honecker, were bilateral and current international questions.

The renewed meeting between the two statesmen was evidence above all of the mutual interest in a continuation of the dialogue and joint efforts for peace, disarmament and detente in the international situation.

The full support of the guest—and immediately following this the close attention of the international public—was accorded to Erich Honecker's announcement that, in line with

an agreement between the Soviet Union and the GDR and Czechoslovakia, the shorter-range nuclear missiles sited on the territory of these two countries, would be removed in the near future, earlier than originally planned. The Greek Prime Minister described this as an historic moment and expressed the certainty that this new initiative from the GDR would be welcomed by the international community.

Andreas Papandreou had arrived in Berlin from the meeting of the six heads of state

and government in Stockholm—from that meeting whose results Erich Honecker characterised as a way in which states and peoples could, despite all their differences in level of social development, tradition, political structure and geographical situation, contribute to the safeguarding of peace through disarmament, confidence and cooperation. The "Stockholm Declaration" is indeed renewed evidence of the great sense of responsibility of the Group of Six initiative for liberating mankind from the scourge of the nuclear threat and for the future of our planet. It provides important new impetus for the cooperation of peace forces all over the

**Joy at the renewed meeting in the GDR capital.**

world. Erich Honecker told his guest that he welcomed the "Stockholm Declaration" emphatically and reaffirmed that the GDR would continue to give its support to all measures which served world peace.

Referring to the GDR's contributions to peace and disarmament the Greek head of government noted that the GDR links its proposals with the Initiative of the Group of Six. In other words: There is agreement between the policy of the GDR and the "Stockholm Declaration", as the talks in Berlin have again showed. The reduction of strategic offensive weapons by 50 per cent, an end to nuclear tests, the elimination of tactical nuclear weapons and reductions in conventional forces and armaments are viewed both by the Warsaw Treaty countries and the states of the Group of Six as further necessary and feasible steps now that the agreement between the Soviet Union and the United States on intermediate-range nuclear missiles has thrown open the door to disarmament.

Following the conclusion of this agreement—and in this the statesmen were unan-

imous—the situation is no longer the same as it was before the Washington summit. That disarmament has become genuinely possible gives mankind new hope. Everyone who, through their energetic and responsible work, has contributed to the conclusion of the Washington Treaty must now ensure that the beginning of nuclear disarmament becomes reality. This is all the more necessary since influential circles have arisen in certain Western countries with the aim of offsetting the agreed disarmament measures for one weapons category through a build-up in another. It is the GDR's clear standpoint that no type of weapon and no question of verification should be excluded from the disarmament process. Imbalances and asymmetries must be corrected through disarmament by the side which has the advantage.

Considering the active stance of the GDR and Greece on the safeguarding of peace as the paramount issue of our time, it was only natural that an important role in the talks should accrue to the ways in which the two states could maintain the momentum of the disarmament process with steps of their own. Mutual support was expressed for the GDR proposal for a nuclear-weapon-free corridor in Central Europe and for the Greek plan for a similar zone on the Balkan peninsula. Andreas Papandreou was assured full backing when he spoke out in Berlin for a nuclear-weapon-free corridor from Scandi-

navia via Central Europe to the Balkans. This consistent position on the elimination of nuclear weapons was also a determining factor for the great attention which, as the Prime Minister was able to report, had been attracted in Greece by Erich Honecker's approach during his visits to Bonn and Paris and by his letter of 16 December 1987 to the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, Helmut Kohl.

Irrespective of the political, economic and social differences between the two states and despite their belonging to different alliance systems—indeed precisely because of and giving full consideration to these differences—the statesmen of the GDR and Greece underlined their sense of responsibility by placing their common views in the foreground—the fundamental interest in living and working together in our common European house in peace and good-neighbourly friendship.

*During the discussions in the State Council building.*

*Photos: ADN-ZB*



"THEY WERE NOT BORN to die a painful death in the spring of life, nor were they born as heroes. They were ordinary people who, like all other people, loved their parents, wives and husbands, children and friends. They loved their home town, street and country. They loved summer evenings, the spring sky, flowers. They loved knowledge, a poem or a song. They loved everything that was still unknown to them, everything they anticipated, the future." Stephan Hermlin wrote this in the preface to his book *Die erste Reihe* (The First Rank) which came out in 1950. The scriptwriter Eberhard Görner and the film producer Peter Vogel used its themes to make a TV film about the antifascist resistance in Berlin which was screened for the first time last November.

The production of cinematographic and television films dealing with that period has a

# "The First Rank"

long and effective tradition in our country. Films with an antifascist theme are among the best made by the DEFA studios and GDR Television. Just recall *Die Mörder sind unter uns* (The Murderers Are Among Us) by Wolfgang Staudte, *Die Ehe im Schatten* (Marriage in the Shadow) by Kurt Maetzig, or *Die Verlobte* (The Fiancée) by Günter Relsch. Many other films could be mentioned in this context. They have won the GDR film makers great international recognition.

Now GDR Television has released another film with an antifascist theme.

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*The First Rank* comes across right from the start, causing the audience to feel involved. The first shots are of the present. A few cheerful young people discover their capital Berlin. Strolling about, they reach the Memo-

## THOUGHTS ABOUT A FILM



film, however, they all sit around one table, the imaginary table of their common Interests as it were. They interpret the evil manifestations of their time in one and the same way and jointly oppose them. This is what made them of the 'first rank'."

The producer also pointed out: "I liked the way the young actors identified with the characters. I believe that the young viewers also felt this."

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We asked two of the outstanding actors in our country for their comments.

One of them was Johanna Schall who played the role of the antifascist Lilo Herrmann in the film. She was born 20 years after Lilo's execution:

"During an interrogation by the Gestapo Lilo suddenly believes to have heard her son crying in the adjacent room. Whereupon she breaks down but does not betray anyone. I am not sure how I would have behaved in such a situation, facing the threat of my son being beaten up", said Johanna Schall. A determined, stubborn silence marked Lilo Herrmann's courageous conduct in the fascists' clutches. Even before the Nazis came to power Lilo, a medical student, had joined a group of like-minded people in an endeavour to head off the fascist danger. Full of disgust and defiance, she lived through that terrible time when first books were burned and then people were persecuted, tortured and beaten to death. She went underground and engaged in the resistance struggle. In 1935 the Gestapo arrested her. Three days before her 29th birthday Lilo Herrmann was decapitated in the Berlin-Plötzensee Prison, the first German antifascist woman to die in this way. Her son was four years old when she was executed.

"People like Lilo Herrmann were not taken in by Hitler, they faced up to him instead," said the young actress. "In our film we tried—avoiding all stereotypes—to depict people who held various views, people who did what they had to and could. For me my role was another opportunity to try to understand that era which we, who were born afterwards, find so hard to comprehend. In any case, the attitude of my film character also had something to do with me, for I compared myself with her and considered my stand on present-day international events ... I sought to represent Lilo Herrmann as a woman who could be anyone of our neighbours, i.e. an ordinary person at first sight. And I tried to make perceptible the extraordinary nature of her conduct, her courage and greatness. What was also important for me was the central place in the film of the ex-

tremely topical question of war and peace. Dealing with it is today more urgent than ever ..."

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Dietmar Terne who impersonated Walter Husemann, commented thus:

"In this film I was thrilled in a completely different way by a theme which already seemed to have been exhausted. It is amazing to see how a small group of young people had the guts to swim against the current under the Nazi dictatorship. Walter Husemann did not want to be an accomplice to what was happening in those days. He renounced happiness with the woman he loved and shouldered the burden of underground struggle. Very deep inside he felt the need to do what he did."

Walter Husemann grew up in a working-class family which did not consider material things to be the sole meaning of life. His father aroused his interest in the ancient world and astronomy, filled him with enthusiasm for music and painting and ushered him into the school of life—the struggles of the working class. The young man became a tool maker, then a reporter for *The Red Flag*—the newspaper of the Communist Party of Germany—and started resisting the Nazis in the underground as soon as Hitler had seized power. In 1936 the Nazis tracked him down, imprisoned him first in the Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp and then in Buchenwald and finally hanged him at Berlin-Plötzensee Prison in 1943. Few are the items he left behind—a photo, a bundle of letters ...

"I have repeatedly read these letters in order to form a clear picture of this man who, while very sensitive, had such a proud resolution that it even impressed the Gestapo interrogators," the actor said. "In his last letter Husemann asked his father to remain determined and strong. He would not die in vain, Husemann wrote. The new, dreamed of time would come. I wondered what Husemann felt while writing these lines. Maybe at that moment he did not feel brave, was trying to pluck up his courage, or perhaps he even had doubts? I tried to portray him from a contemporary viewpoint. Taking part in making *The First Rank* I was fascinated by the absolute commitment of the character I played, a commitment which has also affected my own attitude to life. I got so close to this man with his hopes and doubts that even today I'm unable to get him out of my mind."

Brigitte Thal

Photos: DDR Fernsehen, DEFA

rial to the Victims of Fascism in the Unter den Linden Boulevard. Quietly they enter the building and look at the eternal flame. Their thoughts at that moment are presented in the form of images. A few faces, as young as theirs, emerge: the faces of a woman and five men who look at them and describe their lives in short sentences. Each description ends with a depressing announcement: "murdered", "executed", "sentenced to death" ...

The film relates the life-stories of people who lived in Berlin during the years of fascist terror, who knew one another, acted together and lost sight of each other only to be reunited again in death. They loved life, were as fond of dancing, company and love as any other generation is. They stuck together. For all their fears, troubles and the frequent lack of understanding on the part of their nearest relatives, these young people helped to spread the truth about the murders and killings going on in the Germany of their time.

Five of the film characters are based on authentic individuals; one—Artur Berliner—is a fictitious person created by the film makers. His fate epitomises that of thousands of antifascists—Communists, Social Democrats and Christians—who, in the words of Stephan Hermlin, when the time came, felt the obligation to oppose fascism rather than just tolerate it.

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"They had to die because they thought," said scriptwriter Eberhard Görner, "and because their thoughts gave rise to actions which they did not shrink from taking. This is why they are a model to us. Their consistency in matching their thoughts with deeds is a historical dimension which nobody can deny and which is of the highest relevance today. The characters discuss moral, ethical and political values which people must always be conscious of. We are living in a period in which we feel the legacy of these people to be a topical message."

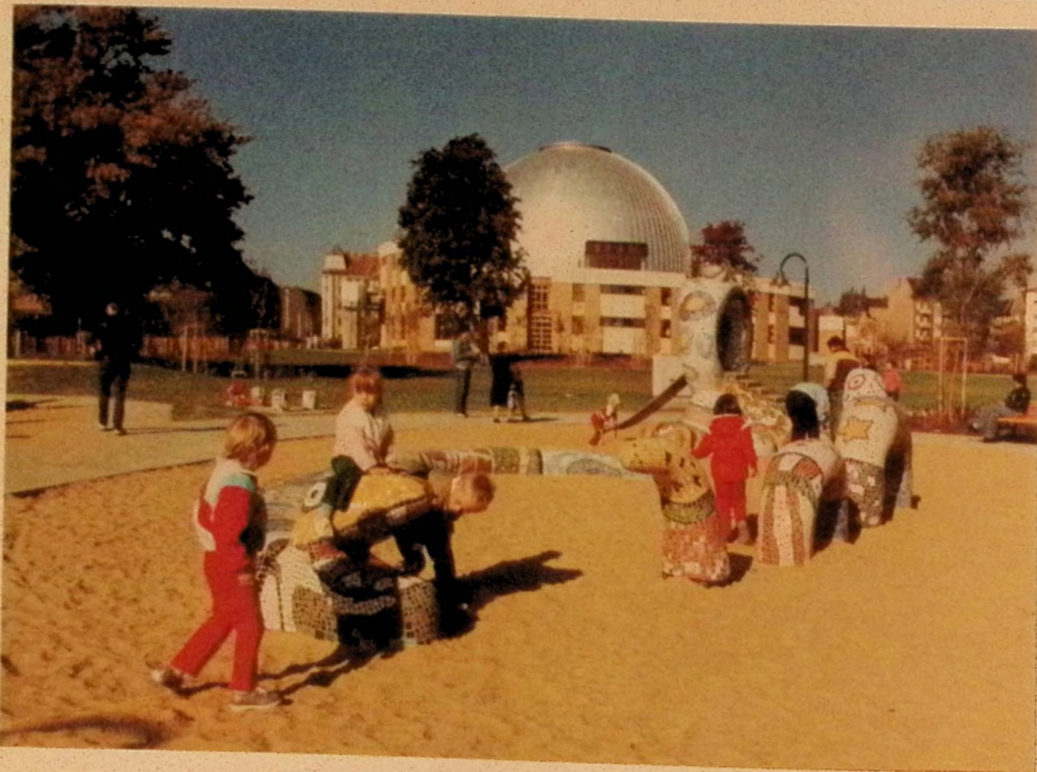
Asked why the subject of antifascist resistance has again been taken up the producer Peter Vogel replied: "This subject is very relevant today for people grappling with the concepts of morality, heroism and the behaviour of people in society. We relate the story of six outstanding individuals who behaved like heroes without being aware of this ... For them politics was not only a vital need but also a thrilling adventure and a means of proving themselves. In reality they hardly had any contact with one another. In our





# I Impressions of the Capital

READERS' FORUM "750"



## Planning for the Future

In August 1984 I stayed in Thuringia with members of the France-GDR Society. Our visit to the GDR ended with a trip to its capital. Once there, I immediately set about "discovering" Berlin.

