17 April 2019
No 9
ISSN 1664-7963

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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

"Stop confrontation, start dialogue!"

Successful Belgrade Conference "Never forget – peace and prosperity instead of wars and poverty"

Interview with Živadin Jovanovi, "The Belgrade Forum for the World of Equals", Belgrade, 24 March 2019*

Živadin Jovanović (picture ev)

On the occasion of 20th anniversary of the aggression of NATO Alliance against Serbia (the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the FRY), on 22 and 23 March 2019 Belgrade was the venue of the International Conference under the title "Never to Forget – Peace and Prosperity instead of Wars and Poverty". The conference was organised by "The Belgrade Forum for the World of Equals", the "Federation of Associations of Veterans of the National Liberation War of Serbia", "The Serbian Generals and Admirals Club" and the "Society of the Serbian Hosts", in cooperation with the "World Peace Council". Besides the participants from Serbia, the Conference was attended by more than 200 distinguished guests from some 30 countries from all over the world. The organisers welcomed the participants and expressed sincerest gratitude for their solidarity, support and huge humanitarian relief during one of the most challenging periods in the recent history of Serbia.

With a total of 78 contributions, the two days were more than well filled. An exhibition with harrowing pictures documented the suffering of the Serbian population during the NATO attack in 1999.

The conference was dedicated to preserving the lasting memory and paying tribute to the military and the police personnel who made the ultimate sacrifice in the defence of their country against the Nato-aggression, as well as to the civilian victims killed during this 78-day war.

Current Concerns: Your conference, which you held for 3 days with many guests from all over the world, has just ended and therefore we would like to ask you: What are your impressions, what are your conclusions out of what we had the last three days?

Živadin Jovanović: I think the conference was a great success in terms of attendance, in terms of the content and in terms of conclusions. As far as attendance is concerned we had about 200 guests from about 30 countries from all continents except from Australia. They are all united in their objective of peace, solidarity and peaceful development. They are authors of books, scientists, some politicians, diplomats, strategic analysers, generally public figures in the countries they come from. They have come on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the NATO war of aggression against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which is illegal under international law. That we can all commemorate the victims and remember the destruction, cruelty and arrogance of the only military alliance, NATO. They are all friends of Serbia, who have shown their solidarity and their support over about three decades now of turbulent processes and developments in the region of the Balkans.

At the conference we also tried to project a vision of peace in Europe and in the world, a vision of inclusive development for all people and all countries. I think that we can be satisfied with the content of the Belgrade declaration (see page 3) and that it will be well received.

continued on page 2

* *Živadin Jovanović* is president of the "Belgrade Forum for the World of Equals". He studied law at the University of Belgrade, from 1964 to 2000 he worked in the diplomatic service of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (from 1992 Federal Republic of Yugoslavia FRY), from 1988 to 1993 Ambassador in Luanda/Angola, from 1995 to 1998 Deputy Foreign Minister, from 1998 to 2000 Foreign Minister, 1996 Member of the Serbian Parliament and 2000 in the Parliament of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In addition to numerous articles and interviews, he has published the following books: "The Bridges" (2002); "Abolishing the State" (2003); "The Kosovo Mirror" (2006); "The Twilight of the West – NATO aggression – Never to forget (2010)"; "1244-A Key to Peace in Europe" (2018)

Editorial

Current Concerns has always condemned the NATO war – just like all other wars before and after 1999 – and critically questioned the reporting on it. Conflicts belong at the negotiating table, solutions must respect international law and the right of peoples to self-determination enshrined in international covenants as well as the human rights of the populations concerned. With a view to the lives of all people on this one and only planet on which we and future generations want to live, it has always been our concern to draw attention to the war crimes committed in all these wars with the use of weapons: which, in addition to the immediate devastations, also destroy or impair the lives of the people affected and their livelihoods in the long term.

The motto of the conference and commemoration of the 20th anniversary of NATO aggression against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia: "NATO aggression – Never to forget!" is in this sense the task of mankind in the service of peace.

That we do not forget what was and is done to people with war – with all wars, but also with aggression against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the first war on European soil after the "Never again!" of the two world wars and all further wars – we owe that to the victims, to the present and future generations, but also to the truth and our human conscience.

As in all wars, before this war too, propaganda and manipulation tried to mislead our thinking and numb our consciences. In the name of human rights, the most fundamental rights of the people in this country have been disregarded and trampled underfoot. International law, UN Charter, international agreements – everything has been ignored in the service of the power interests of a so-called "new world order".

Anyone who as a human being does not want to let his thoughts be taken away and wants to orient himself not only to "narratives", but to facts and sources, knows today about the lies with which this war too was drummed.

Already in the evening before the actual conference, the guests were welcomed and invited to let the photo exhibition of the 78-day bombardment of NATO and its consequences for the people and the

continued on page 3

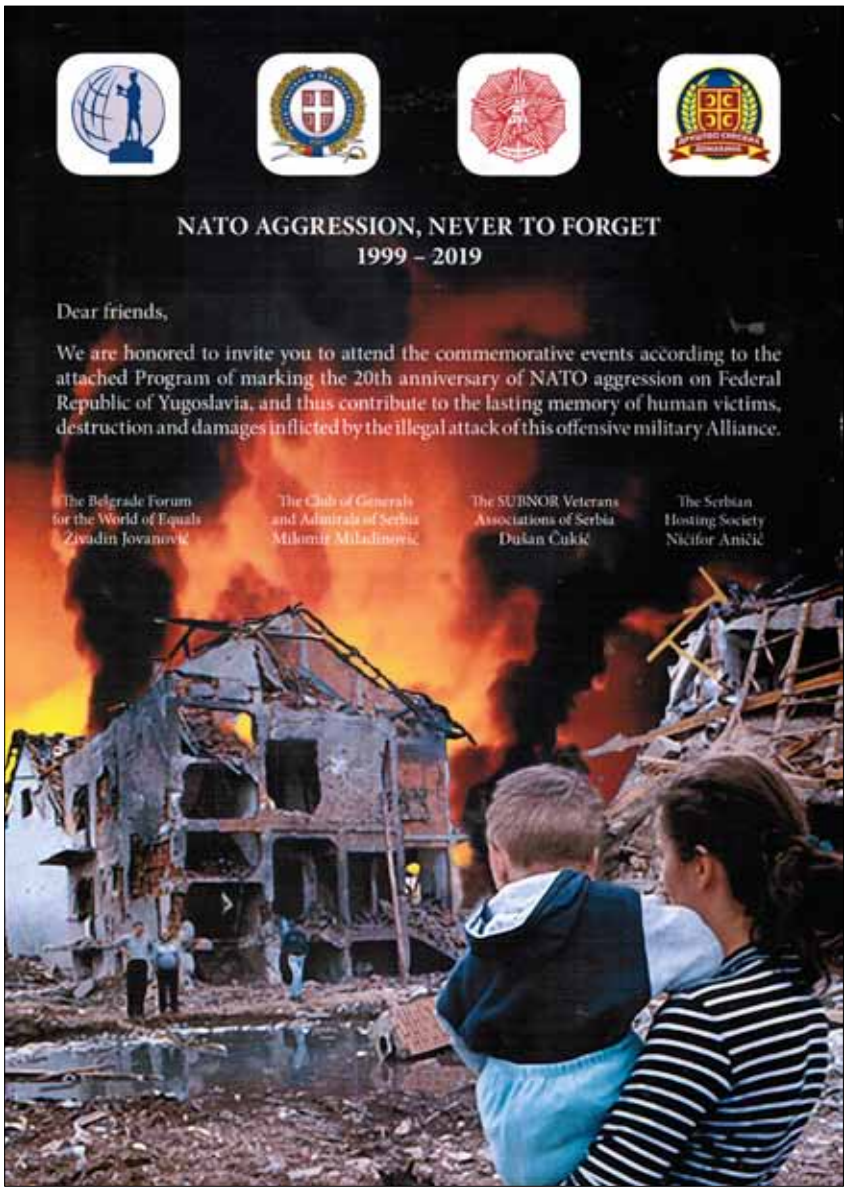
"'Stop confrontation, ...'"
continued from page 1

Mr Jovanović, you just gave the starting signal for the marathon to Mount Athos, which has started right now. Can you say a few words about that? Because it belongs to the conference.
This is a traditional manifestation of athletes. Serbian athletes are the initiators but they include also athletes from surrounding countries, so it is an international memorial marathon. They run every year a different direction and spread the same message of peace, cooperation, solidarity and the message that the NATO aggression from 1999 should not be repeated and should not be forgotten. The more so, that really today instability prevails on the Balkans and in a big part of Europe. So we should be always cautious that peace, stability and development are not guaranteed automatically. It should always be worked in order that it will be preserved. The marathon carries the message of reason, of wisdom and they run about 100 kilometers every day. But they stop at every place, every historical monument to pay respects to the victims not only of NATO aggression but victims of World War I and World War II. This way that they are running today and tomorrow is unfortunately too rich in monuments to the victims.

This is most impressive and deeply touching. But unfortunately also highly topical.
We should be aware what risks are we facing today because of growing mistrust, global confrontation and arms race, enormous funds are invested in preparing for the war and the development and the social life of people is neglected. So this is a dangerous trend if you have global mistrust and global confrontation. If you, let's say right now in Europe, reorient civil structure, completely to serve also military needs.

I think we have gone too far and I have the impression that we are not quite aware of what processes are happening right now. We are occupied by day to day obligations and tasks and we all need to see and be aware of these essential deep global changes, endangering, threatening the security. So, our manifestations including this one today serves just the purpose to state an awareness of what is going on and to mobilise unity of peace-loving people and forces to resist such developments to get the message spread: stop confrontation, start dialogue, stop ruining international agreements, to negotiate better ones, stop transforming the economy and infrastructure for the military purposes.

How else do you commemorate the 1999 war here in Serbia?



Invitation poster to the conference in Belgard.

We had a number of manifestations in Belgrade these days of which the international memorial marathon is only one. There was a two days conference, we also had an excellent exhibition for those artefacts devoted to Nato aggression. We also presented a number of new books to mark this anniversary, books by the best authors on these subjects. And we have many other manifestations apart from what we are doing as a part of what we can say people's diplomacy. The government today [24 March] is organising a central government manifestation in the city of Nîs. This yet again will be the message of remembering victims and the message of reminding that we should turn towards peace, towards cooperation and solidarity and not confrontation.

