

# Briefe aus Berlin

## Alumni Newsletter

of the KRUPP INTERNSHIP PROGRAM FOR STANFORD STUDENTS IN GERMANY



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Stanford | Bing Overseas Studies Program  
Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education

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# Grußwort der Krupp-Stiftung

von Frau Prof. Dr. Dr. h. c. Ursula Gather

Seit über vier Jahrzehnten begleitet die Krupp-Stiftung mit großer Freude das Internship Program for Stanford Students in Germany, das talentierten jungen Menschen aus den USA die Chance bietet, Deutschland auf besondere Weise kennenzulernen – durch ein akademisches Trimester in Berlin und ein anschließendes Praktikum in einer deutschen Einrichtung oder einem Unternehmen. Mit diesem Programm fördern wir nicht nur die individuelle Entwicklung der Teilnehmenden, sondern stärken auch den transatlantischen Dialog – ein Anliegen, das heute von besonderer Bedeutung ist.

In diesem Jahr hatten wir die Gelegenheit, beim Stipendiatentreffen in der Villa Hügel in Essen 14 der insgesamt 33 Stipendiat\*innen des Jahrgangs 2024/25 persönlich zu begrüßen. Ihre ersten Eindrücke, ihre Offenheit für neue Erfahrungen und ihre Begeisterung für Deutschland haben uns sehr beeindruckt.

Besonders gefreut hat uns, Dr. Ullrich Lohrmann als neuen Direktor der Stanford University Berlin willkommen zu heißen. Wir sind gespannt auf die Impulse, die er mit seiner Erfahrung und Expertise einbringen wird, und sehen der Zusammenarbeit gern entgegen. Gleichzeitig danken wir Dr. Karen Kramer herzlich für die weitere Begleitung des Programms – trotz ihres offiziellen Ruhestands – noch bis zum kommenden Jahr. Mit ihrer beeindruckenden Erfahrung aus über 45 Jahren Programmgeschichte steht sie

ihrem Nachfolger beratend zur Seite und gibt wertvolle Einblicke in die Besonderheiten und gewachsenen Strukturen dieses Programms weiter.

Bislang haben 1.412 Stipendiat\*innen das Programm durchlaufen. Viele von ihnen pflegen ihre Verbindung zu Deutschland noch lange über das Stipendium hinaus – sei es beruflich oder persönlich. So berichtete eine ehemalige Teilnehmerin beim Treffen, dass sie 2020 in Berlin nicht nur das Programm, sondern auch ihren späteren Ehemann kennengelernt hat.

Unser Dank gilt allen, die dieses Programm möglich machen – insbesondere den rund 650 Partnerorganisationen und -unternehmen, die jedes Jahr Praktikumsplätze bereitstellen, dem Stanford Club of Germany und dem gesamten Team der Stanford University Berlin. Ohne dieses Netzwerk wäre das Programm in seiner heutigen Form nicht denkbar.

Wir freuen uns, dass der Alumni-Newsletter schon seit 21 Jahren das Netzwerk zwischen aktuellen und ehemaligen Stipendiat\*innen stärkt, und hoffen, dass er weiterhin zum Austausch und zur Verbundenheit beiträgt – über Jahrgänge, Disziplinen und Ländergrenzen hinweg.

Prof. Dr. Dr. h. c. Ursula Gather

Vorsitzende des Kuratoriums der Alfried Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach-Stiftung

→ Spring quarter students, former Krupp Interns, faculty, and staff with members of the Krupp Foundation and the Stanford Club of Germany at Villa Hügel, Essen, May 15.

The photograph on the cover shows the spring quarter students in front of the building of **Triple Z**, Essen's Start-up and Business Center on the grounds of the historic **Zeche Zollverein**.

On the left: Dr. Stefanie Preuß, Dr. Ingomar Lorch, Margret Heymann of the Krupp Foundation; on the right Chairman of the Board and Center Director Stefan Kaul.



# What's New in Berlin

by Ullrich Lohrmann



**Dear Alumni and Friends** of the Krupp Internship Program,

It is both an honor and a joy to address you for the first time as Director of the Stanford Program in Berlin. Since February, I have had the privilege of leading this exceptional program – one that brings together academic rigor, cultural immersion, and personal discovery in ways few study-away experiences can match.

With a background in History and English Language and Literature, and a PhD in History following studies in Freiburg and Oxford, I bring to this role both an academic foundation and more than two decades of leadership in international higher education. Over the course of my career, I have directed study-abroad centers in Berlin and Freiburg, developed curricular frameworks linking theory and practice, and worked with numerous US colleges and universities to promote meaningful student engagement abroad. These experiences have shaped my conviction that education at its best transcends borders.

Engineering Physics major Yunshan Wang is holding one of the drones of **ASDRO**, a land surveying company which developed a drone geomagnetics method to detect iron-containing waste, cables, power lines, and munitions in the ground. Our excursion to Essen included a visit to three start-up companies, vGreens and docport, as

well as ASDRO, at the Start-up and Business Center at the Zeche Zollverein. vGreens develops farming systems that “combine AI and know-how with real-world crop performance.” “Fresh Produce. Anywhere. Anytime”; **docport** offers all-in-one solutions for fully digitized family doctor practices.





The past year has been one of transition and renewal. We have said farewell to Dr. Karen Kramer, whose extraordinary leadership shaped Stanford in Berlin for nearly five decades and whose generous advice continues to guide us during this handover. Her deep knowledge of the program and her enduring commitment have been invaluable as we build on the strong foundation she established.

As I look to the future, Berlin's potential within Stanford's global network of study away centers becomes even more apparent. The city's intellectual openness, creative energy, and position at the crossroads of Europe make it an ideal setting for a broader exploration of the continent and its global connections. In the coming years, we aim to reimagine Stanford in Berlin – to complement its longstanding strengths in German Studies with new academic and experiential pathways that situate Berlin within a European and global context.

The exchange of experiences between the future interns at Villa Hügel and representatives of the Krupp Foundation and the Stanford Club of Germany on the morning of May 15, which was also attended by two former fellows,

Josephine Flohr (Psychology, intern in 2020) and Omosola Odetunde (Computer Science, intern in 2012), was organized in the form of "speed dating" so that, in principle, everyone could talk to everyone else.

This vision is closely connected to the mission of the Alfried Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach Foundation, whose generous support for more than forty years has made this program possible, and to the Stanford Club of Germany, which – like the Foundation – has been a steadfast partner in supporting the Krupp Internship Program. Their commitment to fostering transatlantic understanding and experiential learning continues to inspire our work. In this spirit, we are currently preparing the next Krupp Foundation grant proposal – a process that allows us to translate our academic vision into concrete plans for the years ahead. The proposal is not simply an administrative exercise, but an opportunity to reaffirm our shared purpose: to cultivate the intellectual curiosity, empathy, and sense of responsibility that education across borders can uniquely foster.

Together with our colleagues in Berlin and at Stanford, I look forward to strengthening this legacy and ensuring that each new cohort of students experiences

Berlin as a place of rigorous study, meaningful encounter, and lasting connection. Next year, on September 6–7, 2026, we will celebrate the 50th anniversary of Stanford in Berlin – an occasion that will honor both the program's remarkable history and the people who shaped it, not least Dr. Karen Kramer. It will be a moment to celebrate continuity, renewal, and the enduring spirit of transatlantic exchange that unites us all.

With gratitude for your continued engagement and with best wishes from Berlin,

**Dr. Ullrich Lohrmann**  
Director, Stanford in Berlin

Spring quarter students, Krupp Alumni,  
members of the Krupp Foundation and  
Berlin faculty and staff during their visit of  
the Thyssenkrupp Steel factory in Duisburg.



# Exploring the New Frontiers of AI in Bioinformatics

by Arianna Aalami

**My summer internship** at Burns Life Sciences Consulting (BLSC) GmbH in Berlin was an engaging and unconventional experience. BLSC was founded recently by Stanford and Krupp internship alumnus Tyler Burns. He and his small team of subcontractors provide bioinformatics expertise for academic and private labs wanting to gain actionable insights from their single-cell and spatial data. Because it is a small startup, my day-to-day tasks varied significantly from week to week. This flexibility gave me the opportunity to explore both the scientific and business sides of biotechnology consulting, while also learning to adapt to the fast-paced, constantly evolving environment of a young company.

The focus of my internship was on integrating artificial intelligence (AI) into bioinformatics pipelines. Early in the internship, I researched novel methods of combining large language models (LLMs) with biological data interpretation and helped translate these findings into publicly shared content on LinkedIn as short, accessible research summaries.

Our first major project was an R Markdown file (a file containing R code and text) demonstrating how to use an API key to call different LLMs for biological interpretation, which essentially means that the code I

wrote was able to ask questions to and receive answers from ChatGPT without having to open the app and type in the questions yourself. For this project, we were querying LLMs with the top-ranked genes corresponding to certain ipal components in a single-cell RNA sequencing (scRNA-seq) dataset. The LLM would then be able to provide a biological interpretation of the principal component, which can give meaning to the separation of cells along principal component axes, potentially highlighting previously unknown subpopulations.

The second project was a Jupyter notebook (another kind of file containing Python code and text) pipeline designed to query an LLM thousands of times about potential new research directions in the microbiome field. The results were converted into BERT word embeddings and plotted to create a “concept map”, which provides a visual representation of emerging areas in microbiome research.

Later in the internship, my work transitioned toward developing interactive Dash applications. Dash is a low-code framework for rapidly building clean-looking apps in python. The apps I was creating allowed users to visualize how adjusting parameters influenced the final results of bioinformatics pipelines, making complex data processing steps more accessible and intuitive.



Because of the company's small size, I worked directly with Tyler on a range of tasks that extended beyond technical research. This included discussing long-term company strategy, helping ideate approaches for lead harvesting, and preparing for discovery calls and client meetings. I also contributed ideas related to marketing, branding, and potential productization of the company's services. Sitting in on client calls provided valuable insight into how scientific consulting interfaces with business development and customer relations. Overall, the experience allowed me to "wear many hats," gaining exposure to both scientific innovation and the realities of startup operations.

Outside of work, living in Schöneberg was a highlight of the summer. I shared an apartment with three other Stanford students, which provided a built-in support network and made adjusting to life in Berlin seamless. The neighborhood is lively but not overwhelming, with great access to public transportation, plenty of cafés, and green spaces. Berlin itself is incredibly international and welcoming. Nearly everyone speaks English, but

my German skills from years past equipped me with key phrases that were always appreciated by locals.

Overall, my Krupp internship at BLSC was a valuable opportunity to strengthen my technical, professional, and interpersonal skills. I deepened my understanding of bioinformatics, gained practical experience in AI applications for life sciences, and learned how to communicate scientific ideas to a broader audience. I also developed a stronger online professional presence, particularly through LinkedIn, by engaging with the company's published work and sharing project outcomes.

Equally important were the soft skills I gained: adaptability, independent problem-solving, and the ability to operate with minimal structure. Working in a small, fast-moving startup environment pushed me to take initiative and be resourceful in defining my own workflow.

