

THE RECEPTION OF CLAUSEWITZ IN GERMANY

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Introduction

The preface to Carl von Clausewitz's main work 'Vom Kriege' [On War], which was written by his wife Marie, contains his ambition "... to write a book that would not be forgotten after two or three years, and which anyone interested in the subject would at all events take up more than once".¹ This wish has been fulfilled. Clausewitz was and is to a large extent regarded as compulsory reading for the officer. Some 150 years after the first publication of the book 'Vom Kriege', the German Federal Minister of Defence at that time, Manfred Wörner, said that for him it would be "... inconceivable for an officer not to have read his 'Clausewitz'". However, a look at the history of its effect not only sheds some light on the matter but also reveals an unexpectedly large amount of shade.

Reception up until 1990

The history of the reception of Clausewitz's work in Germany from its publication in the year 1832 through to the second half of the 20th century has been described in detail by Werner Hahlweg and his pupil Ulrich Marwedel.² As long ago as 1836, Zedlitz published a biographical and literary outline of Clausewitz, which appeared in the pantheon of the Prussian army. However, the "sluggish" sales figures – publication of the first four editions did after all require just under 50 years – indicate that Clausewitz's work was not initially among the best-sellers. Outside of the narrow circle of military personnel³, the book went largely unnoticed. And even inside the German officer corps, the prevailing theory was that of the French general Antoine-Henri Jomini (1779-1869), who Clausewitz had criticized fiercely in his writings, namely that of strategic thinking. Clausewitz himself would thus have been anything but satisfied with the reception of his main work.

In addition, changes in the contents of even the second and third editions show that gross misunderstandings accompanied the comprehension and adoption of Clausewitz's thoughts. However, at this time there were also at-

tempts to shed a little more light on “Clausewitz”. The year 1846, for instance, saw the Historical Department of the General Staff publish in the *Militärwochenblatt* [Military Weekly] a treatise on Clausewitz’s influence on the structure of the *Volkssturm* and *Landwehr* [the territorial armies] and their establishment in East Prussia during January 1813. In 1878, the first Clausewitz biography appeared by Karl Schwartz, which also contained additional hitherto unknown documents. And in 1888, the *Großer Generalstab* [Great General Staff] published Clausewitz’s “*Nachrichten über Preußen in seiner großen Katastrophe*” [News of Prussia in its great catastrophe].

Not until 1905, hence just under 75 years after the first publication of the “*Hinterlassene Werke*” [Posthumous Works], did a true Clausewitz boom emerge: in just 13 years, nine new editions appeared. The Chief of the *Großer Generalstab*, Alfred von Schlieffen, had become personally involved in the publication. At the same time a series of publications started up concerning Clausewitz and his life as well as his wife Marie. Lieutenant General Rudolf von Caemmerer in 1905, for example, wrote about Clausewitz in the series “*Erzieher des Preußischen Heeres*” [Educators of the Prussian Army]; Paul Creuzinger in 1911 produced an article about Hegel’s influence on Clausewitz; Karl Linnebach in 1917 published “*Karl und Marie von Clausewitz. Ein Lebensbild in Briefen und Tagebuchblättern*” [Karl and Marie v. Clausewitz. A portrait of lives in letters and diary pages], an importance source - particularly from the biographical aspect.

During the interwar period, social scientists, above all, went to great lengths to provide new access to the work of Clausewitz. Especially representative of these works is the dissertation by the historian Hans Rothfels from 1920, in which he examined the relationship of politics and war in Clausewitz. At the same time he published Clausewitz’s “*Politische Schriften und Briefe*” [Political writings and letters]. He thus considerably extended the view of Clausewitz’s posthumous work. Walter Elze in 1934 examined the theory and didactic approach in the book ‘*Vom Kriege*’. In 1936 the philosopher Walther Malmsten Schering opened up a view of Clausewitz’s war philosophy. Finally, in a special edition of the *Militärwissenschaftliche Rundschau* [Military science review] of 1937, two letters with thoughts on defence were published for the first time. And between 1937 and 1943, in the small paper entitled “*Strategie aus dem Jahre 1804 mit Zusätzen von 1808 und 1809*” [Strategy from the year 1804 with addenda from 1808 and 1809], Eberhard von Kessel published

Clausewitz's card index from the time when he was a pupil of Scharnhorst at the Kriegsschule [War College].

During the years from 1933 to 1943, "Vom Kriege" was republished – after a break of 25 years. General Friedrich von Cochenhausen published two editions, and A. W. Bode even as many as five, which were declared a popular edition. Added to these came various abridged versions, such as that from Schurig or the version by Cochenhausen "um Veraltetes gekürzte Auflage" [abridged to remove the obsolete]. The "Clausewitz Katechismus" [Clausewitz catechism] by General Horst von Metzsch, first published in 1937, is a collection of quotations with brief annotations. Its high print run of more than 220,000 copies underlines the purely military exploitation interests prevailing at that time. The publishers were concerned with conveying in a brief and concise manner what were considered to be Clausewitz's most important theories so that readers would be able to make use of them in their professional activities. This abridging, profoundly unhistorical approach also applies to a similar collection, which Walter Faltz published as "Politisches Soldatentum" [political soldiering] in 1944.

