

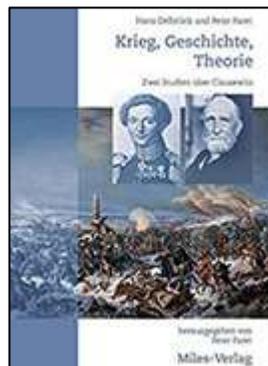
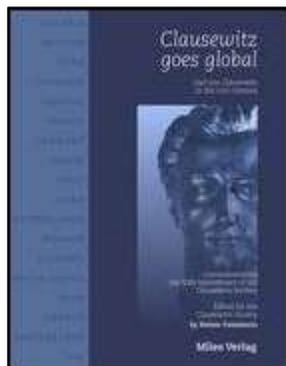


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A FIXED STAR IN A GALAXY OF QUOTES - CLAUSEWITZ AND AUSTRIA¹

Manfried Rauchensteiner

It was 30 years ago. During a lecture on military and war history at the Maria-Theresian military academy in Wiener Neustadt, I asked the question: “As an educated officer, which three books would you pick for a small library?” The answer was simply surprising. Erwin Rommel’s “Infanterie greift an“ (Infantry Attacks) ranked first. Clausewitz reached a disputed second place, but only with some prompting. I continued to ask this question in the following years. The answers were similar.

Now, in the case of the officer candidates, several things probably came into play: For no obvious reason, the book by Rommel was quite popular. This was maybe connected to the fact that for about one year from 1938 on, Rommel was commanding officer at the former Austrian military academy which had been transformed into an officer cadet school of the infantry. But what could be mistaken for a hint of neo-Nazism turned out to be just ignorance, because hardly any of the officer cadets had even a glimpse at “Infanterie greift an”. Also, it should be conceded that the future officers were still in their wild years. A much more trivial reason was, of course, the fact that until their classes in military and war history, they had never heard of Clausewitz and only got into touch with “Vom Kriege” (On War) in their lecture hall for the very first time. Sure enough, even after the lectures, only very few of them actually read Clausewitz.

What could merely pass as a military anecdote still has a far-reaching implication, because even in the seventies of the 20th century, Clausewitz’s name was known in Austria, but not his works. His name was rarely mentioned in universities, and literature seemed to almost ignore him.

But actually, things did not necessarily have to be this way at that time. There was something like a first attempt of coming to terms with Clausewitz. However, also here the context needs to be taken into account: Still in 1975, the habilitation of a historian with the (additional) specialization in military history was downright prevented at the University of Vienna, let alone at the other Austrian universities.

Here, demilitarization and re-education which was promoted by the US occupying power in the first place obviously went so far and had such a lasting effect that habilitation regulations made it impossible to pursue a career in military history at Austrian universities at that time. So in a way, studying Clausewitz was officially banned.

Of course, outside universities, especially in the Austrian Armed Forces, the situation was completely different. Instead, another phenomenon, a thoroughly Austrian tradition prevailed: a certain aversion to humanities and social sciences. Primary subjects taught were the classical military subjects of tactics, operation and strategy supplemented by well-dosed portions of war history which for a long time was mainly illustrated by examples of World War I and World War II. Nevertheless: The overall situation gradually changed.

There is no doubt that Werner Hahlweg played a special role in this. Before World War II, Hahlweg also studied in Vienna and attended courses at the Institute for Austrian Historical Research to pursue studies in historical auxiliary science, and even after the war, he remained committed to Vienna. Rather than his short-lasting marriage in Vienna, the reason for his affiliation to this city was the fact that he had access to the body of sources and literature of the Vienna War Archive's library, which made him return to the Stiftskaserne army barracks year after year. Consequently, his reputation within the scientific community and in the end also within the Austrian Armed Forces increased. Shortly after the formation of the Armed Forces, Hahlweg published an article in the magazine "Landesverteidigung"² (National Defense) and several others in the highly reputed and long-established Austrian military journal "Österreichische Militärische Zeitschrift"³.

So he became the major source of inspiration in the Austrian military journal where Clausewitz developed into a recurring topic. It seemed natural to address warfare theory, to launch a series on operational thinking in Austria in the 19th and 20th centuries⁴ and to make reflections on warfare an explicit category within Austrian military literature. Therefore the relatively large audience of the journal was driven to study this subject more thoroughly and to familiarize themselves with pertinent international research as done, for example, by Peter Paret. There was no way of getting around Clausewitz.

