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WORLD UNITY AS THE ONLY FUTURE FOR MODERNITY: LOCALISING THE WORLD STATE IDEA AND ITS PROPONENTS IN (LATE) 1940s GERMANY

Anna Elisabeth Keim

Cold War history and its focus on systemic competition have somewhat obscured the fact that until the early 1950s, many ideas instead conceived of the future of the world as a development toward greater unity. Especially during the 1930s and 1940s, a *zeitgeist* oriented toward supra-national political entities emerged, and a worldview beyond the nation-state became plausible for many people who perceived the age of nationalism as coming to a definitive end. Some proponents of these ideas even considered an imminent world state to be the only possible political solution for a secure future. This paper extends the research on world state ideas to post-war Germany and investigates the motivation of the German people to occupy themselves with questions aimed at reorganising the world. By focusing on a preeminent figure of the German world state movement, photographer and journalist Joe J. Heydecker, this paper demonstrates the influence of spiritual beliefs as well as technocratic ideas on the world state idea. It argues that the envisaged world state was not necessarily a democratic one but can be understood as a manifestation of a conservative search for different political modernity.

Keywords: 20th century, future, Germany, Joe J. Heydecker, utopia, world state movement

Anna Elisabeth Keim is a research assistant at the Institute of Contemporary History at Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, anna-elisabeth.keim@geschichte.uni-halle.de

Introduction¹

“Globalisation” is a rather recently used term that became popular in the 1990s in the aftermath of the end of the Cold War’s systemic competition. Yet, the basic idea of a connected world or even a united world—be it as an analysis of the present situation or as a vision of the future—is older.² Developments in communication and transportation during the late 19th and early 20th century led to a growing awareness of an already existing world unity as well as to a perception of the world as being (too) small—as German philosopher, Karl Jaspers put it in 1929 when he mentioned a “feeling of world narrowness [*Weltenge*]”.³ A high peak of intellectual globalism during the 20th century was the decades between the early 1930s and early 1950s, which witnessed the development of a zeitgeist oriented toward supra-national political entities and orientation beyond the nation-state becoming plausible for many people who perceived the age of nationalism as coming to its definitive end.⁴

Cold War history, with its focus on systemic competition and the separation of the world into two (respectively three) spheres, has somewhat obscured the fact that until the late 1940s and early 1950s, there existed many ideas that imagined the future quite oppositely as developing toward greater world unity, irrespective of the perceivable formation of opposed power blocs. In fact, extensive literature was produced that contained plans and conceptions about a soon-to-be-created federally organised world.⁵ These conceptions entailed a great variety of political and economic orientations reaching from capitalist liberal democracy to quests for a “third way” and often showed intersections with pacifist movements. The shared intention of these plans was the design of a future world order without the nation-state as its basic principle of organisation. For the nation-state was

- 1 I thank Patrick Wagner, as well as the anonymous reviewers, for their helpful comments. All quotes originally in German have been translated by the author.
- 2 An earlier term to describe this phenomenon was “mundialisation”.
- 3 CHRISTIAN GEULEN, *Unendliche Weiten? Zur Geschichte und den neurotischen Folgen des Durchstreichens leerer Räume*, in: *Umkämpfte Räume. Raumbilder, Ordnungswille und Gewaltmobilisierung*, (ed.) Ulrike Jureit, Göttingen 2016, pp. 73–91, here p. 74. See also: *Welt-Räume. Geschichte, Geographie und Globalisierung seit 1900*, (eds.) IRIS SCHRÖDER, SABINE HÖHLER, Frankfurt am Main 2005.
- 4 See recently: OR ROSENBOIM, *The Emergence of Globalism: Visions of World Order in Britain and the United States 1939–1950*, Princeton 2017; QUINN SLOBODIAN, *Globalists: The End of Empire and the Birth of Neoliberalism*, Cambridge MA, 2018.
- 5 For an overview of contemporary literature, see: WALTER BODMER, *Das Postulat des Weltstaates. Eine rechtstheoretische Untersuchung*, Zürich 1952, pp. 5–10.

conceived of as a principle of destruction that had led the world time and again into an abyss of war and lost its legitimisation more than ever in the beginning age of nuclear power.⁶

While conceptions aiming at the future unification of Europe have been researched quite extensively,⁷ the same cannot be said regarding the world state idea. Though both conceptions share the same assumption about the obsolete nature of the nation-state, their conclusions are marked by differing utopian content. The utopianism of the world state idea, which stands in rather sharp contrast to the actual realisation of a supra-national European structure, has probably been the reason for its relative negligence by historical research too. The existing research dealing with the world state idea, though, has focused mainly on the Anglo-American context as well as on rather well-known intellectuals supporting world unity.⁸ Furthermore, especially for the older research, it can be stated that a thorough historical contextualisation of these ideas has not always been given because most of the research was produced by scholars of political sciences often sympathetic to the idea.⁹

Due to the missing historical contextualisation, the world state idea has usually been interpreted as propagating the democratisation of the whole world, with “democracy” meaning liberal democracy as practised in the United States or Great Britain. The aim of this paper, therefore, is to scrutinise this picture in

- 6 A bestseller was Emery Reves's book *The Anatomy of Peace*, published in June 1945. On its reception in post-war Germany, see: INGRID LAURIEN, *Politisch-kulturelle Zeitschriften in den Westzonen 1945–1949. Ein Beitrag zur politischen Kultur der Nachkriegszeit*, Frankfurt am Main 1991, pp. 240 ff.
- 7 Exemplary for a large amount of literature, see: *Documents on the History of European Integration*, four volumes, (eds.) WALTER LIPGENS, WILFRIED LOTH, Berlin-New York 1985–1991 (as well as further works by Walter Lipgens and Wilfried Loth); FRANK NIESS, *Die europäische Idee. Aus dem Geist des Widerstands*, Frankfurt am Main 2001; BORIS SCHILMAR, *Der Europadiskurs im deutschen Exil 1933–1945*, München 2004; VANESSA CONZE, *Das Europa der Deutschen: Ideen von Europa in Deutschland zwischen Reichstradition und Westorientierung (1920–1970)*, München 2005; *Europe in Crisis. Intellectuals and the European Idea, 1917–1957*, (eds.) MARK HEWITSON, MATTHEW D'AURIA, New York 2012.
- 8 MAJA BRAUER, *Weltföderation: Modell globaler Gesellschaftsordnung*, Frankfurt am Main 1995; DEREK HEATER, *World Citizenship and Government: Cosmopolitan Ideas in the History of Western Political Thought*, Basingstoke 1996; JOSEPH PRESTON BARATTA, *The Politics of World Federation*, Westport 2004; JAMES A. YUNKER, *The Idea of World Government: From Ancient Times to the Twenty-First Century*, London 2011.
- 9 This is also criticised by: MIRIAM RÜRUP, *Von der Offenheit der Geschichte: Der Umgang mit Staatenlosigkeit und die weltbürgerliche Idee*, in: *Bessere Welten. Kosmopolitismus in den Geschichtswissenschaften*, (eds.) Bernhard Gißibl, Isabella Löhr, Frankfurt am Main 2017, pp. 71–102, here p. 78.

several regards. First, by the example of supporters of the world state idea in post-war Germany, the perspective is extended toward Central Europe, which has not yet been researched in connection with the world state idea. Accordingly, this paper focuses on intellectuals and rather ordinary people in post-war Germany whose adoption of the world state idea, and the inclusion of this idea into their imaginations of the future, has so far been ignored by historical research. Second, this paper aims to support interpretations that construe the mid-century world state project as a search process of conservative intellectuals confronted with totalitarianism.¹⁰ Therefore, this paper argues that the world state idea can also be understood as a conservative project marked by an aversion toward mass democracy and as a conservative search for different political modernity, yet with an anti-nationalist orientation.

To tackle these issues, I will proceed as follows. In the first part, I draw a panorama of thought and activism aiming at future world unity in occupied Germany, thereby focusing on the Western Occupational Zones.¹¹ The second part, then, centres on one of the leading protagonists of the German world state movement: photographer and journalist Joe J. Heydecker (1916–1997).¹² Nowadays, Heydecker is best known for the photographs he took in the Warsaw Ghetto in 1941 documenting the systematic elimination by starvation of the Polish Jewish population.¹³ Already during that time, he was interested in ideas of future world unity and reflected on them in his diaries. In a first step, therefore, I will concentrate on Heydecker's intellectual background during the 1930s and wartime. By tracing the origins of his interest in the idea of a world state, I will demonstrate that imaginations of world unity were not necessarily combined with an empathic acceptance of democracy and could instead be motivat-

10 See also: ADI GORDON, UDI GREENBERG, *The City of Man, European Émigrés, and the Genesis of Postwar Conservative Thought*, Religions 3/2012, pp. 681–698.

11 The focus is based upon the fact that the world state movement, as well as publications on this topic, were banned in the Eastern Occupation Zone due to the anti-cosmopolitan stance of the Soviet Union (see end of first part).

