

Current Concerns

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Democracy in times of war Challenges to our common humanity

by Hans Köchler*



Hans Köchler
(picture
hanskoechler.com)

The text published here is the transcript of the opening speech delivered by Hans Köchler, President of the International Progress Organization, at the World Forum on Democracy and Peace 2023 in Berlin, Germany, on 15 February 2023. The Forum was organized by the Academy of Cultural Diplomacy, a partner institution of the Institute for Cultural Diplomacy (ICD), established in 1999 in New York City, United States of America.

In four days of intense debates, moderated by Dr Köchler – who is also a member of the Faculty of the Academy for Cultural Diplomacy and a member of the Advisory Board of the ICD – politicians, diplomats, academics, students and civil society activists from, inter alia, Afghanistan, Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, India, Ireland, Italy, Lebanon, Lithuania, North Macedonia, Malta, the Netherlands, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, Tunisia, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Kingdom, and the United States discussed the crisis of democracy and the threat of global war. Among the keynote speakers were the former heads of state or government of France, Mr. François Fillon; Romania, Prof. Emil Constantinescu; North

Macedonia, Prof. Gjorge Ivanov; Tunisia, Dr Moncef Marzouki; Lebanon, Dr Hassan Diab; Lithuania, Ms Dalia Grybauskaitė; and Malta, Ms Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca.

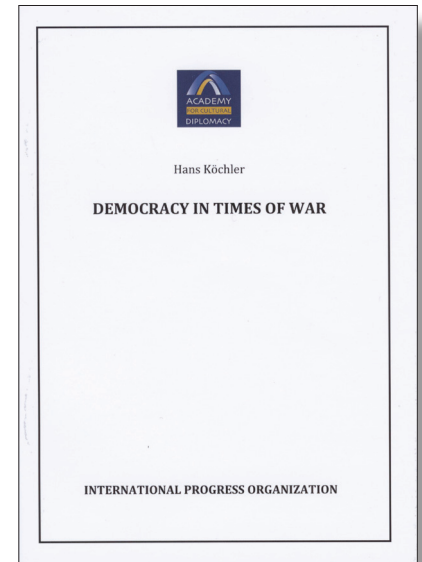
The Kantian vision of perpetual peace

No peace without democracy, no democracy without peace – these were the slogans that inspired many in the peace movement of the last century, especially in the final decades of the Cold War. That era's "democratic peace theory" saw itself in the legacy of the great philosopher of Enlightenment, Immanuel Kant, from Königsberg.¹ In his treatise "On Perpetual Peace" [*Zum ewigen Frieden*]², he had explained that only a polity where the citizens have a say as to "whether there should be war or not" [*ob Krieg seyn solle, oder nicht*]³ offers the prospect of peace, namely, genuine peace that is durable and more than a temporary cessation of arms.

Kant identified that system as *republican* – where decisions are made by those who directly have to bear the consequences of their decisions, and not by an aloof and distant ruler who is not personally affected by the devastating effects of war, for instance. The political order Kant described as "republican" (as opposed to a despotic one where there is no separation of powers) in our time is commonly referred to as "representative democracy."

If we look at the historical facts – the events of the last few decades in particular – we must admit that it was not only "despotic" states, to use the Kantian term, but also states defining themselves as "democracies" who engaged in large-scale wars, indeed a multitude of military interventions that were often justified by references to "democracy," "human rights," or the "preservation of peace." A war to defend peace would indeed be a contradiction in itself. The armed interventions, especially in the years since the end of the Cold War, have destabilized vast regions of the globe and triggered new conflicts that pose serious risks to world peace also in the 21st century.

Was the "democratic peace theory" – and with it, Immanuel Kant – wrong in



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the idealistic equation of democracy and peace, we must ask; or is the obvious contradiction between *idea* and *reality* the result of an error in the classification of the respective state systems? In order to bring clarity to the issue, we need to examine the *terminology*, i. e. to reflect on the *notion* of democracy. Only conceptual precision – which is the prerequisite of intellectual honesty – will enable us to identify and understand the challenges to democracy in times of war. These are situations that threaten to undermine the entire edifice of our modern understanding of state legitimacy, which is informed by the ideals of "democracy" and "rule of law."

Terminology: the principles

The term (by now assimilated into many different languages) was created in ancient Greece. The literal meaning of δημοκρατία is "rule of the people", not rule on behalf of the people (or for the people) – although most polities actually defining themselves as "democracy" fall under the latter category. As *Rousseau* noticed – already before the French Revolution – *direct* rule of the people, as community of citizens, is only feasible when the group is small. In collectives of millions or hundreds of millions, the will

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of the citizens needs to be expressed via *representation*. By way of elections, the people “authorize” delegates to legislate (for a limited period of time). Ideally, this kind of representation should be exercised in the form of an imperative mandate, binding the deputy to the preferences of the electorate as they are expressed in regular elections. In political reality, however, the legislators act on the basis of an *imperative* mandate of the political parties or interest groups that have nominated them or sponsored their campaign. Almost unavoidably, this brings in an element of *oligarchy*, often in the form of *plutocracy*, which undermines the very ideal of *popular* rule, albeit in its mediated (indirect) form. In the 20th century, it was President *Dwight D. Eisenhower* who, in his farewell address of 17 January 1961, warned of the destructive effect of vested interests on a democratic polity: “In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist ...”⁴

As democracy, for organizational reasons, can only be practiced by way of approximation to the ideal of direct rule by the people, decision-making by way of representation should be strictly independent of lobbies and interest or pressure groups. However, daily practice – also in the Western world – points in the opposite direction. *War*, whether actual or planned (strategically intended), has often in history been the catalyst for the mobilization of these groups, to the detriment of democratic representation that all too often may become a mere assertion or enforcement of interests, which are neither publicly declared nor in any way legitimized by the electorate.

To make a proper and honest assessment of the impact of war on democracy (i.e. on decision-making that is meant to conform to the will of the people, whether expressed directly, by referendum, or indirectly, by elections), we must reflect in more detail on the *democratic idea* – and what it implies for the organization of the polity. We speak here of requirements that are universally valid – irrespective of

“Unavoidably, the mobilization of public opinion in war is antithetic to the requirements of sober and meaningful deliberation in a democracy.”

socio-cultural differences – once we have agreed on the principle of *popular rule*. The essence of democracy is *freedom* of the individual as citizen of a state. This freedom is a fundamental human right. The liberty to decide makes only sense (1) if the citizen has access to relevant information (which is the requirement of *transparency*); (2) can shape his/her opinion without being subjected to any kind of manipulation or ideological indoctrination (which excludes all forms of *propaganda*); and (3) can express the *opinion* and assert the *will* (in referenda or elections) free from *fear*.

Democracy and truth

The techniques of “public communication” in support of a war effort were – for the first time in recent history – carefully studied and gradually refined in the course of the First World War. Unavoidably, the mobilization of public opinion in war is antithetic to the requirements of sober and meaningful deliberation in a democracy. *Edward Bernays*, a nephew of *Sigmund Freud*, with surprising honesty, in today’s terms, described these techniques as the “engineering of consent” of the masses.⁵

In the book entitled “Propaganda” (1928), he authoritatively stated that “[t]he conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society.”⁶ It goes without saying that, in view of *our* understanding of democracy, we cannot agree with this assessment. What Bernays describes is an essential aspect, or *modus operandi*, of oligarchy, which is especially pertinent and consequential in a state of war. In the words of Bernays: “Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country” [the United States].⁷ It is exactly what President Eisenhower who, as Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force in Europe during World War II, had

gone through the horrors of war, solemnly warned against. In 2023, the world is again faced with such a threat of undeclared interests.

As regards the earlier mentioned requirement of any decision that is democratically meaningful – namely, access to *unbiased* information, today’s leaders should also pay attention to the wisdom of *Samuel Johnson*, the great 18th century English writer. In an essay published in the London weekly “Universal Chronicle”, under the pen name “The Idler”, he wrote: “Among the calamities of war may be jointly numbered the diminution of the love of truth, by the falsehoods which interest dictates and credulity encourages.”⁸ More simply, the wisdom is expressed in a dictum often attributed to *Rudyard Kipling*: “The first casualty of war is truth.”

As implied in the *freedom of decision*, there is a vital nexus between *truth* and *democracy*. Meaningful participation in public life is simply impossible if people are denied access to information or are prevented from communicating with citizens on the other side. This has been proven one of the most serious predicaments of democracy under conditions of war. In our global era – with the threat of arms of mass destruction – propaganda and denial of access to information are not merely an impediment to democracy in an abstract sense, but an existential challenge to our common humanity. In a constellation of conflict – such as the one we are faced with at present in Europe – *democratic prudence*, nurtured by the wisdom of the informed citizen, is all too easily, and quickly, subordinated to, and eventually eliminated by, the *furor of war*. As always in such situations, propaganda attributes the blame exclusively to the other side. To borrow a term from the German language, *Schwarz-Weiss-Malerei* [black-and-white-painting] seems to be the order of the day. An honest assessment will make us aware that the protagonists on *both* sides of the divide engage in disinformation and what in modern terminology is fashionably described as “hybrid war.”

Not only *truth* in its most essential sense, as a core value of democracy, but also the *integrity of culture* is at stake when the emotions of war absorb the rational mind. Blocking access to TV and radio stations or internet sites, excluding people from performing or participating in cultural events and scholarly or academic exchange, in general: victimizing civil

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“Meaningful participation in public life is simply impossible if people are denied access to information or are prevented from communicating with citizens on the other side. This has been proven one of the most serious predicaments of democracy under conditions of war.”

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society for the sake of war mobilization, is intrinsically antithetical to democratic values.

