

Current Concerns

The international journal for independent thought, ethical standards, moral responsibility,
and for the promotion and respect of public international law, human rights and humanitarian law

English Edition of *Zeit-Fragen*

Humanitarian catastrophe – ceasefire now!

Speech by UN Secretary-General António Guterres to the Security Council on 8 December 2023



*António Guterres addressing the Security Council on 8 December 2023.
(picture UN Photo/Loey Felipe)*

Mr President

I wrote to the Security Council invoking Article 99 because we are at a breaking point. There is a high risk of the total collapse of the humanitarian support system in Gaza, which would have devastating consequences. We anticipate that it would result in a complete breakdown of public order and increased pressure for mass displacement into Egypt. I fear the consequences could be devastating for the security of the entire region. We have already seen the spillover in the Occupied West Bank, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Yemen. There is clearly, in my view, a serious risk of aggravating existing threats to the maintenance of international peace and security.

The risk of collapse of the humanitarian system is fundamentally linked with a complete lack of safety and security for our staff in Gaza, and with the nature and intensity of military operations, which are severely limiting access to people in desperate need. The threat to the safety and security of United Nations staff in Gaza is unprecedented. More than 130 of my colleagues have already been killed, many with their families. This is the largest single loss of life in the history of our Organisation. Some of our staff take their children to work so they know they will live or die together. Colleagues have shared heartbreaking messages from staff members pleading for help. The Under-Secretary-General of the Department of Safety and Security has advised me that all possible means of mitigating the risk to staff within Gaza, short of evacuation, are closed off, because of the way this conflict has evolved.

I cannot emphasise strongly enough that the UN is totally committed to stay

and deliver for the people of Gaza. I pay tribute to the heroic humanitarian aid workers who remain committed to their work, despite the enormous dangers to their health and their lives. But the situation is simply becoming untenable.

This Council called in Resolution 2712 for “the scaling up of the provision of such supplies to meet the humanitarian needs of the civilian population, especially children”. I deeply regret to inform the Council that under current conditions on the ground, the fulfilment of this mandate has become impossible. The conditions for the effective delivery of humanitarian aid no longer exist.

The crossing point at Rafah was not designed for hundreds of trucks and is a major bottleneck. But even if sufficient supplies were permitted into Gaza, intense bombardment and hostilities, Israeli restrictions on movement, fuel shortages, and interrupted communications, make it impossible for UN agencies and their partners to reach most of the people in need.

Humanitarian nightmare

Between 3 and 5 December – the two days preceding my letter – the UN could only distribute aid in one of Gaza’s five governorates – Rafah. Elsewhere, access was impossible. People are desperate, fearful and angry. In some cases, they have expressed that anger towards our staff.

All this takes place amid a spiraling humanitarian nightmare.

First, there is no effective protection of civilians. More than 17,000 Palestinians have reportedly been killed since the start of Israel’s military operations. This includes more than 4,000 women and 7,000 children. Tens of thousands are reported to have been injured, and many are missing, presumably under the rubble. All these numbers are increasing by the day.

Attacks from air, land and sea are intense, continuous and widespread. So far, they have reportedly hit 339 education facilities, 26 hospitals, 56 healthcare facilities, 88 mosques and three churches. Over 60 percent of Gaza’s housing has reportedly been destroyed or damaged – some 300,000 houses and apartments. Some 85 percent of the population have been forced from their homes. The people of Gaza are being told to move like human pinballs –

ricocheting between ever-smaller slivers of the south, without any of the basics for survival. But nowhere in Gaza is safe.

At least 88 UNRWA shelters have been hit, killing over 270 people and injuring over 900. Conditions in shelters are overcrowded and unsanitary. People nurse open wounds. Hundreds of people stand in line for hours to use one shower or toilet. Families who have lost everything sleep on bare concrete floors, wearing clothes they have not changed for two months. Tens of thousands of Palestinians arrived in Rafah in recent days, overwhelming shelters there. Many displaced families – including children, older people, pregnant women and people with disabilities – are sleeping in streets and public spaces across the city.

Second, Gazans are running out of food. According to the World Food Programme, there is a serious risk of starvation and famine. In northern Gaza, 97 percent of households are not eating enough. In the south, the figure among displaced people is 83 percent. Half the people of the north and more than one third of displaced people in the south are simply starving. WFP’s own food stocks are running out. In the north, nine out of ten people have spent at least one full day and night without food. The last functioning flour mill in Gaza was destroyed on 15 November.

WFP has provided food and cash assistance to hundreds of thousands of people across Gaza since the crisis began, and is ready to scale up its operations. However, that would require effective access to all people in need, and at least 40 trucks of food supplies every day – many times the current level.

Third, Gaza’s health system is collapsing while needs are escalating. At least 286 health workers have been killed. Hospitals have suffered heavy bombardment. Just 14 out of 36 are still functioning. Of these, three are providing basic first aid, while the others are delivering partial services. The *European Gaza Hospital*, one of the two main hospitals in southern Gaza, has 370 beds. It is currently housing 1000 patients and an estimated 70,000 people seeking shelter. There are critical shortages of drugs, blood products and medical sup-

continued on page 2

ef. *The UN Security Council did not adopt the resolution on 8 December. The reason for this was the veto of the United States.*

If adopted, the resolution presented by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) would have called for an immediate ceasefire, as well as ensuring the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages and the securing of humanitarian access.

It would have reiterated the Secretary-General's call for all parties to fulfil their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, notably regarding the protection of civilians. It would also have requested the Secretary-General to report to the Council without delay and on an ongoing basis on the status of implementation of this resolution.

Based on Secretary-General António Guterres' letter dated 6 December, invoking Article 99 of the *United Nations Charter*, the UN Security Council convened an emergency meeting on 8 December to vote

on a resolution introduced by the United Arab Emirates calling for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire in the Gaza Strip. The Secretary-General had called urgently for the resolution to be adopted.

The draft resolution was co-sponsored by 97 member states within 24 hours, *Mohamed Issa Abushahab*, UAE Ambassador to the UN, speaking before the vote. The text was "brief, simple and crucial".

The text was only rejected and blocked with a veto by the USA, but otherwise garnered support from 13 (out of 15) Council members (from Albania, Brazil, Gabon, Ghana, UAE, Ecuador, Japan, Malta, Mozambique, Switzerland and the three permanent members China, France and the Russian Federation), with another permanent member (United Kingdom) abstaining.

Numerous Council members expressed their deep disappointment at the veto. *Zhang Jun* (China) clearly characterised the veto: "Condoning the continuation of

fighting while claiming to care about the lives and safety of people in Gaza is self-contradictory. Condoning the continuation of fighting while advocating for the prevention of the spill-over effects of the conflict is self-deceiving. Condoning the continuation of fighting while making references to the protection of women and girls and human rights is hypocritical. These are double standards."

Sérgio França Danese (Brazil) emphasised: "Sooner or later, the members of the Council must live up to their responsibility and do what is right"; these were "dictates of humanity". "Now that we failed once again, maybe we could try a more effective negotiating process which will put the whole responsibility of a draft resolution on all Member States."

Source: <https://press.un.org/en/2023/sc15519.doc.htm>

"Humanitarian catastrophe ..."

continued from page 1

plies. Fuel to run the hospitals is severely rationed. Many patients are being treated on the floor and without anesthetics. As patients with life-threatening injuries continue to arrive, wards are overflowing and staff are overwhelmed. At the same time, the unsanitary conditions in shelters and severe shortages of food and water are leading to increases in respiratory infections, scabies, jaundice and diarrhea.

International humanitarian law applies to all

Everything I have just described represents an unprecedented situation that led to my unprecedented decision to invoke Article 99, urging the members of the Security Council to press to avert a humanitarian catastrophe, and appealing for a humanitarian ceasefire to be declared.

We are all aware that Israel began its military operation in response to the brutal terror attacks unleashed by Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups on 7 October. I unreservedly condemn those at-

tacks. I am appalled by the reports of sexual violence. There is no possible justification for deliberately killing some 1,200 people, including 33 children, injuring thousands more, and taking hundreds of hostages. Some 130 hostages are still held captive. I call for their immediate and unconditional release, as well as their humane treatment and visits from the *International Committee of the Red Cross* until they are freed.

At the same time, the brutality perpetrated by Hamas can never justify the collective punishment of the Palestinian people. And while indiscriminate rocket fire by Hamas into Israel, and the use of civilians as human shields, are in contravention of the laws of war, such conduct does not absolve Israel of its own violations.

International humanitarian law includes the duty to protect civilians and to comply with the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution. The laws of war also demand that civilians' essential needs must be met, including by facilitating the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian relief. International humanitarian law cannot be applied selectively. It is binding

on all parties equally at all times, and the obligation to observe it does not depend on reciprocity.

The people of Gaza are looking into the abyss. The international community must do everything possible to end their ordeal.

I urge the Council to spare no effort to push for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, for the protection of civilians, and for the urgent delivery of lifesaving aid. While we deal with the current crisis, we cannot lose sight of the only viable possibility for a peaceful future: a two-State solution, on the basis of United Nations resolutions and international law, with Israel and Palestine living side-by-side in peace and security. This is vital for Israelis, Palestinians, and for international peace and security.

The eyes of the world – and the eyes of history – are watching.

It's time to act.

Thank you.

Source: <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2023-12-08/secretary-generals-re-marks-the-security-council-the-situation-the-middle-east-including-the-palestinian-question-bilingual-delivered-scroll-down-for-all-english/sg/statement/2023-12-08/>

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International humanitarian law must be respected in all circumstances

International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

Statement by Prof Dr DDr h.c. Hans Köchler*, President of the International Progress Organization
Special meeting convened by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People in accordance with United Nations General Assembly resolution 32/40, United Nations Office at Vienna, Austria, 5 December 2023



Hans Köchler
(picture
hanskoechler.com)

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today is not a time for solemn declarations or an occasion to merely invoke noble principles – at a moment when 16,000 Palestinians, most of them women and children, have been

indiscriminately killed in massive bombings, with thousands more missing under the rubble of their houses in Gaza, and when the territory's infrastructure is systematically destroyed. Hospitals, schools, mosques, churches, United Nations facilities that serve as places of refuge – no place is safe from attack. Let's not mince words: dropping 2,000-pound bombs over densely packed neighborhoods is tantamount to committing massacres of the civilian population – under the dehumanizing label of "collateral damage." The Vice President of the United States of America, Kamala Harris, called the scale of civilian suffering in Gaza "devastating," describing it as "truly heartbreaking."¹

Also, more than 100 United Nations staff, more than 200 medical personnel, and more than 60 journalists have died in this onslaught. The disproportionate death toll among humanitarian staff and journalists is unprecedented in the history of recent conflicts, and in particular in the history of the United Nations.

