

Obituary on Ulrich Albrecht

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Personal Memories on Ulrich Albrecht

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I have known Prof. Dr. Ulrich Albrecht since my student days in 1968 when I attended as one of the first student members meetings of the German Society for Peace and Conflict Research (AFK) and I met Ulrich for the last time on 25 June 2014 when I visited him with Lothar Brock. During these 46 years we met quite frequently at meetings of peace researchers in Germany and events of the peace movement in many European countries during the 1980s and we thus had many occasions for cooperation as critical peace researchers and alternative security experts of which I would just like to mention a few:

- *Study Group on Military Policy*, where we published an Anti-White Paper with materials for an alternative military policy for the Federal Republic of Germany in 1974, an Anti-White Paper on the People's Army of the German Democratic Republic in 1976 and a critical anthology with texts on *Rearming to Disarm (Aufrüsten, um abzurüsten)* in 1980.
- In the context of the Society of German Scientists (VDW) we cooperated on several projects criticizing the rearmament since the late 1970s and arguing for a peaceful change in Europe.
- In the context of several *Pugwash Conferences* between 1976 in Feldafing in Bavaria until 1992 in Berlin.
- In January 1980, Ulrich Albrecht introduced a key strategic component into the first appeal for a *European Disarmament Campaign* (EDC). I had drafted in November 1979 in Amsterdam with two colleagues from the Netherlands and Denmark an Amsterdam appeal that called for neither US Pershing II nor Soviet SS-20 missiles. During the 1980s we attended several meetings of military critics from the West and proponents of human rights in the East and discussed ways of overcoming the Cold War.
- In 1988, we worked together on a special issue of the Journal *Leviathan on Technology Control and International Politik* that was published in 1989.

- Since 1978 we were co-editors of the book series on *International Relations - Theory and History* together with K-J. Gantzel, B. Kohler-Koch and V. Rittberger.
- The only text we ever co-authored was published in English on: “Security in Peace Research and Security Studies”, in a handbook: *Globalisation and Environmental Challenges: Reconceptualising Security in the 21st Century* (Berlin – Heidelberg – New York: Springer-Verlag, 2008): 501-523. It was republished into Spanish as: “Seguridad en la Investigación para la Paz y en los Estudios de Seguridad”, in: *Reconceptualizar la Seguridad en el Siglo XXI* (Mexico D.F. – Cuernavaca: UNAM, 2009): 329-382. At that time Ulrich Albrecht was already paralysed and could not write anymore. He read the text carefully and consented to our co-publication.

In the 1990s Ulrich Albrecht became the mentor of my habilitation in political science at the Free University of Berlin. I am grateful to Ulrich Albrecht for his tremendous patience, endurance and peaceful fight within the institute that a son of a chartered craftsman, who was the first in his family to attend a high school and a university and to get a Dr. phil degree could also obtain a habilitation. Due to his patient perseverance *critical* social science contributions on issues of armament and disarmament and conceptual research on confidence building measures and defence structures became legitimate themes of scientific investigation.

Ulrich was liked by his students and was most popular as a mentor of more than 300 diploma, MA and state theses and as an adviser of many Dr. phil. and habilitation degrees. Unfortunately, for his huge commitment to his students, for social justice and peaceful change in Germany and in Europe he paid a very high price to his family in the last years when he was paralysed.

For me, Ulrich was a friend for whom I had always the highest respect who shared many of my own goals and political visions of a peaceful transformation of Europe that at least temporarily permitted during the early 1990s a process of disarmament and a reunification of Germany and of Europe. I will always remember my visits to him since 2001 to 2014 when I was teaching at the Free University and when we usually went together to his local favourite restaurants and had extended talks on the past where he often mentioned his close cooperation and friendship with Mary Kaldor of LSE.

Ulrich was a source of inspiration for critical thinking on the military arms race and on disarmament in Europe and as the head of the planning staff of the East German Foreign Ministry in 1990 he had many insights into the shortcomings of the peaceful transition of 1989 and 1990 that resulted in the German reunification.

Cuernavaca (Mexico) and Mosbach (German)

in March 2017