

# 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*

## Cyclic processes in political life

A hardly known and seldom discussed text by Jean-Rodolphe von Salis  
from the year 1971 – Part 2

The emergence, the rise, the growth crises, consolidation, the beginning of the decline and the disintegration crises of super states are obviously also subjected to a cyclic process. The Great Eastern Empires of Antiquity emerged from small beginnings of the clans, became powerful, decayed – and disappeared. Why? There is no quick answer, only the one that according to a constant rule nothing remains unchanged and no power lasts, however great it may be. There are impressive analogies between almost all orbits of the rise and fall of super states. The “essentially combatant character of political power” (*Gerhard Ritter*) leads to the concentration of both nations and territories

in super states and to the consolidation of power within the state, and it usually also leads to an extension of this power across the state borders; hence to the control of the state’s population and territory and to the control of originally foreign territories and peoples.

The applied means are also comparable. The construction of a state administration, i.e. of institutions, the strengthening of the central power that prevails by means of a hierarchical bureaucracy across the country or the empire, the development of legal institutions and the levying of taxes to fund the government and administrative system, the establishment of a police and an army, which are

directly serving the rulers, the use of military power to suppress insurrections and to conquer and master new territories, the economic and cultural boom, and finally the war obligations that are increasingly becoming a burden together with other governmental tasks which may lead to financial distress and economic crises and begin to undermine the structure: this is, in broad outline, the cyclic fate of each major super power state before it falls.

Of course, such a scheme of a cyclic process can be abstracted only from numerous individual cases, each of which differs from the other by historically con-

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## Questions on the tax dispute with the USA

by Marie-Hélène Miauton, Lausanne

The Swiss are furious. To be convinced, you simply had to listen to the programme “En ligne directe” of Western Swiss radio RTS yesterday morning [30 May 2013] where they railed against the decision of the Federal Council: scandal, high treason, disgusting, could be heard there.

The political parties are furious as well. They deplore that by this procedure the Federal Council takes them in captivity as hostages and obliges them to vote under pressure on a text of which they do not know for what it will be used. Everybody argues in his or her own manner and what is unusual: they do not contradict. On the contrary, the reasons they bring forth are apt, if put together, to formulate a watertight accusation.

For the citizen it is impossible to have a clear vision in this matter without obtaining answers to at least ten questions:

- Why are the USA in such a great hurry to bring the matter to an end all of a sudden, after having dawdled with this procedure for two years?
- Why do they want to reveal the contents of their one-sided proposal to the banks only after the vote in the parliament?
- Why does the Federal Council want to allow the banks to lever out Swiss law and to release the names of their employees, although the banks *HSBC*,

Julius Bär, Credit Suisse, BCZ and BCB have done this already in January 2012 without being prosecuted by the Confederation?

- Why do they omit to assert that the EU will immediately profit from this exception by demanding the same treatment for herself?
- Why do they pretend that the agreement “regulates the past”, although it demands the release of the names of employees to indict them, an operation that motivated the banks to provide a fund for the protection of their defence?
- Why should the names of employees be revealed to the American justice instead of giving the names of ten highest-ranking managers of the accused banks who are logically responsible for the actions of their office workers and are also well-paid for them?
- Why do the Americans target the Zurich and Basel “Kantonalbanks”, although in their board of directors there are several representatives appointed by the state?
- Why did they ridicule the *Wegelin* bank, which has negotiated on its own and has made severe necessary sacrifices, although many other banks are also affected and do now turn to politics and ask for the solution of their problems?

- Why do they name the up to now spared trustees, lawyers and other mediators in the text?
- Why should the banks pay fines (up to 40% of the kept property!) – although up to now they have hardly ever been awarded the role of a tax collector – even if they did not incite tax evasion, but simply accepted money of which nothing hinted at the fact that they might not be taxed?
- And finally, how can the Federal Council justify that Swiss law, the legal sovereignty of the country and the protection of its citizens, who are bank employees, should be sacrificed on the altar of the financial centre?

We Swiss demand that answers to all these questions will be delivered without delay, because the United States exert a great pressure! We want the answers to be clear and without jargon, because we are no lawyers, however, neither are we fools! And please answers without lies, because we have already swallowed too many lies!

Source: “Le Temps” of 31 May 2013  
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(Translation Current Concerns)

You will find basic considerations on the issue in the documentation p.9–12.

**"Cyclic processes..."**

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tingent features. The history of Rome and the Roman Empire, however, has an exemplary value, which has had an modelling effect on all great powers and empires created within the environment of white mankind. Here we can clearly recognize the emergence of a large empire from humble beginnings, from a municipal republic. It first acquires the surrounding land, which serves as its nutritional basis and as a protective barrier against external enemies; the mixed urban and agrarian nature of this political system has for centuries – until the industrial age – provided the model for the European world of states: each state is a closed economic area that needs to be self-sufficient; the urban upper class provides the administrative authorities, the governors and the educated, some of them are landowners themselves. Agriculture is a source of wealth and authority. Other citizens are dedicated to trade and navigation, yet others are craftsmen, contractors, cultural creators. The peasantry is the reservoir for army recruitment.

The expansion, the wars, the rise to power led to serious internal crises in Rome and the republican institutions originally intended for a small town could no longer meet the demands of power politics. Such policy requires a strong central power. The shock to the political-institutional system, the civil wars, in which the defenders of the old senatorial oligarchy and the spokesman of democracy faced each other; the tension emerging from the inadequacy and instability of the internal order on the one hand and the military conquests on the other – expansion beyond Italy's borders – led to the rise of an individual, *Gaius Julius Caesar*; he was the politician and military leader, the demagogue and conqueror who did not hesitate to start off a coup at the critical moment and was determined to establish his personal power in Rome: here a cyclic process is revealed in clear outlines and with a dramatic scene change that is eminently exemplary for the understanding of typical political processes.

For the super power state Caesarism is the same (or equivalent to) that we witnessed in ancient Greece and in late medieval Italy as a tyranny or domination of a dynasty that used to follow the democratic turmoil of the city-state. In Rome, the final establishment of the Principate, i.e. the personal power of Caesar's successor, under the long reign of *Augustus*, represented the consolidation phase and simultaneously the peak of power, order, peace, wealth and culture of this empire – before Rome was approaching its decay and ruin in gradual descent, in an alteration of up-swings and crashes, with ever more pres-

sure put on the provinces and their populations. It is also quite typical for the analogous processes that an intolerable fiscal system, which a large empire needs to impose on its subjects in order to maintain its position of power – partly due to never ending defensive measures, retreat battles, victories and defeats – leads to economic crises and to material and psychological stress of the population's emotional resilience before an external enemy brings about the final catastrophe.

The phenomenon of Caesarism as the culminating point of the rise of a major power state or an empire may also be regarded as typical in such political power structures' cyclic sequences – right between their rise and decline. Of course, we also find quite diverse variants of this constantly recurring phenomenon, depending on historical, national, geographic, economic or other conditions. The name "Caesar" is the etymological root of the German "Kaiser" and the Russian "Czar" and the official title of "Imperator" that of the English "Emperor" and the French "Empereur". *Charlemagne* has deliberately continued the Roman imperial tradition and had his dignity and his title confirmed by the ecclesiastical authority that had developed in Rome and was increasingly claiming universal validity. At the same time the "second Rome" – Byzantium – also led an imperial existence as Eastern Roman-Hellenistic-oriental Empire. It is quite typical for the rise and fall of empires in the West and the East of Europe that they sought to multiply and prevail using a combination of military strength, political measures, bureaucratic central authority and taxation, while having to overcome some internal resistance

and external enemies and that they finally declined in the last phase as a result of erosion from the inside and attacks from the outside after long defense.

No less typical is the fact that their successors and neighbors, which in turn rose to dangerous heights of power, adopted the power model of Caesarism – the centralized imperial power, embodied in a religiously sacred person. In the East this was done by the Turkish conquerors, who replaced the Byzantine Emperor in Constantinople and united the authority of the Sultan with that of the spiritual leader of the Moslems. However, the Grand Duke in Moscow also claimed to be the successor of the Byzantine emperors; the Czarism emerged from a union of Muscovite state power – fighting the Tatar domination and breaking the resistance of particularistic authorities – with the Greek Orthodox state Church, which after the fall of Byzantium had lost its center. Hence Moscow's claim to be recognized as the "third Rome".

But in the West there was a candidate for the dignity and position of a "third Rome", when Paris, i.e. the French monarchy had a relentless fight with the Roman emperors of German nation. The French kings who had to fight long and serious internal battles with feudal lords, parliaments (courts) and Calvinists were "anointed by the Lord". *Louis XIV*, who added new land acquisitions to the territories inherited and conquered by his predecessors, gained his almost Caesarist power to the inside and the outside by his absolute "Sun Kingdom" and the resistance of the Gallican church against the authori-

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**The cooperative idea instead of the idea of the power state**

"The spiritual force out of which the formation of the Swiss state has emerged since 1291 ist. Since its very beginning, our Switzerland with its cooperative principles has been in sharp contrast to its large neighbour states, all of which developed out of the feudal system and were cobbled together in a spirit of the empire by military-bureaucratic means of power."

*Gasser, Adolf. Für Freiheit und Recht. 1940–1945. Ausgewählte Artikel aus der Basler "Nationalzeitung" Bern, 1948, pp. 7f.*

"The charter of our state also speaks of human enemies that lurk outside a legal community. These were the foreign masters, the Habsburgs, whose arm of power was often equipped with the sword of the German Empire. This greedy dynasty wanted to incorporate the mark cooperatives and legal communities of the developing Confederation into their territory, impose political conformity on them, as we can express very aptly with the buzz word "gleichschalten" today. However, the economic groups and legal associations of the Waldstätte (original Swiss cantons) became a defensive state that took up the centuries-long fight with the dominators and ended victoriously.

