

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*

Korea and the power interests of geopolitics Some fragments on the history of the Korean peninsula

by Erika Vögeli and Peter Hediger*

It is rather difficult for us to assess the importance of the content of the Panmunjeom Declaration for the people of the Korean peninsula. However, a very cursory look at history reveals that this country and its people – occupied more than 100 years ago and being an area of geopolitical conflicts for decades – have never given up on regaining their sovereignty and independence and living together as a united nation.

The following statements are by nature incomplete and are only intended to remind you of a few important stages.

After Japan's victory in the war against China in 1894/95, the Kingdom of Korea, until then in a vassal relationship with China, came under the domination of the Japanese empire, which entirely annexed it in 1910.

Japan – an ally of the German Empire during the Second World War – surrendered in 1945. It could no longer withstand a double pressure: After the end of World War II in Europe, Stalin opened a new front in East Asia against Japan. The two US missions using nuclear weapons in Hiroshima and Nagasaki quickly brought Japan to its knees. At a hastily convened meeting in Moscow, the Soviet Union and the USA decided to disarm the remaining Japanese forces in Korea. The 38th parallel was defined as a provisional border barrier. In the north of this line the Soviet Army was responsible for the disarmament and the US forces in the south.

The Cold war ends any hopes for reunification for the moment

At the Yalta Conference in 1945 it was decided to hold elections in Korea within 5 years to give Korea the opportunity to



On 27 April 2018, Kim Jong Un, Chairman of the State Affairs Committee of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and Moon Jae-in, President of the Republic of Korea, shook hands before the military demarcation line. For the first time since the war, a North Korean leader crossed the border. (picture keystone)

become an independent country with its own elected government. The mandate for these elections, which were originally intended for the whole of Korea, was taken over by the UN in 1947. Increasing contradictions among the former allies led to the Cold War and from 1950 – 1953 to a direct armed conflict on the Korean peninsula. Even after a ceasefire was concluded, the major powers involved in Korea continued their efforts to consolidate their spheres of influence on the Korean peninsula, hardening the military demarcation line along the 38th parallel.

On 10 May 1948, the USA held elections in South Korea and declared Rhee Syng-man as winner. Rhee was part of the resistance against Japanese colonization and spent decades first in Chinese and then in American exile. He took over the affairs of state from the USA on 13 August and proclaimed the Republic of Korea on 15 August. In response, Kim Il Sung, supported by the Soviet Union, proclaimed the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 9 September 1948.

America had meanwhile invested large amounts of money in South Korea – at that time in about half of all mines, railways, banks and the fertile part of the country were supposed to have been taken over by US companies. Nevertheless, the North initially developed more rapidly and showed stronger economic growth than South Korea until the beginning of the 1970s.

Initially, Korea had a short common border of 14 kilometres with the Soviet Union only in the north-east. In 1949, the Communist Party under Mao Zedong gained power on the Chinese mainland and also proclaimed a Communist People's Republic, making the entire Korean peninsula border along the Yalu and Tumen rivers abutting the socialist block and turning North Korea into a strategic apron or buffer zone. At the demarcation line across the peninsula, which also ran along about the 38th parallel, the two Cold War blocks stood directly opposite each other in Korea from then on.

* Peter Hediger is a Sinologist and expert for international security policy. From 1982–1983 he gathered first experiences dealing with North Korea as a member of the Swiss delegation to the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission. 1999–2003 he was first to be appointed military attaché in North Korea (an additional accreditation based in Beijing). Both functions allowed him unique insights into society and military affairs of this secretive country. Following his retirement in 2008 he has travelled to North Korea several times as a private citizen.

Panmunjeom Declaration for Peace, Prosperity and Unification of the Korean Peninsula

During this momentous period of historical transformation on the Korean Peninsula, reflecting the enduring aspiration of the Korean people for peace, prosperity and unification, President Moon Jae-in of the Republic of Korea and Chairman Kim Jong Un of the State Affairs Commission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea held an Inter-Korean Summit Meeting at the 'Peace House' at Panmunjeom on April 27, 2018.

The two leaders solemnly declared before the 80 million Korean people and the whole world that there will be no more war on the Korean Peninsula and thus a new era of peace has begun.

The two leaders, sharing the firm commitment to bring a swift end to the Cold War relic of longstanding division and confrontation, to boldly approach a new era of national reconciliation, peace and prosperity, and to improve and cultivate inter-Korean relations in a more active manner, declared at this historic site of Panmunjeom as follows:

I. South and North Korea will reconnect the blood relations of the people and bring forward the future of co-prosperity and unification led by Koreans by facilitating comprehensive and groundbreaking advancement in inter-Korean relations. Improving and cultivating inter-Korean relations is the prevalent desire of the whole nation and the urgent calling of the times that cannot be held back any further.

1. South and North Korea affirmed the principle of determining the destiny of the Korean nation on their own accord and agreed to bring forth the watershed moment for the improvement of inter-Korean relations by fully implementing all existing agreements and declarations adopted between the two sides thus far.
2. South and North Korea agreed to hold dialogue and negotiations in various fields including at high level, and to take active measures for the implementation of the agreements reached at the Summit.
3. South and North Korea agreed to establish a joint liaison office with resident representatives of both sides in the Gaeseong region in order to facilitate close consultation between the authorities as well as smooth exchanges and cooperation between the peoples.
4. South and North Korea agreed to encourage more active cooperation, exchanges, visits and contacts at all lev-

els in order to rejuvenate the sense of national reconciliation and unity. Between South and North, the two sides will encourage the atmosphere of amity and cooperation by actively staging various joint events on the dates that hold special meaning for both South and North Korea, such as June 15, in which participants from all levels, including central and local governments, parliaments, political parties, and civil organizations, will be involved. On the international front, the two sides agreed to demonstrate their collective wisdom, talents, and solidarity by jointly participating in international sports events such as the 2018 Asian Games.

5. South and North Korea agreed to endeavor to swiftly resolve the humanitarian issues that resulted from the division of the nation, and to convene the Inter-Korean Red Cross Meeting to discuss and solve various issues including the reunion of separated families. In this vein, South and North Korea agreed to proceed with reunion programs for the separated families on the occasion of the National Liberation Day of August 15 this year.
6. South and North Korea agreed to actively implement the projects previously agreed in the 2007 October 4 Declaration, in order to promote balanced economic growth and co-prosperity of the nation. As a first step, the two sides agreed to adopt practical steps towards the connection and modernization of the railways and roads on the eastern transportation corridor as well as between Seoul and Sinuiju for their utilization.

II. South and North Korea will make joint efforts to alleviate the acute military tension and practically eliminate the danger of war on the Korean Peninsula. Alleviating the military tension and eliminating the danger of war is a highly significant challenge directly linked to the fate of the Korean people and also a vital task in guaranteeing their peaceful and stable lives.

1. South and North Korea agreed to completely cease all hostile acts against each other in every domain, including land, air and sea, that are the source of military tension and conflict. In this vein, the two sides agreed to transform the demilitarized zone into a peace zone in a genuine sense by ceasing as of May 1 this year all hostile acts and eliminating their means, including broadcasting through loudspeakers and distribution of leaflets, in the

areas along the Military Demarcation Line.

2. South and North Korea agreed to devise a practical scheme to turn the areas around the *Northern Limit Line* in the West Sea into a maritime peace zone in order to prevent accidental military clashes and guarantee safe fishing activities.
3. South and North Korea agreed to take various military measures to ensure active mutual cooperation, exchanges, visits and contacts. The two sides agreed to hold frequent meetings between military authorities, including the Defense Ministers Meeting, in order to immediately discuss and solve military issues that arise between them. In this regard, the two sides agreed to first convene military talks at the rank of general in May.

III. South and North Korea will actively cooperate to establish a permanent and solid peace regime on the Korean Peninsula. Bringing an end to the current unnatural state of armistice and establishing a robust peace regime on the Korean Peninsula is a historical mission that must not be delayed any further.

1. South and North Korea reaffirmed the Non-Aggression Agreement that precludes the use of force in any form against each other, and agreed to strictly adhere to this Agreement.
2. South and North Korea agreed to carry out disarmament in a phased manner, as military tension is alleviated and substantial progress is made in military confidence-building.
3. During this year that marks the 65th anniversary of the Armistice, South and North Korea agreed to actively pursue trilateral meetings involving the two Koreas and the United States, or quadrilateral meetings involving the two Koreas, the United States and China with a view to declaring an end to the War, turning the armistice into a peace treaty, and establishing a permanent and solid peace regime.
4. South and North Korea confirmed the common goal of realizing, through complete denuclearization, a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula. South and North Korea shared the view that the measures being initiated by North Korea are very meaningful and crucial for the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and agreed to carry out

continued on page 3

"Korea and the power interests ..."

continued from page 1

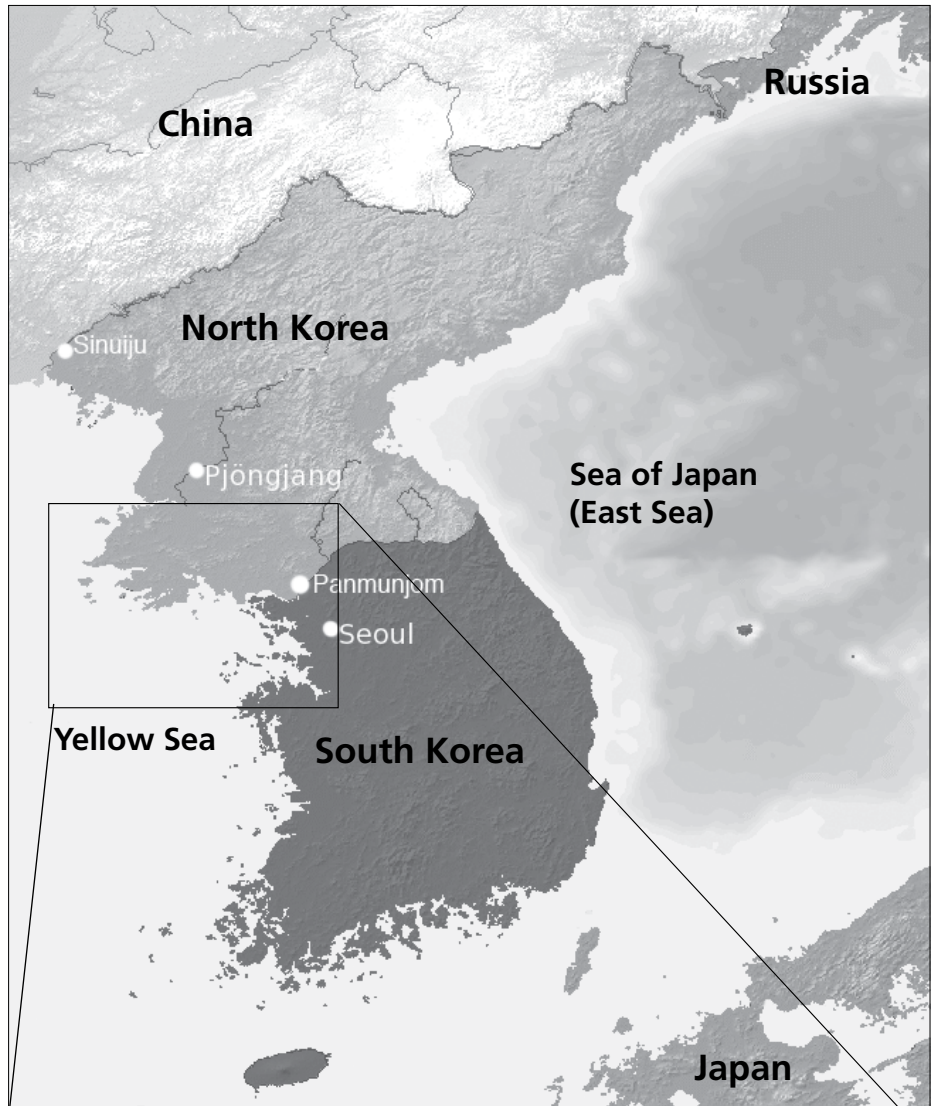
Korean War:

First proxy war of the bipolar world

The Korean War of 1950 – 1953 is considered the first proxy war in the bipolar world of the Cold War. The USA first denoted the Soviet Union as the driving force, later Kim Il Sung was regarded as the person mainly responsible. Modern historians have become more cautious with such one-sided accusations and interpret the North Korean offensive as a reaction to a South Korean provocation. *Kim Gu*, a long-time companion of *Rhee Syng-man* in Chinese exile, made a final attempt to overcome the division of Korea in 1948 with a visit to Kim Il Sung in Pyongyang. Returning to Seoul, he was murdered at the behest of Rhee Syng-man.

The USA used the absence of the Soviet delegation in the Security Council to intervene militarily on behalf of the UN on the Korean peninsula. After initial successes of North Korea, US troops advanced to almost the border of China, which felt threatened accordingly and sup-

continued on page 4



"Panmunjeom Declaration ..."

continued from page 1

their respective roles and responsibilities in this regard. South and North Korea agreed to actively seek the support and cooperation of the international community for the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

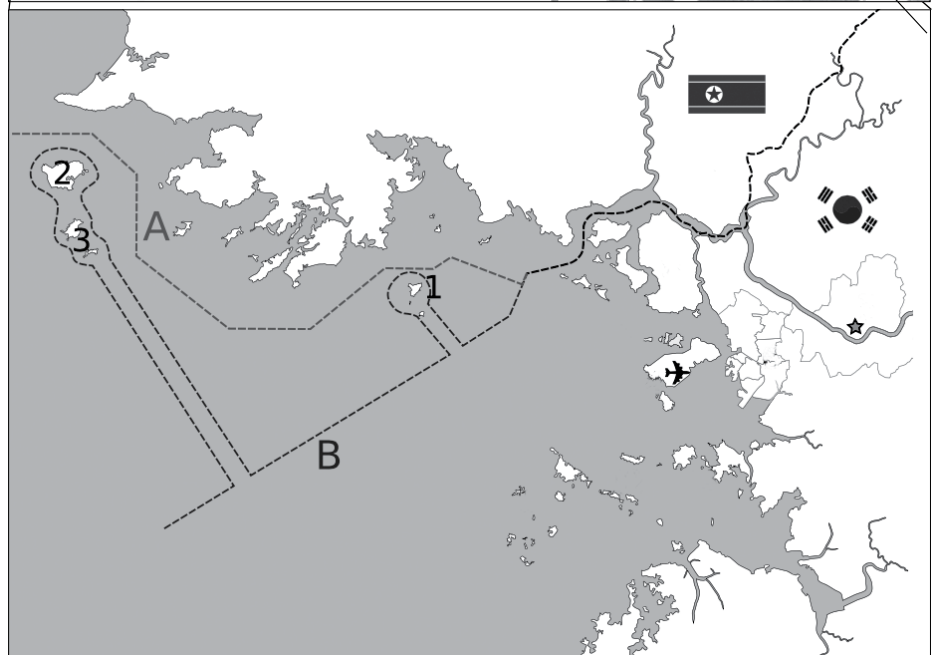
The two leaders agreed, through regular meetings and direct telephone conversations, to hold frequent and candid discussions on issues vital to the nation, to strengthen mutual trust and to jointly endeavor to strengthen the positive momentum towards continuous advancement of inter-Korean relations as well as peace, prosperity and unification of the Korean Peninsula. In this context, President Moon Jae-in agreed to visit Pyongyang this fall.

27 April 2018

Done in Panmunjeom

Moon Jae-in, President, Republic of Korea

Kim Jong Un, Chairman, State Affairs Commission, Democratic People's Republic of Korea.



Time and again there have been border disputes between North and South Korea. The maritime border Northern Limit Line NNL (Line A) in the Yellow Sea off the west coast of the Korean Peninsula is an ongoing conflict zone. A commander of the UN troops committed them unilaterally on 30 August 1953. It was never recognized by North Korea. North Korea, for its part, set the border on Line B. In the zone between the borderlines A and B, there were always military incidents. Islands: Yeonpyeong No. 1, Baengnyeongdo No. 2 and Daecheong No. 3 (maps wikipedia)

"Korea and the power interests ..."

continued from page 3

ported North Korea by sending so-called people's volunteers. China was thus able to avoid an official entry into the war and the involvement of its own country as a war participant. Nevertheless, the American commander-in-chief General *MacArthur* advocated the use of nuclear weapons against China and the occupation of north-east China (Manchuria), which bordered Korea, an important economic region for China. For the first time, the world was confronted with the growing risks of war of two nuclear powers. Even President *Truman* got spooked, so he prematurely dismissed *MacArthur*.

The war went on with tremendous brutality. Paramilitary communist underground troops murdered opponents of the North Korean regime in South Korea and practiced a policy of scorched earth. Conversely, in South Korea, an anti-communist hysteria resulted in mass executions of communist supporters; US troops killed countless civilians, often including families and children, suspecting them of collaborating with the Communists.

In North Korea, in particular the US bombing caused devastating damage. 450,000 tons of bombs, 32,357 tons of which were using napalm, were dropped on North Korea. The consequences were devastating, because unlike in Vietnam, North Korea had more densely populated conurbations with industry.

At least half of the 22 largest North Korean cities were razed to the ground. It is estimated that South Korea lost about one million people, North Korea 2.5 million and China one million.

27 July 1953: ceasefire only

After diplomatic contacts between the USA and the Soviet Union from 1951 onwards in Warsaw and Geneva, negotiations began between the warring parties in Panmunjeom, which led to a ceasefire not until 27 July 1953, but without South Korea ever having co-signed this agreement. This gives additional importance to the inter-Korean summit between Chairman *Kim Jong Un* and President *Moon Jae-in* in Panmunjeom on 27 April 2018.

The 1953 agreement essentially confirmed the 38th parallel as the border between North and South Korea and established a four-kilometer wide demilitarised zone along the border. It was administered by the *Military Armistice Commission* MAC, while the *Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission* NNSC has the mission of monitoring it. In addition, a *Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission*, of which India was a neutral member, was responsible for the repatriation



Part of Pyongyang's modern skyline – it barely fits into the image of North Korea common to the mainstream Western media. Under the link www.korean-books.com/kp/en/search/?page=periodic-pictorial the interested reader finds numerous pictures from various areas of life in North Korea.. (picture keystone)

of the prisoners. This commission was dissolved in 1956. The neutral countries mentioned were Sweden and Switzerland as well as Poland and Czechoslovakia. Following the fall of the Iron Curtain, Poland and Czechoslovakia withdrew their delegations in 1993 on the initiative of North Korea. To date, five Swiss and five Swedish officers are permanently stationed in Panmunjeom for the NNSC. A Polish representative resides in Seoul today. The NNSC has not been recognised by the North since 1993. In the same year Pyongyang also achieved the withdrawal of the delegation of the Chinese People's Volunteers in the Military Armistice Commission from Kaesong/Panmunjeom. The repatriation of the Chinese people's volunteers was already completed in 1958.

US military presence to this day

In contrast, the USA still has a military presence of 28,000 troops in South Korea. To this day, the South Korean army will be under the command of the responsible US general in the event of war. The ceasefire agreement should have been replaced by a peace agreement after one year. While the US has so far refused to sign a peace agreement because it would then have to withdraw its troops from South Korea, North Korea considers the ceasefire agreement with its institutions of the Military Armistice Commission and the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission as anachronistic and obsolete.

Soon after the 1953 ceasefire agreement was concluded, it was repeatedly and in some cases seriously violated. It is impossible to list all incidents and blames

here. Instead, a few selected relevant incidents from more recent times should be remembered:

Northern Limit Line – arbitrary demarcation of the United Nations Command

- Since 15 June 1999, there have been repeated heavy sea battles in the Yellow Sea (Korean name: West Sea) south of the island of Yeonpyong held by South Korea. The reason for this are different opinions about the course of the sea border. Immediately after the conclusion of the ceasefire agreement the *United Nations Command*, the war party on the south side, arbitrarily introduced a *Northern Limitation Line* as a sea border immediately off the North Korean coast. The North has never recognised this demarcation and insists on a border line that runs further south at an equivalent distance from the coastal sections of North and South Korea.

Atomic tests, battles and search for dialogue

On 9 October 2006, North Korea announces its first nuclear test. The UN Security Council decides to extend the existing sanctions regime. After further tests in the following years, boycott and embargo measures against North Korea are tightened even further. In addition to UN sanctions, Japan is drawing up its own catalogue of measures. Virtually all imports from North Korea, especially seafood and rare mushrooms, which are very popular with the Japanese population, are stopped,

"Korea and the power interests ..."

continued from page 4

the direct ferry connection between both countries is discontinued.

