

Current Concerns

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English Edition of Zeit-Fragen

“On-site assistance – that is the Swiss principle” Withdrawal from Partnership for Peace

Interview with National Councillor Luzi Stamm, member of the Foreign Policy Committee



National Councillor
Luzi Stamm
(picture thk)

Current Concerns: You have filed a motion in which you ask the Federal Council to withdraw from “Partnership for Peace” (PfP). What made you do this?

Luzi Stamm: The more NATO sees itself as a war party, the more careful Switzerland

needs to be. If NATO intervenes militarily in countries like Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya or even the Ukraine, the contradiction with our policy of neutrality becomes more and more obvious in case we participate in any form on the side of NATO. In my view this is just common sense.

How did Switzerland become a member of this NATO sub-organisation?

That is a long story. From the democratic point of view, this is all the more debatable the closer the relationship becomes between Partnership for Peace (PfP) and NATO. Our population had no say at all when it came to our accession to PfP. In the 90s it was mainly the Swiss Federal Council, represented by *Flavio Cotti*, Head of the Department of Foreign Affairs and *Adolf Ogi*, Head of the Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport, who suggested that Switzerland should join this PfP.

What reactions did this cause at the time?

In politically right-winged circles this line of action was highly controversial at the time, because the former US Defense Secretary *William Perry* had stressed his opinion that the difference between

a NATO membership and the organisation PfP was to be thinner than a sheet of paper. This means nothing less than that at the time it was already intended to make PfP a part of NATO. This made several politicians somewhat suspicious, even some left winged colleagues. But according to the then prevailing Zeitgeist – the end of the Cold War, the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the (wishful) conception of eternal peace – these concerns were thrown to the winds and it was clear that Switzerland would become a PfP member.

So what does this mean for our neutrality?

The more NATO takes sides in military conflicts, the more it acts as a war party and intervention unit, the more this is obviously problematic for our neutrality. When, for example, NATO said at the

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Elections for the National Council and the Council of States on 18 October 2015

Wanted: Representatives who are not casting one eye at Brussels

by Dr iur Marianne Wüthrich

In three weeks' time, the National Council will be elected in Switzerland, and in almost all cantons the Councillors are up for election. A key electoral topic for the continued existence of the federal, direct democratic and neutral Switzerland is Switzerland's relationship with the European Union. Whereas several political parties had previously included the EU membership in their programme, today only the Social Democrats (SP) and the Greens openly advocate the fact that they are seeking membership of the EU in the 2015 elections, claiming that Switzerland would then have its “full say” according to SP position paper. (How much say the many, only theoretically “equal” small states will have beside the great powers in the EU is in the lap of the gods, however!) The other political parties favour the “continuation of the bilateral way”, however with very different span. So the ones ask for – in spite of the federal authorities' duty, determined by the sovereign,

to regain independent control of immigration – the continuation of the free movement of persons and the extension of the bilateral agreements at any cost. Many candidates do not even shrink back from an outline agreement dictated by the EU. By contrast, there is the requirement of other candidates: “no connection with the EU and no recognition of foreign judges, so that we can determine our destiny independently”. We citizens will have the choice on 18 October.

It has become obvious well enough for those who did not realise it prior to the votes on the *Bilaterals I* (May 2000) and the *Schengen-Dublin Agreements* (June 2005): Switzerland is not regarded and treated as an equal party to the contract by the EU, but should kindly adapt to the respective state of mind and so-called legal developments of the powerful partner. Unfortunately, the Federal Council and its team in the federal administration and

diplomacy as well as some parliamentarians have been busily engaged in complying with the current requests by the superpower for the last few years. “Autonomous reenactment” is the euphemism used for the implementation of EU bodies' suggestions into Swiss law.

Do you remember the “Great Stucki”? In *Current Concerns* No. 23 of 15 September 2015 we presented this great Swiss negotiator, who as fearlessly opposed the Nazi regime in the thirties as he opposed the three Western Allies in New York in 1946. Regrettably, today's Swiss leaders are rarely cut from the same cloth.

Institutional outline agreement: farewell to sovereign Switzerland

Apparently, the obedient “autonomous reenactment”, adopted by the majority of the Federal Council and the Federal Assembly members, is not enough for the

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“On-site assistance – that is ...”

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time, we are going to intervene in former Yugoslavia or in Iraq, that did not just mean taking sides, but it was also a violation of international law. In such cases, Switzerland must not be involved, not under any circumstances at all.

In their response the Federal Council denied that we are conducting manoeuvres or the like together with NATO.

The crucial question in the context of my motion is, how close is the PfP connected with NATO in actual fact? The closer the cooperation, the more obvious it should be to us that Switzerland must leave the PfP. Another question is whether and under what title Switzerland intends to engage with our army internationally.

What do you mean by that?

In my opinion it is absolutely unacceptable for Switzerland to be engaged militarily under the leadership of the United States or any other NATO country and to play a part in this engagement. Some years ago an incident in Afghanistan stirred up dust. At that time a photograph was made public, in which two Swiss soldiers in uniform were standing in file with the Swiss flag next to the British and the US flag. I think the picture was of a military funeral. This picture gave rise to the impression that Switzerland was identifying itself with the military activity of the US in Afghanistan. In fact, four uniformed Swiss officers were on site in the context of the UN mission in Afghanistan, two of whom were doctors. This example shows

how you can ruin your reputation if you engage internationally in this field.

What does Switzerland lose if it leaves its neutral stance?

In this way it will lose very, very much. For me, the example of the International Committee of the Red Cross with its founder *Henri Dunant* is the guideline for Switzerland. When you read how *Henri Dunant* was overwhelmed by the misery resulting from the battle that had raged on the battlefield of Solferino, it takes nerves to remain neutral in such a situation and not to take sides. In such a situation everyone would in the first instance have felt the urge to pass the buck and to address reproaches to those who started the war. But exactly this is not the role of Switzerland. On the contrary, our small country has made a great name for itself, namely that we do not ask who is waging the war here and that instead, we simply help. We provide on-site assistance! That is the Swiss principle which we should stand with and which we should not jeopardise for the sake of some short-term interest-driven policy; because once our reputation as a neutral country is lost, it will be very difficult to win it back again.

Well, that was over 150 years ago, does it still apply to the world of today?

This fundamental attitude of the Red Cross and of Switzerland is more relevant than ever. After all, the crazier and more violent the world is becoming, the more precarious the situation is getting in countries like Libya and Syria to Ukraine, all the more Switzerland should live up to and act according to this traditional principle of neutrality.

Would neutrality provide advantages not only for Switzerland but also for the international community?

Here we need common sense. I used to work in court. If one wants to mediate between wholly estranged spouses and has previously been somehow or other on the side of one of the parties, any attempt at mediation is hopeless. So for being able to offer good offices such as, say, mediation talks in Geneva, it is crucial that you have not previously given the impression of being on the one side or the other. This is only possible if you credibly live according to the principle of neutrality. And in order to do this, we may not be a member of any alliance whatsoever.

Which means that Switzerland must be able to defend itself ...

This is an indirect consequence: Every neutral state must be able to defend itself. We could make a small – but important – contribution to world peace, if we decidedly and distinctly restricted ourselves to a defensive army. If all 193 UN Member States had only a defensive army, we would have a better world. Switzerland must demonstrate credibly with its army that we protect ourselves when we are attacked, but we must in no case join any offensive actions; neither under the auspices of NATO. Therefore a withdrawal from the Partnership for Peace seems necessary to me and that rather sooner than later.

National Councillor Luzi Stamm, thank you for this interview. •

(Interview *Thomas Kaiser*)

“Wanted: Representatives ...”

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EU rulers. With their peculiar lust for basic and supposedly indisputable rules – such as the ideal dimensions of a cucumber or a rabbit hutch – the EU Commission insists on “mechanisms to ensure a more uniform and efficient application of existing and future agreements in the market access area”. Translated into understandable (Swiss) language: The European Commission does not approve of the Swiss authorities having their electorate breathing down their necks, who also want to have a say and sometimes refuse the “uniform” adoption of EU law on Swiss territory. And the EU bureaucracy could proceed “more efficiently” – assisted by our federal administration – if with each weightier regulation they did not have to wait for the referendum deadline of 100 days and perhaps even a referendum whose outcome would be equally uncertain.

Well, we cannot expect anything better from a great power structure. It is however much more serious that the Federal Council does obviously not object to moving away from the Swiss sovereign state by granting the EU fundamental interventions into our constitutional state. An institutional outline agreement is intended to regulate first how the bilateral agreements could be adjusted to unilateral changes of the EU *acquis*, secondly how the EU can monitor the correct application of the agreement (on Swiss territory), and how thirdly, “a homogeneous interpretation of bilateral agreements [can be] ensured” and fourthly, which body should decide in case of discrepancies between Switzerland and the EU (see “Institutionelle Fragen: Informationsblatt”, in: <https://www.eda.admin.ch>).

The body that would monitor and interpret the Swiss application of EU law consistently and decide on disputes, would certainly not be the Swiss Federal Court, but the *European Court of Jus-*

tice, which only very rarely decides in favour of the Member State in processes between the EU Commission and EU Member States – let alone for the non-member Switzerland. Or it would be the so-called *EFTA Court*, which has actually nothing to do with the EFTA, but – according to its (Swiss) President *Carl Baudenbacher* – ensures that its decisions with respect to the EEA countries Norway, Liechtenstein and Iceland will comply with the ECJ decisions. *Baudenbacher* himself calls the EFTA Court the “little brother of ECJ” (see *Current Concerns* No 26 of 28 August 2013).

To summarise in one sentence: with an institutional outline agreement the EU could unilaterally change and interpret “homogeneously” those agreements, that Switzerland settled with the EU, at any time. And if we were not willing to do so, the ECJ would determine the law: foreign law and foreign judges!

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This is how it would probably operate with an institutional outline agreement

A recent example is the "advancement" of the Schengen-Dublin Agreement by the EU-Commission: For the placement of refugees in the EU Member States, a permanent distribution key is to be fixed. According to EU Commission President Juncker Switzerland – together with the EEA countries Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein – is to be included into the distribution key dictated by Brussels and "accept the Dublin legislation and its development without exception". Otherwise, "the agreements in question would be terminated", the EU Commission announced in the daily press.