The resilience of democracy

The *war hysteria* these days here in Europe is an eerie reminder of the mass emotions that accompanied Europe’s stumbling into war more than a century ago. It was too late when the people – including some of the leading German intellectuals of the time such as *Thomas Mann*, *Max Planck*, or *Max Weber* – eventually woke up from their illusions. In our nuclear era, escalating mass emotions, further amplified by the “new social media,” are even more consequential because the survival of humankind may be at stake. As President *Kennedy* presciently said in his “peace speech” of 1963, a few months before his tragic assassination: it is not enough anymore to think about how to secure peace in our time; in the face of arms of mass destruction, humanity must strive to establish conditions

Hope in the resilience of democracy will not be enough in such a situation of emergency. In the best democratic tradition, civil society must step up and *challenge the official narrative* on all sides. The appeal recently initiated by *Sahra Wagenknecht*, a member of the German Parliament, and *Alice Schwarzer* is an encouraging sign.¹⁰ Where governments fail, *citizen diplomacy* can demonstrate that there are indeed alternatives to prolonged and cruel armed confrontation. This is where the resilience of democracy will actually be put to the test – and where the democratic paradigm can prove its relevance more than in any other context. It would be a fateful mistake – and a bad omen for humanity – should the political leaders not pay attention to the by now manifold popular initiatives for peace.

Since the creation of the United Nations after World War II, one of the greatest challenges to our common humanity has been how to establish a system of international relations that takes into account the *interdependence of democracy*

“The human race should rather commit itself to genuine – and that means, lasting – peace in the spirit of cooperation among all nations as equals.”

of peace for *all time*⁹ – or, in the words of Immanuel Kant, “perpetual peace” [*ewiger Friede*]. This can only be achieved if genuine democracy prevails over despotism (as described by Kant), namely if it is able to prevent powerful interest groups from taking an entire state hostage. In a *free republic*, the citizens exercise their will on the basis of an elaborate system of checks and balances, which alone can prevent emotional excesses. When people have direct influence on decisions about war and peace, there is at least still hope that they will not favour any action that jeopardizes their own security and livelihood. What is essential, however, is that no hidden hand manipulates their mind. Edward Bernays’ frank description of the power of what, a century ago, he had defined as “propaganda” must not be forgotten. In the era of AI [artificial intelligence], the prospects of the “manufacture of consent” are frightening indeed.

Under conditions of conflict and war, such as those right now, not only truth may be a casualty, democracy itself risks becoming a victim of the mass mobilization of emotions. Ethnic hatred, racial prejudice, crude clichés and enemy stereotypes always flourish when nations engage in war. Violent emotions of this kind leave no room for democratic debate or sober deliberation of the state’s options and policies.

and peace. The determination “to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours” in the Preamble to the United Nations Charter cannot be interpreted in any other way. While, in times of war, democracy – as we said – is put to the test like in no other situation, democracy is nonetheless the only antidote to the *logic of war*.

In view of the democratic ideal, rooted in the inalienable human right to freedom (individual as well as collective), humankind should not set its hopes merely on the *absence of war* that may result from the more or less rational fear of “mutually assured destruction.” The human race should rather commit itself to genuine – and that means, lasting – peace in the spirit of cooperation among all nations as equals. This is what Immanuel Kant envisaged as “perpetual peace” – and what today’s world order, built on the privileged role of the militarily most powerful countries in the United Nations, is not yet able to deliver. •

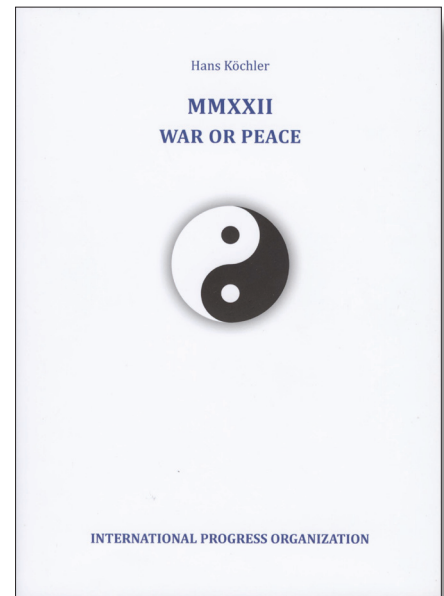
¹ Now Kaliningrad, in Russia.

² *Zum ewigen Frieden: Ein philosophischer Entwurf*. Königsberg: Friedrich Nicolovius, 1795.

³ Chapter II: “Erster Definitivartikel zum ewigen Frieden” [First Definitive Article on Perpetual Peace], op. cit., p. 23

⁴ Quoted from: “Farewell Address,” National Archives / Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, www.eisenhowerlibrary.gov/research/online-documents/farewell-address.

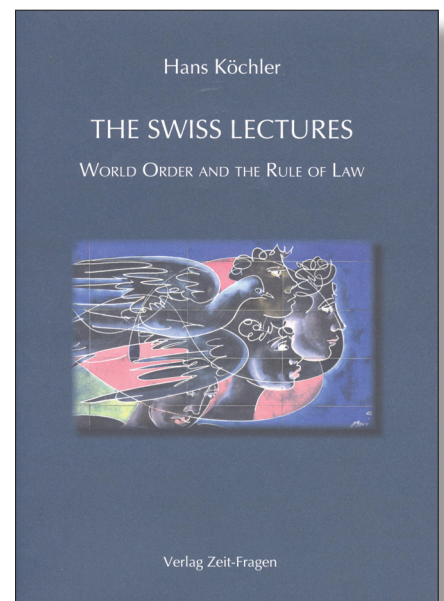
- ⁵ “The Engineering of Consent,” in: *The Annals of the American Academy* (1947), pp. 113-120.
- ⁶ Edward Bernays. *Propaganda*. Reprint edition (with an introduction by Mark Crispin Miller): Brooklyn, NY: Ig Publishing, 2005, Chapter I: “Organizing Chaos,” p. 37.
- ⁷ *Loc. cit.*
- ⁸ *The Idler*, No. 29, Saturday, 4 November 1758, p. 95.
- ⁹ John Fitzgerald Kennedy, *Commencement Address at American University, Washington, D.C., June 10, 1963*; text published by John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum at jfklibrary.org.
- ¹⁰ *Manifest für Frieden* [“Manifesto for Peace”], 10 February 2023, www.change.org/p/manifest-für-frieden.



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War or Peace ...

The texts published in this volume were presented in 2022 at events or for institutions in Azerbaijan, China, Germany, Morocco, Poland, Russia, Switzerland, and the United States. Main chapters: (I) Power in International Relations, (II) Culture and Peace, (III) The Nuclear Dilemma, (IV) MMXXII – War in Europe.



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Double standard: cui bono? Donald Trump – the first former US president on trial

wp. What an absurd theatre we have to endure right now: Amid great media hub-bub, a former US president is being indicted on 36 counts. Among other things, he is alleged to have paid hush money to a sex film actress and violated the laws of campaign finance. What a scandal! For the first time in the US history, a former US president is on trial.

Many of his predecessors and their ministers were guilty of various crimes of a completely different calibre, for example e.g. *Henry Kissinger*: bombing of Cambodia (1969-1973), military coup against *Salvador Allende* in Chile (covert CIA intervention in 1973); *George H.W. Bush*: war against Iraq in violation of international law (1991); *Bill Clinton*, *Madeleine Albright*: war in Yugoslavia in violation of international law (1999); *George W. Bush*, *Condoleezza Rice*: wars in Afghanistan in violation of international law (2001), in Iraq (2003), Guantánamo detention camp in violation of human rights (since 2002); *Colin Powell*: lie that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction as reason for war (2003); *Hillary Clinton*: CIA involvement in elimination of *Muammar al-Gaddafi* (2011); *Barack Obama*: countless assassinations with drones in Pakistan and Afghanistan (2009–2011), airstrike on Kun-

duz (2009) ... With all these war crimes, who called for the International Criminal Court (ICC)? Hardly anyone.

Quite different is the case of Russia and *Vladimir Putin*: Shortly after the beginning of the war in Ukraine, one-sided reporting and denial of the preceding history led all states that concede the role of the world's policeman to the US to the pretension that Putin was waging a war of aggression in violation of international law and that he is committing one war crime after another. The true history of this war, for which actors on the other side of the Atlantic are also responsible, must not be/is not allowed to come to light. All wars have a prehistory, only this one is supposed to have none?

In addition, there was the demand that Putin should be brought to justice subito by the ICC. This was done promptly: charges were recently brought. The ICC holds citizens accountable for the following crimes: Genocide, Crimes against Humanity, War Crimes and Crimes of Aggression. Both the USA and Russia – like Israel and Sudan – have withdrawn their signatures and declared that they will not ratify the treaty. Why do you think?

Something is not right here. The media should not be harnessed for one side or the other, but should illuminate the back-

ground and report factually. Readers should remain vigilant, make up their own minds and get involved in ensuring that the truth is revealed and disseminated. •

Letter to the Editor Ukraine

I ask the legitimate question: Suppose a country other than Russia had waged war on Ukraine? How would the political situation, the refugee policy be seen? Would Ukraine be supplied with tanks and ammunition for peace, along with reconstruction funds? Are we forgetting that Ukraine once belonged to Russia and that a large part of the population was born Russian or has Russian roots? And today we are supplying weapons to a country that was ruled fascistically and corruptly and killed many people.

Black and white: Russia, the bad guy, America (Gulf War), the good guy. Never in my 90 years has it become so clear to me how an enemy image is being fomented – and the countries in Europe are joining in. Where are the scholars who have the courage to point out the true background of the conflict so that we are not lied to?

Bruno Weilenmann, Zürich

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Switzerland–EU: Further development of relations at eye level

by Dr iur. Marianne Wüthrich

While we Swiss are dealing with a shock-wave of greater proportions – the surrender of our neutrality as well as the sacrificial interference with our financial centre on the altar of US-UK interests – the Federal Council is already seizing the next opportunity to satisfy foreign powers.