- A second inter-Korean summit on 4 October 2007 between Secretary General *Kim Il Jong* and President *Roh Moo-hyun* raises new hopes, which unfortunately soon turn out to be illusions. South Korean President Roh commits suicide after his term of office expires.
- Repeated sea battles and mutual accusations in the West Sea (Yellow Sea) prompted North Korea on 23 November 2010 to retaliate by firing missiles at the island of Yeonpyong held by South Korea just off the North Korean coast.
- 3 September 2017: North Korea tests the first homemade H-bomb.
- 9 January 2018: After a verbal escalation with the US, Kim Jong Un signals his willingness to engage in dialogue, and a first secret meeting of senior representatives of both states follows.
- 9 February 2018: At the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games in South Korea, the athletes from North and South Korea enter the stadium together.
- On 27 April 2018, the Chairman of the National Committee for Political Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Kim Jong Un, and the President of the Republic of Korea, Moon Jae-in, meet in Panmunjeom and sign the Declaration for Peace, Welfare and Reunification on the Korean Peninsula.

In contrast to the majority of opinion-forming western media, various observers and journalists describe the North Korean behaviour less and less as irrational. In particular, North Korea's threats are not due to uncontrolled sen-

Madam *Fu Ying*, a former vice-minister for foreign affairs in China and now chairman of the National People's Congress' Foreign Affairs Committee, said: "American rhetoric about North Korea often confuses 'denuclearisation' with 'regime collapse', so much so that North Korea could not tell which one was the main target."

Mahbubani, Kishore. How the Western media gets the Korean crisis wrong. In: The Straits Times vom 13. Mai 2017. <https://www.straitstimes.com/opinion/how-the-western-media-gets-the-korean-crisis-wrong>

timent, but to the experience that such gestures are the only thing Washington takes note of.

Singapore diplomat and political philosopher *Kishore Mahbubani* warns his countrymen: "Please be very careful each day you pick up the newspapers to read some Anglo-Saxon media analysis of contemporary problems, like North Korea or Syria, Ukraine or Iran. When you read these analyses, please ask yourselves: Are you reading an objective analysis? Or are you reading a distorted world view?"¹ In his article he points out that Asians take a completely different approach to solving such problems: They integrate problem regions into joint development instead of covering them with bombs. China would never want to lead North Korea to the brink of collapse – China would neither be able to cope with a stream of refugees, nor can it imagine a military ally of the USA at its border.

How much Asian diplomacy has worked in the background to make the Panmunjeom meeting and declaration possible – we do not know. It is probably part of the practice of successful diplomacy that doesn't trumpet its actions from the rooftops.

"We must return to that spirit where the South and the North worked together toward realizing a peaceful Peninsula.

I clearly state the following: we do not wish for North Korea's collapse, and will not work toward any kind of unification through absorption. Neither will we pursue an artificial unification. Unification is a process where both sides seek co-existence and co-prosperity and restore a sense of national community. When peace is established, unification will be realized naturally someday through an agreement between the South and the North.

What my Administration and I would like to realize is only peace."

Source: From the speech of President Moon Jae-in from 6 July 2017 at Körber Foundation in Germany

www.korea.net/Government/Briefing-Room/Presidential-Speeches/view?articleId=156591&pageIndex=4

New clouds are already casting their dark shadows before on last month's promising Panmunjom declaration. Instead of confidence-building measures, President *Trump*, together with his South Korean ally, sets, as he does every year, a gigantic war machine in motion to exercise launch of an attack on North Korea. An announced meeting between Chairman Kim Jong Un and President Trump is therefore met with scepticism in Pyongyang. It would be important for North Korea if President Trump could finally decide to recognise and establish diplomatic relations under international law, as the US has done with other existing socialist states, China, Vietnam and Cuba. •

¹ Mahbubani, Kishore. *How the Western media gets the Korean crisis wrong*. In: The Straits Times of 13 May 2017 (<https://www.straitstimes.com/opinion/how-the-western-media-gets-the-korean-crisis-wrong>)

Chronology of the Korean Aspiration for Peace and Reconciliation

With the beginning of the detente policy in the 1970s, hopes for a genuine peace agreement were also rekindled in Korea. On 20 August 1971, the first meeting of North and South Korean Red Cross staff members took place, on 4 July 1972 the South-North Joint Communiqué was announced, the first permanent inter-Korean consultative body (October 1972 until March 1975). The provision of humanitarian support was made for the first time since national division, five full-dress inter-Korean economic talks from November 1984 until November 1985 and a first agreement was made on the reunion of separated families, talks on sports, further Red Cross talks, in 1990 the first round of South-North Prime Minister Talks, from 10–13 December an "Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-aggression, Exchanges, and Coop-

eration (Basic Agreement)" was signed in Seoul, then in February 1992 in Pyongyang the "Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-aggression, Exchanges, and Cooperation and the Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula" took effect. A first inter-Korean summit since national division between President *Kim Young-sam* and President *Kim Il Sung* in Pyongyang on 25–27 July 1994. The summit was not held due to the death of President Kim Il Sung on 8 July 1994. In December 1997 six "Four-Party Meetings" among South Korea, North Korea, the United States and China were held in Geneva.

In June 2000 the first inter-Korean summit was held in Pyongyang the "South-North Joint Declaration" was signed. In June 2000 the first inter-Korean summit was held in Pyongyang and

the "South-North Joint Declaration" was signed. From June 2000 until October 2010 eleven inter-Korean Red Cross talks were held in Geumgangsán to implement the details of the June 15 South-North Joint Declaration, fifteen years after the first reunion in 1985, another reunion of separated families took place. From 2000 to 2008, 21 inter-Korean ministerial talks were held as well as meetings of national defense ministers and meetings of the South-North Economic Cooperation Committee. From 2 to 4 October 2007 the second inter-Korean summit was held and the "Declaration on the Advancement of South-North Relations, Peace and Prosperity" was signed.

Source: Peace, a New Start. 2018 Inter-Korean Summit. www.korea.net; http://www.korea.net/FILE/pdfdata/2018/04/2018_inter-korean_summit_EN.pdf

Panmunjeom: From an icon of division to an icon of peace

The 2018 inter-Korean summit, [...], will be held at Peace House in Panmunjeom and the North's leader will be stepping onto the South Korean side of Panmunjeom for the first time.

Panmunjeom, located 52 km from Seoul, 147 km from Pyongyang, and 8 km from the Kaesong Industrial Complex, became known globally when the United Nations forces and North Korean officials met here in 1951 for truce talks. The armistice was signed in 1953 and the Military Armistice Commission subsequently held

talks at the site. From 1971 onward, over 360 inter-Korean talks have been held in Panmunjeom, starting with the preliminary meeting for the Red Cross talks.

Originally, guards of the South, North, and United Nations were guaranteed free movement and access as befits Panmunjeom's status as the Joint Security Area, but, after the axe-murder incident in 1976, they were separated on their own sides of the Military Demarcation Line (MDL). A row of concrete blocks, each measuring 5 cm in height and 50 cm in width, sits on

the MDL between the Freedom House and Panmungak. The Line emerged as a symbol of the tragedy of national division.

The world is once again watching Panmunjeom, the venue of the 2018 inter-Korean summit, to see if it will be able to produce a bud of peace from the soil of the pain of division. •

Source: Peace, a New Start. 2018 Inter-Korean Summit. www.korea.net/FILE/pdfdata/2018/04/2018_inter-korean_summit_EN.pdf

Wars of aggression are criminal offenses

Persons who wage a war of aggression render themselves personally liable to prosecution

The attacks by the British, French and US army units on 14 April and the presumably Israeli units on 2 May on targets in Syria were not legitimised by the UN. All persons involved in these military attacks and their superiors render themselves personally liable to prosecution. They can be accused of alleged war crimes. This is the law as it stands since 1945.

It seems somewhat grotesque that just in those countries which have given rise to important impulses for the development of human rights and international law now politicians hold leading positions with views that must long be considered as been overcome. Their careless and unjustifiable handling of lives and deaths of innocent people defies any achievement of civilisation. In legal terms, they are liable to prosecution. Their actions are contrary to current international law, even if mainstream media are repeatedly whitewashing this.

Taking the "fate" into one's own hands
As individuals, we have always lived a life co-determined by fate. In the past, the focus was on whether there was enough to eat or whether one stayed healthy. In addition, there was "fate" in the form of wars. But in all areas of life, people find and found ways to improve their lives, to better protect themselves and to take precautions.

Restraining the trouble of war

War is one of the worst troubles – because it is not being caused by natural forces but by human beings. After having restrained the right of the fist and the feuds by public peace and since internal peace had been restored, war was no longer accepted as fate. International law has been developed in order to restrict this arbitrariness. Piece by piece, step by step, over centuries. Therewith, our consciousness has also been changed. War is no longer per-

ceived as a "stroke of fate", but rather as a punishable act which, since the *Nuremberg Trials* (1945/1946), can lead to life sentence, at that time even to death.

Hitler's wars of aggression were no longer accepted as a "state's right to war" (*ius ad bellum*). Even if the smell of "victors' justice" clings to the criminal procedures, they contributed to the fact, that a consensus was emerging that war of aggression or similar acts of war are crimes because they are implicating the intentional and negligent death of innocent people. And even if war-mongering politicians defend themselves by spurious arguments against being convicted, it is however foreseeable that their murderous activity will eventually have civilian consequences.

In 40 years over 80 million killed by war

The Nuremberg Trials and the founding of the UN were consequences of the two World Wars: of the First World War, 1914–1918, with 17 million dead and shortly afterwards the Second World War, 1939–1945, with about 60 million fatalities. Added to this was the incredible suffering of millions and millions of widows, orphans, people traumatised by war, war-disabled, homeless, bombed out, hungry people, etc.

War as a crime

In his opening speech on 21 November 1945, the chief prosecutor, the US-American lawyer *Robert H. Jackson*, summed up the aim of the Nuremberg Trials as follows: "That four great nations, flushed with victory and stung with injury, stay the hand of vengeance and voluntarily submit their captive enemies to the judgment of the law is one of the most significant tributes that power has ever paid to reason. [...] This inquest represents the practical effort of four of the most mighty of

nations, with the support of 14 more, to utilise international law to meet the greatest menace of our times – aggressive war. The common sense of mankind demands that law shall not stop with the punishment of petty crimes by little people. It must also reach men who possess themselves of great power and make deliberate and concerted use of it to set in motion evils which leave no home in the world untouched."¹ Thus Jackson expressed the change in the general understanding of war: War as a crime punishable in a civil court.

The Kellogg-Briand-Pact

The *Nuremberg Principles and the United Nations Charter* refer to the efforts of the French Foreign Minister *Aristide Briand* and the US Secretary of State *Frank Billings Kellogg* to declare wars of aggression to be contrary to international law and to resolve conflicts peacefully in the future. The *Kellogg-Briand-Pact* was signed in 1928 by at first eleven nations. It is an essential step towards preventing murders through acts of war.

