

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*

Niklaus von Flüe: patron saint of non-intervention

by Paul Widmer*



Paul Widmer
(picture ma)

through their interpretations.

Nobody has exerted as much influence on the Swiss foreign policy as *Niklaus von Flüe*. The hermit in the Ranft wanted to escape the world, but he did not succeed. Even the envoys of the Great Powers sought him out in his cell in the wild Melch Valley. Archduke *Sigismund of Austria*, the Doge of Venice and the Duke of Milan, they all wanted to know what Brother Klaus thought of war and peace. Why so? Because he was an opinion leader, a moral authority. The Milanese envoy *Bernardino Imperiali* told his prince: "The Confederation trusts him greatly."

What made Brother Klaus so interesting for the Great Powers of the time? Above all, two things: on the one hand, he advised the Swiss to maintain a foreign policy of restraint, to renounce warlike conquests; on the other, he exhorted them to settle a dispute amicably, and to bring it to the judge only in an emergency. He therefore recommended a behaviour that was oriented towards neutrality and arbitration. He impressed not only his contemporaries. With his advice, he has influenced Swiss foreign policy up to the present day.

Spiritual father of neutrality

So people thought for a long time, all over our country, in the Federal Council and in historical scholarship. After the Second World War, Federal Councillor *Max Petitpierre* did not doubt that neutrality had

sprung from the ideas of Brother Klaus. And in the early 1980s, Secretary of State *Albert Weisauer* wrote in his memoirs: "Neutrality is the living expression of what the Swiss National Saint Niklaus von Flüe already expressed in the time of the Burgundian wars, with his well-known warning, 'Don't get involved in other people's affairs!'"

But beware! This is supposedly past history now. Whoever says anything like this today will earn only a tired smile from historians. It has long ago been proved, they say, that Brother Klaus did not care two figs for neutrality. Their reasoning is something like this: First, the phrase "Don't get involved in other people's affairs!" does not originate from him, but from the Lucerne chronicler *Hans Salat*. They say that it was he who put those words in the mouth of the hermit, in 1537. And secondly, Salat did not mean to bring them across as an appeal to neutrality, but used them to denounce the Bernese for the conquest of the Vaud. Thirdly, they say, linking neutrality to the work of Brother Klaus is a concoction of the nationalist historiography of the 19th and 20th centuries. In short: to elevate Brother Klaus to the rank of forefather of Swiss neutrality is, they say, a falsification of history.

Is this really so? I am not convinced of it, and I shall try to explain why hereafter. Certainly, Brother Klaus did not pronounce the word neutrality – of course he could not. The concept of neutrality only just broke fresh ground about then. The medieval world order with Pope and Emperor at the top was breaking up. As long as it had been quite intact, there could be no neutrality. For the Christians it was, at least in theory, a sacred duty to support the cause of the supreme ruler of Christianity. His wars were just, fighting against him was sin. That only changed with the advent of sovereign nation-states. Now the rulers were equal. In a case of war, a third party could side with one or the other of the war parties – or stay out.

The concept of a foreign policy of neutrality arose in this world of sovereign states – but not overnight. As the great historian *Reinhart Koselleck* taught us, concepts are formed in a long process, like a distillate. Various facts flow together and

form the essential features for a whole context of meaning. Just because something is not yet conceptually comprehensible, this does not mean that there are not already facts that anticipate the concept. Consequently, we must ask ourselves: did Brother Klaus really have no idea of what we call neutrality today, simply because he neither used the word nor knew the term? Let us look more closely at these objections.

The appeal not to interfere with foreign quarrels can well be understood as a call for neutral behaviour. No one disputes that. But the critics deny that Brother Klaus expressed himself in this way. They say that the dictum was not coined by him; but that it was foisted on him fifty years after his death. This opinion, however, is to be objected due to a few things, especially testimonies of contemporaries who attest an attitude of mind based on the principle of non-interference to the Swiss patron saint.

"Greed and lust for power"

Brother Klaus' first biographer is *Heinrich von Gundelfingen*. He was a canon at Beromünster and a professor at the University of Freiburg im Breisgau. In his writings, which already appeared in 1488, a year after the death of the hermit, he said that the advice of the holy man would be a great salvation to the confederates if they followed them. And what did Gundelfingen understand these recommendations to be? Not to be corrupted by foreign rulers, to hold honour higher than material advantages, not to engage in foreign conflicts, nor to bring war to one's neighbours. This is advice which is not contrary to neutrality; it is, in fact, rather a prerequisite for the successful implementation of neutrality.

The highly educated humanist *Johannes Trithemius* expresses himself even more clearly, as the former state archivist of Obwalden, *Angelo Garovi*, recently pointed out. The abbot of the monastery of Sponheim had visited Niklaus von Flüe in 1486. In his report at the beginning of the sixteenth century, about thirty years before Salat, he put the following advice in the mouth of Brother

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Remarks on the life of Niklaus von Flüe

by Erika Vögeli

Niklaus von Flüe, born in 1417, is the son of *Hemma*, born *Ruobert*, and *Heinrich von Flüe* in Sachseln (Obwalden). The mother comes from peasant backgrounds from the community of Wolfenschiessen (Nidwalden). His father Heinrich appears in the various documents as distinguished community citizen and member of the County Council. Niklaus grew up with his brother *Peter* and possibly another brother as the son of free farmers.

Little is known about Niklaus von Flüe's younger years. Around 1446 he married *Dorothea Wyss* from Schwendi, born around 1430. Five sons and five daughters are born.

Niklaus von Flüe is mentioned early as respected, efficient farmer and "Rottmeister" (Captain). He takes part in military actions, but was averse to warfare. Around 1455, he is a judge and councillor in prominent public positions – he is a member of the Small Council, the highest political and judicial body of the State of Obwalden. He rejects the office of "Landammann". Although he had achieved everything – family-style happiness, economic success and social status, the grievances of the time preoccupied him, and a long process of reflection and consulting begun, amongst others with the fellow pastor *Heimo Amgrund*. In 1465, he laid down all his political offices, and on the Gallus' day, the 16th October 1467, he left his family in – probably on all sides hardly achieved – agreement with his wife *Dorothea* and trusts his considerable farm to his two oldest, already adult sons. First, he went forth as a pilgrim on a pilgrimage. In the vicinity of Basel, he decides to follow the advice of a farmer and to return to his homeland. So, he settled finally as a hermit in the Ranft, close to the family. There the country people helped him in 1468 in the construction of the cell and the Chapel which is inaugurated in 1469 by the suffragan *Thomas of Constance*.

In the aftermath Brother Klaus, as whom he is known since then is visited and asked for advice by many people of all ranks. Despite the seclusion in the Ranft, Brother Klaus is always informed about the events of his nearer and further surrounding. So, *Bernardino Imperiali* writes on 27 June 1483 to the Duke of Milan who had sent him

as an envoy to Brother Klaus: "During the absence of *Louis I* was with *Gabriel* at the hermit, who is considered to be holy because he eats nothing. The Confederation has great confidence in him. I spent an evening and a morning with him and talked much about these matters. I found him well informed about everything ..."

This interest in the human conditions and his constant commitment for justice, for dispute resolution and peace let him become a widely esteemed and valued counsellor.

In 1482, Brother Klaus writes to the power-conscious Council of the patrician Berne meaningfully: "Obedience [in the former meaning of listening to each other] is the biggest honour that there is in Heaven and on Earth, that is why you need to seek to be obedient to each other, and wisdom is the dearest, because all things start best. Peace is always in God, because God is peace, and peace may not be destroyed, but strife would destroy. Therefore, you should build on peace."

The most famous mediation took place in the course of the discussion of the city cantons and rural cantons after the Burgundian wars, among other things about the admission of Solothurn and Fribourg into the Confederation. Following his admonition to peace, mediated by the pastor *Heimo Amgrund* and the four-year domestic Federal conflict which threatened to break the Confederation was resolved and settled on 21 December 1481 in the "Stanser Verkommnis". Fribourg and Solothurn joined the Confederation as new members.

Brother Klaus died in his Hermitage in the Ranft on 21 March 1487.

His spirit of peace love, mutual accommodation and of equity, in which he always sought equitable solutions, combined with his quest for truthfulness in own doing, made him become the patron of peace and of cohesion. Long before his canonisation by the Pope in 1947, the Confederates elected him as the patron saint of Switzerland. The recent stirred up discussion about Brother Klaus seems, however, petty and somewhat unworldly. Might be, that the literally wordings "Machet den Zun nit zu wit [don't extend the border fence too far]" or "Mischet euch nicht in fremde Händel! [Don't

interfere in foreign conflicts]" are coined by the memory of the chronicler *Hans Salat*. But to what end this sophistry, by which it is attempted quite transparently to play down the importance of this character conveying concord. The statement being understood indeed as peacekeeping message over the centuries, one would have to ask himself: Cui bono?

Niklaus von Flüe's concern is undisputed, and people very well understood the reminder to give the spiritual orientation of peace and balance greater importance as power politics ambitions throughout many, very belligerent and difficult centuries.

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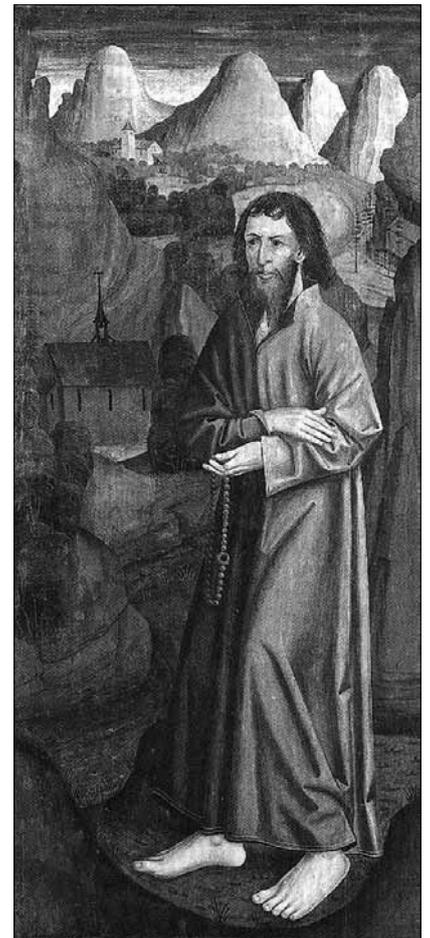
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Eine erstaunliche Geschichte aus dem

Mittelalter. Comic, not only for children.