In the West Bank, forces of the occupation army carry out deadly raids, wantonly killing unarmed civilians, many of them

minors, and destroying Palestinian homes and livelihoods.

"While the world watches..."

While the world watches and the United Nations Security Council – due to the veto of at least one permanent member – is condemned to impotently stand by, the occupying power in Palestine has been able to wage a relentless campaign, indeed a war of vengeance, on the Palestinian people and its aspirations for a life in freedom and dignity.

Ending a "peace process" that never was allowed to flourish – in all the years since the war of 1973 – has been the strategic aim of the political groups that now – under the labels of "Religious Zionism" and "Jewish Power" – form the most extreme, nationalist and chauvinist government in Israel since 1948. I have warned

phobia. However, in all these cases, to remain silent would be irresponsible.

The leaders of Türkiye, Brazil, South Africa, Colombia, Bolivia and other states have spoken out with courage. On 17 November, South Africa, Bangladesh, Bolivia, the Republic of the Comoros and Djibouti referred the situation in the State of Palestine to the *International Criminal Court*. In Europe, the Prime Ministers of Spain and of Belgium – the outgoing and incoming President of the Council of the European Union – were also clear in their criticism of the massive violations of international humanitarian law in Palestine. Others in Europe should follow their example. Politicians should be aware that each state party of the *Geneva Conventions* of 1949 is under the obligation "to ensure respect [of international humanitarian law] in all circumstances."

"Politicians should be aware that each state party of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 is under the obligation 'to ensure respect [of international humanitarian law] in all circumstances'."

of the consequences in my speech here, at this forum, last year.

To avoid all ambiguity: We unreservedly condemn the events of October 7. All lives are equally precious. Double standards must not be tolerated. Both, the right of resistance to foreign occupation and the right of self-defense under Article 51 of the UN Charter, must not serve as a pretext for collective punishment. These rights are never an entitlement to a disproportionate and indiscriminate use of force. They do not in any way justify the commission of war crimes or crimes against humanity, such as those we are witnessing now – and of a brutality and intensity rarely seen since the end of World War II. Those responsible must be brought to justice, regardless of the person's role or position.

In the face of a campaign to intimidate those who are committed to speak the truth we need to make it crystal clear: Condemning these acts and the policies and ideology behind them is *not* an expression of anti-Semitism as, likewise, condemning the atrocities against Israeli civilians is not an expression of Islamo-

Also, the *UN Independent Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in Israel* stated, "there is already clear evidence that war crimes may have been committed in the latest explosion of violence in Israel and Gaza." Regrettably, many United Nations officials who had the courage to speak the truth have been subjected to vicious attacks by officials of the occupying power.

Addressing the root cause of the problem

We join the Secretary-General of the United Nations who, with the large majority of UN member states, has called for a durable ceasefire and for a political settlement that addresses the root cause of the problem: the continued denial of the right to self-determination, in persistent violation of all relevant UN resolutions. The Palestinian people, António Guterres said in the special session of the Security Council on 24 October, "have been subjected to 56 years of suffocating occupation."

continued on page 4

* Professor Dr phil. DDr h.c. Hans Köchler (*1948) served as Chairman of the Department of Philosophy at the University of Innsbruck (Austria) from 1990 until 2008. He is President of the *International Progress Organization*, which he co-founded in 1972. Since then, Hans Köchler has been issuing numerous publications, undertaking journeys, delivering speeches and making contributions to various international organizations; this way he has been committed to the dialogue of cultures. He works in various committees and expert bodies dealing with issues of international democracy, human rights and development. Hans Köchler is a member of the University Council of the *Berlin University of Digital Sciences* (Berlin). Since 2018 he has been teaching at the *Academy for Cultural Diplomacy* in Berlin. Hans Köchler lives in Vienna.

"International humanitarian law ..."

continued from page 3

Mr. Chairman,

The "Oslo Peace Process" of thirty years ago has reached a dead end because it was not primarily based on the paradigm of self-determination, but – like the earlier Camp David Accords of 1978 – focused on the modalities of local self-administration under the ultimate authority of the occupying power. So-called "permanent status" issues were excluded from what was described as the "Principles of Interim Self-Government Arrangements." Over years of prevarication and mistrust, this – not surprisingly – encouraged annexationist tendencies, as did the bilateral accords concluded more recently.

However, *in the face of the inferno being inflicted on the people of Gaza, those issues can no longer be ignored.*

Israel must withdraw from all territories it occupied in 1967, and it must rescind the annexation of Arab Jerusalem – unconditionally. This will also require the dismantling of colonial settlements in the West Bank, one of the major stumbling

create a "United Nations Emergency Force" to monitor a future ceasefire and act as a buffer between the parties along the border. Countries with sufficient clout should act as guarantors for each of the parties. In that regard, the international community may pay attention to the idea recently put forward by

Türkiye, a state that has already acted as mediator in the Istanbul negotiations of 2022 between Ukraine and Russia.

Crucial role of international civil society

Finally, Mr. Chairman, regarding the *actual* prospects for peace, the role of international civil society will be crucial.

It is quite telling that even in countries, such as our host country today, that voted against an "immediate, durable and sustained" humanitarian truce in the recent Emergency Special Session of the General Assembly, the majority of citizens are not in favor of a continuation of the war in Gaza. According to a *Reuters/Ipsos* poll in the United States, more than two thirds of respondents agreed with a statement

the international community, especially for the European Union and its member states, to recognize the State of Palestine."

Also, the international community should listen to the cautioning words of President *Emmanuel Macron*, a few days ago, in Dubai: "There can be no long-term security in the region if that security comes at the price of Palestinian lives." Speaking about the need of protecting civilians, US Secretary of Defence *Lloyd Austin* warned that a "tactical victory" might turn out to be a "strategic defeat."³

If the logic of total war – with the forced transfer of the population of Gaza and the annexation of the West Bank as ultimate goal (as contemplated by leading figures of the coalition government in Israel) – is allowed to prevail, we are faced with the risk of a never-ending cycle of violence that may engulf the entire Middle East and endanger world peace.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. •

- ¹ Press conference on the sidelines of COP 28 in Dubai, 2 December 2023
- ² "Now go and strike Amalek and devote to destruction all that they have. Do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey."
- ³ Speech at the *Reagan National Defense Forum* in California, quoted according to *AFP*, 3 December 2023

"If the Gaza War of 2023 is to be ended in the apocalyptic way alluded to by the Prime Minister, there may be no 'day after' to embark on a vision for peace [...]."

blocks to peace. The citizens of Palestine must be able to decide on the legal status and political organization in their land without any tutelage or outside interference. After all, that is what self-determination means.

In the absence of coercive measures by the Security Council to give effect to resolution 242 (1967) on the withdrawal from occupied territories, movement in this direction will substantially depend on the influence of Western states – first and foremost the United States and the European Union – who have leverage on Israel and have already declared their commitment to a two-state solution as the key to a final settlement. Words must now be followed by actions. (It will be an enormous challenge nonetheless. After decades of effective colonization in the West Bank, there is not much land left for a Palestinian state that, like any state, needs a contiguous territory to be viable.)

Precedent case Suez crisis 1956

In the Gaza area, the General Assembly could follow the precedent of the decision it took during the Suez crisis of 1956, on the basis of the "Uniting for Peace" formula: The UN member states could again

that "Israel should call a ceasefire and try to negotiate." (In any case, the governments rejecting a durable ceasefire were only a tiny minority among the 121 member states that voted for the resolution on 26 October.) In large demonstrations and on social media, citizens' groups on all continents, including e.g. "Jewish Voice for Peace" in the United States and "European Jews for Peace," have made clear that they favor a settlement of the conflict through negotiations and mutual recognition, and not through a war of extermination – a total war the likes of which the Israeli Prime Minister, in a televised speech, ominously described by reference to Chapter 15 of the First Book of Samuel,² and which his official Spokesman sarcastically referred to as "the mother of all thumpings."

If the Gaza War of 2023 is to be ended in the apocalyptic way alluded to by the Prime Minister, *there may be no "day after"* to embark on a vision for peace such as the one advanced by the Prime Minister of Spain at a press conference at the Rafah border crossing between Egypt and Gaza on 24 November. I quote from his impassioned plea for peace and justice in Palestine: "... *the moment has come for*

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Open letter to the Swiss Federal Council

Ladies and Gentlemen Federal Councilors

As Swiss citizens, we would like to express our indignation and disappointment at the Federal Council's policy. Our country's foreign policy in particular has completely lost its profile and is now being deconstructed further and further, for example with the continued rapprochement with NATO. Switzerland holds a seat on the UN Security Council this year and next year, supposedly to make a difference in terms of peace policy. However, our country seems paralysed and remains passive to an unbearable degree. It sits at the table of the powerful and dutifully nods off the proposals of the major powers, above all the USA. Where is the civil courage to actively launch initiatives as a neutral country that serve peace and promote a culture of dialogue in the conflicts of our world? With its pandering attitude, Switzerland is increasingly losing its self-confidence as a neutral state and the global political weight it once had.