From the point of view of power politics it was about supremacy in Central Europe, from the point of view of the history of ideas it was about the intellectual dispute between the cooperative idea and the idea of the power state. Habsburg wanted to rule – the Confederation was a community."

*Georg Thüner. Gemeinschaft im Staatsleben der Schweiz. Grundrisse, Betrachtungen, Mahnworte aus sieben Jahrzehnten. Gesammelt zum 90. Geburtstag des Autors. Bern, 1998, pp. 13f. (Emphasis G. Th)*

# “Whenever we fail to care for creation and for our brothers and sisters, the way is opened to destruction and hearts are hardened.”

*Homily of Pope Francis for the beginning of the petrine ministry on 19 March 2013*

*Dear Brothers and Sisters,*

I thank the Lord that I can celebrate this Holy Mass for the inauguration of my Petrine ministry on the solemnity of Saint Joseph, the spouse of the Virgin Mary and the patron of the universal Church. It is a significant coincidence, and it is also the name-day of my venerable predecessor: we are close to him with our prayers, full of affection and gratitude.

I offer a warm greeting to my brother cardinals and bishops, the priests, deacons, men and women religious, and all the lay faithful. I thank the representatives of the other Churches and ecclesial Communities, as well as the representatives of the Jewish community and the other religious communities, for their presence. My cordial greetings go to the Heads of State and Government, the members of the official Delegations from many countries throughout the world, and the Diplomatic Corps.

In the Gospel we heard that “Joseph did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took Mary as his wife” (Mt 1:24). These words already point to the mission which God entrusts to Joseph: he is to be the *custos*, the protector. The protector of whom? Of Mary and Jesus; but this protection is then extended to the Church, as Blessed *John Paul II* pointed out: “Just as Saint Joseph took loving care of Mary and gladly dedicated himself to Jesus Christ’s upbringing, he likewise watches over and protects Christ’s Mystical Body, the

Church, of which the Virgin Mary is the exemplar and model” (Redemptoris Custos, 1).

How does Joseph exercise his role as protector? Discreetly, humbly and silently, but with an unfailing presence and utter fidelity, even when he finds it hard to understand. From the time of his betrothal to Mary until the finding of the twelve-year-old Jesus in the Temple of Jerusalem, he is there at every moment with loving care. As the spouse of Mary, he is at her side in good times and bad, on the journey to Bethlehem for the census and in the anxious and joyful hours when she gave birth; amid the drama of the flight into Egypt and during the frantic search for their child in the Temple; and later in the day-to-day life of the home of Nazareth, in the workshop where he taught his trade to Jesus.

How does Joseph respond to his calling to be the protector of Mary, Jesus and the Church? By being constantly attentive to God, open to the signs of God’s presence and receptive to God’s plans, and not simply to his own. This is what God asked of David, as we heard in the first reading. God does not want a house built by men, but faithfulness to his word, to his plan. It is God himself who builds the house, but from living stones sealed by his Spirit. Joseph is a “protector” because he is able to hear God’s voice and be guided by his will; and for this reason he is all the more sensitive to the persons entrusted to his

safekeeping. He can look at things realistically, he is in touch with his surroundings, he can make truly wise decisions. In him, dear friends, we learn how to respond to God’s call, readily and willingly, but we also see the core of the Christian vocation, which is Christ! Let us protect Christ in our lives, so that we can protect others, so that we can protect creation!

The vocation of being a “protector”, however, is not just something involving us Christians alone; it also has a prior dimension which is simply human, involving everyone. It means protecting all creation, the beauty of the created world, as the Book of Genesis tells us and as Saint *Francis of Assisi* showed us. It means respecting each of God’s creatures and respecting the environment in which we live. It means protecting people, showing loving concern for each and every person, especially children, the elderly, those in need, who are often the last we think about. It means caring for one another in our families: husbands and wives first protect one another, and then, as parents, they care for their children, and children themselves, in time, protect their parents. It means building sincere friendships in which we protect one another in trust, respect, and goodness. In the end, everything has been entrusted to our protection, and all of us are responsible for it. Be protectors of God’s gifts!

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## “Cyclic processes...”

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tarianism of the Roman papacy. Strangely enough that only after the fall of the monarchy a new dynasty – in reality a general who had been successful thanks to the revolutionary turmoil and his victories on the battlefield – *Napoléon Bonaparte* emerged and made Paris the center of a modern Caesarism and a conquering empire, formally and by being crowned as Emperor in Notre-Dame Cathedral by the Pope summoned from Rome. He was finally destined to bring death to the Holy Roman Empire which had long been hollowed by repeated and hard blows.

In a later episode, the restored Bonapartist Caesarism, embodied in the person of *Napoleon III*, was defeated and overthrown by the Prussian military power whose immediate consequence

was that the Prussian king tried to seize the German imperial crown: Again the prototype of “Empire” and “Caesar” in new forms became a reality that dominated the political field, with new peoples and new rulers, based on state authority and economic power that had developed in generations of constructive work and was backed by its centralized bureaucracy, its police, and the impact of their conquering army. Even the English Kingdom resting on quite another fundament – only a few years after the proclamation of the German emperor from 1871 – had embarked on the path to the “empire”, thanks to its mastery of the seas and *Disraeli’s* initiative and had used the possession of India as an opportunity to confer the title of an emperor on Queen *Victoria* and her successors. The British “Caesarism” had solid constitutional founda-

tions and did by no means make an end to the freedom of the English; but perhaps this love of freedom has contributed to the British Empire being a loose structure. The new term “imperialism” originated in the 1870s in England, however not in a derogatory or reproachful sense, but rather to describe the expansion and size of the dominant sea power of Britain as a world empire. Even the democratic parliamentary France after 1871 spoke again of an “empire” to refer to the colonial empire in Africa and Southeast Asia which for the most part had been acquired by the Third Republic. •

Source: J.R. von Salis. *Geschichte und Politik. Betrachtungen zur Geschichte und Politik. Beiträge zur Zeitgeschichte*. Zurich 1971, Part I, page 133–138. Parts III and IV will be submitted to discussion in our newspaper in further succession.

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

# The War Alliance against Syria is trying to create a new “Gulf of Tonkin Incident”

## The UN Human Rights Council passes a biased resolution against Syria

*Superpowers have always known how to make use of covert operations when trying to push their own interests. The “Tonkin Incident” (cf. box) which led to an escalation of the Vietnam War, was one of many examples: another one was the Boxer Uprising in China at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century which presented a welcome pretext to send the German Expedition Corps. – Stimulated by Emperor Wilhelm’s Hun speech, the Germans created a blood bath among the Chinese population to make it clear to everybody that the Europeans were the masters. – Or the murder at Sarajevo which pulled all of Europe and eventually the whole world into a war that history has marked as one of the most terrible and bloodiest storms of steel for humanity.*

*thk.* It has always been relatively irrelevant events that were taken to justify the brutal destruction of human lives and to implement power interests. But those who think that such simple propaganda tricks out of the repertoire of imperial states are out of date, will be confronted with a highly

unpleasant and hideous reality. Only recently there have been reports that traces of poison gas had been found in Syria providing evidence that the Syrian President Assad had made use of it. This would mean that the “Red Line” drawn unilaterally by the US President had been crossed, forcing the world community to action. There is no doubt that the use of poison gas would be a war crime but thus is a war of aggression or the killing of civilians by drones – both actions not alien to President Obama, winner of the Peace Nobel Prize of 2009.

The French Foreign Minister *Laurent Fabius*, responsible for the news from the alleged usage of poison gas by Syrian troops, was so interested in credibility that the suppositions of five o’clock in the morning were, for the French government, considered a proven fact a few hours later in the evening. Amazing!

### Will Laurent Fabius become a second Colin Powell?

With bad feelings and indignation we feel reminded of the situation ten years ago

when the Secretary of State *Colin Powell* tried to make the UN Security Council believe that *Saddam Hussein* was in possession of weapons of mass destruction. Then it were the French under *Jacques Chirac*’s government who spoke up against an intervention in Iraq, thus rendering any attempt at a Security Council Resolution pointless. France was also supported by the German Chancellor *Gerhard Schröder*. Today France and Great Britain are urging for a military intervention to topple *Baschar al-Assad*. Also from Germany we perceive no clear position against war. France would happily bring countries like Syria and Lebanon, which had been occupied by them during World War I (Sykes-Picot Agreement) and lost during decolonization, back under its control. This goal is directing France’s action. This is against international law and there is no way of hiding that the methods used are the old manipulation techniques in order to push the responsible countries towards a war, on behalf of these super-

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### “Whenever we fail to care ...”

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Whenever human beings fail to live up to this responsibility, whenever we fail to care for creation and for our brothers and sisters, the way is opened to destruction and hearts are hardened. Tragically, in every period of history there are “Herods” who plot death, wreak havoc, and mar the countenance of men and women.

Please, I would like to ask all those who have positions of responsibility in economic, political and social life, and all men and women of goodwill: let us be “protectors” of creation, protectors of God’s plan inscribed in nature, protectors of one another and of the environment. Let us not allow omens of destruction and death to accompany the advance of this world! But to be “protectors”, we also have to keep watch over ourselves! Let us not forget that hatred, envy and pride defile our lives! Being protectors, then, also means keeping watch over our emotions, over our hearts, because they are the seat of good and evil intentions: intentions that build up and tear down! We must not be afraid of goodness or even tenderness!

