

## AVA-BERLIN, ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

### DECEMBER 10, 2017 – HIGHLIGHTS

#### ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

1. Last year, our annual business meeting was held on December 11, 2016, at La Parrilla, Albrechtstrasse 11 near Bhf. Friedrichstrasse. We reviewed the past year and made plans for 2017. Executive Committee officers were elected for 2017: ANN WERTHEIMER (chair), PAM SELWYN (vice chair), ADAM WILKINS (secretary), ALAN BENSON (treasurer), JANE HARTMANN (assistant treasurer), ISABEL COLE and MICHAEL STELTZER (associates). You can find the minutes of the 2016 annual business meeting as taken by ADAM WILKINS at the end of this report.
2. ADAM WILKINS took over secretarial duties, while ANN WERTHEIMER remained mailing list administrator and PAM SELWYN mailing list administrator backup.
3. JON WOLFE continued as our web master. Check [www.avaberlin.org](http://www.avaberlin.org) for event updates including KAREN AXELRAD's great photo documentation.
4. KAREN AXELRAD re-designed our information leaflet, now in living color. KAREN also created our new business cards, complete with a QR code.
5. KAREN AXELRAD posted links to events, articles, and petitions of interest to our membership on Facebook, and PAM SELWYN responded to incoming questions.
6. ANN WERTHEIMER continued as liaison to the United for Peace and Justice coalition, which we joined in 2006. As a local group with no employees, AVA-Berlin pays \$50 dues a year to UfPJ. See <http://www.unitedforpeace.org/> to find us on the members map of the world.
7. The dues for full membership with voting rights in AVA-Berlin are still €30 per year, or a self-assessed smaller amount. See [www.avaberlin.de](http://www.avaberlin.de) and then click on MEMBERSHIP for details. ALAN BENSON and JANE HARTMANN kept dues records, answered questions, and wrote reminders
8. CAROLYN PRESCOTT took care of NPRBerlin matters for us until the FM 104.1 frequency was given to KCRW, which has yet to establish a calendar.
9. CAROLYN PRESCOTT also posted our announcements to The Coalition Berlin newsletter, which is published weekly.
10. We held our monthly Stammtische at Café Daddy, a family-run Turkish Café with homemade food at Kolonnenstr. 50 in Schöneberg. The exception was in August:

Café Daddy was closed so we moved next door to Raamson. The October Stammtisch was cancelled, for the first time ever, because of high winds (Storm Xavier) and the subsequent closing of the entire S-Bahn system.

## **OUR OWN AVA-BERLIN PROJECTS**

1. AVA spent the weeks after the election trying to connect with other groups, both in the U.S. and here in Berlin. We attended meetings of the Anti-Trump Resistance in Berlin and continued to participate as actively as possible. We spent the December Stammtisch talking about networking and possible coalitions, and decided to participate in coalition activities on an ad hoc basis.
2. On JANUARY 5, our first Stammtisch of 2017 focused on the Electoral College and the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact that has gained momentum in recent years. States in the compact are promising that, if enough of them ultimately sign on to the compact, they will give their electoral votes to the national popular vote winner. BEN JOHNSON explained the most important elements of this project. See [www.avaberlin.org](http://www.avaberlin.org) for photos.
3. On INAUGURATION DAY, JANUARY 20, AVA joined a broad coalition of groups to protest Trump's plans and appointments. An AVA contingent met at Pariser Platz near the U.S. Embassy with our We Say NO Flag during the late afternoon. See [www.avaberlin.org](http://www.avaberlin.org) for photos.
4. On February 4, American Voices Abroad Berlin joined The Coalition Berlin at the #NoBanNoWall protests at Pariser Platz. For details about The Coalition Berlin, see <http://the-coalition.berlin>. While a federal judge ordered a temporary stay against deportations of hundreds of detained travelers in airports, the ban was still in effect. Tens of thousands of residents, refugees, and lawful visitors were denied travel and entry. We rallied at Pariser Platz briefly, then marched to Wilhelmstr., turned left and left again on Dorotheenstr., then left again on Ebertstr., and then past the Brandenburger Tor to arrive at the front gates of the U.S. Embassy. See [www.avaberlin.org](http://www.avaberlin.org) for photos and video.
5. On March 2, American Voices Abroad Berlin dedicated its Stammtisch to SCIENCE, SCIENTISTS and the SCIENCE MARCH on Earth Day, April 22 (see item 9 below). The Stammtisch featured a presentation by our own ADAM WILKINS of his new book *Making Faces: The Evolutionary Origins of the Human Face*, Harvard University Press, January 2017:

