

Gerhart Enders as a Scientist.
On the occasion of the 100th anniversary
of his birthday on October 17, 2024

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April 21, 2023

Abstract

This is a largely revised and extended translation of my article *Gerhart Enders als Wissenschaftler. Zum 90. Geburtstag am 17. Oktober 2014*, Brandenburgische Archive 32 (2015) 77–79, <https://opus4.kobv.de/opus4-slbp/files/8026/Brandenburgische+Archive+32.pdf>.

1 ‘Archivverwaltungslehre’ (Archival Management Science)

Gerhart Enders (1924–1972) was a scientist through and through. His *Archivverwaltungslehre* (Archival Management Science)¹ was initially supposed to be called ‘Lehrbuch der Archivwissenschaft’ (Textbook of Archival Science) but this would have led to ideological friction in the 1st edition 1962.² The 3rd edition 1968 was published as the 1st volume of the series ‘Archivwissenschaft und Historische Hilfswissenschaften’ (Archival science and historical auxiliary sciences) of the Institute for Archival Science of the Humboldt University of Berlin, and in the Introduction the term ‘Archival Science’ is defined and its

¹Gerhart Enders, *Archivverwaltungslehre*, reprint of the 3rd ed., with a bio-bibliographic foreword by Eckart Henning & Gerald Wiemers (Eds.) and a foreword by Lieselott Enders, Leipzig 2004, <https://www.univerlag-leipzig.de/catalog/bookstore/article/478-Archivverwaltungslehre>.

²Lieselott Enders, *Zur Neuauflage*, in: fn. 1, p. VI. — BTW, at his time, Sir Isaac Newton also avoided formulations which would have made his physical explanations theologically attackable.

content described. Anyway, the discussion whether ‘Archival Science’ is a science is for me idle by the fact that his author was not a “bread scholar” but a “philosophical head”³.

Altogether, his *Archivverwaltungslehre* is not only “theory”, but also a “guide for practical archive work” (fn. 1, *Introduction*, p. 7). Its theory-led practicality is based on the clarity of thought in the basic discussion.⁴ This clarity probably resulted in the comprehensibility of the presentation, which was rare for (then) German textbooks, as a French reviewer praised (after fn. 2). Last but not least, he was an active archivist.

2 Living science

In wonderful unity, he and his wife, Lieselott Enders (1927–2009), lived science and conducted discussions about archival questions accordingly. After the extended evening meal in the family circle, both sat at their desks – where else?!

To live science means *accuracy*, consequently also *freedom* and *independence in thinking*; *dedication*; *honesty*, *openness*, *collegiality*, *generosity*, *humour*; to take *social responsibility* (Hannah Arendt) instead of sitting alienated in the ivory tower; *role model*.

My father’s archival thinking has been competently appreciated in the 2004 edition of his *Archivverwaltungslehre* and elsewhere. Here, I would like to outline the principles of his thinking: *independence*, *breadth*, and *structuredness*.

3 “Die Gedanken sind frei . . .” (thought is free. . .)

Independence of thought has not least a political dimension. Is not independence of thought an indispensable component of a society constituted and lived in a free manner?

“Die Gedanken sind frei . . .” (thought is free. . .)⁵ Is free thought compatible with taboos? My father never talked about his war experiences in the family circle. He was drafted to the Eastern Front as an anti-aircraft gunner at the age of 17. He was ashamed to have fought in the wrong war and on the wrong side (fortunately, a wound brought him back to Germany). Nevertheless, it occupied him for a long time (he owned several books about World War 2).

³For that notions, see Friedrich Schiller’s famous inaugural academic address *Was heißt und zu welchem Ende studiert man Universalgeschichte?*, Jena 1789, <https://www.friedrich-schiller-archiv.de/historische-schriften/was-heisst-und-zu-welchem-ende-studiert-man-universalgeschichte/>, https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Was_hei%C3%9Ft_und_zu_welchem_Ende_studiert_man_Universalgeschichte%3F; En.: *What is universal history and why does one study it?*, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friedrich_Schiller.

⁴Cf. Eckart Henning, 1. *Zur Bedeutung der „Archivverwaltungslehre“ in der deutschen Archivistik*, in: Fn. 1, p. XI.