12 Joe J. Heydecker's legacy is recorded at the German Federal Archive in Koblenz. Some autobiographical material has been published in: *Ein Mann mit Eigenschaften: Joe J. Heydeckers autobiografische Aufzeichnungen*, (ed.) MARA KRAUS, Weitra 2019. His photographic legacy is recorded at the Austrian National Library.

13 His photographs from the Warsaw Ghetto were only published in 1981 in São Paulo and 1983 in Germany. See: JOE J. HEYDECKER, *Das Warschauer Getto: Foto-Dokumente eines deutschen Soldaten aus dem Jahr 1941*, with a preface by Heinrich Böll, München 1983. Heydecker had been drafted into the Wehrmacht in 1939. He participated in the occupation of France and was later deployed as a laboratory assistant in a propaganda unit in occupied Poland and the Soviet Union. For some time, he was also stationed in Potsdam, where he was deployed for office work.

ed by quite opposite ideas. In a second step, I return to the post-war time and describe how his long-nourished interest in future world unity transformed into activism. Crucial for this, I argue, were impressions during the Nuremberg trials against the main perpetrators of war crimes, in which Heydecker participated as a journalist. In this context, he initiated, together with some supporters, a group called Weltstaat-Liga (League for a World State), which was one of two larger groups dedicated to the idea of a world state in occupied Germany. The group's aims and activism, therefore, constitute the final passages of the chapter.

Beyond the Nation State: Imagining World Unity in Post-War Germany

Startling about the world state idea in several countries is the great range of political orientations that gathered under the roof of supra-nationality, as well as the fact that the idea could attract people of all generational backgrounds. An explanation for this can be found in early Cold War anxieties about the future, like the fear of the atomic bomb or an allegedly nuclear Third World War.¹⁴ Worldwide, many people shared a deep uncertainty regarding the future stability of peace in the face of the worsening relations between the two superpowers of the United States and the Soviet Union, as well as the supposed weakness of the then recently established United Nations. In March 1948, a survey of the Office of Military Government for Germany (U.S.) found that 59 per cent of the population living in the American Occupation Zone and 66 per cent of the West Berliners were convinced of a next world war within one generation.¹⁵ This fear could be used as a strategic factor by the proponents of a world state by conjuring up apocalyptic visions of a nuclear catastrophe and by generating hope through the promised “salvation” of world unity.¹⁶ Therefore, the future, as it was conceived of in the world state discourse, can be understood in terms of a “risk future” (Risikozukunft), as Rüdiger Graf and Benjamin Herzog have proposed. This mode of relation toward the future is characterised by the projection

14 For Germany, see: BENJAMIN ZIEMANN, *German angst? Debating Cold War anxieties in West Germany 1945–90*, in: *Understanding the imaginary war: Culture, thought and nuclear conflict 1945–90*, (eds.) Matthew Grant, Benjamin Ziemann, Manchester 2016, pp. 116–139; FRANK BIESS, *Republik der Angst: Eine andere Geschichte der Bundesrepublik*, Bonn 2019, chapter three.

15 *Public Opinion in Occupied Germany: The OMGUS Surveys 1945–90*, (eds.) ANNA JOHANNA MERRITT, RICHARD L. MERRITT, Urbana 1970, p. 217 f., no. 105.

16 For a drastic example, see: HELMUT KIMPEL, *Atomfrieden oder Atomkrieg*, Der Weltstaat 7/1948, p. 78.

of a dangerous and fearful future, a feeling of urgency, and the aim to prevent possible risks by establishing security and precaution.¹⁷

Adherents of the supra-national political organisation shared the assumption of an “anarchy” or “chaos” supposedly existing between the single nation-states that was perceived as endangering future peace and security, especially since the advent of the nuclear age.¹⁸ Intellectuals of all sorts were convinced that the nation-state offered no more of an adequate frame of political organisation for the solution of contemporary and future world problems and that world unity eventually was the task of the century. In this sense, leftist-Catholic publicist Walter Dirks (1901–1991) wrote in 1949: “The realisation of one world is doubtlessly assigned to our century. This is an enormous adventure full of dangers. Such an undertaking demands planned action of extraordinary scale, leads to a revision of all political and ethical problems, [...] means the dissolution of foreign policy into internal affairs, and brings about a new dimension of human existence.”¹⁹

In post-war Germany, only one monograph was published that was dedicated directly to the topic of a future world state. It serves also as an example of a rather personally motivated interest in world unity. When a professor of economics Robert Wilbrandt (1875–1954) published his study *Aufbruch zum Weltbundesstaat (En Route to the World Federal State)* already in 1946, this was motivated by the suicide of his youngest son Hellmut, who had shot himself in 1942 while being stationed in France.²⁰ While still alive, father and son had disagreed regarding the importance of state and military, which Hellmut had rejected completely. In his book, Wilbrandt described his son’s death retrospectively as a conversion and transfigured it into a personal mission: “Now I recognised: he was right. The whole and complete insanity of our existence became his ally: he was right! Away with this unworthy situation! Let us build another world! Thus, I absorbed with sixty-seven years the youngling in me. Thus, I now feel obliged

17 RÜDIGER GRAF, BENJAMIN HERZOG, *Von der Geschichte der Zukunftsvorstellungen zur Geschichte ihrer Generierung: Probleme und Herausforderungen des Zukunftsbezugs im 20. Jahrhundert*, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 3/2016, pp. 497–515, here pp. 510 f.

18 On the discussion of supra-nationality in German post-war journals, see: INGRID LAURIEN., *Politisch-kulturelle Zeitschriften*, pp. 230–247; FRIEDRICH KIESSLING, *Die un deutschen Deutschen. Eine ideengeschichtliche Archäologie der alten Bundesrepublik 1945–1972*, Paderborn et al. 2012, pp. 185–217.

19 WALTER DIRKS, *Garry Davis und die Weltbürger*, *Frankfurter Hefte* 3/1949, pp. 187–189, here p. 189.

20 ROBERT WILBRANDT, *Ihr glücklichen Augen. Lebenserinnerungen*, Stuttgart 1947, pp. 303–322, 353 ff.

to follow him into the fight for another, better world.”²¹ Although Wilbrandt did not turn into an anarchist and still conceived of the state as “indispensable”, he now pledged for the removal of the state’s right of self-assertion toward the outside, for the association of all states to a federal world state, against militarism, and for a world of free self-determination that would allow personalities like his son to unfold themselves. Half of his book, therefore, was dedicated to the question of the nature of the state as it had been conceived of in the history of philosophy since Plato. Wilbrandt concluded that the “true idea” of the state required a world state as not only a political but also an ethical demand.²²

It is striking, the wide range of media by means of which the world state idea was conveyed in post-war Germany. For instance, leftist journalist Axel Eggebrecht (1899–1991) wrote a radio feature entitled *Was wäre wenn... Ein Rückblick auf die Zukunft der Welt* (*What If... A Retrospect on the Future of the World*), which was broadcasted in March 1947 on the eve of the Allied foreign minister’s conference in Moscow.²³ The feature can be placed in the tradition of utopian retrospectives²⁴—in this case from the year 2047—a time in which no separation in single nation-states and no thinking in national categories would exist anymore. In the distant future of the 21st century, national symbols and anthems had lost their meaning over the last century, as Eggebrecht had a fictional professor explain: “For us in the 21st century, it is not easy to understand the meaning of that music [of national anthems, AEK]. But for the people in 1947, it was familiar and holy. [...] It was one of the most effective means to fill every nation with a fierce conviction of being better than other nations. [...] A custom which is most symptomatic for the whole spirit of late nationalism.”²⁵ The feature also recounted the developments in world politics since 1947. In a process of “organic growth”, a nucleus area in Central Europe²⁶ had developed continuously towards world unity with the entry of the United States and the Soviet Union in 1965

21 R. WILBRANDT, *Ihr glücklichen Augen*, pp. 353 f.

22 See also: SZ [GERHARD SZCZESNY], *Robert Wilbrandt. Aufbruch zum Weltbundesstaat* [review], *Der Weltstaat* 4/1947, p. 18.

23 AXEL EGGBRECHT, *Was wäre wenn... Ein Rückblick auf die Zukunft der Welt*, Hamburg 1947. On the great resonance generated by the broadcast, see: THOMAS BERNDT, *Nur das Wort kann die Welt verändern. Der politische Journalist Axel Eggebrecht*, Herzberg 1998, p. 97.

24 On this genre, see: LUCIAN HÖLSCHER, *Die Entdeckung der Zukunft*, Göttingen 2016, pp. 141 ff.

25 A. EGGBRECHT, *Was wäre wenn*, p. 19.

26 Until the end of 1947, Germany was supposed to become a mandated territory of the United Nations. Until June 1948, the same status was envisioned by Eggebrecht for large parts of Central Europe, including western territories of the Soviet Union and eastern areas of France.

and 1972 respectively to the imagined union, thereby eliminating all political differences. In the united world of the future, the old philosophy of nationalism had been eventually substituted in 1992 by a new philosophy which Eggebrecht baptised “harmonism”.

