

Current Concerns

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and for the promotion and respect of public international law, human rights and humanitarian law

English Edition of *Zeit-Fragen*

“Hear the Swiss signal, Europe!”

by Prof Dr Eberhard Hamer*



Prof Dr Eberhard
Hamer (picture ma)

Euro-functionaries and the European press controlled by them are spreading surprise, rage and bluster about the Referendum against Mass Immigration in Switzerland. Obviously Switzerland deeply disturbed the

European power structures with its democratic right to the national referendum.

In a talkshow, AfD chairman *Lucke* made the clamouring representatives of the other parties aware of the fact that there had already been an existing limitation of immigration to Switzerland which will expire in summer. Now, the referendum has merely renewed this law of limitation, not newly created. Hence, there were no new facts justifying allegations.

If an intrinsically democratic country like Switzerland makes use of its right to let the citizens themselves vote on questions that worry them and if this fact alone puts the euro-elite into a frenzy, there has to be more behind their anger than the fact justifies. Indeed, with the example of Switzerland a meanwhile profound contradiction between the aspirations of the people and the official system of a not elected ruling euro-elite is erupting. That is to say, the 28 political commissars and their 50,000 civil servants have up to now effectively decided in cooperation with their associated govern-

ments what either the global power or the Anglo-Saxon banks and corporations had described as desirable or necessary, regardless of the peoples' wishes. The ruling euro-elite was never annoyed by the fact that this contradicted the wishes of the population in many cases. However, at the example of Switzerland it now bursts open as a legally valid contradiction for the first time.

In other cases for example, the euro-elite has not considered population:

1. The mass of the population does not want a dictatorial European super central state but a “Europe of sovereign father-

lands”. The elite took the decision in small groups in the *Treaty of Lisbon* without any votes of the population. Since then, the euro-elite is acting in a central-dictatorial manner towards a central state, while on the other hand the peoples of the member states are establishing an ever increasing euro opposition. To the horror of the established parties, this is expected to show at the next Euro elections with new parties as for instance the AfD (“Alternative für Deutschland”). England and France do

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Letter to  the Editor

The Swiss' decision to restrict immigration

What amazes me are the voices of the media and leading politicians of EU countries on the decision of the Swiss people – even if it is a close one – to restrict their immigration. In which unspeakable manner, by verbal attacks and defamation, the decision of the sovereign, the Swiss citizens, is put down, suggests that the EU member states and their court press clearly reject democracy and have turned to the principle of domination long ago. Namely the Swiss have voted “wrong” in their eyes.

I think in a real democracy the individual citizen is the sovereign of the country. And all the citizens, i.e. the people are not only the source of sovereignty, but carry sovereignty in themselves. It belongs to the natural law of man, to settle in the context of a community, namely the people, his own affairs without external influence. At least, the right to self-determination of the peoples is defined in the Charter of the United Nations in the Articles 1 and 55.

It seems to me that one is trying to incorporate the only truly democratic country in the world into the planned EU-Central State, as well.

If you take a good look at Switzerland, however, you will immediately recognize that decentralized structures, collecting and spending significant lower income

taxes on all levels down to the municipalities – taken on by the citizens themselves – is much more efficient. In Switzerland, prosperity is significantly higher, old-age security is much better, the roads are still passable, the public transport network is more sophisticated, compared to all other EU countries where the means of taxation trickle away in bureaucracy corruption.

Switzerland has its own currency, the Swiss franc, and therefore does not participate in the bank bailout by using means of taxation on alleged rescue packages, such as the ESM (European Stability Mechanism). Switzerland is also not taking part in the wars abroad offending international law. And Switzerland also has a proportion of foreigners of 23% which is significantly higher than for example the 9% of Germany.

Anyway, what is to be objected to all of this?

If the people in our country (Germany) were asked, we would not have the euro, we would not serve any alleged “rescue packages” and the armed forces would remain in Germany to protect our country.