And ever since, he has remained in the focus of interest. A kind of first heyday of Clausewitz was at a conference in Vienna in 1987. The Austrian military attaché in Bonn at that time, Brigadier Otto Heller, himself a member of

the German Clausewitz Society, conveyed the idea of organizing a conference in Vienna and became the initiator. The Austrian Commission for Military History and the Austrian Society for Political-Strategic Studies (chaired by Prince Karl of Schwarzenberg at that time) were the hosts. The well-attended event took place in the great ballroom of the Association of Industrialists at Schwarzenbergplatz square in Vienna and was dedicated to an “Intellectual Trilogy of the 19th Century and its Significance for the Present”: Clausewitz, Jomini and Archduke Charles of Austria.⁵ Apart from well-known researchers as Werner Hahlweg, Dietmar Schössler and Daniel M. Proektor, also American (John E. Tashjean; Michael D. Krause), Swiss (Daniel Reichel) and Hungarian (József Zachar) scholars, as well as Andrée Türpe of the Humboldt University were among the speakers. Presentations on Archduke Charles of Austria and the “Limited War” were given by me.

Comparing these historical personalities made it possible to identify common ideas, differences as well as different schools of thought. There was Jomini, who initially dominated the discourse on war and, through his vision of the consequences from passing the natural limits in wars, laid the foundation for a school of thought that had been particularly dominant in the US for a long time. There was Clausewitz, whose influence on strategies and actions on European armies came to bear much later albeit much stronger. And then there was idealistic Archduke Charles of Austria, who considered obtaining a favourable peace the ultimate goal of war. Incidentally, the latter became a classic in fields the other two did not “specialize in”. This was maybe also the reason for Friedrich Engels to describe Charles of Austria as the most influential practitioner and theoretician in the field of mountain warfare.⁶

Since all of the three heroes of military history and theory of war and eponyms of the conference in Vienna had bequeathed the world with an abundance of reading material, it was inevitable that the speakers focused on individual aspects of the concepts and the works and tagged them with separate codifications. Here of course, it was necessary to explain the historic intellectual positions at an early stage, because the statements on the nature of war by Archduke Charles of Austria and by Clausewitz differed greatly. Charles of Austria formulated that: “War is the most horrible thing a state or a nation may suffer ... To obtain a favourable peace must be the ultimate goal of every war, for only a favourable peace is permanent and only through a favourable peace can the happiness of nations be ensured and thus the purpose of government fulfilled.”⁷ This was an idealistic approach which was still strongly influenced

by the age of enlightenment. This was also quite emotional. The other one, Clausewitz, provides a sober and multifaceted analysis. Hence, it does not come as a surprise, when he surpassed his Austrian contemporary in terms of both precision and arbitrariness. His demand of an “order of reason for the purpose of peace” which already should be established at the beginning of a war bears a remote resemblance to the phrase coined by the Habsburg Archduke 25 years earlier.

The comparison within the scope of the mentioned conference also revealed a relatively clear picture of the significance and of the reception history regarding Clausewitz, Jomini and Archduke Carl. Of course, the latter is more deeply rooted in the Austrian consciousness. At least among those interested in history, a basic knowledge can be presumed, even if the exact dates and quotes do not immediately spring to one’s mind. And many would at least recognize his image due to the equestrian statue of the Archduke which was erected by his great-nephew Emperor Franz Joseph at the newly built Imperial Forum, later renamed Heldenplatz (Heroes’ Square), in front of Hofburg Palace in 1860. At least the statue sparks interest and may raise the question “Who is that?” (Up to the present day, the words engraved on the pedestal of the statue „Dem beharrlichen Kämpfer für Deutschlands Ehre“(To the persevering fighter for Germany’s Glory) have led to controversies).

There is no such monument of Clausewitz in Vienna. Unlike in Berlin, Hannover, Bremerhaven and dozens of other German cities, also no street and no square in Austria has been named after the German military philosopher, let alone a hotel bearing his name. Measured against his public presence, the Habsburg Archduke thus surpasses Clausewitz and Jomini by far. But this lead drastically melts away when searching for useful quotes by Clausewitz and Charles (Jomini shall be excluded in the following). Charles of Austria was a man of practice. He was a military leader and organizer and thus, in a way, combined the roles of Scharnhorst and Boyen. But he was also a very thoughtful and productive writer, of course with the reservation that “Grundsätze der höheren Kriegskunst für die Generäle der österreichischen Armee“ (The Art of War - Basic Principles for Generals of the Austrian Army) - his only work intended to be passed on and used for training purposes - did not contain any notable philosophical approaches. This rather applied to “Grundsätze der Strategie” (Principles of Strategy)⁸. But they suffered the same fate as most of the Archduke’s works: they were published only after his death. Reportedly, he had tried to publish his works earlier, but the printing was prevented by the

Austrian censoring board. Consequently, the prince did not publish his manuscripts and only passed them on to his sons to serve their military education.