Gonten 2016



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Klaus: "If you remain within your borders, no one can overcome you, but you will be superior to your enemies at any time, and prevail. But if, beguiled by greed and lust for power, you begin to expand your power to the outside; then your power will not last long." Trithemius thus ascribes to Brother Klaus the same reminder as does Salat. And he is not alone. In the coarse language of political debate, a Zurich flyer states in 1522: "Bruoder Clauss said that we should stay on our own muck heap."

Sitting still as the greatest service

Now it might be objected that even if this were true, Brother Klaus also gave advice quite to the contrary. But this is not actually true. The saint in the Ranft was very consistent in his views. He always emphasised the need for peace; he never advised military conquests; and neither did he advocate the Swiss mercenary trade. As the *Treaty of Stans* of 1481 proves, he did not fundamentally reject the expansion of the eight old places. But this had to happen peacefully, not with weapons. Thanks to his settlement, Freiburg and Solothurn were able to join the Swiss Confederation.

Not to begin a war of conquest and not to support any war party militarily, these principles constitute the core of neutrality. Brother Klaus advised both. Whether or not the saying "Do not make the fence too wide" actually comes from him is secondary. There are several instances of lore that testify to the fact that the conception behind it corresponds to his ideas. So, there is much more speaking for Brother Klaus as the apical ancestor of Swiss Neutrality, than against.

Of course, occasionally Brother Klaus' warnings fell on deaf ears. As early as 1512, the chronicler *Anton Tegerfeld* of Mellingen wrote that many years before, Brother Klaus had already advised the Swiss to refrain from their mercenary trade. Unfortunately, a deaf ear had been turned to this advice. But after Marignano (1515) the fiasco was obvious. The confederates were not able to carry out large wars of conquest. The loose alliance of rural and urban communities lacked a central power of command, which would have been necessary for this purpose. They drew the correct conclusion from the defeat and renounced superpower policies from then on. They never again entered into an offensive alliance. They preferred to preserve the great freedom of the individual communities, and did not sacrifice them to a centralist struggle for power. A contemporary South German mocking poem said that the Swiss would have been

spared the ignominy of Marignano, had they followed the advice of Brother Klaus.

As important as the advice of the hermit was, it is doubtful whether neutrality would have been so strongly absorbed in the Swiss consciousness of foreign policy without the Reformation. The confessional division made an abstinent foreign policy not only advisable, but into a question of survival. After the two battles of Kappel, two equally strong camps opposed each other within. To be sure, Catholics and Protestants felt the urge to take part in European conflicts. But that would have meant political suicide, which they wanted to avoid despite all animosities. Ultimately, the fate of the country was put above confessionalism.

This is very well illustrated by a letter from *Heinrich Bullinger* to *Philip of Hesse*, the leader of the Protestants in the Schmalkaldic War. The latter had asked the Swiss Reformed for support. The Zurich reformer rejected his request. For if the Reformed came to his aid, the Catholics would do the same for the other side. For this reason "sitting still" was the greatest service the Swiss could provide to their brothers in the faith. Logically, the Swiss Diet banned the passage of foreign troops and arms, and imposed strict neutrality, even before the beginning of the war (1546).

In the Thirty Years' War, the understanding of neutrality was consolidated. If, originally, neutrality was decided on a case-by-case basis, it became more and more fundamental. So it was possible that the Swiss Diet could already declare Switzerland a neutral state in 1674. And in 1782, the Zurich scholar and counsellor *Hans Heinrich Füssli* completed the circle. At the Annual General Meeting of the Helvetic Society in Olten, he called out to the enlightened elite of the country that Switzerland should adhere to eternal neutrality in its foreign policy, as Brother Klaus had already advised. The connection between Niklaus von Flüe and Swiss neutrality thus arose decades, indeed centuries, before nationalised historiography is said to have invented it. At the Congress of Vienna (1814/15) neutrality was then recognised internationally, as had been most ardently desired.

Peaceful resolution of disputes

Neutrality is by far the most important principle in Swiss foreign policy. However, Brother Klaus' advice still continues to have an effect in another area of foreign policy as well: that is the peaceful settlement of disputes. In his famous message of 1482 ("Fried ist allweg in Gott" – "Peace is forever in God"), he advised the Bernese to settle a dispute peacefully. He expressed himself even more clearly in the same year towards the people of Con-

stance. He told them to settle their dispute amicably – and to bring the matter before the judges only if it were not otherwise possible. Reconciliation, he said, was more important than knowing who is right. This was the only way to achieve lasting peace.

The advice of Brother Klaus sprung from his deep religious conviction. But he also fell back upon what was custom around him. The confederates knew no centralist ruler, who would have been able to impose court decisions by force in their loose federal framework. They therefore preferred to settle a dispute by arbitration or a settlement. Those affected were, with the help of others, to help find a solution to the problem and to assert their will to implement this by an oath before God. This procedure was so common, that it was called the "Law of the Confederates" in the other parts of the empire.

After the First World War, when Switzerland was preparing to join the League of Nations, a great admirer of Brother Klaus had recourse to his ideas. *Max Huber*, at that time a legal adviser in the Political Department (now the EDA), later the president of the *Permanent Court of International Justice* and of the *International Committee of the Red Cross* (ICRC), at the request of federal councillor *Motta* wrote a Federal Council's dispatch for the attention of parliament about the principles of Swiss Arbitration Policy. It was a bold plan. Huber wanted to lay the foundations for a new world order with the expansion of peaceful dispute settlement. He did not succeed. The experiment faltered in the early stages. However, Switzerland concluded a considerable number of arbitration and settlement agreements with other states.

In a speech at the 1951 Obwaldner "Landsgemeinde" (gathering of the electorate), Huber, this outstanding international lawyer and chief architect of the *Geneva Red Cross Conventions*, acknowledged how much he had been influenced the work of Brother Klaus. After the First World War, he had wanted to build on the legacy of the country's spiritual father in the Swiss Arbitration Policy. Ambassador *Paul Ruegger*, Huber's successor at the head of the ICRC, confirmed this and counted himself in with those rooted in this tradition.

But there were other after-effects. At the beginning of the 1970s, when the Federal Council decided to open up the country's foreign policy by participating in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), the first head of the delegation, Ambassador *Rudolf Bindschedler*, resorted to Huber's proposals and presented a draft for a European sys-

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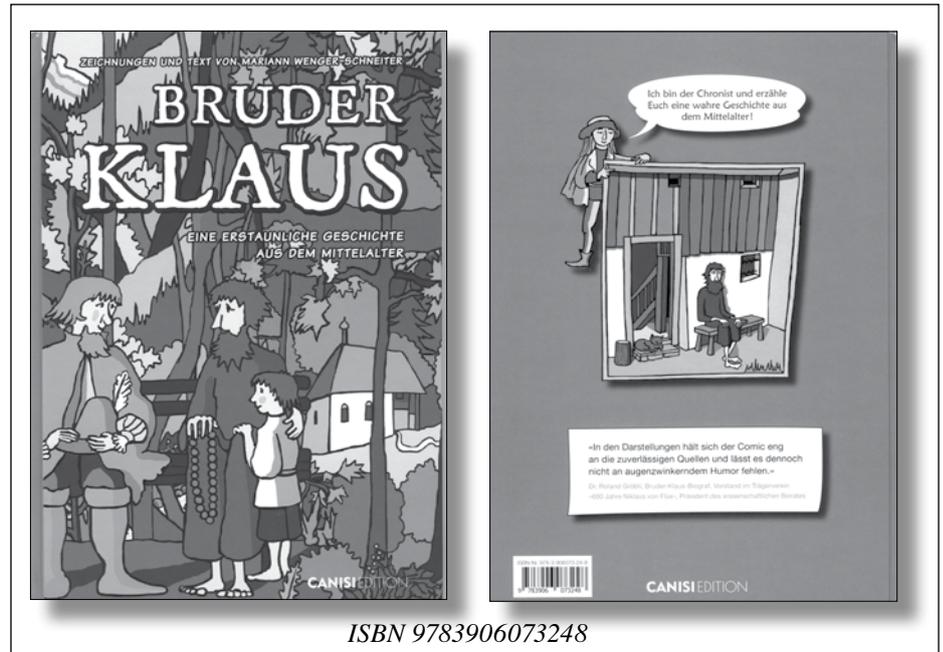
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tem of peaceful settlement of disputes. For many years he made sure that the topic did not disappear from the agenda in the great East-West negotiations. However, the interest of the large states was, to say the least, low. The hobby of the Swiss delegation was smiled at and nothing more.

But fate took an unprecedented turn. After the end of the Cold War, France began to be interested in the issue and sent her Justice Minister *Robert Badinter*. Now everything was different. The OSCE (OSCE) adopted an agreement on conciliation and arbitration in 1992. But Bindschedler was already dead at this time. The conference honoured the deceased by acknowledging that without the steadfast commitment of the Swiss delegation's head, the convention would never have come about.

Of course Bindschedler was also spared a bitter disappointment by his early death. The new mechanism remained a dead letter. To date, the Secretariat at *Avenue de France 23* in Geneva has not received a single application for peaceful dispute settlement. States simply do not willingly submit to the judgment of third parties in international conflicts. And if, by way of exception, they for once do it, they will certainly not



entrust a powerless institution like the OSCE with the task.