I first went to the Unter den Linden Boulevard—the "Champs Elysees" of Berlin. The whole boulevard is lined with theatres, museums, palaces, churches and the buildings of the Humboldt University. The lime trees which have given the boulevard its name, dispensed a pleasant freshness on that warm August day. The ceremonial changing-

of-the-guard in front of the Memorial to the Victims of Fascism and Militarism attracted many tourists. I, too, looked on for a while before moving on to view the restored facades of the Museum of German History and the Unter den Linden Palace. A bridge with admirable sculptures led me to the Marx Engels Square which is surrounded by public buildings imparting a stately air to the whole architectural ensemble. Opposite this square there is the Museums' Island in the middle of the River Spree. It was a pity that I could not visit the Cathedral because it was just being restored.

How pleased I was at the sight of the Palast-Hotel and the Palace of the Republic! The latter can be entered free of charge.

*A playground in the Ernst Thälmann Park, in the background the new large Zeiss planetarium.*

The 365-metre-high Television Tower is the attractive dominant feature in the ensemble surrounding Alexanderplatz Square with its many boutiques, fountains and lawns. Many tourists were strolling past the world-time clock which indicates the time at various parts of the earth ... Later I saw in passing the Sports and Recreation Centre

housing gyms, swimming pools, ice-skating rinks, bowling alleys, restaurants and providing Berliners with a wide range of sporting opportunities. Unfortunately, I had no time to take a closer look at these splendid facilities for it was already late and I wanted to return to my hotel.

The next morning I continued my sightseeing tour of Berlin. Mist had descended on the city. The French Street led me to Academy Square—an architectural ensemble of rare beauty. Then I toured the Leipzig Street with its department stores, cafés and restaurants, enjoying the nice flower beds there. I did not miss the Friedrichstadtpalast Theatre either, whose architecture I found overwhelming. I believe that Berliners value this building highly.

The western mass media refer to Berlin as a grey city with a monotonous life. I for one remember it as a clean metropolis without beggars and jobless people, a city where housing construction is in full swing and which is planning for the future.

*Chierry Escalch,  
Pessac, France*

## A Pleasant Surprise

It was in 1974. We had just ended our wonderful holidays on the island of Usedom and were about to leave when thick fog descended.

After several hours of waiting, our plane took off at last. We had a lot of fun on board as the twin-engine Antonov aircraft seemed to rise from cloud to



*It gained world fame under Max Reinhardt: the German Theatre in Schumann Street which was opened in 1883.*

cloud until we safely landed at Berlin Schönefeld Airport.

But the worst was yet to come. The airliner which was to have taken us to Vienna had already departed. However, my unease vanished when we were allowed to ring up our relatives free of charge, telling them not to worry. In addition, we were given first-class hotel accommodation including excellent board.

The next morning we were invited to tour East Berlin as our plane was not scheduled to leave the city until the afternoon. The tour was organised by the GDR's Tourist Office and we liked it very much. We enjoyed, for example, the beautiful and modern Alexanderplatz Square, the world-time clock, the fountains and the Television Tower. Subsequently we made another sightseeing tour at our own expense during which we saw vestiges of the last horrible war and, above all, many new blocks of flats and other buildings that had emerged within a short span of time. We liked the Brandenburger

Gate, Friedrichstrasse and also the cultural establishments in the city such as the Opera House and the Maxim Gorki Theatre. Finally, our coach drove past the memorial on the Unter den Linden Boulevard where an eternal flame burns, reminding us never to allow another war to break out.

The highpoint of our stay in the GDR's capital was the visit to the Pergamon Museum. We marvelled at the Pergamon Altar, pondering over what the ancient people had been capable of achieving.

At the end of our tour we were handed a small plush Berlin bear, the animal in the city's coat-of-arms, as a memento. On

*Famous archaeological finds from Asia Minor and Egypt—here the Market Gate of Miletus—can be viewed in the Pergamon Museum.*



the whole, this tour was one of our finest experiences. We often recall all the things we were able to see by courtesy of the GDR's Tourist Office.

*Herbert Traxler,  
Vienna, Austria*

## **A Peace Message in our Time**

BERLIN captivates its visitor from the very first moment. I was there for ten days as a participant in the peace congress. Having returned home I dedicated a whole issue of my periodical *Thessaliki Estia* to this city. Yet I cannot help thinking that I didn't cover everything I should have. Berlin has very many surprises in store for its guests ...

Walking along the Unter den Linden Boulevard in the direction of August Bebel Square we were especially struck by the magnificent building of the old library. We simply couldn't keep our eyes off its details: the statues on the frieze, the balcony columns, the beautifully embellished doors ... It looked as though it had survived the war undamaged. But, regrettably, it was destroyed by bombs and it is only thanks to the state's good judgement that it was reconstructed according to its original appearance.

The GDR sets great store by reconstruction and renovation—and this is not only evident in the Unter den Linden Boulevard. The historic buildings, the libraries, the museums, the memorials, the universities, the statues—they all symbolise the strength of the GDR people.

I liked the great care with which the old city areas are being reconstructed and modernised. In this job architects, engineers, sculptors, painters and building workers closely cooperate with one another in order to find the best and most original solution. "We pay heed to our architectural traditions," we were told by deputy chief architect Dorothea Krause, "but we also endeavour to make them serve the people."

We also enjoyed the guided tour of the city, during which we passed by numerous parks and

lawns, large squares and the River Spree, which flows through the city. We saw ships of the White Fleet with cheerful, singing children on board, bookshops with their low-priced offerings, crowded reading rooms, and the very clean streets ...

We also visited Friedrichshain where the rubble of the last war was piled up into a hill which has now been converted into a wonderful recreation area. Climbing up this incline we felt as if war were buried forever under this rubble in Berlin.

There are many street names, buildings and memorials in Berlin reminding people of the large and small sufferings throughout the course of history, of the struggles and fighters, of those who dreamt of a better future for humanity ...

Peace has inspired the Berliners to give of their best in the reconstruction work. Wherever you are, whoever you meet, their "Hallo" spells peace. Peace today and peace in the future, peace for the whole of humankind. The visitor to Berlin does not fail to notice this message of peace in our time and he bears it with him on his return to his part of the world.

*Michaëlis Stafilas,  
Kalithea-Athens, Greece*

## Built for the People

I MADE my first acquaintance with Berlin back in 1961 as a member of a French delegation consisting of young trade unionists from the building workers' union. We were accommodated in a guesthouse of the Confederation of Free German Trade Unions. From the window of my room I could see a pile of rubble. Work had just begun to extend the former Stalin Avenue in the direction of Alexanderplatz Square. New blocks of flats were to be built there, decorated with light ceramic tiles. We saw a model of the future ensemble, which also included a restaurant, the "Moscow", and a cinema. I was impressed by the enthusiasm of the building workers.

However, the fact that West Berlin was pulling out all the stops to lure people away was not to be overlooked. A few days later I witnessed the events of the memorable 13 August at first hand ...

I think that nowhere was the destruction wrought by the war as evident at that time as in East Berlin. Seeing the damaged facades and drab backyards in the former working-class areas it required a great deal of optimism to imagine the city as a future modern metropolis.

Today I enjoy striding from the Frankfurt Gate to the Brandenburg Gate. I also like to walk along Klosterstrasse Street, and have a bockwurst and a big glass of beer in Alexanderplatz Square, and I feel happy amidst the crowds. I simply can't get enough of the works of art in the Palace of the Republic. I also

*The reconstructed historic restaurant "Zum Nussbaum" in the Nikolai Quarter.*



Dear Readers,

In 19 issues of our magazine we have published, under the theme "Impressions of the Capital" your impressions of and opinions on Berlin and also the experiences you have made there. The response to our readers' forum was so overwhelming that we decided to continue publishing your letters beyond Berlin's anniversary year. With this issue we want to conclude this series and would like to thank all contributors, including those readers whose letters could not be published due to lack of space.

The Editor

love Berlin at night, the absence of glaring advertisements and being able to walk through the streets without having to fear an attack.

Some people prefer the small, more intimate places, which have been restored to their original beauty, to the monumental parts of Berlin. In any case I don't think that anyone can remain unaware of the indefinable charm of the Nikolai Quarter.—Is the democratic Berlin praised by everyone? I don't know. Personally, I got the impression, which was shared by all the others in the French party with which I visited the GDR in 1986; that Berlin, the capital of the GDR, is a dynamic combination of a wonderfully preserved historical and cultural heritage and modern architecture. The latter is sometimes a bit daring but nevertheless, it is always intended to serve the interests of the people.

*Claude Salmon,  
Perpignan, France*

## Pain on Parting

I'VE GOT into the habit of making an interesting journey in order to break up the long winter months. Having decided to go to the GDR some people who don't know your country well asked me such prejudiced questions as: "To the GDR in November? Do you really think that's a good idea?"

As it turned out, my stay in Berlin was a worthwhile experience for me. I looked around the city, was in museums and shops and also in some restaurants serving national dishes. It was also interesting for me to see how you spend the pre-Christmas season—with the typical enthusiasm of the northern people.

Apart from the famous Pergamon Museum, I took delight in the exhibits in the Köpenick Palace. I even discovered a museum which is dedicated to the hairdressing trade. All the time I was full of curiosity. I was able to enrich my collection of records with classical music and also attended a concert in the splendid Schauspielhaus Concert Hall. There are many tea-rooms and small cafés in the pedestrian precinct around Alexanderplatz Square, a fact that surprised me.

I wouldn't have thought it possible but sitting in the Interflug plane which was to take me back home to "my" capital I felt real pain on parting. Maybe this was caused by the fact that I had felt so happy in your Berlin. I didn't even take any notice of the climate and the lack of sunshine.

This journey has been a major inspiration for me. If possible, I'd like to return to Berlin every two years in order to explore the boroughs on its outskirts and to visit other cities and towns. Moreover, I'd love to view Berlin from its TV Tower ...

*Daniel Poggi,  
Rome, Italy*

## One Needs Time to Discover Berlin

I VISITED Berlin and Dresden in 1986. So I can say from my own experience that it takes a lot of time to get to know the GDR capital. One starts out in the morning with firm intentions to see various parts of Berlin, in a set order, but it does not take very long before something of interest catches one's attention and a change of course takes place. By being too professional on the planning side one misses out on the spots that are off the beaten track. Now I had a rough idea of my intentions and walked or took public transport on what to me was something of a "mystery tour".

I found the morning visit to the Brandenburg Gate well worthwhile. It is a most imposing site with the reception and exhibition centre providing lots of information on the history and present-day development of the city. The Pergamon Museum and the Museum of German History are a must providing there is sufficient time, you cannot just rush around, so plenty of time should be allowed. On a nice day it is a good idea to take the suburban railway to Treptow Park for a steamer trip on the River Spree, followed by a visit to the Zoo.

Trevor I. L. Eynon,  
Wallasey, Great Britain

## Congratulations on the Anniversary

DEAR BERLIN,

Congratulations and best wishes on your birthday. You and your lime-trees were in full blossom in your anniversary year. The two of you have always belonged together. This fact manifests itself especially in your most prominent road, the Unter den Linden Boulevard, which was the scene of many an historic event. In 1806 Napoleon rode through the Brandenburg Gate as a victor; a few years later, in 1813, Russian Cossacks



were enthusiastically cheered as his vanquishers and as liberators. It was in this boulevard that the first lit-up Christmas tree was erected. (In 1816 the first candle decorated Christmas tree was set up in a bourgeois household in Berlin in which the Humboldt brothers lived, in No. 26 Unter den Linden. Gradually this habit spread throughout Germany. — The Ed.)

