

**GLOBAL FEMINISMS
COMPARATIVE CASE STUDIES OF
WOMEN'S ACTIVISM AND SCHOLARSHIP**

SITE: Germany

**Transcript of Dagmar Schoenfisch
Interviewers: Sławomira Walczewska
& Manu Giese**

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Dagmar Schoenfisch was born in Berlin in 1940. She worked as a nurse in East Berlin, and in August 1961 escaped to West Berlin, where she got her diploma at the Free University. She has a daughter and a son. From 1978 she worked for the Senate Department for Economics, and worked in women's shelter activism. She was founder of the first lesbian bar in Berlin ("Die Zwei") in 1980-81, which she continued to operate until 2002.

Sławomira Walczewska, born 1960, feminist activist and philosopher (PhD). In 1999, Walczewska published *Ladies, Knights and Feminists: Feminist Discourse in Poland*, the first Polish book about the history of women's emancipation in Poland from a cultural perspective. That book was nominated, as one of 20 books, for the most prestigious book award in Poland at that time, NIKE, in 2000. She is author of ca. 50 articles about feminism and history of the women's movement. She was teaching history of philosophy at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow (1985-1990), history of feminist ideas at the Warsaw University (1997), at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow (2000) and the feminist critics of history at the Viadrina University in Frankfurt a/O (2019).

In 1991 she co-founded the eFka- Women's Foundation, one of the first feminist organizations in post-socialist Poland. She edited the feminist magazine "Pełnym Głosem" (*In Full Voice*, 1993-1997) and was member of the editorial board of *Zadra*, the feminist quarterly (1999 - 2018). She is director of the Feminist Institute for Research and Education (www.efka.org.pl/fibe).

Manu Giese, born 1960, trade union employee at HBV (Union of Retail, Bank & Insurance, later ver.di). She came into contact with the women's movement when she was a teenager and had been active in the women's occupied house at Potsdamer Straße 139 in Berlin-Schöneberg since 1981. She belonged to the responsible group of women who, with the help of state subsidies and a great deal of self-help and work, renovated the house from the ground up. In 1986 the BEGiNE -Meeting Place & Culture for Women was opened in those premises. She lived in the house until 1998 and was active in self-administration (e.g. as a board member of the house association). She is also active in the BEGiNE as owner of the women's pub (1986 -1998 and again since 2004).

Dagmar Schoenfisch: Thank God you did not record what I said so far, because that is something that's connected to my time as a young girl as well. I have always had this solidarity with women during my time as a young girl. And I also had sort of an insight as a girl. I watched an older woman, even though I didn't know what was going on. We were in contact with each other and the lady wore a beret and so on. We walked past each other, we looked at each other and I knew there was something. I didn't know what it was. But there was something. Good. Okay. That was my first--. I can remember that too. It's been a very, very long time now. And then I had, I think- I'm repeating myself now, but I've always had a very strong solidarity, for example in high school.

Our class consisted primarily of boys. We were seven girls and 25 boys all studying in the branch of natural sciences. And of course you had to act in solidarity with the girls. And then there was the fact that I was always the best in sport, because I had trained on the high bar from the age of 8 to 14.¹ Nobody else in the class had any experience with the high bar. The discipline doesn't necessarily exist today for girls either. But that of course gave me powers that no one could see, because I climbed up the pole and the ropes. And I made my ups and downs on the high bar. And the boys couldn't do that either. I always had to audition in front of the girls' sports teacher, Fräulein "Miss this and that could you please--". Then I just showed what I could do on it. He didn't have to tell me much either. In addition I can perhaps say that both my parents were also sportsmen. Then, of course, I also have such a--. How do you say that? What kind of professions do women learn? My girlhood dream was always to either become an archaeologist or pilot. For a girl that was unheard of. Becoming a pilot was unthinkable, but I wanted to because I was always free of vertigo and always felt so light, as if I could fly. I jumped down six meters backwards, nothing ever happened, I jumped down the stair landings, nothing ever happened. Knock on wood.

And then I wanted to become an archaeologist. I became interested in history very early in my life, in my childhood. Of course, I was also interested in stories, in literature and so on. And then during 4th grade I think, I went to "Unter den Linden"² and everything was still partially in ruins, the armoury,³ and so on. And the school was at the church square. And I went there with a classmate --Her name was Doris and I said to her: "I want to go dig something up." I really wanted to do that. And then we passed the Red City Hall,⁴ the street that goes from Alexanderplatz⁵ to Unter den Linden. And then we crossed a bridge on the right. I don't know if it was destroyed or not. I can't say this for sure. In any case

¹ The horizontal bar, or high bar, is a structure that gymnasts perform routines on. ("Horizontal bar." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horizontal_bar, 6/12/20).

² Unter den Linden (translated as "under the lime trees") is a boulevard in Berlin's Mitte district. ("Unter den Linden." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unter_den_Linden, 6/11/20).

³ The Zeughaus (armory) in Unter den Linden was built in the early eighteenth century as an arsenal. Following World War II, the building was restored and redesigned as the German Historical Museum. ("Zeughaus." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zeughaus>, 6/11/20).

⁴ The Red City Hall, Berlin's town hall, is located in the city's Mitte district. It houses the city's mayor and the Senate of Berlin. ("Rotes Rathaus." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rotes_Rathaus, 6/11/20).

⁵ Alexanderplatz is a public square and primary commercial area in Berlin's Mitte district. ("Alexanderplatz." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexanderplatz>, 6/11/20).

we passed the Zeughaus and the Zeughaus was still there, standing in its outlines. Because it was a very good structure. And then there was sunshine. Then I went down there. Then my girlfriend said, "No, I won't get in there." Then she got scared. I crawled into it. Sand, stones, and so on, and I began to dig with my hands I think. I pushed the sand away and I found what I was looking for. I found a big bone there. And I proudly dragged it home with me, and the next day I brought it into class. Then my biology teacher told me, "Yes, it's a horse bone". All right. That wasn't a few thousand years, it was more like the 19th, 20th century, and that was my first archaeological excavation. I left it there, because other things were also important. Because I always did the housework, picked up my brother, took him to the kindergarten, picked him up. Before I went to school, I dragged him to the Frankfurt Gate,⁶ which was located in the Blumenstraße⁷ and that's where our after-school care and kindergarten was as well. And from there I went back to the church square. I had to walk quite a bit, I already circumnavigated the world at least once at a young age. We always went everywhere on foot.

And what is the next step when it comes to this aspect? I now jumped ahead a bit in my mind. In any case, I left high school earlier because I couldn't stand it any longer. I had to do something constructive. Otherwise I would have had finished high school when I was 17. That wouldn't have been any different. I made up for all that later. I couldn't go to the office at all, that wasn't possible. Sitting there all day made me sick. Even now I get sick from sitting too long. And then I went to the Charité.⁸ And I introduced myself to the superior. Then she said, "Yes, you're actually still too young to go to medical school. But you can join the cleaning crew--". Then I went-- I learned everything from scratch in the hospital. Then I joined the cleaning crew for a year. I had already earned a little bit by then. Then sometime when I became 18 I already had my own flat next to my mother. When I was 17 I was allowed to the medical technical school, thus I had to do the entrance examination and such. Then I noticed that although I didn't just sit there and learn for years I was able to recall a lot of the things I learned and was able to make use of that for this entrance examination. For example, math, was never my favourite subject, not at all. I liked physics and biology, but I disliked chemistry and math. Then I got to know the hospital from the bottom up. I joined the surgical ward.

⁶ The Frankfurter Tor (translated as "the Frankfurt Gate") is a square in Berlin's Friedrichshain borough. ("Frankfurter Tor." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frankfurter_Tor, 6/12/20).

⁷ Translates as "Flower Street."

(<https://translate.google.com/#view=home&op=translate&sl=auto&tl=en&text=Blumenstra%C3%9Fe>, 6/12/20).

⁸ The Charité — Universitätsmedizin is a Berlin hospital that houses the medical schools of Humboldt University and Freie Universität Berlin. In 2019, it was ranked as Germany's best medical school by QS World University Rankings. ("Charité." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charit%C3%A9>, 6/12/20).

Sauerbruch had just died.⁹ That was a big picture of the operation. The first back resection, was completely new at that time.¹⁰ The heart-lung machine, and so on.¹¹ Then I started working as an assistant nurse on the ward. It took a lot of time until I could go to the technical school and did the internships in the Charité. And of course we were all girls, we were all women. I also went to boarding school. Even on the stations I always had a lot of contact with women, with head sisters, they were all women. And the concept of male nurses only arrived much later, when men broke into the women's domain. Only in modern times. And I enjoyed working in my profession very much, because the patients were my basis for offering help. And this work in the hospital helped me process my traumas from the war days in a way. Because I saw that many people have it much, much worse. War is a thing, but in the hospital I learned more about all these cancer experiences. And medicine wasn't that far then either, so the medical situation was more catastrophic. That's when I did my exam watch on a tetanus case. A woman who had had an abortion and had gotten a tetanus infection. That was pretty extreme. Of course, we were basically all girls in the boarding school. All of us were women. Partially of the same age and such. I also got along well with the other staff. But I always had an affinity for women. And my first girlfriend, who I recently visited again, was a woman, a colleague, if you will.

Sławomira Walczewska: Was your first girlfriend a colleague at work?

DS: We knew each other from the technical school and we had many common experiences. She was working in the side surgery ward and I visited her and then we spent the night talking. Then I helped her with her early morning duty, nobody was allowed to know. At that time I was also--. She came from Spremberg.¹² That might tell you something. If you've ever been there. And then I spent a week there during the holidays and I mostly just read there. My passion has been reading since my childhood. I still read a lot today. And then I visited my girlfriend in Spremberg.

But we didn't stay together until the exam because she used to go to the West. That was our political situation here, it was really bad. That would be a political essay if I really told you all that. But I was kicked out of the medical school after the 3rd semester because I helped several people to escape from the republic.¹³ And then I worked on the cattle yard

⁹ Ferdinand Sauerbruch (1875 – 1951) was a German surgeon. Sauerbruch was head of the Charité surgical department from 1928 to 1949. ("Ferdinand Sauerbruch." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ferdinand_Sauerbruch, 6/12/20).

¹⁰ A vertebral column resection is the surgical removal of vertebra to treat spinal deformities. ("Vertebral Column Resection." The Spine Hospital at the Neurological Institute of New York. <https://www.columbiaspine.org/treatments/vertebral-column-resection/>, 6/12/20).

¹¹ The cardiopulmonary bypass (CPB; also referred to as the heart-lung machine) temporarily controls the heart and lungs of a patient undergoing surgery. ("Cardiopulmonary bypass." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cardiopulmonary_bypass, 6/12/20).

¹² Spremberg is a municipality of the northeastern German state Brandenburg. ("Spremberg." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spremberg>, 6/12/20).