Arianna Aalami (Bioengineering) studied in Berlin in autumn 2024 and interned in Berlin at ASC Oncology/CELLphenomics GmbH in summer 2024 and at Burns Life Sciences Consulting GmbH in summer 2025.

## → New in Berlin



© Humboldt Forum, Key Visual (1/4).

**On Water. WasserWissen in Berlin.** In October, the exhibition opened at the Humboldt Forum, which Katherine Nolan (Art History, German Studies) helped prepare as an intern at the Hermann von Helmholtz-Zentrum für Kultertechnik for the **Humboldt Labor im Humboldt Forum** (see "Briefe aus Berlin" 2024). It is expected to be open to visitors until 2027 and

shows "current research projects of the Berlin University Alliance (BUA) and [...] artistic positions that deal with the element of water and vividly convey its versatility": "Water is ubiquitous – we drink it, bathe in it, experience it as rain, ice, or a river. And yet it remains contradictory, as it is both familiar and at the same time unpredictable. Sometimes there is too

much of it, sometimes too little. Sometimes it flows, sometimes it's lacking, sometimes it floods entire stretches of land. / As a result of climate change, growing cities, and global inequality, water has become a challenge. It cannot be controlled easily and raises questions about established practices. Water is not a passive object, but instead a dynamic element that

demands new scientific perspectives and social negotiation." (Humboldt Forum)

Incidentally, water and ice are also the focus of the current exhibition **Zukunft Alpen. Die Klimaerwärmung** at the reopened Alpine Museum in Munich (until August 30, 2026).

# Status Report

on the Krupp Internship Program by Wolf-Dietrich Junghanns



Alexander Rosalia (Mechanical Engineering) designed parts for optical instruments for the COSIS project (CO2 Sensing)

Imaging Spectrometer at the DLR Institute of Space Research in Berlin-Adlershof.

In October, Berlin's *Tagesspiegel* published a nationwide survey conducted by the Freie Universität Berlin, according to which Berliners are the most unpopular citizens in Germany: rather unfriendly, aggressive, ill-mannered, arrogant, not: direct, funny, open to new things, tolerant, warm, and helpful. The city was not primarily associated with its rich art and culture, scientific and technical innovation, its status as a start-up and/or party center, or its diverse gastronomy, but rather with dysfunctionality: delays at the airport and in Autobahn construction, at the *Bürgeramt*, plus dirt, noise, and drug-related crime... Not surprisingly, many non-Berliners in particular find the city too wild, as Erich Kästner ironically noted about 100 years ago (see his poem on p. 22).

Our 24 summer interns in Berlin do not appear to have had such problems. Here are two representative quotes from their reports: Psychology student Lauren

Cantin, who completed two part-time internships, one at MindHyrst Mental Health & Wellbeing Services for International Students and one at Prinzessinnengarten Kollektiv, wrote: "Berlin is a beautiful city with so much history, art, and music. The people are fun and mostly open to others, and I truly believe that living in the city for any amount of time is a gift. For tips I would tell anyone going there for a study abroad or internship to try and get involved, meet some people, and explore. Just because something is different and you are nervous doesn't mean you should avoid it- it just means your brain is working the way it is trained to, to be cautious around unknown things."

Hunter Prinz (Biomedical Computation) conducted research at the Clinical Neurotechnology Lab at Charité and used the summer to learn "the intricacies of Berlin life": "This city is 25% international, and there is so much you can learn about the city of Berlin, the country

Mariam Colborn (Mechanical Engineering, Interdisciplinary Arts) worked as Mechanical Design and Creative Production Intern at Garamantis GmbH, here with her prototype of a robotic bartender.



of Germany, and the entirety of Europe and the many cultural differences between these countries. I encourage this to be the main task for all interns in Berlin: meet as many people from the city as you can. It is the best way to learn the city and the different social circles throughout it (and even understanding how they are connected on a deeper level)."

Berlin was and is an adventure, and our curious students each write their own adventure tales about it. But it is also certain that the city needs a new narrative: the fall of the Wall and German Unification, "poor but sexy" are no longer enough on their own. What could it be?

This academic year, we had a total of 33 summer interns, six of whom were already completing their second internship. Twenty new hosts reflect the ever-changing and diverse interests of our students, as demonstrated by the seven reports in this issue. Three further examples: Anneli Chow (Earth Systems, Creative Writing) explored the field of fine root ecology at the Institute of Forestry of the University of Freiburg. Jonathan Chu (Comparative Literature, Creative Writing) worked with the Berlin based but internationally active conceptional and performance artist Nezaket Ekici at Ekici-Art. Aden McCracken (Medical Anthropology, Interdisciplinary Arts) pursued her interest in drug advice and harm reduction by researching the drug scene in Görlitzer Park for the Scott Holmquist Studio in Berlin.

Of course, we also had internships with trusted hosts again, like BMW's traffic technology unit – Yunshan Wang (Engineering Physics) – and the German Aerospace Center's Institute of Robotics and Mechatronics – Bear Tolson (Mechanical Engineering), both in Munich. We are very grateful for these long-term cooperations.



The Munich interns Bear Tolson (Mechanical Engineering) and Yunshan Wang (Engineering Physics) explored the Bavarian foothills of the Alps, here on their way to the summit of Herzogstand with view on the Walchensee.



33 internships is a good number, but we could have awarded more grants if it had not been too risky for some international students to complete an internship abroad. Another regrettable development is the sales crisis in the German automotive industry, which is leading to job cuts and making it more difficult to find internship placements. However, the German government's planned special funding for six technology fields is opening up new

Abigail DeLory (Design) with her colleagues Mario Gattner and Nico Nitsch at TrickReich: Modelmaking, Props, Animatronics, Special Effects.

Zulfiyya Kishiyeva (Civil & Environmental Engineering) with her advisor Amy Egerer, Krupp Intern in 2012, at DEPACT Consulting GmbH, a start-up which simplifies the refurbishment of buildings.



Kai Blankenship (Science, Technology & Society) did research on Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) systems in Europe at adelphi research GmbH.

Jaelen Sobers (Civil & Environmental Engineering) worked on structural calculations at MaNidus Ingenieure GmbH in Berlin.

areas of activity also for our students: climate-neutral mobility and energy production (especially nuclear fusion technology), AI (for Berlin's AI ecosystem see the new [#ai\\_berlin hub](#)), quantum technologies (see e.g. [Berlin Quantum](#)), microelectronics, and biotechnology.

PS: In one of the bold attempts to defend Berlin, the Tagesspiegel published 50 points of comparison with New York. No. 27 seems to be the most convincing:

"Entspanntes Sitzen vor einem Späti mit einem günstigen Bier existiert in New York überhaupt nicht."

(["Spreemetropole oder Big Apple. Warum Berlin besser ist als New York," Der Tagesspiegel, Nov. 11, 2025, p. B 8](#))



Zoe Rehnborg (Art Practice, Biology) collecting organic material for an exhibition project at the Art Laboratory Berlin.



Morgan Wyatt (Civil & Environmental Engineering) with his advisor Qian Qin at WeDoSolar where he designed a new mounting solution for balcony solar panels.



# A Summer at the Edge of Space

by Sophia Kennett



**On my first day** at Yuri GmbH, I was immediately dropped into the thrice weekly engineering meeting where the team discussed all the ongoing projects. It was a lot at first: ScienceShells, ScienceTaxis, culture chambers, pump timings. “The microfluidics in the baseplate need to be revalidated.” “We’re getting signal drift in the thermal control electronics.” “The payload interface board failed vibration testing.” There was so much technical jargon flying around that my head was spinning, but at the same time, every project sounded fascinating. I couldn’t wait for my summer at Yuri to begin.

For some context, Yuri is a space biotechnology company in Meckenbeuren, near the beautiful Bodensee (Lake Constance). The company develops hardware and services for conducting life science experiments in microgravity on the International Space Station and other platforms. Yuri also produces and sells Random Positioning Machines (RPMs) and clinostats that allow scientists to simulate microgravity in their own labs. It’s a relatively young startup, only about five years old, with roughly 50 employees across its Meckenbeuren and Luxembourg offices.

My internship focused on Assembly, Integration & Testing (AIT) and Biology Engineering, allowing me to work at the intersection of engineering and biology,

**Building a flight model  
for testing.**

two disciplines I’m passionate about. My work involved hardware integration for biological payloads: examining designs, 3D printing, processing and quality testing parts, then assembling entire systems and testing them for flight readiness. I learned a lot about how testing is performed under aerospace standards, and how documentation varies depending on the mission. On the biology side, I began supporting experimental design to optimize setups for spaceflight, often with autonomy over which parameters to test or refine. I actually enjoyed the work so much that I decided to extend my stay in Germany through December to continue the project.

One of the coolest moments of my internship came when we had a viewing party for the launch of our hardware to the ISS. Watching something I had physically assembled leave Earth was surreal. It was the first time I felt the full scale of what we were working toward, bridging lab benches on Earth with experiments orbiting hundreds of kilometers above us.

And although I love my internship, and it’s the main reason I’ve stayed longer, it’s not the only one. Yuri happens to be located in what I think is one of the most beautiful regions in Germany, the Bodensee area. It’s known for its scenic views of the Alps, hiking trails, charming lake towns, and of course the lake itself, perfect for swimming, boating, kayaking, paddleboarding, and sailing. I spent many weekends exploring towns



**Der Bodensee:  
Lake Constance seen  
from Friedrichshafen.**



The view of Ravensburg,  
my place of residence.

like Lindau and Konstanz, playing beach volleyball with friends, and swimming in the Bodensee. Once, one of my coworkers even swam across the entire lake, eleven kilometers, while the rest of us followed in a boat cheering him on.

I also had the chance to visit the Luxembourg office and join in many *Stammtisch* gatherings with the team. The workplace was very international, so we mainly spoke English, but my German improved through daily life, navigating grocery stores, bureaucracy (tax IDs, social security numbers, *Anmeldung*, apartment contracts), and travel. Being close to Switzerland, Austria, Italy, and France meant spontaneous weekend trips were part of the experience too.

I'm very thankful to the Krupp Internship Program for making this opportunity possible. It not only helped me clarify what kind of work I want to pursue professionally, but also opened my eyes to the idea of living in Germany long term. I'll be sad to leave in a few months, but I know it won't be long before I find my way back.

**Sophia Kennett** (Biology, Aeronautics & Astronautics) studied in Berlin in spring and interned with Yuri GmbH in Meckenbeuren in summer 2025.

## New in Berlin

While the reconstruction of the Bauhaus Archive is still ongoing and the Werkbund Archive and Museum has been forced to relocate, designer Rafael Horzon ([Moebel Horzon](#)) has opened nothing less than the [Deutsches Design Museum](#) in Charlottenburg on his own initiative and with a great deal of wit – a grandiose private venture that challenges the entire design establishment. Horzon's motto is "Nicht jammern, sondern machen!" He has also written the [Manifest der neuen Wirklichkeit](#) (2024) based on this fundamental principle, in which he calls for less art but better design and architecture – as forms of social design. The museum presents outstanding design and its creators

in changing exhibitions. Starting in December, for example, Dieter Rams, who became known primarily as a designer for the electrical appliance manufacturer [Braun](#), but whose work extends far beyond that. Through his influence on Apple design, the former imperialist vision of "German form" as the "world form" of Werkbund founder (and architect of Haus Cramer) Hermann Muthesius became popular reality in an unexpected way – *pop*.



