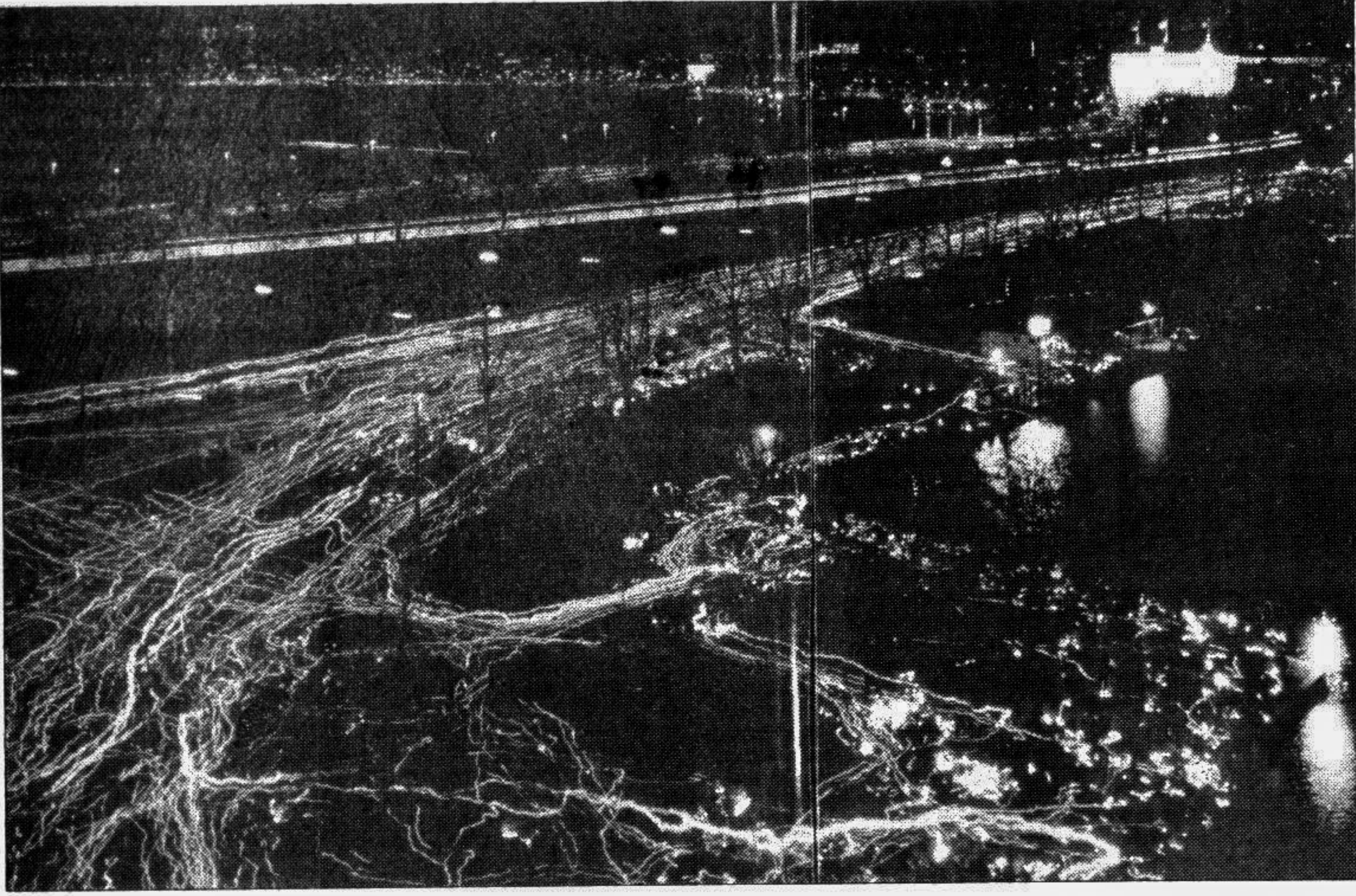


## Brotherhood of Heart and Hand

by Gunther Nonnenmacher



An old Latin proverb says that books have their own fate; nations have their own individual history, which can also be fateful. It is serious in any country of the world when attacks against foreigners and acts of extremist right wing violence occur, when youths employ Nazi slogans and symbols, when there are signs of anti-Semitism. No one is surprised that spectres of the past appear on the horizon when this occurs in Germany.