Werner Voss, Cologne

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

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“Hear the Swiss signal ...”

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not want to give up their sovereignty, either. Only the German old parties insist on it. Driven by the US and the banks and companies, since for the latter negotiating with a central government is easier than with 28 national sovereign governments. Switzerland now indicates that the dream of the “United States of Europe” might no longer be realizable and in as much the Treaty of Lisbon stands against the wishes of the people.

2. How much the US is behind the actions of the euro-elite, shows again just now in the EU acceptance of *Dupont's* GM maize. Without the appropriate tests and reports, respectively paid by the corporation and against the opinion of 80% of the German citizens, the German government tolerated the acceptance of GM maize with the help of the EU. Some other bribed governments of member states even advocated the acceptance; with their help *Merkel* in turn enforced the interests of international monopoly corporations against the will of the majority of the European population. Obviously, the consequences for the environment and the population's health weigh less than the monopoly power of *Dupont*. Correctly therefore, the Swiss signal startled the international corporations, now fearing that the commissars' docility and submission under the will of big capital might be confronted with more grassroots resistance by the affected European population than before.

3. European officials have approved and promoted that *NATO* was declared a European institution, although it

- is directed solely by the United States, beneficial only to their purposes and financed by Europeans without European self-interest, and
- is being misused for aggressive US wars (Afghanistan, North Africa, Somalia and now even Central Africa), the war goals of which are defined by American arms corporations and financial concerns who are provided money and soldiers as auxiliary troops by European *NATO* vassals who do not have a decisive word in them. 80% of the population does not want any war involvement of German soldiers. *NATO*, however, constantly kindles new wars on behalf of the US. Here too, the signal of Switzerland could lead to the population's resistance against the misuse of *NATO* for American world hegemony goals.
- This also applies to the subversive struggle of *NATO* by “orange revolutions” – that are exclusively in American interest – as in North Africa, Syria and now again in Ukraine. They follow the *NATO*

doctrine predefined by the US: Keep the Russians out, the Americans in and the Germans down. The *Brzezinski* doctrine of political and military constriction of Russia is still obeyed by the *Obama* administration, as well. Therefore, uprisings are fuelled and paid for by the CIA (however, *Klitschko* by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation), the international press is committed to enforcing revolutions by their hate songs against *Putin*, and the EU Commissars are even willing to take on the financial costs and follow Ukraine's pledges for assistance, all that fit the interest of US world power goals.

- This is also the interest of the only World Power and its Euro-subordinates, but it is not what the people want – not even in those countries on which the revolutions were inflicted, rather it is about the interests of the Anglo-Saxon High Finance, the US arms industry and the only World Power's extension against Russia. The Euro-functionaries are taking part in the game only in favour of US imperialism, against the interests and at the cost of the European population. The Swiss signal, however, might now mobilize peace movements against the subversive US war, as soon as the people become aware of the background of the alleged revolutions.

4. That the Euro-crazy, as the helping agency of international banks, insurances and companies are also adverse to the European population and benefits at its cost, has above all become apparent in the financial crisis: By US government directive and this way also by pressure from the EU Commission it was accepted that the debt of the Atlantic big banks were taken over, first through taking on a guarantee and then by taking-over of the entire debt of the European countries. This way the bank debts remained and the indebted countries continue to be debtors under the control of these banks. The German taxpayers carry up to 27% of the main burden of this joint liability. With regards to the latter, the Finance Minister maintained that “bank guarantees are not payments.” Thus, the debts of banks and bankrupt countries were significantly increased (in Greece alone they were doubled) which in any case results in the burdening of the German citizens and savers as follows:

- The artificial lowering of interest dispossesses the savers and the life insurances.
- 700 billion euro target payments are practically lost for export-financing. The euro bank and with it, most of the citizens subsidize the export excess (for example imports from Germany for Greece) with continually decreasing chances to be repaid.
- Our citizens are most heavily burdened with the so-called “safety-chute” and the

ESM, whose debts with the international speculation banks and euro states guarantee and extend the debt crisis, enlarge it and make it ever more dangerous for those countries who are stable. With the next escalation of the financial crisis and the next bankruptcy from banks or member countries, payments of hundreds of billions of euros will be owed because of the guarantees, which will be impossible to fund without a currency revision.