Here I would add one more thing: caring, protecting, demands goodness, it calls for a certain tenderness. In the Gospels, Saint Joseph appears as a strong and cou-

rageous man, a working man, yet in his heart we see great tenderness, which is not the virtue of the weak but rather a sign of strength of spirit and a capacity for concern, for compassion, for genuine openness to others, for love. We must not be afraid of goodness, of tenderness!

Today, together with the feast of Saint Joseph, we are celebrating the beginning of the ministry of the new Bishop of Rome, the Successor of Peter, which also involves a certain power. Certainly, Jesus Christ conferred power upon Peter, but what sort of power was it? Jesus’ three questions to Peter about love are followed by three commands: feed my lambs, feed my sheep. Let us never forget that authentic power is service, and that the Pope too, when exercising power, must enter ever more fully into that service which has its radiant culmination on the Cross. He must be inspired by the lowly, concrete and faithful service which marked Saint Joseph and, like him, he must open his arms to protect all of God’s people and embrace with tender affection the whole of humanity, especially the poorest, the weakest, the least important, those whom Matthew lists in the final judgment on love: the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick and those in prison (cf. Mt 25:31-46). Only those who serve with love are able to protect!

In the second reading, Saint Paul speaks of Abraham, who, “hoping against hope, believed” (Rom 4:18). Hoping against hope! Today too, amid so much darkness, we need to see the light of hope and to be men and women who bring hope to others. To protect creation, to protect every man and every woman, to look upon them with tenderness and love, is to open up a horizon of hope; it is to let a shaft of light break through the heavy clouds; it is to bring the warmth of hope! For believers, for us Christians, like Abraham, like Saint Joseph, the hope that we bring is set against the horizon of God, which has opened up before us in Christ. It is a hope built on the rock which is God.

To protect Jesus with Mary, to protect the whole of creation, to protect each person, especially the poorest, to protect ourselves: this is a service that the Bishop of Rome is called to carry out, yet one to which all of us are called, so that the star of hope will shine brightly. Let us protect with love all that God has given us!

I implore the intercession of the Virgin Mary, Saint Joseph, Saints Peter and Paul, and Saint Francis, that the Holy Spirit may accompany my ministry, and I ask all of you to pray for me! Amen. •

**"The War Alliance against Syria ..."**

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powers and their economic and financial lobbies.

Since a few weeks the Syrian army has been successful in driving the enemy mercenaries back who have no interest whatsoever in democracy, pluralism and human rights. The country wants to preserve its sovereignty and not be drowned in chaos like Afghanistan, Iraq or Libya. This is making the Western strategists increasingly nervous since it threatens the success of their plan. After their successes in Iraq 2003 and Libya 2011 they seem to fail due to forces opposing the extension of the war.

**Why is the Human Rights Council so biased?**

In its current session, the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva is also dealing with the "Syrian case" and a silent observer cannot avoid the impression that the majority of the countries represented in the Human Rights Council are debating in a very biased way. On 29 May it passed an "urgent resolution" denouncing lopsidedly the actions of the Syrian Army in Al-Qusayr. The wording of the resolution is so biased that it is completely obvious that various Western and Arabic states and Turkey are doing everything in order to convince the global public of the necessity of a military intervention. Once again we are to be deceived.

The pattern is invariably the same and has been "successful" in the past: In February 2003 the US Secretary of State, Colin Powell – after it had become clear that he would not succeed in the Security Council – had presented his "proofs" that Saddam Hussein was in possession of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons in the UN General Assembly in New York. His statements were based on information of his secret services and the seminar paper of a student, written 10 years before ("I have a fine paper"). Absolute-

**What is the "Gulf of Tonkin incident"?**

*thk.* In August 1964 President Lyndon B. Johnson announced that North Vietnamese speedboats had attacked the US destroyer *Maddox* in the Gulf of Tonkin, even though it had been "in international waters" and the North Vietnamese "had not been provoked". At that time President Johnson announced that the USA could not act differently but extending the war now. Years later it turned out that this attack on the US warship had never taken place.

**Putin: Russia has strategic interests in the Mediterranean**

According to President *Vladimir Putin* Russia is not going to rattle its sabre for the planned deployment of a permanent naval force in the Mediterranean but is going to pursue its own security interests.

"Restoring permanent presence of the Russian navy in the Mediterranean is not a feature of sabre-rattling", said Putin while visiting the command centre of the Russian armed forces in Moscow. "It's a strategically important region in which we have our own interests connected with ensuring national security of Russia."

The naval unit would be equipped with modern ships and armaments,

Putin announced. He appreciated cooperation with NATO in the fight against criminality and maritime piracy and expressed his hope that the Russian convoy would build good relationships with colleagues from the adjacent states and other partner countries present in this region. [...]

Russia is setting up a new naval force which is going to be permanently present in the Mediterranean.

Source: [http://de.rian.ru/security\\_and\\_military/20130606/266259658.html](http://de.rian.ru/security_and_military/20130606/266259658.html) of 6.6.2013

(Translation Current Concerns)

ly nothing of it was correct. It was all lies. The consequence: hundreds of thousands of innocent victims, a destroyed country that has still not found any rest – during the last month there have been over 1000 casualties due to bombings in Iraq – and a deep rift between the Islamic states and the West which will take decades, if not centuries, to heal. Is this the future planned for the Syrians, too? In the voting

in the Human Rights Council, there have been eight abstains and one single vote against. Venezuela was the only country courageous enough to oppose.

It is the task of the UN body to uncover violations of human rights, to discuss them and to oblige the concerned countries to respect these human rights. The

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**Statement of the delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela**

*Thank you Mr President*

Venezuela shares the concern about the loss of innocent human life, wherever it takes place in this world. But we do not share the view that the protection of human life can be used as a pretext for foreign intervention.

It is outrageous that this Council continues to work on the establishment of unilateral interference mechanisms. This urgent meeting is part of that agenda as a reaction to the pressure exerted by Washington. Hereby, the Council disregards the various formal instances intended to address situations like the current situation in Syria. It is obvious that the Council members are not interested in a peaceful outcome of the conflict, and they ignore any proposal which may lead to reconciliation via dialogue and democratic participation, as promoted responsibly by the Syrian government.

*Mr President,*

Our delegation is concerned about the policy of double standards by some states who impose prohibitions and sanctions on the Syrian government, but at the same time encourage and promote terrorist groups that are directly involved in the violent actions against the Syrian people, and who have recently even agreed openly and illegally to supply resources and weapons to these groups. All this happens in the name of peace.

We reject the intervention of foreign powers in the Arab Republic of Syria and

condemn them. These insist once more on advancing the well-known scenario of complaints about alleged violations of human rights and of international humanitarian law in order to justify their armed intervention. At the same time, they want to apply their policy of regime change under the guise of so-called Responsibility to Protect, which they want to impose to whatever price, just as they did in Libya, in clear violation of the principles and objectives of the Charter of the United Nations.

Venezuela recently reaffirmed its support for the government of President Bashar al-Assad as the legitimate representative of his people, and repeats the call to respect the sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity of Syria. We want to sing a song of praise for the efforts of the Syrian authorities in favor of dialogue and political negotiations, looking for a stop to the violence and a peaceful solution of the conflict. We rely on the ability of the Syrian people and the Syrian government to solve their delicate domestic situation without foreign intervention and respect the full exercise of their right to self-determination.

Thank you.

Geneva, 29 May 2013

Source: [https://extranet.ohchr.org/sites/hrc/HRCSessions/RegularSessions/23rdSession/OralStatements/Venezuela\\_07.pdf](https://extranet.ohchr.org/sites/hrc/HRCSessions/RegularSessions/23rdSession/OralStatements/Venezuela_07.pdf)

(Translation Current Concerns)

## “War is the suicide of humanity”

Pope Francis celebrated a Mass on Sunday, June 2nd, together with Italian soldiers wounded during peacekeeping missions in foreign countries. June 2nd is “National Day” in Italy. In attendance at the Mass were the parents of 24 soldiers killed in action and 13 war-disabled.

“Today we have come to pray for our dead, for our wounded, for the victims of the madness that is war! It is the suicide of humanity, because it kills the heart, it kills precisely that which is the message of the Lord: it kills love! Because war comes from hatred, from envy, from desire for power, and – we’ve seen it many times – it comes from that hunger for more power.”

So many times, the Pope noted, we’ve seen “the great ones of the earth want to solve” local problems, economic problems, economic crises “with a war.”

“Why? Because, for them, money is more important than people! And war is just that: it is an act of faith in money, in idols, in idols of hatred, in the idol that leads to killing one’s brother, which leads to killing love. It reminds me of the words of God our Father to Cain, who, out of envy, had killed his brother: ‘Cain, where is your brother?’ Today we can hear this voice: it is God our Father who weeps, crying for this madness of ours, who asks all of us, ‘Where is your brother?’ Who says to the powerful of the earth, ‘Where is your brother? What have you done!’”

From this exhortation, Pope Francis went on to pray to the Lord, that He might “take all evil far away from us,” repeating this prayer “even with tears, with the tears of the heart”:

“‘Turn to us, o Lord, and have mercy on us, because we are sad, we are dis-

tressed. See our misery, and our pain and forgive all sins,’ because behind a war there are always sins: there is the sin of idolatry, the sin of exploiting men on the altar of power, sacrificing them. ‘Turn to us, o Lord, and have mercy, because we are sad and distressed. See our misery and our pain.’ We are confident that the Lord will hear us and will do anything to give us the spirit of consolation. So be it.”

2nd June, the Italian national day, was chosen deliberately. Italy commemorates „Republic day“ with a military parade and a wreath-laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

Source: <http://www.news.va/en/news/pope-francis-war-is-the-suicide-of-humanity> as of 2 June 2013

### “The War Alliance against Syria ...”

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Council has instruments backed by international law helping states in respecting and implementing human rights. This implies of course not to deliver weapons to rebels and terrorists which have been wreaking havoc in Syria for two years. What we observe in the UN sessions in Geneva, however, are lopsided convictions of single states which refuse to be used by the west for its goals.