Not that we Swiss were not prepared to take in refugees or other people in need of protection. We have always done so, since the protection of persecuted people is part of our understanding of the state. As the depositary state of the *Geneva Conventions* and the seat of the ICRC it is quite normal of course for Switzerland and for us Swiss to contribute, either by granting the right to asylum or temporary admission for people from war and crisis areas, or by means of humanitarian aid in the refugee and IDP camps on site.

However, turning the distribution model of the European Commission – which has not even been approved by the Member States yet – quite easily into the "advancement" of the Schengen-Dublin Agreement and suppressing any opposition in advance by threatening opponents with dismissal, that's a bit thick. Although we actually might take the threat easy, because we do not need Schengen-Dublin: We have indeed mastered our border patrol and our asylum law as well as the bureaucrats in Brussels, no problem.

For us, the citizens, the current super-power roar of the European Commission is a good example for what we would have to face in an institutional outline agreement. The European Commission could then come every day and impose on us the so-called "development" of the numer-

ous bilateral agreements (there are more than 120 of them). Each kicking against it would be regulated by the EU Court (see above). There they are totally wrong! The Swiss people will never ever agree on their own disempowerment! Federal Councillor Burkhalter and his top negotiator Jacques de Watteville should always remember this.

"Autonomous pre-enactment" – the Federal Council lets it through on the nod, even in advance

Mr Juncker and his troupe will rejoice: his authoritarian style is not even necessary towards Switzerland, since the Federal Council has already settled matters in advance. On 18 September 2015, the Federal Councillors Sommaruga and Burkhalter met the media. While Didier Burkhalter announced the sensible decision of the Federal Council to use an additional 70 million francs for the refugee assistance locally, Simonetta Sommaruga revealed astonishing facts: Without waiting for the official request from the EU to Switzerland, she announced that the Federal Council had already "decided" on the EU's claims in advance. Switzerland would participate in the *1st Relocation Programme* (distribution of 40,000 people in need of protection) with the inclusion of 1,500 persons, and also in the *2nd Relocation Programme* (120,000 people in need of protection), after consultation with the cantonal governments (<https://www.admin.ch>, media conference, 18 September 2015).

So no "autonomous reenactment", but as it were, an "autonomous pre-enactment". Really autonomous, because the unilateral adoption of law happened voluntarily before it was clear whether the EU would find an agreement among themselves.

Renunciation of the national state: "There are no more national solutions"

Cleverly Ms Sommaruga made use of the EU's difficulties to proclaim a kind of Socialist International. At the media conference she diagnosed the lack of a common European asylum policy and engages for (even) more power to the party headquarters, sorry – the head-

quarters in Brussels. Yes, she even offered the EU to go ahead in this direction:

"We are well prepared, highly legitimized, because we have demonstrated in Europe that you can perform a credible, consistent asylum policy. But now it is clear: There are no more national solutions. Although we have done our homework: There are no national responses to this European problem. And that's why we want to do our part as well." (Simonetta Sommaruga at the media conference, 18 September 2015)

Where is the logic? If the small country Switzerland brings about a better asylum policy (which has even been praised by the mightiest EU lady during her recent visit to Bern) than the Schengen Dublin program, – which was highly praised before its introduction but then soon turned out to be practically useless, – the National State Switzerland is nevertheless obviously superior to the EU's centralized system, isn't it? No, Sommaruga said, additional instruments "for special cases" were needed in addition to the Dublin mechanism, in short "a common, fair European asylum policy". In any case she wanted to hurry Brussels up: "The Federal Council has also decided to commission the FDJP and the FDFA, to engage in the ongoing discussions with the EU for a lasting and binding distributing mechanism of people in need of protection within Europe." (Media conference 18 September 2015)

We can only hope that chief negotiator de Watteville does not forget to demand something from the EU in return for the concessions that Switzerland made.

After this press conference, we can imagine that many people already have a vision of how they will take their seats in the EU headquarters, one day. Only the electorate was able to stop them up to now and we will continue to do so.

As I said: We Swiss have the choice on 18 October. And do not forget: The elected National Councillors and Councillors of States will elect the Federal Council in December. •

Obituary



Hermann Suter
(picture thk)

With *Hermann Suter* (18 December 1940 – 3 July 2015) and *Franz Betschon* (29 November 1941 – 27 August 2015) Switzerland lost two personalities who have worked wholeheartedly for the fundamental values of their country.

Both of them were personalities who were highly critical of the Swiss Army's ongoing dismantlement and fought the cuttings with all democratic means. Together, they founded the group *Giardino*, an association of former and active military personnel who did no longer want to just look on what was going on in politics. *Giardino's* goal is to plead for an army that is worthy of the name and is able to fulfill the constitutional mandate, namely to ensure protection and defense of the country and the people. With respect to this task Switzerland must rely on itself and must under no circumstances join an alliance.

With their commitment they did not always make friends, and so it were mainly the supporters of the army's abolition had fought Hermann Suter and Franz Betschon with unfairest methods and zeitgeist-soaked arguments. Nevertheless, it was also due to their commitment that the weapons initiative was rejected which had demanded that every

military man or woman would have to give his or her gun back to the military armory. By way of these tireless efforts – and not least due to the group *Giardino* – the Swiss voted in favour of the militia army with a great majority. Thus majorities in the population had been obtained in two major military issues, which meant that the Swiss defence capabilities were strengthened.



Franz Betschon
(picture thk)

Again and again either in books or in articles and interviews both personalities drew attention to the precarious situation of the Swiss Army. In the years when the defense capability was being dismantled in a naive frame of mind assuming that a war in Europe would no longer be possible, both of them perceived these proceedings as one of the greatest threats to our country. What about neutrality and sovereignty of Switzerland, if we are no longer capable of defending the country against an aggressor? According to the general finding that a country will always have an army, either its own or an invading one, the latter possibility was unbearable to them because as former officers of the Swiss Army they knew only too well, what that would mean for a country and its people. Both, Hermann Suter, PhD in history, who

for decades as rector of the Teachers' College in Lucerne had stood up for a good and thorough education, as well as Franz Betschon, doctorate of Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich, ETH engineer who had worked in many parts of the world for international companies, were true patriots who repeatedly drew attention to the dangers of the current geopolitical situation. It was their great concern to raise the awareness of the young people for this problem so that future generations would not have to "pay" for today's mistakes. On panels or in other discussions they addressed the people, even the young ones, and appealed to their rationality. But they found that for today's generation, the threat of war is very far away. To the last, they did their utmost to prevent future generations from a rough awakening. For them the militia army was one of the foundations of the Swiss state model, since it contributed to its sense of identity and to the cohesion of the country across language borders.

Both personalities died much too early, and they will leave a great void. It is up to us to continue their commitment to an effective national defense, so that Switzerland will regain an army that meets the requirements of the Head of the Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport, *Ueli Maurer*: The Swiss Army must be the best army in the world that will be deployed only as a last resort, but then will be able to carry out its task.

Thomas Kaiser

An alliance from left to right in the National Council disapproved of transport aircraft

thk. On Tuesday, 22 September, the National Council had to decide among other things about two motions that argued for the acquisition of transport aircraft for the Swiss army. The business is not new, because about 10 years ago, Parliament had to decide on the same issue and refused buying transport aircraft because they were too expensive and not necessary. At that time the then head of the Department of Defense, Civil protection and Sport *Samuel Schmid* had voted in favor and experienced a clear rejection of his idea. Due to the two motions, this issue was on the agenda again in the autumn session.

The reasoning that Switzerland needed such aircraft for returning diplomatic personnel from crisis areas was rather a makeshift argument than a real need. So the head of the DDPS, Federal Councillor *Ueli Maurer* answered to the question

of National Councillor *Erich von Siebenthal* whether Swiss citizens could not have been flown out for security reasons, "because Switzerland had no transportation aircraft" that as far as he knew "this had not happened before" and "had so far never been a problem".

Just like 10 years ago there is reason to suspect that for those who handed in the motion, the entire affair is probably about the possibility that Switzerland could make military operations in cooperation with NATO. SP member and National Councillor *Evi Allemann* who voted for the purchase of the transport aircraft had required this elsewhere. The two major Swiss lapses – the mission in Kosovo and the four Swiss officers who were deployed for the NATO organization *Partnership for Peace* (PfP) in military activity in Afghanistan (see interview with *Luzi Stamm*) – are not for-

gotten. Under the guise of "humanitarian intervention" in an illegal war of aggression NATO had bombed Serbia "back to the Stone Age" as they said themselves. To date, the country has not fully recovered from this shock. "The war", as Major General *Bachofner* then aptly formulated, "returned to Europe, but we lost respect."

In such situations, it is a blessing that there are neutral States which can offer their mediation services and are not perceived as a war party. Switzerland must always be aware of that. The National Council made a good job and rejected both motions and thus the acquisition of transport aircraft. This is even more noteworthy since not only the SVP which is known as opposing foreign missions, but also the Greens and more than 20 SP national councillors voted against the transport aircraft. •

New US-nuclear weapons in Germany – a concealed military build-up

by Herbert Klar and Ulrich Stoll

km. On 22 September 2015 the political magazine of the second German TV station ZDF, *Frontal 21*, broadcast a report about Germany's nuclear armament. Below we document this TV report based on the broadcast manuscript. Short additions in square brackets have been added where necessary.

Introduction: 25 years ago, Germany had twice been lucky. The United States and the Soviet Union had cleared the way for the German reunification and at the same time brought the Cold War to an end. People in the former GDR and in the former Federal Republic did no longer have to fear that their country might become a nuclear battlefield between the superpowers. Up to this day, the terror of a nuclear war seemed very far away. Though now, of all times, in the happily and peacefully united Germany, atomic rearmament is going to happen again. *Herbert Klar* and *Ulrich Stoll* take a look at behind the battle line of the new old Cold War.

[*Speaker:*] Hidden underneath a vineyard in the valley of river Ahr – there is the Federal Government's former survival shelter.

26 years ago, *Willy Wimmer* went through this gate once before – as he deputized the German Secretary of Defence during a NATO-manoeuvre simulating conditions of war: “In spring 1989, the last major *Wintex-Cimex* exercise of the Cold War was conducted here. And this exercise became nuclear after eight days. I was asked to use nuclear weapons against German cities, on Dresden and Potsdam.”