The decline of Swiss neutrality began 30 years ago and has gradually continued ever since. Switzerland, once a major diplomatic power committed to peace, was already losing influence long before the war

in Ukraine. This war and the actions of the Federal Council have made this particularly clear. And now the Middle East conflict, which has been going on for 75 years and which the world public keeps forgetting. "The Jewish people and the Palestinian people – both are victims!" This was emphasized by the Palestinian peace activist *Sumaya Farhat-Naser* during a recent lecture in Switzerland. The problem is the Jewish and Hamas governments, which both want to destroy each other. According to Farhat-Naser, the escalation of the conflict – the extent of the violence is beyond human imagination – was to be expected in view of the daily harassment and discrimination of the Palestinian population by the Israeli government and army in the occupied territories.

Switzerland would have to maintain or establish contact with all parties to the conflict and do everything in its power to achieve a ceasefire and call for peace negotiations. It would have to stand by Qatar in its efforts. Only through this offensive pressure could Switzerland save face, otherwise it would petrify even more into a figure that compliantly supports the game of power. By regaining its contours as a peace-promoting, neutral country, Swit-

zerland will also be able to support and protect the ICRC's activities even better in this sense. The ICRC does not make headlines for world politics, but rather cultivates quiet diplomacy and continues to achieve a great deal, but its work is increasingly being obstructed, criticised and even attacked.

Switzerland must finally become more active in the Middle East conflict and rebuild its foreign policy profile. We urge you, as Federal Councillors, to take an unequivocal stand, to denounce and condemn the wars as such. Have the courage to stand firm and once again raise the voice of reason and humanity clearly and unambiguously, even if this means swimming against the tide of the powerful.

Switzerland does not have to choose "one side", but as a neutral country must spin the thread of peace dialogue in the face of the madness of war. The position of a credibly neutral country has never been pleasant, but the Swiss people will stand behind you, that is our conviction!

*Elfy and René Roca,
Oberrohrdorf-Starretschwil,
Switzerland 29 November 2023*

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

A life dedicated to peace

On the book by *Sumaya Farhat-Naser*

by *Renate Dünki*

More than 20,000 civilians, including around 13,000 women and children or vulnerable sick individuals, have fallen victim to the "total war" (*Netanyahu*) aimed at the destruction of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. The news of these massacres is disturbing to anyone who hears or sees it. Dr *Sumaya Farhat-Naser* gives a face to her fellow Palestinians. She is currently touring the German-speaking countries, delivering lectures as a peace educator with a humanistic-Christian ethic to shed light on the events in the occupied land. Profoundly shaken, she describes the often-forgotten humiliations and persecutions of Palestinians, using a few examples, and highlights her peace work, which also includes Israeli individuals. Getting to personally know this upright woman, who loves her culture and her land, is enlightening and a gift.

What she also offers us is the documentation of her life for peace. She has written various books recounting her experiences and activities in Palestine. In "My Life for Peace," reports and thoughts from many years are compiled into a comprehensive picture. The author refers to her

book as a "reader from Palestine." It is structured chronologically, with later sections marked with the date of writing. It becomes a chronicle of her life and efforts in the land forcibly occupied for decades.

Connected to family and land, yet independent

Sumaya Farhat-Naser's life story begins with the depiction of her family history and youth in the rugged hills near Ramallah. She lovingly describes the landscape with its olive trees and spices, the fields that barely provided enough for a modest livelihood. Her family had cultivated the land for centuries, with many stories passed down. In the old farmhouse, generations lived together in a large room above the stable. The author, closely connected to nature and the customs of her village through her mother and grandparents, decided to work alongside her studies to avoid burdening her family with costs.

Selected by her school for studies in Germany at the age of 14 – an unusual step in her family – she felt a responsibility towards her family and people. She was determined to complete



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her education successfully, to not close the path of learning and independence for other girls by failing. "I wanted to be myself *and* belong to the people who were waiting for me." This path of in-

continued on page 6



Church in Birzeit. (picture Wirth-Barben)

"A life dedicated to peace"

continued from page 5

dependence, yet with strong loving ties to her family and culture, is portrayed by Sumaya Farhat-Naser with simple and warm words drawn from her experiences. She showed the courage to think for herself and take her own path, always with a sense of responsibility for her loved ones and fellow human beings, even under Israeli occupation as a teenager and young woman. The return to the land occupied since 1967 was already arduous. Waiting for hours, the papers were finally checked, and the passers-by subjected to humiliating body searches. "Deeply hurt and humiliated, I arrived home late at night." (p. 25)

Upon her return in 1974, she married a man in line with her convictions and education. Initially opting for a traditional wedding, the couple later chose to live a life between tradition and Western lifestyle in their own small house in Birzeit.

Arbitrary Occupation

The happy life of the young family contrasted with the life in occupied Birzeit. The Israeli military was a constant presence; soldiers patrolled the village and checked papers. Houses were searched, students were arrested under suspicion of political activities – including a brother and a brother-in-law. After months of uncertainty, their whereabouts were finally disclosed. They could receive visitors only once a month for half an hour. After beatings, torture, and uncertainty, they were eventually released.

The arbitrary nature of the occupation was evident in so-called censuses or the confiscation of so-called fallow land (p. 38ff.). In good faith, people trusted in justice and law. However, it became increas-

ingly clear that Israel had long-term plans for dispossession.

University: a committed academic family

From 1975, the Farhat-Naser couple worked as lecturers at Birzeit University. The university was a response to the occupation, as since 1967, no student was allowed to attend the surrounding universities unless in Europe or the USA – unreachable for most. The lecturers aimed to contribute to reconstruction and peace, teaching ideas of democracy and human rights (p. 43). Social issues were addressed, and questions of identity were discussed. Lecturers and students formed a committed academic family during this time. Sumaya Farhat-Naser took on a literacy program for women, as 50% of women were illiterate at that time. Topics also included health, education, and general knowledge. She could train 1,200 women as instructors for more than 400 villages.

Palestinians and Israelis – two separate worlds

Any exchange, getting to know people in Israel, was hindered. Military regulations controlled every aspect of daily life. There were prohibitions on building agricultural roads or exporting olives, ruining the farmers. The regulations had two goals: to hinder economic development and to wear down and force people to emigrate, especially intellectuals who were hindered from reading books or magazines by strict censorship.

Such prohibitions prevented interaction between Palestinians and Israelis. Life unfolded in separate worlds. However, during this time, Sumaya Farhat-Naser's decision to finally overcome these borders matured. After years of occupation, "the

pressure on me and other women became so great that we found inner freedom and were willing to give up the internalised political borders in an Israeli-Palestinian women's dialogue and talk about our reality." (p. 56)

After 20 years of occupation: Intifada 1987

After simultaneous acts of violence by the Israeli military throughout the country, the *Intifada* spontaneously erupted in 1987. In the previous 20 years of humiliating occupation, where no external help could be expected, an educated generation had grown up. They dared to think and compare, maintaining their endangered culture in the underground. This culture of resistance was the basis for the *Intifada*, roughly translated as "shaking off." Palestinian parties were surprised by the movement and were finally compelled to unite. People employed nonviolent means such as boycotts, demonstrations, and strikes. Stones became a symbol of the uprising. The military responded with brutality. Defence Minister *Rabin*, for instance, ordered the breaking of the bones of young people. 90% of the youth were in prison at least once. The fear was often unbearable, and people saved each other through mutual help and solidarity (p. 67). As educational institutions were closed, underground education emerged. In Birzeit, 400 children were taught in the church or mosque, under trees, in houses. Four classes were set up in the author's house as well. Guards warned in time so that the children could disperse when necessary (p. 71).

Oslo accords 1993: occupation persists

The *Intifada* brought Palestine out of oblivion. In 1993, it subsided and the PLO

continued on page 7

"A life dedicated to peace"

continued from page 6

became a negotiating partner. *The Oslo Accords* were concluded, aiming to end the occupation and establish an independent Palestinian state based on the principle of "land for peace" – conditional on the recognition of Israel within the 1967 borders. Consequently, 78% of the former Palestine were to be recognized as Israeli territory.

Scepticism about these treaties was justified. What would they achieve? Obviously, Israel had no intention of returning occupied territories. The result was a "Palestinian autonomy" without any autonomy. The West Bank was divided into Areas A, B, and C. Only the so-called A-Zone (3.5 %) was completely under its own authority; the situation was different in the B and C-Zones. There were thus four separate open-air prisons: Gaza, West Bank North and South and East Jerusalem. All areas of life were and are controlled by the Israeli military; the occupation persisted. "The policy is aimed at destroying Palestinian society and its foundations, humiliating and disenfranchising people." (p. 92) Examples are the so-called bypass roads that enclose Palestinian enclaves. The numerous checkpoints make mobility unbearably difficult. They create an atmosphere of humiliation and anger. The capital East Jerusalem has become almost inaccessible. Through reprisals the Palestinians living there were systematically forced to leave the city.

**Women's centres 1989–2000:
a place of encounter**

While men were forbidden direct contact, women were able to act more freely. In 1989, Dr Farhat-Naser helped to draw up political guidelines in Brussels for the

planned Palestinian-Israeli women's centres in Jerusalem. These guidelines were necessary so that the planned meetings between Palestinian and Israeli women would not be misinterpreted as betrayal and denunciation. In 1992, another meeting of political decision-makers took place in Brussels. The aim was to build a joint endeavour between the two societies for peace. This enabled them to acquire more knowledge about each other. In 1994, two women's centres were finally founded: the Palestinian "Jerusalem Centre for Women" in East Jerusalem and "Bat Shalom" in West Jerusalem. Together they formed the "Jerusalem Link". The decision was made to have separate centres in order not to blur the serious differences between the societies – women in Israel had social security, but none existed in Palestine. These were only the most obvious differences. Each centre therefore developed its own programmes to meet the needs of the women. While maintaining separate centres due to significant societal differences, they collaborated on political education and joint projects. This resulted in the action week "Sharing Jerusalem. Two Capitals for Two States" as a vision of an open city (p. 103). The state of Israel had also been creating facts in Jerusalem for 30 years – annexation of land, denial of all Palestinian rights. The project wanted to contribute to a secure peace based on the equality of the two peoples. The campaign took place in 1997. It was the first major joint peace project of the two women's centres. It attracted international interest.

