

# Current Concerns

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

English Edition of *Zeit-Fragen*

## Swiss agricultural policy – a question of Switzerland’s security and independence

Interview with National Councillor Rudolf Joder (SVP), President of “Verein für eine produzierende Landwirtschaft, VPL (Association for a Productive Agriculture)



Rudolf Joder  
(picture thk)

*Current Concerns:*  
Why do we need another parliamentary initiative in addition to the popular initiative to strengthen domestic production?

National Councillor Rudolf Joder:  
If we want to cut the down-scaling

in Swiss agriculture and preserve an independent agriculture, a better protection against the import of foreign agricultural products is absolutely needed. Switzerland is the country which imports most food per capita worldwide. This is to the detriment of domestic agriculture, which must produce at higher costs and therefore cannot be competitive against cheap products from abroad. Therefore, in addition to the constitutional initiative a regulation in the

farm bill is required that in the future negotiation of free trade agreements the agriculture is to be protected and the import of agricultural products is to be restricted. This imposes restrictions on the negotiation frame of the Federal Council with foreign states, and I expect an effective preventive effect from that.

*What competences does the Federal Council have in this?*

Today, the legal situation is such that the Federal Council can negotiate fancy-free. The Parliament can just say Yes or No to the relevant agreement. Unfortunately, in our negotiations on the wording of the constitutional text, the Farmer’s Union didn’t want to include any passage to have an increased import protection in favour of domestic agriculture. Therefore, I am compelled now to achieve it by a parlia-

continued on page 2

## Preserving sovereignty

By submitting the popular initiative “Food security through domestic production”, the first step is taken in the right direction: If we, the people of Switzerland, want to retain our sovereignty and national independence in the concert of nations, we need to pay special attention to the sensitive areas of government and we must watch the respective developments with the utmost vigilance. These include central issues such as national defence, providing a reliable food, energy and water supply, as well as national education and health care. If a state starts to depend on other states in these areas, it will no longer be able to act on a truly sovereign basis, but will become susceptible to blackmail and be at the mercy of those more powerful.

With terms such as “globalization”, “world community”, “The world is a village”, all created after the end of the Cold War, it was suggested to us that a new era had dawned in which national boundaries would no longer play a role, and where everyone would be able to benefit equally from a global economy, which is why eventually everyone would be better off.

The fact that more new national states were founded in the time of the so-called globalization than during any other time since the end of colonialism is one of the developments that give evidence for this euphemism which was and still is diametrically opposed to the actual political reality. The same is true for the attempt to tie up some of these new national states in a supranational centralized structure named EU, which has experienced some more resistance from the population, at least since the time of the financial crisis, because it was not the people who benefited, but first and foremost the banks and large international corporations.

Whereas the Latin American and Asian countries including Russia are increasingly reflecting on their state sovereignty, and their cooperation considers and pays respect to state sovereignty ever more, the leading powers of the West are still trying out various measures in order to convince their citizens of the abolition of national boundaries and to propagate global economy. The TINA principle – There Is No

continued on page 2

## Popular initiative “Food security” submitted



thk. It was a moving picture: Despite the pouring rain, countless delegates from all cantons had arrived in Berne to hand in the collected signatures to the Federal Chancellor. The individual cantons presented agricultural specialties that they had put onto lovingly decorated “Leiterwägel” which they pulled through Berne’s old town during the march. Children, young, old, dressed in festive costumes, were present and waited despite wind and weather in front of the west wing of the Parliament Building. Surrounded by cheerful music

they all wanted to attend the sovereign act of the handing-over of signatures. The 26 canton flags along with the Swiss flag contributed to a dignified atmosphere appropriate for the national political act. One canton after another handed over the boxes with the collected signatures to the representative of the State Chancellery. Almost 150,000 certified signatures had been collected within just 5 months, a strong signal to the Federal Council’s agricultural policy and the strengthening of local agriculture, which is to be achieved with the popular initiative “Food security through domestic production”, which requires an amendment to the existing articles in the constitution. The President of the Swiss Farmer’s Union (SBV), National Councillor Markus Ritter, and the director of SBV, Jacques Bourgeois, delivered speeches therein appreciating the commitment and the great support as well as the international and national importance of this popular initiative. “Together we can succeed,” said Markus Ritter.”

**"Swiss agricultural policy ..."**

continued from page 1

mentary initiative with a partial revision of the legislation on farming.

*What should be actually changed?*

The parliamentary initiative aims at preventing the self-sufficiency rate from keeping to fall. It kept declining further on and on due to increasing imports in recent years. It's a question of securing the necessary acreage to achieve that at least 50% of the food can be produced in Switzerland. This is still quite low in international comparison. It concerns the question of Switzerland's security as well as independence and thus our future: are we able to nourish our population ourselves at least partly by a functioning and producing agriculture?

*Is it true to say that the cheap imports have directly contributed to a reduction in the degree of self-sufficiency?*

Yes, and that reflects the intentions and objectives of the Federal Council, which says that agriculture is a part of the world food system, where it is not the task of each individual country to be able to provide the population with its own food resources.

*This reminds me of the whole discussion about the Swiss army. There it was called "collective security", leading to a situation, basically speaking, that a state is no longer capable of defending itself and to protect its citizens. One embarks on a complete dependency. How do you assess this approach of the Federal Council?*

On this I have a fundamentally different view. I think that food cannot be compared with industrial goods or for example chemical products. But it must be grown and produced where it is consumed. This principle should have validity as much as possible worldwide. As things go today, however, agriculture in developing countries and emerging markets gets destroyed by cheap imports from abroad, resulting in insufficient food supplies, locally. We must correct this development to the benefit of the industrialized countries and the agricultural multinationals. This is similarly seen by the left and green. Therefore, this principle found twice a majority in favour of the corresponding parliamentary initiatives in the Parliament. It is believed, that the developing and emerging economies are to provide themselves as far as possible with a strong domestic producing agriculture. It has also been stated that it makes no sense to transport staple food 10-, 20-, 30,000 kilometers around the globe; major environmental pollution is the consequence due to the transport of these goods, which can be home-grown as well.

*Does the Federal Council seriously believe in the world food system, or is there something else behind it?*

Apparently, the Federal Council's strategy is based on the assumption that the benefit for example for the machinery industry or the chemical industry, where the international exchange of goods need to be considered under different aspects, takes priority at the expense of agriculture. But there is a fundamental difference between chemical or industrial products and food. To trade industrial products between the countries, is understandable, and as well the claim to produce them, where the best materials are available and the best quality is gained. But with regard to staples we have a completely different situation. It doesn't make sense to refrain from cereal agriculture in Switzerland and to import cereals from India. It doesn't make sense neither, if we refrain from potato cultivation in Switzerland and import potatoes from Egypt with its huge water supply problems. The Federal Council didn't manage to realize this.

*Listening to what you say, one gets the impression that the Federal Council wants to weaken Switzerland as a sovereign State and therefore doesn't provide security nor planning certainty to the agriculture.*

Yes, it's obvious. The policy of the Federal Council is in absolute contradiction to this initiative, as only a small range of niche products is expected to be produced in Switzerland, but with regard to the global food system the main supplies are to come from abroad. By this popular initiative we want to achieve a self-sufficient food situation in Switzerland, namely, that the staple foods are manufactured here. The global transport of staple foods makes no sense with regard to development policy and regarding environmental impact and weakens the security and the independence of Switzerland as well in the future.

*Isn't it also an attempt to tie Switzerland closer to the EU, and then to leave the agricultural supply to Germany or France?*

I agree with this thesis. The Federal Council tries to integrate Switzerland internationally, which of course restricts our independence massively, our self-determination and democratic influence on our public policy. Therefore, it is necessary to take countermeasures by an initiative with mandatory vote.

*You are the President of the Association for a Productive Agriculture. What does the association want to achieve?***"Preserving sovereignty"**

continued from page 1

Alternative – is used to enforce this reasoning. The benefit of all this goes to a number of companies and corporations, as these reap the profits wherever the democratic state control of the economy has yielded to the economic control of the state.

The current crisis in Slovenia, which has led the country to the brink of financial collapse, is bitter reality. It is in this trouble zone, in this field of tension that Switzerland is operating. It is being put under pressure from outside in order to macerate it from within. The recent secret service affair in nearby Germany shows what empty platitudes are being used in the process. When the closest of allies treat each other in this way, then the statement "We are surrounded by friends", which is being used mainly by the Left when talking about security issues, is revealed to be nothing but naïve and cheap embellishment by reality as it actually is. *Henry Kissinger* once said that "there is no friendship between states, only interests". There are people in our country who absolutely refuse to face this, because it is contrary to their political objectives.

In the context of military defence, the Federal Council speaks of collective security and interoperability, in connection with national food supply, they consider Switzerland to be embedded in a global food system, which provides food for everyone, bound by strict environmentalism; they delegate our national power supply to neighbouring foreign countries, etc. This way we do sell our autonomy without realizing during "peace time", what disastrous consequences this will have in times of crisis, not only for our country and our population. These measures if pushed through by political means, are tantamount to a piecemeal coup d'état.

However, the citizens of Switzerland have the instruments of direct democracy, the popular initiative and the referendum, by means of which they may well be able to define new directions for these developments and to take a stand for a coexistence of people which is at the same time dignified and realistic. Leading a self-determined life is a matter of crucial importance for every state as well as for every individual. It is encouraging that, concerning agriculture, the popular initiative "Food security through domestic production" takes a first step in this direction. Further steps with similar objectives will surely follow. The fact that state sovereignty is being reclaimed in this instance, should inspire and encourage us, the citizens, to do the same in other areas.

continued on page 3

Thomas Kaiser

# Increasing food security

## Setting the course for Swiss agricultural policy

by Reinhard Koradi, Dietlikon

Agricultural policy in our country – as indeed in most countries – has followed a strategy in recent years that was blinded by prosperity and a blind faith in the “free market”. Especially in the highly developed economies of the western industrialized countries, agriculture was classified as a negligibility or even as an obstacle to a growth strategy geared towards the global market and insatiable greed. The suspicion can hardly be cleared up that the unbalanced economic and agricultural policy, largely promoted by the “public sector”, i.e. the governments and administrations, is to consciously weaken the livelihoods of a producing agriculture. Not infrequently, agriculture is used as a joker in the poker for the access to the free market, by exchanging the own agriculture against high returns and the growth of the exporting industry for manufactured goods and services. A risky barter, considered that besides food security also social interests, security and even political interests are at stake.

