

Basheer Salamah

New horizens opened and
new friendships made to last

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Inhalt

Words of thanks	180
Goethe Institute	180
Iman and Amr	182
Spaß, Spaß, Spaß	183
Old memories are national heritage	184
Medieval Germany: a powerful nation	185
East and West Germany: one nation; two countries	188
Christmas in Germany	189
Heinz-Kühn-Stiftung brings journalists together	190
WDR: Mehr hören - Mehr sehen	190
Deutsche Welle	193
Cologne carnival	194
Closing remarks	195



Basheer Salama, born 1972 in Jerusalem, studied two years in Ukraina. Took several courses with various foreign and local media institutions. Started working in PBC since 1995. Works as Freelancer for several Arab Satellit Stations. Speaks English, German and Russian.

Thanking words

Before I start my report, I would like to write some words of thanks to all those who made it possible for me to visit Germany, to make a practicum here, and most of all to have the chance to know Germany and the Germans, and to have a close contact with them. Most of all I would like to thank Frau Op de Hipt. She helped us a lot, and we never felt we were alone, she was with us in the hard and the good times, and she made our stay in Germany enjoyable and beneficial. Then I would like to thank Frau Ingrid Lategahn, a German professional sent by CIM to train TV personnel at the Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation (PBC). Frau Lategahn told us about the Heinz-Kühn-Stiftung and encouraged us to apply for a scholarship.

Also, I would like to thank the teachers and the personell at the Goethe Institute in Iserlohn. Our time there was divided between learning German, meeting new friends, having parties and getting to know Germany and Europe. And I would like to thank the people at WDR Studio in Siegen. Also, I would like to thank the Deutsche Welle, especially the head of the African/Middle East Section Herrn De Mayer, the Arabic Section, especially the Chief Editor, Herrn Faris, and all the colleagues there who were very friendly and helpful.

Goethe institute

I have always enjoyed going to new places and meeting new people. I had spent two years in Ukraine studying, and then I was in Turkey where I attended a practical training course at the TRT (Turkish Radio and TV Station), and other places. It was the time now that I visit Germany and get to know it. To us, Germany always represented the modern and industrial Europe. All my colleagues who attended training courses in Germany would come back home and would speak about the great achievements they have witnessed in

the field of media in the various German radio and TV stations, and so to me, it became a dream and an ambition to go to Germany and receive training there.

I did not only fulfill my dream by receiving training at the WDR, and the Deutsche Welle, but also I had the chance to visit several places in Germany and to visit Paris and Amsterdam.

I spent four months in Iserlohn, attending 2 German language courses at Goethe Institute. Among the students at the Goethe Institute were also four other journalists who had scholarships from the Heinz-Kühn-Stiftung. One of them was Ivan from Croatia. We met Ivan at the airport in Düsseldorf on our first day in Germany. He was very friendly. We would talk freely and about almost everything, and we could talk so freely and openly only with Ivan because we felt we understood each other very well, and he would listen to you for hours without being bored. We would sit and discuss the situation in Palestine or in Croatia. We always felt that we knew each other a long time ago.

Whenever the Goethe Institute planned something or planned a trip to one of the places in Germany, we would always have our own agenda in this programme, we would go with the others to museums and exhibitions, but also when we have free time we would walk around and get to know the place more.

When we went to Köln to get training at the Deutsche Welle, Ivan was also there together with Nenad from Mazedonia and Viktorya from Ukraine. Riham and I would go almost every evening together with Ivan and walk around in the city, and sit in some place and talk about Germany, philosophy, religion, and all other subjects that interested the three of us.

The famous Köln Carnival was due to take place while we were there. Daily we would see people from all nationalities dressed in Carnival clothes, laughing and singing. A lot of foreigners have come from all around the world especially Europe to witness this famous Carnival.

We have had a lot of friends here in Germany and mostly through the Goethe Institute. There was one aspect of getting to know Germany and Germans through the 'Tandem Partner', this would be anyone from Iserlohn or the areas nearby, who would want to learn a foreign language from one of the students and so the Goethe Institute would bring two people together, one to learn German and the other to learn another language such as English, French or Spanish. This would be done through day to day contact and conversation and social visits. We would have liked to have such a partner to talk to about Palestine and to ask about Germany, but unfortunately nobody was interested in Arabic, everybody wanted to learn French or Italian or other languages but not Arabic. We could speak English well and so we could speak with these people in English, but they would have wanted a native speaker so as to learn the language better.