During this time, some generally shorter biographies also appeared. In them Richard Blaschke and Walter M. Schering published some previously unknown texts by Clausewitz. In addition, a slightly novelistic genre emerged.⁴ Overall, since the start of the 20th century, there has been an increasing conflict between the academic efforts to provide a comprehensive, critical view of Clausewitz's works, on the one hand, and a purely military interest directed to towards practical exploitation, on the other, accompanied by a romanticizing conception of Carl von Clausewitz as a person. The dominance of the interest in military exploitation together with the resulting abridged versions and misrepresentations may explain that, despite an apparently great demand for Clausewitz's work in the first half of the 20th century, both world wars were not conducted in the spirit of Clausewitz on the German side. The military historian Marwedel came to the conclusion "that the First World War was not waged according to Clausewitz because the way in which combat operations were conducted revealed a number of serious violations of his most elementary theories." And even the critical confrontation of the experiences of the First World War with Clausewitz's philosophy of war had, as Marwedel continued, only a slight influence on the conduct of the Second World War.⁵

After 1945, this realization led to intensive Clausewitz research in West Germany, the promoter of which, namely Walter Elze's pupil Werner Hahl-

weg, was at the establishment that later became the chair of “*Militär-geschichte und Wehrwissenschaften*” [Military History and Military Science] in Münster. Hahlweg dealt firstly with collecting and critically editing Clausewitz’s writings. The 16th edition of “*Vom Kriege*” from 1952 thus offers the original text of the first edition for this first time after 120 years. Clausewitz’s other “*Schriften*” [writings] were published by Hahlweg in the years between 1966 and 1990 in three substantial volumes, with a critique of the text and adapted to the form of the original. And to coincide with Clausewitz’s birthday, Hahlweg compiled his “*Verstreute kleine Schriften*” [Scattered small writings] and made them accessible to a broader public. Secondly, he acted as a biographer of the works and produced a picture of Clausewitz during the period known as the “*Deutsche Epoche*” [German epoch]. Finally, he also provided the reader with a view of Clausewitz’s thoughts on the “*Kleine Kriege*” [small wars] and their transferability to the new global picture of asymmetric wars. In doing so, he ascertained that the “*Kleiner Krieg*” as a popular war or war of total resistance of the then present-day had long exceeded the bounds of mere irregular military actions. Thus, as he claimed in 1980 with not unjustified pride, Hahlweg had through his “*examination of the philosopher’s thoughts in the field of interpretation and practical influence reached a new level.*” And he concluded: “*In this respect the almost universal continuing attention to Clausewitz and his work, the intensification of the examination of his ideas, especially in the last two decades, may well be regarded as a Clausewitz renaissance; one gains the impression that only now is Clausewitz being understood in his actual meaning, particularly in the light of today’s interdependent relations between society, politics, armed struggle, economics and the peace order.*”⁶

Parallel to this came further important stimuli from home and abroad for a new view of Clausewitz. Worthy of particular mention here are the educationalist Erich Weniger (1894-1961) with his article “*Philosophie und Bildung im Denken von Clausewitz*” [Philosophy and education in Clausewitz’s thinking] from 1950, and Ernst August Nohn with his text “*Der unzeitgemäße Clausewitz*” [The anachronistic Clausewitz] from 1956. Peter Paret’s book “*Clausewitz and the State*”, which first appeared in the United States in 1976, was translated as “*Clausewitz und der Staat*” for the German book market in 1993; Raymond Aron’s book “*Penser la guerre, Clausewitz*” [English version entitled *Clausewitz: Philosopher of War*] appeared in French in 1976 and in German as “*Den Krieg denken*” in 1980. And finally, in 1988, Panajotis Kondylis compared the theories of war in Clausewitz, Marx, Engels, and

Lenin. However, here it should be noted that the readership of these works was probably somewhat limited: the almost 20-year “delay” in the German edition of Pareto’s book is just as puzzling as the fact that the German translation of Aron’s “Den Krieg denken” ended up in the bargain section at a very early stage. At the same time as Hahlweg’s biographical works, biographies by Franz Fabian (1956) and Wilhelm von Schramm (1976) also came onto the German market. Friedrich Doepner shed a little more light on Clausewitz’s family in “Die Familie des Kriegsphilosophen Carl von Clausewitz” [The family of war philosopher Carl von Clausewitz]. And in 1991 Dietmar Schössler enriched the German book market in a succinct yet still comprehensive biography “mit Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten” [with personal testimonies and documentary pictures].

Over the course of the years, a Clausewitz “School” established itself around Hahlweg and was more or less directly connected with him. It distinguished itself with numerous publications about Clausewitz and examined him from hitherto unseen perspectives. To mark the 200th birthday, Günter Dill published a collection of material on Clausewitz’s main work, which bore the title “Clausewitz in Perspektive” [Clausewitz in perspective]. In it he compiled contributions that viewed Clausewitz as “a practitioner of warfare, a philosopher, a historian and a politician”⁷. New topics were covered by people such as the Marburg-based educationalist Heinz Stübiger, who published an article on “Clausewitz in Yverdon. Anmerkungen zu seinem Pestalozzi-Aufsatz” [Clausewitz in Yverdon, notes on his Pestalozzi essay]. Helmut Gassen also dealt with Clausewitz from the educational viewpoint. Andrée Türpe produced his doctoral thesis on Clausewitz, the philosopher of war (1977). In 1980 Colonel Klaus Buschmann published the monograph “Motivation und Menschenführung bei Carl von Clausewitz” [Motivation and leadership in Carl von Clausewitz], which appeared within the Bundeswehr [German Federal Armed Forces] as part of the Innere Führung [Leadership Development and Civic Education] series of publications. In 1984, the then Captain Erich Vad published his dissertation entitled “Carl von Clausewitz – Eine militärische Lehre. Untersuchungen zur Bedeutung Clausewitz’ für die Truppenführung von heute” [Carl von Clausewitz – A military theory. Investigations on the importance of Clausewitz for today’s military leadership]. In 1988, Peter Trummer, commissioned by the Studiengruppe für Internationale Sicherheitspolitik [Study group for international security policy], published the work “Clausewitz - heute. Den Krieg denken, um den Frieden zu sichern?” [Clausewitz today. The

philosophy of war to secure peace?). And in 1990, the psychologist Kurt Guss considered war from a psychological and pedagogical view as a unified whole. This interdisciplinary variety was characteristic of research into Clausewitz after the Second World War. It facilitated, as Hahlweg had said, the understanding of Clausewitz's theories and teaching, thus enabling them to be examined and assessed in terms of today's issues of politics and military power.