The production, market and consumer conditions in the agricultural and food sector (primary sector) can naturally not

be equated with the respective requirements of the secondary sector (value adding through processing and refining of raw materials) and the tertiary sector (services, administration, etc.). An appropriate differentiation and consideration would rather be the logical consequence that follows reason. The primary sector is provided by nature: place-bound, locally, regionally and probably nationally embedded. It is very labour intensive and directly dependent on the locally available resources. Despite modern logistics and information systems, this dependence sets natural limits. Limits that mean a weighty and serious obstacle for the food – often for the entire basic supplies. Obstacles, which hardly exist for industrial goods and services or which can be overcome relatively easy. The free market and thus the transfer of production to the “cheap producing countries” fail in agricultural production at the latest because of the resource-bound production site. The conclusion to consequently exclude agriculture in free trade agreements, at what level ever, would be insightful and politically as well as economically wise.

### Agricultural policy 2014–2017 unconstitutional?

The blind faith in the free market and the globalization fantasies seem to paralyze the agricultural theorists and keep them in step with the financial aristocracy. Set under pressure by lowest prices on foreign procurement markets, farmers are forced to make cost savings, closures (mergers), capacity expansion, and thus to use industrial working methods. In order to enforce this break with the established traditions of family farming with as little resistance as possible, agricultural policy has in recent years been given an ecological camouflage. The producing agriculture – the farmer as a producer of healthy, seasonal, local food – mutates to a landscape gardener by the ecological dictate. The administrative burden it entails has long broken through the reasonable loads. Any other branch would rightly and vehemently fight against this planned economy projects and in this defensive struggle meet with the widest support among

continued on page 4

### “Swiss agricultural policy ...”

continued from page 2

The association was formed out of the necessity to initiate the referendum after we were outnumbered in parliament on the *Agricultural Policy 2014–2017*. A small group of politicians has decided to initiate a referendum about the *Agricultural Policy 2014–2017* where people can vote. Unfortunately, we were not enough people to collect the 50,000 signatures in the prescribed period of 5 months. We got 40,000 only. Out of this we decided in the same group, to launch a popular initiative believing that we had more time to launch such an initiative and to collect 100,000 signatures. Also organizationally, this should be possible. At the same time, the Swiss Farmer’s Union discussed a constitutional initiative, and we could finally settle on a common constitutional text in three rounds of negotiations. With this the food security initiative was born. These works triggered the founding of the Association for Productive Agriculture. We stick to our objective with this organizational structure and try to recruit additional members.

*What is the goal of the Association, after the referendum has been handed in today?*

The main task of the Association is to support the political realignment of Swiss agri-

culture towards production and to promote this. Essentially, its concern is to lead the development of our agriculture in this direction with political measures at various levels.

*Each left-winged politician would have to join your concern and to claim its support, especially to prevent large corporations from making big money especially in the developing countries, from destroying the markets there, so that the countries can develop. These are topics which make a left heart beat faster. There are still more initiatives from the left spectrum. Do you support these initiatives?*

The other initiatives show the topicality of the theme. Suddenly, the nutritional situation moves into the focus of the political agenda as various political groups engage in this topic. This has a positive effect in principle and it provides tailwind to the whole political struggle concerning implementation of the nutrition initiative. Our initiative has the most impact on agriculture; therefore it stands at the forefront in my view. Of course, cooperation and joint discussions are something very important in the political process, of course as well with the Left and the Greens.

*How strong is the influence of the EU on the country’s economic policy?*

We’re clearly fighting against a free agricultural trade agreement with the EU. This has, however, moved in the background after the voting decision of 9 February, because the Federal Council must deal with the institutional questions first. But the Federal Council has not given up the idea of a free agricultural trade agreement between the EU and Switzerland. So we need to remain cautious and vigilant and to generate political pressure with this initiative.

*The planned opening of the milk market fits in the same context.*

It also shows that the Federal Council still has not taken note of the nutrition initiative, where nearly 150,000 signatures have been collected in 5 months, up to the present day. In the view of the Federal Council nothing has changed, yet. It continues with its policies as if nothing had happened, and is sticking to its course. It is all the more the same with parliamentary actions and initiatives. It’s important to use the time between the submission of the initiative and its implementation. If we don’t, too little will happen, and the Federal Council can implement its plans without significant restrictions.

*Mr Joder, thank you very much for the interview.*

(Interview Thomas Kaiser)

**"Increasing food security"**

continued from page 3

the population. In agriculture, however, the cards are mixed differently. It lacks the entrepreneurial freedom, and it often lacks the people's understanding of the difficult living conditions for farmers in our country. The direct payment system of the Confederation and the framework conditions changing in a four-years cycle have robbed farmers of their freedom of choice and created a wrong picture of the economic situation of many farms among the population. Direct payments though should secure the existence of the farmers, but a disastrous dependency on cash flow from Bern has emerged, which substantially reduces both free enterprise and the chance to achieve work-cost-covering producer prices in agriculture.

The Constitution Article 104, adopted by the people in 1996, triggered a reform of agricultural policy, which was essentially a turning away from the market subsidy towards direct payments. The consequences of this reform were a structural change with massive losses of family farms, life-threatening losses of income and an impermissible regulation of agricultural production by the authorities towards ecologically justified landscape conservation, which in turn entails a weakening of self-sufficiency.

The basis for the Swiss agricultural policy provided by Article 104 Federal Constitution, is violated at least partially by the *AP 2014-2017*.

The Article demands:

1. The Confederation shall ensure that agriculture makes a significant contribution through sustainable production aligned to market to:
  - a. secure supply of the population;
  - b. preservation of natural resources and the cultivation of the countryside;
  - c. decentralized settlement of the country.

Neither the demand for a production aligned to the market nor the decentralized inhabitation of the land (loss of peasant farms) are supported sufficiently by the current agricultural policy. Therefore, it is imperative that a courageous and forward-oriented rethinking applies in agricultural policy. This includes a generous expansion of the planning horizon in the agricultural sector by the administration. The farmers cannot again and again throw their business decisions overboard in a four-year cycle. These short-term planning periods cause unnecessary investment risks and undermine the long-term survival security of farms.

An unconventional thinking suggests itself. The unconventional is close by. Away from the world trade ideology towards the protection of our own national

interests. A look at the past opens a variety of alternatives to give agriculture back its due importance; family farms as producers of good, natural food on a secure livelihood should contribute to the greatest possible self-sufficiency.

**A vision with a grip on reality**

Of course this new orientation will bring about a clear break with current economic theories and practices.

But is it not necessary to develop and to implement a new economic trend? The freedom promised by the free market has made us slaves long ago. Indeed there is a small minority that increases its wealth through the economic order in an almost obscene way. This inequality creates dangerous sources of conflicts that can lead very quickly to social unrest or even wars.

The global ruin, the chaos and the uncanny cluster risk created by the cartel of power of the capital must be limited. We can get rid of the monopoly of power through decentralised, local and independent structures of production and independently supply and develop our daily life. This is in the interest of every single person, but also in the interest of the sovereign state. The International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (Agriculture at a Crossroads) has given a clear answer to the economy of industrial wear. As a matter of fact we know exactly what to do for the benefit of mankind on our planet. It does not matter where we live, in a western industrial state or even in a less developed country; the problems cannot be outsourced into a globalized world but must be resolved right at our front door in our own responsibility.

With regard to agriculture or our food supply respectively, this means that we have to make use of the local resources very carefully and to cultivate and to develop the production of food under natural conditions in our country. This is more than a contribution to the supply security of our own population. It is an act of solidarity towards the less developed countries and so also a contribution in the struggle against hunger, poverty and exploitation.

**There is something going on in the Swiss agricultural policy**

The Swiss citizens begin to realize that the agricultural policy in Switzerland has to be redefined. There are not the big masses but corresponding initiatives are increasing and confirm a change in awareness. A couple of years ago the initiative "For an economy to the benefit of all" was established. It did not meet with the necessary support of the population. Now there are new initiatives ahead which aim in a sim-

ilar direction. The Swiss Farmer's Union submitted the initiative "Food Security" on 8 July 2014 with about 150,000 signatures collected within 5 months.

**Art. 104a (new) Food Security**

1. The Confederation strengthens the supply of the population with food from different, sustainable domestic production; it takes effective measures against the loss of agricultural land including the pastures for alpine farming and for the implementation of a strategy of quality.
2. It takes care for a low administrative effort and an appropriate security of investment and legislation.

**Transitional provisions**

The Federal Council proposes the corresponding laws not later than 2 years after the acceptance of Art. 104a by the people and the cantons.

A new item in this initiative is especially the demand of efficient measures against the loss of farming land including the pastures for alpine summer farming and the implementation of a strategy of quality. Furthermore, there is the demand of a low administrative effort and an appropriate security of investment and legislation.

National Councillor *Rolf Joder* (Swiss People's Party) doubles the effect with the parliamentary initiative "Frontier Protection".

The parliamentary initiative demands: "The Federal Council and the Federal Administration take care of the protection of the existing domestic agricultural production in the interest of food security and for this purpose limit the importation of food when negotiating or changing international treaties."

This parliamentary initiative takes up an important problem. Cheap imports put the domestic production under considerable prize pressure making cost-covering producer prizes for local farmers impossible. The cost of production is fundamentally higher than in other countries exporting agricultural products due to very demanding conditions of production in Switzerland.

This leads to distortions of prices on the procurement markets and destroys the financial existence of agricultural enterprises in Switzerland. This is undesirable for reasons of supply, security and state policy. A domestic production can only be maintained to the desired extent as long as the farmers obtain just and cost-covering prices for their work. This also applies not only for the domestic farmers but also for the farmers abroad and farm workers. The rea-

**"Increasing food security"**

continued from page 4

son for cheap import products can often be found in the corresponding international treaties (free trade agreements) so it is right to add protective clauses. One or the other consumer might be afraid that food prices may rise. These fears are not appropriate. The raw materials (agricultural products) are a minimal part of the total cost of food and can therefore be neglected. Normally lower prices of raw material just make the margins of producers or dealers raise and thus have no national-economic value.

The *Green Party* launched the Federal popular initiative "For healthy as well as environmentally-friendly and fairly produced foods" (Fair-Food-Initiative).

The initiative calls for the Federal Constitution to be amended as follows:

*Article 104a Food*

- 1 The Confederation strengthens the supply of food which is of good quality and safe, and which has been produced in a way that takes care of environment and resources, is animal-friendly and produced under friendly and fair working conditions. It determines the requirements for the production and processing.
- 2 It ensures that imported agricultural products used as food meet in principle at least the requirements of paragraph 1; it seeks to achieve this objective for further processed and composite foods as well as for feed. It favours imported products from fair trade and soil managed family farms.
- 3 It ensures that the negative effects of the transport and storage of food and feed on the environment and the climate are reduced.