Iman and AMR

We were a big group. Our German language was not that good. There was one student from Egypt. Her husband was studying in German, he was preparing for his Ph.D. in chemistry. I was glad that there was an Arab in my class. But later I realized that she did not want to speak with me in Arabic, and she rarely spoke in German. I thought she was that type of people who when they know one sentence in a foreign language think they speak the language very well, I was very angry but did not care after that.

Then one day they were at a party at Goethe Institute, and I sat with Riham watching the students and talking here a little bit and there a little bit. Then the Egyptian student came and with her a man and he introduced himself as her husband, 'Amr, and asked if they could join us. We then sat and talked a lot, then I asked her why she would not speak with me in Arabic, and she said that when her husband first came to Germany, he was a student at the Goethe Institut and there were two students from Tunisia, and he wanted to speak with them, but they refused to speak with him in Arabic, not because it is better to speak in German when you are learning German, but because they thought now that they speak German, then the Arabic language is not good enough for them, and that is why Iman did not want to speak with me in Arabic, because she was afraid I would be like the two Tunisian students. We became very good friends and they invited us to their small apartment in Iserlohn. It was the first time we have an Arabic dinner in Germany. It was Egyptian and really delicious.

We sat for hours talking about the the political situation in our region. 'Amr's brother was killed in Sinai in the War of 1973 while liberating that part of Egypt. He was very proud of his brother, and of being an Egyptian. He said that usually Europeans support one another and they would look at Arabs as uncivilized people. He told us that at the University where he is preparing his Ph.D., in the break the students used to play this game of football match on a table where you have small figures of players and you move them with wooden sticks. He said that they would always form two teams and play against each other. Every time they played the heads of both teams would choose their players from the group of students waiting to take part in the game. They had never chosen him. He was the only Arab student and they would always choose Germans or Europeans but never him.

Then one day, one player was missing and he knew that one of the teams would have to choose him in order to have a full team and to play, so he just waited till he was the only person left, and when they told him they needed him to play to have a full number of players he said that he was not interested and he just left. He was very angry because the only time they thought of having him join in their game was when they needed a player and he was the only one present. Nevertheless, he likes Germany and he told us that once you get accustomed to living here, everything becomes better and better. The last time we saw both of them Iman was pregnant and she was due to have a baby in January 1999, while we were in Siegen we called her at home and asked

what she was doing and she said that the baby was due in a couple of days. We hope that by now they have a lovely and healthy baby.

Spaß, Spaß, Spaß

During the four months we spent at the Goethe Institute, we were engaged in the various activities offered. We were once taken by the Goethe Institute to visit the Studios of Radio MK. This is one of the private radio stations found in Iserlohn. It is a small studio and the range of its transmission is not that wide. We were very anxious to go, because it had something to do with our profession. One technician welcomed us and explained about the whole place and gave us some booklets. Then he took us in a tour around the place. The studio was very small, and there were only a few people there, most of the equipment used was analogue. They have had recently installed some digital equipment and the technician there told us that he was still practicing on how to use the digital equipment.

I admit I was very much disappointed. In our studios we have had the digital radio equipment installed a long time ago. But then this was only a local private and very small radio station. But it was very interesting to hear about their methods of working and what material interests their listeners in Iserlohn and the area surrounding it.

During this time I have had the chance to watch some programmes of the German TV stations, whether private or public. I have noticed that the level of live talk show or live game programmes was very high, and a great number of old American or British TV series were being rerun over and over. I had always considered that a TV station with a high level of live talk shows is not a successful one, because they would waste the time (2 to 3 hours per programme) on discussing matters (the issue here is not whether the subject under discussing is important or not) and so the director would be sure that 2 to 3 hours of live talk show, then another 2 live game shows then we get 6 to 8 hours of talk or game shows, and not enough documentaries.

During our stay at the WDR Studio in Siegen, I had the chance to speak with some of the journalists about this. They told me that usually the director tends to use live talk shows and game shows when he has nothing else to show, and when I noted that this meant that the programme was not that successful, they said yes, but there was competition between the main public TV stations here in Nordrhein Westfalen (WDR, ARD and ZDF), and a lot of private TV stations such as RTL, Sat 1 and Pro 7, and the private stations have a higher number of viewers. No one would want to watch talk shows the whole time, and since there were not such good distribution of programmes (youth programmes, pop music and others that interest the young generation), no wonder that most people would prefer to watch private stations.