They practised the nuclear war in Germany – the German army “Bundeswehr” participated. Target of the nuclear strikes were as well cities in the former GDR. *Willy Wimmer*, then Parliamentary under Secretary of Defence, was horrified by the war scenario: “At this point the request showed the whole absurdity. On the background of our own history it exceeded all the bounds of the imaginable to expect a German to bomb Dresden and Potsdam with nuclear weapons.”

With the consent of the then German Chancellor *Helmut Kohl*, *Wimmer* stopped this manoeuvre in the name of the Federal Government.

To date, German Tornado-fighter-pilots regularly practice with American atomic bombs dummies. They are supposed to guide

these bombs into the targets in the event of war. In NATO jargon it is called “Nuclear Sharing” – despite that fact German soldiers are banned on the use of nuclear weapons.

The Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and these instructions regulate clearly: It is forbidden for German soldiers to use nuclear weapons, which is now being undermined by “Nuclear Sharing”.

Oliver Meier, “Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (Foundation of Science and Politics),” [says]: “The concept of Nuclear Sharing allows NATO nuclear weapon states, who all signed the NPT, that they contribute to the configuration of the US-nuclear weapons policy by providing military means which are to support the nuclear deterrence of NATO.”

Hans M. Kristensen, “Nuclear Information Project”, Washington DC, [adds]: “In case of war the nuclear weapons stationed in Germany would be used on instruction of the US President. Then the US forces will hand the nuclear weapons over to the German pilots. And these German pilots would then attack targets with nuclear weapons. This is a very unusual scenario for a state

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Non-Proliferation Treaty of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)

Done in triplicate, at the cities of London, Moscow and Washington, on 1 July 1968

(as of 7 October 2009)

The States concluding this Treaty, hereinafter referred to as the Parties to the Treaty,

- Considering the devastation that would be visited upon all mankind by a nuclear war and the consequent need to make every effort to avert the danger of such a war and to take measures to safeguard the security of peoples,
- Believing that the proliferation of nuclear weapons would seriously enhance the danger of nuclear war,
- In conformity with resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly calling for the conclusion of an agreement on the prevention of wider dissemination of nuclear weapons, [...]
- Undertaking to co-operate in facilitating the application of International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards on peaceful nuclear activities,
- Convinced that, in furtherance of this principle, all Parties to the Treaty are entitled to participate in the

fullest possible exchange of scientific information for, and to contribute alone or in co-operation with other States to, the further development of the applications of atomic energy for peaceful purposes,

- Declaring their intention to achieve at the earliest possible date the cessation of the nuclear arms race and to undertake effective measures in the direction of nuclear disarmament, [...]
- Recalling that, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, States must refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations, and that the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security are to be promoted with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources,

Have agreed as follows:

Article I

Each nuclear-weapon State Party to the Treaty undertakes not to transfer to any recipient whatsoever nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices or control over such weapons or explosive devices directly, or indirectly; and not in any way to assist, encourage, or induce any non-nuclear-weapon State to manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, or control over such weapons or explosive devices.

Article II

Each non-nuclear-weapon State Party to the Treaty undertakes not to receive the transfer from any transferor whatsoever of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices or of control over such weapons or explosive devices directly, or indirectly; not to manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices; and not to seek or receive any assistance in the manufacture of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. [...]

New nuclear weapons in Büchel – the tip of the iceberg of multiple cases of bending the law

In 2015, the *Charter of the United Nations* is 70 years old. It has never lost relevance. However, who knows what it contains? The preamble states:

"We the peoples of the United Nations determined

- to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and
- to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and
- to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and
- to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

and for these ends

- to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours, and
- to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, and
- to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest, and
- to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples, have resolved to combine our efforts to accomplish these aims."

The world has moved far from that. Politics no longer abide by international law and human rights. And we have to confess: The US-led "West's" catalogue of sins is large.

Only a few years after the end of World War II, on the evening of 17 January 1961, the ceding US President *Dwight D. Eisenhower* had expressed

his concern on TV, after general comments on the state of the nation:

"[...] we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist. We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes."

The warning against the military and the armaments industry was so authentic – and so surprising for many listeners – mainly because it was spoken by a man who had spent almost his entire career in uniform, from his entry into the West Point Military Academy in 1911 until his release from the Army in 1952 before he ran for presidency.

Similar to the myth of the Hydra's ever growing heads, a second threat to humanity has added to the military-industrial complex: a market radicalism which has revived 19th century ideology of Social Darwinism – the ruthless quest for advantage and superiority and the struggle of all against all, in which the "stronger" shall win.

Both "heads" are countered by law, which is rooted in natural law and corresponds to the social nature and dignity of man. This law has been anchored in international law, in human rights and in many constitutions of the nation states. It is therefore no coincidence that bending the law has become common political practice and increased enormously since 25 years. The list is long and extends to the present.

Pope *Francis* and his predecessor are among the few "celebrities" who have repeatedly taken a stand against this policy. On 22 September 2011 Pope *Benedict XVI* demanded in an address to the German "Bundestag" adherence to political ethics: "Politics must be a striving for justice, and hence it has to establish the fundamental pre-

conditions for peace." [...] "To serve right and to fight against the domination of wrong is and remains the fundamental task of the politician." Only a few weeks ago on 14 September, in an interview with the Portuguese radio station *Renascença*, Pope Francis again took a stand on the causes of the present mass migration: "These poor people are fleeing war, hunger, but that is the tip of the iceberg. Because underneath there is the cause; and the cause is a bad and unjust socio-economic system." Today's dominant economic system, so the Pope, drives the people to the brink of despair and instead worships "Mammon" which is "today's idol". One must, so the Pope, address the causes of the phenomenon of mass migration: "Where the causes are hunger, we have to create work, investments. Where the cause is war, search for peace, work for peace. Nowadays the world is at war against itself."

Specifically the Pope addressed Europe: "I believe Europe's greatest challenge is to go back to being a mother Europe and not a grandmother Europe. [...] Truly, it is centuries of culture and that also bestows an intellectual comfort. Anyhow, what I would say to Europe, has to do with its ability to retake a leadership role in the concert of nations."

But what is Europe doing instead? Is it arming for a next great war – because the economic and financial system of the "West" and especially of the United States is once again about to collapse and once again war is to bring the "rescue" – whatever the cost? New atomic bombs in Büchel are the tip of an iceberg threatening the whole of Europe. There is a method to this madness. Germany, led by its Chancellor, follows Washington in a lemming-like fashion.

Karl Müller

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which has committed itself to not having nuclear weapons, directly or indirectly."

[The program shows a promotional film about the B 61, the US tactical atomic bomb, which is stationed in Germany as well. It has four times the explosive power of the Hiroshima bomb.]

Garrison of the German Army in Büchel: Since decades around 20 American nuclear bombs have been stored here. The peace movement has become silent. Pastor *Rainer Schmid* holds a vigil in Büchel, supported by committed citizens like *Elke Koller*:

15 years ago *Elke Koller* learned that nuclear weapons had been stationed at her doorstep. Since then, she fights for the withdrawal of nuclear bombs: "I felt betrayed and left alone by the politicians. Well, it was incomprehensible to me that after the Cold War ended nuclear bombs were still around here."

In 2009, the black-yellow government of Christian Democrats and Liberals promised the withdrawal of nuclear weapons from Büchel, even anchored it in the coalition agreement – it was a key item in the Liberal Democratic Party's (FDP) program in the election campaign.

Guido Westerwelle, FDP, former Foreign Secretary, [said] on 20.9.2009: "Within the federal government we want to make sure that Germany will become nuclear-free within the next four years."

In 2010, a cross-party majority in the German Bundestag requested from the Merkel-Westerwelle Cabinet "within the alliance as well as towards the American allies to insistently take stand for the withdrawal of US nuclear weapons from Germany."

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Democracy and its praxis

In a statement delivered on the 14 September 2015 at the Opening Panel of the *Forum 2000* Conference on “Democracy and Education” in Prague, Professor *Hans Köchler*, President of the International Progress Organization (I.P.O.), said that the Western world’s consensus on “liberal democracy” is based on an imprecise notion of the democratic process.

He explained the conceptual confusion between representation of the popular will (as in parliamentary systems) and direct participation of the people in the legislative process (by way of *referendum*). While the latter is the original form of democracy (rule by the people), the former – rule on behalf of the people – has often become a tool of powerful interest groups

who have succeeded in influencing or dominating political parties.

Hans Köchler recalled the legacy of the late *Václav Havel*, philosopher and statesman, founder of *Forum 2000*, who, during the *Velvet Revolution* of 1989, emphasized the sovereign role of the citizen and the importance of direct democracy. For the sake of precision, the President of the I.P.O. suggested that, in debates about the democratic paradigm, one should make a clear distinction between direct and indirect (representative) forms of decision-making; lobby-rule should not uncritically be accepted as a kind of democratic “best practice.”

Answering to a panel report on the human rights situation in Egypt, Professor

Köchler highlighted the double standards of most Western governments who propagate “liberal democracy” as global paradigm on the one hand and, on the other, keep silent about a military coup and the abrogation of democratic procedures by use of armed force as in the case of Egypt.

Among the speakers of the panel were Nobel Peace Laureate *F. W. de Klerk*, former President of South Africa, and *Petr Pithart*, former Prime Minister of the Czech Republic. The session was chaired by *Jacques Rupnik*, Director of Research at *Centre d’Etudes et de Recherches Internationales* (CERI) (Paris), and former Advisor to President *Václav Havel*.

source: www.i-p-o.org/IPO-nr-Koechler-Forum2000-Prague-14Sept.htm

“New US-nuclear weapons in ...”

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Apparently Chancellor *Angela Merkel* though thwarted the coalition’s and parliament’s decision.

In November 2009, at the US Embassy in Berlin, Merkel’s security advisor, met the US ambassador. The German reassured the American: Merkel wouldn’t want to withdraw the nuclear weapons.

Immediately the ambassador reported to the US government in a confidential telegram: “*The agreement on the withdrawal of nuclear weapons was imposed on the Chancellor’s Office by Foreign Secretary Westerwelle ... but it made no sense to unilaterally withdraw the 20 tactical nuclear weapons.*” (Source: *WikiLeaks*)

The nuclear weapons remained in Büchel – until today. We enquire why Merkel never put the decision of coalition and “Bundestag” into action.

