

The Legacy of ‘Hiroshima’ in Germany: History and Current Problems¹

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1. The remembrance of the atomic bombs dropped 74 years ago in the German media

On August 6th 2019 the news programs of public German television (ARD 2019a, ZDF 2019a) reported several times on the commemoration ceremony on the occasion of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima 74 years ago, including the news reports of radio, Deutschlandfunk (DLF 2019) and Deutsche Welle (DW 2019). While the print media only reported sporadically (FAZ 2019a, see Netzwerk Friedenskooperative 2019c), the Internet interfaces of major newspapers recalled the event (FAZ 2019b; SZ 2019). In most cases, the statement of the German press agency (DPA) that the atomic bombing claimed 140000 lives, that at the commemoration ceremony Hiroshima's mayor Kazumi Matsui called upon his country to accede to the UN Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty of 2017, and that Prime Minister Shinzo Abe did not mention the treaty in his speech on the day of commemoration was adopted by these outlets. Similar coverage on television, radio and in the daily press took place on August 9th. It was reported that tens of thousands in Nagasaki commemorated the victims in a minute's silence, that the worldwide abolition of nuclear weapons was demanded, that Nagasaki's mayor Tomihisa Taue also called on his country's government to accede to the UN Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and that Prime Minister Shinzo Abe again did not mention the Treaty in his memorial day speech (ARD 2019b, ZDF 2019b). It was stressed that the commemoration ceremonies were influenced by the recent missile tests in North Korea and the expired INF Treaty.

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In the weeks around August 6th, there were only two television broadcasts on the history of the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, on the Franco-German cultural channel 'Arte' and on the public news channel 'Phoenix'.² Both television broadcasts were easy to lose among the diversity of stations and the almost unmanageable range of entertainment. If one takes a first look at the extent to which the German media public is reminded of Hiroshima and Nagasaki today, then - apart from public law television and radio - there have been only very few reports in surprisingly few press outlets. The events are not forgotten, but the remembrance is receding behind many other news items.

A few days earlier, on August 2nd 2019, the INF Treaty (Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces), which was ratified in 1987 between the USA and the Soviet Union and which prohibited the possession of nuclear intermediate-range missiles with a range of 500 to 5500 km, was terminated. This treaty was considered a sign of the end of the Cold War and a central pillar of Europe's security architecture, and represented particularly the interests of Germany and Europe. The German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas tried to work towards not abandoning the treaty in two trips on January 18th in Moscow and on January 24th in Washington. The USA terminated the treaty in February 2019 due to a Russian violation of the treaty; conversely, Russia in turn accused the USA of violation. Both sides have not yet presented the public with any evidence for their claims or denials of violations of the treaty. The American announcement shortly afterwards to station land-based medium-range missiles in the Asia-Pacific region, as well as the test of a medium-range missile a few days later, seems to point to the real reason for breaking free from these contractual ties: the confrontation with China (cf. Fährnders 2019; Kolb/Kruger 2019).

In a commentary in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* on the end of the INF Treaty entitled "There is a lack of a young generation committed to disarmament", a connection was made with the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, pointing to their significance in the history of the Federal Republic of Germany (cf. Mascolo 2019). The commentator of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* was surprised that the end of the INF Treaty provoked so little public response or protest among the younger generation in Germany. He recalled that the ratification of the treaty in the 1980s in Germany was preceded by years of protests by the peace movement and demonstrations with hundreds of thousands of participants against the stationing of nuclear weapons. In his view, the dropping of

² Arte has shown the documentary "Countdown to a new age" (GB 2014) on July 30, 2019, Phoenix the documentaries "Pacific War - The war goes on" (film by Kerstin Zhukovsky, 2015), "Inside Hiroshima" (film by Bertrand Collard, 2015) and "Nagasaki. Why did the second bomb fall?" (film by Klaus Scherer, 2015).

atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki was a formative experience for the older generations, who experienced the Cold War and who are now again warning against a new nuclear arms race. But the younger generations, on the other hand, are politicized and mobilized by climate change, as the Fridays for Future movement shows. The nuclear threat of another arms race seems to have remained unseen by this demographic, as the commentator argues.