⁵August Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben & Ernst Heinrich Leopold Richter, *Schlesische Volkslieder mit Melodien: Aus dem Munde des Volkes*, 1842, p. 307, http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Die_Gedanken_sind_frei

After the war, he joined – according to his experiences and his parental home: his foster father was a small Reichsbahn (German Imperial Railway) employee, his foster mother a housewife – the Social-democratic Party (SPD) and was united into the Communist Party (SED). He and his wife stayed in Eastern Germany (GDR) because they considered the fact that many highest-ranked Nazi officials got highest position in Western Germany to be completely inadequate. Though they did not let their independent thinking be bought even by their individual employment contracts. In the 1960-ies, he was mobbed by Stalinist colleagues.

Examples of this are the Schirdewan debate⁶ and (by far not only scientific) discussions such as the one about the above-mentioned provenance principle.⁷ In his political views, he remained close to social democratic views. This led to disputes also within his family, especially with his brother-in-law Kurt Olivier, a journalist at the General News Service of the GDR, but also from time to time with his wife and me.

4 Teaching thing and iron logics

Can thinking be learned or taught? I don't know. For me, the above-mentioned evening conversations over supper were formative. At them, everything was allowed to be brought up, everything was seriously discussed.⁸ We children were allowed to take part in the conversations with guests under the condition that we restrain ourselves. Eventually, when a school friend told our teacher of German language and literature that he wanted to become a philosopher, the teacher dryly replied that he should go to the Enders, there he could learn thinking.

BTW, Graupner was a great teacher. Once he asked me about Schiller's

⁶Karl Schirdewan became head of the State Archive Administration of the GDR in 1958 after losing a power struggle against Walter Ulbricht. That administration resided in the same building in Potsdam that housed the Central State Archive with its Deputy Director Gerhart Enders. I consider Schirdewan's rehabilitation after 1990 to be questionable because the struggle of Gerhart Enders and some like-minded people against his methods of rule, which ended successfully in 1965 but led to the smear war of Stalinists in the archive administration and in the Central State Archives against Gerhart Enders. See also Herbert Mayer, *Review of Karl Schirdewan, 'Ein Jahrhundert Leben. Erinnerungen und Visionen'*, Berlin 1998, http://www.luise-berlin.de/lesezei/blz99_04/text23.htm. Notice that this memory is in no way directed against his grandson Martin Schirdewan.

⁷Meanwhile, provenance has also arrived in art and culture, cf. <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Provenienzforschung>, http://www.deutschlandfunk.de/ns-raubkunstzentrum-vor-dem-start-eine-neue-aera-der.911.de.html?dram:article_id=309695. Admittedly, that debate proceeds rather different in the former colonial powers.

⁸Gerald Wiemers, student at the Institute of Archival Science 1965–1967, judges: “He was able to carry away in the discussion, which he basically liked, weighing the pros and cons, convincing and taking in other opinions. For most of us, these were new experiences. ... From our faces he tried to read whether we had understood or not. ... Neither jokes nor beautiful eyes could distract him; he was incorruptible.” (2. *Zum Lebensweg von Gerhart Enders* (On the Life of Gerhart Enders), in: fn. 1, p. XV). That seems to point to the ‘iron logics’ I have been taught by my parents. Despite its martial name it is by no means anti-human, on the contrary.

Wallenstein. I had not read it and stammered something. He said, “sit down!” After the school lesson, I asked him why he has not given me a ‘5’ (insufficient). He replied that he assumes me to read it later-on. Admittedly, he had given me two talks before the class for 15 minutes each. I spoke two times for 45 minutes, and he relaxed.

Maxi Wander has interviewed his daughter in: *Guten Morgen, Du Schöne* (En.: Good Morning My Lovely). He also appears in Sibylle Muthesius’ *Flucht in die Wolken* (Escape into the clouds), where the complexity of his personality is mentioned⁹.

In 1973, he committed suicide together with his former pupil Susanne (suffering from a comparable complexity of personality and from the impossibility to become a director).

That associates me with Friedrich Dürrenmatt’s *21 Punkte zu ‘Die Physiker’* (21 points to ‘The Physicists’).¹⁰

8. Je planmäßiger die Menschen vorgehen, desto wirksamer vermag sie der Zufall zu treffen.
9. Planmäßig vorgehende Menschen wollen ein bestimmtes Ziel erreichen. Der Zufall trifft sie immer dann am schlimmsten, wenn sie durch ihn das Gegenteil ihres Ziels erreichen: Das, was sie befürchteten, was sie zu vermeiden suchten (z.B. Ödipus).