In Palestine it was completely the opposite, everybody watched the governmental TV station, and the private TV stations did not have that many viewers because they would only show films and songs, there were no news broadcasts,

no cultural or political or other types of programmes, only films, and in Palestine everything is connected with politics so everybody wants to hear news broadcast and know what is going on in the world. Also in our country there is the competition coming from nearby TV stations. Our country is very small and not like Germany and so it is very easy for us to watch the Jordanian TV, the Syrian TV, the Egyptian TV, the Israeli TV, and the Middle East TV Station and all this without satellite dish. We did not have our own TV station until after the Oslo Agreement in which it was stated that the Palestinians have the right to one radio and one TV stations. It was very difficult to do so with all the Israeli obstacles being placed in our way. There was first the problem of deciding the wave to be used by the Palestinians, then there was the problem of equipment and transmission network, but finally we were able to have our own radio and TV stations which transmit daily and reach to nearby countries, and recently we had our own satellite transmission station.

I also found it interesting that the Goethe Institute would provide some activities connected with sport. Among one of the activities offered in the Freizeit programme of the Goethe Institute was a live game of ice hockey. The game took place in Iserlohn, it was between the Iserlohn team and the Dortmund team. This was the first time I saw a hockey game. Usually I could only see such games on TV and I never paid any attention to them because I found this game boring. But after I watched the game in Iserlohn, I started to understand the rules of the game, and really enjoyed watching it. Of course I was on the side of the Iserlohner team and they won 4 - 0. The game lasted two hours, but it was very interesting and to me this is a game that is really worth watching.

One time we went to Dortmund and we were told that there was a climbing club. I thought it was a mountain and one would climb using robes and other equipment, like what we have in Palestine, but to my surprise it was a only a walls in a hall. I was discouraged when I saw this 'mountain', I have always enjoyed climbing in Palestine, but in real mountains, and this was no mountain at all. Everybody was climbing, and I was watching them, then I decided that I should try, even if it was not that interesting, It was hard at the beginning but I did enjoy it. I was pleased that our activities included sports because it was healthy and you would have the chance to meet new people and to see new things and it was exciting watching a football match or a hockey game, or even playing football with students from nearby schools and getting to know them and spend time with them.

Old Memories are a National Heritage

One time there was a big book market in the streets of Iserlohn. In Palestine we never have such things, to sell old books in the streets, so we decided to go and watch. There were people from all over the region. They had books, photos, post cards and old toys and other things. It was amazing to find such old and valuable books being sold in the streets, and more astonishing was that

a lot of these people were selling their own family photos and post cards. These were photos from the beginning of the century, and photos from the times of the First World War and the Second World War. There were also post cards from soldiers sent to their families during the war. How could somebody sell his own family heritage?. For me it was unbelievable.

Then there was this old woman who sat selling her own photos and photos of her family members. I could see from the photos that she was once a very rich person. She had lived once a very wealthy life in a big house with servants and all the riches which such a living presents, and it seems she lost everything during the war. I have heard about a couple of people who were rich and wealthy and from noble families, and who lost everything as a result of the Second World War. This woman could have been one of them, and because usually such people had pride she would sell her own photos and the only remains she had of her family it feed herself rather than steal or beg. I also wonder why the government of the Nordrhein Westfalen region would not collect such old books and photos and put them in a museum, and in return find a home or a shelter for those people. This is part of Germany's history and it should not be sold in the streets in such a way as I have seen.

Medieval Germany: a powerful Nation

It was the first time I visit a European medieval castle. This was Burg Altena. It was so big and huge that we had to spend hours walking inside and visiting the various parts of it. We could see the equipment and weapons that were used by the Germans since medieval time. It was all very well preserved and exhibited in a very unique way. We toured among the various sitting and study rooms of the castle. It was built on the top of a mountain surrounded by a small forest and overlooking a river. We went inside the towers of the castle and we could see the town of Altena with all the houses scattered at the foot of the mountain.

This visit took me back to that time in which they did not have today's modern facilities. I had read about German history, and about the difficulties they faced in establishing the country.

It was thought that Germany was first to be found in the year 9 A.C. after Arminius won a battle against three Roman legions in the Teutoburger Forest, and thus was considered as a national hero and a big statue was built in his honour near Dortmund during the period from 1838 till 1875. But recently, things have changed, it is believed now that the process of evolution of the German people took hundreds of years, and the word Deutsch was used in the eighth century and it referred to the language that was used in the eastern part of the Frankish empire and which constituted a lot of groups that spoke German dialects and the other part of the empire used Roman dialects.

