

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

Never forget! 1999–2024

International conference “From Aggression to a New, Fairer World Order” in Belgrad

Interview with Zivadin Jovanovic, President of the Belgrade Forum for a World of Equals



Živadin Jovanović
(picture ma)

Current Concerns:
24 March 2024 marked the 25th anniversary of the start of the NATO war against the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY). To mark the occasion, the Belgrade Forum and other organi-

sations organised a major international conference under your leadership. What were the most important results for you?

Živadin Jovanović : We are really proud that about 200 friends from all the continents have gathered in Belgrade to once again condemn the illegal 1999 military aggression of NATO on Yugoslavia and pay their respects to more than 4,000 killed people including children. Participants of the Conference have sent strong appeal for ending of ongoing wars and defuse escalation before the whole humanity is absorbed into global nuclear conflict. In my opinion the most important result is Conference’s appeal to the world leaders to start strategic dialogue on stopping the conflicts and massive killings of people, concentrate on the roots and causes of ongoing wars. The other result is strong support to the new inclusive World Order based on sovereign equality of all countries and non-interference in internal affairs. This position is paired with firm opposition to the policy of expansion, domination and neo-colonialism. Our friends came from different cultures, races, religions, ideologies, even, from different civilisations, but there were no difficulties in reaching mutual understanding and consensus about the issues which were discussed.

Numerous foreign guests from all continents of the world took part or delivered lectures at the conference. What does their participation in your conference mean for Serbia and your concerns?

It means a lot. NATO armed aggression ended 25 years ago, but aggression by other means of political, economic, finan-

cial and propaganda character – continued throughout this period and since recently have been even intensified. Using UN SC’s mandate, NATO practically keeps Serbian province of Kosovo and Metohija under occupation. Using EU, international financial organisations, mass-media and other instruments, leading NATO mem-

ber countries – USA, GB, Germany and France – exert tremendous pressures, to oblige Serbia to recognize illegal, unilateral secession of its autonomous province of Kosovo and Metohija. They want to create another Albanian state beside Albania itself, unite them in so called Great-

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“May the memory of the victims of aggression, consequences thereof, and our struggle, light up the way ahead of us so to help us follow the footsteps of our ancestors with dignity.” from the foreword by Aleksander Skakić in “1999–2024 – We remember ...” (picture Media Center “Odbrana”, 2024)

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er Albania, thus expanding NATO. It is quite clear that behind rhetoric of defending democracy and human rights, stands NATO strategy of expansion. So, the participants of the Belgrade Conference have expressed their support and solidarity to Serbia to resist continued aggression, stay independent, neutral and pursue defending own sovereignty and territorial integrity based on the UN Charter, OSCE Helsinki Final Document, particularly, on the UN SC resolution 1244 (1999). Law, truth and justice make firm common ground.

We had the impression that your conference was more strongly supported by official Serbia than ever before in the past 25 years. Is this the case? How can this be explained and what does this support mean for the work of the Belgrade Forum?

Openness has been and remains one of the basic principles of the Belgrade Forum for a World of Equals as independent, non-profit, non-partisan, voluntary association. Forum always keeps the public and the state institutions informed of our work and views on essential national and international issues. We are very satisfied that this time three Government ministers – defense *Miloš Vučević*, interior *Bratislav Gašić* and employment *Nikola Selaković* – have participated at our conference.

One of them Mr. Milos Vucevic, in the meantime, has been nominated to be next Prime minister of Serbia.

Some fifteen years ago even the local government would hardly notice that the Belgrade Forum exists. We are satisfied with positive evolution showing that the present Government values what we have been doing over the past 25 years. Our program centered on truth, justice and morality, our principles of voluntary engagement, equality, freedom and independence, as well as our worldwide friendship with so many organizations and renown persons, I believe, will be even better valued.

What support does your conference have among the Serbian population?

I think the Conference and the whole program of commemorative events – exhibitions, international review of the documentary films, international memorial marathon Belgrade Thessaloniki and other activities – have been widely supported in the public of Serbia. Similar commemoration events have been taking place all over the country. Belgrade Forum has been pioneer of these activities from the time when previous governments would not dare to pronounce "NATO aggression". Members of our associations – Belgrade Forum, *Serbian Generals and Admirals Club*, Veterans Association SUBNOR and others – have been invited to public meetings, to holding lectures at

schools and universities, talking on radio and TV stations. Serbian Diaspora all over the world has also been organising commemorations recalling thousands of innocent victims of NATO aggression. These activities will, most likely, continue, probably, until the end of the year.

In general, we stick to the principle – do what you think is right to do for your country and people, do it the best way you can and do not feel discouraged if it is not sufficient to meet all the needs. Also, doing this do not harm anybody else, always respect equality.

What was the feedback from the participants of the conference from abroad? Is there an international echo?

First, it is noteworthy to remind that many of our friends and associations all over the world, particularly in Europe, have been organising commemorative events of their own. Some of them came to Belgrade first, and then returned to their capitals to carry on own programs.

The feedback has been so far, very positive. Our friends have been expressing their satisfaction with the framework of the Conference "From Aggression to a New, Fairer World Order", by democratic atmosphere, by what they have learned from the others and by constructive, principled content of the *Belgrade Declaration*. To many of participants Belgrade

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The global majority opts for multipolarity and an inclusive world order

Speech of Živadín Jovanović at the International Conference "From Aggression to a New, Fairer World Order", held on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of NATO's armed aggression against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) (excerpt)

Thank you all for responding to the invitation to attend the International Conference whose theme is "From Aggression to a New, Fairer World Order" and other events of the program marking the 25th anniversary of the beginning of NATO's armed aggression against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. We are extremely honoured and grateful to all our friends who, by their presence here, express their solidarity with Serbia and the Serbian people, as they have done all the past decades. This gives us strength and strengthens the belief that we are on the right path, both in the defence of our legitimate interests and in the fight for peace, equality and a fairer European and world order.

Today we are gathered here in a kind of global people's assembly, with friends from all parts of the world. We belong to different nations, religions, political orientations and civilisations, but we are united in honouring the human victims of a rampaging power, in condemning NATO's aggression and its expansionism. At the same time, we are united in our efforts to contribute to peace, freedom and progress for all countries and peo-

ples. We are here also because we preserve the truth, strengthen the value of law and justice, and to search for a more humane and safer future for everyone.

Today we pay tribute to the defenders of a freedom-loving and independent country that was attacked even though it did not pose a danger to any other country, least of all NATO members. Armed aggression ended two and a half decades ago, but its initiators continue it by other means until today. That is why we condemn all forms of aggression and say that we will resolutely oppose it, regardless of the "tools" that are used.

The people of Serbia will not and cannot forget the human sacrifices and suffering for which the aggressor is responsible. The crimes committed against the Serbian people must never and anywhere be repeated. Peace, equal security, equal cooperation and progress are our universal right and we do not allow anyone to trample on or steal that right from us. Our aspirations are aimed at building a new world order centered on people, their equality, security and progress. We are

committed to an order of freedom, understanding and openness without imposing other people's interests, values and understandings. We ask that historical, cultural and spiritual specificities be respected, that differences be treated as wealth and not as an occasion for new divisions, confrontation and wars. We are fighting for a new, more original order based on the universal principles of equality, coexistence and non-interference in internal affairs.

The global majority of humanity does not accept an order based on force, privileges and "rules" in the interests of the minority. The time has passed when it was possible for a minority to mask its hegemony and neo-colonialism with the garb of democracy and human rights, to impose it on the global majority through aggression and colour revolutions. The trap of division into "democracies" and "autocracies" does not pass. The global majority opts for multipolarity and an inclusive world order in which the interests of humanity and not the interests of the "golden billion" are at the centre.

Source: <https://www.beoforum.rs>

A global popular assembly

ef. On 24 March 1999, NATO launched its first war of aggression in violation of international law. It was directed against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY). NATO's bombs and cruise missiles destroyed not only this small European country, but also the European and global security system based on the UN Charter (1945), the *Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe's* Final Act (Helsinki 1975), and the *Charter of Paris* (1990). To this day, people are still suffering from the severe consequences of this destruction – and not only in Serbia.

For 25 years, the *Belgrade Forum for a World of Equals* has commemorated 24 March as the day in 1999 when the aggression of the NATO alliance against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia began. It honours the fallen defenders of the country and the civilians who were killed.

This year, from 22–24 March, the *Belgrade Forum for a World of Equals*, under the proven leadership of its presi-

dent *Živadin Jovanović*, organised an international conference in Belgrade to mark the 25th anniversary. Participants from 29 countries and from all continents gathered at the conference. Over 30 presentations were held, and numerous documentary films about the war of aggression were screened in the evening.

The conference was opened with contributions from three ministers of the Serbian government: Defence Minister *Miloš Vučević*, Interior Minister *Bratislav Gašić*, and Labour Minister *Nikola Selaković*. Far more dignitaries were in attendance than in previous years. On this, its 25th anniversary, the Belgrade Forum's desire to ensure that the war is not forgotten was recognised at state level.

With regard to the wars in Gaza and Ukraine, the various speakers once again made it clear that the NATO war of aggression against Yugoslavia set the precedent for the wars to come: The change

of NATO from a defensive alliance to an offensive alliance, practically overnight; the application of international law à la carte; the lies and falsehoods of the negotiation staging before the war; the unspeakable role of the mainstream media; the unprecedented levels of PR propaganda. As in past years, participants were informed of the extent and consequences of the bombings for the people and the country, especially through the documentary films, and also how a country is plagued and driven to war for geopolitical and financial reasons – in short, by the machinations of power-politics.

The open, honest, and equal dialogue in the contributions and in the discussions among the participants, which characterised the entire conference, left the impression of a global popular assembly. This is what it can be like when people – for whom peace, freedom, and justice for all is truly a concern – come together from all over the world.

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Conference looked like the world assembly of independent academicians, concentrated to identify the roots of the ongoing conflicts, of the looming danger of global catastrophe and to shed the light on the way out of the present European and global situation. The most of them were happy to have had opportunity to strengthen old friendships and establish new ones. Many of our guests had the possibility to pass their messages and ideas to Belgrade based national and international mass media, many of the domestic organisers to pass their views to

the foreign mass media. We are still receiving comments, letters of thanks, gathering articles, interviews from China to Portugal and from Tierra del Fuego to Petersburg. I think the main, general, feedback that we keep getting is the will and readiness of all to engage in building peace, equality and prosperity for everybody, to avoid catastrophe of humanity.

What plans do you have for the future?

We plan to publish several books, including collection of speeches from the recent International Conference. We will continue projects on bibliography and collection of the books and publications

on NATO aggression in as many languages as possible. Conferences, round tables, seminars for young researchers, international exchange will also be on our agenda.

Generally, we follow developments; make our assessments and try to find the way to air our views. We pay particular attention to strengthen cooperation with our partner associations from all the continents.

We are very happy with our decades long, fruitful cooperation with “Mut zur Ethik” which we will continue to mutual benefit.

Thank You for this interview. ●

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The Belgrade Declaration

Never forget! 1999–2024

Belgrade, 23 March 2024

We, participants of the International Conference held in Belgrade on 22 to 24 March 2024, on the occasion of marking the 25th anniversary of NATO's armed aggression against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) (Serbia and Montenegro) dedicated to the theme "From Aggression to a New, Fairer World Order", gathered from all over the world, hereby declare:

We belong to different countries, nations, ideologies, religions and civilisations, but stand firmly united in our commitment to peace, equality, and prosperity for all peoples, as well as in our condemnation of interventionism, expansion, domination, and hegemonism.

We firmly condemn the unprovoked armed aggression by NATO against the FRY (Serbia and Montenegro) in 1999 as an unlawful, invading and criminal war against a sovereign, peace-loving European country, waged devoid of a UN Security Council mandate, in blatant violation of the United Nations Charter, the CSCE Helsinki Final Act (1975) and the fundamental principles of international law.

We underline:

That the aggression was carried out under false pretexts and that therefore NATO's responsibility cannot be diminished. It was not state authorities but, instead NATO's expansionism that actually threatened a "humanitarian disaster". What happened in Rachak was not a "massacre of civilians", but instead legitimate response of the state to terrorism. The "Horseshoe Plan" did not exist. "Humanitarian" wars or interventions do not exist. Prevention of human suffering can hardly be achieved by destruction of homes and hospitals, use of depleted uranium and cluster bombs, by poisoning air, soil and water.

Back in 1999, NATO reintroduced the war on the European soil, ironically, a war that Europe waged on itself.

It was neither a "little Kosovo war", but rather a war of these geopolitical goals:

1. carving the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija out of Serbia and a full control over the Balkans;
2. deployment of the US troops in the Balkans for the purposes of the strategy of Eastward expansion;
3. creating a precedent for subsequent interventions conducted in violation of international law and of the inviolability of the UN Security Council;
4. justifying the existence of NATO and its acting beyond the area defined in its Founding Act of 1949. "Wherever the law presented obstacle to the policy of

expansion, it must be removed" – was yet another NATO new rule.