Also Clausewitz did not live to see the publishing of his great work, which was amongst others due to the fact that he only considered parts of the manuscript “On War” ready for publishing. Many others of the Prussian military philosopher’s works were never published or only used in classrooms.

Most writings of Archduke Charles were published on behalf of his sons at the end of the 19th Century. Some of the hitherto unpublished works can be only found in the Archduke’s heritage archived in the Hungarian state archives in Budapest. It took a while until the scattered smaller pieces of Clausewitz’s oeuvre was published in one anthology, but by now, all of them should be available.

For the conference in Vienna in 1987, “On War“ was a sufficiently profound source, and maybe it was this very conference that led to the breakthrough and paved the way for the triumph of the Clausewitzian. They definitely pushed Jomini and Archduke Charles into the background – even in Austria.

At this point, the Austrian Military Journal should be mentioned once more. In the following years, it consequently published articles on Clausewitz and thus consolidated his standing. Franz Freistetter, editor-in-chief of the Austrian Military Journal, wrote about Lenin’s remarks on Clausewitz’s ‘On War’⁹. Daniel Proektor wrote about Clausewitz and the present.¹⁰ The Chinese Yuanlin, Zhang wrote about the Chinese edition of ‘On War’ by Carl von Clausewitz¹¹. Thomas Rid published an essay on the reception of Clausewitz by the American Forces.¹² And even if the name of Clausewitz did not appear in the title, he was still present, e.g. in Gustav. E. Gugenau’s “Zum Primat der Politik“ (On the Primacy of Politics).¹³ With these publications, the journal did not only live up to its reputation as a one of the leading military journals in the world, but obtained an almost unique position, because it was the only publication in Austria discussing general war theory and Clausewitz in particular. It must be admitted that subject of the investigations was not whether or not central statements of Clausewitz could be applied to the army’s daily routine or to international peacekeeping and peacemaking missions of the *Bundesheer* – which would have been a quite interesting topic. But the essential questions were and are being raised. And answers are given.

It is no coincidence that new research fields have emerged through applying Clausewitz's concepts and theories to the present world. It is not only about reception history Hahlweg is focussing on, but also about how statements by Clausewitz are mirrored in different models and different forms of recent conflicts. This was done in a similar way as Jörg Kohlhoff did in his Volume "Vom Krieg gegen Terrorismus" (On War against Terrorism)¹⁴ or Eva Strickmann who wrote about Clausewitz and the war in Ruanda (1990 - 1994)¹⁵. Also in Austria, this approach is pursued. The broad definition of state-on-state wars opened up a vast field and already answered the question of whether or not the current forms of individual and collective use of force were covered by Clausewitz's formulations. Particularly in Austria, special examples and references were available. On the one hand, Austrian soldiers have participated in United Nations peacekeeping operations since 1960 and have gained some experience also in peace enforcing missions. But on the other hand even more relevant examples and corresponding deductions could be drawn from the years of fighting in Yugoslavia, where no state-on-state war in the classical sense was waged. Acts of violence were the characteristic element and the most repelling individual atrocities and also the siege of Sarajevo were about unlimited use of force and enforcing the will on the enemy. The fact that this enemy often turned out to be the civil population, moved this conflict towards terrorism, as in this case state terrorism which can be encountered every day. With the very broad interpretation by Hahlweg, according to which revolutions, but also economic issues, trade wars, technological attacks and terrorism are just facets of a greater whole, the individual phases of conflicts can be categorized. It is obvious that force uses technological progress as an instrument. But the question that had to be brought up time and time again was: which kind of policy was meant to be continued by military means? Correspondingly, for terrorist attacks the question is whether discontent with positions and developments or hatred against a person, an ethnic group, a religion or a social system are sufficient to be considered a policy.

Fortunately, Clausewitz drew a line at the other end of the scale, when he established the postulate on the utmost use of force. The use of all available "utmost means" of force, however, has not been an option so far. But this is probably only a matter of time.

The increasing interest in Clausewitz not only became visible within the routine duty of the Austrian Armed Forces and in essays. The increased pres-

ence of Clausewitz can be even more felt in doctrine, and teaching at the academies of the Austrian Armed Forces.

