

## Direct democracy is no computer game Launch of the federal popular initiative “For a secure and trustworthy democracy (e-voting moratorium)”

by Dr iur. Marianne Wüthrich

After years of trials in various cantons and communes, the result is on the table: e-voting has proved unsuitable in every respect. Nevertheless, the Federal Council has been insisting for two years on the widespread introduction of e-voting.<sup>1</sup> In June 2018, it stated that, in the opinion of its expert group, electronic voting “could be developed as a secure and trustworthy voting channel”. Indeed, it spoke of “more than 200 successful attempts”<sup>2</sup> in the country and did not say a single word about the numerous serious breakdowns due to which various software had to be taken out of circulation and many cantons have abolished e-voting again or not introduced it at all. Even the many critical responses received during the consultation process in the autumn of 2018 did not succeed in making the Federal Council see reason.

In order to put a stop to these proceedings in Federal Berne, the collection of signatures for the popular initiative for an e-voting moratorium was launched on 16 March 2019.

In the most glorious spring weather, the initiative committee gathered at the archway on the Bahnhofplatz in Lucerne for the “kick-off event”: a cheerful and highly motivated group of politicians across all political parties, and other citizens, most of them from the IT sector, almost all of them under the age of 30.

It is now up to us citizens to make the initiative known: collecting 100,000 signatures means hundreds of thousands of face to face discussions. In the following you will read the initiative text and the main arguments for the initiative, as well as the recording of my discussions with the president of the initiative committee, National Councillor Franz Grüter (SVP LU – Swiss People’s Party, Lucerne), and with Hernani Marques of the Chaos Computer Club Switzerland, and also statements by committee members Jonas Ineichen, vice-president Juso LU (Young Social Democrats, Lucerne), and Simon Schlauri, Cantonal Councillor Grünlib-

### Federal popular initiative “For a secure and trustworthy democracy (e-voting moratorium)”

The Federal Constitution is amended as follows:

Art. 39 para. 1<sup>bis</sup>  
1<sup>bis</sup> The use of electronic procedures for voting is forbidden.

Art. 197 No. 12<sup>2</sup>  
12. Transitional provision for Art. 39 para. 1<sup>bis</sup> (Use of electronic procedures for voting)

<sup>1</sup>Article 39 para. 1<sup>bis</sup> shall enter into force on the date of its approval by the people and the cantons; with this approval all provisions of the cantonal and federal law on electronic methods of voting shall no longer be applicable.

<sup>2</sup>The Federal Assembly may lift the ban by federal law, if at least the same security against manipulative acts can be assured as for handwritten voting in particular if, under the preservation of voting secrecy:

- a. the essential steps of electronic voting can be verified by those entitled to vote without special expertise;
- b. all voices are counted as they were submitted in accordance with the free and effective will of the voters and without outside influence; and
- c. the partial results of the electronic vote can be identified clearly and without bias, and, if necessary, reliably verified in recounts without special expertise, so that there can be no question of partial results which do not meet the requirements set out in points (a) and (b) being accepted.

<sup>3</sup>The Federal Assembly may lift the ban at the earliest five years after its entry into force.

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

erale (GLP ZH – Green Liberal Party Zurich).

### “Pull the plug on e-voting!”

This is the slogan with which the initiators are going public. The initiative calls for an immediate ban on electronic voting all across the Confederation, the cantons and communes, following a yes vote by the sovereign (Article 39 para. 1<sup>bis</sup> new and para. 1 of the transitional provision). After a five-year moratorium at the earliest, the Federal Assembly can lift the ban by means of a federal law, subject to an optional referendum (para. 3 of the transitional provision). However, this would underlie strict conditions: It would have to be guaranteed that at least the same security against manipulation acts exists as with handwritten voting (para. 2 of the transitional provision). The exact conditions for lifting the

ban on e-voting are listed in the initiative text in paragraph 2 lit. a-c of the transitional provision.

### Democracy needs trust

This is the yardstick by which the initiative committee measures electronic voting and finally rejects it. The paper ballots are counted at least twice by a team of members of the various political parties and other citizens and are then sealed and stored in the communes. If necessary, they can be recounted at any time.

The electronically cast vote, on the other hand, “sinks into a digital sea of bytes and bits – only a few specialists understand how the votes are counted. The sovereign cannot understand the processes at all, and confidence is lost.”<sup>3</sup>

## On such an important question, the people must have the last word

*A conversation with National Councillor Franz Grüter, IT entrepreneur and president of the initiative committee*



Franz Grüter  
(picture ma)

*Current Concerns: I am pleased, National Councillor Grüter, to meet you on this occasion. What motivated you to take over the presidency of the initiative committee?*

*National Councillor Franz Grüter:*

It was not just my idea, but from all our people of the committee. We have almost a historically broad-based committee, which is supported by many parties and organisations usually belonging to different political camps.

*I have noticed that. It is really an extraordinary diverse composition.*

Yes, and we all have realised last autumn that the introduction of the electronic voting system, as planned in Switzerland, would be a high risk. Unfortunately, reality proves us right, so much has happened. Today, we are launching the collection of signatures, so that the Swiss can vote on whether they want to take these risks or not. At worst, it's about losing confidence in our democracy.

*How does the Federal Council, the Federal Chancellery, come to speak of e-vot-*

*ing as completely safe in spite of the many breakdowns and to promote it in such a way?*

The whole mobilisation, the wake-up call, to fight against e-voting actually came up when the Federal Chancellery announced about two years ago that they wanted to introduce e-voting extensively in 18 cantons until the national elections in October 2019. At that time, I have asked the Federal Council, when we, the Parliament, could debate whether we approve it and agree with it, and what are the risks. I was told that the issue would be dealt with in Parliament in 2020/2021. I replied: And then it will already have been introduced in 18 cantons. That is when I suddenly realised: They are introducing it through the back door. It has no democratic legitimacy at all. The people must have the last word on such an important decision. Then we have tried it with parliamentary motions, which failed quite close. In the end that was the reason for us to say we are running a popular initiative – because we have seen how centralised systems work, it is too high a risk.

*I have read in your argumentary that with e-voting votes could also be manipulated deliberately.*

Yes, about a week ago, a world-renowned Canadian IT security expert in an intrusion test, which is currently running at Swiss Post, analysed the source code of

a computer programme and revealed that you can get into this system and manipulate it, i.e. change voices without noticing anything. The verifiability that the Post claims for itself is not guaranteed at all. The possibility that elections or votes could be influenced has led other countries like Norway, Finland, England, France, Germany not to introduce e-voting or at least to stop it for the moment (see also “No longer an issue abroad”, argumentarium p. 8).

*The purpose of the initiative is simply to protect the democratic vote, which every democratic state has to guarantee.*

Yes, we call for a moratorium of five years. Until then a lot can happen, certain conditions can be met. For example, today e-voting is more complicated and more expensive than voting by mail. The documents come by mail and the voters have to scratch their code. Within the next five years, there might be alternative solutions that are decentralised. Communal and cantonal voting offices must be able to check whether the voting results can even be right. If all security conditions are guaranteed, our initiative will allow Parliament to re-enable electronic voting. We leave a door open, but we have to make a stop for now.

*Thank you very much, National Councillor Grüter, for the informative conversation.*

### “Direct democracy is no ...”

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#### Confidence in the tellers – an example

On 10 February, the voters in Solothurn narrowly rejected the introduction of a communal parliament, with 2201 nays to 2192 ayes, (thus the city of Solothurn with its 16,000 inhabitants remains one of the few Swiss cities with a direct democratic communal assembly). According to the daily press, for example in the Canton of Zurich, a recount would be stringently required in the case of such a narrow decision (with a difference of

only 9 votes). In Solothurn, on the other hand, the Pro Committee did not demand a recount, “after the city chancellery had assured them that there had been three counts, each one with a negative result; twice a difference of 9 votes had been counted, and once a difference of 15”. (“Neue Zürcher Zeitung” of 11 February 2019)

This shows how great the confidence of the Swiss population is in their democracy and in their communal administration – we must not allow this treasure to be destroyed by a centralised and depersonalised system.

<sup>1</sup> Press release issued by the Federal Council on 5 April 2017, also see “Why e-voting is bad for direct democracy” by Marianne Wüthrich, Dr iur., *Current Concerns* No. 11 of 18 May 2017

<sup>2</sup> “E-Voting als ordentlicher Stimmkanal: Bundesrat plant Vernehmlassung für Herbst 2018 – E-voting as a proper voting channel: Federal Council plans consultation for autumn 2018”. Press release issued by the Federal Council on 27 June 2018

<sup>3</sup> Federal popular initiative “For a secure and trustworthy democracy (e-voting moratorium)” Argumentarium of January 2019, p. 5 ([https://e-voting-moratorium.ch/wp-content/uploads/Argumentarium\\_E-Voting-Moratorium\\_def.pdf](https://e-voting-moratorium.ch/wp-content/uploads/Argumentarium_E-Voting-Moratorium_def.pdf)). Below cited as “argumentarium”



**In times of cyberwars highly dangerous**

*mw.* "In times of 'cyberwars', economic wars and increased hacker risks, it is highly dangerous to stick to today's e-voting systems. Examples from abroad – but also from Switzerland! – have shown that e-voting infrastructures can be manipulated." (Argumentarium, p. 5; see interview with *Hernani Marques* of the Chaos Computer Club)

**Geneva e-voting system has been hacked**

The canton of Geneva had developed a system years ago, which several cantons took over, but after various breakdowns it was taken out of circulation again. Now the end of the system has come:

"In November 2018, hackers from the *Chaos Computer Club* were able to demonstrate with a simple 'man-in-the-middle' attack on the Canton of Geneva's e-voting system that it is possible without great effort to redirect a vote to a fake server

**Arguments against e-voting**

without the manipulation becoming apparent to the voter. The Geneva system has already shown considerable security gaps in the past. [...] Although the developers [...] reassured us that everything is not as bad as that – the Geneva system will in any case be shut down by the end of 2020 ..." (Argumentarium, p. 7).