"Humans possess the most expressive faces in the animal kingdom. Adam Wilkins presents evidence ranging from the fossil record to recent findings of genetics, molecular biology, and developmental biology to reconstruct the fascinating story of how the human face evolved.... In demonstrating how the physical evolution of the human face has been inextricably intertwined with our species' growing social complexity, Wilkins argues that it was both the product and enabler of human sociality."

Preceding ADAM's talk, we heard from Eve Craigie, an organizer of the Science March [www.marchforscienceberlin.de](http://www.marchforscienceberlin.de). And then we heard from MARGRET KOLBE, a research biochemist who worked in medical and agricultural research at Rutgers and Princeton, who told us about Trump's science agenda, what we can expect in various areas.

6. On March 8, Berlin celebrated INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY. AVAers could take their pick of at least 6 demonstrations, each with a different focus. See [www.avaberlin.org](http://www.avaberlin.org) for pictures.

7. On APRIL 6, the AVA STAMMTISCH featured a talk by Sarah van Gelder.

“YES! Magazine co-founder and editor at large Sarah van Gelder drove 20,000 kilometers through the heartland of the United States, living in her tiny truck camper, interviewing people on Native American reservations, in rust belt cities, Appalachian towns, and southern communities. Her book, "The Revolution Where You Live: Stories from a 12,000 Mile Journey Through a New America" (Berrett Koehler, 2017), tells the stories of broken economies, devastated ecosystems, and communities shattered by racism, violence, and exclusion. But the focus of her book is on the extraordinary work of ordinary people who are transforming their communities, even in the places that seemed to have run out of hope.” Find details here: <https://revolutionwhereyoulive.org/the-book-the-revolution-where-you-live/>

8. On April 15, AVA sponsored a screening of 'I Am Not Your Negro' by Raoul Peck at the Lichtblick Kino, Kastanienallee 77, which was followed by a discussion among members of the audience. PAM SELWYN moderated. Thanks to the Lichtblick, profits from the €10 ticket sales will go to the American Civil Liberties Union.

"In 1979, James Baldwin wrote a letter to his literary agent describing his next project, "Remember This House." The book was to be a revolutionary, personal account of the lives and assassinations of three of his close friends: Medgar Evers, Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr. At the time of Baldwin's death in 1987, he left behind only 30 completed pages of this manuscript. Filmmaker Raoul Peck envisions the book James Baldwin never finished.”

9. On April 22, which is Earth Day, AVA joined the March for Science here in Berlin: <http://marchforscienceberlin.de>. The March for Science wanted “to call attention to the dangers that hostility towards science - from the denial of climate change to racism - poses to our open, democratic society.” See photos at [www.avaberlin.org](http://www.avaberlin.org).

10. On August 16, The Coalition Berlin organized a solidarity demonstration to support the counter demonstrators in Charlottesville, and AVA whole-heartedly joined in. We stood together in solidarity with activists in Charlottesville, Virginia, who bravely stood up to the racist and fascist "Unite the Right" demonstration last Saturday. The murderous attack on anti-racist activists demonstrates the deadly consequences of the right's organizing, emboldened under a sympathetic president.

(See solidarity statement in item 3 of **LETTERS WRITTEN, PETITIONS SIGNED AND SPEECHES GIVEN** below.) See photos on [www.avaberlin.org](http://www.avaberlin.org).

11. AVA-Berlin was asked to organize a discussion after a screening of the documentary film “Sacco and Vanzetti” at the Lichtblick theater on August 27. Michael Hoenisch led the discussion in the sold-out theater. The Lichtblick provided wine and snacks in the lobby afterwards, which encouraged us to continue talking to each other while the next film was showing.

