

AVA BERLIN: FINAL REPORT FROM THE CHAIR (attached)

On December 10, 2006, AVA Berlin held its annual business meeting at Restauration Walden in Prenzlauer Berg. We heard reports from the chair, from the treasurer, from the head of the voter registration project group. We then elected the following seven Executive Committee (EC) officers for 2007: ANN WERTHEIMER (chair), PAM SELWYN (vice chair), DAVID MACBRYDE (secretary), ALAN BENSON (treasurer), JANE HARTMANN-ZEILBERGER (assistant treasurer), ISABEL COLE and MIRIAM VOLKMANN. We also heard presentations from GERD HOFIELEN about his new web site and from ANITA MAGE about universal jurisdiction. We ended the meeting with a bit of brainstorming about our goals for 2007.

On December 9, 2007, we meet again at Restauration Walden (Chorinerstr. 35, for brunch, 12 noon to 3 pm) to discuss the past year, to elect EC officers for 2008 and to discuss the future of AVA Berlin. If you are new in town, or new to AVA Berlin, or have been preoccupied with other things, this meeting is open to you as well, although only paid-up members of AVA Berlin are allowed to take part in the elections. You received a first notice two months ahead of time and a final agenda, along with a few more details, on December 2.

A brief note about meetings: Why do we have only one business meeting a year? In 2006 the executive committee decided to make projects the basis of our group's activities. Looking around at other organizations, we found that many have limited business meetings (often tedious or confrontational) to a bare minimum in order to concentrate on activities. This has proved to be a good idea.

So please find ATTACHED my final report reviewing our activities for this past year. **THIS IS WHAT WE ACTUALLY DID.** The report is divided into five sections: organizational matters, letters written and petitions signed, projects supported, our own AVA Berlin projects, and our other modest contributions to civil society. For those of you who read my mid-term report, half of this will be familiar.

I have written in some detail, so this report is long. I hope reading it will be worthwhile. Paper copies will be distributed at the annual meeting.

Please make any corrections or additions directly to me at wertheim@zedat.fu-berlin.de or 813 2615.

Submitted by Ann Wertheimer, December 2007

► ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

1. Our mailing list – DAVID MACBRYDE continues as mailing list administrator. David is sometimes worried that we are sending out too much mail. But, on the other hand, it is a good sign that we have things to send. He also tries to give advance notice when possible, which, coupled with a reminder or two later, accounts for the sometimes heavier volume.
2. KAREN AXELRAD has continued to photograph AVA Berlin events. She and ANN WERTHEIMER will revise our leaflet for the new year.
3. Is there someone out there who can be our new webmaster? AARON RICHARDSON, who has been our webmaster since we set up the site several years ago, has returned to the U.S. The website needs to be re-designed. KAREN AXELRAD has agreed to give lay-out advice. The texts will be supplied by DAVID MACBRYDE and ANN WERTHEIMER.
5. The dues for full membership with voting rights is €30 per year, or a self-assessed smaller amount if necessary. Details in the treasurer's report.
6. Many thanks to SHELAGH FOREMAN from Cambridge Peace Action (Cambridge, MA) who continues to help us get our 'Greetings from Europe' (see items 4 and 8 in the section below) to the local United for Peace and Justice demonstration organizers.
7. ANN WERTHEIMER continues as liaison to the AVA coalition and the United for Peace and Justice coalition, which we joined in 2006.

► LETTERS WRITTEN AND PETITIONS SIGNED BY AVA BERLIN

1. Below please find a letter composed for the AVA Berlin executive committee by ANITA MAGE with help from PHIL HILL, with proofreading done by JÜRN-HINRICH VOLKMANN, and sent to Frau Monika Harms, the Generalbundesanwältin, on December 28, 2006. The letter concerns 'UNIVERSAL JURISDICTION,' a doctrine that "allows domestic courts to prosecute international crimes regardless of where the crime was committed, the nationality of the perpetrator or the nationality of the victim. It is reserved for only the most heinous offenses: genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, including torture. A number of countries around the world have enacted universal jurisdiction statutes; even the United States allows it for certain terrorist offenses and torture."

