STATEMENT · DIE FETTEN JAHRE SIND VORBEI

What the play is about and what it has to do with today

Synopsis

Jan, Peter and Jule refuse to accept the way things are. At night they break into the villas of wealthy people. They steal nothing. They rearrange the furniture and leave messages: “The fat years are over”. During one of these break-ins the owner comes home early. It is Hardenberg, of all people the man to whom Jule owes a large sum after a car accident. In a panic, the three kidnap him and take him to a remote mountain hut. There the kidnapping turns into a heated debate. Hardenberg tells them that in his youth he thought just like them. The three ask themselves whether he understands them or is cleverly winding them round his finger. Whether the story ends well remains open.

Why it matters today

At its core the play asks what becomes of ideals when you grow older, own things and have something to lose. Hardenberg is the answer none of the three wants to hear: he was once like them. The young people stand for a generation facing rising rents, debt, the climate crisis and growing inequality. They doubt that protest still achieves anything.

How close this is can be seen in the Gen Z protests of autumn 2026. From France, where young people have been demonstrating since October 2026 against the high cost of living and run-down schools, the movement has reached Germany as “Gen Z regelt”. On 31 October 2026 tens of thousands took to the streets in more than 30 cities, followed by riots and looting in Frankfurt, Cologne, Hamburg and Berlin.

How far may protest go, where does crime begin, who may judge whom? The play proves both sides right and wrong. That makes it more relevant in 2026 than in 2004, when the film was released.

Based on the film by Hans Weingartner · Stage adaptation: Gunnar Dreßler · Director: Max Claessen · Hamburger Kammerspiele, German tour autumn 2026 · Markus Majowski as the millionaire
As of November 2026 · markus-majowski.de