

## AVA-BERLIN, ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

### DECEMBER 2022 – HIGHLIGHTS

#### ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

1. Our last annual business meeting was held on December 2, 2021, via Zoom. We reviewed the past year and made plans for 2022.
2. The following Executive Committee officers were re-elected for 2022: ANN WERTHEIMER (chair); PAM SELWYN (vice chair); ALAN BENSON (treasurer); JANE HARTMANN (assistant treasurer); ISABEL COLE, JON WOLFE, and CAROLYN PRESCOTT (associates).
3. ANN WERTHEIMER continued as mailing list administrator and PAM SELWYN as mailing list administrator backup.
4. JON WOLFE continued as our web master.
5. CAROLYN PRESCOTT and KAREN AXELRAD posted all relevant information on our web site [www.avaberlin.org](http://www.avaberlin.org).
6. ANN WERTHEIMER continued as liaison to the United for Peace and Justice coalition, which we joined in 2006. As a local group with no employees, AVA-Berlin pays \$50 dues a year to UfPJ. See <http://www.unitedforpeace.org/member-groups/> and scroll down to UfPJ International Member Groups.
7. The dues for full membership with voting rights in AVA-Berlin are still €30 per year, or a self-assessed smaller amount. See [www.avaberlin.org](http://www.avaberlin.org) and then click on MEMBERSHIP for details. ALAN BENSON, with JANE HARTMANN as backup, kept dues records, answered questions, and wrote reminders.
8. At the December 2021 Stammtisch we decided to try Jitsi rather than Zoom for the January 2022 Stammtisch. In fact, we held our first three monthly Stammtische via Jitsi. Thank you to JON WOLFE for arranging and hosting all of this.
9. In April we decided to return to Zoom. We gave Jitsi a good try—for three months. It was good to be able to use a non-commercial substitute for Zoom, but after talking to some of you about the problems we had with Jitsi, the AVA-Berlin Executive Committee (EC) came to the conclusion that we should go

back to Zoom. The EC also decided to pay for a Zoom Pro plan from our AVA treasury. With a Zoom Pro license, you can host unlimited group meetings with up to 100 people and can collaborate as long as you need, without worrying about time limits or having to start another meeting.

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

11. Back in January, JON WOLFE set up a community for AVA. All of us were invited to join the community, which Discord refers to as a server. We could now easily drop links to articles and discuss them with all who are interested. Somehow this didn't work out. Very few people were interested. Many some day....

12. The years of the pandemic prevented us from getting together in person. Many of our usual activities—joining demonstrations, most obviously—were greatly limited. But our Stammtische got a boost. Our part-timers, who spent weeks, if not months, in Berlin, and who, while they were here, come to AVA meetings and events, have now become full-timers. So we were able to get first-hand information from friends in Massachusetts, Michigan, DC, and Maryland.

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

1. The open letter calls on the nuclear armed states (and other parties to the NPT) to:

End the nuclear arms race by permanently ceasing the manufacture of nuclear weapons;

Phase out the role of nuclear weapons in security policies starting with no-first-use policies;

Commit to a timeframe for the global elimination of nuclear weapons;

Shift budgets and public investments from the nuclear weapons industry to instead support public health, climate stabilization and sustainable development.

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

1. Although AVA-Berlin has no affiliation with any political party in the U.S. or in Germany, we are always happy to explore our common interests with the Berlin chapter of the Democrats Abroad, as well as with German groups like Campact, which lost its Gemeinnützigkeit in 2019.

2. AVA is always happy to announce political events around town, especially if they are in English and/or not widely publicized. Let us know if you hear of something that might interest others. And let us know about your own films, exhibitions, publications, and performances. Just send the information to [wertheim@zedat.fu-berlin.de](mailto:wertheim@zedat.fu-berlin.de).