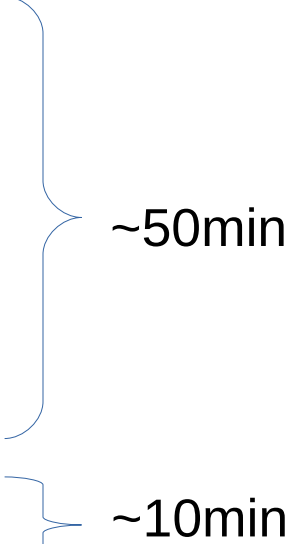


# **Things about East-germany and Christian Horn**

chris@fluxcoil.net / <https://fluxcoil.net>

# Agenda

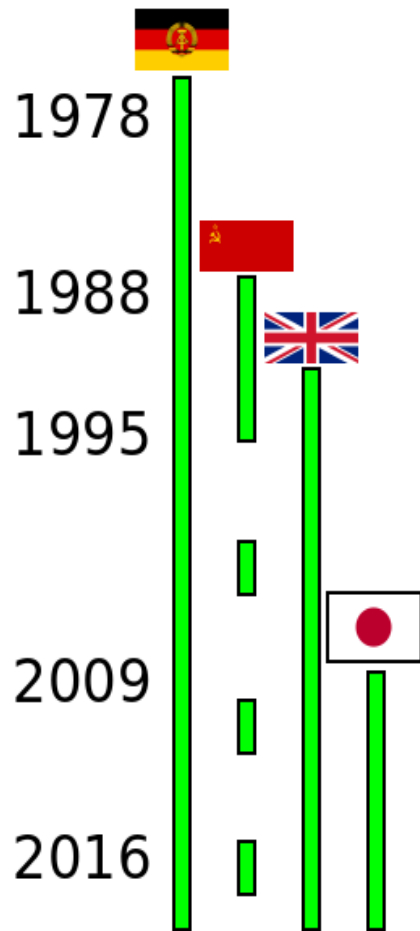
- Introduction: Who is Christian Horn?
  - More details about East Germany
    - My life there
    - East German history
    - The time of German Unity
  - Questions and answers
- 
- ~50min
- ~10min

# Who is Christian Horn?

- 1978: Born in Mühlhausen/Thüringen/East Germany
  - Hearing as a child first time about #Japan, when asking grandma for the most advanced country
- 1989: experienced German reunification
  - So, now I can actually go anywhere I want.
  - More about this and East germany in some minutes :)
- 1997: finished school, 10 months @German army, aka “Bundeswehr”, I’m still heavy weight then
- 1998: worked at several random places for some time, lost weight delivering letters. Eventually I started a training in the IT area. OpenSource is software which is free to use and modify, with many contributors around the globe – that’s what I specialized in.

# Who is Christian Horn?

- 2001: finished work training. No Linux work in my homearea, so moving to Munich:
  - Work at T-systems as #linux-engineer
- 2008: 3 months work in Tokyo, starting to learn Japanese
  - Loving #people #language #culture #food
- 2011: started to work as Technical Account Manager (TAM) at Red Hat in Germany/Munich. English improvements.
- 2016: Coworkers recommend me at Red Hat Tokyo, moving over.
  - Why? Click [here](#) and [here](#)