Brother Klaus plays a humble role in today's foreign policy. His name is rarely found in official announcements. The bells no longer ring across the whole country on his birthday, as they did in 1917. However, the memory of this righteous patriot is not extinct in the general population. It is well known that he has

influenced the development of Switzerland in two ways: first, by what he said, and second, no less important, by the interpretations which his words have experienced over the centuries. Without him, our foreign policy would have been different indeed.

Source: "Die Weltwoche", issue 26/2017 from 22 September 2017

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

Election of a new Federal Councillor

rt. Whether it is a targeted position, a burden, a duty, an ambitious project or a mixture of everything, that will be answered individually. It is not an easy task to meet the various demands as a Federal Councillor. But what are the demands to be met or which ones should be fulfilled?

Ignazio Cassis can certainly show a track record of political experience gained at cantonal and national level in Ticino and Berne. He has gained personal experiences with federalism as a Ticino. As a doctor, we expect him to show a human ethic and as an actor in various foundations a certain ability to cooperate. The country can trust to have found a wise member of the Federal Council.

Our country has certain benchmarks that distinguish it from many other countries around us: among other things, its *direct democracy*, through which we citizens can express our will and our interests in a genuine way. This also includes *federalism* with a balance to be well kept between the interests of the various municipalities and cantons. And of course, the neutrality of our country is also to be mentioned as a value, which has so far kept us out of many conflicts of foreign powers.

So we do not expect our new Federal Councillor to put up any insincere fire-fighting exercises in order to occupy a front rank in the media, but also not to curry favour with foreign powers feeling that the own people are just a brake block. We expect him to lead a well-managed department, its direction not predestined by an expensive civil servant or "expert" apparatus, but executing missions and addressing concerns of the people. It's a demanding task.

Especially today, the situation in a globalised, closely interconnected world is complex and dangerous:

- A creeping integration into *NATO (PFP)*, which has transformed into a war alliance, endangers our neutrality policy and brings us closer to war. This in times of escalating international conflicts.
- By chance our country is located in the midst of an undemocratic EU-state structure. The individual neighbouring countries are no longer our contact persons, but an unelected central office in Brussels. It attempts to impose its interests as a great power and dictates the implementation of its legisla-

tion and asks for high financial contributions, for example for the Cohesion Fund or for contributions to Schengen, without warranting to us a right to speak. Not even the individual EU member-states are allowed to decide on their own.

- A wild running monetary policy of the large central banks (ECB, FED) has forced the *Swiss National Bank* to buy a gigantic amount of foreign currencies thus inflating its own balance sheets. This will expose our country to major risks.
- A probable economic recession with a serious impact on Switzerland as an export nation with a low level of self-sufficiency requires good relations with our neighbour states.

On the one hand, this is a demanding initial position, on the other hand, Switzerland can put its internationally recognised role as mediator in conflicts in balance and, with its experience, can contribute to peaceful conflict resolution, not to be underestimated. The duties and possibilities are great. All the more for an honest and sincere advocacy of our country.

Swiss traditions must not be overgrown by EU law

A lesson from the parliament's autumn session

by Dr iur Marianne Wüthrich

What an “Institutional Framework Agreement” – meaning Switzerland’s subordination under the law and jurisdiction of the EU – would mean, can be seen at the moment by the example of the EU Parliament’s and the EU Council’s tightening of the EU-Firearms-Directive. Since the author is not a weapons expert, here are a few words concerning the content of the directive: in spring 2017, in response to the terrorist attacks of 2015 in Paris, EU leaders severely restricted the private possession of firearms, especially of army weapons. Now the Member States have 15 (!) months to implement the amended directive. Exceptions have at least been contended successfully by hunters, sports shooters, collectors of arms and museums in many countries.¹

This EU-Firearms-Directive was discussed in March 2017 in the Swiss National Council and in the current autumn session in the Council of States. A motion out of the National Council required the Federal Council to join forces with EU states and to resist against a tightening of the Swiss Arms Law.²

You may now ask yourself what Switzerland has to do with a Firearms-Directive from Brussels. Why do we have to defend ourselves against the impending abolition of the tradition of our Shooting Associations? I had exactly the same questions, too.

“Further development of the Schengen Acquis”: What does that mean in concrete terms?

In March, Federal Councillor *Simonetta Sommaruga* explained this to the National Council and thus also to us as citizens: “The adaptation of the EU-Firearms-Directive



With approximately 175,000 members, the Swiss Shooting Association (SSV) is the third largest sports federation in Switzerland and represents around 1,300 local associations. (picture Keystone)

is a further development of the Schengen acquis, and you know that the association with Schengen/Dublin was subject to a referendum, so it is a mission there, that we are a taking part in Schengen/Dublin. *It was very well known at the time what we got involved with*, which was intensely discussed then, that Switzerland is in principle obliged to take on further developments within the framework of the Schengen acquis and to incorporate it into national law. So, we have to implement this in national law, it is not an automatic takeover. “[emphasis added *mw.*]³

Did we exactly know at that time what Switzerland got involved with Schengen/Dublin? I didn’t know. Who could have known 12 years ago which new decrees would be issued in Brussels in the future? That’s why I voted no on 5 June 2005.

In the brochure “Schengen/Dublin – in brief”⁴, the interested reader learns on 19 pages what is included in this agreement, which governs “international cooperation in the field of internal security and asylum”. For example, “Minimum rules for combating trade of firearms and drugs”, with an appropriate adaptation of the Swiss weapons legislation, “without questioning the areas of hunting, shooting associations and arms collecting” (p. 14; emphasis added *mw.*). I repeat my question: Did you know exactly what Schengen/Dublin would mean for the Swiss rule of law and direct democracy in the future? Did Mrs Sommaruga know exactly at that time?

Did Mrs Sommaruga know exactly at that time? I repeat my question: Did you know exactly what Schengen/Dublin would mean for the Swiss rule of law and direct democracy in the future? Did Mrs Sommaruga know exactly at that time?

Preservation of national traditions? Or not rather stronger control over citizens?

“With regard to the adaptation of the new weapons firearms-directive, however, the needs of the traditionally established shooting system sport and the shooters and hunters must also be taken into account. We have recently adapted and substantially sharpened the arms legislation.”

Josef Dittli, Council of States member FDP and former Security Director of the Canton of Uri, on 11 September 2017 in the Council of States

mw. To all Europeans to think: The fact that the Brussels bureaucracy can take

into consideration the traditions of Switzerland, the 28 EU member states and the 3 EEA states in its legislative machinery, is simply impossible. Apart from this, the EU head office is pursuing entirely different objectives: there is no place for cultural diversity in the targeted centralised state with uniform law, but for the total digital monitoring of the citizens. A sharper control of the purchase of weapons and their possession serves this aim. Thus you can not prevent terrorist attacks, because terrorists do not buy their weapons in the shop ...

An emasculated parliament without a right of decision

This is what the Swiss legislation would look like after an Institutional Framework Agreement with Brussels became valid: the National Council discusses on 15 March 2017 the *Motion 16.3719*, which merely asks the Federal Council to “act in the interest of the people in favour of a liberal and free weapons law that corresponds with our Swiss traditions”. The author of the motion can even refer to a referendum, namely the clear rejection of

Swiss participation in protecting EU's external borders

National Council marks the red line

mw. On Thursday, 21 September 2017, the National Council as first council adopted the *EU-Regulation 2016/1624* “on the European Border and Coast Guard” by 102 to 75 votes and 10 abstentions, however, it issued a caveat. This EU-regulation is part of the “further development of the Schengen acquis”, which, according to the agreement Switzerland has to adopt if it wishes to remain in Schengen. It were “a necessary step towards improving the situation on the Schengen external border,” according to the narrow majority of the *National Council's Security Policy Committee* (SPC-N).¹

In reality, the so-called Schengen area is one of the many Brussels' blessings that cannot work because they are self-contradictory: “The basic idea is to facilitate travelling within the ‘Schengen area’ with its approximately 500 million inhabitants without reduction of security” as mentioned in a FDFA brochure.² For the European nation states, Schengen means a fundamental ban on identity checks on its borders with the neighbouring states, if they are also part of Schengen. Instead the external borders should be protected with combined forces – a true Sisyphus work! In any case, the idea of a Europe without borders soon fell through the harsh objection of reality.

As a matter of fact, “Schengen” is concerned solely with accelerating a centralist unitary state. For if a state effectively protects the Schengen external borders and thereby keeps its own borders under its own control, just as the Hungarian government has dared to do, then it is the end of all noble theories!

Only the EU lobby in Berne knows, why Switzerland has to be absolutely with Schengen. This lobby has pressurised us voters for years that we would become European outsiders without Schengen like some former Soviet republics and that we would have to be in the same queue at the airports with their nationals. So what?

The National Council now wants to stop the steady increase of Swiss financial contributions. Firstly, the Federal Decree is designed to ensure that Switzerland is involved in the cost of the new European border and coastal guards at a maximum of 12 million francs per year.³ For in 2015, Switzerland paid 4.6 million euros only for the “European Agency for Border and Coastal Guards Frontex”, in 2016 already 9.9 million – thus more than twice as much! – in 2017, an estimated 12.4 million, and in 2020 it should be 14.2 million.⁴ There are also contri-

butions to Schengen/Dublin, the overall sum of which the Federal Council does not make transparent in its message to Parliament. As a second condition, the National Council wants to stipulate that the planned involvement of the *Swiss border guards* at the Schengen external borders should not lead to a poorer surveillance of the Swiss borders.

