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An European in America

Basically, there are two kinds of people arriving to the US: those wanting to stay, and those knowing they will go back sooner or later. The former ones immediately undergo a visible transformation: they start uncritically believing in the (US) government and pragmatically discerning the useful from the useless. The latter ones look at everything with suspicion and derision, pretending they are just „passing by.“

We do not know what was the initial plan of Hans-Martin Sass. Burdened with solid German classical education, he must have felt lonely quite often. Of course, there, where Hans-Martin had landed – the Kennedy Institute of Ethics at the Washington Georgetown University, he was not the only European: Andre Hellegers by birth and Warren Reich by education, were some of those alike him. However, we are allowed to believe that Hans-Martin's way must have been pushed aside by the mighty simplified so-American Georgetown-Mantra principlism, and that his ideas have been a little bit more complex, broader, and different. Our Hans-Martin had most probably been dreaming of something more intriguing than a set of artificial pseudo-rules: and indeed, one day he discovered that, back there in the old Europe of his memories, a certain teacher and preacher named Fritz Jahr, a humble dizzy unstable person who used to change jobs and adresses at a monthly pace, had used bioethics much before any of the claiming Americans. And so a new life for

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our Hans-Martin begun: unrecognised in Washington, but welcome like a Messiah in Europe, South America, and Asia. And so Hans-Martin started to expand Jahr's teaching globally instead of locally: in the same way as Van Rensselaer Potter who, banned from Georgetown by the almost-all-American conspiracy fired by the Kennedy political and financial power, replaced his original „bridge bioethics“ for „global bioethics“ and started to gather an international group of followers mostly outside his native US.

We, too, Croatian bioethicists joined the line headed by Hans-Martin: actually, it is quite fascinating how, in such a low-profit discipline, some people have seriously engaged in trying to present themselves as the first promoters or even discoverers of Fritz Jahr, or at least to falsify certain steps of the history of that discovery. Hans-Martin has been quite generous over them: his witty way of provoking discussion and his friendly beer chat, have made us all enjoy our studies much more.

Of course, it would be very difficult to say what our stand have meant to him: from his strange complex European-American-Chinese perspective, we all must seem somehow „partial“. Expanding the wor(l)d of bioethics, Hans-Martin has expanded also his own physical world, leaving his friends always more fascinated by his dynamic Marco-Polo-like itineraries.