A painful path to understanding

The work was based on the principle of dialogue and non-violent communication. Many women were very interested

in getting to know the other side. Before the first meetings, there was a preparatory programme for conflict resolution methods. The aim was to learn to listen, to get to know each other as unique individuals with their worries, fears and hopes and to look each other in the eye. However, this should not mean accepting oppression and occupation. The previous history was a burden for the dialogue. For example, it was very difficult to talk about Israel's Zionist myth of a "land without a people for a people without a land"; This myth was used to justify Israel's sole rule. There was a widespread belief that Palestinians had left the country not as refugees, but voluntarily. This was also always the motto of the Israeli government. However, there are also different directions within Zionism, and many Israelis wanted a just peace. The path to mutual understanding was difficult and painful and will remain so (p. 128).

While the PLO was willing to negotiate in the 2000s, *Hamas* rejected negotiations.

Suicide bombings came from this circle, triggering a devastating mood of fear and threat in Israel and Palestine. The hope for peace was destroyed. The Israeli peace movement was absent during this time. In the end, all joint activities of the centres had to be discontinued. The work was no longer justifiable. Dr Farhat-Naser ended her involvement, but decided to document the small steps towards rapprochement she had experienced (p. 143). She stuck to her principle: making peace is an art that requires lifelong work.

The art of making peace

"Making peace means being guided by the ethics and morals of humanity, established in our religions and cultures, and

continued on page 8



In the olive grove of Sumaya Farhat-Naser's family. (picture Wirth-Barben)

"A life dedicated to peace"

continued from page 7

granting the other side the rights that one claims for oneself," writes Sumaya Farhat-Naser (p. 165). The longer a conflict lasts, the more difficult the search for solutions becomes. It takes even more courage to call a spade a spade and break the silence in the face of injustice. Because, Farhat-Naser continues: "Making peace means being willing to accept peace as the ultimate goal, rather than land grabbing, military glory and domination over others, and finding a solution that saves the people of the region from religious wars and ideologies of destruction and enables reconciliation (p. 166)."

In concrete terms, it would mean stopping the violence on both sides, agreeing on the territorial scope of the states and, as a basis for a new beginning, an amnesty for the more than 10,000 Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails, including many intellectuals, but also many young people under the age of 17, women with babies born in prison; and the blacklist of "suspects" must also be cancelled, writes Farhat-Naser (p. 167). The conflict has been going on for decades, it is a cycle of violence and radicalisation. It must be made transparent, the fears and suffering of both sides must be recognised, respected, expressed and mediated. Then peace would have a chance.

Projects of hope and acts of disturbance

Sumaya Farhat-Naser repeatedly found hope and recovery in cultural projects and was able to publicise and pass them on in her environment. She describes the restoration of a Kasr (an approximately 300-year-old watchtower) in a family olive grove – a testimony to the past that was to become a meeting place. Or young musicians who appeal to young listeners with a mixture of traditional and modern rhythms, asking them to find out more and only then form an opinion. Or the cartoon character *Handala*, who speaks for all refugees with her patched dress, as a symbol of resistance and justice.

What is disturbing, however, is the abuse of children and young people in prisons, whose weakness and vulnerability is exploited in order to use them as collaborators and to commit increasingly serious acts of violence against their own people – young people who would need help and support after their traumatising experiences (p. 172ff.).

Strengthening the personality: maintaining your own dignity

There are always humiliating situations at the numerous checkpoints. How can you maintain self-respect and a sense of dignity and protect yourself from hatred? It is due to the author's personal strength and her unwavering commitment to justice and peace that she manages not to feel personally attacked and hurt, but to accept what cannot be changed, but to shape everything that can perhaps be changed. In this way, she consolidates an attitude that enables her to make the best of a situation, however difficult it may be. Sumaya Farhat-Naser always documents this path – working on herself in order to preserve her own dignity – by example. She is determined to protect her humanity. In her grief, she is always connected to her compatriots, not alone. She feels with them.

Self-education to faith in the good within us

In 2008, the political situation is desperate. There are two Palestinian political camps, *Fatah* and *Hamas*, Gaza is sealed off by Israel, the supply of goods has been severely reduced for more than 1.5 million people and attempts at reconciliation have failed. All democratic approaches have been shattered. Fear and mistrust prevail among the people. Right now, Farhat-Naser's seminars provide support and hope. Her message is: I endeavour to make peace with myself and thereby also find peace with others. This self-education to believe in the good in ourselves also helps us to develop empathy and compassion for others. Such an attitude is never without effect (p. 203). Non-violent thinking, feeling and acting in such situations that are hard to bear are based on a conscious inner decision and constant practice. What gives the author this strength? She repeatedly describes her experiences with her mother. The strong, loving relationship between the now elderly, sick mother and her daughter is a source of strength for her and her family. This bond is one of the sources that allowed Dr Farhat-Naser to become the strong personality she was able to develop into in such a difficult life situation (p. 219).

The road to democratisation will be long

In 2011, the conflict between Israel and *Hamas* (which does not represent the

opinion of the majority of the population) in the Gaza Strip once again escalated into war. This was triggered by the murder of the *Hamas* commander by a bomb from an Israeli military helicopter. This escalation led to reactions from *Hamas* with several fatalities. "The fact that there were over 100 deaths in Gaza due to Israeli fire seemed to carry less weight." (p. 257) In the end, a ceasefire was agreed.

The author notes: "The asymmetrical balance of power between Israel and Palestine remains, so a change in Israeli policy is unlikely. Israel's government prevails, does not agree to time schedules or agreements and consistently promotes the construction of settlements by radical settlers as a permanent land grab and means of displacing the indigenous population. The road to democratisation will still be very long (p. 244f).

They should live in peace

Sumaya Farhat-Naser concludes her chronicle with a description of her visit to her daughters and grandchildren in 2013, ten years ago. In addition to recounting childhood stories, laughing and singing, they talked about politics, society, family and the future. She passed on her traditions to her daughters and grandchildren with joy of living and gratitude. "They should have health, joy and security and live in peace. I am sad because I will not live to see this time of peace, and it is doubtful whether my children will. But I want to cling to the hope that my grandchildren will celebrate peace. Hope makes you creative, and the courage to believe in your own strength makes many things possible." (S. 262)

The wealth of experiences and thoughts, her hopes and experiences, her ethics Sumaya Farhat-Naser sets against the cruel reality, is difficult to grasp. It is worth planning plenty of time for reading. We readers are carried away by the moving descriptions and sensitive, loving observations of everyday life, by her humanity and examples of spontaneous help in dangerous situations, by the creativity of her actions she is able to draw from her deeply humane ethics. There are not enough words to describe the value of this book. •

Farhat-Naser, Sumaya (2017). *Ein Leben für den Frieden. Lesebuch aus Palästina*. Mit einem Aufsatz von Ernest Goldberger (A life for peace. Reading book from Palestine. With an essay by Ernest Goldberger). Basel: Lenos-Verlag; ISBN 978-3-85787-479-6

An uncertain future for Argentina

by Gisela Liebe

On 20 November, *Javier Milei* was elected President of Argentina. He won the run-off election against the candidate of the previously ruling left-wing *Peronists*, the former economy minister *Sergio Massa*, with a clear majority of 55.7% of the vote. Voter turnout was very high, at 76%, and no one questioned the legitimacy of the election. The previous president, *Alberto Fernández*, who had governed from 2019 to 2023, did not run. According to general opinion, he stood little chance of re-election, primarily because of the economic situation the high inflation rate (over 100%)

Reflecting this *Javier Milei* assumes the leadership of the country in a desperate situation. The inflation rate is a catastrophic 140%. More than 40% of the population now lives in poverty. Argentina is heavily in debt; interest payments due to the *International Monetary Fund* alone will total 8 billion US-Dollar by 2024.

Who is the new president?

Milei appeared as an eccentric outsider in the election campaign with his newly founded movement LLA, *La Libertad Avanza*. His election programme consisted essentially of extremely neoliberal demands along the lines of the old “Chicago Boys,” as already tried out in Chile after the *Pinochet* coup 50 years ago: Privatisation of state-owned enterprises, extreme cuts in government spending, pegging the national currency to the dollar, abolition of the national bank. The Chilean population still suffers the consequences of these economic policies. *Milei* also made

extremist demands, including the legalisation of organ trafficking. He maintained a heavy presence on social media, with a chainsaw, rock songs, and a tousled hairstyle. His motto: “Abolish the entire caste of politicians!”

Milei, who describes himself as an “anarcho-capitalist”, has no political experience but, as a neoliberal economist, has been a frequent guest on TV talk shows in recent years. The fact that such a man was able to rise to the presidency of Argentina within two years – this out of thin air as a mere media product – is understandable only if you take the last 30 years of Argentinian history into account.

Shock strategy in the 1990s

Since the 1960s, Argentina, although extremely rich in resources, has no longer been a purely agricultural country: It has transformed itself since into a developed, industrialised country with strong trade unions. After the major debt crisis in the 1980s, which had affected the whole of Latin America, *Carlos Meném* took over the presidency in 1989. Following the example of Chile, he applied the shock strategy of neoliberalism, faithfully following: Privatisation of state-owned enterprises (including the state oil company YPF), dollarisation of the peso, opening up the economy to foreign investors on very generous terms, cutting government spending, laying off thousands of state employees. Argentina became a model pupil of the IMF. The effects of this economic policy, the extreme impoverish-

ment of large sections of the population, were impressively captured by *Fernando Solanas* in his documentary films *Memoria del saqueo* and *La dignidad de los nadies*. The social unrest and the struggle of the people for their dignity were also captured. *Meném* was forced to resign at the end of 2001 during the gravest economic crisis in Argentina’s history.