© Deutsches Design Museum, Frank Sperling

# The German Contradiction

by Judy Liu



**When I first** stumbled across the *Siegesdenkmal* in Freiburg, I didn't realize how profoundly important the monument would become in my research. Going to Germany, I knew I was going to conduct research at different archives to support my history honors thesis. I had originally planned to examine Prussian/German militarism from 1871 to 1914 and look into whether there was a shared military ethos within the army that had been disseminated to soldiers across all parts of Germany. I spent the summer months in different libraries and archives, looking for documents that could help me form a conclusion. However, before I knew it, I was frantically scanning documents in Potsdam, Berlin, Freiburg, and Munich as the summer came to an end. Soon enough, I was back at Stanford.

I didn't think too much about my time in Germany as I eased back into my classes. Instead, I became consumed by the thought that I was missing something in my thesis. The scope of my question and interests had evolved by the time summer ended. There were points when I tried to shift my focus towards doing a comparative study between the Bavarians and the Prussians and



their approach in training soldiers. And then there were other times when I tried to narrow the scope of my project by choosing to focus only on members of the Officer Corps given their unique role in Wilhelmine Germany. The amount of reading that I had done left me with more questions than answers. I did engage in conversations with my professors back at Stanford and with historians in Germany, which exposed me to new ideas and ways of thinking. Though that did leave me more confused, but in a good way. Nevertheless, I couldn't shake the feeling that I was missing some part of the puzzle. I was struggling to connect military ethos and what that meant for the rest of Germany beyond Prussia. By the time summer ended, I had a lot of different thoughts and ideas. So, to clear my head, I began to write.

I made the decision to write about the last primary document I had read, which was the memoir of Wilhelm Voigt, or more famously known as the *Hauptmann von Köpenick*. In Potsdam, I had been reading *Iron Kingdom: The Rise and Downfall of Prussia, 1600–1947* by Christopher Clark as part of my review of the literature when I stumbled across the *Köpenickade* for the first time. Wilhelm Voigt had been a criminal who dressed up as a Prussian Officer and commandeered a group of soldiers to help him arrest the mayor and treasurer and rob *Rathaus Köpenick*. It was an absurd story, but in many ways, it was the exact story I needed.

The *Köpenickade* served as a metaphor for the tension I was trying to highlight in Wilhelmine Germany. Power and authority rested in Voigt's uniform, and that power and authority had been reinforced by the militaristic nature of Wilhelmine society.

I still remember seeing the uniform in person. After reading about the story, I immediately left my apartment in Potsdam, took the RE1 from Potsdam-Hauptbahnhof towards Berlin-Alexanderplatz and transferred onto an S-Bahn towards Köpenick. I wasn't able to see his uniform the first time I went to Köpenick, but eventually I did. I was fortunate that I could see many of the things that I was reading about in my secondary literature with my own eyes. There were plenty of times when I'd leave my apartment to go and find a document or monument in Potsdam or Berlin that would be mentioned in my secondary literature.

The *Siegesdenkmal* in Freiburg im Breisgau was dedicated in 1876 to commemorate the German victory in the Franco-Prussian War in 1871.  
© Jörgens.mi CC BY-SA 3.0.

By the end of the summer, I had been to over thirty different cities all over Germany. Some of the traveling had been done to support my research, mainly in Munich, Freiburg, Potsdam, and Berlin. Most of the other traveling had been done because I wanted to see more of Germany, like Dresden, Stuttgart, Staufen im Breisgau, and Wismar. Part of what motivated the traveling was my desire to complete the *Hanseatic passport*. I had found out from a friend that you could request a passport from Lübeck, and if you visited 12 Hanseatic cities and collected their stamps in the passport, you could receive a Hanseatic souvenir. Part of the passport's purpose was to encourage people to learn more about the Hanseatic League, which is also known as the Hanse. This had been a network of medieval cities and towns that formed an alliance to protect their trading interests. A friend and I conspired to complete it, which had us traveling throughout most of northern Germany.

Those travels had been profound. I still remember the feeling of awe I felt when we explored Tangermünde. It was magical. You could almost feel the strong connection between the city and its history. It was holding onto its history as a Hanseatic city in a way that you could almost forget the history that happened after its days as an affluent medieval city. And this was particularly striking. I would think about this a lot during the silent hours of commuting between the various RE and ICE trains that I had to take across Germany. Every city that I visited oftentimes highlighted different moments in their history. Most of the history that was emphasized tended to be early modern history. For instance, in Magdeburg, the city seemed to link its historical ties primarily with the Holy Roman Empire and Otto the Great.

However, this was different in cities like Berlin or Munich where it's not possible to avoid the darker chapters of German history, especially in Munich because it was the birthplace of the Nazi Party. The juxtaposition of the legacy left by the House of Wittelsbach and the Nazis can be seen in the center of Munich, where crowds of tourists typically tend to gather. Within walking distance of the *Neues Rathaus* in Marienplatz, you can find the former headquarters of the Gestapo. In Munich, you're a train ride away from Neuschwanstein Castle, but you're also a train ride away from Dachau, where one of the first Nazi concentration camps had been established. Many monuments that had been built that predated the Nazis are now tainted by them. The *Feldherrnhalle*, which had been commissioned by King Ludwig I to honor the Bavarian army in 1841, is also the location of where Hitler's Beer Hall Putsch ended in 1923.

When I recounted my travels to my professors and friends back at Stanford, I tried to articulate how you



Since 1996, the statue of the "Captain of Köpenick" in contemporary military uniform has stood in front of the town hall in Berlin-Köpenick.

could almost feel the historical narrative every city was trying to tell. There was a specific historical memory each city seemed to draw on, which led me to think more about historical and collective memory.

In fact, I began to explore ways in which I could use historical memory in my own thesis, and this was when I reencountered the *Siegesdenkmal* again, but with a new pair of eyes.

*Siegesdenkmal* had been created to celebrate the German victory in the Franco-Prussian War in 1871. It specifically honors the XIV Corps, which had been made up of mostly Baden soldiers. When the monument had been inaugurated, Otto von Bismarck and Kaiser Wilhelm I personally made the trip down to Freiburg to celebrate it.

When it was first unveiled, the *Siegesdenkmal* captured the feelings of winning a war against France. It celebrated victory and captured the defining moment in 1871 that saw the birth of a nation through war. It did this in a city that was not Prussian, and celebrated soldiers who were not Prussian. And then I realized the final piece that I had been missing in my thesis: nationalism. There is a relationship between militarism and nationalism, a relationship that I had missed at first, but helps answer a lot of the questions that I couldn't answer. I started to see in my documents and in my other primary sources the use of the army as a vehicle for nationalism.

My thoughts about this potential argument are still forming, and there is still so much for me to read and think about as I continue to write my thesis. It is very well possible that I might shift my focus again as I

continue to encounter more primary sources. Nevertheless, I've come to appreciate just how consequential my spontaneous day trips to different cities, my guided research under the mentorship of German historians, and all the thinking I had done on different trains, have been in shaping my own memory of Germany.

Judy Liu (History, Political Science) studied in Berlin in spring and interned with the Militärgeschichtliche Forschungsamt (MGFA), Potsdam and Freiburg im Breisgau in summer 2025.



Georg Elser Square and neon glass facade installation "November 8, 1939": an installation commemorating Georg Elser's bomb attack on Adolf Hitler in Munich's Bürgerbräukeller. Every day at 9:00 p.m., the lettering lights up for one minute. The bomb exploded at 9:20 p.m., but Hitler had already left the premises by that time. Georg Elser was murdered on April 9, 1945, in the Dachau concentration camp.

## → GARDEN PARTY



On June 3, a German-American BBQ was held in the garden of Haus Cramer, attended by current and former Berlin students, members of the Stanford Club of Germany and the German Stanford Association, faculty, and staff.

Guests included Director Emerita Karen Kramer and H. George Will (class of 1955), who brought along the helmet he wore during his time as student firefighter at Stanford.



# Minding the Mind in Berlin: A Reflection on Study and Internships Abroad

by Lauren Cantin



At MindHyrst, l-r:  
Shani St. Louis, Monika Nering,  
and Lauren Cantin.

**Spending time in Berlin** for both study and internships was an experience that shaped not only my academic and professional growth, but also offered deep personal insights. Berlin is a dynamic and complex city that is rich with history, culture, and opportunities, yet for many international students, it can also be overwhelming, especially when navigating less structured university environments than their home campuses.

The first time I went to Berlin was last fall (September of 2024) for a study abroad quarter. I was going completely out of my comfort zone and knew it would be important to get grounded and keep my sense of self even while exploring a whole new culture. That same quarter I studied the psychology of belonging in one of my courses and took a deep interest in the sense of belonging for international students studying abroad.

This past summer following this, I was lucky enough to be able to return to Berlin for two internships that complemented each other in various ways. One was a mental health-focused internship, and the other took place in a community garden centered on sustainability and social engagement. Both roles were personally rewarding and provided meaningful opportunities to apply knowledge from my studies in a real-world context.

Working with the mental health organization, I felt a deep sense of purpose. Every task I undertook was either directly helping someone or contributing to something that would benefit someone in the near future. That immediate connection between effort and impact made the experience very fulfilling and goes to encourage me now as I return to my studies. I was also able to draw from my academic and personal background to



contribute thoughtfully to the work, which added another layer of satisfaction.

In contrast, the community garden internship grounded me in physical, environmental, and communal engagement. I learned about sustainable gardening, low-waste practices, and the value of using resources that are already available instead of buying new. This focus differs somewhat from what I was used to at Stanford, where even sustainability efforts often have access to greater resources. In Berlin, the garden functioned as a shared space built by and for the community, emphasizing collaboration, simplicity, and care.

What stood out most, however, was the social aspect of the garden. Watching plants grow over time was rewarding, but even more so were the conversations and relationships built with local community members who came to help, share stories, or simply enjoy the space. These interactions gave me a broader understanding of life in Berlin and introduced me to different cultural norms and rhythms of daily life. It was beautiful to see people come every week and have that consistency. This continued to show me the importance of a shared outdoor space open to collaboration and fostering a supportive and kind community. Additionally rewarding was seeing how people's attitude and energy shifted throughout their time outside and working with their hands as there are various therapeutic benefits to working outside and with soil.

Outside of these internships, my time in Berlin also deepened my understanding of what it means to belong, and particularly for international students. Navigating life in a city where structures aren't always clear or supportive, especially coming from a smaller town, city, or university, can be disorienting. Compared to

In Neukölln's Prinzessinnengarten.

Stanford's more organized and guided environment, Berlin demanded greater independence and flexibility. I saw firsthand how this lack of structure can impact students' mental health and sense of belonging. From this I got to learn and look into ways people can foster their own sense of belonging and engage with spaces to improve this aspect in their own lives. Many people think that belonging is something you fall into or feel when in the "right" place, but in reality it is something that often takes effort, flexibility, and willingness to experience one initial discomfort.