English:

8. The more planned people proceed, the more effectively chance can hit them.
9. People who proceed according to plan want to achieve a certain goal. The coincidence hits them always then worst, if they reach the opposite of their goal by it: What they feared, what they tried to avoid (e.g. Oedipus).

5 Dedication and holistic view

Like Lieselott Enders, Gerhart Enders did not shy away from “Kärrnerarbeit” (Jürgen Kuczynski; En.: hard work). Scientific thinking puts at its head the effort of the concept. Not least in memory of the above-mentioned principle of provenance, I second the following guiding principle:

The concepts resp. notions are the tools of human thinking.¹¹

⁹BTW, the review in <https://taz.de/Tod-von-Sibylle-Boden-Gerstner/!5366538/> completely discards the role of her husband Karl-Heinz Gerstner https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl-Heinz_Gerstner.

¹⁰<https://www.ruhrbarone.de/friedrich-durrenmatt-21-punkte-zu-den-physikern/24789/>

¹¹Peter Enders, *Classical Mechanics and Quantum Mechanics: An Historic-Axiomatic Approach*, Sharjah (U.A.E.): Bentham 2019, pp. v, 2

Our thinking is not more precise than the used terms.

Such thinking is holistic, an ideal that is based on the Humboldtian ideals and yet can be realized even today.¹² Thanks to his intensive support, I kept up well in Latin class. He added to and commented on every paragraph in the textbook. As a matter of fact, some knowledge of Latin is an immensely useful component of general education.¹³

6 Honesty, openness, collegiality, generosity

Gerhart Enders' honesty and openness – and thus his exemplary character – include his envy-free recognition of the achievements of others. This applies not least to the support he received from his beloved wife, Lieselott Enders. At the memorial colloquium for the latter one¹⁴, his long-time colleague Kurt Metschies thankfully told me that he had once said to him that what she achieved could not be measured by human standards.¹⁵

¹²Peter Enders, *Science, Language and Society*, invited talk, in: *New Paradigms in Philology: Modern Theoretical Concepts and Practice of Teaching* (Sh. K. Zharkynbekova, Ed.), Euras. Natl. Gumilyov Univ., Astana, Nov. 06–20, 2014, pp. 107–111; *Multilingualism in Physics and Physics Education*, invited talk, Proc. Internat. Pract. Conf. 'Modern Education: Methodology, Theory and Practice', Taraz State Pedagogical University, Oct. 26–27, 2018, pp. 6–9.

¹³BTW, once I was asked by the teacher of Latin to continue the lesson because she was asked to went to the neighbouring room, where the love affair of a pupil (from a broadly known family) with his math teacher was discussed. Of course, we looked and heard through the holes in the wall of that old shack. Graupner (see above) said that that affair is their personal agenda. – Nevertheless, according to the rules, she should have asked the headmaster to make her not to teach in that class. I second that prescription just for fairness.

¹⁴Klaus Neitmann, Friedrich Beck, Heinrich Kaak, Frank Göse, Jan Peters & Wolfgang Neugebauer, *Lieselott Enders in memoriam. Das archiv- und geschichtswissenschaftliche Werk im Rückblick und im Ausblick*, in: *Jahrb. Gesch. Mittel- u. Ostdeutschlands* 57 (2011) 221–306, revis. talks of the memorial colloq. March 18, 2011, with a newly ed. bibliography by Florian Seher.