This commentary speaks to some of the central topics of the present article. First of all, I discuss the question of the meaning of 'Hiroshima' for the older generation in Germany (part 2). The name 'Hiroshima' is the sign of the first atomic bomb dropping in the history of mankind and the horror with over 100000 dead and the long suffering of the survivors³. After a review of the immediate post-war years in Germany and the nuclear-critical philosophical discourse in the 1950s, the history of the (West) German peace movement is outlined (part 3). The commentator's assertion that the younger generation pays no attention to nuclear armament unfortunately cannot be examined here. Nor can the question be answered: "What do young Germans today know about Hiroshima and nuclear armament?" Instead, in a further part (part 4), an answer to the question of what is taught about 'Hiroshima' is sought through an analysis of 18 newer textbooks for secondary school history lessons. The background is an older study by Florian Coulmas on West German textbooks, according to which the depictions of the Pacific War and the atomic bombing have only a minor significance and, in addition, the American view is adopted. Only a few newer textbooks do not confirm Coulmas' conclusions. After a critical review of the analyzed textbooks, the question of the legacy of 'Hiroshima' in contemporary Germany is taken up again (part 5).

2. The importance of 'Hiroshima' in Germany in the post-war period

In May 1945 the fighting in Europe during the Second World War ended with the defeat and unconditional capitulation of Germany. The murderous war instigated by the Third Reich in September 1939 with the invasion of Poland resulted in 60 million dead and immense suffering for the survivors as well as a devastated Europe (cf. Herbert 2014, p. 545f). It was a "war of enslavement, exploitation and annihilation" (Wehler 2003, p. 842; see also Buruma 2013) in Poland, the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the so-called "bloodlands" (Snyder 2010). The four victorious powers divided Germany into

³ On Hiroshima as a place of remembrance see Buruma 1994; Yamana 2001; 2017.

four zones of occupation, the areas east of the Oder-Neisse line fell to Poland and the Soviet Union, Austria became independent again.

"In Europe, there was little interest in the war in the Far East since the capitulation of Germany; the concerns of daily life were the focus of attention almost everywhere on the continent." (Coulmas 2010, p. 44; cf. Schwentker 1998) Almost half of the people staying in Germany were "displaced persons", living far from their home and wanting to return: prisoners of war, forced laborers, concentration camp prisoners, refugees, expellees, evacuees. It was a life and survival in anarchic everyday conditions and the chaos of a defeated country lying in ruins, with a destroyed infrastructure and ruined economy (see Wehler 2003, p. 951ff). The victorious powers confronted the Germans with the crimes of National Socialism. The vast majority of the German people were loyal to their National Socialist regime until the end of the war. But the horrors of war, Nazi terror and expulsion, the destruction, the traumatization (cf. Alley 2019, p. 155; Bode 2019) and the hard post-war years "left many Germans with no thought of the past. They felt themselves to be victims - and thus spared the thoughts of the real" (Jähner 2019, p. 12f; p. 396) victims. The past was to be forgotten, something to keep silent about. Most Germans were occupied with themselves in this "time of wolves" (ibid., p. 10), as it is called in reference to the philosophy of Thomas Hobbes. The events in Japan were far away.

The atomic bombs, the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6th and 9th and the surrender of Japan were reported in the newspapers, based on American and British agency reports and under the supervision of Allied censorship. The strategic and historical significance of the new weapon was also immediately discussed in the press, but not the suffering of the population (cf. Coulmas 2010, p. 40). The reporting remained "very abstract" (ibid., p. 56) and one-sided. Diary entries of German intellectuals in exile testify to consternation, but also to perplexity and sometimes cynicism (see ibid., p. 57; see Ötzelt 2018). The interpretations of the events were also one-sided due to the scarce information available. Thus Thomas Mann emphasizes the ambivalence of scientific and technical progress: on the one hand the achievement of human cognitive faculty and on the other hand the eager work of scientists on means of unimaginable destruction (see Mann 1986, p. 237ff). Here an "awareness of the scope of technical innovation" is evident (Coulmas 2010, p. 59), but the victims, the human suffering, are not taken into account.