About all these financial acrobatic adventures, the citizens were not consulted. The concepts, under American supervision in a small circle of big bankers and functionaries, were decided on and presented to the Parliaments in order to be accepted without any debate and as if there were no alternative. That is how democracy is undermined. The Swiss signal most certainly alarms even those involved in the euro-financial “dirty dealing”, since the Constitutional Court has already considered some of this “dirty dealing” as anti-constitutional.

Just as the Americans justify their war attacks by the non-existing danger of “Terrorism”, so do the functionaries when they label every request by the people “national populism”, whereas the people are actually fighting for democratic participation in dealings which they are made liable for and have to bleed for. The international big capital and the “Only World power” (*Brzezinski*) do not want any national participation, nor real democracy in Europe, rather they want a pseudo-democratic disguise of an American-European central dictatorship. EU-functionary *Juncker* was at his best: “We decide on something, put it in the room and wait to see what happens. When there is no big commotion and no protest, because the majority doesn't even understand what was decided, then we continue; step by step, until there is no turning back...” This is how the de-democratisation of Europe and the take over of power by the political commissars in Brussels works directed by the instruction of the USA.

The fear of the Euro-functionaries that the signal from Switzerland will awaken the European democrats and incite serious resistance from the democrats, with regard to participation at the upcoming European election, is not being countered with arguments, rather is being fought by the knock-out label “national populism”. This way, the Internationalists show that they, against the wish of every people (populus), act in their own central interest; which is what they want to continue without and against the citizens.

One can only say “Peoples, hear the signals! Hear the Swiss signal, Europe!” •
(Translation *Current Concerns*)

The Swiss miracle

by Alain Bournazel, President of "Rassemblement pour l'indépendance et la souveraineté de la France" (RIF)

Switzerland is a small country that always causes amazement because the peculiarities of this nation that prospers in a geographically less favourable environment, are so great. Switzerland is a united country despite its four official languages: German, French, Italian and Romansh spoken in the Canton of Grisons. Despite only few sources of energy and raw materials, Switzerland is one of the world's most developed countries. It owes this to an efficient education system.

Although it is called Swiss Confederation, Switzerland is a federal country in

which the state power is highly decentralized because of the 26 cantons. Switzerland is a prime example of a democratic country. The procedure of referendums is widespread, and it can be initiated by the Parliament or by the citizens themselves.

Although all European countries are affected by immigration, only the Swiss could, thanks to the SVP, go to the ballots and vote directly on this problem. It had been pending for several years. With a population of eight million, 80,000 foreigners migrate to Switzerland annually, although the proportion of foreigners is already at 23 per cent. With plenty of com-

mon sense, the Swiss citizens have not bowed to the pressure put on them by the European Union neither did they let themselves be misled by the oracles of backward politicians.

Switzerland has made it clear towards the so-called Europe that they want to remain masters of their own destiny. It would be about time that the French "classe politique" finally ceases to submit to the whims of the European Union, and to take the needs and expectations of the French people into consideration at last. •

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

Protect the essentials

by Marie-Hélène Miauton

There are two opposite camps: Those who accuse Switzerland of being an island, and those who want nothing more than Switzerland to be an island. Both are right and wrong at the same time, because Switzerland has still many specific features, but they are gradually getting lost. The strength of their federal culture that simultaneously involves decentralization and subsidiarity prevents them from devoting themselves fully to globalization. The awareness of being a "Sonderfall" (unique case) in Europe and the world and to remain so is the pride of the nationally conscious and unbearable for the Euro-turbos. Since the early 1990s, the reproach of Switzerland's sell-off is pitched against the accusation that Switzerland is shutting itself off.