### Carla del Ponte has thwarted Nato’s war plans

Recently, the “Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic” which was initiated in August 2011 presented its report presented by the Brazilian *Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro*. This report is also biased and hardly contributes towards a solution of the conflict. *Carla del Ponte*, the determined Swiss Federal prosecutor and former Chief Prosecutor of the Yugoslavia Tribunal, is a member of this commission, as well. Already one month ago she thwarted plans to blame the use of poison gas on Assad when she made, based on the facts, the rebels and not the Assad government responsible for it. It is more than dubious if France’s President *Hollande*, together with his defense min-

ister Fabius, now, one month later, are trying to blame the use of poison gas on Assad. It seems to be another attempt to fabricate a pretext for a military intervention in Syria.

### Favor dialog as the only solution

In spite of all its lopsidedness, Pinheiro warns in his report against attempts to solve the conflict by intervention from outside. “Syria is in need of increased diplomatic efforts”. He also criticizes the delivery of weapons to the rebels. “More weapons mean more dead or injured civilians [...]. Dialog is the only path to a solution.” A small ray of hope in an otherwise gloomy chapter of international efforts to solve the Syria conflict. In this tense situation, the initiatives of the Russian government to solve the conflict with peaceful means deserve highest approval. While the West, with France and the US as the spearhead, are still playing with fire and eventually will have to assume responsibility for a firestorm they have started off, Russia is sending a part of its fleet into the Mediterranean in order to mark presence.

An end of the bloodshed will be possible only by a constructive dialog as many voices are demanding. This must be the objective of the international community.

## Current Concerns

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# Who is using poison gas in Syria?

Interview by Peter Voegeli, editor of SRF, with Prof Günter Meyer



Günter Meyer

(picture University Mainz)

*Peter Voegeli: The winds have changed. More and more the Syrian rebels are under critical attention. They are accused of having used poison gas weapons, and not the regime of Assad. Professor Günter Meyer heads the "Centre for research on the Arab world" at the Johannes-Gutenberg University in Mainz, Germany. Quite pointedly he puts forward the thesis that the rebels and not the Government of Assad have used poison gas. I asked him: "How can you be sure of this while being far away in Mainz?"*

*Günter Meyer:* It is complete nonsense to assume that the Government troops were using poison gas in the current situation. The regime is gaining ground. The forces of Assad have a superior firepower. With conventional weapons, with their artillery, with their air force, with their combat aircraft they can fight the insurgents in a concerted effort. So, in this situation it is to assume that the regime will not take the risk of using poison gas in any case, which last not least could be directed against their own troops by a change of wind.

*That makes sense, if the Government acts rationally, if Assad is a rationally acting dictator.*

There is not the slightest reason to insinuate that Assad is irrational. He has recently stated in an interview: "We will not allow our opponents to pull us across the red line." He refers to the red line, which is set up by Obama: If the Syrian regime uses poison gas against its own people, it will have consequences on the part of the United States, which then would obtain the decisive reason to intervene militarily in Syria. Only Bashar al-Assad's opponents have an interest in this.

*Isn't it possible that Assad hopes to get his supporters mobilized if the Americans intervene in Syria?*

Here we have to assume the perspective of the Obama Administration and bear in mind the consequences. What will happen if a no-fly zone is set up, if large scale supplied weaponry is delivered to the insurgents and the regime actually crashes. Then, a power vacuum comes up, and that will be filled by the insurgents, especially the al-Nusra-Front, the jihadists, the al-Qaeda-followers, just waiting to enter into the power vacuum. The concern that these terror groups would finally seize power is one of the main reasons why Obama doesn't want to militarily intervene in Syria in any case.

*But why is even the independent UN Commission on Syria very skeptical, not just the Americans?*

According to the statement of the prominent member of the commission, Carla del Ponte, all available evidence points to the assumption that the rebels are responsible for the use of chemical weapons. This becomes clear when we look at the specific situation when the poison gas was used in Khan el-Assal north of Aleppo, where 27 people have been killed. A village was attacked with chemical warfare agents, which is supporting the regime. Most of the inhabitants of the place are Shias, being combated by the Sunni rebels. Also regime soldiers were among the dead. It defies any logic, that the government troops attacked a settlement with chemical warfare agents, which is controlled by them. Only the insurgents can be responsible for this attack.

*Where did the rebels get the poison gas from in your opinion?*

The "Guardian" has investigated in detail and concludes that a small rocket, tipped with a poison gas grenade, was shot from the settlement of Bab, which is located very close to the Turkish border. This place is a stronghold of the jihadist al-Nusra-Front, which has joined al-Qaeda. Again and again, Western intelligence agencies have stressed that the Syrian chemical weapon storages are safe, as long as the regime is in power. It can

therefore be excluded that the chemical weapons have found their way to the rebels from there. It is much more likely however, that the chemical weapons came across the neighboring open border from Turkish territory into the hands of the al-Nusra-Front.

*That means, that in your opinion Turkey supplied the rebels with poison gas, although they are allies of the United States, which do not want that at all?*

At least the facts suggest it, and it is enforced by the fact that Prime Minister Erdogan has now claimed that the Turkish secret service possess the remains of at least 200 shells with traces of poison gas which are supposed to be used by the regime in Syria. If actually 200 missiles with poison gas had been fired, which would have resulted in hundreds, even thousands of dead, that would not be at all comparable to the relatively small effect observed in the recent alleged attacks with sarin gas. Therefore, all this suggests a large-scale propaganda campaign to increase the pressure on Obama now, ahead of the upcoming negotiations with Erdogan in Washington.

*There is indeed a confusing variety of rebel groups now. Which one is using the poison gas?*

The al-Nusra-Front is organized best, which is supported by at least 600 jihadists just from European countries according to different estimates and many al-Qaeda fighters infiltrated from the Iraq and many other Islamic countries as well. These groups are well organized with respect to using the media. They have a clear interest to accuse the Assad regime as responsible for chemical weapon use. They are very well aware that the regime is again gaining ground while the insurgents are losing. To turn the tide again, it is crucial to enter this argument – crossing the red line by employment of poison gas – into discussion again; and it is easy for the rebels to get hold of chemical weapons. •

Source: SRF, *Echo der Zeit* of 16.5.2013  
(Translation Current Concerns)

## Christian villages destroyed by armed gangs in the region of Homs

*After having murdered a man and his daughter rebels occupied the village church of Douar and fired on fleeing civilians.*

In recent weeks there was more heavy fighting in the region of Al-Qusayr. As becomes evident from reports of refugees, received by *Fides*, there were also several assaults on Christian villages in the province of Homs.

As revealed by refugee reports, on 26 May rebels with links to the group "Jabhat al-Nusra" seem to have invaded the village Douar, where 100 Greek Or-

thodox families live. The armed rebels were on their way to a military school of the state armed forces and occupied the church of the village, from where the fighters fired on the fleeing civilians after they had killed a man and his daughter. Here a 11 year old boy and a 18 year old girl were killed and ten other people were injured, two of them seriously. After that the Christian mayor *Joseph Jamil Adra* and another man were taken hostage. Homes were destroyed and set on fire. First the traumatized refugees were accommodated in an Armenian Orthodox parish near Homs. The local civil

authorities together with the priests and the Red Cross are trying to provide the refugees with the essentials.

Meanwhile, armed groups invaded the village Ouzm Sharshoh in the province of Homs two days ago. The fighters also devastated homes there or set them on fire, resulting in the flight of more than 250 Christian families. Similar cases of gratuitous violence against defenseless civilians in other villages of the region were said to have taken place.

Source: *Fides* of 31.5.2013

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

## Blue helmets are being targeted

by Rudolf Gruber

*Austria is preparing to withdraw its blue helmets from the Golan Heights. After the lifting of the arms embargo against Syria their safety is getting ever less ensured.*

It is not often that the small state of Austria opposes its most powerful partner states within the European Union. At the EU foreign ministers meeting in Brussels that is what happened: "If two want something, it cannot be that 25 run after them," Austrian Foreign Minister *Michael Spindelegger*, who is known to usually word his statements quite prudently, surprisingly caustically commented on the attitude of Britain and France after the extension of the EU arms embargo against Syria had failed.

### Weapons for extremists

One of the reasons for Austria's opposition against arms sales to the Syrian rebels is that it cannot be controlled into the hands of which group of the insurgents they will fall. It is quite probable that Islamist extremists will benefit, because their units largely determine the battle in Syria, albeit that European shipments of arms to Syrian rebels, which would theoretically be achievable by June, are meant to put the Syrian *Assad* regime militarily under pressure.

### Threat to UN forces

But even the roughly 1,000 UN peacekeepers who have been monitoring the ceasefire on the Golan Heights on the Syrian border since 1974, after the Yom

Kippur War, are beginning to be targeted by the civil war parties. Austria's approximately 380 peacekeepers are the main contingent, the remaining troops are contributed by India and the Philippines.

In the nearly 40 years of peacekeeping operation, the Golan guards were never so vulnerable as now: Japan and Croatia have already withdrawn their soldiers, because the civil war front-line is getting closer to the buffer zone. On a military exchange this past November, 88 Austrian soldiers were fired at on their way to Damascus airport. With 4 casualties they got off lightly in this incident.

And yet by such an incident "the entire mission is called into question," said Austria's Defence Minister *Gerald Klug* on the radio yesterday. The situation was reassessed every day, he had already given orders for the preparation of a scheduled withdrawal, which could be accomplished within a few hours.