At the Theresian Military Academy in Wiener Neustadt - a technical college since 1997 - the times when Rommel's "Infantry Attacks" ranked first in the library of the educated officer belong to the past. Every year, the officer cadets in their 3rd year have to write a thesis comprising some dozen pages. For this dealing with Clausewitz is almost unavoidable. Despite a working method that can be rather considered a lesson in reasoning and in spite of the focus on the present - as prescribed by the curriculum and the occupational image - the results can be sometimes quite interesting. The practical approach is also appreciated by the institution and lecturers, because the actual requirements certainly go beyond a mere hermeneutic discourse. Markus Stiebellehner, for example, addressed current issues regarding wars and conflicts between states and analyzed the arising questions in the light of Clausewitz.¹⁶ Not only do some vague formulations, for example that of the "classical concept of state" and the fact that the author labels "On War" as "theory" show that the author tried to build a reference framework for his thesis, but also, more importantly, they are proof of a not truly Austrian phenomenon: the tendency of tailoring Clausewitz to one's needs in order to facilitate the use, interpretation and exploitation of him. The frequent use of quotes seems opportune as they can be conveniently resold.

When taking a closer look at Stiebellehner's interpretation, it becomes apparent that he effortlessly enhances Clausewitz's definition of state-on-state wars and also that of Hahlweg. Based on the deductions of Gustav Gustenau, he not only includes sovereign states, but also autonomous political communities and as a third category elements that are neither sovereign nor autonomous.¹⁷ The latter (probably) are on their way to stateness and due to their civilisatory stage make use of the "lowest level of conflict resolution": low intensity conflicts and "latent war".¹⁸ With this interpretation and under the precept that nowadays also liberation movements are considered legal entities under international law, it was easy to prove that Clausewitz was still up-to-date. And so, especially in the military, a common and sensible reduction of statements was possible, through which issues as the totality of war or the use of the available utmost force could be avoided. But for the normal curriculum at a military academy, a certain job-oriented interpretation and a solid presentation of smaller aspects of a larger concept should definitely suffice.

Of course, in 2001, the military academies went beyond this basic goal, because in that year, the diploma course “Military Command and Control” organized a symposium on different aspects of war. In the first place, the presentations were tailored to the professional image of the officer and focused on current theatres of operation as Lebanon and the Balkans. But it also provided an opportunity to listen to Herfried Münkler lecturing on Clausewitz and the new wars.¹⁹

Now, holding such a symposium did not actually belong to the central tasks of the “basic training” for officer cadets. But at the National Defense Academy in Vienna, an increasing devotion to Clausewitz could be observed within the scope of the general staff training.

Although Clausewitz had already been an integral part of the curriculum in lectures on the operational general staff, it was at the end of the seventies and entirely in the eighties when the history of war theory became a central subject of teaching. And the examples of war history which had dominated to this time and which had been used and reused were gradually stripped from their generic meaning. - Instead, the lectures were oriented towards Hahlweg’s “Klassiker der Kriegskunst”,²⁰ “Makers of Modern Strategy”²¹ published by Peter Paret and the compendium “The Art and Practice of Military Strategy”²² which is also compulsory for the curriculum at the National Defense University in the US. Clausewitz was extensively addressed in all of these works. In addition, Sun Tsu, Mahan and Herman Kahn were taught. At the Austrian National Defense Academy of course, the “Austrian” cycle with authors as Lazarus Schwendi, Montecuccoli, Archduke Charles of Austria, Maximilian Csicserics, Alfred von Waldstätten, Ludwig von Eimannsberger and others received at least the same attention as international writers. And as a matter of course, this was concluded with Emil Spannocchi. But this was just one chapter of time characterized by the intent to provide a general albeit rather superficial overview.

In the meantime, a noticeable reduction has taken place, while individual military theorists are addressed more intensively. And Clausewitz has gained more and more ground.

Obviously, there were several reasons for this increased attention and interest paid to Clausewitz. First of all, after the disappearance of the threat resulting from a bipolar world order that was definitely considered an eminent danger, a new approach to the theory of war had to be identified, and an adap-

tation to the new emerging areas of conflict was required. And in this process, the disintegration of states, especially of Yugoslavia, which was seen as a destabilization process, was in the focus rather than peacekeeping missions of the Austrian Armed Forces. Furthermore, and similar as in many other western (and eastern) states, forms of terrorism became a prevalent subject that could not only be empirically analyzed but also opened doors to theoretical and even speculative approaches. In the end, also the consolidation of Austria's policy of neutrality, reaffirmed in 2000, played a role. As if by coincidence, in search of an answer, the Austrian National Defense Academy again bumped into Clausewitz. As so often, also practical reasons came into play. Two general staff officers in succession who were familiar with Clausewitz became commandants of general staff officer courses. One of them was Lieutenant-Colonel (GS) August Reiter who after his general staff training attended the German Bundeswehr academy for a year where he was "fed" with Clausewitz. The other, Lieutenant-Colonel (GS) Sascha Bosezky, attended the German Command and Staff College and was awarded the Clausewitz Certificate for his outstanding work.