This initiative addresses the problem of the ability to compete under the same conditions. The requirement to meet quality and processing standards applicable in Switzerland prevents unfair competition by quality-dumping, and would very likely lead to a suspension of the ill-fated and one-sided "Cassis de Dijon" Agreement. Moreover, the initiative, at least indirectly, brings forward the problem of the long transport routes.

Very interesting is also the proposed initiative of Uniterre (Uniterre is an organization of farmers from the French speaking part of Switzerland). The initiative is primarily based on the principle of food sovereignty.

*Article 104a Food sovereignty*

- 1 In order to implement the right to food sovereignty the Confederation promotes the supply with healthy foods from a diverse family farming in Switzerland, which is able to cover the costs and to meet the social and environmental expectations of the people.
- 2 It aims at a primarily domestic supply with food and feed taking into account natural resources.
- 3 It takes effective measures with the objective to:
  - a. increase the number of employees in agriculture and to promote the diversity of production structures,
  - b. protect the cultivated land and in particular the quantity of crop rotation taking into account soil quality,
  - c. guarantee farmers the right to use, reproduce, exchange and sell seeds,
  - d. prohibit genetically modified organisms in agriculture as well as all plants and animals which were generated using new technologies of genome variation and unnatural recombination.
- 4 It
  - a. supports the development of organizations in farmers' hands which coordinate the demand of consumers with the supply of farmers;
  - b. ensures market transparency and promotes the determination of fair prices in production sectors and distribution channels,
  - c. strengthens direct trade relations as well as regional processing, storage and marketing structures.
- 5 It pays particular attention to the working conditions of farm workers and to implement their harmonisation at the federal level.
- 6 It
  - a. raises custom duties and controls the volume of imports to protect and develop domestic production.
  - b. raises custom duties or prohibits the import of food which were produced under social and environmen-

tal conditions that do not correspond to Swiss legislation.

7 It renounces all export subsidies for food and agricultural products.

8 It guarantees information and education about production and processing conditions of imported and domestic food and reserves the right to determine its own quality regulations.

With this initiative, *Uniterre* pursues an approach which is holistic and coordinated with agriculture. It is committed to rural diversity, to cost-covering prices, and to a natural agriculture. Its aim is to give priority to local production and to promote regional trade. An important component of the initiative is to strengthen the market respectively the bargaining position of farmers towards the major customers (wholesalers and processors). The farmers should organize themselves, so that they act as equal negotiation partners and therefore, succeed in safeguarding their interests.

**There is something going on**

These various initiatives of politically differently positioned initiators emphasize the acute need for action with regard to agricultural policy. The above presented solutions of the initiatives aim at the right direction. It is obvious that all initiators demand a renunciation from the doctrine of free trade. This requirement – albeit many neo-liberal theorists and agricultural economists still emulate the doctrine of the free market – corresponds to a practically oriented economic and agricultural policy. It is the only correct answer to the failure of the globally oriented free trade theory. The practitioners, who daily face the reality of food production, who work on fields and harvest their crops, know the reality. They rightly demand sustainable corrections in their own interest, but also in the interests of consumers, citizens in our country and their colleagues outside Switzerland. The discussion has been launched. Who wants to be more involved may, among others, join the Association for a Productive Agriculture. This Association is committed to the objective of protecting agriculture, enhancing the production and maintaining food security. This is an objective which must be endorsed by us all if we do not want to compromise our sovereignty by depending on food imports. •

## “In a stanchion-tied stable the animals have their own place”

*Interview with the president of “IG Anbindestall Switzerland”, Hansruedi Scheuner, Oberlangenegg*

*For a long time the agricultural policy with the ongoing new instructions and prescriptions from the Federal Office for Agriculture (FOAG) has raised great indignation in the farming community and above all among the basic farmers. They are not taken seriously and their concerns swept under the table. They are fed up with being patronized and being dictated by academic graduates in the administration. Also in the question if they prefer a stanchion-tied stable or a loose barn for their cattle. Against the will of the farmers' majority the FOAG applies pressure in direction of such loose barns. That is the reason, why the IG Anbindestall Switzerland has been founded in Steffisburg, Canton of Berne on June 21.*

*Current Concerns: If you live in a town or agglomeration, people are not familiar with agricultural questions. This raises the question what a stanchion-tied stable is and what a loose barn is?*

In a stanchion-tied stable the animals have their own place, where they are tied. In a loose barn the animals can move about freely, but do not have a place of their own.

*What are the advantages and disadvantages of stanchion-tied stables and of loose barns?*

Advantages of stanchion-tied stables: The animals may be watched easily. They are in contact with a lot of humans and get very accustomed to humans. The claws are always dry, that's why they have less disorders. Weaker, ill and heavily pregnant animals have their peace and may not be chased about by other animals. This system is ideal for animals with horns. A daily keeping is possible.

Disadvantages: There is more work in lashing back and in releasing the animals for the pasture. Milking with a robot is not possible.

Advantages of a loose barn: There is no work lashing the animals.

Disadvantages: The animals are standing in their own dung, that may result in a suffering of the claws. Because there is less human contact, the handling with the animals is worse. The care with cleaning supplies is hardly possible. The surveillance of excrements, the trimming of mother cows and bleeding after insemination are not possible. Older and weaker animals may be chased by other animals and may be hurt.

*What are the portions of stanchion-tied stables and loose barns in Switzerland?*

In Switzerland we have got about 60 % of stanchion-tied stables and 40% of loose barns.

*How was the cattle traditionally raised?*

Since domestic animals have been kept, the cattle was always tied.

*Where does the idea of the loose barns come from?*

Probably from the activists for animal rights. The animals have to be as free as if they were outdoors. It is forgotten that they are domestic animals. The idea of the loose barn is new. But not everything good is new. Not everything new is good.

*What is the opinion of the Federal Office for Agriculture (FOAG) concerning the loose barns and the stanchion-tied stables?*

The Federal Office for Agriculture promotes the loose barns. Subsidies are paid for a particularly animal-friendly keeping of animals. Partly, building subsidies are only paid for loose barns.

*What's behind all this that the stanchion-tied stables in Switzerland will be abolished?*

A lot of smaller farms have a stanchion-tied stable. If the regulations for that stable are tightened, you can get rid of them quickly.

*On 21 June, the IG Anbindestall Switzerland was founded in Steffisburg, Canton of Berne. What were the reasons?*

The IG Anbindestall foundation is necessary because the animal protection organisation required, that no more subsidies and no public means should be paid for new buildings and refurbishment. It is a peaceable tactics leading to the stanchion-tied stable's prohibition for cattles, horses and goats.

*What are the IG Anbindestall's goals?*

It would like to welcome as members as many owners of stanchion-tied stables as possible. It wants to correct the mistakes in the animal protection regulations. The producing farmers want to have a say in the coming regulations. Another aim is to inform the Swiss population about animal welfare in stanchion-tied stables.

*How do you become a member of the IG Anbindestall?*

Everybody can become a member, who sympathises with the stanchion-tied stable. You become a member by paying the annual subscription of 20 Swiss francs to the IG Anbindestall, Raiffeisenbank Steffisburg, 30-22804-5 CH 2880817000004883197.

*Mr Scheuner, thank you very much for the interview.* •

(Interview Ariet Güttinger)

# Washington relaunches its Iraq partition project

by Thierry Meyssan

*The sudden collapse of the Iraqi state is presented by the international press as a result of the attack of the terrorist group ISIL [Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant]. But who can believe that a powerful state, armed and organized by Washington, could collapse in less than a week in the wake of a jihadist group formally independent of any state? Besides, who can believe that those who support ISIL in Syria sincerely condemn its actions in Iraq? Thierry Meyssan reveals what's in the cards.*

Since 2001, the Chief of Defence of the United States has been trying to break the "broader Middle East" into a multitude of small, ethnically homogeneous states. The map of the remodeled area was published in July 2006<sup>1</sup>. It plans to divide Iraq into three, a Sunni state, a Shiite and Kurdish one.

Israel's failure in the face of Hizbullah in the summer of 2006<sup>2</sup>, and that of France and the United Kingdom in Syria in 2011–14, gave the impression that the plan had been abandoned. That is not the case: the US military leadership is trying to resume the project through the modern condottieri that are the jihadists.

The events in Iraq last week should be seen in this light. The international press insists on the offensive of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL or "Daesh" in Arabic), but it is only part of the vast action currently in motion.

## The coordinated ISIL and Kurd offensive

In one week, the ISIL conquered what should become a Sunni emirate while the peshmerga conquered what should be an independent Kurdish state.

The Iraqi army, trained by Washington, gave Nineveh to the former and Kirkuk to the latter. Its very command structure facilitated its dismemberment: senior officers having been required to refer to the Prime Minister before moving their troops were deprived of overall initiative while at the same time being installed as kings over their fiefdoms. Therefore, it was easy for the Pentagon to corrupt some officials to incite their soldiers to defect.

Parliamentarians, convened by Prime Minister *Nuri al-Maliki*, also defected and did not vote for the state of emergency due to lack of quorum, leaving the government with no possibility of response.

Left with no other choice to save the unity of his country, Mr al-Maliki called on all imaginable allies. He first sought his own people in general and the Shiite militia of his rival *Moqtada al-Sadr* in par-

ticular (the Mahdi Army), and the Iranian Revolutionary Guards (General *Qassem Suleimani*, commander of the Jerusalem Force currently in Baghdad), and finally the United States which he asked to come back and bomb the attackers.

The Western press emphasizes, not without reason, that the Prime Minister's manner of government has often jolted both the Sunni Arab minority and the secular Baath, as it appeared favorable mainly to the Shiites. This, however, is relative: the Iraqis re-elected the coalition of Nouri al-Maliki during the parliamentary elections of April 30<sup>th</sup>. It got a quarter of the votes, three times more than the Moqtada al-Sadr movement, the remaining votes being scattered among many small parties.

## The preparation of the offensive against the Baghdad authority

The ISIL offensive on the one hand and that of the Pehmergas on the other was prepared long in advance.

Iraqi Kurdistan began to emerge under the protection of the United States and the United Kingdom, with the no-fly zone decreed between the two Western invasions (1991–2003). Since the overthrow of *Saddam Hussein*, it has acquired a very high degree of autonomy and entered the area of Israeli influence. From this point of view, it is unthinkable that Tel Aviv would have been absent from the taking of Kirkuk. Still, the current regional government in Erbil has extended its jurisdiction over the entire Iraqi area forseen by the US Chief of Defence to form independent Kurdistan.