In the reality of the post-war world with nation-states still in existence, supporters of world unity perceived of borders and pass controls as hindrances to peace and as unnecessary bureaucratic procedures. In France and Germany alike, the activities of former U.S. bomber pilot Garry Davis (1921–2013), who while in France had denounced his U.S. citizenship and had issued himself what he called a “world passport”, generated great resonance.²⁷ He rose in popularity while camping on so-called international territory—i.e., the steps of the Palais de Chaillot in Paris, where the United Nations was supposed to gather soon. Due to a network of French intellectuals²⁸ that supported and steered Davis’s actions as well as broad media coverage that depicted him in his Air Force leather jacket as a disenchanting war veteran and “ordinary man” speaking for all the other “ordinary people” of the world, the number of his followers grew rapidly. On 19 November 1948, Davis, along with some of his supporters, tried to interrupt the plenum of the United Nations to read a short declaration in which a worldwide desire for a “world law” was claimed.²⁹

In Germany, too, world citizens groups mushroomed, organising so-called world citizens offices where people could register and obtain a “world passport” with a number—with Garry Davis being number one. In face of the huge numbers of stateless and displaced persons who wished nothing more than to obtain papers, Davis’s activities could have seemed tactless. Instead, they were interpreted widely as a gesture of solidarity with the weak.³⁰ Further, appeals were made to people holding important positions in society to follow Davis’s exam-

27 WOLFGANG KRAUSHAAR, “I interrupt you in the name of the people of the world”. Garry Davis, die Weltbürgerbewegung und die transnationalen Protestbewegungen nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg, in: Grenzkontrolle, (eds.) Kerstin Hädrich, Birte Werner, Wolfenbüttel 2015, pp. 77–97, here pp. 85 f. For Davis’s contemporary reception in Germany, see: GEO BAYER-BAYROS, *Weltbürger—voran! Ein Manifest gegen Hass, Unmenschlichkeit und Krieg*, Regensburg 1949; FRED DINGER, *Weltbürger Nr. 1. Der Weg des Garry Davis*, Hamburg 1949.

28 Several former members of the French *résistance* belonged to the so-called *Conseil de Solidarité*: e.g., George Altman (*Franc-Tireur*), Claudes Bourdet (*Combat*), Albert Camus (*Combat*), Louis Martin-Chauffier (*Libération*), Jean Paulhan, Abbé Grouès-Pierre, David Rousset, Robert Sarrazac-Soulage, and Vercours, as well as various activists of French pacifist movements.

29 GARRY DAVIS, *My Country is the World. The Adventures of a World Citizen*, Toronto-London 1961, pp. 50 ff.

30 WALTER DIRKS, *Garry Davis und die Weltbürger*, p. 188.

ple, thereby exercising pressure on governments.³¹ In particular, the younger yet already war-experienced generation could identify with Davis.³² In November 1948, the German periodical *Der Ruf* (*The Call*) published a poem entitled “Ich grüße Garry Davis...” (“I greet Garry Davis...”) written by student Nicolaus Sombart (1923–2008), son of economist Werner Sombart, and like Davis, a war veteran.³³ In his poem, he called Davis his “brother”, who had experienced the same austerities of war as himself, thereby constituting a community of experience between them. He praised Davis as his role model and admired his courage to stand up alone against established politics. Sombart perceived themselves as young men who only wanted peace and who did not want to sacrifice “their bones” again in some conflict. He gave Davis his word that he would never again march along the drill ground and ended the poem with the hopeful claim: “If all did like you do, the war would be ended forever.”

Ideas dealing with international law and world peace had figured as traditional elements of German pacifist movements, even before the First World War and during the inter-war period, before National Socialism eradicated them. Accordingly, they were reintegrated into pacifist activism in the post-war years. So, the program of the Deutsche Friedensgesellschaft (German Peace Society) in 1948 contained a call for world government.³⁴ Though the world state groups mushrooming in post-war Germany did not belong to the traditional pacifist spectrum, they nevertheless shared the pacifist movement’s goal of securing a future marked by peace and security. In the three Western Occupation Zones of Germany, there existed two larger groups that aimed to actually create a world state. The previously mentioned Weltstaat-Liga (League for a World State) initiated mainly by Joe J. Heydecker probably came furthest in terms of a number of members and range of activism (see below). The other group was called Liga für Weltregierung (League for a World Government) and was founded in 1946

31 WM [WALTER MANNZEN], *Weltbürgerschaft*, *Der Ruf* 12/1948, p. 3.

32 On the generation of the “45ers” in Germany, see recently: CHRISTINA VON HODENBERG, *Zur Generation der 45er. Stärken und Schwächen eines Deutungsmusters*, *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 4/5/2020, pp. 4–9. For a European perspective, see: *Does Generation Matter? Progressive Democratic Cultures in Western Europe 1945–1960*, (ed.) JENS SPÄTH, Cham 2018.

33 NICOLAUS SOMBART, *Ich grüße Garry Davis...*, *Der Ruf* 22/1949, p. 5. For a contextualisation of the periodical, see: ALEXANDER GALLUS, “*Der Ruf*”. *Stimmen für ein neues Deutschland*, *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 25/2007, pp. 32–38.

34 STEFAN APPELIUS, *Zur Geschichte des kämpferischen Pazifismus. Die programmatische Entwicklung der Deutschen Friedensgesellschaft 1929–1956*, Oldenburg 1988, pp. 84–106, 164 f. On peace activism in post-war Germany, see also: *Friedensinitiativen in der Frühzeit des Kalten Krieges 1945–1955*, (eds.) DETLEF BALD, WOLFRAM WETTE, Essen 2010.

in Cologne by advocate Julius Stocky (1879–1952).³⁵ As this group was the German offshoot of the British Federal Union, it aimed for a European federation as the first step toward world unity. The *Weltstaat-Liga*, by contrast, was the only group aiming directly at a world state. There were also several smaller and short-lived groups mushrooming in various cities of the Western Occupation Zones. In the Soviet Occupation Zone, by contrast, the activism of the aforementioned sort was impossible. For the Communist Party controlled by Moscow equated “cosmopolitanism”, as they called it, with “American imperialism” and interpreted it as being at odds with the nationalist orientation of Stalinism.³⁶ Therefore, articles and booklets published in the late 1940s and early 1950s in the German Democratic Republic argued that “cosmopolitanism” and world citizenship were an endangerment to “national culture”.³⁷

From “Panism” to the World State: Joe J. Heydecker and the *Weltstaat-Liga*

Born in 1916 in Nuremberg into a Catholic family and having completed vocational training as a photographer in Frankfurt am Main, young Joe J. Heydecker had followed his parents into emigration to Switzerland in 1933, as they—though neither politically nor “racially” persecuted—supposedly did not want to live in a Germany ruled by Hitler.³⁸ In the following years, he travelled in Central and Eastern Europe, which got him into contact with “people of all nationalities, races, opinions” as well as with books and newspapers inaccessible in Nazi Germany.³⁹ Early on, he read pacifist literature like Bertha von Suttner’s *Die Waffen nieder!* (*Lay Down Your Arms!*) and became interested in Esperanto, as well as other attempts to create a universal language.⁴⁰ Via his interest in Esperanto, he was probably also familiar with Ludwik L. Zamenhof’s ethic called Homaranismo, a cosmopolitan humanism criticising the separation of humanity

35 On Julius Stocky, see: *Neue Kriege zu verhindern*, *Der Spiegel* 14/1948, pp. 6 f. Between 1947 and 1948, the group published a periodical called *Mitteilungsblatt* (*Newsletter*) and since 1949 a periodical called *Die Welt von Morgen* (*World of Tomorrow*). They also published a series of thematically related booklets.

36 SIGRID THIELKING, *Weltbürgertum. Kosmopolitische Ideen in Literatur und politischer Publizistik seit dem achtzehnten Jahrhundert*, München 2000, pp. 243–252.

37 *Ibid.*

38 J. J. HEYDECKER, *Das Warschauer Getto*, p. 17.

39 *Ibid.*, pp. 17 f.