**"Swiss Post's crumbling e-voting system: Immediately pull the emergency brake!"**

The only remaining Swiss e-voting system is currently that of Swiss Post. Swiss Post (i.e. the Federal Council) has invited computer hackers to attack its system. Several thousand hackers are taking part. The test runs from 25 February to 24 March 2019 (*swiss info* SWI from 14 February 2019). Even before the end of the test phase, the unsuitability of the system had been proven several times.<sup>1</sup> It is also striking that Swiss Post is having its software developed by the Spanish company *ScytI*, which is in US hands (media release of the initiative committee dated 1 February).

**More and more cantons are leaving the system**

While the federal government wants to push ahead with the nationwide introduction of e-voting, resistance is growing in the cantons: The parliaments of the cantons of Baselland, Uri and Jura and the cantonal government of Glarus rejected a test phase in 2018, while the cantonal council of Zurich decided at the end of 2018 to stop further investments in e-voting. In Aargau and Basel-Stadt, corresponding initiatives are pending (Argumentarium, p. 8).

**Expensive and without the alleged benefit**

"The voting process in e-voting is not simpler, cheaper or more time-saving. The documents still have to be sent by post. [...] For many citizens, e-voting may be much more complicated than postal voting" (Argumentarium, p. 3). According to the Federal Council's calculation, a nationwide introduction of e-voting would cost at least CHF 620 million in the first ten years (Argumentarium, p. 6). So much taxpayers' money for a questionable and unsafe system? And the icing on the cake: the main argument of the advocates that e-voting would increase young people's participation in the vote did not prove to be true during the test phase in the cantons (p. 6). Quite apart from the fact that our country needs young citizens who learn how to deal with votes and elections in civic education – clicking on something on the computer is definitely not enough.

**Trust in democratically taken decisions are central for a peaceful coexistence**

"That's why we say: No experiments with direct democracy – one does not play with popular rights" (Argumentarium, p. 5). Every prudent citizen can only join in this warning call of the initiative committee. The filigree Swiss voting and election procedure can only exist decentral; it must be supported by the population and the organisation of the municipalities. A centralised and electronic system controlled by the federal administration cannot meet the requirements of the Swiss model.

<sup>1</sup> see interview with *Hernani Marques* of the *Chaos Computer Club*; see also "Serious error discovered in Swiss Post's e-voting system" in: "Neue Zürcher Zeitung" from 12 February 2019

**E-voting can not examine whether the result corresponds to the will of the people**

*Interview with Hernani Marques, Chaos Computer Club\**



*Hernani Marques* (picture *mw*)

*Current Concerns: I've read and heard a lot from the Chaos Computer Club. Now I am pleased to meet you in person, Mr Marques. How did you discover that electronic voting is not secure?*

*Hernani Marques:* We are a computer club, a hacker association of civil society, and we address more deeply computer technology, but also its influence on society. We are computer fans, mind you. But in electronic voting, the e-voting, you want to virtually achieve the squaring of the circle. One wants the vote to remain secret (preservation of the secrecy of the vote), but still ensure that all voices are valid, not manipulated. It is basically an intrinsically intransparent system. If you compare that to a piece of paper with a yes or no on it, in conjunction with a personal voting right card that must be in the same quantity in the election office, then it's just not quite the same thing. As a citizen, but also as an electoral commission, you can not really examine in e-voting whether the totality of the votes cast really corresponds to the people's will.

*Can you describe how to manipulate votes?*

We've started to show attacks, such as redirecting the citizen to a fake page and intercepting the codes he needs to start the polling process. You can also prevent his vote: For example, if he chooses something other than the attacker wants, you could break of the connection. Such stories are possible in digital space, which is not easy with handwritten votes.

Of course it is absolutely right that every child can fake a piece of paper, especially in the case of postal votes where less control is possible than with the ballot box. However, we are here in Switzerland, and that here so many pieces of paper will be faked in a big way, so that the final result is manipulated, we con-

\* *The Chaos Computer Club Switzerland (CCC-CH)* was founded in 1985 as an association, however, in the early nineties, the club activities were discontinued. In 2012, the club was re-founded in Bern. With a symbolic act on the Federal Square in Berne, around 40 delegates from various local "chaos haunts" founded the umbrella organisation. It promotes the exchange of experience among hackers in Switzerland and can represent their interests in public and in political instances. It can also support technical-scientific education. The association is party politically and confessionally neutral. ([www.ccc-ch.ch](http://www.ccc-ch.ch))

**"In e-voting cannot be ..."**

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sider quite unlikely. There are occasional local incidents where someone tries to do that, but most of the time they do not get very far. After a few dozen or a few hundred maybe, as some time ago in Valais, where someone pulled the voting envelopes out of the private mailboxes and faked them, something like that is discovered and can be investigated. There, some people have complained because they have not received their voting envelopes, then they looked at the relevant voting cards at the community and saw that the signatures were written in another handwriting. It was a matter of two hundred papers. DNA samples were used to find out who the perpetrator was, a single offender. He was sentenced to 12 months in prison with three years probation and a hefty fine.

*But there was only one such case.*

Yes, that was a bigger case. There have certainly been other, smaller cases that have come out. The difference is that when it comes to electronic voting, there is no handwriting, it's just data. You can really vote in a big way on behalf of people if you get the necessary codes. Then we have a problem because you do not know what to do. Should we repeat the vote? It is simply unclear. In addition, you can not determine the culprit.

In addition, such a system operates across cantons, for example, that of the postal system. This is currently taken to pieces, as shown in the media: It is unsafe, it even allows the proof that everything is right, but it is forged. Really a complete disaster! These are conditions that just do not go. We cannot do with that in our country.

*The hackers were asked by the post system (i.e. the federal government) to hack the system, because they were convinced in Berne that it would not be possible to crack. Yes, exactly. Actually, the Post intrusion test report should not be ready until the end of March, when the test ends – but the*

## Who deals with IT security, knows that computers are never safe

*Interview with Professor Dr iur. Simon Schlauri, Lawyer and Cantonal Councillor Green Liberals Zurich*

*Current Concern: Simon Schlauri, how did you as a Green Liberal join this initiative committee?*

*Simon Schlauri:* I have been asked, and as a lawyer for IT law, I have found, yes, I participate, because I have known the risks of e-voting for years.

*How does the Federal Chancellery get to go through with this, even though it is so questionable and controversial? I honestly wonder that, too. A major problem is that often people with little IT experience are involved. It seems to me that people who are familiar with IT security also are aware of the risks because they know that comput-*

ers are never safe. This risk also exists with e-voting.

An important point with regard to the security of the Swiss Post system is that experts have established that the code were created amateurishly, that there are security gaps in the verification of the voting result. With e-voting, however, it is essential that this works: Voters must be able to control with certainty the correct transmission of their votes. Because of the shortcomings that are now also appearing in the postal system, I would expect the federal government itself will give up e-voting.

## Without confidence in democratic instruments, political decisions are simply no longer possible

**As the first young party, Juso Switzerland has supported the initiative**

*mw. It is particularly pleasing that there are so many young people on the initiative committee. One of them is Jonas Ineichen, Vice President of the Young Socialists (Juso) of the Canton of Lucerne.*

*Current Concerns: Jonas Ineichen, why is Juso Lucerne taking part in this initiative?*

*Jonas Ineichen:* Juso Switzerland has been criticising the plans to introduce e-voting throughout Switzerland for several years and was the first young party to officially support the initia-

tive. The Juso Canton of Lucerne is also fighting for digitisation, which is carefully considered and benefits for everyone. In my opinion, however, e-voting does not currently meet the requirements of responsible digitisation. It is anything but effective to introduce a technology that has the destructive potential to lastingly damage confidence in democratic instruments. Without this trust, political discussions and above all decisions are simply no longer possible.

test begins to degenerate completely already in mid-March. Possible attacks were shown on Twitter and in the media. There are also really some bugs in this system that are not accidental because someone has put the wrong character or something

like that. But the shortcomings are so vast that you simply have to turn off the system. That's not how things go!

*Thank you for your statement, Mr Marques.* •

# 20 years after 24 March 1999 – the NATO war crimes against Yugoslavia must not remain unpunished

by Karl Müller

If anyone *googled* the German phrase “20 Jahre, Nato, Jugoslawien” [20 years, Nato, Yugoslavia] on 17 March 2019, one week before the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of NATO’s attack on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, two entries appeared by *KenFM*, two entries appeared by *RT Deutsch* and one entry appeared by *Wikipedia*, by *komin-tern.at*, *barth-engelbarth.de*, *frankfurter-erklaerung.de* and *nachdenkseiten.de* on the first page under the heading “All”. If the category “News” was clicked, eight entries appeared by *RT Deutsch*, one by *Telepolis* and one by *Sputnik Deutschland* on the first page.

## No official interest in 24 March 1999

There were no entries from so-called mainstream media on the first pages. Those who searched the “Event Calendar” on the NATO website found references to 20 years of NATO enlargement on 18 March, references to a NATO manoeuvre together with Georgia on 18 March, references to a meeting of NATO foreign ministers on 3 April and on 20 May references to a NATO event in Norway “NATO and the High North”. There were no entries regarding the 24 March 1999.

It is honourable (and equally important) that 20 years after NATO’s attack on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, there are still people who remember the injustice of that time. *Jürgen Elsässer*, like many others who are not mentioned here, already presented many good analyses years ago. He has even published a special issue of his *Compact* magazine comprising more than 70 pages. Two major international conferences on the NATO war are taking place in Belgrade.

However, if carefully observed, there is little or no mention of the chain of decisions and events of 24 March 1999 in neither the NATO states nor Germany. A day that must be called a historical caesura – probably the most for Germany.

## The attack was in breach of international law

For the first time since its foundation in 1949, the governments of all NATO states – i.e. not only the US government, which had previously been known to wage wars contrary to international law – had decided to attack a member state of the United Nations with air bombardments – without a NATO state itself having been attacked, without “a threat or a breach of peace or an act of aggression” according to Article 39 of the UN Char-



*The destroyed bridge of Varvarin has become the deadly symbol of the NATO attacks. Varvarin is a Serbian village with about 2,200 inhabitants. On 30 May 1999 it was bombed twice by NATO planes in broad daylight during a folk festival celebrating the occasion of the Orthodox Trinity Feast. The majority of the victims (10 dead and 17 injured) were killed in the second wave of attacks on the already destroyed bridge, while helpers tried to recover the dead and injured from the first wave of attacks. (picture ma*

ter and without a mandate of the UN Security Council.