As a matter of fact, the Unter den Linden Boulevard used to be the street of the monarchs. But in 1848 people took to this street in protest against them. Traditions of the old Germany have been preserved there to the present day: Frederick II looks down from his pedestal. Bismarck rode along Unter den Linden on his way to pay the emperor his farewell visit in 1890. On 9 November 1918 red flags were hoisted at the palace in Berlin and from its balcony Karl Liebknecht proclaimed the socialist republic.

Victories and setbacks. Here one shouldn't forget to mention the torchlight procession staged by the fascists in 1933 and the burning of books. The "Thousand-Year Reich" ended in misery and ruins. You were on the brink of extinction when, on

2 May 1945, the Red Army entered Berlin; 20,000 of its soldiers had sacrificed their lives for your liberation.

The German Democratic Republic was founded on 7 October 1949, "Risen from the Ruins ...". A new chapter was opened. You've experienced much, much more and you'll live on to see many more events. At the end of this letter I'd like to refer to a verse of Johannes R. Becher's poem "Be Aware", in which he wrote, many years ago, that although the path was difficult, the people were achieving outstanding results and that they should be aware of the power which had been put into their hands and which they should never give away.

Erik Nielsen,  
Løgumkloster, Denmark

## Much Redevelopment Was Taking Place

MY TWO VISITS to Berlin were 10 and 14 years ago and I have no doubt that substantial re-

*Marx-Engels Forum and the Palace of the Republic.*  
Photo: ADN-ZB

building and progress has taken place since my visits. I recall that the foundations of the Palace of the Republic were laid about the time of my first visit. Yet in 1978 the building was completed and I remember being favourably impressed by it.

Indeed my overall impression of the city was favourable. It seemed that much redevelopment was taking place. Compared with West Berlin there did not seem to be such a frantic way of life, less vulgarity. It seemed a more soothing sort of place.

Another thing that struck me about Berlin was that it wasn't "clogged up" with chaotic traffic jams and I understand public transport is good and cheap.

Writing this has renewed my enthusiasm for a future visit and when I do make it I'll look forward to the contrasts I shall surely see in progress of a modern socialist city compared with the period of my last visit.

Russell Holmes,  
London, Great Britain

## Life in a Humane Society

Friends from Japan visited the GDR

IN DECEMBER 1987 the Liaison Conference of the Japan-GDR Friendship Societies observed its 15th foundation anniversary.

To mark the occasion the friends of the GDR held a panel discussion on peace and several gala events. The latter richly varied functions were precluded by a fact-finding trip, the 19th to date, to the socialist German state last November. For most of the delegation members, mainly local municipal officials and trade unionists, this was their first visit to the GDR, to a socialist state.

Their visit began in Berlin where it also ended after ten eventful days. High points of their stay were, among other things, a reception by Horst Brasch, Vice-President of the GDR International Friendship League, and a sight-seeing tour of Berlin, at the beginning of which the Japanese guests laid a wreath at the Memorial to the Victims of Fascism and Militarism. During numerous conversations and meetings the members of the delegation had plenty of opportunity to learn about everyday and social life in our socialist society. In kindergartens and in the Pioneers' Palace in Berlin they informed themselves about the educational and care facili-



Members of the Japanese delegation on the Brühl Terrace in Dresden.



The guests from Japan were fascinated by the paintings from past centuries in the Old Masters' Picture Gallery.

Photos: Günter Ackermann

ties for children; at a comprehensive polytechnical school for physically handicapped children about the future prospects in life of these young people; and in a senior citizens' residential and nursing home about the living conditions of those who have retired from working life. From Berlin the visitors went to the north of our republic. Excursions took them to the shipyard in Rechlin and to the county town of Neubrandenburg. Its many historical buildings and struc-

tures provided the amateur photographers and "film-makers" from Japan with a host of motifs.

Güstrow, whose Gertrud Chapel and Ernst Barlach Memorial made a deep impression on the guests, was another destination. The packed programme also took them to the port of Rostock, to the popular holiday resort at Klink, to the Dedelow cattle-breeding training centre, to the historic town of Potsdam as well as to the city of the arts and

culture, Dresden. Here they viewed the "Green Vault", once the jewel collection of the Saxon electors; the Old Masters' Picture Gallery; and the rebuilt Semper Opera House. GDR REVIEW used this opportunity to meet the friends from Japan and ask Mr. Takao Furumoto, who headed the delegation, about his impressions.

"I'm most of all impressed by the GDR citizens' *joie de vivre*, by their cordiality which we felt everywhere, and by the media at home

CONTACTS ★★★ FROM LAND TO LAND

# FORUM

FOR FRIENDS



During their visit to the former jewel collection of the Saxon electors in the "Green Vault".

The leader of the delegation, Takao Furumoto.



often publish unobjective information about the GDR and thus we didn't know what to expect from this journey. Today I can say on behalf of all delegation members that we have very much enjoyed our stay in the GDR. However, there is another important aspect to our visit: the numerous encounters with citizens and public figures in the GDR have convinced us that the people here really do want peace and that they like living in this land.



"It is one of the most important tasks today to tell people this truth and to inform them which states in the world take peace initiatives. Peace is a main subject of discussion in Japan, too, but little is said about the fact that numerous initiatives to this end come from the socialist states. It is therefore of great value that many personal meetings and conversations are taking place today and that our two countries are deepening their contacts in various spheres of social life.

Owing to the information spread by our mass media, many people in Japan have a false view of the GDR, and for this reason it is very important to go and see for yourself what life is like in your socialist country, to form personal contacts with its citizens. We've realised during our visit that the population of the GDR is genuinely committed to peace and that the peace policy of its government corresponds with the desires of the people.

"One of my conversation part-



Touring the Semper Opera House.

ners coined a phrase which has kept me occupied ever since. He said approximately: First of all one has to consider for whom one needs security and then one has to realise that the more weapons produced the less security there is."

Mr. Norifumi Kawamura, Secretary of the Liaison Conference of the Japan-GDR Friendship Societies, who had attentively followed our conversation, gave an insight into the past and future activities of the friends of the GDR in Japan.

"In 1987 we mounted a total of seven exhibitions about the GDR. The last one, which featured 53 graphic works, was exceptionally well received. Many visitors wanted to buy some of these works and the press wrote about the interesting exhibits done by artists from the GDR. Our series of lectures, which this time focused on the role of women in the GDR, also helped to impart interesting knowledge about your country.

"Brochures, published in conjunction with the GDR foreign press agency 'Panorama', as well as the issuing of the SED's Directive on the Five-Year Plan and the report to its 11th Party Congress were also useful.

"We plan to popularise the insights and experiences we have gained during this visit through the publication of booklets containing travel reports, through lectures and film shows.

"Currently the Liaison Conference of the Friendship Societies has 83 branches. We want to further expand this network. The conditions for this are complicated yet we are very optimistic that we'll achieve our end."

*Ursula Tintemann*

CONTACTS \*\*\* FROM LAND TO LAND

FROM THE ACTIVITIES  
OF THE FRIENDSHIP SOCIETIES



● On the occasion of the 15th anniversary of the Australia-GDR Friendship Society Gerald Götting, President of the GDR International Friendship League, handed over to the Society's National Secretary, Fred Clarke, the Stele of International Friendship. The presentation was made during the official visit to Australia by a GDR People's Chamber delegation last year. Our photo: Gerald Götting (right), Bill Brady, Mayor of the Leichhardt municipality in Sydney (2nd from right), Fred Clarke (left).

● A delegation of the Como municipal authorities, which included representatives of all anti-fascist political parties from Italy, made a fact-finding tour of the GDR in October of last year. They visited Berlin, Potsdam, Leipzig, Dresden and Weimar.

During their exchange of opinion with leading representatives of the GDR-Italy Friendship Society the responsibility of local councillors for the safeguarding of peace and for international friendship was emphasised. The conversations with local government officials from Weimar focused on the expansion of rela-

tions between the town of the German classical authors and Como. In particular, the guests came out in favour of closer contacts between the Memorial to the European Resistance Movement in Como and the National Memorial at Buchenwald near Weimar.

● The Denmark-GDR Society's Aalborg Committee has set up a small GDR Culture Centre in two rooms of the former medical practice of its Chairman Tage Mayling. It is planned to mount exhibitions featuring photos, posters, books, maps, newspapers and periodicals from the GDR and other socialist states, and to hold weekly lectures on sports, education, industry or culture in the GDR. The local committee now also holds its meetings in these rooms.

Berlin evenings, arranged to mark the city's 750th foundation anniversary last year, inaugurated the work of the Culture Centre. Similar events about Leipzig, Dresden, Potsdam, Rostock and Wismar—the partner town of Aalborg—are to follow.

# FORUM

## FOR FRIENDS

● At the festive function, which marked the 20th anniversary of the Tampere Committee of the Finland-GDR Society, its Chairman Timo Jäminki was able to state that interest in the GDR has grown and continues to do so. The local committee was founded in December 1966 and registered as an official institution in March 1967. In the first years of its existence it saw its main task in campaigning for the GDR's diplomatic recognition. Currently the Tampere Committee has more than a hundred members.

Olavi Salmi, General Secretary of the Finland-GDR Society, praised it as one of the most active local committees in the country. In the 20 years of its existence, he said, the group had organised numerous activities promoting friendship and international understanding. In 1975 and 1979, for example, it held GDR Festivals.

● To celebrate the 750th anniversary of the foundation of Berlin, the London-Berlin (GDR) Committee organised a poster competition along the theme

"Peace and Friendship between London and Berlin". All Art Colleges in London were invited to participate and the first prize was won by a 22-year-old student from Kingston College of Art, Miss Christine Dunmore, who is in the final year of her course. When asked why, with so heavy a demand on her time, she entered the competition, Christine said that the question of peace and friendship between all peoples cannot be overemphasised. The first prize was a holiday in the GDR which Christine will be spending here this year. She was presented with her prize by GDR Ambassador Dr. Gerhard Lindner at the Britain-GDR Society's celebration of the 38th anniversary of the founding of the German Democratic Republic.

● The Canada-GDR Committee has issued its fifth publication. Entitled *Canada and the GDR in Sports* it deals with a variety of subjects from this sphere. For example, the booklet carries articles on sports in the socialist German state, on former competitive GDR athletes and reports by Canadian sportspeople about their visits to our country.

Photo: private  
Reproductions: archives



## Canada and the GDR in sports



## CONTACTS \*\*\* FROM LAND TO LAND

## Meeting the Needs of the People

IN MID-OCTOBER of last year the Britain-GDR Society sent its first social workers' delegation to the GDR for a week's study tour. The delegation consisting of five members, who worked for a County Council Social Services Department, the Volunteer Centre, as social work lecturers or had retired from the profession, visited Berlin and Halle. We were particularly fortunate to meet Elli Felz, Head of the Social Care Department of the Ministry of Health, who informed us about the social-welfare policy in the GDR; and to visit facilities for children, handi-

capped and elderly people in Halle County. As a result we returned to Britain with a very clear idea about the considerable progress made by the GDR in meeting the needs of the more vulnerable members of the community. We want to jointly prepare and publish a report on our visit in order to give people here an idea of this particular aspect of life in the GDR.

*Nigel Engert,  
Wincanton, Great Britain*

*Photos: ADN-ZB*



The "N. Ostrovski" School for physically handicapped children in Halle has a swimming pool of its own.



In a senior citizens' home in Leipzig.

## Interest in Information on the GDR

THE German language is taught at a large number of New Zealand schools. There are German-language departments at five universities and there are departments in the Teacher Training Colleges. Generally, there is now an added interest in languages as a unifying factor.

New Zealand's remoteness creates a great desire for overseas travels. This country was settled by people from various parts of the world, therefore there is a wish to travel or at least to learn about one's origins.

The New Zealand-GDR So-

ciety (formed in 1983) introduced itself to schools with excellent films from the GDR. Magazines, booklets and newspapers from the socialist German state are eagerly sought after, as are the magnificent posters and various displays that we receive. The newspaper *Junge Welt* gives both teachers and students an up-to-date account of the lives and interests of young people in the GDR. It provides a good insight into how people in a socialist society relate to world events. The children's periodical *Trommel* is very popular because it conveys

something of the humour and leisure-time activities of young Germans. Copies of the *GDR Review* in both German and English not only prove the point that this is really for local consumption and not just a propaganda exercise; the presentation and content give a favourable and balanced view of life and attitudes in a developed society.