The United Nations Charter

Since 1945, the *United Nations Charter* has formed the basis for international relations. It is the founding treaty of the UN. Its universal objectives and principles form the constitution of the international community, professed by now by 193 member states. The Charter was signed in San Francisco on 26 June 1945 by 50 founding states and came into force on 24 October 1945. To bring it to mind, parts of the preamble and of the first two chapters are printed in the following. •

¹ *The International Military Tribunal of Nuremberg 1945/46. Speeches of the main accusers.* Ed.: "Nürnberger Menschenrechtszentrum" (Nuremberg Human Rights Center), 2015, p. 61

Swiss mission in Korea

Swiss army members for the two commissions NNRC and NNSC

On 7 July 1953, the Federal Council decided to authorise the Department of Defence to make preparations for sending armed Swiss military personnel to the two commissions NNRC (Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission in Korea) and NNSC (Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission in Korea). That was also the birth of Swiss military peace-keeping.

In the course of the following months, instalments of a total of 146 Swiss citizens travelled to Korea. The NNRC terminated its work at the end of February 1954, as it had accomplished its mission of conducting and completing the exchange of prisoners. The NNSC still exists today,

however, with an adapted range of duties within its mandate, and is supported by the Swiss Armed Forces with five unarmed officers in Panmunjeom. [...]

Today, five Swiss and five Swedish officers are on duty for the NNSC and are stationed in Panmunjeom, immediately south of the Demarcation Line. Presently, their main task continues to consist in monitoring the armistice, although only on the southern side of the border since 1995. The NNSC also has an extended range of duties within the armistice comprising nine specified additional tasks that are aimed primarily at promoting transparency and confidence-building. [...]

NNSC delegates are neither UN blue helmets nor UN military observers (blue berets) as the UN flag stands for the alliance of the 16 force providing nations who under the lead of the USA participated in the war as South Korea's allies. The mandate of the NNSC is based on the cease-fire treaty of the warring parties. As military personnel of their own country, the NNSC delegates are called to transparently and impartially fulfil their military-diplomatic mission. •

Source: www.vtg.admin.ch/en/news/einsaetze-und-operationen/militaerische-friedensfoerderung/missionen/nnsc.html from 20.5.2018

United Nations Charter (Extract)

Preamble

We the peoples of the United Nations determined

- to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and
- to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and
- to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and
- to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom, *and for these ends*
- to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours, and
- to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, and
- to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest, and

- to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples,

Have resolved to combine efforts to accomplish these aims [...]

CHAPTER I

purposes and principles

Article 1

The Purposes of the United Nations are:

- 1 To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace;
- 2 To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other

appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace; [...]

Article 2

The Organization and its Members, in pursuit of the Purposes stated in Article 1, shall act in accordance with the following Principles.

- 1 The Organization is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members.
- 2 All Members, in order to ensure to all of them the rights and benefits resulting from membership, shall fulfill in good faith the obligations assumed by them in accordance with the present Charter.
- 3 All Members shall settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security, and justice, are not endangered.
- 4 All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations. [...]

Reminding the state and the citizens of the basic principles of the constitution

Germany's perspectives in a world that has fallen apart

by Karl Müller

Criticism of German foreign policy, which at the same time questions the German constitution, is of little help. It ignores the fact, that the Basic Law is the best substantiated line of argumentation for peace policy and international understanding.

The recognition and formulation of natural law and the incorporation of natural law into positive law means that ethics and law are no longer opposites. Today, human kind can look back on a canon of codified international law based on natural law and thus ethics (for example, large parts of the UN Charter of 1945, the Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, the Human Rights Pacts of 1966). Most constitutions of the nation states have also incorporated principles of natural law.

This also applies to Germany. The version of West German Basic Law formulated in 1948 and 1949 was under the strong influence of natural law, following the catastrophic consequences of pure juridical positivism. To this day, the key points have remained in Basic Law – despite numerous and questionable constitutional amendments. This must always be remembered.

Article 1 and Article 20 of the Basic Law provided for the “eternity clause” of Article 79, paragraph 3. The outstanding importance of the content of these two articles should thus be stressed. Even a slight deviation from these articles is completely unconstitutional.

Human dignity, human rights and the principles of the state

Article 1, unchanged thru today, reads as follows:

“Human dignity shall be inviolable. To respect and protect it shall be the duty of all state authority.

2 The German people therefore acknowledge inviolable and inalienable human rights as the basis of every community, of peace and of justice in the world.

3 The following basic rights shall bind the legislature, the executive and the judiciary as directly applicable law.”

Article 20 originally read:

“1 The Federal Republic of Germany is a democratic and social federal state.

2 All state authority is derived from the people. It shall be exercised by the people through elections and other votes and through specific legislative, executive and judicial bodies.

3 The legislature shall be bound by the constitutional order, the executive and the judiciary by law and justice.”

Paragraph 4 of Article 20, which regulates the right of resist, was first added in 1968 as a result of emergency legislation.

Articles 1 and 20 are closely related. The legislature was faced with the question of how to organise a state where respect and protection of human dignity, human rights and fundamental rights are best guaranteed. Resulting were the four state principles in Article 20: the principle of democracy, the rule of law, the federal state principle and the welfare state principle. Additionally, there is the separation of powers and control of powers.

International law and peaceful coexistence of peoples

But also, the commitments formulated in Articles 25 and 26 connected to the general rules of international law, international understanding and the ban on the preparation of a war of aggression were not only the result of immediately preceding history, but were also an expression of natural law, i.e. fundamental ethical thinking. These two articles deserve to be quoted again and again.

Article 25 reads:

“The general rules of international law shall be an integral part of federal law. They shall take precedence over the laws and directly create rights and duties for the inhabitants of the federal territory.”

Article 26, paragraph 1, reads:

“Acts tending to and undertaken with intent to disturb the peaceful relations between nations, especial-

ly to prepare for a war of aggression, shall be unconstitutional. They shall be made a criminal offence.”

These constitutional articles, which are currently not sufficiently observed and fulfilled, result in rights and obligations for every German and Germany. Every day a look at our media shows us how far Germany has moved away from these constitutional provisions.

Against war preparation and sanctions policy

These constitutional provisions must also be observed in Germany's international relations. It is unconstitutional that German politicians and the German media are helping to press Russia into an enemy image/stereotype and even to provoke a war against this country. Nor is it acceptable that German government members publicly say that they have no legal recourse against the decisions and the subsequent measures of the US administration in dealing with the US termination/denunciation of the nuclear agreement with Iran and the associated announcement of unilateral sanctions contrary to international law – not only against Iran, but also against German companies trading or investing in Iran.

To obligate the government to the rule of law by applying Basic Law

With such statements, the German government declares itself incapable of acting. Such an inability to act in view of injustice fits neither the German constitution nor a constitutional state, nor the constitution of a sovereign state.

If in such a situation the representatives of the German state, who no longer respect the constitution, are faced with an “opposition” that claims to criticize the government sharply but at the same time distances itself from the German constitution, then this is of little help.

Germany and the Germans are well advised to centre their arguments around the basic principles of the country's constitution. Everybody must be committed to this. This is a sustainable perspective in dealing with sanctions and war policy that violate international law.

How the project Nord Stream 2 became a game of power poker

by Bruno Bandulet*



Dr Bruno Bandulet
(picture ma)

It is rare for the German government to oppose its guidelines set by Washington. When US Secretary of State *Rex Tillerson* visited Warsaw in January, he commented on a 9.5 billion project, that the US is not involved in financing and that is outside its remit,

and which concerns the planned second gas pipeline from Russia to Germany. Tillerson characterised it as a threat to Europe's energy security. "Like Poland, the United States is against the Nord Stream 2 pipeline," the Secretary of State announced, adding, "our resistance is driven by our common strategic interests." While the Poles were delighted with this American support, the Ministry of Economic Affairs in Berlin responded with the succinct statement that the project Nord Stream 2 was an entrepreneurial decision.

A pipeline that does not suit the Americans

This intensifies a power struggle in which Germany and Russia are on the one side, the US, Poland and Ukraine on the other – and which is complicated by the fact that the European Commission considers it a being their department, which is in turn contested by Berlin. The Russians have already begun to encase 90,000 of the total of 200,000 pipes in concrete. At the end of January, the mining authority of Stralsund (Bergamt) approved the first 55-kilometer section of the pipeline in German territorial waters. It will run parallel to the existing *Nord Stream 1* pipeline. The laying of the tubes on the 1224-kilometer route from the Russian Vyborg to Lubmin near Greifswald should start this spring.

The chances of the project being realised have increased since the negotiations over a Jamaican coalition failed in Berlin. To be sure, not only the transatlantically accommodating Greens entirely toe the American line, also Union politicians such as *Norbert Röttgen* and *Manfred Weber*, and FDP parliamentarians such as *Michael Link* and



Nadja Hirsch oppose *Nord Stream 2*. Meanwhile, the United States are putting pressure on Denmark. Because the route passes through Danish territorial waters near the island of Bornholm, a Danish permit is required. This is still pending. If necessary, the pipeline will have to be laid elsewhere.

While *Angela Merkel* abstains from public statements, it is obvious where the sympathies of the SPD lie. Even as Minister of Economic Affairs, *Sigmar Gabriel* made a strong case for Nord Stream 2. Last June, he traveled to St. Petersburg as Foreign Minister, where he sat at dinner with President *Putin*, with representatives of the German business with the East, and with *Gerhard Schröder*, Chairman of Nord Stream 2, till long after midnight. This outraged *Katrin Göring-Eckardt* [*Alliance 90/The Greens*], who spoke of a "tremendous affront to the EU".

When Russian gas first reached Germany via the Baltic Sea in September 2011, criticism was still moderate. The two tubes put into operation at that time have a capacity of 55 billion cubic meters of natural gas. They were practically working to full capacity in 2017. Nord Stream 2 can transport the same amount through two tubes – with the possibility of expansion by ten billion cubic meters. This will increase Germany's dependence on Russian gas imports, which currently accounts for 40 per cent of German consumption.

But what does dependence mean? In a long article (*Österreichische Militärische Zeitschrift* 4/2017 – Austrian Military Journal), internationally interconnected energy expert *Frank Umbach* brings in the big guns against the new pipeline, but then the admission slips from him: "And yet, Russia is now more dependent on the Eu-

ropean gas market than the EU is on Russian gas imports, as the EU now has a variety of gas import alternatives."

