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• Beratung • Technologie • Outsourcing
Were He Still Here

If only Stephen Kellen could have experienced another semester at the Hans Arnhold Center. He would have been as engrossed as he had been during his last visit in May 2002, when he sat rapt in the first row listening to Walter Laqueur lecture on terrorism. The breadth of his curiosity was remarkable. He relished regular contact with his vast collection of Berlin friends and followed the Academy’s program closely from a distance. This spring he would have wanted to hear every detail of the visits of three veteran Middle East experts. I can imagine the pleasure he would have taken in hearing the Scharoun Ensemble play compositions by Lukas Foss, how he would have conversed with Michael Geyer about nationalism, and how he would have listened attentively to Tom Geoghegan’s social prognoses. We were blessed to have him as long as we did, but we wish he were still here to cheer us on.

—Gary Smith
Stephen Max Kellen

Berlin 1914 – New York 2004

Stephen had three great loves: his wife and constant companion of nearly 64 years, Anna-Maria, the city of his birth, Berlin, and the city he adopted, New York. As he was fond of saying, “I became a very good New Yorker but have always remained a good Berliner.” The American Academy embodies these three loves. The Academy’s Berlin home is the house in which Anna-Maria grew up and where she lived when Stephen courted her. The Academy was founded on the idea that it would be a living bridge between two communities about which Stephen cared deeply. It would be a bridge for people, including, importantly young people, and for ideas bringing Germany and America closer together and enriching both.

Stephen gave every encouragement for the Academy to grow quickly into the role he envisioned for it. But as it grew (sometimes even more rapidly than he expected), he admonished us — in another of his favorite phrases — “quality, not quantity” must be our touchstone. High standards were a hallmark for all of Stephen’s activities.

Although we will miss Stephen’s energy, focus, judgment and continual thoughtful help, he has left us a very lively institution which bears his stamp and keeps reminding us how fortunate we are to have had him as a great friend.

— Robert Mundheim

“...I believe in love and work, and their linkage. I believe that we are neither angels nor devils, but humans, with clusters of potentials in both directions. I am neither an optimist nor a pessimist, but a possibilist.”

— Max Lerner

My grandfather was a great collector — of ideas, art, and cherished friends. What my family learned on his passing was that he was also an extraordinary collector of quotations. Much to our surprise, we found them squirreled away everywhere: his pockets, wallet, and drawers were filled with scraps of paper. They never left his side.

— Anabelle Garrett
S tephen Kellen was a great man. He would have been surprised by this statement, because he never sought personal recognition for his achievements, and, indeed, was, by temperament and upbringing, incapable of such thinking about himself. But, having known a few people who were truly great—and many who thought they were—I believe that Stephen fulfilled the characteristics of greatness. While he maintained, to the very end, a lively interest in the affairs of the world around him, Stephen probably saw himself primarily as an observer of events.

Well, in this respect, although in few others, Stephen was wrong. In fact, in every area in which he took an interest, Stephen made a real difference. His impact on the music world, and on the city of New York, was obvious and undeniable. So, too, his firm commitment to the Council on Foreign Relations.

But it was the American Academy in Berlin—the project that brought me together with him and Anna-Maria—that turned out to be the most enduring legacy of his philanthropic work. One of his favorite phrases—I can hear him saying it now in his precise, don’t-argue-with-me manner—was “I am a good New Yorker and a good Berliner.” The American Academy in Berlin gave him, and Anna-Maria, a chance to create a tangible link between the city of their birth and the city that they had made their home for over sixty years.

I need to be as precise here as Stephen always was, as Stephen would expect. When he said “Berlin” he meant Berlin, and not, he made clear, Germany. Not that he opposed the long postwar effort to rebuild Germany; on the contrary, he played an important role in this effort. He would have been surprised by this statement, because he never sought personal recognition for his achievements, and, indeed, was, by temperament and upbringing, incapable of such thinking about himself. But, having known a few people who were truly great—and many who thought they were—I believe that Stephen fulfilled the characteristics of greatness. While he maintained, to the very end, a lively interest in the affairs of the world around him, Stephen probably saw himself primarily as an observer of events.

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I need to be as precise here as Stephen always was, as Stephen would expect. When he said “Berlin” he meant Berlin, and not, he made clear, Germany. Not that he opposed the long postwar effort to rebuild Germany; on the contrary, he played an important role in this effort. But he did so out of a conviction that it was in our national interests to create a stable and democratic Germany. Germany was something else—his home, even though it had rejected him and so many others in the 1930s. This was clear in a remarkable piece of symbolism—his insistence on always staying at the Hotel Kempinski because it was located on the site of the house in which he had grown up. By the end, of course, Berlin had embraced him again and even given him its highest award.

The circumstances that brought us together as collaborators and friends are known to many. Allow me to recall it once more.

We began with an idea: to create a permanent American presence in Berlin as the storied Berlin brigade left the city it had protected throughout the cold war. Henry Kissinger, Richard von Weizsäcker, and Tom Farmer joined me in announcing the idea on September 9, 1994, the day after the last American troops left the city. But it was only an idea. No building. No money.

We finally found a building, a large villa on the Wannsee—not the Villa on the Wannsee, but a beautiful old building that had, in its lifetime, been taken over by Hitler, ransacked by theRussians in 1945, and served as the American military recreation center during the cold war. The German government offered it to us, but it was a run-down mess, unusable.

Then came the miracle moment. We discovered that the villa had been the childhood home of Anna-Maria Kellen, whose father, Hans Arnhold, was one of Germany’s leading bankers before the Nazis came to power.

My call on the Kellens at their home in 1996 changed all of our lives. Entering their Park Avenue apartment for the first time, being served those small triangular pieces of pumpernickel laden with smoked salmon, looking at the spectacular art, including a Salvador Dalí portrait of Anna-Maria’s mother, surrounded by silver-framed family portraits from another continent and another century, I somehow felt at home immediately. Perhaps it was because I too had come from a family background steeped in a Mitteleuropa sensibility. I felt as though I was back with my grandparents in Zurich, or my great-grandmother in long-ago summers in Sils Maria. The Kellens had been born in the 1910s, but their values and roots went back much further, into the nineteenth century. Stephen’s immense dignity, his ramrod straight back, his perfect manners, his discipline and iron will cloaked in the modesty of an old-world sensibility—all this was quite unforgettable in the modern world. I remember once, in Berlin, the head of the Prussian Historical Society—and you can imagine what that means—said to me, after listening to Stephen and Anna-Maria speaking German, “You know, no one still speaks German the way they do. It is an experience just to listen to them.”

Stephen was not modern in any sense of the word. Yet he was always open to new ideas and encouraging young people whom he well knew lived with values and a style completely different from the one that had been hard-wired into him early in life.

And so he and Anna-Maria made the decision to support the American Academy—not just in a small way but with a massive gift that would enable us to rebuild completely the inside of Anna-Maria’s childhood home while maintaining its essential character. From that time on, the Kellens and the other descendants of Hans Arnhold have been the central reason for the success of the American Academy in Berlin.

Stephen, always a stickler for precision, wanted to put Anna-Maria forward, since it was her childhood home, not his. So at the Academy’s inaugural in 1998, he insisted that she, and she alone, speak. Stephen stood quietly to the side, a faint, shy smile concealing a deep pleasure just showing on the surface, as Germans greeted him. They were virtually speechless in the face of such an extraordinary gesture of reconciliation, if not quite forgiveness, and their inability to express themselves masked, but only slightly, their indescribably complex reaction to his generosity. Then Anna-Maria spoke, eloquently and movingly, of her childhood in the rooms and gardens that were now so magnificently restored, as Stephen quietly watched her, his eyes glistening with emotion and pride.

But behind Anna-Maria and the whole family was always this man—so stern on the outside, so caring underneath, with a vision of a future that he well knew he would not see. But as we say goodbye to Stephen Kellen, we should also say that his vision will survive, and will succeed. New Yorkers are proud that he chose to live in and give so much to their city. And Berlin is remarkably fortunate that he could see beyond the horrors that had driven him from Germany over sixty years ago, and leave behind, in the city of his birth, something so enduring, a symbol of his vision that will last for a very long time. This is our pledge to Stephen and Anna-Maria and the family. Because of their vision and generosity, I am confident it will survive us all as a permanent link between the two cities that formed the arc of his extraordinary life.
Six weeks ago I sat in The Kitchen, one of these dark experimental spaces somewhere in the Chelsea district of Manhattan, in order to see a rock “tragic-comedy” written and illustrated by a legendary, quirky cartoonist who had been at the Academy. In the intermission, I surveyed the list of The Kitchen’s benefactors on the photocopied pamphlet which served as a program (admittedly a professional vice), and there they were: Anna-Maria and Stephen M. Kellen, the surest seal of excellence any New York cultural institution could display.

Their interests encompassed both the larger-than-life Berlin Philharmonic and the humble Third Street Music School Settlement on the Lower East Side. Their zeal was always for excellence and never for personal recognition. Stephen’s charm was that of the discreet philanthropist, the respectful mentor who was generous in counsel but also allowed his charges to make their own mistakes. (In this respect, Stephen is uncannily like Bob Mundheim, the impresario of the discreet philanthropist, who was forced to leave National Socialist Germany and moved to this country; and of my own relations are of resonance.)

As many have pointed out here, his appetite for dialogue was inexhaustible. Every few weeks brought reports of a conversation with one or another German politician passing through, whether Joschka Fischer, Angela Merkel, or a post-communist member of the Bundestag. He inquired just as eagerly of Americans returning from Berlin like Daniel Libeskind or Roger Cohen.

Stephen’s curiosity was dialectical – simultaneously probing and edifying. Its effect on his interlocutors was as indelible as it was diplomatic. I kept running into people whose lives he had affected. Many came to the Academy, like the von der Planitzes or Bredows, or the cultivated woman my son and I happened to meet on a bus making the rounds of Berlin museums, whom he had impressed after only a few conversations.

Many of us will miss those weekly telephone calls, Stephen’s careful and discrete questioning about life in Berlin. He was somehow always better informed about life in the city of his birth than many Berliners. After answering all his questions, I always wanted to keep him on the line as long as I could in order to tap into that vast store of wisdom.

The Kitchen’s cavernous rotunda of St. John’s Cathedral on Amsterdam and 112th Street gradually filled at last month’s memorial tribute to Stephen, it became clear once again that he had touched many lives. Present were three of four generations of bankers, industrialists, and the politically minded, as well as artists, educators, journalists, and, not least, Germanophiles – just a fraction of the New Yorkers and Berliners who shared an admiration for Stephen Kellen. Each of those six or seven hundred who were there signified a relationship, a story or subplot in Stephen’s life. Even Georg Faust, the magnificent principal cellist of the Berlin Philharmonic who performed there stood for the many ways in which Stephen’s life intersected with those of others. Stephen loved the Berlin Philharmonic, and spoke admiringly of Georg Faust, which moved the superb cellist to fly to New York that day, where he played Bach and Casals with luminous virtuosity between the encomia memorializing Stephen’s life.

But this tale has a preface: In the salon-like gatherings in the home of Hans and Ludmilla Arnhold, where Stephen first met and later courted his future wife Anna-Maria, another great cellist, Gregor Piatigorsky occasionally played, once even with Casals. As that story goes, Piatigorsky, having arrived in Berlin, first barely subsisted by playing a shabbily borrowed instrument in a Russian bar, where he was discovered by a friend of Hans Arnhold’s. The result was true to form: Piatigorsky needed a proper cello, and Stephen’s future father-in-law provided it; all the more fitting that a Piatigorsky pupil, Georg Faust, should play his tribute to the son-in-law at that Manhattan memorial gathering.

I will always cherish the feeling of déjà vu I experienced the first time I visited Stephen and Anna-Maria Kellen. What had drawn me to Berlin was biographically-grounded, from summer visits to New York with my great aunts from Königsberg and their presents of Mörike and Heine to precious weeks spent in the book-lined apartment of Gershom and Fania Scholem in Rehavia. These were worlds that no longer existed in Germany but could still be experienced in New York and in Jerusalem. It was not necessarily Jewish – how many families had been baptized in previous generations? – and yet its mores were as unmistakeable as its cosmopolitanism. The wealth of books surrounding the Klees and Feiningers in the Kellen home signified a respect for the word as well as love of visual art.

My fainter memories of the Scholems and of my own relations are of resolute integrity (not to mention a heavily-Berlinesque English), but it was Stephen Kellen who gave me real insight into that milieu. Their world was shaped by an appreciation, if not admiration, for the best of what those heady years in Berlin brought forth in the arts, scholarship, and industry. It became determined by the measure of character demanded by the vicissitudes of the trials that followed. In the case of Stephen Kellen, his life forged a character compelling in its probity and curiosity.

One of the most perplexing questions remains why a person who was forced to leave National Socialist Germany would devote his life to rebuilding that very country and especially devote so much philanthropic passion to the re-civilization of the city of his birth. Very few émigrés looked back in anything but anger and abhorrence. I asked one of the few who returned, the venerable 91-year old Berliner Ernst Cramer, with whom Stephen had established a fond relationship in recent years. He attributed the decades of his devotion to building the Springer publishing house in postwar Berlin to two things: a sense of gratitude and responsibility to the country he grew up in.

Stephen was blissfully unaware of his greatness, and we can understand something better the character of a man who exemplified Churchill’s well-known ideal: “The price of greatness is responsibility.”

Man the Measure
Gary Smith
First met Stephen in 1942. He was 27, he was married to my cousin Anna-Maria, he was a young father, and he was a full-fledged banker. I was twenty, and would spend the next years in the US Army. On occasion, when I had a 3-day pass and was able to get to New York, Anna-Maria and Stephen were my generous hosts at their home.

Stephen first trained at the respected Berliner Handelsgesellschaft in his native Berlin. He then spent some time at Lazard Brothers in London. In 1936 he immigrated to the United States and found a job at Carl M. Loeb, where he worked for two entrepreneurial young partners, Harold Linder and Bill Golden, both of whom became his lifelong friends. In 1940 Hans Arnhold, his father-in-law, drafted him to help build an investment banking business in New York. The Arnhold Family had recently founded Arnhold and S. Bleichroeder, Inc. to keep alive its long established tradition as bankers after having been forced to abandon its banking firms, Arnhold Brothers, in Dresden and Berlin, where it had played a leading role in financing German industry and international trade.

After my discharge from the Army in 1946, my Uncle Hans also drafted me. Stephen helped me to get the needed Wall Street back-office training in the firm of his friend, Irving Kahn. On January 1, 1947, 57 years ago, I joined him at Arnhold and S. Bleichroeder. Stephen and I shared a large room with two traders, a tick Nyse ticker tape, our economist, and a secretary – my learning experience started. After three months, I took a day off – I had just gotten engaged and wanted to help my fiancée shop for our forthcoming wedding. The next day Stephen sharply reprimanded me: if I thought that I could have extra privileges just because I was a family member, I was in the wrong place. For Stephen, being a member of the Family meant having extra responsibilities. In his long career his attitude never changed – duty and responsibility came first. With his associates he was conscious of his position as a leader. He had a disciplined approach to everything and, even as we grew, each day he would circulate through each department checking with both his chiefs and his clerks. He knew most individual employees.

He had an amazing recall for all that mattered, with a deep understanding of all aspects of the business, including each footnote in the balance sheet. He may have appeared very stiff and strict, as he carried himself erect and was very conservative in his dress. Even on the hottest summer days he would never remove his jacket. He was always appreciative of good manners, and many employees not only respected him but were somewhat intimidated by him. But, they soon learned that their welfare and problems he considered as his problems. He would go out of his way to help them by applying the same methodical approach as was his nature to any solution. Many people owe him very much, certainly not least the broadly dispersed Arnhold Family. Without him our firm would never have prospered as it did. Back in the early post-war years until the 1950s, even today’s giants Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley had at most two hundred employees. International communications were mostly coded telegrams and poor telephone connections. I remember interesting transactions in which Stephen’s friend the legendary Ben Graham and his partner Jerry Newman joined with us.

Hans Arnhold wished that we should remain small – not quantity but quality worked fine. We always watched our overhead. I can remember one occasion, when we had big mail bags full of Mexican Eagle bearer shares, we enlisted Stephen’s wife Anna-Maria and my wife Sissy to clip coupons – we enjoyed having them visit us in the office.

Like traditional bankers, we were always conscious of our reputation, our name – we considered this our most important asset. Stephen helped us to solidify our standing and to gain respect within the Wall Street and banking communities by his stature and professionalism. Thanks to our firm’s European background and historic relations, we were able to build a franchise in international securities, which in turn became a very active business. Stephen was a particularly skilled and diplomatic negotiator – he loved to solve complex problems, which others had failed to solve. He called it his hobby – a typical understatement. It required a lot of work and ingenuity. He developed important relationships in particular with many leading German industrial firms, and he advised them in their expansion to the US.

For more than fifty years we shared a partnership based on mutual trust – both of us could commit the firm individually, which neither would do if the other would have objected. We were very different in many respects. We often approached issues from different angles. But, judging by the results, it must have been a good recipe. I am more impulsive and sometimes would raise a half-baked idea. Stephen would always say, “the devil is in the details,” and of course he was right. When Stephen was asked by friends and clients for advice or his opinion he would often say, “I am cautiously optimistic,” which some thought was a clever hedged response. I have thought about it lately, and I am convinced that these four words – “I am cautiously optimistic” – actually characterize the secret of his success. They truly reflect Stephen’s character and the methodical and disciplined approach in his decision making – his caution, his careful analysis, his willingness to spend time and resources to improve the odds that he would reach the right decision, and his perseverance to follow up.

His concern that an error could lead to an unanticipated loss far exceeded his eagerness for huge profit opportunities. He was never a speculator. He enjoyed games of chance but only if he could intellectually measure the odds. You could trust his judgment. He had a sharp pencil, but at the same time Stephen was most generous when it could further a cause or avoid a hardship to others. He gave much to so many people in his leadership position in the firm and in the industry.

I have talked mainly about Stephen at work – others will describe him as a devoted husband, father, grandfather and proud great-grandfather, about his contribution to broader society and as a philanthropist. Being in his company was always stimulating; his interests and knowledge were so manifold, and until the end, he was an activist and a doer.

Stephen and I have shared a lot of good times and a lot of challenges over many decades – gratefully, for a much longer time than the generations preceding us. For 64 years he served the shareholders, the associates and the clients of Arnhold and S. Bleichroeder with extraordinary devotion and care. We will miss his wise counsel and his strong presence, but all of us can reflect fondly on his great contribution to our lives. He was my partner and my friend.
I played a very small part in Stephen’s life; he loomed large in mine. I kept him abreast of foreign policy talk and gossip. He made possible a dream for the Council on Foreign Relations – to involve younger Americans more deeply in the foreign policies of their country.

As the famous German poet Richard Holbrooke – I mean, Heinrich Heine – once opined: “In the end, God will forgive us all. That’s his business.” For Stephen Kellen, God will have little to forgive. And God will soon discover that business with Stephen can be conducted very quickly.

Stephen was a gentleman and a pleasure. He was rightly known as a great philanthropist, and I might say, he made begging bearable. Many people and organizations owe an enormous debt to him. And as many of us can tell you, Stephen was the easiest person to ask for help. He either said, “Yes,” or “No,” or “I’ll think about it for a couple of days and get back to you.” There was no fuss, no bother, and little begging. If he said he’d get back to you in two days, he would be on the telephone to you within 48 hours to the minute.

In many ways, Stephen lived more in the past and in the future, less so in the present. He did not get bogged down in the present. Nor did he agonize intellectually about current political affairs. It was either “That’s right,” or “That’s ridiculous,” or “I don’t know,” or “Nobody knows.” Stephen was not restrained by great doubt. The past represented culture, and beauty, civilization, and standards. Yes, standards. And he gave so much to maintain those standards, the culture and the beauty. The present was for hard work, for fun, and for creating the wealth to help fund remembrances of the good things past and the future.

It was in the future that Stephen’s life and mine really intermingled. The future for him was about youth and hope. And the future for us at the Council on Foreign Relations was tied to bringing about the greater involvement of some of our more talented young Americans in thinking about the world and about US foreign policy.

I went to Stephen on behalf of the Council, of which he was a longtime member. I told him of the goal to commit to the young, put forward by our chairman Peter Peterson, vice chairman Maurice Greenberg, and myself. Typically, Stephen asked, “How old are these young people?” I said roughly 25–35 years of age. “What do they do at the Council?” Listen to smart people and discuss matters among themselves. “I’ll get back to you in two days,” and he did, and thus began a program that goes forward under the name of the Stephen M. Kellen Term Membership Program.

Stephen used to come to the meetings of these younger people. He would sit without moving a muscle for an hour, concentrating. Afterward, he would say to me things like: “They listen too much to Henry Kissinger and not enough to themselves.” Or, “Many of these younger women are very beautiful, but not so beautiful as the older women.”

Anna-Maria reminded me the other day that Stephen believed in God. I believe that Stephen is in heaven and that in his first conversation with God he will say something like, “We should fix things up a little around here, no?” Stephen still looms large in our lives.