On 29 March, the Federal Council instructed the Federal Administration to “draw up key parameters for a negotiating mandate with the European Union (EU)”.¹ What can that sudden rush be all about? Just because the EU Commission is pushing and threatening? It has been doing so for years. If you wash away the foam, the new variant has more or less the same content as the “institutional framework agreement” with Brussels the negotiations for which the Federal Council broke off in May 2021 – for good reasons. The “Conference of Cantonal Governments (CdC)” supports the new variant. But there are also weighty opposing voices with strong arguments.

Horizontal or vertical? From Brussels everything comes vertically, from above

Translated into somewhat comprehensible German, the following contents of the Federal Council’s media release remain: The 2021 Framework Agreement would have packaged the EU rules into a single “horizontal” (framework) agreement that would have applied to all (previous or future) agreements.

The “vertical solution” propagated today by the Federal Council would consist of the existing bilateral (market access) agreements and, for good measure, a “whole package with new concrete agreements (including electricity, food safety and health)”. So, apropos of nothing, the Federal Council wants to smuggle three new agreements into its “package” ...

In addition to the rules that apply to all, corresponding special rules are to be included in the individual agreements. For example, the Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons would additionally regulate wage protection or the limits of social assistance for new immigrants.

At best, this distinction confuses people’s minds, because the whole system is and remains vertical, it is namely imposed by Brussels and incompatible with the Swiss state system. On the subject of wage protection: we might be allowed to carry out a few percent more checks on

“With a fundamental dynamic adoption of law, however, we risk that in case of doubt our laws will no longer be dictated by parliament and the electorate, but by the EU. We must not give this our direct-democratic legislative competence out of our hands.” (*Kompass/Europa*)

construction sites than EU countries, but that is no substitute for effective Swiss wage protection measures – are the trade unions to be fobbed off in this way?

We have no reason to show signs of weakness towards the EU. In fact, we have a lot to offer our neighbours: Free movement of persons, transit traffic and power lines through the Alps, a domestic market with strong purchasing power (more imports than exports in Switzerland compared to the EU), reliability as a trading partner.

CdC ready for new negotiations with the EU – with reservations

On 24 March 2023, the “Conference of Cantonal Governments CdC” published a media release entitled “The cantons support new negotiations with the EU”. According to this, the cantonal governments have “unanimously” agreed to a “new standpoint determination concerning European policy”. The CdC is an imitation of the EU ministerial conferences and has replaced the cooperation of the cantons in our once strong federalist system with its rough edges by a central office in Bern – without us citizens having legitimised these arrangements adopted by our cantonal governments. And are they (the cantonal governments) truly all supposed to agree on such a momentous matter?

The CdC expresses itself as follows in its position paper²:

– Legal certainty: The CdC hopes that a new treaty will lead to “a long-term and stable relationship” with the EU instead of the “creeping erosion of the bilateral agreements”. *Note: The “creeping erosion” is not due to Switzerland – we have always complied with the treaties – it is a consequence of the treaty-breaking harassment used by the Brussels bureaucracy to wear us down. Would a new “package” give us more legal security than the previous bilateral agreements? The contracting party remains the same ...*

- Adoption of EU law: The CdC is prepared to “agree to a dynamic adoption of law”, subject to the “approval of the Federal Council, Parliament and the people”. *Note: We have already gained experience with this kind of reservation, for example after the acceptance of the federal popular initiative “Against Mass Immigration” by our sovereign. Its text has been laid down in the Federal Constitution for nine years (Art. 121a) and stipulates: “Switzerland shall manage the immigration of foreigners independently”, with maximum numbers and quotas. Yet in implementing this constitutional provision, the Federal Council and the parliamentary majority joined forces with EU bodies against their own people and passed an anaemic law that reflects the will of the citizens in no way.*
- Dispute resolution: The CdC favours “a treaty-based mechanism for the settlement of disputes” and “accepts” that the ECJ should “ensure a coherent interpretation” of EU law adopted by Switzerland. *Note: With these two sentences, the central office of our 26 cantonal governments subordinates itself to the counterparty’s court.*
- Monitoring: Here the CdC does show a mind of its own: “The cantonal governments continue to reject supranational monitoring of the application of the agreements with the EU. The correct application and implementation of the agreements is the responsibility of the two contracting parties in their respective territories.” *Note: They are right! The planned agreement would also affect the cantons and put their very own tasks in the federal state “on the line”. Only: The EU Commission will never, ever relinquish control to the cantons (see next paragraph).*
- Ban on state aid: The Federal Council prefers to omit this point, also in its media release of 29 March. The fact is that in the case of the *public service*, which is deeply rooted in the people,

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Critical Swiss voices on the “Framework Agreement II”

Alliance Compass/Europe: Switzerland’s unique political system must be protected

“As an internationally oriented economy, Switzerland is dependent on productive relations with other states. [...] At the same time, Switzerland has a unique political system characterised by direct democratic decisions and a high degree of stability. This system has contributed significantly to our great social consensus and to today’s prosperity. That is why we want to preserve and protect this system.”

“*Kompass/Europa* is committed to ensuring that our country can continue to decide independently on the nature of its relations with Europe and the world [...] and supports the further development of Switzerland-EU relations on an equal footing, i.e. respecting our sovereignty under international law as well as our democratic institutions and federalist structures, including the associated constitutional popular rights.” (from the manifesto of the *Allianz Kompass/Europa*)¹

Carl Baudenbacher: “Into the EU in a camouflage suit”

“But anyone who analyses things soberly finds that the ‘package approach’ is nothing more than a masked InstA [Institutional Agreement] II. The fact that the non-neutral ECJ would in effect have ju-

risdiction to decide most conflicts, without the federal court having any role to play, would make the relevant treaties ‘unequal treaties’.”

“In this way, the Federal Council remains true to the camouflage approach that has determined its European policy since 2013. The addressee of the camouflage is not – as might be expected – the other side; the camouflage continues to be directed at the people and the cantons. Whether these supreme constitutional bodies will honour this approach in a referendum?”²

Former Finnish Transport Minister Anne Berner: No legal certainty through agreements with the EU

“It is often claimed that legal certainty can only be achieved through subordination to the ECJ. At the moment, however, it is rather the case that, with its policy of pinpricks and sanctions, Brussels contributes to legal uncertainty. It is therefore difficult to understand when the Swiss side presents the EU’s demands as being in Switzerland’s interest.”³

Urs Wietlisbach: “Why are you Swiss doing so well? You have no raw materials, you have nothing!”

“But the ultimate goal of the European Union is a fundamental dynamic adoption of law. And that is an attack on di-

rect democracy, on federalism – on Switzerland’s strengths. I travel around the world a lot, and people always ask me: ‘Why are you doing so well? You have no raw materials, you have nothing!’ If we think it’s because we’re smarter or work harder than the rest of the world, that’s not true. It is true that we are diligent and certainly not the stupidest, but it is due to our direct democratic system, our federalism. We must not give up this system.”⁴

¹ https://kompasseuropa.ch/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Manifest_DE.pdf.

² In: *Schweizer Monat*, March 2023. Carl Baudenbacher is a lawyer and visiting professor at the London School of Economics. He was president of the EFTA Court from 2003 to 2017.

³ Berner, Anne. “Innenpolitischer Realismus im Verhältnis Schweiz – EU” (Domestic political realism in the relationship between Switzerland and the EU). Guest commentary in: *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 24 March 2023. Anne Berner is a Finnish-Swiss dual citizen.

⁴ Gafafer, Tobias; Tanner, Samuel. “Der Krieg bedeutet nicht, dass sich die Schweiz der EU annähern muss» (The war does not mean that Switzerland must move closer to the EU)”. Interview with Urs Wietlisbach, co-founder of *Kompass/Europa*. In: *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 24 March 2023.

“Switzerland–EU: Further development ...” continued from page 5

no stone would be left standing if we accepted the EU ban on state aid. An electricity agreement, for example, is in fact not possible as long as the Swiss hydroelectric power plants are largely owned by the cantons and municipalities and the population rejects privatisation. The CdC leadership is well aware of this, but believes “that in the case of market access agreements with the EU, there is no way around adopting the EU’s state aid rules [...]”. In this dilemma, it dithers about what to do and finally demands, rather unrealistically, that state aid regulations “on the one hand will not significantly encroach on the competences of the can-

tons and that on the other hand already existing state aid should, as far as possible, fall under exemption regulations [...]”.

The German “Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action” dampens such hopes: “The member states have decided that state aid control is the exclusive competence of the European Commission (‘guardian of the EU treaties’) [...] Therefore, all planned state aid-relevant measures must be notified or even formally notified to and approved by the European Commission.”³

The direct-democratic and federalist Swiss state model is simply not compatible with the EU. The following letter to the Federal Council makes this crystal clear.

Kompass/Europa to the Federal Council: Swiss-style constructive criticism

Kompass/Europa is a broad, non-partisan alliance of entrepreneurs, politicians and many other citizens, which already helped the Federal Council to stop negotiations with Brussels on the Framework Agreement in May 2021. On 23 March, *Kompass/Europa* wrote an “Open Letter to the Federal Council”⁴.

The authors call on the Federal Council to “only give a negotiating mandate that respects the interests of the Swiss people and economy”. They point to the fact that they had always supported the bilateral path and were open to a selective adoption of law in individual areas, “with a fundamental dynamic adoption of law, however, we risk that in case of doubt our laws will no longer be dictated by parliament and the electorate, but by the EU. We must not give this our direct-democratic legislative competence out of our hands.” Like many other voices, *Kompass/Europa* also states that the ECJ as a court of the opposing party is not suitable for settling disputes; rather, “a neutral, clarifying instance is needed. This is one of the things we miss in the current discussion.”