The NATO aggression embodied the undoing of the legal order of peace and security in Europe and the world, established on the outcome of the Second World War. Today, the Balkans is more unstable, Europe militarised on dangerous tracks, without autonomy, identity and vision.

The aggression took lives of 1,139 soldiers and police officers, about 3,000 civilians also including 89 children, while some 10,000 people were wounded. However, the consequences of prolonged effects of weapons filled with depleted uranium and toxic compounds are by far greater.

NATO, also, bombed the Embassy of the PR of China, in Belgrade, killing three Chinese journalists and destroying the building of the Chinese Embassy.

We pay our highest respect to all the fallen innocent people and express our deepest, sincere condolences to their families.

The aggressor had been systematically destroying or badly damaging civilian infrastructure, such as railways, roads, bridges, airports, energy system, as well as apartment buildings, industrial facilities, schools, hospitals, kindergartens, and many more objects. Over thirty radio and TV stations and transmitters had been bombed including the national public TV RTS killing 16 professional employees on duty. The direct damage totals some USD 100 billion.

We emphasise that NATO and its member states, participants in the illegal act of aggression, are obliged to compensate Serbia for the war damage they have inflicted.

We appeal that special state and expert bodies, tasked with determining the consequences of aggression on the health of people and the environment, resume their work, and that the war crimes against civilians and crimes of non-compliance with the war-related conventions be prosecuted and sanctioned.

We express our strong support and solidarity with Serbia's efforts to mitigate the consequences of the aggression and her endeavouring to prevent the continuation of NATO's armed aggression by other means.

We express our full support to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Serbia in her internationally recognised borders within which she continued her membership in the UN, the OSCE, and other universal international organisations.

We are deeply concerned about the mass-scale violation of the basic human rights of the Serbian community in Kosovo and Metohija embodied in continuation of their systematic expulsion from, and in preventing the free and safe return of over

Statement of condemnation of the terror-attack in Moscow

Participants of the International Conference held in Belgrade 22 to 24 March 2024, on the occasion of marking the 25th anniversary of NATO's armed aggression against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia,

- Condemn in strongest terms the heinous, bestial and provocative terrorist attack in Moscow that killed so many innocent people, and express belief that the perpetrators will be quickly apprehended and brought to justice.
- At the same time, express their deepest condolences to the families of the killed and the injured ones, to the citizens of Moscow, and to the entire Russian people, in the moment of their pain and huge grief.
- Call for a determined and coordinated combatting terrorism as a global danger that threatens all the peoples of the world.

Source: <https://www.beoforum.rs/en/>

250,000 expelled Serbs and other non-Albanians to, their homes and property.

We firmly believe that the future status of the Province of Kosovo and Metohija may be resolved only in accordance with international law and, in particular, with UN Security Council Resolution 1244 of June 10, 1999, which is lasting, legally binding document. We demand that all provisions of the UNSC resolution 1244 be fully respected and implemented.

We condemn each and all violations of that Resolution and the policy of blackmail and pressuring, and all one-sided steps aimed at legalising the seizure of state territory and completing the ethnic cleansing of the remaining Serbian population, in preparation to create the so-called Greater Albania.

We oppose the unipolar world order based on the strategy of hegemonism and global domination with NATO as its military feast. The aggression against the FRY in 1999 was speeding up of the strategy of expansion to the East, and a source of danger to peace in Europe and the world. At the time of the aggression, NATO had 19 members, and today counts 32. After the erection of US military base *Camp Bondsteel* in Kosovo and Metohija, there followed dozens of new NATO bases. Presently, Europe hosts a far larger number of foreign military bases and stockpiles of nuclear weapons than it did during the bipolar world and the Cold War era.

"The Belgrade Declaration"

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We express our deepest concern about the accelerated escalation of hostilities and conflicts in global relations that add fuel to the fire of conflict, continued provocations, and the looming danger of a global conflict. The world sits on the brink of the abyss. Humanity will either restrain the rampant aggressiveness of the alienated power centres, or fall into that abyss.

This makes us stand unified in the demand for an immediate beginning of the dialogue at the strategic level, under the auspices of the UN, aimed at putting to a halt the escalation, the accumulation of conventional and nuclear weapons, and the breaching of international agreements.

We demand the closure of foreign military camps, the complete withdrawal from Europe of the US tactical nuclear weapons and installations of the so-called anti-missile defences that make security more volatile.

We call for an end to war-mongering rhetoric, and invite all responsible states-

Aligned Movement]. We support the abolition of all monopolies, privileges based on "exceptionalism". We refuse unilateral sanctions, erection of new "walls" or divisions. Attempt to divide the world into "democracies" and "autocracies" is a trickery of the power-centres designed to extend the life of the unipolar world order.

The policy of confrontation, interventionism, and interference in internal affairs, backed by the military-industrial complex and large financial capital, must give way to dialogue, partnership, respect for fundamental norms of international law and the multi-polar world order.

Peace, stability, democracy and inclusive development require radical changes in present global relations, observance of sovereign equality, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, multilateralism, respect of common interests, and exclusion of any egoism, protectionism and privileges of the past.

The biggest obstacle to the world order of sovereign equal nations is the relics of the Cold War. That is why NATO should

mand respect for the UN positions on the lifting of the US blockade of Cuba, and the removal of Cuba from the list of 'states sponsoring terrorism' because it was inserted without any bases.

We hold that the Ukrainian crisis is a corollary of NATO's strategy of expansion to the East, under betrayal of all agreements of the otherwise.

We believe this crisis can be resolved peacefully, by acknowledging and removing the causes and by guaranteeing equal security for all countries. The common future of humanity excludes egotism and selfish approaches such as the 'golden billion' security thesis.

We express our acknowledgment and gratitude to our hosts – the *Belgrade Forum for a World of Equals*, the *Club of Generals and Admirals of Serbia*, SUBNOR of Serbia, the *Diaspora Fund for Serbia*, and the *Association of Veterans of the Military Intelligence Service*, as well as to the citizens of Serbia – for their hospitality and good organisation of the Conference.

The organisers express their acknowledgment to the participants of the Conference, including the World Peace Council and all its members, for their decades long solidarity and support to Serbia and the Serbian people, as well as for their extraordinary contribution to the results of this Conference.

Source: <https://www.beoforum.rs/en/>

"We appeal to all peace-loving forces in the world to join forces in the struggle for the observance of international law, sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries, reinforcing the authority and role of the United Nations and other universal international organisations, the observance of principles of equality, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and for cooperation and coordination in the fight against terrorism and separatism as global threats."

men to resort to dialogue and to finding peaceful, just and sustainable solutions to the ongoing conflicts and crises.

We appeal to all peace-loving forces in the world to join forces in the struggle for the observance of international law, sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries, reinforcing the authority and role of the United Nations and other universal international organisations, the observance of principles of equality, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and for cooperation and coordination in the fight against terrorism and separatism as global threats.

We support the process of multi-polarisation of global relations and their democratisation on the basis of the sovereign equality of all states and peoples.

We support the peace, security and development initiatives that are based on the principle of mutual indivisibility of peace, security and development, and that take note of the root causes of problems. The key roles in that process play BRICS, EAEU [Eurasian Economic Union], Global Initiative "Belt and Road", *Shanghai Cooperation Organisation*, NAM [Non-

be dissolved and the doctrine of hegemonism, expansionism and neo-colonialism consigned to history.

We condemn the mass-scale killing of the innocent Palestinian people, in particular of children, and call for an immediate ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and other areas inhabited by the Palestinian people, in order to finally stop this human suffering unprecedented in recent history, and for unhindered delivery of food, medicines, water, and other necessities of life to the vulnerable population.

We support a two-state solution, the free and safe return of all expelled persons, the abolition of the occupation and the establishment of a Palestinian state within the pre-June 4, 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as the capital, all in accordance with the United Nations Resolutions.

We express our solidarity with the people of Cuba who have been suffering the devastating consequences of the unilateral US embargo for many years. The Cuban people have an inalienable right to choose the paths of internal development of their own, without external interference. We de-

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'Automated Murder': Israel's 'AI' in Gaza

by Patrick Lawrence and Cara Marianna*

"Technological change, while it helps humanity meet the challenges nature imposes upon us, leads to a paradigm shift: It leaves us less capable, not more, of using our intellectual capacities. It diminishes our minds in the long run. We strive to improve ourselves while risking a regression to the Stone Age if our ever more complex, ever more fragile technological infrastructure collapses."

That is Hans Köchler, an eminent Viennese scholar and president of the *International Progress Organization*¹, a globally active think tank, addressing an audience here last Thursday evening, April 4. The date is significant: The day before Köchler spoke, +972 Magazine and *Local Call*, independent publications in Israel–Palestine, reported² that as the Israel Defence Forces press their savage invasion of the Gaza Strip, they deploy an artificial intelligence program called *Lavender* that so far has marked some 37,000 Palestinians as kill targets. In the early weeks of the Israeli siege, according to the Israeli sources +972 cites, "the army gave sweeping approval for officers to adopt *Lavender*'s kill lists, with no requirement to thoroughly check why the machine made those choices or to examine the raw intelligence data on which they were based."

Dehumanising consequences

Chilling it was to hear Köchler speak a couple of news cycles after +972 published these revelations, which are based on confidential interviews with six Israeli intelligence officers who have been directly involved in the use of AI to target Palestinians for assassination. "To use technologies to solve all our problems reduces our ability to make decisions," Köchler asserted. "We're no longer able to think through problems. They remove us from real life."

Köchler titled his talk "The Trivialisation of Public Space," and his topic, broadly stated, was the impact of technologies such as digital communications and AI on our brains, our conduct, and altogether our humanity. It was sobering, to put the point mildly, to recognise that Israel's siege of Gaza, bottomlessly depraved in itself, is an in-our-faces display of the dehumanis-

ing effects these technologies have on all who depend on them.

Let us look on in horror, and let us see our future in it.

AI is not intelligence

We see in the IDF, to make this point another way, a rupture in morality, human intelligence, and responsibility when human oversight is mediated by the algorithms that run AI systems. There is a break between causality and result, action and consequence. And this is exactly what advanced technologies have in store for the rest of humanity. Artificial intelligence, as Köchler put it, is not intelligence: "It is 'simulated intelligence' because it has *no* consciousness of itself." It isn't capable, he meant to say, of moral decision-making or ethical accountability.

before making the decision to strike. There was no other human analysis of the "raw intelligence data." The information generated by *Lavender* was treated as if it was "an order," sources told +972 – an official order to kill. Given the strategy of targeting suspects in their homes, the IDF assigned acceptable kill ratios for its bombing campaigns: 20 to 30 civilians for each junior-level Hamas operative. For Hamas leaders with the rank of battalion or brigade commander, +972's sources said, "the army on several occasions authorised the killing of more than 100 civilians in the assassination of a single commander."

In other words, Israeli policy, guided and assisted by AI technology, made it inevitable that thousands of civilians, many of them women and children, would be killed.

"The Biden regime supplies Israel with weaponry to prosecute its criminal siege of Gaza's 2.3 million Palestinians. It gives the apartheid state diplomatic cover at the United Nations and legal cover at the International Court of Justice. It distorts and obscures the IDF's 'Stone Age' conduct. All of this requires us to speak now not of Israel's genocide but of the Israeli-US genocide."

"Lavender" – indiscriminate killings of entire families

In the *Lavender case*³, the data it produced were accepted and treated as if they had been generated by a human being without any actual human oversight or independent verification. A second AI system, sardonically named *Where's Daddy?*⁴ – and how sick is this? – was then used to track Hamas suspects to their homes. The IDF intentionally targeted suspected militants while they were with their families, using unguided missiles or "dumb" bombs. This strategy had the advantage of enabling Israel to preserve its more expensive precision-guided weapons, or "smart" bombs.

As one of +972's sources told the magazine:

"We were not interested in killing [Hamas] operatives only when they were in a military building or engaged in a military activity [...]" On the contrary, the IDF bombed them in homes without hesitation, as a first option. It's much easier to bomb a family's home. The system is built to look for them in these situations.

Once *Lavender* identified a potential suspect, IDF operatives had about 20 seconds to verify that the target was a male

'The marketing of automated murder'

There appears to be no record of any other military deploying AI programs such as *Lavender* and *Where's Daddy?*. But it is sheer naïveté to assume this diabolic use of advanced technologies will not spread elsewhere. Israel is already the world's leading exporter of surveillance and digital forensic tools. *Anadolu*, Turkey's state-run news agency, reported as far back as February⁵ that Israel is using Gaza as a weapons-testing site so that it can market these tools as battle-tested. *Antony Lowenstein*, an author *Anadolu* quotes, calls this the marketing of "automated murder."

And here we find ourselves: "Haaretz", the Israeli daily, reported⁶ on 5 April that "intelligent" weapons proven effective in Gaza were major attractions when Israel marketed them last month at the *Singapore Air show*, East Asia's biggest arms bazaar.