12. On September 6, American Voices Abroad Berlin answered the call of the international literature festival Berlin (ilb) to participate in a worldwide reading of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. Among the several readings in Berlin, this was the only one in English. The purpose of these readings was to reignite and strengthen the concept of human rights in the world today. See <http://www.worldwide-reading.com/archiv-en/06-09-2017-worldwide-reading-of-the-universal-declaration-of-human-rights>.

The reading began shortly at about 7:15 pm in the spacious common room of the CIEE Global Institute (Gneisenaustr. 27). We had over 30 readers, all of whom read in English and some of whom read in one or several other languages. We thank MARIE BUDDE, a director of the Global Institute, for her help.

After the reading, ADAM WILKENS gave a brief historical introduction to the 1948 Declaration. ADAM then moderated a discussion about the relevance of this human rights document today. The evening, with an attendance of about 80 people (including CIEE students and a large contingent from the American Women’s Club), was organized by CAROLYN PRESCOTT and ANN WERTHEIMER. See [www.avaberlin.org](http://www.avaberlin.org) for photos.

13. On Saturday, October 14, AVA-Berlin sponsored two films at the One World Berlin Human Rights Film Festival. The first film is a brand-new short: *Care in Chaos* by the news organization Rewire. In the words of Amy Goodman’s Democracy Now, the 20-minute film “uncovers the rising tide of attacks on abortion clinics under Trump.”

The second film, *Vessel*, is a 2014 multi-national documentary written and directed by Diana Whitten, focusing on the work of Women on Waves, a Dutch pro-choice organization founded in 2000 by the Dutch physician Rebecca Gomperts. The goal of Women on Waves was to “prevent unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortions by providing sexual health services, including early medical abortions (abortion with pills), on board a Dutch ship, outside the territorial waters of countries where abortion is illegal.” For more information, please visit [www.womenonwaves.org](http://www.womenonwaves.org).

The two screenings were followed by a discussion with local activists involved in the international abortion rights movement: Sarah Diehl, author, filmmaker, and co-founder of the German-Polish group Ciocia Basia, which helps women from Poland get abortions, and Anna Schaden, who is part of a student group making a documentary about the so-called Black Movement in Poland. PAM SELWYN moderated the discussion.

14. The November Stammtisch, organized and moderated by CAROLYN PRESCOTT, focused on Strategies for Resistance and Change. The discussion drew from a number of readings, which were distributed by mail beforehand. This was a short list for a very broad subject, and was meant to help us think about these issues in what will surely be an ongoing movement.

Questions for Discussion: In terms of countering the takeover of the administrative state and the undermining of civil society, rule of law, and democratic processes— What works? What doesn't work? How can protest demonstrations be shaped to carry their message more effectively? How well are we using the media available to us for presentation, for persuasion, for organizing? How are we using language during this critical period? How can we avoid a sort of linguistic and strategic mirroring of Trumpism? How can we formulate a vision for change?

15. Because the discussion at the November Stammtisch was so fruitful, we decided to continue it at the December Stammtisch. CAROLYN PRESCOTT again agreed to moderate.

#### **LETTERS WRITTEN, PETITIONS SIGNED AND SPEECHES GIVEN**

1. Here is the call to action (written by The Coalition Berlin) that AVA signed in anticipation of the demonstration on January 20, Inauguration Day. See [www.avaberlin.org](http://www.avaberlin.org) for photos.

No to Global Trumpism: Time for Action!  
Protest on January 20, U.S. Inauguration Day

Donald Trump likes the spotlight. But as he takes the stage as the new U.S. president, cameras will be turned toward protesters worldwide reminding him and all leaders that racism, misogyny, homophobia, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and fear-mongering will not be tolerated.

“Trumpism” is not an isolated national movement. We stand united against opportunists such as Frauke Petry and the AfD, Marine Le Pen, Geert Wilders, and Nigel Farage who scapegoat and demonize immigrants and religious and ethnic minorities to build their own political power.

Now is the time to come together and resist. Our task is urgent: we are witnessing a wholesale debasement of democracy and hollowing out of democratic institutions in favor of corporate power. We reject the rise of violent nationalism, attacks on workers' rights and trade unions, increasing economic and social inequality, corruption, the prioritization of profit over people, and the dangerous disregard for climate change.

