

Karl Krökel

The Role of Artisans for Understanding Among Peoples

This is the edited transcript of the pre-recorded presentation by Karl Krökel to Panel 1, “Stopping the Doomsday Clock—The Common Good of the One Humanity,” of the Schiller Institute’s Nov. 22 conference, “For World Peace—Stop the Danger of Nuclear War: Third Seminar of Political and Social Leaders of the World.”

Mr. Krökel is a graduate engineer who studied finance and mechanical engineering. He has been self-employed as a machine tool businessman for over 30 years and is currently the Chief Master Craftsman of the Dessau-Roßlau (Germany) Trade Guild. He founded and leads Craftsmen for Peace, and has organized demonstrations with thousands of participants, with the central demand of ending arms deliveries to Ukraine and stopping sanctions against Russia. He spoke in German; English subtitles have been provided.

The full proceedings of the conference are [available](#) at the Schiller Institute website.

Hello and greetings from Germany! Today I will not go into the current issues like the danger of a nuclear war; that in the coming months, millions of people in Germany will be impoverished and hundreds of thousands of businesses will be threatened with bankruptcy; the bankrupt neoliberal system; the deindustrialization of Germany; or the authorship of the act of sabotage against the Nord Stream pipelines.

I am asked as a District Master Craftsman, again and again, why we craftsmen, of all people, get involved in such issues as peace policy, against sanctions, against arms deliveries; or, that we, as craftsmen, support the path of having to develop ourselves into active citizens of the world—into a movement of world citizens. Above all, that we demand that collective action become a force that realigns the existing security architecture.

The answer to this derives from the long history and tradition of the craft sector. The craft sector thinks



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in generations and expects the same from politics. It creates value and growth, it provides ecological and social impetus, and it secures jobs and prosperity. For the skilled crafts sector, but also for society as a whole, peace is the most important framework condition.

Over all these generations, the skilled trades have also made a significant contribution to international understanding. This goes back centuries. For example, the obligation to migrate was a pre-

requisite for admission to the master craftsman’s examination and part of the prescribed training path. The aim was to get to know new working practices, foreign places, regions and countries, usually over a period of six years. Language barriers, religion, and pre-existing migration networks had no small influence on the chosen destinations. The European impact on knowledge transfer was enormous.

As a reminder, from Peter the Great until the end of Bismarck’s chancellorship, there was a German-Russian alliance. At that time, hundreds of thousands of Germans emigrated to Russia and established trade relations there. Three times, Germans were chancellors in Russia, and almost every Russian government included Germans as ministers. It was Germans who built the Academy of Sciences in Russia and introduced new technologies and crafts to Russia. It was Germans who helped build the newly founded Russian capital of St. Petersburg.

These are the spheres in which we as craftsmen think and act. Knowledge, will, ability, honesty, reliability, love for the profession and pride in what has been created, humanity, equality. Not lies, greed, war, financial bubbles, oppression and lost culture of discussion.

So, Europe’s turning to the East represents the historical norm, not the 70-year presence of the U.S.A., whose information war against Russia has the main purpose of making Europeans forget their history. But we craftsmen do not forget our history—we know

where we come from and do not want the work of generations to be simply squandered. And [yet] we are throwing ourselves head over heels into American hands.

We should take the war in Ukraine as an opportunity to rethink everything that has gone wrong in the entire world in recent decades. Especially as former citizens of the G.D.R. [East Germany], we saw the many possibilities of a cooperative, partnership-based order after 1989. It might even have been possible at that time to arrive at a joint new conception of a civilization and economic model and to approach Russia. After all, Germany owes its reunification primarily to the Soviet Union.

Of all four victorious powers, it was above all the Soviet Union that repeatedly raised the possibility of German reunification in 1989. France and Great Britain rejected these proposals outright. For the Americans, too, reunification was only an option on the con-

dition that a unified Germany would become part of NATO. The Russians accommodated the Americans, renounced their goal of a neutral Germany, and thus made reunification possible. What the U.S. made of it, we, as craftsmen, view with embarrassment.

Nothing would be more urgent than to prepare a caesura that would return Europe to its 1989 goals and have *all* European countries withdraw from NATO.

The Eurasian continent is the heart of the world. It is home to two-thirds of the world's mineral resources and two-thirds of the world's population. To find and build that again, is now our task—which the U.S.A. wants to prevent. That is why I call upon the craftsmen of all five continents to join the movement "Craftsmen for Peace," to become a big part of the "Movement of World Citizens," because that is the only way to stop the chaos.

With artisan greetings, your Chief Master Craftsman, Karl Krökel. Until next time.

Sister Ortrud Fürst

Thoughts on Current World Affairs

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Ortrud Fürst is a Sister of the Dominican Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. She spoke in German, with English translation provided. The full proceedings of the conference are [available](#) at the Schiller Institute website.

I am Sister Ortrud Fürst. I come from Aalen in the German state of Württemberg. I joined the Dominican Missionary Sisters in Schlehdorf in 1963. Originally, I wanted to go to South Africa to the mission, but an illness held me back, and besides, I was needed in the administration, because I came from the administrative side. Later I was called to Munich to work with the homeless, first in a women's house that we founded,



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Sister Ortrud Fürst

and later in a house for men and women.

It could be, after all, that the governments of all countries are concerned with humanity, mindfulness, justice, and truth; that swords will be turned into plowshares and that all nuclear weapons on Earth are disposed of; that the longing of so many people for liberation, love and peace finds fulfillment; that all enemy images must die; and that all the religions respect each other as sisters and brothers.

It could be, after all, that the people on our Earth may experience how beautiful it is to share with each other and to take care of Your creation. Then we will experience that You, living God, are very close to us, all the days of our lives until the great encounter with You. It could be that this is true.

Thoughts on the Present World Situation

On that subject, many competent and also war-experienced politicians, military officers, scientists, and peace researchers have already taken a stand. They