Leslie H. Gelb is President Emeritus of the Council on Foreign Relations.
In the family, my grandfather was known as Dodo – a nickname given to him by his sister. Dodo would have been truly surprised and very grateful for such a wonderful showing of love and respect. Indeed, he might have wondered which great man is being honored here, as he sought neither fame, nor adulation, nor honors, nor even greatness in the common sense of the word. For him, a great life was being actively involved in worthwhile causes; it was making a positive contribution to the world around him; it was doing things right, doing things fairly, with high ethics and great attention to detail. Most of all, it was doing things in partnership with people whom he respected, in whom he saw potential and whom he trusted. It certainly was never his intention to make his life an example for us all, but he did just that.

First, in the business world and on Wall Street. For three summers in high school, I was a summer intern at Arnhold and S. Bleichroeder. So my grandfather was my first boss, and at an early age, I had a glimpse of him at work.

For him, there was something noble about being in the investment banking and money management businesses; they were an extension of his personality and God-given desire to help people, providing him a way to solve people’s strategic corporate problems and to help them build and create wealth through wise investing.

When I worked at A&S, my grandfather seemed omnipresent. I asked repeatedly over the summers, “Does my grandfather always come to this part of the firm on a daily basis by telephone, or is he just checking up on me?” The answer I got was always the same: “Mr. Kellen stops by every day.” On summer holidays, my grandfather also checked in daily by telephone – usually just before dinner. When the other end picked up, he would say, “Kellen. How are you? How are we?” I asked once why it was so important for him to call in every single day. His reply was “I like keeping my finger on the pulse.”

My grandfather knew only one kind of management, and that was “Hands-On Management.” And he had little time for people who didn’t subscribe to that theory – and great respect for the people who did. “Everything is management,” he liked to say. Often he would buy shares in a company without even looking at the numbers

at her home on the Wannsee – the same home that is today the American Academy in Berlin. The year was 1935. Through letters and visits, they stayed in close touch – even as she moved to Paris and he to London. In 1936, at the age of 22 he arrived in New York, escorted by his father who then returned to Germany. Three years later, in 1939, my grandmother’s family also came to New York. On March 7, 1940 they were married – and spent the next 64 years together.

In my grandmother, he found someone who knew his background and culture, his sensitivities and weaknesses, and in whom he could confide and trust. My grandmother once told me that at least once every day of their marriage, he called her “mein Leben” – which translates as “my Love,” or “my Life,” or “my Everything.” Over 64 years, that’s at least 23,000 times. The bond my grandparents shared was as strong as I’ve ever seen, showing the strength of a lifetime commitment of love and caring. Together, they rebuilt their lives and prospered in America – a culture so very different from the one they were born into. My grandfather had grown up in Berlin, and on weekends went to his family’s country estate in Gross Kamin, formerly in Germany and today ten miles across the Oder River in Poland. One summer, when I was in Berlin with him just after the Wall came down, I convinced him that we should take a car to the place of his childhood memories. He remembered it well – especially the park and its winding paths through beautiful forests. It was a very emotional moment for him, and it prompted one of his favorite sayings. “It is amazing what one can experience in one lifetime, if one lives long enough.”

My grandfather died just short of his ninetieth birthday. He left us quietly, caring and, as always, wanting more than anything else for his family to stick together through good times and bad into the future. Today, his children and grandchildren are trying to carry forward his legacy into a future that will need both his reach and his vision. His memory will live on – not only in our minds but also in our hearts.

Throughout his life, my grandfather was always devoted to the Katzenellenbogen family. We were born into: his older sister died in her teenage years, and he made sure her gravestone in Berlin was well tended – even when he was brand new to America and didn’t have much money. Late in 1939, he helped get his parents out of Germany, first to England and shortly thereafter to Switzerland. Tragically, the war years prevented him from reuniting with his parents before my great grandfather, Max Katzenellenbogen, died in 1944. Thereafter, he supported his mother, Leonie, for 37 years, and we all enjoyed visiting her in Switzerland as children.

Beyond grief is our gratitude. We thank him for giving us an example of discipline and hard work, of vision and style, of humility and steadfast integrity. We thank him for setting standards of excellence for us and for teaching us to be generous. And of course, we thank him for making us so proud of him and all he managed to accomplish in his extraordinary life.

Another favorite saying he borrowed from Adlai Stevenson: “It’s not the years in your life that count, it’s the life in your years.” For my grandfather, there was both a lot of life and a lot of years. We will miss our Dodo greatly and love him always.

The Life in His Years

Andrew Gundlach

“It is amazing what one can experience in one lifetime, if one lives long enough.”
Stephen Kellen’s life has been described in great detail at the memorial services in New York and Berlin. He had a special way with language, both German and English, that I shall dearly miss.

It is not only his tone of voice that I miss, the way he answered the phone – “Stephen Kellen” – the way he announced himself whenever he called. It is the way he would always inquire about how one was faring. That alone says so much about his character.

Returning from the recent memorial service in New York, I found myself missing his usual telephone call. “Seid Ihr gut geflogen?” he would ask? Then, after a pause, “Wie ist das Wetter in Berlin?”

He always wanted to be well-informed and constantly sought to acquire new knowledge, not just about his family but about so many other things.

He loved to listen and to ask questions. Whenever he wanted to contemplate something someone had said, he would use the short phrase in English, “I see…” It meant that he intended to return the given topic soon, and he usually did. I admired his ability to listen, especially in cases when I knew he held a very different opinion.

I was granted the privilege of learning from him for only a few short years, but I have so much to thank him for. He was there whenever I had a question. In the course of our conversations he often used the saying “the devil is in the details” – and then he would proceed to analyze and discuss the whole matter once more, with the greatest precision.

He was a great philanthropist. The range of his interests has always been remarkable. And he did everything with his characteristic modesty.

He loved youth and relished having discussions with young people. Not only was he a good listener, he also knew how to ask highly pointed questions. We were fond of saying of him that knowledge was his hobby horse. And whenever possible, he would try to help young people.

It was one of his traditions when he was in Berlin to visit to his old school, the Französisches Gymnasium, and have a talk with the graduating class. The last time he went, in 2002, the discussion lasted almost three hours. As a result of these exchanges he was able to bring the point of view of young people into his other debates.

He was grateful for his long life and always curious about what would come next. “How much one can experience in a single lifetime,” he would say, “and how much I am allowed to experience.” – Was man doch in einem Menschenleben alles erleben kann und ich noch erleben darf?

After his attack of pneumonia here in Berlin two years ago, he realized his life would continue only with God’s will, and he often said how grateful he was to the Lord for this blessing. The time he spent at Martin Luther Hospital remains unforgettable, not just for me. Even in his frail state he thoroughly enjoyed chatting with the nurses in a thick Berlin accent. Very soon he knew everything about the lives of the people taking care of him. That was truly Stephen Kellen.

I think he got better more rapidly because he so enjoyed being in Berlin. Berlin was his city in Germany – and only Berlin.

He would say, “Es gibt geborene Berliner und Wahl-Berliner. Ich bin beides” – There are born Berliners and Berliners by choice. I am both!

In his last years he was very concerned about the state of the world. “Die Welt ist aus den Fugen,” he would often say – the world is out of joint. And he would add: “We’ve had fifty years of paradise.” I cannot imagine a better or more succinct summary of the current state of the world.

The American Academy meant a great deal to him, and it gave him great pleasure – because of his feelings for his native city, and because he saw it as an important bridge between America and Berlin. Here, too, Stephen and Anna-Maria Kellen achieved so much through their efforts.

Speaking about my grandmother Ludmilla Arnhold at the opening of the Hans Arnhold Center, I said “Behind every great man stands a great women.” I can say the same today. Behind the unforgettable Stephen Kellen stands a great woman: my aunt Anna-Maria Kellen.
Promises to Keep
Marina Kellen French

What an extraordinary human being my father was! And how surprised he would be to hear the kind words said about him here.

Everyone knows that fathers and daughters have a special relationship, and I was lucky to have that with him for so long. I feel that I can remember my father every day of my life. The first real memories are the regular Saturday and Sunday trips we made to the carousel in New York’s Central Park. When I was at the Brearley School he walked me every day to the corner of 74th Street and Park Avenue and put me on the school bus, always telling me to enjoy my day of school and learn something! He loved father’s day at the school, and I was always so proud of him.

No one probably ever knew that Daddy was once a true Yankees fan. He liked to go to Yankee Stadium and knew all the names of the players: Joe DiMaggio, Johnny Mize, Hank Bauer, Yogi Berra, etc.

In the summer we always traveled to the mountains of Switzerland where we spent time with his mother and my maternal grandparents, and when he joined us on his two weeks vacation, one of his favorite pastimes was to go on walks with me and pick baskets of berries, which we had for dinner.

Daddy graduated from the College Royal Français and the Handelshochschule, and his first job was with the Berliner Handelsgesellschaft. Daddy came to New York via London in 1936. He shared an apartment on East 79th street with Gian Carlo Menotti and John Streisand, whose father had been Germany’s prime minister. He was a workaholic, always striving for perfection and questioning whether his decisions were the best ones that could be made.

Daddy felt a great responsibility to build up Arnhold and S. Bleichroeder to its former eminent state. He often said that what is needed to succeed is energy, urgency, discipline, focus, and fear.

His love of art came from his aunt, Estella Katzenellenbogen, who was a well-known collector of impressionists in Berlin. As I grew older he took me nearly every Saturday to visit art galleries in New York. Often he would buy a picture and take it home under his arm.

I remember one incident well when we went to the Sadenberg Gallery and he fell in love with one of the three tomato plants that Picasso painted. He really wanted it but could not afford it, so every Saturday for at least six months we visited the painting, until sadly one day it was gone.

When he made up his mind that he wanted a picture by a contemporary artist, he was determined to find one and often took us to their homes in Europe as well as in America.

He became a real mentor in my teenage years and taught me to be economical. He was particularly firm about always turning the lights off when I left a room, which I do to this day, frequently with my husband still in the room. He also taught me to drive, and always said there was nothing worse than a bad female driver. He worked especially on my driving backwards.

When I started dating I noticed that my male friends liked to talk to him as much as to me. He was very protective of me because my mother told me that he knew how men take advantage of single young ladies.

Daddy did not like a lot of change in his life. He wore the same watch he received in 1936 from a friend in London and cufflinks that his parents gave him at an early age.

He was born in a house in Berlin on the Pannenstrasse, which is now occupied by the Kempinski Hotel, and he stayed at that hotel on every visit for the rest of his life.

On his business trips to Zurich he always stayed at the Baur au Lac and always had the same meal for lunch and dinner. The waiters did not give him a menu because they knew it was the blue trout and boiled potatoes. In Düsseldorf it was the shrimp in dill sauce, and in Munich it was the venison. When he was asked why he had the same routine everywhere he replied “I am an old-fashioned man, and I also have the same wife.”

I always made fun of my father for never enjoying good restaurants. He felt that my mother was the best cook around and that nowhere could he eat as well as at home.

His greatest joy was spending time in the house in southern France, which he called “Paradise on earth.” He loved going to the markets to buy food and talking to the vendors and hearing the latest news about their personal lives.

In fact, he liked to conduct his own polls everywhere to find out what people were thinking, and to gauge the political environment. He was particularly fond of doing this in the waiting rooms of the Mayo Clinic.

Once, on being introduced to Dolly Parton, he asked, “And what do you do?” Daddy loved people, young and old, and loved life. Partly that was because my mother was the sunshine to him and taught him to enjoy life to the fullest and not to be a pessimist.

He loved his adopted new country and was grateful for the opportunity it gave him. He always said: “I am a good Berliner but also a good New Yorker.”

It is especially poignant that the villa that currently houses the Hans Arnhold Center is the house in which Daddy first met my mother. When he was courting her, as he tells the story, he would take the S-Bahn to Wannsee and call from the station before walking the short distance down the Sandwerder. This was to give them time to lock up the German shepherds, who were well-known in the neighborhood for their love of pantlegs.

You have heard a lot about his great philanthropy. He often quoted to me the words of St. Francis of Assisi: “It is in giving that we receive.”

The woods are lovely dark and deep/But I have promises to keep./And miles to go before I sleep./And miles to go before I sleep.

— Robert Frost

People trusted him and many came to him to solve their problems. He deeply cared about them and wanted to help.

He had something very special about him—a twinkle in his eye, low key and brilliant, decent, honest, a vision of the world, knowledge of history, and integrity and wisdom, and for me he was the quintessential European gentleman.

He loved his family, and when the grandchildren came along he loved nothing more than sitting on the floor playing games with them. When they got older he took them too to the museums and galleries.

He was the rock of Gibraltar for us all and nothing was a problem. There would always be a solution.

After his death we learned that on that date he had been awarded the French Légion d’honneur. How sad that he never knew of it. Daddy, I hope that all of your descendants can live up to your standards, which were so high, and that with the tools you gave us we can exemplify your honesty and intelligence, and that you will look down on us and be proud.
Ice, dirt, and grey miraculous flesh. I can put my finger on the space debris buried all night on my window, until fog effaces it and other signs. What am I looking for? Why does comet dust that seems to burn recall the cold basilica, in June, my pious friend and I invited to the altar, the priest (sour voice, sour heart) reciting; locked in the reliquary, livid, translucent, like a flake of trapped ash, floats a slice of Christ's heart, it's all true, there's medical testimony, it looks like a dragonfly's wing but is His living blood cells. How curtly he announced it, impatient with non-belief before it shows itself, impatient with my indifference, while my friend wheezed through his mouth, awed, worshipful, and the father looked from him to me, as if to say you can't appreciate without astonishment, the miraculous wants innocence beyond knowledge of contradiction, not the monocle of my unbelief. Yet now each night the comet somehow cuts across the relic, a coincidence easy to credit because it makes no sense, to believe in what I know is not true life.

The stars and gods have made us so that we make meaning of what resists us, and of such resistance make a consciousness, a rotund coherence of accident and law. The imagination in one stroke squeegees subway passages, manhole-cover steam cones, clouds, blowback snow when bus wheels turn, the dance of minor things sifting from or into others, momentarily. I smudge an afterimage on my window to mark a juicy slice of being. What happens now? Busses and cafes explode in holy lands, in Hackensack a father kisses his son in peace, money eats dirt on Wall Street, Big Casino overdoses across the street, the Gypsy to the Werewolf sings

*Even a man who is pure at heart and says his prayers by night*

*Will become a wolf when the woldbane blooms, and the moon is full and bright.*

Glacial dust wasting away across the sky where gods have come and gone, downstairs a student's cello practices praise and questions for those gods. Woeful, nervous, almost content, he falters and plays the phrase again.

W. S. Di Piero was a fellow at the American Academy in the fall of 2002. This poem and the poem on page 49 are forthcoming in *Brother Fire*, which Knopf will publish next fall.
The Prospects of Partnership

Developing Strategies for the Middle East
Dennis Ross
Edward P. Djerejian
Martin Indyk

The texts printed here are based on public lectures delivered at the Hans Arnhold Center in March and April of 2004.

When Dennis Ross left his two-hour discussion with German National Security Advisor Bernd Mützelburg, we were no longer surprised by the length or intensity of the meeting. It was the last talk in a marathon of private diplomacy we had arranged for three high-level American Middle East experts — Martin Indyk, Edward Djerejian, and Dennis Ross — on the initiative of Academy Chairman Richard Holbrooke and with the support of the German Marshall Fund. The Foreign Policy Forum’s 54 public and private presentations, conversations, roundtables, and interviews underscored just how keen the desire for renewed bilateral discussion was on both sides.

Each of our distinguished visitors stayed in Berlin for a week, engaging in in-depth exchanges with politicians, members of the media, and the public. Our motives were simple: the Middle East, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in particular, are issues of tremendous and shared concern. An intensification of US-German dialogue and closer working relations between our two countries are needed. Germany’s relationship with key countries in the Arab world — and the high regard Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer enjoys among both Palestinians and Israelis — has made Berlin a fertile ground for this initiative.

The Academy could not have found three more seasoned former American diplomats to launch its Foreign Policy Forum. Dennis Ross’s vast experience on the ground in the Middle East is exemplified by his innumerable conversations with Yasser Arafat conducted over the course of more than ten years. Edward Djerejian served eight US presidents and was asked by the current administration to chair a congressional commission on public diplomacy in the Arab and Muslim world. Martin Indyk served twice as US Ambassador to Israel under Clinton and founded two important non-partisan Middle East think tanks: the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (now headed by Dennis Ross) and the Brookings Institution’s Saban Center for the Middle East Policy, which he continues to direct.

In the course of these meetings, ideas were aired on matters such as the recent emphasis on the “Greater Middle East.” While differences in the American and European perception of realities were apparent, particularly with respect to Israel’s recently announced plan to withdraw unilaterally from Gaza and parts of the West Bank, all agreed that the withdrawal presents opportunities — to say nothing of enormous challenges — that could best be seized with prompt and heightened US-German consultation. Within this context, our visitors asked many pointed questions of their European interlocutors. How can European countries best leverage their influence with Arab regimes and, in particular, induce the Palestinian Authority to take responsibility for security in Gaza? When should European countries be prepared to make public their private criticisms of Palestinians, not least in order to strengthen reformists within the Palestinian Authority? And to what extent does courting Arafat merely reflect the same wishful thinking that was proven wrong at Camp David in 2000?

After three years of relatively limited dialogue, the private visits of Ambassadors Indyk, Djerejian, and Ross to Berlin hint at how much could be achieved if diplomats in both countries make use of their vast and often complementary expertise on the Middle East.

– Gary Smith
Many believe that the Bush administration went into Iraq without planning for what would come the day after. In fact, the administration did plan, but it based its planning on a series of assumptions: that the oil fields had to be protected; that there would be a major flow of refugees fleeing to the North; that there would be mass starvation; that the country risked fragmentation; and, finally, that there would be mass retribution killings. All of those assumptions were reasonable. But as it turned out, they were wrong. The US administration failed to make security its prime concern. Saddam’s regime was one of the two remaining Stalinist, totalitarian regimes left in the world. Who would fill that vacuum when it fell? We did not plan for it; we did not bring in enough forces; we did not bring in enough police.

There were of course several different sources for the insurgency. Probably well over half a million people had been dependent on Saddam Hussein and his totalitarian structure. Those who were part of the regime feared being dispossessed. The Sunni minority, in particular, was bound to feel at risk. In his last years, moreover, Saddam had set different Sunni tribes against each other, and those on the losing end of his manipulations had turned increasingly to Sunni Islamic extremism (traditionally foreign to Iraq). Finally, the Bush administration significantly underestimated the likelihood of the US becoming a symbol of occupation and, in turn, contributing to the insurgency.

The Iraqi military, while it could never have been an agent for social reconstruction, might in the transition period have helped to provide security. Before the war, the US dropped millions of leaflets on Iraq advising the Iraqi military to stay in their barracks and promising that they would be fine if they did. Instead, the military was disbanded after the war. By disbanding the Iraqi military, and by not having sufficient troops on the ground, there was little to fill the vacuum other than chaos. This fuelled the insurgency.

The insurgency in Iraq has deeper roots, unfortunately, than the administration initially imagined, though it is important to make clear that the initial insurgency had little to do with jihadists (and even now their overall numbers in Iraq should not be exaggerated). As long as the insurgency remains concentrated among the Sunnis it will eventually be manageable. However, should the Shia join it on a large scale, it will be very difficult to succeed in Iraq.

I do not believe that the administration went into Iraq because of the War on Terror. But, paradoxically, the administration cannot afford to lose in Iraq because of the War on Terror. While the jihadists may not have been mainly responsible for the insurgency, they will take great heart from, and exploit the consequences of, the US being driven from Iraq. It is thus critical to succeed there.

It was always naïve to suggest that a successful outcome of the war in Iraq would be a row of new dominos – “dominos of democracy.” All the same, success in Iraq would embolden reformers elsewhere, help them find their voices, and give them confidence. Moreover, regimes that repress reformers would see the price of repression going up. That can still happen, and it is another reason why we have a stake in Iraq’s stabilization.

The administration did not go into Iraq because of the War on Terror. But because of the War on Terror it cannot afford to lose in Iraq.

The Bush administration’s Greater Middle East initiative is something that makes an enormous amount of sense, but even without it, we should be pushing the idea of reform on its own merits.

I have worked for administrations that were guilty, basically, of making a Faustian bargain with our friends in the Middle East. As long as they were supportive of our needs – oil, in the Saudi case – we didn’t pay close attention to what they did internal-ly. As we found out on September 11, that did not come cost free.

There is a widespread image that the US exercises a double standard in the Middle East. No doubt, part of that stems from our support for Israel. But there is also the perception that we use democracy as a weapon against those we don’t like – and never against the ones we do like. The fact is, in many of the regimes we are friendly to, citizens have no input in economic or political decision making. There is the sense in far too many Arab countries that nothing can change. Radical Islam preys on that hopelessness and frustration.

Our promotion of the reform process must be done intelligently. A movement needs internal roots for it to have authenticity. One such positive development came in mid March in Alexandria, Egypt, during a meeting of civic organizations and members of civil society at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina. The result was a home-grown call for reform. The participants called for an “elected legislative body, an independent judiciary, and a government that is subject to popular and constitutional oversight.” It called for freedom of the press and the support of human rights, especially of women, children, and minorities. Germany, working with France, has taken the lead in being prepared to embrace something like the Alexandria statement. This fits nicely with what the Bush administration has in mind, and supporting the Alexandria statement would be a very positive step for the G-8 to take this June.