It should be mentioned, however, that Reiter's and Bosezky's work was facilitated by a foundation that had been laid before. Already in 2001 during the 16th course at the Austrian National Defense Academy, a quite demanding Clausewitz seminar of several days had been conducted.²³ Some general findings, brought up by Wolfgang Peischel, culminated in the statement: "If the current expert knowledge becomes obsolete quicker and quicker, then it makes less and less sense teaching it to officer cadets. It seems to make much more sense to develop abilities like abstract judgment and to teach expert knowledge 'on the job' immediately before the respective mission." And: "You have to learn to distinguish which lessons should be learned and which not."

This seminar of 2001 became the basis for the 17th and 18th general staff courses. In the last course which ended in 2010, the shift of contents and questions raised was more than evident. "Trattato della guerra" (Montecuccoli) was no longer discussed, instead there were Sun Tsu, Carl von Clausewitz, A. Jomini, Mahan and Corbett, Douhet, Mitchell and Warden, Ma Zedong, Võ Nguyên Giáp, Liddel Hart, Triandafilov and Richard Simpkin as well as military thinkers addressing Islamism and fundamentalism. Austrian military thinkers and writers were perhaps mentioned, but they were not subjects of the seminar papers.

Despite the variety of authors, Clausewitz was given an essential role which was also underlined by the fact that one course participant could write his military-scientific paper on Carl von Clausewitz's notion of strategy in the light of Kant's critique of reason.²⁴ The author of this thesis, Alexander Klein, described his approach as a discourse on the conceptual history with the objective of facilitating the understanding of terms as tactics, operations, military strategy and strategy and of precisely illustrating the historical development of these terms. With his interpretation, Klein wanted to improve comprehensibility and readability of Clausewitz by referring to Kant's critique of pure reason. This should be achieved by an equation: The author argues that to Clausewitz, a battle meant the same thing as aesthetics to Immanuel Kant. On the next level, strategy is equated with analytics and politics with dialectics.²⁵

Klein defines war as a notion of reason, because the objective of war is to break the enemy's will and thus surpasses the quality of a mere physical application of force. When the consideration of military components by policy and military political consultancy are seen as the consequence of the statement "war is the continuation of policy by other means", then one can tell that this has still not been sufficiently implemented. In Austria, it thus was very obvious that political parties and the government largely ignored possibilities and requirements of the Armed Forces. But in Austria of the seventies and eighties, area defense, which was seen as the point of departure for all military actions, was interpreted in the sense of Clausewitz, because here, the intention was to defend a central area as long as possible or to weaken the conquering forces in a raid-type combat with heavy losses until the political goal of securing the remaining basic sovereignty was achieved. The military however wanted policymakers to act "reasonably" in a military sense. And there were several occasions when this was not the case. Most probably both sides were responsible for the gap between political purpose and military objective.

On a higher level in turn, according to Klein, a war of conquest for exclusively material reasons was unreasonable and bound to fail. "If the political level forgets that it is responsible for breaking the enemy's will, which is only possible, if the war is thought through to the end, then this war cannot be won".²⁶ Again, this conclusion which Klein primarily connects to Adolf Hitler and the German Wehrmacht but which can also be associated with the US Vietnam syndrome and maybe more recently with the problems in Afghanistan is a modern interpretation of Clausewitz. Of course this is also a dilemma of the people interpreting him: In the end, they are historians, because most con-

clusions can only be drawn in retrospect and may lead to statements as “here action was taken according to Clausewitz”, or “in this case, his postulates were completely ignored.” But what if one consequently and consciously follows Clausewitz’s postulates and still fails? In this case the element of friction according to Clausewitz’s definition just needs to be considered more strongly. The bottom line of Klein’s paper is: Clausewitz analyses the political system and correspondingly, studying Clausewitz makes one recognize the actions required for organizing the military in his sense.²⁷ From a certain point of view, the demand to give the Chief of the General Staff the authorities of a commander with absolute power, as Clausewitz projected it, definitely makes sense. Of course this kind of request is a product of huge optimism or a utopia. Thus the pertinent sections seem like an attempt to give the paper some practical value and to justify the demand for more power for the highest Austrian military through statements by Clausewitz and Kant.