““Why are you doing so well? You have no raw materials, you have nothing!” If we think it’s because we’re smarter or work harder than the rest of the world, that’s not true. It is true that we are diligent and certainly not the stupidest, but it is due to our direct democratic system, our federalism. We must not give up this system.” (Urs Wietlisbach)

Our army secured peace for Switzerland peace during the Second World War (Part 1)

by Gotthard Frick



Gotthard Frick
(picture ma)

In the “*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*” of 10 March 2023, several letters to the editor were published under the title “Switzerland of the masochists” dealing with questions of neutrality, army and security policy. Among them one

finds the assertion that not our army, but our “business” (supply of weapons and ammunition) with Nazi Germany had kept it from attacking our country. Those who claim this were certainly born after the Second World War, in contrast to the author of this answer, who experienced this time very consciously as a youngster. In the following it will be shown that this statement is not correct in this regard.

In war, everything is at stake for the peoples concerned. It must be won under all circumstances. All other considerations, concerns, even morality, are secondary. It is not surprising, therefore, that all the significant armies deployed in Western Europe, including the armed forces of democratic states friendly to Switzerland, considered an attack on Switzerland (the French as early as 1937, the British, the Italians and, after arriving in Europe, the United States). But all concluded that our army was too strong for a successful attack. To show this, key sentences from attack plans on our country of all major powers involved are reproduced.

Attack plans against Switzerland – the motives of different countries

The main reasons for possible attacks on our country were different: ideological

“Switzerland–EU: Further development ...”
continued from page 6

The Alliance recommends the Federal Council “not to continue the negotiations on the current basis”, if the EU does not back down from its conditions, because “we value our grassroots democratic rights and our long-term locational advantages more highly than short-term transaction cost advantages from a possible treaty package with the EU. Last but not least, we are convinced that you need to be persistent vis-à-vis the EU in order to obtain the necessary domestic political support for Switzerland’s future European policy.”

The letter to the Federal Council concludes with the supportive words: “For

(creation of the Greater German Reich), elimination of one of the last major non-German friendly armies in Western Europe, takeover of our North-South and East-West transversals, takeover of our economy, a possible occupation of Switzerland to forestall one by the enemy, etc.

It is true that Switzerland supplied arms and even more things to Germany, but also to Great Britain and other countries. For example, at the time of the great German air raids on Great Britain, it had reinforced its fleet with 1500 anti-aircraft guns by the end of 1940. Most importantly and urgently, however, the country needed a large number of Swiss machine tools for its own armaments industry, which we also supplied. Since the USA also needed such machines, they even concluded an economic compensation agreement with Switzerland at the end of 1942. In its agreements with Germany, Switzerland continually reduced the volume of mutual trade, most recently on June 29, 1944, to as little as 20% of the deliveries at the beginning of the war.

As long as there are wars, potential attackers on Switzerland will ask themselves – as they have in the past – the questions:

- Do the Swiss people want to defend themselves?
- Does it therefore have the necessary army?

France: hesitation, waiting, defeat – despite military superiority

Germany attacked France and the Benelux countries on May 10, 1940. Both sides had a total of about 140 divisions each, including 10 British and 20 Belgian on the Allied side. Of all the heavy weapons – guns, tanks, fighter planes – the French army possessed considerably

the complex and demanding decisions you have to make, we would like to wish you serenity and express our confidence. Good solutions or even new approaches need time. We have that.” ●

¹ “Bundesrat beschliesst das weitere Vorgehen im Hinblick auf ein Verhandlungsmandat” (Federal Council decides on further procedure with a view to a negotiating mandate). *Media release* of 29 March 2023

² Conference of Cantonal Governments KdK. *Beziehungen Schweiz-EU. Standortbestimmung der Kantone* (Switzerland-EU relations. Status Report of the Cantons) of 24 March 2023

³ <https://www.bmwk.de/Redaktion/DE/Artikel/Europa/beihilfenkontrollpolitik.html>

⁴ <https://kompassseuropa.ch/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Offener-Brief-an-den-Bundesrat-1.pdf>



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Zeit-Fragen, Postfach 247,
9602 Bazenhaid.

more than the German Wehrmacht. Moreover, the French tanks were far superior to the German ones on the battlefield. France also still had its mighty *Maginot fortification line* on the border with Germany, while Germany had begun building the 650 km long *Siegfried Line* on the opposite side only shortly before the outbreak of war.

In 1939, *Hitler* initially had only 34 divisions on the Western Front, of which only 12 were ready for war, since the bulk of the Wehrmacht was deployed for the war against Poland (September 1–28, 1939). *Hitler* feared a French attack during this time and inquired daily whether such an attack had begun. It was only after Poland’s defeat that *Hitler* was able to commit a large number of troops to the attack on France.

Missed opportunity – consequences for Switzerland

France had not seized its unique opportunity to end the war quickly by attacking Germany, which was initially far inferior in the West. This was not only a strategic mistake, but also a breach of contract, since it had committed itself by treaty to support Poland and Czechoslovakia with its own troops in the event of an attack. Czechoslovakia with its army in case of attack. (Both had already been attacked by Germany.) Its army was completely demoralized.

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"Our army secured peace ..."

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This had also been noted in April 1940 by a Swiss officer mission under Col. *Samuel Gonard*, which General *Guisan* had delegated to the French army with the task of preparing cooperation in the event of a German attack. However, after the shockingly negative impression the French army made on them, they came to the conclusion that our country would have to defend itself alone.

Switzerland then prepared to go it alone with Operation Order No. 13 of May 24, 1941, which triggered the construction of the *réduit*. At the entrances of the *réduit*, it built the big national fortifications, St. Maurice, Gotthard and Sargans. The bulk of the army was moved to the *réduit* with its 16 wartime airfields and fortresses, and preparations were made for the disabling of industry, the blowing up of all major bridges, tunnels and roads, and much more. On July 25, 1940, General *Guisan* summoned all Swiss officers from Major on to the Rütli Report and ordered "readiness for unconditional resistance" at the cradle of the Swiss Confederation.

"Das Reich", the Nazi newspaper, wrote on July 22, 1941: "The Swiss can claim to be the only country in Europe where no volunteers (for the German Wehrmacht) can be recruited." In all, only 2,000 Swiss, 75 % of them living in Germany, volunteered for service in the Wehrmacht. One, who first had to serve his sentence for this, then made up for the refresher courses he had missed during his participation in the Wehrmacht in Russia in the company led by the author. Because of his great war experience, the battalion commander, a professional officer, always called him in as an expert during inspections.

Shortly after the beginning of the war, the army staff introduced vacations also for Jewish conscripts on their holidays. The German "Welt-Dienst", financed by the state, commented as follows: "Switzerland can claim to be the only remaining Jewish paradise in Europe."

**June 1940 to September 1944:
Surrounded by Axis powers**

The Swiss assessment of France's army was already confirmed on 22 June 1940 by its surrender, only six weeks after the German attack of 10 May 1940. Until the arrival of the US troops at the border near Geneva on 7 September 1944, Switzerland was from then on completely surrounded by both Axis powers, and even by the German Wehrmacht after the surrender of Italy on 9 September 1943.

In Switzerland, strict rationing had been introduced shortly after the start of

the war because of the general shortage in all areas. Thanks to the cultivation battle, our degree of self-sufficiency in food could be increased in the course of the war years from an initial 50 % to 59 %. But 41 % of our needs still had to be imported from all over the world. The warring parties had to give their consent for this.

Tenacious negotiating skills

Especially from Germany, the latter could only be obtained in return for concessions from Switzerland. Switzerland was entirely dependent on Germany for vital imports, including coke and coal. Germany exploited this advantageous situation to force Switzerland to make concessions. Thus, towards the end of 1942, i.e. during the winter, it stopped the monthly export of 150,000 tonnes of coal per month in order to put us under pressure. At the beginning of 1943, Switzerland reacted by breaking off the negotiations. But Hitler then gave orders in March 1943 not to push the pressure on Switzerland so far that the negotiations broke down. On 23 June 1943, Switzerland ended the contractless state with a new agreement with Germany, at the same time reducing its delivery obligation by 20%. (For lack of sufficient quantities of heating material, the central heating in the author's parents' house in Zurich froze in the wartime winter of 1943/44. The radiators burst under the pressure of the ice and the residual water flowed through the floors and walls to the lower floors).

A large part of the Swiss gold and currency reserves were stored in the USA. On 21 June 1941, the USA blocked the credit balances and gold reserves of all continental European countries. Individual departments of the US government even demanded that Switzerland stop its trade with Germany altogether (probably unaware of Switzerland's geo-graphical position in the middle of German-occupied Europe). But since the USA also urgently needed Swiss machine tools and precision machines, Switzerland was able to conclude an economic compensation agreement with them and Great Britain at the end of 1942.

**Uniquely rapid mobilisation
capability of the Swiss Armed Forces**

One of the strengths of the Swiss army was its very rapid mobilisation. After a visit to our country, the *Lord Mayor* of London wrote in the "Times" of 11 November 1938 that no army in the world could mobilise as quickly as the Swiss. He recommended that the British government adopt the Swiss system.

In July 1938, the German General Staff Captain *von Xylander* (the later General) visited a live firing of Swiss mountain troops. His report on the event said: "The troops make a good impression. The soldiers work with passion and earnestness [...], they are somewhat ponderous (Bernese Oberlanders), but very tough and strong and reliable [...]. It must be acknowledged that the fire control and effect in firing the artillery as well as the heavy infantry weapons were very agile and remarkably good."

Acclimatisation (to the reality of the battlefield) is of great importance to all armies. In the German attack planning of the summer of 1943, the author General *Böhme* said on the subject: "If Switzerland succeeds in getting through the first two weeks (of a German attack), numerous troops accustomed to fire will be available."