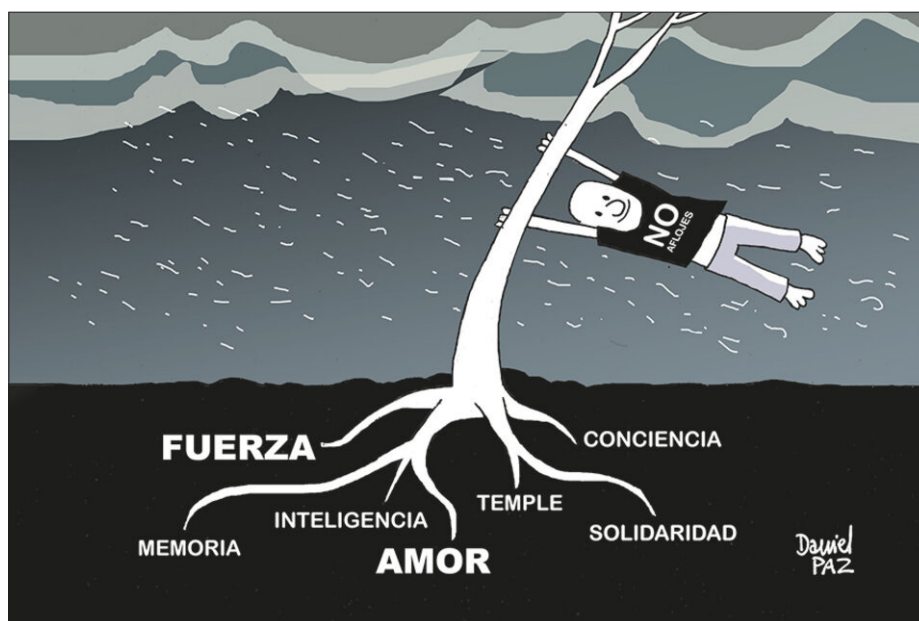
National bankruptcy and reconstruction.

Argentina had to declare its insolvency and thus national bankruptcy after *Meném* resigned. Three governments were chased out of office within a few weeks. Finally, in 2003, the left-wing Peronist *Néstor Kirchner* was elected president. The following decade was characterised by painstaking reconstruction. By the time *Kirchner* took office, after almost a decade and a half of neoliberal economic policy, the debt totalled 175 billion US-Dollar. A large proportion of private creditors were won over to debt restructuring, and by 2010 most of them had finally agreed to a 75% waiver – with the exception of a few hedge funds. The governments of *Néstor* and *Cristina Fernández de Kirchner* – the latter succeeding her husband in 2007 – introduced capital controls, nationalised economic sectors such as the post office and airports, introduced high export taxes on agricultural exports (to which the agrarian oligarchy put up fierce resistance), and were able to use the resulting revenue to triple social spending. The unemployment rate fell from 25% to 9%.

Macri’s relapse into neoliberalism.

In the midst of this slow recovery, another neoliberal politician, *Mauricio Macri*, was elected president in 2015. His first act in office was to lift capital controls and promise the hedge funds, which had not agreed to the debt restructuring, to settle outstanding debt of 4.7 billion US-Dollar. Agricultural export taxes were lowered again. Foreign investments were in great demand. The *Macri* government took out a record loan of 57 billion US-Dollar from the IMF, of which 44 billion US-Dollar was disbursed. Of this loan, 80% was used to repay foreign currency debt. Even the IMF now admits that granting the loan was a mistake. When *Macri* was voted out of office in 2019, the country was once again faced with a huge mountain of debt, this time totalling 175 billion US-Dollar, and was thus on the verge of another national bankruptcy. The proportion of the population

continued on page 11



On the front page of *Página12* on 10 December, a cartoon is printed under the headline “The Milei era begins”: an Argentinean with the slogan “don’t let go” written on his shirt holds on tightly to a tree in a storm, whose roots are made up of strength, memory, intelligence, love, mood, awareness and solidarity. (Picture *Página12*)

“We are wiping off our tears and build up civil society”

by Stella Calloni*, Buenos Aires



Stella Calloni
(picture ma)

In addition to numerous other privatisations, the newly elected President *Javier Milei* from the ultra-right party LLA (*La Libertad Avanza*), which has not even established party structures yet, first announced the privatisation of the state oil company *Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales* (YPF) and the public media. He also pointed out that it would take 18 to 24 months for inflation to fall and that the government’s measures would not be gradual.

Half of Argentinians in shock

While almost half of the Argentinian population, thrown into a state of shock by this unimaginable scenario, remains silent, painfully reflecting on it, Milei’s actions are creating another post-election anomaly. He refused to meet leaving President *Alberto Fernández*, who contacted him on Sunday evening, congratulated him and expressed his willingness to initiate the transition.

Milei does not want to go to the *Casa Rosada*, the government building, nor to the president’s residence, as it was the custom with elected heads of state since the restoration of democracy 40 years ago, and he also claimed that an austerity programme would take place, but that this would have to be the responsibility of politicians, i. e., the current government.

According to one of Milei’s advisors, the austerity programme will drive up inflation. Inflation could increase by more than 50%, which would make the current situation even worse. In addition, he explained that the current tenancy law would have to be cancelled and a new law introduced where prices are set by landlords, which would exacerbate the current housing tragedy and would ultimately also mean the end of the Central Bank.

During these hours, Milei pointed out that the decisions are made by him alone and that there is no coalition. He was alluding to former President *Mauricio Macri*, who had promised him the support of the remaining remnants of the right-wing coalition *Juntos por el Cambio* and played a key role in Milei’s triumph.

Milei’s team has posted a presidential statement under *Opearq* on X, stating that there will be no “gradual” approach, but a shock strategy that will lead to a rise in unemployment. In their first reaction to the privatisation of the public media, public television, the news agency *Télam* and the national broadcaster today, the trade unions announced their opposition to these measures.

The elected governor of *Juntos por el Cambio* in *Entre Ríos*, *Rogelio Frigerio*, spoke out against the privatisation, as this would mean a restriction on freedom of expression. It has not yet been decided who will be responsible for communications from 10 December, when Milei takes office.

Special relations with the USA and Israel

The President-elect spoke yesterday with foreign heads of state who have pledged their support for him. First and foremost, with the governments of the United States and Israel, with which he maintains special relations and to which he will undertake a spiritual journey. These are the two countries that Milei regarded as his most important supporters during his election campaign, including financially.

A first consequence of his personal behaviour during the election campaign was the deterioration of relations with Brazil. The government of President *Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva* called on Milei to apologise to the president. Not only had he insulted and abused Lula, but he even invited former president *Jair Bolsonaro* to his inauguration.

Milei stands by everything he said during the election campaign and warns that he will be relentless, using his shock strategy right away. This will be the first challenge for a population that has always resisted measures that have a serious impact on the current situation.

This man, who claimed to communicate with his now deceased dog *Conan* via a medium, who presented himself with a chainsaw, who insulted several presidents and personalities such as Pope *Francis* and who freaked out in fits of rage, is now under the scrutiny of his own people and others.

Recently, a neighbour of Milei’s related that this right-wing extremist, when they met in the lift of the building where they live, told her that he gave economics courses and that the author he presented was *Adam Smith*. When the neighbour asked him if he was also introducing *John Maynard Keynes*, Milei exploded. She reported: “He yelled at me: ‘You fucking

communist’, and, since the lift still hadn’t arrived, he added: ‘You bastards, you’re ruining the country’.”

It is worth remembering that former president *Macri* also warned Milei that many points of his programme could not be implemented immediately and that as the newly elected president he would have to take responsibility for the reforms.

Among all the articles that have appeared in the last few hours, *Sandra Russo*, columnist for “Página/12”, said that the staggeringly large majority who voted for Milei and made him president do not know what they voted for. It is the first time in the history that an anarcho-capitalist president has won an election and that he has won it with his dichotomic speeches: I will do/I will not do. It is sending shivers down our spines: Our country will be a fascist laboratory where cruelty and stupidity are celebrated, and popular political figures are persecuted.

Russo analyses that since the pandemic something has changed in our individual and collective mental state. Not just in ours, but in the whole world. With regard to the LLA party, she points out that it began by claiming that the earth is flat, and that we now are left with a president who breaks off relations with China and Brazil, who stops the big projects that could give this country the chance of unprecedented growth, who (again!) privatises pension funds, who dismantles the *Anses* (social security) and the *PAMI* (social programmes) and who will release the genocidaires and justify state terrorism.

But the most important thing is that it points out that none of this would have happened if there had been real journalism. In four years, *Sergio Massa* was the only one to cause Milei any trouble in the debates. Milei had more airtime in 2017 and 2018 than any other economist. He was never forced to explain even one of his programme points.

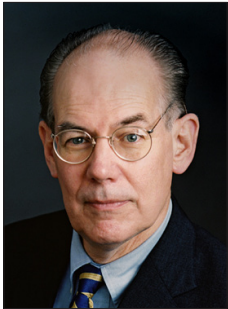
An avoidable disaster

Likewise, Russo noted that this disaster could have been avoided if *Alberto Fernández* had not gone it alone, isolated from his allies and without having honoured his electoral promise to them, and that, in this shattered country, the continuity of historical memory is also broken and the majority of society, which claims to abhor corruption, votes for those who have sold their souls for their candidacy. The task of wiping away our tears and building a civil society that is resistant to abuses and totalitarianism will begin. Nations can make mistakes.

* *Stella Calloni* (*1935) is a long-time correspondent for *La Jornada* in Argentina. She is one of Latin America’s most renowned journalists and writers specialising in international politics. She has published numerous articles on the period of the military dictatorships.

The propaganda formula of Putin wanting to conquer Ukraine and create a Greater Russia has proven to be a brazen lie

by John J. Mearsheimer



John J. Mearsheimer
(picture Wikipedia)

There is a growing body of compelling evidence showing that Russia and Ukraine were involved in serious negotiations to end the war in Ukraine right after it started on 24 February 2022.¹ These talks were facilitated by Turkish President

Recep Erdogan and former Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and featured detailed and candid discussions on the terms of a possible settlement.

By all accounts, these negotiations, which took place in March-April 2022, were making real progress when Britain and the US told Ukrainian President Zelenskyy to abandon them, which he did.

Coverage of these events has focused on how foolish and irresponsible it was

for President Joe Biden and Prime Minister Boris Johnson to put an end to these negotiations, given all the death and destruction that Ukraine has suffered since then – in a war that Kyiv is likely to lose.