The ISIL is a Sunni tribal militia that joined the Al-Qaeda fighters in Iraq, after the departure of *Paul Bremer III* and the surrender of political power to Iraqis. On May 16, 2010, *Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi*, an Al-Qaeda leader in Iraq who had been released under unknown circumstances, was appointed emir and strove subsequently to place the organization under the authority of Al-Qaeda.

In early 2012, ISIL fighters created Jabhat al-Nosra in Syria (that is to say the Front in support of the people of the Levant), as the Syrian branch of Al Qaeda. This group was developed with the revival of the Franco-British attack against Syria in July 2012. It is finally classified as a "terrorist organization" by Washington at the end of the year, despite the protests of the French Minister of Foreign Affairs who welcomes in them "people who do a good job on the ground" (sic).<sup>3</sup>

The success of the jihadists in Syria until the first half of 2013 changed the attractiveness of their groups. The official

Al-Qaeda project of a global Islamist revolution appeared utopian, while the creation of an Islamic state in a given territory seemed attainable. Hence the idea to entrust them with the remodeling Iraq, a project that US military had failed to achieve.

The facelift of the ISIL was achieved in the spring of 2014 with the release of Western prisoners it held: German, British, Danish, Americans, French and Italians. Their first statements confirmed in all respects the information from Syrian intelligence services: ISIL is managed by American, French and Saudi officers. However, the released prisoners quickly backtracked and handicapped their comments on the identity of their jailers.

It is in this context that ISIL broke with al-Qaeda in May of 2014, posing as a rival, while Al-Nosra remained the official Al-Qaeda branch in Syria. Of course all this is only window dressing since in reality these groups, from their inception, have been backed by the CIA against Russian interests (Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Chechnya, Iraq, Syria).

Retransformed in May into a regional organization (rather than the regional branch of a global organization), the ISIL prepared to fulfill the role that its sponsors had assigned it several months previous.

The organization is certainly controlled on the ground by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, but it is under the authority of Prince *Abdul Rahman al-Faisal*, brother of Prince *Saud al-Faisal* (Saudi foreign minister for 39 years) and Prince *Turki al-Faisal* (former director of the Secret Service and current ambassador to Washington and London).

In May, al-Faisal bought a weapons factory in Ukraine. Stocks of heavy weapons were flown to a Turkish military airport, where the MIT (Turkish Secret Service) forwarded them by special trains to ISIL. It seems unlikely that the supply chain could be implemented without NATO.

## The ISIL offensive

The panic that gripped the Iraqi population is in the image of the crimes committed by the ISIL in Syria: public slaughters by "Muslim renegades" and crucifixion of Christians. According to *William Lacy Swing* (former US ambassador to South Africa, and the United Nations, and current director of the International Migration Office), at least 550,000 Iraqis have fled ahead of the jihadists.

These figures show the folly of Western ISIL estimates according to which

### "Washington relaunches ..."

continued from page 7

it would control only a total of 20,000 combatants in Syria and Iraq. The truth is probably three times that many, on the order of 60,000 combatants; the difference being made up exclusively of foreigners recruited throughout the Muslim world and often not Arab. This organization became the main private army in the world, playing the role of the modern condottieri of the European Renaissance.

It should be further developed considering its booty. Thus, in Mosul, it grabbed the Treasury of the District of Nineveh, or \$ 429 million in cash (enough to pay their fighters for a full year). In addition, it has captured many Humvees and two helicopter gunships which it immediately integrated into its apparatus. Jihadists not having the means to train pilots, the international press suggests that officers are former Saddam Hussein Baathists. This is highly unlikely, firstly considering the war between secular Baathists and jihadists that is the backdrop of the war in Syria, and mainly because pilots who interrupted their training for several years are no longer combat ready.

#### International reactions

The Peshmerga and ISIL offensive was expected by supporters of Saudi Arabia in the region. Thus, Lebanese President *Michel Suleiman* (who had concluded a speech in January by a resounding "Long live Saudi Arabia!" instead of "Long live Lebanon!") tried by all means to obtain an extension of its mandate (expiring May 25) for the next six months, so as to be in control during the current crisis.

Anyway, international reactions to the Iraqi crisis are incoherent: all States without exception condemn ISIL in Iraq and denounce terrorism, while some of them – the United States and its allies – consider ISIL to be an objective ally against the Syrian government, and some sponsor this offensive – the United States, Saudi Arabia, France, Israel and Turkey.

In the United States, the public policy debate pits Republicans, who require a military redeployment in Iraq, against the Democrats, who denounce the instability brought about by the intervention of *George W. Bush* against Saddam Hussein. This little word game hides the fact that

the current events serve the strategic interests of the Chief of Defence who it is directly involved.

It could be, however, that Washington has trapped Ankara. The ISIL has tried at the same time to take control of the tomb of *Suleyman Shah*, in Syria in the district of Raqqa. This tomb is owned by Turkey which has an on-site small garrison under the extraterritoriality clause of the Treaty of Ankara (imposed by the French colonizers in 1921). But this action may well have been sponsored by Turkey itself who will have thus found a pretext to openly intervene in Syria<sup>4</sup>.

Worse, when taking Mosul, the ISIL captured 15 Turkish diplomats and their families as well as 20 members of the Turkish special forces at their consulate, angering Ankara. The ISIL also detained truck drivers who were later released. Turkey, which provided the logistics for the ISIL attack, feels betrayed without anyone knowing whether it has been by Washington, Riyadh, Paris or Tel Aviv. This case is reminiscent of the July 4, 2003 arrest of 11 members of the Turkish special forces by the US army in Sulaimaniyah (Iraq) popularized by the film "Valley of the Wolves Iraq".<sup>5</sup> This episode had caused the biggest crisis of the last sixty years between the two countries.

The most likely hypothesis is that Ankara did not expect to participate in such a vast offensive and discovered along the way that Washington planned to achieve the creation of Kurdistan which had failed in 2003. However, ever according to the map published in 2006, this must include a part of Turkey, the United States having planned to dissect not only its enemies but also its allies. The arrest of Turkish diplomats and special forces would be a way to prevent Ankara from sabotaging the operation.

Arriving in Ankara on Thursday from Amman, the Special Representative of the United States in the Security Council, Ambassador *Samantha Power*, hypocritically condemned the actions of the ISIL. The presence in the Middle East of the sycophant of Washington's moral interventionism suggests that a US reaction is planned in the scenario.

For its part, Iran says it is ready to help save the Shiite government of al-Maliki by sending weapons and military advisers, but no fighters. The current reversal

of the Iraqi state benefits Saudi Arabia, major regional rival of Iran, while Foreign Minister, Prince Saud al-Faisal (the brother of the ISIL boss) has invited it to negotiate. •

Translation *Roger Lagassé*

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

- <sup>1</sup> Ralph Peters, "Blood borders: How a better Middle East would look", *Armed Forces Journal*, June 2006
- <sup>2</sup> Thierry Meyssan, *L'effroyable imposture: Tome 2, Manipulations et désinformations*, ed. Alphée 2007
- <sup>3</sup> Tsabelle Mandraud (avec Gilles Paris), cit. in "Pression militaire et succès diplomatique pour les rebelles syriens", *Le Monde*, 14.12.2012
- <sup>4</sup> "Turkish conspiracy to enter into open war against Syria", *Voltairenet*, 28.3.2014
- <sup>5</sup> Mireille Beaulieu, "L'anti-Hollywood turc à l'assaut des crimes états-unis", *Réseau Voltaire*, 5.5.2006 (also in Spanish)

## 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 Vögeli

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](mailto: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*.

© 2013. All rights reserved. No reproduction, copy or transmission of this publication may be made without written permission.



# Stop the course of confrontation before it's too late!

## Working for peace is the greatest act of humanity

by Karl Müller

Completely unnecessary, the confrontation between the US, NATO and the EU on the one hand and Russia on the other hand is heating up. This is not, however, because both sides are escalating the confrontation. After a review of publicly available documents, it is the "western" side that relies on confrontation, while Russia's government is still trying to come to an understanding. This is not a statement of "pro-Russian propaganda", instead it can be understood by anyone who takes the effort to study the accessible documents without prejudice.

It fits into the mould that the current government of Ukraine obviously wants to "solve" the conflict within the country by means of military force and is therein supported by those circles in the EU who have the greatest say. Not only the EU ultimatum to the Russian government two weeks ago, but also the renewed intensification of EU sanctions against Russia are part of that. The same applies to the smug and reality-distorting pamphlets such as the one published by the Swedish Foreign Minister *Carl Bildt* in the "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung" of 8 July or the "position paper" of the deputy chairman of the CDU/CSU Parliamentary Group in the German Bundestag, *Andreas Schockenhoff*, and the Chairman of the German-Ukrainian Parliamentary Group in the German Bundestag, *Matthias Wellmann*, entitled. "For a redefinition of relations with Russia" dated 1 July.

The fact that in the "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung" on July 10, the Ukrainian President *Petro Poroshenko* was pictured in military uniform in the circle of Ukrainian soldiers and that Poroshenko on page 1 was quoted as saying, "The fight goes on," shows how the course is currently set. On the other hand it is worth while to read the speech of Russian President *Vladimir Putin*, given on July 1, before the diplomatic corps in his country, or the many comments from the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and to just think about the difference.

Europe's official thinking has become narrow and its acting dangerous. For years Europe has experienced a deconstruction of its fundamental values and the transition to an ideology of alleged arbitrariness, with the goal to seize power. The circles that are driving this, operate according to the rules of neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) and in order to deceive they are using only the verbiage of these values. In reality, those who actually stand for these values, have less and less breathing space in Europe, so that even

---

### What a "crescendo" can cause

*km. On 12 November 2001, shortly after the beginning of the war against Afghanistan, in an interview with the "Spiegel" the US strategist Zbigniew Brzezinski expressed to the question, how long the war alliance, especially with Pakistan was going to hold: "Longer than most suspect. If America is advancing determinedly, the Pakistani elite, especially the army, will be able to keep control. Pakistan is dependent on America, yet otherwise has no friends. But if American involvement continues to be limited only by allied bombing, if the number of civilian casualties continues to rise, if there is a crescendo of international criticism, but then the situation in Pakistan gets tough."*

*Brzezinski was very aware of what a "crescendo of international criticism" can cause.*

---

personalities such as the philosopher and papal adviser *Robert Spaemann* who had never spoken of it 25 years ago expresses today that Europe threatens to become totalitarian again.