Hans Köchler, who has studied the impact of digital technologies for many years, did not seem to have read the +972 Magazine report before he spoke here last week. This made his remarks all the more disturb-

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“Automated Murder”: ...”

continued from page 6

ing. He was not describing – not specifically – the murderers operating *Lavender* and other such technologies in Gaza. We will all live and die by these Faustian technologies: This, our common fate, was Köchler’s topic. Over the past six months, this is to say, Israel has announced the dehumanisation that awaits all of us in that AI systems are technologies against which we have little defence. “Self-determination gives way to digital competence,” Köchler said. “We can’t distinguish between ‘virtual reality’ and ‘reality’.”

Further ‘Israeli depravities’ and their narratives in the West

Along with the +972 report on the use of AI came others in a week notable for its stomach-churning news of Israeli depravity. In its April 3 editions “The Guardian” revealed⁷ that the IDF intentionally deploys snipers and quadcopters – remotely

which killed seven aid workers, it is incapable that the Israeli military systematically targeted them, one truck to the next, until all three were destroyed—this after WCK had carefully coordinated its deployment of the vehicles with Israeli authorities. These killings are entirely in line with the directive⁸ *Yoav Gallant*, Israel’s repulsive defence minister, issued 9 October: “There will be no electricity, no food, no water, no fuel, everything will be closed.”

And what did we read of this incident in mainstream media?

Per usual, the Israeli military was authorised to investigate the Israeli military – an absurdity no US official and no media account questioned. On April 5 the IDF announced that two officers were dismissed and three other reprimanded for “mishandling critical information.” President Biden declared he was “heartbroken.” “The New York Times” called the attack “a botched operation,”⁹ explaining that the

I go back once again to Hans Köchler. In his speech and in various of his many books, he argues that electronic media – television chief among these – have conditioned people to rely for information on pictures and images instead of reading. “They lose the ability to analyse text, and so the ability to understand problems,” he said here. “People come to live in virtual worlds.”

We cannot think of a better description of the “narratives” advanced by the Biden regime and disseminated in corporate media: They present us with a virtual world – fully aware that, our minds habituated to pictures and images, most of us will mistake this virtual world for reality, just as Köchler warns. As a member of the audience here put it, “How is it possible to watch a genocide in real time and no one says anything? Knowledge no longer has any value. Anything goes, and if anything goes, nothing goes.”

Genocide by US-nibs

The Biden regime supplies Israel with weaponry to prosecute its criminal siege of Gaza’s 2.3 million Palestinians. It gives the apartheid state diplomatic cover at the United Nations and legal cover at the *International Court of Justice*. It distorts and obscures the IDF’s “Stone Age” conduct. All of this requires us to speak now not of Israel’s genocide but of the Israeli-US genocide.

But the Biden regime is culpable in inflicting these multiple wounds on humanity in one other dimension we must not miss. With its incessant attempts to suspend us in a virtual reality of its making, distant from what it is doing in our names, it leads us into the dehumanised, grotesquely technologised future Köchler describes just as surely as the Israelis do as they murder human beings wholesale with AI weapons and kill innocent children with remotely controlled sniper drones. •

“They present us with a virtual world – fully aware that, our minds habituated to pictures and images, most of us will mistake this virtual world for reality, just as Köchler warns. As a member of the audience here put it, ‘How is it possible to watch a genocide in real time and no one says anything? Knowledge no longer has any value. Anything goes, and if anything goes, nothing goes.’”

controlled sniper drones – to target children. The evidence of this comes from US and Canadian doctors who, while serving in Gaza, treat many children with wounds consistent with and easily identified as caused by snipers’ bullets. These are larger than the ammunition generally used in combat because they are intended to kill rather than wound.

The Biden regime never addresses these barbaric developments, and our corporate media, with rare exceptions such as “The Guardian” piece just cited, tell us almost nothing of them. Official and media accounts of events in Gaza, their “narratives,” are utterly at odds with these realities. How, we are left to ask, do they get away with these day-in, day-out dishonesties? This was the obvious question last week, given the extremes to which the IDF’s criminality now extends.

If you Google “Lavender” and “The New York Times,” you get “Lavender Oil Might Help You Sleep” and similarly frivolous headlines. Neither has “The Times” made any mention of the +972 investigation. If you read detailed accounts of the April 1 air attacks on the *World Central Kitchen’s* three food-delivery vehicles,

IDF’s top officers “were forced to admit to a string of lethal mistakes and misjudgements.” Over and over we hear the refrain that Israel “is not doing enough to protect civilians.”

So it was a regrettable accident, we are led to conclude. Israel is doing its best. It has all along done its best. Put this against the raw statistic: The IDF has killed more than 220 humanitarian workers since it began its siege last October, to go by the UN’s count. How can one possibly believe that these were 220 – plus accidents? “Let’s be very clear. This is not an anomaly,” an *Oxfam* official, *Scott Paul*, said after the WCK attack. “The killing of aid workers in Gaza has been systemic.”

Living in virtual worlds

There is reality and there is meta-reality, a term I have used previously in this space. How do the two stand side-by-side? How does the latter, the conjured “reality,” prove so efficacious? How do so many accept the 220 – plus accidents “narrative?” Why, more broadly, do so many accept propaganda and lies when they know, subliminally, they are constantly fed lies and propagandised?

¹ <https://i-p-o.org>

² <https://www.972mag.com/lavender-ai-israeli-army-gaza/>

³ <https://www.972mag.com/lavender-ai-israeli-army-gaza/>

⁴ <https://www.businessinsider.com/israel-ai-system-where-daddy-strikes-amas-family-homes-2024>

⁵ <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/israel-testing-new-weapons-in-gaza-for-global-sales-laying-blueprint-for-automated-murder-with-ai-expert/3137263>

⁶ <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-04-05/ty-article-magazine-highlight-at-singapore-airshow-the-gaza-war-was-a-selling-point-for-israeli-weapon-manufacturers/0000018e-aa7f-dc75-afde-faff383b0000>

⁷ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/02/gaza-palestinian-children-killed-idf-israel-war#:~:text=“This%20is%20not%20a%20normal,still%20on%20our%20shared%20humanity.”>

⁸ <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2024/4/7/dont-feed-the-palestinians>

⁹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/04/world/middleeast/israel-wck-gaza-iran-embassy.html>

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Reflections on the Olympic Games in Paris in 2024

by Dr rer. publ. Werner Wüthrich



An athlete in Olympia dressed in classical costume lights the torch with the Olympic flame. (Picture screenshot olympics.com)

According to the official calendar, the Olympic Games took place for the first time in 776 BC in the Greek city of Olympia in the north-west of the Peloponnese – 3,000 years ago. The simple rural festival in Greek Olympia, which the inhabitants celebrated in honour of *Zeus*, became a competition in song, dance, poetry and many sporting disciplines. The period between two festivals (four years) was called an Olympiad. These games brought together the best artists and athletes from all over the Greek peninsula and the islands. The Olympic Games have a long tradition – even after the fall of Ancient Greece. The basic idea has survived. Since ancient times, the Olympic flame has remained a symbol of peace and friendship between peoples.

The Olympic flame is lit by the rays of the sun in a parabolic mirror and burns during the games at a sacred place in Olympia called Prytaneum. Today, the fire is carried from its place of origin to Paris in a torch relay. It is a highly symbolic event. The torchbearers proclaim the *Ekecheiria*, the Olympic Truce, and the message of peace on their way.

On 16 April 2024, the Olympic flame will be lit in Olympia – just like 3000 years ago. Torchbearers will carry the flame in eleven stages to Piraeus, the harbour city of Athens. Here, the historic three-master, the *Bélem*, takes over the flame and brings it to Marseille. This

ship was already in service in 1896, when Paris hosted the first Olympic Games of the modern era. After about ten days at sea, the *Bélem* will arrive in Marseille. Its arrival will open the festivities and the Games in France. However, the torch relay with the fire continues – right across France. The country will be at its best for many days. President Macron will officially open the Games in Paris on 16 July. They will last until 11 August. It should be a great celebration.

Shady sides

“Games wide open” is the official motto of the Olympic Committee. The organisers will offer a marathon and other disciplines for the general population. However, countries such as Russia and Belarus are excluded. This contradicts the spirit of the Olympic Games, which aims to promote friendship between peoples. Wars were not so rare in ancient Greece either – between Sparta and Athens and also between the other Greek city states. The Olympic Games have always been a bridge and an opportunity to overcome hostile differences and strengthen solidarity. The Greeks, who were often at odds with each other, were united at crucial moments and won a great victory over the Persians shoulder to shoulder in Marathon in 490 BC. The reporting messenger brought the news of the victory to Athens in such a short time that he collapsed dead

at the finish after 41 kilometres. Today, the marathon is part of the programme – as it is again in Paris.

Is there a better prerequisite for the “open mind” that characterised the ancient Greeks? Despite armed conflicts, people met every four years, socialised, celebrated festivals, practised singing, dancing and poetry and competed in numerous sporting disciplines. – Perhaps this is why Ancient Greece has such a unique place in the history of mankind that some of its life serves as a role model again today.

The athletes from Russia and Belarus are only allowed to take part in the competitions as “individual, neutral persons” and are excluded from the opening ceremony. This also violates the Olympic spirit. And what about the population in the Gaza Strip, who are holding out in their ruins and don’t know whether and how they will survive the next few days?

President Emanuel Macron has not exactly shown himself to be peace-loving in recent days and weeks. He wants to send troops to Ukraine and supply more weapons. He is attracting attention with his distinctly bellicose rhetoric, while the French are preparing a “grand” celebration throughout France.

The torchbearers of Olympia proclaim on their way the “holy truce” and the message of peace – as they have done for three thousand years. This must be taken seriously!

After 75 years of NATO – debunking myths and get to the bottom of things

by Karl-Jürgen Müller

Around 4 April 2024, the day on which NATO turned 75 years old, there were many analyses and commentaries on the past and present of this US-led military alliance. NATO apologists have sung its praises: NATO had a history of success and was still indispensable for the defence of the free world. In detail, however, there are also lamentations: what will happen to NATO if *Donald Trump* becomes the next US president? What is still missing so that the NATO states can stand up to the enemies of freedom in the coming years?

But the critics didn't mince their words either. On 8 April, a new book was published from a critical perspective: "Die NATO. Eine Abrechnung mit dem Wertebündnis" (NATO. A reckoning with the alliance of values) is the title, *Sevim Dagdelen*, former member of the parliamentary group "Die Linke" in the German Bundestag, now in the "Sarah Wagenknecht Alliance" (BSW), is the author.

However, it must be added: Apologists and critics do not meet at eye level. In the mainstream of the NATO states, almost only the apologists have their say, the critics are – and actually always have been – marginalised and dependent on smaller media, which are also threatened by coercive state measures. And there is certainly no dialogue between the apologists and the critics. Nor will there be such a dialogue in the foreseeable future. The NATO states are engaged in a propaganda war that is being waged no less fiercely and relentlessly than the actual war. Interest-driven myths are gaining the upper hand, and historical and political analyses trying to be closer to the truth are currently not in demand.

Unbearable

At first, I didn't want to write anything about 75 years of NATO. That only changed when I read an article by *Dagmar Henn* on *rt deutsch* on 1 April. After reading it, I asked myself again how "free" we really are if this author and this medium are taboo throughout the EU. A few days later, I had to read what NATO Secretary General *Jens Stoltenberg* said about Ukraine at the "anniversary" meeting of the foreign ministers of the NATO states in Brussels on 4 April. I couldn't bear it any longer.

What did *Dagmar Henn* write? Eloquent she referred to the fact that the governments of Ukraine and Russia had largely agreed on a treaty to end the war at the end of March 2022, but Western governments vetoed it and put pressure on the Ukrainian

government to continue the war – NATO's proxy war against Russia – primarily with people from Ukraine and weapons from the NATO states. For this, not only did Russian war crimes have to be invented in Bucha, but since the end of March 2022, hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians and Russians have lost their lives.

On the "anniversary", *Jens Stoltenberg* said that NATO must take more leadership in the Ukraine war in future. This could not be left to the individual member states. He was willing to continue supplying Ukraine with massive amounts of NATO armaments in the coming years and to continue the war with active NATO participation (but so far officially without NATO soldiers) in any case and until victory. More NATO involvement in the war, according to *Stoltenberg's* rhetorical formula, would bring the Russians to their knees much more quickly. Press representatives had learnt of additional expenditure amounting to 100 billion dollars for the coming years. *Stoltenberg* avoided to give concrete figures, referring to the meeting of the heads of state and government in July.

So, *Dagmar Henn* has explained how many victims the refusal of the NATO states to end the war quickly has cost so far. And *Jens Stoltenberg* has explained why he wants to escalate the war further – with even more casualties. But war "to the last Ukrainian"? *Stoltenberg's* myth: Only an escalation of the war can end the war more quickly.

NATO myths

The official NATO "historiography" is full of myths.