Yet an especially important aspect of this story regarding the causes of the Ukraine war has received little attention. The well-entrenched conventional wisdom in the West is that President Putin invaded Ukraine to conquer that country and make it part of a Greater Russia. Then, he would move on and conquer other countries in eastern Europe. The counter-argument, which enjoys little support in the West, is that Putin was mainly motivated to invade by the threat of Ukraine joining NATO and becoming a Western bulwark on Russia's border. For him and other Russian elites, Ukraine in NATO was an existential threat.

The negotiations in March-April 2022 make it clear that the conventional wisdom on the war's causes is wrong, and the counter-argument is right, for two main

reasons. First, the talks were directly focused on satisfying Russia's demand that Ukraine not become part of NATO and instead become a neutral state. Everyone involved in the negotiations understood that Ukraine's relationship with NATO was Russia's core concern. Second, if Putin was bent on conquering all of Ukraine, he would not have agreed to these talks, as their very essence contradicted any possibility of Russia conquering all of Ukraine. One might argue that he participated in these negotiations and talked a lot about neutrality to mask his larger ambitions. There is no evidence, however, to support this line of argument, not to mention that: 1) Russia's small invasion force was not capable of conquering and occupying all of Ukraine; and 2) it would have made no sense to delay a larger offensive, as it would afford Ukraine time to build up its defenses.

In short, Putin launched a limited attack into Ukraine for the purpose of coercing
continued on page 12

"An uncertain future ..."

continued from page 9

living below the poverty line had risen again to 35 %.

No way out in the last four years.

Macri's successor as president in 2019 was Alberto Fernández, the Peronist candidate, with Cristina Kirchner de Fernández as vice-president. They held negotiations with the IMF over the previous four years and reached a new agreement, but this did not provide a

"We are wiping off our tears ..."

continued from page 10

Today Argentina, and I do not say this with pride but with great regret, has made a mistake. Greetings to the neutrals.

In this sense, the president of the Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo, Estela de Carlotto, emphasised that, after drying our tears, the decision to resist is firm and she announced that they would continue the fight to find their disappeared grandchildren, as they have done until now. Also, for the fight for truth, memory, and justice.

In the last few hours, the word "resistance" has been heard in many places as the first reaction to this uncertain situation. •

Source: *La Jornada* of 21 November 2023; <https://www.jornada.com.mx/noticia/2023/11/21/mundo/advierite-milei-que-privatizara-petrolera-y-medios-publicos-8597>

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

realistic way out of the debt. Inflation could not be brought under control. Internal disputes within the ruling party, accusations of corruption, and constant attacks by the major media, especially against Cristina Kirchner, destroyed all trust in the government. Added to this were the consequences of the coronavirus pandemic. Brazil's just-re-elected president, Luiz Ignácio Lula da Silva, did everything he could to enable Argentina to join the BRICS-Plus group – the organisation initially comprised of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa and recently expanded – as cooperation between the two major South American economies in the group represents one of the great hopes of Latin America. Unfortunately, Milei had already announced before the elections that he would oppose the plan of Argentina joining BRICS.

Stock market prices have risen – but also food prices.

Following Javier Milei's election victory, Argentinean share prices rose more than 20% on the *New York Stock Exchange* – but so did food prices in Argentina. Milei took office as president on 10 December. He has already given ministerial posts to some of the old caste of politicians that he supposedly wanted to abolish. Luis Caputo, of all people, who was finance minister in the

Macri government and played a key role in the realisation of the 2018 IMF loan, is appointed economy minister. Former president Mauricio Macri himself, who pulled strings in the background of the election, will continue to play an important role. It is well known in Argentina that he has full support for the Milei government and its policies if only he keeps to the sidelines.

Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador commented on Milei's election, saying that the Argentinian people shot themselves in the foot with having voted for Milei. Something like this would not be possible in Mexico because the Mexican people have a high level of political awareness. However, Mexico will always stand by the Argentinian people, AMLO made clear.

"We respect the decision of the majority in Argentina, we respect this decision, even if we believe that it will not help them", he said, "but the people are sovereign, despite all the anti-democratic elements used by the mafia of economic power everywhere, such as control of the media. This is already massive in Argentina, in Chile, everywhere, even in Mexico, but there it is even worse, there is massive manipulation".

Whether Milei can push through his plans remains to be seen. Trade unions and social movements are strong and will put up resistance. •

“The propaganda formula ...”

continued from page 11

Zelensky into abandoning Kyiv’s policy of aligning with the West and eventually bringing Ukraine into NATO. Had Britain and the West not intervened to scotch the negotiations, there is good reason to think Putin would have achieved this limited objective and agreed to end the war.

“It is becoming increasingly clear that in the case of Ukraine, the level of foolishness and dishonesty among Western elites and the mainstream Western media is stunning.” (*John J. Mearsheimer*)

It is also worth remembering that Russia did not annex the Ukrainian oblasts of Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson, and Zaporizhzhia until September 2022, well after the talks had ended. Had a deal been reached, Ukraine would almost certainly control a far greater share of its original territory than it does now.

It is becoming increasingly clear that in the case of Ukraine, the level of foolishness and dishonesty among Western elites and the mainstream Western media is stunning.

¹ <https://www.kyivpost.com/post/24645#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20lawmaker%2C%20while,-%20and%20let%27s%20just%20fight.%22>

Source: https://mearsheimer.substack.com/p/the-myth-that-putin-was-bent-on-conquering?utm_source=post-email-title&publication_id=1753552&post_id=139179620&utm_campaign=email-post-title&isFreemail=true&r=legg2q&utm_medium=email of 27 November 2023

km. *John J. Mearsheimer*, Professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago and author of internationally read books such as “The Tragedy of Great Power Politics” (2001), “The Israel Lobby and US Foreign Policy” (together with *Stephen M. Walt*, 2007), “Why Leaders Lie. The Truth about Lying in

International Politics” (2011) and “How States Think – The Rationality of Foreign Policy” (2023), is one of the best-known international critics of US foreign policy and particularly the eastern expansion of NATO. He mainly blames the overreaching hegemonic ambitions of US foreign policy for Russia’s invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022.

His article printed here addresses a key point of anti-Russian propaganda: the formula that Russia is not concerned with the denazification and demilitarisation of Ukraine, not with the protection of the Russian-speaking population living there and not with a European security architecture that also considers legitimate Russian security interests, but rather – motivated by imperialism – with conquering Ukraine first and then other European states.

Since even the Western mainstream can no longer deny that Ukraine’s previous war against Russia has failed (and cost tens of thousands of people their lives) and that a continuation of the war – especially for Ukraine – would *actually* be pure madness, the Western war faction has been looking for rampant justifications for continuing the mutual slaughter. The most recent example of this was US President *Biden’s* speech to Congress on 6 December, which can only be called perfidious. Biden wanted to persuade the majority in Congress to approve a further 60 billion US dollars for the war in Ukraine. Biden said¹:

“If Putin takes *Ukraine*, he won’t stop there. [...] He’s going to keep going. [...] If Putin attacks a NATO ally [...] well, we’ve committed as a NATO member that we’d defend every inch of NATO

territory. Then we’ll have something that we don’t seek and that we don’t have today: American troops fighting Russian troops [...]. Make no mistake: Today’s vote is going to be long remembered. And history is going to judge harshly those who turn their back on freedom’s cause. We can’t let Putin win. I’ll say it again: We can’t let Putin win. It’s in our overwhelming national interest and international interest of all our friends. Any disruption in our ability to supply Ukraine clearly strengthens Putin’s position. [...]”

Is this why tens of thousands more people are to die in Ukraine in the coming weeks and months? Is this why the country should be destroyed more and more? Is that why there should be no serious negotiations?

That is the perfidy of Biden’s speech: it is hypocritical and mendacious. He probably only meant one sentence seriously. It was at the beginning of his speech: “While Congress – and Republicans in Congress – are prepared to give Putin the greatest gift he could hope for, and give up our global leadership role not just over Ukraine, but beyond...” That’s what Biden is talking about, the “global leadership role” of the USA. What price should the world pay for this?

The US president has not succeeded in forcing the necessary majority in the US Congress for further billions in war funding. It remains to be seen whether this shows a growing awareness of reality among members of Congress or if it was just an episode in partisan politics. One thing is certain: incisive analyses such as those by John J. Mearsheimer are a valuable aid in bringing down the house of cards of war propaganda and finally ending the war in Ukraine at the negotiating table. •

¹ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/12/06/remarks-by-president-biden-urging-congress-to-pass-his-national-security-supplemental-request-including-funding-to-support-ukraine/>



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The “contrite sinner”

by Moritz Nestor

Walter’s grandfather, born in 1920, beat his children on the slightest of occasions, often even without occasion. He came from a poor farming family in central Switzerland and was an alcoholic. His son, Walter’s father, born in 1948, belonged to the working class and had been an alcoholic for as long as Walter could remember. While intoxicated, Walter’s father regularly beat his mother when he came home drunk at night. Walter’s mother was a kind woman, loved her son Walter and went cleaning to save her all in all from misery. Walter loved her. He hated his father from an early age. The people in the village watched the alcoholic’s misery, nobody helped. They despised him. The parson remained silent.

So, Walter grew up hating his alcoholic father. At night, when the time came again, he would listen to the nightly scenes in his room while his sister pulled the covers over her ears and was fearfully indignant at what a bad man their father was. As Walter grew older, he stood protectively in front of his mother and – insensible with rage – took the blows aimed at his beloved, weak mother. Until his father stopped. After that, Walter lay awake for a long time and his hatred for his father ate away at him.

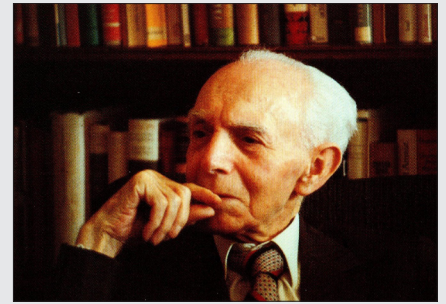
It was not until Walter was approaching forty that he learnt the background to the nocturnal scenes of his childhood days. Back then, he was told, at the regulars’ table, where his father’s weekly wages had turned into beer and schnapps, his drinking buddies had made fun of the drunk: “Your old lady has it off with others.” They laughed at the fool, as they thought oafishly. Walter’s father was unstable and believed the mockery. When he came home, he would seethe with anger, rant and beat his poor wife, almost passing out with his jealousy.