The attack was contrary to international law – and also unconstitutional for Germany. According to estimates, the bombings cost the lives of around 3,500 people, most of them civilians, around 10,000 were injured, and the number of victims as a result of the radioactive contamination and other poisonings cannot yet be estimated. The direct costs of the war were estimated by a study of the German “Bundeswehr” about 23 billion euros, including some 13 billion euros for war destruction in Yugoslavia. Estimates for follow-up costs range from 30 to 300 billion euros.

## Facts that can be proven today

The facts that can be proven today include

- that NATO’s justification that its bombings were intended to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe caused by Serbia (“humanitarian intervention”) was a deliberate propaganda lie: the information that there was no humanitarian catastrophe caused by Serbia and that there was no threat of such a catastrophe was available to the relevant authorities;
- that the negotiations preceding the war were no real negotiations, but resulted in an ultimatum to Serbia – thus NATO’s goal was war or the complete subjugation of Serbia;

- that the Russian government, which had been involved in the negotiations preceding the war, was completely ignored by NATO after the final decision on the war;

## Hardly any consideration for civilian victims

- that during the war NATO hardly took civilian victims into consideration and even deliberately bombed civilians;
- that NATO deliberately destroyed Serbian infrastructure and industry with the goal of long-term destruction;
- that NATO – aware of the consequences – used uranium weapons, radioactively contaminating the attacked land and waters and that further devastating environmental damage was caused by the bombing of chemical industry and refineries in Serbia;
- that during the war concerted NATO war propaganda was adopted almost uncritically by all mainstream media in all NATO states and that most people in the NATO states were given a completely distorted picture of reality;

## And the goal?

- that the actual goal of the war should be the domination of NATO and especially the USA over the whole of former Yugoslavia and over all of South

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# From currency war to military war

by Professor Dr Eberhard Hamer



Eberhard Hamer  
(picture ma)

The global financial system is dominated by a syndicate: The *Financial Stability Board* (FSB), under supervision of the *Federal Reserve Bank* (FED), brings together the major Atlantic banks<sup>1</sup>, which are in turn controlled by seven families.<sup>2</sup> “There is a close linkage to the oil giants *Exxon Mobil*, *Royal Dutch Shell*, *BP* and *Chevron*, and the same seven families are also top shareholders in almost all the largest 500 companies.”<sup>3</sup>

“The methodology for global financial dominance is actually quite simple: America imports many more goods than it exports, and so the (freshly printed) dollars flow out of the US to end up in the central banks of other countries. As the US refuses to pay its debt in gold, central banks are forced to invest dollars in bonds and other financial instruments. The result is a US-dominated global debt system that causes a boom of the US economy at the expense of all the others.”<sup>4</sup>

The unrestrained proliferation of the dollar and the resulting ever-increasing debt bubble (32 trillion dollars) are making the dollar an ever-increasing financial risk. The bubble would burst if the world no longer accepted the dollar. Only dollar dominance enables the global financial syndicate to spend money so extravagant-

ly. This dollar hegemony is maintained by the global US military presence. In this way, almost all countries in the world are in debt bondage to the US Financial Syndicate; they mostly also accommodate occupying troops or US bases, that secure the debt bondage (Ramstein in Germany, Camp Bondsteel in Kosovo, and others).

Time and again, however, individual countries have tried to break out of the dollar empire debt bondage and to use their resources for their own national welfare instead of the global financial syndicate. Economic and financial wars in various forms have constantly been waged against such efforts:

The financial syndicate has its own rating agencies which monopolise the evaluation of the creditworthiness of states. A country that is downgraded must pay higher interest rates.

- Financial blockades, for example against Venezuela or Iran, prevent all financial transactions with a country and practically exclude it from the world monetary system, in order to render it insolvent.
- Economic sanctions block a country’s import or export.
- Price agreements (such as artificially cut imports) reduce the solvency of unruly states until they give up.
- Legal actions against competitors of Anglo-Saxon banks or corporations are intended to reduce their competitiveness – see US actions against VW (23 billion dollars) or *Deutsche Bank* (12 billion dollars).

– At the same time, a globally operating US espionage system ensures that all digital systems worldwide are controlled, evaluated, skimmed off for the benefit of the USA and subjected to US digital rule.

– The ideology of globalisation is acting in favour of the “four freedoms” (freedom of capital, products, services, and labour mobility), so as to break up national structures, social systems, and democracies, in favour of the dollar empire.

The global dominance of the dollar has to be secured militarily. “Wherever it sees its interests threatened, the banking cartel sends the US military, which devours more than half of the world’s entire military budget.”<sup>5</sup> Wherever the US dollar hegemony is questioned, first the above-mentioned means of financial or economic war are used to attempt to restore subservience. If countries or governments remain stubborn, however, if they no longer want to sell their raw materials for dollars or even no longer accept the dollar itself, the financial syndicate demands the deployment of the US military:

- In November 2000, *Saddam Hussein* did not want to accept dollars for Iraqi oil any longer; he also accepted the euro, thereby devaluing the dollar.
- In 2003 Iraq was invaded because of its rejection of the dollar dictatorship, and so the threat to the dollar was eliminated.

Similarly, Libyan leader *al-Gaddafi* tried to stop his oil trade from being settled in dollars. Uprisings and a military intervention were organised against him. After the assassination of Gaddafi and the destruction of his system of government, Libya was reintegrated into the dollar empire.

– Russia was no longer prepared to accept the preference of the US dollar over other currencies and set up its own payment system (*PRO100*) outside the international banking cartel. *Putin* also knocked Russian oil and gas reserves out of the hands of the US oil cartel. Since then, Putin and Russia have been the main enemies of the dollar empire; Russia is being surrounded by military forces and fought with all means of financial and commercial warfare.

– For more than five years Iran has been the target of the US syndicate’s monetary, trade and legal attacks, because this country also wanted to sell its oil not solely for dollars, but also for payment in all other currencies. Brutal

## “20 years after ...”

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eastern Europe, directed against a possible Russian influence there.

Also 20 years later, those responsible at the time do not want to be reminded of their crimes, and that the truth about this war should be hidden from the general public.

### The consequence: an erosion of the rule of law and legal awareness

But the bitter consequence of this attitude is a fundamental, almost irreparable erosion of the rule of law and legal consciousness – not to mention the violation of human conscience. The current lack of an honest and equal public debate culture, especially in Germany, has its origin here. The title of a WDR documentary film about the war in Yugoslavia in 1999, broadcast in 2001, and the German role in it, “Es begann mit einer Lüge” (It began with a lie), in its formulation also became a prediction for further wars. The

lies of the responsible politicians, military, media etc. around the war in 1999 were followed by many more war lies, and the lying has not stopped since. And where the lies have become all too obvious, attempts are made to hush up the truth. One does not talk about it ... as if problems could be solved by repressing them.

### The truth must be on the table

If a society, if a state, if German politics are to recover, the truth must be on the table, the whole truth, officially and for the general public. The decision-makers of the time must be made accountable, i.e. brought before a court. Serious war crimes are not time-barred. The victims of war must be compensated, as far as this is possible at all. The attacked state has a right to have the costs of the war and its consequences borne by the perpetrators of the war. The NATO states involved at that time must be liable for this, because the war criminals acted in their name. Make no mistake: peace without justice will not work. •

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**"From currency to a military war"**

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sanctions against all potential buyers and trading partners have excluded the country from the world financial system and the world economy. As it still does not bend, the threat of military action is becoming more and more brutal.

- China is also disengaging from the dollar by building up a competing currency system (Asian Development Bank); it no longer wants to tolerate the dominance of the dollar, and is thus increasingly becoming an enemy state for the Atlantic Financial Syndicate.

Hillary Clinton had promised in her election campaign "to want to start war against Russia in Ukraine and Syria by March", but then corrected herself that this could not be accomplished before May 2018. It is fortunate that she was not elected.

But America is still under double pressure with its back against the wall:

- The effect of unrestrained dollar pressure has led to a historically unique US debt pillar of 32 trillion dollars, which can collapse at any time if other important countries no longer accept the dollar, if gambled-away banks belonging to the financial system collapse or over-indebted countries become insolvent. The dollar empire has so far tried to cap these dangers with zero interest loans, and this course of action is becoming more and more difficult to sustain. It is certain that a leading currency (dollar) which is increased without restraint will ultimately be devaluated. Confidence is waning. The financial syndicate is therefore already engineering a ban on cash and the replacement of currency by digital money.
- The dollar empire can only be sustained by a constant boom. This presupposes high capacity utilisation of the economy. The US economy, however, is 70 % arms-relevant, so that it will only boom as long as armament production is booming. And this only booms if it can sell armaments, i.e. if there are enough wars in the world. US military equipment production is over

600 billion euros, ten times as high as Russia's; and amounts to more than half of all global military equipment production. The US President orders all satellite states to arm (by purchasing US armaments), but also sells armaments unrestrainedly to countries ruled by dictators (Saudi Arabia).

- After NATO and Ukraine rearmament and after the end of the Syrian war, the US defence industry therefore needs a new sales boost for the economic boom in the USA, i.e. a new war.

It is true that American policy always claims that Russia, China, Iran or other countries are bellicose, and that from them, danger is threatening. Yet arms expenditures and worldwide acts of aggression (sanctions, punishments and others) committed by the USA, show it is in particular the USA which is bellicose and ready for war. And they repeatedly push forward NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg and politicians from the satellite countries (*Maas, von der Leyen*) to agitate against Russia and threaten it with war.

As before the First World War, we are therefore in a situation in which a small event could trigger another global conflagration. Dictatorships and empires have always used war as a last resort when they were at their wits' end. If the US economy crashed due to a lack of demand for weapons, or if the debt bubble of the dollar empire should burst, the world financial syndicate hegemony and the world power US would be on the point of collapse, a point where politicians no longer know what to do next and where they would possibly resort to the ultimate.

Already we hear voices from the USA that war against Iran would have to begin in summer, since preparations had been completed.

It is therefore not understandable that the world does not take note of such war risks, that there are no peace marches, as in the past on much smaller occasions, demanding peace in all countries and that the media controlled by the financial syndicate (e.g. *Springer* press) are, without any opposition, allowed to agitate against Russia and Iran instead of demanding peace.

