

# Current Concerns

The international journal for independent thought, ethical standards, moral responsibility,  
and for the promotion and respect of public international law, human rights and humanitarian law

English Edition of *Zeit-Fragen*

## End of the war in 1945 – the “Swiss Donation for the Victims of War” helps wherever possible

Excerpts from a 1954 history book  
for Bernese secondary school pupils committed to the truth

by Dr phil Peter Küpfer

On 8 May 1945, Germany surrendered. We do not know where all over the world the church bells were ringing on that occasion. We know, however, that on this memorable day, the bells could be heard ringing from all Swiss steeples. This was left to posterity, recorded by faithful historians in their works. For example, we read about it in the description by the Swiss historian *Arnold Jaggi* in his book “Von der Gründung der Eidgenossenschaft bis zum Ende des Zweiten Weltkrieges” (From the founding of the Swiss Confederation until the end of World War II). This is a one-volume review included in the comprehensive “World and Swiss History” which the Bernese historian had published as a history book for the

Bernese secondary schools, in 1954. At that time the Swiss secondary school students were still expected to acquire extensive historical knowledge about their country and the world. The author writes in his preface, “Just like the individual human being will have to ask himself in the decisive moments of his life, a whole people will have to ask the question from time to time: Who am I? Where do I come from? Where should I go and what am I obliged to do? [...] The more the individual understands to consult [history], the better the people concerned may be prepared to face the hours of trial.” He concludes his preface by saying that – and this is something that certain Swiss historians of the very young generation who know

their country’s hours of trial only by hearsay – should learn by heart: “The unbiased study of history, so we hope, may contribute to sharpening the sense of truth and to detecting hidden inner relations.”

### For more historical truth

Today, 70 years have passed since our population faced one of its most serious litmus test. Is it true that it really only saw Switzerland and itself, the Swiss population, in these fearful years, its survival and – as today some of the above-mentioned historians loudly insinuate with the help of media support – only their own profit?

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## The power of moral standing The end of war in Europe

by J. R. von Salis

With a sense of inexpressible relief, the peoples of the old continent heeded the message of the war’s ending. And it is well understood that the people when hearing this message on the memorable days of 8 and 9 May 1945 were filled with gratitude and were seized with a solemn and joyful mood. Finally, the god of war had to abdicate after an exceedingly terrible time of absolute rule, and leave the field to friendlier deities. The European humanity had spent five years and eight months under the despotic laws of a total war. In her proclamation to the Dutch people, the brave Queen *Wilhelmina* said that there were “no words in our language” that could express her feelings of gratitude for the liberation of her people who had been enslaved and harassed for so long. Why should we Swiss not be allowed to rejoice together with the Dutch from the bottom of our hearts? Did they not give free reign to their joy despite all hunger, poverty, suffering of all kinds and mourning for the

victims of the ruthless oppressor? Have the Danes and the Norwegians not done the same? Did the chairman of the English House of Commons not thank in all modesty – not for the “victory” – but for the “salvation from the hands of the enemy” in a thanksgiving service? Have the people of Paris just like the people of Moscow, who had suffered every privation, terror and bitterness to the breaking point of that long war, not given way to an exuberant festive joy? Who could be so stone-hearted and blame them for that? Certainly, only those blasphemous cynics might do that who parroted the last, desperate propaganda from Dr *Goebbels’* devil’s kitchen, which reads as follows, “Enjoy the war; because peace will be terrible!” Enjoying the war meant to rejoice that every day thousands or even tens of thousands of soldiers and civilians fell victim to this war, that towns and villages were razed to the ground, that entire peoples were left defenseless to the worst oppression,

that countless people in concentration camps had to suffer the most cruel tortures and the most terrible death.

It is not likely that the majority of the German people will consider peace more terrible than war, even after a complete defeat. That the bombings ended even before the war ended, was perceived as a relief by the population in those areas of Germany that were occupied by the Allies. Now, for the time being, everything has ended for these German people. Everything was wrong, what they had been told and what they were indoctrinated with, and they have been cheated of everything by a leadership that was characterised as “genial” and praised as “infallible” and “unique”. “We have reckoned with everything from the outset” was one of the most famous sayings of *Hitler*. So probably also the demise. Never before had a policy been as adventurous and unrealistic as the one that

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**"End of the war in 1945 – ..."**

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It is sufficient to read only a few pages of the book by Arnold Jaggi about these years to teach us better. In vivid words Jaggi reminds us of the work of the internationally renowned Swiss jurist *Max Huber*, for instance. The law professor at the University of Zurich was President of the *International Criminal Court* in The Hague for nine years. In the time of World War II, as president of the *International Committee of the Red Cross*, he did everything in his power to fight the disaster and to alleviate the suffering. In the years after the end of World War II it was especially due to the Red Cross and its employees that so many missing people and POWs found their way back to their families after unspeakable sufferings.

As a conclusion of his book, Jaggi devotes an impressive section to the "Swiss Donation", which with the help and support of the Swiss population in the time of the German surrender was welcomed as a blessing all over Europe – and this long before 8 May 1945.

To commemorate this work and to correct distorted images about Switzerland at that time, some excerpts are quoted here from Jaggi's history book for young people:

**About the "Swiss Donation"**

"On 8 May 1945 the church bells sounded across the Swiss countryside. They proclaimed that the murdering in Europe had come to an end. Like other nations, the Swiss sighed with relief.

Even before the German surrender they had taken the decision to give a helping hand to the needy persons in Europe as a sign of gratitude for their own luck of being spared by the war. In December 1944, the National Council and the Council of States unanimously agreed that the Confederation should pay 100 million Swiss francs as a so-called *Swiss Donation* for this purpose. Later, when it became clear that the need was still very high, the Federal Assembly repeatedly approved of new funds. All in all the Confederation contributed almost 153 million to this amazing work. However, the individual citizens also dipped into their purses. That way state and people raised about 206 million francs altogether.

This was a considerable sum for our small country. Compared to the size of the misery, however, it was very little. Therefore those Swiss, who were entrusted with the implementation of the work, made an effort to help as prudently and as effectively as possible. In March 1946, for example, they sent some railway wagons with seed potatoes and two wagons with vegetable seeds to the Austrian Steiermark to support the local cultivation plan. Elsewhere they sent plows, harrows, fertiliz-

ers and means for controlling varmins. In areas that virtually had no more farming equipment, Swiss mechanics and farmers with large repair cars and a number of powerful tractors arrived. They were distributed on the villages and then they plowed from early mornings until late in the evenings. In places where the need was the most urgent, they worked in the light of headlamps all through the nights.

The Swiss Donation provided the destroyed villages especially with tools as well as with glass, roofing felt and slate. Sometimes they also sent craftsmen who first repaired the huts and houses that were easiest to repair.

The Swiss Donation also sent about a thousand huts. They were used partly as apartments to live in, partly as schools, kindergartens and emergency hospitals. In the war zones, most hospitals were destroyed, robbed or otherwise unusable. Here and there Swiss doctors worked in newly established hospitals with instruments, apparatus, dressing materials and medicines that also came from our country.

Finally our country accepted about 6,200 adults with lung diseases and 6,950 children at risk in tuberculosis sanatoriums, hotels or private homes in Arosa, Davos, Leysin, Adelboden, Wengen, Beatenberg and Pontresina.

Initially the Swiss Donation supplied readymade garments as a remedy in dire straits. But then they sent needles, scissors, sewing machines, thread and fabrics and established sewing rooms in the cities. There soon hundreds of native daughters and Swiss women worked together. Feeding the needy was also extremely important, of course.

In order to save one million children from hunger for six weeks, the Confederation granted a new special credit in 1946. Soon over '2,400 railway wagons with food worth more than CHF 20 million crossed our border into the famine areas' of Germany, Austria and Hungary. Moreover, Switzerland maintained canteens and soup kitchens, for instance in Alsace and in Italy; in distant Finland they delivered milk.

Despite its modest means, the Swiss gave numerous suffering people that were often despaired. new courage and confidence in the future. That was perhaps the most important contribution. It ended its activity as late as in the summer of 1948.

At the beginning of the collection a brave donor wrote: 'We thank destiny that we belong to those who can give and do not have to receive.' – Let us never forget these words." •

Source: Arnold Jaggi, *Von der Gründung der Eidgenossenschaft bis zum Ende des Zweiten Weltkrieges. Aus Welt- und Schweizergeschichte. Ein Volksbuch*. Berne (Paul Haupt editors) 1954, pp. 374.

(Quotations translated by *Current Concerns*)

**"The power of moral standing"**

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pretended to be the most superior "realpolitik". It is a perfect illusion, indeed the greatest utopia to want to establish a policy solely on the basis of power; because pure, unlimited, completely amoral and material power will never last. It calls for counterforces, for other powers, and only that policy is truly realistic, which applies the standard of reasonable criticism, which realises the presence of other peoples, currents, and ideas and reckons with them, and which knows that although the power of amoral mindset in the world is enormous, the moral powers may, however, intervene as an unpredictable, but sometimes unexpectedly powerful factor arising in the course of human history.

Excerpt from: J.R. von Salis. "Kriegsende in Europa", Mai 1945 in: J.R. von Salis. *Krieg und Frieden in Europa. Politische Schriften und Reden 1938–1988*. Zurich 1989; first published in: *Neue Schweizerische Rundschau* of May 1945

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70 years after the end of World War I

## The German Armed Forces must serve the will of the people

### Challenging the requirement of parliamentary approval is directed against the lessons from the World Wars

by Karl Müller

70 years after the unconditional surrender of the German “Wehrmacht” – on 8 May 1945 to the forces of the Western Allies and on 9 May to the Red Army – a commission of the German “Bundestag”, officially carrying the long name “Commission for verification and safeguarding parliamentary rights in case of mandating the German Armed Forces missions abroad”, in short form, however, named after a former German Defense Minister “Rühe Commission”, is requested to submit a report and to make suggestions. It’s about the question, “how, on the way of progressive integration into the alliance and despite diversification of tasks, the parliamentary rights can be secured” and where there is a need “for adaptation of the Parliamentary Participation Act”.