¹³ Schoenfisch is referring to the German Democratic Republic (GDR), the eastern part of the country occupied by the Soviet Union following World War II. ("East Germany." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_Germany, 6/12/20).

for one year. I had many colleagues there, but of course also many male colleagues. I was at slaughterhouse A, where the pigs were sent west. I can tell you, sometimes it wasn't as much fun because now I can look at it from a new perspective. And after one year I was able to take another entrance examination to get into the medical school. And then I took my exam and got my diploma.

At that time, I had a girlfriend on the street, and you know I'm into Rock'n'Roll. And we danced together to Rock 'n Roll. We barely had any music in the GDR. And I didn't have a music system either, there wasn't any music system you could buy. My uncle had given me a radio box. I managed to put it together in a way that some sounds would come out. But that was only possible for a relatively short time. When I heard music like that, rock 'n roll music like that, I had to run. I had to move. I couldn't sit still and be quiet. And then at some point there were these May demonstrations¹⁴ and such, Lustgarten.¹⁵ That wasn't called Lustgarten before, it was called Marx-Engels-Platz or something. And then sometime Kurt Edelhagen were there.¹⁶ They played there.

And then my girlfriend and I started dancing to rock'n'roll. There was a crowd around us. My passion was not only reading, but also dancing. But somehow I was never really interested in--I just have to say it now. I was never interested in boys. Their advances didn't affect me. Although I have to say, we lived in an old house and many renting parties lived there. There were also several factories in it, as they used to say, in Old Berlin.¹⁷ A wine yard and a furniture factory, and a shoe factory, and so on. And of course there were a lot of children playing in the backyard. We really played a lot. I have to say that, even if it was all in ruins, the house collapsed next to us, everything was gone across the street.

This time of playing was an absolute necessity for me. And I was already a little crazy back then. I don't know, you could say I couldn't stand it when the kids were fighting each other or arguing or something. And then also--, I'm highly sensitive to exclusion, and so I was as a child. And then I always tried to solve things with a conversation. And then I brought them back in, and so on. Somehow it was the case that I naturally had admirers in this house association. And we liked to play together with the girls, but the guys always attempted to make advances. Most of them kept their distance, but one of them really came too close to me and it was rather unpleasant. They also fought a lot, there were cliques after the war, and they threw stones at them. It was really terrible.

And I have to say, the boys stood with the house community. And if you look at it in retrospect, maybe I had a very good position. Although I was on the road a lot, of course,

¹⁴ Berlin's annual Revolutionary 1st of May Demonstrations began in 1987 with riots in the city's Kreuzberg district. Left-wing groups have since dedicated the day to anti-fascist protests and demonstrations. ("May Day in Kreuzberg." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/May_Day_in_Kreuzberg, 6/20/20).

¹⁵ The Lustgarten (translated as "Pleasure Palace"), now renamed Marx-Engels-Platz, is a park in Berlin. It has historically been the site of protests and political rallies. ("Lustgarten." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lustgarten>, 6/12/20).

¹⁶ Kurt Edelhagen (1920 – 1982) was a German band conductor. ("Kurt Edelhagen." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurt_Edelhagen, 6/12/20).

¹⁷ Old Berlin, also referred to as Alt-Berlin, is a neighborhood in Berlin's Mitte locality. ("Alt-Berlin." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alt-Berlin>, 6/12/20).

my relatives were in West Berlin.¹⁸ We were the only ones who were in East Berlin, in the center of it. Somehow, I didn't have that much time left in the GDR. As a nurse I really had a difficult and stressful job. You worked 48 hours and all shifts, early, late, night watch. And you earned very little money. In principle it was just like that. And you couldn't make big jumps either. You could buy a lot of books in the East, they were really cheap. I did that afterwards during my studies, I had a lot of books from over there. And we also had lecturers who sometimes recommended books from over there. For statistics, and so on. I always had a lot of friendships, and I had a lot of chances, too. But I somehow didn't have any--. Actually I was also quite covered in work. Well, then I got to know my childhood love. Maybe that doesn't belong here, but I have to say that. It wasn't a woman. We grew apart and that was a big problem for me. I don't know if I should say this now. We grew apart because of a rape incident. And that completely destroyed my life. That's when I--. I didn't really want to do that anymore, no matter what, whatever. Somehow I didn't want to do that anymore. This haunted me for a long time. I despite had a friend who lived down the street. Well, I'm saying friend. He was in the Max Planck High School.¹⁹ I was in high school I, and we knew each other because we saw each other a lot on the street. We had a youth club and I actually went there because of the music or something. And maybe for dancing sometimes as well. I used to dance with girls. The boys could never dance. And then- I also helped him get across the border. Always at the risk of my life. I dragged all the papers over or exchanged them. Well, no matter. Then I went from east to west after the 16th of August '61. I came out of the night watch on the 13th of August, and then sat in the ward in the eye clinic. And then the patients came out. Someone was supposed to take over my shift at half past six, but nobody was there yet so I was confused. I had already done all the injections. I thought to myself, something must have happened. The evening before I had already had a hunch. I was still on top of the other station. And we had talked about it. Then I said something happened. It was ominous. The atmosphere was charged and something had to happen, something had to happen. I had a feeling that something happened.

Well, then that was that. Then the patients came in and said, "Sister Dagmar, the borders are closed." And I had just made an appointment, S-Bahn²⁰ station Wilmersdorf²¹ on the 13th of August wasn't working anymore. Then I was crying and went from

¹⁸ West Berlin was controlled by the Western Allies between 1949 and 1990, although it was surrounded by Soviet-controlled territory. West Berlin was seen as a symbol of freedom for many westerners. ("West Berlin." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Berlin, 6/12/20).

¹⁹ The Max Planck Society for the Advancement of Science, established in 1911, is a group of over 80 research institutes funded by the German government. The institutes each have specific focuses and are located primarily in Europe, with exceptions in South Korea and the United States. ("Max Planck Society." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Max_Planck_Society, 6/12/20).

²⁰ S-Bahn (S-Train) is a kind of metropolitan rail system common in Germany and Austria. ("S-train." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/S-train>, 6/12/20).

²¹ Wilmersdorf was a borough of south-west Berlin and has since been merged with Charlottenburg to form the Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf borough. ("Wilmersdorf." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilmersdorf>, 6/12/20).

Friedrichstraße²² to the Ziegelstraße²³ to the S-Bahn Friedrichstraße to Alexanderplatz. I was feeling such a rage too, such a rage. I was so shocked by this information that the borders were closed. And even if someone would have seen me I wouldn't have cared. I cried there and I think it's good no one talked to me. I think I would have blown up. But then you saw that all the guys had these badges they wore under the lapels, they all had them on outside. The SED badges, and whatever else there was.²⁴

And then I came home and first I laid down and cried and cried and cried. Then on the 13th of August a friend of mine had her birthday. Then I went there, too. And an uncle in Düsseldorf also had a birthday.²⁵ Anyway, this 13th of August was absolutely destructive for me. 14th, 15th, the tanks drove over the Friedrichstraße, all around it. None of this made sense to me. I can't even express what was going on inside me. And then I had this kind of hope, although I hadn't talked to my mother about it either. Of course my mother had guessed it. My brother was travelling around somewhere in the GDR, and what he didn't wasn't just positive. And then I got some information from West Berliners because they were still allowed to cross over. And then a friend of a friend came over and said, "You, we'll help you across the borders." I was just a bag of nerves. I had a day off because I had to do night watch before. And I just laid down. Actually I'm a non-smoker. I got myself a pack of "Juwel" because I thought it would help me to calm down.²⁶ I smoked it. I was just done. Then someone was supposed to come and pick me up. It was perhaps the last day. But then on the 15th the end was nigh so to speak.

And then nobody came. I went over to my mother's home, took a hose, cut it off. I had gathered some corks. I was dressed in black and thought to myself: "if nobody comes, I will definitely cross the border." Because I couldn't bear the thought of having a wall be built in front of my nose. Although, of course, it was incredibly difficult for me to leave my mother behind. That really was a life-threatening situation. And then I thought I would never stay here. I can't stand it. Our family was already threatened. And then I thought, I'm going through the Charité, that's where I can leave. Back at the pathology, there was a wall you could climb. On the opposite side was the canal. That's when I thought, then I will go--. I could just climb over. And I was very good at swimming. I will just jump into the water and swim over there. But on the 16th the government had already given out the order to shoot. They could have shot me right in the bum. I might have made it over.

²² Friedrichstraße (translated as "Frederick Street") is a prominent Berlin retail street, home of the Friedrichstraße railway station, and center of the Friedrichstadt neighborhood. ("Friedrichstraße." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friedrichstra%C3%9Fe>, 6/12/20).

²³ Ziegelstraße (translated as "Brick Street") is a street in Berlin. The street houses some of the Humboldt University buildings. ("Ziegelstrasse 10-13." Humboldt – Universität Zu Berlin. <https://www.hu-berlin.de/de/ueberblick/campus/mitte/standorte/ziegelstrasse-10-13>, 6/12/20).

²⁴ The Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED) was the German Democratic Republic's dominant Communist political party from 1949 to 1989. ("Socialist Unity Party of Germany." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socialist_Unity_Party_of_Germany, 6/13/20).

²⁵ The city of Düsseldorf is the capital of the German state North Rhine-Westphalia. ("Düsseldorf." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/D%C3%BCsseldorf>, 6/13/20).

²⁶ Juwel was a cigarette brand in East Germany. ("Juwel (cigarette)." Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Juwel_\(cigarette\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Juwel_(cigarette)), 6/13/20).

But on the other side there was always something going on, there was always some movement.

But I didn't need to do that, because suddenly there was a knock at half past ten. I was completely done. I was completely done. Then a friend of a friend came and brought--, do you want to know that? Do you want me to tell you how I escaped? He brought a passport from a friend. So. He also had a picture of her.

I really need to tell you some names now because it's so weird. The woman's name was Ursula and she lived in Ingrid-Pfad.²⁷ And I was so scared, this was dangerous, to say Ingrid and such, and Ursula-Pfad. That was a phenomenon that was in the back of my head, that scared me so much and my chest tightened. I could somehow still remember the date of birth, because I had learned that from my mother, unconsciously, my mother didn't know that at all to the extent that I was somehow so suitable, and then we walked. The person that helped me then brought an aluminium ring with him. Then I went over the border as his fake fiancée. I had a frock, these frocks, which one can pull down, the zipper went up to the knees, over the knees with a hood, kind of like the army frocks the Americans wore earlier. And I had them dyed black. I always had everything dyed in black. I was wearing them. Then my cousin, who had gone to America in '53, had given me a leather bag like this one. You can't call it a briefcase, rather it was a DIN A5 leather bag that I could wear around my shoulder.²⁸ I was so done. And that was also an absolute lapse. I packed a bikini and a fake bun into this bag. I never really needed to wear a bun because I always had very long hair before, much longer hair. And a lot has changed, everything has been reduced. And I put this bun and this bikini into the bag. Then we went over there, first to the border. We walked up the Alexanderplatz, and then the time was right, because you had to be there before 12 o'clock. And I trembled, of course I was shaking inside, my heart was racing. I thought everyone had to hear that. Everyone must hear that a mile away. Then he sometimes pressed my hand on my heart. Then we came closer and closer, to the crossing. We were at the checkpoint now. Then we went over to Wedding.²⁹ There they had already built these serpentines. There was a small house and a young man sat in it. Then I showed the foreign ID with the other picture. He looked at me for quite a while. He looked up and down several times. And my heart was beating fast. I thought everyone had to hear that, you had to see that. I thought I had a bump here. That was so loud, it also hammered so loudly in my ears. I was about to lose my nerves. And then we were allowed to go through.