This empire collapsed after the death of emperor Charlemagne in 814, and due to the various divisions that took place after his death, two kingdoms were formed one in the East and one in the West. The language border was exactly

the same as the political border. In the East part the German language was being used and thus the word Deutsch was transferred from the name of the language to mean the name of the country: Deutschland.

The German kingdom was formed from the Frankish kingdom in 911, after the extinction of the 'Carolingian dynasty'. 'Conrad the First' was elected king and he is considered as the first German king. The kingship was based upon electoral constitution, where the king is being elected by the nobles, and besides that the law of relatives was also vital and taken into consideration, meaning that the new king should be a relative of the old king, but this was not always the case. The authority of the king was not necessarily being always taken into consideration. The king was respected by the princes of the various German clans.

This authority was reinforced by military and political authorities. This is what the second king - the Saxon duke 'Henry the First' (from 919 till 936) - was able to do. But with stronger and better authority was his son 'Otto the First' - 936 till 973 - who made himself an actual ruler of the empire, by being crowned in Rome in 962. This offered its holder the full and conclusive power and authority of the whole west. This idea never became a political reality because the king had to go to Rome to be crowned by the Pope.

The emperorship ended in the west with the fall of the Staufer dynasty in 1268 and which began in 1138, and the fighting powers inside prevented Germany from becoming a national country, meanwhile that was taking place in other European countries and this was one of the reasons why the Germans did not fulfill their national identity earlier and it was to take place at a late stage.

In Palestine students usually study the history of the Islamic and the Arabic world. We also study the history of Europe with main emphasis on the modern history. Our study of the history of Europe concentrated on the French Revolution and what followed it. We studied something about the English history, but nothing about Germany, and I have always thought that it may be that the German history is not that old, and I mean by history the political history. But here in Germany I have seen several castles, palaces, ancient places and statues of famous Germans.

Our visit to Weimar was also very interesting and it gave us some idea about German history. We have seen that 'Carl August' had brought a number of well known authors and poets such as Goethe to live in Weimar, as he wanted to make it a literary center of Europe. Now Weimar has one of the most important Literary heritages: consisting of Goethe's house and museum, Schiller's house and museum, and a number of libraries and one of the most precious literary archive in the world. A lot of Art and Literature students go to Weimar to look through the invaluable books found in its libraries.

There was also the Bauhaus, which is an architecture school. This was an idea developed in the early days of this century, more specifically in the 1919. Weimar at the time was a political and literary centre, and thus it was most convenient to open such a unique school in such a place. Unfortunately and due to the Nazi regime which ruled the country not long after this, the Bauhaus was banned. We had spent two days in Weimar. During those days we

toured around, and I was amazed to see how many old and historical buildings were found in such a small place. But after you read the history of Weimar it becomes all understandable and acceptable. Weimar was the home of the first German republic.

I sometimes wonder how in a country such as Germany where in the early 1900 a democratic republic was being established by the people, would later and after only a couple of years embrace a regime so inhuman such as the Nazi regime. What is really shocking is that Hitler was elected by the people, and he did not force himself like any other diktator. Looking through some history books, I realized why Hitler was chosen by the German people to lead their nation, why such a man had so much support, and why it was so easy for him just to come out of nowhere and become well known to the Germans in a few months.

At that time there was a world wide financial and economical crisis. The First World War had just ended. A lot of people killed, and no economy. The people were frustrated. Germany was divided by the League of Nations. The situation was very bad: depression, destruction, and hunger everywhere. Then when the general elections took place, the people were so anxious for a change that they believed that with Hitler's leadership things might get better. By coincidence a lot of things became better as Hitler was elected. Germany was given back the right of control over its army. Parts of Germany which were taken away after the First World War were returned, and the economical situation became better. It was not Hitler who did all these things, it was only coincidence, but the people believed more and more in Hitler, and when he stated to declare in open his nazi ideas, and to plan to invade Europe, a lot of Reichstag members realized what kind of a man he was, and they stood against him, but they were either executed or expelled.