A well-known journalist like *Peter Scholl-Latour*, who had been a celebrated media star in Europe only a few years ago, must entrust his thoughts to "Voice of Russia" in order to be read, and his answer to the question how Europe should handle the developments in Ukraine must make us think twice: "Europe has no foreign policy of its own. At the moment, Europe is performing a submission policy towards the United States, which would not have been possible neither under *Helmut Kohl* nor under *Schröder*."

Newspapers as the Polish "Rzeczpopolita" follow the US political line when writing on July 5: "For peace, the good will of the warring parties is less required than, above all, a decisive military blow. It is in the interest of West, Poland and the Ukraine, that this decisive blow is carried out by the Ukrainian side. We should help Ukraine. After all a war of low intensity could take years – as the conflict in Bosnia and Croatia has taught us in the early 1990s. All the efforts of the international community, observers, ceasefires, diplomatic efforts in Europe and the United States did not help at that time. The problem solved itself only when Croats and Bosnians gained a strategic overweight by the West's support. Today we face the same situation in Ukraine. Appeals for peace sound nice in the media, but they do not end the nightmare. War is bad, but even worse is a never-ending war."

Are these Europe's values? To push aside the suffering of the people in eastern Ukraine and the murdering there that has become ordinary and to advocate? Who of us still remembers the long queues at the polling stations in eastern Ukraine, when the people voted for in-

dependence in their parts of the country? Who remembers the upright and very serious opinions of the respondents there? These voices were not taken seriously. Under the slogan of "fight the Separatists" the soldiers are advancing against these people.

And the repeatedly mouthed "peace plans" must appear as mockery. This is also noticed in Europe, and there are also voices such as that of the Bulgarian newspaper "Duma", which wrote something completely different on the same day as the Polish newspaper: "The people in Eastern Ukraine are not interested in agreements which bring no results anyway – that has been observed several times since the beginning of the crisis. They want their right to decide for themselves in which direction they want to go – whether towards Europe or Russia. They do not want that one imposes on them the direction in which they have to orient themselves. The people in Eastern Ukraine have fallen victim to geopolitical interests. Obviously, the Kiev government has no interest in listening to them. That's why it wants to "get rid of" the so-called separatists within the region. But: Will the crisis really be solved if the dissenters are muzzled?"

Is it not right, therefore, what the Russian newspaper "Inswestija" wrote on the same day? "Kiev can feel the support of the West. Therefore the Government is in no hurry to stop the bloodshed in the East of Ukraine, although western governments call on Kiev to stop the military operations. If President Poroshenko would really want that, he would have done it already. The Kiev government has already signed the political part of the association agreement with the European Union. Thus, it is in the hands of the EU to stop the bloodshed in East Ukraine. But Western governments are not interested in stop-

continued on page 10

## Peter Scholl-Latour: "Europe accomplishes a policy of subjection to the US"

km. In an interview for the TV-programme "Stimme Russlands" ("Voice of Russia") (in a written version at: "Ria Novosti" on 4 July, <http://de.ria.ru/opinion/20140704/268926478.html>) the famous journalist and author Peter Scholl-Latour commented on the situation in Europe and Asia and on the conflict between the US, NATO and the EU with Russia.

The Russian President Vladimir Putin – according to Peter Scholl-Latour – is "a very skilful and smart politician. After all and one should not forget this, he is supported by 80% of all Russians. He is profoundly popular and if one wants to blame Putin to be a KGB-man this reproach downright qualifies him to currently cope with the enormous intrigues, the oligarchs, etc.. In the Ukraine there is no control over the oligarchs at all, they are still the most powerful men and one of them is president now. Nobody will persuade me that he has made his billions on his inferior chocolate alone."

Peter Scholl-Latour knows Ukraine's situation "quite well. I have been in Lemberg, Lviv or Lwow, or whatever one wants to call it. I have also spoken to the patriarch of the Orthodox Church there, who was a quite reasonable man – but there are also extremists groups. This comes from the Second World War when Stepan Bandera collaborated with the Germans. This is a self-contained community which does not fit into the rest of the Ukraine. And then the East-Ukraine, the Donbass is populated solely by Russian. During the industrialisation

farmers of the poorer regions, for example Russians of Woronesch, were settled there which is the reason why it is mere Russian. A federal solution is the least to be offered there."

NATO in the East of Europe is "too much present. It was decided that NATO will not advance further than Eastern-Germany and there it must stop. That NATO includes the former East Bloc Countries, Poland, the Baltic states, Romania was out of the question then."

However, Europe according Scholl-Latour has "no foreign policy, at all. Europe accomplishes a policy of subjection to the US, which would not have happened under Helmut Kohl and in neither under Schröder. I also do not know what Merkel has in mind always performing as a preacher for democracy and freedom. The Germans should be aware that they have committed the worst crime Europe has ever seen in its history and this as a highly civilized people. And then one should keep one's mouth a little shut."

The EU does not see – according to Scholl-Latour "that the Eurasian Union, Putin wants to establish, is not directed against Western Europe, but means Russia's consolidation in Central Asia. Because, if Afghanistan is to be vacated and an Islamic chaos will break out or a theocracy or whatever, then this will have a certain effect on Uzbekistan and Tadjikistan for example, since the Uzbeks are already strongly involved in the resistance-camps in Pakistan. And there is also Kazakhstan. It is not un-

derstood, this Arabic dimension, that this is a kind of shield, a defensive organisation. And in this situation the Ukraine as a European counterweight would have been a welcomed partner. And this is cancelled now. Only the Russians and the Belarus are left and these are only 140 million people and among them – one should not forget this – are about 20 to 25 million Muslims, and they are not all harmless. When I was in Kazan for the last time, the leading Imam, who in former times was a good Tatar – and now there was suddenly a young man, who was educated in Medina, in Saudi Arab. The tone changed at once. When I visited the insurgent Chechens then, I met very affable people in the Tarikats, the Islamic Brotherhoods. But then suddenly the young preachers came, who were educated in Saudi Arab and suddenly there was a barrier, and I didn't have access to them, any longer."

Scholl-Latour rejects economic sanctions against Russia: "As I witnessed the effect of the sanctions against Iraq from 1991 to 2003 it was atrocious. Water could not be cleaned anymore, farming became impossible. It was awful. The mortality amongst children and infants was terrifying. The Germans should know this – they faced a blockade in World War One, during which nearly half of the population died of hunger. Insofar sanctions are an immoral means of foreign policy."

Source: <http://de.ria.ru/opinion/20140704/268926478.html>

(Translation Current Concerns)

### "Stop the course of confrontation ..."

continued from page 9

ping it either. They want to keep all competitors for power in Ukraine weak and strengthen the government in Kiev, since this is still on shaky ground."

Many people recognize that the close ties of the European policy to the specifications from the US can lead to disaster. "The Germans want greater independence from the US" was the headline of *Spiegel online* on July 6 on the results of a recent survey. And further, it states: "Trust in the alliance partners has declined, many hope for closer contact with Russia."

How it is to be assessed as if the official German policy and the subservient mainstream media are now quite indignant that two Germans spying on behalf of US in-

telligence against Germany. Are these beginnings of a greater independence from the US actually? Or is this all a diversion from the essence of politics? From the policy towards Russia or about the negotiations on the so-called "free trade agreement" TTIP?

One thing is sadly certain: If the policy continues on the path of hubris, of lies

and confrontation, Europe will end up once more – not as "sleepwalkers", but as gamblers who forgot history and reality – in another disaster. There is still time to counteract. Everywhere there are people who see where the wrong way is heading to; people who do not agree. When, if not now, are we going to try starting a crescent that is clearly audible. •

### How much longer?

"Sometime in the summer of last year, there was – at that time still in the lee of the public – the confession of an agent of the German intelligence service. 'We are' said the man and made a long pause, '... Germany is a huge aircraft carrier for the United States of America. Useful to use in a geographically important position, anything but sovereign'". (*Deutschlandfunk*, 12.07.2014)

How much longer?

# The “Martin Luther of Confucianism” – the importance of Kang Youwei and his students for today’s China

## China before Mao – an early clarion call for the awakening of the Chinese dragon

by Thomas Schaffner

“For about a hundred days, Kang, Liang and Tan Sitong became as powerful as any group of like-minded intellectuals elsewhere had been since the French Revolution.” (Mishra, p. 149) This sentence from the award-winning work “From the ruins of Empire. The revolt against the West and the remaking of Asia” by the Indian author Pankaj Mishra probably leaves the majority of Western readers behind, querying. Whereas every school leaver should know about the French Revolution in broad terms, even the well-read contemporary asks himself what hundred days are meant here, what Kang’s and Liang’s full names are and what constitutes their world-historical significance. Mishra’s effort to open the Westerners’ view on the entire world is supported by the following article, which traces the development of China by its top intellectuals prior to the Mao era. Even if shameful facts for the West will be presented again, it is not due to a pointed remark by Mishra against the West, but quite the contrary. Humiliations that the West inflicted on the people in Asia and elsewhere, have not been forgotten there. It is a good thing to become aware of the facts, because an adequate dialogue in this direction is the only way for more peace in this world.

For the hasty reader the puzzle at the start may be unveiled here: Liang Qichao (1873–1929) was an intellectual standing in the classical Chinese, i.e. Confucian educational tradition who participated in all major events in China until the 1920s. His teacher Kang Youwei (1858–1927) was regarded as the Martin Luther of Confucianism by his students. They were both entirely committed to help China out of its backwardness and lead it towards modernity. They considered this backwardness, that had developed since 1800, and its causes to be self-inflicted. Kang Youwei proposed a new interpretation of the writings of Confucius, to the effect that concepts for political reforms such as general elections and women’s emancipation but also mass mobilization and mass education could be found as early as in the Neo-Confucian writings. Confucianism was to become state religion. Kang thus converted many scholarly officials to the ideals of the West, by portraying them as part of the tradition of Confucius. Liang Qichao saw that they could only stand up to the West if an educated middle class and the ideas of the people’s sovereignty and the nation could be spread.

---

“Mencius says that the people are to be held in honor, the people’s affairs may not be neglected. The governments of the present-day Western states come near to conformity with this principle, but China, alas, is cut off from the teachings of Mencius.” (Liang Qichao quoted in Mishra, p. 144)

---

The hundred days date back to the year 1898, when the Empress Dowager transferred full governmental authority to her son, the 23 year-old Guangxu: He asked Kang and Liang for assistance. Together they sparked a veritable fireworks of reforms, which then, however, ended in a bloodbath among some of the parties after a hundred days – the teacher and his students could escape, the emperor was placed under house arrest – a unique opportunity for the world’s history was lost. After nearly a century of turmoil, war and the death of millions, today’s China refers to the ideas and achievements of the intellectuals of the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in many ways – which is reason enough to shed some light on these antecedents.

