



THINGS THAT MATTERED TO ME
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I came to the Wissenschaftskolleg with my husband, Michael Fried, and daughter Anna, then aged 13, with every expectation of having a happy and productive year. I knew from friends who had already been Fellows that Wiko was a marvelously well-run operation. I had also learned from experience that having a space to live in that feels comfortable and workable is essential when one is away from home. The moment when, on the day of our arrival, bedraggled and weary from the long flight from Baltimore but feeling cheerful and optimistic, we stepped into our flat on the 4th floor of the Villa Walther, with its welcoming rooms, its views of the hauntingly lovely, melancholic garden, and its glimpses of the bright

water of the Hubertussee, I knew we were going to have a good year. And we did. Indeed, we had a superb time.

I am accustomed at Johns Hopkins University, my academic home, to living in a lively and intense intellectual atmosphere with many opportunities for the exchange of ideas with people in different disciplines, so from that point of view Wiko represented continuity rather than change – although of course it also represented the chance to make new friendships and encounter new, stimulating colleagues. I am enormously grateful for the friendships and relationships that Wiko made possible. And I am also much in its debt for the opportunity it gave me to start a new research project.

I very much appreciated being part of the Wiko community. What I also appreciated was the chance to get to know Germany. I was born in Scotland to socialist parents who during the early 1930s honeymooned and vacationed in Germany and Austria but refused to return then or afterwards once Hitler came to power. At the time of my arrival at Wiko, I had just published a book on the post-World-War-II vicissitudes of the concepts of survivor guilt and shame, and during the course of my research I had read numerous testimonies and texts about the Holocaust. Although I had visited Berlin on several occasions, and a long time ago had even spent a few days at Wiko, I had never lived more than a few days at a time in this country with its terrible and amazing history. Now I would have the chance to satisfy my curiosity at close range. Never mind that, in spite of the valiant efforts made on my behalf by Eva von Kügelgen and her gifted team of language teachers, during my year at Wiko I never learned to speak German fluently: I could manage the language in my own way, and in any case when necessary, the German people, with their admirable ability in English, could converse with me in my own tongue.

These are things that mattered especially to me during my time as a Fellow at Wiko:

1. The experience of living in Berlin. I loved living in this large city that never feels crowded. Berlin has wonderful amenities: excellent public transportation, great museums, wonderful opera and music, interesting architecture, green spaces, a lively street life, bike paths, cafés, and a river running through it. Surprisingly, perhaps, I felt not just comfortable, but even at home in Berlin. I got pleasure from witnessing the changing surface of the water in the little lakes around us, from walking in the woods and parks, from looking at the varied buildings, from traveling on the buses and trains, and from the sight of bicyclists of all ages – even if, in their headlong rush and aggressive sense of entitlement, some of them came close to knocking me over. I liked feeling safe. No doubt adding to my enjoyment of Berlin was my sense of relief at being away from the follies of George W. Bush's

politics and the stupidities of the American primary process in an election year. But I am not alone in thinking that right now Berlin is one of the most interesting and pleasant of all the great European capitals, indeed the most attractive of them all. I could even tolerate, though not admire, the graffiti.

2. My contacts with scholars. I especially enjoyed the opportunities Wiko gave me to meet scholars with interests close to my own. Early in the year I attended a workshop at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science on the uses of photography in science, a topic of particular interest to me since at that very moment I was writing on the use of still photographs in the scientific study of the emotions. A little later Raine Daston invited me to present my just-published book, *From Guilt to Shame: Auschwitz and After* (Princeton, 2007), to a group at the same Institute. I appreciated the chance to do this and the excellent discussion with the audience and my commentators, Raine, Andreas Mayer, Henning Schmidgen, and Fernando Vidal, that ensued. With Henning Schmidgen in particular I began a new friendship that I hope we will maintain from now on. Subsequently, Andreas Mayer, an old friend, invited me to chair a session of a workshop also at the same Institute on “Animals Under Observation”, which I also found very stimulating. Early on during my stay, I met historian and former Fellow Ute Frevert one evening at Wiko and was invited to present some of my new work to her “History of the Emotions” group at the Max Planck Institute for Human Development. This resulted in another lively discussion and indeed a friendship with Ute that I prize highly. I met many other interesting scholars on other occasions when I was invited to present my work at various places, including the Kennedy Institute at the Free University and the Einstein Forum. I would also like to mention that, thanks to Wiko, Fellows Pat Kitcher, Candace Vogler, and I found each other and decided to get together regularly to discuss the problem of “Intentionality”, a topic of interest to all of us. Although we did not meet as often as we planned or hoped, we had several productive discussions.