40 Federal Archive Koblenz (BArch), f. legacy Joe J. Heydecker, sign. N 1486/86, Fragebogen [1945] and Lebenslauf [1945]. In 1937, he joined the Austrian Esperanto Society.

into sub-communities that also pledged for the individual's worth, irrespective of "race", class, and religion.⁴¹ During a stay in Vienna from 1937–1938, Heydecker also actively participated in the Harand movement, a Christian conservative circle directed against "race hate" and antisemitism.⁴² The convinced Catholic and monarchist Irene Harand (1900–1975) had founded this movement in 1933, along with lawyer Moriz Zalman (1882–1940), to actively oppose the expansion of antisemitism as it was propagated by the National Socialists. Nevertheless, the Harand movement supported the authoritarian governments installed in Austria by Engelbert Dollfuß and Kurt Schuschnigg and joined the Fatherland's Front. For Heydecker, his participation in this movement was motivated by its profound rejection of antisemitism and "race hate", both of which he detested, but also by its Catholic-conservative stance and its support of corporate state ideas.⁴³

Yet, another field of literature had an even greater influence on his intellectual development. Early on, Heydecker became interested in the so-called New Thought movement, a spiritualist and esoteric movement originating in the 19th century in the United States that aimed for practical self and world improvement by means of "positive thoughts" and "concentration".⁴⁴ New Thought can be understood as a branch of the Lebensreform ("life reform") movement as well as an early manifestation of esoteric literature aiming at self-optimisation. Its publications painted the present in bleak colours as marked by "pessimism", "materialism", and "conflict".⁴⁵ The future, however, was to bring about a "new human" soaked in "positivity" and freed from inner and outer conflicts via participation in the "harmony of the cosmos". For adherents of New Thought, the

41 ANDREAS KÜNZLI, *L. L. Zamenhof (1859–1917). Esperanto, Hillelismus (Homaranismus) und die „jüdische Frage“ in Ost- und Westeuropa*, Wiesbaden 2010, pp. 211 ff.

42 On the following, see: „Gegen Rassenbass und Menschennot“. *Irene Harand: Leben und Werk einer außergewöhnlichen Widerstandskämpferin*, (eds.) CHRISTIAN KLÖSCH, KURT SCHARR, ERIKA WEINZIERL, Innsbruck 2004. In 1935, Irene Harand published her book *Sein Kampf: Antwort an Hitler (His Struggle: An Answer to Hitler)*, which made her popular.

43 On corporate state ideas, see: PAUL NOLTE, *Ständische Ordnung im Mitteleuropa der Zwischenkriegszeit. Zur Ideengeschichte einer sozialen Utopie*, in: *Utopie und politische Herrschaft im Europa der Zwischenkriegszeit*, (ed.) Wolfgang Hardtwig, München 2003, pp. 233–256, here p. 238; ELKE SEEFRIED, *Reich und Stände: Ideen und Wirken des deutschen politischen Exils in Österreich 1933–1938*, Düsseldorf 2006.

44 On *New Thought (Neugeist)* in Weimar Germany, see: BERND WEDEMEYER-KOLWE, „Der neue Mensch“. *Körperkultur im Kaiserreich und in der Weimarer Republik*, Würzburg 2004, pp. 164 ff.

45 On the following, see: K. O. SCHMIDT, *Neugeist im Alltag. Selbst- und Lebensbemeisterung durch Gedankenkraft*, Pfullingen [1925], passim.

nuisances of society could not be solved by class or “race” struggle but only by means of the individual’s concentration on positive aims like peace, love, and happiness. As one of them put it in the mid-1920s: “Why do poor and rich, masters and servants, suppressor and suppressed exist among humans as well as nations? Does it have to be like this? No! [...] This unbearable situation must, can, and will change! To blame for this limitless condition is the inner and outer divisiveness of the individuals and the nations, to blame is the complete absence of concentration, closeness, and inner unity.”⁴⁶ As New Thought was conceived of as a worldwide spiritual movement of millions of people of all nationalities and religions who allegedly shared the common goal to re-establish “harmony”, the influence on Heydecker’s attraction toward ideas of world unity becomes obvious. He was particularly drawn to the writings of Prentice Mulford (1834–1891), a 19th-century American journalist and “hermit” whose essays on the use of the powers of spirit and thought were pivotal for the New Thought movement. In his writings, Mulford heralded a coming “empire of peace” that would be characterised by a “reconciliation of differences” and by the transformation of “enemies” into “friends”.⁴⁷ If one adhered to the logic of New Thought, the realisation of a world state was not a utopian idea anymore but became possible merely by means of the individual’s concentration on the wished-for aim.

Heydecker not only read the New Thought publications but also deduced from them missionary activism. While stationed with his Wehrmacht unit in France in 1940, he secretly founded with some of his comrades a New Thought group. In a booklet printed during that time, he called this group a “fighting religious community” whose aim was to achieve the happiness of individuals, as well as to improve society.⁴⁸ In “tireless striving”, society had to be led to a “higher level” and to the highest possible measure of “harmony”. A precondition for this, he wrote, was the improvement of the “insight” of both group members and non-members to free humanity from the chains of traditional and “non-natural” conceptions. Instead, humanity was to be built on basic cultural and moral values supposedly inherent in human history and all religions alike. About the group member’s tasks, it said in the booklet: “The inner and insightful attitude of a *Neugeist* [a New Thought adherent, AEK] cannot allow him to face

46 K. O. SCHMIDT, *Neugeist im Alltag*, p. 3.

47 PRENTICE MULFORD, *Die Möglichkeit des Unmöglichen. Essays*, translated by Max Hayek, Leipzig-Wien 1919, pp. 46 f.

48 On the following, see: JOE J. HEYDECKER, *Die Grundlagen der Neugeist-Gemeinschaft N. G.*, La Flèche 1940. The booklet is contained in: Federal Archive Koblenz (BArch), f. legacy Joe J. Heydecker, sign. N 1486/105.

the grievances of the world with indifference. He lives not only with the task to create better and higher living conditions for himself and his progeny but also to increase the standard of living in a society in general. Therefore, it is for the activism of the N. G. [the New Thought group, AEK] neither too low to deal with the demand for new developments facilitating the housework of women nor too ambitious to erect modern and hygienic buildings nor too far-fetched to search for new means of understanding between the nations.”⁴⁹ The fighting aspect of the group was expressed in the demand directed toward each member to not let things go by inactively. This included acting according to one’s insights: “A *Neugeist* actually does what he preaches.”⁵⁰ The origin of Heydecker’s interest in world betterment through world unity, therefore, can be found in his attraction to esoteric and spiritualist practices like New Thought, which put it into the sole hand of the individual, not society or class, to improve world affairs.

During his years in the army, Heydecker also spent much time writing down his thoughts on what he called “panism”. Though he never gave a clear definition, he conceived of it as an “all-encompassing doctrine” (All-Lehre) and a theoretical and practical engagement with all expressions of life.⁵¹ In his diaries dedicated to this topic, he reflected on the creation of a “pan-community”—i.e., a community transcending space and time, developing finally into a world state. In his diary entries, Heydecker showed himself strongly influenced by the technocratic discourse of his time, especially by his reading of H. G. Wells.⁵² The development toward world unity constituted for Heydecker a necessity which would finally result out of technological progress.⁵³ The present time was characterised for him by the existence of what he called the “spirit of the engineer” (Ingenieursgeist) heralding a “new era” and a reversal of world events (Weltwende). In 1942, he noted in his diary: “The spirit of the engineer nowadays spans the whole of the

49 J. J. HEYDECKER, *Die Grundlagen der Neugeist-Gemeinschaft N. G.*, p. 6.

50 *Ibid.*, p. 7.

51 Federal Archive Koblenz (BArch), f. legacy Joe J. Heydecker, sign. N 1486/78, Panismisches Tagebuch 1, 12.8.1944 [quoted in the following as: J. J. HEYDECKER, *Panismisches Tagebuch 1*].

52 He often mentioned H. G. Wells’s *The Open Conspiracy: Blueprints for a World Revolution*, published in 1928. In this book, Wells projected in technocratic style the future emergence of an elitist world community by means of scientific progress. On technocracy as an influential “background ideology” of the 20th century, see: DIRK VAN LAAK, *Technokratie im Europa des 20. Jahrhunderts: Eine einflussreiche Hintergrundideologie*, in: *Theorien und Experimente der Moderne. Europas Gesellschaften im 20. Jahrhundert*, (ed.) Lutz Raphael, Wien-Köln-Weimar 2012, pp. 101–128.