Als Vereinigung in Deutschland lebender US-Staatsbürger, die von Anfang an den widerrechtlichen Krieg der von den USA geführten Koalition im Irak abgelehnt haben und die damit einhergehende, durch den Antiterrorkrieg gerechtfertigte Aushöhlung von Bürgerrechten und rechtstaatlichen Prinzipien in unserer Heimat mit Besorgnis betrachten und kritisieren, erklären wir hiermit unsere ausdrückliche Unterstützung für die Strafanzeige des Centers for Constitutional Rights/New York, der Fédération Internationale pour les Droits de l'Homme/Paris, sowie der RAV, vertreten durch RA Wolfgang Kaleck, Berlin, gegen Herrn Donald Rumsfeld et al.

Wir bitten die Bundesanwaltschaft, die Ermittlungen wegen der Vorfälle in Abu Ghraib/Irak, Guantanamo/Kuba und andernorts aufzunehmen.

Wir beziehen uns insbesondere auf die Begründungen Ihres Amtes von 10. Februar 2005, eine solche Ermittlung bezüglich der Strafanzeige des Centers für Constitutional Rights vom 30. November 2004 nicht einzuleiten, weil nicht auszuschließen sei, dass der Rechtsstaat USA die begangenen Straftaten selbst zum Gegenstand einer Ermittlung machen könne.

Wir stellen fest: Dieser Einwand ist hinfällig geworden.

Seit Inkrafttreten des Military Commissions Act von 17. Oktober 2006 genießen Regierungsbeauftragte und Militärpersonal der USA rückwirkend Immunität vor Strafverfolgung wegen im "Krieg gegen den Terror" begangener Verbrechen, also auch wegen der im vorliegenden Fall begangenen Taten. Damit wird sichergestellt, dass im Geltungsbereich dieses Gesetzes, d.h., in den USA, bzw. in seinem Geltungszeitraum, d.h. in der vorhersehbaren Zukunft, keine Ermittlungsverfahren der Art, die in der genannten Begründung Ihres Amtes beschrieben werden, zu erwarten sind. Hinzu kommt die Tatsache, dass die USA sich nicht dem internationalen Strafgerichtshof unterstellen.

Die USA sind damit ein Staat, dessen im Sinne des Völkerrechts straffällig gewordene Amtsträger als Folge einer selbst bewirkten ultima ratio von der Völkergemeinschaft zur Verantwortung gezogen werden müssen, da solche Täter im eigenen Lande nichts zu befürchten haben.

Aus diesen Gründen betrachten wir diese Strafanzeige als einen wichtigen und notwendigen Schritt, sowie als einzige Möglichkeit, dem Recht Geltung zu verschaffen.

2. At our annual business meeting in December, as a follow-up to a recommendation by DOUG HILLMER during his talk about electronic voting last November, we decided to support Rep. RUSH HOLT's Voter Confidence and Increased Accessibility Act as soon as there was an opportunity. So on January 12 we distributed a petition being circulated by People for the American Way. We called on everyone to sign. Rep. HOLT'S bill requires the following for ALL federal elections starting in 2008:

- Paper Ballots -- ALL voting machines must produce a paper ballot
- Audits -- ALL voting machines must be auditable
- No Secret Source Code -- ALL voting machine vendors MUST make the machine's software available for inspection
- Ban on Wireless Devices -- Prohibits wireless technology in voting machines
- Access for All Eligible Voters -- Ensures disabled and minority-language voters can vote privately and independently

In the meantime the bill has been amended to death and is sitting in legislative limbo.

3. At the beginning of 2007, AVA Berlin made contact with a new international group called AVAAZ, which means 'voice' or 'song' in several languages including Hindi, Urdu, and Farsi. AVAAZ was founded by RES PUBLICA, a global advocacy group. By the end of August, AVAAZ had over 1 million members! Here is a summary of the AVAAZ letters and petitions that the EC signed on behalf of AVA Berlin or that we sent out to our mailing list for individual signatures.