Much of the demand for information about life in the GDR comes from the students. The vast majority of the teachers express the need to give a fair and even balance to their lessons. There are also adult classes where people keep up their language skills and plan visits to German-speaking countries for trade or cultural reasons. Throughout the year weekend classes are organised with the theme centred around these countries. The recent study

weekend on the GDR was a huge success. The question and answer sessions were understandably on a higher level than at the high schools.

When visitors come to New Zealand from the GDR this is an extra bonus as we are able to organise school visits. This is always done through the school Principal, and the staff are also able to question the visitor.

Students in both societies share the same concern for peace. The extra burdens facing young people in our society are an uncertain future concerning employment, trade training, housing; a whole range of things which young people in the GDR enjoy as members of a socialist society.

*Leonard Gale,  
Secretary of the  
New Zealand-GDR Society*



# Impressed by the Reconstruction Work

British Film People en route in the GDR

# FORUM

FOR FRIENDS

DUE TO their professions, the main interest of the five cultural workers from Britain naturally focused on film-making. This notwithstanding they were equally receptive to all other information, meetings and conversations in the GDR. At the invitation of the GDR International Friendship League June Reid, Carola Klein, Carolina Spy, Derek Stubbs and B. Ellis-Jones had come to our country to acquaint themselves with the socialist German state.

They were, of course, especially looking forward to such items on their programme as the visit to the Film Museum in Potsdam, the discussion with Prof. Lothar Bisky, Rector of the "Konrad Wolf" College of Cinematography in Potsdam-Babelsberg, and the talks at the headquarters of the Association of the Film and TV Workers' County Committee in Potsdam.

GDR Review met the guests during their visit to Dresden where they learned something about the history, the foundation and development of this city on the River Elbe and came together with members of the GDR-Great Britain Friendship Society's Dresden County Committee in the GDR International Friendship League. We accompanied the film people from Britain when they went to the nationally-owned Gesellschaftsbau contracting firm in Dresden. This enterprise, which was set up in 1974 on the instructions of the City Council, primarily undertakes responsibility as general

contractor for the reconstruction and restoration of cultural-historical buildings. "The biggest and most interesting project to date," said Technical Director Falk Herrmann, "was the reconstruction of the Semper Opera House, which has filled many visitors from home and abroad with enthusiasm since its re-opening on 13 February 1985. However, our tasks also involve the construction of new buildings, such as the "Centrum" Department Store, polyclinics, indoor swimming pools and gymnasiums for schools. Currently we are re-building, step by step, the Dresden Palace, thus fulfilling the pledge we made when we handed over the Semper Opera House. Further projects are the construction— together with the Swedish firm ABV—of the Hotel "Dresdner Hof" in the

Neumarkt Square, the reconstruction of the Dreikönigskirche Church, the renovation and modernisation of the Dresden-Friedrichstadt County Hospital, the construction of a school for physically handicapped children and a parish house for the Mormons. Very often the reconstruction of cultural-historical monuments involves greater efforts, because we need special technologies in order to save as much of the original structure as possible."

During the subsequent tour of the Palace reconstruction building site the guests could see this with their own eyes. It is a laborious task to re-create in its old beauty what was destroyed in a single night during the Anglo-American air-raid of 13 February 1945. Today it is still left to our imagination to guess how this

venerable building will once again harmoniously blend into the picture of the historic city of Dresden.

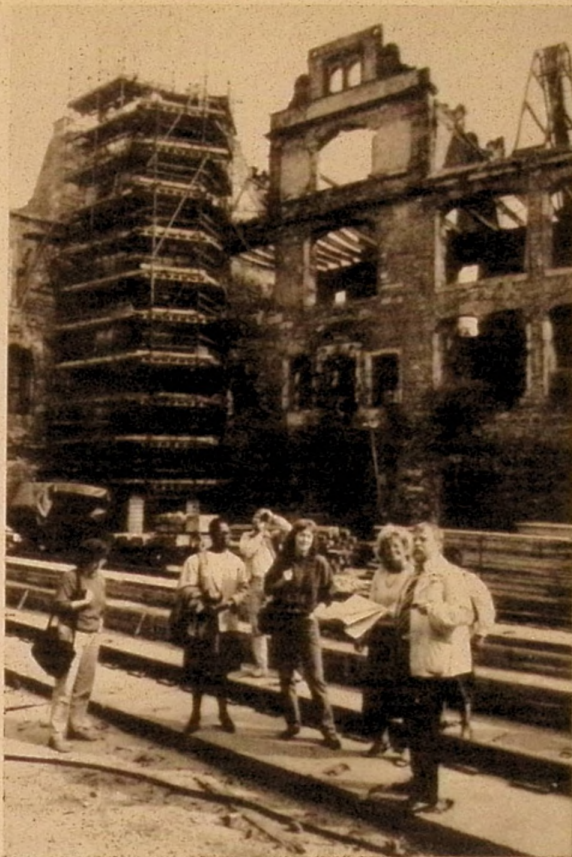
Derek Stubbs, a coordinator at the Newcastle film workshop, wanted to know how much of a say the trade union has in this and other projects. "In keeping with the National Economic Plan the county building authorities set us a task, for which our planning office prepares the main construction measures," Falk Herrmann pointed out. "These are discussed in our trade union groups and the draft plan is submitted by our enterprise to the Ministry of Construction for endorsement. You see, our employees have the opportunity of making proposals. Naturally, we have different opinions, but questions of detail are determined by our experts. However, in every case



In the courtyard of the Zwinger.

CONTACTS \*\*\* FROM LAND TO LAND

A view of Augustus Street which is part of Dresden's historic centre; reconstruction work on the Palace (right).



**Carola Klein, a film producer from Birmingham:**

Attracted by last year's GDR Film Week in London I became interested in this country about which I knew next to nothing. After I'd received the invitation from B. Ellis-Jones to join the group going to the GDR, which of course I accepted with thanks, I informed myself a bit about the land I was going to visit however, on the other hand, I also wanted to let it be something of a surprise to me. Although we've been here only a few days, we've already completed a comprehensive programme. We have met various people and have received a lot of information. I'm especially impressed by the building and reconstruction programme which was explained to us in Dresden. I was born during the war and now and then something reminds me of it. It certainly requires much courage and commitment to realise such ambitious projects in a city where you can still see signs of the destruction even today. And I had my view confirmed that the people here want to safeguard peace under all circumstances.

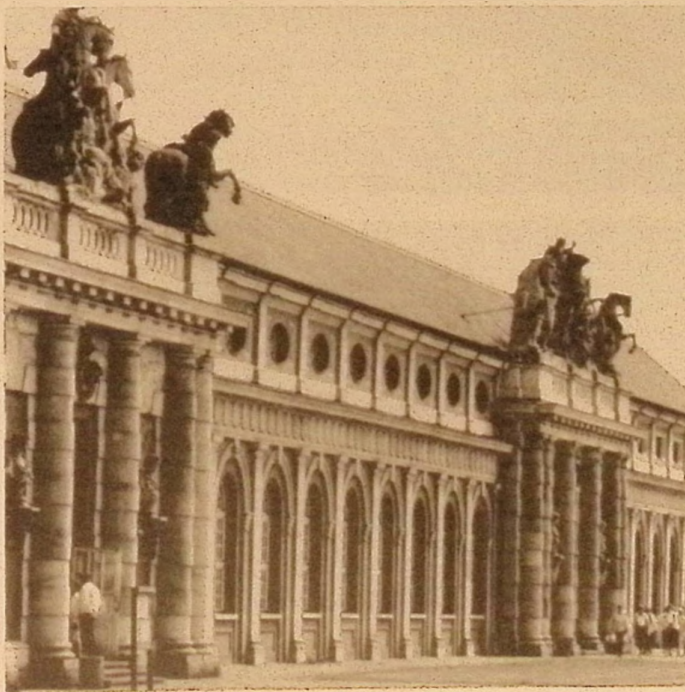
**June Reid, a film-maker from London:**

I work in a group which mainly dedicates itself to the black population in our country, presenting them and their life on film. In this way we want to contribute to enlightening and educating people. We often receive no help in our work. Therefore I think it's really great that everyone here has a say and can bring it to bear. Nobody is discriminated against. For the relations between our peoples it's important to know with what resolve people in the GDR advocate peace. You cannot fail to notice this wherever you go. Regrettably, there is not enough time to see more of your country, for I've only just now begun to actually get to know the GDR ...  
(Translated from the German)

we try hard to reach accord on all questions and find a practicable solution."

"The progress the GDR citizens have achieved in the area of reconstruction is, indeed, impressive," stated Derek Stubbs who captured all stopovers of the small delegation on film. "Meetings at home with documentary film makers from the GDR further increased my interest in the socialist German state. Strictly speaking, I'm open to everything, to cultural life, the economy, the people ..."

Before the party set off from Dresden to Potsdam June Reid and Carola Klein described the impressions they had gained so far as follows:



The Potsdam Film Museum.

Photos: O. Hanns (2), G. Ackermann (1), ADN-ZB (1)

CONTACTS \*\*\* FROM LAND TO LAND

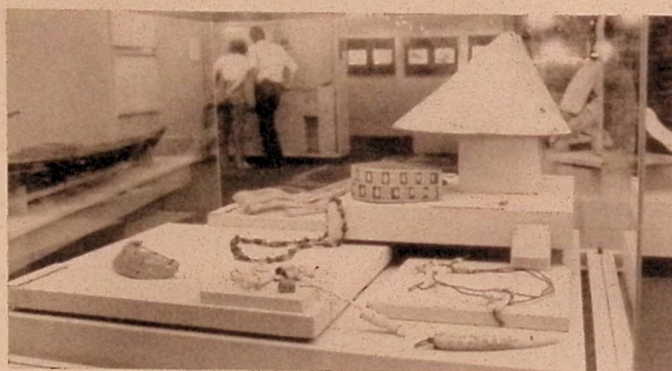
## An Igloo in a Museum



*Ivory carvings, dog sledges, kayaks and household utensils of the Inuits are on display in the State Museum of Ethnology in Dresden.*

*Photos: Günter Ackermann*

WHILE outdoors the summer sun did its best for the Dresdeners and their guests, the local State Museum of Ethnology took its visitors to the world of ice and snow. An exhibition about Eskimo art and culture gives information on the history and present-day life of this tribe of approximately 93,000 people who live scattered in Canada, Alaska, Greenland and the Chukchi Peninsula in the Soviet Union. From July until September alone the exhibition drew around 11,000 visitors. On the relatively small exhibition area of about 300 square metres the Museum presents clothings, household utensils, weapons, ivory carvings, toys, dog sledges and kayaks. Even the once typical snow home of the Eskimos isn't missing—the over two metre high replica of an igloo is, however, made of foam material. You can also learn that the commonly used name of Eskimo (eater of raw meat) was originally a rather disparaging appellation



by their Red Indian neighbours. The Eskimos call themselves Inuits (people).

However, the current exhibition is not the city's first encounter with this tribe. As early as 1825 a touring exhibition was on display in the Grosser Garten Park. The graves of a few Eskimos are still to be seen in the cemetery at Herrenhut. These Inuits had been invited in the mid-18th century by Count Zinzendorf, the founder of the Herrnhuter Brüdergemeinschaft, an Evangelical communion which spread to four continents. Today it has nine parishes with some 3,000 members in the GDR.

Last October the exhibition could be considerably expanded. The Inuit Gallery in Mannheim (FRG), which has become the leading gallery in Central Europe specialising in Arctic art, made available for this purpose 130 works by contemporary Inuit artists from Greenland. These loans have made it possible to present contemporary Eskimo art, which mainly consists of graphic works and brilliantly done sculptures, in a representative selection of originals for the first time in the GDR.

CONTACTS \*\*\* FROM LAND TO LAND

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# Porcelain

FROM THURINGIA

It is not only the famous Dresden china from Meissen that is very popular and sought after. Other porcelain too has become well known. Take, for example, the porcelain figures manufactured by the "Altteste Volkstaedische Porzellanmanufaktur" in Rudolstadt at the foot of the Heidecksburg Castle in Gera County. Its delicate products made of very fine clay are exported to 30 countries. These figures have a long tradition and this manufactory is the oldest in Thuringia. It observed its 225th anniversary last year.