Angela Merkel, Christian Democratic Union, Chancellor, [replies]: “*My attitude concerning the coalition agreement in 2009 has always been that we have to be aware of the consequences. We need to consider if in this case nuclear weapons would be stationed elsewhere and no longer in Germany and we would have to wonder: Are balance and security then really better served?*”

A clear breach of the Coalition Agreement of 2009.

Willy Wimmer [says]: “*That wouldn’t be the first time that the current Chancellor proves herself submissive to American considerations and subsequently expresses this in such a spectacular way.*”

[Fade in] Test drop of the new atomic bomb B 61-12 a few weeks ago in Nevada, USA. The weapon has completely new features. For experts it is evident: This is a covert nuclear build-up.

Hans M. Kristensen, ‘Nuclear Information Project’, Washington DC, [comments]: “*This weapon can be directed into the target and is much more precise than the atomic bombs that were previously stationed in Germany. It is a new weapon, because the US have had no controllable atomic bombs until today.*”

Büchel: Here the new bombs are to be stationed. Elke Koller already sued the Federal Administrative Court for the old nuclear bombs in Büchel without any success. Now she fears that the new ones are even more dangerous: “*You could actually assume that the old B 61 would have never been used, as they should only act as deterrence. But these new weapons are being planned and constructed in a way they could be used indeed. In my view they increase the danger of nuclear war.*”

Nuclear armament in Germany? We ask: “Does the federal government support the atomic rearmament here in the Federal Republic?”

Angela Merkel, Christian Democratic Union, Chancellor, [replies]: “*We will talk with the United States about it. Perhaps the Ministry of Defence has already begun this, I do not know that. I’m going to enquire about that once again, and then we are going to prime you in time.*”

The Chancellor wants to discuss an issue with the US, that has obviously already been decided – the deployment of new nuclear weapons in Germany. In the current US de-

fence budget it is stated: The modern type B 61 bombs are to be integrated in those of the German Tornado fighters in Büchel in the third quarter of 2015 – technical term PA-200. In plain English: New, even more dangerous American nuclear bombs are to come to Büchel and in case of war will be directed into their target by German Tornados.

In the *Frontal 21* interview a spokeswoman for the Russian government comments on US nuclear weapons in Germany. She sees this as an escalation in the East-West relationship.

Maria Zakharova, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Russia, [says]: “*We are concerned that states that actually don’t own nuclear weapons practice the use of these weapons, and practice it in the framework of the NATO, of the so-called Nuclear Sharing. This is a violation of articles 1 and 2 of the Non-Proliferation-Treaty of Nuclear Weapons.*”

The conservative defence politician Willy Wimmer also fears that the deployment of new nuclear weapons exacerbates the tensions between NATO and Russia: “*The questions are: To what end are these nuclear weapons actually to be used? Or what is their purpose? Is the aim to protect American military units or are they useful in connection with attack-options against the Russian Federation? – This is a deliberate provocation of our Russian neighbours.*”

Nuclear proliferation rather than détente.

Source: ZDF, *Frontal 21* from 22.9.2015, <http://www.zdf.de/ZDF/zdfportal/blob/40229212/1/data.pdf>

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

For the International Day of Democracy

“Stop the erosion of democracy” UN rights experts urge Governments across the world

by Prof Dr iur. et phil. Alfred de Zayas* and Dr Maina Kiai**

Speaking ahead of the International Day of Democracy, the Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order, Alfred de Zayas, and the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, Maina Kiai, deplore the increasing erosion of democracy as a result of repressive policies in some countries, but also by virtue of the increasing influence of vested interests at the expense of the public will.

This year’s theme for the *International Day of Democracy* is space for civil society. The United Nations and all Special Procedures mandate holders endorse this necessary and achievable goal.

But democracy today has become an over-used word, invoked even by tyrants. A country does not become democratic simply by holding elections.

What matters most is what happens between those elections: Can people speak out, engage and influence the leaders they have elected? Is there a correlation between the needs and will of the people and the policies that affect them? Can people peacefully assemble when other ways of expressing their grievances fail? Is peaceful dissent tolerated and encouraged to flourish, so that the marketplace of ideas is not monopolized by one group?

On International Day of Democracy 2015, we call on States to recognize that civil society space is the vehicle that allows this to happen. Indeed, it is essential for a true democracy.

Unfortunately, space for civil society is shrinking rapidly today, both in coun-

“Civil society must reclaim its rightful place by demanding genuine participation in governance, including decisions on peace initiatives, environmental protection and trade and investment agreements. ‘Fast-tracking’ legislation or treaties, enacted without consulting stakeholders and without responsible debate is unacceptable in a democracy.”

tries with no democratic tradition and in ostensibly democratic countries. There is a growing disconnect between elected officials and the people. We see this disconnect manifested in the recent surge of large protest movements throughout the world. People perceive a failure of governance and democracy, and protest is often their last resort in making themselves heard. Increasingly, governments are responding to this type of dissent with more repression, distorting the concept of democracy beyond recognition.

Meanwhile, we are also witnessing a worrisome erosion of democracy as a result of the increasing influence being exercised by powerful actors that have no democratic legitimacy, including the military-industrial complex, transnational corporations, financial institutions, investors, big pharma and the oil- and mining lobbies. Democratic governance is being corrupted by players that are not subject to democratic controls and who use their largesse to ensure that their interests are prioritized over those of the general public.

Civil society must reclaim its rightful place by demanding genuine participation in governance, including decisions on peace initiatives, environmental protection and trade and investment agreements. “Fast-tracking” legislation or treaties, enacted without consulting stakeholders and without responsible debate is unacceptable in a democracy.

Democracy is much more than a label. “Representative democracy” can only be called democratic when and if “representatives” actually represent their constituencies by pro-actively consulting with them and facilitating their partici-

pation in decision-making, thus making the goal of greater space for civil society meaningful.

Democracy should not be reduced to an empty word; it is self-determination in action, and a necessary instrument for securing a more peaceful, just and stable world. Civil society is a key partner to achieve this noble goal.

We therefore call upon Member States to ensure greater space for civil society, so that they may take their rightful place as key players in democracy. •

Source: www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?LangID=E&NewsID=16410

ev. Experience has shown that only a constitutional, legal recognition of these people’s rights to participation by means of referenda (and initiatives) guarantees that the will of the citizens is actually taken into account. Unfortunately, this right to genuine democratic participation and involvement is not given in most countries; in some countries it applies at the municipal level or at the level of the “Länder”. Only Switzerland has this constitutionally established possibility of direct participation at the level of the nation state. But as the articles about the growing influence of foundations which are not democratically legitimated in any way, show for example on the educational system, that also here it is necessary to defend this genuine democratic area against elitist inclinations and claims of the said influence and lobby groups.

* Alfred de Zayas (United States of America) was appointed as the first Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order by the Human Rights Council, effective May 2012. He is currently professor of international law at the Geneva School of Diplomacy.

** Maina Kiai (Kenya) was designated by the UN Human Rights Council as the first Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association in May 2011. Mr Kiai has been the Executive Director of the International Council on Human Rights Policy, Director of Amnesty International’s Africa Programme, and the Africa Director of the International Human Rights Law Group (now “Global Rights”).

New developments in the Middle East?

km. There are numerous analyses and opinions regarding the current situation in the Middle East. But there is no consensus in their assessment. Thus it makes sense to be cautious. But it seems like the German government's signals, searching for a common ground with the Russian government regarding Syria and the fight against the IS which is inappropriately called "state" in its long form and even to give up its present claim of the immediate resignation of the Syrian President *Assad*, is matching the latest analysis of *William F. Engdahl* ("Jetzt hat Washington im Nahen und Mittleren Osten verloren", *Kopp-Online* from 21.9.2015).

Engdahl writes that since 2003 the US "had succeeded in gambling away all their strategic influence and all their allies in the whole Middle East and the Gulf region". Russia, however, increased its influence in the Middle East and the Gulf region and is now, according to Engdahl, "calling for the formation of an international coalition, inviting the US to join it, together with the countries of the region and the members of the *Collective Treaty Organization (CSTO)*." In his explanation, Engdahl writes: "At their meeting on 15 September 2015 in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, the heads of states of the CSTO member states condemned the terrorism in Syria and Iraq, especially the terror of the Islamic State. They declared to be willing to send troops to Syria under the supervision of the United Nations, just like NATO. It is a new development, not appreciated by Washington, that all of a sudden there is now a second player playing the same game. The CSTO countries want to discuss their strategy to form a global coalition against ISIS during the UN general assembly, end of September. The CSTO includes Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan." But Russia has also succeeded in including Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States. Engdahl writes: "Obviously, the new Saudi King

and his consultants have realized that the neo-conservative falcons who are feeding the ISIS, Al-Qaida's Nusra Front and the Muslim Brothers in the Middle East, are now targeting the monarchies in Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf states." And, according to Engdahl, Israel, due to various interests in the exploitation of natural resources in the Mediterranean, is also searching closer ties with Moscow. *William F. Engdahl* is not the only one to observe this; these considerations are also mentioned in a German *Deutschlandfunk* interview (24.9.2015) with the former Under-secretary of State in the Foreign Ministry and Ambassador to the USA, *Jürgen Chrobog*. In the interview, Chrobog states that "*Netanyahu's* visit in Moscow was an indication that they are joining the Russian line."

The radio station headlined the interview with "We need Russia" and indeed the former German politician is arguing along this line. There were "common interests between the West and Russia" in Syria, he said. Russia was feeling "threatened by the Islamic State. In the Northern Caucasus, the IS is already building up its own structures. This is highly dangerous for Russia. So there is a common ground which eventually can form a structure for the future between the West, the Americans, and Russia, in order to take action against the IS."