You mentioned the many foreign guests. How do you perceive their participation in your conference?
We have many friends and we owe them respect and gratitude for all their support and understanding for their solidarity, for the enormous humanitarian assistance that they have been sending over decades to my country, to Serbia and to Serbs here and we also cherish very much that our friends all over the world right now are holding conferences, like the conference in Vienna, the conference in New York, in Washington, the conference in Prague, in Bratislava. Then next week there will be three conferences in Italy, in Rome, in Bologna and in Florence. So we are also saying that we from the *Belgrade Forum for a World of Equals*, we are happy because we are recognised as a focal point for all those and they seek our messages, seek our greetings and are sending us messages of solidarity and so forth. So it is very positive that so many people in so many different countries all over the world are aware of the real meaning of the NATO aggression from 1999, of the real meaning

continued on page 3

"'Stop confrontation, ...'"
continued from page 2

of this expansionist policy and the policy of conquist. This is something encouraging for the humanity.

Has the peace movement grown in comparison with previous years within the framework of your conference?
Yes, I think there is a positive change as far as activities of associations and entities. It is positive that we are becoming more and more aware of our duties and that we respond to the situation that is not really bright and very encouraging.

I would like to mention the positive change we are seeing in Serbia itself. In Serbia I can tell you that in 2000 or 2001 nobody would have any manifestations on the occasion of the NATO aggression. These signals from the government were missing, there were no signals encouraging this culture of memory, culture of respect for the victims. No, they were silent and the press, the complete mass media in Serbia never would mention 'aggression'. They would say 'intervention', they would say 'campaign of NATO', or bombardment at the best. But we continuously and steadily pursued a real term, and real characterisation of that attack. It was blatant aggression on a sovereign and peaceful state and not motivated by any humanitarian or similar reasons but exclusively by geopolitical aims by promoting strategies of expansion towards the East.

The fact that you stood all alone in your own country has changed, thank God.
So right in Serbia, we saw unprecedented publicity in the Serbian media for our conference and for all that we are doing. And you cannot see other terms so frequently than 'aggression' from our president, to the prime minister, to the ordinary people. And the journalists, they are now using the term of aggression. This is a sign of change. And this is because we were steady, we knew what was the truth, we urged the others to agree. There is a slight failure of our press. They reported excellently about our conference. Excellently. Enormous space was given. Two pages in one daily, in the most influencial pages. Yesterday, one of the oldest and traditional newspapers in Europe in politics, they devoted a whole page. That has never happened. Most of the times they would completely ignore what we are doing, but now the whole page. And the failure? What is the failure? It is, let's say, that politics don't say who has organised all this. They said it was organised in the "Army House" and that is was good and very constructive and very important. And they reported who was speaking what, with many quotations, excellently, but there is no reference that this was done by the *Belgrade Forum for the World of Equals*, but by generals and admirals veterans associations and the Society of Serbian host.

Nevertheless, the most important thing is that people can read about the results of our conference and that the truth is spread.

Thank you very much. We owe you a big thank-you for what you have done and for bringing so many people together here. It is a tremedous work and we wish you and your country the very best. •

"Editorial"
continued from page 1

country have an effect on them. They are – like all pictures of war – photos of horror, human suffering, wanton destruction, which repeatedly pose the question to the viewer: Why? Why do people do this? Anyone who already dealt with the question at that time remembers the photo of the girl in Vietnam, who, hit by Napalm, runs towards the viewer. Just like that one, these photos also shout into the viewer's conscience: "What did I do, what did we do to you?"

During the two days of the conference, 78 speakers expressed in very different ways why this war and its victims must not be forgotten, why such forgetting only makes new wars and new injustices possible, and that one of the dangers for humanity today is that those really responsible are not called to account.

They recalled how this first war of aggression after 1945 was staged on European soil without a mandate from the UN *Security Council*: with bold lies, unspeakable twisting of history, demonization and media drumbeats – against the UN Charter, international agreements and treaties, against other reports by high-ranking OSCE representatives and against investigation reports that had already refuted the rhetoric of war. The participants also agreed on the geopolitical dimension of the whole – there were no "humanitarian" concerns, but hard geostrategic goals that were pursued.

Clear words were also spoken by official representatives of Serbia. While the authorities have been cautiously reticent for some time, there are now many much clearer and more explicit words. The present Serbian Minister of Defence, *Aleksandar Vulin*, for example, characterised the war goal as an attempt to make the Serbian nation disappear, both biologically and historically – biologically with regard to the weapons used, historically with an attempt to extinguish numerous historical cultural assets and the self-confidence of the people in this country.

Although representatives of the NBC protection of the Serbian army had already discussed the consequences of the uranium ammunition fired in Serbia and Kosovo on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the bomb war, it was striking that this question was clear to all participants today: the consequences for the population are unmistakable in the serious increase in cancer and deaths, and the population is well aware of what this development is connected with.

The 85-year-old Italian journalist *Fulvio Grimaldi*, documentary filmmaker and long-time war correspondent, among others on Italian television RAI, also addressed the historical and cultural dimension: He had experienced everywhere how in the battlefields of the world as something of the first cultural assets are destroyed in order to attack the cultural identity of the people. The power politics of globalisation cannot tolerate this, it needs an "amorphous identity, and that means no identity," says Grimaldi.

At the beginning of human action stands our feeling and thinking: Verifiable information and a reflection on what has been done to fellow human beings – for example in Serbia – and what will be done with the long-term consequences, this is an essential contribution that human conscience and reasonable action will one day assert themselves.

Erika Vögeli

Belgrade Declaration – Never to Forget: 1999 – 2019 (Excerpts)

The participants have unanimously condemned NATO aggression, affirming that in its essence it was an illegal, invading and criminal war against a peaceful sovereign European country, waged without the UN Security Council mandate and under brute violation of the *United Nations Charter*, the *OSCE Helsinki Final Act* (1975) and the basic principles of international law. […]

This was neither 'a small war' nor 'a humanitarian intervention', but rather a war of underlying geopolitical goals for the long-term deployment of the US troops in the Balkans, for the establishment of case precedent for future aggressions, and for the toppling of legitimate governments, all within the Eastbound Expansion Strategy and the overall goal of setting the global dominance. The history will note the fact that, back in 1999, blindly following alien geopolitical interests, Europe fought itself.

The Balkan is today more unstable. Europe is even more divided. Europe's backtracking to itself requires some soul-searching, courage and the vision, including confession that the attack against Serbia (the FRY) in 1999 was a colossal historical error.

The aggression's masterminds and executors should be held responsible for their crimes. The aggression killed some 4,000 persons (including 79 children), whereas additional 6,500 people were seriously wounded. Direct material damage amounted to US 100 billion US dollars. It was stressed that NATO and its members participating in the aggression had duty to compensate the war damages to Serbia.

The participants of the Conference were informed about the findings of scientific and expert analyses conducted so far, all confirming that the use of ammunition filled with depleted uranium, and of graphite and cluster bombs and other inflammable and toxic means of warfare, have resulted in high levels of the long-term environmental pollution and the massive-scale endangering of the Serbian citizens. They welcomed the establishment of special bodies of both the national Assembly and of the Government of Serbia tasked with determining the consequences of NATO aggression reflected on the health of population and the safety of environment, and expressed support to the work of those bodies. […]

NATO aggression against Serbia (the FRY) was a direct and simultaneous attack on the peace and security system in Europe and in the world, which has been constructed on the outcome of the Second World War. As conclusively demonstrated by the subsequent interventions of the USA and its allies (Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Mali, Syria, etc.), this aggression has served as case-precedent and template to globalise the interventionism, a manual on how to utilise terrorism and separatism to carry out the Western powers' plans of conquest, in order to forcibly topple 'unsuitable' regimes and impose geopolitical interests of the West, notably, of the USA. […]

Miladin Ševarlić, President of the Society of Serbian Hosts, Socorra Gomes, President of the World Peace Council (Brazil), Živadin Jovanović, President of the Belgrade Forum for the World of Equals, Milomir Miladinović, President of the Serbian Generals and Admirals Club, Jelena Guskova, Russian Academy of Sciences. (picture vk)

Participants of the Conference expressed their strong support to, and solidarity with efforts Serbia invests in remedying the grave and lasting consequences of the aggression and to her striving to prevent the continuation of NATO aggression by other means. They explicitly supported Serbia's efforts to preserve own sovereignty and territorial integrity and her contribution to resolve the future status of Kosovo and Metohija, which will be in line with international law and *Resolution 1244* of the UN Security Council. They denounced the policy of coercion, pressures, and unilateral steps. […]

The participants have condemned all methods of abuse of international institutions such as: *United Nations*, *OSCE*, *UNESCO*, *WTO* and others, demanding their improvement and strengthening, not weakening and bypassed.

The policy of domination based on military might, typical of unipolar world order, was rejected as unacceptable because being founded on privileges and self-proclaimed excellence and not on equality of all countries and nations. Multi-polarisation excludes dominance and opens window for democratisation of international affairs. The Conference sent an appeal to all peaceful forces in the world to join forces in the struggle for the observance of the international law as based on the UN Charter, for reinforced role of the United Nations and other universal international organisations.

Participants of the Conference unanimously demanded to urgently put an end to a new arms race and violation of relevant international agreements, and to redirect the funds from the military budgets into the domains of economic development, improving quality of people's life, and eliminating the disheartening developmental and social divergences. […] They demanded for full respect of the existing agreements, and renewal of negotiations on stopping arm race, particularly nuclear. They demand full withdrawal of the US tactical nuclear weapons and missile defense assets from Europe that are worsening of the security on the European continent.

[…] Peace, democracy, and progress require radical change in global relations, observance of sovereign equality, non-interference, and multiculturalism. Stability, peace, and inclusive progress require observance of common interests, partnership, and exclusion of any egoism, protectionism, and privileges. Policy of confrontation, interventionism, and interference in the internal affairs, prompted by the military industry complex and big financial capital must give way to dialogue, partnership, observance of the basic norms of international law and international order, which are based on the common interests and mutual respect.

Participants of the Conference committed to peaceful political solution of all international problems, under observance of principles of international law, the UN Charter, and the decisions of the UN Security Council.