Yet at the same time foreign minister *Spindelegger* said calmly that there was no immediate danger, "but the safety of our soldiers has absolute priority." In Vienna it is expected that in August, the withdrawal could begin in earnest. The ever more escalating situation in Syria makes it "extremely difficult for Austria to uphold the mission," said *Spindelegger*. He had already told this to UN Secretary-General *Ban Ki-moon* some time ago.

### Blue helmets an election issue

To make matters worse, the fate of the blue helmets could become an election issue.

The parties of the red-black coalition fear nothing more than Austrian soldiers coming home in coffins before the autumn elections. The opposition – Greens, Liberals and the Austro-Canadian billionaire *Stromach's* Party – call for their immediate repatriation. "What are the Foreign and the Defence Ministers actually waiting for?", FPÖ leader *Heinz-Christian Strache* said publicly.

By courtesy of the "St. Galler Tagblatt" of 29.5.2013

At an event on 4 June in Vienna Nobel Peace Prize Laureate *Marti Ahtisaari* said that an opportunity for negotiations in the Syrian conflict had been squandered in February 2012.

At this time Russia had been ready to talk about three key points with the opposing parties and the permanent Security Council members: first, arms shipments to Syria, second, the possibility of direct talks between the Syrian regime and the opposition, and third, President *Bashar al-Assad's* resignation, which is required by the West. The Russian Ambassador to the UN, *Vitaly Churkin*, had communicated this to him in New York, said *Ahtisaari*. He had forwarded the idea immediately, but the United States, Britain and France had not responded.

"The Security Council is unable to fulfill its responsibilities in Syria," said Finland's former president.

Source: *The Press* of 6.6.2013

## German debates on alternatives to the Euro

by Jochen Scholz

On 14 April on the occasion of the foundation meeting for new party *Alternative für Deutschland (AFD)* at the *interconti* Hotel in Berlin, the former president of the Federation of German Industries, *Hans Olaf Henkel*, mainly known as a socio-political agitator, met with many other mid-forties, who have been politically active previously at regional and local level with the CDU, FDP or SPD. The elected leadership team of the new party is also ideologically and conceptually to be located in the sphere of the “initiative for a new social market economy” that is determined to defeat the welfare state principle of the German Basic Law. For this project, however, there is no need for a monetary reform. The party founders’ motives were undoubtedly the concern about an uncontrolled collapse of the euro-zone, if the previous rescue policy were to be continued. They fear that Germany could fail to meet its commitments of stabilizing the euro-zone.

It is their merit to have initiated under the label “Wahlalternative für 2013” (Electoral Alternative for 2013) since mid-2012 a debate on the supposedly ‘no alternative euro bailout’ policy by the Troika of the *European Central Bank*, *European Commission* and *International Monetary Fund*, which even the parties in Germany backing the Troika are no longer able to escape. This debate gains momentum by the constantly deteriorating economic data of the euro-countries whose social cohesion is at stake as a result of this policy.

Now the lone voice in the euro-desert, *Wilhelm Hankel*, who does not belong to the AFD, is gaining more media attention. Already in his first, unsuccessful appeal to the Constitutional Court against the monetary union, he had warned of the consequences that a central monetary policy would produce for quite heterogeneous economies. His predictions have been far surpassed by reality since. Here the

50 percent youth unemployment in Spain or the 62 percent in Greece may suffice as examples. The old-school Social Democrat, a character which no longer exists in the SPD, has now introduced the concept of a dual currency system a few weeks ago that could stop the division process in the euro-zone and simultaneously act cohesively for the entire EU. The euro will not be abandoned, but acts as a reference currency for the national currencies and as a parallel means of payment. The states will get back the ability to determine a monetary policy themselves, appropriate to their economies and, where necessary, compensating their disadvantages compared to stronger ones by devaluations.

*Oskar Lafontaine* with his recent plea for a European monetary system does not only know which way the wind blows, but also takes into account that an internal currency devaluation in the southern countries (more massive wage cuts) would be irresponsible and an internal currency appreciation (significant pay increases, increase in public spending) would not be politically feasible in Germany.

Unless we are very much mistaken, a timid rethinking within the federal government is in the air. The Chancellor is not known for inconsiderate public statements. Prior to the recent rate cut by the *European Central Bank*, she said at the *German Savings Bank Day*: “For Germany, the European Central Bank would have to raise the interest rates, actually.” A proper economic knowledge that can however not be implemented because of the central monetary policy in the monetary union. Even the tepid response of the Federal Minister of Finance on the German Central Bank’s statement for the hearing before the *Federal Constitutional Court* in mid-June on the occasion of the suit against the *European Stability Mechanism* (ESM) provides food to think. For

the *German Central Bank* comes to terms with the previous rescue policy in drastic words.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall the European partners believed to fence a dominant united Germany by the monetary union in the medium term and to break the dominance of monetary policy of the German Central Bank. With this misconception, the European Union was completely led astray. The euro has proved to be an inappropriate means to this strategic purpose. At the Strasbourg EU summit on 8 December 1989 the then French President *Mitterand*’s use of historical patterns of 1907 made clear, that with the principle decision for the introduction of a single currency it was not all about objective economic considerations but about exclusively strategic ones. In the event that Germany would not give up its opposition to the monetary union *Mitterand* said to German Foreign Minister *Genscher*, “Be prepared to the encirclement by a triple alliance of France, Britain and the Soviet Union” (*David Marsh, Friedrich Griese, “The Euro”, p. 203*). Thus *Helmut Kohl* knew what price he had to pay for the reunion.

After the co-plaintiff *Wilhelm Hankel* has now submitted a thoughtful approach to the stabilization of the entire EU, in time for the hearing before the Federal Constitutional Court, the court should drop its previous fears to be blamed for the failure of the euro. The euro would also fail if the court transferred the case to the *European Court of Justice*. The euro-zone will not withstand the usual procedure there for two years. Word gets around: Saying goodbye to the euro-zone does not mean to be a nationalist or an enemy to Europe. •

Source: *Ossietzky* 11/2013

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# What next in Europe?

## The EU has no future – a peaceful dismantling is needed

by Karl Müller

Currently there are 47 states on the continent of Europe. 27 of them are members of the European Union, 20 European countries are independent. The European Union is incorrectly repeatedly equated with Europe. Such voices mainly come from EU proponents. But the fact is that Europe is more diverse and has more to offer than just the European Union.

The false equating of Europe and European Union is due to the fact that a large entity like the EU seeks to attract great attention, that it wants the European diversity to pass from view and that it wishes the opinion to prevail that Europe's fate is closely linked to the fate of the EU.

Scarcely anybody can imagine that the European Union is only an eye twitch of history – although this exactly will be the case as the EU is an artifact of power politics and has no organic roots in the history of European citizens.

In the heat of the moment, this may hardly be seen by anyone, but the pivotal considerations of the renowned Swiss historian *Jean-Rodolphe von Salis* are an admonitory “pro memoria” for dealing with large entities like the EU and its pro-

tagonists. The EU is in fact “nothing new under the sun” and its fate will probably correspond to that of the “empires” that have been so aptly characterized by von Salis.

This has little to do with historico-philosophical prophecy nor with historical fatalism, but with the systems of power towards which huge governmental or government-like structures were prone to throughout history. Because their logic and foundation is the striving for power and always more power and therefore it constitutes a disease phenomenon in human living together.

*Mikhail Gorbachev*, former President of the Soviet Union tried to save the power of the communist party in his country by “perestroika” and “glasnost”. He failed.

For the last few years, similar to the situation in the former Soviet Union, EU's leaders have seen themselves confronted with fundamental crises, and many of the “solution processes” can be paralleled to the Soviet framework to a certain extent: There are the “Stalinists” of the EU who want to “save” the EU by means of further centralization from a more or less open

dictatorship. They follow *Jean Monnet's* instructions for the abolition of European nation states. They strive for a modern “Pax Romana”, i.e. an EU “peace” at the expense of justice, freedom and democracy. But already the Roman Emperor *Augustus*, who had himself worshipped as the forever young Prince of Peace all life long, extended the Roman Empire with brutal military campaigns, after eliminating his interior opponents with no less violence.

But there is also another group of EU saviours, we are going to call them “EU Leninists” here for the sake of simplicity – according to Gorbachev's approach. They want to “save” the EU by retouching, by maybe even reducing the powers of the EU institutions in Brussels and Strasbourg a little, by maybe giving back a few powers to the nation states, mainly in order to master the euro and the sovereign debt crisis which risks to slide deeper and deeper into a dead end. Ultimately, the “EU Leninists” aim at nothing less than a “Pax Ro-

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## The two basic forms of community

by Adolf Gasser\*

What always needs to be taken into account is the fact that state community life is only possible within the context of organizing principles. In terms of administration there are only two basic organizing principles: the principle of subordination and that of coordination – in other words, the principle of externally controlled administration or self-administration. Either the state order is backed by a magisterial command and power structure, or then it is based on the free will of a people's collective.

In the one case, the state is essentially organized from top to bottom, in the other case from the bottom up. In the first case, the ordering principle is represented by a habituation to command and obedience, in the second by a universal commitment to free cooperation. – Indeed, there have been repeatedly administration orders in which, considered from outside, the two elements were connected; as history shows, however, the original constituent organizing principle remains dominant in such hybrids [...].

Different terms can be used to describe the two opposing principles of order. There are, for example contrasting word pairs such as rulership – cooperative, authoritarian – corporative, hierarchical – federal, apparatus like – popular.

Using first this and then that particular pair of words depending on the purpose, we can see: the contrast rulership – cooperative has been perhaps the most important contrast in social history. The contrast authoritarian state – federal state deals with quite essential issues: namely, the basic foundations of man's community life. In a fundamental way, the two conflicting state models differ primarily by spiritual and moral characteristics. Depending on the predominance of one or the other order principle the states seem to be ruled by opposite community spirits: either by the authoritarian spirit or by the corporative spirit.

