

AAARGH REPRINTS

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**Peter Töpfer speech held at Tehran Holocaust
Conference**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank the Institute for Political and International Studies and the Foreign Ministry of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the organization of this conference and for inviting me to present my thoughts.

When we lived in East Germany where only a very limited freedom of opinion existed critical voices of people from East Germany were heard in Western media. These voices had no other chance to be heard. Of these voices, let me mention one singer whose songs we listened to enthusiastically on Western radio stations. This singer has since switched sides to the radical Right and supports all kinds of wars of the supposed West as well as a racist regime in the Middle East which only survives because of terror and foreign money. Even back then, this singer was not really opposed to the ruling elite; he enjoyed protection from above and great commercial success. In contrast, another critical voice – the philosopher Rudolf Bahro who suggested an alternative to the rule of the stupid Communists in a book published in the West – was sent to jail for years. When he was finally released and emigrated to the West, he continued to be a critical and independent spirit, and it did not take long before he was denounced as a „right-wing radical“.

East Germans debated whether it was appropriate to address domestic problems in Western media. But those who were really interested in freedom of opinion – this was the most important aspect in the critical Opposition in East Germany – used of course all available channels.

Thousands of East German dissidents fled to the West. They simply could not stand living anymore under the stupid people in power. They wanted something out of life, to freely breathe, to freely speak and enjoy the colors of the world.

But strangely enough, I today stand here and try to be heard outside of the country in which I live. From a foreign country, I hope to influence my own country, which has revealed itself to be only seemingly democratic and free. Yes, the freedom of opinion in the West has proven itself to be an illusion. Here too, many people are sitting in prison because they think and speak differently than the rulers want.

It seems to me that freedom of opinion is jumping from island to island. In reality, it is always fleeing. But, at least it exists at all.

To make myself heard, I am using this conference where a historical event is supposed to be discussed, or the question whether this historical event even took place in the way that some people claim. These people send those who disagree with their claims to court and prisons.

I am neither a historian nor a humanist. I am an artist and publisher. Above all, I am an advocate of freedom of expression for all people in Germany and throughout the world: Freedom to speak one's mind without being persecuted, harassed and locked up for it. This is how I view the West – my home. The West is an open space, a place where people talk freely about everything – for example, in a café in Stockholm or in a small French coastal town, and then go home in good spirits. The West is a thing that is open for anything to freely discuss, the „res publica,“ the Republic. But that is not the case in present-day Germany.

I am not willing to give up the concept of free expression upon which the West is based, this incredibly beautiful thing, and deliver it to ruling criminals.

The bemoaned lack of freedom of opinion in Germany is closely related with the subject of our conference: Certain people are punished with prison for expressing their historical views and treated like dangerous criminals. At this moment, the scientist Germar Rudolf is brought into the court room with hand and food cuffs. This – not the subject of this conference, given by the Organizers – animates me as a freedom activist. In today's Germany, people can be tried and convicted for challenging accepted canon about the Second World War – its origins, its execution, and its victims. This war is everything but a „res publica.“

But whatever the reasons for the criminal criminalization of expressed opinions – the reasons are secondary. What counts is that a person named Germar Rudolf is now sitting in a German prison.

It is legitimate that participants and victims of a war, and their heirs have their own views on the subject. War is so cruel and its suffering so great that neither side understands, or wants to understand, the other.

But it is not legitimate and an affront to human dignity if one wants to force upon the other a view, like the lawyer Alain Jakubowicz did to the scientist Bruno Gollnisch on November 7, 2006 in a court in Lyon.

Even with all the indescribable atrocities that were committed by all parties during the Second World War and in the years following, I believe that the cause of today's injuries to dignity and integrity have little to do with that past suffering. My impression is that the peoples have long since made up. This impression I did not only get from reports of veterans meetings and the since developed friendships between old warriors, this impression I get from all areas of life. Most people from the most different nations have a painful memory of the war, and the many injuries have partly been inherited by the succeeding generations.

But all that leads these people to only one realization: *Never again war!* I think

about all the honest, righteous and peace-loving people in all of our countries that never desire war.

There are basically two kinds of history. First, the real memories and imprints that often are without words but comprised only of pictures and emotions. Second, there's history approved by the state and those currently in power, history from pulpits that reaches us with many large words. We always hear the grandiose words that one has to learn from the past. But these words are often empty and without any real content related to life and experience. People have already learned. And if not, then because they still trust the rulers instead of trusting themselves. The decreed history – whatever it postulates – has nothing to do with the learning from history. It only serves to secure the power structure.