I took a quick breath. I looked back for a moment. Then I wanted to run. But the friend that helped me lightly punched my back and we kept moving quietly and slowly. That took so much energy. That took me just as much energy as going through the border. Then we came to an old house, after we moved through these serpentines around it. And then

²⁷ Ingrid-Pfad is a street in Berlin. ("File: Berlin-Lankwitz Ingridpfad. JPG." Wikimedia Commons. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Berlin-Lankwitz_Ingridpfad.JPG, 6/13/20).

²⁸ DIN A5 is a standard page size for paper. ("A5." Prepressure: Prepress, printing, PDF, PostScript, font and stuff... <https://www.prepressure.com/library/paper-size/din-a5>, 6/13/20).

²⁹ Wedding was a borough in north-western Berlin and is now a locality of the Mitte borough. ("Wedding (Berlin)." Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wedding_\(Berlin\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wedding_(Berlin)), 6/13/20).

I went right behind the wall, stood against the wall like this, and I was just glad that nobody could drag me back. And then a West Berliner SchuPo came and said, "Well, did you make it? Congratulations."³⁰ After that, we went to the other friend. And then I lived on the Bundesplatz with my friend, who later became the father of my daughter.³¹ But after we were--, I didn't want to get married either. We had to get married, in the 60s it was like that. You didn't get an apartment, if you didn't order a posse, you didn't get an apartment. And the three of us used to live with friends in the passage room. Then Angrid was born. We were practically married when Angrid was three months old. And I couldn't do that. Well, I didn't really want to get married. I couldn't keep my name either.

Anyway, that's how it was. Then they sent someone from the East after me. And then I had gotten pregnant. And the superior from Westend- I was never unemployed.³² Later, however, I created jobs for myself. The superior from Westend, she hated me because I was not baptized either. My parents were liberal, they were free, they said my mother was Catholic, my father Protestant, and they said, "Please decide for yourselves." I decided against everything, I also did not go to the consecration of young people. Nothing, never, niente.

That was a pretty difficult time. As a nurse you didn't earn much in the West either. My exam was recognized, but my diploma wasn't. I was allowed to work for another year as a nursing intern, again for a rather small amount of money. Then I got about as much West-Mark as I earned East-Mark in the GDR.³³ Around 400 bucks as a qualified force. And the superior from the hospital, she really made my life hell. But the deputy superior, she was very charming, she got me a crib, for example, and all kinds of things. I was very grateful to her. She was really very charming. There is no other way to put it. But this other woman, she was bad.

I have to say that there are a few women who really did a good job as ward nurses in the Charité. We used to have these huge rooms with over forty patients in them. And this one woman embarrassed me in front of that room. That happened to be a men's ward. And what she accused me of was unbelievable. Then I was done. I stood outside in the hallway and cried because she had hurt me so badly. All these bad feelings come up again when I think about it. And then a doctor arrived. We also had no rooms where we could change our clothes. Everything was kind of built like an auxiliary construction. And then I couldn't talk to him at all. I would not have accepted help anyway. I went to the boarding school and the technical school and I just cried without stopping. That was a really bad experience. I didn't understand it. In retrospect there's one thing I do understand. From

³⁰ "SchuPo" is an abbreviation for Schutzpolizei, a state-level division of the German police. ("Schutzpolizei." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schutzpolizei>, 6/13/20).

³¹ Berlin Bundesplatz is a train station in Berlin's Wilmerdorf district. ("Berlin Bundesplatz station." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Berlin_Bundesplatz_station, 6/13/20).

³² Westend is a locality of Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf, Berlin. It was previously a mansion colony. ("Westend (Berlin)." Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Westend_\(Berlin\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Westend_(Berlin)), 6/13/20).

³³ During the Cold War, the Western Powers created the currency West-Mark, or Deutsche Mark, while the parts of Germany under Soviet control used East-Mark as currency. (Schmidt, Hubert. "From Hitler Youth to U.S. Air Force." The History Place: Personal Histories. <http://www.historyplace.com/specials/personal/schmidt9.htm>, 6/13/20).

a psychoanalytically point of view there are people and also women, women, who--, I define it that way: those who have a competitive thought process. Something that I didn't have at all, for example. I didn't have a competitive thought process when I was a young girl. I never wanted to be better or anything like that.

Of course, you have certain ambitions. But for me it was somehow the other way around. I didn't have this competitive thinking. I didn't know this kind of thought process. I actually got to experience that very late in my life. It was hard for me to understand. Since my girlhood I had this feeling to integrate and harmonize, I guess that was an effect that resulted from the war situations.

Can we take a short break?

SW: Of course. I would like to ask you how you discovered women's culture?

DS: That's something that always crossed my path. Here you can see me with my first girlfriend. I was still married. Well, what do you mean by discovered. I think, for example, although I was like a boy, I had already said that I had an affinity for women. Even if that is now for example-- There were situations like that, for example with my girlfriend. There we were with her aunt in the apartment. There were situations like that. There was something like that. We really did a lot of nonsense and her aunt was a judge. Then I was immediately asked whether she was the Red Hilde.³⁴ That she was not.

There had always been a reference there, a very strong reference to women, because in principle I grew up in a women's household. My mother, my grandmother, even if we didn't live together then. My grandmother wasn't with us in Berlin, and we weren't here all the time, even as nurses. I actually always had very good colleagues, except for that one awful woman. I always got along well with them, essentially. And I must also say I often would not have liked to be alone. That's something that I learned during my childhood. I had to deal with a lot of things on my own. I had to go to the doctor alone. I have experienced situations that many adults have not experienced and gone through at all. But in my childhood I developed this structure of having to cope on my own and finding possible solutions.

It didn't matter whether we had to bring away lungs or do something else. My brother had told me that we would get a few pennies more and I suggested to put stones into the saddle at the bottom. I didn't know that anymore. I didn't have to do that anymore. I talked to my brother about it on the phone and he said, "Do you know that this--", I said, "Really?" I can't imagine that at all. But he said that. Then I thought to myself, I must have thought of something back then. Of course my brother dragged me away. He was 4 years younger. Maybe I wouldn't have gotten away with it. My first experience was my girlfriend from boarding school. And I was still married back then. Once I was out of marriage, when I was divorced, I finished the high school for gifted people and then

³⁴ Hilde Benjamin (1902 – 1989), often referred to as "Red Hilde," was a Communist lawyer, judge, and Minister of Justice of the German Democratic Republic between 1953 and 1967. She is known for her role in politically motivated show trials and executions. ("Hilde Benjamin." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hilde_Benjamin, 6/13/20).

enrolled at the Freie Universität Berlin.³⁵ And I started with business education. But then I switched to another subject area, namely pedagogy in adult education, with a focus on adult education. Psychology, sociology, my elective subject was political science. And then I did the intermediate diploma. I have always worked, even during my studies. And of course I also had a lot to do with women, primarily at the university. We were always a group of women who knew each other from the beginning and then went to the lectures together, learned together.

I lived near the university in Lichterfelde West and you could easily walk to the Free University from where I lived.³⁶ I always had a relatively large apartment, so that the working groups always took place there. Coffee was still expensive back then, so we had tea. I still have tea today, I can make tea. Sometimes I had a real addiction to tea. That was also something we did during breaks. To drink tea and to talk a little about something else, not just about our studies. At some point, when I finished my studies, I began to drink tea less often. I went through the Free University and got my diploma within 5 years. I drank so much tea in these 5 years. By the liter so to speak and I got tired of it. But everything has something to do with women, because none of us had much money. Of course we could afford tea, but not necessarily coffee. Maybe it was healthier. That all intensified at the university, where we of course also voted in favor of holding women's seminars in this 5-room, here at the Otto-Suhr-Institute.³⁷ Mainly seminars for women and by women.

To free yourself so to speak and to create an awareness, because it was the same during my studies. It always depends on the field of study, there were fields of study, such as business education, they were in Gary Street and the youngsters arrived at the age of 18, with small suitcases, with diplomatic suitcases. Wasn't my thing at all. And then I got out after two semesters and went to the other WE. And then I felt more comfortable. Despite Karl Marx seminars and so on.³⁸ Well, no matter. And the friendships from the university still exist now. We always did a lot together in the group afterwards. Some of them have travelled together, and so on. I went to university in the winter semester of '72, '73. My daughter was already eleven years old. I was always together with people that were 10 years younger than me. And because I had a daughter, I always had responsibility, and so on. I also worked in the intensive care unit all the way up to my intermediate diploma. I'd like to say that I didn't really have that much time to go and fool around. I was already involved with my responsibility and was able to discipline myself quite well. It was necessary. The time I spent at university was actually a really great time, I have to say

³⁵ The Freie Universität Berlin (Free University of Berlin) is a prestigious research university established in 1948. The university's name is a homage to West Berlin's position in the Western Free World during the Cold War. ("Free University of Berlin." Wikipedia.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_University_of_Berlin, 6/13/20).

³⁶ Lichterfelde West is an area of Berlin's Steglitz-Zehlendorf borough. ("Lichterfelde West." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lichterfelde_West, 6/13/20).

³⁷ The Otto-Suhr-Institut für Politikwissenschaft is a political science research institute within the Free University. ("Otto-Suhr-Institut." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Otto-Suhr-Institut>, 6/13/20).

³⁸ Karl Marx (1818 – 1883) was a German socialist philosopher. He is most well-known for writing *The Communist Manifesto*. (McLellan, David T & Feuer, Lewis S. "Karl Marx." Encyclopaedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Karl-Marx>, 6/13/20).

that. And we also did project seminars like that. They really meant a lot to me and improved me as a person. They were mixed, but it became more and more open. Even the discrepancy between men and women. Even among the students, you could see that there were conservatives underneath. Although we all tried to break out of this and to move further. The affinity to women was of course there, it was always there. Some of the male students made advances towards me. I don't even know why.

And it also turned out that one of them had this conflict because his girlfriend had a child. And I had already spent eleven years with a child. I didn't have to say anything anymore, because these are things that are natural life experiences. And if you have already lived through something like this, then you don't always have to talk about it. It's exactly the same. That's why I didn't do any therapy. I did many things on my own- I dealt with it on my own. And of course I also read a lot, and so on. That kinda ties together with what I said earlier.

SW: We have political science and women's politics at the university. When did that happen? When did you--?