Authoritarian forms of state used to exist, think of the feudal lords of the Middle Ages, even in a small space, so to speak in a decentralized way. However, wherever the authoritarian spirit aims at centralizing bigger areas into one state, it requires a military-bureaucratic central apparatus detached from the people. It is known that it was in the French provinces, the German principalities, the Italian small states etc. that absolutism absorbed and overcame feudalism as a form of domination of centralized character. From then on, administrative centralism has remained the prevailing power of fate for most countries of the European conti-

ment. To this day, there has always been a civil service employed from above, a non-local bureaucracy, equipped with full authority that crucially determined regional and local government matters.

Unlike the authoritarian state the cooperative state by its very nature is always rooted in a small space. And it is this small, clear space unity of the commune in which alone cooperative self-management can flourish. In fact, the federal order principle usually has its starting point in the free, fortified people's commune, i.e. in the municipal association which exists by itself, independent from any authoritarian officials and military apparatus. And it is interesting to observe: a larger body politic with national state character could only ever prosper in the spirit of cooperative society when it emerged from an assembly of free, fortified people. Accordingly, the “old free nation states” (i.e. the Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon countries, the Netherlands and Switzerland) have never had their regional or local sub-associations governed through military command and alien regional bureaucracy.

\* Excerpt from “*Gemeindefreiheit als Rettung Europas*” (*Freedom of the Commune as a Rescue for Europe*), Basel 1957, pp. 12.

# We need a comprehensive discussion of values

## Reflections on the Lilienberg Lectures

*About developments in politics and society and the findings from the cycle "Successful and human-Christian and other values in entrepreneurship" (2012/2013).*

Our world has become unclear: it is driven by tremendous developments such as globalization, the revolution in information-technology or the financial crisis. Therefore, it is important that people are again increasingly aware of their own values in order to orient themselves and to find support. This is especially true for entrepreneurs as well as leaders in business, politics and society. But also in terms of the main questions and the next big challenges – for example, how to secure the social welfare system in the sign of demographic change or how to cope with the enormous complexity of living together globally – it's almost imperative that we carry out a comprehensive debate on values: Only if a certain consensus of values prevails in a country and its people, it is possible to master coming challenges and secure the location Switzerland with its prosperity and welfare benefits!

### Clear warning signals coming from the people

In the recent past, ever more signs have emerged and become stronger that our country is getting out of balance and dissatisfaction is increasing. Especially at the ballot box and with their signatures on the collection sheets of countless initiatives and referenda more and more citizens document their discontent – often, however, their sense of being entitled is running wild.

We are here referring to the adoption of the "rip-off"-initiative, the second-house initiative and the farm-land initiative or the up-coming vote on the minimum wage initiative, the 1:12 initiative as well as the ECOPOP and mass immigration initiative.

These initiatives must be understood as a warning from the people. When summed up and in view of their heterogeneity in substance they are dominating political life.

For once, they bring the already quickly running laws machinery to top speed, which is even more increasing the level of regulation in our country. Secondly, the politicians have become virtually incapacitated. Instead of taking the initiative and looking after the strategic interests and objectives of our country, they have become driven without any foresight.

### The strengths and advantages of Switzerland are at risk

Most of the aforementioned initiatives and the related consequences do not only increase the level of regulation in our country and threaten to stifle the SMEs, but also endanger Switzerland's competitive advantages in the globalized world in the medium to long term.

At risk are, for example, the freedom in contracts and wages, the liberal labor market and the free movement of persons. In short, essential elements for free enterprises, which are a prerequisite for a thriving economy. In addition, with the increasing bureaucratization the percentage of governmental activities, which has so far been very low by international standards, is continuously being raised. Another risk to our locational advantage is the massive attack on the militia system by opponents to the military. This does not only endanger the safety of Switzerland – up to now a considerable advantage of the location – but also undermines a cornerstone of our state by prohibiting to oblige citizens to service community.

While this is in line with the trend for more individual freedom, it ultimately eliminates the sense of responsibility towards state and society.

### Society and economy do no longer understand each other

At first glance, this development astounds as Switzerland holds a leading position in almost all international comparisons and rankings. Prosperity and welfare are at the top. Prosperity and social welfare as a whole are a model to the whole world.

On a closer look, however, it can be realized, that the cause of this trend might well be the declining consensus on values in our country, if it still exists at all. This development is most likely a direct consequence of a transformation in the understanding of freedom: Freedom has been – to put it bold and simple – detached from values that are so inextricably linked and imperative. And it is these very values that are meant in the here- required discussion of and consensus on values.

Excessive remuneration of a minority, the inflated return expectations of more and more companies, the casino mentality of many financial actors, the active and passive division of state, economy and society have ultimately led to this unease that has been felt for some time. Economy and society are affected equally; they understand one another less and less. It is a great danger that the society's reaction to this alienation becomes more radical and thus corrodes the human, factual, and economic foundations of our community! Stakeholders of our economy and the advocates of the location advantages of Switzerland must brace themselves for a long line of voting campaigns which hardly can be won despite enormous efforts – against heterogeneous opposition from the people that feel uneasy, but apparently have the proper values on their side. It need not be mentioned explicitly

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### "What next in Europe?"

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mana", just a bit more subtle. This cannot be called a real perspective either.

What next in Europe? The EU is a threat to the independent states of Europe. No country and no people should meet this menace with illusions. Each country must arm itself and be prepared to such an extent that for the EU the price for infringements becomes too high.

But taking all that into account, is the immediate collapse of a large structure such as the EU desirable? The dangers

here are immense. Peaceful dismantling is a better approach, a path of many small steps. Unfortunately, history so far has not provided a model for such a path, neither can the fate of the Soviet Union be taken as a model, although there – thank God – the bloodshed was small. The price paid by the former Eastern bloc countries was and still is very high. Because this change was partially controlled from above and was to serve concealed targets, and because these countries came from bad to worse, i.e. from the Soviet rule to the usurpation by the EU and the US.

But if the goals and the way of dismantling the EU are honest, i.e. com-

mitted to the common good, and if it is possible to prevent another great power meddling on the path of a peaceful dismantling of the EU – then a change in Europe could adopt a direction that respects the natural rights of the people. More direct democracy would be among them. And last but not least: Basic values for the human living together, as they are currently discussed in Switzerland by the "Foundation Lilienberg Unternehmerforum" (see p. 11), must become values of the citizens of all European countries again – this also applies to the upbringing and education of our children and young people. •

**"We need a comprehensive..."**

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that long-term and holistic thinking is lost en route.

**What values are important to us?**

Entrepreneurs have to face a debate on values or even launch such a debate. Because, without doubt, they have to put their weight behind very important values and defend them. They need to consciously recognize these values, proclaim and live them in the full knowledge that there is no recipe for a discussion of values in a free society, neither is there an absolute or common set of values. We need to discuss not only the individual values per se, but ask the question whether and where these values apply at all and how they can be brought to more awareness again.

We therefore wish to refer only to a few values that were mentioned to us during the Lilienberg Lectures by successful entrepreneurs and business leaders, values that have been lived, tested and proven in their hard business live.

**Freedom:** This value is absolutely central. However, it is inextricably linked with other values, especially with responsibility, namely responsibility towards the welfare of the company, employees, customers, the environment and society. In addition, freedom must not only be understood in its negative form (freedom from what?) but positive (freedom for what?): What for do I possess this freedom and my tangible and intangible "assets"? What can

I do with them for the state and the society? And here the following principle may apply: The more freedom and "assets" I own the greater is my responsibility.

**Personal Integrity:** This consists of, for example, credibility, honesty, confidence, modesty and loyalty towards employees, customers, partners and investors. The personal example, the antecedents of values is more important than thick compliance books and fine-weather models. The latter are especially valuable for those who have elaborated them themselves.

**Modesty, humility, and compassion:** These values enable one to handle one's own company, its employees, customers, and investors, but also to address the great challenges and phenomena of the globalized world, such as grinding poverty and destruction of resources and environment.

The entrepreneurs who have talked about values in the lecture series are not a bene successful, all of them – even on a tough and competitive market!

**Who is called?**

Every single individual must be aware that values also play a role in his life; everyone has to decide on those values that are important to him. But you will have to face the question whether you have not become sluggish because of the great wealth and whether the intrinsic value of freedom is still understood and used sensibly by you.

In the society, individuals need to ask themselves how and where they can bring their freedom and values into the service

of the community. By doing so they contribute to the discussion of values. In addition, it is important in in this context to again promote the values which are associated with freedom such as responsibility, humility and humanity, as well.

The trade organizations have the opportunity and the resources to support or launch a discussion of values. That should pay off in the medium to longer term in comparison to the more expensive referendum campaigns with paid agents.

The entrepreneurs hold very much in their hands: By acting responsibly and in accordance with their values they can exert influence on their environment, their employees, clients, funders and the general society. It is important that the entrepreneurs are committed to their values. Furthermore, a direct involvement in politics (for offices) and society (for example, for the army or in voluntary work) is desirable or even necessary. The relationship with society also raises awareness of the values of others.

The state must in no way directly intervene into the discussion of values. However, government must do everything possible to again take the initiative and act far-sightedly so that predictable unease may be detected in time.