¹⁵See also Friedrich Beck & Klaus Neitmann (eds.), *Brandenburgische Landesgeschichte und Archivwissenschaft. Festschrift für Lieselott Enders zum 70. Geburtstag* (Brandenburg regional history and archival science. For Lieselott Enders on the occasion of her 70th birthday), Weimar 1997; Peter Bahl, *Dr. Lieselott Enders zum Gedenken*, 2009, <http://www.geschichte-brandenburg.de/Enders.pdf>; Friedrich Beck, *Lieselott Enders†. Geboren 13.2.1927 Elbing. Gestorben 25.04.2009 nahe Genthin*, *Der Archivar* 62 (2009) 466–467; Matthias Asche, *Die Potsdamer Archivarin und brandenburgische Landeshistorikerin Lieselott Enders (1927–2009) – eine Würdigung ihres Werkes aus genealogischer Sicht. Gleichzeitig eine Rezension ihrer letzten Monographie über die Geschichte der Altmark* [The Potsdam archivist and Brandenburg state historian Lieselott Enders (1927–2009) – an appreciation of her work from a genealogical point of view. At the same time a review of her last monograph on the history of the Altmark], *Zs. mitteldeutsche Familiengesch.* 51 (2010) 459–466; Frank Riedel, *Nachruf [Obituary] Dr. Lieselott Enders (1927–2009)*, 80th Jahresber. Altmärk. Vereins vaterländ. Gesch. Salzwedel, Salzwedel 2010, 196–198; Klaus Neitmann, *Brandenburgische Landesgeschichte und Archivwissenschaft. Zur Erinnerung an Lieselott Enders (1927–2009)*, *Brandenburg. Archive* 29 (2012) 42; Peter Enders, *Veni – Vidi – Cassavi. Methodologische Gespräche zwischen Historikerin und Physiker [Veni – Vidi – Cassavi. Methodological Conversations between Historian and Physicist]*, rev. lect. at the 2011 memorial colloquium for Lieselott Enders, *Brandenburg. Arch.* 29 (2012) 43–46, http://www.blha.de/filepool/brbgarchive_29_web.pdf; Michael Scholz, *Nachruf auf [Obit-*



Figure 1: Easter 1951 – my parents are looking at their wedding

him.

8 Social responsibility, role model

A core value of Gerhart and Lieselott Enders was intelligent tolerance. Being atheists themselves, they respected the ideological values of others, measuring them by their deeds, in the spirit of Ephraim Lessing's *Nathan the Wise*.¹⁸ On

uary] Lieselott Enders (13 February 1927 – 25 April 2009), Sachsen und Anhalt. Jahrb. Hist. Komm. Sachsen-Anhalt 26 (2014) 289–292. My mother was invited to several such commissions. She always rejected as she considered them to mostly be meetings of old men already not being active scientists. As a consequence, she was elected as an honorary member. She accepted that because no obligations were connected with that.

¹⁶If I were to highlight a single quality of his foster parents, it would be their kindness of heart.

¹⁷Lieselott Enders first was responsible for fine arts in the Cultural Association of the Potsdam district, and later for fine arts and literature. Here, they both were just as incorruptible as in teaching, research and profession.

¹⁸Among our countless visits to theaters and concerts in Berlin was that of Wolfgang Heinz's last performances in this role. Among many other memorabilia, represented precisely the

She was to him what Wolfgang Pauli – “the conscience of physics” – was to Werner Heisenberg. She read and discussed all his manuscripts with him.

7 Humor

Gerhart and Lieselott Enders were – as long as possible due to his illness – basically cheerful colleagues and cheerful parents.¹⁶ They enjoyed celebrating with their employees and with their guests at home. The latter included colleagues from Germany and abroad, as well as artists, cultural figures and like-minded people from Potsdam and the surrounding area.¹⁷ Accordingly, both were anything but resentful. Why should they be, isn't that a weakness of certain people in power?

When I wanted to object to Karl Schirdewan's self-portrayal as a victim of Stalinism, Lieselott Enders placated me by saying that one could have had a factual discussion with

our discovery tours in Brandenburg, the churches played a prominent role. Gerhart Enders' foster mother was Christian and believed she would go to heaven if she did good deeds. She was the very best grandmother I could and can imagine: Love, yet intervene where necessary, and do it in a way that is understandable and therefore acceptable and effective (!). She lived the two basic principles of education: love and consequence. Gerhart and Lieselott Enders' professional and family life realized this love for man, as it was also praised by .

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not
have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. . . And now faith,
hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.¹⁹

Thus, my parents instilled justice in their children. For the birthday of one there was a consolation gift for the other, ditto for school enrollment. When I received a present from Santa Claus, I asked him to consider my sister as well.

Bernhard v. Barsewisch and Heinrich Kaak, in conversation with me and in the lecture at the memorial event for Lieselott Enders (see fn. 14), respectively, raised the accusation that she was “too pro-farmer.” I would like to counter that one of her favourite novels was *Der Stechlin* (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Der_Stechlin).