DS: That actually happened at the same time as my release from this very conservative, cramped marriage. A kind of emancipation thought. And of course in the 60s that was still--. For example, you had to ask your partner, your husband, if you needed a bank signature and wanted to withdraw money. For 60s

example, I conceived both my children when I wasn't married. A caregiver was in charge of me and my son. My son was born in 1976, when I was a graduate nurse, and I did a lot of other things back then. I had almost finished my studies, was a graduate pedagogue, I was actually already finished then, and then a caregiver is suddenly in charge. But this happened due to a precedence judgement. Because I went to **[unintelligible 00:49:07]** Philip Peinisch and said, "Listen, Philip. I feel like I'm really getting screwed here. I am this many years old, I already have a daughter that is this old and now I'm having a second child. I want this child. But just because I'm not married, they do this to me," I said, "This is unacceptable." And then he drew up a legal document and then we went to the Youth Welfare Office, and so on.³⁹ Then that law was scratched more or less. And then at some point new laws were made and it was really necessary. In the 60s this was-- that was a bad time for me, because I was in the GDR and I was 18 years old. In the West I was only of age when I was 21. And then I also had to look- when I was 22 years old. Even in the West I could not deal with the partial attitudes and this conservatism. I also disliked the politics revolving around families. Because I am an opponent of this traditional and conservative family policy so to speak, because it usually doesn't work anyway. We have all seen what that is like. Now we have the marriage for all.

I can only say: hallelujah [laughs].

³⁹ The German Youth Welfare Office (Jugendamt) is an agency that operates within local governments, independently of the federal government, to provide child welfare. ("Youth welfare office." Wikipedia. <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jugendamt>, 6/13/20).

I wrote my diploma thesis when I was pregnant with my son. That was very exhausting. I thought I couldn't get anything together. Should I read the topic to you? My diploma topic, I only have to press on it for a short time.

Problems of couple relationships or the attempt to develop love as a learning process. Experience-oriented, critical examination of the phenomenon of the love process including historical and socio-economic aspects in their determination of gender relations.

So, now you know. This is the topic of my diploma thesis.

SW: What were you trying to say?

DS: It is about life, love, humanity, basic values, about the reason to live. The why and how of relationships. This is such a complex topic. Yes, no matter.

SW: But that's theory. And there was a lot of practice as well. You said you couldn't sit for a long time and I suspect that you did a lot of work away from the desk.

DS: Yeah, I'm actually-- Yeah, I did it all on the go so to speak. I was always working and had completely different life tasks and what I wanted to do-- For example, I wasn't able to work as much as I wanted on my studies. Of course I also had to read a few books and life always had me in its grip, so that I didn't have much time for myself. I'm going to say this now.

That was what happened at the university, but I managed to get through. It was a very nice, very interesting time and as I said, I had already said that I still have friendships with the people from back then. Then because of my "great" marriage I-- After my studies I worked for one year in the Senate for Economics, in traffic education.⁴⁰ I had a group leader who I knew from my studies. But at that time I was already preparing for the second women's shelter here in Berlin. I am an initiative member there. Of course we had another women's group. But this time there were completely different conflicts, also many women-- but fewer women with children. Mostly women without children. The group then grew apart. In the beginning we were 40 women and I noticed that there was a lot of competition.

There was this group of psychologists. I didn't get along with them at all. But neither did the others. This group had split up and then only we were left. Ten of us- so ten of us were left and then I said, "We're gonna create a second women's shelter." And that's exactly how it happened. Well and then the political fight started for women. To create a second women's shelter for abused women and children was difficult, because we already had

⁴⁰ The Berlin Senate is composed of ten departments run by the city's mayor. Some of the departments mentioned by Schoenfisch are the Senate Department for Economics, Energy, and Public Enterprises, the Senate Department for Education, Youth, and Family, The Senate Department for the Interior and Sports, and the Senate Department for Integration, Labour, and Social Affairs. ("Senate of Berlin." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Senate_of_Berlin, 6/14/20).

the first women's shelter, in Grunewald.⁴¹ But that one was overcrowded. I knew almost all the women from the first women's shelter, because I am still friends with one woman that was in the first shelter. We knew each other from the diploma colloquium, back when I was pregnant with my son. I perceived this as disturbing, actually. Several women from our second house competed with the first house. I was always kind of a link there because I was older. I may not have looked the part, but in the end I had the experience of life and of course I already had children and so I had a completely different relationship to the abused women.

A fly, look, I have flies here. What a mess.

And then it was like that, of course-- that was also a political job and we really put a lot of work into it for two years. Of course I did that without getting paid. But then we managed to convince the politicians of our women's shelter and it was accepted. But as is usually the case, when it really came down to signing the contract, the agreement, the basic agreement and then presenting the concept and programme only four people were present. The others were all on semester break. As is usually the case. Well and then, I remember, I was with **[unintelligible 00:57:56]** I was with Ilse Reichel.⁴² Ilse Haase-Schur, was the representative of Ilse Reichel, the senator for family and sports at that time. That's where I went and then Haase-Schur was there. She was always a bit weird. She didn't like us very much. Well, in any case, we got the concept and so on, we had a discussion and so on, and we managed to get through. We got the okay so to speak. That was hard work. Maria then- I'm talking about a different Maria. She then found the houses. From a political perspective that was really hard work, because we had to do all the things that would usually be done by 5 senate administrations. We had to deal with security regulations, we had to work with the Senator for Internal Affairs and with the Police. The Police is a subordinate to the Senator for Internal Affairs. Then there was the Senate for family and sport, they stood with us.

Then there was the senate for work and social affairs, they financed us. For example, we demanded four 2A posts. We actually asked for more, but we only got the 2. For children and so on and so forth. Then we had to discuss all the safety regulations with our architect. That was a huge area and the protection was not guaranteed to the same extent for these abused women and children. In one year we had five dead people, five people were murdered. There have always been disputes with the police and with some politicians as well. And the women also had the problem of being only partially qualified or they were not qualified at all. They had no profession and they had several children and they were exposed to this violent situation and we had to go with the police to at least get their personal papers and in this respect the police was endangered as well sometimes, but the women and children were in danger as well. It also didn't help that

⁴¹ The West Berlin group "Women Helping Women" received funding to open the city's first shelter that focused on issues of domestic violence. (Freeland, Jane. (2019). Domestic abuse and women's lives: East and west policies during the 1960s and 1970s. In K. Hagemann, D. Harsch, & F. Brühöfener (Eds.), Gendering post-1945 German history: Entanglements (p. 259). Berghahn Books. 5/30/20).

⁴² Ilse Reichel-Koß (1925 – 1993) was Berlin's Senator for Family, Youth, and Sport from 1971 – 1981. She played a role in the establishment of West Berlin's first women's refuge in 1976. ("Ilse Reichel-Koß." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ilse_Reichel-Ko%C3%9F, 6/14/20).

the women were struggling economically and they weren't independent and not only this independence was the problem but also the emotional independence.

And that was often the topic and every woman who worked in the house here who had- we had self-administration and everyone actually did everything, which of course also always lacked behind, because everyone has different abilities and not everyone can do everything equally well. Sometimes you get into these kind of positions or you are pushed into roles and you haven't been in them before. I have experienced that again and again in my life. I was always pushed forward although I preferred to be in the background. That was something I didn't want at all. That was a difficult job, but it was also a great job. And of course my motivation also resulted from the sense of justice, which I have experienced since I have been brought into this world. I knew that the world simply is not just. You're always threatened by destruction, beatings and abuse and all that stuff. It used to be much worse than it is now. Now everything is on another level, we now have these foreign Islamists and so on.

It's my subject anyway. I remember my daughter's sports teacher. She was together with a man from Iran and she married him. We then went to a birthday party of another friend. My friend and I were working on our diploma, and she had a pretty intense discussion with some guy there and we had a lively discussion. That was in 75. 74, 75, 75 was when we had this discussion and we thought that the women would once again take the Chador⁴³ in Iran; although the pope so to speak, Reza Pahlavi, had already somehow achieved a liberalization.⁴⁴

And then it was like that again. And then we discussed politics in a rather intense fashion. I used to be much more reserved, much calmer than now. Now I can throw arguments around in a much more confident fashion. But that was a really fierce discussion and I said: That is not acceptable.

Then he argued with all sorts of things. That's not necessarily written in the Koran.⁴⁵ That is also - these laws in there are at least in parts a blatant contradiction to what is actually going on. In the 70's it was even more violent and pronounced and from a structural perspective it was different.

Well I remember it and I thought to myself- and then I told them and the people close to me and people I knew: "we will have some issues with the Islam someday." I said that in the year 75. That was my insight at that time and my statement and that is exactly what happened. And I wish it didn't happen. And it didn't happen because I said it but it still feels terrible to (?) me.

I am also friends with Egyptian women and I was in Egypt for four weeks, because in front of my house was an Egyptian woman who studied. She also studied. And then she invited me to Egypt and we were friends and when I was in Egypt, that was such a blow for me.

⁴³ A Chador is a full-body garment worn by women in primarily Shia Islamic regions. ("Chador." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chador>, 6/14/20).

⁴⁴ Reza Pahlavi is the Crown Prince of Iran's now overthrown Pahlavi Dynasty. He is also a politician and strong critic of the country's Islamic Republic government. ("Reza Pahlavi, Crown Prince of Iran." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reza_Pahlavi,_Crown_Prince_of_Iran, 6/14/20).

⁴⁵ The Koran is the main religious text of the religion of Islam and is regarded as a revelation from Allah. ("Quran." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran>, 6/14/20).

She was completely different and then she was married and I sat down on a balcony, and this balcony was kind of high up in a corner and had a little light. That was on a building site almost, in the desert and that was terrible.

And she had taken all the money away from me and I wanted to go to the sea. I was exhausted from work. And then someone called me, but nobody could actually see me. I made sure that no one could see me, because the balconies were too high. And then I thought- I refused and didn't eat anything anymore and I wanted to go to the sea, I wanted to go to the sea. To Alexandria.⁴⁶

I just wanted to have a little vacation. And then an administrator brought me to Alexandria and then I was there in the hotel. I had no money. So that was just terrible. And then I thought: No. I do not want to go. I do not want to come here again. And although it was an interesting experience this picture of women in this orientally dominated, patriarchal world, that's something I would not have survived.

Just like I would not have survived GDR. That's what I'm saying, I'm firmly convinced of it. As a woman I have always fought against institutions, always against institutions. And I created several precedents. Hopefully they helped others, that would be good. But I have to add something here now. How long do we want to go on? Up to what point – and at the time I did not live with women. I didn't have the time. And if I- I have done 25 years of therapy at the counter for others. If I had been paid for that, I wouldn't have any problems now.