In the "shameful register" of right wing extremism compiled for the year 1992, Federal Interior Minister Rudolf Seiters recorded a 54 per cent increase in attacks compared with the previous year. 2033 of the total of 2,285 incidents — or 90 per cent — were directed against foreigners, asylum seekers or their hosts. There were seventeen deaths, including eight foreigners. According to the official figures, there are approximately 6,400 right wing extremists who are prepared to use violence. Around 70 per cent of the 894 suspected offenders were young people or youths; only two per cent were older than thirty.

Details about the suspected culprits give us grounds for thought: Why is it that the great majority of those involved are young people and youths who are sometimes little more than

children? How and where were these individuals able to acquire and extremist right wing or neo-Nazi view of the world? Answers to this question can only be found if we look beneath the surface, beyond the Nazi symbols and slogans. History does not repeat itself. By applying the old interpretations and analyses we risk overlooking what is new about this phenomenon.

It is no excuse and certainly no comfort to Germans that racial hatred also exists in other countries; there have also been attacks against foreigners' hostels in France, and in Britain the term "Paki-bashing" was coined to describe violent attacks on immigrants from the Indian subcontinent.

The increase in such incidents is clearly a symptom of a problem that is confronting all industrial societies. The flow of people from the less prosperous countries of the Third World, the migration from South to North, has increased. The collapse of communism and the continuing difficulties in central, eastern and south-eastern Europe have also resulted in a further flow of people from East of West, from the former second, socialist world. The problems that arise from this are great enough. However, they were further intensified by the apprehensive mood that prevailed amongst the population of western Europe following the end of East-West confrontation, after the conclusion of a historical phase which, although threatening, had become generally accepted and was largely predictable in its consequences.

This is now being added to by the fact that the social consequences of the structural change which has been taking place in the western industrialised nations for some time are being intensified by economic recession: unemployment is only the most dramatic aspect of this transformation. The most discernible sign of the resultant feelings of helplessness and disorientation amongst the population is people's often quoted "disaffection with politics": opinion polls give all European governments low popularity ratings, irrespective of whether they are Conservative, Liberal or Social Democratic; yet in no country is the opposition particularly popular either. Perhaps this is also one of the reasons for the increasing strength of extremist parties.

Germany is particularly confronted with these problems. It is located at the most eastern edge of affluent western Europe. Reunification transformed sixteen million east Germans into western Europeans at a stroke. The "socialist heritage" of the former GDR has turned out to be a shambles. There is little substance on which to build, but there are high expectations and hopes of democracy and a market economy. People in east Germany do not find it easy to be patient and their fellow countrymen in the west find it hard to make sacrifices — the situation would not be different in any other society.

In 1992, in this politically difficult and financially strained situation, the united Germany took in roughly 200,000 Russians of German origin as well as thousands of Germans from other eastern European countries. There were also the

refugees from the former Yugoslavia, who are amongst the total of around 440,000 asylum seekers that came to Germany in 1992 — a figure greater than the total for the rest of Europe together. Does anyone really believe that taking in and finding accommodation for so many people could be accomplished without dissent? Is there any government or society that could organise processes of this kind without it leading to protest, including violence as one of its shameful excesses?

Disorientation first becomes noticeable amongst children, youths and young adults: they still have to learn society's rules and norms of behaviour and as a rule have not yet been directly confronted with the laws of the state. This is also true all over the world; reports of an increasing readiness to use violence, particularly amongst young people, are currently being heard from Tokyo to New York. There are many explanations for this phenomenon: some are national, others local. In Germany young provocateurs and violent delinquents have seized upon the symbols and slogans which most openly challenge society around them: to Germans the use of the images and language of Nazism represents the breaking of the "last taboo" (Joachim Fest).

However, as psychologists and educationalists have discovered, it is often the case that the willingness to use violence is already present before an ideological justification is sought. In any event, the Cologne-based sociology professor Erwin K Scheuch has not found any evidence to prove that right wing extremism is more strongly developed in German society as a whole and amongst young Germans in particular than is the case in other European countries.