# ..and after work?

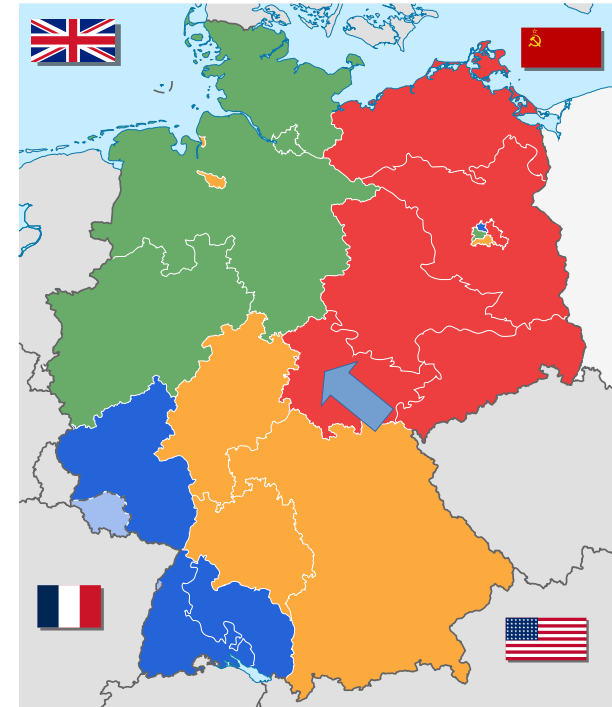
- Learning Japanese
- Singing Beethoven's 9th ( 第九 ) - with ~5000 others in Tokyo
- Cycling, mountains, onsen, jogging around the emperors palace - Red Hat running club
- Researching computer things and culture
  - writing [#japan-blog](#) (English), [#japan-pictures](#), [best of pictures](#)
  - Sharing my typography, language learning, Linux, sustainability things with the world via <https://fluxcoil.net>
- Have not yet found a partner to create an own family, often going to Germany to meet parents/grandparents



"Chris at Tanigawadake" by [chorn@fluxcoil.net](mailto:chorn@fluxcoil.net) / BY-CC

# East Germany, history

- Born in Mühlhausen/Thüringen/East Germany
- Why are there actually East & West Germany?  
After World War II, the allies came from the East (Russian forces) and the West (America, Britain, France etc.)
- They created 2 countries after their ideals:  
capitalist Western Germany, socialist German Democratic Republic (GDR).
- My hometown is now in central Germany, at that time Southwest of East Germany. After the war, America moved in, but left then to get a part of Berlin in exchange. Thanks for telling me, grandma :)



"Deutschland Besatzungszonen 8 Jun 1947 - 22 Apr 1949" by WikiNight2 /  
GNU Free Documentation License

# My life in East Germany

- We have many Gothic churches, and a town wall in good condition
- Thomas Müntzer, leader in German Peasants War. Johann Sebastian Bach worked as citys organist 1707/8
- Had ~40.000 citizens, declined after german unification
- [Video link](#)



"Vor dem Frauentor Mühlhausen" by Michael Sander / GNU-Lizenz für freie Dokumentation

Graphic by Stadt Mühlhausen / public domain

# East Germany: basics

- Languages: German (and Sorbish in 3 villages)
- Men had 3 years of military service: constant fear that America and Western Germany will attack
- The so called “political elections” were not free, the result was already decided. Citizens said not “going to elections” but “going folding [the paper]”
- Religion: mostly Christianity, Catholics and Protestants. Tolerated by government, but not wanted.
- East Germans needed a good reason to be allowed to go to i.e. West Germany. As an East German child, I was aware that I would most likely never in life leave eastern block countries (East Germany, Russia, Bulgaria etc.)
- TV antennas at first not towards the West. “Tal der Ahnungslosen” (“valley of the ones who do not know”) existed.



“Flag of East Germany” by Jwnabd / public domain



# East Germany, politics

- East Germany was socialist, not communist. Money used, the state controlled what gets produced in which factory. This worked to some degree: we had enough to eat, but maybe not what we just wanted to eat. I think this is different from North Korea.
- Our schools told us that Russia freed us from Hitler Germany. The Russians were our friends: much trade with Russia, East German specialists working at Russian oil pipelines and so on.
- Pupils learning Russian in school as foreign language. Our school class was the last year to learn Russian as first foreign language. We had Russian pen pals, met Russian people, they are really nice.