Many came very early and just wanted to chat with me and many stayed for such a long time. Until seven, eight o'clock and I had problems, because I had babysitter problems. My mother was already dead in the East, they let her die in the GDR. That's related to women's problems and pictures. I know that from a friend who is a neurologist and psychiatrist. She said to me: Yes all those who were over 50 and over 60- my mother died at the age of 61, she would probably have had to undergo dialysis and they just let her die.⁴⁷

That's what she told me. Well, she knew that, she worked in that field. I could say a lot about that now, but that's all there is to it. Just something to add to the topic and my confrontation with the structures of this society and, of course, for women. We are again at the point where women in politics- there are always only individual examples but not too much has happened yet. We were really active in the 70s, 80s, at the beginning of the 80s. We were more combative and active back then.

And what did we-- we really did politics. We did a real women's shelter policy. And then I had my two children and then I left the women's shelter, for a political reason, because then they cut our jobs and I already had my job in the women's shelter. It was an A-position, that was a lot. Because I also had two children, I had a certain tax class and therefore I gave half of my money to a woman for a children's area.

⁴⁶ Alexandria is a large Egyptian city and tourist location on the Mediterranean coast. ("Alexandria." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexandria>, 6/14/20).

⁴⁷ Dialysis is a procedure that mimics the function of healthy kidneys and is performed on patients with kidney failure. ("Dialysis." National Kidney Foundation. <https://www.kidney.org/atoz/content/dialysisinfo>, 6/14/20).

Practically what I did with my position, I established a second one- I was not allowed to say that, I was not allowed to talk about it, but now I can do that. Nobody did. Nobody in my politics believes that either, you can believe me. And that is why I also know what I have done for society and the community from a social perspective among other things. And then it was about the fact that we- they said to me: Yes, they all got fat. They had relatively good money, the hard work was over anyway, the house was done after one or two years.

My house still exists. My plaque is still outside. After the murder of Nuriye Bekir- who had four children, who were there when she was killed on the sidewalk.⁴⁸ I said: Yes, we have to fight again. They can't cut our jobs now, we've done all the work for five Senate departments. We are working our asses off. The doctors were sending handicapped people to the women's shelter - that was not our job. Even if I could have done that but the others couldn't. They had no training as nurses and so on. They then sent seriously disabled people to us and we said we couldn't do that. That does not work and there were so many other topics. Everybody was pushed onto the women's shelter. Then they sent everything to us. The police accused us of calling them too often. I was in Spandau with 25 batches, topmost batches, and I made a progress protocol afterwards.⁴⁹ I told them about the women's shelter and then they made me understand that it was also about the safety regulations. They said we call the police too often. I said: what are you trying to tell me? Paragraph so and so. I said: Right. Only if a woman has a knife in her stomach it is appropriate. That was the paragraph that basically negated the statement.

I said: We can't work like this, we have to work prophylactically. If we want to change or improve something then we have to work prophylactically. I was notorious for saying that. It didn't matter to me. They came back from this committee. We also did further training with the police. Then I came back and this murderer was standing there, the man of Nuriye Bekir. He was on the property sitting in his car and he had already put the two-year-old into the car. We are standing in front of each other. I just arrived and he was standing there. I thought to myself: I should kill him. I knew the story. I thought about this. One or two weeks later he killed Nuri. Stabbed her in front of another Turkish woman with six children. They just wanted to return to the house. He intercepted the two-year-old and so on. Afterwards I thought: "If only I had killed him. Then I would have ended up in jail, but I don't care. Then we were here in the women's centre in Stresemannstraße.⁵⁰ On Wednesday we always had a Team Plenum.⁵¹ We got a call from the police. Mrs Schönfish answered the phone. I don't know why she did it, the others were there as well. Mrs Schönfish, could you come out of the house. We got out of

⁴⁸ Nuriye Bekir was murdered by her husband in Berlin in 1980. ("Nuriye Bekir." Gedenktafeln in Berlin (translated as "Plaques in Berlin"). <https://www.gedenktafeln-in-berlin.de/>, 6/14/20).

⁴⁹ Spandau is a western borough of Berlin. ("Spandau." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spandau>, 6/14/20).

⁵⁰ Stresemannstraße is a street in Berlin's Kreuzberg district. ("Stresemannstrasse (Berlin)." Wikipedia. [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stresemannstra%C3%9Fe_\(Berlin\)](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stresemannstra%C3%9Fe_(Berlin)), 6/14/20).

⁵¹ A plenum is a meeting of members of a legislative group. ("Plenum." Merriam-Webster. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/plenum>, 6/14/20).

Kreuzberg.⁵² Nuri was lying there. I held onto the fence like that. It was terrible to see how the women across the street from the hospital were there offering first aid.

All hell broke loose in the house. They were all confused and the fence wasn't finished yet. Of course we put pressure on them to get this fence done, which we had applied for sometime before but we didn't get it until sometime later. I looked after the woman. And I said to her: "Nuriye, you are in danger. We have contact with other women's shelters in Germany and we can take you to another shelter." "No", she said. She didn't speak German well yet, but she was a great woman. "For the first time I found a place.", she said. Then we tried to talk and make her realize how dangerous her situation was. The guy had tied her to the bed by her hands and feet and the children were around. He was on holiday in Turkey. His father had died. She left in a hurry when he was gone. She took the four children and a few clothes with her. They lived in Lankwitz, they lived there, hurried to our house.⁵³ There she was and she felt so comfortable and she felt safe. It didn't take long and I almost went crazy. We had an old blue VW.⁵⁴ I sat behind the wheel and thought: I have to run someone over. I have to run someone over. I was in a state of rage. I was so angry. I drove home. If someone had stopped me, I would have lost my driver's license right away, but I didn't care at that moment. I have to run someone over. I sat in the car. I have to run someone over.

I didn't do that, of course. Then I arrived and turned off the car, went upstairs and jumped on my bed and cried the whole time. The children came over as well, we lived nearby, near Fichtelberg.⁵⁵ The four boys who saw that were two to eleven years old. What about the children? Sometimes I think you're not even allowed to imagine that, because otherwise humans will lose their temper. Now I went through the surroundings again. Women's politics is so exhausting. You always have to fight. You always have to fight. So I left the women's shelter and there we were again in Stresemannstraße and there we were in a group. Then we went to "die Zwei".⁵⁶ It was a Wednesday and only Lilien was there. Only a single woman was there, aside from that it was empty. And we were there as a group of seven to eight people. We didn't really feel like dancing. We mainly talked again and again. Then there was this rumor about "die Zwei" being sold or being given away. And I'm not sure what drove me but I wanted to know more. As brave as a child I went to Lilien to the counter and asked: is it true? Is this pub going to be given away? And she said: Yes.

I couldn't ask enough questions, because I had no idea about the profession. The conversation turned into an appointment and then Ilona and Ruth were there and Chris Mücke was there, I think, and Ingrid and Lilien too. Then Chris said that she had the store

⁵² Kreuzberg is a district in Berlin's Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg borough. ("Kreuzberg." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kreuzberg>, 6/14/20).

⁵³ "Land" is the German word for "state." ("States of Germany." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/States_of_Germany, 6/14/20).

⁵⁴ VW is an abbreviation for the German automotive company Volkswagen. ("Volkswagen." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Volkswagen>, 6/14/20).

⁵⁵ Fichtelberg is a mountain in the state of Saxony, Germany. ("Fichtelberg." <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fichtelberg>, 6/14/20).

⁵⁶ "Die Zwei" translates as "the Two." (<https://translate.google.com/#view=home&op=translate&sl=auto&tl=en&text=Die%20Zwei>, 6/14/20).

before, about three years before, because the Pink Elephant was in it or something like that. That was really brave when I think back to it. I didn't smoke and I didn't drink and then I go to a disco bar, to a pub. Then Chris said: Yes. Then we met, Ilona, Ruth and I. And then we finished our Chinese horoscope so to speak. It was like this. I had called Ruth and said: "Say Ruth could you imagine that? I don't know anything about accounting. I hate that too. I hate desk work too. And then Ruth said: "You know what? I will ask Ilona. I asked: Does she have any idea of this kind of work? Because I didn't know Ilona that well. I actually only knew Ruth. And then she said: I'll ask her. That's what resulted from our conversation. Ilona and I always shared the work during the week. Three, four days. And Ruth did the preparatory work for the bookkeeping, because she is a banker, she did a bank apprenticeship.

But we have the same degree program. She is also a diploma pedagogue and so on. We attended both the diplom colloquium instructed by Schick, she is already dead. Well. In any case, so now [laugh] Chris said- there were three of us and he said- well, I said, "Well, okay, I'm going to clean the toilets." "I'll clean the toilets" I said. Ilona went to the disco and Ruth did something. I don't know what she did. I cleaned the toilets, front and back, I did it thoroughly. Then Ingrid came and said, "Mh, Mh, Mh." [laughing] So we sat down with the others and then we- then they said, "Okay, yeah, okay, we can do it." Then we checked the business terms, and at some point Chris said to me, the others couldn't hear it, unconditionally, "You're going to run this pub." [laughing] That's exactly how it turned out. When they quit after three years I was getting nervous, as you might imagine. But then they said, "The new one is coming. This was in December before we had taken over the pub. I had no idea how this business worked but I was like: "What's the worst that could happen?". Then- God oh God, the pub was absolutely crowded. It was a Sunday. The pub was full. And it was getting crowded and the only thing I could do was make coffee in the kitchen. Whenever it was too crowded I quickly went to the kitchen even if no one needed coffee. I learned very quickly- we obviously- because the beer, thank God that there was no draught beer, I only learned how to do that in the "Wasserturm".⁵⁷ You know? The women from Orlanda were there and I don't know who else.⁵⁸ Well, it was full. Full to the brim. The atmosphere was also quite good. I could not really get into that. Then I always moved around with a bowl to clean everything. [laughing]

Then I came back to the counter and I saw the Orlanda women sitting right in the corner of the entrance. Eva, Heide, and two others. Then they said, there said the Eva, "Oh, Dagmar, could you bring us another round of Amaretto?".⁵⁹ Yes, I said, "Well, oh my god, what glasses should I use?" I said, "What glasses do you want me to put it in?" Do you

⁵⁷ The Wasserturm, built in the late 1800s, is Berlin's oldest water tower. The tower was initially constructed to supply water to the city's residents. The area surrounding the tower is now a high-end commercial, tourist, and residential neighborhood. ("The water tower at Kollwitzplatz (Wasserturmplatz)." Visit Berlin. <https://www.visitberlin.de/en/water-tower-kollwitzplatz-wasserturmplatz>, 6/16/20).

⁵⁸ The Orlanda publishing house is a social justice-centered publisher founded in 1974 in Berlin. ("Orlanda Frauenverlag." Publishers' Catalogues. <http://www.lights.ca/publisher/db/7/3787.html>, 5/27/20).