The 1940 TANNENBAUM attack study stated that part of the Swiss border troops would be ready for combat within five hours, the border, mountain and light brigades in one day and the entire army in two days. According to a report by the German Chief of Staff, *Halder*, dated 27 March 1940, the Italian army needed two weeks to mobilise 20 divisions. In his war diary on 26 March 1940, he wrote "that bypassing the front through an undefended Switzerland would have been a tempting possibility".

On 4 October 1942, the attack planning of the German army of occupation in France warned against being misled by the small number of Swiss units that had just been mobilised, since the conscripts on leave were immediately ready for action again. A reference to our unique mobilisation system.

**Réduit: strategy
instead of conceptlessness**

In response to Germany's military domination of Europe, General *Guisan* created the Alpine Redoubt, or *Réduit*. The bulk of the army was now in the mountains. The emphasis of the subsequent German attack plans was now on occupying the *Réduit* entrances as quickly as possible with airborne troops in order to prevent the moving-in Swiss conscripts from reaching their areas of operations. *Guisan* reacted to this threat by having the Alpine crossings (bridges, tunnels, etc.) and the electricity supply, which were ready to be blown up, permanently secured by strong combat units, even when the bulk of the army had been demobilised. The production facilities in the country were prepared to be rendered useless by the practised removal of key elements (e. g. from machines). •

Is German great power politics also unfolding in the war against Russia?

by Karl-Jürgen Müller

When I read a few days ago that 196 of the 293 battle tanks that Western governments have already delivered to Ukraine or intend to deliver in the near future are coming directly from Germany¹ – in addition to battle tanks of German production from other countries for which the German government has granted export licences – I asked myself again: How is it possible that a German government – 80 years after a war of extermination against the peoples of the Soviet Union waged with the utmost brutality and 80 years after Stalingrad and Kursk – does such a thing: to wage war against Russia again on the front line? Without having been attacked or threatened! To wage war by means of Ukrainians who are giving their lives by the tens of thousands for a war that brings their country nothing but death and destruction. A war in which people with the same history are now shooting at each other, people who have lived together peacefully for decades.

Not a “Zeitenwende”

There is the view that the Western war against Russia is being waged by the USA, that the European states are just vassals under pressure, taking part (rather unwillingly) in this war – against their own interests.

I think that this view must be put into perspective. For Central European states like Poland and the Baltic states, their own anti-Russian reflex is obvious. Their current governments are entirely on a war course. Is the German government now starting to escalate German great power politics and to wage war in the process – very much with its own interests in mind? And is this perhaps not a “Zeitenwende” (turning point) after all, but a policy that has been emerging step by step since the German “reunification” with its “Berlin Republic” – and also in the years before that, during the old Federal Republic?

Here are just a few key words:

German great power and war policy for more than 30 years

- The German grip on the best parts of the economically and politically crisis-ridden Yugoslavia since the mid-1980s, the pioneering role in the (ethno-politically justified and economically motivated) dismemberment of the country and the early secret service support of the terrorist UÇK in Kosovo.
- The “piecemeal strategy” that began immediately after 1990 and militarised the country: step by step from national defence towards the readiness to wage

wars of aggression in violation of international law.

- The German pioneering role not only in the eastern enlargement of the EU (German Enlargement Commissioner *Günther Verheugen*), but also in NATO.²
- The German pioneering role in the so-called *Eastern Partnership* of the EU and thus the access to states bordering directly on Russia – while at the same time deliberately ousting Russia.
- The German role in the unconstitutional change of government in Ukraine in February 2014.
- The German foul play with the *Minsk agreements*: not an honest attempt to bring about a peaceful solution in Ukraine, but preparation for war against Russia.

Sure: it never were the Germans as a whole who did this, nor the German power elites as a whole. Chancellors *Kohl* and *Schröder* and weighty parts of the SPD, for example, did not go for confrontation with Russia, but for economic (and political) advantages from a good relationship with this country and its government. There were also such interests in the German economy. But weren't these – in the long run – just side-tracks?

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“Enable a customarily diligent work and a peaceful life without stoked fear”

Open letter of the Alliance of Saxon Entrepreneurs n. e. V. (ASU) dated 27 February 2023 to the governments of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Russian Federation as well as to the Russian people

Dear Sir or Madam.

We, the Alliance of Saxon Entrepreneurs, would like to address you with this open letter today.

We are an association that has set itself the task of representing the interests of Saxon companies on the basis of the Basic Law, while upholding democracy, freedom of expression and the rule of law. Currently, more than 300 entrepreneurs belong to our association, representing several thousand jobs mainly in the small and medium-sized business sector in Saxony. As different as the industries are in which we are all active, we are nevertheless united by our concern for the future of our companies and thus also by our concern for the future of our families and our homeland.

We are committed to all conceivable measures aimed at restoring normal conditions in Saxony – conditions that are not characterised by war, sanctions, agitation and paternalism and that allow

us to work diligently as usual and to live peacefully without stoking fear.

Unfortunately, we currently see the danger that our federal government is probably doing everything possible to intensify the danger of war for the whole of Europe. We as a business association, as entrepreneurs and as people do not agree with this! It is completely incomprehensible for us how it can be possible that a country, which has already punished itself and the whole world twice with a world war, now ignites again and thus conjures up the danger of a further, large conflict. We openly oppose this aggressive policy of the German government and call on all parties involved in the conflict to seek and find peaceful and diplomatic solutions! None of us wants to put the existence of his company, his employees, his family and his own person at risk just to satisfy geopolitical dictates from overseas.

We German entrepreneurs from the small and middle class are a peaceful

people. We reject any conflict that is carried out with weapons! Weapons always mean that people die. We stand up for life – for a peaceful life together and next to each other! We wish peaceful coexistence and cooperation within Germany, but especially between Germany and Russia. We want to continue to trade peacefully together for mutual benefit. We do not want to lose our sons and daughters, nor our employees in a warlike conflict!

Therefore, we strongly appeal to all parties to work together and diplomatically for the peaceful well-being of our peoples and to stop any warlike action as well as arms deliveries immediately!

With peaceful greetings

Frank Liske & D. Jörg List,
Board of Directors ASU Alliance of
Saxon Entrepreneurs

Source: <https://www.abkmu.de/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/ASU-A3.-Presseerklarung-27.01.23-offener-Brief-Frieden.pdf>

“Is German great power politics ...”

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War mongers in Berlin

Then the attempts to convince the German government with arguments that Russia is waging a war in defence of Russians and Russia against a Ukraine that has been made willing to go to war and, above all, against an aggressive West, and that those responsible in Ukraine have step by step – even before 24 February 2022 – been establishing an extremely nationalist dictatorship that has nothing to do with “freedom”, “rule of law” and “democracy”³ cannot bear fruit either. For the real war mongers are not only sitting in Washington, but also in Berlin. World War II has already shown that fascist regimes can be used for wars. Hitler’s anti-Bolshevism was not just a German thing. History can repeat itself in new constellations.

Prejudices

This time, German politics has managed to avoid a two-front war as in the First and Second World Wars. With massive disinformation and propaganda, they have managed to make large parts of the German population believe that they are helping an innocently (“unprovoked”) attacked small country that is fighting for nothing more than a life in freedom and democracy – against an overpowering and dictatorially led, inhuman aggressor. They wanted nothing more than peace, wanted to avoid any escalation, but now must do everything to make the “aggressor” lose its “brutal war of aggression” (“create peace with more weapons”).

The fact that this disinformation and propaganda can be effective with many people in Germany is also because old, deep-seated prejudices against Russia and the Russians are being served – many times more strongly in the West than in the East of the country. The fact that the clocks tick differently in the East is shown by the many voices against the war from this part of the country which do not come from “extremists” (see also box).

Is there an outlook?

On 8 April 2023, RT DE headlined: “Why the West deserves a punch in the face.” It

“The question of Germany’s role in Europe is of central importance. The much-heard demand that Europe should break away from the USA and follow an independent path in world politics can only make sense if this independent path is defined as a path of international law, of equal rights for all states and peoples, of cooperation and peace.”

would be better if in the West, if especially in Germany, not just a few but millions of citizens actively got behind a call like that of the Berlin Peace Conference “Dialogue, not weapons – peace with Russia” (cf. “Let’s dare more humanity!”). But time is running out for this.

The question of Germany’s role in Europe is of central importance. The much-heard demand that Europe should break away from the USA and follow an independent path in world politics can only make sense if this independent path is defined as a path of international law, of equal rights for *all* states and peoples, of cooperation and peace. In this respect, very critical questions must be asked of German politics over the past 30 years. These questions also go to other European states. But especially to Germany, because since the financial crisis of 2008 at the latest, Germany has claimed the “leadership” in EU Europe and has not been very squeamish in its treatment of other European states. Many still remember former Finance Minister *Steinbrück*, who in 2009 threatened to send the cavalry towards Switzerland, and the German dictates in the euro crisis since 2010 (*Volker Kauder*, parliamentary group leader CDU/CSU in the German Bundestag, 2011: “Now [...] Europe is speaking German.”).

Most likely the truth is: conditions in Germany have to change fundamentally, otherwise also a Europe without the US will not be a supporter of peace. •

¹ <https://www.anti-spiegel.ru/2023/deutschland-liefert-zwei-drittel-der-fast-300-westlichen-panzern-fuer-kiew/> of 5 April 2023

² Hardly remembered today it was the German Defence Minister *Volker Rühle* (CDU) who pushed for NATO’s eastward enlargement from 1993 onwards,

initially against the objections of the then US President *Bill Clinton*, and that in the years 1993–1994, which were decisive years for the eastward enlargement, *Rühle*’s predecessor in office, the CDU politician *Manfred Wörner*, was NATO Secretary General.