Since this time, various editions of the main work "Vom Kriege" have been published. The 17th to 19th editions, edited and annotated by Hahlweg, were published by Dümmler-Verlag and – in addition to the original version from 1832 – contain numerous supplementary texts. The latter included Clausewitz's preface and notice, the preface by the publisher of the first edition, the treatise "Übersicht und Entwurf zum Unterricht für den Kronprinzen" [Overview and draft of tuition for the crown prince] as well as a brief account of tactics and combat theory. These editions are still regarded as standards. In addition, a number of publishing houses produced – in some cases abridged – original texts of the eight books of "Vom Kriege" in paperback format or also in hardback. The editors included Marwedel, Wolfgang Pickert and Wilhelm Ritter von Schramm. And Gerd Stamp picks up on Mentzsch's thread by again publishing a more extensive collection of quotations with the promising title of "Clausewitz im Atomzeitalter" [Clausewitz in the atomic age].

A Clausewitz renaissance also occurred in the training and education of future leaders of the Bundeswehr. Since its foundation in 1957, the Führungsakademie der Bundeswehr [Command and Staff College of the German Federal Armed Forces] has also regarded itself as a stronghold of Clausewitz reception. Clausewitz has regularly been included in the training of future general and admiralty staff officers, as the former military history lecturer Othmar Hackl confirmed: Clausewitz was, according to Hackl, "one of the main subjects in the teaching of military history" at the Führungsakademie.⁸ This generally took place in a lecture as part of the series "Geschichte der Strategie" [History of strategy], in which other strategic thinkers from the national and international arena were also presented. However, occasional seminars as compulsory options in defence history or also later in social sciences reached only few participants. The freedom of choice may have been a way of accommodating the course participants' wishes. In a comparison with thinkers such as Sun Tze or Jomini, they tended to regard Clausewitz as outdated, biased towards the army and difficult to read, if not incomprehensible. Nevertheless, quotations

from his principle work were popular when keywords were required for lectures, presentations or meetings. In this manner, to mark the 25th anniversary of its foundation, the Führungsakademie also adorned its entrance area in the main building with a bust of Clausewitz and a quotation by him that appeared to embody the political spirit of the peace and security policy of that time. Accurately transcribed but taken completely out of context, this quotation merely records the incorrect and also thoroughly dangerous use of Clausewitz as a convenient supplier of quotations.

As an expression of academic ability, every participant attending the training course for the general and admiralty staff is required to produce a thesis. Of the 3,200 participants in the first 45 years, a mere 13 of them investigated topics directly dealing with Clausewitz and his work. This means that only one thesis every third or fourth year was dedicated to the Prussian general and military philosopher.⁹ Ekkehard Guth, himself a military historian, was extremely generous when commenting on this: “The works of Carl von Clausewitz and his teachings have of course been used in some theses because his theories have left their mark even on today’s post-war generation of general staff officers.”¹⁰ None of these works is among those honoured with the Clausewitz Medal of Honour by the Clausewitz-Gesellschaft [Clausewitz Society]. One exception was the course work produced by Thomas Will on “Operative Führung” [operational leadership], because it was later also accepted as a dissertation. It was set within the intellectual framework determined at that time by the editors of the army regulation HDv 100/100 (Field Manual) relating to the command of troops and their superior within the army command Major General Christian Millotat. The attempt – as already made by Moltke – to incorporate an operational level of command into Clausewitz’s field of thought between strategy and tactics and hence transfer Clausewitz directly, as it were, to the battlefield was not, however, convincing.

In 1961, the Clausewitz-Gesellschaft [Clausewitz Association] was founded in West Germany, closely linked to the Führungsakademie der Bundeswehr. Essentially, it forms an amalgamation of active and former officers in the general/admiralty staff and had set itself the target of “preserving the intellectual legacy of the German general staff, particularly that of the General Carl von Clausewitz, and furthering its ideas which have a timeless validity.”¹¹ Today its stated intention is to draw benefits for the present from the encounter with Clausewitz’s thoughts: “This is not concerned with a historical review of Clausewitz and his period or even with a detailed exegesis of his

work, but more with the attempt to view the current tasks of politics and strategy as reflected in the insights of Carl von Clausewitz and thus examine which of the principles and insights formulated by Clausewitz are still important today and are thus endowed with an enduring validity.”¹² In the regional events of its groups, in colloquia and fora as well as at annual conferences it deals with general issues of security policy and military strategy. At regular intervals it publishes the results from this work. And the best thesis of every general/admiralty staff course at the Führungsakademie is honoured with the Clausewitz Medal of Honour.

Clausewitz was also received with acclaim in the former GDR. In Burg, Clausewitz’s place of birth, his memory has been preserved through the naming of objects, such as a training centre, and by transferring the grave of Clausewitz and his wife from Breslau. In 1957, Ernst Engelberg and Otto Korfes published the principle work “Vom Kriege”. In 1979 the Socialist Unity Part of Germany (SED) established a Clausewitz medal as part of the celebrations for his 200th birthday. Also to mark this anniversary, selected “Militärische Schriften” [Military writings] were published from his work. In this respect it is not surprising that, during the transition period to the united Germany, the Professor of Military History and Captain at Sea of the former Nationale Volksarmee (NVA) [National People’s Army] Wolfgang Scheler, was also searching in Clausewitz for a “common intellectual source for the understanding of politics and war, of peace and military power, of the opportunities and limits of armed force”. For the NVA he established that Clausewitz was “always called upon by those wishing to guide military thinking out of its state of torpor and develop it in line with new conditions”. Nevertheless, the efforts of individuals to achieve recognition for Clausewitz and a fruitful transfer to the ideas of security policy and military thinking should hardly have exceeded “the narrow constraints of academic intellectual life”.¹³

These self-critical thoughts of the former NVA officer are indeed not inappropriate for the West German academic community. Without question, the multidisciplinary, critical Clausewitz research stands as a beacon over the second half of the 20th century. It was and also continues to be suitable, as Dill ascertained, “as a means of taking up the dialogue with Clausewitz himself”.¹⁴ Yet it is particularly when the issue involves preparing the future generation of leaders, especially in politics and the military for the practice of strategic policy that the results of the Clausewitz research have barely been employed since Hahlweg. The number and quality of the theses at the Führungsakademie der