The porcelain manufactory has a fund of some 8,000 different models, including single figures and groups from the Rococo and Baroque periods, according to



which the plaster moulds are made. Large groups often consist of hundreds of individually formed pieces which are skillfully assembled by hand. A specialty of this new nationally-owned manufactory are lace-decorated porcelain figures. For this purpose the cotton lace is cut into strips and covered with wet clay. Then these strips are neatly draped around the figures, laid by hand. The lace is destroyed during the firing process, leaving a lifelike porcelain pattern. The making of these figures involves a great deal of manual work. The painting, too, is done by hand. Thuringian porcelain certainly has its fascination.  
*Text and photos  
Bernd Wurlitzer*



# YOUTH

## ROUNDUP



DEAR FRIENDS,

Do you want to visit "Gerede" with me today? This is actually the name of a monthly function which—along with many others—is held in one of Dresden's most popular youth clubs. It's still a bit unusual in our country for most, but not all, of the young people who meet here are homosexual. Here they can chat, get to know each other and perhaps find a partner. For over two decades now in our country homosexual relations have no longer been considered a punishable offence and the media, too, especially in recent years, have made obvious progress in their treatment of this subject. However, there is still a long way to go before all taboos and prejudices completely disappear. These are expressed in a variety of ways, from a disdainful wrinkling of the nose to a questioning shrug of the shoulders. Many people who consider themselves to be very "modern" show intolerance or great uncertainty in their dealing with those "others". Young people are more open, not so rigid in their views. Most of them—not least due to these club meetings—don't show this reserved behaviour, which is thus being broken down generation by generation. The problem will therefore solve itself in the course of time. Nevertheless, such functions are very important, especially for the young people concerned. Through them they can cope much earlier and better with their "coming out", i.e. in recog-

nising and accepting their nature. But this is only possible—and it's important to stress this point—when the heterosexual world meets them halfway.

Recently I popped into "Gerede" and was immediately struck by the relaxed atmosphere. There were quite a few young homosexuals and other visitors like me. They pulled up a chair and made space for me. On the tables stood candles, sandwiches and glasses of red wine and cola. We settled down and listened attentively to the evening reading. The Berlin writer Jürgen Lemke was presenting his book *Ganz normal anders* (Quite Normally Different) which is about homosexual men and is due to be published at the beginning of 1989. In the discussion following the reading many of the listeners talked about their personal experiences. There was no prevarication, everyone spoke openly about their wishes, problems and hopes. "Normals" and homosexuals conversed quite freely with one another as is usually the case at "Gerede". This is precisely the aim of both sides: the integration instead of the isolation of homosexuals. After all there are enough places

where the latter can—although they don't always want to—meet among themselves.

The management of the youth club as well as the two girls and five young men who are currently organising this series of special functions place great value on offering a varied programme. It shouldn't be tailored to one theme but rather deal with human relationships in general so that it continues to attract a wide audience. Thus some of the coming events on the programme are a lecture en-

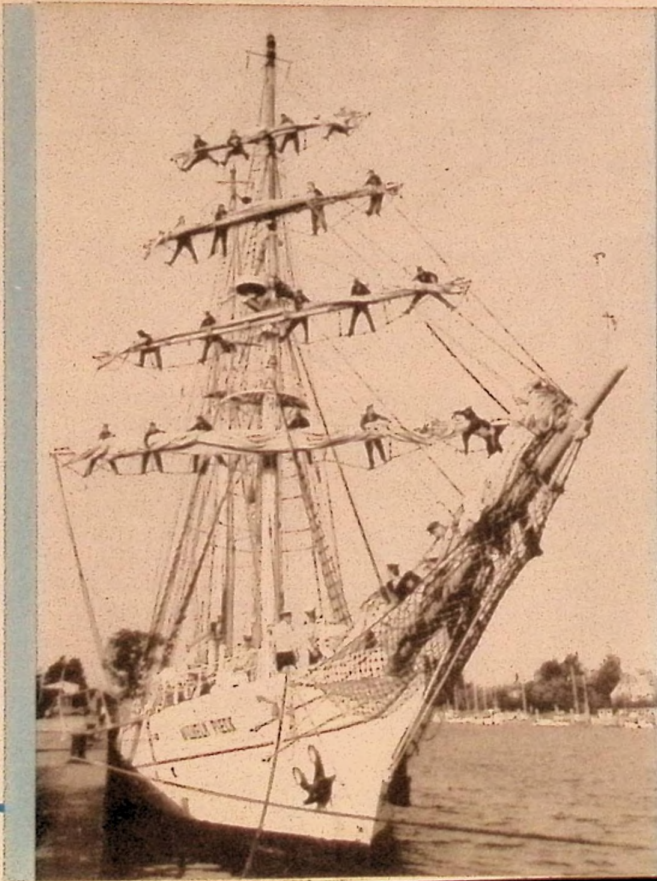
titled "Eroticism and Sexuality in the Visual Arts", a discussion under the heading "Sex at School?", and a musical programme called "Sing if you're glad to be gay", some theatre pieces and more book readings.

It all sounds so interesting that I think that I'll call by at "Gerede" once again in the near future.

Yours,

Petra

"A judgement can be refuted but never a prejudice."  
Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach



# SCHOOL SHIP

Over 5,000 young people have proved their nautical skills on this sailing ship since it went into service as a floating training centre in 1952. The ship, which bears the name of Wilhelm Pieck, the first president of our republic, is 47 metres long, has a mast 27 metres high and carries 570 square metres of sail. Since its maiden voyage it has covered more than 160,000 nautical miles and called at 200 ports.



**NEW  
from AMIGA:**



## "Wind im Gesicht"

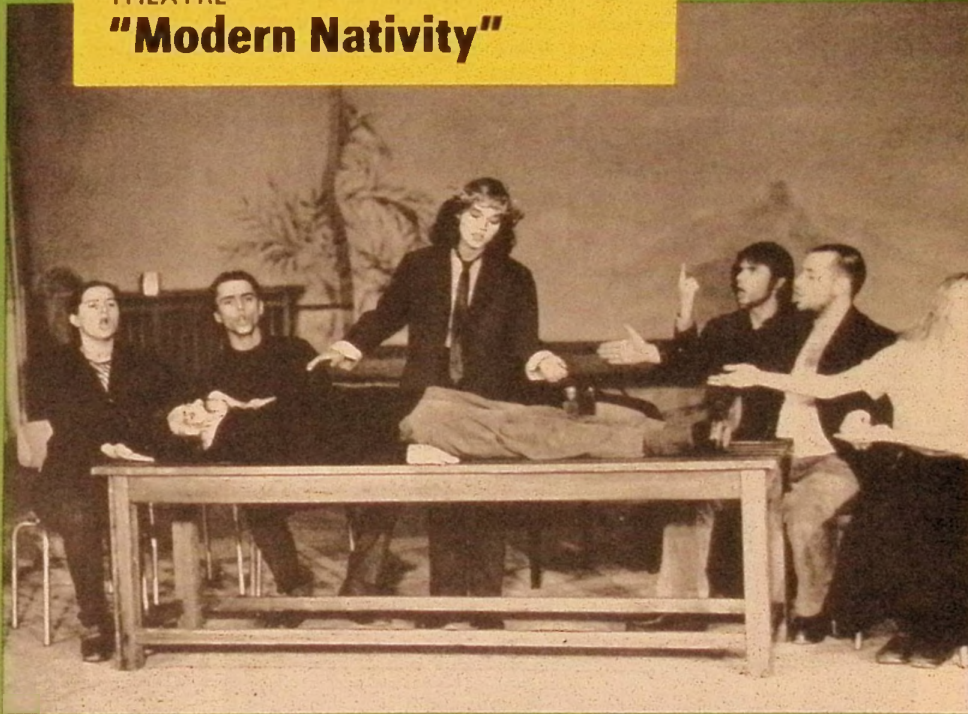
Love songs about longings, dreams and loneliness are the metier of Ralf Bursy, known to his fans simply as "Bummi". In the summer of 1986 the former hard-rock singer struck out on his own and since then he has swamped the competition in almost every hit parade. In the interim "Bummi", who trained as a plant and machine fitter and later did a correspondence course at the college of music, has produced his first solo LP entitled *Wind im Gesicht* (The Wind in Your Face). He composed all of the songs himself and also played most of the instruments on the record.

The autograph address is:  
Ralf Bursy, postlagernd,  
Berlin,  
DDR-1147

Drama students in their fourth year at the Leipzig Drama College recently put on the play "Modern Nativity" by the Polish dramatist Ireneusz Iredynski. The plot: prisoners in a concentration camp are ordered to rehearse a "modern mystery play". For this their margarine rations are increased and they are released from the road-building work groups. Ironically the biblical nativity is taken as a basis for the play—it is only at the end that the prisoners realise the perverse motives of the camp commandant in staging

### THEATRE

## "Modern Nativity"



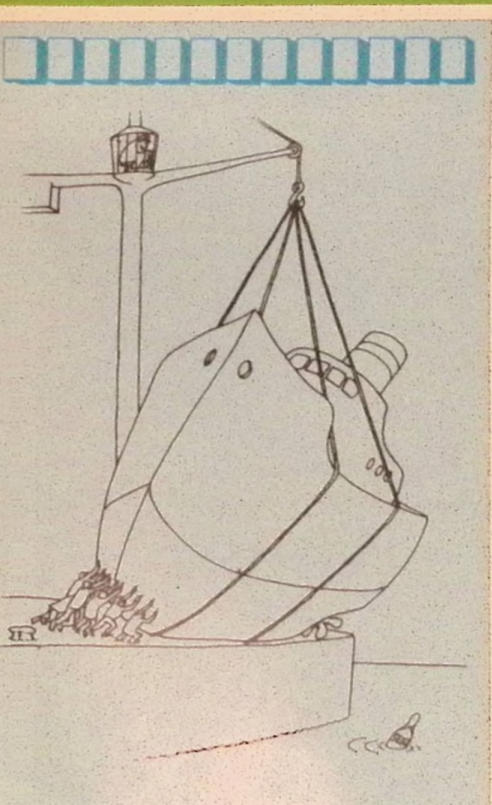
the play, in a cruel way he was playing with the hopes and feelings of the people, who were totally in his power.

In "Modern Nativity", a piece which demands a great deal of openness and self-examination from the students, we see how far it is possible to mistreat and degrade people. At the same time though, it reveals that the plan of turning them into compliant creatures of a tyrannical power, is doomed to failure in the end.

The play was extraordinarily well-received by the audience.

**"One should go to the theatre with the urge to look at one's life, at the people around and their destinies as an outsider and yet as a participant."**

**Ernst Thälmann**





# GDR REVIEW

KALEIDOSCOPE

## Museum

Special attractions at the Halberstadt Municipal Museum are a leather glover's workshop and a pharmacy. At the end of the last century Halberstadt was the centre of leather glove production in the German-speaking territory. The last glover there closed his workshop on account of age in 1975. It was then obtained by the Museum. The pharmacy has been assembled from the utensils of three village dispensaries, the main part coming from the village of Hessen and dating from 1805. All the storage vessels, which are made of glass, stoneware, wood and faience, and the porcelain and brass mortars with pestles, are original as are the old prescription books originating from the 17th and 18th centuries (photo). The chronicle first mentions a pharmacy in Halberstadt in the year 1408.



## Computer Hobby Group

Not only do severely physically handicapped children receive medical treatment and education corresponding with the general curriculum at the Municipal Clinic for Orthopaedics and Rehabilitation in Leipzig and the "Dr. Georg Sacke" Comprehensive School, which is affiliated to it, they are also encouraged to pursue worthwhile leisure-time activities. At the beginning of this year, for example, a computer hobby group was set up with the help of teachers from the Engineering College for Telecommunications.

## Snake Farm

Currently the snake farm in Woltersdorf near Berlin has 100 venomous snakes and pythons. These include, among others, European sand vipers, Russell's vipers, cobras, rattlesnakes and adders. The farm delivers valuable toxin for the pharmaceutical industry. To obtain one gramme

of venom requires, for example, 250 bites by adders or 50 bites by sand vipers. Among the venom customers are the Serum Works in Bernburg, the clinical centre in Berlin-Buch and the GDR Academy of Sciences. In addition to venomous snakes the farm also breeds pythons, mainly for zoos.