Even if it revolves around those who presumably carry the main guilt of the war – the Germans –, the state propaganda is ineffectual and does not penetrate into the real life of the peoples. The Germans are – in contrast to the worldwide and constant indoctrination from above – respected by real people worldwide and even popular. This is why it is even more scandalous when, as of late, Germans let themselves be used to participate in wars. These Germans are gambling away our good reputation and make enemies, where in reality we only want peace and friendly relations with other peoples.

Why does the current German government continue to make enemies for its citizens? For completely alien interests! For the interests of rich Americans that have captured Afghanistan and want to use it for a base to conduct further conquests in Asia, so that they can become even richer. Also for the interests of people who believed that they could expropriate a whole country and expel its inhabitants and that now have to defend themselves against the resistance of these dispossessed and expelled. For this, battleships that bear the names of our proud German lands and tribes patrol today on the Levantine coasts! And these missions are supported by a propaganda that constantly babbles about „democracy“ and „Western values.“ Of course, like a mantra, the „official history“ has to serve its purpose, namely that we should „learn“ from it. As a matter of course, the violent export of state models are thus scandalously justified. The notion of national self-determination has completely disappeared from the synchronized media.

Those that pretend to respect the Western ideal of freedom of expression lecture the whole world – while controlling other nations economically and with military force: nations that are supposed to govern themselves. It is obvious that all the talk about democracy and the history, from which we are supposed to learn, is a total lie. Who is the warmonger and constantly tells us about humanity? Who conducts expeditions and talks about a peace that supposedly has to be enforced through military means? Is it the German children that are constantly being told that they have to learn from history? Children who have to listen to a litany of a heartless, mechanical propaganda, that shamefully is lead with the words democracy and human rights and whose sole purpose is war.

It is obvious for whose interests this boring propaganda is daily being dumped on people. The Germans were always honest when they said that never again war will come from German soil, and never again a German soldier would march into other countries. They were cured of war, they had enough of it. They did not need any propaganda or history lesson. The school of life is very effective.

Now it is revealed why these permanent history excesses have been conducted

over the years in the media and schools: so that the Germans would still be at the disposal of the victors of the Second World War and for their further wars.

The Germans were surprised for a short time at how Israel, of all countries!, expressly wished that German soldiers should interfere in the Middle East, but then they quickly were ready for Israel with their weapons. Not only do these soldiers risk their lives for foreign interests – they actively support an extremely unjust and evil thing: the violent implantation of a construct that *had* to become the enemy of the displaced Palestinians and their allies since it is an apartheid system that strictly separates itself, on racial principles, from the assaulted population and makes any kind of reconciliation impossible. It is only logical when we Germans also get to know this enmity.

We still have a good reputation among most people in the affected areas. If some Germans are willing to die for foreign interests and for the subjugation of justice – at any rate, we will not let our good reputation be ruined. And we – on our part - will not let the peaceful coexistence of nations be destroyed.

We demand the immediate return of all German soldiers!

I am happy that the organizers of this conference have chosen the same day as the International Human Rights Day. Recently, the human rights situation in the West has dramatically worsened: People that are being declared hatemongers are already under the jurisdiction of anti-terror laws. We know who is meant with the word „hatemongers“: revisionist historians. They are not even entitled to court proceedings anymore. Soon they will disappear into the dungeons without legal proceedings. To stop this disastrous development and revert it, we need a fighting spirit and the radical return to our Western values.

In the non-oppositional German media, one can sometimes notice silent objections about the fact that people who allegedly deny something are punished for this denial. (By the way, how can one know that someone is denying?) The writer Bernd Wagner writes on November 4, 2006 in the „Berliner Zeitung“: „When the denial of the genocide of the European Jews was made a punishable offense, no critical voices were raised. But the problem of such measures is clear: the ones unwilling to learn will not be converted by the use of laws. Instead they can feel themselves as martyrs, becoming even less receptive to arguments. Such a law does not protect the truth, but endangers it because it makes a ghetto out of that which is surrounded by taboos in which it becomes a risk to think about it.“

Bernd Wagner might be forgiven if he did not hear the numerous critical voices against paragraph 130 of the penal code; maybe it was because of the brutal oppression that they were only very faintly audible... But what is more of interest is where Bernd Wagner sees „the problem“: namely that the conversion of those unwilling to learn might not work. He views laws as bad means for conversion. But what place does a conversion have in an open and pluralistic society? Wagner talks about an „alleged truth.“ I, who think of myself as a Westerner, would never talk about Bernd Wagner's truth as an „alleged“ one. Why would I do that? I would simply leave it up to Bernd Wagner himself to believe what is true and what is false. And if he sticks to his truth (which deserves respect today), then I do not assume that he wants to feel like a „martyr.“ According to Wagner, „the truth“ (Which one? The *true* truth, the *objective* one?) must be „protected.“ In a truly Western society, no truth is protected: The truths live next to each other, or they present themselves, discuss or compete on equal terms with each other.