Hitler had the whole power for himself. It was the time for propaganda, he played with the people's feeling. He promised them of a better and a stronger Germany. He was 'A strong leader for a strong nation' as he said. He told them that Germans are the best people among other nations. But despite all of this a lot of Germans did not believe in him, they could see the danger that was in such a radical person.

A lot of Germans stood against him. I read about the 'White Rose' group, which consisted of young men and women who fought against such a diktator. These people payed their lives for what they believed in. I think there would never be an excuse for those people who stood by Hitler's side for what they have done, humanity will never forgive them, they had their own minds and they should have decided for themselves whether to fight with a diktator or to fight against him, like a lot of other Germans who decided to fight against him, and they did so, even if it meant that they had to pay with their lives for what they believed in.

During our stay here in Germany we have been to several exhibitions in Münster and in Bonn about the Second World War. People know that this war has destroyed them as it had destroyed others. The war only brought destruction and disaster to Europe in specific and the world in general. I hope that

people will always remember that such wars only lead to disasters and in the end nobody benefits, everybody loses, because everybody loses a brother, a father, a family member or a friend. We have seen so much destruction in our region that we believe that the best thing for everybody is peace and harmony among the world's nations.

East and West Germany: one Nation; two countries

The second language course I attended at the Goethe Institute was full of excitement. There were six new students from Spain. They were 18 or 19 years old. They were full of energy, and every day there was a party in Stennerstraße 4 where they were staying. At the beginning of the course, the Spanish students sat near each other, and three students from Turkey sat near each other, and the students who were together in G1 sat together, and so there was not much contact among the new and old students.

Then one day our teacher said that she did not like the arrangement in our class. She made a new arrangement in a manner that there is a young man then a young woman then a young man then a young woman and so on. And she did not allow the Spanish students to sit near each other, and all students who belonged to the same nationality or spoke the same language were kept away from each other. In time we were all very close friends and that was the best time I have had in Germany.

There was one group of school students from Italy, who came here to attend a language course funded by the German international cooperation institution. They were 15 students all coming from various schools in Italy where German was being taught. They made a research about East and West Germany, and one day they came to our class to talk about their research and about the results they had. They said that the people in East Germany were not educated well enough, they hated each other, and they lived in very bad conditions. They also said that everybody was working for the secret service and so everybody doubted everybody. These students spoke about East Germany as if it was another world.

Then our teacher was so upset that she started crying. She had lived in East Germany, and in the eighties she escaped to West Germany leaving everything behind. Now she has a Ph.D. and teaches German at Goethe Institute. She said that the situation was bad in East Germany and not as good as in West Germany, but it was not so bad as these students described it. 'We had our friends, we had our families, we helped each other, and we had our dignity', she said.

There was one problem which I heard about almost daily during my stay in Germany. A lot of people were complaining that with the unification, a lot of money was to be spent on the process of 'modernizing' the eastern part of Germany, and so the people in West Germany had to pay more and higher taxes. I have seen the difference between East and West Germany during our visit to Weimar. It was very obvious that the people there lived under very hard con-

ditions. It was really like another world. A lot had to be changed so that both parts of Germany would be the same once again. A lot of people had sacrificed and endangered their lives in order to escape to West Germany before the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification.

I had always heard about the problems between East and West Germany, but never thought it was complicated. When I heard people saying that they did not want the unification, and that the people from East Germany did not work, I was surprised, because in my country we are living in a state of 'occupation', and for me East Jerusalem and West Jerusalem are one Jerusalem and not two, because I have always known Jerusalem as one city and our capital. But here some people are really against the unification, the unification of their own country. It is really strange for me.

Christmas in Germany

Christmas is always a very special time of the year in Palestine. First of all because Bethlehem is the birth place of Jesus Christ, and it is a very holy place. The Christmas of 1998 we were in Iserlohn. You could see that everybody was happy, adults and children. Everybody was counting the days till Christmas Eve, because it meant presents, family and most of all holidays.

On Christmas Eve, Frau Barbara Frankenberg, one of the teachers at the Goethe Institute told us that her family intended to visit 'Dechen Höhle' in Iserlohn, and asked if we would like to join. We did know what that was, but we were very curious to find out. When we arrived there, we found a lot of people waiting in turn to enter the Dechen Höhle. It was a big underground cave. When finally our turn came, we entered. It was dark with a little light, like candle light. We could see the stones forming such fascinating shapes together with water. I think it is frozen water together with stone, which had been formed into such strange shapes over thousands of years. Then as we walked inside we passed by several groups of musicians who would welcome us, sing and play Christmas carols and would give some sweets to the children. Then one man came and explained about the whole place and how they discovered it. At the end of the cave there was one young lady who gave us and all the other people who visited the place Christmas biscuits and wished us a happy Christmas.