Our country is well-known, however, for the fact that its distinct otherness has by no means prevented it from generously opening to the world, rather it favours it or makes it even necessary. This opening is shown by the participation in the major international organizations, including the UN. Due to the worldwide reputation of its direct-democratic model; due to the

disproportionate number of major business corporations, sports organizations, international institutions on its soil; due to the size of some of its economic sectors that allows Switzerland its worldwide trade. In short, due to its success!

However, the major and profound difference between Switzerland and other countries of the world is its political system. It can't be emphasized enough how much this has always shaped the sense of responsibility of the citizens and continues to shape it. It is true: the sovereign Swiss people is often consulted, however, this also enables the entire country to deal with the various subjects. Due to the information provided by parties and the media, the population can hardly escape the discussion. This allows for a more comprehensive perception of political realities than is possible in other countries in which – once the elections are over – any elaboration of laws and their detailed implementation are at the sole discretion of the Parliament. The consultation process that precedes any legislation, slows down the decision-making process, but allows the inclusion of various political

and social positions in the respective decisions. This is the reason why the population is not demonstrating for a Yes or a No. It is also due to the popular initiatives which affect politics and force them not to detach themselves too much from the concerns of the population and live a life of its own, as is all too often observed elsewhere.

The French essayist and politician *Yvan Blot* wrote in his book "La démocratie confisquée" [The confiscated democracy]: "Direct democracy does not prevent Parliament to play its role. However, it prevents the development towards oligarchy that characterize the pure parliamentary regime. It doesn't weaken the power of the legislative chambers, but that of the antechambers" (Media, trade unions, associations, bureaucracy). This remark is harsh but true. Is this the reason why we are facing again a discussion about restricting direct democracy by increasing the number of necessary signatures and reducing the collection time? Let us not deceive ourselves: This is about the essentials! •

Source: "Le Temps" of 24.1.2014

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

Many people would like to call the Swiss people's rights their own

Dr E.-M. Föllmer-Müller and Karl Müller

There are only a handful of politicians and the notorious mind acrobats who have difficulties in accepting democratic decisions. They prefer to make use of crude prejudices or "pathologizations". But in Europe, which, by the way, includes Switzerland too, there live many more people. A look at the social media

is enough: There are lots of congratulations to the Swiss citizens. Many people would like to have the Swiss people's rights as well. The voices come from all European countries. That doesn't have anything to do with xenophobia. Switzerland is the country that takes most foreigners: so far 85,000 each year. Al-

most 25% of residents in Switzerland are foreigners. In Germany, for example, less than 10%. What from do the EU and their mouthpiece officials claim the right to interfere with the sovereignty of Switzerland? In Switzerland, the people are sovereign. The sovereign has decided, and that has to be accepted. •

The freedom of movement of persons: People must not become a merchandise

by Dr phil Henrietta Hanke Güttinger

In the wake of the referendum on the free movement of persons in Switzerland the mainstream media are stigmatizing the Swiss people in stupid comments as being “racist” or “xenophobic” or “anxious”. Wise comments on the economic and political backgrounds of the free movement of persons, however, are being suppressed.

Free movement of persons is one of the three pillars of neoliberalism and globalization. Since the times of *Thatcher* and *Reagan*, free movement of capital, goods and persons have left an unspeakable disaster. Years ago on the radio, (“Deutschlandfunk”) I listened to an interview with a young German construction worker who was standing in front of an excavation pit in Berlin. He was out of work. The construction workers on this construction site came from Poland. They were exploited in return for a meagre wage, were living in barracks and had their families in Poland ...

This is what free movement of persons is all about: People become a merchandise that can be pushed around in order to achieve maximum profit. It is a myth that globalization brings along prosperity for all, a deadly myth indeed. The former UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, *Jean Ziegler*, shows this obviously in his book, “Betting on Famine: Why the World Still Goes Hungry” and the same does *Jean Feyder* in “Mordshunger” (Murderous Hunger). Europe is a neo-liberal project. We have come to know quite well what it brings to the population: massive impoverishment in Greece, billions for the banks (ESM), Hartz VI and, and, and ...