Belgrade, 23 March 2019

Source: http://www.beoforum.rs/en/nato-agression-belgrade-forum-for-the-world-of-equals/621-never-to-forget-1999-2019-belgrade-declaration.html

Sanja – a greeting to the conference

Willy Wimmer (picture ma)

The unprecedented war of aggression by the NATO troops against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has a face. It is the face of *Sanja*, who has been torn from her hopeful life at the age of fifteen. She had been a student of the elite mathematical boarding school in Belgrade for half a year. As the second best mathematician of her year, she was entitled to this place. She was a great hope for her country, perhaps a new *Tesla*. She was killed by Nato fighter planes on the bridge of her hometown Varvarin, together with others, in a terror attack typical for the NATO. Typical because the pattern corresponded to what the world experienced in the attack on the embassy of the People's Republic of China in Belgrade, when the United States wanted to keep going the war of aggression against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which was contrary to international law and gross.

There's another face to this war. That of NATO spokesman *Jamie Shea*. Seldom so few people lied to so many with such an effect as it happened on the part of the NATO and the politicians responsible in the West of the type of *Tony Blair, Josef Fischer* or *Madelaine Albright* in the war illegal under international law against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The spirit with which a country was invaded in the midst of peace lives on today. There is no other way to value the fact that *Christoph Heusgen*, foreign policy advisor to the German Chancellor, recently paid spectacular tribute to Jamie Shea in Berlin.

We should be aware of the dimension of this war today and then. This is illustrated by the refusal of a British general to comply with the NATO Commander-in-Chief *Wesley Clark*'s instructions and to start the next world war by ordered action against Russian forces. That was and is the point in the dimension of the NATO aggression up to this day. The gross war of aggression against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was the starting shot for the "war that should have its starting point in this war". Those for whom The Hague was intended have not yet taken their seats in the dock.

Willy Wimmer, State Secretary of the Federal Minister of Defence (retd.) Vice-President of the Parliamentary OSCE Assembly 1994-2000, Member of the German Bundestag from 1976-2009

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

"We need peace, so we should join forces, we should carry this in our hearts"

Voices from the Belgrade Conference

by Eva-Maria Föllmer-Müller

Irinej Bulović, Bishop of the Serbian Orthodox Eparchy Bačka in Novi Sad, said in his speech that conflicts should always to be resolved through peaceful means. The Serbian Orthodox Church keeps reminding of the war in its prayers and sermons. Today, people in Serbia have many friends. The peace process will take a long time, because we are living in a post-Orwellian era. At the end of his speech, he consecrated the conference.

Pyotr Olegovich Tolstoy, vice-president of the Russian State Duma, addressed the conference participants on behalf of the Russian parliament and emphasised the historical ties between the Russian and the Serbian peoples. Both peoples should learn from the wars. He himself, has been a journalist on the Russian radio during the Yugoslavia war and has reported at the time. This war has not been an isolated case. Outrage he condemned the double standards of the Western "community of values". He demanded that all true war criminals must be brought before a court of justice. Without acknowledgment of what has been done, there will be no forgiveness.

Memmorial-Marathon (picture vk)

Mihailo Miša Gavrilović, lives in the Serbian diaspora in London, spoke about how the Serbs in the diaspora fared in the NATO countries during the war. Propaganda against Serbia has begun some 10 years earlier. They had repeatedly commented against the propaganda. He himself had been on radio and television 800 times between 1991 and 1999.

The head of the Serbian Orthodox Church of Montenegro and Littoral, the Metropolitan bishop *Amfilohije Radović*, said the conference strikes the heart of Europe and the world, calling for peace and prosperity instead of wars and poverty. He was very happy about the participants from abroad. He himself had been in the area of Pec during the war, he had known exactly what was happening. The war had been the continuation of the Crusades, the Napoleonic Wars, the Nazi era. The totalitarian ideology had come first from the

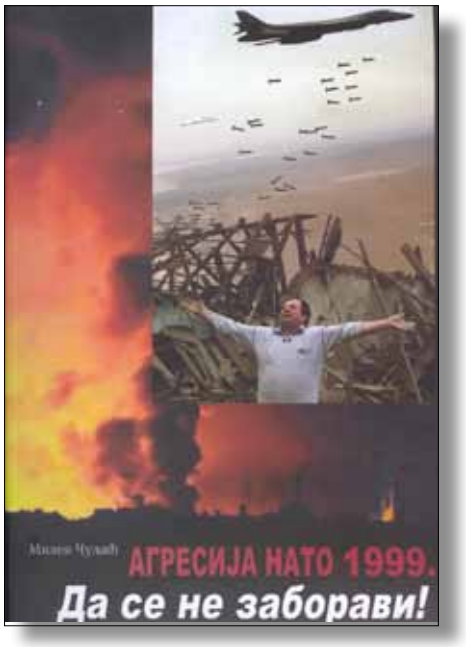
continued on page 6

The famous Austrian writer, *Peter Handke* was awarded with the "Charta of Courage" by *Živadin Jovanović*, President of the Belgrade Forum for the World of Equals at the Conference. He was recognised for his intellectual courage in defending truth and justice in times when avarice of power and lies dominated over Serbia.

"'We need peace, so we should ...'"
continued from page 5

East and comes now from the West. Selfish interests govern the world today. "We need peace, so we should join forces, we should carry that in our hearts."

Aleksandar Vulin, Serbian Minister of Defense in office, found clear words: For more than 12 years, one was not allowed to speak of NATO aggression. Never in history has such a supremacy been utilised against such a small country. It was shocking that the killed children and civilians were termed as collateral damage. He was happy about the many foreign guests, they should also report. "In 1999, in our darkest hour, when we were attacked by our erstwhile allies, when the whole world was silent, you gave us back hope." He clearly rejected joining NATO.



ISBN 978-86-915585-4-3

"Exhibition on the suffering of the Serbian people during the 1999 NATO aggression, which commemorates thousands of victims. The pictures tell us about destroyed houses, bridges, streets, factories. Special attention is paid to the environmental disaster, the ecocide and the depleted uranium-filled ammunition, which continues to kill at this moment – and will continue to kill for many years to come. There are countless photos of the despair of the Serbs in 1999." (Milen Čulić)

"Serbia will never enter NATO!" Furthermore: "We will not do to others what has been done to us. What we want is peace, justice, rule of law and freedom."

Vladislav Jovanović, former Foreign Minister of Yugoslavia and former Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to the United Nations, said: "In late 1991, Ambassador *Warren Zimmermann* asked me to meet him and on that occasion he presented a single piece of paper, saying that in case there will be a robust conflict in Kosovo, for which Serbia could be considered responsible, America is ready to bomb Serbia and Belgrade. Then I asked him: 'This is an ultimatum?' and he replied: 'Yes, this is an ultimatum'. That is what Zimmermann said privately. At that time I was Foreign Minister and he wanted to meet me in my office. It was very brief, almost impolite, blunt. This is not the language used in diplomacy. It was still polite, but very harsh. I reminded him of Serbia's long history with ultimatums, carrying in mind the Hungarian ultimatum and others in our history. And that was the end of our conversation. He did not want to collaborate. Then I told him that I am going to inform President *Milosevic*. And maybe a month or two after our conversation he was revoked. The State Department was not pleased with the ambassador – he was the only American ambassador in Eastern Europe who did not succeed in eliminating the existing government. After that he decided to leave the State Department and went to Columbia University as a professor or he was simply removed from office. Otherwise, he was a nice man, quite polite, well educated, I met him many times. It was his assignment. To me, that was characteristic, American policy was not very friendly toward Serbia already 10 years back."

Srđan Aleksić, lawyer, and *Velimir Nedeljković,* both from Niš, drew attention to the consequences of the contamination of Serbia with the use of extensive DU munitions (depleted uranium); this has verifiably led to significantly increased cancer rates in the affected areas. NATO itself had admitted the use of DU ammunition. So far, 18,000 people have died, the Italian courts have granted the compensation claims of the relatives of the 7,600 soldiers who were in active service at that time and of whom 450 have already died of cancer. Serbia ought to make this claim also. An international group of lawyers is about preparing a lawsuit against the NATO countries. An international prohibition of DU weapons must be demanded, also because of the environmental contamination (ecocide). •

Delegations of the Conference

Belarus	Japan
Belgium	Latvia
Brazil	Lebanon
Bulgaria	Montenegro
Canada	Nepal
Croatia	Austria
Cyprus	Palestine
France	Portugal
Germany	Russia
Greece	Romania
Great Britain	Switzerland
India	South Africa
Iran	Ukraine
Ireland	USA
Israel	Venezuela
Italy	

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

Publisher: Zeit-Fragen Cooperative
Editor: Erika Vögeli, Eva-Maria Föllmer-Müller
Address: Current Concerns,
P.O. Box, CH-8044 Zurich
Phone: +41 (0)44 350 65 50
Fax: +41 (0)44 350 65 51
E-Mail: CurrentConcerns@zeit-fragen.ch

Subscription details:
published regularly electronically as PDF file

Annual subscription rate of
SFr. 40,-, € 30,-, £ 25,-, $ 40,-
for the following countries:
Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brunei, Canada, Cyprus, , Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hongkong, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Qatar, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, USA

Annual subscription rate of
SFr. 20,-, € 15,-, £ 12,50, $ 20,-
for all other countries.

Account: Postscheck-Konto: PC 87-644472-4

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Uranium ammunition contaminates the world

A new book about a weapon that was a taboo issue over many years

by Dr med. Gabriella Hunziker

Book Review

The book has just been published, it is not an easy topic, rather heavy stuff. It deals with the most serious crimes against humanity and against nature, to such an extent that all of us should be concerned with it. The documentary filmmaker and author *Frieder Wagner* has been dealing with the subject of uranium weapons for quite some time. Among others, he has realised the films "Todesstaub" (Deadly Dust) and "Der Arzt und die verstrahlten Kinder von Basra" (The Doctor and the contaminated Children of Basra). His concern, as he writes, is to foil the cover-up strategy of the military, industry, governments, but also of the media and to help spread the truth that uranium weapons are weapons of mass destruction and should therefore be outlawed and banned worldwide. Wagner learned about uranium weapons and their effects for the first time in 2002 when he met the doctor and scientist Dr *Siegwart-Horst Günther.* He was the first to draw attention to the terrible consequences of the so-called uranium ammunition after the Gulf War in 1991. Putting his life at risk, he proved that the use of uranium weapons by the USA and its allies caused fatal diseases among the population and soldiers as well as severe malformations in new-borns (Günther's disease).

What is depleted uranium, why are projectiles made from it and why are these weapons so dangerous?