The Foundation "Lilienberg Unternehmerforum" will stay focused on this topic and will launch a new lecture series in corporate culture and ethics for the upcoming weeks and months. •

Source: *Foundation Lilienberg Unternehmerforum* May 2013

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## Basic principles from the perspective of a personalist psychology

by Dr Annemarie Buchholz-Kaiser

There are basic principles of psychology and pedagogy, in other words 'essentials' which – because they correspond to human nature – are of central importance to the young child and are also valid for life in the family and in the school. They are also applicable to societal cooperation in later life, in which full human development and well-being is to be strengthened and encouraged. The following are the most important:

1. *Human Dignity*, in order for it to be more than a simple postulate, must involve an emotional quality that can only be experienced and reinforced within a social context. It is founded on a mutual give and take. Families, schools as well as society can create conditions in which human dignity is not only respected but also lived. It is no coincidence that, in 1948 – after the disaster of World War II – this postulate was taken up as the first point in the United Nations *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*:

*“§1. All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.”*

Psychology and pedagogy, families and schools can lay the foundations in education and upbringing. They can provide the opportunity for adults to become living examples of this principle. Human dignity does not come about of its own accord, it does not fall from heaven and it is not an entity beyond the human mind and human control. On the contrary, human dignity must be laid *within* human coexistence, it is here where it is fostered, strengthened, continuously reinvigorated and passed on: *it must be lived*. In order for it to be protect-

ed as an “essential” of human existence, it must however be firmly entrenched in the constitutions of countries.

2. *Social Bonds*, in both a personal as well as more general social context, are a further prerequisite for emotional health and for the full development of human personality. A child's basic trust cannot develop without empathy – the receptive mutual interaction between mother and infant. Without a secure attachment and emotional anchoring within the whole family (including father, siblings, relations and friends), a child cannot establish and fully develop its individuality, neither can it develop a full sense of self-sufficiency, empathy and responsibility. Without an inner feeling of security within the family, the transition to adulthood during puberty is highly vulnerable to drug consumption, violence, perversion, political seduction and dissociation. In a certain respect, the adolescent is not equipped with an inner immune system or an inner sense of equilibrium.

An adult lacking in social bonds is much less prepared to enter into a lasting marriage (which is difficult enough), to raise a family and master the many demands of a modern working life. Nor is he or she well equipped to overcome the disappointments and failures in life without experiencing depression, psychosomatic illness and suicidal tendencies. It is through human social bonds that a meaning of life, human strength and power is acquired, which ultimately makes the entire difference in a person's mental, emotional and physical health and in his or her contribution to the life of the next generation, even when that person gets older. Therefore, based on my good experiences with the “three generation” family model (grandparents, parents, children) in this context, I would fully endorse its re-establishment.

3. *An entrenchment* in one's own culture, meaning the inner understanding of our culture's universal values, is the condition for having a firm place in this world and in this time. It is also the condition for establishing a respect for other people and their culture, and it is the condition for a productive co-existence among peoples. I would like to state clearly: I do not mean the kind of propaganda for introducing “multi-cultural” societies that serve the hidden agendas of political manipulation, and ultimately the elimination of the values and objectives of our Christian and Western culture. This disastrous product of the Frankfurter School of Social Science has as its objective the establishment of a new, purely materialistic form of Socialism without values. As such it also awakens the opposition of entire peoples.

4. *Freedom* is equally necessary for life as air is to breathe. Voluntariness in human life is also an essential condition for a child to become secure within the family and internalize its values. Coercion only interferes with this, whereas insight and solidarity represent far more powerful and viable moving force in the long run.

The highest possible level of freedom as has been realized in direct democracy, is a subject that once again must be brought to discussion. It is imperative in the face of a new form of sovietization on a global scale, and also in the face of a ruthless globalizing economy solely geared towards shareholder profit while sacrificing human well-being, the ‘Bonum commune’. The economy must serve life and not the other way around. Natural Law, Christian Social Teaching and also every ethic that is based on human nature and life have all come to this conclusion.

Excerpt from: Annemarie Buchholz-Kaiser, “Strengthening Human Beings”, Zurich 2000

## “Counteracting the worldwide warmongering in a soothing way”

*In response to our editorial note in the edition of May 27, we have received numerous, really positive oral and written responses. At this point we would like to pass some of them on to our readers – they are representative of all the supporting, thoughtful and stimulating letters and echoes that we received and we would like to take this opportunity to say thank you!*

*The editors*

Dear editorial team of *Current Concerns* I was a little shocked about your note on page 1 of the 27 May edition concerning the lack of responses to your last editions [...].

I can assure you, that for me, your newspaper always represents a ray of hope in the week, because you always research and illuminate themes and backgrounds, which the mainstream newspapers (to none of those I have any longer subscribed) do not cover at all, or they only cover them superficially, uncritically or only from an economical, state-supporting or geopolitical point of view.

The last two editions, which you mention, have been extremely interesting containing the topics “Against the small-mindedness”, the article by *Matthias Erne* about the left historians’ lack of conscience, “GMO crops”, “Swiss Gold”, “Cooperatives”, “Afghanistan”.

The excellent articles by *Peter Regli* and *Albert Stahel* in the last newspaper, on the one hand about national security in Switzerland and on the other hand about the strategies and developments in the Middle East have been informative and enlightening.

The interview with Ecuador’s President *Rafael Correa* entitled “Europe can learn from Latin America” was a highlight of this edition.

Other topics that you continually pick up, such as the problems of today’s school system, the background to the creation of new national parks, Europe/EU in general and the role of the US in particular, are always very informative, providing insights that are not offered by any other newspaper printed in Switzerland.

I would therefore be a little sad, if the newspaper would only appear once every two weeks, but if this would be necessary for technical, financial or per-

sonnel problems, I would of course understand.

*J.S., Winterthur*

Dear Editors

Whether your newspaper is published weekly or bi-weekly, this is, in my opinion, not at all so relevant for its value – if there are not enough meaningful topics available or if there are other difficulties – unless it does not lose quality. Whoever collaborates in a body on a voluntary basis, knows what this means, and can only appreciate your efforts. Likewise, he should be grateful to every contributor in this regard. None of your two assumptions in your section concerned however is true, neither the lack of interest nor the “tone”. I can only honestly testify this, and I dare to think that this is also true for many others.

For your newspaper in general, I can only present you a “posy” and actually award recognition and praise to you; for your courage and, above all, for your thorough and independent investigation. How important it is to stick to the truth! Other media that are barely independent and that are dancing to the tune of their donors or sponsors, are hardly relevant for thinking people, at most for comparison and to practice reading “between the lines”. Very often in these media it is only about distraction from the important and deciding factor by repeated and long turning over of irrelevances.

Only facts and information can save the small country of Switzerland. It has to learn again to be honestly true to *itself* and to its own unique peculiarities (strengths as well as weaknesses) and to firmly assert to itself! Fortitude and truth have a liberating effect, knowing to have done the best possible. Who else, if not you and your newspaper should demonstrate the reality to interested people; isn’t it precisely that which strengthens us and connects us with our home country! I think that your important role especially consists of counteracting in a soothing way the worldwide warmongering, an endeavor that you manage very well [...].

Sincerely – thank you very much for your efforts

*E. F., Niederlenz*

Dear Editors

The rainy weather is also a good thing. One takes more time to read.

I think that the articles in *Current Concerns* are attractive. Exactly, a little leisure is needed, because it is not always about the current issues of the day, but about more fundamental issues. The issues of the day use to fly past quickly.

With the print of Pope *Francis*’ speech you even go ahead. At least for me it was the first time to learn, what are his more specific concerns and how he approaches them.

Maybe, it has been good that you wrote that you expect a response to your articles. This is not so obvious. I’m a journalist and I rarely get a response. As a journalist you write about what you see and hear. Thinking about that, one or another feedback from a reader may bring in new ideas. Maybe that is easier on the radio, because this can leave people a say on the phone. Therefore, sometimes it is perhaps not very profound.

These are just a few thoughts. I am looking forward to the following numbers.

I wish you a nice weekend.

*M.G., Eggersriet*

Dear Mrs *Vögeli*

Your appeal in the latest issue of *Current Concerns* of 27 May left me concerned. I could feel a certain resignation emanating from it. If I interpret you correctly, you complain about the lack of response on the part of the readers. More to this further down.

I would like to express one thing very clearly: The quality of the articles and the chosen topics are excellent (also the “tone”) and are well above that level of other media (including NZZ). Especially in recent months, the published contributions were on a consistently high ethical and professional level, to which I have repeatedly pointed in my circle of acquaintances. This is journalistic quality as I imagine it. But they are also typically Swiss (as they were at least in former times): deliberative, comprehensive, without Undertone and despicce, with proven facts, without ideological blinders. A strong contrast to the media of the that are obviously written from a determined ideological cornern or even directed, as quite some people suspect. Formerly, the media were known as the fourth power. They understood themselves as “controlling authority.” Unfortunately, this belongs to the past, but will come back, I’m sure. Today the system media have become the “manipulative

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**"Counteracting the worldwide..."**

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force". Articles not corresponding to the ideological editorial policy are put down. The role of *Current Concerns* reminds me somehow of the last world war, when the Swiss media were widely regarded as the only reliable and independent informants in Europe. Wouldn't that be beautiful if we could achieve this again! And it could become a quality brand of our country at the present time, more than ever.

I interpret your appeal on page 1 of your issue of 27 May that you expect letters to the editor concerning the various articles or at least confirming reactions. I must suppose indirectly that this was not the case to the extent you had expected. Looking at things from my point of view, I would like to send a favorable comment to (almost) every article you publish. But then I would certainly overdo things and probably ridicule myself. The people who are on my line have given up. They have consciously or unconsciously acquired the feeling that nothing can be changed and that Europe is being driven against the wall (to put it mildly). At the beginning of this year, *Jean-Claude Juncker*, top guru of the EU, recommended to the journalists at the New Year reception, they should concentrate again on the year 1913, the last year of peace before outbreak of the First World War. 2013, Juncker said, could become again the pre-war year for the Europeans. That's not only prophecy, that is knowledge. Apparently, Juncker knows, what lies ahead to the Europeans or what is planned. I always recommend your magazine to my large cir-

cle of friends. But to my knowledge only one single friend has also subscribed to the journal. There is a strange reluctance that I psychologically can not quite interpret. Maybe it is the above mentioned resignation.