With the discovery of nuclear fission in 1938, the destruction of Hiroshima marked the beginning of a new era in the history of mankind, the atomic age. With the burgeoning antagonism of the USA and the USSR and the beginning of the Cold War shortly after the end of World War II, the founding of two German states in 1949, their rearmament

and their integration into the hostile military blocs of NATO (admission of the FRG in 1955) and the Warsaw Pact (admission of the GDR in 1956), political controversies dominate the public debate. The dangers of a new nuclear war and - after the American hydrogen bomb test on March 1st, 1954 on Bikini, which also irradiated the crew of the Japanese tuna boat 'Fukuryu Maru' ('Happy Dragon') No. 5 (cf. Stölken-Fitschen 1995, p. 93), - also the dangers of the atomic bomb tests are increasingly discussed. The remembrance of 'Hiroshima' is only now beginning in Germany, delayed by about a decade.

For philosophy in post-war Germany, the experiences of the Nazi era and its crimes were central themes, as well as the threat of nuclear war and the responsibility to be assumed as a result. Georg Picht (1913-1982) gave the two-volume collection of his essays the subtitle "Philosophizing after Auschwitz and Hiroshima". These two names stand for the newness of the historical epoch, that science and technology can destroy all life on earth and that therefore mankind today bears the responsibility for its future history. They denote "two different manifestations of evil" (Picht 1981, p. 11; cf. 1981a). For Picht both the political orders and the sciences are "without reason" (1968/1981, p. 121) and only the insight into the danger to humanity and the threatening catastrophes could force the necessary change of consciousness to a new morality and reason (see *ibid.*, p. 127; see Jaspers 1957; 1958).

In the public disputes about the nuclear armament of the 'Bundeswehr', the West German army, Theodor Litt (1880-1962), who during the Third Reich was prohibited from lecturing and who in 1947 after conflicts in the Soviet Zone moved from Leipzig to Bonn, emphasizes that with the increased scientific and technical possibilities, the importance of responsibility also increased. He sees in the development of nuclear weapons, of instruments of possible self-destruction of mankind the result of "three centuries of strictest service to the cause" (Litt 1957, p. 18). This "devotion to the cause" limits the freedom of man and threatens his humanity, although it is "an act of freedom" (*ibid.*, p. 22f). The necessary corrective is the "self-contemplation" (*ibid.*, p. 23), the insight into these modern circumstances of life in the so-called "atomic age". For Litt, "means always remain means" (*ibid.*, p. 27), on which the "purpose-setting will" (*ibid.*, p. 26) decides, even if these means make total destruction possible. For him, these possibilities of self-destruction only refer to the significance of the "self" and emphasize the burden of responsibility.

Günther Anders (1902-1992), who in 1950 after American exile did not move to one of the two German states but to Austria, was the only philosopher of note who made the atomic bomb his central philosophical theme. For him, it is the expression of a

technologized world that achieves monstrous effects beyond human imagination and makes the destruction of mankind possible. "While utopians cannot create what they imagine, we cannot imagine what we create." (Anders 1981, p. 96) Since it is actually no longer possible to act morally in a world under the atomic threat, a moral dilemma follows, because to accept irresponsibility would mean accepting the end of the world. For Anders, the possibility created by man to eliminate himself as a species represented a completely new anthropological and historical situation. Anders was one of the main initiators of the international movement against nuclear weapons and tried to overcome the "apocalypse blindness" of mankind. He visited Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1958 on the anniversary of the airdrops (cf. 1959/1982) and in 1959 he began an exchange of letters with the former air force pilot Claude Eatherly, who had explored the weather conditions over Hiroshima and thus felt guilty as a co-responsible person (cf. 1961/1982).