The heritage of Clausewitz cannot only be found within the military or military-owned publishing houses, even if these clearly and obviously are the most dominant and competent actors in this field. Indeed, there are other sectors, in which attempts to implement Clausewitz’s theories were made. This of course leads to the vast field of auxiliary constructions. Ludwig Regele for example tried to prove that in the twenties and thirties of 19th century Habsburg Archduke Johann had built huge fortresses in line with the concepts of Clausewitz.²⁸ It is only natural that Clausewitz witnessed the Tyrolean uprising and also commented on it, and of course, Archduke Johann was concerned with defense issues and as general of the corps of engineers he also felt responsible for the construction of several big fortifications, in particular the one called “Franzensfeste” on the Schabser plateau in the Puster valley in the Tyrolean south. But to conclude that, as opposed to Schlieffen and the younger Moltke, Johann considered defense-based warfare as the better strategy, in line with Clausewitz, and that this was the reason for him to plan and build fortifications, is a little far-fetched. It is very likely that Johann never read a single line of “On War”, as to him dealing with military issues was rather a necessity than a passion.

And it also seemed to be unavoidable that even pacifists quoted Clausewitz. An Austrian example for this phenomenon is Paul Wenzel’s essay “Die Friedenskunst”. Mit Clausewitz’ Kriegsregeln den Frieden gewinnen“ (The Art of Peace. Winning Peace with Clausewitz’s Rules of War).²⁹ But at this place, this essay shall not be commented any further.

Far more important are the papers written at Austrian universities or by academics. Three observations can be made: Military history and also intellectual discourses on the theory of war have become respected subjects at universities. This and the inclusion of Clausewitz's concepts and theories approximately coincided with his already described reputational gain in the Austrian military environment. It can also be assumed that the applicability of the intellectual discussions' outcomes was not as imperative at the universities as within the military.

However, at least a part of the substance offered in teaching and scientific writing does not qualify as the pure doctrine: rather it is the sum of read and analyzed contents. There are empiric studies, essays on Clausewitz's biography or – most common – attempts to link and explain modern conflicts with Clausewitz. But first, let us stick to the facts:

At the University of Innsbruck, a guide for students, journalists, civil servants, and other people interested in the “basics on the changing faces of war and its manifestations” was composed that dealt with Mao, Che Guevara and also with Clausewitz.³⁰ This deliberately small-sized volume by Irene Etzersdorfer addresses the changeability of war. So the statement “war is a chameleon“ is nothing new.

She argues that at the beginning of modern times, war was “nationalized“. Today, new forms of the condotta, asymmetrical wars, have replaced state-on-state wars. Where the state is weak, the political power shifts from the state to the people. The words on Clausewitz seem to be an introduction rather than an interpretation. And whether he is in appropriate company might be questioned as well.³¹

A philosophical diploma thesis on Clausewitz, approbated at the University of Klagenfurt, is even shorter and also has little substance³². It is limited to just a few quotes on war as the continuation of national policy, on war as the advanced form of the duel, limitation of force and their absence and on the phenomenon of friction. At the end, the author briefly concludes that the observations and analysis on war made by Carl von Clausewitz – even if more than 200 years old – are still valid today.³³ You don't have to write a diploma thesis to realize this.

Much more important than the mentioned attempts at the subject is Christian Stadler's essay on Clausewitz in the volume “Krieg” (War) which addresses fundamentals and contains a profound and inspiring interpretation

of the 1st book, even if only of a few key sentences.³⁴ It certainly contains concrete facts and is a philosophical essay which does not digress to modern armies or the Austrian *Bundesheer*. It deals with the notion and nature of politics which are characterized by being made by free “and on principle responsible creatures” that are “diametrically opposed or even hostile to each other”. The political purpose, however, is often obstructed by the focus on the military strategic goal. Stadler sees the tendency to perceive war as absolute as a warning, and the apparent general removal of limitations as dangerous error. Making the enemy defenceless was always the primary goal. But in the end, the masses will “determine the nature of politics”. With this, Stadler probably has arrived in the 20th or even 21st century.

Beyond interpretations of Clausewitz written by philosophers and political scientists, it is still the historians who provide a useful approach for research. Unfortunately, historians too often tend to draw on monocausal explanations. Whether this makes sense or not must be decided on a case-by-case basis. But this approach is still more plausible than a superficial presentation of some of Clausewitz’s thoughts and can be used to project great historic decisions and processes onto one or more central statements of Clausewitz. In this context, the works of Martin Müller should be mentioned who started with a diploma thesis on the Austro-Hungarian warfare against Italy and later wrote a dissertation on the Austro-German offensive in Italy of October and November 1917 and the Michael offensive in France in 1918. Clausewitz is only mentioned when the author refers to the dual terminological concepts of Clausewitz as the main emphasis was on strategy and tactics. The limited terminological concepts were not important for the dissertation, but the word “annihilation” became the pivot of the paper. The concept of annihilation was the focal point of Martin Müller’s thesis and he subsequently, even if not necessarily, added the subtitle “Eine Clausewitz-Studie” (A study on Clausewitz).³⁵

