

Publication

WE, THE LESSER KULTURLANDSGEMEINDE
OF THE
CANTON OF APPENZEL AUSSERRHODEN

to Our Dear and Loyal
CULTURAL COMPATRIOTS,
within the Canton and without

A PESTILENCE IS SPREADING AMONG US, IN SWITZERLAND AND ABROAD: A PLAGUE OF FEAR OF ALL THAT IS FOREIGN, OTHER AND UNKNOWN. WE, THE LESSER KULTURLANDSGEMEINDE OF THE CANTON OF APPENZEL AUSSERRHODEN, HAVE ASSEMBLED HERE IN "THE COUNTRY OF FOREIGNERS" TO MAKE A STAND – AGAINST EXCLUSION AND FOR DIALOGUE, AGAINST FEAR AND FOR AN ENCOUNTER WITH THE OTHER. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NO INTENTION OF IGNORING, BELITTLING OR PAPERING OVER ACTUAL PROBLEMS, WE CALL FOR A WORLD IN WHICH FENCES, WHETHER OUT IN THE COUNTRYSIDE OR INSIDE OUR HEADS, DO NOT IMPEDE FREE THINKING AND ENCOUNTERS UNTRAMMELED BY PREJUDICE.

AND YET, ALL AROUND US, JUST SUCH FENCES AND WALLS ARE BEING FORTIFIED, OR CONSTRUCTED ANEW; AND THEREFORE WE MAKE THE FOLLOWING PROPOSITIONS:

1. THE OTHER CLARIFIES THE SELF

HUMANS KNOW THEMSELVES BY WAY OF THEIR FELLOWS; I RECOGNIZE MYSELF IN YOU – FOR IT IS ONLY IN THE OTHER, BY DISCRIMINATING OR ASSIMILATING, THAT THE SELF BECOMES TANGIBLE AND INTEL-LIGIBLE. ENCOUNTERS WITH FOREIGNERS ARE THUS VERY MUCH IN "OUR" OWN INTEREST. FAR FROM MERE COURTESY, THEY ARE IN FACT THE SINE QUA NON AS "WE" DEVELOP, ESTABLISH AND CONTEST "OUR" OWN IDENTITY, WHETHER AS INDIVIDUALS OR AS SOCIETIES.

2. ALL MIGRANTS ARE EQUAL –
BUT SOME ARE MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS

MILLIONS ARE EN ROUTE – MIGRANTS ALL, ALTHOUGH SOME TRAVEL OF THEIR OWN FREE WILL, IN COMFORT AND AT THEIR WHIM, WHILE OTHERS ARE FORCED ON THEIR WAY IN THE NAME OF SHEER SURVIVAL. THESE TWO GROUPS OF MIGRANTS ARE WORLDS APART, IT IS TRUE. AND YET IT IS WRONG THAT "MIGRANT WORKERS" BE SUBJECTED TO DEMANDS FOR ASSIMILATION FROM WHICH "BUSINESS NOMADS" ARE EXEMPT. INTEGRATION IS ALSO A QUESTION OF CLASS AND POWER.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION FOR ALL

"INTEGRATION", ONCE A MAGIC FORMULA, NOW RISKS BECOMING A THREAT, WHILE POPULAR OPINION GLADLY ELIDES THE FACT THAT SUCH A PROCESS MUST INVOLVE BOTH MIGRANTS AND NATIVES IN EQUAL DEGREES. THE RES PUBLICA "FOR ALL" MUST CREATE THE PREMISES AND POSSIBILITIES FOR INDIGENOUS AND FOREIGN SUBJECTS ALIKE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE COMMONWEALTH AND TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR IT. THE FOREIGNER'S RIGHT TO VOTE AT THE LOCAL LEVEL (AS FOR EXAMPLE IN APPENZEL AUSSERRHODEN) DEMONSTRATES THE FEASIBILITY OF SUCH A PROCESS. WE ARE ALL CITOYENS.

7. THE CULTURE OF OUR COUNTRY

A WORLD GROWING SIMULTANEOUSLY EVER SMALLER AND EVER LARGER REQUIRES CONSENSUS ON FUNDAMENTAL VALUES, VALID FOR ALL, AND ON THE MEANING OF THE WORD "WE". THIS IS A BREEDING GROUND FOR CONFLICTS, AND THE MEASURE OF A COUNTRY'S CULTURE IS ITS ABILITY TO DEAL WITH THEM – FOR THERE IS NO CHOICE BUT TO HAVE IT OUT. CONFLICTS CANNOT BE SMOOTHED OVER WITH DOUBLETALK, NOR BANNED BY STATUTE.

4. SWITZERLAND IS NOT SWISS-MADE

ROUGHLY A THIRD OF THE SWISS POPULATION ARE OF MIGRANT PROVENANCE, WHETHER DIRECT OR INDIRECT, WHILE SWITZERLAND'S SELF-IMAGE AND THE FACE IT SHOWS THE OUTSIDE WORLD HAVE NOT KEPT PACE WITH THIS REALITY. IT IS TIME TO BID FAREWELL TO THE FANTASY OF A HOMOGENEOUS HELVETIAN FOLK, AS WELL AS TO A SWISS NORM FOR THE OBLIGATORY OBSERVANCE OF FOREIGNERS – IN THE SCHOOLS AND ELSEWHERE.

5. OPEN LIVING ROOMS

ENCOUNTER IS THE BE-ALL AND END-ALL IN "THE COUNTRY OF FOREIGNERS". THROW OPEN THE PARLOUR DOORS, GRANT ACCESS TO THE PATIOS, MAKE USE OF THE PUBLIC REALM, LEAVE TRACES AND WEAVE WEBS BETWEEN THE SELF AND THE OTHER! HUMANKIND REQUIRES A HABITAT, BUT NOT NECESSARILY A HOME. HUMANKIND NEEDS LOCATIONS, NOT ROOTS; OR IF SO, THEN ROOTS LIKE THOSE OF IVY, WHICH GROW BACK REPEATEDLY AS THEY ARE MOVED FROM PLACE TO PLACE.

6. ART, A FRUITFUL ALIENATION

ART HAS SINCE TIME IMMEMORIAL SERVED AS A MIRROR. IT IS THE OTHER, THE FRESH REGARD, THE UNFORESEEN TURN. IT OPENS OUR EYES TO WHAT WE HAVE HITHERTO IGNORED, OR TAKEN FOR GRANTED – IN SHORT, TO THE OTHER WITHIN OURSELVES. ART IS THE SPIRIT AND THE SENSES ABROAD; AND NO TRAVELLER RETURNS THENCE QUITE THE SAME.

DECLARED
at our
CONVENTION
OF
1 & 2 May 2010
IN TROGEN