► in mid-January, we signed the following petition to block military escalation in Iraq:

President Bush's plan to escalate the war in Iraq is not supported by the Iraqi people, the international community, the Iraq Study Group, or the vast majority of Americans. We urge the new US Congress to block the military escalation in Iraq and demand a diplomatic solution and a real plan to end the Iraq war.

▶ on March 15, a petition to the G8 environment ministers in anticipation of their meeting in Germany on March 15. AVAAZ was invited to this meeting to present their climate change petition

▶ on April 14, a petition to sack Paul Wolfowitz as president of the World Bank

▶ on May 17, a letter to the G8 finance ministers, joining DESMOND TUTU, NOAM CHOMSKY and MARY ROBINSON, among many others, in calling on rich countries to keep their promises of aid to the world's poor. Here is an excerpt from that letter:

Together you represent the world's economic powerhouses. We write to ask that you also strive to represent the millions of people whose lives are blighted by extreme poverty. Aid is not a panacea. But Marshall Plan aid from the US kick-started the rebuilding of a Europe shattered by war and delivered real benefits to the US in terms of new markets for its goods. Aid to East Asia helped catalyse the economic miracles that have lifted millions of people out of poverty. Today many African governments are using aid to underwrite growth and provide essential schools, health services and water supplies for their people. The poorest countries in the world need you to honour these aid pledges if they are to meet the Millennium Development Goals and end poverty. Please seize that chance today.

▶ on May 23, a petition "to block the handover of Iraqi oil to multinational companies":

Our simple message: we support Iraq's sovereign right to its own oil. Revenue from oil should be distributed fairly to the Iraqi people. And the Iraqi national parliament should decide this without foreign influence.

▶ at the end of May and the beginning of June, a petition to G-8 leaders calling for action to avert a climate catastrophe and a follow-up:

Petition To World Leaders: Climate change is the greatest threat facing our world today - and we are almost out of time to stop it. You must tackle this problem now, decisively and together. Start working toward a new global agreement this year. Set binding global targets for emissions to avert catastrophic climate change. Take bold action immediately - and we will join our efforts with yours.

In September, in order to cut down on AVA Berlin mail volume, we recommended that AVAers subscribe to AVAAZ directly.

4. The EC sent the following letter, written and signed by ANN WERTHEIMER and JOAN KLAKOW, for the UNITED FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE mobilization in Washington, D.C. on January 27. (AVA Berlin is a member of the United for Peace and Justice coalition.) We sent a copy of the letter to SHELAGH FOREMAN, chair of Cambridge (Mass.) PEACE ACTION, who made sure the letter got into the right hands at the mobilization. We like to think of Cambridge Peace Action as our sister group in the U.S.

Greetings from Europe!

As citizens of the United States living abroad, we send you greetings of solidarity. We join the United for Peace and Justice coalition in this national mobilization to send a message to the newly elected congress: END THE OCCUPATION OF IRAQ! BRING OUR TROOPS HOME!

Everyone now sees the false pretenses under which this war was started and the resulting war profiteering. We all see that the arrogance of the Bush administration has created new causes of violence. We mourn the great loss of life, the many seriously wounded, the catastrophe in Iraq.

What can we do now? We can bring our troops home and give up all claims to permanent military bases. We can help resolve the humanitarian crisis that our policies have created. We can take proper care of our veterans. And we can finally begin real diplomacy throughout the region. THESE ARE MISSIONS WE MUST ACCOMPLISH!

To whom should we turn for advice? Not to those who say the war is right but that we are fighting it wrong but to those who warned us from the beginning – loud and clear – that this war was based on faulty intelligence and deception. Let us now make judgments and decisions based not on the desire for oil or military bases. For the world's sake and for ours, let us end the occupation of Iraq, not because we are losing, but because of our desire for peace and justice.