The isotope U 238 is *depleted uranium (DU)*, whose density is about 70% higher than that of lead. Like lead, it is also a heavy metal and is thus highly toxic. In addition, it is a so-called alpha emitter with a radioactive half-life of 4.5 billion years! Depleted uranium is a by-product of the production of nuclear fuel rods for nuclear power plants. According to Frieder Wagner, to sell it to the armaments industry is a profitable alternative to expensive and complicated disposal for the nuclear industry.

ISBN 978-3-85371-452-2

"Depleted uranium has two very important, outstanding properties in military applications: If the metal is formed into a pointed rod and accelerated accordingly, it easily penetrates steel and reinforced concrete due to its enormous weight. The result is abrasion of this uranium rod, which self-ignites when exposed to the enormous frictional heat reaching temperatures between 1,000 and 5,000 degrees Celsius". After the explosion, millions of very small uranium particles get into the atmosphere and can seriously injure or even kill anyone who inhales this fine dust. These uranium oxide particles are respirable because they are 100 times smaller than a red blood cell, and they contaminate the soil, air and water wherever these weapons have been used so far. When inhaled, the nano-sized uranium oxide particles can cause cancer and leukaemia. As with AIDS, the immune system collapses and the kidneys and liver are damaged. Along with the blood, the particles also move to the brain, to the female oocytes and to the male semen. This leads to chromosome- breaks and thus to changes in the genetic code. This means that the children of these people often suffer from deformities, as do their children and grandchildren. Entire generations will thus be damaged over many decades and centuries as their genetic code has changed incurably, as Wagner writes.

Why is this a concern for all of us?

The problem concerns all of us because radioactive particles are not confined to one place. The winds and storms in the area keep the fine, invisible 'deathly dust' whirling around and it can be carried to areas where no combats have taken place. Wagner illustrates this with the example of the Kurdish town of Erbil in northern Iraq, which is many hundreds of kilometres away from any battleground. "There was an unusual increase in cases of leukaemia in children and infants, caused by a type of leukaemia that otherwise only occurs in old people. Urine samples of the sick children, dust from the air filter of a car driven locally and organ samples of a slaughtered cow raised on the grasslands of Erbil were examined. The result was appalling, as all the samples contained high concentrations of uranium 238. The dust from the car's air filter was contaminated even 1,000 times higher than the highest samples from the battlefields of Basra."

In 2003, Wagner visited the children's hospitals in Baghdad and Basra together with Professor Dr Günther. What he saw there he describes impressively in his book. He was confronted for the first time with the reality of the consequences of depleted uranium projectiles. He saw babies with severe, terrible deformities that were not viable. The fathers of these babies had participated in the wars as soldiers and were therefore contaminated. A doctor told them in a hoarse voice: "Until 1991 in Baghdad, according to our records, we had within 1,000 births at most one with minor defects and no more than one every 14 days. Today we have here almost every day one or two such deformities, and they all resemble the deformities we got to know after the Chernobyl catastrophe". In Basra they were told that today ten times more patients suffer from cancer than before the war in 1991, and that 20 times more babies are born with malformations – and the trend is rising. But also in families of soldiers of the allies babies with severe deformities were born.

Since the Gulf War in 1991, the US army has used uranium weapons in its wars under the tacit toleration of NATO allies. In Kosovo as well as in Bosnia and Serbia, Kuwait, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Somalia, Iraq and Syria. Wagner also raises the question of where Germany stands when it comes to uranium ammunition. With regard to the peace movement in the 1980s, the "German Bundeswehr" did not equip its tanks with uranium ammunition. Wagner: "This policy has been disrupted the first time when the German government abstained from voting for the first time in December 2014 at the last resolution of the UN General Assembly to outlaw uranium ammunition worldwide …". The ban on uranium weapons failed again in 2014 due to the veto of three members of the Security Council, namely the USA, Great Britain and France. Wagner writes: "Such an exemplary view as that of small Belgium will not be hold here in Germany for the time being. Belgium was the first country in the world to ban the production and use of uranium weapons. In Belgium it

continued on page 8

Contemplating Germany

Listening and talking to each other

by Karl Müller

The following text is attempting to reflect on three topics which are important for Germany and the German debates. The idea is to encourage discussion about these topics and to listen to each other:

– The pupil's demonstrations for a new climate politics,
– The "fight against the right",
– The enemy image Russia.

Under the motto "Fridays for Future", thousands of children and young people in many countries of Europe and the world, particularly in Germany, have been demonstrating regularly since the end of last year on Friday mornings during school hours for an immediate and radical change in climate policy.

The media and political response[1] to these demonstrations is interesting: most of them are positive to euphoric. Many of those who are severely criticised by the young people consider their drive outstanding.

One motto of the demonstrators is (in slight variations): "Why learn for a future that will soon no longer exist?" Do such slogans really originate from the minds of the young people? And why isn't the motto different? For example: "We want to learn today for a future for which we will be responsible tomorrow".

Talk to the students

Experience shows that it is easily possible for adults to discuss well with the demonstrating students. These are young people who do not want to allow themselves to be used by someone else. Many slogans of the demonstrations may sound as if they were directed against adults. But these students are different from those of 1968. The students like to talk to adults as long as they are serious. Why don't adults take advantage of this opportunity much more? One could also talk about other dangers that threaten man and nature. The greatest danger is war! How about discussing the social question and its consequences – at home, but even more in Africa, Asia and Latin America? Or how about discussing the question of democracy – another very important topic for Germany.

Perhaps also to discuss what it means to attend school and to be able to learn.

And that it would be best to collaborate with all people of good will in order to solve the problems existing in the world – but starting with those in one's own country. That perhaps it does not at all serve one's own cause if suddenly all sorts of politicians want to stand with the climate demonstrators in front of cameras and microphones, or that *Greta Thunberg* is passed around the world and proposed for the Nobel Peace Prize, or that she is awarded the *"Goldene Kamera"* by ZDF and interviewed by [the German TV stations] ZDF and ARD. Is this really about the future of our planet?

And what should we think if the German Green Party acts like the greatest administrator of student concerns?[2]

> "Dear students, that must alert you: There are nuclear powers facing each other capable of destroying the world within a short time. And they are no longer talking to each other. Instead, the arms spiral has been set in motion. We are talking about a new Cold War. And many say that the situation is much tenser than in the first Cold War – in which mankind only happened (!) to avoid a nuclear war by luck."

The "fight against right-wing extremism"

Also the German "fight against right-wing extremism" often instrumentalizes the youth, not only in the Antifa. What exactly is meant by "right" often remains unclear. Many slogan bearers shy away from concrete discussion about the contents of law, about unconstitutionality and protection of the constitution. Instead, the debate is far-fetched. At this year's Book Fair in Leipzig, cartoons were on display that had been drawn and painted for the *German Cartoon Prize* on the subject of "Caution, homeland![3]" A book by various authors entitled "Eure Heimat ist unser Alb-traum" [Your homeland is our nightmare] was published in early 2019 by the *Ullstein Verlag*. The announcement[4] reads: "This book is a manifesto against homeland, an ethnically transfigured concept. 14 German-speaking foreigners are opposing the normalisation of this idea. For the first anniversary of the so-called 'Ministry of Homeland', *Fatma Aydemir* and *Hengameh Yaghoobifarah* collect unsparing perspectives on a racist and anti-Semitic society." *Spiegel online* published a pre-print.[5] Many German leading media have discussed the book – mostly very positively. But what are all those fellow human beings who want Germany as their homeland, as a state of the Grundgesetz – including its social and cultural preconditions – and who are by no means racist or anti-Semitic, supposed to do with such massive criticism? Should they shoot back in the same style? And what prompted the 14 authors to engage in such harsh criticism?

Have the book authors and people understanding homeland as something completely different ever spoken to each other – not in a staged talk show, but honestly and equally – and listened to each other? Or is that no longer possible in today's Germany?

Do not accept the enemy image Russia

Just like NATO has labelled Russia as enemy. Once again looking at the Leip-

continued on page 9

"Uranium ammunition contaminates ..."
continued from page 7

is also forbidden to trade with this controversial weapon and also to store and transport these weapons by Belgium. The corresponding law passed by the Belgian parliament in 2007 came into force on 21 June 2009."

Frieder Wagner's book contains a rich collection of evidence and facts that will open everyone's eyes. It contributes significantly to clarify the dangers of radioactive ammunition. The silence about the "taboo subject uranium ammunition" must finally come to an end. The topic concerns all of us, because it concerns the future of our children and our earth. The book stirs us up and shocks, it must be widely distributed to become a basis to require a ban on the use of uranium weapons from the governments of the world. Wagner: "No power in this world has the right to make entire regions, autocratically chosen battlegrounds, uninhabitable and to poison and kill people long after the war has ended. In this way we destroy the habitat of our children and grandchildren, and they will one day rightly curse us for it." •

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

Johann Gottfried Herder

A fierce opponent of colonialism, cultural arrogance and racism

by Moritz Nestor

On 14 May 2017, the Integration Commissioner of the German Federal Government wrote: "A specifically German culture, beyond language, is simply not identifiable."[1] The Integration Commissioner thus proved the usual ignorance. Her provocation struck the heart. Try and say such words to those Catalans who can still remember "how, after the death of the dictator, all place-name signs in Catalonia were corrected by hand – with brush and paint – from Spanish (Castilian) to Catalan. In the hearts of the people, the Catalan language and culture – their freedom – had remained alive."[2] The statement of the Integration Commissioner has understandably provoked consternation and anger.[3]

So what is a "specifically German culture"?

The doctoral thesis "Johann Gottfried Herder. Cultural Theory and Concept of Humanity of the Ideas, the Letters of Humanity and Adrastea"[4] by *Anne Löchte* was published in 2005. It helps to clarify much of this question. It is, for example, to *Johann Gottfried Herder*'s credit to have worked out in his "Treatise on the Origin of Language" of 1772 that nothing characterises a culture as specifically as its language.