We denounce Trump's reckless attitude toward the use of military power and nuclear weapons.

A Trump presidency risks escalating global conflict and war, sparking arms races and further militarization. His trigger-happy instincts threaten effective cooperation, dialogue, and disarmament.

Around the world, the tide of extremism is rising. Racist rhetoric is igniting xenophobia and violence against refugees and minorities. Militarization is growing. Environmental protections are at risk, and the dangers of climate change are being dismissed. Economic inequality is being exacerbated. Fake news is replacing facts. Public services—social security, education, health care—face privatization. Women's and LGBT rights are under attack.

We must speak out. We must reach across borders and build bridges against hatred and division. We demonstrate in solidarity with all those in Washington D.C., London, Madrid, Paris, and elsewhere who say NO to Trump.

2. On April 11, ANN WERTHEIMER signed this letter on behalf of AVA-Berlin:

**A wide-ranging collection of leading activists from a variety of movements has come together to sign the following powerful statement to the U.S. Congress:**

Our environmental and human needs are desperate and urgent. We need to transform our economy, our politics, our policies and our priorities to reflect that reality. That means **reversing the flow of our tax dollars, away from war and militarism, and towards funding human and environmental needs**, and demanding support for that reversal from all our political leaders at the local, state and national levels.

We and the movements we are part of face multiple crises. Military and climate wars are destroying lives and environments, threatening the planet and creating enormous flows of desperate refugees. Violent racism, Islamophobia, misogyny, homophobia and other hatreds are rising, encouraged by the most powerful voices in Washington DC.

President Trump plans to strip **\$54 billion** from human and environmental spending so as to increase already massive spending on the military. The plan raises Pentagon spending to well over **60 cents of every discretionary dollar** in the U.S. budget -- even as Trump himself admits that enormous military spending has left the Middle East "far worse than it was 16, 17 years ago." The wars have not made any of us safer.

Washington's militarized foreign policy comes home as domestic law enforcement agencies acquire military equipment and training from the Pentagon and from military allies abroad. Impoverished communities of color see and face the power of this equipment regularly, in the ongoing **domestic wars on drugs and immigrants**. This military-grade equipment is distributed and used by many of the same private companies that profit from mass incarceration and mass deportation.

Using just a fraction of the proposed military budget, the U.S. could provide free, top-quality, culturally competent and equitable **education** from pre-school through college and ensure affordable comprehensive **healthcare** for all. We could provide wrap-around services for survivors of sexual assault and intimate partner violence; replace mass incarceration with mass **employment**, assure **clean energy and water** for all residents and link our cities by **newfast trains**. We could double non-military U.S. **foreign aid**, wipe out **hunger** worldwide. The list of possibilities is long.

Instead, the Trump administration plans to take much of their \$54 billion gift for the Pentagon from the budgets of the Environmental Protection Agency (even threatening to shut down its already under-funded environmental justice office), the Department of Health and Human Services (slashing family planning and anti-violence-against-women programs), from the State Department (thus privileging war over diplomacy), and foreign aid (so that the wealthiest country in human history turns its back on the world's most desperate).

Among those most desperate are the 24 million refugees who have been forced out of their homes and countries, more than at any time since World War II. Instead of cruel Muslim bans and cuts to the already meager number of refugees allowed into the U.S., we should be welcoming far more. Alleviating the refugee crisis also means working to **end, rather than escalate, the wars that create refugees**, and supporting human rights defenders in their home communities. That means more diplomacy and foreign aid, not more military spending.

With its hundreds of billions of un-audited dollars, **the military remains the greatest consumer of petroleum** in the United States, and one of the world's worst polluters. The U.S. needs new green, sustainable jobs across our economy targeted to people facing the highest rates of unemployment and low wages. Military spending results in an economic drain. Clean energy production creates 50% more jobs than the same investment in military spending.

The U.S. military also serves as a security force protecting the extraction and transport of fossil fuels domestically and from the Middle East and other parts of the world. U.S. military force thus enables the continued assault on the planet and some of its most impoverished inhabitants by ensuring the supply of cheap fossil fuels, all while subsidizing some of the largest corporations in the world.