## Fröbel House

Friedrich Fröbel (1782-1852), an important exponent of progressive bourgeois educational theory, was born in Oberweissbach in Suhl County. Within a few decades his ideas and concepts for the kindergarten spread to the whole of Europe, the USA and Japan. Five years ago the house, in which this son of a pastor and



founder of the kindergarten was born, was turned into a museum. Among many other things, the visitor can view there the originals of Fröbel's letters to his father and the first edition of his book *The Education of Man* that was published in 1826. An especially valuable exhibit is his father's Bible from the 17th century.

## AIDS Research

Prof. Robert Gallo from the National Health Institute of the USA, who shares the credit for discovering the AIDS viruses together with Dr. Luc Montagnier of France, was a guest at a colloquium on the subject of AIDS research, its prevention and control, which was hosted by the GDR Academy of Sciences in Berlin last January. The US expert reported about his research work into human retroviruses and, in this context, also referred to the GDR's internationally acknowledged results achieved by Prof. Arnold Graffi. Prof. Gallo also spoke about further aspects of AIDS research, saying that the problem of AIDS could be solved from a medical and scientific point of view, and that cooperation between the East and West was valuable and necessary to attain this end.



# GDR REVIEW

KALEIDOSCOPE

## Documentary Film

The film *Erlinnern heisst leben* (Recalling Means Living), which was made by the DEFA Studio for Documentary Films on behalf of the Berlin Municipal Authorities and with the support of the Jewish Community of Berlin, had its premiere in January. It traces the lives of Jewish citizens who greatly influenced the city's political, economic, scientific, cultural and artistic life.

The film was produced by Roza Berger-Fledler, who was born in France to a Jewish couple from Poland and who has lived in the GDR since 1957. She also wrote the script for this film.

## Procession

Every year on Palm Sunday many Catholics from the Eichsfeld region, which is located in the western part of Erfurt County, come to Hellingenstadt to participate in the traditional procession. Old chronicles have established that it was introduced

by the Jesuits in 1575. Today this procession in the Eichsfeld region is one of the oldest Passiontide traditions in German-speaking lands.

## Finds

During excavation work for the new hotel "Dresdner Hof", in the direct vicinity of Brühl Terrace,



archaeological finds from the post-1500 period were unearthed. They included 25 stone wells. These discoveries furnish proof for the assumption that the area around the former Church of Our Lady was the site of the first settlements in Dresden which reach back as far as the Stone and Early Iron Ages.

## Eventful Holidays

In 1987 close to 17,000 severely handicapped children spent happy holidays together with healthy boys and girls of their own age in especially organised holiday camps or within the framework of local holiday schemes. To this end the number of places for participants was increased by 1,000 compared with 1986, thus doubling the number of places available in 1980. The handicapped children were looked after by 4,500 trained staff.

This year, too, "Jugendtourist", the travel agency of the Free German Youth organisation, offers group tours for hand-

icapped young people, including wheelchair users, in the GDR and abroad. Last year more than 300 handicapped youngsters made use of this opportunity.

## Waterworks

At the end of last year our capital city obtained another technical monument: the old waterworks in Friedrichshagen. Following comprehensive reconstruction work the waterworks—once the largest and most up-to-date in Europe—which was closed down in 1979, was opened to the public as a museum. It informs the visitor about the history of water supply and sewage treatment in Berlin from the year 1237 up to the present time.

The waterworks was built between 1889 and 1904—the house containing the engines (photo) dates from 1893—on the northern shores of Lake Müggelsee with the help of specialists from England. The outward appearance of the brick buildings resembles those of an English country house.



Photos: ADN-ZB, Bernd Wulitzer

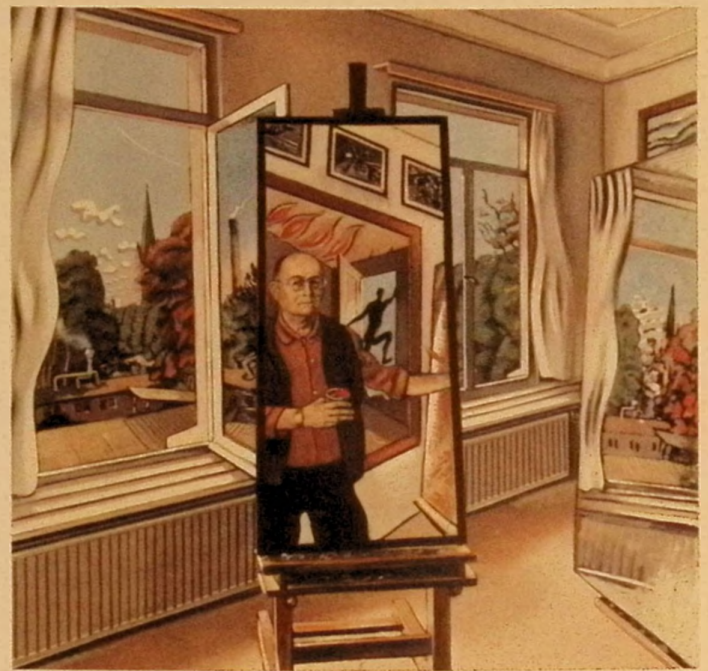


# THE KEY TO ONE'S OWN IDENTITY

Painting and Graphic Art at the  
10th GDR National Art Exhibition



Siegfried Klotz: "Dr Fritz Löffler"



Wolfgang Mattheuer: "Inside, outside and I"

In a few days, on 3 April, the Dresden exhibition halls will be closing their doors on the 10th GDR National Art Exhibition. As was expected, there has been a constant stream of visitors from both near and far over the past six months. Up to the end of 1987 alone the figure has been put at 500,000. For many the exhibition was an interesting and lasting art experience, while others were rather doubting or sceptical about some of the works. Differences of opinion have for years been part of the character of art appreciation in our country; and the artists themselves wouldn't want their work to be judged in any other way than through lively public discussion.

We asked art expert *Dr Rolf Segor* for his thoughts and views on the tendencies present in the exhibition of painting and graphic art.



Trakla Wensłoch: "P. 10.000"



Gerhard Kettner: "Self-portrait"



Herta Günther: "Farewell"



Arno Mohr:  
"Artists' café"

Christine  
Perthen:  
"Choreographer  
at work"



Photos:  
Siegfried  
Thienel,  
AGN-ZB,  
Reproductions:  
Robert  
Kowank,  
Gerhard Döring,  
Rolf Grosser,  
Archives.

THE TENTH Exhibition offers insights into a wide variety of individual artistic styles. The range stretches from the poetic, pastose painting of Theodor Rosenhauer to the material art of Kurt Teubner, for example. The true to life aspect of many paintings and prints is again fascinating. The 10th GDR National Art Exhibition asks many questions which interest and affect our fellow citizens.

I always find it interesting to see how discussion groups spring up, often quite spontaneously, in front of the works on show in the Albertinum Museum in Dresden. Visual art in this country has become an irreplaceable means of social self-expression. The majority of works present a clear standpoint and thus force the public to form their own opinions. I believe this is also a reason for the great attraction of GDR contemporary art.

\*

Now as before, artistic representations on the subjects of war and peace are a central aspect of contemporary painting and graphic art in the GDR. At the 10th Art Exhibition works such as Nurla Quevedo's "On the day the war ended", Rolf Kuhrt's "The murder of Thälmann", Hubertus Glebe's "Civil war in Spain 1936-1939", Johannes Helsing's "Mistaken—for Eugen in Pretoria" and Willi Sitte's Nicaragua painting "They only wanted to learn to read and write" are impressively effective statements for peace. It is conspicuous that not a few artists link their humanistic messages with the treatment of history. In their own way the painters and graphic artists want to make a contribution to mankind's search for a historical identity. For it is important to experience and to know what struggles and efforts, what sacrifices and pain, what courage and will has in the past been necessary to secure the progress of mankind. Coming to terms with the present and preparing for the future would be inconceivable without historical consciousness.

\*

Though the development of art in the GDR is stable and continuous the 10th Art Exhibition has still pointed to one or two shifts in emphasis. At the last Art Exhibition in 1982/83 the comment was made: In contemporary art there is a tendency to allegorisation and intellectual overburdening of the depicted subject. Some critics even went as far as talking of a "mythical renaissance".

My observations now indicate a different picture. The tendency to "heavy" art has generally subsided. Pictures are now being painted rather than thought out. Direct representations of real experiences are finding more and more expression in paintings and graphic art. Colours are assuming greater importance and the spatial composition is becoming more cogent and more clear-out. Despite this the best works still place high intellectual demands on the viewer.—The use of allegories to interpret current events is similarly less common, though this does not detract from the value of mythological material and allegories where they are necessary. Bernhard Helsing's painting "Christ refuses to obey" (1986) is a convincing illustration of this.

\*

In the exhibition we can note a relatively high proportion of portrait paintings and prints. The increase in the number of portraits is a sign that many artists are turning their attention more and more to the individual. The portraits are a lasting, individual example of social ideals and moral concepts. The world political situation and the environment at work and in the cities causes mankind to search constantly for an identity. With their portraits the artists are reacting to the search for harmony between the social and personal identities.

In my opinion, convincing portraits have been created by painters such as Ronald Paris, Siegfried Klotz, Harald Metzkes, Karl Raetsch, Elke Hopfe, Norbert Wagenbrett, Gerda Lepke, Herta Günther, Christine Wahl, Gerhard Kettner and Bärbel Kuntsche.

Siegfried Klotz, for example, in his "Dr Fritz Löffler" (1986/87), a portrait of the famous Dresden art historian, uses sensitive colouring to achieve human warmth, closeness and the wisdom of old age. In "Portrait of my mother" (1986/87) Ronald Paris avoids using a representative posture. Instead he raises human modesty to the greatness it deserves. In Karl Raetsch's "Agricultural cooperative chairman E. F. Klocke" (1986) the constraints of the format are ignored. The person depicted becomes a symbol for self-confidence and irrefragable activity ...

Herta Günther, Christine Wahl and Bärbel Kuntsche take a different approach to their portraits. They try to promote a poetic, sensitive picture of mankind. They delve deeply into the psyche of the person they are painting or drawing. The viewer is struck by the evident search for truth and presentation of problems.

Realist portrait art in the GDR depicts fellow citizens in their unmistakable uniqueness. The majority of artists resist all forms of normative presentations of personalities. In the emotional and mental richness of the individual they find at the same time the conditions for the richness of society as a whole. Representative portraits are done away with in favour of human closeness and together-

ness on an equal footing. In a very moving way the viewer is able to experience this strange ego as his own.

\*

In many self-portraits the artist's own person becomes the vehicle of expression for individual and social experiences. The painters and graphic artists in our country are not just observers; the majority of them also want to be participants. They consult their own personalities more and more frequently and so it is not surprising that the number of self-portraits has grown.

The clarity with which such a self-examination can be carried out is illustrated by graphic artist Gerhard Kettner in his pen and drawing "Self-portrait on 19 October 1984". The self-examination pulls no punches whatsoever. But a pointed appraisal of one's own situation is at the same time a symbol for thought on other areas of life. Thus a successful mastering of life demands an uncompromising search for the truth. Openness is an integral element of this process.

Leipzig artist Doris Ziegler probes her feelings for life in a similar fashion. In her painting "Self-portrait with son" (1986/87) she expresses her caring for her child. At the same time she illustrates the existing disappointments, sacrifices and longings of a woman and mother.

For me these two works are key notes of the whole exhibition.

That the artist searching for truth has nowhere to hide is pointed out by painter Wolfgang Mattheuer. His work "Inside, outside and I" (1986) links the inner with the outside world.—Paul Michaelis, on the other hand, uses his wonderful painting "Myself (in a white shirt)" (1985/86) to tell us that honesty and a sense of humour are part and parcel of self-examination.