Until around 1800 China, the emerging superpower of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, was the largest economy in the world next to India and a confident, self-sufficient power, hence the Middle Kingdom, the center of the world. The two hundred years of Chinese decline and the dominance of the West, are “a historical aberration” according to Kishore Mahbubani, which has now come to an end. Modern China and the CCP, however, have not yet completely eradicated Mao from their history, and Deng Xiaoping’s numbers game, according to which Mao had acted 70% correctly, 30% incorrectly, a proportion which is likely to be well adjusted in the next few years. Additionally, however, they are looking for reference points in their own history, core values that have shaped Chinese history for centuries and might still be a guideline for the future. Among other things the CP found them in Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism. Therefore, it may be interesting to address the fundamentals and their reformers who, after the collapse of the Empire in 1912, sought a connection with the tried and true Sino-Confucian and Western tradition. In this context, our source Pankaj Mishra refers to two intellectuals who are hardly known in the West, their voices being drowned

by the deeds of Sun Yat-sen, Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Zedong: Kang Youwei, who was, however, revered by his students as Martin Luther of Confucianism, and his famous scholar Liang Qichao.

**“Three thousand years ago  
the Europeans were living  
like beasts ...”**

Liang Qichao, standing in the classical Chinese, hence Confucian educational tradition and participating until the 1920s in all major events in China, saw the reason for the backwardness of his country in China’s own hubris: They thought they were the world and all the others were barbarians. Liang and his teacher Kang Youwei were both shocked when they themselves read something about the West or visited Hong Kong for the first time in the 80s or 90s of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and had to admit that there were other advanced civilizations.

Kang supported the reform of China, which he considered as degenerate as Turkey, although the sultan and his people had never been as humiliated as their Chinese counterpart. The 70 years of Chinese humiliation since the 1830s hit the Chinese all the harder when looking back on 4,000 years of history, or in the words of Liang Qichao in 1902, “Our country’s civilization is the oldest in the world. Three thousand years ago, Europeans were living like beasts in the fields, while our civilization, its characteristics pronounced, was already equivalent to theirs of the middle ages.” (quoted in Mishra, p. 136)

Confucianism had placed a unifying bond around China since the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC and had a charisma to which even conquerors like the Mongols and later the Manchus succumbed, in the sense that they albeit strangers sinicized, i.e. they took over the Chinese culture – an event unheard of in the world history that the winner might be overwhelmed by the culture of the conquered, – especially when we think of the “triumph of the American

**"The 'Martin Luther of Confucianism' ..."**  
continued from page 11

way-of-life" since the Second World War as a counterpoint ...

**"A hundred times more  
than Western soldiers, Western  
commerce weakens China"**

But back to the Asia of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Mishra points out that in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Chinese had learned very quickly from their defeat by the British in the Opium wars and by France with respect to Vietnam; they built up a Western-style industry, including armament. However, as with Ottoman Turkey and Egypt the British pressed for free trade, so the protection for the young industry applied no longer. China was in a semi-colonial situation, because, as Liang Qichao put it in 1896, "a hundred times more than Western soldiers, Western commerce weakens China." (quoted in Mishra, p. 139) And so China, especially after the crushing defeat by Japan in 1895, was shared like a melon among the imperialist powers, whereas in 1900 the United States announced a policy of the "open door", which rendered the profits of the enforced free trade to the

foreigners, but imposed its costs on the Chinese. Within a century, China thus degenerated from a country with a positive trade balance to one heavily in debt.

**Kang starts an educational  
campaign for the Chinese people**

The humiliations suffered by China made Kang take a revolutionary step: Together with his exam candidates, thus the future elite of the country, he submitted a petition to the young Emperor *Guangxu* requesting to reject the humiliating peace treaty with Japan and initiate a real revolution from above, in the manner of the Ottoman Tanzimat reforms. Kang was indeed not successful, but he initiated the first mass movement in the history of China! Kang now launched an educational campaign not only for the upper class, but also for the Chinese "people", a term which was used in this context for the first time. Public libraries and schools were established to empower the people to political participation. Liang made copies of the petition, became secretary of the Education Association in Beijing and founded newspapers that were read widely. Thus he became the most influential journalist in China. The development of the educational system

and industrialization were his main concerns. 100 years after India and 20 years after the Arab world, a public space for debate and discussion had now emerged in China. Liang realized that they could only stand up to the West if an educated middle class and the ideas of the nation and popular sovereignty could be spread. In his argument, which was, of course, already dangerously close to the abolition of the monarchical system, Liang built on the Chinese tradition, "Mencius says that the people are to be held in honor, the people's affairs may not be neglected. The governments of the present-day Western states come near to conformity with this principle, but China, alas, is cut off from the teachings of Mencius." (Liang Qichao quoted in Mishra, p. 144)

**Yan Fu compares  
Western and Chinese tradition**

It was as well clear to Liang's teacher Kang, who saw himself as a classical wise Confucian scholar, that Confucianism had to be reinvented in order to be saved. That is, some of the Western virtues had to be taken over. The translator and writer *Yan Fu* had formulated a comparison of Western and Chinese tradition in 1895 as follows, "China values the Three [family] Bonds most highly, while the Westerners give precedence to equality. China cherishes relatives, while Westerners esteem the worthy. China governs the realm through filial piety, while Westerners govern the realm with impartiality. China values the sovereign, while Westerners esteem the people. China prizes the One Way, while Westerners prefer diversity [...]. In learning, Chinese praise breadth of wisdom, while Westerners rely on human strength." (quoted in Mishra, p. 146) More than a hundred years later, Kishore Mahbubani formulated as follows: Asia today would again take its natural place in the hierarchy of societies and cultures. And why? Because the Asians have discovered the seven Western pillars of wisdom! Each country which introduced the seven pillars, could also ascend! Mahbubani ranks among them the free market, science and technology, meritocracy, pragmatism, culture of peace, rule of law, and last but not least education. (see Mahbubani, pp. 62-113)

Kang, who was named Martin Luther of Confucianism for his subsequent activities after Liang, suggested a new interpretation of the writings of Confucius, to the effect that political reforms such as general election and women's emancipation, but also mass mobilization and mass education were to find even in the Neo-Confucian writings. Confucianism was to be state religion. Kang thus converted many

**Paris 1919: The Western powers stick  
to racial prejudices – Asia is indignant**

ts. Is "a person from Central Africa created equal to a European"? (cited from Mishra, p. 246) No, he does not think so. Who made this statement which would in today's Switzerland be subject to anti-racism legislation? When, where and in which context?

It was in 1919, in Paris. The First World War was over, the victorious powers were negotiating a new world order. An organization was planned that was meant to bring the peoples to the negotiating table in order to prevent them from determining their conflicts with weapons. This League of Nations needed clear statutes. So it happened that a non-European country brought forward the motion to include the equality of nations, that is, the equality of "races", as they used to say then, into the statutes. The country was Japan. Its delegate *Makino* based his request on the US American principle that "all men were created equal". The openly racist response that this was not so – we cited it in the beginning – came from a man who won an entry in the history books due to another statement: It was Lord Balfour, this very Lord *Balfour* who in 1917, in his famous *Balfour Declaration*, had promised "a homestead" to the Jewish People, as a refuge for people of Jewish belief who were being prosecuted and humiliated by racial hate.

Among many others, *Pankaj Mishra* is presenting this nasty example of western arrogance and double standards, of labeling and treating Asian people as a "lower race" – they have not forgotten this. But it was not only Lord Balfour who paraded this attitude. US president *Wilson* – then a figure of hope for many Asians – was joining the ranks of the white prejudice bearers with his statements and actions. Mishra: "In the end, Makino put the racial equality issue to a vote – and won. But President Wilson, in an act remembered for decades by Japanese nationalists, ruled that the majority vote was annulled by the fact that there were some strong objectors to the clause." (Mishra, p. 200) While the victorious powers were making fun of the non-European conference participants in a racist manner, the treatment of the Japanese motion demonstrated the Western policy of double standards. This procedure is legitimately revolting for today's reader, but it can also remind us of today's UN with its Security Council and the five permanent members with their vetoing power. This vetoing power is being criticized globally – very prominently by *Kishore Mahbubani*, who has been sitting, in this body as Singapore's representative, in 2011, but also by neutral states like Switzerland that are demanding reforms.

"The 'Martin Luther of Confucianism' ..."  
continued from page 12

scholarly officials to the ideals of the West by portraying these ideals as part of the tradition of Confucius.

### The reforms of 100 days under Emperor Guangxu

Many of the Chinese intellectuals who knew the West from their own experience, became convinced Social Darwinists because they thought they could only thus secure the survival of the "yellow race" in the fight against the white; other students as Kang' *Tan Sitong* proposed the establishment of a republic and morally exemplary actions, similar to *Gandhi*.

When, in 1898, the Empress Dowager transferred full governmental authority to the 23 year-old Guangxu, the hour of reformers around Kang and Liang had come: They were asked by the young emperor for help and together with Guangxu they sparked a firework of reforms during a hundred days. Mishra: "For about a hundred days, Kang, Liang and Tan Sitong became as powerful as any group of like-minded intellectuals elsewhere had been since the French Revolution." (Mishra, p. 149) However, the reforms were introduced too quickly and roused resistance with the old elites who were able to win the Empress to launch a coup. Most reforms were revoked, the consultants sentenced to death. Kang and Liang were able to escape, Tan surrendered to his captors with a statement, that was reminded in China for decades, namely that China would only then renew if men were willing to die for it. He and six other reformers were publicly beheaded. Mishra: "Thus ended China's opportunity to enact the kind of top-down modernization, that Turkey and Egypt had attempted. Revolution became as inevitable as it had become in countries elsewhere in Asia." (Mishra, p. 151)

### Liang as well as al-Afghani: unmasking Western methods of rulership

Liang now gathered exiled Chinese in Japan and with the financial support of already resident compatriots he founded magazines, schools and education companies. He read *Hobbes*, *Spinoza*, *Rousseau* and the Greek philosophers, wrote biographical studies of *Cromwell*, *Cavour* and *Mazzini*. He reported on the Philippine resistance against the US and the conflict between the Boers and the British in South Africa. He closely traced the race for natural resources and territories. He was in a lively exchange with revolutionary thinkers from all over Asia. Like *al-Afghani*, he de-

scribed the methods of Western powers to subjugate other countries. Methods, "which included cajoling countries into spiralling debt (Egypt), territorial partition (Poland), exploiting internal divisions (India), or simply overwhelming adversaries with military superiorities (the Philippines and the Transvaal)." (Mishra, p. 159)

scribed the methods of Western powers to subjugate other countries. Methods, "which included cajoling countries into spiralling debt (Egypt), territorial partition (Poland), exploiting internal divisions (India), or simply overwhelming adversaries with military superiorities (the Philippines and the Transvaal)." (Mishra, p. 159) Through these remarks Liang anticipated *Lenin's* dictum that imperialism was the last stage of capitalism, in other words and without the Marxist background.