5. In February, the EC sent this letter, written and signed by ISABEL COLE and ANN WERTHEIMER, to the Munich Staatsanwalt as well as to the editors of several German newspapers concerning EXTRAORDINARY RENDITION and the El-Masri case.

Als in Deutschland lebende US-Bürger, die seit 2003 Stellung gegen die zynische und rechtswidrige Politik der Bush-Regierung beziehen, begrüßen wir das rechtsstaatlich konsequente Vorgehen der Staatsanwaltschaft München im Fall El-Masri. Wir sehen dies als hoffnungsvolles Zeichen, dass das menschenverachtende System der sog. "außerordentlichen Rückführungen" - zu Deutsch: Entführungen und Auslieferungen an Folterer - in den Rechtsstaaten der internationalen Gemeinschaft nicht länger toleriert wird. Wir rufen die deutsche Politik und die Öffentlichkeit dazu auf, diese Normen auch weiterhin zu unterstützen.

6. BÄRBEL SCHINDLER-SAEFKOW of the DEUTSCHER FRIEDENSRAT invited AVA Berlin to send a speaker to their peace rally on March 8. Although AVA Berlin did not completely agree with all the demands of the demonstration (notably that troops in the north of Afghanistan should simply be withdrawn), the AVA Berlin executive committee DID agree with the basic 'no' to sending German Tornado reconnaissance aircraft to Afghanistan and so decided to send a speaker. PHIL HILL, representing AVA Berlin, emphasized that the activities of the United States in Afghanistan (and in Iraq) have been so counter-productive, so negative, "dass nichts mehr daran korrigiert werden kann," and that he supports "mehr ziviles Engagement zu Ungunsten des Militärischen."

7. On April 30, we distributed the petition of the AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION (ACLU) to restore habeas corpus and due process. On June 5, we sent out a follow-up. And in September, in honor of Constitution Day on September 17, we mailed you a second petition from the ACLU to end rampant surveillance and warrantless spying, to restore habeas corpus and due process, to shut down Guantanamo Bay and give those held there access to justice, and to stop torture and extraordinary rendition.

8. The EC sent the following letter, written and signed by ANN WERTHEIMER, to the United for Peace and Justice (UFPJ) coalition, of which we are a member group. Again entitled 'Greetings from Europe' (see 4 above and all of our previous mailings to UFPJ), the message was written for the October 27 'day of regional, mass anti-war action,' the goal of which is to tap into the broad sentiment against the war and to bring new people into the streets. As with all previous 'Greetings from Europe' to UFPJ, a copy was sent to Shelagh Foreman, chair of Cambridge Peace Action, see 4 above.

Greetings from Europe!

American Voices Abroad Berlin sends you greetings of solidarity!

As citizens of the United States living abroad, we look at our country through both a telescope and a microscope. From a distance we see what all the world sees: a country mired in a war begun under false pretenses and dominated by profiteering, a war that has unleashed new sources of violence. From our distant but very focused point of view, we see a delusional administration unwilling to end the occupation of Iraq, incapable of admitting its own failures, stalling until it is no longer in office.

But under the magnifying lens we see the people of the United States – our families, friends and former neighbors, now an overwhelming majority of the population – asking: How can we get out of Iraq responsibly?

From our point of view, responsibility means demonstrating our non-imperial aims: We must end all claims to permanent bases! We must end all claims to Iraqi oil! We must end the occupation of Iraq, withdrawing our soldiers and military contractors. This is the responsible way out.

We ask of our country that it work with the United Nations to form a peace-building mission – unprecedented in size and vigor – with partners especially from the Arab and Islamic worlds, led by the United Nations, without troops from the occupying countries. Those occupying countries – the United States and the Coalition of the Willing – must now work with the United Nations to re-build Iraq, to compensate it for all the death and destruction.