Picture by Wolfgang Kluge / CC-BY-SA 3.0

# East Germany and schools

- We also had school lessons on Saturdays.
- First foreign language: Russian. The way of teaching was not very good, I think.
- First 8 school years were same for all, then you could do another 4 to get 'Abitur' - qualification for University. But for that, parents should be members in the political party.
- 3 organizations: Jung- and Thälmannpioniere (pupils), Free German Youth (FDJ, "Freie Deutsche Jugend")
- After school? Everything also done in West Germany. Also: collecting old newspapers to earn some money for sweets.



FDJ by Jgaray and JP by Kolossos / public domain

# East Germany and Japan

- Surprisingly, there seem to be quite some parallels.
- East German/Socialist arts: The glico man and other pieces remind me
- German Democratic Republic (GDR) citizens had a right to work. Factories were not as effective as in Western Germany. Once you started working, you would likely work in a place for a long time – just as in traditional big Japanese companies!
- Fulltime care: children were looked after all over the day, in school and club activities. After the unification, this became quite a problem: what to do with the time? Who should look after children?



Image Eisenhüttenstadt by Gottfried Hoffman / CC BY 3.0

# East Germany and cars

- The default car: Trabant ('Trabbi')
- Two-stroke engine: simple, dirty and loud.
- More people wanted to buy than were available: waittime 10 years.
- Used ones more expensive than new ones. Exchange parts were always rare.
- Also: Wartburg, build in Eisenach, 50km in the south of Mühlhausen



Trabant and Wartburg by "High Contrast" / CC BY 3.0 DE

# German Unity, changes..

- In 1989, I experienced German unification.
- Our family drove in grandpas Lada over the border. Greeted by citizens at the street, receiving chocolate. Getting 'Begrüßungsgeld', buying Bananas – rare in east Germany.
- Oh boy, so many things changed. So, now everybody was allowed to go where they want.
- The media started to tell me that my friends from yesterday, Russians, are now the enemy. This teaches you much about who influences you.
- Change from 'government controlled prices' to 'free market'. Milk prices are now different, depending on where you buy it. Is 10% cheaper worth a 1h drive?
- Education: former language teaching methods were not good, almost everybody threw Russian away, and learned English. Older generations still just know the Russian language.
- Recycling systems and factories got destroyed :(



20 Mark by DDR / public domain



Germany becomes one by Борис Бабанов / CC BY SA 3.0



# German Unity, changes..

- As of 1989, just 17.2% of the households had a telefon. This changed..
- My 'song' of that time, I still sing it at Karaoke: Scorpions: "The wind of change"
- 2001, my work training finished. No Linux/OpenSource work in 50km diameter, so moving to Munich. Culture shock! Identical language, so you expect no changes. But people there
  - grew up with different education ("Russians are bad!" "Communism is a menace!")
  - grew up with different music
  - watching different anime and reading different comics
  - Much more of a culture shock for me than the move to Japan :D
- Now, after ~30 years, wages in East and West are still different..



Bundesarchiv, Bild 183-1990-1003-400  
Grimm, Peer / CC-BY-SA 3.0



# Questions and answers

- Please reach out via email (English, 日本語 , Deutsch): [chris@fluxcoil.net](mailto:chris@fluxcoil.net)
- Website: <https://fluxcoil.net>

# Pfefferbrötchen/ フェファブレチェン

- Get some bread rolls/ ブレッドロール
- Cut the tip off (the first part), i.e. 1cm
- Use the fingers to pull out the soft, inner parts
- Create a dough from minced meat, as you use for hamburgers
- Spice up the dough with pepper, raw egg, ketchup
- Fill the dough into the emptied bread rolls
- Bake the rolls
- The fat from the dough goes out, the roll gets crunchy. Cut this into 2 halves and eat it with ketchup!
- Very tasty fresh/warm, but also cold!



"Broetchen" by Terabyte / CC BY-SA 3.0



Hackfleisch by Rainer Zenz / CC BY-SA 3.0