At the same time, I also learned ways to support and foster that sense of belonging – for myself and others. Simple things like building community, checking in with peers, and creating spaces for social and cultural exchange can make a significant difference. Things like shared movement (for example exercise classes, dancing, or going on walks together), shared meals, and shared struggles can help bring people together. These lessons are valuable not only abroad, but also back home.

Overall, my time in Berlin offered a rich mix of professional development, cultural learning, and personal growth. It wasn't always easy, but that's what made it so rewarding. Berlin has truly changed me in many ways and taught me so much. Going abroad can be rewarding and transformative as it teaches you to find your footing, connect with others, and grow in ways you might not have expected.

**Lauren Cantin** (Psychology, German Studies as a planned minor) studied in Berlin in autumn 2024 with MindHyrst Mental Health & Wellbeing and Prinzessinnengarten Kollektiv/Nomadisch Grün GmbH in Berlin in Summer 2025.



# Filmtipps

## Amrum

<https://www.warnerbros.de/de-de/filme/amrum>

Fatih Akin (z. B.: „Gegen die Wand“, 2004; „Crossing the Bridge – The Sound of Istanbul“, 2005; „Tschick“, 2016) verfilmt den autobiographischen Roman des in Hamburg geborenen und am Film noch beteiligten Schauspielers und Regisseurs Hark Bohm (1939–2025); „Die Ehe der Maria Braun“, 1978, u. v. m.). Die Kindheitsgeschichte spielt im Frühjahr 1945: Der 12-jährige Nanning versucht mit allen Mitteln, seiner erschöpften, aus dem zerstörten Hamburg auf die Nordseeinsel geflohenen Mutter, einer Nationalsozialistin, bei der Ernährung der Familie zu unterstützen; der Vater, ein SS-Offizier, kämpft an der Ostfront. Der Junge muss in der Spannung zwischen seiner Innen- und der Amrumer Außenperspektive auf seine Familie seinen eigenen Weg suchen. Akin erkundet mit dieser Hommage an Bohm seine „deutsche Seele“, ohne die Schönheit der Natur zu vergessen. Manche meinen jedoch, der Film sei zu schön, um zu bewegen.

## In die Sonne schauen

<https://www.neuevisionen.de/de/filme/in-die-sonne-schauen-164>

Statt „Amrum“, „Cranko“, „Riefenstahl“ oder „Der Tiger“ nominierte eine deutsche Jury diesen in Cannes mit dem Preis der Jury ausgezeichneten Film von Mascha Schilinski für den Oscar: „formal kompromisslos, emotional existentiell und künstlerisch einzigartig – ein Solitär des deutschen und internationalen Kinos“, der das Publikum spaltet. Das 149 Minuten lange Drama verwebt nicht-chronologisch, assoziativ die Geschichten von vier Mädchen, die in verschiedenen Epochen auf einem Bauernhof in Sachsen-Anhalt leben, von vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg bis in die Gegenwart. Gemeinsam sind ihnen Misshandlungserfahrungen, das Leiden unter von Männern bestimmten Moralvorstellungen, die Last der Vergangenheit.

## Wunderschöner

<https://dolfilm.com/projekte/wunderschoener/>

Die Schauspielerin und Regisseurin Karoline Herfurth beschäftigt sich mit der Fremdbestimmtheit von Schönheitsidealen, Paarbeziehungen und insgesamt mit den Problemen moderner Frauen, die sich in bzw. zwischen Berufsleben, Partnerschaft und Familie nicht verlieren wollen. Dabei möchte sie auch das Genre des Liebesfilms verändern. Nach dem großen Erfolg von „Wunderschön“ und „Einfach mal was Schönes“, beide von 2022, nimmt ihre Komödie anhand eines Prostitutionsskandals nun zusätzlich Makrosoziales mit in den Blick – mehr Realismus, mehr Drama, gleicher Erfolg.

## Stolz und Eigensinn

<https://stolzundeigensinn.de/>

Diese Dokumentation ist die Ergänzung, wenn nicht das Gegenstück zu „Die Unbeugsamen 2 – Guten Morgen, Ihr Schönen!“ („Briefe“, 2024), indem sie sich ausschließlich auf Frauen aus ehemaligen Industriebetrieben der DDR – Bergbau, Chemie, Leder – konzentriert. Diese „erzählen mit heute überraschender Selbstverständlichkeit über sich und die persönlich erlangte Unabhängigkeit durch ihre Arbeit. Selbstbewusst und emanzipiert teilen sie ihr Erstaunen darüber, dass plötzlich nur noch Männer ihre Arbeiten machen sollen. Sie erzählen auch von den einstigen Utopien, die es heute nicht mehr gibt“ (Filmverleih Salzgeber). Das geschieht unter Verwendung von Filmmaterial des Leipziger Piratensenders KANAL X (1990–91) aus der Zeit des „Wendebruchs“, als solche Betriebe und ihr Personal in Großmaßstab abgewickelt und diese Frauen schon einmal porträtiert wurden. Und ja, es ist auch ein Film gegen Vorurteile.

## Mit der Faust in die Welt schlagen

<https://www.flare-film.com>

Der „Wendebruch“ für (werdende) Männer: Der nach dem gleichnamigen, mit dem Anspruch auf Repräsentativität geschriebene Roman von Lukas Rietzschel (2018) gedrehte Spielfilm über das Aufwachsen zweier neun- und zwölfjähriger Jungen einer im Zuge der „Wende“ zerfallenden Familie spielt in den Jahren 2000 und 2015. Constanze Klaue beobachtet im Detail die Entwicklung von Wut, Radikalisierung und der damit einhergehenden Fremdenfeindlichkeit (gegen Polen, Sorben) in den von Helmut Kohl versprochenen „blühenden Landschaften“ – wie sie durch wirtschaftlichen Niedergang entstandenen sind. Sie ergänzt gleichsam die wichtigen Dokumentarfilme Thomas Heises (1955–2024): „Eisenzeit“ (1991), „Stau, jetzt geht's los“ (1992), „Kinder, wie die Zeit vergeht“ (2007) u. a. Diese Filme sind abrufbar in der bpb-Mediathek.

## Leibniz – Chronik eines verschollenen Bildes

<https://weltkino.de/filme/leibniz-chronik-eines-verschollenen-bildes>

Edgar Reitz ist bekannt für seinen Zyklus „Heimat“, in dem er deutsche Geschichte seit Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts erzählt. Mit dem Philosophen und Informatikbegründer Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1717) geht er zurück in die Zeit nach dem Dreißigjährigen Krieg (Prager Fenstersturz 1618–1648 Westfälischer Friede) und diskutiert das Verhältnis von wissenschaftlicher und künstlerischer Wahrheit anhand eines Dialogs zwischen Leibniz und der fiktiven Malerin Aaltje van de Meer, die nicht nur die Kunst, sondern auch die später „vergessenen“ Malerinnen des Barock vertritt, die heute wieder in die Museen geholt werden. Die Malerin tritt zuerst als Mann auf, um als Künstlerin glaubwürdiger zu erscheinen, sie folgt auf einen typischen, an Leibniz' Porträt scheiternden Hofmaler, der für Reitz ein „Vorläufer der Künstlichen Intelligenz“ war. W.z.b.w. – für die Kunst.



## Filimportale

### Filme, Filmliteratur, Filmbildung

<https://www.epd-film.de>

<https://www.fbw-filmbewertung.com>

<http://www.filmportal.de>

<http://www.kinofenster.de>

<https://www.kinofilmwelt.de>

[http://www.bpb.de \(Mediathek; Shop – Materialien – Filmhefte\)](http://www.bpb.de (Mediathek; Shop – Materialien – Filmhefte))

<https://filmbildung.grandfilm.de>

### Kinderfilm

<http://www.kinderfilmwelt.de>

<https://mideufilms.de/>

### Deutsches Fernsehen in den USA:

<http://www.onlinetvrecorder.com>

### Berliner Filmfestivals

<http://www.festiwelt-berlin.de>

## 22 Bahnen

<https://constantin.film/kino/22-bahnen/>

Schwimmen oder/und Therapie? „Tildas Tage sind streng durchgetaktet: studieren [Mathematik], an der Supermarktkasse sitzen, schwimmen, sich um ihre kleine Schwester Ida kümmern – und an schlechten Tagen auch um ihre Mutter. Zu dritt wohnen sie im traurigsten Haus der Fröhlichstraße in einer Kleinstadt, die Tilda hasst. Ihre Freunde sind längst weg, leben in Amsterdam oder Berlin, nur Tilda ist geblieben. Denn irgendjemand muss für Ida da sein, Geld verdienen, die Verantwortung tragen. Nennenswerte Väter gibt es keine, die Mutter ist alkoholabhängig. Eines Tages aber geraten die Dinge in Bewegung: Tilda bekommt eine Promotion in Berlin in Aussicht gestellt, und es blitzt eine Zukunft auf, die Freiheit verspricht.“ (Constantin Film) Doch so einfach ist es nicht in der Verfilmung von Caroline Wahls gleichnamigem Bestseller von 2023.

## Das Verschwinden des Josef Mengele (La Disparition)

<https://dcmstories.com/movie/das-verschwinden-des-josef-mengele/>  
Der in Russland verfolgte und 2022 ausgereiste Theater-, Oper- und Filmregisseur Kiril Serebrennikow verfolgt in diesem Biopic die Jahrzehnte währende Flucht des „Todesengels von Ausschwitz“.

Mengele entzog sich Prozessen und Verurteilung, verfiel aber zunehmend in Paranoia. Zugleich steht das Verdrängen seiner Verbrechen durch die Familie in Deutschland, die ihn unterstützte, für deren Verdrängung in ganzen Gesellschaften. Ein größtenteils in Schwarz-weiß gedrehter Film nach dem Roman Olivier Guez „La disparition de Josef Mengele“ (2017).

## Masterplan – das Potsdamer Treffen und seine Folgen

<https://www.zeroone.de/movies/masterplan/>

<https://www.ardmediathek.de>

„Im November 2023 treffen sich rechte Vordenker, Politiker und Unternehmer im Landhaus Adlon in Potsdam hinter verschlossenen Türen. Wochen später veröffentlicht das Medienhaus Correctiv die brisanten Inhalte dieser Konferenz. Die Enthüllung schlägt Wellen. Deutschland diskutiert über ein Wort, das bis dahin kaum jemand kannte: „Remigration“. Der preisgekrönte Dokumentarfilmer Volker Heise erzählt die Geschichte wie einen Politthriller faktenreich, packend, unaufgeregert. Er bringt die Stimmen derer zusammen, die Teil des Treffens waren, und derer, die es aufgedeckt haben.“ (ARD) – Damit es später nicht wieder heißt: „Wir haben es nicht gewußt“.