A December 2014 Gallup poll showed **people in 65 nations considered the United States far and away the largest threat to peace in the world**. If the United States was known for providing clean drinking water, schools, medicine, and solar panels to others, instead of attacking and invading other countries, we would be far more secure and face far less global hostility.

We can do this. Reverse the flow. No Walls, No War, No Warming!



3. We signed this solidarity statement below from The Coalition Berlin to show our support for Charlottesville protesters. We also called on AVA members to attend the solidarity demonstration on August 12 (see **OTHER PEOPLE'S PROJECTS THAT AVA-BERLIN SUPPORTED** below).

**The Coalition Berlin** stands in solidarity with Black Lives Matter and anti-fascist activists in Charlottesville, Virginia who bravely stood up to the racist and fascist "[Unite the Right](#)" rally on Saturday, August 12, 2017.

At the rally, fascist and white supremacist groups waved swastika and confederate flags, chanted "Jews shall not replace us," and marched around the statue of Confederate icon and defender of slavery, Robert E. Lee.

Under the guise of "free speech," these groups seek to recruit others to their cause, with the intent of intimidating and harming people of color, Muslims, Jews, immigrants, women, and LGBTQ people. Yesterday this became reality when a white supremacist intentionally drove into counter-demonstrators, killing one activist and injuring 19 more.

This attack demonstrates the deadly consequences of the right's organizing, and is a direct extension of their dehumanizing ideology. It is the result of a sympathetic American president who encourages racist scapegoating and feelings of white victimhood.

As activists in Berlin, Germany, we are reminded daily of the murderous consequences of fascism. For this reason, fascists must be countered and confronted, not ignored. This task is especially urgent as we witness the growth of the far-right across Europe and the United States, accompanied by attacks on vulnerable populations.

**We will continue to defend Muslims, Jews, queer people, immigrants, people of color, and women. We recommit ourselves to anti-fascist organizing and education, and urge individuals and organizations to do the same.**

We encourage groups and individuals to add their names in solidarity to this statement. [Click here to add your organization or name.](#)

In solidarity,  
The Coalition Berlin

## **OUR OTHER MODEST CONTRIBUTIONS TO CIVIL SOCIETY**

1. Although AVA-Berlin has no affiliation with any political party in the U.S. or in Germany, we are always happy to explore our common interests with the Berlin chapter of the Democrats Abroad.
2. AVA-Berlin is always pleased to announce English-language events around the



city, especially those at the Einstein Forum in Potsdam and the American Academy at Wannsee.

3. NPR Berlin (104.1 FM) publicized our regular Stammtische and special events on its web site. Its replacement, KCRW, does not (yet) have a community calendar.

4. Since the November election, more and more people have been coming to AVA events or have asked to be on our mailing list. They want to be informed and to be involved in the resistance against Trump and the European nationalist right, especially the AfD here in Germany.

Those of you already on the AVA-Berlin mailing list receive our invitations and can decide whether you would like to go to an AVA movie night, join others at a demonstration, or participate in a discussion. So you are in **The Loop**. Now and then you forward our messages to friends who are not in AVA, or post our events on social media, on your personal web sites, or on the web sites of other organizations, essentially trying to expand the number of individuals among whom information circulates, expanding **The Loop**.

AVA would like to try to gradually expand this loop even more. We suspect that there are many more people who may want to be engaged in some form of resistance but who prefer not to join an organization or a mailing list. American Voices Abroad Berlin wants to connect with them.

So we are asking you to think of the people in the various formal or informal groups to which you belong – a reading group, a sports club, a band, or colleagues at work – and to consider whether they would like to be in **The Loop**.

**Remember, The Loop is not an organization; it's simply spreading the word – from friend-to-friend, from one group to another – in order to enlarge the community of engaged citizens.**

Let's focus on the March for Science [www.marchforscienceberlin.de](http://www.marchforscienceberlin.de) as our first concerted effort. Ask some people that you know if they would like to be alerted to new information or opportunities to be active, specifically, for a beginning, if they would like to join AVAers at the Science March protests on April 22, 1 pm, starting at the Humboldt University, Unter den Linden 6.