Theodor W. Adorno (1903-1969), who returned to the Federal Republic of Germany from American exile in 1953, made the historically unprecedented and systematic mass murder of European Jews the thematic core of his thinking like no other. The fact that Auschwitz was possible is for him an expression of the failure of culture: "All culture after Auschwitz, including the urgent criticism of it, is garbage." (Adorno 1966/1973, p. 359) He sharply criticized the way the past was dealt with in Germany (Adorno 1959/1977) and considered the most important demand on education that Auschwitz should not repeat itself: "The demand that Auschwitz should not happen again is the very first demand on education" (Adorno 1966/1977, p. 674). In contrast to the philosophy of religion, of technology, of history and anthropology of Picht, Litt or Anders, he argues on the basis of a critique of capitalist society and the development of nation-states in world history: "Genocide has its roots in the resurrection of aggressive nationalism that has taken place in many countries since the end of the nineteenth century. One will not be able to dismiss the consideration that the invention of the atomic bomb, which can literally wipe out hundreds of thousands of people in a single blow, belongs in the same historical context as genocide" (ibid., p. 675). Under the conditions of over-powerful production conditions and international antagonism, people live with "the prospect of total annihilation" (Adorno 1969/1972, p. 367), they are "enclosed by a horizon in which the bomb can fall at any moment" (ibid., p. 366). This gloomy and pessimistic view of the political and social conditions did not prevent Adorno from attempting to enlighten the public. He was a public intellectual who "played a groundbreaking role for the cultural and political self-discovery of the Federal Republic and the self-image of the post-war generations" (Müller-Dohm 2003, p. 494), and he influenced the student movement in particular.

3. "Never again Hiroshima" - On the history of the German peace movement

"Never again Hiroshima" became the "slogan of the German peace movement" and the opponents of nuclear weapons (Stölken-Fitschen 1995, p. 239). However, "the" German peace movement did not and does not exist (see Buro 2008, p. 272). The occasions, actors, goals, stages, forms of action and participation are too different to group into one movement. With regard to the topic 'Hiroshima', for example, three stages of the West German peace movement can be distinguished: the "fighting against nuclear death" campaign at the end of the 1950s against the planned equipment of the Bundeswehr with nuclear carrier systems, the Easter March movement against nuclear armament in the 1960s, and the campaign against the NATO double decision to station nuclear medium-range missiles in the early 1980s.⁴

"The reflection on Hiroshima as a synonym for the apocalypse now made possible by man, as an unforgettable memorial for the present and the future, came late. This was partly due to the fact that, under the censorship of the American occupying forces, little information about the effect of the bomb on Hiroshima, especially about its late effects and continuing dying, leaked out in the period leading up to the conclusion of the peace treaty". (Stölken-Fitschen 1995, p. 245) According to Stölken-Fitschen this late reflection was also due to the attitude of the Japanese, who also wanted to forget and start anew and who only after the accident of the 'Happy Dragon' began to pay attention to the "atomic bomb patients"(cf. *ibid.*).

On 12 April, 1957, 18 scientists, mostly nuclear physicists, published a statement in Göttingen in which they spoke out against the planned equipment of the Bundeswehr with nuclear carrier systems and announced that they would never participate in the production, testing or deployment of nuclear weapons. This declaration had a great public resonance (see *ibid.*, p. 205ff). But despite the nuclear fears of the German people, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) won the 1957 parliamentary elections with an absolute majority in the person of Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, who supported the equipping of German troops with nuclear carrier systems (see *ibid.*, p. 236). In contrast, the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD), supported by the trade unions (DGB), initiated the movement "Kampf dem Atomtod" (fighting against nuclear death), which in 1958 tried to make the nuclear threat clear to the public with vigils, demonstrations and poster campaigns, fought against the decision of the Federal Government and organized

⁴ On the peace movement in the GDR see "Bewegter Frieden" (2018).

rallies with up to 150,000 participants (ibid., p. 238f; p. 248; cf. Otto 1983, p. 215; Kurscheid 1981). The movement understood the atomic bomb as an existential threat and aimed at the abolition of the bomb. But only a few months later, after the parliamentary debates on the nuclear armament of the Bundeswehr and the decision of the Parliament (Bundestag) on 25 March 1958, the rejection of strikes by the SPD and DGB executive committees, and the rejection of a plebiscite as unconstitutional by the Federal Constitutional Court (Bundesverfassungsgericht) on 30 June 1958, the campaign came to an abrupt end (see ibid.; Stölken-Fitschen 1995, pp. 265f; pp. 282f).