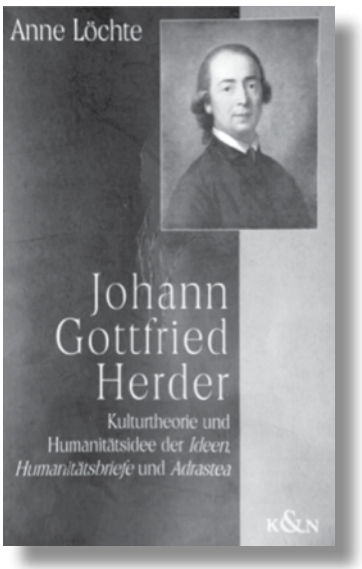
Together with *Friedrich Schiller*, *Johann Wolfgang Goethe* and *Christoph Martin Wieland*, *Johann Gottfried Herder* belongs to the "Weimar constellation of four". They are the most important poets and writers of the "Weimar Classicism". Only so much for the question of what belongs to a "specifically German culture". But it is also part of the "specifically German culture" that epochs of its history, such as the Weimar Classicism, are today hardly consciously still alive in the soul of the German people.

Herder was a fierce opponent of colonialism, cultural arrogance and racism.[5] Herder abhorred destructive and warlike nationalism. He despised the arrogance of the nobility, criticised the state of *Frederick the Great* and admired the direct Athenian democracy of antiquity. As a Christian believer, he was a fierce opponent of the Roman Church's hunger for power. He regarded self-determination as the natural right of every culture, praised international understanding, peaceful cultural exchange and the learning of peoples from each another. Nothing was more alien to him than what we would today call "nation building", "humanitarian intervention" or cultural imperialism. He was a fierce opponent of conquest and imperialism.

"If you don't lay it out, underlay it."

Anne Löchte's great merit lies in having liberated Herder in her book from a great deal of poetry and ignorance. It was said about him that a direct path led from him to volkisch (ethnic) "Teutomania", that he had presented the first "closed theory of modern nationalism". He is a "historical relativist", he provides a "legitimation of colonialism", shows "racist tendencies" and sees the "white man" as "primeval man" etc. The summit of ignorance is *Nathan Gardel*'s devastating judgment: "Of course, Herder's Volksgeist became the

continued on page 10



ISBN 3-8260-3105-9

"Contemplating Germany"
continued from page 8

zig Book Fair: how is it possible that a book entitled "The Future Is History. How Totalitarianism Reclaimed Russia" won the Leipzig Book Prize for European Understanding"?[6] A book describing the *Yeltsin* years, a decade of Russian decline and Western influencing, as a time of "freedom" and the nearly two decades since *Vladimir Putin*'s first presidency, when the people in Russia were substantially better off, as a loss of freedom. What does this have to do with European understanding? Or should everyone in Europe this side of the Russian border (Russia is a European country, too) "agree" to share the enemy image of Russia? They say that, in the institutions of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) – comprised of all European states, the Central Asian states formerly belonging to the Soviet Union, the USA and Canada – should play a central role in securing peace in Europe, they already share the enemy image: the representatives of the NATO states and Russia are no longer talking to each other, only positions are being proclaimed and accusations made. Where is this leading?

Dear students, that must alert you: There are nuclear powers facing each other capable of destroying the world within a short time. And they are no longer talking to each other. Instead, the arms spiral has been set in motion. We are talking about a new Cold War. And many say that the situation is much tenser than in the first Cold War – in which mankind only happened (!) to avoid a nuclear war by luck.

The responsibility of adults

But our students are not responsible for this condition, we adults are. We adults can start listening and talking to each other – even if the others think differently. But even more, we have to demand it from those who decide about war and peace and the future of our country. •

1 The German website of "Fridays for Future" has compiled a press review (only the titles and links) for the period from 25 February to 24 March (*https://fridaysforfuture.de/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Pressespiegel-24.03.2019.pdf*). It comprises 46 pages. Also the German Chancellor Angela Merkel positively appreciated the pupils' demonstrations. (*https://www.zdf.de/nachrichten/heute/-fridays-for-future--merkel-lobt-klimademos-der-schueler-100.html*) During a discussion with pupils in Berlin in early April she said it was right "that you put us under pressure [...]. That there is a signal that there is concern is good for us".

2 The website "Philosophia Perennis" (*https://philosophia-perennis.com/2019/04/02/greta-thunberg-die-buechse-der-pandora-ist-geoeffnet/*) has an interesting article on this question.

3 cf. *www.deutscherkarikaturenpreis.de/ausstellung/vorsicht-heimat/*

4 cf. *www.ullstein-buchverlage.de/nc/buch/details/eure-heimat-ist-unser-alptraum-9783961010363.html*

5 cf. *www.spiegel.de/kultur/literatur/eure-heimat-ist-unser-alptraum-vorabdruck-das-ende-des-german-dream-a-1253290.html*

6 cf. *www.leipziger-buchmesse.de/International/Leipziger-Buchpreis/*

"Johann Gottfried Herder ..."
continued from page 9

Third Reich."[6] What has been attributed to one of the greatest German humanists in more than a hundred years is reminiscent of Goethe's biting verses from *Faust*: "Be fresh and alert in the interpretation! If you don't lay it out, underlay it."

Herder, pioneer of modern (cultural) anthropology

How complicated things are in reality becomes clear, for example, from a remark by Anne Löchte, in which she briefly mentions that the modern concept of culture of the cultural anthropology founded by *Frans Boa*s goes back to Herder and *Wilhelm von Humboldt* and his geographical, historical and psychological research. If the curious reader now pursues this hint, he discovers astonishing things:

It was Herder and Humboldt who had deeply influenced Frans Boas when the young German emigrated to the USA at the age of 29 for reasons of love. Born in Minden, Westphalia, in 1858, Frans Boas grew up as the son of liberal, cosmopolitan Jewish parents, sympathisers of the freedom ideas of the 1848 Revolution and supporters of the Enlightenment and Weimar Classicism. He attended the Minden Gymnasium with its classical humanistic curriculum, read his *Homer* and became interested in foreign cultures at an early age. He studied mathematics, physics and geography at the universities of Heidelberg, Bonn and Kiel and took his first doctorate in 1881 at the age of 23. He became an assistant at the Berlin Ethnological Museum, where he was encouraged by *Rudolf Virchow*, founder of scientific medicine. In 1885, at the age of 27, he took his second doctorate in geography in Berlin.

Frans Boas, a learned and educated German in the spirit of the Enlightenment, humanism, Weimar Classicism and liberalism, founded modern cultural anthropology in the USA on the intellectual prequisite know-how of European culture, with the "specifically German culture" at its centre. Today it is called "American" without hesitation …

On 30 July 1931, the 73-year-old emeritus Frans Boas speaks at a ceremony in his honour at the University of Kiel, where he received his doctorate 50 years earlier: "The behaviour of a people is not essentially determined by its biological ancestry, but by its cultural tradition. The recognition of these principles will save the world and Germany in particular, many troubles.[7] On the eve of National Socialist racial madness, Boas, who comes from the Herder tradition, warns with these words against racist Social Darwinism, eugenics and their political arm, National Socialism, which replaced the achievements of the Enlightenment with pseudo-scientific drivel. In the USA, too, Boas warned against the abuse of anthropology by secret services and against the devastating biologism that claims that cultural differences originate biologically and "prove" the superiority or inferiority of races.

For the sake of completeness, one thing should only be mentioned briefly, Anne Löchte herself does not go into it: Herder's concept of culture also corresponds in its essential features with *Alfred Adler*'s *individual psychology*, with the philosophical anthropologists of the 20th century such as *Gehlen* and *Scheler*, and above all with *Adolf Portmann*'s "basal anthropology".

Serious study of Herder has increased recently

In view of this situation, one can only be grateful that Anne Löchte has presented a factual analysis of Herder's view of culture. The second peer reviewer was *Hansjakob Werlen*, a member of the *International Herder Society.* The work was encouraged by the *Friedrich Naumann Foundation* with funds from the *German Federal Ministry of Education and Research*. The Siblings *Boehringer Ingelheim Foundation for the Humanities in Ingelheim* on the Rhine supported the printing. A "comprehensive investigation", Löchte writes, was necessary not least because "there are countless misrepresentations in the history of reception, the spectrum of which ranges from comparatively harmless misinterpretations to abstruse accusations.[8] The serious study of Herder's work has increased in recent decades, she reports. This was also urgently necessary, as the newsletter of the International Herder Society from April 2004 makes clear, which speaks of the "completely dodgy Herder knowledge of the present".[9]

Anne Löchte writes objectively, in a differentiated way. She weighs carefully and precisely and does Herder justice historically. She examines his *concepts of culture and humanity* from the Ideas to the Letters of Humanity to the late work *Adrastea*. She wants to make a research contribution and not demonstrate the topicality of Herder's ideas. That is up to the reader. With Anne Löchte's study, the reader holds in his hands a work with which he can reflect on the real intentions and the deeply human ideas of one of the greatest thinkers of (his own) German culture and independently assess its significance for our time. Although not intended to be so, the book is, through its objectivity, a very topical book on the question of "specifically German culture", but also on the thorough clarification of the question of what a culture is at all and why life in cultures is the natural form of human life.

"It was already known to the ancient Greeks ..."

In the sixties school essays still liked to start with sentences like "It was already known to the ancient Greeks …." As far as the "completely dodgy Herder knowledge of the present" is concerned, one might recall that even the ancient Greeks knew that wisdom was the foundation of historical justice. Wisdom, they said, is, when you can perceive a person as it is, not as you please. One of the most dangerous things is the slow distortion of the historical memory of a culture for its own human achievements, the positive side of its identity. Here lies the task: to liberate from oblivion what "specific German culture", indeed what culture really is. The historical memory of the European peoples for their own cultural achievements must again become true to reality. Herder's rehabilitation by Anne Löchte was an important step in this direction. •

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1 Jaeger, Mona. "Deutsche Leitkultur nicht identifizierbar" (German defining culture not identifiable). In: "*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*" from 31 August 2017. *www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/bundestagswahl/deutsche-kultur-was-aydan-oezoguz-mit-ihrer-aussage-meinte-15175917.html* (seen on 15 September 2017)

2 Roca, René. The Catalans have the right to freely determine their future. In: *International. Zeitschrift für internationale Politik* (International. Journal of International Politics). IV/2017, p. 22f.

3 ibid.

4 Löchte, Anne. *Johann Gottfried Herder. Kulturtheorie und Humanitätsidee der Ideen, Humanitätsbriefe und Adrastea*. (Cultural Theory and concept of humanity of the Ideas, the letters of humanity and Adrastea) Würzburg 2005

5 Herder, Johann Gottfried. *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit.* (Ideas on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind) Verlag Deutscher Klassiker 1989, II 7,1, p. 255f.