A change of course is necessary: economies need to be hedged in, on a worldwide level. The right of a people to self-determination must be taken seriously in all areas, both politically and economically. The decision of the sovereign to con-

tain the free movement of persons must be regarded in this context.

Previously, our national hero *William Tell* had to regulate things with the crossbow. Today, the citizen does it with his vote at the ballot box. That’s something dreaded by the high finance. That’s the reason for bashing Switzerland with these stupid arguments. Beware, the other European nations might take an example! The other European people are deprived of political participation, beware, they might put in their veto at the ballot box. In order to maximize profit they take away the peoples’ sovereignty and control them by the EU Commission ... Besides Switzerland, the *Celac* countries (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States) as well might offer an orientation: 33 Latin American countries have agreed on a peace zone and thus shaken off the US American yoke. •

Letter to  the Editor

Thank you, Switzerland!

The Yes of the Swiss voters on the initiative against mass immigration shows once again the advantages of direct democracy. Where else do the people have the opportunity to determine such important decisions. A majority of the population has not been impressed by the scaremongering of their own Federal Council and the economy and opposed to the uni-

tary heteronomy by the EU. This is a strong signal for Europe.

Mass immigration destroys the established social structures. The unhindered flow of labor, capital, services and goods in the European Single Market has nothing to do with freedom or even philanthropy. It deprives the economically weaker countries of the much needed skilled

workforce, leads to abuse of the social systems in the richer countries and reduces the wages everywhere.

Apparently you can’t cheat the Swiss people. Thank you!

Karl Volker, Germany

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

Swiss people, I understand you

by *Pierre Chappaz, Geneva*

The French entrepreneur Pierre Chappaz living in Geneva thinks that the Swiss have the right to exercise their sovereignty in questions of immigration.

The accepted popular initiative “Against Mass Immigration” will be put into practice by the introduction of quotas for residence permits. From now on, the Federal Constitution will regulate that maximum numbers and annual contingents for employed foreigners must be fixed, oriented on the economic interests of Switzerland as a whole and also taking into account

the preference for residents. Border-crossers have to be included. Essential criteria for granting resident permits are particularly the application of an employer, the ability to integrate and a sufficient, independent basis of existence.

As a Frenchman who has been living in Geneva for years, of course I feel affected. But, to come to the point, I am not at all shocked by this vote.

First, I admire Switzerland’s direct democratic system which gives the sovereign people the right to decide on all questions that relate to social life.

And I also admire Switzerland’s ability to defend its independence, its identity and its values against the pressure of the EU and that of the large states surrounding it. Some years ago the Swiss have agreed to join the Schengen¹ treaty and opened their borders. The immigration has reached a substantial level of 80,000 persons per year which is, in relation to the population, three times as much as in France.

The Swiss Federation has always integrated newcomers particularly effectively.

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Hijacking reveals serious security gaps

Politicians need to act swiftly

by Thomas Kaiser

Believe it or not, but it is really true: after 5:00 pm until 8:00 am and on weekends the Swiss Air Force is not able to defend our own air space, if there is a violation of air space over Swiss territory (see box). Therefore, no F/A-18 has taken off last Monday morning to take over the air policing and to accompany a hijacked airliner to Geneva airport. This security disaster is actually not caused by the army or the air force itself, but is a result of the cuts in the military budget for years resulting in a systematic reduction of the military fighting strength. On Tuesday following the incident Federal Councillor *Ueli Maurer* stated in the Security Commission of the National Council, that the army is simply missing the money to maintain a 24-hour service. To guarantee a military mission of the air force around the clock, the army would need additional 100 people. It would need “pilots, ground staff, technicians, mechanics and experts for the air traffic control”, as Federal Councillor *Ueli Maurer* said. That would create an additional expenditure of 30 million Swiss Francs. It’s money “the army simply doesn’t have” according to Federal Councillor *Ueli Maurer*.

