



GRUNEWALD ENJOYED
AND REMEMBERED
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I came to accomplish a number of projects and, not unlike Christopher Columbus, ended up in different waters. My original intention was to prepare a “treatment” (Drehbuch) for two documentaries – one a portrait of my generation, the very young who left Central Europe during the Nazi era; the other on my youth. Two film companies had expressed interest in these subjects and I had dealt with these topics in books published in years past (*Thursday's Child Had Far to Go* and *Generation Exodus*). However, movies, unlike books, are expensive to produce, and as a result it took longer than anticipated to carry out these projects.

At the same time, following the upsurge of terrorism and various other forms of political violence, including the war in Iraq and its repercussions on European-US relations, I was

sidetracked and spent a considerable amount of time commenting on current affairs, writing articles, and being interviewed. I also put the finishing touches to a book entitled *No End to War*, which was published in spring of 2003 in English, German, and several other languages. Back in the 1970s, I was one of a small group that engaged in the systematic study of guerrilla warfare and terrorism. Since then this has become a very crowded field, but there still was considerable demand, for weeks almost insatiable, for analysis and comment. I do not regret this lengthy interlude (of being sidetracked); at a time of crisis there is always a strong urge to communicate one's ideas. But intellectually, these issues are not very challenging. They are complicated, that is to say there are no simple, monocausal answers, and generalizations are difficult – often impossible – simply because the sources and manifestations of terrorism vary from country to country. But the basic issues are still fairly clear, even though there is frequently considerable resistance against accepting them for psychological or ideological reasons – for instance that, in most cases, poverty is not the prime factor generating terrorism, or the idea that all ethnic conflicts can be peacefully solved. In other words, the main task in this field is not the discovery of some new laws of the hidden motivation of terrorism but repeated and patient explanation of the knowledge that has been amassed in this field. It is not so much a question of new discovery and research, but of explanation.

And so after several months I went back to an old project on Jerusalem in which I had engaged in 2000–01. This is neither a history of the city nor a sociological study; I took Jerusalem (personalities, places, events) as a starting point for reflections on the past and the future of a variety of issues including religious fundamentalism, national strife, the Kibbutz, the fate of various ethnic groups that had settled in Jerusalem, ranging from the Sefardi aristocracy and the German Jews to the Moroccans and the Russian immigrants. I was also dealing with the development of intellectual life in the city from the 1920s on. The book is based on a variety of sources, including personal experience and literature, and I was greatly helped by a number of Fellows in my year who read some of the manuscripts and made valuable suggestions.

But as important as these projects was the fact of simply staying in Berlin and at the Wissenschaftskolleg. While I know Germany fairly well and had been in Berlin many times, I had never been there longer than a few weeks. Exposure for a longer period at a time of political, social, and economic tensions was of particular interest. We explored both the neighborhood of Berlin (north and south and east) which I hardly knew as well as other parts of Germany, Switzerland, and Austria. However difficult the economic situation,

Berlin has become during the last decade something like the capital of Europe. This manifested itself in a variety of fields – the number of cultural and political events every day, as well as the number of visitors from outside the capital and from abroad. At the Wissenschaftskolleg (and in places such as the Gendarmenmarkt at midnight), we met friends and acquaintances and some whom we had wanted to meet for a long time but never had. Walking with a guidebook in the vicinity of the Villa Walter, I realized that someone whose name was familiar to students of German cultural history had lived in about every other house.

All this contributed to a better understanding of contemporary Germany, essential for a student of Germany; newspapers and books are accessible anywhere on the globe, and owing to computer technology it is possible to listen to German radio and (up to a point) watch German TV from afar – but this cannot replace live contact.

The same is true with regard to meetings in the Wissenschaftskolleg – e-mail exchanges with colleagues, however valuable, are usually ad hoc, pursuing a certain question, whereas seemingly aimless conversation over lunch and on many other occasions in the Wissenschaftskolleg (I am not enamored by the abbreviation) was more often than not unfocused, unpredictable, and therefore quite enlightening; it certainly contributed to my general education, ranging from topics such as the history of modern art to India in the twentieth century and Jews in the Islamic world in the Middle Ages.

As for the seminars, I am of two minds; the intention is laudable, but it seems to me that specialization has unfortunately progressed so much (the famous “two cultures”) that it has become sometimes exceedingly difficult and perhaps even impossible to bridge them, that is to say to explain research, unless those attending have minimal scientific knowledge. Fellows will attend such presentations out of a feeling of duty and politeness vis-à-vis their colleagues, but I am not sure (based on my own experience) that they will be able to make contributions that are of value. One cannot, of course, generalize and lay down hard and fast rules. Some topics are accessible to the nonspecialists, others are not.

I wonder whether the following should not be given a try – one or two monthly meetings on topics of more general interest. I found in private conversation that there is great interest among Fellows about (for instance) the organization of various aspects of cultural life in West and East – and the problems confronting it. The structure of German universities is quite different from that in other countries and there is curiosity to know more: the status and the function of the professor and the student body – how do today’s students compare

with previous generations, what are their interests, the function of Academies and foundations in various countries, the problems facing operas and theaters, and museums, state support for sciences and the arts, cultural exchanges and the difficulties involved, publishing books, radio and television as educational factors.

These are just a few examples. While we talk a great deal about globalization, there are enormous differences between how things are done in various countries. I am sure people knowledgeable on these and other subjects can be found among the Fellows, and on occasion outside experts could be invited.

I arrived at the Wissenschaftskolleg with some apprehension; not since my Kibbutz days had I lived so closely with fellow human beings and, given the psychological frailties of old age, I was not sure how such arrangements would work. They could not have worked out better and we leave with sadness which, no doubt, will turn in due time into nostalgia, making appear the days on the Wallotstraße and in the Villa Walter in even rosier light. *Die schönen Tage von Aranjuez sind nun zu Ende. In contrast to Don Carlos we greatly benefited from them.* What bothered me a little is the fact that most young Germans no longer know their own literature, but I fear there is little the Wissenschaftskolleg can do about it.