Another one of *Umbach's* statements is also true: "While Germany and the Czech Republic benefit economically from Nord Stream 2, previous transit countries such as Slovakia and Poland are more likely to be the losers." But then he admits, "the Nord Stream 2 project is likely to strengthen the liquidity of the German gas hub as well as gas trading and could even accelerate the integration of the national gas markets in Central Europe, which might also benefit Poland and other Central Eastern European countries."

It is, however, also correct that Nord Stream 2 will shift power relations: as long as gas flows through Poland and Ukraine, *Gazprom* has to rely on their co-operation. With Nord Stream 2, the Russians will free themselves from dependence. The other profiteer will be Germany. It will become the centre and economic hub for gas trading in Central Europe, albeit not necessarily the "European energy centre", as the journal "Deutsche Wirtschafts Nachrichten" (German economic news)" speculates.

We need the gas, the Russians need the money

An insinuation also disseminated by *Frank Umbach* is pure invention, namely that in the future Russia will be able to blackmail its European customers. Germany, like Austria, has large gas storage facilities that would suffice for months in an emergency. They are usually replenished in the summer. In addition, Germany will contin-

* The journalist and book author Dr Bruno Bandulet was i. a. managing editor at the German daily "Die Welt" and member of the editorial *Quick* magazine. In 1979 he established the information service *Gold & Money Intelligence* (G&M), which appeared until 2013. From 1995 until the end of 2008 he was editor of the background service *DeutschlandBrief*, which appears as a column in the magazine *eigentlich frei*.

Battlefield Nord Stream 2

by Prof Dr Eberhard Hamer*



Prof Dr Eberhard Hamer
(picture ma)

On 10 April 2018, the Ukrainian ruler *Poroshenko* visited Mrs *Merkel* and demanded that she stop the construction of the *Nord Stream 2* pipeline through the Baltic Sea from Russia to Germany, which would “change the transit role of Ukraine for Russian natural gas and its revenues for this gas transit, as well as the strategic position of Ukraine”.

It is true that the *Nord Stream 2* pipeline, which will no longer pass through foreign territory but instead through the Baltic Sea, should ensure the independence of gas supplies from Russia to Germany, so that there will be no more opportunity for Ukraine to stop these gas

* Prof Dr Eberhard Hamer is the founder of the *Mittelstandsinstitut Hannover* as well as author and editor of several books like among others “Was tun, wenn der Crash kommt? Wie sichere ich mein Vermögen oder Unternehmen?” (What should we do when the crash comes? How do I secure my assets?) 10th edition 2008, and “Visionen 2050. Wohin steuern wir? Trends und Prognosen für Deutschland und Europa” (Visionen 2050. Where are we heading? Trends and forecasts for Germany and Europe) 2016.

supplies, for dictating the transit price at Germany’s expense, or for constantly tapping into the gas pipeline illegally. Russia as well as Germany would be relieved of dependence on Ukraine for their vital supplies of gas.

Poroshenko can rely on the EU Commission, which also opposes the *Nord Stream 2* pipeline because of its hate against Russia, because it wants to preserve Ukraine as the only gas transit country and therefore a pawn against Russia.

And even the US has decided to sanction all companies involved in *Nord Stream 2*. They oppose the construction of this gas supply because they have an oversupply of gas even in their own country, which they want to sell liquefied in Europe and, above all, in Germany (*Cuxhaven*).

Luckily, former Chancellor *Schröder* is on the board of the *Nord Stream 2* project and has so far, on the domestic front, calmed the campaign against this gas supply which is in actual fact indispensable for Germany. However, whether he can in the long run resist the foreign policy pressure applied by Washington, Brussels, Ukraine and the Western oil and gas industry, will ultimately be decided in Berlin.

At least, those international permits for the transfer of the oil pipeline through the

Baltic Sea which have so far been issued were granted despite American protests and sanctions. Also the companies involved in the oil pipeline fear the liability consequences of exiting from their contracts more than the American boycott. Thus, the opponents of the *Nord Stream* gas pipeline focus on blackmailing the *Merkel* government to make it initiate the stop.

As she always does, so also in this question *Merkel* is already partly caving in. She assured *Poroshenko* that “from our point of view, a *Nord Stream 2* project is not possible without any clarity as to the continuation of the Ukrainian transit role”. So she seems to be ready to stop the gas security which is vital to our economy, if she can thereby maintain Ukraine’s current blackmail situation. Yet the purpose of the expensive new gas pipeline *Nord Stream 2* is precisely to prevent this blackmail by Ukraine. *Merkel* seems ready to cause harm to her voters by the Ukraine risk to the Russian gas supply and by replacement of the latter with the expensive American liquefied gas.

Once again, the Berlin colonial administration does not have the courage to resist the orders issued by its colonial power (USA).

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

“How the project Nord Stream 2 ...”

continued from page 9

ue to source Norwegian natural gas. Also Poland, which has so far imported part of its needs directly from Russia, has never been blackmailed, although relations could hardly be worse. As soon as *Nord Stream 2* is in operation, Poland can be supplied at any time – via Germany as the distributor. If this is not desired, Norwegian gas and the more expensive LPG from the US are alternatives. In Poland, a pipeline to Norway is already being considered.

You can also see it this way: the Germans and the Europeans need the gas, the Russians need the money. So where is the problem? Moscow correctly complied with existing supply contracts, as early as in the Soviet-era (and even with *Hitler-Germany* until 1941). According to neutral observers, Kiev was complicit in the Russian-Ukrainian gas conflicts of 2006, 2009 and 2014. As soon as four instead of two pipelines pass through the Baltic, transit through Ukraine will probably be superfluous. In any case, this contract will end in 2019. Then Ukraine will lose transit fees, and the transaction of transport – as it is via the Baltic Sea –

will be assuredly conflict free. It is understandable that Ukraine is reluctant to lose money and importance in terms of energy policy.

In future, Germany will need more gas than before. The production in the North German lowlands, which used to supply 20 per cent of home requirements, is declining, as is the yield of the Dutch *Groningen* field.

Regardless of whether one believes in the theory of controllable climate change caused by carbon dioxide or not, the federal government must be measured by its own climate goals. Despite the energy turnaround, CO₂ emissions in Germany have not declined since 2009, but have remained virtually unchanged, as nuclear power has been replaced by coal-based power generation after the accident in *Fukushima, Japan*.

At present, around 40 per cent of electricity in Germany is generated by coal and only 13 per cent by natural gas. The burning of bituminous coal produces three times as much carbon dioxide as the use of natural gas. Once the last nuclear power plants are shut down, the gap must be closed by natural gas. Take *Baden-Wuerttemberg* as an example: There, two nu-

clear reactors that run in continuous operation, apart from the usual maintenance work, cover one third of the electricity demand. According to a decision by the *Merkel* government one of these must be decommissioned already in 2019, the other 2022.

To eliminate coal as well as nuclear power, and then to refrain from replacing it with natural gas, seems like an interesting variant of the 1944 *Morgenthau* plan. But after all, the anti-industrialists who consider this feasible also believe that energy is “renewable”. The Green Party in Germany and the European Parliament, which rejected *Nord Stream 2* as early as in May 2016, are mixing dependence on America with Russophobia and energy-political illusionism, to form that kind of Europeanism that is limited to the action of constantly shifting power from nation-states to the EU Commission.

The geostrategic interest of the United States, in turn, is to sabotage any German-Russian cooperation and to confirm the concept of Russia as the enemy. The conflict with Berlin is preprogrammed.

Source: *DeutschlandBrief* in “eigentlich frei” No. 181 of April 2018

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

Between left-green hegemony and radical Pegida movement

Ulrich Greiner: A return to the foundations of our culture

by Winfried Pogorzelski*



The book *Heimatlos – Bekenntnisse eines Konservativen (Homeless – Confessions of a Conservative)*, by Ulrich Greiner, former head

of the editorial section of the weekly newspaper *Die Zeit*, presents a witty essay, based on a careful reconstruction and on clever comments about his own ideological and intellectual biography. With the title “Homeless” he refers to a book of the same title by Johanna Spyri, Swiss writer of books for youth and creator of the novel *Heidi*, that had moved the author as a child to tears.

Greiner’s book reminds former students among us of many things that have taken place over the last decades and years of important developments: from the German post-war period to the student movement of the sixties and from the German reunification to the advancing globalisation and the wave of refugees. The current debate on Islamism is discussed as well as the trend towards multiculturalism and vegetarianism. Above all, he is keen to bring into focus what should be preserved, what should by no means be sacrificed to any alluring zeitgeist.

The attitude of conservatism

The author, as he emphasises, is not concerned with developing a theory or programme of conservatism, where in contrast to left-wing and reactionary ideologies or political movements, “paternalism from the spirit of utopia” (p. 41) is unknown. His concern is to get to the heart of an open discomfort that is now affecting more and more people who do not automatically accept anything just because it is new. In his introduction, he speaks of the social-democratisation of the CDU by Angela Merkel, the euro rescue, free trade, and Angela Merkel’s handling of the wave of refugees, all being presented in unison as without any alternative by the media, or of the condemnation of meat-consumption and the propagation of vegetarianism, belonging to political correctness. In nine chapters, Greiner presents his observations and reflections, substantiated by references to historical events and developments, to biographies and writings of important authors. Keywords from the chapter headings are among others: *The left-green cultural hegemony*, *The own and the*

alien, *criticism of Islam and Multiculturalism*, *The ideology of feasibility – Euthanasia and reproductive medicine*, *the proven national state*, *promises of equality and limits of the welfare state*.

The own and the alien

A typical attitude, according to Greiner, is the widespread self-hatred of many members of our culture, which is expressed by criticising one’s own while uncritically judging anything alien as better, more exotic, more authentic, just because it stems from another, strange culture. In this attitude, “everything that looks like a Christian tradition is refused under the guise of multi-cultural fairness” (p. 40). However, almost the entire history of our tradition is shaped by what is called “Christian Occident” (ibid.). Consequently, the author is concerned not to obliterate differences between the own and the alien, what was diligently pursued in multiculturalism and the so called welcoming-culture. Our tradition contains the Christian-influenced guiding culture – as according to Greiner validly defined by the German Interior Minister *Thomas de Maizière* – with their unwritten rules of coexistence, essentially describing peaceful coexistence and the precedence of law over religious rules. For example, Islamic culture is alien to us, and – one may add – will always stay alien. Self-determination and freedom of opinion were and are handled quite differently in Islamic culture than in ours. The contrast between alien and own must remain clear, emphasises Greiner with reference to demonstrations by Turks for the introduction of the death penalty in Turkey.