Bundeswehr on the topic of “Clausewitz” offer an extremely modest picture. And in the seminars and other teaching sessions, the trend has been towards simple, convenient selected texts that were primarily intended to serve as supporting arguments in everyday professional life. However, Clausewitz’s aspiration for himself and for his work in terms of political and military practice is as follows: “It is not what we have thought that we consider to be a contribution to the theory but the way in which we have thought it.”¹⁵ Consequently, Hahlweg had emphasized “the philosophical method of the work ‘Vom Kriege’” with its cognitive structures as one of the still unresolved core issues in the epilogue to the 19th edition.¹⁶ Apparently there existed a deficit here that was capable of also having negative effects on the education and training of future leaders in politics and the military.

No empirical investigations exist on the extent to which Clausewitz is established in the consciousness of German society. A look at an Internet search engine with the number of hits it produces provides a certain amount of empirical evidence¹⁷: “Clausewitz” alone records 215,000 hits, “Clausewitz” and “Strategie” has 62,200 entries, “Clausewitz” and “Vom Kriege” still 39,000, and “Clausewitz” and “On War” as many as 101,000. The intention here is not to compare the number of hits with those for other important strategic thinkers. However, the relationships among the search strings are interesting: firstly, it becomes clear that the principle work appears almost three times more in the English translation than in the German version. Secondly, it is surprising that the more specific subject of “Strategie” records almost twice the number of hits as the work “Vom Kriege”. Alongside this, the 79,400 entries for “Clausewitz-Gesellschaft” are astonishing: as large as the other hit rates may appear – Clausewitz with the German connotations appears almost paltry in comparison. As it is not possible to state who the interested parties in these topics are, a further look into the Internet is ventured. This reveals three Clausewitz barracks in Germany: in Burg, Hamburg, Nienburg – until a few years ago there was also a fourth in Oldenburg; Burg and Leipzig each have a Clausewitz-Hotel, and in Burg there is a secondary school, the former Erich Weinert Schule, which has been renamed the “Europaschule Carl von Clausewitz”; and clicking on “Clausewitz-Straße” yields 14,600 hits. In this context, it should be mentioned that the postal services in the GDR and the Federal Republic of Germany both issued a commemorative stamp to mark the 200th birthday. All this, as previously stated, has little conclusive power and

yet the result of an empirical survey on the level of awareness of Clausewitz in society would presumably yield rather modest results.

New stimuli

The picture looks different in the academic debate: in the last two decades, four groups have formed that deal intensively with Clausewitz. A first group gathered in 1990/91 at the Universität der Bundeswehr Hamburg [University of the German Federal Armed Forces] around the sociologist Gerhard Vowinkel. Its members regarded Clausewitz as “a non-canonized classical exponent of social science”. Uniting them was their surprise in the topicality, clarity of thought and academic usability of Clausewitz’s thinking.¹⁸ The works produced within the scope of a research colloquium displayed a surprisingly varied palette of social scientific approaches, inviting further studies. Unfortunately, there was no continuation of this colloquium.

Almost as a countermove, in 1995 Schössler founded the “Interdisziplinäre Forum für die Theorie und Praxis der Sicherheitspolitik, für Strategie und Streitkräfteforschung in der postkonfrontativen Periode” [Interdisciplinary forum for the theory and practice of security policy, for research into strategy and armed forces in the post-confrontational period] at the Universität der Bundeswehr München [University of the German Federal Armed Forces Munich]. This forum published Clausewitz studies, annual compendia and a collection of written works in the form of anthologies. In 1991 Schössler himself brought out a clearly structured and very readable academic biography in paperback format with personal testimonies and documentary pictures. Today the forum no longer exists; Schössler continues to be involved in this topic and, seizing on a notion by Clausewitz, recently published the “Grundriss einer Ideengeschichte militärischen Denkens” [Outline of a history of ideas in military thinking].

A third group formed in Berlin around the political scientist Herfried Münkler. His work “Das Bild des Krieges im politischen Denken” [The image of war in political thinking] takes an intensive look at Clausewitz’s theory of war compared with other military philosophers such as Engels or Carl Schmitt. Münkler deals in particular with the partisan and guerrilla warfare as well as terrorism. In 2001, the philosopher Andreas Herberg-Rothe completed his habilitation¹⁹ thesis under Münkler’s supervision with his work “Das Rätsel Clausewitz. Politische Theorie des Krieges im Widerstreit” [The mystery of

Clausewitz. Political theory of war in conflict]. In her habilitation thesis, the philosopher Ulrike Kleemeier investigated the philosophical principles of the theory of war. And, more recently, Krzysztof C. Matuszek has emerged from Münkler's group with his dissertation "Der Krieg als autopoietisches System. Der Krieg der Gegenwart und Niklas Luhmanns Systemtheorie" [War as an autopoietic system. Present-day war and Niklas Luhmann's systems theory].

The fourth group resulted from the fortunate circumstance that the Commander of the Führungsakademie der Bundeswehr at that time, Admiral Lange, was committed to a substantial dissemination of Clausewitz's ideas in teaching. In 1999, he arranged for Paret to receive a special honour for his research on Clausewitz at the Führungsakademie. During his acknowledgement speech on "ways of approaching the work of General Carl von Clausewitz", Paret pointed out that a special focus of research on the "pedagogical Clausewitz" had evolved at the College.²⁰ The pedagogical views and statements represented an integral constituent in Clausewitz's political and strategic philosophy; ignoring these resulted by necessity in a reduction, a distortion or even a loss for the comprehension of the overall work. Clausewitz himself with the previously mentioned observation: "It is not what we have thought that we consider to be a contribution to the theory but the way in which we have thought it" had underlined that he regarded his studies on the campaigns less worth reading as an objective result but more as an example of how such studies can be made profitable – namely in the manner of "strict sciences". In general his principle work "Vom Kriege" and the theory of war elaborated within is a lecture, autodidactically for himself as well as for others.

