

Reconstructing the past with a bearing on the present: The Third Monday Evening presented by the Basel Theatre in November 1982

Georg Kreis

The paper addresses, firstly, the intentions behind the 're-enactment' of the Basel peace congress of November 1912; secondly, the political context of the day; and, thirdly, the impact of bringing this historical event into the present day. Regarding the intentions: The November 1982 performance followed the Düggelein period and formed part of a Basel Theatre series organised by Erich Holliger. In loose cooperation with Basel University historian Markus Mattmüller, it aimed to politically educate and provide 'food for thought' as a conscious alternative to the dominant view of history in mass media and the classroom. The context: The peace movement emerging at this very time in response to the NATO double-track decision, and the recent surge of interest in the history of the labour movement (which made its mark in Switzerland with the documentary volume published in 1975 by Limmat Verlag). As for the impact, a distinction must be made between immediate and long-term effect. Immediate: The audience repeatedly interrupted the speakers in the cathedral by applauding, not only because of the quality of the recitations. The longer term impact: We can all speculate about this.