

KEH - KRIEGSENTWICKLUNGSHILFE (WAR DEVELOPMENT AID)

10 November 2009

Launching of KEH-website / www.kriegsentwicklung.ch

The impetus for the KEH campaign came from the morally questionable declarations of the federal government on the Weapons Export Ban Initiative, advocating further exports of war material. The main arguments in favor of the arms industry were the preservation of jobs and the existing "strict" regulations for the export of war material - which nevertheless led to child soldiers in India being supplied with weapons by Switzerland. With the "charitable" organisation KEH (War Development Aid) we took these arguments seriously and led them ad absurdum with provocative and subversive means. The aim was to occupy the arguments in such a way and to think through their ethical consequences to the end that it would be very embarrassing to maintain them with a clear conscience.

Accordingly, pictures of child soldiers proudly posing with their weapons were to be found on Kriegsentwicklungshilfe.ch, whereas in (pseudo)scientific articles, experts explained why Swiss military aid abroad makes sense.

18 November 2009

Media Hoax - Criminal Charge

Published in: Blick am Abend



Waffen für Kids? Jetzt reicht!

ANZEIGE → Der Zürcher Autor Andreas Heusser verklagt kriegsentwicklungshilfe.ch - die Seite sei rassistisch.

Spenden Sie Ihre Waffen für Bedürftige und Kinder in Drittweltländern.» Dieser Aufruf des Vereins Kriegsentwicklungshilfe schockiert den Zürcher Autor Andreas Heusser. Am Samstag soll diese Sammelaktion auf dem Zürcher Helveti-

tiaplatz stattfinden. Die Veranstalter, die telefonisch nicht erreichbar sind, betreiben provokative **Abstimmungspropaganda für ein Verbot von Kriegsmaterialexporten.** Heusser geht das zu weit. Er verklagt die Betreiber von

«kriegsentwicklungshilfe.ch» wegen **«Verbreitung rassistischer und volksaufhetzerischer Inhalte»**. Und fügt an: «Damit ist zweifellos ein Tiefpunkt in der grassierenden politischen Propaganda-Unkultur erreicht.» **wyc**

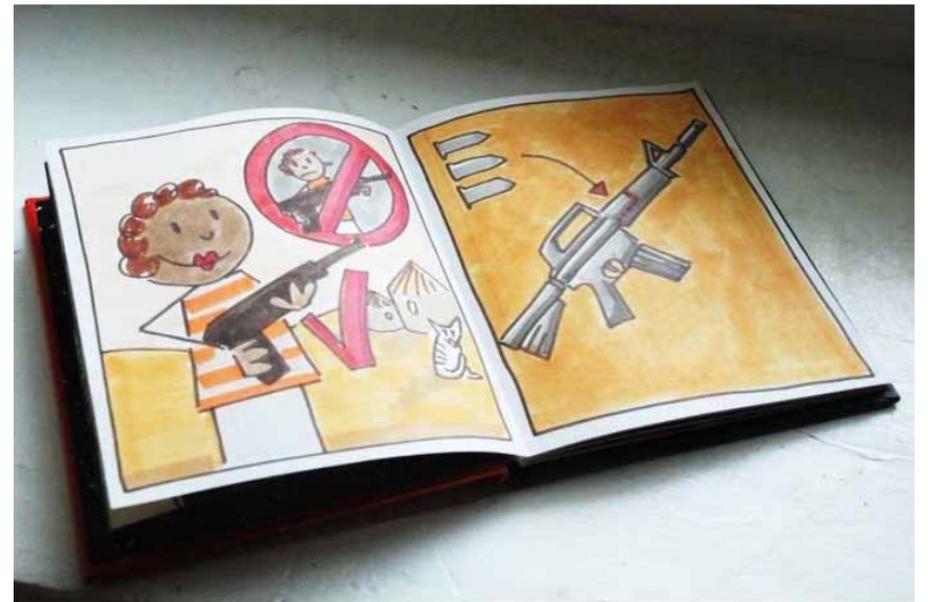
**Title: Weapons for kids?
That's enough!**

Criminal charge. The Zurich author Andreas Heusser is suing kriegsentwicklungshilfe.ch - the site is racist.