Chrobog is not pleased that Russia is supporting the Syrian President *Assad* and gaining influence in the Middle East. And yet he says: "It has been realized that it will not work without Russia. Russia will be needed, also in the fight against the IS, also in finding a peaceful solution in Syria one day, one has to approach Russia." Then he adds: "Russia has been highly neglected in the past. Just imagine how Russia has been treated: in 2014, *Obama* spoke of a regional power. Russia has been disqualified – and this is the response." Chrobog is speaking of Mos-

cow's increasing influence in the Middle East. Regarding collaboration with *Assad*, he later adds that it would not imply treason towards the moderate rebels in Syria: "The rebels are widely pushed back. With respect to the war, they hardly play a role. And if you imagine what could now happen after *Assad's* resignation: The country would probably dissolve, just like we saw it happen in Libya. Nobody can be interested in this. What we need now is structures." We could now be resentful and ask: Have you said this to your allies in Washington, too? But we won't do this here. Instead we finally want to point to an article in the "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung" of 24 September 2015. The title was: "Russia welcomes *Merkel's* proposal for a dialog with *Assad*." In the article we read: "Russia has welcomed Chancellor *Merkel's* (CDU) assessment that talk about ending the war needs to include the Syrian ruler *Baschar al Assad*. The Chancellor's position is conforming to Moscow's position, Kremlin spokesman *Dmitri Peskov* told the News Agency *Interfax* on Thursday. It was 'unrealistic' to exclude the 'legitimate president' of Syria from the search for a conflict solution. 'The Chancellor's declaration agrees with what President *Putin* has already stated several times: Only the Syrian people can decide Syria's fate.'"

Europe and Germany are standing with their backs to the wall. Angela *Merkel* will be aware of that, too. Millions of people who were living in Syria and fleeing from the violence are on their way to Europe; Europe and the EU states are facing immense challenges. To continue closing our eyes to the dangers which the IS creates, directly and indirectly, can have catastrophic consequences. The neo-conservative playing with the fire is threatening to set the whole of Europe ablaze. Also here the collaboration with Russia is in Europe's central interest. New nuclear bombs in Büchel are absolutely not suitable here. •

The solution of the Syrian crisis, an important step towards a multipolar world

by Georges Corm* and Gabriel Galice**, Geneva

Unfortunately, the general consternation caused by the photograph of a drowned Syrian child in Europe did not lead to questioning the stereotype reports on the Syrian drama's causes. Some of these causes have to be searched at some distance: There are, for instance, the US plans for the reorganization of the "Great Middle East", on the pretext of wanting to introduce democratic states, of destroying the "rebellious" countries who do not subject to the geopolitical objectives of US and its allies. The more obvious cause was the disastrous implementation of such plans in Iraq in 2003, in Libya and Syria in 2011, and currently in the Yemen – on the basis of resolutions adopted by the terminately sick *Arab League*, which the UN Security Council had approved. These operations paved the way to the "Islamic State" (IS).

This policy causes a severe infringement of international law principles, which have already been strongly impaired by the double standards in politics. They appeal to moral and ethical principles, which – since enforced with brute force – have led to the death of thousands of innocent people and the extensive destruction of entire societies. All principles of international law are being subverted by that.

Actually, NATO, after the implosion of the Soviet Union and the dissolution of the *Warsaw Pact*, should have been transformed into a kind of OSCE, increasingly involving even the Russian Federation and possibly China. This did not happen. Thus, the relative monopoly of the enlarged NATO created a false sense of omnipotence, not least through the use and abuse of "Smart Power" (media, think tanks, funding of NGOs, special operations, etc.). This sense of omnipotence was even more significantly enhanced by the partnership with the oil monarchies of the Arabian Peninsula in the Middle East which are little democratic. In the case of Syria, the latter have, together with Turkey that has been pursuing its own regional interests, financed and armed the second generation of terrorist groups that emerged from Al Qaeda – especially the so-called "Islamic State" and the so-called "Al Nusra" Front.

Today, however, two factors are complicating the Syrian situation for the United States and their allied European states. Against all expectations of the Western diplomatic services, the Syrian regime is still in office. Its opponents seem therefore – at least publicly – less and less willing to give preference either to the IS or the Al Nusra front. Is it possible that the sense of reality is slowly becoming manifest in

"Negotiations for a peaceful end to the horrific Syrian conflict could therefore be a sensible way to put an end to this bloody wasps' nest for all external actors. This would be a first step towards a multipolar world attained by negotiation."

the Western diplomatic services? This is greatly to be hoped, although it could just as well be only diplomatic manoeuvres.

The second factor which is related to the first is that every action causes a reaction. The expansion of the American "omnipotence" encounters different types of resistance. Some are powerful states that pursue important regional interests, such as China, Russia and Iran; the others are moderate forces within the imperial states, who have learned from the failures or the results of the often catastrophic armed interventions. The *Obama* administration and the British Parliament seem to belong to these "doves" being less narrow-minded than the "hawks" (sometimes also European ones) – if we want to take up *Benjamin Barber's* distinction.

Today Syria is the field of a larger and extremely violently-led confrontation between states with imperial tendencies and the regionally oriented states. The purely local actors are thereby exploited relatively easily for the familiar tactics of "proxy war".

The "case" of Syria and that of the Ukraine have taken us back again into the mood of the Cold War. It is a matter of course that Russia, which is still an important state, has clear geopolitical objectives. The first is the fight against terrorist contamination on its territory and its extension across the Caucasus and Chechnya. Russia's second goal is to secure its only military stronghold in the Mediterranean, which is located on the Syrian coast.

Currently, Russia wishes for a joint military response to the IS and the first steps for a diplomatic solution for Syria agreed upon with the USA. The question thus arises as to whether we are willing to switch from a Western-dominated unipolar world to a multipolar world, in which countries such as Russia, China or Iran will have their place, or whether the policy of execration and demonization of all rulers who do not submit to the will of the US and its allies, should be continued.

Negotiations for a peaceful end to the horrific Syrian conflict could therefore be a sensible way to put an end to this bloody wasps' nest for all external actors. This would be a first step towards a multipolar world attained by negotiation. •

* Georges Corm was born in 1940 in Egypt. He is a Lebanese politician, economist, historian and lawyer, and was Minister of Finance of the Republic of Lebanon from 1998 to 2000. He is the author of numerous books on the history of the Middle East. Since 2001 he has been Professor at the University of Saint-Joseph in Beirut.

** Gabriel Galice was born in 1951 in Lyon. He is an economist and political scientist with a doctorate at the University of Grenoble, author and editor of several books and articles on the nation, Europe, the war and about Jean-Jacques Rousseau and peace. He is president of the "Institut international de recherches sur la paix" (GIPRI) in Geneva.

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

Letter to  the Editor

Hypocrisy

Today's migratory situation within the EU territory has been produced by exactly those circles who are now posing as "saviours".

First, there is NATO, an offensive alliance, that created precisely that chaos in Afghanistan, in Iraq, in Libya and in Syria, which triggered off the present flood of migrants.

Many EU states are therefore themselves responsible for the current predicament.

The large-scale industry is looking forward to the cheap workforce gained that way. It is going to undercut the earnings of today's labour proletariat by price-dumping and black market labour, that way further weakening the middle classes, a process which will cause substantial social conflicts.

The rising attractiveness of the EU region has been increased by the media and by the oh-so-solidary left-wing parties to such an extent that more and more asylum-seekers will risk the perilous journey across the sea and will be drowned miserably.

What good do all the tears do? What is the point of putting yourself into the limelight as a "do-gooder" while sweeping all the facts under the carpet?

With self-righteousness and sentimentality you cannot practice responsible governance.

What is needed is a relentless course of action against traffickers, the creation of EU reception camps in the neighbouring areas of crisis regions, and the ending of the NATO's and the Anglo-Saxons' post-colonial behaviour in Africa and the Near East.

National Councillor Oskar Freysinger,
Savièse

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

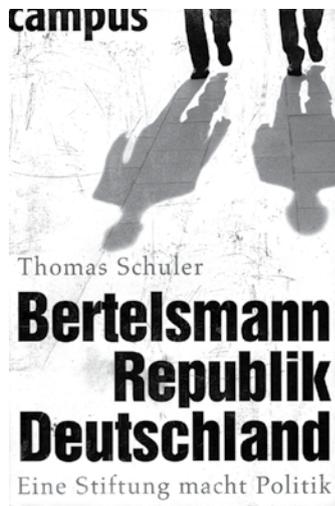
Foundations in the role of instigators

Swiss education policy in the sights of international foundations

by Peter Aebersold

Why are major foreign corporations and their foundations interested in the Swiss educational system?

The general public is unlikely to be aware of the fact that foundations belonging to foreign multinationals (*Bertelsmann Foundation, Jacobs Foundation, Mercator Foundation, etc.*) have for over a decade been quietly undermining the educational sovereignty of our cantons and are influencing the public elementary school and the universities with the aid of generous multi-million amounts. They employ Swiss middlemen to do so, preferably well-known and influential politicians



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Japan's Government is calling for the closure of all Departments of Humanities and Social Sciences at the Universities

jpv. The news came like a thunderbolt in Japan: At least 26 universities have already agreed to close its departments of humanities and social sciences or at least to cut them down drastically. 17 of them have indicated that they will not accept any new students in these subjects.

On 8 June, the Japanese Minister of National Education, *Hakubun Shimomura*, informed the presidents of the 86 universities of the country that they "should close its departments of humanities and social sciences or to change them in order to meet the needs of society more adequately." It called for "focussing on the areas of study that are useful to the economy".

The opposition to these measures has come immediately. In August, particularly, the Council of Science of Japan has expressed "strong concerns about such

"The popular initiative against the 'Curriculum 21' will enable us to once again withdraw our educational system from the influence of foreign multinationals and to restore the necessary support by the people to the educational authority of the cantons and to our direct democracy."

such as former Federal Councillors or cantonal Heads of the Department of Education, who not only have a certain reputation but also have insider knowledge of the specific policy mechanisms in Switzerland as well as a high-level network. Without any legal legitimacy or a contract and beyond all parliamentary control they have launched projects in Swiss schools (initial funding, networking, offering awards) that claim a charitable purpose, but ultimately pursue the economic goals of their corporations.

Our higher education system has been turned inside out, due to the exertion of outside influence. Now is the elementary school about to suffer the same fate?

A study conducted by the University of Bremen shows how it was possible to bypass Swiss democracy and politics through externally controlled political influence and so to completely remodel our whole higher education system with the aid of the *Bologna* model without encountering much resistance. In this way our higher education system is being cut to size so as to fit in with the OECD-

backed transformation of our government primary care, our public services like education, health, electricity, water, etc. with a view to opening new global markets (private sponsorship in favour of profit-oriented research).