³ Cf. for example most recently <https://globalbridge.ch/in-der-ukraine-wird-unter-dem-laerm-des-krieges-eine-oligarchische-diktatur-errichtet/> of 2 April 2023 and <https://www.nachdenkenseiten.de/?p=96200&pdf=96200> of 11 April 2023

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“Let’s dare more humanity!”

Lecture at the congress

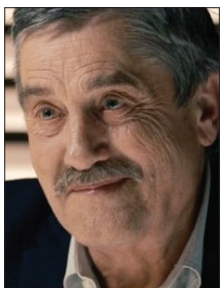
“Dialogue instead of weapons – peace with Russia” in Berlin on 27 March 2023

by Wolfgang Effenberger

km. In their answers to the question of who and what caused the war in Ukraine and how this war can be ended, those who once called themselves the “peace movement” in Germany do not agree. The spectrum ranges from the demand for arms deliveries to Ukraine (so even in the formerly peace-moving German official churches) to the demand for an immediate ceasefire and subsequent peace negotiations. Characteristic of this is the adherence to ideological and party-political positions as well as marginalisation and exclusion.

In contrast, the “East German Board of Trustees of Associations” (OKV) – which is accused of being “anti-reunification”, but which itself speaks of working for the “inner unity of the German people” – had taken two letters from former high-ranking GDR military officers as an opportunity to invite speakers from East and West Germany for 27 March 2023¹, who have quite different ideological positions. They agree that the war in Ukraine poses a massive danger to world peace and that everything must be done to achieve “peace with Russia” – not because one has to be a friend of Russia, but as “an imperative of reason” – said the former GDR agent at NATO and today’s publicist Rainer Rupp at the beginning of the conference.

We document the lecture of the former Bundeswehr officer and today’s publicist Wolfgang Effenberger and the Final declaration.



Wolfgang Effenberger (picture ma)

Dear Friends of Peace,

thank you for the invitation. And thanks to Generals Manfred Grätz and Sebald Daum, without whose courageous letters this event would probably not take place.

In 1946, I was born two months after my parents were expelled from Silesia in South Oldenburg and then became a soldier at the age of 18. In 1973, as a young captain, I had an insight into the planned nuclear battlefield in my assignment as a NATO officer during the Cold War. In my function as a response consultant, I wrote orders for the so-called emergency on this reddish order paper.

Appeal: Dialogue instead of weapons – peace with Russia

We, the participants of our forum today, call on all peace-loving people to join our protest against war and for a just peace.

In the great danger in which our peoples currently find themselves, we no longer have time to argue about party-political differences and different socio-political orientations. Instead, we must concentrate (focus) on what unites us!

The future of our children and grandchildren and the preservation of human life on our planet require that Germany and its economy do not fall victim to a policy of Western “rules-based order” that wants to “destroy” Russia and is preparing for war against China.

The USA and NATO are standing with their military power on Russia’s borders, arming Taiwan against China and thus threatening the security of the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China.

This policy is accompanied by economic, financial and media wars, sanctions that violate international law and by misinformation associated with the dismantling of democracy and freedom of expression.

Double standards characterise the West’s “rules-based world order”. In reality, it is an imperial war policy led by the USA. For this, the peoples pay the blood toll and lose their hard-won social achievements. Since 1999, the war of aggression against the rest of Yugoslavia in violation of international law, the USA has mandated its own war operations in accordance with its so-called “rules-based international order”.

The war in Ukraine, planned for the long term and started in 2014 at the latest, is also before our eyes on a daily basis.

Germany, as a warring party, is contributing to the further escalation of this war with arms supplies, money and military training on the front line. It is arming, making the population ready for war and persecuting peace activists. It is fuelling hostility against Russia with hatred and incitement. The government violates its oath of office [Article 56 GBL, “... dedicate to the well-being of the German people, ... protect them from harm... ”], violates the most important obligation of the Basic Law: the commandment of peace [Article 26 GBL]. This policy leads to a world war that will know no victors.

Therefore

- we raise our voices to stop the spiral of war,
- we protest against the German support to prolong the war
- and demand an end to this course of war through a just peace that guarantees Russia’s security and a peaceful anti-fascist Ukraine without NATO.

Let us not wait until it’s too late again!

We see our event as a further voice for peace, so that it becomes stronger and gains force in the broadest sense.

Berlin, 27 March 2023

Source: <https://fdvr.de/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Entschliessungend.pdf>

(Translation Current Concerns)

On the back I typed my then secret tasks:

Among others:

- Exploring ADM² blocking points
- Developing impact analyses
- Preparing ADM operations ...

In the so-called defence case, I would have had to lead a nuclear interdiction platoon at that time.

In view of the willingness of the United States to accept nuclear devastation here in Europe, I soon realised that peace in freedom must have the highest priority. It is the prerequisite for a dignified life. Freedom and truthfulness are basic prerequisites for peace. In war there is neither freedom nor truth nor democracy, but only unimaginable suffering on both sides!

In 1989 I hoped that real peace would finally come to Europe! But my hopes

were disappointed. Russia was plundered, and NATO, contrary to its promises, was steadily expanded eastwards, culminating in the coup in Ukraine.

The first casualty in war is always the truth. I have consciously experienced this as a contemporary witness, namely in the illegal wars of the USA: Vietnam, Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Syria.

The conditions for a free, democratic society are hardly given today.

We must not allow ourselves to be manipulated into a war by means of lies, as happened, for example, in the Yugoslavian war in 1999. As always, tangible economic and geopolitical interests were behind the usual phrases of freedom and democracy. These were bluntly explained at the end of April 2000 at a conference of the

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“Let’s dare more humanity!”

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US State Department on the Balkans and NATO enlargement to the East in Bratislava: “In the forthcoming NATO enlargement, the spatial situation between the Baltic Sea and Anatolia must be restored as it was at the height of the Roman expansion. To this end, Poland must be surrounded to the north and south with democratic states as neighbours, Romania and Bulgaria must ensure the land connection to Turkey and Serbia must be permanently excluded from European development.” This plan has been consistently implemented ever since.

The US *Camp Bondsteel* secures the US military presence from Kosovo to Kashmir for 99 years. The Yugoslav war also let the mischief of Polish Marshal *Pilsudski* out of the bottle again – 100 years ago, Pilsudski aspired to a Polish-dominated space between the Baltic and the Black Sea.

On 21 July 2021, the USA and Germany pledged to secure Ukrainian sovereignty and energy security. And beyond that to expand the Three Seas Initiative – here the Adriatic has now been added. Poland is now the geostrategic anchor of the US aircraft carrier in Europe.

After the USA failed to get a UN mandate for its war against Yugoslavia in 1999, it has since been mandating its wars itself. This means that the law of the jungle rules.

In July 2009, I spoke at the Berlin Peace Festival on the topic of “New Wars for Raw Materials?”

My main points were:

1. the Kosovo war as a “Zeitenwende” (turning point)
2. the return of geo-power politics
3. the militarisation of the EU.

Article 42 of the EU Treaty makes military missions “to safeguard the values of the Union and serve its interests” real. In plain language, this means wars of aggression to protect economic and strategic interests.

In 2010, I received an invitation to the Dresden Symposium for the first time. I gladly think back to Colonel Professor Dr Dr *Ernst Woit*, who repeatedly invited me not only as a speaker, but even personally. The working papers of the *Dresden Study Group* consistently dealt with trend-setting topics, such as “Multipolar Collective Security instead of *Pax americana*” in 2011. Since then, I have been advocating for a multipolar peace order in my books, e. g. “Wiederkehr der Hasardeure

– Schattenstrategen, Kriegstreiber, stille Profiteure 1914 und heute” (Return of the Plungers – Shadow Strategists, Warmongers, Silent Profiteers 1914 and Today), together with *Willy Wimmer*.

In July 2014, we wrote in the foreword: “The same circles that instrumentalised national conflicts for their own interests a hundred years ago are at work again today. Once again, poker is being played without hesitation and the danger of a world war, and with it new and immeasurable suffering, is being accepted.”

This was followed in 2016 by “Geoimperialism – the Destruction of the World”. In 2020 the “Black Book EU & NATO – Why the World Cannot Find Peace” and in 2022 “The Underestimated Power – From Geopolitics to Biopolitics – Plutocrats Transform the World”.

On 21 September 2022, the *International Day of World Peace*, I spoke as a former member of the Bundeswehr together with retired as well as active colonels and generals of the Austrian Armed Forces on *Human Rights Square* in Vienna. There they called for Austria’s legally enshrined neutrality to be maintained. While the Federal Republic of Germany rejected Stalin’s offer of neutrality in spring 1952 in favour of integration with the West, the Austrians implemented perpetual neutrality with constitutional rank in 1955.

On 27 October 2022, the *Biden* administration adopted the new *National Security Strategy*. First on the list is the growing multidisciplinary threat from China and its challenge in the Indo-Pacific region, as

well as the challenge in Europe emanating from Russia. North Korea and Iran follow. The new nuclear strategy explicitly rules out any renunciation of a nuclear first strike. The US Congressional handouts of 15 November 2022 quote from the new National Security Strategy: “The United States is a global power with global interests. We are stronger in every region because we are engaged in the other regions.” The Congressional paper goes on to say: “[...] US policymakers pursue the goal of preventing the emergence of regional hegemony in Eurasia [...]; US military operations in World War I and World War II, as well as numerous U.S. military operations and day-to-day operations since World War II [...] have apparently contributed in no small part to supporting this goal.”

For a century, it has been mainly about increasing the wealth of a group of tycoons in the City of London and on Wall Street. A look at current financial flows confirms this. For example, the financial elites in the US and the UK seem to have little interest in a settlement of the Ukraine conflict. Today, the same circles would like to lead us into a third world war.