He might have done this to allude that – at least for the mentioned offensives - Clausewitz would have come into play. But neither the offensive in Italy in 1917 nor the one at the German western front in 1918 were meant to be test exercises for the strategies and tactics described by Clausewitz in his books. Only in retrospect one could draw conclusions to the extent that some ideas might be in line with Clausewitz’s concepts or the offensive was based on the concept of annihilation. But this can be said about any major offensive during the war, and this would apply to the thinking not only of German general staff officers, but also of the Entente Powers and the US Forces which at

that time had more or less consequently followed the tradition of Jomini. Without any doubt, annihilation was the military goal. And irrespective of where this desire for a devastating victory was rooted: According to the “Dogma of the Battle of Annihilation” (Jehuda Wallach) the consequence must be something like a nuclear holocaust.

Finally, the Canetti Symposium in Vienna at the end of 2004 is worthwhile mentioning.³⁶ Starting out from Canetti’s „Masse und Macht” (Mass and Power), among others, Thomas Macho, Martin von Creveld, Lutz Unterseher and Ulrike Kleemeier gave their presentations. The latter dwelled on the topic: “Das Denken des Krieges. Überlegungen zu Clausewitz” (Reasoning of War. Thoughts on Clausewitz). Thus, the organizer stuck to an established and proven pattern: When discussing Clausewitz, it is always advisable to include German scientists in the debate, especially someone like Ms. Kleemeier, because they always give fresh impetus to the debate. And this closes the circle back to Werner Hahlweg.

The fact that until the sixties of the 20th century, a Clausewitz reception was non-existent in Austria because he was ignored until then resulted in Hahlweg having to make something like a new start. This is why a Clausewitz renaissance was neither possible nor necessary. Actually Clausewitz continuously gained in importance. And this not through indisputable pontifications as is sometimes the case in ecclesiastical history, but in a much simpler and more basic way: Clausewitz is being read, received and interpreted. Hence, he is more than a fixed star in a galaxy of quotes. Fifty years ago, this was unthinkable.

Notes:

¹ In memoriam of Werner Hahlweg.

² Clausewitz, „Österreich und die preußische Heeresreform 1807-1812“ in: *Landesverteidigung. Österreichische Militärische Zeitschrift*, 2nd year (1962), pp. 83 - 88. Revised version of a lecture held within the scope of the Austrian Military Society in Vienna on 18 October 1960.

³ Werner Hahlweg, „Militärwesen und Philosophie. Zur Genesis der methodischen Grundlagen des Werkes ‚Vom Kriege‘ des Generals von Clausewitz“ in: *Österreichische Militärische Zeitschrift*, issue 5/1976, pp. 395-398; „Philosophie und

Militärtheorie im Denken und in den Aufzeichnungen des Generals von Clausewitz“ in: *Österreichische Militärische Zeitschrift*, issue 1/1988, pp. 31-35.

⁴ Manfred Rauchensteiner, „Zum ‚operativen Denken‘ in Österreich 1814 bis 1914“ in *Österreichische Militärische Zeitschrift*, issue 2/1974, pp. 121-127; issue 3/1974, pp. 207-211; issue 4/1974, pp. 285-291; issue 5/1974, pp. 379-384; issue 6/1974, pp. 473-478 and 1/1975, pp. 46-53; „Zum ‚operativen Denken‘ in Österreich 1918-1938 in: *Österreichische Militärische Zeitschrift*, issue 2/1978, pp. 107-116.

⁵ The presentations of the conference on Clausewitz, Jomini, Erzherzog Carl were published by Gesellschaft für politisch-strategische Studien (Vienna), by Clausewitz-Gesellschaft e.V. and by Landesverteidigungsakademie in Vienna in 1988.

⁶ Frederick Engels, “Mountain Warfare in the Past and Present” in *New York Daily Tribune*, MECW Volume 15, p. 164.

⁷ „Grundsätze der höheren Kriegskunst für die Generäle der österreichischen Armee, Vienna 1806“ in: *Ausgewählte Schriften weiland seiner kaiserlichen Hobeit des Erzherzogs Carl*, vol. 1, Wien 1893, pp. 1-85.

⁸ Archduke Charles of Austria, „Grundsätze der Strategie, erläutert durch die Darstellung des Feldzuges von 1796 in Deutschland, 1. Teil“ in *Ausgewählte Schriften*, vol. 1, pp. 221-343. (Part 2, *Ausgewählte Schriften* Bd. 2, fills the entire volume, but only covers the story of the campaign).

⁹ Issue 6/1964, pp. 409-414.

¹⁰ *Österreichische Militärische Zeitschrift*, issue 2/1988, pp. 139-143.