The state is doing what it can. Critics of supposedly mild sentences often overlook the fact that most of the cases have to be settled in the juvenile courts according to laws which, — as in all civilised states — are based on integration and resocialisation rather than deterrence and retribution. In the meantime the interior minister has banned several extremist right wing associations. The police have adapted their tactics to better deal with the problems. The large democratic parties — CDU/CSU, FDP and SPD — have agreed on a basis for an amendment to the Basic Law which maintains the right to political asylum, but at the same time accelerates decision-making procedures and facilitates the sending back of asylum seekers whose applications are clearly unfounded. In recent months millions of Germans have taken to the streets in many German cities and proclaimed their solidarity with foreigners and their rejection of violence in large candlelight demonstrations. Nevertheless, there are no miracle cures or instant remedies: it may be possible to better control this worldwide migration, but it can only be totally stopped by building barriers — something no one wants, particularly not in Germany where a wall has only recently been pulled down.

In fact, the freedom of individual travel that has applied inside the single European market since January 1 did not trigger any anxieties or fears,

something which shows that the foreigners in Germany — there are more than six million of them — are generally accepted and do not have any problems. The populations of western European countries have enjoyed the freedom to travel for decades and they have been able to get to know one another. As the "Euro-barometer" surveys regularly published by the EC Commission indicate, some nations perceive a closer affinity to certain countries and feel more reserved about others. However, racial hatred directed against people from other EC member states is to be found nowhere. In this respect EC Europe already represents a multinational society, without this leading to discernible levels of anxiety or discrimination.

However, difficulties can arise with foreigners who come from other cultural surround-



Everywhere and in many different ways people are demonstrating their opposition to right wing extremism and hostility towards foreigners. In recent months millions of people have taken to the streets to combat racial hatred. In candlelight demonstrations they have shown their solidarity with foreigners and proclaimed their abhorrence of violence. Sparks of hope — an article

Hamburg sparkles: Over 300,000 people demonstrated against racial hatred in the north German port. "A city says no". The silent majority also took to the streets during the demonstration in Munich, the Bavarian capital — school classes, prominent personalities, complete factory work forces — a total of 400,000 people.

## Marriage without love



In Singapore fear that the birthrate of the most educated part of the population is falling has led the state to encourage bright graduates to marry bright graduates — regardless of whether they love one another

In India child marriage is illegal, but it still goes on, and in Rajasthan this is the time of year for mass marriages. The children are very young. The groom may be nine years old, the bride just 18 months

## Singapore Government Tries to Breed Smarter Babies

High-flying Singapore finds the best-educated section of its population has a falling birthrate. At the same time births among the uneducated are rising. Enter the State. A Social Development Unit funded by government plays matchmaker to Chinese graduates with the aim of re-stocking the island with babies of high-achieving Chinese couples. Gemini News Service has talked to the Unit's woman deputy director.

Stephen Carr writes from Singapore

IN Asian societies, match making is a traditional activity. Mothers fret about their daughters waiting too long to get married and meetings are arranged with parents of unattached boys. In Singapore, the state takes on the role of fretful mother and, like other state activities, the business is highly organised.

The Social Development Unit (SDU), a sort of bureaucratic lonely hearts club, is on

the 40th floor of a cylindrical skyscraper in the heart of the island's financial district. The building also houses the Treasury, which funds the unit.

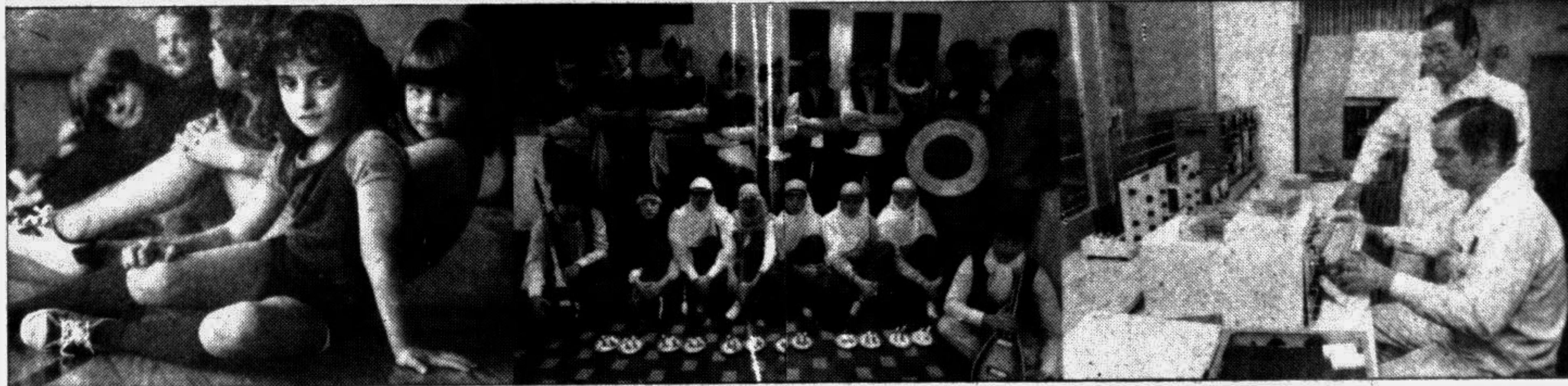
Susan Chan, unit deputy director, presents its work as that of a club, co-ordinating a wide range of social activities for single people and reliving a lot of loneliness.