During the Christmas holidays, a German teacher from Vietnam, who was a friend of Frau Barbara Frankenberg, a teacher at the Goethe Institute, came to Iserlohn. She had attended a two month German Language course at Goethe Institute in Munich during November and December, and now that the course was over she decided to visit Iserlohn. Frau Frankenberg arranged with Goethe Institute that she (Dot) would stay in the room next to ours, so we had a new neighbour. At that time all the other students had already left Iserlohn and gone back home, and only very few students remained and we were among those who spent Christmas in Iserlohn.

Every night we would sit long hours and talk with Dot about Germany, the Germans and the Goethe Institute. She was once an English teacher, but

then she found that German is interesting and now she is a German teacher. She said that it was very difficult for her to teach people German, and they would ask her about Germany or they had already visited Germany and would speak about it, while she the German teacher knew nothing. She knew the language, but not the country or the traditions of the people. She also said that she had a very unique problem here in Germany, she had allergy against water and humidity. That is why she always wore warm clothes (summer clothes) and sandals, with no stockings, even when it was very cold. It was very interesting when students of the Goethe Institute would meet and speak about their experiences in Germany and about their own countries.

Heinz-Kühn Stiftung brings Journalists together

We were once invited by the Heinz-Kühn-Stiftung to a brunch. A big number of German and foreign journalists were present. They all have had at some point a scholarship from the Heinz-Kühn-Stiftung either to get a training here in Germany (for non Germans) or to go abroad and work at a radio or TV station or a newspaper. There I met a big number of journalists among whom were some who have worked for some time in Palestine and Israel. It was very interesting to talk about the political situation or the various places and the other part would know exactly what you are talking about. We had also spoken with journalists from other regions of the world, and it was interesting also to speak to some journalists from the German media organizations who explained to us about their work and the rules and regulations that govern their work.

Also, we met one German journalist who is married to a Palestinian, she spoke very well Arabic, and she spoke about Ramallah and mentioned some of the people living there as though she had been living there all her life. Martina told us that a German media institution was to be opened in Ramallah in the summer of 1999. She said that it would be a good chance for us to work with these people because we had spent some time here in Germany and could speak German, and since we knew a lot about media work, like camera shooting and tape editing, and we already live in Ramallah, it would be a good chance for us. We were pleased to hear about this, because it would be really a very good chance for us, we would not forget our German and we would use all our skills and knowledge in media to work there.

WDR: Mehr hören - Mehr sehen

We were supposed to conduct our practical training at the WDR Studio in Siegen. We had never heard about Siegen, and so we asked our friends in Iserlohn about it, and most of them told us that it was a city but not a very big one. We were a little bit disappointed but on the other hand it was a chance for us to meet new people and to get to know new places in Germany. Our practical

was to start on January fourth. Frau Op de Hipt took us from Iserlohn and we went to WDR Studio in Siegen. We are very thankful that she came with us, otherwise we could not have found our way there. It was a big place, and one could get lost easily.

We went to the studio, were introduced to the people there and spoke with the head of the studio. We told her about our previous experience and showed her that we were not beginners. The Studio was really very well equipped with both analogue and digital equipment. I had not thought that it would be that 'big', it was a five floor building (not so big) but everybody told us that it was a very small studio, so I just thought it would be two floors. There were both radio and TV studios. I was to work in the TV studio for one month and Riham in the radio studio and then I would go to the radio for the second month.

The people at the TV studio were very cooperative and friendly. Every day there was a conference at 11 a.m., where they would discuss the stories and the reports of the day and who would do what. There was also this meeting with the other WDR regional studios and the main studio in Cologne. The chief editor would sit near a telephone hybrid and would listen to the other chief editors in the various studios and everybody would say what stories they had, I had never seen such a conference and it was good to see how big stations such as WDR communicate with their regional studios and how they organize the daily transmission programme among themselves to ensure that no collision or repetition happens.

Every day there was something new. There was a daily programme and I would just look at it and see what was interesting for me and then ask if it was possible to join in. Most of the time it was possible, and that was a chance for me to see how they work, to visit new places in Germany I have never been to, and to communicate with my new colleagues at the WDR. We would sit and talk about the equipment being used or the type of work we usually conduct at home.