The National Council is right! Thereby he calls on the Federal Council, on the one hand, not to swallow everything, which the Brussels bureaucracy dopes out, but, on the other hand, first to take its responsibility for protecting the Swiss national borders. – It is to be hoped that the Council of States will at least confirm this red line in the winter session. •

¹ To strengthen the European Border and Coast Guard. 17.033 Media release SPC-N from 29 August 2017

² Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. Integration Office FDFA/EAER. *Schengen/Dublin – kurz erklärt*. 2nd edition 2011, p. 4

³ Federal decision on the approval and implementation of the exchange of notes between Switzerland and the European Union for the adoption of the EU Regulation on the European Border and Coast Guard (17.033). *Minutes of the National Council* from 21 September 2017

⁴ Embassy of the Federal Council on 17.033, from 17 May 2017. *Bundesblatt* 2017, p. 41821

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the People's initiative “For the protection against armed violence”, which was rejected by the Swiss people on 13 February 2011 with 56.3% no votes. The adoption of that initiative would have meant that the Swiss soldiers would no longer have been allowed to keep their infantry rifle at home; the majority of the voting people didn't agree on that.

On 15 March of this year, Mrs Sommaruga also assured that she had advocated in the spirit of the motion “to ensure that the continuation of the Swiss tradition of the shooting sports associations is possible. As you know, sports shooters often use their former army weapon. Switzerland has therefore been committed to ensuring that the infantry rifle can continue to be kept when the army service is terminated. *We have achieved this goal*”. [emphasis added *mw.* And note: So, is the Federal Council able to achieve something in Brussels from time to time? We have to remember this for coming confrontations!] That is why the National Council might calmly

agree to the motion, because the Federal Council had done everything possible in Brussels anyway; however, the EU directive would still need to be transposed into national law. The National Council cannot be put off until a later draft of this act of transposition, but agrees to the motion with 118 Yes against 58 No with 3 abstentions.⁵

The Council of States, on the other hand, rejected the motion with 29 to 13 votes and 2 abstentions on 11 September 2017, after Federal Councillor Sommaruga declared: “Whether you decide to reject or to accept – the most important thing is that we agree on the content. Whether you accept or reject now leads to no difference in the direction to proceed.”

This is almost as much the case as in the largely disempowered parliaments of the EU Member States: whether the National Council or the Council of States say yes or no, does not matter. After all, Mrs Federal Councillor tells you “the direction to proceed”: “We will implement this directive, because otherwise the Schengen/Dublin would be automatically terminated [...]. We do not want that at all.” By the way, the attentive citizen also learns that

the decision has long since been taken: The Federal Council has already “made it clear to the EU that we will implement the directive. As we must do so within thirty days.”⁶

I do recommend to our citizens and to the members of the parliament as elected by us: it is bad enough if there are already such meaningless Council debates in Berne today as a result of the integration into the EU. If we want the Swiss Parliament to be able to decide in the future, we must not accept an “institutional framework agreement” according to the blessings of Brussels! •

¹ cf. New bans. EU Parliament tightens weapons law – open dispute at press conference. *Spiegel online* from 14.3.2017

² 16.3719 Motion Salzmann Werner. We will not be disarmed by the EU!

³ 16.3719 Motion Salzmann Werner. National Council debate from 15.3.2017

⁴ 2nd Issue 2011. https://www.eda.admin.ch/dam/eda/de/documents/publications/EuropaeischeAngelegenheiten/Schengen_de.pdf

⁵ 16.3719 Motion Salzmann Werner. National Council debate from 15.3.2017

⁶ 16.3719 Motion Salzmann Werner. Council of States debate from 11.9.2017

International Day of Peace – 21 September 2017

UN Independent Expert demands: “Silence the drums of war and disarm for development”



Alfred de Zayas
(picture ma)

Alfred de Zayas is calling on States to transform war economies into peace economies. The appeal is being made in a statement to mark International Day of Peace on Thursday, 21 September.

“Lobbying on behalf of military and industrial companies is fuelling wars worldwide and frustrating the aspiration of humanity to live in peace. Instead of cutting military budgets, many States are currently increasing their military expenditure and reducing investment in health, education and social services.

States should refrain not only from the use of force in international relations, but also from the threat of force, as stipulated in the *UN Charter* (Article 2(4) UN-Charter). However, in spite of these well-known rules, many politicians engage in sabre-rattling, frequently with the support and applause of political commentators and the mainstream media.

Based on the UN Charter’s call to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, civil society is leading the movement to ensure peace becomes a clearly defined human right.

This initiative was enshrined in the *Santiago Declaration* of 10 December 2010, which led to a draft *declaration on the right to peace by the Advisory Committee of the Human Rights Council*, a document manifesting a holistic approach to peace and encompassing civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights.

The watered-down resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council is not the end of the story. States must listen to civil society and complete the work already started by the General Assembly at the height of the cold war. A renewed cold war makes a new Human Rights Council resolution all the more urgent.

States must work together on resolving the root causes of local, regional and inter-

The UN Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order, Alfred de Zayas, is calling on States to transform war economies into peace economies. The appeal is being made in a state-

“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.”
(Chapter I, Article 2(4) UN-Charter)

national conflict, often emerging from the unrepresentative nature of governments, great injustices and inequalities prevailing in the world.

Over the past seventy years many armed conflicts had their origin in the denial of the right of internal or external self-determination.

There are still many indigenous peoples, non-self-governing peoples and others living under occupation who have a legitimate claim to self-determination. It is time for the United Nations to proactively support the realization of self-determination as a conflict-prevention strategy, requiring mediation.

My previous reports to the UN Human Rights Council and the UN General Assembly emphasized that addressing global problems including pandemics, climate change and the challenges of the Sustainable Development Goals requires trillions of dollars.

It is therefore imperative to drastically reduce military expenditure and convert war economies into peace economies. It is unconscionable to continue the arms race when millions of human beings are suffering from extreme poverty, famine and no access to clean water and sanitation.

We must silence the drums of war and disarm for development.”

Mr Alfred de Zayas (United States of America) was appointed as the first *Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order* by the Human Rights Council, effective May 2012. He is currently professor of international law at the Geneva School of Diplomacy. Mr Alfred de Zayas practiced corporate law and family law in New York and Florida. As a Human Rights Council mandate holder, he is independent from any government or organization and serves in his individual capacity. The Independent Experts are part of what is known as the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council. Special Procedures, the largest body of independent experts in the UN Human

Rights system, is the general name of the Council’s independent fact-finding and monitoring mechanisms that address either specific country situations or thematic issues in all parts of the world. Special Procedures’ experts work on a voluntary basis; they are not UN staff and do not receive a salary for their work. They are independent from any government or organization and serve in their individual capacity.

Source: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=22109&LangID=E>

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

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Address: Current Concerns,
P.O. Box, CH-8044 Zurich

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Subscription details:

published regularly electronically as PDF file

Annual subscription rate of
SFr. 40,-, € 30,-, £ 25,-, \$ 40,-
for the following countries:

Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brunei, Canada, Cyprus, , Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hongkong, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Qatar, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, USA

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

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

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World Congress of the International Physicians for Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) was held in York

by Dr Matin Baraki



Matin Baraki
(picture bremerfriedensforum.de)

The organisation IPPNW – an international grouping of physicians – also has a German section (“*Internationale Ärzte für die Verhütung des Atomkrieges, Ärzte in sozialer Verantwortung*”), which mainly works for the disarmament of nuclear weapons.

In 1985, the organisation received the Nobel Peace Prize for its “considerable service to mankind by spreading authoritative information and by creating an awareness of the catastrophic consequences of atomic warfare”.

For the 22nd time, this international meeting was held in York (Great Britain) in September with approximately 600 guests from all over the world.

The strong presence of representatives from India and Japan was conspicuous. The “face” of the meeting was characterized by young people who’s messages contributed to the constructive progress achieved at this meeting. The Congress called for a peaceful coexistence of all nations without nuclear bombs and set its goal of contributing to the enforcement of the worldwide ban on nuclear weapons.

In the opening speech, the President of the Conference pointed out that it would be a matter of convincing all nations to support the nuclear weapons ban agreement, which is already supported by 486 organizations from 130 countries around the world.

It was emphasised that with the escalation of the conflict between North Korea and the USA, the acute danger of the actual use of nuclear bombs is growing today. A study was presented which informed of the consequences of such an operation. Just 50 bombs – if India and Pakistan were to use them in the event of a war – would kill 30 million people immediately. The resulting global nuclear climate change would lead to further 200

million deaths. Never was the danger that the human species could be extinguished, as great as today.

The text of the nuclear weapons ban agreement shows how the countries can exit of this program. The treaty is to be enshrined in international law, and the ideas of “collective security” in the partner organisations and states are to be disseminated. However, with the current strategy of the nuclear powers, the existing power structures in the world are being cemented. This makes a change in the status quo more difficult. Indeed, these powers do not intend to dissolve the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, but they also do not want to sign it, explicitly referring to India and Pakistan.

Delegation members reported on their work and the struggle of the peace forces in their countries. The British nuclear bomb opponents see their focus on obtaining a ban on British nuclear submarines. They pointed out that for the US armaments industry, the nuclear bomb is a “sacred cow”. In the USA peace movement, the medical and humanitarian consequences of a nuclear weapon deployment are addressed in order to mobilise the people there against the nuclear bomb. A Russian representative emphasised that for the government of Russia nuclear safety was the first priority to promote conditions for the abolition of the nuclear bomb. An Indian delegate emphasised the role of UNO and criticised the Indian mass media, which hardly reports on the subject of the prohibition of nuclear weapons. The Japanese participant pointed out the confrontational behaviour of North Korea and the USA, which has reached a frightening stage. But these tensions can only be solved politically. The US administration should respect the sovereignty of North Korea. Australia, like the Federal Republic of Germany, put themselves under the nuclear protection shield of the USA. Therefore, the government in Canberra has no interest in banning nuclear bombs, declared an Australian delegate. While a Norwegian

participant called for the necessary popularisation of prohibition in his speech, the delegate from Costa Rica highlighted the role of his country as the most committed country for a ban, pointing out that 25 to 30 Latin and Central American countries had signed the contract on the prohibition of nuclear bombs. Costa Rica presented the prohibition agreement to the UNO in 1997. All African states are nuclear-free, and South Africa, which already had the nuclear bomb, has, however, ceded it long ago, as a guest from Kenya informed.