Greiner emphasises some differences between Christianity and pre-secular religions such as Islam, without, of course, praising Christianity as the sole blessing religion to the skies. Thus, the principle “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” [Lev 19, 18] is Christian, there is no requirement in Christianity to assassinate other believers or commit suicide attacks. The sacrificial death of Jesus is revolutionary because it rescinds the principle of retribution: instead of sacrificing others, the Son of God sacrifices himself to put an end to the cycle of violence. This does not mean, however, that Christians are better people per se. In the course of the history of Christianity, there were also dark sides, devastating damage. The author concludes this part of his remarks with the comment: “Historical experience shows: Feeling certain about the own one does not need de-

fining it more closely, one can confidently approach the not own and the alien. Nevertheless, the times have changed. The own has become questionable. What once was normal has ceased to be.” (p. 75)

Ideology of feasibility versus self-restraint

Greiner speaks of the spreading “ideology of feasibility” (p. 77), of the attempt of modern man to “want to be God” (ibid.). In contrast, his conservatism is characterised by caution and self-restraint as shown on the example of euthanasia and reproductive medicine. He is extremely sceptical of both, since both are bound to the so-called – right to self-determination, being claimed as if it were the most natural thing in the world. First of all, the author states that the so-called “Freitod” (free death – suicide) of well-known contemporaries has received public acclaim over and over again, by considering it as brave or even courageous. Greiner, on the other hand, asks: “Does man realise his freedom in suicide – or does he not forever forfeit it?” (p. 79) He quotes the writer *Reinhold Schneider*, who is of the opinion that suicide is not limited to the ego. The suicidal person carries “something horrible into the world, something that should not exist and that threatens its order. [...] His attitude, his thinking have something subverting. No one becomes guilty on himself alone, in this or any other sense. For the law of order, of preservation, of administration is given to all: therefore every one who violates the law, commits an outrage against all.” (pp. 79)

Later in the chapter, Greiner comes to the protection of marriage and family, granted by most states in the world. He is overwhelmed by an uneasy feeling at the thought that same-sex couples should be able to marry and adopt children. This feeling tells him, “that it would not be good, to open an institution that has been, since time immemorial, and still is intended for the legal union of man and woman and for the legitimization of their descendants, by allowing a ‘marriage for all’” (p. 83). In the following he points out the objections – uttered more frequently and frankly – against the monopoly of the classical heterosexual marriage. For many “the idea that affection, sexuality, and procreation were necessarily related” is as obsolete as the “thought that only naturally born offspring are acceptable” (ibid.). The

* Pogorzelski, Winfried, Dr phil., high school teacher of German and History, canton of Aargau

"Between left-green hegemony ..."

continued from page 11

profiteers of reproductive medicine would only welcome proceedings in this field. The conservative, however, according to Greiner, would feel a considerable discomfort in the face of this development. In Germany there are created about ten thousand children per year by artificial means, breaking the order of descent: "The genealogical order, which represents a cultural achievement of first order, seems to have come to an end." (p. 84) An emerging consequence of this development is eugenics, for which the use of seed banks will open the doors. There would be the danger of a veritable optimization delusion – promoted by profit-oriented reproductive centres – of those who can afford this dubious form of medical progress. Greiner strikes a balance in this chapter when he analyses: "Self-realisation is the new credo. If you take a closer look at it, it is actually just an 'ego-realisation', but not the development of a social, dialogical personality, but the enforcement of an ego. What follows is the optimization of the human capital, which finds its limits only in the feasible. [...] In the first and last things, however, in giving birth and dying, there are borders that should not be transgressed. They are defined by the history of humanity, having been, wherever it was beneficial, a product of nature and culture. Those borders are based on wise self-limitation gained through experience. Whenever people have tried to play God, the outcome was bad for them." (p. 97)

United States of Europe or strong nation state?

Greiner also stays with the topic conservatism when dealing with the nation state: A solid state, even a monarchy, was always the target of the conservative. Today the author advocates a strong nation state as an achievement of modernity and as protection against any tyranny. But the nation state is – due to the European unification in the EU – increasingly endangered or does not exist any more: In Germany the transfers of billions to other EU countries significantly exceeded the competence of the Federal Chancellor, in 2015 she lost the control about the wave of refugees. Committees whose members are no longer elected by citizens increasingly determine the everyday life of the citizens. The national constitutions of the EU member states cannot redeem their claim that every exercised rule has been legitimated by the people. The political authority does not come from the people – democracy! – but from the community of states, from Brussels, making many decisions, touching our lives directly. An alternative would be a real European Constitutional state, whose citizens could

be European citizens and not citizens of nation states. The development is going in the opposite direction: The EU is increasingly shaped by heterogeneity, the centrifugal forces increase, the participation in the elections to EU Parliament decreases, the euro is not at all suitable as glue of a deepened agreement. A reduction of the Brussels apparatus, a return to the cooperation of self-reliant states therefore went in the right direction.

And then Greiner surprisingly quotes the French politician and historian *Alexis de Tocqueville* (1805–1859), founder of comparing political science, who realised that the idea of equality is probably directing to a central state and that this centralism might lead to a new despotism [...] the sovereign power extends its arms over the entire society; it covers the surface of society with a network of small, complicated, minute, and uniform rules, which the most original minds and the most vigorous souls cannot break through to go beyond the crowd; it does not break wills, but it softens them, bends them and directs them; it rarely forces action, but it constantly opposes your acting; it does not destroy, it prevents birth; it does not tyrannise, it hinders, it represses, it enervates, it extinguishes, it stupifies." (p. 118) Greiner frankly admits: "You will not want to assert, the Brussels authorities resembled those by Tocqueville outlined sovereign, but if one reads, the Commission employs 35,000 officials and the entire body of law more than 50,000 pages [...], then the differences are not that great." (pp. 118) Tocqueville, born aristocrat, had foreseen the triumph of democratic society their difficulties in "a mixture of fascination and alienation. He was conservative and liberal at the same time. A man like him would be urgently needed today." (p. 120)

The limits of the welfare state

Greiner sets apart with the limits of the welfare state too. The claim to equality among men would never become fulfilled. Inequality belongs to human existence. Nevertheless he is the opinion, that the "abysses between rich and poor are spooky, the salaries at the top are dizzying and the increase of ignorance and neglect at the bottom depressing" (p. 123). Of course it is an absolute scandal that the former chairman of the VW Group, *Martin Winterkorn*, gets a pension of 3,100 euros daily (!) while a worker has to live with a maximum pension of 60 euros per day. But implementing virtue by the state will never succeed. *Hegel* mentioned, it would violate the feelings of the poorer people concerning "their independence and honour" (p. 125), if the richer class would pay for them. The recipient of state caring is indeed freed from immediate dis-

stress, but also threatened in his self-esteem like the taxpayer, the state-supporting middle class, too: At his time *Wilhelm von Humboldt* came to insight that the inclination of the citizens to neighbourly sympathy and attention sinks, the more he is forced to become an anonymous taxpayer (see p. 127).

Sexual orientations and the search for a special identity

What also bothers the author is the incessant search, or the development of a very special identity of the individual, which is driven to extremes. He is oriented towards the Canadian philosopher *Charles Taylor* here. With *Immanuel Kant*, he argues that the worthiness of human beings is "that they are capable of rational action, to let their lives be guided by principles [...]" What is emphasised here as valuable is a *universal human potential*, an ability that is common to all human beings." (p. 130) This potential, and not what the individual makes or has done of it, ensures respect for everyone. In contrast, according to Taylor, nowadays the "individualised identity" becomes more and more important, for example the fact that I am "dark-skinned, female, or homosexual". (p. 131) He locates the development of this idea in *Rousseau* and *Herder* – it is no longer a question of cultivating what is "general human in itself, but what is of one's own. [...] To be faithful to myself means to be faithful to my originality, and only I alone can articulate and discover it. By articulating it, I define myself." (ibid.) According to Greiner, this kind of "Identitätspolitik" ("identity politics", ibid.) contradicts the idea of equality, indeed – it dissolves it. Today, only the recognition of the difference counts. In addition, this recognition is still threatened because it comes from history, such as the fact "that as a black man or a woman of the history of colonialism or patriarchy, I am so damaged to this day that I have a right on redemption." (p. 132) From here, it is only a small step towards gender issues, because the current socially relevant debate is decreasingly concerned with the common good than with the finding of one's own identity. Children should not just learn to respect deviant sexual orientations at school, but also have the early opportunity to choose from the rich catalogue of sexual options what is right for them", so at least according to curricula in federal states, in which the Greens co-govern. An article in the Wikipedia lists – believe it or not – 23 different gender'. Above all this is the formulation and enforcement or satisfaction of potentially infinite particular interests in a pure enti-

continued on page 13

The postage stamp as cultural property and micro-artwork

For the 175th anniversary “Swiss Postage Stamps 1843-2018”

by Urs Knoblauch, cultural journalist, Fruthwilen TG



The history of communication, postal services and, in particular postage stamps, gives an interesting insight into international communication as well as into the diversity of creative and cultural expressions of people in the respective nation states. Already 5,000 years ago people used knots, symbol script on wood, clay tablets and papyrus as their exchange medium. In the Middle Ages, the monasteries became centres of literacy. Postmen often carried the messages to their recipients on long and dangerous routes by water and on land. Soon signposts and distance markers appeared on the scene. In the 17th century, stagecoach operators created the first offices resembling modern post offices with stamps and postmarks on postcards and letters. The technical development was rapid. Infinite small inventions and improvements contributed to that. As per invitation to the interesting exhibition at the Museum of Communication in Berne, “Stamps are not

only a mirror of cultural history, but also a Swiss success story,” that introduces well to this multicultural and identity-building cultural property.

1874: Foundation of the Universal Postal Union in Berne

On 1 March 1843, Switzerland was the second country worldwide after the United Kingdom to introduce the postage prepayment system with the Zurich 4 and Zurich 6 stamps. Additionally in 1874, the *Universal Postal Union* was founded in Switzerland, in the assembly hall of the “Äussere Stand von Bern” (was a historical ceremonial society of young citizens of Berne), where its seat is still today. With this honourable office, the Swiss Confederation has also taken on a great social responsibility. Hence, the postal system is based on mutual human trust, mutual help among people and an ethic of peaceful coexistence.

For 175 years countless creations of art enabled human relations on equal terms by letters, postcards and packages to all countries and remote regions of the world is possible in a variety of languages and forms. Often, well-known artists were invited to the design of postage stamps and design competitions were carried out. In Switzerland traditionally special stamps are issued annually for aid organisations, humanitarian and social concerns as well as for anniversaries. Stamps became a valuable national and international collector’s item, collecting is mostly cultivated in families and through numerous active clubs, exchanges of stamps and friendly relations. Just today it is a meaningful stimulus for families and schools to revive this cultural heritage of handwritten postcards and letters in times where digitalisation becomes dominant.