Scanning the SDU literature, it seems hard to disagree. A magazine called *Link*, edited

by Chan, gives advice on how to prepare for marriage, profiles a single female member, looks at a happy couple who tied the knot after joining the unit and gives details of such quarterly events as the Candlelight Dinner, Rainbow Night and Saturday Lunch Mates.

All sounds very commendable. But publicity for the unit never mentions race. You

Continued on page 11



## Neighbours with Foreign Passports

Germany is home to more than six million foreigners. They came here to work, to study — to live. SCALA reports on different aspects of how Germans and foreigners live together. Multiculturalism is the catch-word in German cities. It represents the unspectacular normality of everyday life. Yet what would life be like in Germany without the Greek greengrocer's on the corner, without the Italian gourmet restaurant, or without the Turkish worker in the car industry? And what would the German Bundesliga be like without its star foreign players?

to weaken the opposing team". Anton Hubler, the Frankfurt team's equipment manager who has seen many generations of players come and go, describes Tony Yeboah like this: "Quiet, modest, unpretentious, sensitive and appreciative." His former team-mate Karl-Heinz Korbel, an experienced judge of forwards as centre half, says: "Anthony is very skilled at dribbling the ball, he can hold it for a long time and keep opposing players at bay. He is also very straightforward and can shoot from all positions." And the newspapers enthuse: "The way he takes the ball, lets it run at his right foot, pushes his

body between the ball and opposing players, moves the ball out front and sprints forward — it will be a long time before we see anyone his equal."

Anthony Yeboah was born in Accra/Ghana in 1964. He has five sisters and three brothers. His father was himself a player in the national side. As a national player he decided to move to Europe in March 1988 and began his career here in the German second division with 1st FC Saarbrücken, for whom he scored 17 goals in the 1989/90 season. In Frankfurt he gave his support to the elections to the city's Foreigners' Representative Council in