It is a grotesque of history that this commission is just named after the German Defense Minister, who in 1998 against his own chancellor advocated for German participation in an illegal war against Yugoslavia and who already in 1994 gave an interview to the news magazine *Der Spiegel* indicating the German way, according to which the Germans should be prepared not with one large, but with many small steps (“salami tactics”) for war missions of the German Armed Forces.

#### The German Armed Forces as a nodding-through panel for NATO decisions?

*Rühe* already publicly expressed, what was to be the “compromise” between the rights of the people’s representatives and the “integration into the alliance”. In an interview with the radio station “Deutschlandfunk” of 10 September 2014, six months after the establishment of the Commission, named after him, he spoke about possible “urgent decisions” of the “Bundestag” within a day, but especially about the subsequent Parliament’s acceptance of government decisions. As *Rühe* said, it must never happen again, that the “Bundestag” refused joint NATO operations. In future, the federal government should, “after it had been conclusively regulated in NATO, go into Parliament and report to Parliament, whereof we have made ourselves dependent and what is expected of us, if we do not want to paralyze the others. Parlia-

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“The [...] decision, expressed in these provisions of the ‘Grundgesetz’ on the background of the German constitutional tradition since 1918 for full parliamentary control over the armed forces, reveals a principle underlying the army constitution, according to which the deployment of armed forces requires the constitutive, antecedent approval by the ‘Bundestag.’”

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ment should acknowledge and approve of this.”

In fact, already today German Armed Forces, German soldiers are quite intensively involved in NATO war preparations and warfare. Reality has run ahead the claims of German politicians, like the President, the Defense Minister or the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The renewed public debate about German participation in an EU army and the related statements of the German Defense Minister – “It may happen that we have to change German law.” – are the prelude to a “legalization” of previous and coming injustice.

The Minister is seconded by other members of the *Rühe* Commission, such as *Roderich Kiesewetter* of the CDU – “Dutch and Poles would be deeply disappointed, if a mission of joint units required by them fails because of the ‘Bundestag’”. Who is setting up integrated forces, expects reliability – they expect it from us and we expect it from them.” Or *Niels Annen* of the SPD: “The ‘Bundestag’ has to take it seriously, if the allies have some doubts.” The fact that Mr *Kiesewetter* just mentioned Poland, is particularly volatile. In Poland there are influential forces who wish rather sooner than later to go to war against Russia. Even together with German soldiers?

With regard to the planned EU-Armed Force the Member of the German Federal Parliament *Kiesewetter* suggests: “The approval of deploying German troops within the European Armed Force may be transferred temporarily to the European Parliament.” *Niels Annen* (Member of the German Federal Parliament) added to

the considerations of the German Defense Minister concerning changes in German law: “If she aims at transferring competences of the ‘Bundestag’ to the European Parliament, we are thinking in a similar direction.” The plans of the Green Party Members of the German Federal Parliament, *Cem Özdemir* and *Tobias Lindner* go even further. In their official statement on the proposal to establish an EU Armed Force, they claim that such an Armed Force might make national Armed Forces obsolete. They want the German parliamentary reservation to be equally and entirely replaced by a “control” authority of the EU Parliament.

#### Federal Constitutional Court: German Armed Forces are the matter of the people and of its representatives

All these politicians reveal an insufficient legal and historical awareness. In 1994, in its judgment on the Somalia deployment of the German Armed Forces in the year 1993 (BVerfGE 90, 286) the German Constitutional Court established the requirement of parliamentary approval, or “parliamentary reservation” by judgement of the highest court. The judgment states: “The constant purpose of the regulations of the ‘Grundgesetz’ (Basic Law) with respect to the armed forces is – in the various stages of their shaping – not to leave the power potential of the ‘German Armed Forces’ to the executive alone, but to integrate it as an “army of the parliament” into the democratic constitutional order,

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““The fateful political decision on war and peace [...]’ should ‘be made by the highest representation of the whole people, whose fate is concerned, therefore, by Parliament.””

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that is to secure for the Parliament a legally relevant influence on the structure and the deployment of the armed forces.”

In the text of the judgement the Court reacts not only to the corresponding provisions in the “Grundgesetz”, in particular

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to those for the case of defense, which may only be declared with a majority of two thirds by 'Bundestag' and 'Bundesrat' (Article 115a of the Constitution), but also to the history of the German armies' power of order. The Court cites among other things the rapporteur on the occasion of the adoption of the "Grundgesetz" amendment at the time when a German army constitution was established: "'The fateful political decision on war and peace [...] should 'be made by the highest representation of the whole people, whose fate is concerned, therefore, by Parliament.'" The Court concludes: "The decision, expressed in these provisions of the 'Grundgesetz' on the background of the German constitutional tradition since 1918 for full parliamentary control over the armed forces, reveals a principle underlying the army constitution, according to which the deployment of armed forces requires the constitutive, antecedent approval by the 'Bundestag'." Determining the details was left to the legislator by the Court, who fulfilled this more

than 10 years later, in 2005 with the Parliamentary Participation Act. In the second subparagraph, paragraph 1 the principle is formulated: "The deployment of German Armed Forces outside the scope of the 'Grundgesetz' [i.e. outside Germany] requires the approval by the 'Bundestag'."

**EU is not allowed to decide on military missions of the German Armed Forces**

The Federal Constitutional Court and the Parliamentary Participation Act have formulated only narrowly defined exceptions in the case of "imminent danger that can not be delayed." But there is no mention of any necessary "integration into the alliance". On the contrary, the Parliamentary Participation Act even determines that in the case of "imminent danger" as well as in other cases, the German "Bundestag" may terminate a German military mission at any time. Even more: In its judgment on the "Lisbon Treaty" the Federal Constitutional Court decided in June 2009 that the German military constitution and the parliamentary rights in the deployment of the Federal Armed Forces are part of the core of the German "Grundgesetz" and

"The requirement of parliamentary approval (parliamentary reservation) for the deployment of the German Armed Forces abroad is integration-resistant."

may not be transferred to the European Union, because it is an essential of German democracy that must not be given up ... Literally the judgment reads: "Even if the European Union was developed into a peacekeeping regional system of mutual collective security within the meaning of Article 24 (2) of the 'Grundgesetz', a supranationalisation with application priority regarding the specific deployment of German Armed Forces is not permitted in this area, because of the priority of peace and democracy, which in so far is precedent to the integration authorization of Article 23 (1) GG. The requirement of parliamentary approval (parliamentary reservation) for the deployment of the Ger-

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**The army and the people**

km. The aim of having an army which is at the service of the people's will and which therefore takes up arms only in case of an armed attack on the own country in order to defend the latter is the result of bitter historical experience.

Until the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the German regions, the only existing armies were mercenary armies serving their paying prince or other army leaders – the best known among them is *Wallenstein*. Following the Prussian army reform after the defeat against *Napoleon's* conscript army, compulsory military service was introduced in Prussia and there were outstanding figures like *Gerhard von Scharnhorst* who showed a noble attitude and bold thinking among the leading officers. However, these reforms were influenced by democratic thoughts only at the beginning. With the restoration of the rule of the aristocracy after 1815 the German conscript armies were not under the obligation of the people, but of their princes. The struggle for the first all-German Constitution of 1848/49 failed not least because of the armies of the Princes. When political opposition arose as was the case in the Prussian Parliament, it was fought down with a breach of the constitution. The then Prussian Prime Minister *Otto von Bismarck* later recalled how he took sides and explained that "the representatives [ought to] lay the greatest weight of iron and blood into the hands of the King of Prussia, so that he could put it into the one scale or the other, just as he pleased." Three wars followed.

The Constitution of the Empire (1871–1918) determined that the Commander in Chief of the army was the German Emperor (and King of Prussia). In the history books, you find the attitude that was demanded by the soldiers. So *Wilhelm II* let the recruits of his Potsdam guard regiment know: "You have sworn loyalty to me, that is to say, you are my soldiers now, you have devoted your hearts and souls to me; there is only one enemy for you, and that is my enemy. With the current Socialist activities, it may happen that I command you to shoot down your own relatives, brothers, even parents – which God may prevent – but even then you must follow my orders without a word of complaint." The elitist attitude of German officers was reflected in an article of the *Military Weekly*: "In no other country of the world the officer stands at such a high level, takes such a high rank on the scale of human society and such a prestigious and respected position as in Germany. The basic convictions descending from the original concept of the officer corp are: dynastic sense, unconditional loyalty to the person of the monarch, increased patriotism, preservation of the existing, defending the King's rights which had been entrusted to the officer's protection and combating unpatriotic mentality which was hostile to the King."

We all know about the millionfold killing and dying during World War I.

The "Reichswehr" in the Weimar Republic, too, did not feel obliged to follow the rules of democracy. Its officers, who mostly came from the Imperial Army, despised democracy and were not ready

to defend the young Republic against right-wing insurgency within the country. Many officers of the "Reichswehr" welcomed the Nazis' rise to power, supported the murder of *Hitler's* intra-party opponents in the summer of 1934 and submitted to *Hitler's* "Wehrmacht" and its rearmament policy and infringements for a long time without a murmur.