53 On the following, see: J. J. HEYDECKER, *Panismisches Tagebuch 1*, 20.11.1942.

earth and achieves the greatest tasks. Behind everything and everyone stands the engineer as an anonymous but mighty spirit. He is universal. His laws span the earth without regard to the nations. The engineer has conjured the internationality of things. In every part of the world, people work according to the same principles, [...], all bridges rest on the same laws, every screw, every part of technology is cosmopolitan.”⁵⁴ In his mind, the spirit’s progress would lead with necessity from technological to political world union, though only a few people already disposed of this “insight”. The missing insight of the masses regarding the preeminent meaning of technological progress, as well as its misuse for “profit”, were, in Heydecker’s view, reasons for “political and economic crisis”, “psychological unrest”, and “conflict of emotion”. In a future “pan-community”, however, the “spirit of the engineer” would function as a new “mysticism” and “real Kabbalah” of the modern human. For Heydecker, the connection of technocratic visions with religious phrasing was no contradiction, since a “religious attitude” was supposed to constitute the foundation of the future “pan-community”.⁵⁵

The elitist conception of Heydecker’s vision is obvious in his distinction between the insightful few and the allegedly ignorant masses which mirrored the contemporary widespread scepticism toward mass democracy and masses influenced by propaganda.⁵⁶ For him, world unity was eventually achieved through a long-term process steered by a minority of “insightful” and “experts”.⁵⁷ Those experts were supposed to reach leading positions solely by their “abilities” and not in the way of democratic procedures. Though Heydecker was not completely dismissive of democratic control, he was convinced that most people had no real interest in political matters if the expert government was successful. Consequently, he envisioned the united world of the future as completely de-politicised. In this sense, he noted in his diary in 1943: “Everything leads undoubtedly towards the abolishment of politics, by which I mean the daily politics of the street or masses. [...] Politics must become practical sociology, a discipline with exact methods and certain results. Therefore, the mass must be de-politicised so

54 J. J. HEYDECKER, *Panismisches Tagebuch 1*, 20.11.1942..

55 See also: Federal Archive Koblenz (BArch), f. legacy Joe J. Heydecker, sign. N 1486/67, Gründliche Gedanken über die Welt einer fernen Zukunft, Konstancin 1944 [unpublished manuscript], p. 41 f. [quoted in the following as: J. J. HEYDECKER, *Gründliche Gedanken*].

56 On criticism directed towards mass society, see: PAUL NOLTE, *Die Ordnung der deutschen Gesellschaft: Selbstentwurf und Selbstbeschreibung im 20. Jahrhundert*, München 2000, pp. 77 ff.; JAN-WERNER MÜLLER, *Das demokratische Zeitalter: Eine politische Ideengeschichte Europas im 20. Jahrhundert*, Berlin 2013, pp. 38 f., 213.

57 On the following, see: J. J. HEYDECKER, *Panismisches Tagebuch 1*, 28.6.1943; J. J. HEYDECKER, *Gründliche Gedanken*, pp. 44 ff., 54 f.

that it can exercise only a passive (i.e., controlling) influence, but not an active influence reserved exclusively for the scientific qualified.”⁵⁸ Heydecker called this future political model “panismic democracy”, which meant a “democracy” that would leave the individual “unmolested” with politics.⁵⁹ This included “no political parties, no political newspapers, no political speeches, no political processions and votes, deployments and gatherings”. The “politician of tomorrow” was conceived by him as an “expert” of a certain area of expertise but also as a “working man” (Werkstätiger) for the “well-being of society” whose task was merely to control the “smoothly functioning of the apparatus of provisioning and security”.

The design of the future world by experts according to knowledge included for Heydecker most importantly population control and the (re-)organisation of space. In this, too, he was by no means an exception but an example of the widespread contemporary obsession with grand-scale planning.⁶⁰ Already in Weimar Germany, predecessors of the world state idea had envisioned the complete (re-)organisation and “rationalisation” of worldwide space. For example, in 1928, lawyer Albert Pfaul expressed his wish to arrange the supposedly “messiness” of the earth and of its inhabitants according to the perfect “order” and “precision” of the universe.⁶¹ Also, Hermann Sörgel’s well-known plan for a union between Europe and Africa which he called “Atlantropa” fit the picture and was also presented in the *Weltstaat-Liga*’s periodical.⁶² For Heydecker, as for many of his contemporaries, questions of (re-) organisation of space were tightly connected with population control as precondition. The “rampant jungle of the 2.2 billion”, so he wrote, needed to be controlled and humanity freed from the “yoke of the

58 J. J. HEYDECKER, *Panismisches Tagebuch 1*, 28.6.1943.

59 It was quite a common feature of the time that dictatorial and autocratic regimes of various political shades perceived of themselves as “democracies”. See: J.-W. MÜLLER, *Das demokratische Zeitalter*, p. 12 f.; ANNA CATHARINA HOFMANN, *Demokratie praktizieren in einer Diktatur? Politische Partizipation und ihre Grenzen im späten Franco-Regime (1966–1973)*, *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 58/2018, pp. 225–262, here pp. 225 f.

60 On the (re-)organisation of supposedly “empty space”, see: *Umkämpfte Räume. Raumbilder, Ordnungswille, und Gewaltmobilisierung*, (ed.) ULRIKE JUREIT, Göttingen 2016. On the discourse of space and population in the 1930s and 40s, see: THOMAS ETZEMÜLLER, *Der ewigwährende Untergang: Der apokalyptische Bevölkerungsdiskurs im 20. Jahrhundert*, Bielefeld 2007, chapter seven.

61 ALBERT PFAUL, *Die Weltverfassung*, Düsseldorf 1928, p. 5.

62 HERMANN SÖRGE, *Atlantropa. Raum, Brot und Kraft für Millionen*, *Der Weltstaat* 2/1949, pp. 96–97. See further: ALEXANDER GALL, *Atlantropa. A Technological Vision of a United Europe*, in: *Networking Europe. Transnational Infrastructures and the Shaping of Europe 1850–2000*, (eds.) Erik van der Vleuten, Arne Kaijser, Sagamore Beach 2006, pp. 99–128.

masses”.⁶³ In a “thinned out world” (gelichtete Welt), problems regarding the possession of space (Raumbesitz) would lose their present urgency.⁶⁴ Instead of “bubbling cities with dark backyards” and deformed nature, there would exist “healthy, spacious settlements” with unpolluted nature in between. In 1944, he noted the following vision in his diary: “Repeatedly, I see a world populated through the power of reason with one billion people at most, with vast nature reservoirs, even amid present-day narrowed Europe, inhabited by mighty flocks of cattle, horses, and all sorts of creatures. In between, neat streets that lead from one of the far apart settlements to another.”⁶⁵ As he perceived population growth as an immense endangerment to the (re-)organisation of worldwide space, the urgent necessity of the instalment of a “rationally” organised “pan-community” had to be implemented in his contemporaries’ consciousness. With missionary eagerness and in a millennial manner, he wrote: “We have to show them [the contemporaries, AEK] that we stand before the divide at midnight.”⁶⁶

Were there any intersections between Heydecker’s envisioning of a worldwide “pan-community” led by a technocratic elite and National Socialist striving for world domination? After all, his diaries and manuscripts were written during wartime and entailed an avowal of grand scale planning which was also a characteristic of National Socialist plans for the exploitation and colonisation of Central and Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.⁶⁷ Yet, two important differences must be considered. First, Heydecker detested war and militarism and always conceived of himself as a pacifist. Pacifism was likely the most important constant in his life, which, as we have seen, had its origin in the spiritual influence of the New Thought movement, with its rejection of “friction” and “hate” and its longing for “harmony”. Second, and because of this, he rejected any “race hate” as well as antisemitism.⁶⁸ Therefore, the final worldwide domination of the “Arian race”, as imagined by the National Socialists,⁶⁹ would not have been compatible

63 J. J. HEYDECKER, *Gründliche Gedanken*, pp. 44, 65.

64 *Ibid.*, p. 68 f.

65 J. J. HEYDECKER, *Panistisches Tagebuch 1*, 12.8.1944.

66 J. J. HEYDECKER, *Gründliche Gedanken*, p. 34.

67 See: BIRGIT KLETZIN, *Europa aus Rasse und Raum. Die nationalsozialistische Idee der Neuen Ordnung*, Münster-Hamburg-London 2000, chapter three; BOAZ NEUMANN, *Die Weltanschauung des Nazismus. Raum, Körper, Sprache*, Göttingen 2010, pp. 62 ff.

68 Heydecker was deeply opposed to the National Socialist persecution of the Jews and pointed repeatedly to the fact that the mass murders had been well known in the German population before 1945. For example, see: J. J. HEYDECKER, *Das Warschauer Getto*, p. 34 f.

69 L. HÖLSCHER, *Die Entdeckung der Zukunft*, p. 273. On National Socialist “utopia”, see: IAN KERSHAW, *Adolf Hitler und die Realisierung der nationalsozialistischen Rassenutopie*, in: *Utopie*

with his vision of a harmonious and peaceful future. An explicit discussion of National Socialism, though, is missing in Heydecker's manuscripts of that time and also did not figure in the post-war activism of the Weltstaat-Liga. Instead, National Socialism was perceived as yet more "evidence" of the destructiveness of the principle of nation-states and extreme nationalism, as well as of the "in-harmonious" tendencies of political modernity.

The prospective world state rationally organised by experts was imagined by Heydecker as free from any state paternalism, bureaucracy, and centralist structures. In his diaries and manuscripts of the early 1940s, the future economic organisation of the world state had remained rather vague. His notes combined sympathies for some state monopolies for basic needs (like food, housing, transportation, and communication), central planning, and anti-capitalist notions like a rejection of "profit making" with a strong aversion toward communism and class struggle.⁷⁰ Further, he conceived of society in rather Darwinian terms as a struggle between the "fit" and "unfit". In 1944, he wrote: "We distance ourselves from the belief in a world of eternal peace. We do not even wish for such a world. We do not aspire to a land of plenty where fried doves fly into the people's opened mouths. We acknowledge that tension is a law of nature, that selection requires struggle, that risk is the motor of any progress and maturing."⁷¹ At first sight, this quote seems to stand in striking contrast with the New Thought principle of establishing societal "harmony" as well as with pacifist ideals. Yet, New Thought perceived of society as being based on the individual's "right" demeanour, individual performance, and self-optimisation. Its approach was therefore very well adaptable with market liberal performance society, but also with the effort-oriented "national community" in Nazi Germany, with its Social Darwinist stance toward society.