It is not the responsibility of the state to protect the truth, but to protect the bearer of truth, namely from the danger of being forced to submit or convert to another truth.

How much we have distanced ourselves in the West from the mind of Enlightenment demonstrates a report in 1997 (nineteen ninety seven) by the agency of „Protection of the Constitution“ (secret service) in regard to *Sleipnir. Journal for Culture, History and Politics*. The reason for being scrutinized by intelligence: „The importance of *Sleipnir* is the open debate that it facilitates.“ Indeed, the secret service denounced the publishers to have given room for an „open debate“! This is unbelievable!

Furthermore, a Berlin Court decreed in the year 2000 a penalty against the editor of *Sleipnir*, on the grounds of using a „factual choice of words“ in his journal. For this, the editor’s house and office were searched and the computers confiscated which, ten years later, have not been returned. We have actually reached the point in Western Europe, that openness, objectivity and the encouragement of discussions are considered criminal offenses!

Western man, living in the spirit of the Enlightenment, is distinguished by composure which means nothing else but love. But I do not believe that the ones responsible for the violations of human rights – policemen, prosecutors and judges – are especially filled with hatred and lack of tranquility. My impression is that they are afraid.

I merely view them as cool and thoughtful. After all, they are following their interests. But do these people really believe if it serves their interests to steal other people’s freedoms because of expressions of opinion? Can this serve peace? And is peace not our highest goal?

The Jews got quite late, under the influence of their European host nations, into touch with the Enlightenment, and even today many have not escaped their mental ghetto yet. And this is why they are blind to the fact that holy relics are routinely toppled. Decreed truths and sanctuaries demand, because they are connected with oppression, to be questioned and toppled. Every oppressed person looks for the first chance to get rid of his oppressor. Because of this, we often have ugly scenes, even wars. Let us prevent these ugly scenes by letting everyone have his truth and not dictate a truth to anyone. „Factual choice of words“ and the „facilitating an open debate“ must of course not only be not penalized – they must again be our distinctive marks, no matter in which context – may it be with Jews, Eskimos or – like my friend Serge Thion would say – wearers of apple-green ties.

It is not a matter of historical events or whether or not they took place. The point is that everyone should be able to make anything a „res publica“. This must not be a matter for the prosecutors and judges.

I ask the revisionists that are indicted in Germany no longer to participate in arguments with judges about historical matters because we then will get used to the thought that historical matters belong in a criminal court. This thought damages our freedom immensely. May the revisionists and their lawyers use the constitutional law and its instruments in their defense and engage themselves for the validity of basic rights and then discuss any matter freely with legal protection. May the judges and the prosecutors be convinced by that and overcome their fear.

Translation by Constantin von Hoffmeister

Neil Young

Living With War

I'm living with war everyday
I'm living with war in my heart everyday
I'm living with war right now

And when the dawn breaks I see my fellow man
And on the flat-screen we kill and we're killed again
And when the night falls, I pray for peace
Try to remember peace

I join the multitudes
I raise my hand in peace
I never bow to the laws of the thought police
I take a holy vow
To never kill again
To never kill again

I'm living with war in my heart
I'm living with war in my heart in my mind
I'm living with war right now

Don't take no tidal wave
Don't take no mass grave
Don't take no smokin' gun
To show how the west was won
But when the curtain falls, I pray for peace
Try to remember peace

In the crowded streets
In the big hotels
In the mosques and the doors of the old museum
I take a holy vow
To never kill again
Try to remember peace

The rocket's red glare
Bombs bursting in air
Give proof through the night,
That our flag is still there (2)

(1) *Durchblicke*, 4. Jahrgang (1997), Nr. 7, herausgegeben vom Landesamt für Verfassungsschutz Berlin, S. 101

(2) Neil Young, *Living With War*, 2006, zu hören auf:
<http://livingwithwar.blogspot.com>

<http://revolutioninternational.blogspot.com/>