Similar goals are being pursued by the secret treaties TTIP, TiSA, CETA, etc., which stand outside the existing international legal system (UN Charter, Human Rights, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, etc.), and which by use of private arbitral tribunals want to force the states to sacrifice their citizens' public non-profit provision with basic supplies as well as labour, environmental and health protection laws (such as laws concerning GM technology) to the profit interests of global corporations. Now a radical system change, like the one concerning the universities, is to be carried out in the elementary schools in Switzerland, inter alia by means of the *Curriculum 21*.

In charge of the "strategic foundations" is the Foundation of the German Bertelsmann Group, which determines with its Europe-wide ranking what a "good" foundation is – good according to their wishes.

One example is the German *Jacobs Foundation*, which also operates in Switzerland and has a direct line to the economic organisation OECD. It is not publicly known that its "strategic activities" in Switzerland began with initial funding in the millions. The highest authorities of the teachers' associations and universities were invited to participate in its work, for instance in the foundation's own seminar hotel Schloss Marbach on the Lake of Constance. Former Federal Councillor *Pascal Couchepin* and former Federal Councillor *Flavio Cotti* were members of the Board of Trustees of the *Jacobs Foundation*, and according to the former, the Foundation has the two focal points of research and of projects in the field, in order to influence social processes. As a private organisation they have great freedom of action. They cannot replace the state, but they can take great risks and use a much more rapid approach than the state. This is important to initiate social change, to

a policy for the future of the humanities and social sciences". The most prestigious universities in Japan, those of Tokyo and *Kyoto* have declared that they will not implement these government directives.

Certain observers in Japan fear, however, that the recalcitrant universities could be forced through financial pressures to adopt this policy. The demand of the Minister of Education is aligned with the view of Prime Minister *Shinzo Abe*. He believes that "education must adapt to the needs of society." In a lecture at the OECD in 2014, he had stated that "instead of the highly theoretical academic research we want to promote a more technical and professional education, an education that is tailored to the needs of society." •

Source: Summary of a report, published in "Le Monde" dated 17.9.2015

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Schools are suffering from chronic reforms

Over the years our rather efficient school system has had to deal with ever new reforms. These reforms are based on various ideologies. In the planned *Curriculum 21*, the magic word is “competence orientation”. New forms of learning and a new learning culture are to be promoted and find their way into the system. Part of them are the so-called “self-directed” and “individualized” learning, where each pupil receives his or her own lesson plan and should mainly work on his own. Classroom teaching and teaching from the front of the classroom should be eliminated and the teacher should withdraw from the actual learning process and mainly accompany the learning process and act as a coach who creates learning environments. It is clear, that for the new Curriculum 21 – somewhat influenced by the “gender ideology” – with its “competence avelange” it will be difficult to overrule the Swiss schools harmoniously. It seems that our schools must go on to suffer from a chronic reform fever which is also directed globally.

Karl Frey, Olten

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

Letter to  the Editor

Math learning is different!

It is something new at school that children are taught how to cheat. Our son brought worksheets home from school by *Vivian Mohr* entitled “kriminell gut rechnen” (calculating criminally-well). “Calculating criminally-well” is a teaching tool to train mathematical competences. The task was to read the story of a cool youth gang, which are up to quite some nonsense. Among others, they cheat their classmates, which another gang of children finds out by their own research. Following the story, the given math problem was: “How could the cool youth gang have cheated without that the crime would have realized it immediately?!”

The worksheets have no longer anything to do with mathematics. None of the tasks contained therein could be solved mathematically. With computing competences, our children should learn how to cheat! Competence-oriented teaching, as provided by *Curriculum 21*, does not contain any value-orientation. Since competencies are only functional, they are ethi-

cally neutral. In this context the education expert Prof Dr *Jochen Krautz* writes: “Competence-orientation neglects contents. The contents become secondary. They have no value in themselves, but serve only as a means to achieve the goal. By which content one attains a skill does basically not matter: For the training of ‘literacy’, it is immaterial whether a poem by *Goethe*, or a user manual for a smart phone is employed. Functional for ‘literacy’ are both. However, educational lessons assume, that one learns to read in order to be able to understand the literary contents.” Do we really want lessons in our schools, in which the contents no longer matter? Contents are therefore significant in order to help our children become critically and independently thinking people. For that they need a comprehensive education.

Gabriella Hunziker, Mühlrüti

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

“Foundations in the role of ...”

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be a kind of social pioneer. Couchepin believes that the *Jacobs Foundation* is quite successful. Currently *Hans Ambühl*, General Secretary of the *Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education* (EDK), holds a seat on the *Jacobs Foundation Board*. The Foundation has invited cantons and communes all over Switzerland to participate in the *Jacobs’* “educational landscapes”.

In 2011, *Jacobs* determined and funded three projects in the Canton of Basel-Stadt three projects in the Canton of Fribourg and three projects in the Canton of Zurich for the pilot phase of their “educational landscapes”. In spring 2014, the *Jacobs Foundation* introduced the second phase of its programme “Education Landscape Switzerland”, which will take from 2014 – to 2018 and for which it will make available 2.5 million Swiss francs. (That amounts to a total of 6.5 million for both phases.)

In the precedent pilot phase *Jacobs* imposed the condition that it would be made mandatory (!) for the cantons to participate in the *Jacobs’* “educational landscapes”. In the year 2014 *Jacobs* selected “their” new “educational landscapes” from the list of

submitted projects: Aarau, Berne-West, Biel, Bläsi BS, Bulle, Emmen, Littau, Sursee, Amriswil, Arbon, Lausanne and Raron.

According to the Foundation, Swiss society is “characterized” by migration, globalization and demographic change, and therefore, with its program “Education Landscapes Switzerland”, the German *Jacobs Foundation* promotes the systematic cooperation of school and “extra-school education actors” to form local education landscapes.²

Is it any wonder that educational policy makers, cantonal Heads of the Department of Education, board members of teacher associations and school principals sing the praises of education reforms – often against their better judgment and own experience – and that they are fulsome in the praise of the unitary Curriculum 21?

Wire-pullers and their networks come to the attention of the public only rarely, but this was the case with *Ernst Buschor*, former Head of the Department of Education, Canton of Zurich and international guru of *New Public Management* (NPM). Around the year 2002 he carried out the NPM reforms at the university which made for a cultural change in the direction of “self-organisation” and – as it is in American universities – an exertion of influence of sponsors from the economic sector on the hitherto free academic life.

According to *Wikipedia* *Buschor* was active, inter alia, on the Board of Trustees of the *Jacobs Foundation* since 2003 and on the advisory board of the *Centre for Higher Education* (CHE) since 2004. In 2005 he became a member of the executive committee of the *AVENIR Foundation*, Zurich, and from 2005 to 2007 he was Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the *Bertelsmann Foundation*, Gütersloh, and so on. According to the “*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*” from 9 March 2003, “he has plowed up the educational system like hardly any politician before him”.

Since 2008 he has been sitting in the steering committee of the new business-oriented “Forum Bildung” (Forum on Education), which is funded by foundations such as *Mercator*, with the goal of “putting the Swiss educational landscape in motion”.

The popular initiative against the “Curriculum 21” will enable us to once again withdraw our educational system from the influence of foreign multinationals and to restore the necessary support by the people to the educational authority of the cantons and to our direct democracy. •

¹ Tonia Bieber: *Soft Governance in Education*. TranState Working Paper No. 117. Bremen 2010
² “*Zytpunkt*” No. 4/2014, Verband Thurgauer Schulgemeinden VTGS

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

Politics must rest on ethics

by Moritz Nestor*

Live with your century, but do not be its creature.

Labour for your contemporaries, but do for them what they need, and not what they praise.

Friedrich Schiller

On 22 September 2011, Pope *Benedict XVI* held a widely noted speech on political ethics to the German “Bundestag”. He placed natural law in the center of his speech and called for truthfulness in political action. Benedict XVI said that the ethical core of natural law with respect to politics was the following:

“Politics must be a striving for justice, and hence it has to establish the fundamental preconditions for peace. [...] To serve right and to fight against the dominion of wrong is and remains the fundamental task of the politician. [...] Yet when it comes to the decisions of a democratic politician, the question of what now corresponds to the law of truth, what is actually right and may be enacted as law, is less obvious. [...] The question of how to recognize what is truly right and thus to serve justice when framing laws has never been simple “.¹

Thus, the former head of the Catholic Church referred to Aristotle’s claim which has been at the center of natural law thinking since the Greeks 2,500 years ago: politics must rest on ethics. Power alone cannot create justice. Positive law must be measured along pre-state ethical standards, derived from the knowledge about human nature and shaped in a way that it becomes justice. Law, Aristotle says, will neither become justice by mere controversy (discourse ethics) nor by force or ideology.

At that time 2,500 years ago the Greeks had entered a new historical phase: Natural law recognized that lasting peace could not be secured solely by power, but that political power must be committed to securing a just and secure peace.

This originated in the fact that right and wrong in the state depended on how humans perceive and evaluate reality. Right and just action are directly related to truthfulness. If one perceives things as they are, one can live up to them and do the right thing and that way become happy.

Since Aristotle the basic idea of natural law is that man can then live happily as long as he leads his life in accordance with the laws of the external nature as well as his inner social nature (zoon politicon). Leading life, however, means nothing but

that man makes use of his reason and that he understands – guided by his humane feeling – what is right and what is wrong. Political action by this standard comes close to justice.

It is part of the ineffable conditions of our times that the intellectual elite advising politics is attempting to crush this brazen relationship between politics and ethics. *Jürgen Habermas* arrogated the claim that modernity had begun properly only when in the late 20th century the American John Rawles had tried to strictly separate politics and ethics again.

It is true, however, that the German resistance to *Hitler* had found its pre-state standard in the ethics of natural law which had enabled them to offer resistance to the dictatorship with its inhuman power politics. The Nazi state abused people as means to an end, precisely for the reason that it despised the European tradition of natural law ethics, was obvious to everyone. After the Second World War it was obvious to everybody that this was profoundly unjust.

It therefore calls for an explanation whom the intellectual elite was serving by their attempt to once more separate politics and ethics at the end of the twentieth century and thus prepare the ground for a return to pure power politics. No wonder that in a world that is dominated by pure power politics, one dismisses Natural Law as “Catholic special dogma”; for according to natural law, any imperial power politics is unjust and misanthropic.