Clearly, different countries will move at different paces. But we must at least be consistent in supporting broader values. And if certain friendly gov-ernments or regimes are inclined to repress their reformers, they should know that they pay a price—not only in private.

If the situation in Iraq continues to be unstable, the broader pressure for reform is going to dissipate. We all have an enormous stake in the positive outcome of Iraq, and it is going to have to take time. The right kind of stability and change can be, in part, produced by a positive perception that change is possible.

There is a hearty group of reformers in the Middle East, and their voices are gaining strength. They need support from the outside and the sense that they will not be abandoned. Their hope is the greatest antidote to those who prey upon an absence of hope.

The Iraqi-Palestinian issue is neither a function nor a derivative of Iraq. At the same time, had we been more successful—not just in bringing about the demise of Saddam’s regime but in terms of stabilizing the system more quickly—it would have greatly affected the psychology of the region. It would have fostered a deeper sense that change is possible, even between the Israelis and Palestinians.

History and geography have destined Israelis and Palestinians to be neighbors. Israel, with all of its power, cannot extinguish Palestinian aspirations. And the Palestinians, with all their anger and with all the use of terror, cannot abolish Israel. But for the past three years, there has been no genuine peace process. There has been only a deepening war process, and with all the pain and suffering, it has produced a legacy of disbelief on each side. Neither the Israelis nor the Palestinians believe they have a partner for peace. The absence of any dialogue other than a dialogue of violence has cemented the mutual conviction that peace is not possible.

The “road map to peace” plan has been a serious, if flawed, effort to revive the peace process. On June 24, 2002 President Bush gave a speech declar- ing that a two-state approach would henceforth be
American policy. But he also – rightly – made it clear that no Palestinian state could be built on the twin foundations of corruption and terror. In effect, his central message was that the Palestinians are not entitled to a state – they must earn it.

The road map’s concept was logical enough: three phases and a set of reciprocal obligations. In the initial phase, the Israelis lift the siege and the Palestinians reform themselves and fulfill security obligations. The second phase sets up a Palestinian state with provisional borders. And in the third phase, that state negotiates the issues of permanent status.

Its only flaw is that the members of the Quartet – the US, the EU, the Russians and the UN – negotiated a document in which they, understandably, have no responsibility for carrying out even one of the 52 paragraphs of obligations. The Israelis and Palestinians have those obligations, but the document was not negotiated with them. Not surprisingly, the Israelis and the Palestinians interpret each of the 52 paragraphs and their respective obligations differently. The road map will never have even the possibility of a life until Israelis and Palestinians have a common understanding of those obligations.

The fact is, however, that no such understanding exists, and there has been no diplomacy to produce it, or at least a Quartet understanding of what would constitute performance. This has ensured that the road map would exist only on paper, while the reality on the ground would remain frozen. That the road map would exist only on paper, while the actual withdrawal – I estimate it will be about a year. If we don’t create a positive momentum, many terrible things could happen in that period, which is the moment and that much depends on how they take advantage of it. Here is a chance to prove that they are capable of good government, of being a state, of taking control in Gaza and fulfilling responsibilities.

One of the things that struck me in recent talks with Palestinians and Israelis was a convergence of anger and grievance in the Arab world, but it is no panacea.

The good news is that Israeli withdrawal allows for a revolutionary moment, a chance to break out of a completely frozen situation. The bad news is that the nay-sayers are standing ready to fill the vacuum. If the Israelis simply leave Gaza and throw the keys behind them over a high fence, there is too high a probability that the group that catches the keys won’t believe in a peaceful coexistence between Palestinians and Israelis. The one group that has planned most effectively for the day after has been Hamas – even before the assassination of Sheik Yassin. Hamas is planning to dominate this process, planning to shape governance after the Israelis are out, already planning how it will turn over the settlements. If that is the direction in which we are headed, this potentially transformative revolutionary development will turn out decidedly for the worse.

There is a worrisome gap in time between the Israeli declaration of the intent to withdraw and the actual withdrawal – I estimate it will be about a year. If we don’t create a positive momentum, many terrible things could happen in that period, which might, once again, erode the chances of transforming the situation. And it will make it harder to produce the tacit cooperation that is necessary to coordinate parallel moves unilaterally.

Resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would take away a major source of anger and grievance in the Arab world, but it is no panacea.
How, then, can we affect the outcome? How can we ensure that the Palestinians assume real responsibility? Palestinians in the Fatah party know how high the stakes are – that this is a competition with the future. Will it be an Islamist future or a secular one? We, the new guard of Fatah, too, have a stake in having that future belong to Fatah.

But Arafat is a complicating factor. He has no interest in a stable outcome here – not because he wants Hamas to gain, but because chaos serves his interests. In the face of such chaos, Arafat believes international actors will turn back to him to bring order. This may not fit reality – but it is his perception of reality. Arafat’s fundamental weakness is that he will never foreclose an option and never close a door. To end the conflict, for him, means ending himself. Arafat has been governed by a cause and a struggle for that cause.

While Arafat believes that he, personally, gains by chaos and instability, the new guard of Fatah understands that they lose. Our critical task at this juncture is to create an international consensus that can build an incentive for Palestinians to act responsibly. By creating a public rather than merely private consensus, by announcing that the whole world is watching, the Palestinians will feel obliged to demonstrate that they are up to the task of statehood. We need to let them know what kinds of responsibilities have to be assumed. And we need to offer our help.

That gives them no explanation to use with the Palestinian public for taking steps on security – such as acting against groups like Hamas that continue to promote terror. We should strengthen Palestinian Prime Minister Abu Ala’s hand by being public and precise about Palestinian responsibilities. We should talk to Abu Ala and members of the legislative council – an institutional base that is home to reformers among Palestinians. In every possible way, we must strengthen those who are prepared to coexist with Israel.

We must also help the Palestinian Authority fill in and provide the social services currently being provided most effectively by Hamas. One tends to forget that Hamas, though a terrorist organization, provides a great many social services – hospitals, clinics, after-school programs. The outside world – and this is especially true in Europe – must find better ways of cutting off the flow of monies to Hamas without dismantling that social safety net.

Creating a way-station for peace need not be a long, drawn-out process, but we are not at a point where we can suddenly make peace. All the groundwork has to be laid again. What I call “two freedoms” must be established. The Israelis have to feel freedom from terror, and the Palestinians have to feel freedom from Israeli control.

When the Israelis withdraw from Gaza – and make a symbolic step toward withdrawing from the West Bank – it will be crucial for Israelis in the West Bank to get out of Palestinian lives. Israelis are currently controlling nearly every aspect of Palestinian life in the West Bank.

But in the face of Palestinians assuming no security responsibilities and essentially doing nothing to stop terror, Israel has to protect itself. It has two choices: a siege or a barrier. The siege has prevailed since the second intifada began – 160 checkpoints in the West Bank.

Under the siege, however, it is simply impossible for Palestinians to lead anything resembling a normal life. (If you have to get to a hospital, you’d better hope it is not an emergency. You have to plan a couple of extra hours in the morning and the afternoon just to get your kids to school. And forget about even trying to conduct normal commerce.) Palestinians regard the siege as a kind of collective punishment.

And yet it prevents 90-95 percent of the terror attacks against Israel today. The problem is that, a year from now, the siege will have to stop just as many, if not more, such attacks. The siege fosters continuing Palestinian anger and resentment against Israel. Hamas operatives may be killed, but so long as the siege exists, there will be an ever-deepening pool of new recruits. In short, the siege is not in Israel’s interest. It makes sense on a day-to-day basis, but as a longer-term strategy it preserves Palestinian hostility and an Israeli presence in the territories that threatens Israel’s Jewish character. (By 2010, there may be more Arabs than Jews between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River. If Israel remains as it is in the territories, it cannot be both Jewish and democratic.)

The whole world is watching to see if Palestinians are up to the task of statehood.

Is the barrier an alternative? The fence is a more benign way of producing security for the Israelis than a siege because it does not interfere with and control all aspects of Palestinian life. The fence being built right now is going to be on 12 percent of the West Bank. About 5 percent of it is a wall; 95 percent is a fence. It has to be built in a way that reflects topographical, demographic, humanitarian and political criteria. Partly you want to ensure that you have two states; partly you want to get out of Palestinian lives so that they feel freedom from Israeli control; and partly you want to send a message that the fence isn’t permanent – unless Palestinians choose to make it permanent.

Once a way-station has been built – once both sides have a kind of normality back in their lives again, it will be possible to think about peacemaking and the future. The hardest thing today is for both sides to accept the fact that the other has a complaint or a grievance – that the other side is suffering. Each side is consumed by its own sense of grievance – with some legitimacy. We have to break the cycle of grievance, break the cycle of anger, and break the cycle of revenge.

Given the stakes, given what can be lost, this is a time to develop a much more collective approach. Germany and the EU have what can only be described as a special relationship with the Palestinians. If Europe has cultivated a special relationship, this is the moment to trade on it. The regional and international friends of the Palestinians should publicly say to them “we’re going to help you, but here’s what’s required of you.” If the Palestinians need help on security, we should be prepared to provide that help. But they must take the lead. No one else can act for them. As long as the Palestinian mindset is that someone will do it for them, nothing will change.

Abu Mazen said in a speech about 18 months ago – before his brief tenure as Palestinian prime minister – that it was time for a Palestinian sense of national responsibility to become more important than unity. Unity had been an excuse for the Palestinians to avoid confronting violence. If the Europeans would say publicly that those who pursue violence now, in this setting, are jeopardizing not only Palestinian interest but threatening the Palestinian cause, it could do much to change the internal dynamic among Palestinians. The very notion that there are legitimate and illegitimate ways to pursue Palestinian aspirations needs to become part of the public discussion.

This would also change the character of their relationship with the Israelis. Joschka Fischer has had more of an impact than anyone else in Europe on the Israelis. He has demonstrated to the Israelis that he takes their concerns seriously, and as a result, they listen to him.

I haven’t always put such emphasis on the “collective we.” But the involvement of the other members of the Quartet is especially important at a time when American diplomacy has been less intense. The US didn’t produce the Sharon initiative. Israeli pressure has done so. Israelis support it because of their concerns about demographics and their concerns over three years of war with no prospects of security.

If we do not plan now and focus on practical steps on the ground soon, we won’t get there. The promise of the current moment is that it provides a chance to create a way-station to peace. The danger in the moment is that we may let it slip by. We cannot wait until the day after.

Is there a reason to be hopeful? The situation does not lend itself to optimism, but we cannot give up. Giving up will make hopelessness a self-fulfilling prophecy. And giving in means giving up to the wrong people – those who reject the idea of a peaceful settlement. I start from a different premise: that there is no alternative to peaceful coexistence.

The whole world is watching to see if Palestinians are up to the task of statehood.

Ambassador Dennis Ross is director of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. He served as special Middle East coordinator under President Clinton and directed the State Department’s Policy Planning Office in the administration of George H. W. Bush. His book The Missing Peace: The Inside Story of the Effort for Middle East Peace will be published this August by Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
A Struggle of Ideas

US Public Diplomacy in the Middle East

By Edward P. Djerejian

Last year I had the honor of chairing a congressionally mandated public diplomacy commission to address one of the most important issues facing us since the fall of the Berlin Wall. Our 13-member United States Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy in the Arab and Muslim World was a bipartisan commission of regional and communication experts. Our report, “Changing Minds, Winning Peace” (online at www.bakerinstitute.org) was released on October 1, 2003.

The attacks of September 11, 2001, required the United States to pursue a long-term, comprehensive war on terrorism. Extending military power abroad, practicing vigorous state-to-state diplomacy, choking off financial resources to our adversaries, and improving defense at home—these steps are all necessary. But they are not all that is required. Despite our best efforts in these areas, animosity toward the US has grown to unprecedented levels, making the achievement of our policy goals more difficult and expensive, both in dollars and in lives.

In the National Security Strategy of the US in the fall of 2002, President George W. Bush spoke of the importance of adapting public diplomacy to meet the post-September-11 challenge: “The war on terrorism is not a clash of civilizations. It does, however, reveal the clash inside a civilization, a battle for the future of the Muslim world. This is a struggle of ideas, and this is an area where America must excel.”

But America has not excelled in the struggle of ideas in the Arab and Muslim world. According to the director of the Pew Research Center, attitudes toward the US “have gone from bad to worse.” According to Pew surveys, “the bottom has fallen out of Arab and Muslim support for the United States.” For example, shortly before the war against Saddam Hussein, by greater than a two-to-one margin, Muslims surveyed in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Jordan said the US was a more serious threat than Iraq. Only 2 percent of British Muslims agreed with the statement that “the US supports democracy around the world.” The Arab and Muslim world, however, cannot be addressed in isolation. Animosity toward the US is part of a broader crisis worldwide.

What is required is not merely tactical adaptation but strategic, and radical, transformation. Often, we are simply not present to explain the context and content of national policies and values. As someone in Morocco told us, “if you do not define yourself in this part of the world, the extremists will define you.” They have defined us, for example, as ruthless occupiers in Iraq and as bigots, intolerant to Muslims in our own country. These depictions are absolutely wrong, but they stick because it is rare that governments or individuals in the region are prepared to take up our side of the story and because the US has deprived itself of the means to respond effectively—or even to be a significant part of the conversation.

As Woody Allen says, “90 percent of life is just showing up.” In terms of the Arab and Muslim worlds, we have not been showing up.

As the group was on the way to Cairo last year, I caught a cold and had to stay in the hotel for an evening. I turned on al-Arabiya satellite television and started to watch a talk show entitled “the Americanization of Islam.” The guests were discussing what they perceived as an American “conspiracy” to hijack their religion. Not a single participant on that two-hour program had a clue about America. The true American position was nowhere represented. No one was there to say the Americans are a religious people. The country has Muslims, Christians, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, and other religious groups. There is freedom of religion. There is separation of church and state, but this in no way means that Americans are not a religious people.” Nothing was said to this effect. Instead, the discussion simply fed into a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Of course, Americans can’t be on every television program and every radio station. We can’t be in every article that runs in the Arab press. But the fact is, we are simply not significantly present in the daily debate and discussion that is taking place about us. The State Department has only 54 Arabic speakers with a truly professional level of fluency. Of these, only a handful are able and willing to participate in media discussion on Arab television and radio. Our advisory group called for adding three hundred fluent Arabic speakers within the next two years. There should be an additional three hundred by 2008.

Just as the US urgently needs to transform the way it explains and advocates our values and policies abroad, it also needs to transform the way it listens to what others are saying, not only in Arab and Muslim states but throughout the world. Our report made a number of very specific recommendations, including reorganizing the way public diplomacy is managed and funded in the White House, the National Security Council, and the State department.

The transformation we advocate can have a profound effect on Arab and Muslim societies as well. These societies are at a crossroads, with the opportunity to take the path toward greater liberty and prosperity, within the context of their own rich cultures. With effective policies and public diplomacy, we can help galvanize indigenous moderates and reformers within these societies. The overall task is to expand the zone of tolerance and moderation in the Muslim world and to marginalize the extremists, be the extremists secular or religious.

We must, moreover, be candid in our dialogue. Americans are trapped in a dangerously reinforcing cycle of animosity with Arabs and Muslims. The latter respond in anger to what they perceive as US denigration of their societies and cultures, which in turn prompts an American reaction of bewilderment and resentment, and so on. A transformed public diplomacy that is candid about differences but also stresses similarities—especially in values—can help end this.

Most changes will not occur overnight, but some steps, taken immediately, will produce short-term solutions. More importantly, however, the US government needs to view public diplomacy—just as it views state-to-state diplomacy and national security—in a long-term perspective. It must be sustained for decades, not stopped and started as moods change in the world. Public opinion in the Arab and Muslim world cannot be cavalierly dismissed.

Much has recently been said about the Greater Middle East, but this policy is not really new. The first Bush administration raised these issues of political and economic reforms in the region. At the same time, losing our common Soviet enemy precipitated a kind of identity crisis. Various theories and schools of thought began to emerge around the idea of defining the new enemy, including Samuel P. Huntington’s notion of “the clash of civilizations.” His thesis is, to me, a classic example of what I learned from my Jesuit education at Georgetown University to identify as the “fallacy of composition,” the extrapolation from parts to a whole. Reality is very wide, but if you generalize outward from one small part of it, you’ll reach a false understanding of the truth. Huntington looked at various cultures and civilizations and homed in on the extremist fringe. From it, he generalized his theory of the clash of cultures and civilizations. This notion, however faulty, has received a great deal of attention.

America’s position as the world’s superpower may well contribute to the animosity shown toward it today, but it alone is not a satisfying explanation. The US enjoyed the same level of relative power after World War II, for example, but was widely admired throughout the world. Attitudes toward the US were important in the past, but the stakes were raised on September 11, 2001. They have become a central national security concern. Hostility toward the US makes achieving our policy goals far more difficult.
Television in the Arab and Muslim world is, by far, the most efficient means of disseminating ideas. And accurate portrayals of US policies on Arab TV and Muslim TV in general are sadly lacking. Part of our group went to Casablanca in Morocco. One group member, Judith Milestone, described the decaying slums of Casablanca, where, amid excruciating poverty and abysmal sanitary conditions, one could see hundreds of hand-wired satellite TV dishes. The residents of the Moroccan slums are watching the satellite networks of al-Jazeera and al-Arabiya, with their political slant on the news. They’re watching film programs that show people with cars and beautiful apartments. Throughout the Middle East they’re watching pre-canned American sitcoms. In fact, they are being bombarded with American television content, much of which distorts the perceptions of viewers who lack the contextual background to understand, for example, that the lifestyles in programs like “Friends,” “Dallas,” and “Seinfeld” are not necessarily the American norm. In Damascus, “Seinfeld” is aired twice a day. A Syrian teacher of English asked us for help in explaining American family life to her students. She asked, “Does ‘Friends’ show a typical American family?”

In most of the Arab world, the 8 o’clock news typically consists of footage of the country’s president, prime minister, and the foreign minister meeting guests – for half and hour, with music in the background and virtually no commentary. That’s the news. And after thirty minutes, there is the thinnest commentary. It is an insult to the intelligence of the Arab people. And that is what they have been subjected to for decades.

All of a sudden something interesting happened called al-Jazeera. The satellite network broke through all sorts of barriers. Some people in our group called it “electronic perestroika.” The network carries live shots of what is happening in crisis situations. Now, all of a sudden an Arab family can watch, from its living room, an Israeli official being interviewed by an al-Jazeera correspondent. It was an amazing change. I have been interviewed by the network and I therefore know al-Jazeera’s political prejudices first-hand. I have been in their editorial room. But the fact is that the network has done something revolutionary in the Arab World. It has brought live news and commentary into the living room. And that is what we have to compete with.

Our report took a nuanced stand on how to deal with the new and emerging threat. In particular, we criticized a project being put forward by the Broadcasting Board of Governors, the US entity responsible for government-supported international broadcasting, to establish a Middle East Television Network (now called “al-Hurra”), designed to compete with al-Jazeera.

The Advisory Group’s report described a dichotomy throughout the whole Muslim world. American values have a high approval rating, for Arabs and Muslims consider them to be their values as well. (As an Iranian woman told us, “who could be against liberty and the pursuit of happiness?”) The ideals of equality of opportunity, equality before the law, of human rights, social justice, human dignity, and individual freedom are shared by many.

The value system is not the issue. We found that the negative attitudes toward the US are largely based on perceptions about the execution of US policies in certain areas. They may be based on perceptions rather than reality, but these perceptions are powerful forces.

The al-Jazeera satellite network, for all its political prejudices, has done something revolutionary; it has brought live news into Arab living rooms.

The three major prisms through which America is judged in the Arab and the Muslim world are: the Arab-Israeli conflict; Iraq, where the US is perceived not as a liberator but as occupier; and fundamental issues of political and economic governance in the Muslim countries themselves. But what does this third point have to do with America? We have to be honest about the fact that there is systemic corruption in many of these regimes and societies. This is often combined with major economic problems – underemployment, a general lack of privatization and property rights – as well as growing demographic pressures. Levels of real political participation in the region are low. So when citizens of such a country grieve about their lot, they also take account of the fact that the US is one of the major supporters of the regime in power.

Separating simple opposition to policies from generalized anti-American attitudes is not easy. The Advisory Group’s mandate was not to advise on foreign policy itself, but rather to examine how the tools of public diplomacy may be used to promote US values, policies, and interests. One can say that US policy constitutes about 80 percent of how attitudes and thoughts are formed in this region; public diplomacy counts for only about 20 percent. But it is a critical 20 percent, when one considers the stakes involved.

It would, of course, be absurd to advocate changing policies in order to become popular. We have to pursue our policies as any administration perceives the national interest of the US. And we must use the tools of public diplomacy to assess the likely effects of our particular policies.

Most importantly, we must be ever aware of the perceived gap between our principles and our policies; many people in the Muslim world say that we don’t live up to our values.