It would be extremely tragic if *Thomas Mann’s* appeal to European listeners in 1953 were to go unheard. In his American exile, he had recognised the tendency of the USA “to treat Europe as an economic colony, a military base, a glacis in the future nuclear crusade against Russia, as a piece of earth that may be antiquarian and worth travelling to, but whose complete ruin they will not give a damn about when it comes to the struggle for world domination.”

Chinese President *Xi* bid farewell in Moscow on 22 March, saying “Change is coming that hasn’t happened in 100 years. And we are driving this change together.” – Change towards a multipolar world.

The globe must no longer be the plaything of an irresponsible financial oligarchy that prepares the ground for ruthless exploitation. Let us throw the sinister narrative of “good here, evil there” into the dustbin of history! Let us outlaw war! And above all: let us dare more humanity! Thank you! ●



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¹ See for an overview <https://www.nachdenken.de/?p=95840> of 3 April 2023 (editor’s note).

² ADM is the abbreviation for „Atomic Demolition Munition“, i.e. tactical nuclear weapons. It is often also referred to as atomic mines, nuclear mines or nuclear landmines (editor’s note).

On one of the last texts by Marie Luise Kaschnitz: Seismographics of our ‘Culture disturbance’ ‘A world critique in flashes’ is what Hermann Kesten called it

by Peter Küpfer

While tidying up recently, I came across a paperback book that had impressed me when I was younger. Its haunting short texts are slivers, like fragments of a consciousness about what moved people and how it did so in the 1970s, when these texts were written. When I briefly reread individual pages, I was once again and often shaken, as I was in the first reading; I was also trepidatious.

For me, the most disturbing thing about this reencounter was that in these “recordings” of the everyday by *Marie Luise Kaschnitz*, the trepidation from today’s perspective stems from the fact that today they seem like forebodings or premonitions of a dam break that was already looming at the time. Today, more than 50 years after the publication of Kaschnitz’s book, this dam break has become a tangible reality in many aspects. At that time, a deserving German writer felt it and translated it into language. And where are such writers today? I don’t want even to talk about certain German and European female politicians here, although the fate of all of us depends more on them than on an imperturbably sensitive modern female writer.

Whether or not

It was the slim little book “*Steht noch dahin*”, (“Whether or not”) by the German writer Marie Luise Kaschnitz (1901–1974), who was justifiably very well-known in the postwar period, winner of the *Büchner Prize* in 1955, which was still meaningful at the time. Even then, it was difficult to classify these shorter, highly polished texts, which get under the skin, into one of the standard literary genres. The Swiss literary critic *Elsbeth Pulver* calls the book a “collection of short prose texts (reflections, short stories, parables, dreams)”. In them, the author’s “I” appears as “an ageing person who [...] is incessantly forced by time to pay attention”.

When reading these texts, we experience a kind of sensitive contemporaneity that does not simply report, but takes set pieces of modern everyday life as an opportunity to look at them and place them in surprising contexts. In Kaschnitz’s work, this is often done in a dreamlike, intuitive way, but then again with wide-awake observation. The text thereby becomes a sensitively guided seismograph of human and fellow human shocks that “the course of time” brings upon us. This is something that has become rare in our current media and our literature, which

“All my poems were actually only an expression of homesickness for an old innocence or the yearning for an existence newly ordered by the spirit and love [...] everywhere I only tried to direct the reader’s gaze to what was significant to me, to the wonderful possibilities and the deadly dangers of man and to the startling abundance of the world. I have never wanted to give the cheap consolation that some readers expect from poetry, and if my verses [...] were comprehensible, it is because my path in poetry has led me from

nature to man and that I could never completely forget that I was communicating with people, admittedly those who do not shy away from the effort of the unfamiliar and only slowly comprehensible.”

From: Acceptance speech by Marie Luise Kaschnitz (1901–1974) on the occasion of the award of the Georg Büchner Prize, 1955

German Academy for Language and Poetry: <https://www.deutscheakademie.de/de/auszeichnungen/georg-buechner-preis/marie-luise-kaschnitz>

“goes for” outward appearances and the breaking of breaking taboos. (Are there any taboos left to break?)

Even the first text, which gave the collection its title, is stirring: “Stands still there”. What “stands there”, i. e., its outcome, is completely open:¹

*“Whether we get away without being tortured, whether we die a natural death, whether we don’t starve again, search the rubbish bins for potato peelings, whether we are herded in packs, we have seen it [...].”**

Even the “we” makes us hold our breath. What? Such fates concern the world, but not us! But the turn-of-the-century generation of Marie Luise Kaschnitz saw it; many of her friends experienced it firsthand. One only has to consider the realities of the First World War, the years of crisis (which were also years of hunger), then the National Socialists’ rule with their genocide of the Jewish population, but also the organised persecution and killing of Travellers, disabled people, *Jehovah’s Witnesses*, and other opponents of the war, socialists, Christians and communists, then the destruction of Germany in the last months of the Second World War. This cruel bombing of Germany’s major cities was no longer in pursuit of any military objectives but reflected solely the targeted terrorisation of the German civilian population, one of the many unpunished war crimes, this time committed by the other side, which allowed itself to be celebrated as the victor.

But in the 1970s, of course, seeing also meant literally seeing, for everyone, namely through the triumph of television, seeing that the things mentioned were happening again and again – at that time, however, several hundred to a thou-

sand kilometres away from Europe. Were they therefore less painful? This is the writer’s immanent question, which is echoed in the text.

Do we all have to learn the cell-knocking language?

This is how her text continues in the enumeration of what may still threaten us or threaten us again:

“Whether we do not still have to learn the cell-knocking language, to stalk the neighbour, to be stalked by the neighbour, and to weep at the word freedom.”

Here Kaschnitz mentions the secret language practised worldwide by knocking on the walls or the radiators of a cell, depending on the codes of prisoners, many of whom were members of illegal groups or secret organisations. Today we also think of the courageous people who have been languishing in prisons for years for the sole reason that they have brought to light the web of lies, which also exists in the present time, for world-political motives. *Julian Assange*, *Edward Snowden*, *Chelsea Manning* and others: Now they are treated as traitors to the United States. And now, in Berlin, even a courageous speaker at a demonstration against the war in Ukraine is treated as a criminal. His hint that Russia may have acted in self-defence is described as a whitewash of war crimes, and he will be prosecuted.

“Remains to be seen, all remains to be seen ...”

The current exclusion of everything Russian has now reached a level that must be described as pre-racist. Where are the legal and human rights barriers that still hold?

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“On one of the last texts ...”

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Here Kaschnitz, more than 50 years ago, proves to be a true seer. She also followed the Auschwitz trials meticulously and was shocked by the excuses of the defendants that they had done nothing but carry out orders from their superiors, as the law required. The fact that laws can also be unlawful, namely against the guideline of human rights given by nature, which are binding for all people, including governments (the UN’s *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* lists them), is systematically omitted in this litany of justification.

Finally, the author also mentions the danger, which many were aware of at the time, of triggering a catastrophic nuclear strike for the entire world, a danger that the circles of our present-day warmongers do not want to perceive. Such a degree of repression, however, is madness.

“Whether we steal away in time to a white bed or perish in a hundred atomic flashes, whether we manage to die with a hope remains to be seen, all remains to be seen.”

Kaschnitz’s short prose poem ends with this unillusioned conclusion. It leaves everything open, even that the foreseen catastrophe could be preventable. Could, if ...

The starving children of Biafra

In the 1970s, everyone was talking about an extremely bloody war in Africa. At that time, the Biafra war was described as a civil war but was in fact a proxy war, in this respect comparable with today’s war in Ukraine. Biafra is a region in Nigeria where the Ibo population predominates. It has its own traditions and was majority Christian at the time, while the rest of the country is majority Islamist. But that was not the only reason Biafra Province (like Donbass in Ukraine) made demands for partial autonomy to the central government. They were disregarded and the Ibo ethnic group undertook a successful coup against the authoritarian central government. The former colonial power (Great Britain) subsequently supported the central government. In a long-lasting war, the central government finally succeeded in defeating the breakaway province of Biafra, ousting its leaders and making the autonomists compliant again. This was preceded by almost complete isolation, widespread bombing by British fighter planes, an embargo, and economic sanctions, which drove the province of Biafra into famine, with corresponding vic-



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tims, especially children. At that time, only *Caritas International* was able to alleviate the emergency situation to some extent.

This background appears in an impressive short text in the middle of the book. Its very title is multi-layered, “Enfant inconnu” (Text 28). It alludes to war memorials often found in France, dedicated to the unknown soldiers who died in the war, the “soldats inconnus”. The text describes in sober terms how the Queen of England received a shocking Christmas package from Biafra during the time of the Biafra famine:

“Inside the box was nothing of that sort [of benevolent presents from the grateful English population to their beloved queen, P.K.], but rather the corpse of a little child killed by an aerial bomb, from which the mother had separated to put it under the Queen’s Christmas tree, Happy Christmas and you are to blame.”

In a manner typical for Kaschnitz, she goes on imitating the inner state of a “normal” contemporary at the time, who is primarily interested in the scandalous dimension of the matter, but unfortunately not in its true political dimensions:

“I wonder what will happen to this child’s body, whether they will bury it or bury it in Westminster Abbey, which I think would be pretty [...], the Peers with their little crowns, the Archbishop of Canterbury in rega-

lia. The royal children putting their bouquets on the baby coffin, later a tombstone, an Eternal Lamp, about near the poet’s corner, the child of Biafra, l’enfant inconnu.”

Here the poet masterfully plays with the two ways in which great powers deal with unpleasant truths. Either they are swept under the carpet or they are diverted onto the hypocritical track and pretend to be sorry for “it”, thereby serving all the clichés and sentimentalities with which genuine empathy is drowned today.

“That is you, too!”