And, of course, responsible behavior also means preventing a war with Iran. Five years ago many Americans did not believe that the United States would really go to war with Iraq, especially because UN inspectors were not finding any weapons of mass destruction. But the disinformation campaign was successful, and a war powers authority resolution was passed in Congress, a resolution that is still in effect. This resolution must be repealed. And congressional hearings must begin to expose the current alarming disinformation campaign justifying war with yet another country. We must stop behaving as if we were sent by God to invade and remake the entire region.

At home, we must take care of our veterans. We must reform our dysfunctional electoral system. We must restore all of our constitutionally guaranteed rights.

These are the right things to do. These are the responsible things to do. And, as far as we can tell from abroad, this is all in the national interest of the United States.

Let us begin to consider what real security means and what an effective government in the United States might look like. How do we want to relate to the rest of the world – as aggressors and war profiteers, or as a force for peace and justice and international law? I think we all know the answer.

► OTHER PEOPLE'S PROJECTS THAT AVA BERLIN SUPPORTED

1. At our business meeting in December, AVA Berlin agreed to distribute the “APROPOS GLOBAL” newsletter published by GERD HOFIELEN, WOODY WILLIAMS and PIA ALESSI. We are very pleased to continue this relationship.
2. AVA Berlin publicized the showing of AL GORE's film An Inconvenient Truth sponsored by the YOUNG DEMOCRATS of DEMOCRATS ABROAD BERLIN at Max & Moritz in Kreuzberg on January 11. We also publicized DA's showing on March 15 of The War Tapes.
3. On April 12, AVA Berlin (along with DEMOCRATS ABROAD BERLIN) publicized a

special screening of Taxi to the Dark Side by ALEX GIBNEY, at the Babylon in Kreuzberg. MICHAEL RATNER of the CENTER FOR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS introduced the film.

4. AVA Berlin always promotes the The EINSTEIN FORUM's American Voices series, although the similarity in names is, of course, accidental. On May 21, LOUISE RICHARDSON, executive Dean of the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University: "What Terrorists Want: Understanding the Enemy – Containing the Threat"! On December 4, SARAH CHAYES, founder of the Arghand Cooperative, Kandahar, Afghanistan: "The Promotion of Vice. Afghanistan since the Taliban." (And forthcoming on December 18, at the Vertretung des Landes Brandenburg beim Bund, In den Ministergärten 1, Berlin-Mitte, SAMANTHA POWER, Anna Lindh Professor of Practice of Global Leadership and Public Policy, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard: "Can American Foreign Policy Be Fixed?")

We are also always pleased to announce the lectures of the Einstein Forum outside the American Voices Series. For example, on October 15, RICHARD DAWKINS, Charles Simonyi Professor of the Public Understanding of Science, Oxford: "The God Delusion." And on November 21, Dr. NAVID KERMANI, author, and Prof. Dr. SUSAN NEIMAN, Director of the Einstein Forum: "Über Loyalität. Zwischen Iran, Amerika und vielen anderen Heimaten."

5. On May 25, AVA Berlin participated in an international round-table sponsored by URI – UNITED REPUBLICANS OF IRAN: FOR A DEMOCRATIC AND SECULAR GOVERNMENT. This round-table, the kick-off event of the 3rd International URI Congress, was held at the guesthouse of the Berliner Stadtmission, Lehrter Strasse 68. DAVID MACBRYDE represented AVA Berlin.

6. On June 26, AVA Berlin helped organize an evening at the ACUD movie theater in Mitte. After a showing of 500 Miles to Babylon by DAVID MARTINEZ, an audience of about 35, including several AVAers, discussed the film and the Iraq War with BRIAN CURRAN of IRAQ VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR and PHIL HILL of AVA Berlin. Thank you, BRIAN for coming to Berlin just for this evening, ISABEL COLE and PHIL HILL for organizing the event, and ACUD for initiating this project. Preceding the film, AVA Berlin organized a dinner at the 5-Flavor restaurant to give BRIAN a chance to do a bit of networking with various individuals and groups interested in supporting Iraq Veterans Against the War. Thank you again, ISABEL COLE.