„Donate your weapons for needy people and children in third world countries.!” This call of the organization Kriegsentwicklungshilfe shocks the Zurich author Andreas Heusser. On Saturday, this collection campaign is to take place on Helvetiaplatz in Zurich. The organisers, who cannot be reached by telephone, are making provocative voting propaganda for the export ban of war material. For Heusser, this goes too far. He sues the operators of kriegsentwicklungshilfe.ch for „disseminating racist and incitement content“. And adds: „This undoubtedly marks a low point in the rampant political propaganda (anti)culture“.



Campaign for charitable Mob Justice, Kinshasa, Kongo, 2000



Schoolbook „Using weapons correctly“, published by KEH-Teaching Material Publishing House, 2003



23 November 2009 Propaganda Video – Call for National Weapon Collection Day

In an interview with a TV journalist, Dr. Alois B. Stocher, President of KEH, calls for a federal weapons collection day on Helvetiaplatz Zurich. The weapons would be delivered in the form of aid packages directly to the needy - especially children - in developing countries. When asked what job security means for war development aid, Stocher is not afraid to compare it with a concentration camp in order to illustrate how 'important' job security is not only for the directly affected employees (guards, cleaning staff etc.), but also for the suppliers (gas suppliers). Stocher: „You can transfer this 1:1 to the war development aid of the federal government and to our work.“

29 November 2009 Performance – National Weapons Collection Day

Helvetiaplatz Zurich

Dr. Alois Stocher and his assistant George Klein are waiting on Helvetiaplatz with three shopping trolleys for „firearms“, „stabbing weapons“ and „other weapons“ for donations from the population. However, participation in the national weapons collection day is rather sluggish: Stocher and his assistant George Klein have to do a lot of persuasion work - yet nobody is willing to donate their old army weapons to children in the Third World. Even tanks or missile defence systems are not brought over. This gives rise to bad expectations for the forthcoming vote on the ban on arms exports: Do the Swiss perhaps no longer want to provide war development aid? For Dr. Stocher and KEH this would be an economic catastrophe.

30 November 2009 Propaganda Video – Wort zum Sonntag (A Christian Commentary on current affairs)

After the vote on the ban on arms exports, in which the population follows the recommendations of the Federal Council and votes ‚no‘, Dr. Stocher can breathe a sigh of relief: He recognises in the result of the vote a clear confirmation of his work and a mandate from the Swiss population that KEH should continue and intensify the existing war development aid. In particular, he thanks the Christian Democratic Federal Councillor Leuthard, who has vehemently campaigned for arms exports. Stocher makes it clear that war development aid does not contradict Christian charity, but on the contrary is rooted in it.



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Unpublished newspaper article on KEH

War Development Aid - A political art project in the spirit of Schlingensief

When it comes to the provocative art project KEH (War Development Aid), opinions tend to differ sharply. Once again the question arises as to how far art may go - and whether the end justifies any means.

Scandal as a means of art

The scandal as a political means of art - with this recipe the gifted provocateur Christoph Schlingensief managed to polarize the public like no other: Who doesn't remember the murmur that went through the media landscape when in 2001 he brought repentant neo-Nazis to the stage of the bourgeois theater as actors? Or the action „Please love Austria“ at the Vienna Festival 2000, where he staged a kind of ‚Big Brother‘-show with asylum seekers in a container who could be deported by Internet vote?

In Zurich, an anonymus artist duo - consisting of Andreas H. and Christof N. - ensures that his provocative spirit lives on. The two recently founded the „charitable“ organisation Kriegsentwicklungshilfe KEH (War Development Aid) and called for a federal weapons collection day on Helvetiaplatz in Zurich. According to KEH's homepage, the weapons would be delivered in the form of aid packages directly to the needy - especially children - in developing countries. Accordingly, there are pictures of child soldiers proudly posing with their weapons. Meanwhile, in (pseudo)scientific articles, experts explain why Swiss arms aid abroad makes sense.