⁵⁹ Amaretto is a sweet liqueur. ("Amaretto." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amaretto>, 6/16/20).

remember the small bowls and stuff. I thought, yes that's good, okay, all right. Amaretto and small glasses, yes, the bowls, aha, then I already knew it. They mean bowls. Then I fixed a tray, five or six things on it. [laughing] I moved with the tray through the masses, bumped into the corner, and I did that a few more times that evening. Then Eva said, "Man, you're all right, you can stay." [laughing] I had no idea what I was doing. In the back there was always a big glass on the machine that read "used cigarettes" on the toilet. It was full you know. For God's sake. I ran away from my marriage because I always had the feeling that I was suffocating, and for years I didn't know why. But because of these three packs of Gauloise⁶⁰ or Rote Pfote ("Red Paw"), the curtains were always yellow and brown, I haven't had any curtains on the windows since then. [laughing] And I thought: "oh my." Okay, whatever, ashtray service. I'm very hospitable, that comes from my Slavic origin, that's in my genes I guess. [laughing] I cleaned the ashtrays and made coffee in the kitchen. Then I adjusted. I think I was like a kid on a scooter driving through and just looking and marvelling at everything and stuff. [laughing] The music was good. I don't think I danced at all that night- I danced that night too?

SW: I don't know, but you did a lot of dancing.

DS: That's true, I danced a lot. But even when I was alone in the pub, in the morning I sometimes danced alone, cleaned it up. I don't know what happened then but that's how it started. And I- it actually happened relatively fast. The thing with the alcoholics.

SW: In what glasses-

DS: In what glasses? [laughing] God oh God. I will never forget the story. But that question saved me because now I had an idea of the amount. [laughing] Oh, no. [laugh] Well, then New Year's Eve came, I didn't remember if Ruth was there, but Ilona was definitely there. They had already worked on New Year's Eve, and I fried 600 meatballs. My apartment smelled of meatballs for six weeks. That was my debut. I wasn't even able to eat them. Well I tasted them but didn't eat them. [laughs] Just now, I'm so stupid. Kids, I'm so stupid with my social flaws. Well, good, okay. But, that was great, so yes, I mainly worked on the counter, because I'm a counter bitch, it's written somewhere in an article. The "Counter Bitch of the Year" [laughs] was written in a magazine. I actually - I must say I somehow got used to it relatively fast. [laughs] And the best thing was, there were only women, but I hated smoking. Then somebody says - I said: "When Ilona were together- did you see that? A mosquito, a mosquito.

SW: [laughs]

⁶⁰ Gauloises is a French cigarette brand. ("Gauloises." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gauloises>, 6/16/20).

DS: That would've left me with another bump. Yes. Then Ilona said to me, "No, you do it, I am a non-smoker. I won't clean the ashtrays." And then I had to do that, because that was part of the service, too. I hated that. I resented Ilona for that. I don't know if I told her that, but at some point I should tell her that. Well, at least I talked to Ruth about it later. But I really disliked it. I always had dirty hands, you know, from cleaning the ashtray. Those were the two only women, and we had to pay a high rent. And the-, what else can I say about that? Over the course of time I had also gotten to know some good girlfriends, for example through my daughter and years later they often told me, "Gee, you know, I was so in love with you". I heard that years later. And I was always quite surprised. [laughing] I always thought I had so much work to do. That was a pleasant thing for me. To always do a lot. I couldn't think about it. That kind of work didn't allow me to think about that. That still happens to me sometimes today, things like that still happen to me sometimes and I think to myself, I've been beyond good and evil for a long time now. I think I was the woman who had the fewest affairs in the pub. Or would you say something else?

SW: No.

DS: No, tell me the truth. I am very - I think I am communicative and relatively open, but I am also very reserved. I also listened a lot. Yes, they were- that's why I don't have a bell. I had a stalker in my garden before. Not so long ago. Climbed over the fence in the back. I can tell you, well, good, okay. Is that still important?

Manu Giese: Yeah, that's important.

DS: Yes. [Laughing]

MG: But you say what you want to say. The others will like to hear and see what you have to tell and show, but only the things you want to tell us.

DS: Should I talk about the "Wasserturm"? Oh well, then-- unfortunately, I have to say, we have been fired from the old "Zwei" in Schöneberg.⁶¹ Oh, maybe I still have to add something here, sometime in the sixties I stood on the opposite side of the pub, there was a bus stop and the area was terrible at that time. It was a striped area and gray and gray, quite horrible. Of course I also knew the mother of my girlfriend, whom I know from boarding school. We stood on the other side. The mother, I can say her name. Unfortunately she is already dead. Her name was Gerda, she was in the administration. So there we are, I was in my mid-20s, maybe, and Gerda said to me: "Tell me, Dachshund," they always called me Dachshund, "Dachshund, do you know what kind of pub that is over there? Right across the street". I said: "No." I didn't know anything at all back then. Then

⁶¹ Schöneberg is a locality in Berlin's Tempelhof-Schöneberg borough. ("Schöneberg." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sch%C3%B6neberg>, 6/16/20).

she said, "Well, it's a pub with HWG." I said, "Is this a construction company or something like that? What is it? Tell me." "You don't know?" "No." "Well it's a pub.", it was the Pink Elephant at the time, "A pub where frequent casual sexual intercourse happens." "Well, that's one interesting pub, that was the Pink Elephant back then. I was quite embarrassed when I heard that. I couldn't even imagine it. Then it became my pub afterwards.

SW: What's my name?

DS: That ended up being my pub.

SW: Oh so that was your- now I get it.

DS: That ended up being my pub then. 20 years later or so. Or 10 years. 15 years later. Then I came back to the area and thought, no, yes, no. Well, it was a very dynamic time. I also got to know a lot of women. Of course, I still worked politically. At some point I was also involved, had been invited to the university in some hall and that was just about women's projects. I was invited for a project. I sat down in that lecture hall. Then all the projects were financed by the state. I sat there as the only private idiot. Then I listened to what it was all about. Then I had to say something: "The 'Zwei' is not a project. The 'Zwei' is a commercial enterprise. A small business and we pay rent." At that time we already paid 4000 bucks a month in rent, D-Mark.⁶² That was a lot of money for 66 square meters of taproom. That was a small part. But it was always cheap. At least once it was full, nobody could fall over. That was always great. You could pass out and it wouldn't matter. Everyone could just hold onto each other before they'd fall over. I worked a little over ten years in there and it was a very dynamic time. Then certain rhythms and songs were played when it was full.

Bambalaia and so on. I was wearing boots with a heel like that and this counter was like that with boards. Then while I was working and drinking and serving my boots would make these sounds because the heels would hit the wooden boards. When certain songs came on, you could see that, either from this side or from the other side. All heads always turned to the counter. That was really funny. That was funny. Some things were so funny. We once had a situation that was pretty brutal. Something that happened between the women. That was really awful. But that was really the only time it happened when I was there. I've always- when I've seen- sometimes guys came into the pub, but that was forbidden. Then I immediately-- They already said: "Watch out Dagmar is coming." I went across the pub to the door and said, "Sorry, only women." Many didn't understand it at all. "Only for women." Some of them tried to drag me away. But then the women came at them. I can tell you. Once my arms went all the way up here, they really grew by a meter. The women were charging at them. They were outsiders, they really wanted to come into

⁶² D-Mark is an abbreviation for the German currency the Deutsche Mark. The Deutsche Mark was used from 1948 until 1999 when it was replaced by the Euro. ("Deutsche Mark." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deutsche_Mark, 5/23/20).

the pub. Then they went around the back, they bent the iron gate, which was at the metal door back there, because I had always attached my bike to it.

That was a dynamic time. Then we had structural defects. We had 80 centimeters of wet masonry. Whenever no one was here. I was always the 'lucky' one. When the heating went out. Wednesday, when it was supplier day. I had the leaking heater. I dragged the felt out there. I almost collapsed because it was all wet. Then the shit came out of the toilet and dripped down all the way to the carpet to say it bluntly. Whenever I was there. I always had bad luck. Nobody noticed that. You didn't notice that when you looked at me either. I was always relatively friendly, so no one would have noticed that. No matter how you want to rate it. But it was pretty extreme. Then we had won two instances and then the third instance was due.

That's when he wanted to negotiate. I think I made the mistake that I didn't have- my lawyer was there, but nobody said anything reasonable or such. Then I told the landlord: "You can buy the pub from me". Of course-- they all laughed. Then we didn't win the third instance. I think to myself- I am firmly convinced that they were bribed. I'm quite sure of it. Because the landlord wanted to negotiate with us and I should have done that. Then I might have gotten a ten-year contract and constant rent and better toilets. Then I partially cleaned the pub. I did that too. At least my hands became clean because I had to use so much water. No, children, no, no. Well, good okay. But it was still a very dynamic time. Manu also made music with us. We used these discs and it was in a bigt like that. In '82 I lived in America with my two children and when I came back I said I don't want to listen to any more music. I can no longer bear to be locked up there. They are sitting just a few centimeters away from me and they are always blowing their smoke into my face. I just couldn't take it anymore cause it was so much sometimes. And then just sitting and sitting, that's just not my thing. That's why I didn't stay with the Senate. They had offered me a job like that. I'm not a desk person. I would unhinge the world, I was always in motion. Oh, there is a book, by the way. "In Bewegung bleiben".⁶³ Yes, I also wrote something like that in it, but that is difficult. I don't even know where that thing is. Well.

SW: Then you came back from America.

DS: Then I came back from America. Then I said, I can't play music anymore. I am a counter bitch. That's how it was. Yes and then of course in '91, and it was International Women's Day.⁶⁴ They already occupied the pub. They wanted us to go outside. Then they closed us down. Conversation was no longer possible. The lawyer we had also had

⁶³ *In Bewegung bleiben: 100 Jahre Politik, Kultur und Geschichte von Lesben* (translated as "Keep moving: 100 Years of Politics, Culture and History of Lesbians") features one of Dagmar Schoenfish's essays. (Dennert, G., Leidinger, C., & Rauchut, F. (Eds.) (2007). *In Bewegung bleiben: 100 Jahre politik, kultur und geschichte von lesben*. Querverlag.

https://books.google.com/books/about/In_Bewegung_bleiben.html?id=jPgUAQAIAAJ, 6/16/20.)

⁶⁴ International Women's Day has been celebrated annually on March 8th for over a century. The day's purpose is to honor women's achievements and advocate for gender parity. ("About International Women's Day." International Women's Day. <https://www.internationalwomensday.com/About>, 6/16/20).

problems with Wohnbau-Kommerz GmbH & Co KG.⁶⁵ They had negative experiences. The company was opposite of Joachims-Thaler-Straße in front of the lawyer's office. The practice also had shit experience with them. Well and then we had to get out, otherwise the door would be smashed in. Luckily we didn't have any windows. That was an advantage. Word spread around like wildfire. "The Two" is closing and that was hell. No one could enter the pub anymore. They were standing outside, a crowd had gathered so to speak and then suddenly the light went out. After midnight. I thought, Oh God, not on the last day. Not on the last day. Operating the equipment was already quite a hassle. Sometimes when it didn't work I just moved the wires. Then I thought I had magic hands, because sometimes I was scared to death. A disco without disco music, can you imagine that? You can't. And then the light always went out and when that happened I knew Clarissa made music. I went to the kitchen, behind the small hallway where there was this hot dog machine and I looked at the fuses. Oh God, I thought to myself, what's going on? And suddenly I come out from behind and the music comes on. And I don't know how many hundred lighters, matches--, and then music, and *We shall overcome*. I went right back in, I went back in, and cried for a while and couldn't stand it at all. I couldn't stand it.