We need a "revolt of all peace lovers" to bring the demand for peace and an awareness of the danger of war to all peoples. If we remain inactive and do not defend ourselves in time, an irresponsible USA and NATO policy could, against our will, lead us back into a war impasse.

Not only is it high time to warn against these developments, but we must also do it more loudly!

- <sup>1</sup> JP Morgen Chase, City Group, Wells Fargo, Deutsche Bank, BNP, Barclays
- <sup>2</sup> Goldman Sachs, Rockefeller, Lehman, Rothschild, Warburg, Lazard and Soaps
- <sup>3</sup> Orzechowski, Peter. *Durch globales Chaos in die Neue Weltordnung* (Through Global Chaos to the New World Order), Rottenburg 2016
- <sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, p. 61
- <sup>5</sup> *ibid.*, p. 62  
(Translation *Current Concerns*)

## Current Concerns

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

*Publisher:* Zeit-Fragen Cooperative

*Editor:* Erika Vögel, Eva-Maria Föllmer-Müller

*Address:* Current Concerns,

P.O. Box, CH-8044 Zurich

*Phone:* +41 (0)44 350 65 50

*Fax:* +41 (0)44 350 65 51

*E-Mail:* CurrentConcerns@zeit-fragen.ch

*Subscription details:*

published regularly electronically as PDF file

Annual subscription rate of

SFr. 40,-, € 30,-, £ 25,-, \$ 40,-

for the following countries:

Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brunei, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hongkong, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Qatar, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, USA

Annual subscription rate of

SFr. 20,-, € 15,-, £ 12,50, \$ 20,-

for all other countries.

*Account:* Postscheck-Konto: PC 87-644472-4

The editors reserve the right to shorten letters to the editor. Letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of *Current Concerns*.

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## “The ultra-left is playing a decisive role in spreading violence”

Interview by Alexandre Devecchio (“Le Figaro”) with Eric Delbecque\*, France



Eric Delbecque  
(picture [www.ericdelbecque.fr](http://www.ericdelbecque.fr))

restaurants and kiosks.

Various Swiss media have sweepingly spoken of violent yellow jackets. This does not correspond to reality. In the French media, a clear separation was rightfully made in the reporting between the yellow vests and the groups of the Black Block and of the extreme left (also having come from neighbouring countries) who had temporarily been in hiding in the demonstration. The published analyses were almost unanimous in their opinion that the police leadership had failed because the police had not been able to prevent the massive destruction. The opposition parties have therefore demanded the resignation of Christophe Castaner, the politically responsible Minister of the Interior. President Macron decided not to withdraw his confidence in him, but he dismissed the head of the police prefecture and another police chief. In the interview below, a French expert on internal security has his say.

Alexandre Devecchio: Did the violence perpetrated during the Paris demonstra-

\* Eric Delbecque is a historian, internal security expert and author of the book “Les Ingouvernables, de l’extrême gauche utopiste à l’ultra-gauche violente” [The ungovernable – from the utopian extremist left to violent ultra-left] (2019).

*jpv.* According to the information from the French Minister of the Interior, Castaner, [reported to] the parliamentary Commission of the Senators, the following damage was done in the surroundings of the Champs-Élysées on Saturday, 16 March 2019,

- 27 businesses were robbed,
- more than 130 stores were more or less destroyed,
- fires were started in 79 places and 5 buildings burned,
- 30 police officers, cops (constable on patrol) and firemen were injured, which was the highest amount of injuries since the beginning of the Saturday demonstrations of the Yellow Vests.

*jpv.* On Saturday 16 March 2019, extreme acts of violence were perpetrated on the margins of the demonstration on the Champs-Élysées in Paris. The media spread images of a multitude of broken shop windows, robbed shops, burned houses, res-

tion [Act XVIII of 16.3.19] come from radicalized yellow vests, or do they bear the signature of the ultra-left, which you describe in your book?

Eric Delbecque: The ultra-left plays a crucial role in the spread of violence. I believe that the expression “radicalised yellow vests” does not correspond to reality. We are currently confronted with three types of violent people: ultra-left troops, violent people wearing a yellow vest in order to be wrapped up in a political cloak and plundering vandals [“casseurs”]. There are probably also individual elements from ultra-right groups, but they are marginal.

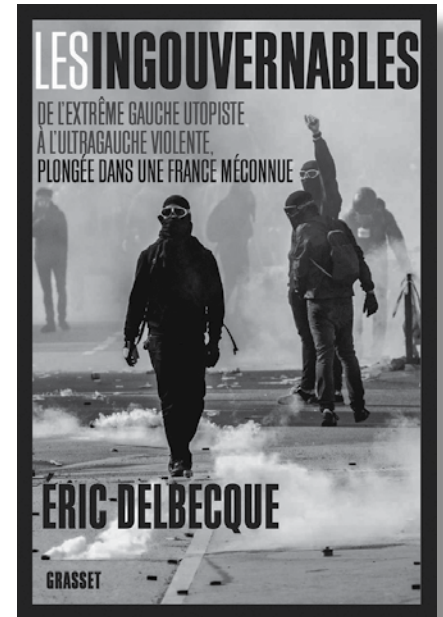
Are there also Zadists<sup>1</sup> and representatives of the Black Blocks? What is the difference?

Black Blocks are not a movement, but a mode of operation. Their aim is to challenge the police and to conduct a genuine information war, the primary strategic objectives of which are: to prove their fighting power, to provoke the police and the gendarmerie in the hope of slip-ups that can serve as justification for the unfair thesis of “police violence”. Let us take this opportunity to point out that this concept makes no sense in our democracy. Sometimes, the code of conduct is violated (and punished then too): but calling policemen and gendarmes violent thugs is an enormous stupidity. Under the hoods and the black face masks there are militant ultra-leftists, who may be or used to be Zadists, violent anti-speciesists [from the animal liberation movement], autonomous anarchists, intellectual heirs of revolutionary syndicalism, and supporters of the diverse currents of the ultra-left protest galaxy.

Why aren’t these small groups known to the police forces arrested and detained?

Some are identified, others succeed in not getting caught by the “radar”, others are new recruits. This political propensity to violence should be recorded much more precisely. The whole thing suffers from that: In recent years we have concentrated on Islamist terrorism, which is quite understandable, but at the same time we have underestimated the damage potential of other radical groups, especially the ultra-left. We must realise that any political radicalism (radical Islamism, ultra-left and ultra-right) is a great threat to our country.

How do you define these groups ideologically? You call them “ungovernable” or “hippunk”<sup>2</sup>. Why?



ISBN 978-2-24681-733

Their first characteristic is the rejection of any authority, including that of the state itself. They reject not only capitalism, but any “dominance”. They do not want to “obey” anyone. This is how the Zadist project can be explained: The “autonomous zone to be defended” is a “zone of temporary autonomy” that is to become definitive ... This space is about escaping the laws of the republic. It is a dream of extreme self-government. Everyone has his own myths! The problem is that some of these activists are willing to use violence in order to achieve their goal: the multiplication of the ZADs and the weakening of the state or of power in general.

For these people their grouping or “community” is more important than the individual or the nation?

This happens inevitably when one rejects the foundation of the nation state. The absence of the state, anarchy, is not synonymous with emancipation. The “ungovernable” finally succeed in forming groups that place their conceptions of the collective above the individual parts of society and the individual people.

Riots in Grenoble, violence in Paris ... The “lost territories of the Republic” and the “autonomous zones to be liberated” (ZAD) seem to be multiplying? In your book you mention the spectre of a “spotted France” [“France leopard”]. What does that mean?



# More direct democracy in Germany (part 1)

## Referenda (popular votes)

by Christian Fischer, Cologne

Sometimes “representative” democracy and “direct” democracy are seen as opposing and only the latter is qualified as “true” democracy. It is not recognised that direct democratic possibilities also presuppose a parliamentary system and that “direct” democracies must and are always “mixed forms”. A second misconception is favoured by theories according to which “representative” democracies are not and never have been democracies anyway, because they were designed by the economically powerful solely for their interests and in this sense would always be functioning anti-democratically.<sup>1</sup> Here, however, no distinction is made between, on the one hand, the institutions historically created for many different reasons, which as well support democratic decision-making processes, and, on the other hand, their actual use – or even their malpractice.

The aim of this multi-part article is to show, contrary to these misconceptions, how real democracy in Germany can become more direct. The focus is less on the actual current malpractice and more on the existing institutions that are already at the sovereign’s and at the citizenry’s disposal, as well as on the opportunities of their direct democratic further development. The first part deals with the centrepiece of a direct democracy: the referendum.

### The reality

There is “direct democracy” in Germany, i.e. the possibility for referendums, at the municipal level (here the referendum is called “Bürgerentscheid”, citizen’s decision), in almost all rural districts (except so far in Baden-Wuerttemberg and Hesse) and in all federal states (here the state

Federal states	Equity quorum So many % of voters must sign the petition for a referendum	Assent quorum So many % of voters must vote in the referendum
Baden-Wuerttemberg	16,7	33,3
Bavaria	10	0
Berlin	7	25
Brandenburg	ca. 3,8	25
Bremen	5	20
Hamburg	5	0
Hesse	20	0
Mecklemburg-Western Pomerania	ca. 8,9	33,3
Lower-Saxony	10	25
North Rhine-Westphalia	8	15
Rhineland-Palatinate	ca. 10	25
Saarland	7	25
Saxony	ca. 13,2	0
Saxony-Anhalt	11	25
Schleswig-Holstein	ca. 3,6	15
Thuringia	8–10	25

Quorums in petition of referendums and in referendums in the German federal states. (Table wikipedia an cf.)

constitutions speak of the “plebiscite”), where the citizens can directly issue legislative proposals into the state parliaments and possibly vote on these legislative proposals. However, there are still no referendums at the national level, although the Constitution stipulates that state power can be exercised by the people in elections and *plebiscites* (Art. 20).

In order to allow plebiscites at the national level, Article 76 of the German Constitution would have to be amended, because this article determines who can introduce legislative initiatives into the legislature – the sovereign as a direct actor

was unfortunately “forgotten”. This is regulated differently, i.e. more directly, in the state constitutions. In the German Bundestag there have time and again been initiatives heading in this direction, some nearly successful. The coalition agreement of the Federal Government of 2018 contains for the first time a corresponding declaration of intent (Item XIII 1.), the implementation of which, however, is not yet known.