Yes, there were also upright officers with a noble mindset. There was the 20 July 1944 and its history. There were high-ranking officers of the army who as early as in 1938 disapproved of *Hitler's* war plans as a gambler's aberrations and were even willing to overthrow *Hitler* for a short time. But even a man like *Claus Schenk Count of Stauffenberg* became an admirer of the "Führer" after *Hitler's* first war successes and was still dreaming of a Germany victory in an unjust war long after he had inwardly already dissociated from the Nazis. Not all "Wehrmacht" officers and certainly not all "Wehrmacht" soldiers were criminals, but the "Wehrmacht" was also involved in serious crimes during the war.

The famous founding fathers of the German armed forces and of the Military Constitution in the German "Grundgesetz" were aware of all this and wanted to take it into account. The German Armed Forces, the federal army, should be a pure defense army, the German Armed Forces soldier a citizen in uniform bound to his people, the German army should be an army of democratic order and democratic backing. But where is it now – and where is it intended to head for?

# Peace and cooperation throughout Europe

by Prof Dr habil., colonel in the General Staff, ret. Wjatscheslaw Daschtschew\*, Russian Academy of Sciences



Prof Dr Wjatscheslaw  
Daschtschew  
(picture ma)

Europe's development is characterized by an awful peculiarity – the incessant struggle for supremacy between France, Germany and Russia or the Soviet Union. A struggle, which lasted for centuries, crossed the borders of Eu-

rope and expanded into world wars. In regular intervals this struggle brought periods of terrible suffering, victimizations and destructions to the peoples. Out of this "European confrontation" the United States achieved enormous geopolitical and economic advantages. It finally enabled the US to take control over Western Europe and to position Western Europe against Russia, thus throwing the Europeans into a political pre-war crisis at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The maintenance and if necessary the intensification of this "European confrontation" was one of the main tasks of the United States' global policies.

Britain also took advantage of the clash between French, German and Russian interests for its own purposes.

As soon as one of these three powers began to strive for supremacy, the other two joined forces against it. Thus, Russia and Prussia joined forces against Napoleonic France, when it began with the conquest of Europe. In World War I France and Russia joined forces against Germany. During World War II once again the Soviet Union and France were fighting against the threat of Nazi Germany's domination. They were joined by the US and Britain.

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After the Second World War, the Stalinist leadership acted as a standard-bearer of hegemony policy. They were driven by an expanding communist sense of mission and by the ideology of class struggle, which contradicted the laws of geopolitics. During the war and immediately thereafter they established their control over Central and Southeast Europe, forcing the countries of the region to take over the Soviet social system. From the beginning, the Western powers rated this as a major violation of the geopolitical balance of power in Europe

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up to 1990. At the beginning of Perestroika, he was also a professor at the Diplomatic Academy of the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He acted as a foreign policy adviser for Michail Sergejewich Gorbatschew and he was considered a pioneer of the East-West détente, of German unity and more generally for human rights, democracy and market economy. In 1991, he taught at the Free University of Berlin as a visiting professor, in 1992 at the Ludwig-Maximilian-University of Munich and in 1996 at the University of Mannheim. In 1995, he was awarded the Friedrich-Joseph-Haass-Prize for German-Russian relations. In 1998, he returned to Russia and there he worked at the Centre for International Economic and Political Studies of the Institute of Economics of the Russian Academy of Sciences until 2006.

## "The German Armed Forces ..."

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man Armed Forces abroad is integration-resistant." (Federal Constitutional Court/BVerfGE 123, 267)

### "Grundgesetz":

#### Commitment to international law and prohibition of aggressive war

70 years after the end of the war, there is a controversy in a question that is central for the country and for the Germans: Who decides on the fate of Germany? After the war the "Grundgesetz" had provided Germany with the possibility of becoming a democratic state. The orientation on international law (Article 25 "Grundgesetz") and the punishability of preparing wars of aggression (Article 26 "Grundgesetz") were constitutive. Anyone familiar with history, knows that none of the two German states were actually sovereign when they were established. But with the decisions of Potsdam even the victors had determined that the "definite reconstruction of German political life on a democratic basis and the potential participation of Germany in international life" should be prepared. Since then there have been many efforts in Germany and also some success therein, to make Germany more democratic and to

help it become an actor in international relations that is orientated on international law. Unfortunately, these steps have increasingly been obstructed after 1990, especially by West German power elites who do no longer demand democracy for Germany, but claim that the idea of national sovereignty is outdated and that important issues of the community are to be left to "transnational governance", i.e. they are to be left to a "governance" from the top that exceeds national borders. Recently German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble, repeatedly emphasized this view, for instance in an article among others for the "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung" of 7 April 2015.

#### Yes to the "citizen in uniform" and No to the "archaic fighter"

The question of the rights of the German parliament concerning operations of the German Armed Forces belongs in this context. Should the soldier of the German Armed Forces – as it was intended after its founding – be a "citizen in uniform" with democratic attitudes? A citizen who is ready to defend his country and his people in case of an attack, if necessary? Closely tied to the will of the people! Or shall the German Armed Forces increasingly degenerate to an "expeditionary force", submitting to political interests

of foreign masters and cherishing the vision of the "archaic fighter", far from the will of the people?

70 years after the Second World War, these questions are of central importance for Germany's future. The German Armed Forces are currently deployed in 12 countries outside of Germany: at the Horn of Africa, in Kosovo, in Turkey, in the Mediterranean Sea, in missions labeled as fight against terrorism, in Sudan, off the coast of Lebanon, in Southern Sudan, in Somalia, in Syria related to the destruction of chemical weapons, in the Central African Republic, in Mali, in Afghanistan and Iraq. All these operations are rightly controversial, but they have not yet been the major combat operations, which we are going to see in the future. Unfortunately, the rights of the German parliament are no guarantee that this Parliament will say "No" when asked. But the sense of parliamentary approval and the legal situation means that the German military forces are bound to the will of the German people. Whenever the parliament does not follow that will, it must be called to heel. Direct democratic decision-making powers must be created and complement parliamentary democracy. But such a correction would take another turn than the one that is now being planned by politics in order to bypass the people.

**"Peace and cooperation ..."**

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and in the world as well as an extremely serious threat to their interests and their independence. On this ground uniting of forces by the United States and the Western European states developed into a frontal position against the Soviet Union. With pleasure, the American ruling elite took over the role of the guarantor and saviour of the Western states against "the danger from the East". The result was a global anti-Soviet coalition. The Soviet Union turned out to be in an extremely difficult and vulnerable situation. The United States, however, were given the opportunity to impose their rule on the countries of Western Europe.

### Europe's division is advantageous for the USA

One has to admit that this was a direct result of severe miscalculations and nonsensical decisions of the former Soviet Union. Rather than bundling all forces of the Soviet peoples and the incredibly rich natural resources of the interior country to strengthen and to improve the Soviet society, the Soviet leaders led the country into an unnecessary, destructive and futile altercation with all Western powers. Not to mention their creating such conditions, which turned the United States into a global superpower, into a contender for world domination, which began to impose its will onto the European states. The periodic power struggle within the France-Germany-Russia or Soviet Union triangle, evolved into the "Cold War" and caused a deep East-West divide in Europe. This turned out to be beneficial for the United States alone. And that's why the foreign policy doctrine of the USA was based on two principles: "to keep the Americans in Europe" ("keep Americans in"), that is maintaining the domination of the United States there, and "keep Russia out of Europe" ("keep Russia out"), that is, by no means permit Russia's rapprochement and cooperation with the European countries, especially not with Germany.

### Perestroika and the foundations of a new foreign policy

During the Perestroika (reform), the insight that this was leading to an impasse in international relations in Europe and that it was necessary to find a way out was dawning on Soviet politicians. In the beginning, the Soviet leadership were focusing on problems how to pull the Soviet Union out of this dangerous state of confrontation with the West which was not only threatening mankind with the apocalypse but also consuming the best resources of the country and preventing the solution of more important tasks in domestic policies, especially ensuring a high qual-

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"In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, in order to ensure the survival a new philosophy of peace and cooperation is required that declares a policy of domination illegal and creates firm guarantees against the outbreak of war in Europe and against its being sparked from outside."

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ity of life and a high standard of living for the Soviet citizens.

Since 1985 the new Soviet leadership under *Mikhail Gorbachev* had been tackling this task. In the Perestroika years, the most important foundations of the new thinking in Soviet foreign policy were elaborated. These principles included the following:

- Rejection of a policy of messianic reign and its condemnation;
- Putting an end to the east-west confrontation and the arms race;
- Respect for the basic rule that the force of law and not the law of force should govern international relations;
- Respect for the right of every people to choose its path of development;
- Establishing an undissolvable connection between politics and morals;
- Transforming greater Europe (EU) into a united Europe and creation of a pan-European political and economic region of law and culture (the idea of a "Common European House");
- Transforming the OSCE into the central organisation, enabling it to act for security and cooperation in the states of the new Europe;
- Stepwise dismantling the block structures in international relations in Europe and ban of spheres of influence and domination on the European continent.

All these principles were characterizing the essence of new Socialist foreign policy. Based on these principles we saw the peaceful reunification of Germany which would have been unthinkable without overcoming the "Cold War". The countries of Eastern Europe won their independence. The war in Afghanistan was ended and the Soviet troops were withdrawn.

### The Paris Charter – decreed for oblivion by Washington

The culmination of Soviet foreign policy under *Mikhail Gorbachev* was the memorable 21 November 1990 when the representatives of all European states signed a fundamental international act, the *Paris Charter*. It was the first time in history that a pan-European consensus on the conservation of peace, security and cooperation was reached among all European states. Also the US, together with Canada, signed the Paris Charter. They could not stand apart in this pan-European urge for peace and the creation of a new Europe. Otherwise the US might have risked a loss

in credibility. This is why they had to join – even though the Paris Charter contradicted the core of the American foreign political doctrine which was based on the division of Europe and their own dominance. But after the breakup of the Soviet Union, Washington made every effort to let the Paris Charter disappear from the European agenda until it was completely forgotten. And that was what happened. European safety and the European cooperation were severely damaged.