“The history of Europe and America is [...] a history of injustice and violence, but also a history of overcoming the latter by moral insight and political power”,² writes the well-known constitutional law expert *Martin Kriele* in his book “Die Demokratische Weltrevolution”. Natural Law was and is at the center of overcoming injustice and violence.

With the so-called Westphalian Peace in 1648 that ended the Thirty Years’ War, the Westphalian Order emerged with the Peace Treaty of Munster and Osnabruck, thus overcoming the bloody wars of conquest and religious wars of the early modern period. It was mainly due to Natural Law by *Hugo Grotius*, that the foundations of International Law for the peace treaty were created. The respective state was given the monopoly of power over its territory. Its borders should not be violated by imperial lust for power. Intervention should be prohibited.

The religious wars and wars of conquest of the early modern period were one of those many historical phases when politics, building solely on the will to

power and imposing terrible misery onto the people, provoked resistance. Such periods in time have always marked the flowering of Natural Law. The Westphalian Order was established towards the end of those 200 years between the 16th and 17th century, when Christian culture had created modern natural law and brought it to its peak.

In 1492, the bloody conquest of America by Spain and Portugal began accompanied by the blessings of the Catholic Church – as the “Church in power” its transformation to Catholic Social Teaching and the Cooperative Movement was yet to come. The conquerors wrecked havoc in America. In a shocking report the monk Bartolome de Las Casas describes the terrible pillage, enslavement and extermination of the Indians, which he had witnessed.³ It was the *School of Salamanca* that developed the Natural Law doctrines out of the philosophy of late scholasticism by addressing this injustice. The conquerors justified the genocide of the Indians by saying that the Indians were not baptized and therefore no legal persons, with whom one could negotiate contracts, and that therefore they could not have any right to govern themselves. A personal friend of Las Casas, *Francisco Vitoria* (1492/93–1546), who had been informed by him of the inhumanities, was commissioned by Emperor *Charles V* to develop guidelines for the evangelization of the Indians. Vitoria confronted the conquistadors subsequently with the conviction “that people are basically equal and free in nature.”⁴ The right to life and liberty, the dignity as a human being was therefore no longer limited to the membership of a denomination or race but was granted to every human being simply by the fact that he was a member of the human species. This marked the beginning of a shift within the Catholic Church, away from “Church in power” towards the words of its founder, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”⁵

Vitoria’s student *Suarez* (1548–1617) developed this approach into a theory of Natural Law. And for some years the Indians were given liberties in one of their regions – a first approach to a sovereign region of self-government based on Natural Law.

At the court of the Spanish Habsburg monarchy under Charles V a fierce public debate had previously taken place be-

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tween Natural Law representatives and the representatives of pure power politics. *Reinhold Schneider*, a poet and native of my hometown Baden-Baden, has immortalized this struggling for natural law in a wonderful historical novel entitled "Las Casas vor Karl V", in 1941. It earned him a persecution by the SS, because he designed the conflict between natural law and power politics in such a lifelike manner that the reader knew he drew the parallel to Hitler, but also to any other dictatorship.

Hence, from natural indignation against injustice towards the Indians arose the first modern approach to Natural Law, as a "liberation of man by law" (Kriele). This Spanish doctrine of natural law was the starting point for its further development. In the wake of the Eighty Years' War, in which the Spaniards tried to enforce Catholicism on Protestant Netherlands again, Hugo Grotius (1583–1645) developed the doctrine of Natural Law which built on the work of the School of Salamanca and continued it. And in response to the misery of the Thirty Years' War the doctrine of Natural Law was further developed by *Samuel Pufendorf* (1632–1694), for whom the Palatine Prince Elector *Karl Ludwig* established the world's first chair of Natural Law in Heidelberg in 1661. A handy summary of Pufendorf's Natural Law "De officio hominis et civis" of 1667 was used at schools in many European countries for decades as an introduction to ethics, and at the universities it became a "must read" for any law student as an introduction to the subject.

A pigskin-bound edition of *Samuel Pufendorf's* large two-volume Natural Law system "De jure naturae et gentium" of 1672 can be found today in the Central Library in Zurich with the handwritten note "from the books of *Gottfried Keller*".

From Late Scholasticism and the School of Salamanca to Grotius and Pufendorf we can trace the emergence and flowering time of modern natural law. It pushed open the door to the development of the enlightened model of the sovereign republic; based on a monopoly of power within one territory (Westphalian Order) and resting on the three pillars of natural law: separation of power, natural law, human rights and democracy. Aristotle had already defined them in his *Politeia*.

This state model, the principles of which were derived from natural law, might be described as the "European state model". It is the means to secure co-existence within a free and just order. To a certain extent, its basic principles are adap-

tion to what a human being needs to be able to live as a person. *Friedrich Schiller*, professor of philosophy and history, put it down in a wonderful sentence:

*"The state itself is never the purpose, it is important only as the condition under which the purpose of mankind may be fulfilled, and this purpose of mankind is none other than the development of all the powers of people, i.e., progress. If the constitution of a state hinders the progress of the mind, it is contemptible and harmful, however well thought-out it may otherwise be, and, however, accomplished a work of its kind. Its longevity then serves the more to reproach it than to celebrate its glory – it is then merely a prolonged evil; the longer it exists, the more harmful it is. In general, we can establish a rule for judging political institutions, that they are only good and laudable, to the extent, that they bring all forces inherent in persons to flourish, to the extent, that they promote the progress of culture, or at least not hinder it."*⁶

This state model as well as the associated Westphalian Order of the state system are children of Europe. It is a model, and as such something one has always to strive for. The politically most mature form is the Swiss Federal State of 1848, which allows the greatest possible development of freedom in a direct democratic legal system.

"The political Enlightenment was natural law doctrine. It was based on the nature of man as a human being, not as a Catholic or Protestant, as a Christian or heathen, as European or Asian, as a free man or a slave, etc. Its question was about the conditions which would enable people to cooperate peacefully and friendly. Its answer was: by assuming a legal state, which means according to the Kantian formula: by recognizing each other – people and states – as having equal rights and by limiting their freedom according to universal laws to such an extent that the freedom of everyone can exist together with the freedom of all. By doing so, they submit their animal-biological nature to their rational nature and hence overcome the principle of the right of the stronger, faster, smarter, more brutal, more unscrupulous. Thus, at the same time, they establish the freedom in which every person and every people can decide for themselves, in order to realize the best

possibilities inherent in them to collaborate fraternally and to keep peace with each other. Question and answer have a purely intra-worldly rational character and are not bound to any theological presuppositions. In them, the natural law minimum is expressed which embraces all religions, cultures, traditions and which is essential in order to establish a universal peace. Only the supplementary question – Why should we want the conditions of a peaceful and friendly coexistence? – refers to a morality which in turn, has distant religious roots, but has not a religious expression by itself; one that was alive even in pre-Christian religions and is and has already been recognized in the pre-Christian philosophies, such as Stoicism. This morality can be assumed and acknowledged by atheists and has often met with even more emphatic support by them throughout the history of the Enlightenment than it did from the churches. Grotius said, natural law would even then apply if there was no God or if he did not care about human issues."^{7,8}

Those who, in the face of the above-outlined history, speak of natural law as a "Catholic special doctrine" do not know what they are talking about. After all: the fact that the non-believer is not released of morality just because he does not believe, and because he therefore presumes that there is no God and that "anything goes" – this is exactly where Natural Law puts a stop. It has thus laid a foundation for a humane and secular ethics.

It has given birth to a model of co-existence, which has assembled all the rival religious and secular groups under one roof, and under this roof the freedom of each group is protected and the political conflict is guided into peaceful channels.

My friend, the Japanese Natural Law Professor *Hideshi Yamada*, once replied to my question, what the difference was between Natural Law thought in Europe and Asia: "You have placed more emphasis on reason, we have placed more emphasis on feeling."

So, Martin Kriele's question is raised again: Why should we want the conditions of a peaceful and friendly coexistence? Because the human intellect is transformed to reason only if it is connected to humane thoughts and feelings. "It is the direction, the goal towards which we develop, namely more and more humaneness; that we develop our skills as human beings," *Hideshi*

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Yamada said. And already about 2,300 years BC, the Chinese *Mong Dsi* (about 370 – about 290 BC; Latin name: *Mencius*), a man from Hideshi Yamada's cultural background and himself a scholar of the great *Kongzi* (Latin name: *Confucius*), gave a moving response to this question about the "always-wanting-to-be-more-of-a-fellow-human being":

"All people possess a moral sense within them that cannot bear the suffering of others. [...] Why do I say that all people possess within them a moral sense that cannot bear the suffering of others? Well, imagine now a person who all of a sudden sees a small child on the verge of tumbling into a well. Any such person would experience a sudden sense of fright and dismay. This feeling would not be one that they summoned up in order to establish good relations with the child's parents. They would not purposefully feel this way in order to win the praise of their friends and neighbours. Nor would they feel this way because the screams of the child would be unpleasant. Now by imagining this situation we can see that one who lacked a sense of dismay in such a case could simply not be a person. And I could further show that anyone who lacked the moral sense of shame could not be a person; anyone who lacked a moral sense of deference could not be a person; anyone who lacked a moral sense of right and wrong could not be a person. Now the sense of dismay on another's behalf is the sprout of ren (love) planted within us, the sense of shame is the sprout of righteousness (yi), the sense of deference is the sprout of ritual li, and the sense of right and wrong is the sprout of wisdom. Everyone possesses these four moral senses just as they possess their four limbs. For one to possess such moral senses and yet to claim that he cannot call them forth is to rob oneself; and for a person to claim that his ruler is incapable of such moral feelings is to rob his ruler. As we possess these four senses within us, if only we realize that we need to extend and fulfill them then the force of these senses will burst through us like a wildfire first catching or a spring first bursting forth through the ground. If a person can bring these impulses to

*fulfilment, they will be adequate to bring all the four quarters under his protection. But if a person fails to develop these senses, he will fail to protect even his own parents."*⁹

Another cultural area, the same social human nature, the same question of the fair contributions to the world and the same answer: compassion, shame [conscience, MN] and modesty, as well "right and wrong [...] planted within us [...]. Everyone possesses these four moral senses just as they possess their four limbs." Catholic missionaries have brought Mencius' lyrics and those of his teacher Confucius to Europe. And many thinkers of the 18th century, who contributed valuable substance to the development of natural law and a democratic constitutional state, have drawn on these resources. Last but not least also *Albert Schweitzer* did. We know by *Jeanne Hersch's* research that such natural law approaches can be found in all cultures.