Art as shock therapy

It was no coincidence that the initial spark of the action fell precisely in the run-up to the „arms export ban“-initiative: the impetus for this came from the questionable moral argumentation of the Confederation, which in its vote recommendations stood up for the arms industry. The main arguments were the preservation of jobs and the existing „strict“ regulations for the export of war material (which, as is well known, nevertheless led to the supply of weapons to child soldiers in India). With their art project *War Development Aid* the artist duo took these arguments seriously and led them ad absurdum with provocative and subversive means. The irony, however, was not an end in itself, but merely a camouflage, as Christof explains: „The thing is actually not at all ironic and certainly not meant to be ‚funny‘ - and if it is, the laughter should stick in your throat and cause nausea.“

Andreas adds: „In psychotherapy, the so-called „symptom prescription“ is an efficient form of therapy for patients who are considered incurable: Instead of prescribing a drug, the patient is prescribed the very symptoms he wants to get rid of. A schizophrenic, for example, is asked to hear voices even more intensively after 9 p.m. than usual. This often makes it possible for him to get rid of the symptoms, because it becomes impossible for him to continue to show them spontaneously (and without reflection). We have tried the same with the arguments of the proponents of arms exports: to cast their arguments in such a way and to think through their ethical consequences to the end that it would be almost impossible - because very embarrassing - to continue to maintain them with a clear conscience.

Drastic means to an end

In order to achieve this therapeutic purpose, the two know no limits. On the homepage on ‚Human Values and Ethics‘, for example, there is an ‚empirical study‘ comparing the value of a Swiss job with the value of a human life in the Third World. Using various economic indicators, the author comes to the politically incorrect conclusion that the average Swiss is generally worth more than any other person in the world. But since this economic added value is to a large extent due to the more attractive jobs, the cynically logical conclusion is as follows: „We must not allow jobs to be put at risk here in order to protect human lives in the Third World that are worth much less than these jobs“.

The television interview with Dr. Alois Stocher, the president of KEH, aims in the same direction. Asked what job security means for his organization, Stocher is not afraid to use a comparison with a concentration camp to illustrate how ‚important‘ job security is not only for the directly affected employees (guards, cleaning personnel, etc.), but also for the supplier companies (gas suppliers). Stocher: „You can transfer this 1:1 to the War development aid of the Federal Government and to our work.“

It is clear that this was intended to take the arguments of the federal government and the arms lobby to the extreme and to expose their moral dubiety. The question, however, is whether the end justifies the means in this case. In other words: Does one evil justify the other?

Criminal complaint against KEH

It is precisely this ethic problem that has attracted the attention of Zurich author Andreas Heusser. As you could read in *Blick am Abend* of 18.11.09 („Weapons for Kids - Enough!“) he took legal action against the operators of KEH because of incitement of the people and racism. In his media communiqué, Heusser wrote: „This is undoubtedly a low point in the rampant political propaganda culture!

What has been kept from the public, however, is that Heusser is one half of the artist duo. With this hoax, the artist duo continues an artistic tradition that also began in Zurich: Placing false reports in the newspaper was a popular way for the Dadaists to draw attention to their cause. But for Andreas it is not just about the advertising effect: „Normally it’s the media that influence popular opinion with more or less subliminal means of manipulation - even in the case of arms exports,“ Andreas explains, „so it was important to turn the tables for once.“

The lesser evil?