Cosmopolitan and independent Switzerland

Even before the foundation of the federal state in 1848, Switzerland was cosmopolitan and economically and culturally innovative. Through its four-language and cantonal tradition and diversity as well as its neutrality and the rejection of violence and wars of aggression, the Swiss Confederation acquired a sought-after diplomatic and democratic mediating role and culture. In 1871, shortly after the foundation of the *Red Cross* in 1864 this international aid organisation and the Swiss population provided exemplary humanitarian aid in the internment and care of the 87,000 suffering Bourbaki soldiers in the Franco-Prussian War.

“Between left-green hegemony ...”

continued from page 12

lement society, “having no vision of itself” (p. 141).

Give conservatism a voice

The media “from the leading newspapers to the public-service radio broadcasters cultivated an ‘moralism of compliance’ [...] which does not offer a sounding board for opposing opinions” (see text on the back cover). That applies even more to political parties. Ulrich Greiner characterises many current developments precisely, stripping them of the fascination, they have for many, and encourag-

es them to oppose against them, asking them to reflect on the fundamental values of our culture. In his closing remarks, he realises that the social attitudes and mentalities that are questioned can neither be changed by politicians nor even by himself. Above all, he wanted to be clear about his own conservatism. If he could convince many readers, he would no longer be homeless. He does not seem to mind outing himself being a conservative, social-democratic intellectual. •

Greiner, Ulrich. *Heimatlos. Bekenntnisse eines Konservativen*. (Homeless. Confessions of a Conservative.) Reinbek 2017, ISBN 978498025366

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

continued on page 14

"The postage stamp ..."

continued from page 13

This certainly contributed to the fact that, at the suggestion of the German General Postal Director *Heinrich von Stephan*, the *Allgemeine Postverein*, one of the oldest international organisations with 22 member states, was renamed the *Universal Postal Union (UPU)* in 1874. Since 1909, Berne has been home to the impressive World Post Memorial "Autour du Monde" ("Around the World") by the French sculptor *René de Saint-Marceaux*. It shows five postwomen embracing the globe while exchanging letters of joy and sorrow. Over time, international agreements were signed on the occasions of the World Postal Congress. In 1947, the *Universal Postal Union* became one of the numerous specialized agencies of the United Nations. Down to the present day, Switzerland holds its pioneering role in the postal sector and thus bears a great responsibility.

Against this historical background, the current business policy and radical free market plans and processes are particularly worrying, not only in the postal services, forming an important basis of public services, but in numerous public institutions in the state and "services" up to school and healthcare! The population is well advised to protect these cultural properties and evaluate the extolled short-term "benefits" and modern technologies within the larger framework of cohabitation.

A presentation well worth seeing and inspiring educational material

On this occasion, the *Museum of Communication* in Berne has organized an interesting exhibition under the motto "Extreme – 175 Years of Swiss Stamps". In addition to insights into the genesis of stamps, the program-supported exhibition offers a look at some of the most important and expensive stamps in Switzerland. Some examples of the 10,000 original stamp designs and around three million stamps can be admired as well as interesting video portraits of stamp collectors.

A catalogue and an inspired booklet on Swiss history for schools, "Dented and stamped – Stamps as a window to Swiss history and historical culture" have been issued for the exhibition that lasts until 8 July 2018. Although some of the usual official "historical narratives" are heard in the teaching material, the students are objectively, respectfully and interestingly introduced to some important aspects of Swiss historical culture. Thus, we read: "Stamps are sources of history. Stamps in Switzerland are pasted on letters for 175 years. They are consciously designed works of art and authentic historical sources of the last 175 years, i.e. the epoch of modern Switzerland. They show their development, their people, their achievements and their crises."

It is very deserving that the original booklet was commissioned by the *Association of Swiss Philatelic Associations* (President: *Hans Schwarz*) and developed at the *Institute for History Didactics and Remembrance Culture* of the Lucerne University of Education. It has been published by the educational publishing house of the Canton of Lucerne. (Authors: *Karin Fuchs*, *Hans Utz*, project management: *Peter Gautschi*) This example shall illustrate how important it is for a country and the world community to teach the subject of history. The authors are aware of this, because the freedom of teaching materials and the careful and broad-based technical cooperation when developing teaching aids was a great achievement in Switzerland. They write: "The booklet offers an opportunity to get to know our history and deepen our knowledge through stamps. It combines easily understandable general information with tasks that lead to own discoveries. It can be used on its own, combined with other educational materials or in combination with a visit of the exhibition."

Due diligence is an urgent necessity at a time when even in Switzerland thorough teaching of history was abolished by reform strategists as an independent subject in schools. This jeopardizes the necessary "learning from history" and the knowl-

edge base of an honest, free and lively democracy with self-determination, concerns for the common good and critical resilience. Thus, in the chapter "Switzerland under threat – Strength through History", the authors objectively point out the decisive importance of "Spiritual National Defense" alongside the military measures and quote an impressive excerpt from General *Henri Guisan's* speech to the soldiers on 25 July 1940 at the Rütli.

The solid and richly illustrated bilingual catalogue (German and French as official world postal languages) was designed and realized by the philatelist *Hans Schwarz* (Seengen). In his contribution, the historian *Tobias Kaestli* (Magglingen) addresses the civic significance of stamps and emphasizes: "A nation is a political community that wants to assert itself in the world with its own cultural identity." (P. 28) He touches upon the importance of the sovereignty and unity of Switzerland and on the example of the diversity of the cantons and associations flags and the unifying Swiss flag and adheres: "The federation acted cautiously. Swiss patriotism should not be dictated from the high ground, but be rooted in the spirit of federalism and nourished by the federal idea." (p. 31)

In his welcoming address, Councillor *Hans Stöckli* (President of the *IG Stamp*) points out that "the invention of adhesive postage stamps by Sir *Rowland Hill* in 1840 [...] for the formation of the modern Confederation of 1848 came just at the right time" and he continues that in the US *National Postal Museum* in Washington, the three issued cantonal stamps of Zurich, Geneva and Basel are among the top five stamps in the world. According to Stöckli stamps shall "help to historically embed events and people and give orientation on important things in and for our country". This motto also applies to all states and the entire world community, all of which are linked to the pigeons of peace.

• Further details: Museum of Communication, Helvetiastrasse 18, 3000 Berne 6, Tel. +41 (0) 31 357 55 55, www.mfk.ch

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

Teachers set the course

by Marilies Kupsch

The other day, an elementary school teacher I am friendly with showed me a letter written by a former student, which illustrates the teacher's educational role in a moving way. It contrasts sharply with the role of the teacher as "coach" and "learning companion" planned for the future. A conversation about this girl with this teacher as well as her notes, which she had made for encouragement and parental counseling, impressed me greatly and once again proved to me how crucial the teacher's attention, empathy and psychological knowledge are to a child's road of life, and how much care, patience, and confidence are required for accompanying and strengthening a discouraged child and its parents. This is an essential part of the primary school teacher's actual task, namely, as a new important caregiver besides its parents, to look at the child's situation with a trained eye and from an emotionally greater distance than they do, as well as to introduce the child to the wider community and to support and correct it wherever necessary.

Jennifer was overprotected and pampered by her parents due to various illnesses in early childhood and a permanent susceptibility to infection. For example, she still slept in her parents' bed at the age of nine, and, in her first few years at school, she was always brought to school or she was kept at home several days running with minor infections. Added to this was her sibling position as the youngest child with a much older brother. The consequences for the child were anxiety, lack of confidence in her own abilities, overweight, bullying by her classmates, as well as bad marks in the cultural techniques as early as in the 2nd grade. Her parents then had their child repeat the class, which was a great blessing for Jennifer, as she now had a teacher who saw her problems and tackled them.

The teacher quickly realised that Jennifer's weaknesses in school performance were due to a profound insecurity. She approved Jennifer's daily practice in read-

ing, writing, and math, exercises which were in accordance with her standard of performance. By giving her credit and encouragement and talking to her often, she brought Jennifer to clearly visible successes in the course of a few weeks. At regular intervals, she advised the parents to treat their daughter as a "big child" and to put more trust in her. She recommended literature on the subject of over-indulgence, or spoiling. In addition, she advised a diet change, participation in a swimming or gymnastic course in the child's leisure time, and cycling. Jennifer was able to recover quickly due to the close cooperation with her parents and the teacher's firm conviction that she would learn well. Her parents implemented her teacher's advice and were delighted with their daughter's progress. Soon she slept in her own bed, came to school alone, became more active and "pluckier", as well as more open and alive and slimmer. In the new class, Jennifer was not shut out by the other kids. After three years she was easily able to change to a grammar school, although she had been attested major weaknesses in the second class. Unfortunately, Jennifer fell back into an isolated position at grammar school. Her only friend moved to another city. But, strengthened by the good experience of a class and teacher change in elementary school, she made a fresh start at another high school. There she feels fine today; she is popular and standing for election as a spokeswoman for her level. The following excerpt from her letter speaks for itself:

"P. S. I and my parents always wanted to thank you for how much and how well you took care of me! How you set me up, so that I regained my self-confidence a little! And how you set me on my way to a grammar school. You are an incredibly good, strong and very admirable teacher! [...] You made so much time for me at that time, all these meetings with my parents, conversations and much more! I can only thank you for my now being in the sixth form. This would never have happened if my parents had

not made the decision to make me repeat the year! My mum blames herself a lot because she thinks she's guilty for everyone bullying me, because she thinks that if she had enrolled me a year later, I would have been in your class right away, and I would never have had to suffer under the bullying by my classmates and the teacher. However, I think she is by no means to blame, I mean, how could she have known, and besides, that is exactly what made me strong! I have learned to be above such things and be self-aware, and I know I can do it." •

(Translation Current Concerns)

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

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

The editors reserve the right to shorten letters to the editor. Letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of *Current Concerns*.

© 2013. All rights reserved. No reproduction, copy or transmission of this publication may be made without written permission.

Letter to  the Editor

My experiences as exercise instructor of rehabilitation sports with people living with dementia

For now eight years I have gathered with great joy experiences in prevention sports as ski gymnastics, back muscle training and general fitness with different groups.

Some weeks ago I was breaking new grounds when I gained my license as exercise instructor of *neurology rehabilitation sports* from the disabled sports association of North-Rhine-Westphalia.