American policy toward the Arab and Muslim world on particular issues needs to be more fully communicated. These include: the peaceful settlement of conflicts between the Arabs and Israelis, in Kashmir, and in the Western Sahara; peace and reconstruction in Afghanistan and Iraq; regional security cooperation; and our encouragement of progressive economic, social, and political reforms.

As a former American diplomat, I can say that there’s nothing to be apologetic about in the major thrust of our policy toward this region. The American vision for the Arab and the Muslim world is a positive one: for it to become a peaceful, prosperous region working toward participatory government. Our goal is not to impose a Jeffersonian or a Federalist model from above, but to allow democracy to evolve according to the cultures and the structures of these societies themselves.

Of course, we will have differences with Arabs on how, for example, we conduct our role in the Arab-Israeli conflict. But reasoned opposition to US policies need not turn into hatred and extremism. And if you look at the Arab-Israeli conflict, it is only when the US – with our European allies, especially in the current context of the Quartet – acts with strong leadership and political will, making use of a strategy and its influence, that progress can be made. It takes a US President, whether Democrat or a Republican, to move forward with commitment and strategy – from Nixon and Kissinger in the disengagement agreement in 1973; to Jimmy Carter in 1979 and the Camp David Accords; from Bush 41 and James A. Baker III in the Madrid Conference; to Clinton and Camp David; to Bush 43 and the Road Map and two-state solution. Political will is thus the essential element on the part of the Arabs, Israelis, and the US.

Our values and our policies are not always in agreement. The US Government often supports regimes in the Arab and Muslim world that are inimical to our values but that, in the short term, may advance some of our policies. Indeed, many Arabs and Muslims believe that such support indicates that the US is determined to deny them freedom and political representation. This belief often stems from our...
own ambivalence about the possibility that democracy’s first beneficiaries in the Arab and Muslim world will be Islamic extremists. It has caught us in a deep contradiction—one from which public diplomacy, as well as official diplomacy, could help extricate us. But we must take these key policy challenges in the region seriously, and we must minimize the gap between what we say (the high ideals we espouse) and what we do (the day-to-day measures we take).

In general, the building up of civil society, of NGOs, of representative groups, and emerging middle classes is essential for the future of the Arab and the Muslim world. And that is the generational challenge to address. It is essential to build and support the middle and, at the same time, to abandon the perception that any change will bring the Islamists to power. At the same time, we must analyze each country individually, distinguishing Egypt from Syria, Kuwait from Morocco, etc.

It is understandable that viewers in the Arab world don’t trust state-run TV and radio channels.

Mainstream Islam is tolerant and moderate. Mainstream Muslims want what we all want—for ourselves and for our children: stability, financial security, to be able to educate our children, to live in peace and security, to have a voice in government and equal economic opportunities. This is the mainstream. This is what gives me encouragement. The great challenge of our time, and the great opportunity, is to make the zone of tolerance grow and to marginalize the extremists. With those extremists and terrorists who hate us—who those who consider us profane and themselves sacred—there is no dialogue. We should not be naive about that.

It is absolutely essential that Europe and the US begin real substantive strategic coordination on meeting this challenge. This task is not America’s alone. It involves Europe, Japan, China, Russia, and especially the Arab countries. The dialogue must be multi-faceted and collaborative.

We have failed to listen and failed to persuade. We have not taken the time to understand our audience, and we have not bothered to help them understand us. We cannot afford such shortcomings.

The great American baseball legend Casey Stengel left us a valuable management principle: If you walk into a room and find, in one corner, six guys who hate you—who are plotting against you and want to kill you—and, in the other corner sixty people who haven’t made up their minds yet, you’d better get to the sixty before the six get to the sixty. That is public diplomacy, and that is what our policy objective has to be in the Muslim world.

Ambassador Edward Djerejian is founding director of the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy at Rice University. He was US Ambassador to Israel in 1993 and Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs in the administrations of George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton. Other diplomatic posts include serving as US Ambassador to Syria during the Reagan and first Bush presidencies.
The effort to transform the Middle East is again in the headlines, this time within the context of the new US strategy toward the “greater Middle East.” But the effort did not begin with the Bush administration. As we try to assess the prospects of the current strategy, it is helpful to examine the history of a previous effort to transform the region, that of the Clinton administration, which I had the honor to serve. That administration had, of course, inherited a peace negotiation from the previous Bush administration.

The fundamental difference between the approach of the Clinton administration and that of the current Bush administration is that we thought we could transform the region through the engine of peace, whereas the Bush administration holds that the way to transform the region is through the engine of war – in particular, through regime change in Iraq.

Ours was a two-pronged strategy. The first was to pursue a policy of comprehensive peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors: Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and the Palestinians. The second was to contain what we called the rogue states in the region: Iraq and Iran, in particular, and, to a lesser extent, Libya. We felt there was a symbiotic relationship between the two strategies; the more successful we were at containing and isolating the regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraq and the ayatollahs in Iran, the more our efforts to promote comprehensive peace would be supported; and the more effective we were at promoting comprehensive peace, the more we would succeed in isolating the regimes in Iraq and Iran.

We made a very clear decision to use peace as our engine of change. This meant temporarily setting aside goals such as promoting democracy and political and economic reform. We wanted to bring the Middle East into the twenty-first century through a process of peacemaking. Once peace was achieved, we believed, energies and resources could then be freed up within the region that would enable its governments and peoples to focus on these far more fundamental issues.

Today the Bush administration’s approach essentially turns this strategy on its head. According to President Bush’s explanations before the war, the effort to use force to bring about regime change in Iraq is intended to create a ripple effect – to create shockwaves in the region that will facilitate the promotion of political and economic reform. Once that is achieved, the administration argues, it will be possible to promote peace.

Unfortunately, the Clinton administration’s strategy for transforming the Middle East failed, even though it had some important successes along the way (the Israel-Jordan Peace Treaty, for example). But Bush’s current strategy is not in great shape either. It is worthwhile to look at why we failed, and to learn what we can from it.

Part of our failure had to do with our willingness to strike a bargain with the key Arab countries – Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Both countries were and remain our allies in the region. Egypt in 1993 was facing a serious challenge from Islamic extremists who were using terrorism to try to destabilize the regime. Saudi Arabia was not facing the same challenge, but the regime was deeply religious and autocratic. We judged that any effort to push it toward democracy would in all likelihood cause instability in a critical part of the Middle East – an area on which we depended for the free flow of oil at reasonable prices. In both cases, we decided to put aside the issue of reform.

The Bush Administration holds that the way to transform the region is through the engine of war – in particular, through regime change in Iraq.

What we failed to notice during that period was that the Saudi and Egyptian regimes were, for the sake of their own survival and stability, pursuing policies that in effect helped to create a situation that would hurt us severely on September 11.

We received modest financial assistance from the Saudis for the peace process, but otherwise they kept their distance from the effort. The Egyptians were usually prepared to endorse Yasser Arafat’s decisions, but they were rarely willing to press him on anything. They feared that Arafat would turn around and accuse Egypt of pressuring him, which would have had damaging political consequences that President Hosni Mubarak was not prepared to risk.

On some occasions, Cairo even opposed our efforts, especially when it came to promoting Israel’s regional integration. At the critical moment in December 2000 when President Clinton put forward his parameters for resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, both the Saudis...
and the Egyptians privately signaled their acquiescence to our proposals. But they failed to provide any demonstrable support for the deal. And when Arafat said no, they ran for cover.

When it came to addressing their own internal problems, the Saudis and Egyptians essentially—and perhaps unintentionally—reflected the opposition onto the US. In the Saudi case, the regime dealt with its fundamentalist opposition by forcing into exile its extremists, who then sought refuge and set up operations outside of Saudi Arabia—in Africa, Asia, Europe, and of course the US. Saudis, moreover, helped to fund the al-Qaeda network through their private foundations. And by exporting the Wahhabi form of Islamic extremism, they helped to create a fertile environment for the recruitment of al-Qaeda terrorists.

The Egyptian government cracked down on its Islamic extremists, but it also excluded other, more moderate voices from the political arena. As general alienation in Egypt grew with the regime’s inability to meet the people’s basic needs, younger people moved toward the extremist mosques and, often from there, into Afghanistan. There was no room left for a political center to emerge between the regime itself and the Islamic extremists. Any criticism that arose was deflected from the regime onto the US and Israel. As a result, growing anti-Americanism founds its voice just as we were vigorously pursuing a settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, when Arafat was the most frequent foreign visitor to the White House. That is why I am skeptical when people tell me that the reason for anti-Americanism in the Arab world today is that we are not doing enough to solve the Palestinian problem.

Today, it is essential to develop a policy that deals specifically with these two critically important countries. Above all, such a policy must address the funding of extremist organizations. The Saudis have begun to take measures, as when on March 8, they introduced a new law designed to control the funding of such organizations.

Beyond that, we have to encourage Saudi Arabia and Egypt to open up political space for their citizens. Room for political expression needs to be created between the authoritarianism of the governments and the extremism that is cultivated in particular fundamentalist mosques. Reasonable people in civil society need an environment in which their efforts can be strengthened.

We must encourage these regimes to take the lead in promoting greater tolerance in their own societies, in promoting educational and religious reforms. The Clinton administration was told time and again by Egyptian and Saudi leaders that nothing could be done internally before the Palestinian problem was solved. It tried to forge peace without receiving any significant support from those regimes. It ignored the problems internal to the Saudi and Egyptian regimes, however. Those problems came back to bite us on September 11.

But if pursuing peace without pressing for reform was a mistaken policy, so too is the current Bush administration’s effort to promote reform without pressing for peace. In this regard, I fear that the Bush administration has learned the wrong lesson from our experience. We need to find the middle way between the two. German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer is in fact suggesting such a course, and his basic point is the right one. We must promote political reform at the same time that we seek to support a viable peace process. Each should reinforce the other.

Effective transformation in the Middle East requires a four-part strategy. George Bush began to articulate such a strategy before he launched the war in Iraq. Unfortunately this has now morphed into a two-part strategy focused on stabilizing the situation in Iraq, on the one hand, and promoting the idea of transformation, on the other. If the other two branches—containing rogues states and resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict—continue to be ignored, the overall strategy will fail.

The first part of this four-part strategy is indeed to stabilize Iraq. The administration’s argument that regime change there could create an advantageous ripple effect throughout the region is essentially right. But if we do not succeed in stabilizing the situation and putting the Iraqi people on the road toward a firm, pluralistic government that can represent all of the interests of the different Iraqi communities, then the chances for anyripple effect are very slim.

Indeed, there is a real danger that the opposite will take place, that a failure in Iraq would generate instability—a negative ripple effect throughout the region. If Iraq dissolves into sectarian conflict between Sunnis and Shiias it will make the so-called “clash of civilizations” look like a tea party. In this case, the chances for any kind of serious political reform would go out the window, as regimes bat en down the hatches to protect themselves from the destabilizing effects of integrating Iraq.

The first requirement is thus to stabilize the situation there, provide basic security for the Iraqi people, and lay the groundwork for a pluralistic Iraqi government. It was quite heartening to see the signing of the provisional constitution on March 8 as a step toward that overall objective. But the situation in Iraq currently remains very dangerous and insecure. And it could get a lot worse, particularly in the run-up to the US elections. Foreign al-Qaeda-led elements are doing their best to cause chaos in Iraq, as a way not only to defeat the US in Iraq (as they defeated the Soviet Union in Afghanistan), but also to defeat George Bush in the elections.

The second part of this strategy has to be a more effective policy for dealing with those same rogue states that we in the Clinton administration sought to contain—Iran, in particular, and to a lesser extent, Syria. Though it labeled Iran as part of the “axis of evil,” the Bush administration has not developed an effective policy toward it. Instead, a policy vacuum prevails. This is highly problematic in terms of our overall strategy and, in particular, the idea of promoting democracy in the region. We saw this in the recent Iraqi elections, as the US and even Europe remained silent while the Iranian hard-liners essentially hijacked the elections and suppressed the reform movement.

If we stood idly by while the government in Iran—which is hardly a friendly regime to the US—suppressed democracy, what does this indicate about how we will act with regimes like Saudi Arabia and Egypt that are our friends? It suggests that those people who have been looking toward the US and Europe for support in their efforts to promote democratic reform within their countries will not receive it. And as a consequence, they will be reluctant to stand up.

As is well known, the most aggressive support for Palestinian terrorism comes from Iran. The terrorist organization Palestine Islamic Jihad is a creature of the Iranian intelligence services. Trained by the Iranian revolutionary guard corps and funded by Tehran, it takes its orders directly from Tehran via its headquarters in Damascus. Tracing the course of the intifada, we can see that whenever Hamas was prepared to reduce terrorism, it was Palestine Islamic Jihad that went out and launched another terrorist attack, provoking an Israeli retaliation and renewing the cycle of attack and response.

We are, moreover, far from achieving an effective means of preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons, although Europeans have taken the lead in developing an approach.

If Iraq dissolves into sectarian conflict it will make the so-called “clash of civilizations” look like a tea party.

The third branch of this overall strategy is to promote democracy and encourage political, economic, and educational reform in the Arab world. Importantly, there also needs to be a component of religious reform, though this has yet to be articulated either by the Bush administration or by Europeans in the current discussion of the “greater Middle East.”

The strategy requires further differentiation. First there are the four large regional Arab powers—Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Syria. In Iraq’s case, successful democratic practices could generate pressure for reform elsewhere in the region. Syria’s regime is essentially frozen and impenetrable (at least for the time being) to our efforts to encourage reform. In Saudi Arabia and Egypt we need to be conscious of the risk of recreating the situation that prevailed under the Shah of Iran. In that case, our attempt to move the Shah’s regime toward greater political openness destabilized the country. In Egypt and Saudi Arabia too much change too quickly might end up aiding the very people whom we are trying to keep from power: the Islamic extremists. For they are well organized and have benefited from the regime’s suppression of the
quitter, more moderate voices for political reform and are, at present, in the best position to take advantage of any kind of political opening.

If we stood idly by while the government in Iran suppressed democracy, how will we act with regimes that are our friends?

Because of these risks, we must engage the leadership of Egypt and Saudi Arabia in a serious dialogue. Announcing our plans in public before talking to them risks giving offense. In the Clinton administration we worked very closely — and with some success — with President Mubarak on an economic reform program. Much of that success came from the fact that Vice President Gore engaged President Mubarak directly and regularly, explaining the economic reforms and supporting him as he took risks.

Beyond Saudi Arabia and Egypt are the smaller Arab states: countries like Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, Yemen, and the United Arab Emirates.

Jordan, Morocco, Bahrain, and even Qatar, have new leaders from a younger generation who understand very well what is needed in terms of the process of introducing political and economic reforms. Not surprisingly, they are already taking the kinds of steps that we want to encourage in the bigger Arab states. This has to do not only with the more progressive views of these leaders but also the fact that their countries have less at stake than the bigger Arab powers.

These smaller Arab states can serve as models of reform and have leaders whom we can work with. One might view them as case studies that show how the same kinds of things might be done on a larger scale. When Qatar, for example, takes steps to give women the vote, it has an impact on neighboring Saudi Arabia, where women are still denied that right.

The combined effort to work with the smaller states, to stabilize Iraq and use it as a model for the larger states, and to partner the Saudi and Egyptian leadership in reform efforts is an ambitious one. But we should not take on the task unless we are prepared for that moment when the people in the region — be it in the smaller states or in the larger ones — take our efforts seriously and actually stand up and demand their rights. How will we act then? Consider a country like Tunisia, which has embarked on major economic reforms but has completely restricted any political reforms. How would we act if a political reform movement started there? The example of our lack of support for the reformers in Iran bodes badly. The people in the region will not be satisfied with a quiet, more moderate voices for political reform and are, at present, in the best position to take advantage of any kind of political opening.

An Israeli withdrawal from Gaza will create a vacuum. We must help responsible Palestinians fill that vacuum.

I believe that there is a way to do this. Such an effort would require a UN-Security Council-blessed, US-led, European-partnered initiative to create conditions for the emergence of a new, democratically elected Palestinian leadership. It would require limited special forces under NATO to back up a restructured and retrained Palestinian security force, which would have responsibility for maintaining order in the areas vacated by Israel. The international presence could then oversee elections in accordance with the constitution that Palestinians have already drafted, empowering their prime minister and taking power away from Arafat. In this way we can help them build democratic political institutions, transparent economic institutions, and an independent judiciary. And once a responsible, capable, and accountable Palestinian leadership is formed, it can enter into negotiations with Israel for a final settlement of this conflict. (See my article "A Trusteeship for Palestine" in the May/June 2003 issue of Foreign Affairs, pp. 51–66.)

The four-part effort to transform the Middle East described above builds on what President Bush wants to do in terms of promoting democracy in the region but also places it within a context of peacemaking. By stabilizing the situation in Iraq; by countering the rogue regimes; by standing up for the little guy (both supporting the reform efforts of smaller states in the region and by lending strength to those still small voices for political reform in the larger states); and by promoting the Israeli-Palestinian peace process through a US-European intervention in Palestine, I believe we can meet this daunting but noble objective. And in the process, we can help to bring both democracy and peace to the Middle East.
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Fellowship Honors Lloyd Cutler

The international law firm of Wilmer Cutler & Pickering announced last November that it will support a semester-long Fellowship named in honor of trustee Lloyd Cutler for the next three years. Two partners, Dieter Lange and Roger Witten, were instrumental in making possible the fellowship, which Academy President Robert Mundheim greeted as a “splendid gesture.” Mr. Mundheim is confident that the prize, which gives preference to outstanding applicants from the field of law, will “draw even better lawyers and law academic applicants to the Academy’s program.”

Mr. Cutler, born in 1917, served as Counsel to both the Clinton and the Carter administrations and maintains an active practice in several fields, including international arbitration and dispute resolution, constitutional law, appellate advocacy, and public policy advice.

Trustee Gahl Burt, who brought Mr. Cutler to the Academy’s board in 1998, toasted him at a celebratory dinner in Washington to mark the announcement. “I can think of no wiser sounding board for our young organization than Lloyd Cutler. Indeed, we wouldn’t have our president, Robert Mundheim, were it not for him,” she said.

In addition to the Academy’s board, Mr. Cutler has served a number of other institutions, most notably as chairman of the board of the Salzburg Seminar; as co-chairman of the Committee on the Constitutional System; as a member of the Council of the American Law Institute; and as trustee emeritus of the Brookings Institution and member of its executive committee. He was a founder and co-chairman of the Lawyers Committee on Civil Rights under Law.

The firm that Lloyd Cutler helped found in Washington in 1962 now has more than five hundred international lawyers in offices in Washington, Berlin, New York, London, Brussels, Baltimore, and Northern Virginia and will merge in at the end of the month of May with the prestigious Boston-based law firm of Hale and Dorr.

Dieter Lange, Wilmer Cutler’s senior European partner, practices from the firm’s London, Brussels, and Berlin offices. He is co-chairman of the firm’s International Practice Group. Roger Witten, the senior litigation partner in the firm’s New York office, recently led a victorious Wilmer Cutler legal team in the US Supreme Court’s decision to uphold the McCain-Feingold Campaign Finance Reform law.

Inaugurating the fellowships next fall will be Hiroshi Motomura, Dan K. Moore Distinguished Professor of Law at the University of North Carolina School of Law. Motomura’s project, “Germany: a Country of Immigration or a Nation of Immigrants?” examines current trends in German immigration and citizenship law. The author, most recently, of Americans-in-Waiting: the Ambivalent Story of Immigration and Citizenship in the United States plans to take full advantage of the rich comparative terrain from his vantage point in Berlin.

“As the first Lloyd Cutler Fellow, you will be, I hope, the first in a long line to honor our trustee, one of the most distinguished US practitioners of the second half of the twentieth century,” wrote Mr. Mundheim in a congratulatory letter to Professor Motomura.

Academy Trustee Köhler Nominated for German Presidency

Horst Köhler, former director of the IMF and longtime Academy trustee, will in all likelihood be elected the next president of the Federal Republic of Germany. He was nominated in March by the CDU, CSU, and FDP, parties that will enjoy a majority when members of the Federal Convention cast their votes on May 23. His rival, SPD candidate Gesine Schwan, visited the Hans Arnhold Center a week before the nominations were made public, leading a fellows’ seminar on her experiences as president of the Viadrina European University in Frankfurt (Oder).

Richard von Weizsäcker, one of the Academy’s founders, held the presidential post for two terms between 1984 and 1994. It was during the last year of his tenure that the inspired idea of forging a strong, private institution to promote German and American cultural exchange was announced.

Mr. Köhler is the first German to head the IMF, a post he took up in 2000. Between 1990 and 1993, as deputy finance minister under Chancellor Helmut Kohl, he was a chief negotiator of the agreement that became Maastricht and was closely involved in German unification, devising, among other things, a way to fund the Red Army’s withdrawal from the former GDR.

He served as president of the German Savings Bank Association from 1993 to 1998, the year he was appointed to head the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development.