The 79 other short texts are variations on this theme, each in its own way. Incidents that we “know” from the media or from our everyday lives are examined, not by way of the overall picture but in a partial picture that speaks to us – and then set against a background that is again only hinted at. But these hints always refer back to the central point, the *ecce homo* (this is man): Dear reader, this is the human being who behaves this way or that way. That is you, too. And what do you think of that? This is the question that every text asks, straightforwardly and unavoidably.

Therein lies its radicality, which is not aimed at the politics of the day or mere emotions, but at human concerns. *Tua res agitur* – that is you, too, it is also about you. It takes a lot of nerve to read it; it is not the modern superficial thrill that is addressed, but the nerve of our being: our humanity, sober but serious.

The last text, by the way, is dedicated to the blackbird’s twittering. It stands for the vitality of all good forces – those of nature, to which the human species still belongs, even if we are too little aware of it. Our innate powers to be genuinely affected become stronger when we rejoice. The fact that we can still do this, as witnessed by the sadly rarer blackbirds that chirp despite everything, as long as there is still some blood within them, it is not completely, but nonetheless predominantly in our hands. Hopefully we will find the way.

* All quotations translated by *Current Concerns*

¹ Quoted from the edition *Suhrkamp Paperback* st 57, 1979, ISBN 3-518-06557-2-300, p. 7

Sources:

Kaschnitz, Marie Luise. *Steht noch dahin* (*Whether or not*). Suhrkamp Paperback st 57, 1979, ISBN 3-518-06557-2-300; 1990 edition available in bookshops.

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Plant and promote native perennials and flowers

by Claudia Meier

Which nature lover does not dream of a bedding of plants whose splendour of colour and shape delights the eye for months, which smells wonderfully and in which it creeps and crawls, hums and flutters? Naturally planted containers and areas with native perennials and flowers serve as a recreational and meeting space and as a unique close-up experience of nature for young and old.

What is meant by native wild perennials?

Native wild perennials are perennial plants that settled here after the last ice age, i. e., more than 10,000 years ago. Native wild perennials are optimally adapted to our nature and environmental conditions. This is one of the reasons why they are so easy to care for, robust and undemanding. Together with likewise native animal and plant species, they form valuable communities in which they benefit optimally from each other.

Not to be confused with shrubs, perennials only thrive in the growing season between spring and autumn. With the onset of winter, all above-ground plant parts die. The warmer temperatures of early spring cause the herbaceous shoots of perennials to sprout again from their rhizome, bulb or bulbous stem or from some other storage organ. This cycle repeats itself year after year. The simplest example of this is the snowdrop. Many wild perennials also serve as a tea or as a spice, or delight as a beautiful bouquet of flowers.

Agony ... or rather the joy of choice

The flowering season of native perennials and flowers lasts from early spring until deep autumn. Even in winter, the scrawny stems and seed heads develop a very special, natural beauty and enable insect pupae to survive successfully.

Whether *bellflower*, *mullein*, *mallow* or *St. John's wort* – they are all beautiful. Whether outside on the window sill or balcony, by the garden seat or on the terrace, around the house or in the garden - wild perennials enchant everywhere. Whether in a small box or pot, in a tub, trough or garden is irrelevant. But which wild perennial is suitable for which place and purpose?

To begin with, look at the location of the planting: Is it sunny, semi-shady or rather shady? If you are planting in the garden, you should also consider whether the soil is nutrient-rich or poor, moist or dry. Once the conditions of the location have been clarified, you can start selecting plants that are appropriate for the location and suitable for the purpose. The colour and shape, the beginning and duration of

flowering of the perennials also plays an important role in the choice.

Preparation of the soil and planting the perennials

It is important to prepare the soil carefully. Although wild perennials are very robust, they will hardly thrive if the space is already heavily overgrown with other plants. To prepare the ground, remove the previous vegetation, remove as many roots as possible and loosen the soil. Then work the surface with a rake so that a fine crumbly planting surface is created. Now the well-watered wild perennials can be distributed over the area at a sufficient distance: Tall plants are best at the back or in the middle of the group, low ones at the edge and in the foreground. Now plant and water well.

Care

In the first period after planting, it is advisable to pluck out any competing weeds so that the perennial plants can grow well. If there is a lot of droughts, water during the first year. Larger plants should be tied to a support. After that, the wild perennial area is very easy to care for. After withering in autumn, shrub stems should be cut back only very cautiously or, even better, not at all. Especially the useful ladybird and other insects prefer to nest in the stems and thickets of a perennial bed and later overwinter in the same place. Withered flowers full of seeds or fruits also provide food for hungry birds and new seeds for next year as well. There is still enough time to cut back the withered plant residues after the end of winter, i. e., shortly before the start of vegetation. If the cut plant parts are laid out on the surface of the soil, their inhabitants can find their way out into the open at the right time.

Species diversity and biodiversity

With the easy-care wild perennials, a diverse fauna makes its way into the garden. Many insects such as bees, bumblebees and butterflies depend on these



The perennial viper's bugloss is a feast for the eyes as well as the bees. It feels most at home in dry and well-drained soil. (picture cm)

plants. On average, more than ten insect species benefit from a single native wild perennial, which promotes biodiversity. Wild perennials provide animals with shelter, nesting material, food and water. Because of the diversity of insects that live on and in wild perennials, larger animals also find their way into the flowering wild perennial kingdom. While the perennial flowers provide abundant nectar and pollen for insects, birds, bats, hedgehogs and other animals feed on these insects. Later in the year, the fruit and seed heads of the perennials provide fruits and seeds for many birds and wild animals.

Wild bees and other insects as important pollinators

Without flower pollination by insects, fruit and vegetable cultivation would not be nearly as productive. The importance of wild pollinators, especially wild bees and hoverflies, was long underestimated. Today we know that they provide about two-thirds of the total pollination in agricultural crops and increase fruit set even where many honey bees are ac-

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Pestalozzi's motto: head, heart and hand

by Marianne Bürkli

Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746–1827) was a Swiss educator and philanthropist, school and social reformer, philosopher, and politician. His pedagogical goal was holistic popular education to empower people to work independently and cooperatively in a direct-democratic community. This elementary school would strengthen the power of the people, educate, and enable people to be able to help themselves and their loved ones in all needs autonomously and independently. It was important to him to develop the intellectual, moral, and manual skills of the children in a harmonious way. The content of his numerous political and pedagogical writings is still relevant.

Head: Pestalozzi wanted to educate people holistically. **Heart:** Only when the teacher feels with the heart does he grasp what kind of student is in front of him and how he is doing. The children are taught together as a class, the teacher conducts the discussion in the class. The child experiences the social relationship to the other. **Hand:** No living creature has a hand that is so incredibly broadly applicable.

I am a retired handicrafts teacher and am amazed and appalled that in Switzerland (direct democracy) the authorities have abolished handicrafts and crafts as separate subjects behind the backs of the citizenry. For the students, needle-

work was a very popular subject and a welcome change from the cognitive subjects. They could make something on their own and take the item home with them when the work was done. In doing so, they learned old and new cultural techniques such as sewing, knitting, embroidery, crocheting, printing – but they also learned how to work with machines – at work they learned to saw, sand, drill – in cardboard to measure, cut, and glue. What they also learned to a great extent was manual dexterity, care, accuracy, perseverance, and patience. They always worked together with their classmates, who very often also encouraged them, since most of the others did the same and they didn't want to be left behind. As a reward for their work, they were always able to take their self-made work home with them – and they were always happy about it.

It never ceases to amaze me how quickly children make progress. There is a boy in the second grade, pretty sure he has never picked up a pair of scissors. He cuts the shapes out of paper very clumsily, but the whole calendar page with its bright colours looks very pretty when glued on. When embroidering in the third grade, however, this same boy handles needle and thread so skilfully, carefully, and precisely that I am amazed.

The earlier curriculum in handicrafts was very well structured and was geared precisely to the developmental steps of the children. The work was always planned from the easy to the difficult, until the children in the sixth grade could sew clothes, leather sport bags, appliques on terry towels and so on. The children's thinking was also trained a lot through the manual work, as the words “understand, mentally grasp, recognize connections, understand the meaning of things” say. Or “grasping, grasping difficult connections quickly, absorbing them with the mind, grasping them spiritually”. By grasping – touching with my hands – I also grasp the process in real terms. The head is also important when doing manual work. The child always gets to know the different techniques and materials and also trains their imagination.

Milton Friedman, US-american economist, wrote in his book “Capitalism and Freedom” in 1962: “It makes little sense to finance school lessons such as needlework, basket weaving, etc., since they give so little [for whom?]. If parents want to spend their own money on such antics, that's their problem.” Have our authorities dutifully acted according to this neoliberal bible, unaware of the devastating effects of the neoliberal economy, which has unfortunately impoverished whole countries? •



The magnificent chicory is a medicinal plant. It likes it warm and dry. Because it is resistant to salt water, it can also be planted along roads. (picture cm)



The cardoon is a special ornament in the garden. Its seeds are readily eaten in autumn by goldfinches. (picture cm)

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tive. Hoverflies provide a double service at that: they are considered pollination professionals, and their larvae are true aphid killers. Wild bees are also masters at pollinating flowers. Moreover, thanks to their great biodiversity and special adaptations, they have a number of advantages over the honey bee. For example, some wild bees fly even in cool and rainy weather. Others pollinate flowers that are not visited by the honey bee. Mason bees are many times more efficient at pollinating fruit flowers than the honey bee.

Wild pollinators such as wild bees and hoverflies need a rich and continuous supply of pollen and nectar as a basis for life, as well as a large and varied supply of small structures for their nest sites and preferably short distances between nest and forage plants.

And last but not least

There is nothing good unless you do it: the easy-to-implement garden project makes it possible to experience nature all year round with great added value. •