WDJ

## → What Is Noémi Ola Berkowitz Doing Today?



In 2016, I did theatrical directing internships at English Theatre Berlin and the Maxim Gorki Theater in Berlin after having taken Karen's Stanford in Berlin theater seminar and falling down the German *Regietheater* rabbit hole. The multilingual, experimental German theater scene drew me in further, and I decided to stay. While earning my B.A. in Theater and Psychology at Stanford, I had focused more on acting, but the directing possibilities in Berlin fascinated me. I worked as an assistant director at the Maxim Gorki Theater from 2017 to 2020, where I learned from directors like Oliver Frljić, Nora Abdel-Maksoud, and Yael Ronen. Off the clock, I developed my own projects, including the piece *a face to the story in the newspaper*, which I wrote and directed at a Polish-Jewish Festival in Krakow in 2019.

When the pandemic hit, I was offered a position as assistant director at the Munich Kammerspiele,

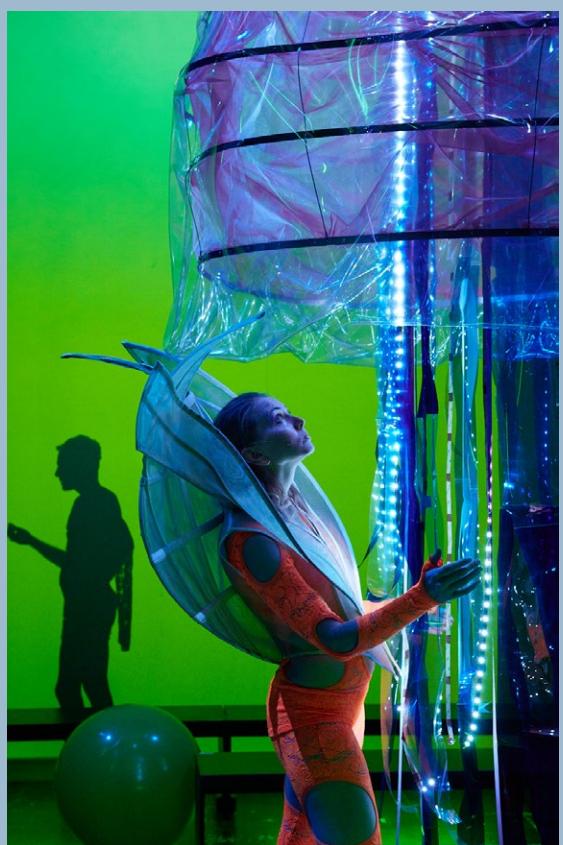
where I worked from 2020 to 2022. There, I directed and co-wrote an *imperfect utopia* (fig.), a play about queer life and queer utopianism, a co-production with the Munich Kammerspiele and TR Warszawa in Poland. This colorful show featured live musician Trace, three languages, and a bar onstage. We played several sold-out and critically acclaimed shows in both Poland and Germany.

Since 2022, I have continued to work as a freelance director, dramaturg, and translator, with Berlin as my base. I love how this city brims with art, culture, and nightlife, with innovative artists constantly hungry for new forms and new work. I am now completing an M.A. in Dramaturgy at Berlin's Ernst Busch Academy of Dramatic Arts, during which I have served as dramaturg for Toni Morrison's *Dreaming Emmett* and for a devised piece at Schauspiel Dortmund. I've also written and directed the first draft of

a play about AI, *Metal Skin*, for the Sopot Non-Fiction Theater Festival in Poland.

Berlin offers so much, and as a city full of transplants, *Wahlberliner*, and those passing through, it's also an amazing place to make

connections that have led me to artistic collaborations across Europe. And whenever I return to Haus Cramer and talk to Karen about the latest premieres, I'm reminded where it all began for me.





## Das Deutsche Volk by Dhruv Vaze

*Das Deutsche Volk* is a deep study of remembrance, peeling back the layers of public mourning to expose the quiet bureaucratic turmoil that lingers after a tragedy. It is not a documentary about the 2020 racially motivated Hanau terror attack in the sense of reenactment or forensic reconstruction of the killing of nine people. Rather, it is about the aftermath – the wreckage left behind. Not just the grief felt by those affected, but also the hollow rituals of a state that acknowledges tragedy while neglecting/abandoning its proper remembrance.

The horror of *Das Deutsche Volk* is procedural. The film moves through courtrooms, vigils, press conferences – spaces meant to offer clarity, yet steeped in an ambient sense of futility. Testimonies are recited, condolences extended, but the camera lingers in the pauses, in the faces of those who are forced to accept the unacceptable. Unlike traditional political documentaries, this is not a film that argues. It observes. And in doing so, it captures the unbearable weight of systemic inaction.

Visually, the film strips away excess, the majority of which is shot in black-and-white. Its stark framing, often isolating

individuals against vast, impersonal backdrops – police stations, government buildings, city plazas – turns the machinery of the state into something coldly monolithic. The editing resists emotional crescendos; there is no release, only accumulation. Silence is used with devastating precision, stretching moments just long enough to force discomfort, to make the absence of the murdered felt. The absence of justice. The absence of reform. Or, perhaps, the absence of a system capable of offering the kind of closure that is being demanded.

What makes the film most unnerving is its refusal to offer resolution. It is not about healing, nor does it pretend healing is possible in a landscape where wounds are continually reopened by negligence – or by the simple fact that loss cannot be bureaucratically rectified. The families of the victims do not get justice, but the film never quite defines what justice would have looked like. And by the end, the question lingers – not just who is responsible for the tragedy, but who, in the years since, has chosen to look away.

Dhruv Vaze (Computer Science, Management Science & Engineering) studied in Berlin in winter 2025.

## → WILL TRIP



# How to come back?

Tips for recent alumni

The **Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung** offers fellowships for U.S. scientists and scholars:

<https://www.humboldt-foundation.de/>

**Cultural Vistas** provides internships and practical training opportunities in business, engineering, finance, tourism, IT, media/communications, international relations, the nonprofit sector, German studies, economics, and other fields for up to 12 months:

<http://culturalvistas.org>

"The **Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange (CBYX) for Young Professionals** is a fellowship funded by the German Bundestag and U.S. Department of State, that annually provides 75 American and 75 German young professionals, between the ages of 18½–24, the opportunity to spend one year in each other's countries, studying, interning, and living with hosts on a cultural immersion program. [...] CBYX is open to candidates in all career fields, and applicants from a broad range of backgrounds are selected for the program each year."

<https://culturalvistas.org> (Programs)

"**Building a Diverse and Inclusive Culture of Remembrance (DAICOR)** is a reciprocal transatlantic exchange program for individuals with a professional interest in the promotion of an inclusive and progressive culture of remembrance in public spaces in Germany and the United States."

<https://culturalvistas.org> (Programs: Professional Study Tours)

The **Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD)** and the German Committee of the International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience (**IASTE**) help individuals find study and research opportunities at all levels as well as internships:

<http://www.daad.de>

<http://www.iaeste.de>

<https://www.daad.org/en/home/contact>

The **Internationales Parlaments-Stipendium (IPS)** lasts five months (March 1 to July 31) and includes meetings, seminars, and an internship with a parliamentarian:

<http://www.bundestag.de/ips>

The **German Center for Research and Innovation (GCRI)** in New York is a governmental initiative to internationalize science and research. It is a clearinghouse providing information on research and funding opportunities for researchers (graduate students, post-docs, etc.) all over Germany and logistical help:

<https://www.dwih-newyork.org/en>

The **German-American Fulbright Commission** has special programs for U.S. citizens, e.g. grants for teaching assistantships at German high schools:

<http://www.fulbright.de> (Grants – Grants for US Americans)

<https://us.fulbrightonline.org/>

The **Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V. (KAS)** provides stipends to German and international graduate students for further education and graduate work, especially for young people who want to become leaders in the fields of politics, business, science, media, and culture:

<http://www.kas.de> (Stipendien)

The platform "Your Link to Germany" provides information about studying and working in Germany:

<https://www.deutschland.de>

## Besuch vom Lande (1929)

Erich Kästner (1899–1974)

Sie stehen verstört am Potsdamer Platz  
und finden Berlin zu laut.  
Die Nacht glüht auf in Kilowatts.  
Ein Fräulein sagt heiser: „Komm mit, mein Schatz!“  
Und zeigt entsetzlich viel Haut.

Sie wissen vor Staunen nicht aus nicht ein.  
Sie stehen und wundern sich bloß.  
Die Bahnen rasseln. Die Autos schrein.  
Sie möchten am liebsten zu Hause sein.  
Und finden Berlin zu groß.

Es klingt, als ob die Großstadt stöhnt,  
weil irgendwer sie schilt.  
Die Häuser funkeln. Die U-Bahn dröhnt.  
Sie sind das alles so gar nicht gewöhnt.  
Und finden Berlin zu wild.

Sie machen vor Angst die Beine krumm  
und machen alles verkehrt.  
Sie lächeln bestürzt. Und sie warten dumm.  
Und stehn auf dem Potsdamer Platz herum,  
bis man sie überfährt.



© Atrium Verlag, Zürich/W1-Verlage, Hamburg

Erich Kästner, „Besuch vom Lande“ aus *Das ist Berlin!* Herausgegeben von Sylvia List. Zürich: Atrium 2023, S. 56–57. © Atrium Verlag AG, Zürich, 2023

Erstdruck: Herbert Günther (Hg.): Hier schreibt Berlin. Eine Anthologie von heute (Berlin, Internationale Bibliothek), München: 1929, S. 97.

# Zweimal in Berlin: My Experience as a Two-Time Krupp Intern by Aliana Arzola

**After a wonderful quarter** abroad in Berlin, followed by an internship in summer of 2024, I felt deeply accomplished and fulfilled. Visiting Germany and most of continental Europe for the first time, immersing myself in a new culture, language, and work ethic was invaluable for my college experience at Stanford. When I returned to campus, I stepped into the role of (one of three) Berlin student ambassadors, working with the Bing Overseas Studies Program. Having had the opportunity to promote the program and Krupp internship throughout the year, meeting Berlin alumni, interacting with “Friends of Berlin” and staff at home and at the Stanford Center in Berlin, I realized that my journey in the city was not necessarily over. With the Krupp Program, one can do several internships throughout the Bachelor’s, with each as a new opportunity to explore a different part of Germany, a new company or sector, and a new community.

This summer, as a rising senior, I had the privilege of working with the German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP) in their English-language foreign affairs magazine, *Internationale Politik Quarterly (IPQ)*. This was particularly special, because DGAP and Stanford have a long history of partnership, starting with former Stanford in Berlin professor and *Internationale Politik* Editor-in-Chief Sylke Tempel. Since she began the partnership, more than a dozen students have interned with DGAP, a leading think tank in Germany, Europe, and the world. Being able to work with a think tank that has such international impact was a true honor. When I got the confirmation that I would be able to work with *IPQ*, this meant one thing: I would be going back to Berlin.

As I had spent five months in Berlin in 2024, going back was as exhilarating as it was nerve-wracking. Would I have lost my German skills? My understanding of the culture? Would I feel as comfortable as I once did? Not to mention, being there for just the summer, and not the spring and summer, I was unsure how I would adjust to knowing I had so little time there. Nonetheless, the summer was promising and I gladly returned! Once there, I realized that Berlin remained the dynamic city I knew, both changing and exactly the same as it had been. The international communities, the accessible public transportation, the events going on all around the city nearly every day... it is simply the best place to be.