At the state level, there are different levels of quorums for initiating votes and different levels of quorums for the necessary approval in the event of implementation. Only in Bavaria, Hesse, Hamburg and Saxony there is no quorum on the votes once an initiative has got voted on. There is uniformity at all levels in the provision that direct financial issues cannot be the subjects of referendums.

The existing voting possibilities were and are used by the citizens, to a varying extent the states – according to the differently high hurdles. But over the decades there have been thousands of votes in Germany at state and municipal level.

At the state level, 17% of all plebiscites were successful.<sup>2</sup> Better known examples are the recently successful initiative in Bavaria to protect bees and thus also food, or

### “The ultra-left is playing a ...”

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The territories no longer controlled by the Republic [the State] tend to become more and more “autonomous”. We’re gradually giving up our right to take them back one day ... The released message is: “If you are able to keep the republican [state] authority in bay long enough, you can ultimately become independent of general law.” “Spotted France” is the future of a nation that accepts that its territory will become a socio-political and ideological Emmental cheese: a Salafi enclave here, a Zadist community there and a district

that will become a criminal “no-go area” outside the legal system. The very opposite of the civilisation of which Europe has dreamed for centuries ...

Source: © *Le Figaro* from 18.3.19 (Translation *Current Concerns*)

<sup>1</sup> Zadists: ZAD is the abbreviation of “zone d’autonomie à défendre” [autonomous zone to be defended], which means urban or rural areas occupied by militant forces (zadists). [translator’s note]  
<sup>2</sup> Hipunk: The convergence of romantic hippie utopia and of punk radicalism. This direction renounces the Marxist revolution from above – the dictatorship of the proletariat – and uses a new offensive tactic: undermining state authority from below by multiplying “lost territories of the republic” (no-go-areas). [translator’s note]

### "More direct democracy in Germany"

continued from page 9

an earlier vote on the protection of non-smokers; a few years ago there was a vote in Baden-Wuerttemberg on the Stuttgart 21 railway station project; in Hamburg years ago there was an important vote on educational policy – and much more, which many people who are not directly affected often do not even notice.

Incidentally, it is also possible to vote at federal level: on the structure of the federal states. This possibility was also used from the 1950s to the 1990s and led in part to new federal states (Saarland, Baden-Wuerttemberg) and in part to the rejection of new rearrangements (Rhineland-Palatinate, Lower Saxony, Baden-Wuerttemberg, Berlin, Brandenburg).

Not a few political decisions have, by the way, already been taken anticipating an alleged citizens' will in order to avoid "impending" votes. Examples from some more recent times: A few years ago, Cologne's City Council decided against the construction of a new playhouse; in 2018, the newly elected NRW State Government decided to reintroduce the nine-year grammar school, in each case before the collected signatures were even submitted. This is not a glorious chapter with regard to the democratic behaviour of the elected representatives, because it just hindered the sovereign to vote.

#### Some perspectives

Direct democratic traditions in Germany do actually exist, but are expandable. The quorums should be lowered at state and municipal level. An admission quorum of about 5% of the voters may be justified and already requires a broad discussion between the initiators and their fellow citizens on the subject. But if an initiative is authorised, no minimum number of "yes" votes should be required. Rather, there should be a neutral official support for the democratically legitimate cause in order to make it known. It is the freedom of everyone to participate or not.

At the federal level, a simple amendment to the Constitution and an implementing law based on it must create the possibility of direct voting. Then the citizens could also vote on the matters for which the Federation is responsible ac-

ording to Art. 73 of the Constitution. For example, issues relating to foreign policy and foreign trade, including war operations and arms trade! Proposals for a simple amendment of the Constitution Law have been around for a long time<sup>3</sup>, but they must be developed further. What is also important is a perspective that has been missing so far:

The "Mehr Demokratie" (More Democracy) association, which has been working for many years with concrete proposals for conducting votes at federal level, also does not support citizens being able to vote, for example, on fiscal or direct financial issues. But why shouldn't citizens be allowed to vote at all levels on all matters on which their MPs also decide? It is claimed that a citizen is not competent to decide. A glance at Switzerland, where this is possible, proves the opposite.<sup>4</sup> Even a glance at the behaviour of our MPs would suffice to give rise to quite some doubts on the professional competence of those entitled to vote so far.

Equally important is the fact that public debate often lacks the perspective that referendums cannot be a substitute for legislative parliamentary work. Votes are always yes-no decisions on a more or less narrowly defined subject, which often influences other subjects that are not covered by this vote. And it is by no means the case that the people only have one opinion on a subject that they express unequivocally when asked. The history of agricultural legislation in Switzerland is a good example of this.<sup>5</sup> It shows how voting initiatives by small farmers, large farmers, environmentalists, animal rights activists, etc., lead into different directions and had by no means the same effect on the same subject. They required mediation for years and decades. Such mediations must be carried out by parliamentarians in cooperation with the initiators of the vote. In a political culture such as Switzerland, there is (even) greater openness on all sides than has been the case here (so far). In this field our political culture, which loves disputes so much, still has lot to learn on all sides. Such debates would be an important element of popular education.

Voting, as in democracy in general, is not about the final victory of a majority over a minority (or even an active minority over a silent majority); it is not even

about whether "the will of the people" is implemented or suppressed; it is about rules and institutions with which fair mediations and ultimately decisions can be found for the various opinions and interests of the people. And it is about the participation of the citizens.

We must make use of the opportunities already available to us as a historical heritage and, where appropriate and possible, improve them. For this we need not only wise insights from an analytical elevated perspective, which sometimes only confirm the maliciousness of the rulers or the stupidity of the ruled, but also the will to act here and now. That is our task as citizens and sovereigns. To voluntarily and without necessity assume responsibility for the shaping of the community in the sense of the common good is an intellectual achievement that requires above all historical education. And it is an empathetic achievement that requires a shared sense of community (Gemeinschaftsgefühl). Unfortunately, our constitutional practice has favoured political personnel with rather different motives. Therefore, to claim the end of our democracy is a convenient "explanation" for not participating in the "system", but this is utterly wrong. The end will only be reached if we do not make use of what we have and can develop further.

Institutional structures and legal regulations that facilitate the participation of citizens in political life will also promote this participation. And a more direct participation of citizens in political life will complicate tendencies among political actors who are not oriented towards the common good and the honest mediation of various interests. That is the perspective for a sustainable democracy. •

<sup>1</sup> An example for this is: Mausfeld, Rainer. Phänomene eines "Tiefen Staates" als Erscheinungsbild des autoritären Kapitalismus, in: Mies, Wernicke (Hg.). *Fassadendemokratie und tiefer Staat*, Wien 2017

<sup>2</sup> Rudzio, Wolfgang. *Das politische System der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*. Wiesbaden 2019, p. 295

<sup>3</sup> [www.mehr-demokratie.de/gesetzentwurf/](http://www.mehr-demokratie.de/gesetzentwurf/)

<sup>4</sup> Wüthrich, Werner. [www.zeit-fragen.ch/en/numbers/2017/no-27-14-november-2017/taxes-and-finances-in-switzerland-determined-by-the-people.html](http://www.zeit-fragen.ch/en/numbers/2017/no-27-14-november-2017/taxes-and-finances-in-switzerland-determined-by-the-people.html)

<sup>5</sup> Wüthrich, Werner. [www.zeit-fragen.ch/en/numbers/2017/no-2223-23-september-2017/agriculture-and-direct-democracy-part-4.html](http://www.zeit-fragen.ch/en/numbers/2017/no-2223-23-september-2017/agriculture-and-direct-democracy-part-4.html)

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

# Work – necessary evil or fulfilment and self-realisation

by Marita Koch

“We have trouble finding qualified and motivated employees who are committed to the company and willing to work on Saturdays.” That’s what Mr and Ms *Bieker* say, owners of a medium-sized family business in a major German city. They run a studio for high-quality kitchens and are known for their expertise and reliability in fulfilling even tricky and unusual customer wishes. This requires both high-quality craftsmanship and commercial expertise and experience. Recently, they were looking for a new employee to work in consulting, planning and sales. A qualified young man applied. Mr and Ms *Bieker* would have liked to employ him. But there were some obstacles: The young man’s salary expectations were many times higher than the salary of the company owners. Furthermore, the applicant did not want to work on Saturdays in any case. But this is difficult for a retail company whose customers seek advice on Saturdays. In addition, the applicant wanted to work one day at home office and announced already in the interview that he had four children, and if one of them was ill, he would stay at home. The list of demands is incomplete here. The business owners did not employ the applicant.

## Fewer and fewer craftsmen

Not only in retail companies you will encounter such claims. There is also a short-

age of skilled workers in other sectors: according to kitchen specialists, painters and tilers have to be booked ten weeks in advance if a kitchen is to be replaced. This is the case throughout the republic. Other trades also lack people; for example, bakers and butchers are becoming fewer and fewer. In numbers: Between 2008 and 2017, the number of bakeries and butchers in Germany fell by 20%. Between 2014 and 2018 there were almost 58,000 vacant apprenticeship places in the food trade. A large, long-established family business that manufactures high-quality electrical household appliances has difficulties finding technicians and engineers because it is based in Gütersloh, North Rhine-Westphalia, and Gütersloh is not considered “hip”. Companies in Munich or Berlin are different, they find personnel easier because the cities are “chic and sexy” and offer party qualities.

How does this fit in with the many working poor that also exist in Germany? People who have to do two jobs in order to make ends meet or top-ups who don’t earn enough in spite of a full-time job and have to top up with welfare? I learn that such people have extremely badly paid jobs: Warehousing, temporary help, unskilled labour. They are poorly trained people who also lack the basic skills to practise a trade. This is despite the fact that Ger-

many is not a developing country, actually has a good school education and – like Switzerland and Austria – has a dual vocational education and training.