Essential elements in Clausewitz's pedagogical thinking such as the nature of the matter, clarification of the circumstances, instruction, theories and methodological and methodical instruments are in a constant interplay with one another and serve one common aim, namely that of educating the individual by autodidactic means for his activity as a military leader. Clausewitz has thus developed a set of educational instruments which is appropriate for the objective of training military leaders for top positions and key roles. This set of instruments even stands up to present-day examinations in terms of educational science, particularly those directed from the field of adult education. The effectiveness of Clausewitz's ideas to date can therefore – also – be explained by virtue of their didactic structures.

Clausewitz himself was a successful educator and instructor. He gave intensive thought to educational issues, both as the head of Scharnhorst's of-

fice during the reform phase as well as in individual memoranda and essays. Pedagogically therefore, Clausewitz was not only in keeping the times, but stood at the forefront of educational progress along with other leading reformers. It may justifiably be said that their reform work was to a large extent an educational reform.

Discovery of the ‘pedagogical Clausewitz’ at the Führungsakademie der Bundeswehr had specific consequences. As long ago as 1995, Admiral Lange had ordered a 24-hour compulsory seminar for every member of the general and admiralty staff course. In addition, every participant received his own personal copy of “Vom Kriege”. The seminar was arranged under the heading of “Clausewitz – den Krieg denken” [Clausewitz – philosopher of war] and was designed on interdisciplinary lines. Philosophical approaches were taken into account, and very specifically among them anthropology, dynamics, decision theory, gestalt theory, action theory, conflict theory, constructivism, educational science, phenomenology, functionalism, sociology and engineering. In twelve sessions it dealt directly with the principle work “Vom Kriege”, in each case under a core heading and with a view to its importance for contemporary practical strategy. These seminars came to an end in 2007. Today “Clausewitz” is again (only) offered in seminars as compulsory options, e.g. on the topic of “intercultural competence”²¹. However, the lecture series on various approaches to strategy including that of Clausewitz continues to run.

In the years from 2002 to 2008, ten theses at the Führungsakademie der Bundeswehr were written on the subject area of “Clausewitz”; this is a threefold increase compared with the number in the first 45 years. During this period a number of notable and especially commended theses were produced. Hartmann’s work from 1997 dealt with the topic of “Erkenntnis und Bildung. Philosophische Grundlagen der Kriegstheorie Carl von Clausewitz’ und ihre Bedeutung für pädagogisches Handeln” [Discovery and knowledge. Philosophical principles of Carl von Clausewitz’s theory of war and its importance for pedagogical activity]. It found its way into his book “Carl von Clausewitz: Erkenntnis. Bildung. Generalstabsausbildung” [Carl von Clausewitz: Discovery. Education. General staff training programme], which appeared in 1998. In this work, Hartmann reconstructed the contemporary philosophical and epistemological knowledge paradigms which Clausewitz was able to employ or by which he was influenced. It was specifically F.D.E. Schleiermacher’s particular hermeneutics and dialectics as well as their astonishing agreement with Clausewitz’s exposition that offer the basis, as Hartmann summarized, for a

new “better Understanding of Clausewitz”. However, Hartmann also investigated the principles of educational theory in Clausewitz and used these to evaluate learning and teaching at the Führungsakademie. Overall he drew a positive picture: “In principle ... the statement that Clausewitz’s essential pedagogical ideas are specifically employed at the Führungsakademie der Bundeswehr (is) fully justified.” Features he emphasized here were the general educational aspiration, the granting of self-study components, the open and critical discussion, the integration of theory and practice, the importance of personality development for the course participants and the educational travel. Nevertheless, he also made sixteen “proposals for improvement”. Education should be understood as being more formal and less material. Tuition should be concerned with the development of intellectual and methodical competence as an overriding educational aim and a metacommunicative level of reflection. This would require an academic-intellectual approach he claimed: “Academic thinking in the actual military area of tactics, operations and strategy is a humanities-oriented way of thinking. Mastery of the methods of thinking in humanities (hermeneutics, dialectics) is an essential prerequisite for the development of intellectual-methodical competence. In turn it forms the prerequisite for performance-related skills in complex dynamic situations.”²²

Besides this, other works appeared by younger staff officers, the origins of which are also at the Führungsakademie der Bundeswehr. In 2005, Müller examined elements of systems theory in Clausewitz’s work from a mathematical viewpoint. In 2007, during his further studies at L’Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes in Paris, he presented his master’s thesis on “Clausewitz’ Lehre über den Kleinen Krieg 1810 – 1811 an der Berliner Kriegsschule” [Clausewitz’s theory on the Little War 1810 – 1811 at the Berlin War College]. The French participant in the course at the Führungsakademie der Bundeswehr Cohélèach dealt with Clausewitz from the viewpoint of economic theory. Taking the same perspective, Gieseler developed the “Elemente der Spieltheorie in Clausewitz’ ‘Vom Kriege’” [Elements of game theory in Clausewitz’s ‘On War’]. And finally, several works seized on Clausewitz’s teachings on the Kleiner Krieg and appraised them in terms of the current challenges through asymmetric warfare.