Thus the ruling American elite became guilty of the disappearance of one of the most important international file of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It had expressed the vital interests of all European peoples. Under pressure from Washington, it even fell into oblivion in the western mass media. It is a strange fact that after 1991 even the leaders of Russian foreign policy did not once recall it, although the Paris Charter dealt with the fate: "We, the Heads of State or Government of the States participating in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, have assembled in Paris at a time of profound change and historic expectations. The era of confrontation and division of Europe has ended. We declare that henceforth our relations will be founded on respect and co-operation. Europe is liberating itself from the legacy of the past. The courage of men and women, the strength of the will of the peoples and the power of the ideas of the Helsinki Final Act have opened a new era of democracy, peace and unity in Europe."

What remarkable words! It seemed as if wonderful prospects and chances were opening to create a completely new Europe of peace, stability and cooperation, for the European peoples who had suffered three World Wars in the 20<sup>th</sup> century – two hot and one cold war – with their unspeakable horrors, losses and sufferings.

### The foundations of the Paris Charter

It is worthwhile here to recall the most important principles of the Paris Charter. Not just for historical interest but because they have to be reborn in a new way and applied to European policy in order to avert the dangers which threaten again the security of the old continent and the whole world. Because it is not without reason that we again start hearing agitated voices talking about the possibility of a new World War. These are the fundamental principles:

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**"Peace and cooperation ..."**

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- Not to accept any acts directed against the territorial integrity or political independence of states or towards threats with or applications of violence, and all other acts incompatible with the principles and goals of the Charter of the United Nations and the OSCE or violating international law.
- The safety of Europe needs to gain a new quality. It needs to be non-dividable and equal for all states. For the peaceful settlement of controversies and disputes, appropriate procedures and institutions need to be established. All countries are obliged to collaborate in the stabilisation of trust and safety.
- The problems of disarmament and armament control need to be solved in Europe.
- All peoples of Europe need to have the same right of self-determination, but also of territorial integrity in agreement with the UN Charter and the norms of international law.
- It is indispensable to ensure the conquest of perpetual distrust between the peoples and the building of a united Europe through joint acts and an increase of the mutual dependence of the signatory states of the Paris Charter.
- In its search for answers for the present and future challenges, Europe needs to be open for dialogue with other countries including the United States and Canada.

In the case of their realisation, these new foundations of European coexistence were meant to put an end to war on the European continent. In view of the 21<sup>st</sup> century they had defined the new philosophy of peace and collaboration between the peoples.<sup>1</sup>

**Enemy stereotype and sanctions – artificial estrangement of Russia from Europe**

Without the Charter of Paris, Europe became absorbed again into a state of affairs characterized by: division, domination of the United States, policy of isolation and a general weakening of Russia, its demonization in the eyes of the European and American public, information warfare against this country in a not as yet experienced sly, crafty style, a heavy tightening of anti-Russian orientation in the policy of NATO and the EU. The enforcement of "orange" state changes in the countries of the post-Soviet area with the aim to bring governors depending on America to power, aiming at a confrontation with Russia.

The situation in Europe was greatly aggravated after the radical nationalists' seizure of power in Kiev following an Ameri-

"The culmination of Soviet foreign policy under Mikhail Gorbachev was the memorable November 21, 1990 when the representatives of all European states signed a fundamental international act, the *Paris Charter*. It was the first time in history that a pan-European consensus on the conservation of peace, security and cooperation was reached among all European states. Also the US, together with Canada, signed the Paris Charter. They could not stand apart in this pan-European urge for peace and the creation of a new Europe. Otherwise the US might have risked a loss in credibility. This is why they had to join – even though the Paris Charter contradicted the core of the American foreign political doctrine which was based on the division of Europe and their own dominance."

can script and funded by American money.<sup>2</sup> The leaders of the "Euro-Majdan" were selected carefully by US intelligence agencies and began to strictly execute all their orders. From the outset they operated following the parole of hostility and fight against Russia, just the same US strategists were pursuing in their policy. They sparked off a cruel and fratricidal civil war in the Ukraine. Washington had expected that Russia would intervene thus providing a pretext to transform the Ukrainian crisis into a European carnage. It is to be noted that the revival of the principles of the Paris Charter could have served and still can serve to stop the Ukrainian tragedy. This insight is increasingly gaining ground in the European countries' political circles and the public.

The wide ranging sanctions against Russia by the United States worked as a crucial component of the European crisis. Their purpose has been to alienate Russia from Europe and to exacerbate the European political situation. They are also intended to create an artificial "enemy stereotype" of Russia as a more or less aggressive great power.

For reasonably thinking and experienced politicians in the West it is not hard to guess what is hidden behind this purposeful malicious disfigurement of Russia's nature on the part of the United States and their European vassals. Former German Chancellor *Helmut Schmidt* explained already in an interview by *Deutsche Welle* as early as on 20.11.2007: "No danger emanates from Russia. The threat is coming from the United States."

**Way out of the deadlock**

Today, the revival of a Pan-European movement, which is founded on the basis of the Charter of Paris for a new Europe, gains high priority.<sup>3</sup> Only observing the principles of this Charter can bring Europe out of the dangerous deadlock, in which it was driven. The Charter conforms to the vital interests of not only Russia, but of all European States.

The most experienced European politician, *Hans-Dietrich Genscher*, who has been Minister of Foreign Affairs of the

Federal Republic for 18 years, has voted in favor of a return to the Charter of Paris. In his speech on 10 November 2012 in Berlin in the Willy-Brandt-Haus entitled "The responsibility of the Germans in Europe" he particularly pointed out that to cease for ever more the policy of domination will provide the most important precondition to create a new Europe. Earlier, on 18 May 2012, he had published an essay: "It is not confrontation, but cooperation with Russia".<sup>4</sup> He wrote: "Today it is about America, Europe and Russia to jointly determine their common interests. Their interests coincide much more than certain security bureaucrats in Brussels and their comparable ones in Washington's departments [...] think. It is also about the relationship with our great neighbor in the East and about exploiting the opportunities of the East-West cooperation. In a situation that is getting more and more complex, statesman-like wisdom is required. And that means, to end the confrontation and not to allow the risk of a new confrontation [...]. *And it is important that Europe meets the great ideas of the European Charter of 1990.* [Emphasis added by W. D.] All this and the solution of the major problems of our time is possible together with Russia, but in no case against Russia."<sup>5</sup>

**The lesson taught by the 20<sup>th</sup> century: A policy of domination is unlawful**

This is actually the main conclusion from the history of European development in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, in order to ensure the survival a new philosophy of peace and cooperation is required that declares a policy of domination illegal and creates firm guarantees against the outbreak of war in Europe and against its being sparked from outside. By all accounts, this has been realized by the politicians of many European countries, among them French President *Francois Hollande* and German Chancellor *Angela Merkel*. An unprecedented event bears evidence to this: Their joint trip to Moscow and the permanent contacts with

**"Peace and cooperation ..."**

continued from page 7

President *Vladimir Putin* in the development of measures to end the war in the Ukraine, a war which poses a major threat to the peace of Europe in itself. There is every reason to hope that this visit lays a foundation for the cooperation between France, Germany and Russia to strengthen the unity of Europe, the security and welfare of all European peoples, and their economic, scientific and cultural progress.

**Cooperation instead of confrontation to the benefit of the peoples of Europe**

Favorable conditions for convening a new pan-European meeting have been maturing in order to take decisions for Europe's return to the Paris Charter renewed principles, that would meet the requirements of the present. It is the order of the day, before it is too late, to stop the wrong path of confrontation between the European powers and to address the task of creating a new Europe. The close cooperation between France, Germany and Russia must serve their welfare. This must be a collaboration which ends the wars for ever under which the Europeans suffered so severely.

In this context the question arises: How will this cooperation affect the status, the activities and geo-political role of the European Union? No doubt, it will allow expanding the scope of the EU significantly to increase the political and economic effectiveness of this supranational organization. A new pan-European integration area of Lisbon will arise, not only to the Urals, the dream of *Charles de Gaulle*, but to the coast of the Pacific Ocean. This is going to open up unprecedented favorable prospects of political, economic, scientific and cultural development for the European countries.

This pan-European integration area will be part of a new world order. *Franz Betschon* – Colonel of the Swiss General Staff – wrote about this topic in his book<sup>6</sup>. According to his ideas the future might look as follows: Europe and Asia are growing into one economic unit; the term "the West" loses its meaning; Western Europe and North America cease to exist as a unit; Continental Europe will be oriented towards the East; the US will lose its dominance; the EU and NATO will be replaced by something else.

Of course, this version of global development depicted by Betschon has to be understood as a vision in a distant future.