Following the example of the British "Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament", pacifist groups organized the first Easter marches against nuclear armament in 1960. This developed into a nationwide, independent, extra-parliamentary opposition which, under the impression of the Vietnam War, became increasingly politicized and became the socially critical "Campaign for Democracy and Disarmament". The number of participants in the Easter marches rose from 1000 (1960) to 300,000 (1968). "Especially under the impression of the emergency legislation (1968), the military intervention in ČSSR (1968), the formation of a social-liberal federal government (1969) as well as internal differentiation processes through the independence of the student protest movement and the formation of an anti-authoritarian subculture, the movement came to a virtual standstill in 1970." (Otto 1983a, p. 297) The policy of détente of the 1970s seemed to defuse the threat of nuclear weapons, and it was more important to deal with other problems.

In reaction to the NATO double decision to station medium-range missiles on 12 December 1979, the largest mass movement in the history of the Federal Republic of Germany was born. The "Krefeld Appeal" of 16 November 1980, an appeal by the West German peace movement to the Federal Government to withdraw its consent to the stationing of new nuclear medium-range missiles in Europe and to press within NATO for an end to the nuclear arms race, had about 4 million signatories (Buro 2008, p. 275). Forms of non-violent civil disobedience, such as blockade actions, were widespread. In autumn 1983 (Bundestag debated on missile stationing) almost one million people demonstrated simultaneously in four parallel large-scale demonstrations. The stationing decision of 21 November 1983 was considered a defeat and was the end of the peace movement.

Similar to the "Fighting against Nuclear Death" campaign and the Easter marches, no concrete goals were achieved (cf. Buro 2008, p. 282). Neither the nuclear armament of Europe could be prevented, nor could nuclear weapon-free zones or disarmament be accomplished. Government policy has "hardly been influenced by the activities of the

peace movement" (ibid., p. 286). However, the campaigns and actions have informed and mobilized large sections of the public. "The discussion about nuclear weapons led large parts of society into a debate about the monstrosities of military thought and practice (Hiroshima/ Nagasaki)." (ibid., p. 282) Perhaps it is the merit of the peace movement to show the population the possibility of peaceful conflict resolution and thus demonstrate "that military-supported policy is not absolutely necessary and that there are peaceful and de-escalating alternatives" (ibid., p. 287).

Four years after the stationing of medium-range missiles in Europe, the INF Treaty was ratified between the USA and the Soviet Union, and with the end of the "Cold War" and the self-dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, the nuclear danger of war disappeared from the horizon of public attention. There were then peace actions and demonstrations in Germany on the occasion of the Iraq War and the Yugoslavian War (see Buro 2008, p. 275ff). Only the termination and end of the INF Treaty brought the danger of a nuclear conflict in Europe back into the public eye. For the younger generations, the period of the Cold War and the fear of a nuclear war is a closed past, without significance for present life and the future.

4. The knowledge of 'Hiroshima' in history textbooks

A knowledge of Hiroshima as a place of nuclear destruction cannot be assumed to be known by younger generations. There is no reliable empirical data on historical and political knowledge about the dropping and testing of atomic bombs, their causes and conditions, the Cold War and the various nuclear weapons treaties. A (non-representative) survey of students of the teaching profession at the TU Dortmund University a few years ago showed that only one in two of those questioned knew Hiroshima as the site of an atomic bomb release. Many answers to the question about the locations and the year of the deployment of nuclear weapons were inaccurate, incomplete or wrong. The survey cannot provide any information about the reasons for the mostly vague and insufficient knowledge.

Florian Coulmas investigated what is taught about Hiroshima (and Nagasaki) in German textbooks and what knowledge and views on the use of nuclear weapons are conveyed there. In his comparison of German, Japanese and American textbooks, he notes that in German textbooks "the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki ... does not appear as part of national history" (Coulmas 2010, p. 96) and occupies only a small place in the presentation of World War II. He rightly asks the critical question "whether this is

appropriate in view of its world-historical significance" (ibid.).