A few examples:

- The founding of NATO in 1949 was a defensive reaction to a communist Soviet Union striving for world domination. Thus, NATO prevented the Soviet Union from taking control of the rest of Europe after the Sovietisation of the Eastern and Central European states occupied by the Red Army after the war, and secured peace in Europe. In doing so, NATO had always orientated itself on international law and the UN Charter. It has always been committed to protecting the law and the rule of law.
- After the end of the Cold War, the NATO states had shown the best will to create a peaceful and just "new world order" that now encompassed all states in the world. Only the ill will of others (terrorists; the "axis of evil" including countries such as North Korea, Iraq,

"Purely defensive intentions"

"In the early summer of 1988, the working group defence of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group flew to Washington for a working visit. [...] The group went directly to the CIA headquarters in Langley. We listened in amazement to the explanations there, focussed on a completely new American policy towards the Soviet Union: We should break away [...] from what we had heard for decades about military potentials and strategies in the conflict between East and West in Europe. The results of a study on this topic were clear: the Soviet Union was pursuing purely defensive intentions."

Willy Wimmer, 1988-1992 State Secretary in the German Ministry of Defence, in his 2016 book Die Akte Moskau (The Moscow File), p 11f.

(Translation Current Concerns)

and Iran; Russia and China) had stood in the way. This was the only reason why, soon after 1991, NATO's tasks were expanded to include global missions, the term "defence" was redefined ("The security of the Federal Republic of Germany will also be defended in the Hindu Kush.") and it participated in the wars waged by the USA.

- Thus, for example the NATO war of aggression against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1999 was a "humanitarian intervention", preventing further genocide and seeking to pacify former Yugoslavia which had disintegrated into several states.
- The expansion of NATO to the east was primarily in response to the desire of the former Warsaw Pact states and peoples of Eastern and Central Europe to find protection from an aggressive Russia and finally belong to the West.
- In the Ukraine war, NATO is defending the freedom of the whole of Europe. NATO must therefore do everything in its power to prevent a Russian victory in the Ukraine war. If Ukraine were to lose the war, Russia would also attack the other European states to implement its imperial plans.
- In the global struggle of democracies against the autocracies of the world, NATO stands on the side of freedom, justice, and democracy.

Sapere aude!

All these myths can be refuted with an unbiased view and with an eye to the po-

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75 years of NATO: from war to war

by Manlio Dinucci, Italy

When NATO gathered in Brussels to celebrate its 75th anniversary and established further military aid to Ukraine, Kyiv is struggling to support the war effort against Russia. It is therefore increasingly resorting to terrorist attacks within Russia.

The Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) has arrested a group of terrorists transporting high explosives to be delivered to a final destination in Moscow. On board their commercial vehicle – it was intercepted at the Ubylinka checkpoint on the Russian-Latvian border in the Pskov region (western Russia) – among others, a load of 27 Ukrainian-made Orthodox icons containing high explosives was discovered. These and other explosive devices were on board a vehicle that had crossed six NATO countries: Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia on its way from Ukraine to Russia. The plan was obvious: once in Russia,

Orthodox icons would be purchased by churches, parishes, and families of believers. After a certain time, the icons would be detonated with remote controls to cause the greatest number of victims during a religious holiday in which the faithful gather in churches and families.

At the same time, the investigation into the terrorist attack on 3 April in Moscow is continuing, it has so far caused 144 deaths, a number that may increase as over 500 were injured. The decision to attack concertgoers is part of the terrorist plan aimed at targeting the Russian civilian population to cause chaos and distrust toward the Government. According to the plan, the massacre of the concert spectators was to be followed by the killings of the Orthodox faithful with the explosive icons.

It should not be a surprise that ISIS militant executors for these terrorist actions are used. The political-media mainstream tries to erase the fact that for years

Kyiv has been collaborating with this terrorist movement financed and armed by the United States and NATO initially to demolish Syria from inside. Two articles from the same mainstream testify to it. On 120 July 2015, reporting an investigation by the “New York Times”, the Italian daily newspaper “Il Giornale” ran this headline: “ISIS troops alongside Ukraine against Russian separatists”. On 21 November 2019, the British newspaper “The Independent” ran this headline: “How Ukraine became the unlikely home of ISIS leaders fleeing the Caliphate.”

The terrorist plan is part of the strategy of NATO in which ISIS militants are also used, in 75 years NATO has moved from the Cold War to the post-Cold War wars, and with the 2014 coup in Ukraine to open war against Russia. •

Source: <https://www.perunmondosenzaguerra.eu/2024/04/06/75-anni-della-nato-di-guerra-in-guerra-20240405-pangea-grandangolo/>

Open letter to the German Federal Government and the Bundestag

cc. The following open letter dated 9 April 2024 was signed by members of the district council of almost all parties in the district of Uckermark (state of Brandenburg, north eastern Germany). The exception was the members of Bündnis 90/ Die Grünen. In Germany, a district is the regional political unit above the cities and municipalities.

Dear Federal Chancellor *Olaf Scholz*, Dear President of the Bundestag *Bärbel Bas*

We are contacting you in deep concern about a further escalation of the war and with the expectation that you will take responsibility for a peaceful solution instead of further arms deliveries.

We strongly condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine in violation of international law and the resulting war.

We stand in solidarity with the Ukrainian people, who have been suffering the catastrophic consequences of this war for two years now.

International law applies unreservedly to all states and people. Arms deliveries do

not solve conflicts and are not morally justifiable, especially in view of German history. We are therefore opposed to attempts to resolve conflicts by military means. We demand a return to Germany's refusal to supply weapons to war and crisis zones.

Germany should leave no stone unturned to initiate diplomatic solutions for an end to war and to promote peaceful coexistence between peoples.

With great sorrow, we are observing the expansion of the arms industry and the increasing and seemingly thoughtless use of war rhetoric in public. Instead of military support, Germany should do everything in its power to provide Ukraine with all the humanitarian aid it can.

War only knows losers. Instead of the dominance of the military, we need the language of diplomacy and peace.

Following the preamble of the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany, we, the signatories of this letter, are aware of our responsibility and see the Uckermark firmly anchored in a united Europe, animated by the will to serve peace.

With kind regards

Christian Bork, Heike Heise-Heiland, Anne-Frieda Reinke, Andreas Büttner, Jens Koeppen, Achim Rensch, Knut Büttner-Janner, Mirko Koschel, Siegfried Schön, Frank Düpre, Walter Kotzian, Tobias Schween, Harald Engler, Axel Krumrey, Walter Seehagen, Burkhard Fleischmann, Dietmar Meier, Dr. Wolfgang Seyfried, Dr. Alexander Genschow, Josef Menke, Günter Tattenberg, Hannes Gnauck, Andreas Meyer, David Weide, Monty Gutzmann, Thomas Neumann, Evelin Wenzel, Torsten Hagenow, Gerd Regler, Christine Wernicke, Wolfgang Banditt (District Council Chairman), Karina Dörk (District Administrator)

Source: District Administration of Uckermark; https://www.uckermark.de/index.php?object=tx_3615.5.1&ModID=7&FID=3615.9696.1 of 9 April 2024

Note: The open letter was initially published on the official homepage of the Uckermark district administration, but then had to be removed due to pressure from the media (e.g. *Der Spiegel*). (Translation *Current Concerns*)

“After 75 years of NATO ...”

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litical and historical facts and contexts, and have already been thoroughly refuted, also in this newspaper. But these refutations find almost no access to the mainstream media in the NATO states – instead, the myths are cultivated and nurtured and regurgitated daily in the

most diverse forms – mostly accompanied by unverifiable horror stories about the “others”.

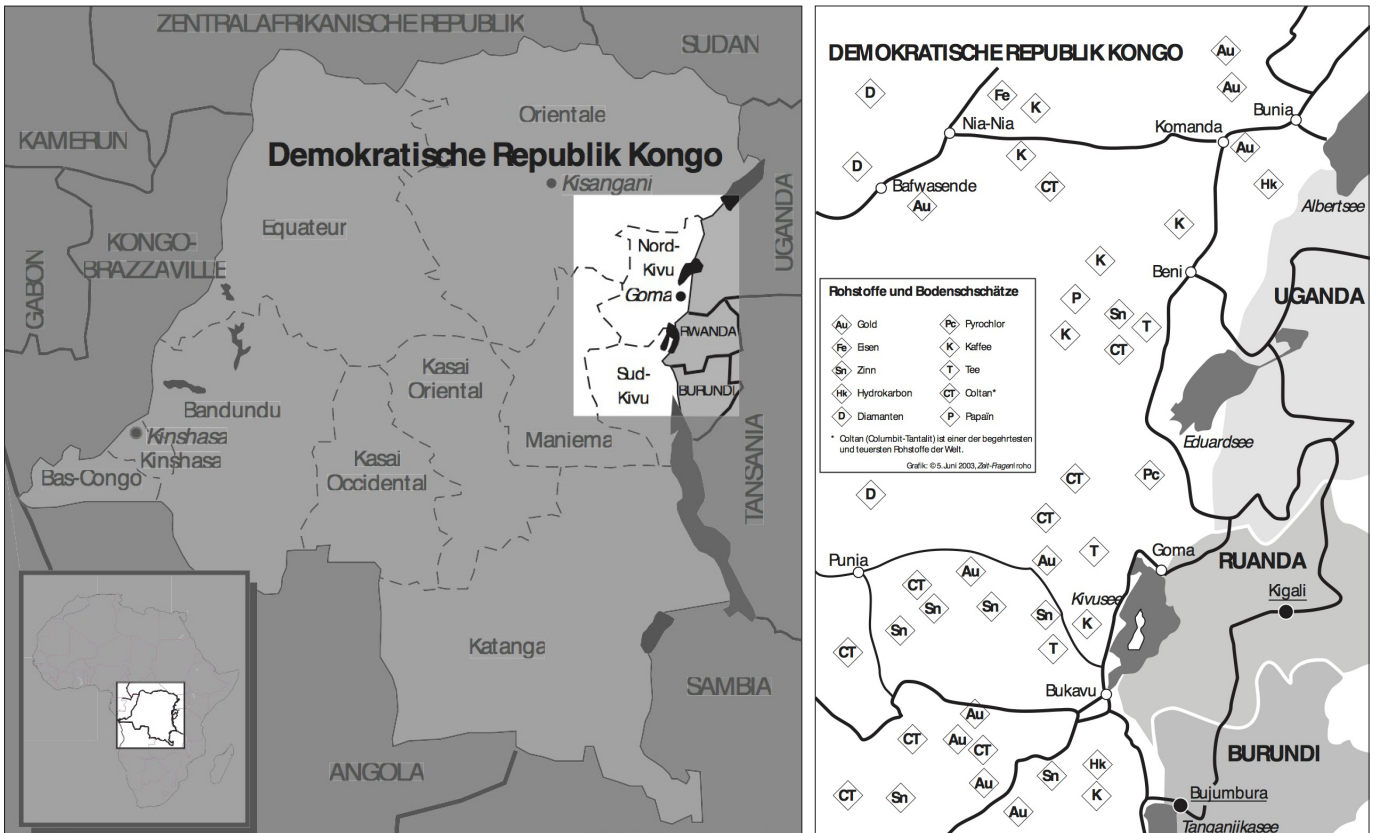
More than 200 years ago, *Immanuel Kant* wrote: “Sapere aude! Have courage to use your own reason!”. This appeal has lost none of its topicality. Resolute opposition is necessary when the basis of constructive human coexistence, namely hon-

esty in our dealings with one another, good faith in public life, is in danger of getting lost entirely. Today, when the citizens of the NATO states are once again being driven into a major war with a potential for escalation that threatens humanity, it has become vital to debunk the dangerous NATO myths and get to the bottom of things. •

East Congo – the perpetual humanitarian catastrophe continues

part 1: The never-ending war targets mainly the civilian population

by Peter Küpfer



Covetousness that kills people: mineral resources in the Democratic Republic of Congo. (Graphic cc)

Before our very eyes yet another humanitarian catastrophe unfolds in East Congo. Many alarming reports from the region itself prove this. The matter-of-fact eyewitness account of an East Congolese priest who had joined villagers fleeing to the town of Goma, the supposedly safe haven (see *Current Concerns* No 5 of 12 March 2024), is disturbing.

So is the recent report of *International Committee of the Red Cross* general director *Robert Mardini*, who was so genuinely shocked by the desperate situation he saw when he visited International Red Cross facilities in the Congolese region of North Kivu that he came forward with a serious appeal to the international community: Do everything to stop the fighting! (see *Current Concerns* No 6, 2024). What alarmed him most was the yet again dramatically intensified military situation. Right now, the region north of Goma is being shelled with heavy artillery. Civilians are among those being targeted. This is the main reason why hundreds of thousands of people are again desperately trying to run for their life and that of their children as domestic refugees. Parallels to the intolerable situation in Gaza are obvious.¹

Just like civilian populations in other crisis hotspots in the world people in East Congo have endured the humanitarian catastrophe of perpetual war for decades. Once again people are currently fleeing towards the region around Goma, a city near the border to Ruanda. The much-tested town has been under siege for more than two years now. For well-known reasons thousands of people keep seeking refuge, which the town can provide neither logistically nor militarily. Survivors just grab basics of their belongings which they carry on their heads and pour in never-ending columns of hundreds, sometimes thousands through unsecure areas, babies carried in wraps, all on foot, including severely wounded casualties and children. Some can't even make it to Goma because of their injuries, hunger and exhaustion and end up in improvised refugee camps right and left along the bad connecting roads, protected from the rain sometimes only by thin plastic foils attached to some wood stakes stuck into the ground. But within the frontier town itself the situation is just as desperate. Our contact in Goma, a priest who has joined his parishioners from a distant village on

their flight to the town, sends us a brief message with the following desperate words (there is no time for more): "The hope for peace is vanishing. The plight of the people, most of all the refugees – two huge camps are near-by – drives us into almost utter despair. And then the spiritual genocide, carefully set-up over a long time: Thousands of orphaned children have forgotten in the mean-time that there used to be things like ways to school."

