



Beate Baumann - Merkels Büroleiterin



Gisela Aderhold



Markus Söder (CSU) - Bayrischer Staatsminister (Finanzen + Heimat)



Matthias Kupfer

- Steffen Seibert – Sprecher der Bundesregierung
- Christoph Heusgen – Außenpolitischer Berater der Bundeskanzlerin
- Eva Christiansen – Leiterin des Stabes Politische Planung
- Manfred Schmidt – Präsident des Bundesamts für Migration und Flüchtlinge (BAMF)
- Dieter Romann – Chef der Bundespolizei
- Hans-Georg Maassen – Präsident des Bundesamts für Verfassungsschutz
- Holger Münch – Präsident des Bundeskriminalamts

**Politiker heute – 2020**

- Angela Merkel – Bundeskanzlerin
- Horst Seehofer – Bundesinnenminister
- Thomas de Maizière – 2018 aus Regierung ausgeschieden
- Peter Altmaier – Bundesminister für Wirtschaft und Energie
- Sigmar Gabriel – Aufsichtsrat Deutsche Bank
- Frank-Walter Steinmeier – Bundespräsident
- Wolfgang Schäuble – Bundestagspräsident
- Markus Söder – Ministerpräsident von Bayern, Vorsitzender der CSU

THE GERMAN SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA  
**Friday Film Fest Series**



**Die Getriebenen**

Directed by Stephan Wagner

March 19, 2021

● 6:30 PM ●

Film, Food & Discussion

The German Society of Pennsylvania  
611 Spring Garden St.  
Philadelphia, PA 19123

## Die Getriebenen (2020)

**Director:** Stephan Wagner

**Screenplay:** Florian Oeller

**Production:** Alexander van Dülmen

Stephan Wagner

**Music:** Irmin Schmidt

**Camera:** Thomas Benesch

**Editing:** Gunnar Wanne-Eickel

**Length:** 118 minutes

Based on the book "Die Getriebenen" by Robin Alexander

Commentary by Karl Moehlmann



### Die getriebenen Flüchtlinge

In 2015 the conflict in Syria escalated dramatically, causing hundreds of thousands of Syrians to leave their country. The situation in Iraq and Afghanistan also added to the wave of refugees trying to flee the war torn Middle East. In the first ten months of 2015, about 700,000 refugees moved from Turkey to Greece and then along the eastern and western "Balkan-route" through Serbia to Central Europe.

A trip on this route (not including the passage through Turkey) is about 1,300km or over 800 miles and can take weeks. Many of the refugees took trains or busses to transition to the Balkan countries more quickly. Their destination was Hungary, which is part of the European Union (EU). But first they had to pass through Serbia, which is not a part of the EU.



Über diese beiden Routen versuchen zahlreiche Schutzsuchende, Mitteleuropa zu erreichen. Grafik: MEDIENDIENST INTEGRATION 2016



The EU, following the Schengen agreement of 1985, had abolished all border controls among its 26 member states. Thus once in Hungary, the migrants could easily travel to other countries in the EU. The Schengen agreement was followed by the Dublin agreement of 1990 which was supposed to regulate the entry and distribution of refugees to the EU. It stated that the country of first entry was supposed to register the refugees and conduct the asylum seeking process.

The first country on this route from the Middle East was Greece. But the high number of refugees simply overwhelmed the capabilities of the Greek government. Only a portion of travelers were registered, while the vast majority were just waived through, with the assumption that their destination was Central Europe, especially Germany. It's fair to say that the Dublin rules, thus, proved to be *undurchführbar* and set Germany and Hungary on a dramatic collision course, because in June 2015, Hungary, under its populist leader Viktor Orbán, started making preparations to close its 175km border with Serbia and not let any more refugees enter its country.

In the meantime, the humanitarian situation of the refugees worsened every day. Insufficient food and primitive shelter, lack of water for hygiene, cold weather, the stress of long foot marches, and daily mistreatment by border police of Hungary, Croatia and Bulgaria: all these factors coalesced to create intolerable conditions. Driven out of Syria by the unrelenting civil war and waived through by Greece because of overwhelming numbers, the refugees kept moving in search of a safe haven and a better life.

On August 19, 2015, Minister of the Interior, Thomas de Maizière, had to raise the number of expected refugees and asylum seekers to Germany to 800,000, double of previous forecasts. BAMF (*Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge*) decided to forego the Dublin regulations for Syrian refugees, which had demanded the registration of refugees in the country of first entry. The pressure on the political leaders in Germany to act increased exponentially. "Die getriebenen Flüchtlinge" started to drive the politicians into a frenzy of action.