The results of his study of older West German history textbooks⁵ can be largely confirmed by an analysis of 18 textbooks for history teaching that were published after 2000 and are approved in North Rhine-Westphalia as teaching material for the subject of history in courses at secondary level I and II. These courses have World War II and post-war history as subjects of the curriculum (see MSB-NRW 2020, see also Hindemith 2020). The presentation of the Pacific War, the atomic bombing, the human and political consequences and the significance of 'Hiroshima' varies greatly, usually comprising only one or two pages, sometimes only a few sentences (cf. e.g. Brokemper/ Köster/ Potente 2006, p. 197), sometimes nothing at all (cf. Breiter et al. 2018). For the majority of the books analyzed, it is also true, as Coulmas sums up his investigation: "The German textbooks mostly adopt the official American view and present the supposed causal connection between the bombs and the capitulation of Japan as a fact". (Coulmas 2010, p. 97) For example: "The Second World War ended three months later with the unconditional surrender of Japan after the USA had dropped atomic bombs for the first time over Hiroshima and Nagasaki." (Langendorf 2015, p. 255) or: "In Asia the war did not end until September 1945, after the USA had dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6th and 9th and thus forced Japan to surrender with the cruel destructive power of this new weapon" (Laschewski-Müller/ Rauh 2016, p. 237; see also Baumgärtner/ Fieberg 2009, p. 132; Christoffer et al. 2009, p. 210; Christoffer et al. 2016, p. 150; Derichs et al. 2017, p. 145; Droste et al. 2015, p. 679; Ebeling/ Birkenfeld 2009, p. 58; Lenzian 2017, p. 315; Lenzian/ Marx 2005, p. 206; Regenhardt 2008, p. 97). On the other hand, only one textbook associates Japan's capitulation with the declaration of

⁵ Unfortunately, Coulmas does not identify editors, publishers, publication years and editions for the history books he consulted. The following textbooks are probably involved:

Ebeling, H. (1970): *Die Reise in die Vergangenheit - ein geschichtliches Arbeitsbuch*. In d. Neubearb. von Wolfgang Birkenfeld. Bd. 4: *Unser Zeitalter der Revolutionen und Weltkriege*. Braunschweig: Westermann.

Schmid, H. D. (Hrsg.) (1979): *Fragen an die Geschichte - Geschichtliches Arbeitsbuch für Sekundarstufe I, Band 4: Die Welt im 20. Jahrhundert*. Frankfurt a.M.: Hirschgraben.

Graßmann, S. (1983): *Zeitaufnahme. Geschichte für die Sekundarstufe I. Bd. 3/4: Vom ersten Weltkrieg bis zur Gegenwart*. Braunschweig: Westermann.

Mickel, W./ Wiegand, B. (1987) (Hrsg.): *Geschichte, Politik und Gesellschaft* Bd. 1: *Von der Französischen Revolution bis zum Ende des 2. Weltkrieges*. Lern- und Arbeitsbuch für Geschichte in der gymnasialen Oberstufe. Bielefeld: Cornelsen.

Cornelissen, J. et al. (1993): *Geschichte 4 G: Das 20. Jahrhundert*. München: Bayerischer Schulbuch Verlag.

Bemlochner, L. (Hrsg.) (1997): *Geschichte und Geschehen II. Ausgabe A/B. RSR. Oberstufe. Gymnasium*. Stuttgart: Klett.

war by the Soviet Union and the occupation of Manchuria (see Berger-v.d.Heide 2009, p. 103), and only another textbook mentions Japan's hopelessness and willingness to surrender (Brückner/ Focke 2012, p. 129). The situation for Japan was hopeless in the summer of 1945. The call for an unconditional surrender after the Potsdam Conference was initially ignored by Japan, while at the same time unsuccessful soundings were made about an end to the war. With the Soviet cancellation of the Neutrality Agreement and the declaration of war on August 8, Japan lost the last hope of a neutral mediator and finally accepted the Potsdam conditions on August 14 (cf. Coulmas 2010, pp. 20ff; Melber 2020, p. 19; ausführlich Scherer 2015, pp. 36ff, 82ff, 141ff).