At 13, Walter was strong enough. From then on, he hit back, became a bully in general and did not allow himself to be told anything by anyone any longer. It was not just at home that he was unbearable: If he did not get what he wanted, he would use his fists. Lengthy speech-making was not his thing. He was eventually sent to a closed juvenile psychiatric centre for three years because he was no longer able to cope at school either.

That was fortunate for him. Here, for the first time in his life, he felt truly recognised, understood and safe. He recovered and completed an apprenticeship. The “difficult”, opinionated bully became a capable professional who gradually worked his way up in the community, canton, political associations and parties.

Understanding human nature through depth psychology

However, understanding a person’s nature is only possible for those who study people for their own sake; perhaps even a fundamental understanding cannot be separated from the desire or inclination to help the other person, to help him realise his true nature. Knowledge of human nature must not become a parlour game, a superficial amusement in which one points out “faults” to one’s neighbour or pulls the mask off one’s face; still less must it become a means of hubris, where one believes oneself to be superior to one’s own shortcomings through the insight into the shortcomings of others. It may sound moralistic, but you can only really understand human beings if you love them; and you will love them better if you understand them better. The basic feeling of a true connoisseur of human nature must be respect for the other person’s personality, an attitude free of judgemental and moralistic intentions: Nothing is more difficult for a person than such an unprejudiced ability to encounter others, and this is the reason for the psychological context that those who are good experts on human nature are those who have themselves already been caught up in great entanglements of guilt, temptation or inner distress; as *Alfred Adler* emphasises, “contrite sinners” have played an outstanding role in the development of European moral-



Friedrich Liebling (1893–1982)
(picture ma)

ity (for better or for worse). If we take a more objective approach to the problem, it is obviously the case that our own hardship, once it has been overcome, opens our eyes to the great difficulties that human beings have with their lives: an insight that makes us conciliatory and mild and makes us aware of the value of human beings in themselves, regardless of the blemishes they are afflicted with.

From: Liebling, Friedrich. *Tiefenpsychologische Menschenkenntnis (Understanding human nature through depth psychology)*, in: Liebling, Friedrich. *Essays*, Zürich 1992, p. 33ff.

First published in: *Psychologische Menschenkenntnis. (Psychological knowledge of human nature) 1/1964-65*, pp. 210-218
(Translation Current Concerns)

However, every time he had ambitiously worked his way up to the top somewhere, at some point he suddenly lost interest and looked for another field of activity to start from the “bottom” again. Even though he had learnt to talk instead of fighting in the juvenile centre, he remained opinionated and needy throughout his life, convinced that he had to be the only one, the cock of the walk and the best.

Walter had hated his father since he was a child and had many times felt like killing him. He had never wanted to be like “that man”. This hatred never left Walter. Even when he had long since become successful, he hated himself passionately whenever he discovered behavioural traits in himself that he seemed to have in common with his father. This always caused him to feel under the weather for a long time. For years he didn’t want to admit to himself that he had learnt more than he liked by watching his father’s violence, bossiness and dominance.

At 30, Walter was a successful businessman, married a colleague and had a

vasectomy, because he did not want children. He was afraid of being a bad father.

One day, Walter’s father found out about the vasectomy. Slightly drunk and in the heat of the moment, he kicked his son between the legs. Walter, who had worked in security for a long time and had learnt self-defence techniques as well as restraint, threw his father to the ground, unconscious with pain, and hissed into the drunk’s ear: “If you don’t give in now, I’ll kill you.” “I would have done it. Thank God my father gave in. We only narrowly escaped a catastrophe,” Walter explained in a gravelly voice.

His father pressed charges. Walter and his mother testified in court. They made consistent statements and the case was thrown out. “From then on, I no longer hated my father. I only despised him,” he said. “I avoided him for twenty years, didn’t want to see that man again.” He faithfully kept up the relationship with his beloved mother.

Over these many years, Walter, who was constantly striving for the top but never satisfied with his successes, felt,

continued on page 14

"The 'contrite sinner'"

continued from page 13

sometimes more, sometimes less clearly, that a "black stain" was his daily companion: "After all," it occurred to him spontaneously from time to time, "after all he is my father."

He had already turned fifty when, one day towards the end of the year, a decision matured in him that had been ripening over many years. "It wasn't out of deliberation," he emphasised, "it was an intuitive act that had been fermenting for a long time. I knew I would do it now. Before he dies." He visited his father a few days before Christmas Eve, offered the old man his hand, which he took in amazement, and forgave him. The old man's tears ran down his face and he said to Walter in a choked voice: "This is my best Christmas present ever."

"I've known for a long time that it was hatred of him that made me angry back then. But you know," he says, "we've talked about everything for so long now, you've always kept it in front of my eyes, and I've realised more and more: With my hatred of him, I'm putting myself on the same level as him, so to speak, him who was always beating me. I can't be doing myself what I've never wanted him to do. I learnt to hate him precisely because of his violence. And now the black stain is gone."

Walter worked at his way out of his hatred with admirable mental strength. He had inwardly and inevitably felt himself driven to give up his life's lie. He could no longer bear his "dark shadow". Because he knew that it was his "father after all".

And he had long since outgrown his father and understood how much his father had been incited by his drinking buddies and that he had therefore been violent towards Walter's mother. The son also learnt with the help of a psychologist that his father hadn't hit him because he hated Walter or was "evil". In Walter's mind, that father that Walter had always thought "bad" had long since turned into an abandoned alcoholic. Nobody had helped him and people had made fun of him and had earned money at his expense. So, Walter decided that he would rather give up his pride and hatred – which were a life lie fuelled by "good reasons" – than continue to suffer as a result. He realised that the person who hates is the first victim of his hatred. In the end, the realisation of the true reasons for his father's violence prevailed over his old childish, hateful

Gaining insight into ones own development and thus inner freedom

On the possibilities of understanding human nature through depth psychology

The method is the free exchange between the psychotherapist and the person who is seeking advice; as conversation partners on the same eye-level, they examine together the hardships and difficulties that hinder the latter in his life and progress. With generous tact and comprehensive knowledge of mental problems, the mind-doctor is able to create an atmosphere during the conversation, in which the conversation partner achieves more clarity about his own life.

From the knowledge of his own reactions and the psyche of his fellow human beings, which can be summa-

risied as " understanding of human nature", the psychotherapist's student achieves an inner superiority that not only liberates him from his disorders, but also makes him in general an inwardly balanced, clear-thinking and feeling person.

From: Liebling, Friedrich, In der Sprechstunde des Seelenarztes. (In the consultation of the mind doctor) In: Liebling, Friedrich. Aufsätze. Zürich 192 pages 64 ff.

First appearing in: "Wir Brückenbauer" (We bridgebuilders) 22/Nr. 43, Page 6. 1963

(Translation Current Concerns)

pride. Pushed to honest self-knowledge, he turned round inwardly and began to work his way out of the lowlands of his life, out of his hatred. He wanted to be *human*, not *inhuman*. Out of his own personality, he *wanted to develop* a new direction for his life, and so gave it a new direction.

Alfred Adler, the founder of individual psychology, wrote in 1927 in the introduction to his book "Menschenkenntnis" (English translation of the book "Understanding Human Nature", 1927, Greenberg, New York): "With our inadequate education today, real knowledge of man is actually only given to one type of person, that is the 'contrite sinner', the one who has either been caught up in all the transgressions of human inner life and has managed to escape from them, or who has at least come close to doing so. Of course, it can also be someone else, especially someone to whom all this could be demonstrated, or who has a special gift of empathy. However, the best judge of character will certainly be the one who has experienced all these passions himself. The contrite sinner seems to be the type that is accorded the highest value not only in our time, but also at the time of the development of all religions. He is the one who stands higher than a thousand righteous. If we ask ourselves why this is so, then we have to admit that a person who has risen from the difficulties of life, who has worked his way up from the mire, who has found the strength to throw all this behind him and rise from it, must know the good and bad sides of life best of all. No one else

can equal him in this, especially not the righteous."

Individual psychology teaches that "the results of experience acquire entirely new values, when the power of self-knowledge and self-criticism is still alive, and remains a living motif. The ability to know one's self becomes greater when one can determine the wellsprings of his activity and the dynamics of his soul. Once he has understood this, he has become a different man and can no longer escape the inevitable consequences of his knowledge." (Adler, Menschenkenntnis)

This is what Walter's *living* example teaches us: We humans are not "stimulus-response beings", not genital-controlled "beings of drives and instincts", not "living systems", not a "product of neuronal currents", not a "reflex of economic conditions", not a calculable "cost-benefit maximiser". Our psychological problems are not determined by "genes", "defective" brain structures, synapses or nerve pathways, nor by hormonal or metabolic disorders or economic "production conditions". Inner change is possible in us, as Alfred Adler wrote, "when the power of *self-knowledge* and self-criticism is still alive, and remains a living motif. The ability to know one's self becomes greater when one can determine the wellsprings of his activity and the dynamics of his soul." We are capable of recognising our strong natural moral dispositions of charity and mutual help and of shaping our lives in accordance with them, giving them a different, better and more humane direction – if we overcome hatred. •

“Never again war”

The current relevance of Käthe Kollwitz' work

by Winfried Pogorzelski



Käthe Kollwitz – self-portrait, 1924.
(picture Wikimedia Commons)

Käthe Kollwitz (1867–1945) is one of the most considerable artists of the 20th century. Her extraordinary, distinctive works – lithographies, etchings, graphics, wood carvings, sculptures, and others – are living expression of her humanitarian and pacifistic commitment. They are based on her personal and political experience as well as encounters with artists at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. Her life and work spanned World War I, the Weimar Republic, and the rise and fall of National Socialism until her death in 1945. Inspired by the motto “Take a stance”¹, Kollwitz always took part in the artistic, societal, and political life. With her art, she set herself apart from the usual historic painting that idealized life. Swiss art collector Eberhard W. Kornfeld (1923–2023) characterised Kollwitz' unique “artistic path” as an expression of “human realism”².