Mr. Köhler joined the American Academy’s board in 1998 through the good offices of honorary chairman Thomas L. Farmer and Richard C. Holbrooke and negotiated a substantial gift on the part of the German Savings Bank Association at that critical early stage. Mr. Farmer greeted the news of his nomination enthusiastically. “Horst Köhler is a man of quiet determination who has a clear concept for a revived Germany in both the European and transatlantic framework.”
This spring the Academy welcomed five official Distinguished Visitors to the Hans Arnhold Center: Berlin-born composer Lukas Foss, SEC Corporation Finance Director Alan Beller, and three seasoned American diplomats, Martin Indyk, Edward Djerejian, and Dennis Ross. Other speakers from the areas of economics, history, and literature contributed the public program as well.

Lester Thurow’s January lecture drew its title from his book, *Fortune Favors the Bold: Building Lasting Global Prosperity*, which argues that in order to prosper and, indeed, to survive in the globalized world, states must build economic systems that embrace globalization. The author of the 1980 bestseller *The Zero-Sum Society* and *Building Wealth* is professor at MIT’s Sloan School of management.

Legal expert Charles Fried, a former Solicitor General in the Reagan administration, lectured in early March on “The Concept of Liberty Implicit in US Constitutional Law.” In his talk, the Harvard professor and former judge traced the origins of our contemporary understanding of free speech to the Dred Scott Decision of 1857 and explored the implications of free speech on a range of today’s hot-button topics, from same-sex marriage to campaign finance reform. While in Berlin, Mr. Fried also participated in a lively argument with German legal experts at the Heinrich Böll Foundation on the legal situation of prisoners currently in US detention in Guantanamo, Cuba.

The ongoing discussion of the corporate oversight continues into June when William McDonough, chairman of the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board (pcacob), addresses “the Challenge of National Jurisdictions and a Global Economy.” After ten years as president and CEO of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, Mr. McDonough was nominated in 2003 by the SEC to chair the pcacob, a private-sector, non-profit corporation created by the 2002 Sarbanes-Oxley Act in order to oversee the auditors of public companies.

Toward the end of June, the Academy will welcome Anne Krueger, managing director ad interim of the International Monetary Fund, who will assess the imf’s role in the global economy sixty years after its founding. Ms. Krueger has been with the imf since 2001 and has overseen its activities during a complex period of global crises as well as growth. She previously was a professor at Stanford’s department of economics and was the World Bank’s vice president for economics and research from 1982 to 1986.

Twentieth-century German history is always a topic of great importance at the American Academy in Berlin. This semester, two very different scholars contributed to the discussion. Jürgen Kocka, noted historian and president of the Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung, gave the second annual Fritz Stern Lecture in early May, addressing the theoretical “Problem of Freedom in German History” before the assembled board of trustees and special guests. Gerhard Casper, an Academy trustee and President Emeritus of Stanford University, moderated the discussion.

In early April Jörg Friedrich, freelance historian and author of the controversial and extremely successful book *Der Brand* (forthcoming in an English translation) presented a sweeping overview of war in the twentieth century, with a focus on the...
practice he calls “urbicide” – the destruction of cities – with examples drawn in particular from the Allied aerial bombardment of Dresden, Essen, and other German cities during World War II.

At the other end of the program spectrum, cultural life at the Academy has been particularly rich this spring. Fellow Elizabeth McCracken and her husband, British writer and playwright Edward Carey have been in residence all semester, as was writer Norman Manea for the month of March. The Romanian-born professor at Bard College gave readings all over Germany from his recent memoir The Hooligan’s Return. Manea’s stay as Writer-in-Residence at the Academy was itself a sort of return, since it was a DAAD fellowship in the German capital that first enabled him to leave Ceaucescu’s oppressive Romania in 1986. Manea’s numerous novels, volumes of shorter fiction, prose pieces, and poems have been translated into twenty languages.

Author Colson Whitehead stayed at the Hans Arnhold Center during a chilly February week and warmed up the house with a reading from his second novel, John Henry Days is the story of a hack writer who is sent reluctantly to cover a small-town festival commemorating the American folk hero John Henry. Fellows and guests were also treated to passages from Whitehead’s newest book, The Colossus of New York, a series of takes on his beloved native city.

A week later, writer Candace Allen read from her debut novel Valaida, which recounts the life of African-American jazz trumpet virtuoso Valaida Snow. Allen scoured two continents for biographical material relating to her elusive subject, which she then supplemented with many richly imagined characters and settings. Allen, who was the first African-American female member of the Directors Guild of America, lives in London but is a frequent visitor to Berlin, where her husband Simon Rattle directs the Berlin Philharmonic. After the reading, Richard Bernstein of the Berlin bureau of the New York Times moderated a lively discussion about the rich tradition of African-American expatriates in Europe. German-born Composer Samuel Adler, who arrives at the Academy toward the end of the semester, will continue his reflections on the relationship between German and American music. His extensive catalogue includes over four hundred published works, as well as three books. Mr. Adler currently teaches at the Julliard School of Music in New York. As Composer-in-Residence at the Academy, he will give a lecture-recital on “the Second German Transformation of American Music, 1933–60.”

Siemens AG, one of the American Academy’s founding benefactors, continues its generous support by funding a Siemens Fellowship at the Hans Arnhold Center for the next three years. Thanks to President and CEO Heinrich von Pierer and Senior Vice President and Chief Economist Bernd Stecher, the first Siemens Fellow will take up residence at the Academy during the fall semester of 2004.

With 65,000 employees and 11 of its worldwide businesses based in the US, Siemens is a firm that well understands the importance of strengthening the ties between Germany and the US. Last year, the US produced approximately 21 percent of Siemens’ worldwide business and generated $15.9 billion in new orders. In the same year, Siemens USA was a major exporter, generating more than 13 percent of sales ($2.2 billion) to overseas customers.

The US is not only one of the electrical engineering and electronics giant’s largest markets, it is also the site of many of the company’s philanthropic activities. These include support for science research courses at top US universities and donates about $1 million annually in scholarships and awards. Last year it dedicated more than $12 million to additional corporate citizenship and community affairs activities. It is hardly surprising, then, that the company shares the Academy’s goal of promoting German-American dialogue in a wide range of cultural and academic fields.

This fall, Siemens and the Academy look forward to welcoming the inaugural Siemens Fellow, Lothar Haselberger, a professor of archaeology at the University of Pennsylvania.
Academy Alumni have been busy in Washington. Adam Garfinkle (spring ’03) left the National Interest for a job at the State Department as chief speechwriter for Secretary of State Colin Powell. Chris Kojm (spring ’01) has been appointed Deputy Executive Director of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, an independent, bipartisan commission created in late 2002. Two Academy Alumni were active in the election-year Democratic primaries. As Derek Chollet (spring ’02) worked on the staff of candidate Senator John Edwards, advising on international affairs, Benjamin Barber (fall ’01) advised Howard Dean’s campaign. Further afield, Howard M. Wacltel (fall ’00) was appointed to a 12-person commission constituted by Jacques Chirac to prepare a report for him on global taxation for the next G8 meeting.

In the newsroom, journalist Nina Bernstein (fall ’02) has been covering US immigration policy in the post-September 11 climate for the New York Times. Her two-part series on the declining pregnancy rates among American teenagers was launched with a lengthy front-page piece on March 7. Belinda Cooper (fall ’02) has published a number of articles, book reviews, and travel pieces in the Times and was recently in Israel working on a documentary film.

Biographical pieces by current fellow Elizabeth McCracken and several Academy alumni were included in the December 28, 2003 issue of New York Times Magazine, which was devoted to “The Lives They Lived”. McCracken profiled Doris Fowler, author of Standing Room Only; Nicholas Dawidoff (spring ’02) wrote about Doris Bauer, a frequent late-night caller to the wfan program well known among radio sports fans; and David Rieff (spring ’03) contributed a portrait of UN Special Envoy to Iraq Sergio Viera de Mello who was killed by terrorists in Baghdad last August. A few months later, Jeffrey Eugenides (2000–01), whose novel Middlesex is a bestseller in German as well as in its English and American editions, hosted McCracken at a reading at the Cologne Literature Festival.

Artist Sue De Beer’s 2-channel video installation “Hans und Grete,” which she worked on during her 2002–03 year in Berlin, is on view at the Whitney Biennial in New York between March and June. An installation by artist Stephanie Snyder “Es war einmal et. al.,” also worked on during a prolonged Berlin residence, was on view in March and April at the Galerie Thomas Schulte in Berlin. Port C. K. Williams (fall ’98) received the National Book Award for his new collection, The Singing, admired in the New York Times Book Review for its “scorching honesty.” Williams was honored during a ceremony in New York. Henriette Cole (spring ’00) won the Kingsley Tufts Poetry Award for his collection Middle Earth. The award is the largest prize given for a single book of poetry. “Middle Earth is a book of extraordinary grace and power,” says previous Tufts Award winner Robert Wrigley, who chaired the panel that chose Cole. “It’s very much a book about a personal voyage into self-hood. It’s a very brave book. He’s a craftsman of the highest order.” Henri Cole is currently poet-in-residence at Smith College.

High Art for flute and toy piano by Martin Bresnick (spring ’01) was performed in a concert featuring contemporary American music at the Berlin Philharmonic in early March. Laura Schwendinger’s Nonet, a 15-minute work in three movements will be premiered and broadcast on wfmt in Chicago on June 14. The Fromm Foundation commissioned the composer (spring ’00) to write for the Chicago Chamber Musicians. Her piece Lontano, commissioned by the cme ensemble, also premiered this spring. Two works by Betsy Jolas (fall ’00) Mettet IV and Wanderlied will be performed this spring in Arvignon, Strasbourg, and Montreal.

The Slug Bearers of Kayrol Island, a collaboration between Cartoonist Ben Katchor (spring ’02) and composer Mark Mulcahy had another successful performance at The Kitchen in New York in late March. The “Tragicomedy for Music Theater” makes use of projections and animations by Katchor.

Among our academic alumni, it seems to be an especially rich season for fellowships, honors, and appointments. James Sheehan (spring ’01) has been elected president of the American Historical Association. Historian Margaret Lavinia Anderson (spring ’01) won an acls fellowship for next year. Her article “A German Way of War?” was published in the January 2004 issue of German History. Psychologist Laura L. Carstensen (spring ’02) is using funds from her 2003 Guggenheim Fellowship to research her next book, about the sudden extension of life expectancy in the 20th century. Anthropologist Ruth Mandel (fall ’00) was awarded a 2004–05 fellowship at the Woodrow Wilson International Center in Washington DC to work on a critique of international development in Central Asia, based on recent research in Kazakhstan. Art historian W.J.T. Mitchell (fall ’02) will be back in Berlin in 2004-2005 as a Fellow at the Wissenschaftskolleg. Mitchell delivers the Goddard Lectures this spring at the University of California, Berkeley. Another prestigious lecture series will be given by Richard Sennett (spring ’02), the 2003–4 Castle Lecturer in Ethics, Politics and Economics at Yale.

Steven Szabo (fall ’02) has been appointed the Steven Muller Chair at the Johns Hopkins Bologna Center for the year 2004–05. Michael Meltsner (fall ’00), currently director of the First-Year Lawyering Program at the Harvard Law School, was Hengeler-Müller-Guest Professor at the University of Freiburg in the summer of 2003.
The American Academy in Berlin invites applications for its fellowships for the 2005–2006 academic year. The Academy is a private, non-profit center for advanced research in a range of academic, cultural, and professional areas. It welcomes younger as well as established scholars, artists, and professionals who wish to engage in independent study in Berlin for an academic semester or, in special cases, for an entire academic year.

The Academy, which opened in September 1998, occupies the Hans Arnhold Center, a historic lakeside villa in the Wannsee district of Berlin. Fellowships have been awarded to writers and poets, public policy experts, journalists and cultural critics, economists, historians, legal scholars, theologians, art historians, linguists, composers and musicologists, painters and sculptors, and filmmakers.

Named prizes include the Bosch Fellowship in Public Policy, the George Herbert Walker Bush Fellowship, the Citigroup Fellowship, the Coca-Cola Fellowship, the Lloyd Cutler Fellowship, the DaimlerChrysler Fellowship, the Gillette Fellowship, the Ellen Maria Gorrissen Fellowship, the Haniel Foundation Fellowship, the Holtzbrinck Fellowship in Journalism, the Anna-Maria Kellen Fellowship, the J.P. Morgan Prize, the Guna S. Mundheim Fellowship in the Visual Arts, and the Siemens Fellowship.

US citizens and permanent residents are eligible to apply. (All applicants must permanently based in the US.) Fellows are expected to be in residence at the Academy during the entire term of the award. The Academy offers furnished apartments suitable for individuals and couples. Only very limited accommodations are available for families with children. Benefits include a monthly stipend, round-trip airfare, housing at the Academy, and partial board. Stipends range from $3000 to $5000 per month.

Application forms can be downloaded from the Academy’s web site (www.americanacademy.de) or obtained upon request. Applications and accompanying materials must be received in Berlin by October 25, 2004 (with the exception of applications in the visual arts and music, which are due in New York by December 1, 2004). Candidates need not be German specialists, but the project description should explain how a residency in Berlin will contribute to further professional development.

Applications will be reviewed by an independent selection committee following a peer review process. The 2005–2006 Fellows will be chosen in January 2005 and publicly announced in the spring.

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The Berlin Prize Fellowships 2005–2006

A talented group of scholars and artists chosen by an independent selection committee are expected at the Hans Arnhold Center next fall. Civil rights historian Jane Dailey (Johns Hopkins University) and medievalist art historian Lawrence Nees (University of Delaware) were awarded Berlin Prize Fellowships. Other art historians in residence will include Ellen Maria Gorrissen Fellow Christopher Wood (Yale University) and Benjamin Binstock (New York University), the semester’s Anna-Maria Kellen Fellow. Archaeologist and ancient Rome expert Lothar Haselberger (University of Pennsylvania) inaugurates the Siemens Fellowship. Writer Hilton Als, theater critic for the New Yorker magazine, will be a Holtzbrinck Fellow. Noted film maker Hal Hartley will hold the Citigroup Fellowship, and independent poet Gjertrud C. Schnackenberg will be the Coca-Cola Fellow. Hiroshi Motomura (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) inaugurates the Lloyd Cutler Fellowship. The George H. W. Bush Fellow will be political scientist Alan Wolfe (Boisi Center for Religion and Public Life at Boston College). Finally, political scientists Jytte Klausen (Brandeis University) and Ezra Suleiman (Princeton University) will hold Bosch Public Policy Fellowships.
The Spring 2004 Fellows
Profiles in Scholarship

By Miranda Robbins

Andrew Bacevich, a military analyst and professor of political science at Boston University, is writing a broad study of militarism in American life from the Vietnam war through the present. The former US Army officer is one of two inaugural George H. W. Bush Fellows at the Academy this spring and the author, most recently, of American Empire: the Realities and Consequences of US Diplomacy. Concerned by the recent implementation in Iraq of the doctrine of controversial warfare, he is tracking the cultural and societal impact of a new civil-military tension. The “citizen soldier” of the past has been replaced by “a professional military that sees itself as culturally and politically set apart from the rest of American society,” The pro-military stance of the Christian Right; anti-militarism within the American elite; the increasingly politicization of the officer corps; the shifting depiction of the military in popular culture are some of the factors related to that tension.


Mary Anne Case is a professor at the University of Chicago’s law school, where she teaches feminist jurisprudence, constitutional law, European legal systems, and regulation of sexuality. From Berlin as a Bosch Fellow she is probing the contradictions within German abortion law – inconsistencies that the German legal and political communities have preferred to downplay since abortion law was revisited after unification. The German constitution guarantees the right of the fetus to life, and abortions “remain characterized as wrongful acts.” But if a woman undergoes counseling, she may abort in the first twelve weeks of pregnancy without risk of criminal sanctions. Case is especially critical of mandatory counseling. The system would not be so “anomalous,” she writes, “if counseling were a well-established practice under present-day German law, if persons seeking to engage in a wide variety of acts were required to undergo counseling beforehand.” The system, however, “encourages a view of women as uniquely unable to make responsible decisions without aid.” Case’s study promises to have an impact on abortion debates in both the US and Germany.

DaimlerChrysler Fellow David Ferris will look back on two centuries of Bach reception for a book about the most illustrious of J.S. Bach’s many musical sons, Carl Philipp Emanuel (1714 – 1788). The second son’s life is ripe for a critical biography, one that comments on rather than perpetuating the various myths that have long fueled Bach family histories. These range from the myth of divine succession to scenarios of Romantic rebellion and Freudian failure.

C.P.E. himself promoted his father’s posthumous reputation and supervised publication of his works. In his Father’s Image: the Historical Identity of C.P.E. Bach will be more than a book about the anxiety of influence, however. Ferris gives a close analysis of the music, examining the “underlying aesthetic affinity” as well as the vast stylistic differences in the works of both Bachs. With a trove of original manuscripts on hand in the Statisbibliothek, it is an especially inviting project to undertake from Berlin. Ferris, an assistant professor of musicology at Rice University, is also an expert on Romantic song cycles, of Schumann in particular.

The decision to continue war in the face of obvious defeat – sometimes even beyond defeat – is a compulsion that once enjoyed the name of heroism, at least in the mythic realm. Michael Geyer, a military historian who is all too familiar with the carnage inflicted by Germany during two world wars, terms it “catastrophic nationalism.” The professor at the University of Chicago and current DaimlerChrysler Fellow is writing a book on the syndrome that draws explicitly on Germany’s bloody example. Examples of military-political decision making and the action and reactions of ordinary Germans will
For the past six decades, Germans have been engaged in the slow and painful processes of Geschichtskritik, or critical reflection on the past, a movement that Adorno himself at the University of Munich was a part of. The lecture notes on the “culture industry” he gave to his students have been compiled and published posthumously, revealing the depth and breadth of his thought on the subject. Adorno believed that the “culture industry” was a force for homogenization and standardization, eroding the critical edge of society. He argued that the “culture industry” was not only a product of its time but also a cause, shaping the way people think and feel about the world.

The late Ellen Maria Gorrissen Fellowship, a Bush Fellow and assistant professor at George Washington University is conducting interviews and examining two sets of recent records: the 1991–2002 “Wall Trials,” connected to the infamous shootings by GDR border guards, and the extensive volumes issued by two parliamentary inquiries (1992–94 and 1995–1998) devoted, respectively, to getting GDR history right and to overcoming the consequences of that history. Harrison has set out to test the quality and historical accuracy of the documents and to examine their sometimes divergent conclusions.

Legal historian Kenneth Ledford, as inaugural John Kluge Fellow, is completing his major social and legal history of the Prussian judiciary, 1848 to 1914. Ledford points out that the German judiciary still has a “reputation” for being conservative, even though it is not the same as it was in Prussia. The book earned McCracken a PEN/Winschitl award.

Elizabeth McCracken’s novels and short stories have been published in eleven countries, and though her settings are decidedly American—obscurer suburbs and small cities like Des Moines, Iowa—the characters who inhabit them contain continents, both figuratively and literally (they are often immigrants). This spring as Ellen Maria Gorrissen Fellow, McCracken is at work on Marvellous, a short novel that deals very specifically with “place, from the smallest level (a bedroom, a house, a six-house street) to the largest (a city, a state, a country at a particular time).” With her second novel, Niagara Falls All Over Again, McCracken subjected her hero, Mose Sharp, to a life of characteristically American roving restlessness. Mose and his vaudeville partner travel from hardscrabble Midwestern depression-era beginnings through a period of Laurelhawk Hardy-like Hollywood success, followed by the inevitable downward slide into television. The book earned McCracken a PEN/Winschitl award.

Short films by Reynolds Reynolds have been shown at prestigious festivals from Sundance to Rotterdam, from the New York Underground Film Festival to the Cuban biennial. But it is the challenge of presenting his pieces as museum installations (at places like the Tate Modern in London) that most intrigues this spring’s Guna S. Mundheim Fellow. How do the expectations of an art audience differ from those of a film audience? In art venues his work takes on different, hypnotic qualities—with sound, special effects, and even narrative content occupying a new plane. Three short films Reynolds made with Patrick Jolley—“Burns” (2002), “The Drowning Room” (2000), and “Seven Days Til Sunday” (1998)—take on the classic elements of fire, water, and air.
Fellow Profile: Xu Bing

Don’t Vacuum this Room

When artist Xu Bing left China for the US in 1990, in the wake of the Tiananmen Square massacre, he brought with him a mangled bicycle salvaged from the day the tanks rolled in. Over a decade later, when disaster struck his new home town on September 11, 2001, he would engage in another salvage operation, this time of dust from the wreckage of the World Trade Center. The dust now lies in a fine layer across the parquet floors of a museum in Cardiff, Wales, marking out the words of a Buddhist koan: “As there is nothing from the first, where does the dust itself collect?” This fragile installation, together with his entire oeuvre, has just won Xu Bing the first Artes Mundi Prize, a $70,000 award for contemporary art.

The line of Xu Bing’s career has been a curling, agitated brushstroke stretching from the imposing Chinese tradition of dissident scholar-painters (like the exiled early-Qing-dynasty master Bada Shanren) to more recent populist credos such as “art for the people.” This fragile installation, together with his entire oeuvre, has just won Xu Bing the first Artes Mundi Prize, a $70,000 award for contemporary art.