As a motive for the use of the atomic bomb, the statement by President Truman is only occasionally mentioned (see Langendorf 2015, p. 255; Sauer 2009, p. 52f). Also the question of the justification of Truman's decision is only occasionally explicitly put to the students as a task (Derichs et al. 2017, p. 145; Berger-v.d.Heide 2009, p. 103). Coulmas had stated that "the complexity of the reasons that come together" and "the moral problems that were quite visible at the time" are rarely taken into account (cf. Coulmas 2010, p. 97). In only one textbook, which includes an excerpt from Coulmas' text, Coulmas' presentation of the various reasons for Japanese capitulation is put up for discussion (see Baumgärtner/ Fieberg 2009, p. 134), and only in one other is Truman's justification printed next to an American newspaper article from 1945 containing a moral critique of the atomic bombing, about which the pupils are asked to comment (see Sauer 2009, pp. 53f). The military necessity of dropping atomic bombs is denied by most scientists today (cf. Coulmas 2010, p. 17; Scherer 2015, pp. 180ff), the use of atomic bombs was already controversial at that time within the American government, among high-ranking military personnel and among scientists involved in the development. Scientists see it primarily as a demonstration of power towards the Soviet Union (cf. Coulmas 2010, pp. 18f; Scherer 2015, pp. 12ff; Melber 2020, p. 18f).

The history of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the war between Japan and China, the American oil embargo, and the Pacific battlefield as a whole are presented rarely and then very briefly (see Ebeling/ Birkenfeld 2009, p. 58; Baumgärtner et al. 2016, p. 313; Lenzian 2017, p. 315; Regenhardt 2008, p. 97). There are others, but again only a few textbooks, in which not only abstractly and summarily the number of fatalities, late health consequences or the almost complete destruction of the cities are mentioned or some photos are printed, but also the suffering of the victims is broadly and vividly thematized, for example by the report of a doctor from Hiroshima (see Ebeling/ Birkenfeld 2009, p. 58) or through memories of children from Hiroshima (cf. Christoffer et al. 2009, p. 211; Christoffer et al. 2016, p. 151). For most books, 'Hiroshima' is the

beginning of the age of nuclear weapons and the arms race (cf. Baumgärtner et al. 2016, p. 316; Baumgärtner/ Fieberg 2009, p. 133; Berger-v. d. Heide 2009, p. 174; Christoffer et al. 2016, p. 150; Derichs et al. 2017, p. 145; Ebeling/ Birkenfeld 2009, p. 58), in a single case it is explained by texts by R. Oppenheimer and G. Anders (cf. Lenzian/ Marx 2005, p. 206) or 'Hiroshima' is discussed as "a reminder" of suffering, nuclear dangers and the importance of peace (cf. Christoffer et al. 2009, pp. 210f; also Christoffer et al. 2016, pp. 150f).

Coulmas' analysis of 2010 and this new investigation refer to Federal Republic textbooks. A look at the book "Geschichte in Übersichten" ('History in Overviews') from 1982, which summarizes the "subject matter of history lessons in grades 5 to 10" in the GDR, shows exemplarily not only other historical facts, but also a different view of history and a different evaluation of events:

"In accordance with a promise made to its Western allies, the USSR declared war on Japan on August 8, 1945, three months after the end of the war in Europe. Since 67 percent of the Japanese armed forces were in China, the Soviet Army's attack was of decisive importance for the war. ... The US government dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945 and on Nagasaki on August 9, 1945. More than 300,000 people died, tens of thousands were wounded by the radiation and condemned to years of infirmity. There was no military necessity for the dropping of the atomic bomb, as the defeat of the Japanese forces was imminent. Reactionary groups in the USA wanted to impose their will on other peoples with the sole possession of this terrible weapon, but above all they wanted to intimidate and blackmail the USSR." (1982, p. 417)