The Afghan delegate presented a “peace plan” for Afghanistan, the implementation of which would require the replacement of the NATO military by military units from the Islamic and non-aligned countries. The already 38-year war in the Hindu Kush shows that only a political solution of the conflict is promising. For this solution, a concept and a program should be developed and implemented by the Afghans themselves, in accordance with the local conditions, involving the broad masses of the population and all political groups, including the Taliban.

It was emphasised that the USA did not sign the Cluster Bomb Prohibition Treaty, however, stopped its production. Here the normative force of a treaty becomes clear, which in the case of a prohibition of nuclear bombs could have a similar effect.

In meetings of the regions (Africa, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, North America, South Asia and Southeast Asia and the Pacific) and in numerous workshops, the participants discussed and deepened the questions and problems presented in the plenary session.

A British soldier who was deployed in Afghanistan, Iraq and Northern Ireland gave a historical overview of the brutality of the British Empire, in which the continuity of the warfare of British imperialism was unmistakable. His appearance turned out to be a highlight of the Congress. •

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

One war can hide another – after the Caliphate, Rojava

by Thierry Meyssan



Thierry Meyssan
(picture
wikipedia)

While the Syrian Arab Army, the Russian aviation and Hezbollah are preparing to finish off Daesh, the Pentagon is planning a new war against Syria, this time with Kurdish troops. Just as the mission of the Caliphate was to create a Sunnistan straddling

Iraq and Syria, so the mission of “Rojava” is to create a Kurdistan straddling the two states, as the Pentagon has been publicly stating for the last four years.

According to US grand strategy, as defined by Admiral *Cebrowski* in 2001, and published in 2004 by his assistant *Thomas Barnett*, all of the Greater Middle East must be destroyed except for Israël, Jordan and Lebanon.

Consequently, the imminent victory against Daesh will change nothing of the Pentagon’s intentions.

President *Trump* is against the manipulation of the jihadists. He has stopped the financial and military support that his country was giving them, and has managed to convince Saudi Arabia and Pakistan to do the same. He has modified NATO policies in the matter. However, nothing yet hints as to whether or not he will also oppose the Pentagon’s grand strategy. As far as the US Interior is concerned, the whole of Congress is in league against him, and he has



This map was published by Robin Wright nine months before the offensive by Daesh into Iraq and Syria. According to this Pentagon researcher, it rectifies the map published in 2005 by Ralf Peters for the reshaping of the Greater Middle East. (picture map)

no possibility of preventing a procedure for destitution other than negotiating with the Democratic Party.

Donald Trump has composed his administration of ex-senior civil servants from the *Obama* administration, a number of opportunistic politicians, many improvised representatives, and very very few trustworthy personalities.

His special representative against Daesh, Brett *McGurk*, is an ex-collaborator of President *Obama*, and is supposed to serve *Trump*’s new policy. On 18 August, he organised a meeting with the tribal leaders to “fight Daesh”. However, the photographs he published attest to the fact that, on the contrary, several of Daesh’s leaders also participated in the meeting.

In the same vein, helicopters of the *US Special Forces* exfiltrated two European leaders of Daesh and their families from the outskirts of Deiz ez-Zor, before they could be taken prisoner by the Syrian Arab Army on 26 August. Two days later, they also exfiltrated about twenty more Daesh officers.

Everything looks as though the Pentagon were storing away its jihadist structure and conserving it for other operations elsewhere. Simultaneously, it is preparing a new episode against Syria with a new army, which, this time, will be composed around Kurdish forces.

This war, like the war against the Caliphate, was announced four years ago in the *New York Times*, by *Robin Wright*, a researcher at the *US Institute of Peace* (equivalent to the NED for the Pentagon). It also planned to divide the Yemen into two states, potentially shared between Riyadh and Abu Dhabi – and finally, last but not least, to dismember Saudi Arabia.

Kurds and Kurdistan

“The Kurds live in a region of strategic importance. Abundance of water and oil deposits are such a significant factor that neither Turkey nor Iraq can waive these resources also claimed by the Kurds. Thus, Kurdistan is of geopolitical importance for the Western world. This has contributed to a lively interest in the events and persons.” (p. 15)

“It’s abundance of water makes Kurdistan a strategic region of importance in an otherwise arid world. With a glance at the map the two streams Euphrates and Tigris are already dominating, but numerous rivers and lakes are to be added, e.g. the two Zab rivers and the Aras. The headstreams (those of the Euphrates are called Murat and Karasu) and the upper courses of the two streams run on Turkish territory. Several large dams (inter alia the Atatürk Dam

southeast of Adiyaman) have been put into operation, used to produce electricity and in partly initiated and partially realized projects – such as the South East Anatolia Project (GAP, abbreviation for Güney-Dogu Anadolu Projesi) – to transform vast land between Urfa and Gaziantep into agricultural land.” (pp. 24)

“Oil deposits in Kurdistan are a major economic and geo-political factor. The distribution of the income from the oil fields of Kirkuk (not laying in the Kurdish part, but claimed by the Kurds) has not yet been conclusively clarified between the central government in Baghdad and the RKKI (regional government Kurdistan Iraq).” (p. 25)

Source: *Strohmeier, Martin; Yalcin-Heckmann, Lale. Die Kurden. Geschichte. Politik. Kultur. 2010, ISBN 978-3406 59195 2*

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

"One war can hide another ..."

continued from page 9

Meanwhile, the "Rojava" project corresponds to Israeli strategy, which, since the end of the 1990's and the development of missiles, is no longer concentrated on controlling its border regions (the Sinai, the Golan and South Lebanon), but on taking its neighbours from behind (hence the creation of South Sudan and eventually, Greater Kurdistan).

The recruiting drive for European soldiers for the "Rojava" project has only just begun. A priori, it could assemble as many combatants as there were for the jihad, insofar as the members of the anarchist groups which provide manpower are as numerous in Europe as common law prisoners.

Indeed, the jihadist network began in French prisons before becoming a generalised "crusade". It is probable that the recruitment within the anarchist movement will also spread as the conflict goes on. Washington, London, Paris and Berlin, who organised this recruitment, planned in the long term.

I use the word "crusade" deliberately, because these wars in the Middle Ages, like the one we have just experienced, were in fact European imperialist operations against the people of the Greater Middle East. It is just as grotesque to claim that there is a link between the message of Christ and the crusades as to claim a link between the Prophet and jihadism. In both cases, the commanders were "Westerners"¹ and these conflicts exclusively served Western imperialism. The successive crusades bled across two centuries, and the majority of Christians in the Levant fought alongside their Muslim compatriots against the invaders.

Not long ago, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, *Laurent Fabius*, publicly declared that President *Assad* "did not deserve to be on Earth", and confirmed that the jihadists were doing a "good job". Many young people answered his call by joining Al-Nusra (Al-Qaida), then Daesh. Today, the French ex-Minister for Foreign Affairs, *Bernard Kouchner*, publicly announced that France would support the creation of state which would include Iraqi Kurdistan and the corridor to the Mediterranean via Syria. A few young Europeans have already answered this call, and many others will follow.

Today, as in 2011–12, the Western Press has taken the side of this new anti-Syrian army, supported by their governments. It will never question the treachery of *Abdullah Öcalan*, who renounced Marxist-Leninism for anarchy. It will repeat that Kurdistan has already been recognised by the Sèvres Conference, in 1920, but it will avoid looking at the documents which specify its boundaries. It will believe it to be legitimate in Iraq and Syria, although it is currently situated in Turkey. It will ignore the fact that the frontiers in fact correspond to nothing other than the plans developed by the Pentagon.

The referendum for the independence of the Iraqi region of Kurdistan and the territories annexed with the help of Daesh will launch the beginning of this operation, on 25 September. As in 2014, it will be intended to simultaneously destroy Iraq and Syria, this time without creating a "Sunnistan" from Rakka to Mossul, but a "Kurdistan", on a territory linking Erbil and Kirkuk to the Mediterranean. •

¹ This term is poorly chosen insofar as "Westerner" is not opposed to "Oriental", but to "Soviet". I could find no other term to describe collective-

Nato's Anarchist Brigades

"So the Pentagon has added to the number of 'their' Kurds, not only a few Arab and Assyrian mercenaries, but above all, militants from the European extreme-left. [...] Just as the CIA has enrolled tens of thousands of young Western Muslims in order to turn them into Islamists, in the same way, it has recruited European anarchists to create the International Brigades, on the model of those which fought in 1936 in Barcelona against the fascists. We can also find auxiliary YPG/NATO troops such as the International Antifascist Battalion (Central Europe), the Bob Crow Brigade (English and Irish), the Henri Krasucki Brigade (French), the International Revolutionary People's Guerrilla Forces (Americas), the Revolutionary Union for Internationalist Solidarity (Greek), the Unity of the Marxist-Leninist Party (Spanish), and all the pro-US Turkish groupuscules (DK, DKP, MLSPB-DC, PDKÖ, SI, TDP, TKEP/L, TKPML) to mention only the most visible (cf. "LGBT Brigades In Syria? Western Anarcho-Leftists Cutting Their Teeth With Western-Backed Kurdish YPG", Brandon Turbeville, *Activist Post*, July 27, 2017. "Le Rojava, un califat d'extrême gauche? Réseaux 'antifascistes' et terrorisme: le laboratoire kurde", *Observatoire des extrêmes de gauche*, 16 août 2017).

Source: *Meysan, Thierry. Nato's Anarchist Brigades, www.voltairenet.org from 12 September 2017*

ly the Europeans, the North-Americans and the Israelis. Author's note.