Alarm calls get ignored yet again

It is the second time already that the desperate priest mentions to us what is of deep concern to International Red Cross general director Mardini, too: All schools in the region have been transformed into improvised First Aid medical stations. For years there has been no regular school routine in North Kivu. Many children are abducted by the mercenaries and trained to become child soldiers. What is their future? And what is the future of a country whose children in their vast majority don't know what "going to school" means?

As Robert Mardini told the press after his visit to North Kivu, the crisis has es-

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"East Congo – the perpetual ..."

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calated to a new stage by now. While in the long history of suffering of the East Congolese civilian population up to now, the fighting used to be carried out mainly between military personnel of the foreign mercenary groups and the usually hapless Congolese national army, now whole areas are indiscriminately shelled with heavy artillery. This is a breach of internationally binding laws of war, as Mardini stresses. The two hospitals in Goma and Bukavu (at the Southern tip of Lake Kivu) who have always worked at the brink of collapse, are now overwhelmed by severely wounded patients to an extent that they can't cope much longer. Improvised tents are mushrooming there, too.

Mardini urges the international community to at last insist on the adherence to the *Geneva conventions* and demand that the military war parties protect the civilian population. As in Gaza, these binding conventions are cynically ignored and it seems to be impossible to this day in Eastern Congo as well (for 30 years in this case!), to actually implement them. The actors behind the mercenary armies in this region have always been international superpowers and as long as the remains the case, the only possible conclusion is that the aim and purpose of the whole never-ending war is to clear the entire resource-rich East Congo of inhabitants altogether. Coltan, the resource everything is focussed on here, has been regarded by US intelligence circles as a "resource of strategic importance" since 1942. Is mafia-style murderous theft the only imaginable way to acquire such a resource in our times?

The never-ending war is waged against the people of East Congo

Humanitarian hardship is unfortunately only one aspect of the permanent war in East Congo. The other one gets even less coverage in our media. This is the obviously criminal character of these military operations. The armed gangs, the number of which is estimated to be more than hundred by informed sources, fight each other, they fight against defence militias of the desperate population and most of them fight against the National Congolese army who have never been able to bring peace to the region.

But there is one thing all these groups have in common, despite their often-poetic names which contain a lot of democracy, freedom and the like (but never peace!): cynical, sadistic and obviously purposeful cruelty aimed at the unarmed villages in the hills and their civilian populations. It entails the systematic annihilation of entire settlements and villages, often combined with slaughtering of the men, mass rapes of the women and killing



Refugee camp in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Several million people are refugees in their own country. (picture screenshot Aktion Deutschland Hilft)

of the children. These atrocities have occurred time and again over the last years in the settlements and villages.

It is this perpetual terror of the gangs which turns the survivors of entire villages into refugees who just grab what they can carry and run for their lives. Because the so-called rebels fight mainly against the almost defenceless civilians – a scandal beyond comprehension.

And this has been going on for more than thirty years, at various locations, with changing actors, with armed gangs operating under ever-changing aliases – but with always the same brutal conduct. This has been evidenced by tons of documents, many of them initiated, elaborated and registered by the UN. The minutely detailed reports, a whole panopticon of horrors by now, list locations, names of victims, often names of perpetrators, dates and particularities of the atrocious acts on thousands of pages.²

Up to now the efforts of death-defyingly courageous witnesses and self-help groups, but also of knowledgeable experts and serious reporters have been to no avail. This explains the growing desperation of the people in the region. What hurts them most, is the unashamed way the world, especially the Western world, keeps turning a blind eye on their suffering, the shoulder-shrugging – the openly displayed indolence, as the scholarly term puts it. Indolence is the inability to feel empathy for suffering fellow human beings and the active commitment as a consequence. In the codes of law of so-called civilised countries, the failure to assist a person in danger is a felony. The international superpowers, including the Western community, who like to refer to their value system as high standard for the rest of the world but regularly fail to draw proper conclusions from their own values whenever it suits their interests, are guilty of

this felony on a daily basis, both regarding Gaza and the East Congo.

... and is imported from abroad

Anybody who scrolls through *Wikipedia* or our mainstream quality press searching for information on these permanent new "Congo conflicts" will inevitably stumble on the term "rebels". According to the rigged narrative of the lobbies and intelligence agencies involved, it has been "rebels" for thirty years, who chased out *Mobutu* in a blitzkrieg in 1997, "rebels" again in this twisted version who took up arms against the new overlords: "Kabila-père" (*Laurent-Désiré Kabila*, shot and killed soon afterwards by one of his own bodyguards) and then Kabila-son (*Joseph Kabila*, installed as successor after his death). Joseph Kabila stayed in office as unelected interim president until 2018, of a Congo which had been as rock-solid an US ally all the time as it had been under *Mobutu*. Both Kabilas (apparently father and son biologically, but they hardly ever met) had been military commanders of these «rebels» (i. e., Rwandan troops) and share responsibility for severe crimes against humanity and their cover-up.

What kind of «rebellion» is this? Who rebels against whom here? As a matter of truth, it is a US textbook example of a pre-emptive regime change, claiming countless peoples' lives. If it comes to the main supplier of strategic resources, there is no such thing as risk tolerance. With *Mobutu's* health deteriorating and no certain successor being installed; question marks had started to pop up. Finally, after more than twenty years of the same script it's "rebel groups" yet again who now massacre the East Congolese population. Taking the lead regarding cruelty and systematic destruction of the livelihood in East Congo is a terror-

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"East Congo – the perpetual ..."

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ist group called "M23". Why? Armed by whom? What for? In any case, the perpetrators of this gang are certainly no "rebels", not even Congolese nationals apart from some collaborators. Neither is it a civil war what has been going on, day in and out, in this war theatre. As a matter of truth and fact these are foreign mercenaries, trained, armed and paid mainly by the neighbour state of Ruanda.³ The ethnicity aspect which the Rwandan party keeps talking about is merely a rather effective smoke grenade, thrown in-order to camouflage the real motives. Because the ethnic card played here is based on an inner-Rwandan problem which has been transplanted to East Congo in a web of lies. Recently the Congolese foreign minister has made this plain with a few courageous words. (see box)

The aim is the undisturbed exploitation of the resources

The war that has been kept going for thirty years now by anonymous guerrilla groups in East Congo reveals one of its major purposes more and more clearly: it is the permanent expulsion of the indigenou Congolese population. These people are unlucky enough to just going on with their daily routines of agriculture and sheep-keeping as their ancestors had done, in an area stuffed with rare, strategically important resources the whole world is craving for today. No longer is it just gold, diamonds, copper and uranium that have already claimed so much blood in the

long-suffering Congo – today the issue in the border regions of Congo with Ruanda and Uganda is mainly coltan, lithium and cobalt. These extremely rare resources are indispensable for high-tech products both in civilian and arms industries. Without them there is no production of mobile phones, no space travel, no high-tech communication, no car batteries and no guided missiles.

And there is another mystery solved as soon as one gets a glimpse of a natural resource distribution map of East Africa. The tiny state of Ruanda, once poor as a church mouse, has become one of the top coltan and (since 1997) diamond suppliers in the world. And that without any mines of either coltan, gold, diamonds, lithium or cobalt on its territory. Rwanda's coffers have been filled by the raids for Congolese natural resources since the so-called "rebel wars in East Congo". In-order to cover-up Ruanda's real role in this lawless self-service outlet of strategic natural resources for the warlords, their government and their Western friends (in Europe mainly the EU) keep reiterating the old war lie that Ruanda had to keep up arms to fight off revanchist elements still militarily threatening Ruanda and aiming for genocide against the ethnic Tutsi (after thirty years!), although the Tutsi elites have had a firm grip of power in Ruanda since 1994. Almost everything in this narrative is twisted in a classical war lie, as recent history shows if it is analysed without bias.⁴ The proof will be subject of the second part of this article.

So the provisional summary is a sad one. As Pope Francis put it during his visit of several days in Congo last year, many people have died in East Congo for thirty years, entirely ignored by the Western world. They are victimised cynically and sacrificed for Western profit and exploitation. One year ago already, as he did recently regarding Ukraine, the Pope emphasised that there is only way towards peace, namely honest negotiations of all problems, respecting all of those who are afflicted by the human and material catastrophe.

¹ see recent issues of *Current Concerns* (CC): After the elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo. CC No 4, 27 February 2024; Report from Congo CC No 5, 12 March 2024; Democratic Republic of Congo/IKRK. Humanitarian catastrophe escalates, CC No 6, 26 March 2024

² Historically correcting analyses: Ruzibiza, Abdul Joshua. *Rwanda. L'histoire secrète*, Paris (Editions du Panama) 2005; Rever, Judi. *In praise of blood. The crimes of the Rwandan Patriotic Front*, Canada (Vintage Canada) 2020 (reprint), ISBN 978-0345812100; Onana, Charles. *Holocauste au Congo. L'omertà de la communauté internationale*, Paris (Editions de l'Artilleur) 2023, ISBN 978-2-81001-145-2

³ see remark 2

⁴ see remark 2. Apart from the literature cited this document which has remained "inconsequential" since the start of the conflict is very revealing. It is a detailed UN report about the crimes against Congolese civilians committed by armed forces under non-Congolese command, titled "Report Mapping", download at UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights; Democratic Republic of the Congo Mapping Exercise of 2010.

US withdraws military troops from Niger

According to reports, Niger's Interior Minister, General *Mohamed Toumba* has met with the US Ambassador in Niamey, *Kathleen Fitz-Gibbon*, to discuss the plan to withdraw troops.

Last Saturday (16 March 2024) *Ama-dou Abdramane*, speaker of the Nigerian junta, announced the end of the agreement for military cooperation with the United States, which takes into consideration the interests of its people. It describes that US Military presence as illegal since it violates constitutional norms.

Observers recall that the preceding day, the Nigerian Government declared its willingness to strengthen its cooperative relations with Russia in terms of security issues and matters of common interests.

In addition, the military authorities of Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso announced recently the imminent establishment of a joint security force to combat extremist violence in their respective countries.

Source: *Prensa Latina* from 28 March 2024

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

The Security Council addresses the security and humanitarian crises in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

"The representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) condemned recent attacks by the Rwandan Defence Forces/M23 coalition, including the bombing of Goma International Airport, as State crimes and violations of international law. "The Security Council should take note of this aggression," he stressed. Turning to the fabricated arguments by Rwanda, he stated that Rwanda and FDLR are allies working to exploit the mineral resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Therefore, he requested the Security Council and the African Union to create and deploy an ad hoc mechanism in North Kivu to identify and expel them from Congolese territory. Moreover, Rwanda interfered in the internal affairs of the Democratic Republic of

Congo by opposing the deployment of MONUSCO and SADC.

Pointing to Kigali's support for rebel groups like M23 – "Rwanda's armed wing in the Democratic Republic of the Congo" – he spotlighted its role in undermining efforts to achieve lasting peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the broader Great Lakes Region, including by blocking the Nairobi and Luanda processes. Against this backdrop, he urged the Council to demand Rwanda immediately withdraw its troops from his country's territory and to cease all support for M23".

Source: *United Nations, Security Council, meetings coverage of 20 February 2024* (<https://press.un.org/en/2024/sc15596.doc.htm>)

Attack on neutrality

Since when have Austrian governments neglected neutrality?

by Daniel Jenny, Austria

On 14 July 1984, the Austrian Foreign Minister *Alois Mock* (ÖVP) sent a letter to his French counterpart and President-in-Office of the Council of the European Communities, *Roland Dumas*, in which Austria officially applied to join the European Communities. He writes: "In submitting this application, Austria assumes that its internationally recognised status of perpetual neutrality, which is based on the Federal Constitutional Law of 26 October 1955, will be maintained and that, as a member of the European Communities, it will also be able to fulfil the legal obligations arising from its status as a perpetually neutral state and to continue its policy of neutrality as a specific contribution to the maintenance of peace and security in Europe on the basis of the Accession Treaty."

The government of the time headed by Federal Chancellor *Fred Sinowatz* (SPÖ) and Vice-Chancellor *Norbert Steger* (FPÖ) had respected the wish of the Austrians to remain neutral even if they joined the then European Communities and attached a reservation of neutrality to the application for membership.