“Craft – that’s too exhausting for us” was the recent headline of the German “Bild”.<sup>1</sup> The situation in Switzerland is not much different. The classic craft trades are no longer trendy among young people, says *Armin Broger* of the *Thurgau Trade Association*<sup>2</sup>. *Dennis Reichhard* of the *Thurgau Chamber of Industry and Commerce* adds: “We are increasingly having problems to find and recruit enough good skilled workers. Our commercial enterprises are suffering from the migration of young, qualified skilled workers to the metropolises.”<sup>3</sup>

In order to understand this situation – and to consider whether and how one could take countermeasures – different strands have to be brought together. More and more, the gap is widening between well-trained people who can and do make demands and those whose school education is barely enough for auxiliary jobs. This raises the question of the quality of school education. Despite massive investment in education, an increasing number of people is less qualified. *Current Con-*

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New publication by Zeit-Fragen publishing house

## The Cooperative Idea – A Cultural Heritage of Humanity

In November 2016, the “cooperative idea” was declared part of the Intangible Cultural World Heritage of UNESCO. With the adoption the idea is to be protected and at the same time to be brought more strongly into the consciousness again as economic model. The impulse to declare the cooperative idea a World Heritage came in 2014 from *Dietmar Berger*, the long-time president of the Middle German Cooperative Association. The *Raiffeisen Association* and the *Schulze-Delitzsch-Society* joined this idea and jointly submitted the application to the UNESCO.

In order to honour the recognition of the cooperative idea as a World Cultural Heritage, the cooperative *Zeit-Fragen* organised two events as part of the Leipzig Book Fair 2017.

Participants in the panel discussions included *Dietmar Berger*, long-standing president of the Middle German Cooperative Association, Professor Dr *Markus Hanisch*, holder of the *Raiffeisen* professorship at the Humboldt University in



Berlin (“Economics of Rural Cooperatives”), Professor Dr *Richard Werner*, Director of the Center for Banking, Finance

and Sustainable Development, and Dr *Eva-Maria Föllmer-Müller*, editor and psychologist of the *Current Concerns* newspaper and *Jean-Paul Vuilleumier*, president of the *Zeit-Fragen Cooperative*.

The anthropologically founded ethical basics of the cooperative idea are still relevant today and should be preserved and further developed for future generations. The UN had already proclaimed in 2012 the “Year of Cooperatives” and thus honoured the cooperatives with their 800 million members in over 100 countries worldwide. Cooperatives are working to reduce poverty, create jobs and promote social inclusion. Reason enough to discuss the cooperatives, their historical, social-ethical, economic and practical basics. (Foreword to the brochure)

The 70-page brochure [in German] can be ordered from the *Genossenschaft Zeit-Fragen*, Postfach, CH-8044 Zurich; e-mail: [abo@zeit-fragen.ch](mailto:abo@zeit-fragen.ch), for CHF 10.- plus postage.

**"Work – necessary evil or ..."**

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*cerns* has repeatedly and extensively written about the reasons for this.

**Fun oriented into the professional environment?**

The question arises as to the attitude towards work among the young generation. As a teacher of 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grades, you accompany students into professional life. Thereby you are supported by text books. However, such teaching aids today focus on areas that are more likely to hinder a reasonable entry into professional life. They occupy the pupils with an intensive examination of their own sensitivities and needs. The focus is less on the question: What demands does the profession put on me? Rather: Which demands do I put on the profession? Where do I feel comfortable, what am I enjoying, are the people nice, do I have enough vacation and not too long working hours, do I earn enough, what is the prestige of the profession like? Of course, a young person must enjoy his or her job, that's not the point. It is a question of weighting. If young people instructed in such a manner are supposed to describe the first day in the company in an internship report, one often reads the answer: "Everyone was nice to me." Many people cannot say much about the company because they do not pay attention to it. Often one hardly learns what the company actually does. But you almost always find out when there was a break and when work finished. When they have to hold on to a job for a longer period of time without any variety, many complain about boredom. In this way, the students continue what they have already learned at school: Making demands. Not their performance, their contribution is important, but that one is nice to them and does not ask too much of them and that they have fun. They come to school in the morning, they are taught by the teachers, they are entertained, they participate when they are interested, they complain when they find it "boring" or when they do not understand, etc. In any case, they feel little responsibility for what happens at school. Often they have not been made familiar with the idea that they are also the ones that matter – and that performance brings far more joy and satisfaction than passive consumption. The child and youth psychiatrist *Michael Winterhoff* warns: "It can be foreseen that an increasing number of young people, who are not able to work, will continue to burden the already overworked and empty social security funds in the future. However, the even greater social risk potential will lie in the fact that in the near future an ever-increasing number of young people will lack all sorts of social skills. These people live purely fun oriented, only for the moment,

do not waste any thought on tomorrow. They are not able to take responsibility, neither for themselves nor for other people, neither in a private relationship nor in a professional context. Like young children, they always demand everything for themselves and thus place a considerable burden on social peace."<sup>4</sup> *Sarah Konrath*, a US psychologist, published a study in 2011 in which she was able to prove, using standard tests, that today's adolescents have about 40 % less empathy than their colleagues 20 or 30 years ago, the result of excessive media consumption.<sup>5</sup> And – I might add – young people, when they are fobbed off with fun culture and media consumption, do not have the satisfaction that they can achieve something, that they are really important for others, for a common work. Real satisfaction cannot be consumed, it does not come from the smartphone and not from the amusement park. It comes from effort, from overcoming difficulties with one's own strength, from making an important contribution to a common cause, which is really important, which is reflected in reality, not only in school grades.

**Self-confidence by achievements in real life**

A student, 13 years old, helped as a roofer. The roof was completely covered when it began to rain. Immediately all the craftsmen formed a chain to give the new roof tiles from one to another and so they covered the roof at full speed – the young man in the middle, an important link in the chain. What a feeling, when the work was completed together! Such experiences make strong, wake joy and responsibility. From time to time a student in a longer practical training makes the experience of being truly required, he can make a real contribution to the adult world, not just a pedagogically arranged one, he is indispensable to the business. A young woman who in a long internship in a bookstore, is completely tired in the evening, because she was constantly in demand during the Christmas business. A young man, who makes the experience of being able to advise customers in a sports shop. Child and adolescent psychologist *Allan Guggenbühl* states: "At work, the adolescents or children experience that they are important."<sup>6</sup>

When such a young man comes back to school, he often seems to be matured for years. He is different in life, learns differently, knows why. So it seems like a crime, to help young people learning always by "fun". You do not take them seriously by asking them always for their "needs". Nor they are taken seriously when they are held with computer programmes on the leash, even if its called "independent learning". To take them seriously means to give them responsibilities that are appropriate to their age, so that they can feel like a significant

and not merely consumptive and dependent member of the community. Winterhoff focuses on the forming of relationship between parents and children, between teachers and students.

A cause for the immature behaviour of many young people he sees in the efforts of many parents and teachers to maintain a collaborative relationship with the children instead of meeting them as adults. "Parents are not primarily friends, partners and mentors of their toddlers, but their guardian angel, leading figure and limitation in a positive sense."<sup>7</sup> In school too, the relationship is the most important, says Winterhoff, criticising: "Teachers are often only allowed to be mentors who are no longer responsible for teaching matters but who are supposed to watch the youngest learning everything themselves."<sup>8</sup>

**Child labour? Child labour!**

Guggenbühl advocates a new way of child labour. He makes a difference to the child labour of earlier times, where child labour was often necessary due to the great distress of the families. Under miserable working conditions the children often suffered. Therefore child labour has been banned finally. Today, according to Guggenbühl, "we have exceeded the target. Children are forced to unemployment. Not being able to work and being allowed to work only on the computer – that is a devaluation of older children and adolescents. They feel degraded because they bring nothing and do nothing for the community: a degradation and not a privilege."<sup>9</sup> Impressively he describes a school in Kyoto where students are actively involved in caring for the school, welcoming guests, and so forth.

According to him the students of this school "had a great self-assurance and competence!" He advocates that children from the age of nine should work for one or two days a week and earn money. He makes concrete suggestions as to what kind of work fits for which age, how this work could be accompanied and regulated, so that the children benefit and not get harmed.<sup>10</sup>

A proposal that deserves serious discussion. And we also need to rethink and change our parenting and schooling behaviour, if we want to enable our youth to have a truly fulfilling occupation, and if we want our society to have good professionals and a functioning economy. •

<sup>1</sup> "Bild" from 16.2.2019

<sup>2</sup> *Thurgauer Zeitung* from 6 February

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Winterhoff, Michael, *Persönlichkeiten statt Tyrannen. Oder: Wie junge Menschen in Leben und Beruf ankommen*. Munich 2010, p.15

<sup>5</sup> Konrath, Sarah, *Changes in Dispositional Empathy in American College Students Over Time*. 2001

<sup>6</sup> Guggenbühl, Allan, *Für mein Kind nur das Beste*, Zurich 2018, p. 206

<sup>7</sup> Winterhoff, loc. cit., p. 162

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 160

<sup>9</sup> Guggenbühl, loc. cit., p. 198

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

# Mary Ainsworth taught us how to understand our children and ourselves

by Klaus and Karin Grossmann\*

21 March 2019 marked the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of *Mary Ainsworth*, born Salter. She was a psychologist from Toronto, born 1 December 1913 in Glendale, Ohio, USA. She would have been 106 years old in 2019. Two coincidences determined her scientific career, which have fundamentally changed the way of our knowledge and our adequate and enlightened way to deal with our children today. First, in 1950 she accompanied her husband *Leonard* to London, where he took up a PhD position. Mary was a wife with no formal employment. In an ad in *The London Times*, a certain *John Bowlby*, a psychoanalyst, advertised a research position for a project on the impact of early mother-child separations on personality development.

## John Bowlby

John Bowlby, 6 years older than Mary Ainsworth, was in the final stages of a comprehensive report for the *World Health Organisation* (WHO) in Geneva on the importance of maternal care for the mental development of children who were separated from their parents mostly due to political events. The report was published in 1951; it appeared in German only 22 years later, in 1973. A version of 1965 that was easy for laypersons to read experienced numerous new editions, including the later German translation (see *Grossmann*, 2018). On Mary Ainsworth this did not seem to have made any particular impression at first. After three years, she left Bowlby's working group at the end of 1953 and went with her husband to Kampala, Uganda – the second coincidence – again without having a job there herself.

\*Klaus E. Grossmann, Prof Dr phil. Dipl. Psych., Emeritus of the University of Regensburg since 2003. Full Professor for Psychology in Bielefeld (since 1970) and in Regensburg (since 1977).