In 1999, the “Internationale Clausewitz-Zentrum” (ICZ) [International Clausewitz Centre] was founded at the Führungsakademie. Today it is in close contact with the economics and social sciences faculty of Potsdam University, where an International Clausewitz Institute is to be established. In the first

eight years, the Centre held 49 events in the form of Clausewitz discussions, workshops and colloquia and also regularly reported on these events in the Clausewitz-Informationen [Clausewitz bulletins]. By far the majority of the events were concerned with general political and military topics, without establishing a direct reference to Clausewitz's theories, principles and ways of thinking.²³ The target which the Centre had set itself "to analyse the methodology ... of Carl von Clausewitz's thinking in terms of its topicality and – in a second step – to apply it to today's global risks and conflicts in security policy", apparently remains largely neglected in these events. Instead, it appears to be concerned with applying what are termed the "timeless discoveries" of Clausewitz, such as the "wunderliche Dreifaltigkeit" [fascinating trinity] in politics and strategy. This approach is also in accord with the objectives of the Clausewitz-Gesellschaft, with which the ICZ is closely connected. As one of its set targets states: "This is not concerned with a historical review of Clausewitz and his period or even with a detailed exegesis of his work, but more with the attempt to view the current tasks of politics and strategy as reflected in the insights of Carl von Clausewitz and thus examine which of the principles and insights formulated by Clausewitz are still important today and are thus endowed with an enduring validity." The separation mentioned here of academic treatment and political and military practice as well as the wish to search and work with "enduring" or "timeless" discoveries is a contradiction in itself in connection with Clausewitz.

Outlook

What the four groups mentioned above share is their search for approaches to Clausewitz from the viewpoint of the humanities or social sciences. In contrast to some of the hard, open discussions of such issues in other countries, for a long time in Germany these new perspectives were only found in the more academically oriented groups. The same is true of approaches to Clausewitz from the fields of economics, natural sciences and technology. And the stimuli to adopt an understanding of war determined by sociology as a social system not only on the level of interaction and organization but on that of society in accordance with Niklas Luhmann have only become part of the German discussion in recent years.

Consequently, only now is it becoming really clear that Clausewitz - far ahead of his time and with only a premonition of the differentiation of the

academic disciplines from the middle of the 19th century - developed a sociological theory of the functional social system of 'war' which contains a theory of strategic thinking and action. We find today's corresponding academic theory offered in Luhmann's functional-structural systems theory. The immediate link to Luhmann's theory, and especially to his comments on "Politik als Gesellschaft" [politics as society] and on the generalized communication medium "Macht"²⁴ [Power], has already been formulated by Clausewitz himself when he interprets war as a means of politics and - in his first definition in "Vom Kriege" - as an act of force. This means that on the basis of this general theory, individual discoveries by Clausewitz on power, complexity reduction and the reallocation of quotas on actions and expectations, on the concatenation of contact selections of experience and action, on paradoxes, uncertainty and indeterminability, on probability and degrees of freedom can be included in the development of theories from the medium range to the lessons of strategy, i.e. extending into the practice of theory and doctrine formation in education and teaching for leadership personnel. Similarly problems from experience, hence from the empirical knowledge of war - exactly in line with Clausewitz's understanding of historical example - can be treated differently and can be linked with different approaches to those used previously. This also enables answers which today's picture of war urgently needs, as shown in some cases by the very confused contributions on terrorism and asymmetric warfare.

Relatively independently of these four groups, a large number of works are also currently appearing from very different perspectives. Today's technology is leading to what one might actually call revolutionary changes in the publishing of Clausewitz's works. The principle work is now available as a copy on CD-ROM provided with the especially convenient search functions, and various publishers are now outbidding each other with low-cost reprints of the full edition of the "Hinterlassenen Werke" from the first half of the 19th century. Since 2005 the book "Clausewitz lesen!" [Read Clausewitz] by Beatrice Heuser has also been on the German market and this is well suited as an introduction and aid to understanding, without lapsing into the same mistakes of earlier collections of quotations.

The works of Olaf Rose – finally – provide the German reader with access to how Clausewitz was received in Russia (1991/1995). Due to Soviet secrecy, existence of the Clausewitz biography by the Soviet-Russian Clausewitz philosopher Swetschin (1997) and of his official Clausewitz transla-

tion remained concealed from German Clausewitz researchers until the end of the Cold War.

For some time, the subject of asymmetric wars has increasingly been approached from the viewpoint of Clausewitz. In 2002, for example, the Internationales Clausewitz-Zentrum ran a workshop dealing with the topic of “Kampf gegen den internationalen Terrorismus” [the fight against international terrorism], while the Bundesakademie für Sicherheitspolitik [Federal College for Security Studies] together with the Clausewitz-Gesellschaft held a colloquium on the same subject in 2003. Kohlhoff in 2007, on the basis of Clausewitz’s teachings, raised the question concerning the possibilities to defend oneself against terrorism. And Claus von Rosen traced Clausewitz’s basic elements of the Kleiner Krieg from the tactical, strategic and political view. In doing so, he discovered in particular, that Clausewitz as a strategist of insurrection was far more practical in the field of the New Wars than had hitherto been assumed. His theories on the Kleiner Krieg are directly connected with comments on “great” war. And the detailed comments on tactics and combat methods in the Kleiner Krieg can to some extent be directly applied to today’s New Wars. Clausewitz’s thoughts can therefore make an essential contribution to the understanding of asymmetric wars.²⁵

A further new field is opening up in the comparison of economics and Clausewitz. In 2001, a translation from the English of a workshop report by the Boston Consulting Group appeared with the title “Clausewitz. Strategie denken” [Clausewitz on Strategy]. This report is intended as a reader for practitioners and theoreticians in industry and business in order to facilitate access to the topic of “strategy”. As a collection of quotations it has the familiar failings of the random, largely uncritical eclectic. And in 2008, Jan Grünberg published “Strategie und Taktik nach Clausewitz und ihre Anwendung in mittelständischen Unternehmen” [Strategy and tactics according to Clausewitz and their application in medium-sized enterprises]. However, the connection between the theories of Adam Smith and Clausewitz has not yet been properly revealed.