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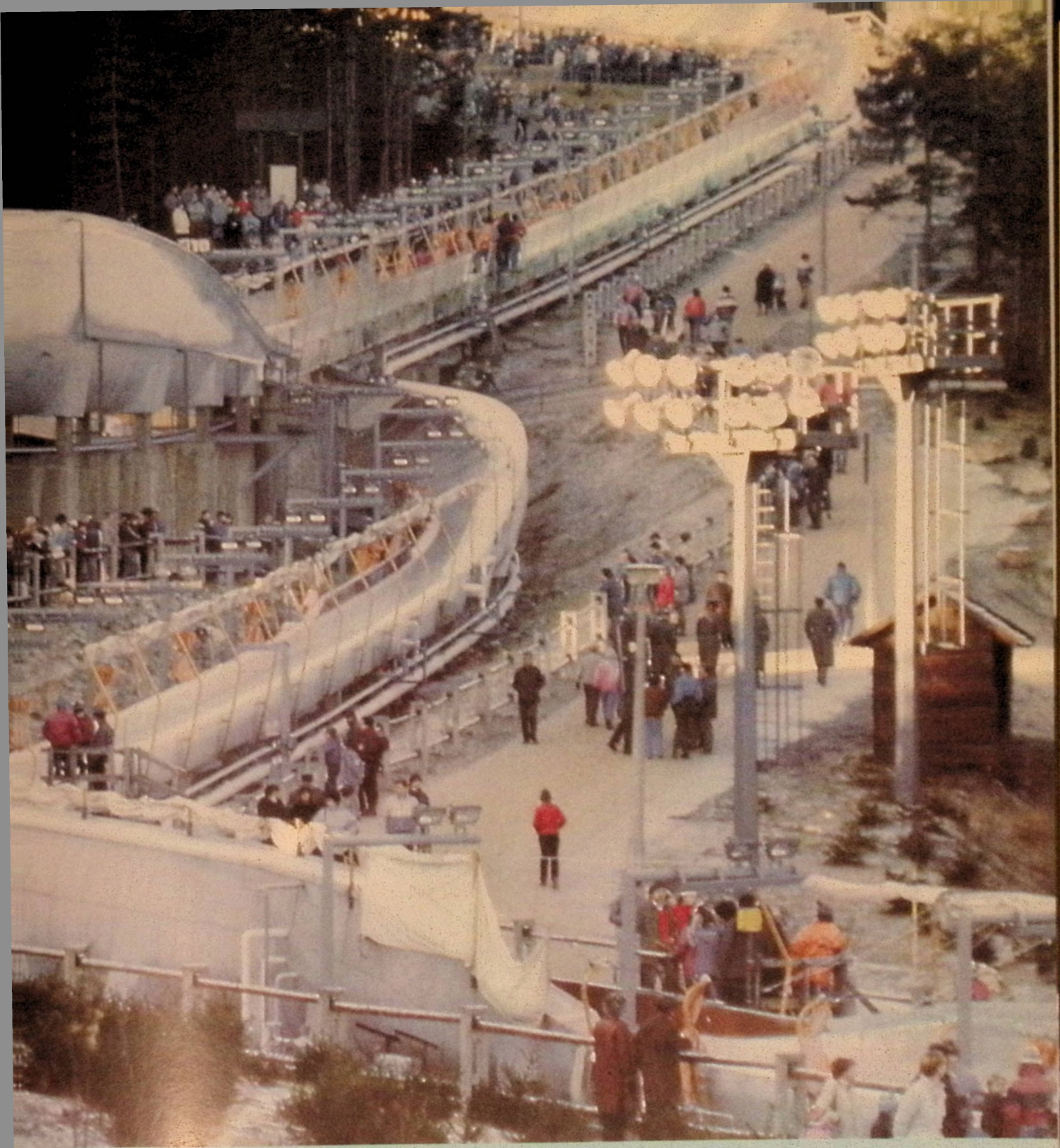
An essential factor at the exhibition is the march forward of the young generation of artists. In none of the previous National Art Exhibitions were the young artists so well represented as at the Tenth. But their presence has not been simply a matter of numbers. The artistic and intellectual range has been remarkable. The young artists examine their artistic heritage without any reservations. Their statements are unambiguous and clearly formulated. The form language of many of the young artists has vitalised the exhibition. However, the overall quality and richness of the exhibition is to be found in the correlation and juxtaposition of the different personal styles of all the artists' generations.



*A good start is vital if success is to follow, and there has been no shortage of successes in both two-man and four-man events for Wolfgang Hoppe (right) and Dietmar Schauerhammer.*



## The "Ice Snake"



## In Altenberg's Kohlgrund





Would you attribute a leading role in their sport to the GDR's bob pilots? In view of the long list of successes, in which there is no shortage of Olympic gold medallists, World Cup winners or world and European champions, the answer to this question should be very positive. Well-known names? Certainly Wolfgang Hoppe, Dietmar Schauerhammer, Bogdan Musiol. And from years past we must not forget Meinhard Nehmer, Bernhard Gernshausen and Hans-Jürgen Gerhardt. All well and good, but what about the question as to the leading GDR national champions in the four-man event? Between 1959 and 1986—no-one at all! This probably sounds rather unlikely, because since 1976, the year in which the GDR first competed in Olympic bob events, the Olympic four-man champions have repeatedly come from the GDR. But strange as it might sound, a glance into the record books shows that it is indeed true: Between 1959 and 1986 there were no national championships held for the four-man bob in our country. The reason: The natural-ice runs between the Thuringian Forest and the Erzgebirge Mountains no longer met the necessary standards. And the first run with artificial ice in the Thuringian resort of Oberhof was no longer safe for the larger bobs because of the ever increasing speeds. The GDR bob crews had no option but to compete abroad. A situation which could not be tolerated in the long-term. After the successful debut at the 1976 Olympics in Innsbruck the call was made to provide appropriate conditions for bob-racing in the GDR. All the more in view of the response of international commentators. Swiss racer Joseph Benz who, together with his driver Erich Schärer, for many years belonged to the world's bob-racing elite, Olympic gold medallist and three-times world champion, said at the time: "Bob-racing will now be really interesting, because the competitors from the GDR have enormous potential for improvement and represent a valuable addition to our sport. For us it is an extra motivation, because we have to be careful that we don't end up just trailing in the wake of the blue GDR bobs."

A new run was needed, but where should it be built? The long-standing home of bob-racing in our country is Oberhof—it has been the local sports club there which has provided the GDR's top drivers and crews since 1976. Traditions in tobogganing and bob-racing reaching back to the time before the First World War also exist, however, in the Eastern Erzgebirge Mountains in what is today Dresden County. The winter sports resorts of Geising and Oberbärenburg boasted what were then modern toboggan runs. Indeed the International Tobogganing Association was founded in Dresden in 1913. Later this sport fell somewhat into oblivion in the Erzgebirge Mountains and it was another winter sports centre which attained international recognition: the Dynamo Sports Club in the 900-metre-high village of Zinnwald with its biathletes. From there came the



The toboggan racers, too—here Thomas Jacob—enjoy ideal conditions on the Altenberg run.

In 1987 Detlef Richter (right) and Bogdan Musiol secured the title of national two-man bob champions on the refrigerated Kohlgrund run.

GDR's first world champion in this interesting winter discipline, the biathlon, Dieter Speer. Today younger athletes are following in his footsteps, and the biathletes around Frank-Peter Roetsch, the three-times world champion of 1987. André Sehmisch, Birk Anders and Raik Dittrich also attracted attention in the Olympic winter 1988.

But more was planned for Zinnwald. Those responsible for bob-racing decided to build a modern toboggan and bob run near the biathletes' training centre not far from the winter sports resort of Altenberg. Finally in March of last year Wolfgang Hoppe, Bogdan Musiol, Ingo Voge and Dietmar Schauerhammer mounted the victors' rostrum as the new GDR four-man bob champions in the cool air of the Kohlgrund Valley. The newest refrigerated run in the GDR is now two years old. Over 1,413 metres long it snakes down into the valley with 17 bends and a vertical height difference of 122 metres. The run is packed with difficulties. Especially demanding are the omega-bend right at the start, the spiral halfway down and the final finishing curve. The "ice snake" attracted the interest of the sport's fast-men even before its international opening, because the know-how of the GDR experts when it comes to building toboggan and bob runs enjoys an excellent reputation far beyond our own borders. They were also called upon for advice during the construction of the Olympic runs in Sarajevo and Calgary.

Already during the first racing competition it became clear that the organisers need have no worries about attendance figures. Peter Knausedder, the chief trainer of the Austrian toboggan team, came to Altenberg in late autumn 1986 for the first race of the European Three Runs Tournament—it was the international premiere of the new run. Asked for his impressions he said: "We Austrians have a special relationship to winter sport. But the enthusiasm and response of the spectators here has impressed me greatly. At home I've never experienced as many as 20,000 spectators on a single day." And he also added at the time: "A super run,



The combined toboggan and bob run snakes 1,413 metres down into the valley.



a super atmosphere and a super competition! If you want to win here you really have to concentrate. The run demands the highest skills from the racers."

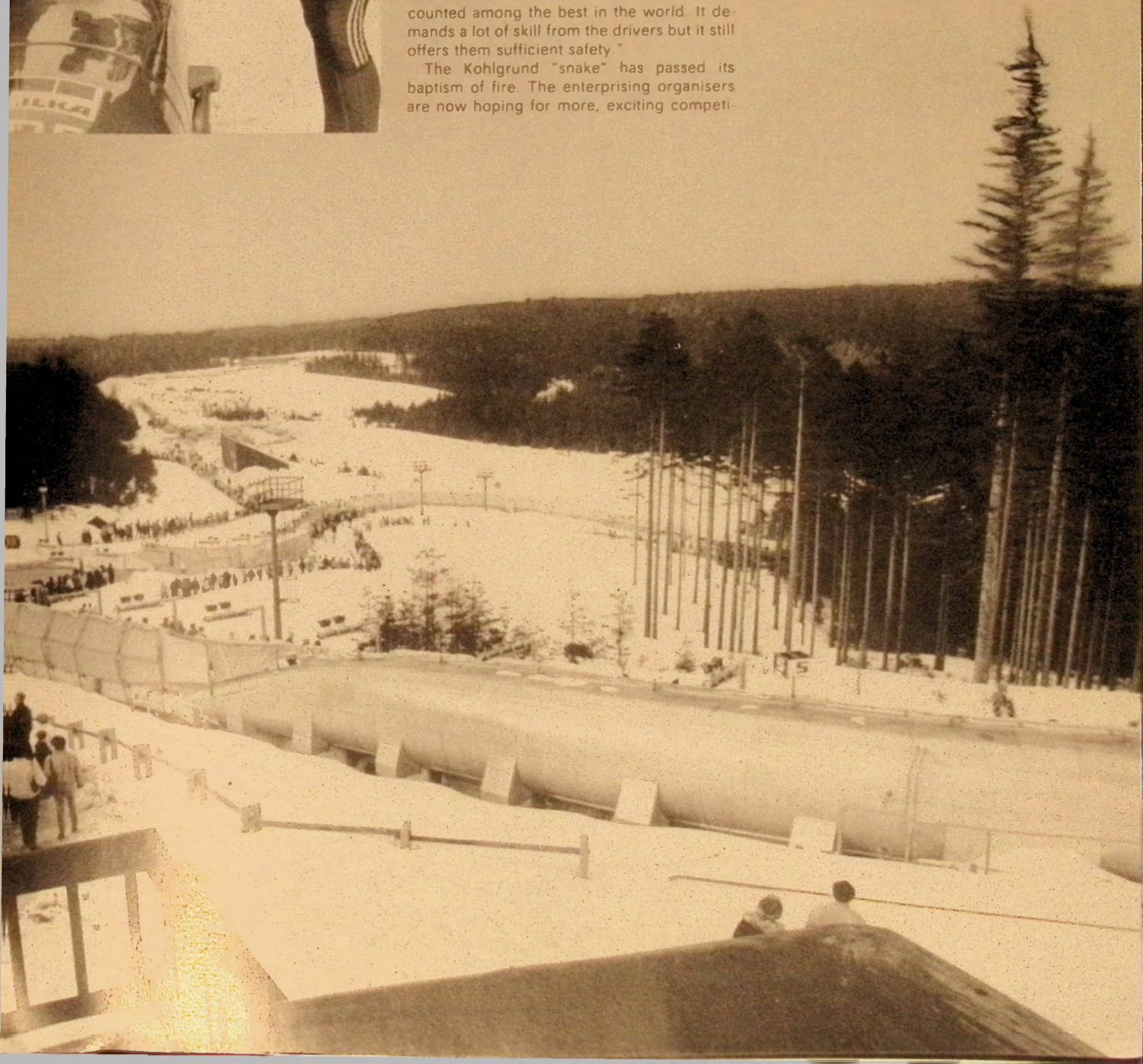
After a few national competitions it was the turn of two and four-man bobs from 17 countries to try out the Altenberg run in November 1987. The competitors came from as far afield as Australia and New Zealand for the first World Cup event of the 1987/88 Olympic season. Positive reaction to the new run came not only from the competitors. The president of the International Bob and Toboggan Association, Klaus Kotter (Federal Republic of Germany), who was present for the races in Altenberg, also said: "We can feel very satisfied with the organisation here. The run has shown that it deserves to be counted among the best in the world. It demands a lot of skill from the drivers but it still offers them sufficient safety."

