



STIFTUNG
ADAM VON TROTT
IMSHAUSEN e.V.



Dear Eva-Maria McCormack

Remembering Adam von Trott on our annual 20th July commemoration this year, guest speaker Prof. Dr. Alexander Wöll, a leading expert on Eastern Europe and Ukraine turned to what was at the core of the Adam von Trott's resistance against the Nazi regime: "I believe in the power of the word in a time of brutal war".

Faith in the power of the word was put to the test in this year of war 2022. Our work at the Adam von Trott Foundation was shaped by Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the many impacts of the war. At Imshausen, the power of the word took on very different forms in the face of this: There were countless conversations with more than 1,000 students who visited Imshausen in 2022 for workshops and seminars; there were long discussions about acting and not acting, and of course, about how we could best help and support the people of Ukraine. The war on Ukraine was again and again at the centre of our regular "Imshäuser Exchanges", and at the conferences and in the context of teacher training courses we offered and hosted.

Against the language of violence, war, propaganda, hatred and fear, we draw on the values that inspire and connect us with Adam von Trott and his friends in the Resistance – values that can offer guidance and orientation especially to the young people who come to Imshausen: civil courage, openness, commitment and the thirst for knowledge that helps to better understand and take responsibility for the complex world around us.

In this spirit, we wish you, our foundation's and supporters, a blessed Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year. Thank you very much from all of us for your faithful support and friendship, which we look forward to also in the coming year.

With warmest regards,

Board and Team

Adam von Trott Foundation, Imshausen

"I believe in the power of the word in a time of brutal war."

Prof. Dr. Alexander Wöll
University of Potsdam

International outreach

With this first Christmas newsletter, our foundation is starting a wider project to enhance its international outreach. From 2023 onwards, we will offer a regular English-language newsletter to the foundation's friends and supporters as well as international partner organizations outside Germany. We look forward to staying in touch with you more closely in future, and we welcome any new friends and supporters you would like to

recommend our foundation and work to. To facilitate a wider and international audience, the foundation is also producing an English-language version of our [homepage](#) as well as an English-language version of our [digital exhibition](#) on Adam von Trott and his involvement with the German Resistance.

Both projects are expected to be completed in spring 2023.



Adam von Trott Lecture of November 24, 2022

**British historian Timothy Garton Ash
on the path "From post-war Europe to
post-wall Europe – and back"**

By Dr. Karl Adam

In hindsight, historians try to bring order to the diverse, mutually contradictory developments and events of the present, to identify trends and set turning points. This is particularly challenging in the case of contemporary history, which, according to a well-known dictum, "still smokes". Hasty judgments are forbidden.

Things are constantly evolving and where there is a turning point today, continuity may be discernible in retrospect. After the Russian attack on Ukraine, questions of historical periodization arise again: The Cold War may have ended in 1991, the East-West conflict – as the current year clearly showed – is ongoing.

The hubris of the "end of history"

Timothy Garton Ash is one of the most prominent interpreters of world events and when he held this year's Adam von Trott Lecture in the university town of Göttingen in Lower Saxony, things came full circle, so to speak. In 2004 he had already given an Adam von Trott Lecture in Oxford, but "what a contrast that was to today!" The historian speaks of a widespread "hubris" around 2004: the eastward expansion of EU and NATO were successful, the euro zone grew and prospered, a democratic era seemed to be beginning in Ukraine with the Orange Revolution, and a constitution for the European Union was in the works. All these developments were supported by a historical optimism fed by the events of the geopolitical turning point of 1989-1991. The path towards democracy, the rule of law and freedom seemed irreversible. According to a well-known book title, in many places people thought they were at the "end of history". Garton Ash speaks of a "vulgar Hegelianism" that broke ground at the time. Even with the so-called Arab Spring from 2011, people still had the path to democracy in mind – and not the brutal failure of the Prague Spring 1968, for example.

A historical stroke of luck

According to Garton Ash, what happened in 1989-1991 was not a historical necessity, not an inevitable development, but rather a "unique historical stroke of luck", almost "a miracle". Many things had to come together to make this stroke of luck a reality: the global political course of the USA under Reagan, the appointment of Gorbachev as General Secretary of the CPSU, favorable developments in Eastern and Western Europe – right down to coincidences such as Günter Schabowski accidentally opening the Wall. Garton Ash sees much of what Machiavelli once called "fortuna" at work here.

Post-2004: En route to crises

What in hindsight appears to be an "upward turn" from around 1985 has its counterpart in the "downward turn" since around 2004. From here on, the impacts became more frequent and the narrative of the general path to eternal peace was increasingly thwarted. And that precisely "at the moment of triumph", according to the historian. First came the failure of the EU constitution after the negative referendums in France

and the Netherlands (2005). Then there was the first election of the Kaczyńskis in Poland (2005). There was Russian President Putin's inflammatory speech at the Munich Security Conference (2007). And there was the Russian war against Georgia (2008) and the beginning of the Economic and Financial Crisis, which culminated in a Euro Zone Crisis and in particular a Greece Crisis (from 2010). Those were in turn followed by the Migration Crisis of 2015/16. Added to this was the dismantling of democracy in Hungary after the election of Viktor Orban (2010) and the caesura of the annexation of Crimea and the beginning of the war between Russia and Ukraine (2014). Borders were again shifted militarily, democratic developments were reversed, walls were built again in "post-wall Europe". Parallel to this was the global rise of populism, which was expressed by the double whammy of the "terrible year" 2016: the election of Donald Trump as US President and the Brexit referendum in Great Britain. And moreover, the Covid-19 pandemic with its around 6.6 million deaths worldwide, its lockdowns, gigantic aid packages and consequences for the economy and society has not even been mentioned. In retrospect, a veritable cascade of crises becomes apparent.

Ending post-wall illusions

According to Garton Ash, the Russian war of aggression against the entire Ukraine from February 2022 marks the end of the "illusions of the post-wall period" and once again shows impressively that even historians do not know the future. Nevertheless, "historically informed assumptions" are required to interpret the present. Recurring patterns are particularly instructive: Empires – including the Russian one – don't like to give up. They "strike back". Putin has always been a revisionist. This did not require NATO's eastward expansion, which is often used as an explanation or justification for Russian action, especially in Germany.

For an optimism of the will

The example of Adam von Trott, a resistance fighter against National Socialism, shows why it is still worth not giving up hope and fighting for a free Europe. The Italian philosopher Antonio Gramsci had spoken of the need for "pessimism of the intellect" and "optimism of the will". Garton Ash also sees this combination at work when looking at von Trott's struggle. The problems of the present must be recognized and analyzed soberly. But hope can only arise if the courage is found to tackle recognized problems constructively and courageously – according to Timothy Garton Ash, who will continue to elaborate on his reflections in a new book on the history of Europe. A certainly worthwhile read – for understanding our time and as a basis for "historically informed assumptions" concerning the future.



ADAM-VON-TROTT-LECTURE
Vom Nachkriegseuropa
zum Nachmauereuropa
- und zurück

Professor Timothy Garton Ash
University of Oxford

24. November 2022
19:00

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