Several works deal with “Strategisches Denken” [strategic thinking] in connection with Clausewitz. Alongside Peter Trummer’s anthology from 1988 and Martin Kutz’s observations from 2001 on the “Historischen Voraussetzungen und theoretischen Grundlagen strategischen Denkens” [Historical preconditions and theoretical principles of strategic thinking], Hartmann’s works from 1998 are particularly important in this respect. He has demon-

strated that Clausewitz has developed a new - comprehensive - paradigm for the theory of war with a claim to universality: In order to observe and understand as well as practically experience and deal with such complex-dynamic realities as war and actions in war as if in a complicating medium and in a space creating its own effect, this - according to Clausewitz - would have to be distinguished by an increase in complexity if it is to be appropriate to the subject. For this purpose Clausewitz is said to have connected to the two methods of thinking: hermeneutics and dialectics according to Schleiermacher. He thus contradicted all quantitative-mechanistic approaches of his time for dealing with the social phenomenon of war. At the same time, Hartmann has therefore also terminated the 100-year-old quarrel as to whether Clausewitz was inspired by Hegel or not. Clausewitz not only employed this method himself but also introduced it for the reader in his principle work within the generally unread Book II. In this he explains, admittedly in what for our present-day ears is a rather clumsy conceptual style, three special techniques: methodism, criticism and examples. Ultimately Clausewitz is concerned with the link between theory and practice. The three special methods are comparable with today's social-empirical methods such as the critical-empirical method, the ideal typology or the probability and decision theory. Current scientific theories and the like do of course extend beyond 'Clausewitz'; however, they have neither overhauled nor even discarded his principles.

The task is therefore to render Clausewitz's thought paradigm rewarding by education on how to think. Clausewitz's theory of war is a hermeneutic theory. It is to a great extent not a technology but a critical science of reflection. At the same time it offers a method of reflection. Due to the complex-dynamic reality of war, the theory offers space for individual talent and the "tact of judgement". Uncertainty should not be driven out by education committed to positive teaching contents; instead, the individual should be enabled to withstand uncertainty by training of the commonsense and character. A number of theses can be derived from this:

- Science is an open process which cannot be locked and has no Archimedean point. A criterion for scientific progress is the crosslinking of theoretical elements which is becoming increasingly dense.
- War as a subject of research is part of the real world and in turn of the socio-political world within.

- Historical relativity, changeability and polarity of the object call for methods capable of capturing this. They are hermeneutics and dialectics.
- Theory of war is critical reflective knowledge not a positive theory based on laws and technology. In the field of tactics, however, methodism is a suitable access at lower levels of leadership.
- Understanding is a suitable method not only for the interpretation of texts or speeches but quite simply for the interpretation of social reality. This also includes war and warfare.
- Dialectics provides principles for truth-oriented communication. Dialectics does not necessarily look for the synthesis if the subject itself is characterized by polarity. Hermeneutics and dialectics are mutually dependent.²⁶

This is what constitutes the “how” in thinking according to Clausewitz. It is said to be “extremely modern”, if he is not still considered to be visionary. Learning and practice have to be consistent in the training of leaders. “If after the end of the East-West conflict, Clausewitz may have been rediscovered, his theory of war is nevertheless abridged to the contents affecting security policy and strategic operations, what remains lost is that which Clausewitz defined as his legacy for posterity: the epistemologically reflected methodology for solving complex-dynamic tasks.”²⁷

Concluding remarks

Is Clausewitz embedded in German consciousness today? Was the ball for a fresh reflection on an academic-practical examination of Clausewitz taken up in Germany at the end of the Second World War? As is all so often the case, there is no clear yes or no; after all, more than 50 years after Hahlweg’s new approach a major gap still exists up to the present-day. On the one hand, numerous academic research studies exist with an impressive variety and breadth, the results of which are also of importance for political-military practice. However, the extent to which these studies have penetrated society or even the groups of decision-makers is probably rather small.²⁸ On the other hand, to a large extent an abridged acceptance of “Clausewitz” prevails, fed by a plain interest in exploitation; a practice-related examination of “Clausewitz” himself

has barely taken place so far and is even categorically rejected by some decision-makers. Implementation of the new discoveries in political and military applications therefore still leaves much to be desired. This leads to the almost typical misunderstandings that have been occurring since the first publication of “Hinterlassene Werke” over 180 years ago until the present-day. These misunderstandings are extensive and are effective in terms of the question concerning the utility of Clausewitz’s work in the very general sense, his theory of methods for understanding and thinking of war and warfare as well as the explanation of the social phenomenon of war as part of politics. They also affect the more special issues such as the theory of warfare, the continuation and effect of politics down to the last thin threads of warlike events or the applicability of the theories, not only to the air force and navy but also to the New Wars of today.

Nevertheless, Clausewitz offers considerable potential for today’s politics and military, far more than the title of the principle work “Vom Kriege” would lead one to expect at first sight. Important steps in the academic preparation of this potential have already been taken in the last 60 years:

- for an understanding of the New Wars and the requirements they place on politics, society and the military by bringing back the scientifically value-free term “war” into the public debate and not restricting its use to either the so-called war between states or the asymmetric terrorism in the field of domestic politics;
- for the development of a strategic culture within the scope of the national and European alliance with a firmly established priority for politics;
- for the transformation of the Bundeswehr as a permanent reform: this process has itself a strategic dimension in the coordinated development of armed forces planning and is not merely to be understood as the organizational side;
- in pedagogical terms: Clausewitz is not part of history teaching; he is not a mine of attractive quotations and not a positive theory for “makers of systems” like Jomini but offers a school of thought aimed at reflexivity for the social system of war and warfare; this cannot only be experienced and acquired in a space for free academic thought;
- for continued research on the understanding of Clausewitz’s approaches and their connection to further discoveries from the

perspective of today's science. However, this must not only take place randomly and in groups acting mutually independently; a think tank of this nature would not only benefit society in the Federal Republic of Germany with science and politics and also the Bundeswehr in the homeland of Clausewitz, but instead, in times of increasing complexity in global society and politics with an increasing pace of change, it should presumably become a social necessity.

Notes:

¹ Clausewitz, Carl von, *Vom Kriege*, 18th edition, Berlin 1991, pp. 175-176.