For me all of this was negative as well as positive. I had to cry, I couldn't stand it. That also got me down, I have to say that. But it was also like an era that ended somewhere. Then I was with a woman, we also lived together. She was also in the pub from '94 onwards. A great woman, highly intelligent, horticultural engineer. We had a nice big apartment. When I wasn't working, I ran around with the paint roller. I reached 3.65 meters high until I almost broke my back. I can tell you, that time was really exhausting, very terrible.

My girlfriend also made music herself, in alternation with the other disco women. The way I had met her, with tea, when she came into the pub, with tea. Then I thought to myself, "That's wonderful, I don't have a problem with that". Then I was surprised that while I was drinking a glass and singing cheerful songs, she had already finished two or three glasses. And then I thought to myself, "How did she do that? Where did it go, how did she do that? Then it became more difficult. I remember a conversation where she said, "Yes, she played cards with her old girlfriend and with a doctor friend and then they drank vodka". Then I thought to myself, three people and a bottle, if you play all night, that's possible. And maybe I should add this. I'm not the typical person you would find in a pub. When I took my exam as a nurse, I was asked in the Charité which area I wanted to work in. Then I said, "I don't care which area. Just don't send me to the psychiatric ward". That wasn't possible, I didn't want that. It was clear to me that I would die there. In this respect I did not have this experience with alcohol and drinkers. I must say, "Thank you Cosmos". I am not someone that can get addicted easily. That's why many people claimed I was an alcoholic. That wouldn't have been possible due to all this stress. Especially considering I had children.

⁶⁵ Wohnbau-Commerz is a private property management company based in Berlin. ("Wir freuen uns über Ihr Interesse an unserer Homepage." Wohnbau-Commerz. <https://wohnbau-commerz.de/13801.html>, 6/16/20).

I can drink more now than ever before. I can say that. But now I don't owe anyone anything anymore. And then, they all kept screaming, I can still hear it today, "The two. It was a good time. That was the best time of my life, Gisela. You know, that was the best time of my life." And then I always feel so guilty. Then I thought, good okay. Alex was also involved. I don't only have positive experiences, not even with women. Then I thought, okay, I had such a beautiful life. I had just inherited a bit, then I had sold the attic, because '86, '87 the "lipstick" had opened. And then a friend visited me. And suddenly, on Friday, at midnight or before, everyone left the pub and ran away, the pub was almost empty, not empty but almost.

I didn't know what happened, I didn't know they were opening another pub. Anyway, that was a hard time. We worked every day, every night of the week. From Monday to Monday. And sometimes it was hard, but we had to pay the rent. That was our priority. While spring wasn't quite as bad it was still a really hard time. And then I actually asked Anneliese Necker. But I had already said and done that publicly. And Gisela really embarrassed me a lot, because I had never asked anyone for money.

We still needed 10,000 for the rent. Then I asked Gisela and I was embarrassed. Then Gisela brought it over without words and I paid a hundred bucks every month until the end. Gisela was already in my heart before I asked her. And then- yes- I told her that too, because I really liked the fact that she trusted me too. Gisela really became a friend then. And another person that helped me for a long time- that was in the "Wasserturm", that was Heidel, Heide Ammel, Heidelchen.

I must also say that when I was seriously ill, I was still here in Schönewald in the old pub.⁶⁶ I used money to scratch myself, that's when I became kind of sick, because money is the biggest source of bacteria. Then I had a skin spot, I was out eating with Britta, we went to a Greek restaurant and I had no appetite at all. I noticed, I was already quite feverish, that was on a Friday. Then I got through the night. Then I sat on a bench in the back, then Erika came along, then I said, "I'm sick, I'm not feeling good". And then I went home, on my bicycle, I think.

Then I sat at home and within a short time the infected spot grew. The whole side had a pus, those were streptococci, staphylococci.⁶⁷ Then Mona and Simone helped me, Carola wasn't there. That was someone else, then I went breathing and singing. I also tried to keep myself fit for work with a breathing and singing therapy. They dragged me to my doctor, my former staff doctor, who isolated me immediately. I was not allowed to work. My son's birthday was in November, and I was not allowed to be there because of the risk of infection.

⁶⁶ Schönewald is a city in Bavaria, Germany, about 360 miles south of Berlin. ("Schönewald in Bavaria Destination Guide Germany." Trip Mondo.

<https://www.tripmondo.com/germany/bavaria/swabia/schonewald/>, 6/16/20).

⁶⁷ Streptococci and staphylococci are both types of bacteria that cause infections. ("Streptococcal Infections." Medline Plus. <https://medlineplus.gov/streptococcalinfections.html>, 6/16/20;

"Staphylococcal Infections." Medicine Plus. <https://medlineplus.gov/staphylococcalinfections.html>, 6/16/20).

I had been given high-grade antibiotics, I think it was medication from England. I was in quarantine for four weeks. That's what happened. Then Heidelchen came and I had bought the attic in Roennebergstraße.⁶⁸ Because I was in Lichterfelde, I had to move out. The landlord then maltreated me, I just had to move out and then I moved to the attic, fifth floor, 200 square meters, 100 square meters were not renovated. We lived in one part of it, then I had another woman, a well-known woman. You probably know her too, I had rented a one-room apartment to her. Then I was leaning against the wall with my girlfriend when my son celebrated his birthday. That was a hard time. And then Heidelchen came over and brought a small stove with her. I had no heating in there yet. The person who sold the apartment told me that he would install a new heater in the room. But it took until November for that to happen. And so Heidelchen came by with a stove. Then she laid there on the couch like this and I laid there like this so she wouldn't get infected either. That was really extreme.

And I also had a very positive experience with Heidelchen. And with Heidel, we had been invited to a seminar by the German Youth Institute for Social Professions by people whom I can't remember the name of, you probably know them, too.⁶⁹ Somewhere near Münchhausen-Stein-Stücken-Kirchen-Hausen, no idea, somewhere in Bavaria.⁷⁰ And then we went there and Ruth was there too, and several other women. So everyone who had worked in social pedagogy.

Heidelchen was there and Ruth was also there. I always moved out of the room I shared with Ruth, because Ruth snored so much. I was afraid the walls would collapse. I always found myself somewhere else, in the lounge or somewhere where I found a little peace. This has always been the case with Ruth, even when we were on the Baltic island. On Usedom we were together once.⁷¹ That was funny.

Anyway, Heidelchen was there too, and ever since-- did I know Heidelchen before? In any case, Heidel was already there and suddenly the train left, and Heidel was standing outside at the station. But she followed me. There was also a child. The train left and Heidel stood at the station, and since then we always say--

Because nobody remembered the name of the place. Inside there was "Kirchsteinhausen" and she always said "Kirchheim-Schweinshausen", or something like that, that was always a saying. And there we held our seminar, that was also quite nice. And then Heidelchen of course- she is a doctor. We created a group together via the Volkshochschule Neukölln,⁷² because my professor of political science, Schadenberg,

⁶⁸ Roennebergstraße is a road in Schöneberg, Germany. ("Roennebergstrasse." Online Street. <https://onlinestreet.de/strassen/Roennebergstra%C3%9Fe.Berlin.185789.html>, 6/16/20).

⁶⁹ The German Youth Institute is a social science research institute founded in 1963. ("About Us." Deutsches Jugendinstitut (translated as "German Youth Institute.") <https://www.dji.de/en/about-us.html>, 6/17/20).

⁷⁰ Bavaria is a state in southeastern Germany. ("Bavaria." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bavaria>, 6/17/20).

⁷¹ Usedom is a Pomeranian island in the Baltic Sea. ("Usedom." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Usedom>, 6/17/20).

⁷² Volkshochschule Neukölln is an adult education center in Berlin's Neukölln district. The center offers both personal and professional courses. ("Volkshochschule Neukölln." Campus Ruetli. <http://campusruetli.de/volkshochschule/>, 6/17/20).

knew the director of the Volkshochschule Neuköln. And he said, "You should apply." And then we created a tender and we always did that for 4 years, always on Wednesday before I came to the pub.

And then Friday was always Table. Then we were in Rudow,⁷³ Käthe-Dorsch-Ring⁷⁴ and Fritz-Erler-Allee.⁷⁵ There was a wash house. There the women had launched a wash house, a big room. There we offered dance trances, meditation and so on. And there we always made an announcement in the "Volkshochschulheft".⁷⁶ And there I worked for 4 years with Heidelchen. I was feeling pretty bad, because I had hardly slept. For decades I had barely gotten any sleep every day. When I was feeling really bad I said to Heidelchen: "Can you read the trance again today?" And I was the first one to fall asleep. It was just terrible. I used to take the subway back then.

4 years we did it on the side. And when we decided not to do that anymore, they increased the fees. That was really funny. They had increased the fees but despite that we said-- I couldn't do it anymore. Well, that's what I can tell you about friendships.

Oh, "Wasserturm". Then we left the old pub in Schöneberg. "Man, Dagmar, when are you going to open another pub?" I had actually worked on an individual case basis as a diploma pedagogue. I worked with a Turkish boy in Schöneberg. I actually worked 10 hours a week. Out of these 10 hours I worked 8 hours as a supervisor, did schoolwork, and so on. And 2 hours of my work was preparation and follow-up. I earned good money. I was assigned to the Friedenau⁷⁷ Town Hall because I lived around the corner, in Sponholz.⁷⁸ I earned around 1,000 Mark for 10 hours a week. It was great. Preparation and follow-up. And that was really great.

When I left they said: "That's a shame." I don't know. I've always had so many chances. I could have made it really easy for myself. But that wasn't the right path for me. And then Alex told me about the pub. "Wasserturm" in Charlottenburg, Spandauer Damm.⁷⁹ I can tell you that was a rip-off. We paid far too much. I put my whole inheritance into it. You don't always pay the building mass, you always pay the clientele. Whatever that is, if there is something in it. But it wasn't great either. A big pub, much bigger than my old one. Three to four times bigger with pension upstairs, a whole floor. Large room with stage,

⁷³ Rudow is a locality of Berlin's Neukölln borough. ("Rudow." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rudow>, 6/17/20).

⁷⁴ Käthe-Dorsch-Ring, named after German actress Katharina Dorsch, is a high-rise building in the Neukölln borough of Berlin. ("Käthe-Dorsch-Ring 21." Emporis. <https://www.emporis.com/buildings/1328308/kaethe-dorsch-ring-21-berlin-germany>, 6/17/20.; "Käthe Dorsch." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/K%C3%A4the_Dorsch, 6/17/20).

⁷⁵ Fritz-Erler-Allee is a high-rise building in the Neukölln borough of Berlin. ("Fritz-Erler-Allee 190." Emporis. <https://www.emporis.com/buildings/109277/fritz-erler-allee-190-berlin-germany>, 6/17/20).