7. FORTHCOMING: AVA Berlin is participating in the planning of an international conference on Iraq ("Der Irak - Alternativen zu Krieg und Besatzung") sponsored by the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW, Nobel Peace Prize 1985) and PAX CHRISTI (a non-profit, non-governmental Catholic peace movement working on a global scale on a wide variety of issues in the fields of human rights, security and disarmament, economic justice and ecology.) The conference will be held on March 7 and 8, 2008, and will mark the 5th anniversary of the start of the Iraq War.

You will receive details as things develop. Anyone interested in participating in the planning, please contact ISABEL COLE <ava@andere-seite.de> or PHIL HILL <ava@phil-hill.de>.

► OUR OWN AVA BERLIN PROJECTS

1. On February 9, AVA Berlin organized a benefit for the legal defense of AGUSTIN AGUAYO, the conscientious objector whose legal defense the AVA coalition has been supporting. AVA Berlin pledged 250 euros. Thank you, MEREDITH WHEELER of AVA southwest France, for organizing this fund-raising effort.

The benefit was held at PAM SELWYN's house and featured ISABEL COLE's excellent chili and cornbread. In the words of the late MOLLY IVINS, this was definitely not bus station chili. The 18 guests saw "Sir, No Sir," DAVID ZEIGER's film about the GI movement during the war in Vietnam.

MEREDITH WHEELER writes that Agustin and family are now back in the USA and free—campaigning against the war. In July Agustin completed a speaking tour in the Pacific Northwest, sponsored by COURAGE TO RESIST along with many local groups. Agustin says: "Before I left for Iraq I searched deep within me, I concluded that if I go over there I can't take a life. I ultimately said I'll go, but I'm definitely a conscientious objector. I'm not willing to cross that line, no matter what I can't take a life." Two years later, after his application for discharge as a conscientious objector was denied by the Pentagon, Army Spc. Agustín Aguayo went AWOL in order to resist redeploying to Iraq.

FORTHCOMING: On December 21, AGUSTIN AGUAYO will receive the Stuttgarter Friedenspreis (€5000) awarded by "Die AnStifter." "Mit dem Stuttgarter Friedenspreis der AnStifter anerkennen die Stifterinnen und Stifter Zivilcourage und das besondere Engagement für Frieden, Solidarität und Gerechtigkeit."

On Sunday, December 16, on his way to receiving the prize in Stuttgart, Agustin will visit AVA Berlin. PAM SELWYN will be hosting an evening with Agustin at her apartment,. Check your mail for the invitation: subject line Meet and Greet Agustin Aguayo.

2. We often get visitors from home and think how interesting it is to talk to them. Now we have developed an unofficial forum to introduce our visitors to others: 'MEET AND GREET'! The first 'meet and greet' event was organized by MIRIAM VOLKMANN on May 10 at the Seerose, a vegetarian restaurant serving Persian food, at Mehringdamm 47 in Kreuzberg.

Miriam introduced ELLIE DURHAM SPIEGEL (American Friends Service Executive Committee, NY Region; Regional Immigrant Rights; NAFSA UN representative) and HANS SPIEGEL (Prof. emeritus Hunter College, Columbia U., urban planning; Friends of VISTA; UN consultant to UNEP). We enjoyed the opportunity to discuss the following questions: Is it as hard to get people to actively participate in peace activities in the NY/NJ area as it is in Berlin? Do vigils make a difference? Is Iran next? We also discussed the coming elections and global warming.

Anyone who would like to organize a 'Meet and Greet,' just contact someone on the executive committee with your suggestions.

3. Also at the beginning of May, AVA Berlin responded to a request from MEIKE SCHUBERT, the wife of an American soldier, CHRIS CAPPS, who had gone AWOL. CHRIS said that he could not in good conscience return to Iraq, that he was planning to turn himself in soon and that he was expecting to be released within a few days. Apparently the Army was processing so many such cases that they were not even able to hold the soldiers for long. The family (they have a small child) was in financial difficulties due to the whole ordeal, and AVA Berlin, along with COURAGE TO RESIST, decided to pay some of their travel expenses. Meike and Chris were in touch with (and vouched for by) the MILITARY COUNSELING NETWORK (www.getting-out.de), with whom we have always had very good experiences, as well as with IRAQ VETS AGAINST THE WAR (www.ivaw.org), a relatively new organization.