22 Gripen fighter aircrafts are urgently needed to protect the Swiss airspace

Answering the question on the responsibility for this disaster, National Councillor *Jakob Büchler* replied: “The parliament is to blame for this, as it has reduced the funds to the army. By an increased budget of 5 billion, the service could be easily provided again. It is simple to beat on the air force now. We cannot fly, because we don’t



(picture: Swiss Army LW)

have the prerequisites to do so.” Moreover: Only the F/A-18 can provide this service, because the over-30-year-old *Tiger* air fighters are unable to operate at night and in bad weather conditions. By a partial replacement of the *Tiger* fleet with 22 *Gripen* fighter aircraft one would at least have met the technical requirements again to protect the air space during the night.

More pilots must be trained

The Department of Defense, Civil Protection and Sports (DDPS) promptly reacted and promised to create the hundred jobs needed and thus reestablish this important service. But this can only be realized by 2018 or even 2020. Apart from the ground staff it requires especially well-trained and experienced pilots who are

able to provide this demanding service that is not available in Switzerland at the moment. They will have to work in three shift operations at the airports requiring a large reserve. It requires a comprehensive flight control, which can coordinate the fighter jets in the Swiss airspace and in particular enough aircraft, which are technically equipped to conduct air policing tasks.

Mission as given by the constitution not anymore possible

Reducing our defense capability started with the implementation of the *Army XXI* concept at the latest. Prior to the referendum in 2003 former Federal Councillor

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“Swiss people, I understand you”

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The education system is doing a very good job there. But we have to admit that in the last years, especially since the Schengen vote, the situation has significantly deteriorated. Crime is exploding – this has to be attributed to the foreigners. In the prison of Champ-Dollon, 92% of the inmates are foreigners according to the 2011 report which listed the countries of origin (Eastern Europe, the Balkans, etc.) and even the inmates’ religion.

The Swiss are hospitable people; I can testify for this, but, due to the inflow of foreigners attracted by the prosperity of the country, they have run into difficulties. In the Geneva elections of October 2013 the anti-border-crosser party MCG “Mouvement citoyens genevois” has won a vote

of 20% by denouncing the lack of security but also the wage-squeezing competition of the border-crossers and the roads congested by the commuters.

You cannot solve the problems by negating them. The Swiss have made a mistake by voting for Schengen in 2005. Now they try to correct it by voting for the introduction of immigration quotas. The voting result has triggered the passions. During the whole campaign I was amazed at the medias’ lopsidedness against the initiative. All left and almost all of the bourgeois parties opposed it. In spite of these recommendations, the majority of the voters deemed it necessary to vote against the “mass immigration”.

Many of my Swiss friends, particularly in the Romandy, are shocked about this result which in their opinion is offending their generosity and their hospi-

tality. I would like to tell them that I am grateful for these qualities but I respect the right of Switzerland to choose the people whom they want to grant their hospitality. Today’s voting result is mainly symbolic, even if the symbol is a strong one. The upcoming negotiations with the EU and all affected countries will define the rules and the quotas. I am relying on the common sense of the Swiss that will lead to a reasonable agreement. •

¹ Schengen includes the abolishment of border controls which caused an increase in uncontrolled immigration; a much larger number of immigrants, however, are the result of the Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons between Switzerland and the EU which is part of the Bilateral Agreements I [Editor’s note]

Source: “Le Temps” of 11.2.2014

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

"Hijacking reveals serious ..."

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Samuel Schmid argued with deep conviction that a new crisis would become visible 5 to 10 years ahead of time and that there would be enough time to strengthen the army. He claimed a so-called *ramp-up phase*, which the army would have to go through. With such tales, the Swiss electorate was misled. Today we see the result. It is not comforting at all. The constitutional order to ensure full protection of the population cannot be achieved under these circumstances.