In 1988 and 1989, the following parties and institutions were in favour of joining the European Communities:

- FPÖ (Freedom Party of Austria),¹
- the *Austrian Trade Union Federation*, although having demands concerning an accession, is not against it,²
- ÖVP (Austrian People's Party),³
- The *Association of Austrian Industrialists*.⁴

Those against accession to the European Communities are:

- the Greens,⁵
- the KPÖ (Communist Party of Austria).⁶

On 31 July 1992, the EC Commission responded to Austria's application for membership, which was submitted in 1989 without a formal reservation of neutrality, with a statement⁷. The EU addressed the compatibility with Austria's permanent neutrality as follows:

"Possible solutions to the problems resulting from Austria's neutrality: The solutions to the legal problems identified above must be worked out in the accession negotiations, namely

1. either through a redefinition of the neutrality status by Austria (which would have to be notified to the partners)
2. or through an exception to the Treaty enshrined in the Act of Accession."

This statement is revealing. The EC Commission drew Austria's attention to two possibilities:

1. in the first case, Austria would have had to redefine its neutrality status so that it was compatible with the *Common Foreign and Security Policy* of the nascent EU and inform all other states of this.

2. in the second case, Austria was shown the way to negotiate exceptions to the "Treaty on European Union" in Austria's acts of accession.

Formal accession negotiations began on 1 February 1993⁸ and lasted until their conclusion on 12 April 1994.⁹ A time, where Federal Chancellor *Franz Vranitzky* (SPÖ) and Vice-Chancellor *Erhard Busek* (ÖVP) were in the Austrian government.¹⁰ At that time, obviously the decision was made not to pursue the second option and not to obtain a derogation. Austria did not obtain an exemption from the treaty, as other countries like Denmark and Great Britain. These countries have shown that it was possible to obtain exemptions from the treaties (UK e.g., "British rebate", Denmark e.g., "EU defence reservation", which was abandoned in a referendum in 2022).

Austria did not achieve this, and most probably did not even try – the negotiations were confidential – because it would have been a de facto agreed reservation of neutrality. However, *Alois Mock* (ÖVP) decidedly ruled out a reservation of neutrality at the time. The "Irish clause" and "constructive abstention" were options that were granted to neutral states in the EU for independent neutral behaviour. However, these were not "exceptions agreed in the Acts of Accession."¹¹ It is hard to believe that the Austrian negotiators obviously chose the first option, which was tantamount to giving up neutrality within the EU! Since then, governments have been talking about being neutral – meaning being neutral only outside the EU. This is incompatible with the law of neutrality under inter-

national law. Therefore, to this day, everything is done in harmony with the EU. However, this violates the obligations of neutrality under international law. Till today, the Austrian governments do not seriously and honestly fulfil their duties of neutrality.

The neutrality of Austria remains

Even today, 80 % of Austrians agree that they want to maintain neutrality.¹² For them, neutrality is a peacemaking instrument that makes sense for the whole world and has also become part of their own identity.

As Professor *Michael Geistlinger* explained at a public lecture in Ansfelden on 28 March 2023, the treaty provisions of the European Union are nothing more than a founding treaty of a regional international organisation:¹³ "The European Union is often seen as a superstar, but in purely legal terms, purely in terms of international law, it is nothing more than a regional international organisation. As

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BUNDESGESETZBLATT FÜR DIE REPUBLIK ÖSTERREICH

Jahrgang 1955 Ausgegeben am 4. November 1955 57. Stück

211. Bundesverfassungsgesetz: Neutralität Österreichs.
212. Verordnung: Errichtung von Ergänzungskommandos zur Durchführung der Erfassung und Einberufung der Wehrpflichtigen.
213. Verordnung: Änderung der Sprengel der Gerichtsbezirke Neulengbach und Purkersdorf.
214. Kundmachung: Änderung der Kundmachung, betreffend die Anrechnung von Vordienstzeiten für die Vorrückung in höhere Bezüge bei den Beamten der Österreichischen Bundesbahnen.
215. Notenwechsel über die Aufhebung der Sichtvermerkpflicht zwischen Österreich und Monaco.

211. Bundesverfassungsgesetz vom 26. Oktober 1955 über die Neutralität Österreichs.

Der Nationalrat hat beschlossen:

Artikel I.

(1) Zum Zwecke der dauernden Behauptung seiner Unabhängigkeit nach außen und zum Zwecke der Unverletzlichkeit seines Gebietes erklärt Österreich aus freien Stücken seine immerwährende Neutralität. Österreich wird diese mit allen ihm zu Gebote stehenden Mitteln aufrechterhalten und verteidigen.

(2) Österreich wird zur Sicherung dieser Zwecke in aller Zukunft keinen militärischen Bündnissen beitreten und die Errichtung militärischer Stützpunkte fremder Staaten auf seinem Gebiete nicht zulassen.

Artikel II.

Mit der Vollziehung dieses Bundesverfassungsgesetzes ist die Bundesregierung betraut.

Körner

| | | | |
|---------|-------------|--------|--------|
| Raab | Schärf | Helmer | Kapfer |
| Drimmel | Maisel | Kamitz | Thoma |
| Illig | Waldbrunner | Figl | |

212. Verordnung des Bundeskanzleramtes vom 15. Oktober 1955, betreffend die Errichtung von Ergänzungskommandos zur Durchführung der Erfassung und Einberufung der Wehrpflichtigen.

Auf Grund der §§ 17 und 18 des Wehrgesetzes, BGBl. Nr. 181/1955, wird verordnet: Ergänzungskommandos werden mit folgendem örtlichem Wirkungsbereich in folgenden Städten eingerichtet:

Für den Ergänzungsbereich

| | | |
|------------------|-------|----------------|
| Burgenland | | in Eisenstadt, |
| Kärnten | | in Klagenfurt, |
| Niederösterreich | | in Wien, |
| Oberösterreich | | in Linz, |

4

115

1151

| | | |
|------------|-------|---------------|
| Salzburg | | in Salzburg, |
| Steiermark | | in Graz, |
| Tirol | | in Innsbruck, |
| Vorarlberg | | in Bregenz, |
| Wien | | in Wien. |

Raab

213. Verordnung der Bundesregierung vom 25. Oktober 1955, womit die Sprengel der Gerichtsbezirke Neulengbach und Purkersdorf geändert werden.

Auf Grund des § 8 Abs. 5 lit. d des Übergangsgesetzes vom 1. Oktober 1920 in der Fassung des Bundesgesetzes Nr. 368 vom Jahre 1925 wird mit Zustimmung der niederösterreichischen Landesregierung verordnet:

§ 1. Die Gemeinden Gablitz, Mauerbach, Preßbaum, Tullnerbach und Wolfsgraben werden aus dem Sprengel des Bezirksgerichtes Neulengbach ausgeschieden und dem Sprengel des Bezirksgerichtes Purkersdorf zugewiesen.

§ 2. Diese Verordnung tritt am 1. Jänner 1956 in Kraft.

| | | | |
|---------|-------------|--------|--------|
| Raab | Schärf | Helmer | Kapfer |
| Drimmel | Maisel | Kamitz | Thoma |
| Illig | Waldbrunner | Figl | |

214. Kundmachung des Bundesministeriums für Verkehr und verstaatlichte Betriebe vom 29. Oktober 1955, womit die Kundmachung des Bundesministeriums für Verkehr vom 19. Juli 1948, BGBl. Nr. 174, in der Fassung der Kundmachung des Bundesministeriums für Verkehr und verstaatlichte Betriebe vom 27. November 1952, BGBl. Nr. 218, betreffend die Anrechnung von Vordienstzeiten für die Vorrückung in höhere Bezüge bei den Beamten der Österreichischen Bundesbahnen, abgeändert wird.

Auf Grund des zustimmenden Beschlusses des Hauptausschusses des Nationalrates vom 24. Ok-

“Attack on neutrality ...”

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a regional international organisation, the European Union is bound by international law. In the EU Treaty, it expressly recognises the principles of the United Nations Charter.” (By the way, it would be better if the EU adhered to the United Nations Charter instead of just its principles). Even if the Austrian Federal President says so, it is not correct to say that the EU’s solidarity obligations take precedence over its obligations under international law. The opposite is true. Prof. Geistlinger continues: “Rather, universal international law takes precedence over the regional international organisation. Our obligation to perpetual neutrality is an obligation under universal international law. If we enter into obligations towards the European Union that are not in line with our universal obligations, we are indeed guilty towards the EU, but universal international law requires us to act against the European Union.” The obligations and rights of the neutral state towards the international community therefore continue to apply. Unfortunately, our governments are undermining neutrality because we do not take the duties of neutrality seriously enough.

Pre-emptive obedience

Instead of obtaining exemptions due to its neutral status during the accession negotiations with the EC/EU, the government of that time chose a different path: the country offered its services to the EU when the Second Gulf War was looming in the run-up to the accession negotiations.

The Second Gulf War began with the conquest of Kuwait by Iraq on 2 August 1990. The staged testimony of a Kuwaiti diplomat’s daughter before the US Congress on 10 October 1990 about the alleged killing of new-born babies by Iraqi soldiers had a considerable influence on American public opinion and led to widespread support for a war mission in the USA. The UN Security Council issued a resolution in which – exceptionally – the use of military force was also authorised: Resolution 678¹⁴ of 29 November 1990 “authorise[d] member states cooperating with the Government of Kuwait, in the event that Iraq does not fully implement [...] the above resolutions by 15 January 1991, to use all necessary means to give effect to Resolution 660 (1990)¹⁵ [meaning withdrawal from Kuwait] [...] and to restore international security in the area”. From 16 January 1991, a coalition, led by the USA and legitimised by UN Security Council Resolution 678, began combat operations to liberate Kuwait.¹⁶ However, this resolution also stated that all states were

requested to “support the [...] measures taken in an appropriate manner”. By “appropriate” it was meant that neutral states were exempt from this due to their status under international law.

Unfortunately, the government at the time, with Federal Chancellor Franz Vranitzky (SPÖ) and Vice-Chancellor *Josef Riegler* (ÖVP), took a different view and said that we could not participate, but would allow the flights over our federal territory because of the resolution. However, this behaviour is not conforming to neutrality. This is precisely why the Security Council expressly stated: “to support in an appropriate manner”. Respect for Austrian neutrality would have been necessary. At that time, however, not only the overflights but also the transports were approved. The tanks transported by Austria were “armoured recovery vehicles” and not “normal” tanks. The government has offered its services to the EU. Why? Did they want to convince the EU in the run-up to the accession negotiations that they would renounce their neutral status if necessary? Did the transatlantic hegemon demand via the EU structures that Austria renounce its neutrality? Was pressure exerted?

Forced allegiance

A similar process was observed with the eastern enlargement of NATO and the EU. All states of the former military alliance “Warsaw Pact” were first admitted to NATO in stages and then to the EU in a second step. The first eastward enlargement of NATO in the accession round of Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary took place on 12 March 1999. The second eastward enlargement of NATO with Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia took place in the accession round of 29 March 2004. Only Malta and Cyprus were spared NATO membership.

When the USA attacked Iraq in spring 2003 in the Third Gulf War in violation of international law, all ten newly admitted countries without exception had to support the USA politically and militarily as a coalition of the willing¹⁷. Only Malta, Austria and Cyprus were spared direct participation in the coalition.

Only in a later step, on 1 May 2004, did the ten countries achieve that, after fulfilling the “Copenhagen criteria”¹⁸, they now have the “ability to fulfil the obligations of EU membership and, for example, to implement all EU regulations and support the objectives of the EU”. These ten were Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Malta and Cyprus. Finally, Bulgaria and Romania joined the EU on 1 January 2007.

Is it a coincidence that they first joined NATO, thereafter a war mission was enforced and only then did they fulfil the EU’s “Copenhagen criteria”? It would appear that the EU is merely the political arm of NATO. Could this be the reason why Austria was not allowed to honour the three neutrality obligations agreed by the international community in 1955 as part of a “unilateral legal transaction”? The three obligations are the duty of abstinence, the duty of equal treatment and not to make Austrian territory available to belligerents. Is that so difficult?

We believe that the security of a state decreases in an alliance, as you can no longer decide on war and peace yourself. Alliances always want to become bigger. They are committed to power, not peace. It is high time we honoured our neutrality commitments. Peacemakers are needed. •

¹ https://www.cvce.eu/de/obj/entschlie%C3%9Fungsantrag_der_fpo_betreffend_die_aufnahme_von_beitrittsverhandlungen_mit_der_eg_27_november_1987-de-101722dd-877a-4b8c-aa04-0a05e79cae96.html

² https://www.cvce.eu/de/obj/europa_memorandum_des_osterreichischen_gewerkschaftsbundes_6_dezember_1988-de-17d7fc58-bc40-4435-b75c-ac8cd04b3f87.html

³ https://www.cvce.eu/de/obj/europa_manifest_der_osterreichischen_volkspartei_ovp_23_mai_1988-de-30e56e53-2fcb-4ab7-b33d-0fc096b757e1.html

⁴ https://www.cvce.eu/de/obj/stellungnahme_der_vereinigung_osterreichischer_industrieller_zur_europaischen_integration_europa_unsere_zukunft_wien_1987-de-51284fca-1239-4766-aba2-fd0ee07c7752.html

⁵ https://www.cvce.eu/de/obj/europamanifest_der_osterreichischen_grunen_alternative_februar_1989-de-9ad04f3d-2c40-44c1-bb83-944a04e6e5ac.html

⁶ https://www.cvce.eu/de/obj/denkschrift_der_kommunistischen_partei_osterreichs_hinsichtlich_des_eg_beitritt_osterreichs_1988-de-7e7e8587-8c06-40e2-b83e-ae70e03c9eb9.html

⁷ https://www.cvce.eu/de/obj/commission_opinion_on_austria_s_application_for_membership_31_july_De:1991-en-e22a3d78-7ef1-46e1-8dbb-f4db-7c584fc4.html

⁸ <https://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/themen/at-25eu/hintergrundinfo/oesterreichs-weg-in-die-eu.html>

⁹ On 1 November 1993, under the third Delors Commission, the Maastricht Treaty became effective, creating the European Union with its pillar system, including foreign and home affairs alongside the European Community. See also https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_European_Union

¹⁰ <https://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/bundeskanzleramt/geschichte/regierungen-seit-1945.html>

¹¹ E-Mail of 1 February 2024, 4:00 p.m.