At *IPQ*, I started off with a bang. DGAP’s *IP* intern for the German-language magazine, Anna, and I, got to take part in the German-American Trade and Tech Conference, hosted in the Landesvertretung Baden-Württemberg, which is essentially a mini-embassy for the



state of Baden-Württemberg in the nation’s capital. While there, we were able to listen to a variety of professionals in the fields of international trade, artificial intelligence, foreign affairs, government, and defense, among others, as they discussed current affairs that concern transatlantic relations. It was a great experience to be able to join such an experienced crowd and learn more about pressing topics from both a German and an American angle.

In the office, I got to develop my writing and editing skills, as I was an editorial intern. Since *IPQ* publishes every three months, I got to see the tail end of editing for the summer edition and the ideation and initial stages of the autumn edition. My day-to-day mostly, then, consisted of reading and editing articles from published professionals, learning more about European defense, economic security, and EU affairs, and ideating covers, titles, and social media strategy for *IPQ*. It was my first experience in such an operation, and I truly enjoyed how dynamic and varied the topics I handled were. Another consistent project I worked on was drafting an original article, for which I decided to focus on the relationship that Spain and NATO share. The *IPQ* and *IP* teams were both very welcoming and helpful, and I am grateful for their guidance.

# INTERNATIONALE POLITIK Quarterly

No. 4 | Fall 2025



The journal *INTERNATIONALE POLITIK QUARTERLY* is published by the German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP) which has been one of our recurring internship hosts. Initially, these placements were arranged in part by Dr. Sylke Tempel (1963–2017), long-term editor-in-chief of *Internationale Politik*, who taught at the Berlin Center and inspired students to pursue political journalism. We are very grateful for the continued support of our program.

Aside from the professional benefit of completing a Krupp internship, the experience of being in Germany is another crucial element of the program. In Berlin, I was able to explore museums like the DDR Museum, Neues Museum, and Deutschlandmuseum. I was also in a new area of the city, which meant that I explored new coffee shops, restaurants, and markets, elements of exploration that make the city so unique and vibrant to me.

Having the internship cohort in the city – as well as other cities in the country – allowed me to visit friends both in Berlin and through travel. Living once again with a host family further assisted my integration into the local culture and provided me with a welcoming environment. It is truly an unbeatable experience, no matter where in Germany one is placed.

Towards the end of my time in Berlin, I was able to visit my old internship location, the refugee and immigrant-facing nonprofit, Need4Deed, for a very *Berliner Sommerfest*. Seeing my old co-workers and how their mission has evolved and improved, I felt a deep sense of joy and gratitude for the previous summer. Combined with what I got to experience this summer – working in the think tank and editorial sector – it was the ideal close to a second summer in Berlin. It was a summer of growth, new experiences, and immense enthusiasm for the future of the Krupp and Berlin programs.

**Aliana Arzola** (International Relations, German Studies, Economics) studied in Berlin in spring and interned with Schöneberg hilft e.V. and Need4Deed in summer 2024, and with the editorial team of DGAP e.V. in summer 2025.

## → Summer Seminar in Berlin



# Your chances of finding a polar bear in the Swabian mountains are low, but not zero:

An Internship with Tübingen's Geophysics and Glaciology Group by Emmy Echevarria Muniz

I had a special circumstance when it came to finding my internship that I think most students should take advantage of when looking for opportunities in their field. I entered the Krupp Internship Program without knowing what I wanted to do. I had an idea that I wanted to work in the electrical engineering field with an emphasis on building something; however, I didn't know. Wolf Junghanns suggested that I ask my academic advisors for some ideas. Thankfully, I declared my major that same quarter and met with my major advisor. He put me in contact with the Tübingen Geophysics and Glaciology group led by Reinhard Drews. They were a bit hesitant at first, but my major advisor really pushed for it and also offered that I could use recently developed equipment just for testing purposes. After spending the entire summer with them, I believe this was the best match for me.

Though it wasn't exactly what I expected, with no physical training involved, I still built a virtual model that will hopefully help out the PhD student that I worked with, Johannes, on his thesis. The model was of a radar system developed by University College London in 2011 called the Autonomous phase-sensitive Radio Echo Sounder (ApRES). It is used to monitor and image Antarctic ice shelves, and it is relatively new – it gives high-resolution data, can be operated autonomously, and can capture data while stationary or can be driven on a snowmobile. Though it was created in 2011, an accurate model of how data is collected has not been made.

So that is what I worked on the whole summer! Using a Python script and a basic structure of the ApRES sample from GitHub, I added noise that is usually seen in the equipment from the circuitry. I also added two different types of signal attenuation in the model. Signal attenuation happens due to the signal traveling through a medium, in this case, ice, and it decreases in amplitude due to different factors, one of which is temperature. I first modeled basic attenuation using an exponential model that decreases the farther down a reflector is. A reflector is anything in the ice that causes the signal to bounce back up. This could be from the ice changing properties, pockets of water, or pockets of air trapped in the ice. These reflectors can also be the basal terraces in which Johannes is trying to investigate why and how they appear. Then I used a temperature-dependent model that used real data points collected from Antarctica as well as Greenland. I think I got relatively



The Neckarfront with Hölderlin Tower behind, seen from Eberhard Bridge. In 1477, the ruling Duke Eberhard I

of Württemberg also known as *Eberhard im Bart* founded the University of Tübingen.

close to getting something that looks surprisingly similar to the real data collected.

Outside of modeling, I also had the opportunity to use Stanford-designed 3-D printed antennas and compare them against standard skeleton antennas to see how they compare. The Radio Glaciology group at Stanford, the one which my major advisor leads, designed these antennas to be lightweight and cost-effective. These antennas have been tested many times in ice and snow, but I wasn't sure if they could be used in soil sensing since the composition of the soil is very complex compared to the former. I collaborated with the hydrogeology group at Tübingen, who were already conducting a pumping test at a local underground water storage facility, and deployed the antennas there. I was told by many people in my lab that students have tried what I was attempting to do, and none of them were able to see the groundwater table. A groundwater table is the upper layer that marks where the ground is fully submerged in water. This layer would be considered a reflector in the ApRES system. Due to the uncertainty, I didn't get my hopes up. Yet, after a week of fixing code and analyzing my data, we had a surprising conclusion. In our overnight radar collection, we were able to see the groundwater table in the data!

Besides modeling and conducting research, I also got very close to the group. Since Johannes was also new to



Field work conducted at Lauswiesen. The white antennas are the standard skeleton antennas I am testing.

Tübingen, we learned about the city together. The first week I arrived, we watched university student groups race on the Neckar with *Stocherkähne*. Racing on the Neckar happens every year. Many groups dressed up in fun costumes and performed dances for the judges of the "Spirit" competition. They raced around the Neckar island in the heart of the city, and so many people went down with their ship. It was utter chaos with the number of people watching and racing. It really felt like the whole city showed up with beers and was ready to have a good time. I learned a lot of German card games at a Biergarten while drinking *Bananenweizen* (banana juice and beer, trust me, it tastes good). I was able to find housing in one of the university dorms with great flatmates. I really got to experience German university culture, being so close to a student bar that had karaoke nights every Wednesday till 3 a.m. I never realized how "Country Roads Take Me Home" transcends even the cultural barrier. I visited the Tübingen castle and saw all the cool artifacts that the archaeological group collected from hundreds of years ago. I even got to see the Vogelherd horse made out of mammoth ivory from around 40,000 years ago. Food-wise, I was taught by Rebbecca, the resident elephant lover of the group, how to make traditional Swabian food like *Käsespätzle* and *Dampfnudeln*. I tried traditional sweets like *Maultaschen*, not to be confused with the meat version that I also tried. Both are very good. Though most of the time I spoke English due to being in an international group, there was a small part of me that felt very much integrated into German society and culture.

Outside the group, I also met excellent researchers. The Geophysics and Glaciology group is world-renowned for its Antarctic research and expeditions, so many researchers come to the group to present papers and receive in-person feedback. A few of the people I got

to hear from included Kevin Norton, researching cosmogenic nucleoids, Maria Spyrou, a researcher in evolution and history of infectious diseases, Patrick Schmidt, researching transformative technologies in the Stone Age, David Prior, researching ice microstructure, Luca Malatesta researching Japanese landscape signatures after earthquakes, and Youzuo Lin researching computational wave imaging and physics integration. Honestly, I could go on and on about how academically enriching it was being here in Tübingen. These are just the people who are visiting the group, which just tells you how great the group itself must be to have people from Capitol Hill come to visit.

Yet, I think the best part of my internship was the people I met throughout it. Though the group was small, boy was it mighty. Everyone in my group welcomed me so fast, and we got to know each other very well. We had lunch together every day and talked about our personal lives and our projects. The group had such a fun tradition in which, if you bring a dish, usually a dessert, to the group, you have to explain the project you worked on based on the dessert you brought. I learned how to make Tres Leches since one of the PhD students had had it in America and forgotten what it was called. Using my cake, I explained the experiment I conducted. The cake itself was the soil, and the frosting on top was the heavy grass found at the pumping site. The three milks I poured over the cake were the rainwater that collected in the soil, as well as the stored water, and finally, the bottom of the cake, where all the milk settled, was the groundwater table. Even as we all drank coffee around a table, we still engaged in deep conversation and enjoyed a sweet treat while we were at it.

The group also invited me to their yearly retreat in the Swabian mountains, where they all live together and learn about different techniques for data analysis.

I learned three different ways in which geophysical data can be inverted by the PhD students who work on it every day. I am a person who gets really confused when certain concepts are abstracted in a way that no real application can be derived from them. During the lectures, I started to gain a deeper understanding of methods like gradient descent search, a concept I struggled with when I learned it in CME100. They explained these very complicated concepts in a simple way using real-world examples, and some funny ones. For example, Leah, another PhD student, explained Bayes' theorem through the idea: What is the probability that a white animal you see in the mountains would be a polar bear, if polar bears lived in the Swabian mountains. This then caused the inside joke of yelling, "ICE BEAR!" every time we saw a white animal (I think we left the poor sheep confused). Yet, with all the fun we had, I remained confident in my ability to use what I learned in my research. After these talks, we played games, ate together, and even hiked all the way up a mountain to see ruins of a castle where only a tower stands. The view from the top of the tower was really incredible! I got to learn a lot, not only about the data analysis, but also about everyone in the group.

Some things that I will take away from my Krupp internship would be that I definitely chose the right major to study. Before this experience, I would have never thought that my skills and abilities would transfer into the world of glaciology as well as the world of geophys-

ics in general. With coding expertise as well as understanding the fundamentals of circuit design, I am able to transfer my skills to whichever field needs me. I also learned more about myself and how I learn. Coming into this internship, I was very anxious about the fact that I did not know anything about geophysics or glaciology, and I was nervous that I was not going to meet expectations. In reality, like with most experiences, you learn on the job, and no one expects you to be a genius on your first day. You learn as you go, and being able to directly implement what you have learned helps to cement the information in your brain. Also, I am not shy to say that I am very bad at physics, but this internship also made me want to pursue further education in the geophysical field since it does directly relate to studying the earth. Overall, this was an amazing experience, and I would love to come back to Tübingen to either continue research or just to visit the amazing people in the lab.