### In 1908, China is ready for modernity

The resentment of a people, who around 1800 had a higher standard of living than Europe, then erupted in a spontaneous uprising, led by a shamanic secret society of advocates of traditional martial arts, the so-called "boxers". The fight was directed initially against property, then against people from the West and led to the famous razing of the expeditionary corps of the Western powers and Japan.

The Empress Dowager fled, now kick-starting some reforms so that China at her death in 1908 was prepared for establishing a modern state. The examinations for the civil service, based on a tradition of 1,000 years, were abolished, now there were modern schools with a western curriculum. In distant India the philosopher and politician *Aurobindo Ghose* (1872–1950) appreciated this awakening. It was an awakening similar to the Meiji-revolution in Japan. One of the first students of the new school was Mao Zedong, who realized the extent of China's humiliation and pledged change, as he told in an interview with the US writer *Edgar Snow*.

### Liang in favour of a republic, Kang in favour of a moral world community of brothers

Liang had observed China's latest and largest-ever humiliation from Hawaii and was now determined that the Chinese people's salvation from their slavish mentality so far only lay in a republic and a strong national state.

Being a true anti-Western Social Darwinist, he declared that "when a race cannot meet the exigencies of the times, it cannot endure." (quoted in Mishra, p. 166)

His teacher Kang, however, fell out with Sun Yat-sen on the question of monarchy or republic and went to India, where he designed an internationalist social utopia of a moral world community of brothers, in which all racial, ethnic and linguistic differences should be overcome – a vision which was adopted by Mao Zedong in parts, Mishra says, without going into more detail and giving more accurate reason about this idea.

### Liang in the United States in 1903: Welcome to the President and profound shock

In 1903 Liang made an extensive tour of the United States – this was a turning point in his intellectual career. The United States had penetrated the continent and now defined the Philippines as a "new frontier", as the future president *Woodrow Wilson* put it. Wilson continued: They were hungry for new markets, "to which diplomacy and, if need be power, must make an open way." (quoted in Mishra, p. 171) The closed doors of the nations would have to be forced open, the flag had to follow commerce. Interest in China was also huge, and they called for a policy of "open doors", exactly those doors, which would also be blown open if necessary. So Liang received a lot of attention on his journey, he was even welcomed by President *Theodore Roosevelt*, Secretary of State *John Hay*, but also by the banker *J. P. Morgan*. Liang was shocked by the social inequality in the United States and the power of corporate interests. Very accurately, he observed a growing centralism and consent to imperialism. Democracy, he concluded, had to be built from bottom up over a long period of time and could not be brought about by revolutions – an insight that can only be confirmed by the experience of the Swiss Confederation and its history.

### US democracy's reality raises Liang's doubt about democracy in general

Following the processes around the Panama Canal building, Liang clearly realized beforehand what kind of concentrated power was being established in the United States, and that this power would take possession of the planet, but would rush at China beforehand. The partially witnessed

**"The 'Martin Luther of Confucianism' ..."**  
continued from page 13

human rights violations against African American and Chinese immigrants raised Liang's doubt about democracy. However, he failed to win over the Chinese people living in the United States for the cause of the Chinese nation. They preferred clan structures and would bring about criminal gangs instead of representative parties. Thus they could not create a nation, he noted. And this also applied to China itself. Therefore, he concluded, "In a word, the Chinese people must for now accept authoritarian rule; they cannot enjoy freedom." (quoted in Mishra, p. 174) Only 50 years from now we could give the Chinese Rousseau's works to read; since for now democracy would end up in chaos in China. Meiji-Japan was Liang's evidence: A modern nation could also be built up with an autocratic state. Many people in Asia thought alike, especially, when Western countries favored protectionism and turned their backs on free trade in a selfish manner, since free trade had increasingly become unfavorable for them. The statism of *Bismarck's* Germany was now a role model, the enlightened despotism marked the road to progress and a guarantee of survival, for example, against the United States, which Liang did not want to concede a truly dem-

ocratic nature. So Liang also clearly opposed Sun Yat-sen's republican revolution that would only lead to chaos and ultimately to a new tyranny.

**Liang in 1903 like CCP today:  
a strong state directs economy  
and promotes social balance**

Unfortunately, the huge chaos after the fall of the Chinese Manchu dynasty proved him right. Liang would also have advocated – as, interestingly, the heirs of Mao had done – a strong state which encourages and protects the capitalists so that they could better survive in the competition with the outside world. An industrial production on the basis of capitalist methods, guided by a strong state: the only way for China to survive. But there was also a strong social component: the state should regulate the private sector in order to prevent excessive social discrepancies. A program, a hundred years old, which today is more or less applied in China. The question of what would have happened if ... is, however, recognized in today's science of history, but will get us nowhere. Nevertheless, just as in Russia, where the February Revolution could have justified a republic and would have saved the population from 70 years of suffering – would the Bolsheviks not have intervened with a coup in October/November, with the known con-

sequences such as communist planned economy, Stalinism, the Gulag, etc., – so Liang's concept could have avoided 60–70 million Chinese deaths, as the figures of the party historians of the Communist Party of China today reveal the toll of the history of the Chinese revolution.

**Liang – a Deng Xiao Ping  
before his time?**

Deng Xiao Ping's pragmatism, his famous cats metaphor – "it does not matter whether a cat is black or white; as long as it catches mice, it is a good cat" – would this not have been possible in 1911? Unfortunately, it was not the case and the people were not spared the bloody aberrations. And even today, as Kishore Mahbubani stresses, the road to freedom and democracy is different depending on the country. The West should take care not to impose its way on others, that might even be too fast, see the Russian example after the fall of Communism. China would take a slower pace, and that would grant stability and peace. (see Mahbubani, pp. 149) Liang would probably agree with Mahbubani, both in his criticism of the West as well as in the slow pace of struggling out of despotism. Even if the concept of enlightened absolutism seems long since overcome and outdated to the Europeans: Should Asia today risk chaos and anarchy, only for the sake of the pure doctrine? No, Mahbubani analogously says in his book.

**Confucian values and Chinese success story**

ts. The Confucian values: "ren", "yi", "xiao" and "zhong", which approximately mean "humanity", "virtuousness", "childlike modesty" and "faithfulness" were a guide for the correct way to negotiate in China, in politics as well. The system of Meritocracy which promotes "the best and the most daring" without showing concern for his/her background and is only based on his/her performance, was part of the Chinese Success Story, which according to *Kishore Mahbubani*, positively influences today's China which is ruled by the Communist Party. An observation which also has been confirmed by *Konrad Seitz*, the former German Consul to China with profound Western insight, in his outstanding book "China. A World power returns". The Chinese American, *Amy Chua* and her husband, *Jed Rubenfeld*, go a step further in their controversial book "The Triple Package: How Three Unlikely Traits explain the Rise and Fall of Cultural Groups in America". This book examines the feeling of the Chinese as being superior to everyone else and – however in combination with those in the USA who are an ethnic minority and have experienced insecurity – how they have developed a strong impulse towards control and ambition as a result: "We'll show them!" It is out of

this perspective that Chua and Rubenfeld construct their theory of "Triple package", which today contributes to the fact that the Chinese Americans, among other minorities such as the Jewish Americans, belong to the most successful groups in the USA as far as success and wealth are concerned. A theory which should be looked upon critically. Certainly the fact that the Chinese portrayal as being a superior people was effective in their history with respect to their fall in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as well as its reconstruction. However, from the Swiss perspective, the concept of Amy Chua and Jed Rubenfeld leave some points unanswered. Their concept of the "Triple package" admits that it only measures in terms of success and wealth, simultaneously it seems to neglect the personalist view of the human being and its history almost to the point of their being negated; the same applies to the principal of the cooperative society, which focuses on human dignity and which incorporates the three "selves", the responsibility for oneself, the self-help (where people learn to help themselves) and the self-autonomy as the basis for a society in which humans live together in equality and maintains the disposition to be democratic especially in the form of direct-democracy.

**1912: Liang Minister of Justice,  
later financial advisor:  
the debt trap snaps shut**

After the revolution of 1911, Liang was persuaded to take over the post of the Minister of Justice in 1912 and later became a financial advisor to the president *Yuan Shikai*, the successor to Sun Yat-sen. And as happens so often, the power was now back at the soldiers, Yuan was not the enlightened despot; he also reintroduced Confucianism with Kang's support, as a pillar of his rule, which the Republicans had declared unfit. What followed is painfully familiar from Egypt, Iran and Turkey, Mishra claims: Yuan fell into the debt trap and spiral and finally had to sell railway licenses and mineral rights to foreign creditors. Now Japan behaved increasingly imperialistic as well and had the pan-Asian intellectuals from Japan expelled or banned their newspapers.

In 1915, Yuan had to accept 21 Japanese demands, as he was in the debt trap with his Asian neighbors as well. When Yuan wanted to proclaim himself Emperor, he was overthrown. After his death in 1916, China was divided, as Liang had feared it would happen, into countless territories that were ruled by warlords. Sim-

**"The 'Martin Luther of Confucianism' ..."**

continued from page 14

ilar to Afghanistan before the Taliban, so Mishra's comparison.

**Minister Liang  
for allied war support ...**

The power in China was now no longer derived from Confucianism, but from the barrel of a gun, as Mao wrote in 1927. To this day, that time of chaos is used in China as a justification for authoritarian governance, Mishra says, and he certainly has the consent on the part of Mahbubani, who warns to impose Western models prematurely on other countries which all have their own course of history.

Liang was subsequently minister of the government in Beijing, and supported China's going to war on the side of the Allies: Only thus the "unequal treaties" could be resolved and Japan could be pushed back, he considered. He also sent workers and students to France, including the first generation of communist leaders like Deng Xiao Ping and Zhou Enlai.

