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## Preface

“World Political Challenges” is the third volume in the series “Political Issues Under Debate”. It combines contributions on concepts for a global political order as well as on several controversial global political conflicts. Over the past 200 years and more, the global state system has been transformed from dynastic empires and small states into a system of real and theoretical, or perceived, nation states. Since the Congress of Berlin in 1878, the number of states has steadily increased, apart from an interruption during the neo-imperial expansion phase from 1922 to 1945, and is likely to continue to do so in the twenty-first century. Not every state is a nation state, i.e. a state whose citizens wish to live together within it, in so doing forming a nation (by will). In the spring of 2014, the fragility of some nominal nation states has again been demonstrated in Ukraine. The studies included in this volume attempt to develop a universally applicable, historically well-founded definition of “nation”, which permits an explanation of the phenomenon of the multiplication of nation states, including during the era of globalisation and European integration, while at the same time developing a long-term perspective, according to which the number of nation states will cease to increase as a result of the emergence of federal nation states.

Two texts in this volume deal with the failed peace policy concepts from the international workers’ movement before the First World War within the context of the 100th anniversary of the Congress of the Socialist International in Basel in 1912. Their influence on the international peace movement during the course of the following century will also be addressed. The anniversary of the beginning of the Great War gives cause to again investigate the issue of who was to blame for unleashing it. Three influential patterns of interpretation of international relations and global events are of global political significance: the conviction that war is eternally rooted in human nature and history, the renewed interest in geopolitical thought, and the theory of a clash between the predominantly religious-based civilisations.

Finally, this volume examines individual international conflicts in greater detail: the rebellion in several Arab countries, the warning issued by the winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature, Günter Grass, against a war of intervention against Iran, the Indo-Pakistani-Chinese entanglement in the disputes over Kashmir, and the multinational intervention to prevent Islamic domination and a division of Mali.

In the final studies, I explain the extent to which the peaceful international regulation of the conflict over the Swedish-inhabited Åland Islands in the Baltic Sea after the First World War and the high degree of autonomy for Quebec within the Canadian federation can be models for the regulation of other national-territorial disputes. In the case of Åland, the relationship between the territorial integrity of a state and the right to self-determination by the people was balanced against each other for the first time in international law. The regulation of the conflict, which to date remains extraordinarily stable, consists of internationally guaranteed, far-reaching linguistic-cultural and economic autonomy for the islands within Finland, as well as their demilitarisation and neutral status.

The texts in this volume were written in preparation for lectures which I have been regularly giving since May 2004, in other words, towards the end of my regular professional activity, under the heading “Controversial Political Issues from the Perspective of Contemporary History” (*Politische Streitfragen in zeitgeschichtlicher Perspektive*). Until December 2009, these lectures were given at the University of Mannheim, where I held the professorship for Political Science and Contemporary History from 1993 to 2005 and from October 2009 onwards at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt-Main, where I am still a lecturer today. There, I was Professor for Political Science and Political Sociology from 1975 to 1993 and from 1971 to 1990 also worked as an academic specialist and then research director at the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (*Hessische Stiftung Friedens- und Konfliktforschung*). These lectures are attended by both regular students and many senior citizens from the “University of the Third Age”, as this most worthy establishment is rather euphemistically known.

I understand political science as being a study of politics that is not really able to be unbiased and impartial, since all the key elements of this field of science inevitably invoke value judgement. However, one can and should be very cautious when it comes to expressing political value judgements and using strongly biased and emotional language. To the extent that political recommendations are given, they should expressly be identified as such, so that an analysis of the past and a prognosis of what is possible and probable in the future on the one hand and normative statements on the other can remain clearly separate from each other. In my view, contemporary historical science is an essential branch of political science, and was also undisputedly so when after 1945 political science was established at German universities as a science of democracy.

Contemporary history as history that extends into the future is, I believe, a global history of the era of the sovereignty of the people as a concept that is gradually being asserted. Until now, it has been divided into three time periods: the “long century” from 1176/1789 to 1917, in which the forces for forming modern liberal and social democracy slowly unfolded, the “short century” from 1917 to 1991, which was characterised by antagonism between liberal democracies and their communist and National Socialist/fascist antipodes, and the new century that began in 1991. During this latter century, it is clear that new, serious challenges such as the Islamist-theocratic one have emerged for the democracies. Over the coming decades, they are certain to be joined by others. Violent, belligerent politics

will not disappear from the scene, and will time and again raise questions about the possibilities for peaceful politics. It remains an objective of peace and conflict research to explore possible answers to these questions.

