

AVA-BERLIN, ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

DECEMBER 17, 2023 -

HIGHLIGHTS

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

1. Our last Annual Business Meeting was held on July 23, 2023 at Feinberg's Restaurant. This was the 20th anniversary of AVA's founding and the first in-person meeting of AVA since 2019; the business meetings in 2020 and 2021 were held via Zoom. AVA postponed the regular December meeting in 2022. However, the serving Executive Committee members all agreed to extend their terms until we actually held elections. See item 2 below.

2. The following Executive Committee officers were re-elected: ANN WERTHEIMER (chair); PAM SELWYN (vice chair); ALAN BENSON (treasurer); JANE HARTMANN (assistant treasurer); ISABEL COLE, JON WOLFE, and CAROLYN PRESCOTT (associates).

3. ANN WERTHEIMER continued as mailing list administrator and PAM SELWYN as mailing list administrator backup.

4. JON WOLFE continued as our web master.

5. 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/member-groups/> and scroll down to UfPJ International Member Groups.

6. 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.org and then click on MEMBERSHIP for details.

ALAN BENSON, with JANE HARTMANN as backup, kept dues records, answered questions, and wrote reminders.

7. Our Stammtische are sometimes in person and sometimes via Zoom. We have kept to the two Stammtisch guidelines recommended by DOUG HILLMER: First we go around the "room" and give everyone 1-2 minutes just to say what's on their minds. This can be about the political or social issues of the day, or someone can just mention something personal. This precedes the actual Stammtisch discussion and gives everyone a chance to be heard early on. We just listen to each other to see what people are interested in or concerned about. Of course, during this first part of the meeting a topic may emerge. Then, during the Stammtisch discussion itself, if there is a back and forth conversation between two people, they should "self-regulate" their discussion after three or four exchanges by one or both saying that it is time to "yield the floor" to others. If nobody wants the floor, then the back-and-forth can continue. PAM SELWYN moderated when necessary.

8. In November, ANN WERTHEIMER got a message from a student at the Hochschule für Medien, Kommunikation und Wirtschaft (in Gesundbrunnen) who wanted to know if someone from AVA would participate in their project: a podcast about the upcoming U.S. presidential elections. Although the students used the word "expert," what they really seemed to want was someone who had been paying attention. ANN went to Gesundbrunnen, was filmed and recorded, and is waiting for a link to the edited Podcast, which will then be sent to all.

OUR AVA-BERLIN ACTIVITIES

1. On Saturday, August 5 at 4:00 PM, we saw *Oppenheimer* at the Zoo Palast <<https://zoopalast.premiumkino.de>> in the original version (English without subtitles).

2. On August 29, at 7. PM, we had an informal discussion with Angelina Davydova, a Russian environmental and climate journalist who has been

living in exile in Berlin since Russia's invasion of Ukraine. She told us about her activities with the [Ukraine War Environmental Consequences Work Group](#) and answered questions on the environmental movement in Russia, developments in the Russian diaspora and political opposition, and other relevant issues.

We're grateful that Austausch e. V. agreed to host the evening and that its director, Stefan Melle, a prominent expert on Eastern Europe, was present to introduce Angelina.

Angelina Davydova writes for international media (including Zeit, taz, Science), NGOs and think-tanks. She is also a co-host of the English-language podcast The Eurasian Climate Brief. Angelina is currently a fellow of the journalistic program Media in Cooperation and Transition (MICT) in Berlin. She is also a climate journalism coordinator with n-ost, a Berlin-based network for cross-border journalism. She has been an observer with the UN climate negotiations (UNFCCC) since 2008. She is a member of the World Future Council since October 2020.

3. On Friday, September 15, we joined The Fridays for Future climate strike. Rather than have a contingent ourselves, individual AVAers joined some of the many participating NGOs (BUND, NABU, DUH, Campact, Greenpeace, WWF) at the Brandenburg Gate.

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 Democrats Abroad as well as with German groups like Campact.
2. AVA is always happy to announce political events around town, especially if they are in English and/or not widely publicized. Let us know if you hear of something that might interest others. And let us know about your own films, exhibitions, publications, and performances. Just send the information to wertheim@zedat.fu-berlin.de.