The breadth of Xu Bing’s work will enter culture, and at the same time I am unable to escape it.” In fact, his word-based work has entered new cultures with impressive ease. Shown all over Europe, North America, and Asia, Xu Bing’s pieces are as likely to incorporate advanced computer software as to make use of stone rubbings, banners, and ancient bookbinding methods—and as likely to poke fun at Western modes of art installation and performance as it is to turn the Chinese calligraphic tradition on its head.

Xu, born 1955, is the child of profoundly literate parents—and of Mao’s wrenching cultural reforms. No sooner had he memorized the first of thousands of classical Chinese characters than a drastically simplified set of characters was introduced. During the Cultural Revolution, his historian father and librarian mother were pilloried as “reactionaries” just as Xu himself was being packed off to the countryside for a program of “rustication.” He returned to Beijing much influenced by his time as a laborer, becoming first a model student and then a prized teacher at Beijing’s Central Academy of Fine Art. There was a period in which he worked in the propaganda factories, painting giant posters. Throughout the 1980s he was a favorite of the Chinese art establishment, but gradually, as his work began to take on an increasingly experimental direction, the favor turned to irritation. Xu spent painstaking months preparing his first major conceptual work, “A Book from the Sky,” which was first exhibited in Beijing in October 1988—just months before the student protests began in Tiananmen Square. He devised an elaborate system of some four thousand unintelligible “characters,” carving each fake word onto a wood block and assembling them into over five hundred hand-printed books and scrolls. His patience in preparing the volumes matched his mischievous delight in the element of surprise—the moment when viewers would realize that the distinguished looking texts surrounding them are meaningless. The work caused a sensation—which morphed into uproar after the June 1989 crackdown. His old teachers denounced it as impenetrable, inaccessible, “bourgeois liberal.” When a leading cultural Mandarin disparagingly compared it to “ghosts pounding the wall,” Xu promptly left Beijing for north China and, with the help of a team of other “ghosts,” made a full-scale rubbing of the Great Wall itself. The result, “Ghosts Pounding the Wall,” is one of his most powerful works. Soon after its completion he left for the US.

Since leaving China, Xu’s work has taken on even more variety. In 1994, he transformed a Beijing art gallery into a pigpen—literally—where a male and a female pig, both carefully painted with characters from his pseudo pictogram—mar, frolicked un-self-consciously before a discomfited audience. In 1995, he placed silk moths onto the pages of large blank books, watching the eggs and larvae form the shifting lines of an unreadable, enigmatic text—before being effaced in a web of spun silk.

Xu continues to play with notions of art’s accessibility, particularly through his “Square Word Calligraphy” system, developed to combine Western words with Chinese calligraphic techniques. The project, which often takes the form of interactive classroom installations, has built a popular bridge to Western audiences, who learn some of the tenets of the Chinese art of writing—correct posture, creative stroke, and attentiveness to spiritual energy—by taking up the brushes themselves.

The breadth of Xu Bing’s work will be on view from May 27 through August 1 in a special exhibition at the Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst in Berlin-Dahlem, as well as in a companion catalogue, co-published by the American Academy, the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Ostasiatische Kunst.
From the first, self collect?
In Berlin, a Showcase of American Talent Marks an Anniversary
Five Years at the Hans Arnhold Center

BERLIN - Alvin Youngblood Hart sidled up to the microphone in black leather pants and a plaid shirt, dreadlocks tumbling out of his leather cap. "The whole world has gone mad, especially recently," said Mr. Hart, the blues guitarist and 2003 Grammy Award nominee. The newly laureate sidled up to his guitar to make the same point.

Up front, a row of his colleagues from the American Academy in Berlin, where he was staying for a month as a Distinguished Visitor, clapped and cheered. On this particular night in November, Mr. Hart was king of the stage in the darkened movie theater on the west side of Berlin. But each of the 11 fellows would have the chance to walk a red carpet of their choosing during their stay.

To be an American Academy fellow means being given a platform for your work by night and an oasis to conduct your research by day. The American Academy, which just celebrated its fifth anniversary, held 118 cultural and political events last year. It is a temporary home for American scholars, journalists, economists, and artists who, supported by sizable stipends, spend a month to a year in a beautiful villa on the Wannsee, a lake just outside the German capital.

But it has also become a place for Germans and Americans to interact and talk with, and sometimes yell at, one another.

The informal design of the place is "an imminent form of critique of the insularity of some German institutions," said director Gary Smith. "I don't believe the Academy should be an academic monastery."

So the fellows, chosen from among about two hundred applicants, spend their days writing, traveling, visiting exhibitions, speaking or sometimes just exploring Berlin in the name of the creative process. But important work gets done: Jeffrey Eugenides, for example, wrote part of his novel Middlesex, which won a 2003 Pulitzer Prize, during his fellowship year, and Ward Macartney set a recent novel, The Weather in Berlin (2002), in an academy suspiciously like this one, where he was also a fellow.

Pierrot Joris, a Belgian-born poet, has long studied post-World War II writers who wrote in German, but he had never been to Berlin. The city became important for him as he began to translate the works of writers like Gottfried Benn and Paul Celan.

"I walked along Berlin's Landwehrkanal the other day," he said. "I need ed to walk the path of the poem 'You Lie' by Celan. I needed to imagine Benn where he was in the 1920s."

For journalists like Richard Cohen, a columnist for The Washington Post, time at the Academy provided new sources of information. "I thought it would be good to get my head out of Washington and look at America from abroad," he said. Mr. Cohen made his mark on Berlin in October when he gave his controversial speech "America, the Misunderstood," a lecture on American values and the reasons for the Iraq war. "The reaction was much more hostile from the Americans in the audience than the Germans," he said. "It made me recapitulate my thinking."

Fellows can eat almost every meal together if they choose, and there are optional programs set up by the Academy, like visits to the Bundestag and film screenings.

Svetlana Boym, a professor of Slavic literature at Harvard and a current fellow said that the group has become close. "We have intellectual relations and arguments with specific people. As she works on a book about the tensions among public, philosophical, and artistic freedoms, her interactions with German colleagues have also helped illuminate the relationship between art and politics, she said.

The German interior minister, Otto Schily, saw the Academy's influence as reaching beyond the elite of Berlin. "When one views those who go to the American Academy as mul tipliers in their communities, then the Academy has changed how those in Berlin view America," Mr. Schily said in an interview.

Certainly it provided a forum for heated debates during tensions between Germany and the US over the Iraq war. At the height of these disagreements, Mr. Schuly debated Richard C. Holbrooke, who was American ambassador to Germany in the early 1990s and later ambassador to the United Nations, and was instrumental in establishing the Academy.

"The farsightedness of setting up the Academy when there is such a high level of tension and anger in the German-American relationship cannot be underestimated," said John Kornblum, another former American ambassador to Germany and now the chairman of Lazard & Company GmbH, Germany, an investment bank. "It has the broadest mixture of people who attend its events of any transatlantic center here."

The Aspen Institute Berlin, which is often mentioned in the same conversations as the American Academy, focuses more on politics and foreign policy. It describes itself as "a transatlantic marketplace of ideas" and is run by a moderately conservative American, Jeffrey Gedin, who has been active in the German debate over Bush administration policies.

The American Academy was created by Mr. Holbrooke, who enlisted the support of Henry A. Kissinger, the former secretary of state, and Richard von Weizsäcker, the former German president. As the American military left Berlin in September 1994, they announced plans to establish it. "There was a need to create some institution that symbolized the spirit of the new era based on intellectual rather than military ties," Mr. Kissinger said in an interview.

Mr. Holbrooke said, "Our mission is to keep alive the special relationship between Americans and the people of Berlin." The Academy, he said, was designed to serve as a continuing bridge outside government channels. "It has never proved its value more than during this time of tensions in the official relationship, when it is serving as a bridge between the two countries," he said.

With an operating budget of $2.7 million for 2004, the Academy has attracted about eighty private and corporate donors. But the largest are the descendants of Hans Arnhold, a wealthy banker who owned the villa in 1921 and was forced to leave when the Nazis came to power. Arnhold’s relatives, especially his daughter, Anna-Maria Kellen, and her husband, Stephen Kellen, donated the money to renovate the villa and start the Academy. The result has been an institution that is more than just a policy forum.

"This involves a friendship that stands independently, that doesn’t simply revolve around whether a pre-emptive strike is the right security policy," Mr. Weizsäcker said in an interview. "The American Academy stands for the values of the Enlightenment, for the American Constitution that provides a structure for checks and balances, and for a state under the rule of law."

By Sarah Means Lohmann
From The New York Times
December 25, 2003

Lukas Foss Immerses Himself in Berlin’s Musical Life

The Return of the Native

Lukas Foss wrote an opera about a little devil named Gribelfisch and gave a head start to America’s opera-loving children with The Jumping Frog of Calaveras County. He has a great love of Baroque music and allows its formal models to surface over and over in his work. But he was also a serialist, a minimalist, and a neo-romanticist: "I don’t change my style, just my techniques and means of expression," Lukas Foss says. This week the 81-year-old composer, one of Americans oldest and most influential, is a Distinguished Visitor at the American Academy. For the Berlin-born Foss, this is a return. "I have only a few memoirs of old Berlin, Tiergarten in particular," He and his Jewish family had to emigrate in 1933; at age 15 the child prodigy found himself at the famous Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. He studied conducting with Serge Koussevitzky at Tanglewood and composition with Paul Hindemith. In 1953, he took over Arnold Schönberg’s composition class at UCLA. He remained there for ten years but later lived primarily in New York and Boston: "I still teach every Monday," Foss says, "that’s why I have so little time to organize my papers and notes."

And considering his work-intense life, these papers and notes have become many indeed.

As the longtime director of the Brooklyn Philharmonic, the Buffalo Philharmonic, and the Milwaukee Symphony, Foss has upheld both the classical tradition and modernism. He also performs as a pianist and develops children’s programs, regarding himself as a spokesman for his art.

This time he came to Berlin with his piece “Tashi,” for clarinet, string quartet, and orchestra, which was played at the Academy by the Schrawn Ensemble. While he is in Berlin, Foss wants to immerse himself deeply in the city’s musical life. His tight schedule includes a film about the tenor Joseph Schmidt, Alcina at the Komische Oper, and a premiere of a work by composer Frank Michael Beyer.

By Manuel Brug
From the Berliner Morgenpost
March 13, 2004
Translated by Brian Currin
XU BING: AS THERE IS NOTHING FROM THE FIRST I WHERE DOES THE DUST ITSELF COLLECT?

XU BING, MAY 27TH – AUGUST 1ST, MUSEUM FÜR OSTASIATISCHE KUNST BERLIN
FUAN LUN, MAY 15TH – JULY 3RD, GALLERY BERLIN
WIEBKE LOEPER I HAI BO, MAY 28TH – AUGUST 1ST, WHITE SPACE BEIJING
Two Failed Walls

By David Warsh

BERLIN — There was the usual dinner here before Hope M. Harrison’s lecture at the American Academy in Berlin about the origins of the Berlin Wall in 1961. Chef Renold Kegel prepared a witty meal: first, Rostock fish stew with mushrooms; then, “Broiler,” baked chicken on a bed of rice and peas with lecso relish, both typical East German dishes; and finally, a “Divided Dessert.” That turned out to be a measer but succulent slice of pineapple, a reminder of trade with Cuba, topped with whipped cream (there were plenty of cows in East Germany) separated, however, by a long thin cookie wafer (decorated, in turn, with delicate frosting on one side to evoke the painting of the wall) from a rich chocolate mousse studded with pieces of banana.

This banana business is a kind of running joke among Berliners. Even before the wall went up, film director Billy Wilder ridiculed ubiquitous shortages in the East with a scene in his neglected classic One Two Three: a Potemkin bar in which an East German entertainer yodels a German version of “Yes, We Have No Bananas,” chronicling a long list of shortages. When the Wall came down, the West German government handed out bananas to the throngs of celebrating Osties in Potsdamer Platz.

Harrison’s after-dinner talk was fascinating. Then it paid an unexpected dividend the next day. Harrison is an assistant professor of history and international affairs at George Washington University and author of the newly-published Driving the Soviets Up the Wall: Soviet-East German Relations 1953-1961. She served as director for European and Eurasian Affairs at the National Security Council in 2000-01.

More to the point, Harrison is of the generation for whom the cold war was not a real-time issue of concern but an accomplished fact. She was born in 1963.

As a graduate student, she flew into Berlin on November 10, 1989 — the morning after the Wall came down and spent the next ten days witnessing the euphoria that ensued. She spent 1991-92 in Moscow and Berlin during the golden age of archival research, when almost everything in the Soviet records was open to inspection. (Many of those filing cabinets since have been locked up again.)

And the response to her book has been enthusiastic: “A truly distinguished example of new cold war scholarship,” according to John Lewis Gaddis of Yale University, who is among the leading historians of the period. “As a case study of how a study of how a small power can manipulate a superpower, it is sure to become a classic.”

Among the current generation of Americans, and for many Europeans, Berlin’s experience is already fading, its story something that was young, it is once again a division of the baby boom voters who furiously debated the issues when they were young, it is once again a divisive issue in American politics. All the more reason, therefore, to pay attention to the scholars.

By David Warsh

March 14, 2004

The American Academy in Berlin, in cooperation with the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, LiteraturWerkStatt, and the United States Embassy invite you to take part in an ongoing dialogue:

CURATING MODERNITY
A SERIES OF DIALOGUES INSPIRED BY THE SHOW “MoMA IN BERLIN”

Monday, May 24th, 2004, 8 p.m., Neue Nationalgalerie
John Elderfield and Michael Fried Moderated by Wolfgang Kemp, Hamburg
Strategies of Curating

Monday, May 31st, 2004, 8 p.m., Kulturforum
T.J. Clark and Benjamin Buchloh Moderated by Wolfgang Kemp, Hamburg
The Inflation of ‘Modernitat’

Friday, September 10th, 2004, 8 p.m., Kulturforum
Chuck Close interviewed by Michael Kimmelman
Curatorial Canonization – an Artist’s Perspective
The series begins this March with a dialogue between
Robert Rosenblum and Ann Temkin on
Modern Art and its Histories

Registration required: moderaty@americanacademy.de, Curating Modernity has been made possible through the generous support of BASF and is part of the “American Season 2004.”

The series began this March with a dialogue between Robert Rosenblum and Ann Temkin on Modern Art and its Histories.
MONTAG:
FAKTEN
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All nationalism calls upon nations to fight war beyond defeat, to cast aside self-preservation and to continue fighting war to collective death. This deadly imperative may appear outlandish, something reserved for extremists. But in German history it is rather too close for comfort. This essay (part of a larger book-in-progress on the subject) will explore what this catastrophic nationalism meant in the context of World War II and how and why it was capable of holding an entire nation in its grip. While I focus here on a single nation, Germany, it should be evident that the call for collective death in the defense of the nation is a global calamity.
Death Tolls

For most Germans and Americans today, the notion of “fighting to death” seems pure hyperbole. It is difficult to imagine that “fighting to death” or “war to the point of no return” could and did actually happen on a mass scale. The statistics suggest otherwise. The highest German death-tolls in the World War II occurred late in the war, distinctly after Allied victory and German defeat were assured. World War II was at its most lethal not in 1942–43, that is Stalingrad, but from the summer of 1944 into April 1945. Throughout that period, German military casualties never fell below 300,000 per month. January and February 1945 were the deadliest months of the war — among the deadliest months of the entire twentieth century, with German military and civilian casualties hovering somewhere around 500,000 per month. Overall, more German soldiers were killed in action between July 20, 1944 (the date of the failed coup against Hitler) and May 8, 1945 (unconditional surrender) than in the entire previous five years of war between 1939 and 1944. And during the last year of the war, the civilian casualties approximated those of the soldiers, if indeed they did not surpass them. This is the true extent of the “destruction on a scale without historical precedent,” which writers like W.G. Sebald have come to speak of with quite an extraordinary effect on public consciousness.

At the same time, Germans fought ferociously throughout the last year and the last months of the war. Facing inexorable defeat, they fought to the point of self-destruction and lashed out at their enemies with extraordinary fury. Casualties among the Third Reich’s opponents reached exorbitant heights. While American casualties in the European theater were always higher than in the Pacific, the American forces fought some of their deadliest battles between November 1944 and February 1945 on the entire western front and even on the southern front in Italy. But American casualties were dwarfed by the exorbitant losses the Red Army suffered in its advance across the Oder and into Berlin, as well as in its sweep through Southeastern Europe.

Simultaneously, German security forces decimated their ideological enemies in a vast wave of mass murders across the shrinking space of occupied Europe. Violence against civilians found its cataclysmic expression both in combined Wehrmacht and SS sweeps against real and imagined partisans as well as in the systematic destruction of Eastern European cities like Warsaw and Budapest. Within the ambit of these “killing frenzies,” the death-marches of concentration and death camp inmates stand out as the most horrendous examples of murder. Even when the death factories were closed in late 1944 on order of Heinrich Himmler, the killing and the dying continued unabated. The annihilation of the victims of the Third Reich did not come to an end until Germany had surrendered and was occupied.

In short, World War II reached its lethal zenith after the outcome of war, victory and defeat, were all but certain. In a most immediate and literal sense, then, annihilation and self-destruction intertwined during the last phase of the war. This sad progression of mass death hinged on what appeared to Allied combatants to be an unfailing German spirit of war. Much has since been done to differentiate this image. There was no romantic desire for death, no Götterdämmerung, but the fact is that Germans soldiered on in the midst of a cataclysm of destruction. Had the German front — any of the fronts — collapsed, had German morale buckled, had there been a more sustained resistance, there still would have been the legacy of genocidal war and of the Holocaust to contend with. However, because Germans fought in the face of their own destruction, Europe turned into a vast zone of death with Germans in the role of vicious torturers and murderers, tenacious fighters, and hapless victims.

Catastrophic Nationalism

The seeds for the seemingly unwinding pursuit of war in World War II were sown in World War I. In the face of defeat, the nationalist right found a language of epic outrage that focused on the notion of an Endkampf — a final battle. This was the rhetoric, for example, of the Military Supreme Command’s call for a popular uprising in late October 1918: “Will the German people fight for their honor not just with words, but fight to the last man, and therefore guarantee the possibility of rebirth (Wiedererstehen), or will it be pushed into capitulation and therefore to destruction before a last and extreme exertion?”

Though it failed as a call for action, the exhortation expressed a widely held sentiment regarding what was proper and virtuous for a nation. Walter Rathenau had made a similar argument in early October, as had Konrad Haussmann, the liberal Deputy from Württemberg. Max Weber even echoed it in 1919 when he called for a guerilla war against the French occupation of Ruhr area was “a people would have organized their resistance as wars between November 1944 and February 1945 on the entire western front and even on the southern front in Italy. But American casualties were dwarfed by the exorbitant losses the Red Army suffered in its advance across the Oder and into Berlin, as well as in its sweep through Southeastern Europe.

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More German soldiers were killed in action between July 20, 1944 and May 8, 1945 than in the entire previous five years of war between 1939 and 1944.
the tide had shifted irrevocably against them. As historians acknowledge, German political and military leadership was keenly aware of the worsening strategic situation and of impending defeat as early as 1942. Following others who have studied the situation in detail, I suggest that October 1942 be taken as a turning point. It was then that a series ofstrategic assessments strongly suggested that, after the failure of the summer offensive, Germany was on the strategic defensive.

This is the same period that saw the mobilization of the machinery of Total War. It also coincided with the Propaganda Ministry’s first major campaign, officially in preparation for the 1942 Volkstrauertag (People’s Day of Mourning). Calling upon the Germans to imitate their “heroic dead” – a central theme from that point onward – Josef Goebbels launched the campaign with a series of articles that stand out even in a world already engrossed in a cult of the dead:

Our consolation in this hour of remembrance is our unalterable faith that one day the shining hour of victory will rise from the graves of our dead, our noble fallen. This victory will be crowned with the miraculous blessing of the sacrifice of these men and women, for whom we grieve today.... The heart of the dead... continues to beat, especially in the youth of Germany, who cannot wait to avenge the great sacrifice of your loved ones with an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. The hour of revenge has begun! We must see inscribed over the caskets of our fallen the old call to action: Germany must live— or we must die. 1

The grim intent of this “sacrifice” was spelled out in Hitler’s testament: “Centuries will pass, but out of the ruins of our towns and of our art the hatred will be renewed against the people who in the last instance are responsible and whom we can thank for all of this: international Jewry and its auxiliaries.” 2

This was a return to the language of 1923. Used thus in 1942–43, it initiated a deliberate politics of the funeral pyre, aimed not only at snatching immortality from the throes of defeat through a heroic gesture but at inciting the mobilization of generations to come. The Nazis sought to make the nation self-destruct so that future generations would have no choice but to revenge the dead.

From this point onward, Goebbels systematically sounded the note of collective death as a beacon for future revenge. The logic of Endkampf after 1942 was as simple as it was poisonous: to die in war as a German soldier or civilian meant to be remembered; to be remembered entailed being revenged; of the late 1950s and 1960s, most Germans chose to disavow their dead. The question that remains is what will happen, when they start to remember? The first step toward finding an answer is to acknowledge how deeply poisoned this memory of the dead was and continues to be.