Air force already neglected prior to the First World War

For nearly two decades, our politicians have been playing around with the security of our country, sacrificing the great good of freedom and security for the illusion of an everlasting peace. Just this year, the Swiss Air Force celebrates its 100th anniversary. Those who remember the beginnings of the Swiss Air Force will recognise parallels in the politics of the past and present. Although the years prior to the First World War were characterised by an arms race between the great powers, the majority of people assumed that there would be no war. They enjoyed life, moved to their summer resorts and were caught completely unawares by the outbreak of war. At the time Switzerland neglected to modernise its army and – in contrast to all the countries around it – had no operational air force. The aviation pioneer and first Alpine crosser, *Oskar Bider*, was heavily involved in building a Swiss Air Force by the start of World War I. (see *Current Concerns* No 15 of 28 April 2013) Then, too, the political leaders did not want to spend any money, so that the first military aircraft were owned by the pilots. They brought their planes to the army, thus ensuring a minimal air defence. Only in the course of the war the air force was further developed. The arguments before the First World War against an air force were almost the same as today.

More than half of the fighter pilots cannot fly at night

Towards the end of the Cold War the Swiss Air Force possessed over 300 aircraft. Today, there are just about 80, more than 50 of which are not ready for use in bad weather and at night. The incident in Geneva on Monday two weeks ago showed how quickly a threat may occur that cannot be handled by an unprepared army. How many times has the

thk. In the night of Sunday, 16 February to Monday, an Ethiopian passenger plane on the way to Rome was hijacked and diverted to Geneva. Monday morning the plane landed in Geneva. The kidnapper, co-pilot of the airplane concerned, gave himself up to the authorities. Thus, the abduction came to a bloodless end. After the Italian authorities had realised that the *Ethiopian Airlines* flight had been hijacked by a kidnapper and would not land in Rome as planned, the Italian Air Force sent two *Euro Fighter* planes in the night sky to accompany the hijacked aircraft. Once the Ethiopian aircraft had crossed the border to France, the French air force took over this air-policing mission and escorted the hijacked plane. Geneva was the destination airport. On Monday morning at 6 o'clock the machine touched down on the runway and was accompanied by French warplanes until final standstill. In addition to its exceptionality this process also has political explosive implications, because seri-

ous flaws in the defence concept of the Swiss airspace came to light. Why did the hijacked plane have to be accompanied by French warplanes on Swiss airspace? Why did our own air force not take over? What is the reason for this procedure? The fact that the French "stepped in" here, "depends", as National Councillor and security expert *Jakob Büchler* stated on request "on the treaties that Switzerland has concluded with the neighbouring countries Italy, Germany and France". Accordingly, the Swiss Air Force may follow a hijacked plane over foreign territory until the affected country takes over the task. But the use of armed force is strictly prohibited.

Here something becomes apparent that has been known for years, but ignored by policymakers. Is it really true what many critics of the existing Swiss army keep complaining about – that our army in general, and our air force in particular are not able to guarantee the necessary protection of our country and the people living in it?

fact been discussed that the attack on a nuclear power plant could trigger a meltdown. It is irresponsible, or should we perhaps tell those fanatics who plan such a thing that it would be unfair to do it at night, because Switzerland then could not defend itself, and ask them to wait at least for five years? Are we really living in Absurdistan?