9 Legacy

The legacy of Gerhart Enders lives on in his colleagues, friends and relatives. I myself walk in his footsteps when I draw on forgotten physical ideas to solve today's problems. For art students can be seen drawing in front of important paintings in museums – not to copy the Old Masters, but to learn the craft. This teaching method has unfortunately been lost in the natural sciences.²⁰ In contrast, I was fortunate to have been taught by my parents an awareness of the importance of history itself. And lo and behold, forgotten ideas can help solve today's problems!²¹

spirit in which the Deutsches Theater reopened with this very play in 1946. – In contrast, the Hans-Otto-Theater in Potsdam offered rather bland fare at the time. For example, Anton Chekhov's *Three Daughters* was still being performed in the before-1980s in a musty, conventional manner, as if the refreshing innovations of Moscow's Taganka Theater did not exist.

¹⁹1 Corinthians 13:1,13, in: New Revised Standard Version Bible, <https://bible.oremus.org/?passage=1%20Corinthians%2013:13&version=nrsv>. See also Erich Fried, *What it is*, in: *Love Poems* (transl. by Stuart Hood), Richmond: Oneworld Classics 2011, <https://fliphtml5.com/qdik/lxji/basic>.

²⁰Cf. Wilhelm Ostwald, *Johann Wilhelm Ritter*, quoted in: Werner Hollmann, *Die Zeitschriften der exakten Naturwissenschaften in Deutschland*, 1937, p. 8 (after Thomas Hapke, *100 Jahre Ostwald's Klassiker der exakten Wissenschaften 1889–1989*, 2003); Regine Zott, *Über Wilhelm Ostwalds Wissenschaftshistorische Beiträge zum Problem des wissenschaftlichen Schöpfungstums*, 1999, p. 16, fn. 17; also assigned to Wilhelm Engelmann, *Ankündigung*, in: *Ostwalds Klassiker der exakten Wissenschaften*, № 121, Leipzig 1911, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/40854/40854-h/40854-h.htm>.

²¹Peter Enders, *The divergence between the historical and the logical developments of physics—Forgotten old insights can serve modern physics*, *Asian J. Physics* 23

The book “Archivverwaltungslehre” is considered a classic in the field of archival science and provides a comprehensive overview of the principles and practices of archival administration. It has been cited extensively in the archival literature and is still considered an important reference work for archivists and researchers.

In “Archivverwaltungslehre,” Enders examines the role of archives in preserving historical records, the organization and management of archival institutions, the selection and acquisition of records, the appraisal and arrangement of records, and the provision of access to records. The book also addresses issues such as preservation, conservation, and the use of technology in archival work.

Enders’ “Archivverwaltungslehre” has been influential in shaping the field of archival science in Germany and has been used as a textbook in archival training programs. The book has been revised and reissued several times. . . (ChatGPT)

It has been translated to English, Spanish, Italian, Hungarian, Russian, and perhaps more languages.

10 Acknowledgment

I have to express my sincere thanks to all my parents’ friends and former colleagues honouring their memory. Those who have not yet made peace with their past, and even those who were guilty without need²², would probably be forgiven.

My special thanks goes to Eckart Henning and Gerald Wiemers for having realized and edited the 2004 reprint of *Archivverwaltungslehre* on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the birthday of Gerhart Enders as well as for their insightful forewords. Gerald Wiemers also has supported my 2014 article mentioned in the Abstract.

That article was rejected by the West German journal ‘Der Archivar’ that superseded the East German journal ‘Archivmitteilungen’. I feel highly indebted to Klaus Neitmann for having published it.

Last but not least, I thank DeepL for providing translations.

(2014) 1&2, 265–286; *Von der klassischen Physik zur Quantenphysik. Eine historisch-kritische deduktive Ableitung mit Anwendungsbeispielen aus der Festkörperphysik* [From classical physics to quantum physics. A historical-critical deductive derivation with application examples from solid state physics.], Heidelberg: Springer 2006, <http://www.springer.com/physics/particle+and+nuclear+physics/book/978-3-540-39395-5>;
fn. 11

²²In the Stasi files on Gerhart Enders, Lieselott Enders has found very disappointing entries.