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7 Pöhl, Friedrich/Tilg, Bernhard (Ed.). *Frans Boas – Kultur, Sprache, Rasse, Wege einer antirassistischen Anthropologie.* (Frans Boas – Culture, Language, Race, Ways of an Antiracist Anthropology. Vienna 2011, p. 21

8 Löchte, p. 9

9 Sauder, Gerhard. In: Löchte, p. 9

Brexit – Lessons to Switzerland

Great Britain and Switzerland are ready for free cooperation between sovereign states

by Dr iur. Marianne Wüthrich

The lamentations about the expected horrors of a No-Deal-Brexit* are set at a similar level of volume and excitement as the warning calls for a Switzerland without an institutional Framework Agreement with the EU. On closer inspection, many of the things feared in both cases will in all likelihood turn out to be nothing much at all. For example, Switzerland already has some experience with unconventional solutions itself, "thanks" to various illegal sanctions from Brussels. In addition, free cooperation between states is much more pleasant and flexible than an EU-esque authoritarian standardisation of the most diverse legal systems and cultures. The anxious glances we keep sneaking at Brussels sometimes make us almost forget natural behaviour and dealing between two states. In any case, the Federal Council has already negotiated a whole series of treaties with the British government for the period after the Brexit (whether with or without a deal), naturally subject to the approval of Parliament and the sovereign.

> "The more freedom and sovereignty Switzerland retains to shape its own future, the better it will be for the population – and that not only in the material sense!"

Professor of Economics Patrick Minford on the effects of Brexit

The media often talk of chaotic conditions after a "hard" Brexit, the collapse of the British economy and much more. This inevitably reminds us Swiss of the gloomy prophecies for Switzerland as a business location in the event of the sovereign's refusal to join the EEA in 1992. It is well known that none of this has happened, quite the contrary. Corresponding signs can also be observed in the British economy: the Swiss newspaper "*Finanz und Wirtschaft"* (Finance and Economy)writes: "Since the summer of 2016 the unemployment rate has fallen continuously to 3.9 %. This is the lowest level in over forty years."[1]

In Switzerland, we do not often hear comments of British economists on the consequences of the Brexit. One of those, and a person who calls a spade a spade, is *Patrick Minford*, Professor of Applied Economics at Cardiff University. He says that he can see no major problems for the British economy, because once Britain left the EU, trade in goods would be conducted according to the rules of the *World Trade Organisation (WTO)*, and thus on a very solid basis. In addition, London would then have the opportunity to conclude free trade agreements with other states: "The sooner we get out of the customs union and are free to conclude free trade agreements with countries outside the EU, the better". It is also interesting to note Professor Minford's comment that the warning against kilometre-long truck traffic jams at the border is unrealistic: "According to WTO rules, customs clearance today takes place electronically even before the border is crossed. This is why the demarcation between Ireland and Northern Ireland is not a problem." This is a problem artificially conceived by the EU as a political weapon", said Minford.[2]

What are the consequences we can draw for Switzerland from all this? First, the freedom to conclude treaties with other countries without interference from outside is part of the foundation of state sovereignty – we have always had this freedom, so let us preserve it! Secondly, Switzerland has more options with respect to Brussels than the WTO rules. If we do not sign a Framework Agreement, we will be left with the basic 1972 *Free Trade Agreement* with the EU, and the *Bilateral Agreements I and II* will remain. Although the EU Commission and the EU turbos in Berne claim that without "modernisation" these treaties would stagnate and become obsolete, we should not forget that the Orwellian term "modernisation" means the future obligation to adopt any new EU laws, which Switzerland would then have agreed to with the institutional agreement.

The more a country is involved, the more difficulties it will have to get out again

The authoritarian way in which EU leaders deal with a country that has done nothing other than making use of its contractual right of termination should be a particularly clear warning sign to us. As Professor Minford notes, the song and dance about the border between Ireland and Northern Ireland is only to keep Britain in the Customs Union, and so in fact to prevent its withdrawal for years to come. This would also serve as a deterrent to other states wishing to withdraw.

The fact that exactly the same regulations concerning all areas of life apply to 28 states – for example in the regulation of the movement of persons and goods across borders – highlights the absurdity of the EU construct. Why should London and Dublin not regulate their border traffic by direct agreement? That is precisely why the majority of Britons want to leave: so that they can again negotiate their own affairs with other states.

For Switzerland, the lesson to be learnt from these events is clear: the deeper we get entangled in the Brussels networks, the more difficult it will be for us to get out again. It is true that, according to the Framework Agreement, we would theoretically retain the right to call for referendums against the flood of EU decisions pouring in over us, but this would be stalled by guillotine threats. For the Framework Agreement would entitle the EU to suspend one or more of the bilateral treaties as a "compensatory measure" for an undesirable referendum (Article 10 (6) of the Agreement). This might well soon include the Free Trade Agreement (FTA), which Switzerland concluded with the EEC in 1972, and the more than one hundred other treaties based on this, as the annex to this agreement announces early negotiations on their "modernisation".[3] We must not allow Brussels to modify this contractual structure for trade between Switzerland and the EU states, which has been tried and tested for 47 years.

Lessons for Switzerland: Conclusion

For reasons of constitutional law and policy, it is advisable not to let ourselves be impressed by the alleged billions in losses that the trade association *economiesuisse* predicts the Swiss economy to suffer without a Framework Agreement. Instead, let us concentrate on the essentials: Switzerland's well-positioned economy, its low unemployment rate and its high quality of life are mainly caused precisely by the special characteristics of the Swiss model: directdemocratic decisions with a view to the common good, small-scale, federalist and provident organisation, our dual vocational training system, and our neutrality (and therefore no war participation). In other words, the more freedom and sovereignty Switzerland retains to shape its own future, the better it will be for the population – and that not only in the material sense!

Federal Council creates basis for new economic relations with Great Britain[4]

Since the British decision of 23 June 2016 to leave the EU, the Federal Council has swiftly negotiated with the British

continued on page 12

"Brexit – Lessons to ..."
continued from page 11

government on the most pressing intergovernmental issues. The reasons: "The United Kingdom is an important partner of Switzerland. At the end of 2018, around 43,000 UK citizens were living in Switzerland. Conversely, the Swiss community in the UK was about 34,500 persons. In 2017, the UK was the fifth most important sales market for Swiss exports worldwide (CHF 11.4 billion)."[5] In contrast to the secrecy surrounding the Framework Agreement, here everything is above board: the most important agreements for the period after Britain's withdrawal from the EU are ready and open to be read by everyone. One of the treaties is currently undergoing the consultation procedure. That is how uncomplicated is the cooperation between two states pursuing common goals.

– *Federal Council "Mind-the-Gap" Strategy of 19 October 2016*
Shortly after the British referendum, the Federal Council adopted its "Mind-the-Gap" strategy to ensure the fullest possible continuation of mutual rights and obligations in all areas in which the two states maintain relations.
– *Trade agreement signed on 11 February 2019*
As a basis for their future economic relations, the plenipotentiaries of the two governments have initialled (provisionally signed) an agreement which will enter into force in accordance with Art. 9 para. 3 thereof when the trade agreements Switzerland-EU are no longer applicable to the United Kingdom.[6]
– *1972 Free Trade Agreement (FTA) will continue to form the basis*
Whether Great Britain leaves the EU with or without an agreement: "The trade agreement signed by Switzerland and the United Kingdom provides for the reciprocal rights and obligations laid down in the FTA to be continued on a bilateral basis from the date of withdrawal"[7].

Swiss exporters well prepared

Swiss exporters will fill any gaps in electronic customs clearance or other regulations by transporting their goods to Great Britain for storage and stacking them in local warehouses there, so for example the Jonschwil cheese exporter *Hardegger or Stihl Kettenwerke* in Wil. Stihl is a global corporation based in Germany and has "sufficient experience in dealing with different regulations, customs clearance and transport in markets without free trade agreements," says media spokesman *Stefan Caspari*. This will also be the case for other companies in the EU: Because they are interested in the smoothest possible continuation of trade, they will already have taken their measures by now. The *Bühler Group* in Uzwil, for example, has "developed strategies for all possible variants of withdrawal from the EU, in order to be able to continue to operate profitably," says media spokesman *Samuel Eckstein*. And *Hardegger Käse AG* is banking on the new agreements that the Federal Government has negotiated with Great Britain: "These are a first step towards a secure future."[8]

Three decisions by the Federal Council on the topic of migration after Brexit

– *Consultation Procedure on the Agreement of 25 February 2019 on the reciprocal rights of British and Swiss citizens in the field of the free movement of persons*
British and Swiss citizens living in the respective other state at the time of the UK's withdrawal from the EU are to retain their rights under the Swiss-EU Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons (residence rights, coordination of social security schemes, mutual recognition of professional qualifications).[9] On 22 March 2019, the Federal Council opened consultation procedure on this draft agreement; these are due to end on 29 May 2019.
– *Separate quotas for employed British citizens*
For the current year of 2019, the Federal Council has approved a quota of 3,500 employed persons from the time of the British withdrawal from the EU.[10]
– *Visa exemption*
The Federal Council has made the necessary amendments to the *Ordinance on the Entry and Visa Procedure (OPEV)*, so that British citizens are exempt from the visa requirement to enter Switzerland, even after Brexit, and even for longer-term residence.[11]

The question of a research agreement between the two top rankers arises

According to international rankings, ETH Zurich, together with the British universities of Oxford and Cambridge and a handful of US centres, is one of the world's leading research institutions. If the EU were indeed to downgrade Great Britain – like Switzerland – in the "Horizon" research programme, an international network of excellence between the two countries and others would be an appropriate response.

Strangely enough, neither *Fritz Schiesser*, president of the ETH Board,

continued on page 13

Internal consultation on the Framework Agreement: Goal achieved?

mw. On 16 January 2019, the Federal Council launched so-called "consultations" with selected "actors", which have apparently now come to an end. The evaluation for the attention of the population is vaguely postponed to "early summer". The Federal Council has explicitly not chosen the democratic instrument of the consultation procedure, where the views of all cantons, parties and associations, citizen groups and individual citizens are drawn up in writing and publicly accessible. Rather, according to the Federal Council, there were "direct meetings and contacts" with the aim of "conducting interactive discussions on the advantages and disadvantages of the draft agreement, identifying the positions of the most important Swiss actors and working out a consolidated position with regard to the open points" (Federal Council press release of 16 January).