There is no indication that the majority of the soldiers or, for that matter, civilians, embraced the Nazi cult of the dead. Rather, the persistence and intensity (one might even speak of a certain revival) of religious rituals of mourning is striking. More generally, the distance of the German people to self-destruction was not the end, but the beginning of remembrance. The Third Reich had lost the war, but in its active pursuit of catastrophe, the Nazi leadership was confident that it would capture the future.

Fifty years after World War II, this future has not arrived. Instead, with the cultural revolution the Nazi regime grew as defeat approached. And yet, without apparently believing in what they fought for, Germans effectively continued to do the regime’s bidding.

To attempt to answer this riddle leads into treacherous terrain. Emotions are still raw. But it is important at least to try to resolve the contradictions of event, experience, and memory.

The Fear of Revenge

Nazi propaganda succeeded quite spectacularly in at least one respect. It embedded the fear of enemy revenge into German hearts, thus creating an involuntary German community. Indeed, if I have been referring to “the” Germans in World War II (as a collective entity), I do so for this very reason. Wars are generally capable of creating such involuntary communities, but the Nazi leadership fostered this tendency even more deliberately. After a crucial meeting with Göring about total mobilization, on March 2, 1943, Goebbels noted in his diary with smug satisfaction:

Göring is perfectly aware of what would happen to all of us if we were to become weak in this war. He has no illusions about it. Especially as we were always enough civilians, men and women, who took on ever-widening responsibilities and worked their laborers ragged – and, often enough, worked them to death; there were soldiers and officers who, by dint of circumstance, ideology, or sheer bravery, relentlessly pulled small units, much as large formations forward – forward into self-destruction; and in the midst of all this, there was the vast number of security personnel, who out of fear, out of spite, and out of loathing drove tens of thousands of people into death. It was the tyranny of young virtue rather than the convictions of the old Nazi sacks that drove Germans into the catalysm of the last years of war.

One must also consider the role of state terror. The sheer measure of state terror against the German population cannot be overemphasized. Between 1943 and 1945, the number of convictions for defeatism (Wehrkraftversetzungen) skyrocketed, and the overall number of Germans killed by the regime – approximately 300,000 – is astonishing. Especially during the last year of the war, there was an acute and very real fear of getting killed – not by the enemy but by the many roving death squads (for that is what the fliegende Feldgerichte, the mobile court martial units, basically were) roaming the country.

The Nazi politics of the funeral pyre sought to make the nation self-destruct so that future generations would have no choice but to revenge the dead.
Terror worked so effectively, however, because it hinged on a much more generalized compulsion: a “no-exit” situation for civilians and soldiers. Rather than softening German morale, the ever tighter enclosure of German space and the total vulnerability to air attacks advanced the sense of no escape and heightened compulsion. The leadership often designed ingenious no-exit situations. In bombed out cities, for example, it was often only in factory canteens that one could find food. A system of cleared streets leading to the factory, its canteens, and temporary housing there, essentially tied workers, both male and female, to work. In the military, security cordons, staffed by the much feared military police, were systematically set up behind the front to catch all those who streamed back on the retreat in order to return them to the front. The famous elasticity of the German army, which thrived on the interchangeability of functions, was able to transform even cooks, drivers, and hospital personnel into fighting cadres.

Outright state terror hinged on the institution-alization and systematization of compulsion. Terror remained selective and often random. What was predictable was the way that soldiers and civilians were funneled into one-way streets that led invariably toward fighting and – given the vast superiority of the Allies – self-destruction. In contrast to 1918, however, Germans did work and fight. And working and fighting, they propelled themselves relentlessly forward in a system of virtuous mobilization that tied workers, both male and female, to work. In the canteens, and temporary housing there, essentially seemingly sensible idea that only collectively – as family, as group, as trek, as nation – could individuals survive proved to be calamitous.

This is certainly true of the armed forces, where comradeship dictated that soldiers stick together. Time and again, they formed viable fighting units that were relentlessly pushed back into the front. And the more youthful, inexperienced, and frightened the units, the higher their inclination to clump together. Toward the end of the war many of the soldiers were between 14 and 16 years old. The carnage among the youngest was indescribable. Deserters ran the risk of being shot (as in the case of a cohort of deserting Hitler Youth near Vienna). But thrown into battle, these inexperienced and frightened youngsters were marked for death.

Mass flight from the East needs to be considered in this light as well. The deliberate and systematic delay and hindrance of civilian and military officials in organizing the flight, the desperate will to survive that led to collective flight in the middle of winter, and the extraordinary brutality of civilian treks when caught between the lines led to the worst German civilian carnage in the entire war. It is often debated whether these refugees (or, for that matter, the bombing victims) were innocent or not. It is the wrong question to ask. Much like the teenage conscripts, they became the sacrifice victims of an Endkampf that deliberately set out to destroy and poison the future. And this being an ungodly war, there was no angel who stayed the slaughter-hand.

Military history suggests that flight (in contrast to capitulation) is the deadliest form of survival. The mass flight from occupied and German territories in the East not only proved this rule but highlights the essential reality of Endkampf in 1945. This was not the nation of heroic Nibelungs, fighting to the last man, woman, and child, envisioned by Nazi propaganda. This was a frightened and desperate mass, a nation that had lost any sense of the future, desperately desired not to know, and dearly wished to believe in a fortuitous and possibly miraculous outcome of the war. It was a nation that entered the last years of war, quite literally, with “eyes wide shut.”

Fat al Strategies of Survival

In the case of the Germans in World War II, the pervasiveness of the situation becomes fully apparent when we recognize that the prevailing survival strategies led to the worst disasters. That is to say that the very impulse to survive and the prevailing strategies of survival, under the conditions set by the Nazis on one hand and Allied war-fighting on the other, greatly heightened the chance of getting killed. The seemingly sensible idea that only collectively – as family, as group, as trek, as nation – could individuals survive proved to be calamitous.

Transatlantic Internationale Politik (TIP) is the quarterly English-language magazine of the German Council on Foreign Relations in Berlin.

TIP features a selection of articles, essays and op-ed pieces on topical issues in foreign affairs. It also presents European documents, book reviews, and a survey of articles from European foreign policy magazines.

TIP is essential reading for everyone who is working in the field of politics and global economic issues and is interested in European views on international relations.

“I have long felt that the eminent journal of the German Council of Foreign Relations would be of great interest and importance to a wide readership. TIP will be good news indeed to the international foreign policy community.”

Henry A. Kissinger
The collapse of unions, the withdrawal from civic life, and the seven-fold increase in the rate of imprisonment are just three factors that have changed how people in America experience the rule of law. The legal system has come to seem arbitrary, unpredictable, and unfair. And those who are part of it have learned to act accordingly.

The Movement from Contract to Tort

The British historian H.A. Maine proposes the thesis that modernity is the movement from “status” to “contract.” Without being quite as grandiose, I say the biggest change I have seen, which goes almost unrecorded in legal literature, is that, with the collapse of unions, we have moved from “contract” to “tort.”

For most working Americans, this may be the biggest change in the way the law now impacts their lives. In the 1950s and 1960s, up to 35 percent of workers, especially men, were covered by collective bargaining agreements. As a matter of “contract,” each worker was protected, or could not be fired except for just cause. If he were fired, his union would file a grievance, arguing that “just cause” did not exist under the contract. If it was not resolved at the grievance step, an arbitrator came in, and decided the case in a cheap, informal procedure, often without a lawyer. The remedies? Reinstatement, back pay. The idea was that under a contract, a “relationship” would continue, in some way, if only between the employer and the union.

“Contract” also permeated the non-union world. The cultural norm, back in business then, was: what the hourly worker got, the middle manager got. If not a contract as such, at least a contract-based norm of fairness.

Now, from what I can see in my own practice as a labor lawyer, this world of “contract” is gone. Few—under 8 percent—work under any kind of labor contract. All the rest work under a rule of law known as “employment at will.” That is, anyone can be fired for any reason, at any time. Or for no reason. Or a bad reason, like the color of your tie. With no warning. No severance pay. Nothing. About two years ago I taught a seminar at the Humboldt University in Berlin. In our first session, as a preliminary, I mentioned this “common-law” notion of “employment at will,” virtually as an aside. To my dismay, in each later session, I’d have to start at the beginning, with “employment at will” all over again. With these young European law students, it was too hard to take in. Any reason? At all? The arbitrariness, the unfairness of it, was, to a European, shocking, unnatural.

Whether or not it is “unnatural,” it is radically new.

In the US, we talk of “employment at will” as a common-law rule, as if it went back to the Saxons and King Alfred and the Domesday Book. But even for America, on a mass basis, this is a new type of legal regime. For decades, from the 1930s on, we operated under either a “contract,” or a threat of one through union organizing. Before that, we lived, overwhelmingly, in a rural economy, with the majority of Americans working on a farm, or as tradesmen and craftsmen and apprentices in often tiny American “cities.” And even those who fell outside of farm-and-shop were in an economy that was always desperately short of labor.

In short, until unions collapsed, America did not know “employment at will” in anything like its current, universal, and highly arbitrary form. Far from being the era of King Alfred, “employment at will,” for us, is more like the Brave New World. It means a constant turnover, on a scale known in no other country, nor at any time in our history. It is a regime that Americans experience as maddening. Any human being would.

The bite of it is softened only by the fact that so many of these jobs aren’t worth fighting to keep. While there is no “contract” remedy, however, there is now a remedy in tort. Since the collapse of unions, people, maddened, have flooded the federal courts with “civil rights”-type claims, analogous to claims in tort. As labor law waned, civil rights law waxed. Indeed, this waning and this waxing have a faint connection. For over thirty years, unions have tried to pass labor law reform, to modify the Wagner Act, to let Americans join unions. Freely, fairly; without being fired. While coming close, the unions, over and over, have lost, by small margins, in the US Senate, usually as a result of a filibuster. But perhaps as a consolation prize, Congress has frequently added another “new” civil right in employment. They include the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended in 1991; the Civil Rights Act of 1971; the Age Discrimination in Employment Act; Employee Retirement and Income Security Act; the Occupational Health and Safety Act; the Medical and Family Leave Act; the warms Act…

Even to me, as a labor lawyer, it is very complicated to determine in a given firing whether any of these civil rights laws apply.

This is the world not of “labor” law but of “employment” law, not of “contract” law but of “tort” law. And now, in our federal legal system, at least on the civil side, it is the biggest single area of law. Each year, in federal court in Chicago, we see thousands of these cases. “Forty percent of all the filings here,” a magistrate judge, who settles many of them, estimated to me. But this “tort” law is quite different from the old kind of “contract” law.

First, it is not so much about conduct as it is about state of mind. It is no longer the issue whether the employer fired the plaintiff for “just cause,” whatever that might now mean in a world of “employment at will.” What the plaintiff must do is show that the employer acted to harm him. The point of the case is not to limit the “objective” or “external” but the “subjective” or “internal” — in a sense, to peer into the human heart.

In other words, the issue is “motive.” But as to “motive,” it is unclear, even now, at least at the trial level, where working lawyers are, what a judge may require us to prove. Right now, on appeal, our firm has a case involving race. And the issue for the appellate court is: does race have to be the factor? Or only a factor? Surely, it is the latter.

And if it is only a factor, then what kind of factor is it? Does it have to be a controlling factor? Or only, as the judge declared in our case, a catalytic factor? Or, as we argue, does it only have to be a substantial factor? Then there is a huge further controversy: whether, even if so, the employer can still win if it can prove it would have made the same decision anyway.

Confused? So are the lawyers. After forty years and 40,000 case opinions and repeated attempts by the Supreme Court to clarify—which which seem to last only a short time—we are on appeal, and the case law is, I can assure you, still unsettled.

Second, compared to the old “contract” law, the new “tort” or civil rights law is expensive. “Contract” (arbitration) was cheap. Easy. Now, the fired employee has to come up with thousands—five, ten—not to pay my legal fees, but just for costs: the court reporter, depositions, photocopying.

Of course, by a court award, I have to obtain my fees from the other side: soon, I have a cash claim bigger than my client’s! I have just looked at my “bill” for a single Title VII case. So far, to date, with no trial, it’s nearly $180,000!

The old system? The whole proceeding may have cost under $10,000.

Third, the cases settle, or never go to trial. Either because the federal courts drop them through one or another legal “trap door,” or because the parties, exhausted, finally settle. Of 100,000 civil cases in federal court, perhaps fewer than 2 percent will go to trial. This December the New York Times did a front-page story on the fact that lawyers in America no longer try cases ("US Suits Multiply, But Fewer Ever Get To Trial"). The puzzle was: why settle on the eve of trial when the parties have already "sunk the costs" in the litigation? By the time of trial, the big expenses are over. The trial itself, may take two or three days, is not that much more costly. Oddly, it may be that because the parties have paid out so much in cost, after all the deadly, destructive phase known as discovery, they are more risk-averse than ever.

Fourth, the new "tort" law is much more scorched-earth style than the old "contract" law. For one thing, in federal court, unlike arbitration,
I can use the rules of discovery. And I can force you to give up, to tell me, everything: what is in your secret heart, not to mention in your tax returns.

It’s hard to exaggerate how big a change this is: in a sense, everyone in the case has to strip themselves, take off their clothes – far more now than was the case when I started out in law school. Look at what Paula Jones’s lawyers did to Clinton, as a sitting President. It is discovery that makes the new “American-style” tort law so bitter, so arbitrary, each side on a rampage to swing at the other.

Over what? Intent. Motive. A “bad” state of mind. So that gives a legal rationale to harass, to destroy, in a litigation that is disconnected from the question of whether or not the employee was treated fairly.

Obviously, it is terrible for the employer, and he or she is often right to complain; after all, the employer probably did not engage in a “hate crime,” or fire because of a factor like race. Or it was a mix of several motives rather than one bad motive. But remember that the employer got rid of the older, cheaper system in the first place. Indeed, the more expensive the system, the bigger the discovery rights, the bigger the employer’s advantage. We plaintiff lawyers learned from the management lawyers how to torture people in a deposition!

And with the new “tort” unlike the old “contract” arbitration, there is no constraint on slash-and-burn. Because in arbitration, the remedy was to reinstate, to put the employee back. If both employer and employee had to live again, together, it made no sense to slash-and-burn.

But in the tort system, nobody is going back. Not now. It never happens. For one thing, the litigation that is disconnected from the case of Enron, taking all the chips and betting them on red.

So what happens? Without any legal accountability, people lose their pensions. It may be that they work for Enron. Or WorldCom. Or the employer simply one day stops the 401(k) entirely. In any event, while it may lead to little litigation, this is a major transformation of legal roles. Employers are no longer “trustees” in the sense envisioned by ERISA. Employees are no longer “beneficiaries.” Now the employer is more likely to be selling me his stock; instead of trustee and fiduciary, we are in the world of Enron, of seller and purchaser, the world of consumer fraud.

The bite is softened only by the fact that so many of these jobs aren’t worth fighting to keep.

In this new world, the law is: Employee Beware. Behind a closed door, the top earners may be “restructuring.” Or getting rid of the 401(k) altogether. Or in the case of Enron, taking all the chips and betting them on red.

As we move from the old trust law to the law of fraud, people in their working lives experience the world as more arbitrary, more unpredictable. Indeed, in the very area where the law once protected them most reliably: in their pensions, in their savings. The form of that savings, alas, is no longer in a defined benefit but in a 401(k) – in an amount which may be ludicrously small, or not even there. For there is no “insured” 401(k) and very little or no transparency. Even in the case of gross fraud, the legal system here provides not much help at all.
Healthcare

In healthcare, too, people feel vulnerable, even preyed upon. In particular, people no longer expect the tax-exempt hospital to be a “charitable” institution, as a guardian or protector, in any legal sense. A major change in the law, or at least the culture, is that the “charitable” hospital behaves toward the uninsured as badly as many of the “for-profit” hospitals.

When critics of the right speak of a Legal Crisis in America, they often refer to “the trial lawyers” filing suits against hospitals primarily and, to a lesser extent, doctors. Medical Malpractice. Lawyers like Phillip Howard, author of The Death of Common Sense (1995), are arguing that there is “too much law” and that lawyers and lawsuits are ruining the nation.

Yes, of course, patients sue hospitals without restraint, for everything they can get. I find it appalling. But who started this war? Hospitals and doctors sue their patients far more—far, far more—than their patients sue them.

If we simply count up filings, the real source of the much-talked-about Litigation Hell is the explosion of suits by hospitals and doctors going after patients.

This is the American model. First we deregulate, or fail to regulate. Second, even worse than deregulation, we defund enforcement. My old law professor Clyde Summers has kept telling us over the years: “You have to understand: it costs money to have rights.” There is so much twaddle on the right, by lawyers like Phillip Howard, about our rights-oriented liberalism and government regulation. What rights? At the federal, or the state level, there’s nothing in the budget for them.

Deregulation as a movement is a minor part of the weakening of public law. A much bigger problem is that there is nothing in the budget. In the nurse’s case, for example, the Illinois Department of Public Health would like very much to investigate. But there is no staff. At first, I was incredulous; but there is no one there. Indeed, the worst part is: Republicans and Democrats alike cut salaries, make the jobs as bad as possible. The result? Either a slot is abolished, or an incompetent is hired. This only proves Summers’ point: it costs money to have a right.

Public law collapses and then we express shock when private law, tort, malpractice, move in this area instead. Not all these private cases are worthy ones, or even related directly to this withdrawal of regulation. But because the public law has collapsed, it creates, reinforces, too much private litigation, folk justice, vengeance.

And all of this, understandably, makes people cynical about the law.

If it’s bad on the state level, it’s even worse, almost laughably worse, on the federal level. Another of our cases at the moment: we are suing for low-wage, Mexican workers at a chicken factory. Why? Because they didn’t get 60 days notice that the factory was closing. This violates the WARN Act. If there’s
The collapse of public law has led to an explosion of private law – people taking private revenge for things that the “state” is no longer strong enough to regulate.

no notice, they get a modest amount of compensation. (By the way, these workers are really poor!) But the company claims an exception. The Department of Agriculture “shut us down” for massive health violations – rats, rat droppings, diseased meat everywhere – and the shutdown was “unforeseeable” under an exception to the law. So the whole issue is: was the shutdown for massive health violations “unforeseeable”? The ruling of the district judge – a liberal, a Clinton appointee, of Mexican descent: Yes, it was unforeseeable. It could not be “reasonably foreseen” that the Department of Agriculture would enforce its own regulations! He dismissed our case!

After all, the Department of Agriculture, under Clinton, then Bush, has been trying to deregulate food safety. Do less. And there are fewer inspectors. And no one takes them seriously any more. In other words, it is “unforeseeable” as a matter of law that the Department of Agriculture will take any serious steps to enforce its own regulations. By the way, this lonely USDA inspector didn’t shut down the plant for good. He just closed until the owner could make repairs. But the owner moved his business to Iowa, where the USDA inspectors would look the other way.

This is my colleague’s case. My only role was to edit the brief, as I did by striking out the word “rodent” and putting in the word “rat.” But otherwise, the evidence is horrific. But my point is that food safety – getting rat droppings off of meat – was something, once, in America, that public law could do. Now it can’t. Why? We either deregulate, or defund. Result? Private lawyers move in instead. With clients who don’t expect public law to work, and go for everything they can get.

It is understandable if Americans see the law, and the legal system, as a kind of roulette wheel. Given the arbitrary way the law now works, it is understandable that people take any chance to swing at each other’s heads.

But when Americans lose faith in the fairness of the rule of law, it makes America as a country more dangerous in the world. If we are skeptical of the rule of law in our day-to-day lives, at home, we will be even more skeptical of it abroad.

If Europeans are puzzled that Americans disdain their inclination toward international law and scoff at the European fondness for what Robert Kagan calls “the Kantian paradise,” they should remember: we’re the country from Litigation Hell.

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like the elephant, fog
shredded north
a white sun going down
Bessomers fired
through clouds horizoned
on my dog-eared stack
It feels good and right
to waste earnest hours
of an early evening's
daylight saving time
in uncertainty and want
these cranky climates
changing in us while we
haven't started dinner yet.

– W. S. Di Piero

Didn't You Say Desire Is
The Salome Summit
Mahler and Strauss in Graz, 1906

By Alex Ross
W
hen Richard Strauss conducted his sensuously savage opera Salome in May 1906, in Graz, the crownheads of music gathered to witness the occasion. The world première of Salome had taken place five months before, in Dresden, whence word spread that Strauss, the master provocateur of German music, had created something beyond the pale – an ultra-dissolvent Biblical spectacle, based on a play by a recently deceased British degenerate whose name was not to be mentioned in polite company; a work so frightful in its depiction of adolescent necrophilia that imperial censors had banned it from the Court Opera in Vienna.