(Translation *Pete Kimberley*)

Source: *www.voltairenet.org from 19 September 2017*

Whom does an "independent" Kurdish state serve?

cc. Such diverse media as the "Neue Zürcher Zeitung" and *Sputnik* agree on one point: the founding of a Kurdish state in northern Syria and Iraq is associated with geo-strategical issues. On 23 September, the "Neue Zürcher Zeitung" wrote: "Only one state has so far openly taken the side of the Kurds: Israel. An independent Kurdistan, so the calculation, could help to contain the growing influence of Tehran in the region. Both states, Israel and Kurdistan, are surrounded by hostile states and share a history of centuries of persecution and statelessness. On 13 September, Israel's Prime Minister *Benjamin Netanyahu* spoke out, de-

claring: 'Israel supports the legitimate efforts of the Kurdish people to establish their own state'. He's being celebrated in northern Iraq". An Iraqi security expert, *Ahmed al Sharafi*, was quoted at *Sputnik* on 22 September: "[Israel's Prime Minister *Benjamin Netanyahu* has been talking about the necessity to build an oil pipeline from Kirkuk and Mosul [both in Iraq] via Syrian territory to the Mediterranean Sea since 2005, so that Israel would have a reliable source of energy". And further: "The foundation of the Da'esh [Islamic State/IS] had the goal of overthrowing the regimes in Iraq and Syria and establish-

ing pro-American governments in these countries. This is an advantage for Israel as an ally of the United States. This [the regime change] would also allow Israel to bring oil and water sources under its control. Israel would then have loyal neighbours – from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean. But the persistence of the Syrians made these plans fail. Therefore, they now rely on the implementation of the 'Kurdish project' to divide Syria and Iraq". *Sputnik* continues: "According to *Haim Hassun*, the Syrian brigadier general, the Syrian army has already begun to avert the threat posed by the Kurds on Syria's territory". •

Afterthoughts on the elections to the German “Bundestag”

Who is controlling German politics?

A new study on the influence of the US-American Council on Foreign Relations

by Karl Müller

Nearly for a whole year before Election Day, the German Chancellor stated that the Germans had “never before been so well off”. This was the motto of her public appearances – and the common theme of her responses to the citizens’ questions. Those asking question in TV shows were quickly satisfied by this, probably they had to... not a single question could be discussed in depth during these stagings. After all, these shows were more or less part of the controlled stage play “election campaign”.

Reality-conscious east

Public appearances without preselection were different – even more different in East Germany. The Germans from the states Mecklenburg-Hither Pomerania, Brandenburg, Saxony-Anhalt, Saxony and Thuringia seem to be more conscious of reality than their West German fellow citizens – and it is not fair to reduce their protest to tomato-throwing.

Many of them are employed in the low wage sector and for example are well aware that the lower 40% in the income distribution have fallen behind the rise in income of the upper 60% and partially even had to accept losses in their real wage¹. One week before the elections, the *Deutschlandfunk* commented: “With this clientele, the parties’ programmatic messages must feel like the SED’s [the ruling party in the former GDR] slogans of the permanent exceeding of plans”, adding that “advertising material in the street campaign had never been so meaningful.”

Foreign politics not an issue for the “Chancellor of the Western Allies”

Remarkable was: German foreign politics – except regarding the charged Turkey issue – was hardly an issue in the campaign. Securing peace, international understanding, international law... hardly worth a mention. At least not in the media subject to public law. Coincidence? Not relevant? Or maybe part of the stage play?

Back to East Germany. Many people there are interested in a good relation-

ship with Russia, disapproving of sanctions against Russia, happy about *North-Stream 2*. Most likely they would also be happy about the “New Silk Road” – if factual information were available. Maybe they also wonder if the course of the German campaign had been planned precisely beforehand. *Merkel* was to remain Chancellor, whatever happens, after *Donald Trump*’s election victory. This was and is in the interest of the “deep state” in the USA. “Chancellor of the Western Allies” – this would be appropriate today.

The CFR’s role

It seems like the actual planning offices were not situated in Germany. Most likely a US American association called the *Council on Foreign Relations*, CFR, is much more relevant for Germany. In early September a highly meritorious Swiss institution called *Swiss Propaganda Research* has published a comprehensive study: “Die Propaganda-Matrix: Wie der CFR den geostrategischen Informationsfluss kontrolliert” (The Propaganda Matrix: How the CFR is controlling the geo-strategic flow of information)².

This study should become compulsive reading in all circles concerned about understanding reality, in all schools and university seminars.

The statement in the introduction is confirmed when reading the study: “Be it Russia, Syria or Donald Trump: In order to understand the geo-political media reporting one has to know the key role of the American *Council on Foreign Relations* (CFR). For the first time the following study is showing how the Council’s network has created a trans-Atlantic cycle of information, nearly closed in itself, where nearly all relevant sources and reference points are controlled by members of the CFR and its propaganda organisations.”

Until today:

Securing the global US dominance

The study is informing about the CFR’s history, its goal to secure the global US-American dominance. Since the foundation of the CFR in 1921, an institution for

a “global American Empire” has been created “whose key positions have nearly consistently been staffed by the now almost 5,000 representatives of the CFR.”

In a well-documented manner and with descriptive graphics, the study demonstrates how not just German media are integrated in the CFR’s network but also non-government organisations, so-called think tanks and experts, the military, secret services, governments, press and PR agencies and also individual journalists – and also prominent actors.

What makes optimistic

The last paragraph of the introduction, however, makes optimistic: The CFR had created an “information matrix” which “is highly superior to classical government propaganda.” But “due to the success of independent media it is increasingly [losing] its efficiency.”

In the summary we read: “Due to the internet there are increasing possibilities to distribute information in a decentralized and cheap way, thus bypassing the gatekeepers of the Council. Meanwhile there is also a number German-speaking reader-financed media and platforms which challenge the conventional narrative, allowing for new perspectives.” Interesting links are given.

It depends on the citizens

Hence: How long will the Merkel system work? The answer for this question will not depend on Merkel alone. It will mainly depend on us citizens. Those informed can recognise the stage play that is being performed. Nobody needs to know everything in order to understand: It is highly devious to claim that the Germans “had never been so well off”. The number and size of the tasks is huge. The general drowsiness which Mrs Merkel was trying to impose on the country can be suicidal.●

¹ cf. https://www.diw.de/de/diw_01.c.550957.de/themen_nachrichten/realeinkommen_nahmen_seit_1991_weniger_stark_zu_als_die_wirtschaftskraft_erste_anzeichen_fuer_wieder_steigende_einkommensungleichheit.html

² <https://swprs.org/die-propaganda-matrix/>

Globalisers withdraw top technology from Germany

by Prof Dr Eberhard Hamer



Eberhard Hamer
(picture ma)

The SME economy has always pointed out that small and medium-sized entrepreneurs are usually true to their home countries, location-based. This already becomes apparent when you look at their family ties and the domestic character of a medium-sized personnel company.

The large corporations, on the other hand, have long been international. They not only produce world-wide, have suppliers the world over, but also have shareholders from all over the world. According to estimates of the *Mittelstandsinstitut (SME Institute) of Lower Saxony*, more than 70% of our DAX companies are predominantly foreign-owned, mostly American. A group controlled by a foreign country no longer has a national bond, has no home, demands globalisation and free trade, and above all, freedom of capital, including tax savings through tax havens.

We owe our export surpluses to the international trade of these global corporations. These surpluses, on the other hand, can only be achieved by the fact that we have had or still have important technical advantages in growth industries – mostly publicly subsidised. If we lose such a technical lead, we lose not only our export capability but also a part of our prosperity.

In this sense, the technological growth drivers of our international corporations are extremely dangerous not only as seen from the ownership structure of a capital company, but also because of their dependence on foreign powers such as the USA or China:

- In Germany it is less possible than in other countries to keep technical advantages a secret and in reserve, because the Americans, according to the laws made by the occupation forces, have the right to control all our digital and computer systems, including all telephone lines and cell phones in Germany, comprehensively and exhaustively. Thus, they can immediately pick up any new technology developed within our country through their spy systems and transfer it to their local industry. Often, therefore, the competing American industry knows about new patent developments even before a patent has been granted in our country.
- Where this total espionage is not sufficient, technical innovations are stolen by financial and bribery tricks, such as

in the location-safe submarine technology of the *Howaldt shipyard*, where an unloyal board, with the approval of the federal government, allegedly accepted American takeover requests by handing over all plans and technical internals, until the Americans had everything and were no longer interested in the shipyard itself.

- How dangerous a shift of German production abroad is, was experienced by the photo industry decades ago. In the fifties and sixties, Germany was the world leader in photo cameras. Then production was shifted to Asia “because of the cheaper labour force” and only sold in Germany, until the Japanese competition made more attractive offers of the German models on the world market than we ourselves did, and so they seized the market leadership. Today, we buy Asian cameras instead of German ones.
- After the US and Japan, China is now the big technology plagiariser. The Chinese have more than 3 trillion dollar assets, for which they are unlikely to get anything any more if they do not switch to some tangible assets in good time. They therefore buy everything they can get all around the world, especially technology – at any price.
- They cannot shop in the US, because the US has a security veto right which it is constantly exercising. It is true that there is such a national security reserve in Germany as well, but it is never used, because our globalisation-addicted federal government would see this as an “international trade restriction”. In this way, the Chinese are able to buy high-technology in Germany without hindrance.
- An example of the sell-out of German technology is the acquisition of the majority of the shares of the world-leading robot company *Kuka* in Augsburg. This has reached its rank as a world leader with the aid of a lot of German subsidies. Now that it is Chinese, *Kuka*’s production technology is lost to Germany and is systematically relocated to China. Within a few years already, we will be buying robots from China, which will not bring us an export surplus, but export deficits.
- The German automobile companies, too, were first exporting to China; they were then forced to build their own production facilities in China, thus bringing German technology to Chinese companies. In the next few years they will be able to export less and less of their domestic products against the competition of these companies, and will therefore lose the export market.