And, in fact, CHRIS did turn himself in, and the army did release him. Some AVAers got to meet CHRIS and MEIKE in Berlin on May 22 when CHRIS represented the German branch of IRAQ VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR, which is in its founding stages, at a meeting here in Berlin organized by several German peace groups. We hope to continue our contact with CHRIS and MEIKE for further projects. See 6 below ('Meet and Greet' at Isabel Cole's.)

4. On May 23, AVA Berlin, along with CAFE AMERICAIN and THE YALE UNIVERSITY CLUB in Germany, co-sponsored an evening with THOMAS POWERS at ST. GEORGE'S bookshop in Prenzlauer Berg. The evening was a great success with about 50 people attending. Thank you, DAVID MACBRYDE and ISABEL COLE for the organizing, and thank you, ST. GEORGE'S.

Acclaimed journalist Thomas Powers is a specialist on issues of intelligence, security, terrorism, and counterterrorism. He is the author of three nonfiction books: *Intelligence Wars: American Secret History from Hitler to Al-Qaeda* (New York Review Books, 2002); *Heisenberg's War: The Secret History of the German Bomb* (Knopf, 1993); and *The Man Who Kept the Secrets: Richard Helms and the CIA* (Knopf, 1979), a biography of the CIA director. He is also the author of a suspense novel, *The Confirmation* (2000), which surrounds the confirmation of a CIA director. A regular contributor on intelligence and terrorism issues to *The New York Review of Books*, Powers has also contributed articles to *The New York Times*, *Harper's*, *The Nation*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, and *Rolling Stone*. In 1971, Powers won a Pulitzer Prize for National Reporting for his articles on Weatherman member Diana Oughton. He is a Fellow of the American Academy in Berlin this spring. During his residency in Berlin, Powers will write a non-fiction account of the ambiguous circumstances surrounding the death of the celebrated Oglala chief Crazy Horse by the US Army in 1877. (www.americanacademy.de)

5. On June 28, AVA Berlin and Cafe Americain co-sponsored an evening with SAM HAMILL, poet, translator and founder of Poets Against War, who is in Berlin as a guest of the Poesiefestival. The reading, organized by Isabel Cole, was held at ST. GEORGE'S bookshop in Prenzlauer Berg and attracted about 45 people.

Sam Hamill is the author of 14 volumes of poetry and two dozen translations from the ancient Greek, Latin, Estonian, Chinese and Japanese, and has received fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Guggenheim Foundation, among others. In 2003 he took a much-publicized stand against the Iraq War with his public refusal of an invitation by Laura Bush to attend a symposium on poetry at the White House. Within a few days he had rallied 1500 poets to send poems of protest to the White House, soon thereafter founding Poets Against the War. It has since grown into a worldwide network of poets opposed to many forms of war, tyranny and oppression, and its website, at www.poetsagainstar.net, offers a virtual anthology of contemporary antiwar poetry.

Sam Hamill read his poems and talked about his work as a "poet against war". Among other things, discussion focused on the power of language for good and evil in poetry and politics, the role of cultural dialogue and

translation in promoting peace, and his belief that "...as we enter the State of Poetry... we transcend the State". There was plenty of time for our own questions and comments. Here are KAREN AXELRAD's photos: http://www.pbase.com/karenaxe/sam_hamill of the evening.

6. On July 27 ISABEL COLE hosted a 'MEET AND GREET' at her house for CHRIS CAPPS and MEIKE SCHUBERT. Eighteen people attended to talk about Iraq Veterans Against the War and their plans for future activities.