So is this a kind of "processing" of people with an unwanted mind of their own? Included among the "most important actors" (a term that is almost unbearable for a Swiss citizen accustomed to democracy!) were, for example, not the 26 cantons, but only the head of the Conference of Cantonal Governments (KdK), not all political parties, but only those "with appropriate power in parliament" – i.e. those who are then to bring together the majority for the agreement during the vote in parliament ...

Despite serious reservations, for example on the part of cantonal governments opposing a ban on state aid because they want to retain their federalist sphere of influence, or of the *Swiss Trade Union Confederation*, which wants to keep to a wage protection system worthy of its name, the federal administration team apparently managed to persuade most of the "actors" to accept unpalatable compromises.

The editors of "Finanz und Wirtschaft" (Finance and Economy) wrote quite openly on 2 April: "At first, things looked bad for the institutional agreement with the EU (InstA): after the publication of the Framework Agreement negotiated by the Federal Council with the EU, the government was confronted with harsh rejection. The treaty seemed to have no chance. [...]

Now it appears that the consultation was probably not a bad idea. In talks with interested parties the Federal Council apparently succeeded in softening the criticism and in awakening understanding for the agreement. The consultation has thus achieved its goal." (Peter Morf. "Erfolgreiche Konsultation – Successful consultation". In the magazine "Finanz und Wirtschaft" from 2 April 2019)

"I am still grateful to Swiss Mountain Aid today"

Gstaad/BE: Construction of a new stable

recorded by Max Hugelshofer

Bruno Oehrli prepares his farm for the future. The 33-year-old is convinced that the longer, the more flexibility is required. His new stable takes this into account.

"This week was the final spurt. My father and I completed the interior of the new stable together, and tomorrow we can stall. I am curious to see how the cows, cattle and oxen will react. I am excited in any case. Everything is just as I imagined, even if of course not everything is finished yet.

The new stable is the first piece of the puzzle on the way to my vision of a modern mountain farm: near-natural, little laborious, resource-saving and interconnected to local tourism. I am convinced that I can turn my parents' farm into a real pearl. Ten years ago, I would never have dreamed that I would take over this farm. As a kid, I always wanted to become a helicopter pilot. To work towards this aim, in a first step, I completed a training as a polymechanic. Afterwards I moved from Gstaad to Berne and started a pilot training. I already had my private certification in my pocket when I realised that I was heading straight into a deadlock. In my year we were over 40 people. There are about four jobs every year.

Moreover, away from home, in the city, I realized how much the mountains, nature and our farm mean to me. A training year as a farmer on a farm near Gruyères showed me that farming is just right for me. But I wanted to know more than you learn in a vocational education. However, I needed a vocational maturity certificate for further training. To obtain this certificate is not only time-consuming, but also expensive. My savings were running short, and I received only rejections for my many scholarship requests. This happened because my parents, as farmers, of course owned land and were rich – just on paper. Finally, Swiss Mountain Aid helped me. I'm still grateful for that today. Because without a vocational baccalaureate, it would not have been possible to study agronomy at a university of applied sciences.

rt. Making work easier in agriculture certainly makes sense. Entrepreneurship and flexibility can be expected from almost all farmers today. But their activities must be remunerated fairly over decent product prices. This means that working as a farmer must be worthwhile. An increasing liberalisation of the markets with foreign countries compels niche existence or court task. A farmer from the Swiss Plateau can only lose the competition with North German dairy farmers or US wheat farmers in the long run because he does not have the same conditions. Whether the framework conditions for agriculture are right or whether they are increasingly being forced into a competition they lose must be in the hands of politics and ultimately of the voters. (picture www.berghilfe.ch)

The fact that Swiss Mountain Aid is now also supporting me in the construction of the stable makes me twice as glad. This comes full circle. It was only during my studies that I acquired the necessary knowledge to find out what suits me and my farm and what it takes to lead it into a

continued on page 14

"Brexit – Lessons to …"

continued from page 12

nor *Antonio Lopreno*, president of the Swiss Academies of Sciences, is pushing for such a consolidation, because: "From the point of view of industry and research, there is probably no alternative to the Framework Agreement," said Schiesser, and very similarly Lopreno. Yet the alternative is presented to us by the British Department of Education. It is planning "a worldwide Champions League of the best universities" and explicitly invites Switzerland.[12] •

[1] "Das Brexit-Chaos/Starker Arbeitsmarkt - The Brexit Chaos / Strong Labour Market". In: "*Finanz und Wirtschaft*" (Finance and Economy) from 30 March 2019

[2] Florian Schwab. "Britanniens glänzende Zukunft – Britain's bright future." In: *Weltwoche* No. 06.19 from 6 February 2019

[3] "Abkommen zur Erleichterung der bilateralen Beziehungen zwischen der Europäischen Union und der schweizerischen Eidgenossenschaft in den Bereichen des Binnenmarkts, an denen die Schweiz teilnimmt" (Agreement to facilitate bilateral relations between the European Union and the Swiss Confederation in areas of the internal market in which Switzerland participates) [Institutional Framework Agreement]. "Gemeinsame Erklärung EU-Schweiz zu den Handelsabkommen" (EU-Switzerland Joint Declaration on Trade Agreements), p. 32 *www.eda.admin.ch/dea/de/home/verhandlungen-offene-themen/verhandlungen/institutionelles-abkommen.html* (in German)

[4] "Bundesrat schafft Basis für die zukünftigen Wirtschafts- und Handelsbeziehungen mit dem Vereinigten Königreich" (Federal Council creates the basis for future economic and trade relations with the United Kingdom). *Federal Council press release* from 14 December 2018

[5] see *Federal Council press release* from 14 December 2018

[6] Trade Agreement between the Swiss Confederation and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from 11 February 2019 *www.eda.admin.ch/dea/de/home/verhandlungen-offene-themen/offene-themen/brexit.html (in German) and uk_trade_agreement_pdf*

[7] Economic relations between Switzerland and the United Kingdom after the "Brexit". Status 29 March 2019. *www.eda.admin.ch/dea/de/home/verhandlungen-offene-themen/offene-themen/brexit.html)* (in German) and *https://www.eda.admin.ch/dam/dea/en/documents/fs/FS-Brexit_en.pdf*

[8] David Grob. "In der Schwebe" (In limbo). In "Wiler Zeitung" from 29 March 2019

[9] Agreement between Switzerland and the United Kingdom on the rights of citizens following the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the EU and the abolition of the Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons (FMPA).

[10] Revision of the Ordinance on Admission, Residence and Employment (VZAE) of 22 March; *Federal Council press release* from 22 March 2019

[11] *Federal Council press release* from 22 March 2019

[12] Florian Schwab. "Brexit. Descent into the bush league". In the journal "*Weltwoche*"from 27 February

Equal say for cooperative members!

The cooperative principle must include democratic rights

by Dr phil. René Roca, Research Institute for Direct Democracy (www.fidd.ch)

In *Current Concerns* No. 15/16 from 13 July 2018 I reported on my proposal at the annual general assembly (AGA) of my Raiffeisen Bank. This year's AGA took place on 9 March 2019. In the meantime, the "headquarters" of the Raiffeisen banks in St. Gallen had replaced the entire management and provided it with lavish financial compensation, although it had failed miserably in connection with the *Vinzenz* debacle. Not a good omen.

Another language?

On the occasion of an extraordinary meeting of delegates in November 2018, fundamental reforms (the so-called "Reform 21") were adopted, which were to be explained at the annual general meetings of the 246 cooperative banks, according to the announcement. The cooperative members could be curious.

On the occasion of the AGM of the *Raiffeisenbank Rohrdorferberg-Fislisbach*, I put my request and questions under the agenda item "miscellaneous", as I did last year. After a brief review of the two discussions I had with Raiffeisen representatives, I asked my two questions again:

1. What does the cooperative principle mean for Raiffeisen today?
2. What can I do as a cooperative member, as a co-owner of the bank, if I do not agree with the bank's strategy? How do I proceed?

Unfortunately, I received only rudimentary replies from the Bank during the two discussions. I have always had the impression that the representatives of the bank (CEO and chairman of the Board of Directors, BoD) and I speak a different language. I emphasised at the AGA that I do not want my vote to be understood as a vote of no confidence against our bank and the new leadership team in St. Gallen. In St. Gallen, they should first "tidy up".

Still, the question for me is, what next? What can I do if the wrong people sit in St. Gallen or at my Raiffeisenbank again in the future and if the banking group or my bank is pursuing the wrong strategy? Up to now, as a cooperative member (and nota bene co-owner of the bank), I have had no opportunity to file an application that will be put on the agenda for sure. The right to apply (as any rabbit breeders association and also cooperatives, including savings banks, know) is missing in the statutes of my Raiffeisenbank. I can merely ask my bank to put something on the agenda at the next AGA. The right to draw up the agenda lies solely with the board of directors. To me, however, self-determination and co-determination are a central fundamental cooperative right, an important cooperative value.

"Compulsory statutes" do not fit the cooperative principle

I have now instructed the BoD to address this issue at the next AGA. The Chairman of the BoD replied to me at the AGA that Raiffeisenbank was integrated in association law. *Raiffeisen Schweiz* provides model statutes that each Raiffeisen bank must adopt. I replied that these would then be "compulsory statutes" and that our Raiffeisenbank would thus no longer be autonomous and independent (as is repeatedly stated in advertising brochures). The right to amend the model statutes lies with the meeting of delegates, the supreme organ of Raiffeisen Switzerland.