But you have to admit that on the whole he has correctly detected the mega-trends of the development of the new world order and Europe's place within this order. The successful development of this tendency is in the interests of Russia and of other European countries. ●

- <sup>1</sup> The Paris Charter can be found on the internet in many languages.
- <sup>2</sup> More precise in: W. Daschitschew, "Die ukrainische Tragödie und der neue 'Kalte Krieg' der USA gegen Russland", in: *Sozial-humanitäre Kenntnisse*, No 4, 2004; *Geopolitik*, No 1, 2014 (Russian)
- <sup>3</sup> I wrote a series of essays about the subject. Cf. "Es ist an der Zeit zu den Prinzipien der Pariser Charta zurückzukehren." in: *Geopolitika*, 15.8.2012; in the collective volume *Geopolitik. Theorie, Geschichte, Praxis. Arbeiten der internationalen wissenschaftlich-praktischen Konferenz*, scientific publishing centre "Raum und Zeit", Moscow 2012. "Die Pariser Charta – eine Zukunftschance für Europa", in: *Wirtschaftliche und philosophische Zeitung*, No 36 (926), September 2012
- <sup>4</sup> Hans-Dietrich Gentscher: "Nicht Konfrontation, sondern Kooperation mit Russland", in: *Tage Spiegel*, 19.5.2012. This essay was reprinted in Russia in the journal *Raum und Zeit*, No 1, 2013
- <sup>5</sup> In the above-mentioned journal *Raum und Zeit*, p. 13
- <sup>6</sup> Franz Betschon. *Das eurasische Schachtornier. Krisen, Hintergründe, Prognosen*. Frankfurt/Main, 2009

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

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# The “Arab” common defence force

by Thierry Meyssan

*Many of the states and personalities who had taken position at the start of the Yemen war have since changed their mind. Careful to avoid automatically taking sides along the sunni/chiite split, they are calling for a cease-fire and a political solution. Behind this useless war is the project for the creation of an Arab NATO ... under Israeli command.*

In his Doctrine of National Security, published on the 6<sup>th</sup> February 2015, President Obama wrote: “Long-term stability [in the Middle East and North Africa] requires more than the use and presence of United States military forces. It calls for partners who are capable of defending themselves without assistance. That is why we are investing in the capacity of Israel, Jordan and our partners in the Gulf to discourage aggression while maintaining our indestructible engagement to the security of Israel, including by its qualitative military advancement”<sup>1</sup>.

Careful reading of this document leaves no doubt. The Pentagon strategy consists of the creation of a modern version of the Baghdad Pact, an Arab NATO, in order to be able to withdraw its military forces in the Middle East and North Africa and reposition them in the Far East (the “pivot” against China).



World Cultural Heritage: the city of Sana'a in 2007. (picture wikimedia)

Likewise, it is clear that from the US point of view, the Pentagon plans that this “Arab Common Defence Force” should be constituted of Gulf States and Jordan, and that it should be placed under Israeli command. If we take the example of the Baghdad Pact, we will remember that it was constituted by the United Kingdom with its old colonies. However, after three

years, its Staff was placed under the control of the Pentagon, although the United States had never been a member of the Pact.

In November 2013, the Israeli President of the time, *Shimon Peres*, spoke via video-conference before the Gulf Security Council meeting in Abu Dhabi, in the presence of representatives from the principal members of the Arab League and the sunni states of Asia<sup>2</sup>. His intervention, which dealt with the necessity for a new military pact opposing Iran, was copiously applauded.

The SIPRI of Stockholm (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute) has just revealed that Saudi Arabia would be prepared to create the “Arab Common Defence Force” by increasing its 2014 military budget by 13 billion dollars (+17%!).

Riyadh is trying to implicate the greatest number of states possible in this project, and has succeeded in buying the participation of Egypt. To do so, the Gulf states offered 12 billion dollars for investment projects in Cairo, during the economic conference in Charm el-Cheikh, on the 13<sup>th</sup> March.

The *Arab League* adopted this project during its summit at Charm el-Cheikh on the 1st April. Officially, its aim is to apply the 1950 Arab Defence Treaty to fight terrorism, unless it is to satisfy Saudi ambitions in Yemen. The war against the Houthis, for which no one can understand the necessity, is playing the role of a full-scale exercise, with no show of compassion for the thousand dead and 3,000 wounded that it has caused.

According to *Stratfor*, the military staff of operation “Decisive Tempest” is not in Arabia, but in Somaliland. This country, which proclaimed its independence in

## Yemen: ICRC and MSF alarmed

Joint statement – Sana'a/Geneva (ICRC/MSF) – The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) are extremely concerned about the severe damage caused by recent Coalition<sup>1</sup> attacks on airports in Sana'a and Hodeida, obstructing delivery of much needed humanitarian assistance and movement of humanitarian personnel.

“Yemen depends almost completely on imports of food and medication, especially for the treatment of chronic diseases,” says *Cedric Schweizer*, who heads a team of 250 ICRC staff in Yemen. “Sana'a airport was an essential piece of civilian infrastructure, and the main lifeline for supplying essential humanitarian goods and services. The harsh restrictions on importations imposed by the Coalition for the past six weeks, added to the extreme fuel shortages, have made the daily lives of Yemenis unbearable, and their suffering immense,” Mr Schweizer added.

The disruption of the key logistic infrastructure, including airports, sea ports, bridges and roads, is having alarming consequences on the civilian population, and the humanitarian situation has now become catastrophic. Checkpoints operated by the different armed factions have ob-

structed the delivery of urgent medical supplies to hospitals and have prevented patients and casualties from accessing essential health care.

“The current conflict has already caused extreme hardship for the population across the country,” said *Marie Elisabeth Ingres*, who heads the MSF mission in Yemen. “The destruction of the runway at Sana'a means that countless lives are now more at risk, and we can no longer afford to stand and watch as people are forced to drink unsafe water and children die of preventable causes,” Ms. Ingres added.

MSF and the ICRC demand that robust and unobstructed channels for the provision of humanitarian assistance are opened and respected by all parties to the conflict in this increasingly desperate situation. We call for an end to attacks on these vital lifelines and for the Yemeni civil aviation authority to be given the chance to repair the airports, so that humanitarian assistance can be sent to Yemen. •

<sup>1</sup> Except Saudi-Arabia: Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, Jordan, Morocco, Sudan, United Arab Emirates, Egypt (Translator's footnote)

## Switzerland responds to humanitarian crisis in Yemen

Berne, 8.5.2015 – In view of the rapidly escalating humanitarian crisis in Yemen, Switzerland is making CHF 2 Million available to the Yemen Humanitarian Pooled Fund managed by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). At the same time it calls on all parties to respect their obligations under international law to ensure the protection of civilians, to engage in dialogue to seek a political solution to the conflict and to cease hostilities.

Switzerland is concerned about the ever-deteriorating political, humanitarian and economic situation in Yemen. It calls on all parties to respect their obligations under international law, to ensure the protection of civilians, to allow delivery and distribution of humanitarian relief and supplies and to seek a sustainable political solution through negotiation. Switzerland welcomes the appointment of the new UN Special Envoy for Yemen, *Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed*, in this regard.

Months of ongoing fighting and the consequent destruction of the transport infrastructure have led to a massive deterioration in the humanitarian situation.

To meet the population's most urgent and acute humanitarian needs, Switzerland is making CHF 2 Million available to the Yemen Humanitarian Pooled Fund managed by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). The fund is supporting emergency relief projects in the areas of healthcare, WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) and food aid. Switzerland's overall budget for Yemen amounts to approximately CHF 8 million.

In Yemen, which is the poorest country in the Middle East, 15.9 million people – i.e. 60% of the population – need humanitarian assistance. The food security of 10.6 million has been undermined and 1.6 million are suffering from acute

malnutrition, 850,000 of whom are children. Basic healthcare provision is insufficient. 13 million people have no access to clean water and in the course of the next decade Sana'a could become the first capital in the world to run out of water. In recent years, Yemen has taken in more than 250,000 refugees from the Horn of Africa. Armed conflicts have internally displaced over 300,000 people.

Switzerland has been active in Yemen since 2007. Its humanitarian programme currently focuses on water, sanitation and

hygiene projects. Switzerland is working together with multilateral partners such as the *ICRC*, *WFP*, *UNICEF* and *UNHCR*, and carries out projects with bilateral partners such as *Oxfam*, *Save the Children* and *Care*. Switzerland has been a member of the "Friends of Yemen" – a group of nearly 40 countries and international organisations created to support the political transition process – since 2013. •

Source: [www.admin.ch/gov/en/start/documentation/media-releases.msg-id-57188.html](http://www.admin.ch/gov/en/start/documentation/media-releases.msg-id-57188.html)

## Attacks on civilians are prohibited under international humanitarian law

ef. According to WHO 1,300 people have become victims of the bloody conflict in Yemen until the end of April, 5,210 have been injured. More than 300,000 people in Yemen are fleeing according to the United Nations. Millions of people are depending on humanitarian aid. As the "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung" reported on 7 May, 22 active aid organisations in Yemen recently called for an immediate end to the air and sea blockade imposed by Saudi Arabia, in order to be able to supply the suffering civilian population with food, fuel and medicine (see *Current Concerns*, No 12 of 11.5.2015).

Since the end of April, the international airport in the capital Sanaa was brought to a standstill after the Arab military coalition had bombed it. This means that humanitarian aid essential for survival could no longer be delivered to the country. On 4 May, the ICRC and MSF have released another alarming statement after weeks of warning against a humanitarian disaster.

On Friday, the ICRC team wrote on Twitter: "With or without previous warning: direct attacks on civilians or civilian objects are prohibited under international humanitarian law". Even the humanitarian coordinator of the UN for Yemen, *Johannes van der Klaauw*, urgently called in his statement, "to preserve this important lifeline – and all other ports and airports – so that humanitarian workers can reach those who have been affected by the armed conflict in Yemen".

Only on Friday, 8 May, Saudi Arabia had announced a five-day cease-fire in Yemen starting on Tuesday to supply the needy population. The Yemeni aviation authorities expressed on the same day that the runway destroyed by several airstrikes should be repaired in order to allow relief flights.