Origin, education and artistic orientation

Käthe Kollwitz was born in Königsberg in 1867 and remained there throughout her childhood. Supported by her father, she completed her artistic education in Königsberg, Munich and Berlin. Her husband Karl Kollwitz was a public assistance doctor in the Berlin district Prenzlauer Berg. Max Liebermann, great exponent of impressionism, as well as painter and sculptor Max Klinger, exponent of symbolism, inspired her to turn to the dark sides of life in her working. She took interest in the everyday life and work of the common folk, which she had gotten to know in the fishers' pubs of Königsberg and afterwards in Berlin.

In 1893, Gerhart Hauptmann's naturalistic drama, “The Weavers”, premiered in a closed showing of the “Freie Bühne”, because it had been hit with a performance ban. The play depicted the revolt of the Silesian weavers in 1844 and its end in moving pictures. “The impression was tremendous”, said Käthe Kollwitz. Thus, she created the print-graphic cycle “A Weavers' Revolt”—inspired in part by the 1891–1892 famine among Silesian weavers – which made a great stir at that time. In six paintings, the artist depicts the outbreak, climax and suppression of the weavers' revolt. The depictions are not merely historical illustrations, but mirror the actual social hardship of the late 19th century's Gründerzeit, by referencing the historical revolt. The work was exhibited at the Great Art Exhibition of Berlin (1899), which marked an artistic breakthrough for the artist. Max Liebermann advocated for an award for Kollwitz, but the indignant Kaiser Wilhelm II, refusing to confer the medal, referring to the series as “art from the gutter”, made by a woman.

Exhibitions in Berlin, Vienna and Paris

In 1898, Käthe Kollwitz received a teaching assignment at the female artists' school in Berlin. She participated in the first exhibition of the *Berlin Secession*, a group of artists which separated itself from the art establishment, and again in the *Vienna Secession* a little later on, which follows the same goals. During this time, she started the seven-parted cycle

of etchings titled “The German Peasants' War”, which also referenced an historical event (German Peasants' War in 1524/25), to comment on the situation of the proletariat in the German Empire.

The year 1904 led her to Paris, where she visited *Auguste Rodin* in his atelier. Kollwitz admired Rodin and wanted to turn to sculpting. The *Salon des Indépendants* shows her works.

“I want to have an impact in this time”

The First World War was a significant event for Käthe Kollwitz: Her son *Peter*, at only eighteen years of age, enlisted as a volunteer and was killed during the First Battle of Ypres³ on October 1914. She would not get over his death for all of her life, especially because she had encouraged him to get his fathers' approval before enlisting. Kollwitz became an active pacifist in 1918 by opposing lyricist *Richard Dehmel* with an open letter, after he called for a final war draft of teenagers: “Enough people have died! No more people must fall! I invoke a greater poet than Richard Dehmel [*Goethe*] who said: ‘Seed for sowing should not be milled.’”⁴

Soon she decided to create a memorial for her son and all volunteers of war. Only in 1932, eighteen years later, would the sculpture “The Grieving Parents” be finished. It depicts a pair of parents hewn out of granite, in deep mourning. It is located in the soldiers' cemetery Vladslo in Belgium, where 25,000 fallen soldiers – amongst them Peter Kollwitz – are buried.

continued on page 16



Käthe Kollwitz “A Weavers' Revolt”. (picture Wikimedia Commons)

“Never again war!”

continued from page 15

“I accept that my art has a purpose. I want to have an impact in these times when people are so desperate and in need of help”, Kollwitz wrote in a diary entry dated 1922.⁵ She became active in the pacifistic organisation *New Fatherland* (*German League for Human Rights* after 1922) and in the *Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom* (WILPF), whose task, up until today, is to make people aware of the horrors of modern warfare. As an artist, Kollwitz designed posters against famine and war. She was the first woman in history to receive the medal *Pour le Mérite* for Sciences and Arts. *Alexander von Humboldt*, was the first recipient of this medal and, since 1842, had become the Chancellor of the *Order of Merit* with powers to recommend candidates.

The period of National Socialism and recognition in the USA

Under the threat of the growing strength of the National Socialist German Workers’ Party (NSDAP), Käthe Kollwitz, *Albert Einstein* and *Heinrich Mann* initiated an appeal to the *Communist Party of Germany* (KPD), and the *Social Democratic Party of Germany* (SPD), under the title “*Dringender Appell*” (Urgent Appeal), to join forces in order to prevent the NSDAP from gaining a majority prior to the Reichstag elections in July 1932. It was signed by 33 people, including her husband Karl Kollwitz and the writers *Erich Kästner*, *Theodor Plivier*, *Ernst Toller* and *Arnold Zweig*.

In 1933, Käthe Kollwitz and Heinrich Mann were forced to leave the *Prussian Academy of Arts*. She was increasingly prevented from exhibiting her works and many were removed from museums (e.g., during the “*Degenerate Art*” campaign in 1937). An article about Käthe Kollwitz, based on an interview, appeared in the Moscow newspaper “*Isvestija*” in November 1936. This was followed by an interrogation by the Gestapo and the threat of imprisonment in a concentration camp in the event of a repeat offense. In 1943, her apartment and numerous graphics, prints and printing plates were destroyed in air attacks.

Parallel to this development, the artist and her work attracted increasing attention in the USA. By the time she celebrated her 70th birthday in 1937, she had already had to withdraw from the public eye, while she was becoming increasingly well-known across the Atlantic on the East and West coasts (New York and Los Angeles). Her exhibitions, some organised by German and Austrian exiles, attract large

numbers of visitors and she received many praises from art critics.

“Never again war!”

The legacy of Käthe Kollwitz

As the recent and ongoing wars show, Käthe Kollwitz’s work is more relevant than ever. These wars, too, are the result of the failure of a policy motivated by greed and aimed at expanding influence and power, in the mistaken assumption that war can solve problems. The countless victims are still innocent, above all, the soldiers who have to obey the order to enlist, who give their lives or suffer from physical and mental consequences throughout their lives. War leaves behind millions of miseries, including lasting suffering and traumatising among the civilian population. And last but not least, the legacy of war presents future generations with very difficult tasks (a good example for this is the long lasting process of reconciliation between France and Germany after World War II).

Käthe Kollwitz earned great merits by resisting this scourge of humanity with her art and her work. The impact of her art cannot be overstated: “Like few other artists of her time, Käthe Kollwitz combined her work with a socio-political, humanitarian and pacifist commitment. This coherent identity of man and work, of ethics and aesthetics, still commands respect today and has retained an unbroken topicality at a high level.”⁶

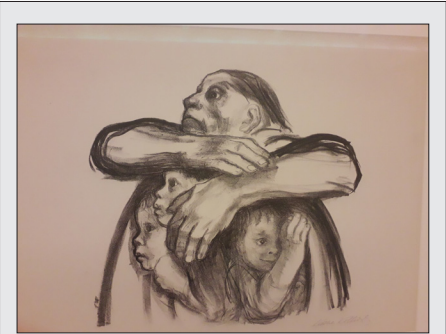
- ¹ Bielefeld, Kunsthalle. *Take a stand – Käthe Kollwitz. With interventions by Mona Hatoum*. Zurich Art Association/House of Arts Zurich and Hall of Arts Bielefeld. Hirmer Verlag. München. 2023.
- ² Meier, Philipp. “Two artists remember their war trauma. Mon Hatoum by poetic means, Käthe Kollwitz like a punch in the face”. *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* of 15 November 2023.
- ³ The First Battle of Ypres (20 October to 18 November 1914) took place in West Ypres. Casualties were high, but the German troops were unable to cut off the British army from their supply lines. *Wikipedia*, “*First Battle of Ypres*”, https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erste_Flandernschlacht
- ⁴ Fischer, Hannelore. ““There has been enough dying! Nobody must fall anymore!””, Zurich Art Association/House of Arts Zurich u. Hall of Arts Bielefeld, p. 23.
- ⁵ Forster-Hahn, François. ““Now something is blooming over there!””, Zurich Art Association/House of Arts Zurich u. Hall of Arts Bielefeld, p. 73
- ⁶ Fischer, Hannelore. *ibid.*, p. 27.

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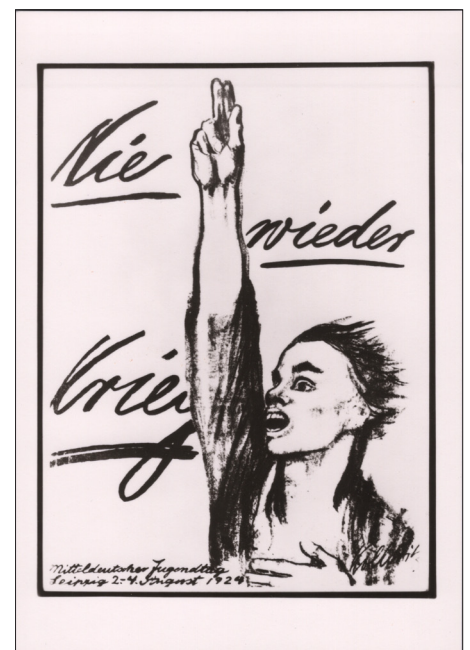


(picture Wikimedia Commons)

Käthe Kollwitz, “Seed for sowing should not be milled”, 1941

“I have decided – for the 3rd time – to take up the same theme and said to *Hans* a few days ago: This is now my legacy: ‘Seed for sowing should not be milled’ [...] So I painted the same scene again: Boys, proper Berlin boys, who greedily scent the air outside like young horses, are held back by a woman. The woman (an old woman) has wrapped the boys into her protective mantle, spreading her arms and hands over them in a violent and dominant gesture. ‘Seeds for sowing must not be ground’ – this demand is, like ‘Never again War’, not a sentimental yearning, but a command, a demand.”

Käthe Kollwitz, *Diaries*, December 1941



“Never Again War”

(picture Wikimedia Commons)