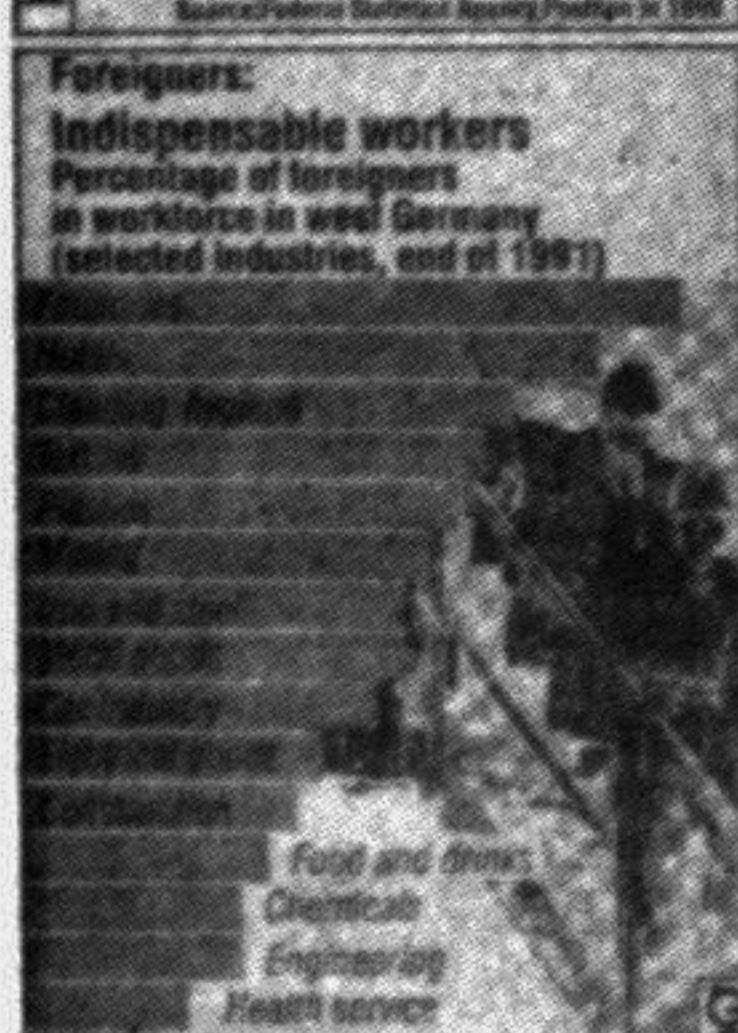
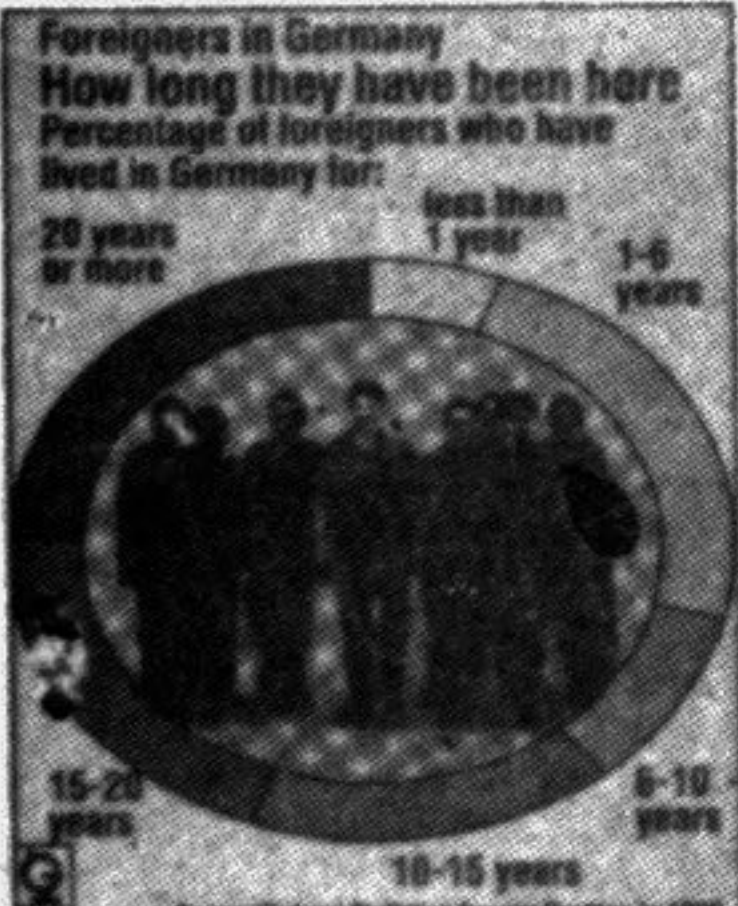
1991. Today he says: "I feel very, very comfortable here."

In Germany Yeboah is only one of many. Every fifth active sportsman in the nine most important German federal leagues — soccer, handball, basketball, volleyball, ice hockey, table tennis, wrestling, boxing and weight lifting — is a foreigner. The largest group is to be found in the federal ice hockey league where their share of the players is 37.2 per cent. The most foreigners run after a ball in the soccer Bundesliga. And the naturalised Turk Rıza Yıldız even won the world championships in wrestling for Germany in 1990 and 1991. It

is worth remembering the words of Dieter Baumann, the German Olympic medal winner in Barcelona and "1992 Sportsman of the Year": "I'm a foreigner for half of the year."

LINE 127 travels between two different worlds on its long journey through Essen. Where the train disappears under ground, the Ruhr metropolis is elegant and chic. When it comes out into the open again, it is surrounded by the city districts that still typify old industrial Essen. Here you will find the mine workers' estate of Belsen. Alongside the new residential blocks and the small old redbrick miners' houses, one building stands out: it is made of wood — the visible focus of an abstract idea which has become a tangible and functioning enterprise. It is the headquarters of the team

Continued on page 10



For many of the more than six million foreigners here Germany has become a second home. 61 out of every 100 foreigners have already lived here for more than ten years. Many of them no longer think about returning home. They have families, their children have grown up or go to school here. Many only know the home country of their parents from holiday visits. The economy would be worse off without them. In 1991 1.9 million foreign men and women were working in the old federal states. Foreign citizens were responsible for a tenth of the total domestic product of west Germany (2,200 billion marks) in 1991.