Gustav Mahler, the Director of the Court Opera, attended with his wife, the beautiful and controversial Alma. Giacomo Puccini, the matinee-idol creator of La Bohème and Tosca, made a trip north to hear what “terrible cacophony” his German rival had concocted. The bold young composer Arnold Schoenberg arrived from Vienna with his brother-in-law, Alexander von Zemlinsky, and no fewer than six of his pupils. One of them, Alban Berg, traveled with an older friend, Hermann Watzmayer, who left a memoir of the occasion, describing the “feverish impatience and boundless excitement” that all were feeling as the evening approached. Raoul Auernheimer, a protégé of Arthur Schnitzler, was one of several rising literary stars in attendance. The widow of the waltz king Johann Strauss, no relation to the composer of Salome, represented old Vienna. Ordinary music-enthusiasts filled out the crowd – “young people from Vienna, whose only hand luggage consisted of the [opera’s] piano score,” Strauss noted. Among them may have been an Austrian teenager named Adolf Hitler, who had just seen Mahler conduct Tristan and Isolde in Vienna, on the night of May 8. Hitler later told Strauss’s son and daughter-in-law that he had borrowed money from relatives to make the trip to Graz.

There was even a fictional character present – Adrian Leverkuhn, the hero of Thomas Mann’s novel Doctor Faustus, a tale of a composer in league with the devil.

O
n the sixteenth of May, the weather was uncertain. There was rain in the morning, sun in the afternoon. That morning’s Grazter Tagepost carried news from Croatia, where a Serbo-Croat alliance was gathering force, and from Russia, where the Tsar had recently dissolved the Duma. The English minister of war, Lord Haldane, was quoted as saying that he “knows Germany and loves Germany’s literature and philosophy” and that he could recite passages of Goethe’s Faust by heart.

Strauss and Mahler, the titans of Austro-German music, spent the day in the hills above the city, accompanied by Alma, who recorded the encounter in her famous memoirs. A photographer captured them outside the opera house, apparently preparing to set out on their expedition – Strauss smiling in a boater hat, Mahler squinting in the sun. The company visited a waterfall and had lunch in an old inn, where they sat at a plain wooden table. They must have made a strange pair: Strauss, tall and lanky, with a weak chin, a bulbous, balding forehead, strong but sunken eyes; Mahler a full head shorter, a muscular hawk of a man, the picture of genius in the flesh. As the sun began to go down, Mahler became nervous about the time, and he suggested that the party should head back to the Hotel Elefant, where they were staying, in order to prepare for the performance. “They can’t start without me,” Strauss said. “Let ‘em wait.” Mahler replied: “If you won’t go, then I will – and conduct in your place.” Alma assumed that Strauss was concealing his anxiety behind a facade of nonchalance.

Strauss was 41, Mahler was 44. They were in most respects polar opposites. Mahler was a kaleidoscope of moods – childlike, heaven-storming, despotick, despairing. As he walked agitatedly from his apartment on the Schwarzenbergplatz to the opera house on the Ringstrasse, cab drivers would whisper to their passengers, “Der Mahler!” Strauss was earthy, self-satisfied, more than a little cynically, a closed book to most observers. The soprano Gemma Bellincioni, who sat next to him at a banquet after the performance in Graz, described him in her memoirs as “a pure kind of German, with a sort of kindliness, a gossipy and no inclination to talk about himself and his work, a gaze of steel, an indecipherable expression.” Strauss came from Munich, a backward place in the eyes of sophisticated Viennese such as Gustav and Alma. Alma underlined this impression in her memoirs by rendering Strauss’s dialogue in a ridiculous Bavarian dialect. Not surprisingly, the relationship between the two composers suffered from constant misunderstandings. Mahler would recoil from unintended slights; Strauss would puzzle over the unintended slights. He was still trying to understand Mahler some four decades later when he came across Alma’s book and annotated it. “All untrue,” he wrote, next to the description of his behavior in Graz.

“Strauss and I tunnel from opposite sides of the mountain,” Mahler said, according to Alma. “One day we shall meet.” In spite of their differences, the two had a common bond. They both saw music as a medium of conflict, a battlefield of extremes. They marshaled all the grandeur of romanticism, yet they questioned the heroic Beethovenian pose. They were both populistst with a pessimistic streak – they felt nostalgia for a world that had not yet been destroyed. Their shared aura of might and melancholy may explain the fascination that each one held for the other. Strauss’s first major act upon becoming President of the Allgemeiner Deutscher Musikverein, or General German Music Association, in 1901, was to program Mahler’s Third Symphony for the festival the following year; indeed, Mahler’s works dominated the Association’s programs for several years running. So much Mahler was played under Strauss’s watch that some critics took to calling the ADMV the Allgemeiner Deutscher Mahlerverein. Others dubbed it the Annual German Carnival of Cacophony. Mahler was especially impressed by Salome, which Strauss had played and sung for him the previous year. He wanted it to be one of the main events of his Vienna tenure. But the censors balked at an opera in which Biblical characters are made to perform unspeakable acts. Furious, Mahler began hinting that his days in Vienna were numbered. In March he wrote to Strauss: “You would not believe how vexatious this matter has been for me, or (between us) what consequences it may have for me.”

So Salome came to Graz. The State Theater staged the opera at the suggestion of the critic Ernst Decsey, an associate of Mahler, who assured the management that it would create a succès de scandale. “The city was in a state of nervous excitement,” Decsey wrote in his autobiography, Music Was His Life. “Parties formed and split. Pub philosophers buzzed with curiosity about events at the opera house,... From the provinces came visitors; from Vienna came critics, press people, reporters, and foreigners. Three sold-out houses – overbooked, actually. Porters groaned, and hoteliers reached for the keys to their safes.” The critic himself fueled the anticipation with a high-flown preview article in the Grazer Tagepost on May 16, acclaiming Strauss’s “tone-color world,” his “polyrhythms and polyphony,” his “bursting out of the narrowness of the old tonality,” his “fetish ideal of an Omnitarian.”

As dusk fell, Mahler and Strauss appeared at the opera house. They had rushed back to town in their chauffeur-driven car. The crowd milling around beforehand had an air of nervous electricity. As Decsey recounted in the next day’s paper, the orchestra played a fanfare when Strauss walked up to the podium, and the audience applauded stormily. Then a deathly silence descended, the clarinet played a softly slithering scale, and the curtain went up.
Wilde wrote his play in 1891, saturating it in the rich, gymnic imagery of Symbolism. “While everything in your Salome is executed in endlessly dazzling strokes,” Mallarmé wrote to him, “there also arises, on each page, the unsayable and the Dream.” The Irishman brought his own obsessions to bear, notably a scandalous eroticization of the male body. Wilde became the great unmentionable in England, but on the Continent his writing enjoyed a vogue, acquiring propaganda value for those who wished for a general loosening of bourgeois mores. Max Reinhardt produced the play in Berlin in 1902; Richard Strauss saw that production, and, after getting hold of Hedwig Lachmann’s forceful German translation, began setting it to music word for word. Next to the first line, “How beautiful is the princess Salome tonight,” Strauss made a note to use the key of C-sharp minor, although it would turn out to be a different sort of C-sharp minor than Bach’s or Beethoven’s.

Strauss always had a flair for beginnings. He wrote what may be, after the first four notes of Beethoven’s Fifth, the most famous opening flourish of all: the “mountain sunrise” from Thais Spake Zarathustra. That music had elemental power because it was grounded in basic phenomena of sound. The opening phrase reproduces the hierarchy of “natural” harmonic tones, which Pythagoras named the “harmony of the spheres”; out of them blazes a towering chord of C major, which has within it all the majesty of nature. Stanley Kubrick, in his film 2001, let Strauss’ music speak for nothing less than the cosmos itself. Salome, written nine years after Zarathustra, whisks us away into a very different and much more artificial world.

The first notes are nothing more than a rising scale, but it is a very peculiar scale that had probably never appeared in music before. The first half belongs to the key of C# major; the second to the key of G; then C# resumes, but in the minor. What makes the combination more than a little unnerving is the presence of the tritone interval lurking at the heart of it — what medieval scholars called diabolus in musica, the musical devil. For centuries, composers had relied upon the tritone to suggest forces of darkness, to summon up an atmosphere of fear. Something about the mutual thrum of the notes G and C# creates an uneasy vibration, a nasty, invasive edge. George Gershwin had recourse to it when he wrote that most devilishly charming of Mephistophelean arias, “It Ain’t Necessarily So...” Strauss went further: he juxtaposes two distinct keys along this axis. Which is to say, each note in the C#-major key is distant by a tritone from the notes of the C-major set. By beginning with this collision of keys, Strauss signals that Salome’s world is cracked down the middle.

The little run of notes at once suggests a world where bodies and ideas circulate freely, where opposites meet. There is a hint of the glitter and swirl of city life — the debonairly gliding clarinet looks forward to the jazzy character who sets in motion Gershwin’s Rhapsody in Blue. At the same time, this scale suggests a collision of belief systems, a meeting of irreconcilables. Salome takes place at the intersection of Roman, Jewish, and Christian societies, and a violent outcome is assured. Most acutely, the Salome scale goes inside of the unsettled mind of one who wishes to devour all the contradictions of her world. Strauss was not the first to write in this way: Wagner used similar combinations of chords to portray Hagen, in Götterdämmerung, who wishes to seize the Ring and conquer the world. And in Mussorgsky’s Boris Godunov, a pendulum swing across the tritone symbolizes the sinister splendor of the murdered Tsar. The lurching opening chords of Puccini’s Tosca show the malevolence of Baron Scarpia, who bends the institutions of Church and State to his private passion. Strauss had a penchant for such clashing chords from the beginning of his career; in his tone poem Don Quixote, they blare forth at the moment the Don takes leave of his senses and begins his titling at windmills.

Salome maintains a sulphurous, changeable atmosphere throughout. The real tour-de-force comes with the entrance of Herod. Salome’s degenerate stepfather, halfway through the opera. He comes out on the terrace; looks for the Princess; gazes at the Moon, which is “reeling through the clouds like a drunken woman”; orders wine, slips in blood, stumbles over the body of a soldier who has committed suicide; feels cold, feels a wind — there is a hallucination of wings beating the air. It’s quiet again; then more wind, more visions. The orchestra plays fragments of waltzes, expressionistic clusters of dissonance, impressionistic washes of sound. There is a turbulent contrapuntal episode as the Jews in Herod’s court dispute the meaning of the Baptist’s prophecies. Two Nazarenes respond with the Christian point of view; Strauss, a committed atheist, later commented that he intended this music to be as boring as possible. Salome dances her dance: it’s a little kitschy and a little gruesome. She demands the head of the prophet as a reward, and Herod furiously tries to change her mind. She refuses. Soldiers prepare to behead the Baptist in his cell, and Herod sentences his son to prison. At this point, the bottom drops out of the music altogether. A toneless bass drum rumble and strangled cries in the double basses build to a gigantic smear of sound that covers most of the spectrum of available tones.

Now the head of John the Baptist lies before Salome on a silver platter. The harmony steadies itself on luminous C sharp, where the opera began. Strauss’ Hitchcockian manipulation of our expectations goes a step farther: having shocked us with unheard-of dissonances, he now disturbs us with plain chords of nectarean bliss. For all the reeling ugliness of the setting, this is still a love story, of a perverse kind, and the composer honors his heroine’s emotions. “The mystery of love,” Salome sings, “is greater than the mystery of death.” Herod spits out his fear and loathing of the degenerate spectacle that his own incestuous lust has generated. “Hide the moon, hide the stars!” he rasps. “Something terrible is going to happen!” He turns his back and begins to walk up the great staircase of the palace. The moon, obeying his command, goes behind the clouds. An extraordinary noise emanates in the trombones: the opera’s introductory motif is crunched together as one dark, glowing chord. Above it, Salome’s love themes begin to blossom again, like flowers in rubble. But, at the moment of the fatal kiss, something goes awry: two different chord progressions, either of which would sound unremarkable on its own, unfold simultaneously in different parts of the orchestra. A fresh nightmare of dissonance results — a mix of the ordinary and the unspeakable. It is like a hideous face in a crowded room. A moment later, the moon reemerges, illuminating the scene. Herod, poised at the top of the stairs, turns around, looks, and screams, “Kill that woman!” The opera ends with eight bars of noise.

Although music historians tend to sanctify the premieres of Schoenberg’s Second String Quartet, in 1908, and of Stravinsky’s Rite of Spring, in 1913, as modernism’s revolutionary musical moments, Salome came first, and it foreshadowed practically everything that came after. As T. S. Eliot said of Ulysses, it killed the nineteenth century.

The crowd roared its approval — that was the most shocking thing. “Nothing more satanic and ‘artistic’ has been seen on the German opera stage,” Ernst Deesey wrote in his review the next day. After the performance, the composer held court at the Hotel Elephant, with a never-to-be-repeated company that included Mahler, Puccini, and Schoenberg. When someone declared that he would rather shoot himself than memorize the part of Salome, Strauss answered to general amusement, “Me, too” — at least according to the memoirs of the conservative Austrian composer Wilhelm Kienzl. The following day, he wrote triumphantly to his wife: “It is raining, and I am sitting on the garden terrace of my hotel, in order to report to you that Salome went well, gigantic success, people applauding for ten minutes until the fire curtain came down, etc., etc.” Although some dissenting voices were heard — Kienzl called the opera “an almost shameless glorification of sexual psychopathy” — no real scandal ensued. Salome went on to be performed, in its first few years of existence, in some 25 different cities. The success was so great that Strauss was even able to laugh off criticism from Kaiser Wilhelm II. “I am sorry that Strauss composed this Salome,” the Kaiser reportedly said. “Normally I’m very keen on him, but this is going to do him a lot of damage.” Strauss related this story in his memoirs, adding with a flourish: “Thanks to this damage I was able to build my villa in Garmisch!” Indeed, thanks to rapidly accumulating royalties, he was able to build a beautiful house in Garmisch! “Thanks to this damage I was able to build my villa in Garmisch!” Indeed, thanks to rapidly accumulating royalties, he was able to build a beautiful house in the Alpine resort village, beneath the Zugspitze, Germany’s highest mountain. “Graz has covered itself in glory,” Mahler was heard to say when the performance was over. And yet, Alma recounts that on the train back to Vienna, Strauss’ colleague sounded bewildered by the opera’s success. He had no doubt that Salome was a significant and daring work — “one of the greatest masterworks of our time,” he later said. Thus, he could not understand how it could have won over the public. In the same carriage, Alma continues, was the short-story writer and poet Peter Rosegger, whom Mahler admired intensely. The composer voiced his unease, and Rosegger replied, “Vox populi, vox dei” — the voice of the people is the voice of God. Mahler asked whether he meant the voice of people at the present moment or the voice of the people over time. No one seemed to know the answer to that question. In a contemporary article about Salome, Rosegger declared that Strauss had transfigured a horrible, non-German, “foreign” subject with
the force of his personality. Mahler seemed to feel the same: “I cannot rhyme it all together for myself, and can only surmise that it is the voice of the Erdgeist sounding from the heart of genius....”

The younger musicians from Vienna were elated by what they had heard, though they were careful to temper their enthusiasm with skepticism. A group of them, Alban Berg included, talked until the early hours of the morning in the Thalia Restaurant next to the theater. They might have used the words of Adrian Leverkühn, the devil-bound hero of Mann’s Doctor Faustus, who spoke as follows: “What a talented good old boy! The happy-go-lucky revolutionary, cocky and conciliatory. Never were the avant-garde and the box office so well acquainted. Shocks and discords aplenty – then he good-naturedly takes it all back and assures the philistines that no harm was intended. But a hit, a definite hit.” As for Adolf Hitler, nothing is known about his reaction at the time. (I take up this problem in another chapter of my forthcoming book.) We cannot know for certain if he was even there. But when Salome was banned from the stage of the Graz Opera in 1939 on the grounds that it was “too Jewish,” Strauss made the story of the Führer’s youthful enthusiasm known, and the opera was reinstated.

Whether or not the Devil himself attended, Salome was a highly charged occasion. Past and future were colliding: two centuries were passing in the night. Mahler would die in 1911, seeming to take the entire romantic era with him. Puccini’s Turandot, unfinished at his death in 1924, would more or less end a glorious Italian operatic history that began in Florence at the end of the sixteenth century. In 1909, Schoenberg would inaugurate a difficult new atonal language and find himself violently at odds with the Von populi. Hitler, who, circa 1906, was a dreamy aesthete with no known political pretensions, would attempt the annihilation of a people and a world. And Strauss would survive to a surreal and bewildered old age – “I have actually outlived myself,” he said in 1948. At the time that he was born, Germany was not yet a unified nation and Wagner was still composing the Ring of the Nibelung. At the time of Strauss’s death, Germany had split into East and West, and American soldiers were whistling Sinatra tunes in the streets.

A few years ago, I stopped for a night in Graz. Puccini’s Turandot was playing at the opera house, in a bizarre production set in a futuristic pop-culture world of ultraviolent football games and striptease cheerleaders. The next morning, I went looking for the Hotel Elefant; I had the idea that I might be able to find an old hotel ledger in which all those famous names could still be read. But the Elephant was now the site of the local offices of the Austrian Trade Union Federation, and the ledger had disappeared. “Ja, there was a hotel here,” the ancient desk clerk told me. “Eighteenth century. Nineteenth century. Long time ago.”

Standing in the parking lot where the garden used to be, I struggled to picture that rainy morning in 1906, when Richard Strauss said good-bye to Gustav Mahler and sat contentedly on the terrace for a while.

2. The names of five Schoenberg students – Heinrich Jalowetz, Karl Horwitz, Erwin Stein, Viktor Krüger, and Zdzislaw Jachimecki – were listed in the Graz TageRpap’s “Fremde Liste” (list of visitors) on May 18. The sixth student was Alban Berg.

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Ode to a Fifth-Grade Teacher

Elizabeth McCracken
was a glamorous monument of a woman. Kids, it’s true, know fat people. Kids are like birders when it comes to fat: there’s a pleasure in an identification, especially, for instance, if your mother has not noticed the fat person. (“That man is really fat. Why is that man really fat?”)

But Miss Caprietti was more puzzling. Chances were she wore larger underpants than anyone I had ever met, and yet her neck and face belonged to some thin Italian movie star. Taut. Lovely. Flawless. (Plastic surgery? Maybe so. A little fat vacuuming. If you’d described such things to me then – “they take a little plastic tube and suck out your lard” – you would have been greeted with the kind of incredulity such preposterous information deserves.) She wore a giant shellacked black hairdo that was called, she explained to her fans, i.e., all the fifth grade girls, The Artichoke. Who knew hairdos had names? Only the keels of her ears poked out from underneath The Artichoke. Her lipstick was very red.

As far as her actual circumference – well, the magma at the center of the earth is very hot, but cannot be gauged in actual degrees, Centigrade, Celsius, or Kelvin. She wore floor length dresses – this was in 1986; she was the only one – that suggested a large silhouette without ever catching on a single angle of her body. Then she’d add a thin shawl, or a large translucent scarf, or – she had a series of these – an object of clothing that was halfway between a jacket and a wrap. She never fell for the fat lady’s folly, the vest. Sometimes she wore short kimonos. She looked like a pitched circus tent, her strident neck the center pole.

I worshipped her.

I wasn’t alone: every year Miss Caprietti held a poll, and every year she edged out Mother Teresa as the Most Admired Woman among the girls in her class. (She told us ahead of time that she always won the polls; we might not have thought of voting for her, but once she mentioned it, Of course!) She was, she said, an expert on Netsilik Eskimos, Herring Gulls, and Volcanoes, all of which we would study that year. To study Netsilik Eskimos under Miss Caprietti, we understood, was like studying electricity under Edison.

It is only now that I realize that she was an expert because she read the textbooks ahead of us.

Mornings, we had “assembly” on the “carpet” in the middle of the classroom. The whole place was wall-to-walled; by “carpet” Miss Caprietti meant an area in the middle free of chairs. We assembled cross-legged in front of her. Then she stood at the front and told us our plans for the day; she reported whether the Good Ship Miss Caprietti’s Fifth Grade Class was suffering from any discipline problem; then she closed her eyes and clasped her hands and said – very quietly, but aloud – the Lord’s Prayer. (Maybe she did this for my benefit, poor little pagan. Everyone else was Catholic.) Afterwards, we went to our desks and she went to hers, where she applied her lipstick, peering into a red plastic sphere-shaped mirror that sat on the corner of her desk. She had all the time in the world to perfect her mouth. We had to read about Eskimos, after all, but she already knew everything.

At morning assembly, watching her pray, her head even tinier from perspective, I dreamed of climbing under her skirt and warming my hands on her mysterious ankles. I talked my mother, who made my clothes, into sewing me a few floor-length skirts, so I could be as grand as her.
Film stills from *Burn* (2002), by current Academy fellow Reynold Reynolds and Patrick Jolley.
Through their founding gift and abiding support of the American Academy in Berlin, Anna-Maria and Stephen M. Kellen and the descendants of Hans and Ludmilla Arnhold have enabled the Academy to become Germany’s most visible center for transatlantic discussion and activity. We will greatly miss Stephen Kellen, whose generosity and dedication to the Academy endures as an inspiration to us all.

The Academy would like to thank the many people who donated in memory of Stephen M. Kellen to support the programs he regarded as a centerpiece of his effort to bring together two of his passions – Berlin, the city of his birth, and America, the country he adopted.

We also greatly appreciate the continued support from corporations, foundations, and individuals who share the Academy’s commitment to strengthening the transatlantic relationship and enriching the cultural and intellectual life of Berlin.
Von einer Reise sollten Sie immer etwas mitnehmen.
Zum Beispiel ein Lächeln.