In an article written after the war in 1947, Heydecker elaborated further on this.⁷² Now, he advocated for complete autonomy of the individual from the "anonymous hydra" of state administration. The latter, so he wrote, had taken over religion's former role of calming the modern human's "fear of existence" (*Lebensangst*). He referred to the Laocoon group in the Vatican museums as a "symbol

und politische Herrschaft im Europa der Zwischenkriegszeit, (ed.) Wolfgang Hardtwig, München 2003, pp. 133–144.

70 J. J. HEYDECKER, *Panismisches Tagebuch 1*, 20.5.1943, 28.6.1943; J. J. HEYDECKER, *Gründliche Gedanken*, p. 78.

71 J. J. HEYDECKER, *Gründliche Gedanken*, p. 61.

72 On the following, see: JOE J. HEYDECKER, *Die Erdrosselung des Individuums*, Bayerische Rundschau 19/1947, p. 1.

of all people fighting against the deadly embrace of an organisation". Again, he distinguished between the "able" and "unable" (Tüchtige / Untüchtige), whereby the latter were accused of submitting not only themselves but also the "abled minority" to the paternalism of the state. In contrast to socialism, which he called a "movement of the weak", he wished for a "renaissance of the individual" and a "rebellion" against the "death of suffocation". To justify his pledge for complete freedom, he referred to his experiences in the Wehrmacht: "Freedom demands constant alertness of the senses as well as the ability to make decisions and to take destiny into your own hand. Countless people perceived it as salvation to be freed from these demands under the dull mode of commands in the Wehrmacht. The ones drafted from working life, by contrast, rightly deemed the long-serving soldier as in fact unable for life. [...] The cry for guidelines, directions, and orders is a confession of failure of personality."⁷³ Like Heydecker, other members of the Weltstaat-Liga were dismissive of state paternalism and bureaucracy too. For example, author and photographer Hans Windisch (1891–1965) wrote down rants about the "dictatorship of bureaucracy" paralysing society like a "cancer".⁷⁴

Voicing antipathy towards bureaucracy, firstly, was a common trait of the post-war years, as the bureaucracy was associated with totalitarian political practice.⁷⁵ With their criticism against state paternalism, secondly, Heydecker and his fellow campaigners, placed themselves in contemporary "neoliberal" thought that conceived of the supranational federation as a possible enabler of global free trade and capital flow as well as a new model of the global organisation after the end of empire.⁷⁶ According to Ludwig von Mises (1881–1973), for example, the "association of all states into a world state" combined with "free trade", "international division of labour", "cosmopolitanism", as well as "eternal peace" constituted the central demands of liberalism.⁷⁷ Further, the strong rejection of bureaucracy was motivated by the fact that critics of the idea of a world state liked pointing to the possible danger that such a structure would eradicate all differences between the nations and inevitably become totalitarian. Heydecker was therefore eager to contradict this notion by assuring that "our conception has nothing to do with the hierarchical pyramid that is the organisational form

73 J. J. HEYDECKER, *Die Erdrosselung des Individuums*, p. 1.

74 HANS WINDISCH, *Daimonion. Über das Menschliche*, Augsburg 1948, pp. 104 ff.

75 DIETER FELBICK, *Schlagwörter der Nachkriegszeit 1945–1949*, Berlin 2003, keyword "Bürokratie".

76 Q. SLOBODIAN, *Globalists*, chapter three.

77 LUDWIG VON MISES, *Liberalismus*, Jena 1927, pp. 93, 130 f.

of all present states”.⁷⁸ Back in 1944, he had envisioned for the offices of the world government to be spread over the globe, depending on their “natural focus”. Instead of being structured vertically, they were supposed to work “side by side” on their respective tasks, assuming “casual cooperation” only if need be.⁷⁹ Other members of the Weltstaat-Liga, such as journalist Gerhard Szczesny (1918–2002), were also convinced that a federally organised world state would in fact lead to more “decentralisation” and “differentiation” on all levels from the local to the global.⁸⁰

After having delved at length into Heydecker’s intellectual background, I now turn to the events leading to the formation of the Weltstaat-Liga. The context for this provided the spatial and intellectual setting of the Nuremberg trials against the main perpetrators of war crimes, which Heydecker covered permanently for Radio Munich and several German newspapers. The experience of the Nuremberg trials as a German journalist was twofold.⁸¹ On the one hand, it constituted for some a long amiss experience of the “outside world”; on the other hand, the German journalists were separated from their Allied colleagues by not wearing uniforms and by not having access to certain areas of the Justizpalast (Palace of Justice).⁸² Susanne von Paczensky (1923–2010), journalist and founding member of the Weltstaat-Liga, later recalled the German journalists as having been “a small shabby group, the men in dyed Wehrmacht jackets or dangling old suits”.⁸³ Nevertheless, both the international atmosphere of the trial as well as its significance for international law left an enduring impression on the participants. In a retrospective account, Heydecker described the international atmosphere as he had perceived it before the opening session of the trial: “At the entrance to the courtroom, identity cards are checked again. War correspondents in American, British, and French uniforms crowd over the wooden steps toward

78 J. J. HEYDECKER, *Gründliche Gedanken*, p. 88.

79 Ibid.

80 GERHARD SZCZESNY, *Souveränität ist Souveränität*, *Der Weltstaat* 3/1948, p. 46. On the intellectual roots of federalism in Catholic social doctrine and French personalism, see: V. CONZE, *Das Europa der Deutschen*, p. 294.

81 About 150 non-permanent German reporters and correspondents were accredited for the (main) Nuremberg trials. See for a list of names: *Nürnberger Extra-Blatt*, (eds.) WALTER GONG, JOE J. HEYDECKER, GÜNTHER PEIS, WILHELM E. SÜSSKIND, s. 1. [1946], https://archives.cjh.org/repositories/5/archival_objects/941430 (accessed on 4 September 2020).

82 WILHELM E. SÜSKIND, *Die Mächtigen vor Gericht. Nürnberg 1945/1946 an Ort und Stelle erlebt*, München 1963, p. 19; SUSANNE VON PACZENSKY, *Bescheidene Luftschlösser: Journalistische Randnotizen aus einem halben Jahrhundert*, Frankfurt am Main 1997, p. 22.

83 S. PACZENSKY, *Bescheidene Luftschlösser*, p. 22.

the entrance. Journalists of all nationalities, arguing groups, Indians, Russians, Australians, a Negro, Swiss, and Brazilians. In-between them were well-known faces: John Dos Passos, Erika Mann, Erich Kästner.”⁸⁴ And in an article by journalist Wilhelm E. Süskind (1901–1970), published in December 1945, the trial was described as a “nature reservoir of internationality” and interpreted by him as having made the German journalists more aware of problems and sorrows outside of both Germany and Europe.⁸⁵

For Heydecker, it was mainly the inaugural address of chief prosecutor Robert H. Jackson that made a lasting impression.⁸⁶ In his address, Jackson emphasised the necessity of an effective international law “to meet the greatest menace of our time—aggressive war”.⁸⁷ Further, he emphasised the urgent necessity to prevent any repetition of war crimes in the future: “The wrongs which we seek to condemn and punish have been so calculated, so malignant, and so devastating that civilization cannot tolerate for them being ignored, because it cannot survive for them being repeated.”⁸⁸ Interestingly enough, a German professor of international law, Hermann Jahrreiß (1894–1992), who had passed an impressive career in jurisprudence during National Socialism and the trial was part of the defence of Wehrmacht officer Alfred Jodl, left an impression on Heydecker too.⁸⁹ In his speech for the defence, Jahrreiß tried to delegitimise the juristically authority of the trial by putting forth his conviction that the legal regulations of the trial anticipated the “law of a world state” and could thus be characterised as “revolutionary”.⁹⁰

Some of the German journalists were convinced that the trial would leave a lasting impact on future world politics. For instance, Wilhelm E. Süskind imagined that the trial should be transformed into an institutionalised office or “outpost” of the United Nations which was to be assigned to handling complaints

84 JOE J. HEYDECKER, JOHANNES LEEB, *Der Nürnberger Prozess: Bilanz der 1000 Jahre*, Köln 1985, p. 112.

85 W. E. SÜSKIND, *Die Mächtigen vor Gericht*, pp. 33–35.

86 J. J. HEYDECKER, J. LEEB, *Der Nürnberger Prozess*, pp. 9–10.

87 ROBERT H. JACKSON, *Opening Statement before the International Military Tribunal*, 21.11.1945, www.roberthjackson.org/speech-and-writing/opening-statement-before-the-international-military-tribunal/ (accessed on 14 February 2021).