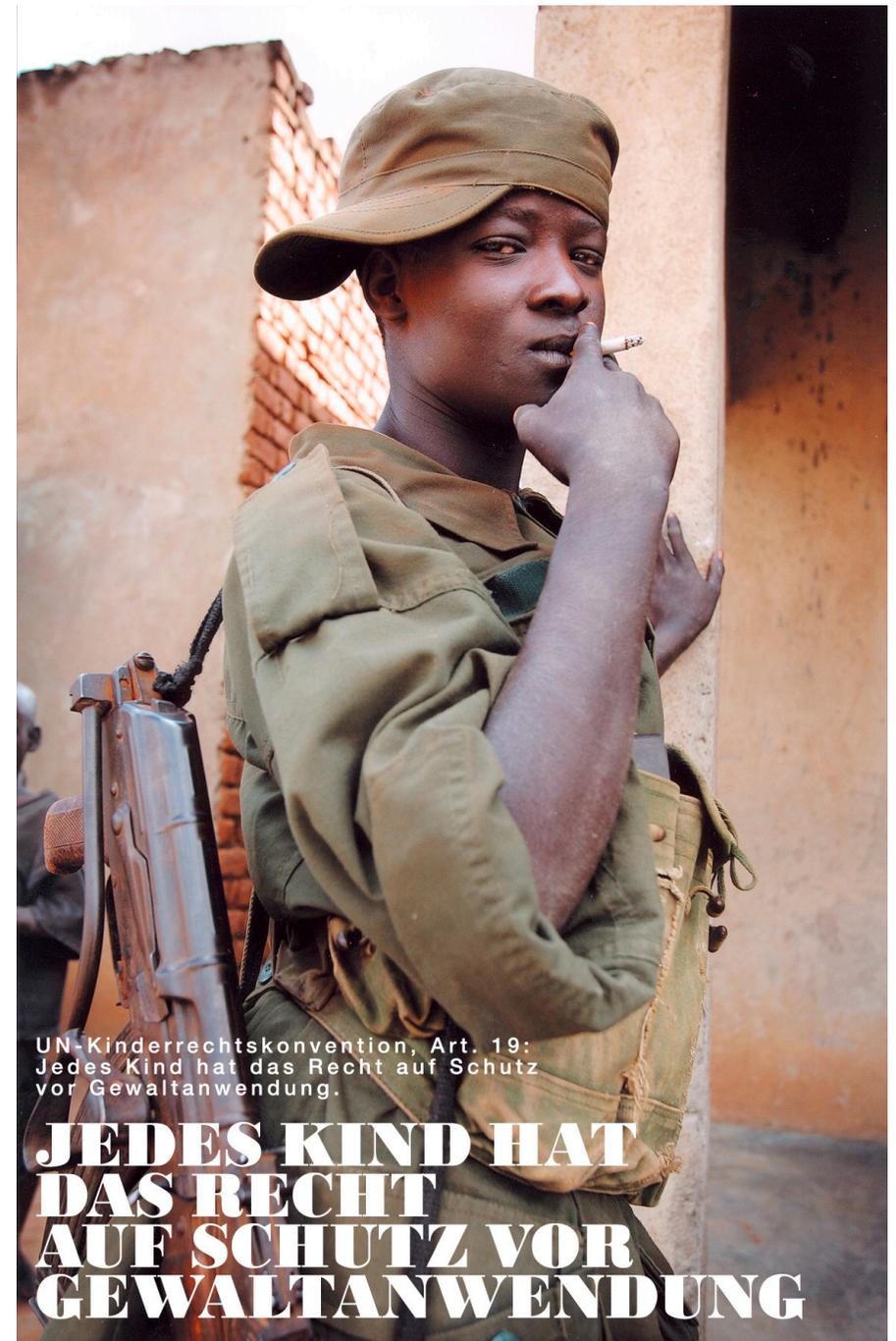
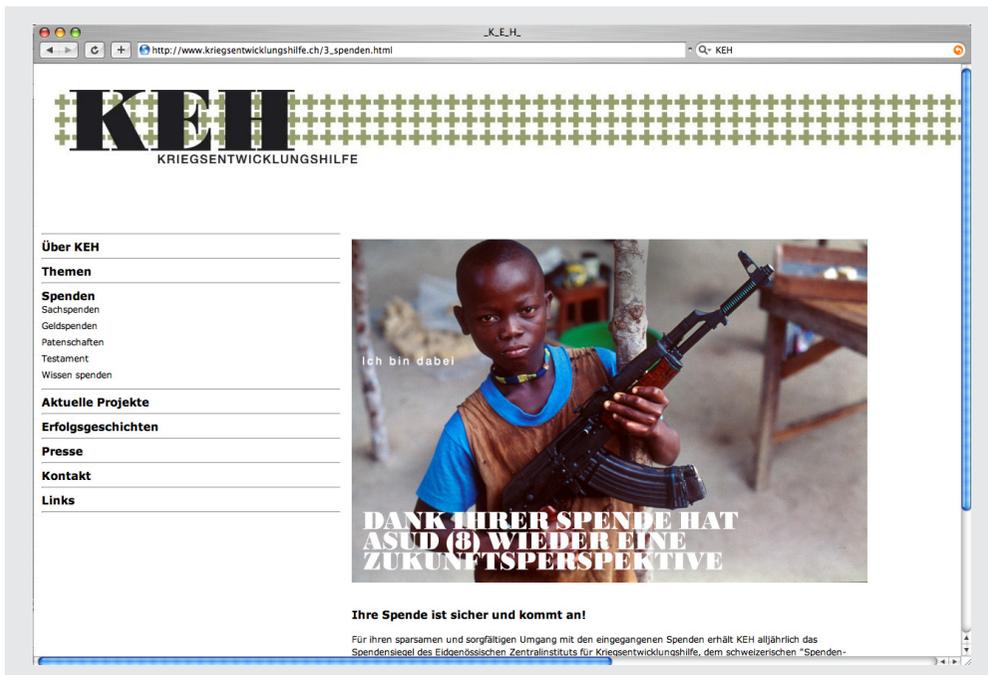
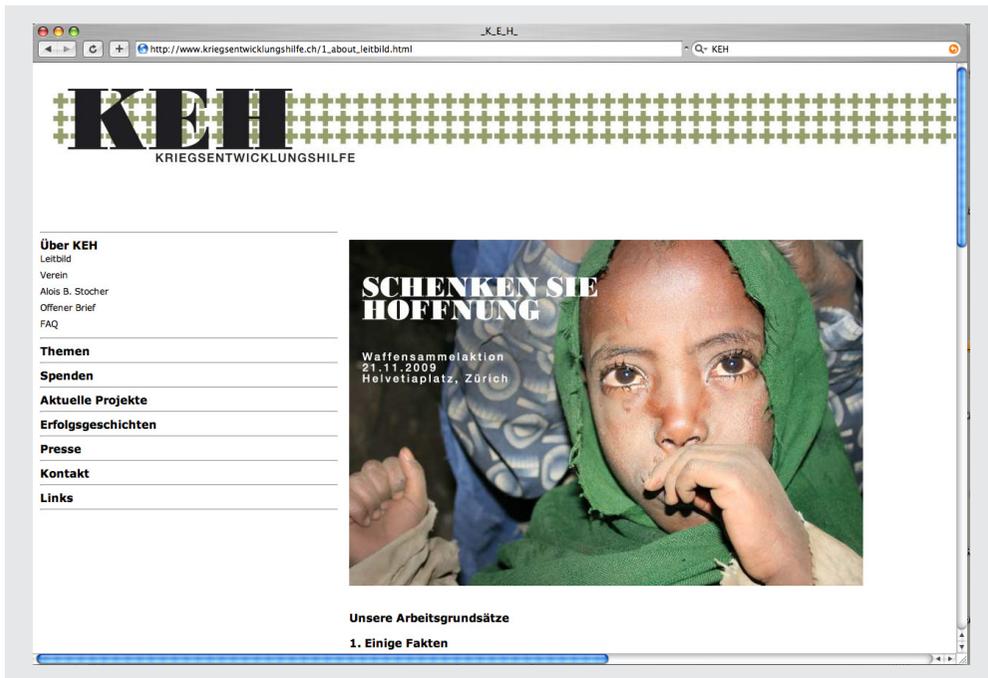
The moral question - may art do everything? - remains unanswered. Christof replies weighing up: „The ethicist in me steps in, asking the aestheticist what is more cynical: the Federal Government’s argumentation in favour of the export of war material or the fact that we took their arguments serious and satirically aggravated them. I consider the first to be the bigger scandal, not least because the Confederation also claims to be the conscience of the nation in moral matters.“ Andreas adds: „It would of course be bad if our action were reduced only to this question. We hope that the discussion will not stop at the artistic means of representation, but that the irritation is merely a trigger to deal with the contents of the action.“

