With a little help … or: the chefs still haven't arrived

April 28, 1995 · Page 1 of the original document

… of all our friends, a reflection on the culinary culture of the capital and of our country has begun since our first open letter in December. The media and many guests have kindly taken an interest in our efforts to keep the MAOTHAI running in its usual quality and finally to be able to open its small offshoot on Oranienburger Straße.

Throughout Germany, representatives of non-European restaurants and many guests who care about more than just cabbage rolls have since taken steps to limit the damage done by the "two-chef decree" of October 1994.

Those who had stirred it up at the time did not give in. With the loudly proclaimed intention of doing something about the high unemployment in the country, about mafia-like structures, undeclared work and degrading employment conditions, raiding squads made up of labour officials, police and customs auxiliaries went after the cooking pots of mainly Asian restaurants all over the country five weeks ago, checking the restaurants just as thoroughly as some German construction sites had been checked in December – think only of the Bundestag's construction sites.

There, however, the German construction lobby promptly refused to tolerate interference in its employment policy. In view of a foreseeable cost increase of around 15% and the loss of 150,000 jobs in the German construction industry – which would happen if building in Germany were done only by Germans at German pay scales – the authorities left well enough alone in the European Community.

They turned instead to the more defenceless foreign restaurant trade in Germany, to obtain confirmation there that they were right with their draconian regulation of work and residence.

Translation of the original German document