7. On August 29, AVA Berlin (thank you, DAVID MACBRYDE) organized an evening at Max und Moritz with Dr. JAMIE WALKER, who recently returned from Afghanistan. Jamie Walker has long been active in the field of conflict resolution, mediation and peace education. She was a trainer for nonviolent action, carried out a comparative study of conflict resolution in European schools for the Council of Europe and helped 'import' school and community mediation to Germany. Currently she heads the MediationsBüro Mitte in Berlin. At the request of the GTZ (German Technical Cooperation), she went to Afghanistan with a view to 'Peace Education in Afghanistan?', including the question mark. After JAMIE'S presentation with photos, there followed a lively discussion among the 15-20 people attending.

► OUR OTHER MODEST CONTRIBUTIONS TO CIVIL SOCIETY

1. The STAMMTISCH took place on all first Thursdays at BARCOMI'S, Sophienstrasse 21 in Mitte at 8 pm. We thank CYNTHIA BARCOMI and her staff for their hospitality!

2. AVA Berlin movie nights throughout the year were: at PAM SELWYN's house, "The Short Life of José Antonio Gutierrez" directed by HEIDI SPECOGNA; ROBERT ALTMAN's last movie, "Prairie Home Companion" at the Babylon; and at the Acud, "500 Miles from Babylon" directed by DAVID MARTINEZ.

3. On April 13, in anticipation of the presidential elections in France, AVA Berlin met with representatives of the ASSOCIATION DEMOCRATIQUE DES FRANCAIS A L'ETRANGER (ADFE) at Leonhardt at Stuttgarter Platz. Our friends from ADFE Berlin, which is the Berlin section of a non-partisan but left of center group of French citizens living outside of France, told us about their group, gave us their opinions of the parties, the candidates, and what it all means for France, for Europe, and for the rest of the world. We hope that we will be able to reciprocate. This may be the beginning of a beautiful friendship. Thank you, PHILIPPE LOISEAU and ANNIE SAUVAT, and sorry about the outcome of the French presidential elections.

4. On April 20, the BERLINER ZEITUNG printed a short response to the security alerts in Germany as follows: "Ich weiß nicht, was man von einer so vagen Warnung halten soll", sagt etwa ISABEL COLE, Vorstandsmitglied der American Voices Abroad Berlin, ein Zusammenschluss von US-Bürgern, die die Militärpolitik des US-Präsidenten ablehnen.... "Terrorwarnungen in den USA haben eine lange Geschichte, es waren auch fragwürdige Warnungen darunter." Sie werde ihr Leben wegen der Warnung nicht ändern.

5. We have kept up our contact with BRIDGEBUILDERS via DAVID KNUTSON – concerning the Amerika Haus project. BRIDGEBUILDERS has also started a list of American artists in Berlin. If you know an American artist (a singer, actor, painter, writer, photographer, entertainer, etc.), or a German artist who works in the U.S. or uses America as a topic, please contact DAVID at concertamerica@-online.de.

6. We have also kept in touch with STEVEN HILL, author of several books on the U.S. Electoral System, who spoke to AVA Berlin a few years ago at DAVE SOLOMON's BOOKS IN BERLIN in Charlottenburg. On April 7, we forwarded STEVEN's request for personal stories for his new book.

7. KARA KRULL and ALAN BENSON arranged to give this year's high school graduates at the John F. Kennedy School (Zehlendorf) a voter registration form at their graduation rehearsal on June 28. ALAN was able to help some of the graduates with their registration problems.

8. On September 2, DEMOCRATS ABROAD BERLIN invited AVA Berlin to join them for their Labor Day potluck picnic and folk music jam at the Britzer Garden (BUGA). Because a baseball diamond could not be found for that day, the planned softball game (DA vs. AVA) was postponed.

9. In November, COLIN KING represented AVA Berlin at the Claim Democracy Conference in Washington, D.C., "the largest gathering in years of national, state and local leaders working for electoral reform, voter protection and media reform." Sponsors include the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Americans for Campaign Reform, Common Cause, Dêmos, FairVote, New America Foundation, People for the American Way, Verified Voting and many other groups." COLIN will present a brief report at the annual business meeting.