Personalist psychology and anthropology, developmental psychology and pedagogy have accumulated a rich fund of knowledge and experience. They can give sound scientific answers and directions to the question "Why should we strive for the conditions of a peaceful and friendly coexistence?"; they give answers and directions that have been tested empirically, without reducing the people to an object. This empirically tested knowledge about human social nature, which has been derived from personalist human sciences, meets with the personalist philosophical anthropology and with the Catholic social doctrine of the Revelation at the same point: The human person, who is both an individual and a communal being at the same time, must be the starting point and the objective of all political action.

I would like to close with a remark. In the French Constitution of 1793 we find the remarkable sentence, "The social guarantee consists of the effort of all to assure to each the enjoyment and preservation of his rights; this guarantee is based upon national sovereignty."¹⁰ Social guarantee of human rights means that natural and human rights must be lived politically. Otherwise, they are dead letters. In a global world, in which the sovereignty of nation states is being dissolved, human rights lose exactly this power: to be the protection of the individual against the all-powerful state. They have been and are abused – key word "humanitarian intervention" – by nihilistic pure power politics as a weapon against the people. War and human rights, however, are like fire and water.

And so we have arrived at the topic of our meeting*, which we want to work on in a joint effort in the following three days. Thank you for your attention. •

¹ https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2011/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20110922_reichstag-berlin.html (as of 3 Sept 2015)

² Kriele, Martin (1980): *Befreiung und politische Aufklärung*, Freiburg/Basel/Vienna, p. 7 (Translated)

³ cf. Hanke, L. (1949), *The Spanish struggle for injustice in the conquest of America*. New York

⁴ Kriele, Martin (1988) *Die Demokratische Weltrevolution*, Munich/Zurich, p. 23

⁵ Galatians 3/28. Cf. also Colossians 3/11, 1 Corinthians 12/11–13 <http://biblehub.com/galatians/3-28.htm> (as of 3 Sept 2015)

⁶ Schiller, Friedrich: *The legislation of Lycurgus and Solon*, http://www.schillerinstitute.org/transl/lycurgus_solon.html (as of 3 Sept 2015)

⁷ Kriele, Martin (1997): *Die demokratische Weltrevolution und andere Beiträge*. Berlin, p. 2 (Translated)

⁸ Grotius, Hugo (1950): *De iure belli ac pacis. Drei Bücher vom Recht des Krieges und des Friedens*. Paris 1625. Tübingen, p. 33

⁹ Mencius, *Readings 3 The Doctrine of the Goodness of Human Nature*. www.indiana.edu/~p374/Mengzi3.pdf

¹⁰ <http://www.columbia.edu/acis/ets/CCREAD/frerev.htm> (as of 3 Sept 2015)

* Lecture held at the September Meetings "Mut zur Ethik" from 4 to 6 September 2015, dedicated to the topic "Freedom, Sovereignty and Human Dignity – A Safeguard against Despotism and War". ©Moritz Nestor, moritz.nestor@gmx.ch

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Citizens' letter for peace and democracy

by Christian Fischer and Emil Brütsch, Germany

cc. Print media, websites and initiatives are a dime a dozen. There is no chance to have an overview of what is recommendable and what should rather be critically reviewed. In the following article the editors of the German "Bürgerbrief für Frieden und Demokratie" (Citizens' letter for peace and democracy) introduce their website and their concern. They commit themselves to peaceful conflict solutions in international relations, for a more balanced economic and financial regulation and for more direct democracy in Germany.

By using digital information services, many interested citizens want to gather information about the world events and their background. There are also difficulties connected with that endeavour. Often the sources are impossible to verify. Often it takes a lot of time, until one comes across things that are interesting and important. Sometimes one sits in front of the PC for hours, with only a low yield.

Each information service focuses on certain priorities and interests, filtering out information with this focus. Often it is commented according to the respective political opinion, sometimes quite polemically. It frequently happens that you are connected to blogs, where polemical disputes are posted. All these are the citizens' democratic rights. Nevertheless one would like to obtain interesting information, that is missing in the mainstream media with less personal effort information that one must not filter out of some polemical blog dialogues.

The editorial team of the "Bürgerbrief für Frieden und Demokratie", therefore has set itself the task to filter a part of the daily data flood and make it available to the readers. Of course, there is no claim for completeness, and here as well information is filtered according to certain objectives as regards content: Just according to what we believe is important in order to preserve and develop peace and democracy. What democratically active citizens are already doing to achieve these objectives seems important to us as well. With this in view, we are indeed impartial and independent, but not indifferent.

In the following we try to disclose and put into words our political and ethical attitude: A lively democracy is the best way to attain the overarching goal of peaceful coexistence of people and nations. We understand democracy as the equal participation of all citizens' in public life and in the decisions to be taken. This is more than just choosing one's representatives. We be-



Tribute to the victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki

The bombs were a nuclear blaze, which did not have any relevance for the outcome of the war and brought an immense suffering for Hiroshima and Nagasaki (Short film 0h6, film 0h44, description: [interview](#) with, [book](#) of docu-creator Klaus Scherer). The few survivors had to serve as guinea pigs. The Government of the United States as well as the former Japanese emperor lied using the bombs to save their faces. In reality the two bombs of the "Manhattan Project" were supposed to make the USA appear as the only victorious power and establish the dominance of the USA with respect to weapons of mass destruction. What contempt of mankind! (the editors) – In a poignant documentation "Arte" reported the experience of the 90-year-old eyewitness [Tsutomu Yamaguchi, who survived both terrific atomic bombings](#) – he also described his long-lasting incapability of speaking publicly about the catastrophe. Today he regards it as his duty to tell his story in schools and to young people at many other places and to call for the abolition of atomic weapons. "One for all, all for one." He even succeeded in speaking to the UN. But the UN has remained too weak an organization up to date to be able to stop atomic weapons. Yamaguchi was active until his death in 2010. [\(0h53\) Up to this day the government of the USA has not apologized to the Japanese for their suffering from the nuclear weapons.\(the editors\)](#) – With 100,000 illuminated paper lanterns on the river Motoyasu, [the inhabitants of Hiroshima commemorated the countless victims of the atomic bombings](#). The lights symbolically brought back to mind all the people, who had desperately searched protection from the atomic fire in the cool water of the rivers in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. – The fact, that the government of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has just introduced a far-reaching military reform, is certainly not in the sense of those, who commemorated the atomic victims worldwide and is contrary to the fact, that Japan at the UN General Assembly wants to present a new resolution draft for the abolition of nuclear weapons.

Erhard Eppler: Russia and the lesson of German history

"... No one may argue that the Russians had as little reason to feel humiliated as the Germans once had. That even may be true, however, it is irrelevant. What matters is the feeling of humiliation, the feeling of being a victim, even if others do not see that. A nation that can perceive itself solely as a humiliated victim is not capable of living in peace. This is now also true for a small, brave nation in the Middle East. People who grow up in the knowledge that their nation must fight for its existence expelled, punished, ostracized, mistrusted, is capable of a lot of things that do not match the character of this nation. ... Obama's declaration that Russia was only a "regional power", was meant as a humiliation. And that makes one think twice. Once again: Where such a basic sense of humiliation prevails, all arguments are ineffective – unless the reality itself contains the proof of the contrary: the unmistakable integration of this people into the community of nations, the apparent respect for its history and its achievements. ..." – Even if one does not agree with all positions, which Putin puts forward in connection with the Ukraine, the aspect of humiliation, which Eppler points to, is important for any policy that is interested in peace, not only when dealing with Russia (the editors).

lieve, that the citizens are able to do more. We do not share the repeatedly expressed opinion, holding that the rather important decisions should be left to the "experts" at higher levels.

Vibrant democracy relies on sovereignty, i.e. on freedom of decision at all levels, beginning with the individual citizen via the

federal authorities up to the national level. We support the principle of subsidiarity to the effect that from the municipality up to the international level, as much as possible should be decided at the respective lower level and that only factually overarching is-

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sues should be decided at the next higher level; that applies to fiscal issues, as well.

In this sense, we are very sceptical about any centralism even in the 21st century. It is an opponent to civic sovereignty. However, we increasingly encounter centralism in supposedly democratic robe everywhere, both in the international economic and financial world as well as – most of all – at the supranational level of the EU. For quite some time our representatives in Germany, but also in other EU countries, have become henchmen for strong lobbies from which today's increasing militarization and warfare emanates. And this is where things have come full circle: The European Union, once propagandistically launched as a peace project, practices the undermining of democratic institutions, of division of powers, of sovereignty and, indeed, of a genuine peace policy that respects the sovereignty of other nations as self-evidently as it respects the human rights of each citizen.

Against this centralism and against the disregard of human rights and national sovereignty, we want to strengthen and encourage the free citizen. Especially, we would like to strengthen direct democratic options which were once promised in the German "Grundgesetz" (Basic Law Art. 20, 2) but not implemented in practice. In recent years lots of citizens have recollected on their sovereignty, that is on their freedom, and have developed activities referring to the formation of a common political will and to the expression of opinion beyond the professionalized political business. We want to report on these efforts and possibly even contribute to networking.

The "Bürgerbrief für Frieden und Demokratie" have emanated from the popular initiative for the withdrawal from the ESM that has collected signatures for Germany's withdrawal from the *European Stability Mechanism* since 2013. In order to help our fellow citizens to form their own opinion the editorial team of this newsletter to citizens collects current and basic information and opinions on the

topics: rights and dignity of man, war and peace, self-determination and sovereignty, active citizenship, democracy, subsidiarity and division of powers, human economies, meaningful European cooperation, relations with international institutions. If we find interesting articles and news in the digital world, they are briefly summarized and linked and only sometimes briefly commented. In addition, we also want to inform about the activities of other citizens and thus support the possibility that these active citizens gain knowledge of each other and, if they wish, also communicate with each other. Since May 2014 the newsletter has been published monthly with currently two to three, sometimes four pages. You can find it on the website www.volksinitiative-esm-austritt.de directly on the homepage. If a subscription is activated on this page, the newsletter will be delivered by email after being published. The editorial team is pleased if readers of the newsletter in turn take the opportunity of proposing articles. •

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