3. My conversations with Germans about Germany and its history. Germany’s ongoing dialog with itself and others about the events of the Holocaust impressed me deeply. From the moment Michael and I began participating in the intensive German language course at the start of our stay at Wiko, the topic of Nazism came up regularly. It is hard to imagine what it must be like for Germans young and old to confront daily such a hateful past, but to me there is something exemplary about the way they are doing so. A remarkable conversation with a person I met thanks to Reinhart Meyer-Kalkus epitomizes this for me. I was attending a concert in Wolfenbüttel, about a three-hour drive from Berlin, and just

before the music began a group of us was walking through the attractive, old little town, where Lessing had once lived. The town had survived World War II intact, so I asked my companion, "Where were you born, and what happened to your city during the war?" She replied that she had been born after the end of the war in what had been a small, beautiful little town not far from Wolfenbüttel, a town that had been leveled by the Allied bombing eight weeks before the surrender. There was a pause while I tried to think of what to say. Before coming to Wiko I had become interested in recent discussions of the rights and wrongs of the British and American firebombing of Germany during the war and in the new literature devoted to the question of German victimhood. I had complex and unresolved feelings about the issue of firebombing because of the pathos suffusing some accounts of the sufferings endured by German civilian victims of the bombing. I had been perturbed by the tendency of some authors to imply an equation between Jewish and other victims of the Nazis and the German victims of the Allies. I had even been offended by the discussion of this topic by W. G. Sebald, whose writings I otherwise admired immensely, because of what I felt was a failure of tact in his handling of the question.

So I asked my companion whether her town had had any factories or other structures of military or strategic value to the Allies that might have justified the destruction, and she replied "No." I struggled to respond when she suddenly said: "The Germans-we-started-the-war. We deserved what happened. We *had* to touch bottom before we could crawl back again to join the civilized world." The directness and frankness with which she voiced this sentiment, perhaps a commonplace of German thinking on the topic today, touched me. As a consequence of this exchange and others like it, I find that my own attitude toward the bombing of Germany has subtly changed, and that I am more open to the idea that the Allied destruction of German cities and the killing of so many civilians were not only militarily unnecessary but morally wrong.

A visit I made with Michael to Buchenwald was a disturbing experience that was also marked by another unexpected encounter. I was struck by the fact that the camp lies only a 15-minute bus ride from Weimar, the historic home of the Goethe, Schiller, Herder, and the German Enlightenment. Indeed the road on which we traveled, which had been blocked off by the Nazis in order to build the camp, had been one of Goethe's favorite routes when he made excursions into the countryside outside Weimar. Michael and I spent a somber two hours walking through the remains of Buchenwald and visiting the various exhibits there. The more time I spent in Germany, the less explicable the rise of Nazism with its contempt for human life became for me. When we were waiting at the bus stop

for a ride back to the Weimar train station, we encountered a retired union worker from Frankfurt who was helping lead a tour of fellow retirees to Buchenwald. The group was staying for several days in the hostels built for visitors in order to study the history of the camp in detail. The man opened the conversation by asking us if we had been to Buchenwald before, or Auschwitz, both of which he had visited several times. His willingness to engage the topic with us, the frankness of our brief exchange over the dreadful past as we sat, incongruously as it felt, in the delightful summer sun, again impressed me deeply. I valued each of the many encounters of this kind that I experienced during my year at Wiko, every visit I made to museums and exhibits about Germany's past, and every book on the topic that I read.

4. A day trip through the Mark Brandenburg. I made several trips during my stay in Berlin, including visits to Amsterdam, Bilbao, Baden-Baden, Munich, St. Petersburg, and London. But a high point for me was a car trip I made with Michael and Wiko Fellow Gustav Seibt into the Brandenburg countryside. The aim of our trip, which was proposed and organized by Gustav, was to visit some of the scenes and places mentioned in Theodor Fontane's *Before the Storm* and other novels. Those scenes and places were familiar to Gustav because he is an ardent cyclist who finds the flat, uncrowded little roads of the former East German countryside a joy to ride and because his love of Fontane, which he shares with Michael, had made him an expert on the area.

We started our tour at Frankfurt an der Oder, an East German town on the German-Polish border that had been much damaged by heavy fighting at the end of the war and badly rebuilt and then unattractively modernized. But the city has two things very worth seeing: a museum dedicated to Heinrich von Kleist, who was born there; and a very rare representation of the anti-Christ in some fine 16th-century stained glass windows, recently returned to the old St. Marienkirche from which they had been taken by the Russians as a trophy at the end of the war. Gustav had arranged for us to see the Kleist museum, even though it was normally closed on the day we visited, and then, after a good look at the stained glass, we began a marvelous tour of small churches, war memorials, and other hidden sites of historic or artistic interest that Gustav had picked out for us. The small country roads were largely empty, the agricultural countryside was soft and appealing, and now and again we passed a wind farm. Our itinerary took us through small villages and past farms and tiny churches. Among the stops we made were the lovely "Barockkirche Friedersdorf", of the von Marwitz family, a small seventeenth-century church that had been badly damaged in the war and was now restored; a fine Soviet war memorial commemo-

rating the Russian soldiers who had died during the bloody combat with the Germans that ended the war; the tiny village church where one of Gustav's grandfathers had been vicar; and beautifully restored Neuhardenberg, the former estate of the von Hardenberg family, one of whose members, Count Carl Hans von Hardenberg, was implicated in the plot to assassinate Hitler. Neuhardenberg has a handsome *Schloss* with a beautiful garden park, a magnificent Schinkel church – and an excellent restaurant where we enjoyed an early evening meal before heading back to Berlin, due west into the setting sun. The enchanting and instructive and sobering trip was for me a kind of encapsulation of Germany's complex history, and it was a trip moreover that we could never have undertaken without our lucky encounter with Gustav at Wiko and the friendship with him that ensued.