## Die getriebenen Politiker

On July 12, 2015, Angela Merkel was busy negotiating the debt crisis with Greece. Just months later, on November 20, 2015, she announced her famous *“Wir schaffen das”* policy and accepted all refugees that were stranded in the Budapest train station or stuck at the Hungarian border. This ended the *Nervenspiel* with Viktor Orbán who had steadfastly refused to accept any of the migrants, preferring to poke the German-European hegemon in the eye. A total of 1 million refugees, most of them from Syria, ended up in Germany by the end of 2015. But Viktor Orbán was not the only one trying to put pressure on Angela Merkel and influence her decisions.

Sigmar Gabriel, the SPD challenger, waits for a misstep by Merkel that will propel him into the office of chancellor. The Bavarian governor Horst Seehofer wants to close the border and objects to Merkel's course while fighting off the young, aspiring and power-hungry Markus Söder. The heads of BAMF, the federal police, and the secret service conspire to stop Merkel's ill-advised openness and empathy for the plight of the refugees, even if it means to use teargas, billy clubs, and water cannons at the border. Even Merkel's own husband criticizes her for not doing enough to stop the cause of the refugee crisis, the Syrian civil war itself.

Despite this intensely polarized political climate, Angela Merkel keeps a cool head. She comports herself with a combination of deep empathy, composure and professionalism. She is, in a word, *gelassen*. So when her motto *“Wir schaffen das”* finds an equivalent in the *Willkommenskultur* of the people itself, like the warm welcome of the first refugees arriving at the train station in Munich and a massive popular effort to help integrate all the migrants, Merkel seems vindicated. Her *Staatsfraulichkeit* has engendered a positive image of the other, better Germany, at least for the moment. The frequent attacks against migrant homes, the *Fremdenfeindlichkeit* of the Pegida movement and the rise of the AfD had not begun yet.

### Seamless

The narrative has a rapid pace, with the major actors in near constant motion: on their phones, in their cars, in planes, walking briskly in the corridors of the *“Kanzleramt”*, imbibing the daily agenda, moving from meeting to meeting. This approach yields a

realistic impression of the high pressure dynamics of a crisis of such magnitude. Fittingly, most actors bear a striking resemblance to the politicians whom they portray. Angela Merkel is played by the fabulous Imogen Kogge, who makes you forget that she is not Angela Merkel.

In fact, the editing in one of the scenes is done so perfectly that you cannot distinguish between real footage and the reenactment. When Merkel, answering questions on the TV show *“Gut leben in Deutschland”* talks to a Palestinian girl who had been in Germany for four years already, Merkel states that Germany cannot accept all the other Palestinians living in refugee camps. At this point, the girl starts to cry and Merkel decides to go over to her and comfort her (*“Ich möchte sie trotzdem einmal streicheln.”*) In the movie, Kogge is seamlessly replaced by the real Angela Merkel as she touches her.

Every aspect of this movie, from the editing and casting and writing all the way down to the makeup, synergizes to create a gripping, utterly realistic portrayal of the refugee crisis. And the acting is simply superb. From Seehöfer to Söder, from de Maizière to Altmaier, from Gabriel to Steinmeier, Schäuble and Orbán, from the major players to the minor heads of the security organizations, all the actors achieve what all actors dream of achieving: they make you forget that you are watching a movie.

Thus we are given a docudrama that is at once *unterhaltsam und informativ zugleich*. It provides a unique insight into the *“enorme Belastung der Verantwortlichen”* in such pressurized situations. Merkel's *“Gelassenheit, Nervenstärke und Mitgefühl”* somehow reduce the stature of all the other politicians, foreshadowing how she would act in even bigger crisis. All international observers of the current pandemic agree that Merkel's handling of the crisis is the main reason that Germany has far fewer victims than most other countries, especially the US, and that her leadership style made the difference again.





Angela Merkel - Bundeskanzlerin



Imogen Kogge



Sigmar Gabriel (SPD) - SPD  
Vorsitzender, Wirtschaftsminister +  
Vizekanzler, voraussichtlicher  
Kanzlerkandidat der SPD gegen Merkel



Timo Dierkes



Horst Seehofer (CSU) - Ministerpräsi-  
dent von Bayern + Vorsitzender der CSU



Josef Bierbichler



Frank-Walter Steinmeier (SPD) -  
Außenminister



Walter Sittler



Thomas de Maizière (CDU) -  
Bundesinnenminister



Wolfgang Pregler



Wolfgang Schäuble (CDU) -  
Finanzminister



Rüdiger Vogler



Peter Altmaier -  
Chef des Bundeskanzleramts



Tristan Seith



Viktor Orbán - Ministerpräsident von  
Ungarn



Radu Banzaru