Of all forms of rule, democracy is the one that requires independently judging and responsible, political citizens. The citizen who regards him or herself as being apolitical is unavoidably political in the sense that they support the current political rulers by declining to give their vote for a better alternative. For democracy, it is more true than for all other forms of rule that the population of every country has the government that it deserves; if a population wishes to see improvements in government, it must first improve itself. What is meant by this is that it must improve its power of political judgement and its political activity. In a democracy, every citizen of age represents one vote in elections and referenda that is non-transferable.

As someone who has had the privilege of being able to study politics and its socio-historical background and origins for almost all my life, I hope that I now have a certain ability to critically examine current events and to procure background information that enables others to train their power of political judgement, regardless of their nationality or fundamental political convictions. For this reason, I also permit myself to address topics about which I have not conducted my own thorough research. With a brief analysis with a contemporary historical reference point, my aim is to enable the audience and readers of my lectures to further develop their own political judgement grounded in their previous knowledge, their value premises and interests, and inevitably also their unrecognised and unconscious prejudices, by clarifying the requisites, contexts, and possible consequences of this or that political decision. The lectures would fail in their spirit and purpose if they were to be judged according to the conclusions at which I arrive more or less clearly and decisively with regard to the debated issue in question at the end of the lecture. To a far greater extent, what matters is whether the listeners and readers can profit from my observations in that they are able to recognise new dimensions, requisites, and possible consequences of the subject under dispute, and of the dispute itself, of which they had not previously been aware. Some of the reactions I have received from listeners and readers have confirmed that this has succeeded in some cases, and this gives me encouragement to continue with the experiment.

A scientist should not misuse their lectern for political sermons and confessions of faith, but should illuminate a conflict from all possible and useful political sides, analyse it carefully in terms of its elements, and the reasons why it emerged, and then represent and explain it in terms of its social and historical development. Consequently, five-sixths of the lecture consist of scientific analysis: a closer definition of the subject of dispute, the citing of the most important positions held in the public sphere in relation to it, an explanation of the historical background to the dispute, and a presentation of the likely consequences that the realisation of the one or other political position might have.

During my time teaching at university, students would occasionally ask me about my personal political views on issues and current affairs and were not

satisfied with only hearing a scientific analysis. I was open about my political opinion as a citizen on the matter in question, not only in personal conversations but also in the lecture hall or seminar room. During the lectures on political issues under debate, I now express my own ideas from the start. In a separate fifth section, I give a brief outline of how in my view the issue in question might be dealt with in a peaceful political way, which I would recommend to politicians or political activists if they were to seek my advice or read my lecture scripts, as has occasionally been the case.

In order to make the considerable amount of work required to cover each topic more worthwhile, I produce a text of strictly limited length which I then make available on the Internet. However, I always give the lecture freely, since a lecture should not be simply read out from a written document. As a result, there is a clear difference between the manuscript that I have created, which contains a greater amount, and more precise, detailed, and the oral presentation of the issues under debate. Quite frequently, current events from the same week or month, and sometimes even from the same morning, have an impact on the topic of the lecture. I therefore sometimes make direct associations in the lecture to current developments, which are not included in the written version.

For my lectures, I am able to draw on a rich source of material and experiences gathered from over 40 years of research activity on issues relating to east–west relations and sociopolitical developments in the former communist-ruled countries of Europe, as well as on national movements, nationalism, and the formation of nation states. However, I also permit myself to approach topics about which I have not formerly conducted any research of my own, for which I draw solely on secondary literature and current newspaper reports and documents. In order to check my findings and opinions on the different positions in the dispute, I send the manuscript of each lecture to specialist colleagues with specific expertise in the relevant country and subject of the lecture and ask for their critical feedback. I wish to offer my heartfelt thanks to all these friends and colleagues, all of whom I cannot name here, for their ideas and objections. I would also like to thank the listeners who gave me some valuable suggestions and who with their useful questions and intelligent criticism contributed to the final text. The gratifying level of interest during the course of the past 10 years and the informed questions and critical comments offered by my listeners and readers encourage me to continue the experiment of the 50 lectures that I have given to date on the ongoing subject of “Controversial Political Issues from the Perspective of Contemporary History” in the future.

My particular thanks go to Anna Güttel-Bellert for her meticulous translation and excellent cooperation in the sometimes difficult process of rendering specialist political terminology, which is loaded with bias, from German into English. Once again, my heartfelt thanks go to the publishing company and its staff, in particular Mr. Frank Schindler, who managed the initial stages of this publication project. They have shown great understanding for a project by a political scientist and peace and conflict researcher who wishes to tackle controversial current political issues with expert socio-historical arguments.

As with the first volumes, I would again like to invite readers to voice their critical objections, comments, and questions. I can be contacted directly at the following email address:

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