I also critisised that the Chairman of the BoD, in his annual report, which was entitled "The cooperative lives", only vaguely told what reforms (Reform 21) the Raif-

continued on page 15

"What the individual cannot do, many can." Friedrich Wilhelm Raiffeisen (1818–1888)

"'I am still grateful to Swiss Mountain ...'"
continued from page 13

successful future. First, I stopped milking and switched to organic pasture beef. It is important to me to reduce the workload continuously. Not because I don't like to work, but because I am convinced that I can run the farm more efficiently. My girlfriend has a good job. It doesn't make any sense if she gives it up to help mucking and haying. I partially outsource certain labour-intensive routine tasks such as haying. I'd rather pay a colleague for bringing in my hay with his expensive round baler than invest in a new loader wagon and still work hard day in, day out during the summer. There are more profitable and satisfying ways for me to use my working time. For example in agrotourism. At a location like ours, in the middle of a well-known tourist resort, this is a huge opportunity. What exactly I will do, I do not know yet. I have a lot of ideas and I am already talking to decision-makers from tourism. But first the stable has to be finished. It is already designed for versatile use. No matter what I decide to do, in these increasingly fast-moving times I cannot assume that I will do it the same way over the next few decades. That's why I took new directions in stable building. The fact that the building is as open as possible and gets along without many pillars that block the space, I have copied from companies in the Swiss Plateau. One of our own ideas was not to concretise the livestock housing, but to build it from wooden boards. Two days of work, and you could use the stable for anything. For renting horse boxes in the summer months, for example, or for occasions at the farm. I can also adapt it without much effort to the farming of various animals. No matter what the future holds: with my new stable I am prepared." •

Source: *Berghilf-Ziitg*, No. 103, Spring 2019
(Translation *Current Concerns*)

Swiss Mountain Aid

Schweizer Berghilfe, *www.berghilfe.ch* (Swiss Mountain Aid) is a non-profit-organisation exclusively financed though donations and has the goal of improving the foundation of existence and living conditions in the Swiss Mountain region. It promotes the self-help of the mountain population and thus contributes to the development of economic and living spaces, the preservation of regional culture, the maintenance of the cultural landscape and the counteraction of migration. Support from Swiss Mountain Aid triggers a multiple of investments that primarily create added value and jobs for local businesses. In 2017, Swiss Mountain Aid supported 490 projects with CHF 21.4 million.

Democracy, culture and peace ethics

To the Gottfried Keller anniversary year

*by Dr phil. Peter Küpfer**

An exhibition of works by Urs Knoblauch at the Gottfried-Keller-Zentrum Glattfelden pays tribute to the world-renowned realist and places him in a widely ramified humanist tradition.

The central installation of the exhibition, dedicated to the manifold work of Gottfried Keller. It is built up around an old school desk: indication that Gottfried Keller ascribed fundamental importance to a good and comprehensive general education for the success of democracy. In the foreground the artist Urs Knoblauch. (picture lk)

In the light-filled gallery in the attic of a spacious traditional house, Gottfried Keller has taken a place of honour. Today, it is the Gottfried-Keller-Zentrum, located in the middle of the wine-growing village of Glattfelden (Zurich Unterland). The central installation dedicated to him is framed by works of art dedicated to eleven other related writers. The light personalities range from Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, Goethe and Schiller through Henry Dunant, Leo Tolstoy, Albert Schweitzer, Bertha von Suttner and Romain Rolland to Meinrad Inglin, Albert Camus and Chyngyz Aitmatov. The atmospheric gallery has thus been transformed into a complete art work which, in the pictorial language of the Zurich conceptual artist Urs Knoblauch, draws a large intellectual-historical arc. Paintings, sometimes large-scale, sometimes detail-oriented, are decorated with photographs, symbolic objects and texts on walls and niches to form entire installations. All works are provided with meaningful quotations, sometimes graphically designed, often incorporated into the paintings themselves in the artist's handwriting.

Assembly of humanistic spirits

On the occasion of his 200th birthday, the exhibition with works by Urs Knoblauch honours the great realist Gottfried Keller. It emphasises the intellectual roots of the world-renowned Swiss writer. These are anchored in the global humanist tradition of thought, which places the human being at the centre and awards him value and dignity because he is a human being. Urs Knoblauch illustrates this with his own artistic means: Gottfried Keller's realism is based in its essence on morality and social responsibility. He is characterised by his commitment to man, his dignity, his freedom and his claim to lead a life in peace and honest exchange. This concern and the struggle for it he shares with the other writers present in the room. His peculiarity is that he also grasped this basic attitude politically – he considers it as indispensable for the success of modern democracy, if deserving this name, concretised in modern Swiss democracy, which he not only praises, but also measures over and again by its own standard.

50 years of the concept of "Capturing more precisely"

Urs Knoblauch was born and raised in Zurich. First, the artist underwent a creative training and received an art scholarship from the City of Zurich. After graduating as a secondary school teacher, he worked as a drawing teacher at the "Literargymnasium Rämibühl" in Zurich until he retired. In addition to his artistic activities and his permanent publications as a cultural journalist, he also gave generations of young people the pleasure of drawing and painting, sharpening their view of the world. As a member of the "Maturitätskommission" of the Canton of Schwyz, the enthusiastic and inspiring teacher continues to be associated with the school. As an artist committed to his own concept "GENAUER ERFASSEN" (capturing more precisely), which he has pursued for 50 years, Urs Knoblauch is regularly present at exhibitions and site- and space-related works in Switzerland and abroad. His ethical, humanistic and cultural-historical themes are in dialogue with painting, photography and text. Together with his wife *Lene*, the conceptual artist lives and works today in his studio house in Fruthwilen, Thurgau, high above the Untersee (Lake Constance).

Ethics of culture and peace

Urs Knoblauch presents his exhibition under the title "Ethics of Culture and Peace". It has the significant subtitle "Zum sittlichen und sozialen Realismus in der Literatur- und Kulturgeschichte – Wirken für das Individual- und Gemeinwohl" (On moral and social realism in the history of literature and culture –

continued on page 16

* Dr phil. Peter Küpfer is a long-standing grammar school teacher, Germanist and publicist.

"Equal say for cooperative ..."

continued from page 14

feisen Group now wanted to introduce; the information on this was very scarce.

I now expect my Raiffeisen bank to report transparently on the reform process on a regular basis over the next year and, at the next AGA, to put an item on the agenda in favour of the cooperative members' right to petition. That is the only way to breathe life into the principle of cooperatives again. •

"Democracy, culture and ..."
continued from page 15

working for the individual and the common good). As in previous exhibitions, Urs Knoblauch ties the pictorial-textual messages to human culture. The conceptual artist attaches great importance to the responsibility of the artist in particular for ensuring that our culture remains true culture, i.e. humane. When visiting the exhibition, the observer encounters personalities in every detail who see man in interaction with his fellow human beings and his social environment. For Urs Knoblauch, genuine realism is closely linked to the ethic of peace, which develops essentially from the individual's sense of responsibility for the whole, the bonum commune.

Central installation on Gottfried Keller

The central installation dedicated to Gottfried Keller is built around an old school desk.

It is reminiscent of Gottfried Keller's own struggle for education and how centrally it was tied back for this writer to the foundations of a living democracy. Democracy in its very own form was and is only possible if it is linked to the ethical foundation. For Gottfried Keller, a solid school education that, according to Pestalozzi, includes the forces of the mind, physical and manual dexterity as well as the forces of the mind, is one of the basic prerequisites for this. Only in this way can the demanding path of a democracy succeed, supported and co-responsible by the citizens themselves, as it has taken on a valid form in the Swiss Federal Constitution of 1848.

Gottfried Keller (picture wikipedia)

From painter to writer

The later writer and constructive-critical Swiss patriot comes from a middle-class family. Gottfried Keller's father was a publicly active craftsman, his mother the daughter of a country doctor and district judge. Both came from Glattfelden, where the young writer-to-be spent long and formative stays in the home of his uncle. The path to becoming a writer was not marked out for the only son of a family in material distress due to the early death of his father. Because of a minor disciplinary offence, the gifted pupil was expelled from secondary school. The path to becoming a writer was not straightforward. At first it led Gottfried Keller through his training as a painter. Keller's strong talent, however, was not purposefully promoted, so that a stay in Munich dedicated to training as a painter did not produce the desired result. The young Keller now increasingly felt the desire to work as a writer. After his first lyrical attempts, the decision was made on the basis of a further education scholarship provided by the City of Zurich. It led Keller to the University of Heidelberg and then to Berlin, where he finished "Der grüne Heinrich" (Green Henry). After years of intensive self-study, including self-discovery, Keller made his breakthrough as a writer, especially in Novellistics. His two collections of Novellas, "Die Leute von Seldwyla" and the "Züricher Novellen", made the writer famous not only in Zurich. The immortal stories of people who lose sight of the centre of meaning of life for a time and finally, often in encounters with women strong in life and character, gain a firm foothold in active life, were translated into all cultural languages.

Only the argument counts

Despite his openness to the world, Gottfried Keller has always seen himself as a Swiss writer. He identified himself with the Swiss Confederation of 1848 as a federal state and expected much from its direct democracy. In a novella of the middle years, "Das Fähnlein der sieben Aufrechten" (The Flag of the Seven Uprights), he distances himself from political radicalism in strong images. For Keller, the argument must permeate the democratic debate, and thereafter the resulting contribution to the whole. In the "Green Henry", the young hero, who returned home from what was then still monarchist Germany, is fascinated by the everywhere tangible awakening of a rejuvenated Switzerland that is struggling for unity in diversity. What prevails must no longer only follow particular interests, but must be capable of winning a majority. For Keller, this is the most important and only control that democracy needs. In order to actively serve the young Swiss democracy and also as gratitude to a city that with its scholarship supported its son on the way to becoming a writer, Gottfried Keller held the demanding position of First State Secretary of the Canton of Zurich for 15 years after 1855. The position he filled with a great sense of duty so that he did not write any major literary works during this time. In his novel "Martin Salander", the writer shows in various forms what is dangerous for the noble hunt for majority-capable decisions supported by the citizens.

The demon of the founding years – already history?

Keller sees a major danger for democracy in "Martin Salander" in the unpleasant spirit of arrogance, of wanting to be more than fellow citizens. Although this striving in the novel results entirely from the weakness of the characters described, such democratic misconduct has become almost endemic in Switzerland at the end of the 19th century, Keller emphatically states. The cases of systematic fraud and enrichment committed (also by respected fellow citizens and responsible persons) against the individual, but also against the national wealth, are deeply affecting. They resemble scandals in every detail, which have been generating headlines in today's Switzerland for years. As in "Fähnlein", the author focuses on young people. If they grow up healthy, i.e. not spoiled, but encouraged to make their contribution, they are provided with inner protection against all kinds of challenges. Keller's father was already aware that a good public school must lay down and cultivate this democratic consciousness. At first hand as a pupil, the young Keller did not experience this training of the nation, which was later anchored in the constitution. Hence, it was all the more emphatic in the school of life. •

The exhibition in the "Gottfried-Keller-Zentrum", Gottfried-Keller-Strasse 8, 8192 Glattfelden, will last until 28 April (14–16 h finissage).

Opening hours: Mon–Fri, 9–11.30 h and 14–17 h, Sat, Sun, 10–15 h

(Translation *Current Concern*s)