- The worst example is *Airbus*. This aviation group, which is highly subsidised by us, has – supposedly to gain a foothold in the Chinese market – delivered to the Chinese its own production potential of airbus machines, so that today, the Chinese are already able to build their own competitor machines to Airbus in their own companies, using Airbus technology. There are no powers of imagination necessary to predict that in 10 years Airbus will no longer be able to deliver to China, because Chinese airbus companies will be dominating the market.
- Last message: *Siemens*, too, sees the digital future first and foremost in China, and is moving its global research center for autonomous robots to China. It is only logical that after the withdrawal of the *Kuka* robot control, Siemens cannot keep its world-leading robotics research without a domestic production application either, but instead places its future research in the country which has, among other things, acquired the robot technology.

In all cases the German tax payer has massively subsidised the future technologies, especially with the taxes of the small and medium enterprises and the middle class, and then the international corporations have transferred the results of these subsidies and of German technology abroad, sold them or even given them free of charge.

The Federal Government sees this as a “normal internationalisation process” and does not intervene. On the other hand, SME research sees the migration of advanced technologies subsidised by German tax payers as the cause for the concurrent migration of thousands of medium-sized companies in the supply market and so for the loss of the international competitive ability of the German economy as a whole, in the coming years.

Why is the federal government so passive when it comes to the migration of German top technology?

Why are the international corporations not obliged to repay the subsidies received by the German taxpayer for the development of the cutting-edge technologies when they export these technologies abroad?

Why is there no outcry from politics, middle-class economies and trade unions when our cutting-edge technology moves to the USA or China, thus drying up high-tech jobs?

Literature: Hamer, Eberhard (Ed.). *Visionen 2050*, Rottenburg 2016

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

Germany

Sovereign citizens cannot be polarised

by Christian Fischer

Never since the 1950ies have so many parties been elected to the German Bundestag as this year. Other countries envy us for that. But are the citizens' essential wishes adequately represented and expressed in this way? Or are very similar concepts just emphasised differently for the respective group of voters? Are the alternatives at the "edges" the ones that promise a more democratic future? A review of the French elections shows a re-orientation of the political agenda, which can also be observed in Germany. This can be used to deduce essential tasks for a democratic reorientation.

In France, a newly founded political movement just won the presidential office and subsequently also the parliamentary elections on the ticket of a neo-liberal Europeanisation of French politics. The ruling party system has imploded. The new movement has not received a broad support but was still able to push conservatives and socialists to the far edge. The Front National served as a whipping boy to make the day for the new star *Macron*. The *Le Pen* party which his campaign found so easy to defame turned out to be the perfect platform which put him right into the train to Brussels.

Polarisation in France

In France, the system of majority voting and a divisive element among the well-known political organisations have contributed to this polarisation. In Germany, the proportional representation system will hardly permit such radical changes in the party landscape. But does this re-organisation on the political stage also indicate a new policy? Or are they just the new tailor-made costumes for the same play that has long been on stage for some time already?

Macron has already had responsibility as a minister and, as a president, does not announce anything new, but merely that he intends to pursue a more consistent continuation of social cuts, a stricter orientation towards the EU Commission's guidelines and the dissolution of national sovereignty. His parliamentary majority consists of mostly inexperienced members of parliament, who had to commit themselves to his presidential decisions without any programmatic commitments. One of his first steps was to streamline not only "his" members of parliament but also, if possible, the press¹ and, apart from that, to indicate boastful but unrealistic announcements about climate policy, for example.² His further neo-liberal reform plans,

which can be followed in the daily press, have long been known in Germany under the keyword "Agenda 2010". In France, too, the socialist president *Hollande* had already tried to put similar things on track. Old wine in new wineskins, one could say, praised with exaggerated advertisement and accompanied by a dictatorial attitude.

Macron wants to "rebuild Europe" on his own – with neither parliament nor electorate

In France, the old wineskins (parties) have been put aside in the store room. They themselves had long ceased to take their own goals seriously, be it social democracy or conservatism, but had already prepared and practiced what Macron now wants to implement more clearly and consistently. The barely veiled announcement reads: We are rebuilding Europe, we are starting the next round in the dismantling of state regulations, of national democracies and in the construction of the EU administration. For that we need neither a real legislative power nor a sovereign electorate, but all the more a strong supranational executive power, which we will equip with sovereign rights and budgets and military. In this policy of the big banks and international corporations with their disregard of borders, social responsibility only seems to be an appeasing promise – the mantra that once the "reforms" have been implemented, everyone will somehow be better off.

And what should the Germans expect?

In Germany, too, political parties have long waved good-bye to many of their old values and goals of the past. It was a social democrat who as chancellor implemented the social cuts which granted a special hausse to some big actors in the German economy, to the detriment of other national and international competitors. The first wars which Germany participated in after 1945 were led and propagandistically promoted by the same social democratic chancellor, in breach of international law, aided by his foreign affairs secretary from the Green party. Measures meant to protect civil life and functions of state sovereignty are degraded step by step, privatised and "deregulated". A preserving political force which propagates and maintains the spirit of freedom-loving citizens, decent traditions of education and the rule of law in the nation state are hardly detectable any longer.

No, contrary to rumours, the German conservatives are not turned into social democrats, but rather they lost more

and more of their own old principles. Only in campaigns and coalition negotiations the old slogans pop up as part of the poker game, but in the political daily routine other priorities are set. What are all the parties with those black, red, yellow, green and recently even blue colours good for after all? Most of all, it seems, to keep up appearances and the acceptance of the citizens for what is going on at the stage where this play called democracy needs to provide illusions of the old differences associated with these political colours, while there are hardly differences left in their acts and deeds.

Members of the German parliament from all parties have – with two thirds majority – removed the passage dealing with the political aim of national and political unity from the preamble of the constitution (Grundgesetz) already 25 years ago. And with an amendment of Article 23 they solidified the dismantling of national sovereignty and the division of powers.³ Unlike France, in our party system the problem is not so much old wine in new wineskins: The old wineskins are still intact in Germany, but for some time now new wine is being served – as compared to the old party values. Or rather - Euro vinegar. One could say, the political guidelines haven't changed for a long time, Macron in France only changed gears and even accelerated the process instead of changing direction, and Germany will follow suit, regardless of whether the vice chancellor is called *Schulz* or *Lindner*.

Radical market policies in France and Germany

Radical market policies oriented towards maximum profits for big business and big finance are the common denominator for the leading political forces in both France and Germany. They consider socially responsible politics, federal and national democracy, promotion of small and medium enterprises, ethical values in education etc. to be useless antiquities. Only the political costumes differ. In France a "modern" movement triumphed against a nationalistic straw puppet, although 80% of the electorate didn't vote for them in the first place and antipathy has grown in the meantime. In Germany we see a more stable party landscape with political parties trying hard to keep the various layers of society on board and maintain political stability.

In both countries the same guideline is obvious: the old Right-Left-divide is sup-

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posed to be replaced by a decision between pro-Euro (= without alternative) or nation (= nationalisms = reactionaries). A new party called Alternative for Germany (AfD) seems to be most welcome as a new kid on the block to be pushed around by all the others and disguising their real agendas. Labelled as "progressiveness" liberal models of society including genderism insanities are promoted to ever increasing heights, and at the same time radical market policies with its urge to quantify anything and everything are sold in the same package. All in the name of freedom. Traditions, orientation towards values etc. ride on the "reactionary" ticket, together with all uncountable qualities, including democracy and the rule of state law – by now already defamed as twin sisters of nationalistic racism between the news headlines.

The Left joins the masquerade

The Left, too, are playing their part in this masquerade. With national democracy – or any kind of democracy, for that matter – they never had a very close relationship. Their agenda has always been that of all-knowing elites or experts dragging the people behind them towards their brighter future. The existential – not just ideological – distaste of big business and big finance towards nations and borders and the fact that they are riding first class on the train to Brussels is no big deal for the Left. At least one has common interests, which is the anti-national stance. The German party The Left (Die Linke) joins those chanting the Euro hymn with ease, see for instance their former party leader *Gysi* on the occasion of him being awarded the carnevalesque "Medal against deadly seriousness" in Aachen in February 2017.⁴

On the other hand, Madame *Le Pen*, whose voters in France should be supporters of the left cause according to the old theory because most of them belong to the socially disadvantaged, has no problem to demand social justice and will perhaps one day even revitalise the old *Georg Büchner* slogan: Peace to the shacks, war on the palaces! And she would certainly be more efficient than Martin Schulz in Germany, provided she were allowed to. In Germany, too, a right-national movement evolved when it became clear that from the liberal camp no opposition to the radical market march to Brussels was to be expected, unfortunately this movement includes some rather sinister proponents of antidemocratic emotions.

Will so-called national movements be instrumentalised by the EU?

The French elections suggest that nothing is more welcome to the EU strategists than such national movements. However, within those movements there are certain elements who aim for more polarisation in this regard. This may be logical as a matter of fact, but politically they are falling into the trap. Because that makes it easy to defame the anti-EU arguments by pointing towards supposedly inhumane or racist followers of these movements. Although AfD, Pegida and the Identity movement do issue statements on a regular basis to distance themselves from racism, the narrative is still widely accepted that these statements were "not strong enough".

There seems to be no real representation for those opposing the EUisation of Germany from a truly democratic standpoint and who find themselves at the right edge of the spectrum only for the lack of alternatives. This includes people like the political writer *Monika Maron*⁵, whose experiences reach back as far as to the German Democratic Republic.

Where is the democratic force?

Where is the democratic force that cannot be dragged off the track, neither towards the Brussels Leviathan rising, nor into the swamp of inhumane positions? A force aware of the facts that

- democracy will only grow "from the grassroots" and therefore always has different national faces
- the organisation of democracy has to be federal and decentralised in order to be humane and sovereign, founded on the will of a sovereign electorate, therefore neither borderless nor subject to a supranational executive
- human beings from all nations share the same dignity, including refugees, migrants and even convicted perpetrators
- a public life based on freedom and cooperation is the best foundation for common wealth and security, for the economy, health care and education, for international peace between the nations,
- the state has the obligation to protect its citizens and has to maintain certain basic institutions of security without questioning the self-responsibility of the citizens,
- conflicts of interests have to be defined and discussed openly in order to settle them directly by the sovereign in organised referendums rather than refer them to party representatives who almost always act without control by the electorate in periods between ballot days,

- the respect of state sovereignty has to include those states which happen to be no democracies; after all there is always the diplomatic tool to restrict bilateral cooperation for instance regarding arms trade,
- peace is the ultimate precondition for human life, which may be broken in situations of foreign aggression warranting defence, but never in order to pursue political aims.