The March for Science is a way for all of us to combat 'alternative' facts and fake news, whether the denial of climate change or the dissemination of absurd conspiracy theories. The March is trans-institutional and independent of all political parties. It welcomes everyone who cares about the future of our society – not just scientists. "On April 22nd this year, [Earth Day](#), people will be taking to the streets worldwide, as well as in many cities in Germany ([map](#)), to show their support for science and research as a non-negotiable base of our open and democratic society." So let's get more people in **The Loop**. Make a mental list of **Loop** contacts and be ready for more information about the Science March here in Berlin, specifically our AVA contingent, as the March nears. Watch this space for details!

5. Let us know about your own exhibitions, publications, openings and performances.

Just send the information to [wertheim@zedat.fu-berlin.de](mailto:wertheim@zedat.fu-berlin.de).

## **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS AVA ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING – DECEMBER 11, 2016, as recorded by ADAM WILKINS**

American Voices Abroad Berlin

Minutes for the AVA-Berlin Annual Business Meeting 2016 submitted by Adams Wilkins, secretary

The annual AVA business meeting was held on 11 December 2016, and took place at our usual venue, the La Parrilla Steak House, Albrechtstr. 11 in Mitte. We began shortly after 12 noon. JANE HARTMANN chaired, taking the place of PAM SELWYN, who was ill and could not attend. Eleven members-in-good-standing were in attendance, plus several guests. The preliminary agenda had been prepared by chair ANN WERTHEIMER and, with no modifications made, the meeting followed the agenda.

1. The first item of business was acceptance of the agenda.
2. ANN WERTHEIMER then gave her report of the year's events and activities, reviewing organizational matters, special AVA projects during the year and various public positions taken (in terms of letters written, petitions signed and speeches given). Under organizational matters, key points were that ANN had taken over the job of mailing list administrator, though in 2017 this will presumably be passed back to ADAM WILKINS. JON WOLFE and KAREN AXELRAD continued their jobs of web master and photographer, respectively. It was also noted that there had been a change of venue for our monthly Stammtisch from the "Crunch Kantine" in June to "Raamson" in Schöneberg to "Café Daddy", a family Turkish restaurant, one door down on Kolonnenstr. 50 in August. Dues remained at 30 euros, although, as before, individuals who find that too steep for their budget can self-assess payment at a lower level. Amongst AVA-Berlin projects reviewed were RICH ROSEN's talk on the steep economic challenge that mitigating climate change poses (4 August) and a second talk from Miguel Verde of the Berlin Forum on Global Politics (6 October) on the current state of the big trade treaties (TTP, TTIP, and CETA). Other events of note were sponsorship of the film by D.J. Spooky, "Rebirth of a Nation" at the Lichtblick Kino in Prenzlauerberg (10 October) and participation, with our banner, at the big anti-TTIP demonstration (17 December). An activity that stretched over several months, in which a number of our members participated but in which ALAN BENSON played the lead role, was voter registration for the 2016 Presidential election in the US. The entire report will be posted at [www.avaberlin.org](http://www.avaberlin.org); click on the Archive tab.
3. ALAN BENSON presented the Treasurer's report, reviewing income and expenditures. The bottom line is that our net balance at the end of the year was 476.45 euros, hence somewhat down from the balance of about 625 euros the previous year, but still satisfactory. In 2016, we had 23 fully paid up members.

4. The election of officers was held, under the supervision of JOAN KLAKEW. The proposed slate of officers for 2017 was as follows: ANN WERTHEIMER (chair), PAM SELWYN (vice chair), ADAM WILKINS (secretary), ALAN BENSON (treasurer), JANE HARTMANN (assistant treasurer), and ISABEL COLE and MICHAEL STELTZER (associates). With 11 members-in-good-standing in attendance and voting, the slate was accepted unanimously.