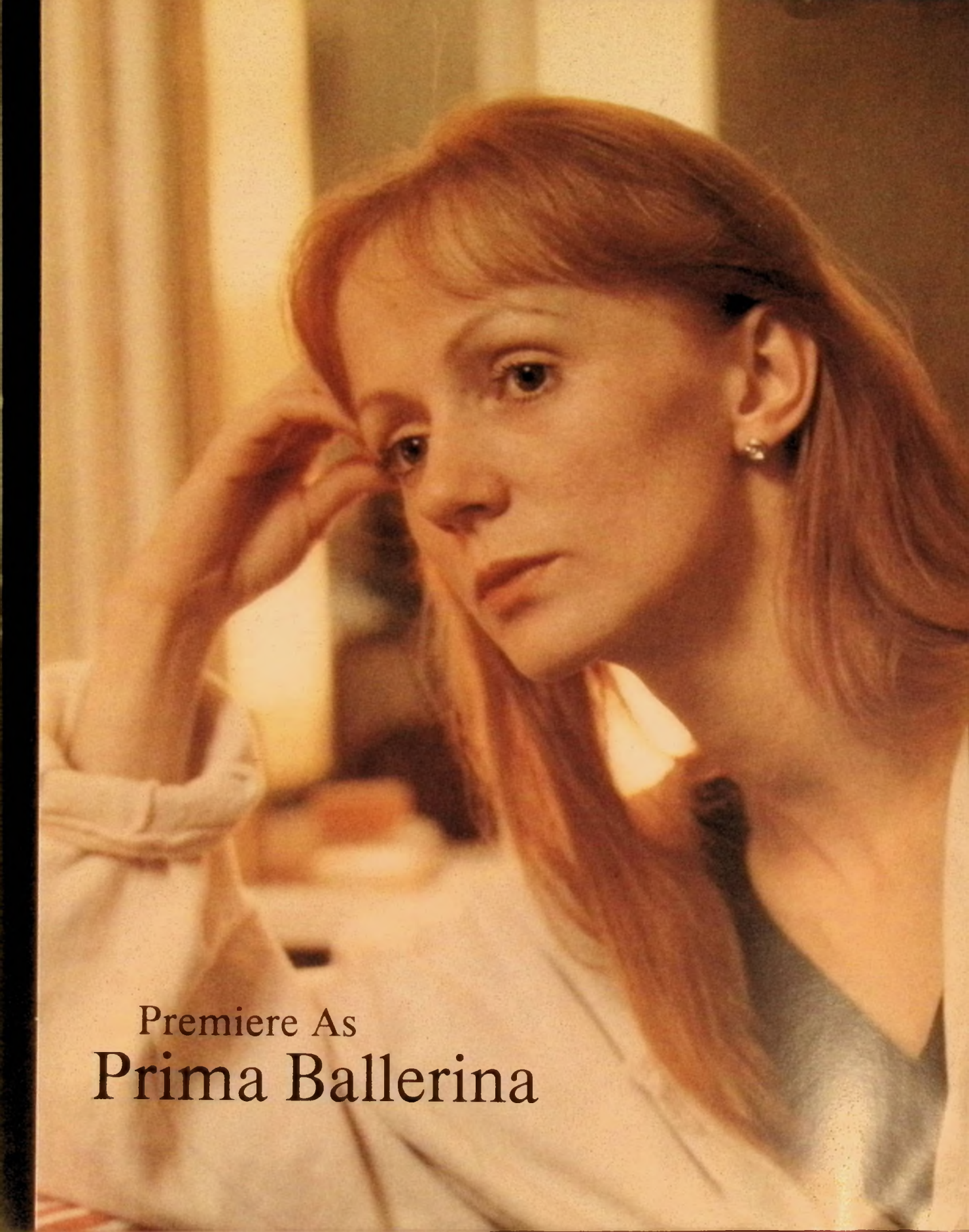
The Kohlgrund "snake" has passed its baptism of fire. The enterprising organisers are now hoping for more, exciting competi-

tions on their new run. One date already occupies an important place in their calendar, because Altenberg has been chosen to put on the Bob World Championships in 1991. Bernd Haase, who organised the World Cup races in November 1987 commented: "Arranging the world championships is a big test for us. We have already gained some vital experience and we are determined to do everything we can to make the 1991 World Championships a success."

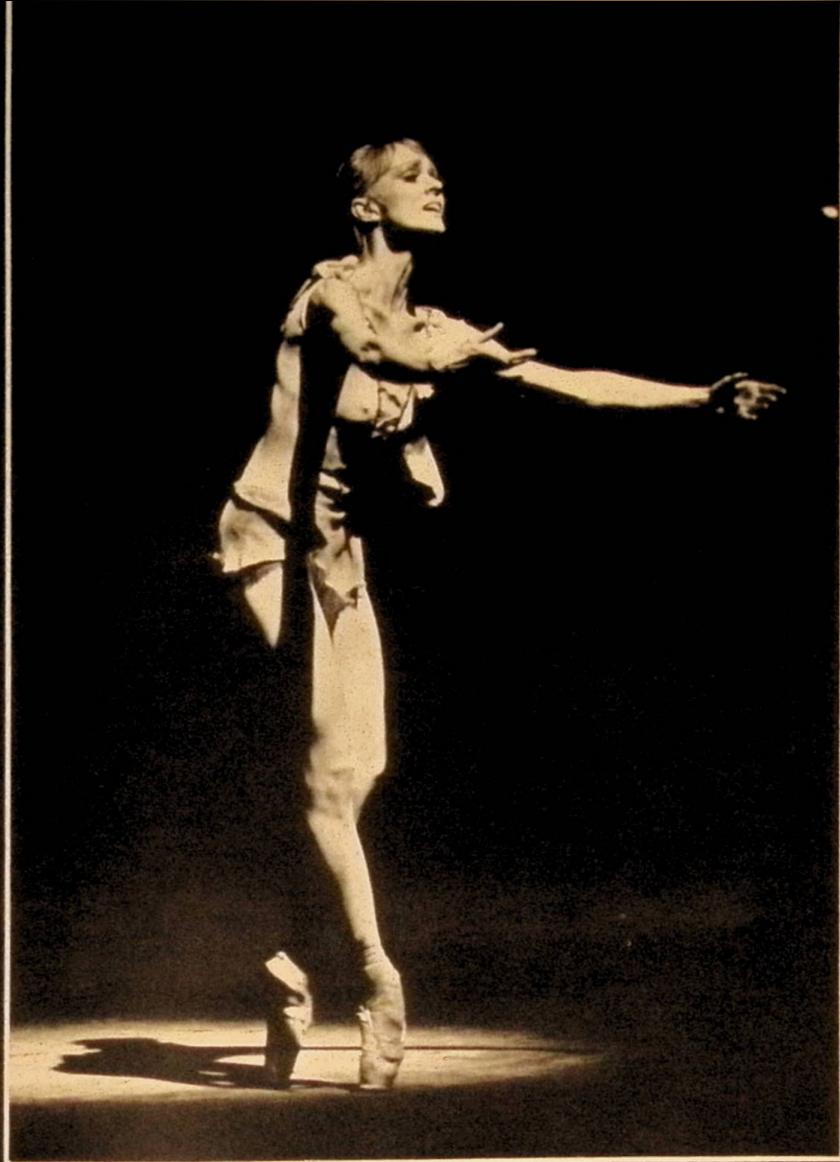
*Thomas Pollul*

*Photos: ADN ZB (3), Manfred Fromm (2), Andreas Meschke*





Premiere As  
**Prima Ballerina**



AN EARLY HIGHLIGHT of the 1987/88 season at the German State Opera House in Berlin was the premiere of a three-part ballet evening with choreography by Conrad Drzewiecki from Poland. Different motifs were set to music from the first two decades of this century: *Les Biches* by Francis Poulenc, *The Firebird* by Igor Stravinsky and Arnold Schönberg's *Verklärte Nacht*; partnerships in conflict. The lead was danced by Steffi Scherzer. It was at the same time her own personal premiere as prima ballerina.



Steffi Scherzer as Flavia in the ballet "Spartacus" (left), during rehearsals with Ralph Stengel and in classical style in "Symphony in C".

Photos: Jens Hübner, Marion Schöne



## PREMIERE AS PRIMA BALLERINA

Steffi Scherzer joined the company of the German State Opera House 12 years ago, straight after finishing her training at the Berlin School of Ballet. She had always wanted to come to the State Opera. She wanted "to be able to work with choreographers employing the most varied styles, to be able to test myself, to be free and to be able to express my own personality." She dances such varied ballets as *Spartacus* and *Sleeping Beauty*, *The Nutcracker* and *Carmina Burana*, *Ondine* and *Swan Lake*. "Swan Lake," she said, "is one of the most important so far, with the tremendously demanding double role as Odette and Odile."

Mastering the classics is still the touchstone for every dancer. Everything else is founded on a command of the classics. But now, with the expressive and sensual music of Schönberg's *Verklärte Nacht*, was Steffi Scherzer nervous before the premiere? "On the evening, before the curtain went up, certainly." Her colleagues think highly of her, they like her natural modesty. She exudes friendliness. Harmony at work is for her a necessary precondition for success. She is convinced that the overall effect of ballet is achieved through the collective performance. She feels especially motivated if one of her colleagues comes up to her after the performance and says "You were really good to-night."

But what about the rare title of prima ballerina? Is it not the high point of a dancer's career, an attribute that shows she has reached the very pinnacle of achievement in

ballet? "I want to continue to set my goals higher and higher, to satisfy the increased demands placed on my dancing, especially by the audience." On stage she can feel how the audience is taking part and associating with what is happening to the characters. When the message she is trying to convey with her interpretation is understood, she feels this as an extra encouragement. In such moments she forgets how much physical and mental effort the evening has cost, how much discipline and hard work lies beneath the grace of each movement. The effort begins again the next morning at ten o'clock sharp, with a practice session at the bar. The same series of exercise with strict and monotonous regularity—day in, day out. Where does Steffi find the strength for this? Her answer was short and simple, almost laconic: "The daily work is necessary. You notice it straight away, if you let slip for just one day. Talent alone is not enough. I just have to push my body as far as it will go. The strength comes from recognising the necessity." The Director of Ballet, Egon Bischoff finds praise especially for the consistency of her performances: "She is an amazing talent. For us that makes it our duty to do everything to encourage and help. There are always new, greater tasks awaiting her."

A dancer's career is a short one. This is no doubt another reason for her concentration on her profession. "Dancing is my whole life", she said. Not a day goes by on which she doesn't devote herself to it. She carries out her work very thoroughly; each performance of *Swan Lake*, for example, requires an average of two weeks preparation. She dances parts which most ballerinas can only dream of and has gathered acclaim in many

countries around the world—in Japan and Italy, in the Soviet Union, in Yugoslavia, Cuba, the Federal Republic of Germany and in France. She sees these guest performances as an important opportunity to test herself alongside the best, to meet new challenges, to dance for a completely different audience under new conditions. Satisfaction comes through the audience's applause, which, in her experience, is more emotional and more spontaneous in other countries than it is at home. And then there is always the joy and expectation of returning to Berlin, to the Nikolai Quarter in the city centre, where she now lives, to the Berlin audience and her friends; but most of all to the family, son Philipp and husband Roland Gawlick, the ballet master at the State Opera.

\*

Steffi Scherzer says: "You can't reach the top in art without ambition." She orientates herself according to this fact. She worships famous dancers such as Galina Ulanova. The two have met at ballet competitions. "A woman who radiates an enormous personality."

This year a dream will come true for Steffi Scherzer. She is to dance the lead in *Giselle*, the romantic, lyrical character, which has been danced by so many legendary ballerinas before her. She sees herself both as a part of their tradition and yet something different. She presents an interpretation which embodies a present-day awareness of life, which, so she hopes, will mobilise, rouse and move the emotions and spread aesthetic pleasure ... With a smile she added: "Which art form can do more than that?"

Stefanie Hoffmeister

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Our Front Cover  
Photographed by Carla Arnold

Our Back Cover  
Spring in Lusatia  
Photo: Frank Ihlow



by Henry Büttner

Sick Humour