On Saturday, 9 May, the news reached us that war planes of the Arab military coalition under the leadership of Saudi Arabia bombed the Sanaa airport again, which was to be re-opened for aid shipments. •

### "The 'Arab' common defense force"

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1960, then was attached to Somalia following a coup d'état in 1969, proclaimed independence for a second time in 1991 before being once again reintegrated into Somalia in 1994. It proclaimed its independence for a third time in 2002. During the first two independences, Israel was the first state to recognise Somaliland. Currently, this state is no longer recognised by anyone, but since 2010, it acts as an Israeli base to control the Bab el-Mandeb Straits which link

the Suez Canal and the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean.

The Chiefs of Staff of the Arab League met on the 22<sup>nd</sup> April to evaluate the units that it could place at the disposition of this organisation. Egypt, Koweit and Morocco – all three implicated in the bombing of Yemen – will be presenting a preliminary report on the 1<sup>st</sup> July.

All of this was unfortunately foreseeable. After having betrayed the Syrian people by excluding the Syrian Arab Republic from its ranks, in violation of its statutes, the Arab League is preparing to betray the

Palestinian people and place its armies under the control of a colonial state. •

<sup>1</sup> *National Security Strategy*, White House, February 6, 2015. And our commentary "Obama Rearms", by Thierry Meyssan, Translation Roger Lagassé, Voltaire Network, 10 February 2015.

<sup>2</sup> "Shimon Peres addressed Gulf Security Council, end November", Translation Alizée Ville, Voltaire Network, 5 December 2013.

Source: [www.voltairenet.org/article187586.html](http://www.voltairenet.org/article187586.html)

(Translation *Pete Kimberley*)

# The OECD is muscling in mightily

by Reinhard Koradi

The OECD (*Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development*) has already repeatedly posed as an arbitrator as well as a dedicated lobbyist for a deregulated economic order, fully to the taste of the mighty. In doing this, these self-proclaimed wiseacres do not like to comply with the rules of democracy. Also this organisation lacks the necessary respect for the sovereignty of free national states. Without a mandate or political legitimacy, the OECD urges independent states to introduce reforms that should be decided at national level alone, under national law and only in accordance with the applicable national democratic processes for decision making.

Switzerland has already been pilloried or even suffered injury several times by the intervention in its internal affairs on the part of the OECD, so for example in connection with the so-called tax dispute, with the reforms of the educational and health systems and recently by a commentary about the Swiss agricultural policy.

Readers of *Current Concerns* know that domestic agricultural policy is under scrutiny. The ongoing reforms of Swiss agriculture have led to significant losses with respect to security of supply and food sovereignty in our country. The Swiss Farmers' Union initiative to improve food security has already been deposited with an overwhelming number of signatures at the "Bundeshaus" (federal parliament building). Other popular initiatives with a similar focus are in circulation. In Switzerland this will result in a broad-based discussion of the future agricultural policy.

## Is the OECD acting as a Trojan?

Curiously, just at this time an OECD study of Swiss agricultural policy has appeared (OECD Review of Agricultural Policies: Switzerland 2015). Although this study confirmed that Switzerland had already taken important steps to reform its agricultural policy, these reform efforts should not be downscaled, the study maintained. Further reform was needed.

Switzerland is requested to dismantle remaining trade barriers and to reduce direct payment support schemes for farmers.

Specifically, the OECD proposes to adopt a two-pronged approach concerning future payments to farmers. Thus farmers would on the one hand receive payments for the preservation of cultivated landscape and biodiversity, and on the other hand they are to be subsidised in order to make their farms "more competitive". Here the OECD is thinking of supporting either investment or the development of exit strategies.

It is clear that the Swiss neo-liberal think tank recommends that Switzerland

should abandon border protection for agricultural products, further reduce prices for the producers and further advance the initiated structural change in direction of an "industrial agriculture".

By what right does the OECD interfere with Switzerland's agricultural policy? That remains a mystery. Nor can the suspicion be refuted that interested parties, some also in Switzerland have called for the above mentioned study. But the fact remains that the called-for need for reform is on the table, just at the right time as opposition against the erosion of our autarchical provision of local, high quality food is growing throughout the population.

## Subordination or sovereignty

What is happening in the field of agriculture is (only) one example of what can befall a sector of a sovereign state's economy in the context of globalisation and deregulation. There is a guiding principle for this interference in internal affairs (by international organisations, the EU, etc.) and there is only one objective: the weakening of national states and the implementation of a neo-liberal economic order. This also

implies that politics has to toe the economic line.

Flourishing and well-working infrastructures are being dismantled and put at the so-called free market's disposal. Instead of looking at agriculture we can turn to the sectors of education or health, to public transport or the supply of energy and water. Even security (military and police) and law (international treaties) run the risk of being withdrawn from state sovereignty. The discussions about tax policy reveal another minefield dangerous to national sovereignty. The scope of these reflections could be extended even further. To do so, I will only include one summary of an article in the "Dolomitenzeitung" in South Tyrol. "In South Tyrol, mountain rescue is organised by volunteers at community level. The rescuers give up their time (for exercises and missions) and put their lives selflessly on the line when it comes to the rescue of accident victims in the mountains. Its mountain rescue team is the pride of every village and works just fine. Now it was leaked that the EU aimed

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## How do the OECD decisions find their way into the Swiss legal system?

*mw.* Although the OECD is being controlled from abroad (the US, the UK and the EU), our federal government employees are responsible for the seamless transfer of OECD decisions into the Swiss legal system, as we can read on the *Seco* (*State Secretariat for Economic Affairs*) homepage.

After all, the OECD (which was established in 1961 as a coalition of 34 Western states and is based in Paris) has no decision-making power, but is a pure discussion forum theoretically – albeit a well-stocked one with an annual budget of 354 million, 2,500 Secretariat staff and 250 publications per year!

"The OECD brings together 34 member states in an environment that offers them the opportunity to discuss, revise and improve their economic, financial, educational, environmental, scientific, social, and development policies. In the context of globalisation, the OECD provides a forum in which governments can work together to share experiences and seek joint solutions to common problems. Great weight will be given to a better coordination and coherence of national and international economic policy." *www.seco.admin.ch/themen*

To put it plainly: The governments of the dominant Western countries and their backers amongst the global players

force their "joint solutions" on the smaller countries such as Switzerland. Because although in theory the unanimity rule applies in the OECD and therefore no country can be forced to do anything without its consent, the infiltration of the "decisions" into the individual countries functions by way of these countries' own – of course hand-picked – delegates to the OECD.

Along these lines, the permanent Swiss delegation to the OECD, with 7 delegates headed by *Ulrich Lehner*, represents "the concerns and interests of our country" in the governing bodies of the OECD – whereby it is generally known to be a matter of opinion where those concerns and interests lie and notably they also introduce the OECD "solutions" into federal administration and from there into politics: "*Our delegation is actively involved in the meetings and work of the OECD and thus supports the approximately 500 Swiss delegates who come to Paris every year to participate in this organisation's committees and task groups.*" [Emphasis by *Current Concerns*]

Conclusion: The Swiss Federal Administration provides the OECD with the accomplices who travel to Paris at the taxpayers' expense to arrange the implementation of the globalised corporations' orders.

# Agricultural policy must not be reduced to competition and open borders

by Reinhard Koradi

In some sectors open borders might bring benefits for both providers and consumers. After all, international economic relations are the result of different resource deposits, production conditions, but also production capacities. From this perspective, the free market access is definitely to be considered as a progress. However, the wars for resources show only too clearly that the free market often has to give way to the rule of the strongest. Markets are truly free only if equity, fairness and transparency are unconditionally in place. Free market economy necessarily should include the freedom to decide as a sovereign state autonomously on participation and the extent of liberalisation and deregulation. The accusation “cherry picking” is likely to immediately come up; but if the right were exercised by each side to protect the interests of the citizens as a sovereign state, then the “cherry-picking” can simply be rejected by the other side.

## Free trade undermines national sovereignty

There are several reasons that sabotage the terms of effective free market. One of the main causes is the violation of national sovereignty. The all-encompassing (economic) regime by WTO, IMF, *World Bank* and OECD is burdened by serious shortcomings. What comes in addition to partisanship is mainly the lack of willingness to think and act in a differentiated way. The deliberate suppression of different starting points and basic conditions as well as the claim to infallibility violate the self-determination of sovereign states. In this respect, the pendent transnational agreements (TTIP, TiSA) are to be classified as critical. If they ever enter into force, the nation states and thus their

## “The OECD is muscling in mightly”

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at a revision of the mountain rescue, and that namely on the grounds that ‘the voluntary work of the mountain rescuers was moonlighting.’” (*Dolomitenzeitung*, April 2015)

There could be no more absurd reason for the change from the militia system to a neo-liberal market system.

The intentions are clear. Market and profit are to control our lives in the future. What is not marketable will be eliminated. In other words: the time is ripe to close the door on all the centralist shenanigans, the interference in our internal affairs and the undermining of our self-determination. •

governments go further in the dependence of commercial interests of transnational corporations. With the conclusion of such agreements the political bodies and authorities subordinate the autonomy of their states to the global, selfish and power-oriented targets of a financially strong minority. Politics thus lose their independence and is in danger to be fully taken into the service of the self-interest of high finance.

Corresponding adjustments are urgently needed, i.e. the states must increasingly insist on their self-determination and vigorously oppose the autocratic rule of corporate bosses and (economic) lobbyists. In accordance with the specific needs of the countries and the local population it is necessary to break through and if necessary to cancel globally arranged contractual terms and obligations. It would be an alternative to consider the conclusion of appropriate agreements between two sovereign parties or the personal contribution by self-directed work and acting.

