

Ludger Kühnhardt

Verknüpfte Welten. Notizen aus 235 Ländern und Territorien (vol. 1 1960-1999; vol.2 2000-2020), Wiesbaden: Springer 2022.

The different worlds on earth have been connected like never before between the mid-20th and early 21st century. At the beginning of this path, previous undesirable developments and errors were dissolved. The spiral of war was broken in Europe. Decolonization loosened the knot of foreign control for all peoples. Extremely tense ideological and geopolitical contradictions were resolved by the perspective of multilateral order. With the gradual linking of the many different worlds, the opportunities, but also the contradictions of globalization have become more evident: The growth of world population did not overcome the existing socio-economic gaps. At the same time, the massive consumption of resources put a huge strain on the human environment. Regional or local conflicts replaced well-known geopolitical patterns of conflict. Globalization became the mantra of a new era, while new cultural and religious identity issues turned out to be destructive. Humankind increasingly experienced itself as a unit and yet was hardly prepared for it. What began hesitantly in the middle of the 20th century ended with the corona pandemic of 2020: At the end of a long epoch of transition, all of mankind is existentially connected. Only now has the enduring test of a responsible use of these linked and knotted worlds („verknüpfte Welten“) begun.

As journalist, contemporary historian and political advisor, Ludger Kühnhardt, Director at the Center for European Integration Studies (ZEI) at Bonn University, has recorded impressions, noticed conversations and reflected on links between the different worlds of this one planet. The two volumes of “Verknüpfte Welten”, written in German on the spot in all independent states and many non-sovereign territories on all continents for over six decades, offer fascinating reading. The texts are reconstructing the puzzle of a world that has gradually discovered itself as single entity over a period of just over half a century. With the corona pandemic, an intermediate epoch between old resolutions and new connections has come to an end. The unique travel notes taken by a global citizen in 235 countries and territories offer exciting impulses for multi-dimensional reflections and creative re-assessments of the years 1960 to 2020. “Verknüpfte Welten“ is a rich and important source of contemporary history.

Vol 1: <https://link.springer.com/book/9783658338046>

Vol 2: <https://link.springer.com/book/9783658338060>