Labours of a sovereign electorate

Does this force exist, this awareness in the middle of our society, mighty and non-ignorable? Yes and No. There are many citizens who would sign all the point above, but in the political arena their voices are always silenced by propagandistic noise, trumpeting out the opposite view to many of these points. Were this awareness present within a self-confident and capable citizenry rather than just the heads of many individuals, no political party colour trumpeting fuss would be able to distract a sovereign electorate towards the wrong track.

There is this elephant called EU in the room openly aiming to replace democratic sovereignty and division of powers by a practically uncontrollable executive - but too many look the other side and choose to mistake him for some cuddly kitten. Instead, the citizenry has the task to evolve into an elephant themselves and reduce those political mis-leaders to kitten status. In order to achieve this aim, we have to support those actors in politics whose hearts still burn for the right issues. Most of all we as citizens have to revitalise the basics of democratic life as outlined above and once again start to gain self-respect from them. We have to discuss ways together how to erect them firmly in the political arena of our countries. This is a long-term labour of (Self-)enlightenment towards civil responsibility, independent of parliamentary election dates. •

¹ Macrons Mühe mit den Medien (Macron's Trouble with the Media). In: *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (international) from 25 July 2017, p. 32

² Tzermias, Nikos. Frankreichs Energiewende – grosse Ziele und ungewisse Umsetzung (France's energy turnaround - major targets and uncertain implementation). In: *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (international) from 24 July 2017, p. 5

³ Fischer, Christian. *Demokratie braucht Nation* (Democracy needs nation) from 24 September 2017, <https://zeitgeist-online.de/exklusivonline/nachdenkliches-und-schoengeistiges/1040-demokratie-braucht-nation.html>

⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HoAFg9n95Rk> oder <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w3W40IAW6Xc>

⁵ Maron, Monika. Links bin ich schon lange nicht mehr. (It has been a long time since I have been left-wing). In: *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (international) from 1 July 2017, p. 21

“Light, air, freedom” – The Ahrenshoop artists’ colony turns 125

by *Alfried Nehring**

Light, air, freedom – with these signal words, the Ahrenshoop Art Museum celebrates the founding of the “Künstlerkolonie Ahrenshoop” 125 years ago with a big anniversary exhibition this season. Young painters followed the example of their colleague *Paul Müller-Kaempff* in 1892, who had completed his training with the landscape painters *Hans Gude* and *Eugen Bracht* in Berlin, to settle down in the small fishing village on the coast of the Baltic Sea. Among the founding members was the painter *Elisabeth von Eicken*, who was already very well known at that time. Ladies had no access to the academies and thus the artists’ colony enjoyed a large clientele in their painting schools for ladies from the beginning on. They were of great concern for them and source of income equally for the founders *Paul Müller-Kaempff* and *Friedrich Wachenhusen*.

The unusual light between sea and Bodden attracted the painters as well as the clear air, the smell of salt of the Baltic Sea and the freshness of the jungle-like forest, which today still extends from the eastern village exit of Ahrenshoop to the island of Rügen as “Vorpommersche Boddenlandschaft” (Western Pomerania Lagoon Area National Park). Far removed from the regulated and hierarchical art business of the capital, from the hustle and bustle, the narrowness and the destruction of nature, becoming increasingly widespread by a wild industrialisation, they *allowed themselves*, to use the truth of nature in a still undestroyed uncivilised landscape for the most important measure of their painting. They colonised the small village and its picturesque surroundings by their art.

In simple words *Paul Müller-Kaempff* has recorded in his memoirs, what fascinated him about Ahrenshoop at that time and how a rather random study trip became a life choice for him: “In the late summer of 1889 I stayed in Wustrow on the ‘Fischland’ with my colleague, the animal painter *Oskar Frenzel*, to paint sketches. On an occasional hike on the high bank, reaching the last hill, suddenly there lay a village at our feet: Ahrenshoop. Nobody was to be seen, the hoary thatched roofs, the gray willows, and gray dunes gave the whole picture a touch of deepest seriousness and perfect virginity. Nowhere a bleak utility building with a cardboard roof, nothing that disturbed the overall impression, the village road very



Paul Müller-Kaempff. Sweeping view over the village Ahrenshoop with goat herders and fishermen, 1890. (picture ma)



Paul Müller-Kaempff. Old boatman's cemetery in the dunes, 1893. (picture ma)

wide and sandy, no wire fence, no billboard. Behind the village on the Schifferberg the churchyard gazed over with white and black wooden lattices and crosses, overgrown with golden yellow blooming hawkweed. Dunes, forest and lake, in the distance we could see the dark line of the Darss. The dunes crowned with ancient white haw trees, hollies and wild roses. This was a place of study, as I had always wished for.” The idea for one of his most famous paintings, “Alter Schifferfriedhof im Dünen” from 1893 was formed by these impressions.

In the new art museum of Ahrenshoop, created by civic involvement, the painting is always present for the visitors and tourists as a permanent loan from the art gallery at Kiel. It is one of 11 works from the period of the artists’ colony, for which the municipality of Ahrenshoop has built an

artistic path with weather-resistant large-format reproductions on the occasion of the founding jubilee on the painters’ former motifs.

As an artist colony, Ahrenshoop has the advantage that its countryside is a magnet for the following generations and artists of European standing. In June of 1911, the Russian painters, *Marianne von Werefkin* and *Alexej von Jawlenski* travelled to Pre-row, not far from Ahrenshoop on the Baltic Sea, as summer guests. The latter experienced a new beginning in his creativity. He wrote: “I painted in very strong, glowing colours, absolutely the opposite of natural and material. This was the turning point in my art.” Marianne von Werefkin integrated her impressions in colourfully expressionistic paintings “The cliffs of

* The author lives in Ahrenshoop. He was a successful film and television producer and is the author of art books. His biography of the Russian impressionist *Isaak Levitan* was presented in *Current Concerns* from 11 May 2017.

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Ahrenshoop” which can be found today in the Museum of Modern Art in Ascona.

In a collection of exhibitions due to the jubilee of the artist colony, the Art Museum Ahrenshoop displays a further exhibition, dedicated to the artistic dialogue between tradition and modern. It seems to be an unusual idea, to confront the paintings of the Japanese artist, *Leiko Ikemura*, who currently lives in Berlin, with the paintings of the colour magician, *Emil Nolde*. The double presentation is part of the project “Nolde in the North” which, at the occasion of the 150th birthday of the painter, unifies the Nolde-Foundation in their original building, Seebüll together with nine other North German museums.

Even if Nolde and Ikemura have never met and their paths in life and their work conditions were totally different, the museum’s guest can discover inspiring analogies through the paintings chosen by the curator, Dr *Katrin Arrieta*. Their realistic landscapes combined with natural experiences are a decided source of their art. As such, they are part of the tradition of landscape painting, as it developed in the 19th century.

Emile Nolde was born in 1867 in his beloved land between seas, Schleswig-Holstein and although he is only 6 years younger than Paul Müller-Kaempff, he stands for a completely new artist generation. As a skilled wood sculptor for the making of furniture, in 1893 he became a teacher for drawing and modelling in the Industry and Trade Museum in St. Gallen. His “Mountain postcards” of the summits which are depicted as figures of legends, sold so well that he decided to become an independent painter.



Marianne von Werefkin.
High coast of Ahrenshoop, 1911.
(picture ma)



Leiko Ikemura. Genesis – St. Ursula, 2016. (picture ma)

More than hundred years later Leiko Ikemura transferred her impressions of her studystay in Swiss Grisons in the tradition of Japanese Tuscan painting to a cycle of fairy mountainous landscapes, particularly large and impressive the picture “Genesis – St. Ursula” from 2016, Tempora on canvas. After her studies in Spain, stays in Zurich and Munich, Leiko Ikemura creates the artistic breakthrough in Cologne. In 1987, she received a first large-scale personal exhibition at the “Museum für Gegenwartskunst” in Basel, which today owns more than 100 works by Ikemura.

In 1907, Emil Nolde is chosen by the artist group *Brücke* as their spokesman because of his expressive coloring. Great successes of his exhibitions also lead to his membership in the *Berlin Secession*, from which he becomes excluded after an argument with *Max Liebermann*. His life in the metropolis and the art scene in the capital do not satisfy him. After all he finds the seclusion and inspiration he desired for his work in his own residence in Seebüll. There he created his world-famous still lifes in which “flower scenes” ripen into color-sparkling sensuous art experiences. Between the flower pictures of Ikemura and Nolde an artistic dialogue is also taking place in the exhibition at the Ahrenshoop Art Museum.

During the last 125 years Ahrenshoop has also changed considerably. At the time the artists started a dynamic that changed the remote fishing village to a long term destination for tourists. Nevertheless the

local structure from the time of the artists’ colony is still recognisable, the surrounding landscape is largely natural. In the Darss forest, in the dunes of the Baltic Sea and in the meadows of the Bodden you can still feel the genius loci of once.

Even the architecture of the new art museum in Ahrenshoop is an expression of this connection between tradition and modernity. The Berlin-based architect group *Staab* has put the ensemble of a typical farm with a thatched roof into a modern cubature and covered it with architectural bronze.

By the anniversary year with its many-faceted cultural offerings Ahrenshoop has further consolidated its reputation as an artist’s place and gained charisma. The ties with Switzerland outlined here should be a small example. •

(Translation *Current Concerns*)



Art museum Ahrenshoop. Combination of tradition and modernity. (picture ma)