¹² <https://express.at/express-umfrage-bestaetigt-eindeutig-80-wollen-neutralitaet-behalten/>

¹³ <https://infoe.at/2023/03/28/vortrag-mit-univ-prof-dr-michael-geistlinger-28-3-2023/>

¹⁴ <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/Chap%20VII%20SRES%20678.pdf>

¹⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Security_Council_Resolution_660

¹⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gulf_War

¹⁷ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coalition_of_the_willing_\(Iraq_War\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coalition_of_the_willing_(Iraq_War))

¹⁸ https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/eu-enlargement_en

Blatant violation of neutrality and democracy

Federal Council refuses to sign the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons!

by Dr iur. Marianne Wüthrich

On 27 March 2024, the Federal Council announced that it would not join the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) “for the time being”. It had already declared the same in 2018 and 2019.¹

This is big news from the Federal Palace! Unfortunately, it is nothing new for us citizens that our “servants of the people” violate the principle of neutrality, but what is happening here is unprecedented. For more than five years now, the Federal Council has been ignoring the will of the Swiss Parliament, which voted clearly in favour of joining the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in 2018 (see box).

Journal for the Swiss Abroad: Federal Council’s duty to accede

“Switzerland is defined, among other things, by its commitment to conflict resolution, nuclear disarmament, and world peace. [...] Which is why signing the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) immediately would seem to be a no-brainer for the Federal Council. [...] To ratify the TPNW would also be in keeping with Switzerland’s hu-

manitarian tradition. And yet the same Federal Council has hit the brakes.” With these crystal-clear words, *Swiss Review*, the magazine for the Swiss abroad, is reminding the Federal Council of its duty to Switzerland and the world.²

Peace-loving states join the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons³

The treaty “contains a comprehensive and explicit ban on nuclear weapons, prohibiting their use, threat of use, production, stockpiling, acquisition, possession, deployment, transfer, testing, and any support for these prohibited activities.” (Federal Council press release of 27 March 2024) The TPNW thus goes much further than the 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which was recognised by the five nuclear powers – the USA, Russia, the UK, France and China – and has since been recognised by practically all countries in the world.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons has been in force since 2021 and has already been ratified by 70 states, the majority of them from the

Global South, while the five nuclear powers mentioned above and the entire West – with the exception of the neutrals Ireland and Austria! – remain white on the world map.⁴ Switzerland would have every reason to follow the courageous example of Ireland and Austria and join the peace-loving states of the world. Instead “[t]he Federal Council still holds the view that the effectiveness of the TPNW is limited, since neither the nuclear-armed states nor the majority of Western and European countries recognise it.” His masters voice – more than embarrassing for the once neutral and independent Switzerland.

Federal Council tries to wriggle out

According to all surveys and the more than 132,000 signatories of the neutrality initiative that has just been submitted, Switzerland’s neutrality corresponds to the will of the vast majority of Swiss people. The Federal Council correctly states in its press release: “The use of nuclear weapons would hardly be compatible with international humanitarian law.” But then it wriggles out again and claims that “joining the TPNW is not in Switzerland’s interests, given the current international context [...]” Why not? The Federal Council fails to give us a more precise answer in its press release. It merely states that it adopted its report on a parliamentary postulate on 27 March. It is worth taking a look at the report.

Accession would have “negative effects on cooperation with NATO”

In the report of 31 January 2024 on the “Consequences of Switzerland’s accession to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons for Switzerland’s foreign and security policy”⁵, we learn about the alarming mood of war being cultivated in the Federal Council. We spare our readers the absurd accusations against Russia, whose “use of military force” has prompted many European states to “strengthen their defence preparedness” – it doesn’t get any more twisted than that. And we note with displeasure how the Federal Council waxes lyrical about Sweden and Finland joining Nato (and the EU accession that preceded it): “Two states that cultivated a long tradition of neutrality during the Cold War and later evolved from neutral to non-aligned states when they joined the EU and the Lisbon Treaty came into force have now come to the conclusion that their security is better guaranteed in Nato.” (Report, p. 2)

Under the heading “Risks” (of joining the TPNW), the report comes to the point:

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The Federal Council acts against the unequivocal will of the Parliament

mw. On the same day as the Federal Council published its decision, the Swiss Social Democratic Party wrote: “Saying yes to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is more important than ever before!” Also said: “Today, the Federal Council has once again spoken out against the signing and ratification of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The SP strongly criticises this decision, which is against the clear will of the Parliament, and calls for quick action. [...] Switzerland has still not signed the treaty, even though the National Council and Council of States approved a corresponding motion by SP Councillor of States Carlo Sommaruga back in 2018.” The SP concludes: “The order to the Federal Council had therefore already been issued long ago.”

And indeed, I came across the motion 17.4241 by Carlo Sommaruga (SP, GE): “Sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons”, which was adopted by the National Council on 5 June 2018 with 100 votes in favour, 86 against and one abstention. On 12th December 2018, the Council of States also clearly approved the motion, with 24 votes in favour, 15 against and 2 abstentions. This result was contrary to the rejection recommendation of the Federal Council (which was already represented at the time by the head of the FDFA, *Ignazio Cassis*).

In addition to the left-wing parties, many representatives of the CVP and some

members of the SVP and FDP in both chambers also said yes to the ban on nuclear weapons. The motion “instructs the Federal Council to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons quickly and submit it [to Parliament] for ratification.” Carlo Sommaruga, then a member of the National Council, said in his vote: “As incredible as it may sound, despite the 250,000 deaths caused by the two bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, nuclear weapons have never been banned, unlike biological weapons, which were banned in 1975, and chemical weapons, which have been banned since 1997. However, there is no doubt that the use of nuclear weapons has devastating consequences for the civilian population. As the ICRC and its [then] president *Peter Maurer* emphasise, nuclear weapons by definition violate the Geneva Conventions, of which we are the depositaries and which prohibit the targeting of civilians in armed conflict.” This is therefore a clear mandate from Parliament (elected by the people) to the Federal Council. It is unbelievable that the Federal Council has persistently ignored this – for over five years now!

Sources: SP Switzerland media release of 27 March 2024. <https://www.sp.ps.ch/artikel/2024/03/27/>; Minutes of the parliamentary negotiations of 5 June and 12 December 2018. <https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/amtliches-bulletin/amtliches-bulletin-die-verhandlungen?SubjectId=44998>

“Blatant violation of neutrality ...”

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“Even if current military cooperation is not likely to be directly affected according to current knowledge, joining the TPNW would complicate Switzerland’s position in security partnerships. This is particularly true in relation to NATO, which is a declared nuclear alliance and will remain so for the foreseeable future.” (p. 3) Why would accession “complicate” Switzerland’s relationship with NATO? What comes across rather cryptically on page 4 of the current report is translated into readable language by the *Swiss Review* on the basis of a Federal Administration paper from 2018, “saying that Switzerland would probably cooperate with nuclear-weapon states or their allies, in the extreme case of self-defence against an armed attack. As a party to the TPNW, Switzerland would abandon the option of explicitly placing itself under a nuclear umbrella within the framework of such alliances [i. e. NATO and the EU]”.⁶

In plain language: by voting against the TPNW, the Federal Council is heralding Switzerland’s de facto accession to NATO.

The burning question of security for neutral Switzerland

The Federal Council omits the most important question in its construct: Namely, whether Switzerland would actually be safer under the nuclear or conventional protective umbrella of NATO (and the NATO-EU Sky Shield) than it has been in over 200 years as a neutral state. For anyone familiar with Swiss history, the answer is clear. Thanks to its neutrality, Switzerland was able to stay out of all the wars raging around it, especially the two terrible world wars of the 20th century.

A second, no less important question: Who is NATO supposed to protect us against?

The Russian ambassador to Switzerland, *Sergei Garmonin*, recently remarked in a lecture in Kloten that the DDPS (Swiss Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Security) had said that “Russia could deploy tanks or even its

navy (!) against landlocked Switzerland”. In fact, Russia has never attacked Switzerland (apart from General *Suvorov*, who fought against the French on the Zürichberg at the end of the 18th century) and has no plans to do so today.

The Russian ambassador also pointed out that President *Vladimir Putin* had recently reaffirmed that he had no intention of attacking NATO. However, *Sergei Garmonin* warned that Switzerland’s relationship with Russia would not be helped by a rapprochement with NATO.⁷

Remain a neutral country and make ones contribution

One aspect of the Federal Council’s report should also be addressed: “One of the possible risks of accession is that the TPNW may meet with little understanding, or even outright rejection, from major international players and Switzerland’s bilateral and multilateral partners.” (p. 4)

The fact that the major powers have “little understanding” for the neutral position is nothing new. We know this from history: warring powers regularly called on Switzerland to position itself on their side. It is the fate of the neutrals not to be “understood” by the warring powers. But even if the centres of power do not understand the neutral Swiss position, the main thing is that we ourselves understand neutrality as the foundation of our self-understanding as a state and our activities in the world.

Switzerland can only make its contribution to peace on the basis of its neutrality, through the indispensable work of the ICRC and its willingness to provide its good offices to all warring parties who so wish.

In the Ukraine war, too, our Federal Councillors would be well advised to remember that Switzerland’s peace work is not possible if it sanctions one party and supplies weapons to the other – whether directly or in a ring swap. And in the Gaza war, the Federal Council and Parliament must not be deterred from doing all they can to support the ICRC and the UN aid organisations, above all the Palestinian relief agency UNWRA, so

Neutrality policy scandal: Federal Council decides to join European Sky Shield

mw. On 10 April, the Federal Council stepped up its neutrality reduction programme once again: it decided to join the “European Sky Shield Initiative” (ESSI). This was “launched in August 2022 and is based on the need to strengthen air defence in Europe and better pool efforts”. It goes on to say: “Eleven countries have now signed the declaration of accession to the MoU [Memorandum of Understanding].” So Switzerland is one of the first eleven signatories – the *Amherd/Cassis* duo is really very eager, considering that we are neither a member of NATO nor the EU!

According to the press release, Switzerland is primarily concerned with “better coordination of procurement projects, training and logistical aspects in the area of ground-based air defence” (GBAD) in Europe. The Federal Council also emphasises that even after signing the declaration of accession, “Switzerland is free to decide” where and to what extent it wishes to participate in ESSI: “Signing the declaration of accession to the MoU does not create any obligations.” So it’s all quite harmless?

Then why did Switzerland and Austria have to record “their reservations under neutrality law” in an additional declaration in order to “exclude any participation or involvement in *international military conflicts*”? [emphasis mw]. The matter is obviously not that harmless after all.

What is Switzerland doing in the “air defence system” of the EU/NATO against Russia?

Our neutrality-based defensive reflex is confirmed by a report from the British news agency *Reuters* under the title: “Neutral Switzerland joins European Sky Shield defence project” with the explanation: “The European Sky Shield Initiative (ESSI) is a joint air defence system launched by Germany in 2022 to strengthen European air defence – an issue that has come into sharper focus since *Russia’s invasion of Ukraine*.” [emphasis mw]

Sources: “Federal Council decides to join the European Sky Shield Initiative”. Media release of 10 April 2024; “Neutral Switzerland joins European Sky Shield defence project”. *Reuters* from 10 April 2024

that they can bring a little light into the hell of the people in the Gaza Strip. •

Participation in the State of Alliance NATO activities mean the “de facto annulment of the Swiss neutrality”

mw. On 20 February 2024, the National Council’s Security Policy Committee adopted “Motion 24.3012 with 16 to 8 votes and one abstention, instructing the Federal Council to amend the relevant legislation in such a way that the joint exercises with NATO in which a state of alliance according to the meaning of Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty is simulated, are declared as prohibited. The majority of the Committee is of the opinion that a cooperation with NATO, which includes the participation in such exercises, would mean a de facto rev-

ocation of the Swiss neutrality. They recognise that such exercises are not planned at the moment however, want to send the Federal Council the signal that with this Motion, where they see the limits of any cooperation with NATO.”

It is to be hoped that this Motion will be approved by both councils although the Swiss Army rightly should not participate in any NATO exercises at all.