One thing was very interesting and that is here in WDR I noticed that every person is only confined to do what his work is, for example the cameraman cannot edit or be soundman, or the journalist cannot edit or be cameraman, and I found that this sometimes caused problems, because they would need to edit something quickly and the editor was not there and so they would just sit and wait for him, and one journalist said that she had to go to the WDR studio in Arnsburg to make some interviews there because the journalists working there had other things to do and were busy, and I was wondering, if they had the 'one man show' training we had then the cameraman or the editor would do that interview themselves instead of sending for somebody from another studio.

I was not able to work in the full meaning of the word because they told us that we cannot conduct our own interview due to language difficulties, it was depressing so I decided to use my time for something beneficial to me and to my work in Ramallah. I had seen that here they had AVID equipment for TV, we did not have these equipment but it was to be bought in the near future, so it was a chance for me to get to know the technology of such digitized

equipment and to know how to operate it. I used to sit with the editors and the journalists after we would come back from covering one news report, and we would watch the editor as he would edit the story.

What was also very interesting was that every crew member is a vital member in covering a story, for example the journalist prepares the story and the questions to be asked, at the site of shooting the cameraman is the boss, and he decides what shooting positions are the best and naturally he communicates with the journalist but as he is an expert in shooting he says what is to be done. Every crew member is very vital to the whole team work, and I think this is the best way of working.

I went with the TV crew for several interviews. Such interviews gave me the chance to get to know the Germans in a better way. Most impressive was one time when I went with the crew to a town where a coal mine used to exist. It was now a museum. We were 1500 metres under ground. They used to get coal, silver, and zinc from under the ground, but because the amount was not sufficient they closed the mine. Before the team started doing their work, the mine workers invited us all to eat and drink in their small restaurant.

I was astonished when they said that whenever a guest comes to visit them they give him food and drinks for free. This was a habit of the Arabs to be so generous, and to feed the guests, but I never expected to find this habit here

I had always felt that the Germans and the Europeans in general don't care about such things, and you would live for 50 years in the same building with a German and he would never come and introduce himself or visit you. But this was really strange because these people did not let us go home until after they gave us another time something to eat and drink. They were very simple people, but kind hearted and friendly.

After we finished our work under ground, we went outside, and there I spoke with the mayor of this town who was very helpful. He told me a little bit about the history of this town, and about the mine and the mine workers. He asked me about Palestine and the political situation now. He also asked about my work, and if such a training (in the WDR) was beneficial to me. He was pleased that people from various countries and from all fields of specialization have the chance to get some training in Germany.

Also, one time I went with the colleagues to an interview, which gave me some information about the German social system. We went to a social institution to make an interview with a young teenager of fourteen years, she had had problems with her family, and left her parents' house, and here in this institution she lived and they pay for her education. Such institutions care for teenagers who face problems within the family, like a drunk father or a drug addicted mother or parents who use violence against their children, and these institutions take these teenagers, and care for them and provide them with a home and education until they are able to find their own job and live independently.

I found the idea most interesting, because otherwise those teenagers would have either to live in the streets and resort to unacceptable means of living, or they would stay within this abnormal family and suffer psychological disorder-

ders, in both situations the future of these teenagers would have been wasted.

Unfortunately we could not stay in the WDR for a longer time. I have had a good and beneficial time with the TV people, maybe it would not be the same with the radio, but at all maybe it was better for us to go to Deutsche Welle. Here in WDR we only had the chance to watch how they worked, to give comments and to discuss things with the colleagues. We never had the chance to do the work ourselves because of the language problem and because they considered us as trainees. At Deutsche Welle we would be given the chance to work, because it is in Arabic our mother language.

Also, before speaking about Deutsche Welle I would like to speak about Siegen. It is not a very well known city as Cologne, Düsseldorf or Bonn, but it is quite a big city. I have noticed during the month I stayed there that the inhabitants are in general wealthy. There are a lot of villas, and detached family houses. There had been once here coal mines and a lot of factories. This was for some time the centre of heavy industry, but the people have decided to change this industrial place into a green place and so it was. The factories were not as many as they used to be but it is greener now and no smoke factory smoke is covering the sky.

I have read that North Rhine-Westphalia was once an industrial centre, it was the foggy part of Germany because there were so many factories there. Then it was decided that it was time to change all this and a lot of factories were closed and the industrial centre became once again one of the most beautiful and green part of Germany, with the Siegerland and the Sauerland areas.