## Democratic control and solidarity under pressure

This is especially true when it comes to provision with basic supplies. It is the “public sector” that is responsible for an optimal basic supply. In Switzerland these are the federal government, the cantons and the municipalities. Through the discussions around deregulation, liberalisation, privatisation, competitiveness and public management the ensured supply of essential goods and services has taken significant damage. More and more, the dogma prevailed that the state is inefficient, competition promotes prosperity and the free market is the most efficient market regulator. The counter-argument is that an infrastructure established and maintained by the public sector ensures a solid guarantee for the security of supply, reliability, high quality and equal opportunities and thus contributes significantly to the attractiveness of a country or region. Through the commercialisation of public duties (energy, water, transport, education, health, administration and security), the very efficient militia system, the valuable voluntary work is undermined in many areas of activity. The democratic control over these existential tasks of care is lost, and the solidarity within the population is oppressed by the prevalent competitive thinking.

## Agriculture as reinsurance

For basic supply a productive agriculture is essential. For decades, this importance

of a secure basic supply has been neglected and a patchy agricultural policy – reduced to competition and open borders – has been pursued; by the way cleverly masquerading for mainstream acceptance in an ecological guise. The fact is that this policy can neither meet the requirements of a national policy, nor those of safety, social or economic policy demands.

The result of this policy is that the farmers, not only in Switzerland, fight for their existence and are thereby also suspicious of one other. The current agricultural policy blanks out the supply policy and therefore the infrastructure-sustaining facts of domestic food production and mutates the longer the more into a lab of neo-liberal field trials. The farmers are gradually getting into a threatening existential crisis. They find themselves between hammer and anvil. On the one hand the production cost increase, in particular because of the growing number of production and quality requirements and the corresponding control effort. On the other hand – politically intended – prices for their products are constantly falling. By politically promoted structural “improvements” farmers are pushed into an investment trap. Smaller operating units lose their livelihoods as a result of falling incomes and are forced into termination of their enterprise or into operational extensions with corresponding investments. The resulting increase in production volumes fuels the fall in prices. The downward spiral continues and accelerates the thinning of the producing farms very dangerously in terms of supply policy. This process continues and leads in the final result to the industrialisation of agriculture – also in Switzerland. Industrialisation may be unappetising. However, what is a lot more serious, is the loss of food sovereignty in our country and the many serious personal fates of the affected farmers. As a justification of this policy buzzwords like competitiveness or lower prices for food in Switzerland come to the fore. But, the political explosiveness of this way of steering agriculture remains under the carpet: Destabilising the security of supply, dependence on foreign countries, the loss of very valuable jobs and the abandonment of self-determination over food production and consumption. In addition, the question of who ultimately generates the efficiency gains, remains unanswered. Though often invoked, it is definitely not the consumers.

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**"Agricultural policy must not be ..."**

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Change is hardly coming along. Unless the citizens seriously face up to the scenario that one day the plates on the dinner tables will simply remain empty because there is no longer any food produced in Switzerland, imports from abroad have stopped due to political "discrepancies" and perhaps quite simply because of the lack of purchasing power. Because the concentration in agriculture does not end with the farmers. Upstream and downstream sectors are suffering from this policy as well and find themselves in the same scenario of structural changes, which will consequently put Switzerland as a workplace at risk with a considerable number of related jobs.

**Rethinking in sight?**

The United Nations declared 2014 the *Year of family farms* and 2015 the *International Year of the Soil*. With this declaration the attention was to be directed towards the importance of soil, biodiversity, food security, agriculture and other important, partly unknown significant factors of the soil. Various federal agencies, representatives of trade and industry organisations and *non-governmental organisations* (NGOs) are carrying out various activities in Switzerland which address the topic of soil and its importance.

The insight that soil is a very precious and finite good forces us to carefully and responsibly deal with this dwindling basis of all economic activities. The balance between use and protection of the natural resource soil therefore places very high demands on the relevant actors at all levels. Particularly, the farmers are called up, as they know very well about the importance of the soil as their foundation for living. We can therefore rely on their knowledge, experience and care very well. But the arable land is increasingly under pressure. The urbanisation (housing projects), recreation areas, re-naturalisation of river beds and lake shores as well as environmental protection are often pitted against the production of agricultural goods. Here, most likely commercial interests play a much greater role than the pleaded ideological values. In a sustainable and modern agricultural policy, the balance between production and the ecological balance must be sought and found. It is not right to pit ecology against the subsistence food production in our country.

During the *International Year of the Soil* the national sovereignty on land use needs to be addressed. The disposal of the national resources – and that includes necessarily the land – must remain sacrosanct and respected.

The soil with all its natural treasures needs to be treated and declared as the basis of life for the people in the respective countries. Therefore it can never be treated as a normal "commodity" and object of speculation or even misuse. The purchases of fertile farmland (land-grabbing) in less developed countries by international investors and rich countries must be stopped. Instead of buying land in foreign countries, it is important to carefully use their own resources and develop self-subsistence by means of domestic production and targeted measures.

**More personal responsibility in Switzerland**

More and more people realize the importance of self-subsistence for the internal stability and the sovereignty of a nation. Various referendums are in the pipeline. All initiatives call for a strengthening of self-subsistence with respect to domestic food. Both, the *Swiss Farmers' Association* as well as *Uniterre* and the Greens express their steadily increasing uneasiness about the current agricultural policy in our country. The overwhelming number of citizens' signatures also confirms that this discomfort increasingly spreads among the whole population as well.

The request of National Councillor *Ernst Schibli* addressed at the Federal Council must be regarded in the same context: "Although Switzerland has the lowest rate of self-subsistence in Europe, the Swiss policy of the Federation is geared towards an even stronger extensification. Actually, due to domestic and foreign facts the opposite should be the case."

He put the question to the Federal Council whether it can recognize the close relationship between the producing agriculture and the upstream and downstream industries to maintain diverse, adequate domestic food supplies. He further asked about the willingness of the cantonal governments to put framework conditions in place in such a way that the actors along the whole value creating chain have a real perspective to fulfill their mandate in commercially viable structures in the long term. In addition, National Councillor Schibli also asked for a commitment of the Federal Council to an adequate supply of high-quality local food.

As of today, the response of the Federal Council is pendant. However, the signs emerging in the population clearly underline the urgency and importance of the raised concerns.

**It is up to us**

The basis for the Swiss agricultural policy of agricultural products is established in the Federal Constitution (Article 104):

1. The Confederation shall ensure that agriculture makes a significant contribution through sustainable and market-oriented production, to:
  - a. secure supply of the population;
  - b. conservation of natural resources and maintenance of the cultural landscape;
  - c. decentralised settlements of the country.

The Swiss citizens are called upon to use their political rights to demand the implementation of Article 104; for a modern and sustainable (in the sense of preserving the productive capacity) agricultural policy includes necessarily the protection and promotion of existing production and supply structures. Appropriate legal measures and regulations are to guarantee agriculture and farmers a reliable and long-term oriented base of existence. The current "reforms" prevent a long-term operational planning and management of farms and impose a considerable risk in succession planning. It must be demanded also that all, in some cases some trivialized, instruments (such as control of direct payments, taxation basis and their application) are scrapped, which ultimately only serve the purpose of "structural improvements" leading to even larger farmers' death.

We have to say goodbye to the "fair-weather policy" and think in differentiated crisis scenarios. Only in this way is it possible to put the real importance of agriculture for our political independence and security of supply back into perspective and to promote the willingness to provide the necessary "risk premium" for a wide structural policy for food security in our country.

We still have the time.

One bright spot is the widespread rejection of the counter-proposal by the Federal Council on the "Food Security" initiative by the Swiss Farmers' Union. The Federal Council turned the concern of the initiators around at 180 degrees. Instead of giving the Swiss farming families a perspective and protecting the farm land and the supply of the Swiss population with local food, the Federal Council's proposal propagated access to agricultural free trade. Such a re-interpretation of a federal popular initiative was not savored by the participants in the consultation on the counter-proposal.

A first opportunity to strengthen local agriculture now opens up to the voters by the popular initiative on food security. Let us take this opportunity to steer the agricultural policy in our country into a future-proof and trustworthy – considered from the supply perspective – political direction. •

# Secret negotiations on trade treaties, a threat to human rights

by Professor Dr iur et phil Alfred de Zayas,  
UN Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order

Geneva (23 April 2015) – *The Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order, Alfred de Zayas, expressed Thursday his deep concern over the general lack of awareness on the adverse effects that existing, or under negotiations, bilateral and multilateral free trade and investment agreements have on the enjoyment of human rights in many countries, particularly in the developing world.*

I am concerned about the secrecy surrounding negotiations for trade treaties, which have excluded key stakeholder groups from the process, including labour unions, environmental protection groups, food-safety movements and health professionals.

Proactive disclosure by governments, genuine consultation and public participation in decision-making are indispensable to make these agreements democratically legitimate.

“Fast-tracking” adoption of such treaties has a detrimental impact on the promotion of a democratic and equitable world order.

It is tantamount to disenfranchising the public and constitutes a violation of human rights law, which stipulates that every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity to take part in the conduct of public affairs.

There is a general lack of awareness concerning the adverse effects that existing bilateral and multilateral free trade and investment agreements already have on the enjoyment of human rights, including the right to health, the right to education and the right to live in a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

Human rights impact assessments should be urgently undertaken, given the numerous treaties currently under consideration and the potential risk they represent for the enjoyment of human rights.

I am especially worried about the impact that investor-state-arbitrations (ISDS) have already had and foreseeably will have on human rights, in particular the provision which allows investors to challenge domestic legislation and administrative decisions if these can potentially reduce their profits.