**Emmy Echevarria Muniz** (Electrical Engineering) studied in Berlin in spring and interned at the Fachbereich Glaziologie und Geophysik of the University of Tübingen in summer 2025.

Group Dinner in the small village of Hayingen in the Swabian mountains. We ate *Spätzle*, herb crusted roast beef, and *Pommes*.



# In Freiburg: A Meditation

by Aman Dhillon



**The sun begins to rise**, marking a moment of comfort before the intense warmth it promises for the rest of the day. This beautiful yet potent summer weather has become both a pleasure and a presumption here in Baden-Württemberg. Nestled in the storied embrace of the Schwarzwald, my day begins on Sedanstraße. As I step onto the narrow sidewalk, I'm greeted by Bettina, my landlord, returning from her morning walk with Cookie, her bespeckled poodle. I pass by the jewelry shop Amyara, where I spot Alex – a familiar face and a relic of Sedanstraße.

Quickly, the cool morning air becomes colored by the warming call of coffee beans. I soon find myself surrounded by the mismatched colors and eclectic furniture of Sedan Café, welcomed by my *doppelter Espresso*. Embellished with coffee drinkers lounging on the steps and students tucked into the windowsills, Sedan Café is the life force of the Altstadt. The gentle buzzing of morning chatter and laughter underscores a certain café culture I have come to love.

Turning the corner around CinemaxX Kino, I notice the Straßenbahn approaching the stand. The Straßenbahn is the primary mode of transportation here, connecting the entire city with ease. As my eyes confirm the red label reading “Messe” adorning the front of the Bahn, my tired walk turns into a jog as I rush to catch my ride. And just like that, my day begins.

I ride the Bahn to the second-last stop at Technische Fakultät, where the Institut für Mikrosystemtechnik (IMTEK) lab awaits. Located next to the *Flugplatz*, the futuristic IMTEK building is surrounded by dusty yellow fields and wide paved paths. It's here that I spend my days working on my project for the summer. From modeling in CAD to discussing machining strategies with Andreas in the mill, each day moves me a step closer to solving my task.

My interests center on wearable and implantable electronics. This evolving interface between the human body and technology, I believe, will define the future of health. At IMTEK, I am deepening my understanding of implantable probes for stimulation and drug delivery. With an independent project as my focus, I'm engaging with the complete design process for the first time – moving gradually from research to ideation, from ideation to fabrication, and from fabrication to testing. My specific goal is to find a reliable method of cutting these multifunctional fibers.

One of the highlights of my experience has been working with Emilija, my mentor. I look forward to our conversations not only about my project but also about

the broader Move2Treat initiative and neuroprobes in general. Sometimes, I'm wonderstruck that such cutting-edge health innovation is happening in a place that feels like it was plucked from a fairytale.

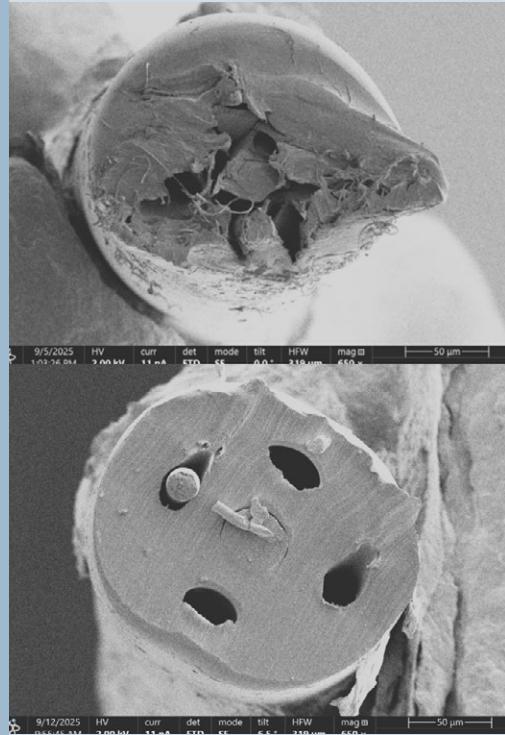
A favorite moment of mine was the day Emilija and I tested my fiber-cleaving prototypes. I gained a nuanced understanding of the various materials and sizes, which gave me valuable insight into the physical nature of these delicate fibers. Out of many trials, only a few seemed to be well-cut. We wouldn't know for sure until the next day, when we examined the fibers under the electron microscope.

That day was my last, and it felt wholesome and deeply satisfying. I sat with Emilija and two other students I had grown close to over the past three months. We slowly looked at each sample under the microscope, many of which were not clean cuts. The moment we saw the first successful image appear on the screen was pure relief. After weeks of ideation and design, I was finally seeing the fruits of my labor. I was ready to share my findings with the rest of the lab group.

While lab meetings were a great way to connect with the entire group, it was during our lunch breaks at Mensa that the real conversations happened. The food might not have always been the most exciting, but the company more than made up for it. Diversity, to me, is one of the defining emblems of the IMTEK lab. Just at my lunch table, I would find myself surrounded by a truly global group – people from Iran, Spain, Australia, India, and beyond. These moments, sharing stories, swapping ideas, and laughing over common struggles, deepened my appreciation for the community I was part of.



My landlord's dog Cookie.



Final prototype of fiber cleaving tool.

Before vs. after. Using cleaving tool: fluid channels intact and smoother surface.

Surrounded by an international group of people, English often became the common thread that connected us all. Yet, not wanting to let my German slip away, I signed up for evening classes in the building across from CinemaxX Kino. I always felt a little nervous before class and sometimes dreaded going, but once I was there, I found myself enjoying the lessons more than I expected. The group was small – only about five of us, each with an equal number of teachers. I appreciated this intimate setup, as it allowed for practical learning and helped me feel more deeply embedded in a town that had already given me so much.

After long days at IMTEK, my favorite way to finish the day was to run along the Dreisam River, the vein that brings life to the town. The river was always alive with people basking in the sun or cooling off in its waters. Like many things here, the Dreisam was just a hop and a skip from my doorstep. Having spent countless hours along its banks, I've come to deeply appreciate the natural beauty that surrounds me.

Another place that became a quiet anchor in my routine was the *Laufbahn* at the Institut für Sport und Sportwissenschaft. Enveloped by the greenery of the Schwarzwald, the track felt almost hidden, an oasis of rhythm and breath amid the whispering trees. I've run on many tracks around the world, each etched into memory by the hours I've spent circling it, but this one holds a particular calm. On one of Freiburg's many sweltering summer days, the sprinklers had turned on mid-work-

out, sending arcs of water glinting in the sunlight. With each lap, I ran through the mist, feeling both exhaustion and exhilaration as droplets cooled my skin. Looking up between intervals, I remember staring at the forest, the sky, and the clouds, feeling nothing but gratitude to be there.

But it's on the weekends that the true adventures begin. I like to say I live next to a portal to Europe. More times than I can count, I've rolled out of bed and into another country, sampling new foods, hearing new languages, and exploring new cities. This freedom to wander has been one of the greatest gifts of my time here. I can hardly put into words the feeling of seamlessly walking in and out of different, unique communities.

When I'm not off on another trip, I often find myself watching the endless trains and buses, just steps from my door. I imagine the countless destinations they reach, entertaining myself with fanciful thoughts of their journeys – and reflections of my own.

In the six months I've spent in Germany, I've traveled to ten countries. Being at the intersection of Germany, France, and Switzerland has made some of this travel effortless. But beyond the trips and the trains, it's the rhythm of daily life here – from Sedanstraße to the lab, from coffee to conversations – that has shaped this unforgettable experience.

Over these months, I've truly come to love it here. No matter how exciting my travels, the warmth of this small town and its accessibility have become a source



Black forest cake from the *Traditionshaus* Café Schmidt. The coffeehouse has been owned by bakers and confectioners since 1520!

of comfort. As I reflect on my time, my thoughts are alive with questions about how I want to shape my life moving forward. I'm at a point where I seek to better understand my relationship with the world around me. With that comes the looming question of where I want to spend my time – or perhaps even live. My experiences here have made me seriously consider the possibility of living in Germany, or Europe more broadly, in the future.

Krupp, to me, is a gift. Being in Berlin for the study abroad program was a truly enjoyable experience; however, it's the months spent completely on your own when the real learning happens. I especially believe that being in a different city from Berlin, as I was in the south of Germany, adds depth and dimension to the abroad experience. The support from the Krupp stipend, rather than receiving a salary from the host, offered a unique sense of freedom. It redefined expectations and lifted some of the pressure, giving me the mental space to focus on what mattered most to me – genuine engagement with the place around me.

When I first arrived, I thought my time in Germany would be limited to a year of language learning, after which I'd move on. Yet now, I find myself registering for my second year of German and contemplating a German Studies minor. I've come to realize that studying abroad is a cornerstone of the Stanford experience, and I believe it's something every student should pursue. To become a global citizen is to truly understand what it means to be human in our vast world.

As I walk from the Hauptbahnhof to my home, witnessing the sunset framed between the two towers of Herz Jesu Kirche, I reflect on the delicate balance we must all find in life. For me, that balance was choosing to immerse myself in the German world – a special place that will always hold a piece of my heart: Freiburg.

Aman Dhillon (Bioelectrical Engineering) studied in Berlin in spring and interned at the Institut für Mikrosystemtechnik (IMTEK) of University of Freiburg in summer 2025.



Stadium of the Institute of Sport and Sport Science.

# Our New State Parties

Behind the expansion of bureaucracy lies a quiet crisis:  
The mainstream parties are becoming increasingly detached from their social surroundings. by Oliver Weber

*The current calls for a reduction of Germany's notorious bureaucracy are nothing new, but they are currently being voiced particularly vigorously by various social actors in light of the economic stagnation that has persisted for years. We're thus presenting a fundamental political science perspective on the problem.*

**Reducing bureaucracy** on a large scale was one of the many bold announcements made by the new federal government. According to the coalition agreement, nearly one in ten jobs in the higher federal administration would be cut. Restructuring personnel takes time, which is why it isn't yet possible to clearly judge whether this goal will be achieved. The cabinet's decisions so far don't leave much room for hope. Never before has there been such a high number of parliamentary secretaries of state and ministers of state. According to the budget, more than two hundred additional subordinate civil service positions are supposed to be created to staff the newly formed digital ministry. At the very least, the higher administration is growing rather than shrinking.

It would be easy to accuse the government, as the opposition often does, of breaking its election promises and wastefulness. The higher administration's long-standing tendency to increase personnel points to a much more fundamental problem, however, independent of individual ministries and parties. The Union [i.e., the Christian Democratic Union and the Christian Social Union; CDU/CSU] and the Social Democratic Party (SPD) are losing their character as mainstream or people's parties [*Volksparteien*] and instead becoming parties that compensate for the loss of social ties by becoming closer to the state. The increase in political patronage in the distribution of offices is an inevitable consequence of the party system's increasing estrangement from society.