Deutsche Welle

After one month at the WDR, we went to the Deutsche Welle, the Arabic Section. The language barrier at the WDR prevented us from benefiting fully from our stay there, so Frau Op de Hipt suggested that we go to Deutsche Welle, specifically to the Arabic Section where we could work and in our mother tongue. We had never been at the Deutsche Welle, but heard a lot about it from our colleagues. We knew that here they conduct usually training courses for journalism, administration and technical training. Here we met journalists from several Arab countries. For me it was interesting to sit with my Arab colleagues, and discuss various regional and international problems.

They told me that the Arabic section was one of the biggest sections in the Deutsche Welle, and there had been two sections: the Arabic section and the Marakkesh section. Marakkesh refers to the three North African Arab countries which are: Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco. They were divided although they spoke the same language, because the dialect used by the people living in the Marakkesh was so difficult and different that other Arabs could not understand it. Then it was decided that the two sections would be joined into one, and the Literature Arabic, 'Hoch Arabisch', would be used, and all

Arabs whether in Africa, Asia or any other place would understand this Arabic.

The work of our colleagues here at the Deutsche Welle was mainly to broadcast to the Arabic world the German point of view of problems relating to the Arabic world. They have broadcast hours from two till 4 p.m., which consisted of one hour news headlines and political analysis of day to day wide - world crises. Then there would be also an economical and business daily magazine, one cultural magazine and other magazines. It was very interesting to see how many different types of programmes they would produce daily. Then they would broadcast another news headlines with political analysis, and so one till 4 p.m. Everyday at 11 a.m. there would be a conference where all journalists would sit with the editor in chief and discuss the daily programme. There would be daily two main editors who would produce the two news headlines and political analysis. They would decide what news headlines were important and distribute the work among the other journalists.

The Deutsche Welle itself is a very important part of the German media institutions. It is a window of German culture to all other nations and cultures. You could find people from every country, and every section transmitting in its mother tongue. I feel like everybody here is a member of one very big family, an international family. What gathers all these different nationalities is the German language. You could see one person from Japan talking with another from Mexico, they would communicate in German. To me Deutsche Welle is a small version of our world, all working together in harmony.

I have recently read in the newspapers that the government will reduce the yearly funds given to the Deutsche Welle. This reduction will be around 400 million marks. As a result a number of sections will be forced to close, such as the Ukrainian section. There was a lot of talk about this matter in the last period. A lot of sections threatened of closure because of the reduction have objected the closure and journalists demonstrated and wrote letters to the ambassadors of their countries in Germany. It would be really a big loss if such a huge media institution will not be given the chance to expand and build new horizons. The world is expanding every day and our time demands that we move on forward and not go backwards.

Cologne Carnival

I had never celebrated carnival or took part in such an activity. It was the first time for me here in Cologne. Since we were in Iserlohn at the Goethe Institute, everybody would talk about the carnival, and the teacher would say, 'if you are here next February, then you should celebrate the carnival like we do'. On Thursday, the Deutsche Welle made a big party celebrating the beginning of the carnival. Then every evening we would go to the center of the city and we would see all the people there dressed for the carnival.

On Sunday we were watching TV, and then we saw live coverage of carnival parades at the cathedral. We were surprised because we knew that the

carnival parade begins on ‘Rosen Montag’ and not on Sunday. Then we directly went to the cathedral and were surprised how many people were present. It was fantastic. They were all dressed up in costumes, even little children, and the various groups would pass by, play music and throw chocolate at the people on both sides of the streets.

Then on ‘Rosenmontag’ we went early, because we knew that a lot of people will come from all over Germany and also from Europe. When we arrived at the cathedral, we could not walk because there were so many people, but it was great. The parade lasted for 5 or 6 hours. It was freezing cold but simply wonderful. It was one experience I will never forget, and I hope I can once again watch this carnival live.

Closing remarks

I have stayed here in Germany for six months, my stay was not only a chance to see this beautiful country and get practical training here, but also a chance to meet the people and to get to know them and to make new friends. It was a chance that opened new horizons for me and I will always be thankful for the Heinz-Kühn-Stiftung. Now I will be going back home, taking with me the experience and the knowledge of all that is new here, and the memories of the good and friendly people I met here, and I hope that I will have the chance to visit Germany once again in the near future.