Source: *Media Release of the Security Policy Committee of the National Council (SPC-N) of 20 February 2024*

¹ “Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons: Federal Council sees no need to change direction at this time” Press Release by the Federal Council of 27 March 2024

² Forster, Christof. “Ban Nuclear Weapons? Yes, but ...”. *Swiss Revue* No.2 of March 2024

³ TPNW: Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons www.icanw.org/signature_and_ratification_status

⁴ *Auswirkungen eines Beitritts der Schweiz zum Kernwaffenverbotsvertrag auf die Aussen- und Sicherheitspolitik der Schweiz* (Consequences of Switzerland’s accession to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons for Switzerland’s foreign and security policy). Report of the Federal Council in fulfilment of postulate 22.3800 Dittli, 31 January 2024

⁶ Forster, Christof. “Ban nuclear weapons? Yes, but ...”. *Swiss Revue* No.2 of March 2024

⁷ Lecture given in Kloten town hall on 22 March 2024

“In Defence of the human being”

by Moritz Nestor

An urgently needed book was published in 2020: *In Defence of the Human Being*. The author is *Thomas Fuchs*, philosopher, psychiatrist, and the Karl Jaspers Professor of Philosophy and Psychiatry at *Ruprecht Karls University* in Heidelberg. Fuchs's book reminds us of the intellectual eradication we have witnessed in the human sciences since the 1960s and 1970s. Today, the human being seems to have disappeared from some areas of our human science disciplines.

Only recently, for example, a group of young social workers at a large psychiatric institution in Germany, who deal with the most serious problems on a daily basis, expressed their honest astonishment that the term “relationship” had never been mentioned in their training. Of course, the term was self-evident in their view. But in the scientific principles that they learned in their training for dealing with their patients, the word “relationship” was mentioned neither in theory nor in practice. They were essentially only familiar with ecological, cybernetic, and radically constructivist systemic approaches, mostly of US origin. The huge field of human scientific research on humans as cultural and relational beings, especially in Europe, was no longer taught. What happened?

Misanthropic aberrations:

Deep ecology and transhumanism

There is, Thomas Fuchs begins his book, a long tradition

*“of putting humanity itself in the dock, of accusing it of excess, greed, hubris, or perfidy, of blaming it for the horrors of war or the destruction of the planet. Recently, there has even been an increase in statements to the effect that it would be best for the earth if it could free itself from its ‘coating of mould’, as Schopenhauer once called humanity”.*¹

Fuchs cites as examples the *Voluntary Human Extinction Movement*² founded by *Les Knight* in 1991 and based on deep ecology, which pursues the “extinction of humanity to save the earth”, as well as the transhumanist³ *Robert Ettinger*, who wrote in his 1989 book, *Man into Superman*, that humanity is “itself a disease”. We must “set about curing ourselves of it”. Our species *Homo sapiens* is “only a bungling beginning”. When man “clearly recognises himself as an error”, he will be “motivated to form himself”⁴.

The human being: A living, bodily being in a relational space

Fuchs is concerned with the defence of the human being against challenges directed against the humanistic view of man and its core: the human person as a free, self-determining and social being connected to others. According to Fuchs, we humans are not “mere spirits” without corporeality, but “living beings” in “a shared relational space” and with a claim to respect our dignity, which humans “assert through their bodily existence and togetherness”.

From behaviourist conditioning ...

Fuchs cites the book *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* by the US behavioural psychologist *Burrhus Frederic Skinner*, published in 1971, as a relatively early example of the questioning of the “humanistic personal concept of man”. It is a radical rejection of the personal conception of man.

“The belief in something like free will and moral autonomy”, Skinner wrote, “is the relic of a mythical, pre-scientific view of man. The attribution of personal responsibility and dignity hinders scientific progress”.

Skinner wanted to use social technologies to condition human behaviour in the same way that *Pavlov* conditioned his dog, whose saliva, after a while, would run only if the little bell sounded to announce the arrival of food. In this way, overpopulation and wars were to be discouraged and happiness instilled in humans.

... to the delusion of man as a will-less fulfilment organ of biochemistry and cybernetics

Recently, there has been less talk of Skinner's frightening social utopia. But, according to Fuchs, Skinner's basic idea is more relevant than ever: “to replace our self-image, which is biased by prejudice and myths, with rational knowledge of the human being and corresponding technologies”.⁵ For example, the Israeli historian *Yuval Noah Harari* claims in his 2017 book, *Homo Deus* that artificial intelligence is gradually rendering the humanistic view of man superfluous. Fuchs describes Harari's theory, also known as “posthumanism”, which is based on biology and cybernetics, this way:

*People will no longer see themselves as autonomous beings running their lives according to their wishes, but instead will become accustomed to seeing themselves as a collection of biochemical mechanisms that is constantly monitored and guided by a network of electronic algorithms.*⁶

Untenable assumptions

Harari says that in recent decades life sciences have relegated the free will, the “idea of an autonomous self” and the human “ego” to the realm of those imaginary stories about Christianity, St Nicholas, and the Easter Bunny.⁷ *Homo sapiens* is “an obsolete algorithm”.⁸ However, says Fuchs, Harari's cynical deconstructivist theory has very real political consequences: Digital surveillance systems are being created worldwide using artificial intelligence. Fuchs believes that “something very like Skinner's social technology is being realised”. Authors such as Harari uncritically adopt set pieces of a “scientific view of humanity”. This includes three assumptions:

One, everything animate and inanimate can be fully explained scientifically. Two, subjectivity, mind, and consciousness are attributed to physical and physiological processes and are the products of nervous activity. Three, human subjectivity, spirit, and consciousness have no “independent effectiveness in the world”.

Today the biosciences see all organisms as biological machines, controlled by genetic programmes. Mental experience, inwardness – all this is merely an “effect of biochemical or evolutionary mechanisms”. What is alive is thus eliminated.

To this way of thinking, the human mind and consciousness are “neuronal information processing”, which in principle can run on any hardware and be simulated by computer systems.

In this way, the human being becomes the “sum of his data”, says Fuchs, and self-awareness, self-determination, understanding, self-reflection, and self-knowledge become superfluous – the algorithms know us better. Here again Fuchs:

The modern chorus of materialistic neurophilosophy proclaims that our subjective experience is nothing more than the colorful “user interface of a neuro-computer and thus a user illusion” (Slaby 2011) – only the neuronal computational processes in the background are real.

Self-knowledge, understanding, self-reflection, self-awareness and self-determination – in short, mental and spiritual life – are no longer a reality in this materialistic world view; they are a naïve, nostalgic belief.

To summarise, the following picture emerges: the modern “posthuman” materialist says that everything is matter that can be fully investigated by science. Consciousness, thinking, and feeling derive

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from physical-chemical nerve activity: “neuronal data processing”. Like a computer.

Human consciousness: events bound to physicality in the interpersonal space.

For Fuchs, consciousness, thinking, and feeling are not physical-chemical processes. Translated into everyday language, Fuchs says analogously:

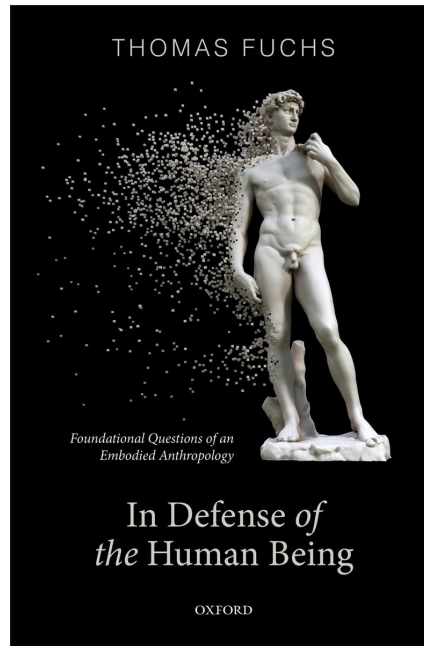
Just as a melody, although it cannot be heard without a piano, is not contained in the material of the piano keys or can be explained by these keys, a person cannot express consciousness, thinking, and feeling without a brain and body. The melody is not the sequence of keys. It sounds in the spiritual space within and between us humans. So we always think and feel in the social space of social relationships. Thinking is therefore always interpersonal thinking, and feeling is always interpersonal feeling. A person without social relationships, which would of course be unthinkable, would not need to think, feel, or even speak.

We feel as whole beings – not with the brain alone

According to Fuchs, materialism cannot be effectively countered by opposing it argumentatively to an abstract, disembodied, pure spirit. Rather, according to Fuchs, it requires casting the human person as a body-soul unity. According to Fuchs, the humanistic view of the human being shows “that human beings are present in their own body, that they feel, perceive, express themselves and act with their body”. When we humans meet, it is not brains that meet. It is the same with every life process. In reality, every human person does not act as a brain, but as a self-determined organism that is an inseparable unity of body and soul.

According to Fuchs, interpersonal relationships are therefore not the contact of brains, but “intercorporeality”. This means: My hand is not a piece of flesh, but an animated part of a living organism. We do not understand other people “by means of a theory of the mind”, Fuchs remarks, but rather

“intuitively on the basis of their physical expression, their gestures and their behaviour. Just a few weeks after birth, babies recognise the emotional expressions of the mother or father, namely by understanding and feeling these expressions’ melody, rhythm, and dynamics in their own bodies.” (p. 13)



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Hence, also, digital online communication always presupposes that we are dealing with “a living person made of flesh and blood”. The “feeling body” also feels sympathy in virtual spaces. We immediately understand what Fuchs means: In the cinema, it is not just the neurons in my brain that use a “theory of mind” to analyse what is going on outside the cave of my head on the screen. If the virtual mountaineer on the screen falls on the north face of the Eiger in a snowstorm, we react with our whole body.

Humanism of the embodied living spirit

This view of the human being as a body-soul unit – which neither materialistically sees everything spiritual as a higher nervous activity nor assumes an abstract disembodied spirit – is what Fuchs calls “embodied anthropology”, a “humanism of the living embodied spirit”. This is actually a view that Aristotle had already recognised: the experiencing and self-conscious organism.

Taking this view of the mind-body problem, Fuchs agrees with Adolf Portmann’s “basal anthropology” and with the concept of man we find in Adlerian individual psychology – which already emphasises the indivisible mind-body unity in its name – as well as with neo-psychanalysis and with the psychosomatic research of Franz Alexander, Thure von Uexküll, and others, to name just a few important researchers.

In his defence of the human being, Fuchs starts with this fixed point, with the “what” question, “What is the human being?”, to take a stance against the on-

going anti-humanist stream of false theories which radically question nothing less than the freedom and continued existence of the human species. This is not simply a theoretical question, says Fuchs, but an ethical and, above all, an eminently political one.

The concept of man: An eminently political concern

“For as Karl Jaspers wrote, the concept of man that we hold to be true”, Fuchs writes, “ultimately determines our treatment of ourselves and others – today we would have to add: and nature”. He elaborates:

Humanism in its ethical sense therefore means resistance to the rule of technocratic systems and constraints as well as to the objectification and mechanisation of human beings. If we perceive ourselves as objects, be it as algorithms or as neuronally determined apparatuses, we surrender ourselves to the rule of those who seek to manipulate such apparatuses and dominate them socio-technologically. “For the power of Man to make himself what he pleases means [...] the power of some men to make other men what they please”.⁹ The defence of man is therefore not only a theoretical task, but also an ethical duty.”¹⁰

This is completely in the spirit of Karl Jaspers as he wrote in “Der philosophische Glaube” (1974): It is “the concept of man which we hold to be true that ultimately decides how we treat ourselves and others” – today we would have to add: and nature.

¹ Schopenhauer, Arthur. *The World as Will and Representation* Vol. 2, 1859, quoted from Fuchs, p. 7

² <https://www.vhemt.org/> (retrieved on 3 October 2021)

³ Transhumanism wants to “improve” human nature through genetic engineering, nanotechnology, brain-computer wiring and the like. The biologist and eugenicist Julian Huxley defined transhumanism in his 1957 book “New Bottles for New Wine”: “The human species can, if it wishes, transcend itself – not just sporadically, an individual here in one way, an individual there in another way, but in its entirety, as humanity. We need a name for this new belief. Perhaps transhumanism will serve: man remaining man, but transcending himself, by realising new possibilities of and for his human nature”.

⁴ Ettinger, Robert C. *Man into Superman*. New York 1989, pp. 4, 8f., quoted from Fuchs, p. 8 [translation by Thomas Fuchs]

⁵ Fuchs, pp. 8ff.

⁶ Harari, J. N. *Homo Deus. Eine Geschichte von morgen* (Homo Deus. A brief history of tomorrow). Munich 2017, p. 445, quoted from Fuchs, p. 9

⁷ Harari, 2017, pp. 381 and 392, quoted from Fuchs, pp. 9f.

⁸ Harari, 2017, p. 516, quoted from Fuchs, p. 10

⁹ Lewis, C. S. *Die Abschaffung des Menschen*. (The Abolition of Man.) Freiburg/Br. 2007 [first edition 1943], p. 63, quoted from Fuchs, p. 17

¹⁰ Fuchs, p. 16f.