Such investor-state tribunals are made up of arbitrators, mostly corporate lawyers, whose independence has been put into question on grounds of conflict of interest, and whose decisions are not subject to appeal or to other forms of accountability.

The apparent lack of independence, transparency and accountability of ISDS<sup>1</sup> tribunals also entails a violation (prima facie) of the fundamental principle of legality laid down in international human rights law, including article 14 of the ICCPR, which requires that suits at law be adjudicated by independent tribunals.

It has been argued that ISDS tilts the playing field away from democratic accountability, favouring “big business” over the rights and interests of labourers and consumers. The establishment of parallel systems of dispute settlement and their exemption from scrutiny and appeal are incompatible with principles of constitutionality and the rule of law, and as such are harmful to the moral welfare of society (“contra bonos mores”).

Because all States are bound by the United Nations Charter, all bi-lateral and international treaties must conform with

the Charter and its principles of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, sovereign equality of States, the prohibition of the threat of and the use of force and of intervention in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of States.

Pursuant to Article 103 of the Charter provisions of free trade and investment agreements, as well as decisions of ISDS arbitrators must conform with the UN Charter and must not lead to a violation, erosion of or retrogression in human rights protection or compromise State sovereignty and the State’s fundamental obligation to ensure the human rights and well-being of all persons living under its jurisdiction. Agreements or arbitral decisions that violate international human rights law are null and void as incompatible with Article 103 of the UN Charter and contrary to international ordre public. •



Prof DDr Alfred de Zayas (picture ma)

\* Article 103 of the Charter stipulates that “in the event of conflict between the obligations of the Members of the United Nations under the present Charter and their obligations under any other international agreement, their obligations under the present charter shall prevail.”

<sup>1</sup> proceedings before the intended arbitral tribunals, in which industrial and business associations and companies can sue governments, but not vice versa.

# Ambrosia honey – materialized industriousness of the bees

## The smallest domestic animals and their great benefit

by Heini Hofmann

As a symbol of diligence and donor of the sweet gold the honey bee bears a close relation to our cultural history. But since the sting is not far from the honey, the smallest of all livestock has always kept some distance, in its own small hut and away from house and yard.

Let us pay a visit there and look over the bees' wings to watch the honey production. Let us experience wonders and more wonders! We are fascinated by the organisation in the hive because we perceive it as a state and the bees as its citizens. The comparison, however, is misleading. The rules of the game in the bee state are relentlessly hard. The individual means little, the community is everything.

### Royal jelly and bee bread

In the bee state there are three very different bee species comparable to three castes: the oversized queen, the only female sex animal, the pudgy male drones, which account for only one to three percent of the total population and, finally, the main body with the industrious workers, which are granted only a short life, namely three to four weeks for the generation of early summer and a few months for the winter generation.

The workers spend their first days after hatching from the hexagonal waxen cradle with cell cleaning like a cleaning woman and then advance to Jack of all trades, starting as babysitters. From their salivary glands they produce the royal jelly that is used as food for the Queen and serves as a nurse milk for the brood. If a larva is fed only royal jelly, it becomes a queen. But if it also receives pollen mixed with nectar, the so-called bee bread, it will become a worker.

### Nectar and honeydew

But as soon as the former cleaning lady has taken on her duties as a nurse, she accepts yet another new job as a construction worker. Now the wax glands between the Chitin rings on the bottom side of the abdomen have become functional. From these, fine wax platelets are sweated out, the building material for the honeycomb.

An apprenticeship is not required. The expertise of the hexagonal honeycomb structure is pre-programmed.

After about three weeks of life, if not earlier, old age begins for the worker bee. Again it has to change, from the hive bee to the collector bee, from indoor to outdoor service. Now it gets into the strenuous and dangerous life outside the protection-offering hive. As collecting bee it is



*Industrious worker bees on colourful blossoms are more than just an idyll. They perform – next to their pollen and nectar foraging – valuable pollinating work. (picture ABT)*

responsible for the procurement of food, nectar, honeydew, pollen and water.

To prepare their delicious food named honey the bees use two liquid raw materials: For flower honey the sugary juice of nectar flowers, a secretion of nectarines (nectar glands of the flowers), and for forest honey the honeydew. This is produced in forests and reed beds and on many herbaceous plants by sucking insects (leaf, bark and scale insects), which feed on the seven-tube juice of the plants while excreting the excess, sugary proportion of their digestive system and splashing it in form of shiny, dew-like droplets on needles and leaves.

### Predigested and chewed

Nectar and honeydew are absorbed by the foragers with their trunks and transported in a special organ, the crop or honey stomach. This is so to say the public stomach. If the bee wants to consume thereof for itself, it opens a valve, whereupon a portion passes into its colon. Up to 1,500 clover flowers a little bee has to fly to in order to fill this honey stomach (it almost equals the weight of the "empty" bee), and five dozens of such stomach fillings merely give a thimbleful of honey – a Sisyphean task!

Back in the hive the honey stomach is emptied into a cell by regurgitation. Then the younger workers in the hive see to the thickening of the nectar by ... and moving it ... on their tongues, so that water evaporates from it. The delicious honey is so to speak lovingly predigested, regurgitated and chewed by the bees – totally biologically ...

During the oral manipulation of the food juice and salivary glands antibiotic-like substances (inhibins) and enzymes are added. Honey, therefore, is much more than an ordinary sugar water solution. When the water content of the honey

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### Honey is pure nature!

The main component of honey is invert sugar i.e. a mixture of glucose, fructose, sucrose, malt and other sugars. Approximately 95 percent of the honey dry matter therefore consist of carbohydrates. The remaining 5 percent include organic acids, proteins, amino acids, flavoring agents, minerals, lipids and vitamins.

Contrary to a wide-spread popular opinion, the question whether and when honey crystallises has nothing to do with its authenticity. The greater the glucose and the smaller the fructose content, the faster honey crystallizes. Rape honey, for instance, does so right after the harvest, whereas acacia honey only after years. Honey is best stored in a cool, dry and dark place. Heat above 40° C and microwaves destroy valuable ingredients.

But honey is not only food, it also cures. Low water and high sugar content, as well as hydrogen peroxide ("Honey inhibin") and other antibacterial substances prevent microbial growth. Honey is therefore used in many areas, in case of asthma with children up to slow-healing wounds. In apitherapy there are also other bee products next to honey used, such as bee venom, propolis, beeswax and pollen.

**"Ambrosia honey – ..."**

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drops to eighteen percent, the cells of the hive are closed, but only – other than the brood combs – with an airtight lid.

**Phenomenon pollen loads**

Pollen foragers have a more sophisticated technology than work nectar bees. The flour-like powder formed in the stamens of the flowers, which is used as food for breeding is transformed into pellets while collecting. The similar color of the pollen loads, which can vary depending on the visited plants from lemon yellow (rape), then orange, red, blue and green to grayish black (poppy pollen), shows that the bee is flower-constant. Bees are not easy-going moths!

With a brush on the heel of the hind legs the stuck pollen is brushed out of the hair dress of the body. Then, by rubbing the hind legs together, the granula caught in the brush grains are removed with a comb at the lower leg and mixed with nectar as an adhesive. The pollen accumulated in the comb on the outer side of the leg is eventually moved to the lower leg

cup by means of lever movements of the heel which has been converted to a slider. The pollen is fixed in this cup by long edge hair.

In this way, the pollen from the right comb is collected in the left cup and vice versa. A spur pushing the pollen load out of the cups is situated on the middle pair of legs and is used to empty the yield into the storage cells. So much for the anatomy of an ingenious function or, in other words, one of those little wonders that escape our glances.

**Propolis and cooling water**

In addition to nectar and pollen flying bees also carry other things, for example propolis, i.e. tree sap, that serves to embalm intruders like skull moths and shrews which have been stabbed to death and are too heavy for transporting. It also serves to amplify cell edges or to tighten the flight hole.

To maintain the life processes in the colony and to cool the hive in summer, water is required as well. To provide cooling, the bees initially try ventilation produced by cirrus fanning of the wings, called "Sterzeln". Failing that, water for evaporation must be flown to in the stock.

Honey production therefore is a complex process carried out by tiny creatures with a brain merely the size of a pinhead!

**From honey robber to beekeeper**

The first honey lovers among men used to rob the wild bee colonies in hollow tree trunks or crevices. Only with increasing culture the master animal man realized that one can benefit only from the bees in leaving to them the necessities for survival. This is how the practice of cultivation arose, whereby bees were initially kept in straw baskets.

For a long time, beekeeping then belonged to agriculture. The bee house was part of the farm, such as the storage and "Stöckli". Beekeeping was a modest sideline with multiple benefits, pollination, honey and wax. However, a sedate occupation like beekeeping has no place in modern agriculture. And moreover, the peak of fieldwork coincides with the urgent beekeeping care measures.

Therefore, beekeeping has increasingly shifted from agriculture to amateur beekeepers. Today, Switzerland has about 20,000 beekeepers with an average of 10 colonies. However, both agriculture and beekeeping remain dependent on each other: Agriculture provides the bees' yield, and the bees reciprocate with the pollination service. Apart from the honey as direct income there is the infinitely greater economic benefit from the pollination in the vegetable and fruit production. Since without bees there would be neither fruits nor vegetables!

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

**The exhibition on the subject**

From 29 April to 20 September 2015 the Graubünden Nature Museum at Masanserstrasse 31 in Chur shows the special exhibition "Wonder World of Bees", dedicated both to honey bees and the more than 600 wild bee species occurring in Switzerland.

([www.naturmuseum.gr.ch](http://www.naturmuseum.gr.ch))



*Bee Maja working at the customer's home.  
The rambling beekeeper's bee-hive on wheels. (picture ABT)*