The cruelly failed revolution of 1911 had shown one thing: The old China was considered discredited, in turn, it was agreed that now something completely new would arise. Opinions differed: While some were striving for a copy of the US, others like Mao were convinced that a new universe must arise from the demise of the old universe, something people could only rejoice in.

What was needed was now a revolution of the minds, and in 1919, it manifested itself in the "May Fourth Movement".

**... but disregard by the West pushes  
China into communism**

China's failure at the Paris Peace Conference was sealed in May 1919 – and triggered angry student protests internally, the "May Fourth Movement". The US president was accused of being a liar, and Chinese with pro-Japanese attitude, even if it was only conjectured, were assaulted, among them the Chinese ambassador to Japan, who was in Beijing at the time.

The May Fourth Movement stood for a new generation of Chinese who had been trained the western way and represented the people much more than the scholars around Kang and Liang.

Among the working students and workers who in support of the Allies had travelled to Europe, especially France, was also

Liang Qichao himself found his way back to Mencius and Confucius with their emphasis on a moral order. In these ancient teachings lay wisdom; the Confucian ideal of "ren", which taught harmony and compromise, was far superior to the western rivalry: "Material life is merely a means for the maintenance of spiritual life; it should never be taken as a substitute for the object which it serves."

(quoted in Mishra, p. 212)

Deng Xiao Ping. He, too, was politicized and radicalized by the Europeans' rough treatment. The Bolsheviks behaved different from the latter, since they renounced the unequal treaties with China and offered themselves as the only real ally against the imperialist powers. And they did so effectively: As early as in 1921, the Communist Party of China was founded in Shanghai with the assistance of Moscow. The Western powers were not disinterested in the radicalization in China due to their arrogance. So *Nehru* noted that "the specter of communism" had been brought over Asia by the discrediting on the part of president Wilson. And like *Ho Chi Minh*, Mao came to the conclusion that China could only become sovereign through communism. In Berlin, the headquarters of the Communist International (Comintern), thousands of opponents of colonialism gathered from around the world. As early as in 1920, Comintern had helped to found the Communist Party of Indonesia, which in turn sent representatives to Shanghai in 1921. In addition to Berlin, Moscow was the refuge of the revolutionaries from all over Asia, including *Ho Chi Minh*.

**Torch of European civilization  
kindled fires ...**

Liang developed quite differently. After 1919 he traveled to Europe and turned in disgust from social Darwinism, because it had led to the worship of money and power, to the rise of militarism and imperialism. Like the Indian Nobel Prize laureate for Literature in 1913, *Rabindranath Tagore*, he was of the opinion that "the torch of European civilization was not meant for showing light, but to set fire." (Tagore, quoted in Mishra, p. 210) One of the main reasons for the First World war was social Darwinism, Liang said. Since the Europeans had recognized this, they were now looking for a new ethics, and this would explain their enthusiasm, e.g. for *Lao Tse*. He himself

found his way back to Mencius and Confucius with their emphasis on a moral order. In these ancient teachings lay wisdom; the Confucian ideal of "ren", which taught harmony and compromise, was far superior to the western rivalry: "Material life is merely a means for the maintenance of spiritual life; it should never be taken as a substitute for the object which it serves." (quoted in Mishra, p. 212) The Europeans saw life only as a material process. The eastern scholarship emerged from the mind, the western one, however, from matter. From a political point of view this meant that the liberal democracy of the West lost its reputation in Asia. So Linag's old mentor, Yan Fu, says, "As I have grown older [...] I have come to feel that Western progress during the last three hundred years has only led to selfishness, slaughter, corruption and shamelessness." (quoted in Mishra, p. 213)

**"Western civilization is nothing but the  
rule of power" – and the Swiss model?**

Even Sun Yat-sen now spoke out against materialism and the economic imperialism of the West, and resorted to the "traditional virtues", "loyalty and filial piety, then humanity and love, faithfulness and duty, harmony and peace." (quoted in Mishra, p. 213) Moreover: The Western "civilization, when applied to society, will mean the cult of force, with aeroplanes, bombs and cannons as its outstanding features. [...] Therefore, European civilization is nothing but the rule of Might." (quoted in Mishra, p. 214)

These are statements to which a Swiss citizen may definitely agree, however with a certain differentiation: The criticism of the above-quoted thinkers from Asia refers to the centralized power structures of the West, where the individual citizen is exposed to continuous propaganda of the elites and the social issues remained unsolved, which was the only reason why their aggressive foreign policy found support. Had the citizens not been manipulated, an overwhelming majority would have voted for a peaceful coexistence – because ultimately, it were the own sons, brothers, spouses who had to bleed to death on the "field of honour", for the arrogance and

"As I have grown older [...] I have come to feel that Western progress during the last three hundred years has only led to selfishness, slaughter, corruption and shamelessness." (Yan Fu, mentor of Liang Qichao, quoted in Mishra, p 213)

### "The 'Martin Luther of Confucianism' ..."

continued from page 15

greed of both the power and the financial elites. As regards Switzerland, they considered themselves inhabitants of a small state, which was federally built on a cooperative basis from the bottom up and struggled to comply with the state motto of a perpetual armed neutrality, exposed to similar pressure as the countries of Asia: So in all European wars of the last two hundred years, the Swiss were always in the middle of war turmoil and willy-nilly had to make concessions since otherwise they would have been strangled economically, as *Daniele Ganser* proves in his book "Europa im Erdölrausch" (Europe in the oil rush).

#### Switzerland can have a bridging function between Asia and the West

It has always been the attempt of Switzerland, the nation established by the will of the people, to work towards the peaceful settlement of conflicts, to be moderate and to suggest the same to the neighbors. Every war just laid the seeds for the next one, for revenge. The Confederation had very early overcome this principle of the law of the jungle, the blood feud. Why should this not be possible at the international level? With the foundation of the ICRC and the Good Services of Swiss diplomacy they tried to

gain worldwide respect for this principle of peaceful coexistence.

In this respect, Switzerland could also have a bridging function between Asia and the West when it comes to put moral standards above the greed for money and power. It would certainly be profitable for Pankaj Mishra to study in detail the Swiss model in this aspect, for example on the basis of the habilitation thesis of Dr *René Roca*, and include it in the East-West debate.

Mishra's further statements reveal how manifold the points of contact between the Swiss model and Eastern philosophy might be, for example when he quotes Sun Yat-sen's basic features of Eastern civilization: "benevolence, justice and morality." (quoted in Mishra, p. 214) And, "This civilization makes people respect, not fear, it. Such a civilization is, in the language of the Ancients, the rule of Right or the Kingly Way. One may say, therefore, that Oriental civilization is one of the rules of Right. Since the development of European materialistic civilization and the cult of Might, the morality of the world has been on the decline. Even in Asia, morality in several countries has degenerated." (quoted in Mishra, p. 214) Even if a citizen of a western central state may have one or the other objection, the quote shows how strong the chagrin of the West, how abysmal the disappointment were in Asia when considering the ideology of double standards of the West – and still is, as Kishore Mahbubani writes. They did not want to have anything to do with this arrogance, hypocrisy and greed – so what else than to rely on the old masters and seek to modernize them with an own slant?

One who played a central role here, Rabindranath Tagore, who was invited on a lecture tour of China by Liang Qichao and others in 1924, will be presented in a fourth and final part of this article series. •

#### Literature:

Pankaj Mishra. *From the ruins of Empire. The revolt against the West and the remaking of Asia.* London 2013. ISBN 978-0-2419-5466-9.

Kishore Mahbubani: *Die Rückkehr Asiens – das Ende der westlichen Dominanz.* Berlin 2008. ISBN 978-354907351-3. Esp. chapter 3: *Warum Asien jetzt aufsteigt.* p. 62–113.

Kishore Mahbubani. *Can Asians think?* Singapur 1998. ISBN 978-981-261968-6.

Konrad Seitz. *China. Eine Weltmacht kehrt zurück.* München 2000. ISBN 978-3-442-15376-3 Esp part 1: *Die vollendete Zivilisation – China bis zum Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts.* p. 13–82.

Amy Chua, Jed Rubenfeld. *All people are equal. Erfolgreiche nicht. Die verblüffenden kulturellen Ursachen von Erfolg.* Frankfurt/New York 2014. ISBN 978-3-593-50117-8.S.279, footnote 27.

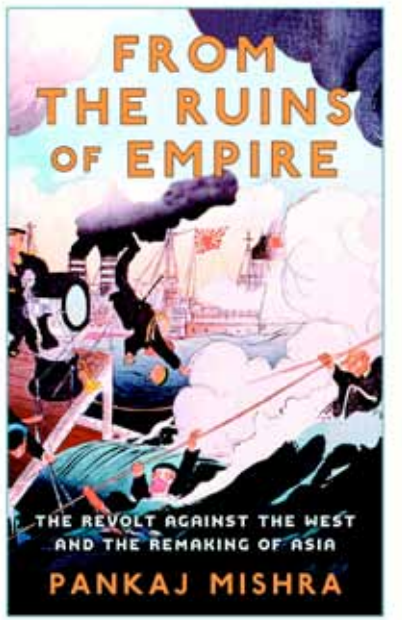
Daniele Ganser: *Europa im Erdölrausch. Die Folgen einer gefährlichen Abhängigkeit.* Zurich 2012. ISBN 978-3-280-05474-1.

René Roca. *Wenn die Volkssouveränität wirklich eine Wahrheit werden soll ... Die schweizerische direkte Demokratie in Theorie und Praxis – Das Beispiel des Kantons Luzern. Schriften zur Demokratieforschung,* vol. 6. Edited by Zentrum für Demokratie Aarau. Zurich 2012. ISBN 978-3-7255-6694-5.

## Letter to the Editor

The presentation of *Pankaj Mishra's* award-winning book "*From the Ruins of Empire*" is a treasure trove for me. I have read the review with growing enthusiasm and I noticed how little I know about history. I had to look up many aspects or I had to have them explained to me, so that I got especially curious about the book. The fact, that history has a much greater context than I as a European have believed till now is a real extension of my horizon and I am very grateful that *Current Concerns* again and again gives valuable and forward-looking information. You can experience in yourself that the multi-perspectival consideration of the world leads to a better understanding of political processes and to an easier approaching other people and opinions. There are books opening up a new look onto the world for you, therefore the importance of books and of reading should never be underestimated. That is why I am looking forward to the following articles about the thinkers who have been presented by Pankaj Mishra in his book in order to better understand the world and to engage in dialogue with neighbours, friends and my own children.

*Petra Flamme-Müller, Hannover*



ISBN: 978-1250037718