I beg you emphatically not to resign and to continue as before. Please accept my heartfelt thanks for your valuable work.

*M. E., Sargans*

*Dear Editors of Current Concerns!*

In case you have the feeling that you received hardly any echo or confirmation by your readership, you ought by no means conclude that your articles are less interesting or do not strike the right note. I wish that *Current Concerns* will find a broader readership. Especially for the German readers your articles are a welcome source of information in our almost uniform media landscape. For me, there is no comparable journal which takes such an open and honest stance for a policy based on the right measure, healthy common sense und practical reasoning. One arrives at a very different basis for discussion versus other fellow citizens who only consume the media in a politically correct manner and thus are led astray. If one considers the direct-democratic and liberal achievements the sophisticated and independent Swiss citizenship has hard-earned and defended in recent history, we Germans should feel ashamed that our people did not even try up to now [...].

Though many citizens see more or less clearly that the European Union has de-

facto been acting as an illegal big state since long which does not present a viable concept that could satisfy the diversity of the European peoples. Instead, when this lack is expressed publicly, it is punished for taboo-breaking and smothered with unobjective bullying. The return to national currencies is often discussed, but the far-progressed integration and formation of dictatorial power structures at the top of the European Union is not questioned.

Unfortunately, there is no democratic culture of discussion and no political freedom in Germany. The tender shoots East of the Elbe have been quickly plowed under, since existential fears and authoritarian thinking drowned the courage, leaving a serious aftermath until these days. The situation appears sometimes without any way out, even more as was the case in the final phase of the GDR, as the idea of the "West" as a supposed refuge or promising alternative does no longer exist. But in comparison to our compatriots, we have perhaps a better sense of the fact that a political system which does not learn from its mistakes, has to fail.

Do not give in, but please continue to report so bravely about political grievances in that well-balanced and encouraging way and on how this can be overcome.

Relying on this, we, the citizenship, have to take our destiny in our own hands and find alternatives to the oppressing party state in order to initiate the necessary changes at the ballot box!

*J. G., Berlin*

## Exchange of the tenth “Ambassador of apple trees” between Switzerland and Russia

by Elfy Roca

On 31 December 2012, under the title of “27 apple trees. Brothers and ambassadors for cultural and friendly ties of Switzerland and Russia” *Current Concerns* No 53 reported on the renovation of the Swiss Embassy in Moscow and on the friendship between the two countries, the valuable and important collaboration of the two nations as well as on the art project of the Vaud artist Anne-Julie Raccourcier.

On 23 April, the tenth apple tree has now been planted in a ceremony in Elm, canton of Glarus.

### A brief look back

For more than 200 years, Switzerland and Russia have maintained a friendly relationship. Then and now, there is an intense cooperation in both, the humanitarian and economic field. The ever more extensive exchange of both nations in the past years has, amongst other things resulted in the fact that the Swiss Embassy in Moscow had to be reconstructed and extended.

As reported by *Current Concerns*, the architects *Brauen & Wälchli* were chosen by the jury of the project competition for the construction of the “Bernese Roses” – so called because an apple tree of the Bernese Roses variety was to be planted in the newly designed patio.

The Vaud artist *Anne-Julie Raccourcier* who won the competition “art-in-architecture” as an artistic enrichment of the Swiss Embassy, connects to this apple tree with her suggested work “Bilocation”. Her idea was not only to create a work which is standing on embassy ground alone, but to take up the embassy idea of the message and simultaneously create a unifying element between the two countries, namely something which does also exist outside the embassy: in Switzerland. To this avail, an apple tree was to be planted in each of the 26 Swiss cantons. All are trees which are grown by grafting from the species “Bernese Roses” as the one which shall be planted at inauguration of the new embassy in Moscow in 2015. They shall grow “as ambassador of the connection between the two countries and keep it alive this. A photo of each tree and its connecting story or tie with Russia will than be hung up at the entrance of the renovated embassy building. Each visitor shall be given a small insight into the manifold relations of countries and peoples.”<sup>1</sup>



The Suvorov House in Elm. (picture er)

### The tenth apple tree in the canton of Glarus

On 23 April, the tenth apple tree has now been planted in Elm in the Canton of Glarus. The Suvorov House stands in Elm. It provided the quarters to the Russian general *Suvorov* from the 5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> October 1799, when he crossed the Alps with his army. That this house is still standing today, Switzerland and Russia owe to *Kaspar Rhyner*, former councillor state and government. He saved the house from demolition and restored it in 1970/71. Thereafter, he had it put under the protection of federal and cantonal authorities. Today, it is an essential part of the townscape of Elm.

But *Kaspar Rhyner*'s achievements reach far beyond. For many years, he was committed to the legacy of previous generations and let the Swiss-Russian past come alive time and again. Anyone who is interested in the history of General *Suvorov* and his crossing of the Alps, comes to an open door. But for the community of Elm, Glarus and Switzerland, and in particular for the Swiss Military, ( the shooting range of Wichlen is situated in Elm) *Kaspar Rhyner* is relentlessly at work. Countless witnesses of the past, such as the slate museum in Elm owe the work of *Kaspar Rhyner* their preservation. Not only in Switzerland, but also with other

countries and in particular with Russia, *Kaspar Rhyner* maintains friendly relations. Russian delegations visit him frequently. On 13 December 2012, on the occasion of a Christmas reception, *Kaspar Rhyner* was rewarded with the medal for “friendship and cooperation” by the Russian Ambassador *Alexander Golovin* in person, on behalf of the Russian Federation.

### Location next to the Suvorov House

Hence, as location of the apple tree for the canton of Glarus there was only one site qualified, the Suvorov House in Elm. The original idea, to plant the tree behind the house was to be abandoned soon, as the tree together with the Suvorov House was to form an integrated work of art. After a visit by the artist *Anne-Julie Raccourcier* at the site, only one site seemed to be qualified: the garden of the neighbour *Dr Martin Vosseler*. *Mr Vosseler* is also affiliated in several ways with Russia. His father, geography professor in Basel, had already maintained an intensive dialogue with Russia. He was deeply impressed with the Russian culture and passed this fascination on to his son. *Mr Vosseler* became a medical doctor. In connection with his commitment with the association “International Physi-

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cians for the Prevention of Nuclear War" he engaged himself for Russia. This way and with the goal of international understanding, he transmigrated the Ukraine after the Chernobyl catastrophe. In 2011 as well, now in connection with his engagement at *sun21* he walked from Basel to Saint Petersburg. Sun21 is, amongst others engaged in energy efficiency and in creating a 2000-watt-society. He speaks Russian and was enthusiastic about the idea of planting an apple tree in Elm as much as Kaspar Rhyder.

**Big rally in Elm**

On 23 April, 10 a.m. sharp, the ceremony of planting finally began. Many personalities from politics and economy of the Canton of Glarus came to Elm, as well as the First Embassy Counselor of Russia, *Vladimir Pashchenko*, who traveled all the way from Berne. With beautiful sunshine and three Beresina grenadiers, the Suvorov House offered a magnificent scenery. After Kaspar Rhyner's introduction of all participants, the artist Anne-Julie Raccoursier explained her unifying idea. With the planting of 26 apple trees, one in each Swiss canton, at a place that stands for Swiss-Russian relationships, she does not only acknowledge the friendship of the two nations, but also the federalist structure of Switzerland.

Subsequently, an alphorn sounded and accompanied the planting of the "Bernese Roses", jointly performed by Anne-Julie Raccoursier, Kaspar Rhyner and Martin Vosseler.

Thereupon and in cooperation with Martin Vosseler, First Embassy Counselor Vladimir Pashchenko unveiled the slate donated by Kaspar Rhyner, which carried the following inscription:

*"I am one of the 27 'Bernese Roses' and I am going to put down my roots here in Elm at the Suvorov House on the historic Suvorov path Airolo – Panix – Ilanz. I symbolize the cultural and artistic bond with the Embassy of the Swiss Confederation in Moscow.*

*Elm, April 2013,  
Anne-Julie Raccoursier"*

In fluent Russian, Martin Vosseler expressed his delight about the tree being planted in his garden. Thus, his relationship with Russia, which is already tradition in his family will be solidified.

In his speech, First Embassy Counselor Vladimir Pashchenko expressed his hope that the tree might find the same fertile soil as was the case with the relationship between Switzerland and Russia. He appreciated the idea of the tree and described it as a



*Kaspar Rhyner, owner of the Suvorov House, is planting the "Bernese Rose" together with the artist Anne-Julie Raccoursier in Martin Vosseler's garden. (picture er)*

symbol of his work as ambassador. Like plants, the relationship between countries was something lively which had to be fostered and cared for.

As final speaker, pastor *Eckehard Raster*, once again placed the planting of the tree at the Suvorov House into a historical context. The march of the *General Field Marshall* was an important incident as much as a drastic experience for the Glanerland. But one could learn from history. Something new and great could emerge from a crisis time and again.

The tenth tree has now been planted. More shall follow all over Switzerland, until the 27<sup>th</sup> Bernese Rose is to be planted in Moscow in 2015, of which the 26 Swiss trees have been grafted. A work of art that is connecting peoples and that will accomplish the friendship of both countries.



*The apple tree with the donated slate and all contributors to this successful occasion. (picture mb)*

<sup>1</sup> *Current Concerns* No 53 of 31 Dezember 2012