88 Ibid.

89 J. J. HEYDECKER, J. LEEB, *Der Nürnberger Prozess*, p. 10.

90 *Der Prozess gegen die Hauptkriegsverbrecher vor dem Internationalen Militärgerichtshof*, vol. 17/18: Verhandlungsniederschriften 25.6.1946–8.7.1946, (ed.) INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL, s. 1. 1997 [1948], p. 521.

about future war crimes.⁹¹ Even though he acknowledged that reveries about world politics would not suit Germans momentarily, Süskind was convinced: “Something of this kind, we must dream about, we have to do—we in Germany and the people of the world. So that what has been done here for one year [...] will not be lost. For those are the forces of peace.”⁹² Even though Heydecker later often emphasised the long-lasting impact of the Nuremberg trials too, in his opinion it had also partly failed, especially regarding the implementation of an effective international law. In 1947, he pointed to the “everywhere perceived half measure” supposedly adhering to the trial and lamented: “In retrospect, [...] a certain disappointment cannot be concealed. The tribunal dispersed, the words faded, and not the erection of a universal world law made progress but the deepening of polarities between the sovereign nation-states.”⁹³ The (impossible) task that the Nuremberg trials had, in his opinion, failed to achieve was more than ever placed upon himself and like-minded supporters of the idea of world unity.

Already in November 1945, Heydecker indicated in his diary that he had been thinking for some time about establishing a “party” by the name Internationale Union (International Union) inspired by “Wells and Einstein”.⁹⁴ He elaborated further on this idea some weeks later, when he was meeting for dinner with two of his journalist colleagues, Hans Schwab-Felisch (1918–1990) and Peter Martin Bleibtreu (1921–1994), of whom the former was also interested in the political ideas of H. G. Wells.⁹⁵ The decision to venture together in the direction envisioned by Heydecker was, according to him, motivated by their shared conviction “that the recently founded parties as well as party politics in general were not suited to give humanity the essentially new”.⁹⁶ After a meeting with journalist and author Michel Herbert Mann (1907–1976), whose “aim in life”, according to Heydecker, was likewise “world government”, they decided to found a league instead of a party due to “tactical reasons”.⁹⁷ The reason for this was the German situation in which “the foundation of a completely new and internationally oriented party” would meet with “quite unfavourable preconditions”. According to Heydecker, the undertaking could “all too easily” be observed with

91 W. E. SÜSKIND, *Die Mächtigen vor Gericht*, p. 185.

92 Ibid.

93 JOE J. HEYDECKER, *Nürnberger Lehren*, *Der Weltstaat* 4/1947, p. 15.

94 Federal Archive Koblenz (BArch), f. legacy Joe J. Heydecker, sign. N 1486/79, *Panismisches Tagebuch* 5, 18.11.1945 [quoted in the following as: J. J. HEYDECKER, *Panismisches Tagebuch* 5].

95 J. J. HEYDECKER, *Panismisches Tagebuch* 5, 27.1.1946.

96 Ibid.

97 On the following, see: J. J. HEYDECKER, *Panismisches Tagebuch* 5, 27.2.1946.

“a suspicious *they try it again*” or interpreted as “German messianism”. He also voiced the idea that the headquarters of the league had to gradually be moved abroad, for example to a head office in Switzerland, to shake off “the German odium”. Heydecker and his colleagues then started working on a “Charta” that was supposed to convey their fundamental ideas and later became the program of the Weltstaat-Liga. In doing so, they perceived of themselves as being in line with a zeitgeist whose “symptoms” could be perceived everywhere and that confirmed them in their chosen path.

The entries in Heydecker’s diary during the spring and summer of 1946 depict his growing impatience to move the project ahead faster so that his group would become the first of its kind legitimised by the American authorities. The Nuremberg trials became for him now a time-consuming obstacle detaining him from his work for the league in Munich.⁹⁸ Equally as tedious was the Allied requirement to collect 25 founding members, all of whom had to fill in a large questionnaire and were sometimes anxious to put themselves in the limelight. Businessman and liberal politician Walther Sternfeld (1901–1965), by contrast, joined the group early on after a visit to Heydecker’s flat had revealed shared convictions between the two. Like Heydecker, Sternfeld was convinced that the “world state had to result directly out of the individual, without a detour via the exponents of government” and “that the idea [of a world state, AEK] is imminent in millions of people and needed only a new instrument”.⁹⁹ Finally, Allied authorities legitimised the Weltstaat-Liga. Triumphant, Heydecker noted about the reactions following the announcement of the founding in the press: “We only received enthusiastic letters. It seems as if for countless people the last hope begins to fulfil itself. [...] Sternfeld and I agree that the matter now cannot be impeded anymore.”¹⁰⁰

The Weltstaat-Liga managed to gather about 3,000 members mostly in the three Western Occupation Zones of Germany.¹⁰¹ The league’s members had an age average in the mid-forties and their professions were quite diverse, though people associated with the media and university were dominant in leading positions.¹⁰² It understood itself mainly as a forum that should gather like-minded

98 J. J. HEYDECKER, *Panismisches Tagebuch* 5, 20.3.1946, 25.7.1946, 18.8.1946.

99 Ibid., 22.6.1946.

100 Ibid., 21.10.1946.

101 There were also some members in the Soviet Occupation Zone. See: WELTSTAAT-LIGA, *1. Rundbrief an unsere Mitglieder und Freunde*, München 1947, p. 1.

102 ANNA ELISABETH KEIM, *Die Weltstaatsidee in der frühen Nachkriegszeit: Eine exemplarische Untersuchung der Weltstaat-Liga (1946–1950) und ihres politischen Denkens im Kontext der Frie-*

people and collect knowledge on how the aim of a world state could be achieved. They tried to emphasise the “objectivity” (Sachlichkeit) of their cause to distance themselves from the criticism of being “utopians”.¹⁰³ The utopianism of the idea of a world state was rejected, and instead, it was perceived as the only realistic option in face of an otherwise doomed future. This change of perception was by no means singular to the league but a characteristic of the world state movement in general. It is, for example, very well reflected in a quote by writer Thomas Mann (1875–1955) in a letter he wrote in November 1945 in the Californian exile: “The historical hour of humanity brings with it the consequence that concepts like the realistic and the utopian have become uncertain and have begun to exchange their meaning. When the realisation of the utopian becomes a necessity for survival, it is legitimate to call it realistic, to support and fight for it. Instead, it becomes utopian [...] to preserve the old, the deceased, and what is averse to life.”¹⁰⁴

Nevertheless, the world state movement and their idea of future world unity did entail characteristic elements of a utopian figure of thought that usually conceives of itself as being placed at a world historic divide and that aspires to participate in a breakthrough into a completely different future.¹⁰⁵ In the program of the Weltstaat-Liga, the future world state was rather vaguely envisioned as being marked by disarmament, a world legislative and executive, a joint police force, unity in terms of economy, and a world government composed of elected representatives of the people of each federal state.¹⁰⁶ Further, the prospective world state “should rest on the ideas of humanism, pacifism, and democratic socialism; on equality of the sexes, races, and confessions; on the guarantee of personal property, universal human rights, public law as well as personal freedom

densinitiativen nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg, MA thesis [unpublished], Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg 2017, pp. 28–36.

103 WELTSTAAT-LIGA, *1. Rundbrief an unsere Mitglieder und Freunde*, München 1947, p. 2.

104 THOMAS MANN, *Mr. David McCoy*, in: Thomas Mann, *Essays*, Vol. 6: *Meine Zeit 1945–1955*, (eds.) Hermann Kurzke, Stephan Stachorski, Frankfurt am Main 1997, pp. 46–54, here p. 48. Thomas Mann’s support for world state projects was influenced by his son-in-law, the Italian publicist Giuseppe Antonio Borgese, and his daughter Elisabeth Mann-Borgese, who were both actively involved in the *Chicago Committee to Frame a World Constitution* as well as in the *World Movement for World Federal Government*. See: O. ROSENBOIM, *The Emergence of Globalism*, chapter six.

105 WOLFGANG HARDTWIG, *Einleitung*, in: *Utopie und politische Herrschaft im Europa der Zwischenkriegszeit*, (ed.) Wolfgang Hardtwig, München 2003, pp. 1–12, here p. 7.

106 On the following, see: WELTSTAAT-LIGA, [booklet entailing the so-called Munich Declaration], München 1947.

and security of the individual; on the freedom of belief, conscience, speech, art, science, congregation, association, and formation of parties”.¹⁰⁷ Additionally, the formation of “cosmopolitan personalities” and the acquisition of a universal language was expected from the league’s members. Also, every member was invited “to foster the spirit of pacifist, cosmopolitan, and world citizen ideals as well as to confront all militarist, nationalist, and chauvinist appearances”.¹⁰⁸ Seemingly, the league’s program entailed certain democratic elements. On the other hand, it was conceived rather vaguely so that people with quite adverse beliefs could gather under its roof, thereby enabling the league to act apart from party politics. Further, the seemingly democratic image was also indebted to the fact that it needed to be approved by American authorities.