² Hahlweg, Werner: „Das Clausewitzbild einst und jetzt“, in: Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege*, pp. 1-172; the 19th edition additionally contains: Nachrede zur 19. Auflage, pp. 1253-1340; Marwedel, Ulrich: *Carl von Clausewitz. Persönlichkeit und Wirkungsgeschichte seines Werkes bis 1918*, Boppard a. Rh. 1978.

³ Helmuth von Moltke's remarks that Clausewitz's *Vom Kriege* had been essential for his self-education and leadership skills significantly promoted the interest of contemporary and upcoming officer generations. See Hahlweg: „Das Clausewitzbild einst und jetzt“, p. 64.

⁴ Example given, Gerhard Scholtz: *Carl von Clausewitz. Bildnis eines deutschen Soldaten*, Berlin 1936; Gerhard Scholtz: *Reich mir Deine Hand. Carl und Marie von Clausewitz*, Heilbronn 1939; Paul Burg: *Feder und Schwert. Der Philosoph des Krieges Carl von Clausewitz*, Berlin o.J..

⁵ Marwedel, Ulrich: *Carl von Clausewitz. Persönlichkeit und Wirkungsgeschichte seines Werkes bis 1918*, Boppard a. Rh. 1978, p. 2.

⁶ Hahlweg, Werner: *Nachwort zur 19. Auflage „Vom Kriege“*, p. 1331.

⁷ Dill, Günter, „Vorwort“, in Dill, Günter (ed.): *Clausewitz in Perspektive. Materialien zu Carl von Clausewitz. Vom Kriege*, Frankfurt/M., Berlin, Wien 1980.

⁸ Citation in Marwedel, Ulrich: *Carl von Clausewitz. Persönlichkeit und Wirkungsgeschichte seines Werkes bis 1918*, Boppard a. Rh. 1978, p. VIII

⁹ All theses are listed in Führungsakademie der Bundeswehr/Clausewitz-Gesellschaft (ed.): *Generalstabsausbildung zwischen Gesellschaft und Militär. Das Jahresarbeiten-Archiv*, Herford und Bonn 1991. An assessment of these theses is given by Bald, Detlef and Wilhelm Nolte (ed.): *Ansichten und Einsichten. Militär,*

Staat und Gesellschaft im Spiegel ausgewählter Jahresarbeiten von Absolventen der Führungsakademie der Bundeswehr, Bremen 1998.

¹⁰ Citation in Bald, Detlef und Wilhelm Nolte (Hrsg.): *Ansichten und Einsichten. Militär, Staat und Gesellschaft im Spiegel ausgewählter Jahresarbeiten von Absolventen der Führungsakademie der Bundeswehr*, Bremen 1998, p. 121.

¹¹ Elble, Rolf: *Clausewitz in unserer Zeit. Ausblick nach zehn Jahren Clausewitz-Gesellschaft*, hrsg. im Auftrag der Clausewitz-Gesellschaft Darmstadt 1971, p. 7.

¹² Clausewitz-Gesellschaft e.V. (ed.): *Jahrbuch 2007. Eine Zusammenfassung von Beiträgen aus der Arbeit der Gesellschaft*. Band 3. Hamburg 2008, p. 255.

¹³ Scheler, Wolfgang: *Clausewitz und das militärtheoretische Denken in der DDR* (<http://www.sicherheitspolitik-dss.de/ap/ap04x055.pdf>) (accessed 27 October 2010), p. 57.

¹⁴ Dill, Günter, „Vorwort“, in: Dill, Günter (ed.): *Clausewitz in Perspektive. Materialien zu Carl von Clausewitz: Vom Kriege*, Frankfurt/M., Berlin, Wien 1980, p. XXX.

¹⁵ Clausewitz: *Hinterlassene Werke*, Band VII, Berlin 1835, p. 361.

¹⁶ Hahlweg, Werner in: Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege*, pp. 1282, 1339-1340

¹⁷ Accessed 14 August 2010.

¹⁸ Introduction to Vowinckel, Gerhard (ed.): *Clausewitz – Kolloquium. Theorie des Krieges als Sozialwissenschaft*, Berlin 1993.

¹⁹ Post-doctoral qualification showing ability to lecture and do research at professorial level.

²⁰ Details in Rosen, Claus von: „Carl von Clausewitz“ in: Detlef Bald, Uwe Hartmann, Claus von Rosen (ed.): *Klassiker der Pädagogik im deutschen Militär*, Baden-Baden 1999, pp. 77-106.

²¹ Souchon, Lennart in: Clausewitz-Gesellschaft e.V. (ed.): *Jahrbuch 2007. Eine Zusammenfassung von Beiträgen aus der Arbeit der Gesellschaft*. Band 3, Hamburg 2008, p. 226.

²² Hartmann, Uwe: *Carl von Clausewitz. Erkenntnis-Bildung-Generalstabsausbildung*, München 1998, pp. 154.

²³ An overview of all conferences and presentations is provided by *Clausewitz-Information* 3/2007, pp. 59-81, and *Clausewitz-Gesellschaft* 2008, pp. 83.

²⁴ Niklas Luhmann: *Macht*, Stuttgart 1988; Niklas Luhmann: *Soziologische Aufklärung 1. Aufsätze zur Theorie sozialer Systeme*. Opladen 1974, p. 213.

²⁵ Rosen, Claus von: „Die heutigen Kriege – nach Clausewitz. Zum Verständnis der neuen Kriege heute“ in: Helmut R. Hammerich, Uwe Hartmann, Claus von Rosen (ed.): *Jahrbuch Innere Führung 2010*, Berlin 2010, pp. 201-238.

²⁶ Hartmann, Uwe: *Carl von Clausewitz. Erkenntnis-Bildung-Generalstabsausbildung*, München 1998, pp. 138.

²⁷ Hartmann, Uwe: *Carl von Clausewitz. Erkenntnis-Bildung-Generalstabsausbildung*, München 1998, p. 160.

²⁸ As evidence may serve Naumann, Klaus: *Einsatz ohne Ziel? Die Politikbedürftigkeit des Militärischen*, Hamburg 2008.

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