Karin Grossmann, Dr phil, Dipl. Psych., Senior Scientist, associate of the University of Regensburg. Research stays among others in the USA, Japan, Israel, Egypt, Papua New Guinea. Numerous publications in German and English, for example: Karin Grossmann, Klaus E. Grossmann. "Bindungen – das Gefüge psychischer Sicherheit" (Attachments – the structure of mental security). Stuttgart 2012.

Together they received the *Bowlby/Ainsworth Award* of the New York Attachment Consortiums in 2006 and the *Arnold-Lucius-Gesell-Prize* of the "Theodor-Hellbrügge-Gesellschaft" in 2007.

The married couple Grossmann is one of the most renowned researchers in the field of attachment and human development. Since 1973, they have jointly devoted themselves to longitudinal and intercultural research on attachment and the synthesis of attachment theory and the development of culture and language in the child.

In London she had been a colleague of *James Robertson*, a former stoker and man for all technical matters at the *Anna Freud Institute*. Under the aegis of *Anna Freud*, he had developed into an outstanding observer of small children who, after involuntary separation from their mothers, mourned apathetically and were unable to cope adaptively and healthily with the usual demands of a children's home. His written reports were of unprecedented quality. A revolutionary film about *Laura*, a two-year-old girl in hospital, at the time without consolation from her parents due to strict visiting regulations, marked the end of the institutional separation of children and mothers. A movement emerged, "Child in Hospital", which was actively taken up in numerous countries and regional associations. Other films about the suffering of unintentionally separated small children in a children's home ("John") and in the domestic care of *Joyce Robertson* ("Kate", "Thomas", "Jane") still impress today (Robertson & Robertson, 1975).

## Ainsworth's early findings in Toronto

In Toronto, Mary Ainsworth had worked clinically and on the projective Rorschach test. She was influenced by the "security theory" of her teacher *William Blatz*. It says: Early in development, family security forms an essential basis. A child needs this in order to develop new skills and interests, otherwise it is all too easily unsettled and thereby impaired. In her later observations and empirical studies, Mary Ainsworth has clarified this and demonstrated that mental security arises essentially from the quality of parental response to children's signals of needs and interests. These means of expression are part of the disposition of natural history of every healthy human new born to communicate in infancy long before speaking. The more reliable the behaviour of their educators is to their needs, the better small children develop a sense of security. To do this, the educators must perceive the child's intentions, recognize them, interpret them correctly, and answer them promptly and correctly. In this way, they become persons of attachment. Mary Ainsworth called this "sensitivity to the infants' signals". The predominant theoretical environment at that time was the social learning theory, which was based on the affirmation of childlike behaviour through rewards – "social reinforcement". However, this



Mary Ainsworth (picture American Psychological Association)

was not sufficient for the wealth of social interaction that took place in reality.

## Connection of different approaches in Uganda

Around 1953 in Uganda, Ainsworth observed on her own initiative 26 families with babies aged 1–24 months, every 2 weeks for 2 hours per visit and up to 9 months. This was the time when the two coincidences mentioned – Bowlby in London and the informal observations in Kampala – fortunately merged into their revolutionary findings.

A lifelong correspondence with John Bowlby began. Mary Ainsworth recognized the value of John Bowlby's way of thinking, which was shaped by *Darwin's* theory of evolution and included the more recent findings of behavioural ethology. She recalled her own evaluations of James Robertson's precise observation protocols in London. And she saw the advantage of the observation method of psychoanalyst Anna Freud. She was so impressed by all this that even back then in London she planned to use the method of naturalistic observations herself, if she ever had the opportunity. Her greatest scientific achievement was probably the application of Charles Darwin's basic principle to the interaction of small children: First observations and questions, secondly explanatory models are constructed from them, and thirdly the appropriateness of the model is examined on the basis of new

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### "Mary Ainsworth taught us ..."

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data, ideally with the aid of experimentally obtained data (Bowlby, 1990, p. 336).

#### Maternal sensitivity

The opportunity came 11 years later in Baltimore, where they had moved in 1955. Her marriage to Leonard Ainsworth was divorced in 1960 and she suffered greatly. In Baltimore, Mary Ainsworth had to familiarise herself with new professional requirements as a clinical psychologist. The sophisticated processing of the very detailed observation data from Uganda could be completed. The result was a convincing and verifiable explanatory model – *Maternal sensitivity to the child's expressing behaviour* (Ainsworth, 1967). Step three of Darwin's insight – to examine the adequacy of the model on the basis of new data – could thus be tackled.

In Baltimore – as before in Uganda – 26 mothers with their babies were observed every 3 weeks, mostly for 3 to 5 hours, with 5 committed employees over a total of 16 times during the first year of life. The course of all observations was then dictated, transcribed, i.e. in narrative language as learned by James Robertson. From these narratives, the quality of maternal sensitivity in responding to changes in the infant's expression was calculated with the aid of various measuring scales.

#### The "strange situation"

The adequacy of the model sensitivity proved Ainsworth with a test situation. It records differences in the behavioural strategies of the then one-year-old infants to deal with short-term separations from their mothers during reunification. When, after short separations, they immediately approached their mothers, made close, loving contact, quickly calmed down, and soon explored again unimpaired, they appeared confident in the loving care of their mother. They moved quickly and smoothly, as Mary Ainsworth writes, between the mother as the comforting and reassuring "haven of safety" and as the supervising and supporting "secure base", Blatz's concept. Children of less sensitive mothers would have less successful strategies; they did not succeed or only late in establishing the reassuring closeness, especially in their distress due to separation. Ainsworth called this test "strange situation".

It has been used by many researchers as a test of secure or insecure attachment. However, this is often too early, because a child's attachment development continues after the first year of life. Other figures of attachment can be added, especially fathers, but also older siblings or familiar

figures, if they regularly and reliably devote themselves to the well-being of the child and deal with it sensitively.

#### New publications in developmental psychology

The investigations in Baltimore had a great echo in developmental psychology. The original report was recently republished – enriched by the scales of sensitivity (Ainsworth et al., 2015). Developmental psychology studies based on Mary Ainsworth's findings and research and John Bowlby's shared insights are numerous. In our longitudinal studies from birth until the age of 22, we also oriented ourselves on her research (Grossmann & Grossmann, 2017). The third edition of the *Handbook of Attachment* (Cassidy & Shaver, 2016) is dedicated to Bowlby and Ainsworth: "With respect and gratitude for the pioneering work of John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth". It comprises 43 contributions by 79 authors on 1011 pages, an author index of 27 and a subject index of 28 pages. The refinement of the attachment theory ranges from a 1958 reference to Bowlby's *Nature of the Child's Ties to his Mother* to current neuropsychological imaging techniques. Further sections, each with several contributions, are from the field of biological aspects: Modern evolutionary theory, psychoneuroimmunology and neuroscience of attachment. Attachment development in infancy, childhood and adolescence up to old age is researched. Psychopathology and clinical applications, psychopathology in children, disorganisation in longitudinal section, the development of foster and adoptive children, mental differences, prevention and intervention on the communal level are also current research areas, inspired by Mary Ainsworth.

Clinical research deals, for example, with attachment in adult therapy and family therapy.

#### Mary Ainsworth – a life for the attachment research

Mary Ainsworth has laid new and convincing foundations for the understanding of the emotional development from the cradle to the grave, as Bowlby put it. She was skilled by her London experience in John Bowlby's research laboratory in the early 1950s. Her lifelong collaboration with John Bowlby as a profound authority of childhood suffering and his insistence on evolutionary-biologically oriented empirical testing have laid a firm foundation for her work. We miss her researching spirit in order to understand attachment development beyond the first year of life as well as she taught it for the first year. But one thing is certain: Mary

Ainsworth has given us a coherent understanding of the nature of newborn human beings who depend on their parents to develop a basic sense of mental security and self-confidence. This enables them to participate in culture, its linguistic representation and creative communication as a matter of course. In addition, she has laid the foundations for the linguistic recording of the attachment representations of adults, essentially as consequence of life-long attachment experiences. Above all, however, she is the reliable godmother of a generally new estimation in living together with our children, who, as often was the case, are no longer "disciplined", "conditioned", "chastised", but protected, supported, not threatened, understood in loving togetherness. They are able to grow up competent, self-determined and open to the world.

Many thanks, Mary Ainsworth! •

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(Translation Current Concerns)

# Triumph of art over barbarism

## On the documentary “The Miracle of Leningrad” and its historical background

by Dr phil. Winfried Pogorzelski

27 January 2019 marked the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of Leningrad (now St. Petersburg). The Soviet Union had been attacked by the troops of the German Reich on 22 June 1941.

### Siege and liberation of Leningrad

In the course of September, the siege ring around Leningrad closed because *Hitler* had decided “to wipe the city of Petersburg from the face of the earth”.<sup>1</sup> During the siege, which lasted 872 days, about one million Leningrad inhabitants died, they starved to death, froze to death – particularly numerous in the extremely cold winter of 1941/42 with minus temperatures of up to 40 degrees – and died by violence. This barbarity is the biggest war crime of the Nazis after the Holocaust.

On 9 August 1942, the performance of *Dmitry Shostakovich’s* 7<sup>th</sup> Symphony under extreme conditions in the concert hall of the Leningrad Conservatory made a significant contribution to strengthening the resistance.<sup>2</sup> It had been ordered by the Soviet leadership for the 355<sup>th</sup> day of the siege in order to strengthen the morale of the population. The composer had left Leningrad for security reasons. He stayed in Kuibyshev on the Volga (since 1990, Samara again), southeast of Leningrad, where he completed the work. The sheet music had been brought to Leningrad by a daredevil military pilot who had broken through the German air blockade.

### The Docu-Drama “The Miracle of Leningrad”

This impressive event is the subject of a recommendable “Docu-Drama” genre film by *Christian Frey* and *Carsten Guttschmidt*.<sup>3</sup> At the centre of the events are the composer *Dmitry Shostakovich*, his son *Maxim*, the then 17-year-old governess *Olga Kvade*, the German non-commissioned officer *Wolfgang Buff* and the conductor of the *Leningrad Radio Orchestra Karl Eliasberg*. In lavishly produced feature film scenes, actors embody the involved parties of the time, some of whom speak as contemporary witnesses themselves. Excerpts from interviews with experts and original film footage provide valuable information and unforgettable impressions. With this approach, the authors achieve a level of immediacy that is second to none.