Art as a time bomb

The contents and contributions on the KEH-website show above all one thing: that arms exports - whichever way you look at it - remain something morally reprehensible. What the visitor of the homepage searches in vain, however, are alternatives: Political ideas and practical solutions, for example for all the people who would lose their jobs if the initiative were accepted. „That’s right,“ Christof confirms, „but it can’t be our role as artists to shape society. Our task is difficult enough: how do we succeed in pointing out questionable traditions, ethical problems, ideological fixations, unreflected attitudes, etc. with artistic means? It is the task of politics, not of art, to develop solutions to these problems“. Andreas adds another provocative parable: „We tried to dissuade the bomber at the last moment from his plan - one could have discussed alternative actions and future perspectives with him later.“

Triumph of the fictitious character

The fact that the rescue was not successful at the last second has been known since voting Sunday at the latest: While the complaints of the minaret supporters were met with open ears at least abroad, the slap in the face for the *weapons export ban*-initiative did not even cause a bad conscience. For the two artists, the defeat is not entirely unexpected: „Unfortunately, this is not the first time that the people have fallen for a demagogue like Alois Stocher,“ says Andreas, who resents his Alter Ego’s triumph. The latter solemnly addresses the Swiss population via youtube with a „Wort zum Sonntag“ (A Christian Commentary on current affairs) and thanks them for the great trust they have placed in Switzerland’s War Development Aid through their vote. In other words: Operation successful, patient alive - but brain dead.



UN-Kinderrechtskonvention, Art. 19:
Jedes Kind hat das Recht auf Schutz
vor Gewaltanwendung.

**JEDES KIND HAT
DAS RECHT
AUF SCHUTZ VOR
GEWALTANWENDUNG**

KEH on Wikipedia:

KEH (War Development Aid)

KEH was a satirical art project, launched 2009 by Andreas Heusser, Christof Nüssli and Christoph Oeschger. It consisted in the creation of the fictitious charity organization "War Development Aid" (KEH) and several actions performed by its representatives, Dr. Alois B. Stocher and his assistant George Klein.

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War Development Aid

The project was performed in the context of the 2009 Swiss vote for an exportation ban of war materials. In the same year, a report made headlines according to which Switzerland - despite official proclamations to the contrary - has granted arms exports to countries where child soldiers are deployed.[1] The satirical project was aimed to expose the hypocrisies on politicians who subordinate their christian and humanitarian principles to the interests of the arms industry.[2] Superficially the website of KEH resembled a Christian Charity organization, but through the absurd and ridiculous texts, photomontages and videos it became apparent that it was satire: What KEH promoted was to further develop wars in development countries. All kind of weapons from firearms to tanks were alledegely collected in Switzerland and brought to needy children in third-world countries to help them protect themselves.[3]

National Weapons Collection Day

Part of the project was a "National Weapons Collection Day" in the city of Zurich, where passers-by were informed about the War Development Aid and asked to donate weapons. The project made news, when Andreas Heusser (who played Dr. Alois Stocher) announced in a press release that he will prosecute the president of the KEH, Dr. Alois Stocher, for his inhumane practices.[4]

References

(1) cf.:

- Schweiz liefert Waffen für Kindersoldaten, Aargauer Zeitung, 8 November 2009

- Liefert die Schweiz Waffen für Kindersoldaten?, 20min, 8 November 2009

(2) Wie die CVP Waffenexporte und Bergpredigt unter einen Hut bringt, Tages-Anzeiger, 10 November 2019

(3) Das Gesamtwerk Alois B. Stocher, KEH und OLAF, Philip Reding Online, 27.10.2010

(4) Waffen für Kids? Jetzt reicht!, Blick am Abend, 18 November 2009

Post an die KEH



Please note:

The original KEH-Website: www.kriegsentwicklungshilfe.ch is not online anymore, but an archive-version can be accessed by the following link:

<http://kriegsentwicklungshilfe.000webhostapp.com>