For many decades now, social scientists have debated how to correctly classify the various phases that political parties go through in their history. While the specifics are disputed, it is common practice to distinguish between mass parties, prevalent in the first half of the twentieth century and known for their close connection to particular social groups and member engagement, and people's parties, or catch-all parties, as Otto Kirchheimer once called them. The Union exemplified this latter type of party early on because – in an unusual turn for the German political tradition – it was on the one hand interdenominational and on the other hand also integrated small businesses and the rural working classes. The SPD followed suit with the Godesberg Program in 1959.

The people's parties incorporated voter groups from various social classes, religious denominations, regions, and social circles, though not entirely randomly. They remained bound to ideology, albeit less so than the mass party. They cultivated certain core voter groups and acted as a kind of action committee for other intermediary organizations. This is how the SPD, for instance, maintained its traditionally close alliance with the unions and social welfare organizations, and the Union long profited from a very lively Catholic association that supplied it with votes, personnel, and its own world view.

The political elite of the mainstream parties were often recruited from the parties' immediate social circles and sometimes returned to them after the end of their political career. Gerhard Jahn, for example, the hard-working minister of justice and reform in Willy Brandt's cabinet, expanded the German Tenant's Association into a large and influential organization in the fifteen years after he left the government. This was entirely in keeping with parties' intention to act as mediators between society and the state; the political and social concerns of large social groups were supposed to be sorted, discussed, and aggregated within the party before being passed on to the political system in order to bridge the huge gap between the individual citizen and Parliament.

What has happened since then? A few traits of the current SPD, and especially the Union, still correspond to the model of a people's party. Even so, the trend has been moving in another direction for some time now. As early as the mid-1990s, the scholars of party politics Peter Mair and Richard S. Katz predicted that mainstream parties would take on the character of state-affiliated cartel parties. That wasn't just meant to be polemic; it also described verifiable structural shifts, such as the increasing importance of party financing by the state, the professionalization of party leadership, the mass media coverage of electoral campaigns, and, above all, the disappearance of social and moral milieus.

Since then, the situation has intensified. Fewer and fewer people attend church or become union members, and fewer develop loyalties to their milieu and party. Meanwhile, well over fifty percent of citizens are likely to vote for different parties. Within the parties themselves, ties to their social circles are fragile at best. The rift between the trade unions and the SPD hasn't been mended since Gerhard Schröder was in office. Catholic organizations, to which Konrad Adenauer, for example, naturally still belonged, now maintain closer ties to at most Armin Laschet. We increasingly hear the churches

quietly lamenting that fewer and fewer CDU members still know what it means to be a Christian Democrat – not to mention the higher orders of Catholic social teachings.

The general disorganization of society has also affected the people's parties. A large portion of their ties to their surroundings has been severed or weakened or, due to falling membership numbers, is no longer of greater significance. Instead, professional political careers now dominate the scene. The two major parties run their own academies to school a well-trained functional elite capable of organizing highly publicized electoral campaigns, which are often designed by external consultants. It has also become more common for university graduates to proceed directly to party headquarters because there are hardly any social spheres close to the parties where they could first prove themselves. And deserving local politicians are increasingly shying away from taking positions at higher political levels.

Yet the loss of social ties inevitably leads to an increase in party patronage. The number of parliamentary state secretaries appointed by the parliamentary groups has increased significantly – one in ten CDU/CSU members now holds such a position, and the figure is likely to be even higher in the SPD. What's more, the number of staff assigned to ministers personally is also continuing to grow from one legislative period to the next. Recent studies by the public administration and political scientists Sylvia Veit, Simon Scholz, and Stefanie Vedder show that the appointment of senior ministry officials is more politicized than it was in the Bonn Republic. Civil servant state secretaries, who have always been political appointees, are being appointed more frequently based on political loyalty than in the past. Ministerial directors and administrators, department heads, and deputy department heads are also increasingly displaying a more noticeable political allegiance [*Stallgeruch*].

The parties thus compensate for the loss of their social ties by creating positions for trained party soldiers and increasingly recruiting their functional elite from among politically ambitious civil servants. To summarize research on the cartelization of the party system in a nonpolemical way: The parties are becoming state parties [*Staatsparteien*] – not due to corruption or internal degeneration, but because of a general social change that has created a gap between parties and society, one that is now almost impossible to bridge.

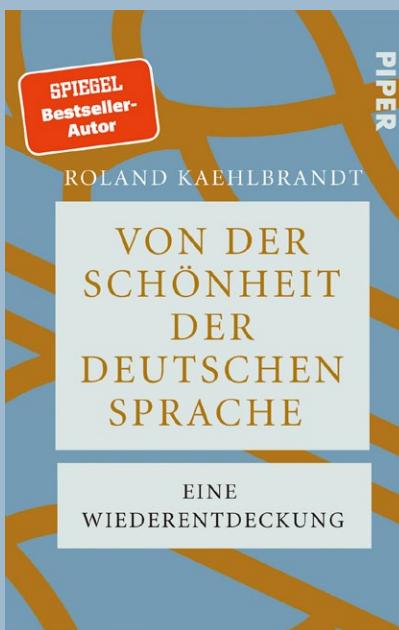
We can complain about the bloated bureaucracy, or we can discuss what caused it: the fundamental transformation of mainstream parties into professionalized, state-affiliated organizations that are socially disengaged and focused on election campaigns and administration. Many of these trends cannot be reversed. But they raise the question of whether parties of this type can still fulfill their constitutional role of mediating and rationalizing social conflicts if the gap between them and an increasingly atomized society continues to widen.

The gap that antiestablishment parties such as the Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) are filling could also be seen in these terms, rather than being attributed to individual political misjudgments.

English translation by Joann Skrypzak-Davidsmeyer, Cologne.

Source: "Unsere neuen Staatsparteien." *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Sept. 30, 2025, no. 227, p. 9.

## Recommended Reading



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Nach dem *Lexikon der schönen Wörter: Von anschmiegen bis zeitvergessen* (2020) und *Deutsch – Eine Liebeserklärung. Die zehn großen Vorzüge unserer erstaunlichen Sprache* (2022) verteidigt Roland Kählbrandt nun die Schönheit des Deutschen als Ganzes.

Und zwar nicht nur seine Beweglichkeit und Kompositionsfreudigkeit, sondern auch seinen zu Unrecht gescholtenen harten Klang: Die Konsonanten am Ende der Silben gestatten Lautmalerei und erzeugen Rhythmus, mithin *Wohlklang!*

# 50 Years of Stanford in Berlin: The Party and the Book

by Karen Kramer



In last year's *Briefe aus Berlin*, I alerted you to the fact that in 2026 we will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of Stanford in Berlin/the H.G. Will Center. We want to celebrate the first half century of the program with the people for and with whom this program exists: you who studied and were Krupp interns here, and all of those who have contributed to building your program. Invitations will be sent to you this winter. For now, please save the date: September 6 and 7, 2026.



Leo von König (1871–1944);  
Charlotte Cramer (1907–2004),  
oil painting, 1928.

The condition of Haus Cramer in April 1967.

The centerpiece of the anniversary celebration will be the premiere of a special book, the micro-history of the campus of Stanford in Berlin/the H.G. Will Center: the registered architectural and garden monument Haus Cramer in Berlin-Dahlem. Stanford in Berlin faculty and staff, outside experts, and Cramer family members have for years pooled our efforts to publish this study, which spans the long century from the Cramer family *Landhaus* to Stanford in Berlin: *Haus Cramer. Object. Lessons* (edited by Karen Ruoff Kramer, Cheryce von Xylander, Stanford, CA: Stanford University/BOSP, 2026).

In the years of research that went into this book, one of the things we learned was that what we have for almost 50 years lovingly called "The Villa" isn't one. It is a *Landhaus*, a point about which its architect, Hermann Muthesius, was adamant. Hans and Gertrud Cramer,

the Jewish-German family who had commissioned the house, moved in with their children Fritz and Charlotte when it was completed in 1913. Muthesius, a guru of early 20th century industrial design, is known for integrating the social-aesthetic modernity of English Arts & Crafts and the use of industrial materials in the German Werkbund movement, as well as for his influence on the Bauhaus School of applied thought. Gertrud Cramer entered their collaboration with thoughts of her own about "the ideal home" and applied them. The occasionally strained collaboration between the architect and the family resulted in what many feel to be the architect's finest house, metonymic for its time: the progressive, upwardly mobile culture that prized education and innovation, physical exercise and the arts. Nazi rule drove the family into exile in 1933. They resettled in New York and Massachusetts and stayed.

The ethos of *Landhaus* Cramer and its garden again came into its own in the mid-1970s, when the State of Berlin leased the property to Stanford; in 2000 the university purchased the property with the support of Stanford alumnus H.G. "George" Will, then-President of Stanford Gerhard Casper, and the Stanford Club of Germany. The Cramer family has partnered with the university since Stanford moved into Haus Cramer in 1978. Charlotte Cramer, guest of honor at Stanford's inaugural celebration, led students through her childhood home, telling them about her life growing up there. She later gifted to Stanford in Berlin the portrait that Berliner Secession painter Leo von König painted of her in her teenage years; those of you who studied in Berlin after 1994 will remember the painting, which



© Landesarchiv Berlin: F Rep. 290 (01) Nr. 0119678 (Detail).

hangs next to the grand piano in the main hall. Those of you who studied and interned earlier than that may well remember Dominik von König – son of the painter and Krupp Foundation board member who collaborated with us in developing the Krupp Internship Program in its early years. The family has in recent years gifted further prized works of art, exiled to the US 90 years ago and now again hanging in the halls of Stanford's H.G. Will Center. This exceptional gesture of largesse, returning paintings to the very city they had to flee, testifies to the friendship that the university and the Cramer family have enjoyed for half a century.

The book follows four main themes. The unique, path-breaking architecture of the legendary *Landhaus* campus. A conjuring of the period lifeworld that it typified, following in archives the concrete doings of the family and exploring with acute authenticity the broader cul-

ture of burgeoning Berlin. The book leaves Haus Cramer when the family does, in 1933, and reflects upon the devastations wrought by their one-time *Heimat* in their voices, from the vantage point of their new home. Finally, we recount Stanford's erstwhile half century in Haus Cramer: student life, educating behind the iron curtain, growing the institution – couched in the breathtaking political changes of the divided-then-united city and the mind-blowing technologies that have upended how we interact: It is a book about you and your home in Berlin. We will inform you, when the time comes, how to buy it – but better yet, pick up a signed copy on Pacelliallee, down the street from Podbielskiallee U-Bahn, on September 6–7 this coming year.

Herzliche Grüsse aus Berlin!  
Karen Kramer, Director Emerita



On the basketball and volleyball court, where the Cramer family's grass tennis court once stood (before a clay court was built along Cecilien-Allee, since 1949 Pacelliallee, for their children Charlotte and Fritz after World War I), tennis was played again in

the spring for the first time since 1945. L-r: Jay Gupta (Computer Science), student aid Jinhui Gao (North American Studies, History, Political Science), Yunshan Wang (Engineering Physics), Alexander Rosalia (Mechanical Engineering).



*Der Himmel über Berlin* as seen by winter quarter student Alexandra Yepifanova (Science, Technology & Society) on the evening of March 3, 2025.

## IMPRESSUM

Krupp Internship Program  
for Stanford Students in Germany  
Stanford in Berlin  
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