I approached my new task completely unaware, and realised how, after some stumbling from exercise hour to lesson, I found my way in better and better. I began to realise that even people with major disabilities, sitting in a wheel chair, can be won over to motion, if I devote myself to them – certainly within their limits. This I experienced with a female participant who in the first lesson sat motionless, with a set look in her wheel chair. Suddenly a smile flickered across her face and she began to turn her feet or threw her arms up in the air. I was very taken with her activity which I could educe. Something simi-

lar happen with a participant who tended to be aggressive. Using my gestures and facial play as aid I gave her a *Redondo*-ball in her hands which she kneaded with her fingers imitating me or put it from one hand to the other with a smile. My heart opened in the truest sense of the word!

It was very interesting for me to witness how the slightly fitter participants are able to perform fine motor exercises, for example pressing a peg with the thumb and then alternating with all fingers.

I also experienced similar things with other exercises, which I initially wanted to omit, because they require a great deal of skill. To my astonishment, they have been mastered by some [participants].

To hit a bowl in the middle of the circle of chairs with small bags or beer mats in frisbee-style was a lift for all. Naturally the self-esteem of the sportspeople increased considerably.

Each sports lesson starts and closes with a playful ritual and is assigned with

verses which many participants join in even after a few lessons. Simply wonderful!

A male participant is always very helpful and hands the tracksuit top to me at the end of the training and helps collecting the small sport equipments like beer mats, ballons and bags.

All in all, a very fulfilling activity for me, like balm on the soul.

Interesting to undergo how broad the spectrum of sport is, beginning with the commercial high-performance professional sport, ambitioned hobby sport, popular sport, prevention and health promoting sport through to rehabilitation sport for people with handicaps.

In the latter case sport, play, fun, motion with all their bio-psycho-social positive effects have priority.

Werner Voss, Wiehl (Germany)

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

Prevention is always better than healing

In connection with the important article by Rita Brügger [*Current Concerns* No 7, 3 April 2018 (<https://www.zeit-fragen.ch/en/editions/2018/no-7-3-avril-2018/dementia-laproche-dune-maladie.html>)], which encourages us to accompany the persons affected by dementia with increased benevolence and understanding, I would like to refer to the book “*Tout savoir pour éviter Alzheimer et Parkinson*” (Editions *Le Rocher*) [All worth knowing on the prevention of Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s] by the French professor *Henri Joyeux*.

Henri Joyeux is honorary professor at the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Montpellier (France). He is a retired surgeon specialised in cancers and therefore neither neurologist nor gerontologist nor psychiatrist. His careful observations, studies and researches on the basis of many national and international publications have enabled him to find ways to limit or even to prevent the disease. Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s are not a matter of fate – prevention is always better than healing!

The prevention of these diseases depends on many factors. It takes a lot of experience and understanding, because it is a question of holistic health and not just cerebral.

A book that can be recommended to all interested or affected people.

Nicole Duprat, retired teacher, France

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

When beauty becomes fatal

A Swiss-Dutch lady's slipper rescue operation

by Heini Hofmann



The most striking part of the nectarless lady's slipper flower is the yellow, shoe-shaped labium. (pictures Schweizerische Orchideen-Stiftung)

An icon among the native orchids is the lady's slipper (*Cypripedium calceolus*). But its enchanting flower became fatal, because unscrupulous collectors excessively plunder and hawk the botanical jewel for bouquets or ornamental garden plants in spite of its protection status. Now an ingenious rescue strategy wants to put an end to this.

In general, Orchids are endangered and therefore protected. Especially the lady's slipper, the shining light among the native "flower poems", shows a significant decline throughout Switzerland, particularly alarming in the central and western "Mittelland" (midlands). It is already extinct in the "Jurabogen" (Jura arch) and the greater Basel area.

Reasons for the decline in Switzerland (and in other European countries) are, besides climate and biotope changes, clear cuttings and monoculture afforestations from earlier and more recent mechanical forest use, marginally as well the preference of badgers and wild boars for lady's slipper rhizomes, but especially the wilful sacrilege of "plant friends".

Checkmate for flower rogues

Orchid robbery has already existed before, as a photograph of the market place in La Neuveville from 1921 shows, where wild lady's slippers were openly offered for sale. However, such sacrilege still exists today, as large lootings at Creux-du-Van in Val-de-Travers and near Scuol in

Lower Engadine show, where about 2,000 flowering lady's slipper orchids were completely sinned, although they do not survive in gardens for long anyway. The culprits were never found.

This robbing of orchids is comparable to the poaching of rhinoceroses. While the lady's slipper's beauty becomes fatal, it is the rhino's nose horn, to whom an aphrodisiac (libido increasing) effect was attributed. But because even here, as with the orchids, a total protection is difficult despite strict laws, one tries to obtain a price collapse by throwing sawdust imitations on the market and thus make illegal poaching unattractive.

Such a checkmate principle should now also help the endangered lady's slipper orchids: They are multiplied in the laboratory and then planted out in nature. At the same time, an indigenous lady's slipper, selected for longer flowering periods, is cultivated, which – by analogy with tropical hybrids – will go on sale. It is legal and cheaper as well to purchase than illegally plunder on the black market, and it will bloom for almost twice as long. Sometimes *Sherlock Holmes* methods are more effective than legal paragraphs ...

Idealism and professionalism

However, to multiply lady's slipper in vitro and to plant it again at original sites proved to be extremely difficult, as first experiments in England have shown, where in 1970 nationwide just barely a single (!), day and night guarded plant existed. In Switzerland, the same goal is pursued by the *Swiss Orchid Foundation* at *Herbarium Jany Renz*, based in Basel, an internationally renowned documentation and research institution whose future has unfortunately become uncertain (see box "Tragic development"). Despite this unpleasant situation, former curator *Samuel Sprunger* and his companion *Werner Lehmann*, two committed orchid experts, let the spirit of "Orchid father" *Jany Renz* live on with their ingeniously conceived lady's slipper rescue operation. However, because the sowing of seeds from wild plants proved to be unsuitable and, vice versa, in vitro culture requires appropriate facilities, horticultural expertise and 24-hour climate control, they looked for a suitable partner.

They were successful in Holland at *Anthura B.V.* in Bleiswijk, a huge flower nursery near Rotterdam, specialised in flamingo flowers (= anthuriums, hence

continued on page 18

"When beauty becomes fatal"

continued from page 17

the company name), phalaenopsis and selected "garden orchids". They found the ideal project partner in the local specialist *Camiel de Jong*. Through the teamwork of an idealistic non-profit organisation with a professional private company and thanks the goodwill of the authorities of both countries, an ingenious orchid rescue project has become reality.

Nine cantons already on board!

However, the lady's slipper project was not easy at all, because *Cypripedium calceolus* is a protected species and is subject to the Cites regulations, in Switzerland under Appendix II, in the EU even more strictly under Appendix A. Therefore, no Swiss export permit was required for the export of lady's slipper seed capsules, but Holland required both, a Swiss export and a Dutch import permit. The germination of the seedlings and the subsequent growth of the pre-seedlings in vitro (sterile) is also a difficult undertaking.

In *Anthura's* tissue culture centre the seeds are germinated in bottles with sterile nutrient solution before they are put into soil (ex vitro, no longer sterile) and re-potted several times in air-conditioned greenhouses until they are strong enough for planting out after three to four years. In the

current pilot test, around 28,000 seedlings were produced, of which around 3,500 are selected for repatriation. *Anthura* will sponsor the project with around 40,000 euros and, if it works, will in return be able to produce long-flowering plants for trade, which is in the interest of the project (collapse of prices, ban on sacrilege).

The response is encouraging: nine cantons are already participating in the "lady's slipper project": Neuchâtel, Jura, Basel-City, Baselland, Berne, Obwalden, Aargau, Zurich and St. Gallen. In April, the coordination meeting of all participants took place at the "Bürgerspital-Gärtnerei" in Basel. The Swiss-Dutch planting teams were assembled so that in June the repatriation plantings could take place simultaneously in all nine cantons. Where exactly, will be understandably not communicated, with one exception: on the Älggialp, Obwalden, in the centre of Switzerland, a visitable, fenced in reference facility is being built.

Win-win for all!

In short, the beneficiaries of this courageous marriage between idealism and professionalism in favour of the "birds of paradise under the flowers" are both countries and nature itself. Switzerland can save its orchid icon Lady's Slipper and the Dutch company can establish an additional mainstay. If this pilot project

proves to be successful, other countries with extinction of orchids will also jump on the bandwagon. There are already interested parties. Finally, this can help nature throughout Europe. So in the future it will no longer be called "Tulips from Amsterdam", but "Orchids from Rotterdam"...

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

In mega greenhouses, the rhizomes are first planted in special soil ex vitro, then repotted several times, until after a few years they are ready for repatriation as adult plants.

Tragic development

HH. It began hopefully: The most important amateur orchid systematist of the 20th century, *Jany Renz* (1907–1999), chemist and *Sandoz* director in chief, bequeathed his private collection on orchids, one of the largest and most valuable in the world (thousands of books and herbarium from around the world), the University of Basel, where she found a home at the Botanical Institute. The *Swiss Orchid Foundation* at *Herbarium Jany Renz*, founded in 2001, became the trustee.

Practice-oriented objective

This is how a unique orchid competence centre was created at the Rhine's knee, where researchers from all over the world handed the latch. According to long-standing, dedicated curator *Samuel Sprunger*, "the aim of the *Orchid Foundation*" is "research and protection of wild orchids on a national and international level and advises decision mak-

ers in politics and business so that future generations can still enjoy orchids".

Under his aegis, the immense collected material was digitised and the orchid literature catalogued. With the *Swiss Orchid Research Award* (SORA), the foundation has awarded an annual prize for research in the field of orchids since 2006.

The big disillusionment

Because today field research and systematics are no longer a priority and laboratory science dominates, the entire *Jany-Renz* legacy was complimented out of the sacred university halls in 2016 and stored in *Bottmingen BL* in a carpentry building for subtenancy. Library and herbarium separated, the future uncertain. The *Orchid Foundation* also had to move, and the continuation of its commitment is at risk.

The *Swiss Orchid Award* has already died. What once earned worldwide admi-

ration is now passed in mourning in an involuntary deep sleep. If no prince kisses it awake, it will end in oblivion. The worldwide orchid community cannot understand the checkmate of this world-famous research cultural asset. What is currently still running, such as the lady's slipper orchid rescue operation, is based on heart and soul of idealists.

Not a good testimony!

A highly decorated scientist from another department, who has also collected a research library that is unique in the world and who finally had to help it to stay safe on his own initiative, formulates it in his frustration: "It is a tradition that universities – for lack of space or simply for lack of interest – segregate cultural assets. They obviously don't feel responsible for their own history anymore."

(Translation *Current Concerns*)