⁷⁶ Translates as "adult education booklet." (Google Translate. <https://translate.google.com/#view=home&op=translate&sl=auto&tl=en&text=Volkshochschulheft>, 6/17/20).

⁷⁷ Friedenau is a small locality in Berlin's Tempelhof-Schöneberg district. ("Friedenau." <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friedenau>, 6/17/20).

⁷⁸ Sponholz is a pub in Friedenau, Berlin. ("Sponholz Bar Pub." Sponholz Berlin. <https://www.sponholzberlin.de/>, 6/17/20).

⁷⁹ Spandauer Damm is a road that connects the Charlottenburg and Westend districts of Berlin. ("Spandauer Damm." Wikipedia. https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spandauer_Damm, 6/17/20).

billiard corner, counter in the room, terraces, garden and terraces. However, I have to say that this was in my interest because I actually wanted to get out. I also wanted to go out into the countryside and I wanted to take a deep breath again. And then we went out there and opened on the 2nd of June 1992. And we weren't even finished with the renovation. Wille was still part of it.

The back of the main hall wasn't painted yet. I had already had my first high school party and no idea of the beer tap. It reminded me of the Amaretto situation. We had plastic cups there and made contracts. I always made contracts for everything possible. The first high school party was on Tuesday and the pub was full. We had a terrace dance. You haven't seen something like that. It didn't take long until I could draw beer like a pro without spilling anything. Drawn with flower, a real tulip. I always said "with a clove". I could pour yeast or wheat down to the last drop. I always said "wheat with vegetables". Those who didn't know me always asked: "With vegetables?" I said, "Lemon?"

The first high school party was such a blast. I had a freezer in the cellar. You can't even imagine what the cellar looked like. Then on Sunday, when I had my day off, I was digging in the dirt. Always rummaged through the dirt. And then I had to introduce the pub to women little by little. Because the scene was in Schöneberg, and that was a bit outside. Then all the women from the surrounding area moved to Schöneberg because of the pub. And then I was in Charlottenburg, and all the women came along again.⁸⁰

In Westend they were partially-. So subway and bus was in front of the door, and so- and the women from Spandau had to pay less than me. Since Schöneberg was a little further away. And then it started. And then for the first few years--, or as a transition, we started with live music, international live music. All cassettes from this era. That was a while ago, we still had cassettes back then.

And then the groups introduced themselves. The other day when I cleared out the garage- you don't know that from before. But ask Beate, Katharina, she knows the garage, Ulla. And that went well, too. Then there was international live music. We had groups from Russia, from England Red Hot and Blue.⁸¹ They sometimes queued up to the entrance of the Laugenkolonnie, so there was really something going on.

And then I had five barrels in the chest below. And then I had these wheat beer crates, that's when it started. One time we had a party with five music groups in the cellar. And two of them had united and had thrown a party. With admission and so on, they collected the money, made contracts, and then they always- when they had earned the equivalent of a barrel- I don't remember how much it was- 200 or such, no idea. I don't remember, I would have to do some research. I also threw a lot away. I have begun to detach myself, to separate myself from that. I still have the business documents in the back of the garage.

⁸⁰ Charlottenburg is a wealthy locality of the Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf borough in Berlin. ("Charlottenburg." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charlottenburg>, 6/19/20).

⁸¹ "Red Hot + Blue," is an AIDS-benefit album from the Red Hot Organization. The album was released in 1990 and was named after Cole Porter's musical *Red, Hot and Blue*. "Red Hot + Blue" features artists including Fine Young Cannibals, Neneh Cherry, and Iggy Pop. ("*Red Hot + Blue*." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_Hot_%2B_Blue, 6/19/20).

And then they said, "Another barrel." And then I always went down. That was one way. I had to climb the stairs out of the back of the house, across the parking lot and then into the cellar, then to the cool box in the cellar. And then I picked up the barrel, nobody else was able to do that. Then I had to connect the unbound carbon dioxide bottles, they all say that wrong, but the thing that goes in there is called unbound carbon dioxide. That didn't take long. I was the only one who could do that, and that was sometimes a bit difficult.

If there was a lot to do and I was alone at the counter- that happened once when someone hadn't come to work. Belinda sat there and just waited. She wanted to work behind the counter. And then I always had to go down to the cellar, then I had to change barrels and connect the unbound carbon dioxide bottle. Then within 10 minutes I had dragged up 10 of these crates. All during one party. In just a few minutes. That's when I thought my back would break for the first time.

And this live music was also something that came with a very specific story. Sometimes it was full, sometimes not so full. It depended completely on the mood. And still there were women, but there were more and more men. Until we had launched an event on Sunday. I remember there was a woman with accordion and something else. That was a Sunday. And that was the first women's party, and then we had also done advertising. I never did advertising before, that was always word of mouth. And then on Sunday it was full again. And that's when the women pushed for "only women" days again.

I paid a lot more rent for this place back then. Maybe 6,000-7,000 bucks for rent, but you have to earn that amount of money first. And then it was like that, Friday Night, women over 40, and so on, and that was always really extreme. Wednesday there were some working groups. And then I had an intern, who was always in "Die alte Zwei" and she sometimes came to the pub at the weekend. She liked to dance. I always called her "Martini". She became a pastor, she was studying and had to learn a lot. Latin, Greek, church history and such. And then she graduated and she sometimes came to the "Wasserturm". First she had brought me a bouquet of flowers in "Die alte Zwei". I was confused and wondered why she gave it to me. But well, it was a beautiful bouquet, I love flowers. And at some point she came into the "Wasserturm" and said, "Dagmar, can I ask you a question? I said, "Yes, go ahead." "Yeah, tell me, could you imagine giving me an internship?"

Then I said: "Yes, why not? How do you imagine it to work though?" And then we talked about it briefly, and then I was her mentor. You have to imagine that. A: I was not baptized. B: I was absolutely against the church. I only love the church as a body of sound. And C: of course I liked Martini, and then I said, "Okay Martini, sure." And then I had to go to the mentor conferences. There were a few little snobs from the church magazine sitting there, and so on. And then there was some brainstorming, the first round of introductions. They all talked about the great stuff they did and Martini said: "Yes, I'm Martini, I'm doing my internship." "And they asked her where she was doing her internship. And she said: "Well, in the pub." And then it was my turn and I said, "I'm the one who provides the internship." The way they looked at us. It was priceless. Well, but the leader of the seminar, the leader of this round, Ulrike, she always came to the talks we held on Wednesdays. Mixed, men

and women. And it was crazy because near the “Wasserturm”, was the “Nussbaum-Allee”, and there is the psychiatry, that was the psychiatric ward.⁸² And I once spent four weeks in a closed ward. In the psychiatric ward. My husband brought me there.

And I can tell you: The only reason I got out was me. I owe that only to myself, and now that was very close by. And then I had the people in my pub during the week, women and men. And they also came to Martini during the week, when she had taken over a day. And then she also wrote her work, "How do I bring God to the people", or "How do I bring the people to God", or something like that. I also have her work here, yes. Of course it has been evaluated very critically. And then she had some conversations with the individual people. And I thought that was great. That's the reason why someone believes in God, although I couldn't even say that he exists. That may disturb many now, but it is still my opinion, my attitude. For me only nature is-- that is the only sacred thing that exists for me. And to that extent, I would always advocate that in public, to that extent you know my point of view.

And during the seminaristic presentation I didn't say that I wasn't baptized. I didn't want to harm Martini because I wasn't baptized. Of course, I didn't say my opinion either. They didn't ask me about it anyway. And then Martini did her internship with us. That was really great. Then she had a church-. We all went to church after work on the weekend. We went there for her first sermon. Oh God, sometimes I only saw fog. Not because of the alcohol, just from a little fatigue and from work, and so on. Then she went to Duisburg and had a church there.⁸³ And the crazy thing is, I visited Edda, Edda Kumlow. She had gone to Duisburg because she had worked for the Reichsbahn and there was a vacancy and she took it.⁸⁴ I was also in Duisburg a few times and there is Kibala. Kibala is a village near Duisburg, based on this historical place, somewhere there is still one, somewhere in Israel or something. It was quiet, it was a Sunday and we were buying asparagus. And Edda drove by car, I thought it was great, she also cooked, I thought it was great. And then we walked around, because I wanted to have a look at the church, we also had a look at it. And there are two women walking down the sidewalk. And I say to Edda, "Tell me, Edda, look. Isn't that Martini there?" I didn't want to believe it. "Come," I said, "let's run a little faster." Then we passed them, then I turned around and I really didn't want to believe that. There was Martini with her girlfriend.

Can you imagine that? I have often had such situations in my life, in England as well and no matter where, in Turkey as well. And there I thought: "That's crazy!". And then we went to dinner together. We went to the Greek restaurant. That was really great. I have to say this. These are always such highlights, and such cycles and such, you know. The

⁸² "Nussbaum-Allee is a street in Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf, Berlin. ("Nussbaumallee"(translates as "Walnut avenue.") Berlin.de: District office Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf. <https://www.berlin.de/ba-charlottenburg-wilmersdorf/ueber-den-bezirk/freiflaechen/strassen/artikel.177485.php>, 6/19/20).

⁸³ Duisburg is located in North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany. Duisburg is one of the biggest cities in the urban Ruhr area. ("Duisburg." Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duisburg>, 6/19/20).

⁸⁴ The Deutsche Reichsbahn is Germany's national railway network. ("Deutsche Reichsbahn." Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deutsche_Reichsbahn, 6/19/20).

things that happened with Martini. And Martini, she comes from the Ruhrpott.⁸⁵ They always have their old beer [top-fermented dark beer] there. Then the family was there too. I'll tell you, that drew circles. Circles, national and international. And that's Martini. Martini now has another church here in Lichterfelde Ost.⁸⁶ I was also invited to the opening. But as I said, I could actually-, as I said years ago, I can't accept an invitation every day. Either for my birthday or to go somewhere else. And I can't do that anymore. I used to be on the road. But somehow that changes. Then there was a pub here, a pub that was also called "Die Zwei" but written differently. I should have patented the name at that time.

Then I thought to myself, "Man, that's actually really fitting."

⁸⁵ The Ruhr area, also referred to by locals as "Ruhrpott," is in North-Rhine-Westphalia, Germany. Ruhr's economy was previously based on coal mining and steel production. However, in recent years, Ruhr has become more metropolitan and is now a popular tourist destination. ("Ruhrpott—the former industrial region is a popular destination for visitors." German City Profiles. <https://medium.com/german-city-profiles/ruhrpott-the-former-industrial-region-is-a-popular-destination-for-visitors-c5fd6fa1ffba>, 6/19/20).

⁸⁶ Lichterfelde Ost is an area of Berlin's Steglitz-Zehlendorf borough. ("Lichterfelde (Berlin)." Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lichterfelde_\(Berlin\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lichterfelde_(Berlin)), 6/19/20).