### The heroes and their fate

When the German troops close the siege ring around Leningrad in September 1941, the future expectations of



*The composer Dmitry Shostakovich as air-raid guard on the roof of Leningrad Conservatory 1941. (picture ma)*

the young music-loving governess *Olga Kvade*, who works in an orphanage and loves her hometown above all, suddenly collapses. The longer the siege lasts, the more the population, including some 400,000 children, struggle round the clock for their naked survival: Hunger, sickness and death are omnipresent, and what’s more is the bitter cold in winter. Year after year thousands lose their lives. At the end of the siege about one million people are killed. The radio is constantly on. Its broadcasts are intended to encourage the population and the soldiers to hold out.

*Dmitry Shostakovich*, a native of Leningrad, is working on his 7<sup>th</sup> Symphony, which is to become a beacon of resistance. After the completion of the first three movements, the composer is evacuated together with his family at the express request of the party leadership and against his will, in order to complete his work safely. Until then he had fulfilled his duty as air-raid guard at the Leningrad Conservatory. *Shostakovich* completes the score in exile. He presents “his Leningrad” on camera with the words: “I dedicate my Symphony No. 7 to our struggle against fascism, our certain victory over the enemy and to my hometown Leningrad.”<sup>4</sup>

### Preparation of the concert under extreme conditions

*Karl Eliasberg*, conductor of the Radio Symphony Orchestra of Leningrad, has the great task of performing the demanding 75-minute work as soon as the score

is available. It actually does reach the besieged city! In a hurry, the sheet music is copied for the musicians by *Eliasberg’s* wife. Finally, the work may be rehearsed by the musicians. The concrete circumstances, however, make the project considerably more difficult. It is even endangered. Only thirteen members of the orchestra are still available. The others are no longer alive or too weak to be able to play music. Finally, the other musicians needed can be found through searching in hospitals and by a radio call. All those involved in the great task are affected by hunger and other deprivations. *Eliasberg* speaks of a “bunch of amateurs and military musicians”.

The conductor stands under enormous pressure because of the most important commission of his life. Does he succeed in fulfilling his duty within a reasonable time? Should he fail, he reckons with his liquidation, since he acted on behalf of the dictatorial Soviet leadership. Often, he is close to despair. Over and again, his wife’s encouragement keeps him from giving up. The perseverance of the orchestra and its leader is a model for all Leningraders.

### Performance and effect of the “Leningrad”

In the summer of 1942, the time has come. First, *Eliasberg* delivers a speech on the radio stating: “[...] *Shostakovich* wrote this great composition. [...] Europe thought that Leningrad was finished.

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### “Triumph of art over barbarism”

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But this performance bears witness to our spirit of resistance, our courage and our willingness to fight. Listen, comrades!”<sup>5</sup> The symphony will be performed in the concert hall of the Leningrad Conservatory, broadcast on the radio live and will be heard throughout the city over the loudspeakers. Emotionally, Eliasberg’s wife congratulates her husband: “You have made possible the impossible”. There are no flowers for the conductor; but he and the orchestra receive a huge applause. The performance does not fail to have its effect. It is viewed as the turning point of the war, since it sustainably strengthens the stamina and resilience of the visibly moved inhabitants and it also reaches and deeply impresses the German soldiers. “It dawned on us”, veterans told conductor Eliasberg after the war, “that we would never take Leningrad. We realised that there was something stronger than hunger, fear and death – the will to remain humane.”<sup>6</sup>

In his commentary, Dmitry Shostakovich includes his massive criticism of Stalinism when he writes in his memoirs, the authenticity of which is still controversial today: “I feel inconsolable grief for all killed by Hitler. Yet the thought of those murdered by *Stalin’s* order causes me no less pain. I mourn for all those who have been tortured, tormented, shot and starved to death. There were millions of them in our country even before the war against Hitler had begun [...]. I have no objection to the Seventh being called the ‘Leningrad Symphony’. However, it is not about the siege. It is about Leningrad, which Stalin destroyed. Hitler only marked the end.”<sup>7</sup>

### The daily sufferings in wartime

There are also reports from the perspective of German soldiers. Right at the beginning of his first assignment in the Soviet Union, the young German non-commissioned officer Wolfgang Buff is mercilessly confronted with what it means to fight in Russia. He observes how a wounded comrade is not taken out of the line of fire by anyone. He watches in horror as not only the wounded man is shot by a comrade, but another one also who tries to save him! Buff’s superior comments on the inhuman scene with the cynical words: “Welcome to Russia!” The believing Christian Buff can only stammer: “Lord, have mercy on us”.

During the winter months, supplies are brought in by lorries over the frozen lake Ladoga. Nonetheless, starva-

tion and freezing to death are part of everyday life. One time, Buff meets an old Russian, who chops pieces from a dead frozen horse with a hatchet. As a symbol of Christianity, the young German soldier draws a fish into the snow, whereupon the old man crosses himself. Later, as Buff himself wants to help a wounded comrade, he is hit by a bullet, too; he dies with the words: “When I fall, it is into the arms of the heavenly Father”. Scenes of the feature film drastically show the events to the viewer. Wolfgang’s brother *Joachim* reads quotations from the young soldier’s war diary.

These and other shocking fates are highlighted. With German military thoroughness, deprivation and death come into the city, which demand everything from the population in stamina and bravery. This is illustrated in an oppressive way through images and film scenes from the archives<sup>8</sup>. There is neither electricity nor running water, food runs out, cat meat, boiled tree bark and glue is consumed, there are cases of cannibalism, water is obtained from Neva ice holes, starving and dead people lie on the streets, including children, coffins are transported by horse-drawn sleighs ...

What the documentary drama describes with feature film scenes and testimonies from contemporary witnesses is further specified by excerpts from expert interviews with the historian *Sönke Neitzel* and the British journalist and writer *Anna Reid*.<sup>9</sup>

### Music – teacher of history

In 1944 Eliasberg was honoured as a deserving artist of the USSR, later he was forgotten until his death in 1978. Three years earlier Dmitry Shostakovich dies – showered with honours and awards – as one of the most important composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, who could never be sure of his life under the Soviet dictatorship. The monumental “Leningrader” with its exemplary content and meaningfulness – resistance to violence and the victory of art over barbarism – still offers today a direct, sensual access to events of historical importance and their effect on people.<sup>10</sup> Once again, we are encountering music as an outstanding teacher of history. It is “a general expression of violence and threat, a timeless symphonic accusation against injustice, reign of terror and the ruthless negation of the individual. Shostakovich and countless citizens of the Soviet Union had painfully experienced all this at first hand, long before the beginning of the war through the Stalinist terror of the 1930s.”<sup>11</sup> In 1975, at

the end of his life Shostakovich sums up: “But the most important object of art remains [...] man, his spiritual world, his ideas, dreams, desires.”<sup>12</sup> According to musicologist *Vera Baur*, the 7<sup>th</sup> Symphony by Dmitry Shostakovich incorporates equally “the basic sound of violence and the deep longing for humanity”<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted after: Mijnsen, Ivo. The other genocide. 75 years ago the Soviet city of Leningrad was liberated from the German siege by the Red Army. In: *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* of 26 January, p. 7

<sup>2</sup> Resistance to violence, injustice and war has been the subject of music for quite some time. With regard to the Second World War, one thinks only of *Benjamin Britten’s* famous work “War Requiem”, a 90-minute piece for vocal soloists, choir, chamber orchestra and symphony orchestra in memory of the victims of the Battle of Britain. Its premiere was in 1962 in the newly built cathedral of Coventry, the previous building was largely destroyed during the German bombing of the city of Coventry during the Battle of Britain in the Second World War. See also Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung. “Wie den Frieden in Töne setzen? (How to translate peace into tones?)” <http://www.bpb.de/apuz/29179/wie-den-frieden-in-toene-setzen>

<sup>3</sup> *Leningrad Symphony/Das Wunder von Leningrad, (The Miracle of Leningrad)* documentary drama, D 2017, 90 minutes, director: Christian Frey, Carsten Gutschmidt, camera: Jürgen Rehberg, Marc Riemer, Tom Bresinsky, Michael Kern, Yuri Ermolin Editing: Marcel Martens, Production: gebrüder beetz filmproduktion (Reinhardt Beetz). In coproduction with: NDR, NDR/Arte, SWR, RBB, DR, NDK, LVT, Czech TV.

The film was and still shown from time to time by various TV stations, such as Arte, ARD and others. Over a certain time, it will be available from the respective media libraries. A DVD can be obtained directly from the producer: gebrüder beetz filmproduktion Hamburg, Eppendorfer Weg 93a, D 20259 Hamburg, e-mail: [hamburg@gebrueder-beetz.de](mailto:hamburg@gebrueder-beetz.de)

<sup>4</sup> To be viewed on the Internet at <http://www.spiegel.de/einstages/leningrader-sinfonie-von-schostakowitsch-1942-ueberleben-mit-musik-a-1194616.html>

<sup>5</sup> Quoted after Iken, Katja. “Leningrad Symphony. Mit Pauken und Trompeten gegen den Terror”. (With timpani and trumpets against terror) In: *Der Spiegel* of 27 February 2018, under the title, to read under <http://www.spiegel.de/einstages/leningrader-sinfonie-von-schostakowitsch-1942-ueberleben-mit-musik-a-1194616.html>

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Baur, Vera. The “Leningrad” – supertemporal indictment, quoted after BR Klassik, <https://www.br-klassik.de/themen/klassik-entdecken/schostakowitsch-leningrader-siebte-symphonie-100.html>

<sup>8</sup> Thirty photos with informative legends and some film material is also included in the article by Katja Iken, *loc.cit.*

<sup>9</sup> Reid, Anna. *Leningrad, The Epic Siege of World War II, 1941-1944*, this: *Blokada, Die Belagerung von Leningrad (The Siege of Leningrad) 1941-1944*, Berlin 2011

<sup>10</sup> Recommended CD recordings: Mariinsky Orchestra (Orchestra of the Mariinsky Theatre in Petersburg), Valery Gergiev, Shostakovich, Symphony No 7 in C major, Op. 60 ‘Leningrad’, see also: [www.mariinskylabel.com](http://www.mariinskylabel.com)

<sup>11</sup> Vera Baur, *loc.cit.*

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*

(Translation *Current Concerns*)