Regarding activism, the Weltsaat-Liga supported the plan of British politician Henry C. Osborne (1909–1996) to conduct worldwide polls for a constituent assembly in 1950 and the creation of a world government in 1955.¹⁰⁹ The plan envisioned the establishment of a worldwide federation through the declaration of the people’s will, either simultaneously throughout the whole world or in successive steps, above party lines and irrespective of established political procedures. In this context, the league organised straw polls in several small German towns which showed extremely high approval ratings for the establishment of a world state.¹¹⁰ These results were achieved through high propaganda efforts as well as to the fact that mainly people who were sympathetic to the idea participated in the polling. In public, these activities were met with quite a divided echo and compared to political jokes (Schildbürgerstreiche).¹¹¹ The league also supported the aforementioned world citizens’ registration efforts, though they were partly sceptical of Garry Davis’s “dreamful cosmopolitanism”.¹¹² In particular, Gerhard Szczesny problematised the missing realism of Davis’s activism. Accordingly, he wrote in 1949: “They [Garry Davis and his supporters, AEK] wish to build upon the heartfelt solidarity of *all* people and want to achieve a peace treaty of *all* humans of good will. Obviously, they do not notice that their worthy auto-

107 WELTSTAAT-LIGA, [booklet], p. 3.

108 Ibid., p. 2.

109 Initially, Heydecker had been sceptical of the plan. See: JOE J. HEYDECKER, *Der Osborne-Plan. Kann das Ziel bis 1955 erreicht werden?*, *Der Weltstaat* 3/1948, pp. 48–50.

110 ANNE MARENN, *Wählerdruck erreichte 94 Prozent*, *Der Weltstaat* 7/1949, pp. 142 f.

111 *Das Streiflicht aus der Petroleumlampe*, *Der Weltstaat* 7/1948, p. 82.

112 JOE J. HEYDECKER, *Was ist Weltbürgerschaft? Über Sinn und Ziel der Weltbürger-Registrierung*, *Der Weltstaat* 3/1949, p. 102; GERHARD SZCZESNY, *Atlantikpakt der Herzen?*, *Der Weltstaat* 5/1949, p. 118; JOE J. HEYDECKER, *Garry Davis hat sich zurückgezogen: Zwischenbilanz eines romantischen Unternehmens*, *Der Weltstaat* 7/1949, p. 141.

mobile of the future (Zukunftsautomobil) is missing two wheels. [...] The happy message heralded by world citizen number one is heard beyond the iron curtain only as a weak and faint echo and will soon drain away completely in the great silence that is spreading over one third of the earth.”¹¹³ Further, the activism of the league was aimed at implementing a paragraph into a future German constitution codifying the possibility of the transfer of the state’s sovereign rights unto a supra-national entity.¹¹⁴ To achieve this, the league contacted politicians and tried to influence the deliberations of the Parliamentary Council regarding article 24 of the future German Basic Law.¹¹⁵ Though Joe J. Heydecker gave a speech on the necessity of a federal world government in front of the council, the rephrasing of the paragraph, which then included a reference to the “people of the world”, was due to internal discussions of the council.¹¹⁶ Still, the deliberations in the council’s commissions show that world state ideas were present on the contemporaries’ horizon of ideas, even if they did not agree with them. This is illustrated by a quote of Social-Democrat Carlo Schmid (1896–1979), who voiced scepticism but also a sort of reverence for the world state idea: “All due respect to the world state endeavours! The idea is worth the nobles’ sweat. Regarding these things, one should cease to speak of utopias as one does all too easily. But I do not believe that we will reach world government before first heading through Europe.”¹¹⁷

The league’s short-lived existence ended in July 1950 with the initial high rising hopes in ruins. It left behind unpaid debts and liquidators trying to force money from former members, who sometimes even could not recall having joined the group.¹¹⁸ The intensifying Cold War and the hot one in Korea diminished the enthusiasm that had accompanied the movement for world unity since the end of the Second World War. Also, Heydecker’s first marriage did not survive the league’s failure, which had been a project of his wife Marianne

113 G. SZCZESNY, *Atlantikpakt der Herzen?*

114 As models served the new constitutions of France, Italy, and Japan which already contained similar paragraphs.

115 *Appell an Regierungschefs*, *Der Weltstaat* 4/1947, p. 19.

116 On the Parliamentary Council’s discussions of the paragraph, see: *Der Parlamentarische Rat 1948–1949. Akten und Protokolle*, vol. 5/I and 5/II: Ausschuß für Grundsatzfragen, (eds.) DEUTSCHER BUNDESTAG, BUNDESARCHIV, Boppard am Rhein 1993, pp. 481, 543; *Der Parlamentarische Rat 1948–1949. Akten und Protokolle*, vol. 14: Hauptausschuß, (eds.) DEUTSCHER BUNDESTAG, BUNDESARCHIV, München 2009, pp. 171 ff.

117 *Der Parlamentarische Rat 1948–1949*, vol. 5/II, p. 543.

118 *Kein Recht in der Welt*, *Der Spiegel* 6/1953, p. 12 f.

as much as his.¹¹⁹ With his second wife Charlotte and their daughter, they left the Federal Republic in 1960 disillusioned with chancellor Konrad Adenauer's policy of re-armament and moved to São Paulo, where the couple ran a photo studio and a publishing house called Atlantis Livros.

Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated how the “risk future” of a potentially nuclear Third World War was met in occupied Germany with an activism aimed at preventing this future scenario by taking leave of the nation-state as a basic principle of political organisation and instead pledging oneself to an idea of worldwide supra-nationality. The world state idea thus appealed to all those who—for some reason or other—subscribed to this diagnosis of a highly hazardous, if not already doomed, future. For them, a soon-to-be-established supra-national political organisation on a global scale followed only logically from the seemingly “obvious” notion that the age of concurring nation-states, as well as nationalism, had come to an end in the face of global nuclear danger. Such an outlook on the future, therefore, seemed realistic and feasible instead of utopian. Next to the wish for security and peace, the supporters of the world state idea shared the aim to establish what journalist Axel Eggebrecht, in his radio play, had called “harmonism”: an apolitical future without any political conflict and friction. Such a notion was (and is) hardly compatible with the democratic principle of pluralism, which is built upon opposing political perspectives.

The imagination of a depoliticised future was also characteristic of photographer and journalist Joe J. Heydecker's visions of world unity during and after the Second World War. In “his” future world state, democratic procedures were to be substituted by a technocratic elite organising the world “rationally” according to the “insight” of a few, thereby leaving the “masses” “unmolested” with politics. Such a “panismic democracy”, therefore, had nothing in common with the liberal democracies' principle of mass participation. Instead, Heydecker identified the politicization of the masses as a reason for the “inharmonious” present state of societies—a common feature for conservatives of that time confronted with mass democracy and totalitarianism. As has been shown, Heydecker's individual and elitist outlook on present society as well as on the future political organ-

119 Heydecker had developed his ideas on “panism” together with his first wife, Marianne Steber (1902–1968). The couple's letters containing their extensive exchange of thoughts on the topic seem to have been destroyed.

isation of the world had its roots mainly in his subscription to esoteric New Thought principles. In such a mindset, the transformation of world events to the better could only be achieved by means of (elitist) individual action and thought, not by class struggle or mass participation.

Further, by the example of Heydecker and other members of the Weltstaat-Liga, the paper has highlighted the interconnectedness of conservative political thought with a “neoliberal” economic agenda in the post-war German world state movement. As has been shown, Heydecker hoped for a future “renaissance of the individual” which he conceived of as having complete autonomy over its destiny and enterprises and as not in need of protection from the state. The future world state, thereby, was envisioned as the only possible form of political organisation that could effectively guarantee individual freedom by distributing power decentralised over various levels of responsibility.

In summary, the world state movement in post-war Germany was rather characteristic compared with other contemporary searches for a “third way” that entailed supra-national political organisation. It, too, can be understood as resulting out of personal experiences with and deliberations about totalitarianism, mainly in the guise of National Socialism. The totalitarian, still-present past served as a warning counterfoil for future political undertakings, though world state adherents liked to merge National Socialism in with an indistinguishable history of the destructiveness of nation states too. The example of Heydecker made clear, though, that the affirmative support of individualism as opposed to totalitarianism did not necessarily include a joyous embrace of genuine democratic principles like pluralism or party politics. For the moment, it remains an open question as to whether or not the German world state supporters became comfortable with the newly established Federal Republic’s democratic guise. Heydecker, obviously, did not, as he left for South America, where he stayed during the whole time of the Brazilian military dictatorship.