The military necessity and the justifications for the dropping of nuclear bombs are still heavily disputed today (cf. Melber 2020, pp. 18ff). Coulmas analyzed the historical background of the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on the basis of historical documents and scientific research, distinguished the interwoven technological, military, political and human aspects of the Pacific War, and attempted a differentiated assessment and evaluation of the many different factors that came together (cf. Coulmas 2010, p. 23). Against this background of historical knowledge and political controversy, the accounts in almost all textbooks appear to be more or less clearly biased, abridged and - even the more detailed accounts - ultimately inadequate. The competencies expected and aspired to in the core curricula for a reflected awareness of history (cf. MSW-NRW 2011a, 2011b, 2011c, 2014, MSB-NRW 2019) require a differentiated consideration of the historical

connections including political controversies based on scientific knowledge. This includes the discussion of the historically given but rejected political alternatives of all conflict parties involved (detailed and critical about it Scherer 2015) on the basis of historical research instead of the suggestion of a causal effect connection between the dropping of atomic bombs and Japanese capitulation or instead of the uncritical adoption of the later American justification. The fact that German and European history occupy a large part of school lessons and that the 20th century and the debate about National Socialism in particular carry great weight is well justified and comprehensible. But an exclusive focus on German national history and the West, also in the treatment of the Second World War and post-war history, seems to be problematic. It is inappropriate both in view of the importance of the Asian states in past, in view of the conflicts in East Asia in the globalized world of the present and in view of the world-historical significance of the dropping of atomic bombs, the history of their victims and the dangers of nuclear armament.

5. The legacy of 'Hiroshima'

The legacy of 'Hiroshima' is articulated in the annual Peace Declarations of the Mayor of Hiroshima in remembrance of the dead and the sufferings of the survivors of the atomic bombing ('hibakusha'), the commitment and efforts to ban and abolish all nuclear weapons with the goal of a nuclear-free world and eternal world peace (see Matsui 2019; see also Melber 2020).

In Germany there are a large number of civil society organizations and initiatives that are active in the spirit of the Hiroshima heritage: Netzwerk Friedenskooperative, Trägerkreis "Abolish Nuclear Weapons", IPPNW (International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War), ICAN-Germany (International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons), PNND (Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament. Engaging legislators worldwide in steps towards nuclear disarmament). On Hiroshima Day there were commemoration events in 70 German cities (cf. Netzwerk Friedenskooperative 2019b). In addition, a picket protest was held for several weeks in front of the gate of the Büchel airbase (Eifel), where some twenty American atomic bombs with the destructive power many times greater than that of a Hiroshima bomb are stored (cf. Nuclear-free 2019). This year again more people took part in the Easter marches than in previous years. The Netzwerk Friedenskooperative speaks of several tens of thousands who took part in actions for peace, disarmament and justice in about

100 cities. The central demands of the Easter marches were disarmament, a nuclear weapons-free world and a stop to arms exports (cf. Netzwerk Friedenskooperative 2019; 2019a). A representative survey published a few weeks ago by Greenpeace Germany found that an overwhelming majority (91%) of Germans are in favor of joining the UN nuclear weapons ban. The survey also found that 84% of respondents believe that nuclear weapons stationed in Germany should disappear completely (see Greenpeace 2019). Local politicians are also working in the spirit of the legacy of 'Hiroshima': 600 German cities have joined the organization "Mayors for Peace", founded in 1982 by the mayor of Hiroshima, in order to take responsibility for the security and lives of their citizens and to prevent the worldwide proliferation of nuclear weapons through actions and campaigns and to achieve their abolition.

But government policy seems to be unaffected by this. To this day, Germany has not signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The government argues that the goal of a nuclear weapons-free world cannot be achieved in this way, the security policy reality is not taken into account, and Germany is fully committed to the obligations within the framework of NATO (see Deutscher Bundestag 2018). The legacy of 'Hiroshima' is thus politically controversial, has a very different media presence and seems to be relevant only for subgroups of society. In this respect it can be said that it is still an unfinished task, also an educational task. If the legacy of 'Hiroshima' also implies responsibility for peace and reconciliation, then textbooks should deal with this history in a more differentiated way and give the subject a greater place in the classroom. For responsible action does not require abstract knowledge and information about the atomic bombs and their effects, but rather a comprehensive and concrete knowledge of the events, their conditions and history as well as the consequences and the history afterwards, including the long suffering of the 'hibakusha', their denial of aid, their discrimination and their struggle for recognition.

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