¹¹ *Österreichische Militärische Zeitschrift*, issue 3/1990, pp. 229 f.

¹² „Vom künftigen Kriege. Zur Clausewitz-Rezeption der amerikanischen Streitkräfte“ (On Future War. On the Reception of Clausewitz in the US Forces) in: *Österreichische Militärische Zeitschrift*, issue 2/2004, pp. 181-186.

¹³ *Österreichische Militärische Zeitschrift*, issue 3/1994, pp. 253-258.

¹⁴ Subtitle: Im Spiegel der Lehre des Generals Carl von Clausewitz, Neckenmarkt 2007.

¹⁵ Eva Strickmann, *Clausewitz im Zeitalter der neuen Kriege: Der Krieg in Ruanda (1990- 1994) im Spiegel der „wunderlichen Dreifaltigkeit“*; Glienicke 2008.

¹⁶ Markus Stiebellehner, *Krieg und Konflikt im Rahmen der klassischen Staatenkonzeption sowie unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Theorie von Carl von Clausewitz*, Diplomarbeit Militärische Führung (Diploma thesis), Wiener Neustadt 2001.

¹⁷ Gustav E. Gustenau, *Zum Begriff des bewaffneten Konfliktes*, in: Österreichische Militärische Zeitschrift, issue 1/1992, p. 48f.

¹⁸ Stiebellehner, *Sicherheit als prioritäre Staatsaufgabe*, p. 81.

¹⁹ Printed in: *Armis et litteris 18: Beiträge zum modernen Kriegsbegriff*, ed. by Theresianische Militärakademie, Wiener Neustadt 2001, pp. 155-168.

²⁰ *Klassiker der Kriegskunst*, ed. Werner Hahlweg, Darmstadt 1960.

²¹ *Makers of Modern Strategy from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, ed. by Peter Paret with collaboration of Gordon A. Craig and Felix Gilbert, New Jersey 1986.

²² Ed. by George Edward Thibault, Washington D.C. 1984.

²³ I would like to thank Brigadier August Reiter very much for providing the seminar documents. I would also like to express my gratitude to Brigadier Reiter and Lieutenant-Colonel Bosezky who took the time for extensive talks with me.

²⁴ *Strategie und System. Der Strategiebegriff bei Carl von Clausewitz im Lichte der Kantischen Vernunftkritik*. Military-scientific paper, 18th general staff officer course, also diploma thesis at the faculty „Grund- und Integrativwissenschaftlichen Fakultät“ of the University of Vienna, 2010.

²⁵ Klein, *Strategie und System*, pp. 126-143.

²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 154.

²⁷ *Ibid*, p. 165f.

²⁸ Ludwig Regele, Erzherzog Johann, „Carl von Clausewitz und das Festungswesen“ (Archduke Johann, Carl von Clausewitz and Fortifications) in *Der Schlern. Monatszeitschrift für Südtiroler Landeskunde*, 75th year, issue 4, Bozen 2001, pp. 237-248. (Monthly Review of South-Tyrolean Regional Studies)

²⁹ Ed. St. Michael (Stmk) 1982.

³⁰ Irene Etzersdorfer, *Krieg. (War) Eine Einführung in die Theorien bewaffneter Konflikte*, Wien-Köln-Weimar 2007. (An Introduction into the Theories of Armed Conflicts)

³¹ See: Critique by Martin Meier in *Militärgeschichtliche Zeitschrift*, 68th year (1968), issue 1, p. 135f.

³² Stéphane Martin Binder, *Clausewitz und seine Folgen*. (The Aftermath of Clausewitz), Diploma thesis University of Klagenfurt, 2004.

³³ Even the corrector of the paper seemed to have overlooked the incorrect dates and grammatical mistakes (of the German thesis).

³⁴ Christian Stadler, *Krieg* (Grundbegriffe der europäischen Geistesgeschichte, ed. Konrad Paul Liessmann), Wien 2009, p. 76-85.

³⁵ Martin Müller, *Vernichtungsgedanke und Koalitionskriegführung*. (The Concept of Annihilation and Coalition Warfare). *Das Deutsche Reich und Österreich-Ungarn in der Offensive 1917/1918. Eine Clausewitz-Studie*, Graz 2003. (The German Empire and the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the 1917-18 Offensive: A Study on Clausewitz. Published in German)

³⁶ Krieg. Die unentrinnbare Doppelmasse. Referate auf dem 17. Internationalen Kulturanthropologisch-Philosophischen Canetti-Symposium, 4th-7th November 2004, ed. John D. Pattillo-Hess, Vienna 2005. (Papers delivered at the 17th International Canetti Symposium in Vienna).