5. An informal review and discussion of some of the events of the year followed. Since this was a US Presidential election year and one with an outcome that the great majority, if not all, of our members will have viewed with dismay, much of the discussion in this part of the meeting and the next was about our activities and views in the run-up to the election and what we, as an organization and as individuals, can do to oppose actions by the incoming Administration. It was noted that our own MICHAEL STELTZER founded the Meet-up group “Berliners for Bernie” and that this has now been renamed “Progressive Democrats Abroad”. MICHAEL was also a speaker at a panel discussion held on 2 November at the August Bebel Institute in Wedding, on the question of how progressives should vote in the 2016 election. This topic had been the subject of much discussion amongst our members face-to-face and by email. ANN and CAROLYN PRESCOTT wrote a personal letter to all members discussing this issue, and urging that members seriously consider voting for Hillary Clinton against Trump, once she had become the Democratic Party nominee. ANN pointed out that the Democratic Party platform adopted at the convention was probably the most progressive in decades. She said that had Hillary won, we could have spent our time holding her to the promises of this platform. (See [http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/papers\\_pdf/117717.pdf](http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/papers_pdf/117717.pdf) for the platform itself.) ALAN reviewed his voter registration work for AVA and was able to report some good results for the efforts made.

6. The final part of the meeting involved discussion of plans for 2017, particularly in light of the election of Trump to the Presidency and how progressives should respond. NANCY ENGLISH began with a psychologist’s view of Trump and the likely consequences of how he will govern, if her diagnosis is more or less correct; it is not a pretty picture. JOAN moved, and this was seconded and voted, that we thank ANN and CAROLYN for their lucid letter concerning the Hillary Clinton issue. The discussion then shifted to the future and specifically to plans we should make for 2017. KAREN raised the question of how we might investigate getting paid ads on Google and talked about our need for a greater presence on social media. The discussion then shifted to the particular issue of electoral reform, which, it is generally agreed, is sorely needed in the US. RICH ROSEN had earlier, by email, suggested that this was an important topic that we might want to give special attention to in 2017. ANN had then made a list of various specific issues, under this heading, in the preliminary agenda. CAROLYN then broadened the topic to raise the question of whether there were not a whole slew of issues that we should address – both for clarifying our individual understanding and in terms of possible actions by AVA.

There was general agreement that this was a very good idea, and ADAM suggested that we approve it as a formal motion and then follow up with a specific plan. This idea was approved by an informal vote. The suggestion was made that for many of the coming Stammtische we name a particular issue for special attention, at least for part of the time. ADAM then proposed that he and CAROLYN work up a list of possible

issues, with brief descriptions, for consideration by AVA. It was further suggested that the list, once approved, be sent to our whole membership, with suggested dates for each topic. This might well improve turnout at the Stammtisch. Again, this was approved by the group. CAROLYN and ADAM then agreed that they would meet soon to discuss the issues and produce the list, with the aim of having this ready before the 5<sup>th</sup> January Stammtisch. BENJAMIN JOHNSON, an early member who has returned after a long absence, proposed that matters of electoral reform be the key subject for discussion at that Stammtisch and that he would take the lead in explaining the Electoral College and the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact. Again this was agreed.

The penultimate discussion, in which ISABEL COLE led off, concerned the other progressive groups in Berlin and how they are planning to respond to the coming Trump years. A key question is to what extent and how we might coordinate AVA's efforts with those groups. Should the emphasis be on joining in with other groups' efforts or developing our own distinctive presence? The latter would be most valuable if we can increase the numbers of our active members (a recurring issue for us that will be receiving the attention of a small subcommittee convened last year, consisting of MARGRET KOLBE, CAROLYN PRESCOTT, GRETCHEN KLOTZ and ADAM WILKINS). Because the political views of other groups are often different from ours, this whole issue of cooperation vs. stand-alone activities is a non-trivial one. We will almost certainly be returning to it, perhaps on a case-by-case basis.

The final part of the discussion returned to the matter raised by KAREN AXELRAD earlier. How might we strengthen our presence on social media and project our views better. ADAM argued that there was a large potential for doing a lot more with you tube videos but that, if so, we would need to look into this and try to devise strategies. STEVE GILL strongly concurred.

The last bit of "business" was that ALAN asked approval for donations to two groups that we have supported in the past: 75€ each to Connection e.V. and to DMFK (Deutsches Mennonitisches Friedenskomitee). Approval was granted.

7. The meeting was adjourned a few minutes before 3pm, amid mutual wishes for a good year in 2017.