Swiss people want a good national defence

You can twist and turn it as you want. Switzerland has been sacrificing for years its operational capability by means of good faith and a political agenda (GSoA – Group for a Switzerland without an army), which now turns a trivial event like a hijacking into a national disaster. After years of cutting down military capacity it becomes apparent that we can only protect our airspace with the help of foreign powers. As a citizen you wonder why our air force does not have more sense of honour and why it leaves the population in the dark about the security situation. Shall we really continue to indulge in an illusion with the result that we are going to stand in front of a pile of rubble at the end, which will be the result of political arrogance, military failure and a nonsensical internationalism? No, the Swiss people do not want that in any case. The clear Yes (73 %) to maintain our militia army is an unambiguous commitment to the defence capability of Switzerland. The Federal Council is obliged to take this vote

into account and to equip and update our army accordingly. •

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A land without Air Force is unprotected

Yes to the army is to say: yes to Gripen

The army can only permanently ensure the increasingly important defense of the Swiss air sovereignty with the latest modern fighter jets. Therefore the replacing of the thirty-year-old F-5 Tiger aircrafts is mandatory. The fighter jet Gripen E has, according to comprehensive evaluation, the best cost-benefit ratio, which is why it is the right choice for Switzerland. In addition to the security policy logic of replacement also economic policy considerations advocate the adoption of the Gripen Funds Act when going to the polls on the coming 18th May.

An alliance critical of the military, comprising SP, Green, left young parties, the Group Switzerland without an Army (GSoA) and other peace-activist organizations, called for the referendum against the Federal Law on the Funds for the procurement of the fighter aircraft *Gripen* (Gripen Funds Act). With this the replacement of 54 thirty-year-old aviators of the type *F-5 Tiger* by 22 modern fighter jets of the type *Gripen E* is to be financed. These new fighter jets cost 3.126 billion. The Gripen Funds Act allows the Army to divert an average of almost 300 million per year from the total annual budget for this procurement from 2014 to 2024. This amount represents 0.5 % of the total federal spending in 2012. The army thus does not receive additional 3.126 billion, but the funding is taken out of their regular budget. Last week Federal Councilor Maurer opened the referendum campaign with a press conference. The vote will take place on the coming 18th May.

According to Article 2 of the Federal Constitution of the Swiss Confederation has the duty to preserve “the independence and security of the country”.

If the thirty-year-old aircrafts are not replaced by modern *Gripen E* fighter jets, Switzerland cannot control and protect its airspace permanently and appropriately.

This is the task of the army. It has to defend country and population in accordance with the Constitution. In these tasks the defense of the air sovereignty is becoming more essential. Therefore combat aircrafts are the most important among the resources of the army. They are necessary to cover the remits of air policing, air defense and reconnaissance.

Unfortunately, recent history has shown that these tasks are not merely of hypothetical nature, but can very well become real. Think of terrorist attacks like 9/11, popular uprisings or military conflicts in this context. A country without effective air force is unprotected and at the mercy of air attacks. In order to meet the constitutional mandate, Switzerland therefore needs a sufficient number of adequate fighter jets.

The replacement of the F-5 Tiger is necessary

The *F-5 Tiger* – to be replaced by the *Gripen* – can no longer fulfill the duties of the Air Force at night or in bad weather. Thirty years after their purchase they make almost no contribution to the protection of Switzerland. Likewise a thirty-year-old car is only of interest for classic car fans.

The 32 *F/A-18* fighter jets, also part of the Air Force, can only provide air sovereignty under “fine weather” conditions. In a specific threat (extraordinary situation with limited air traffic), according to specialists, considerable losses will incur in the sustainment of the Air Force in the areas of air policing and air defense. Switzerland's fighter jets must not have merely symbolic character. Nobody drives a convertible when it is raining. If the *F-5 Tiger* will not be replaced, Switzerland will – given a continued threat – no longer be able to closely control and protect its air space for more than two and a half weeks. It therefore needs a replacement, in order to sufficiently fulfil all the tasks, which are constitutionally required, in every situation.

Gripen is the adequate choice

After a lengthy evaluation the fighter jet *Gripen E* was selected. According to the army, it includes as multi-role combat aircraft (air-to-air, reconnaissance, air-to-ground) advanced radar equipment and armament, sophisticated reconnaissance and communication skills, electronic equipment of the latest generation and a comprehensive self-protection system. The best cost-benefit ratio is the *Gripen*'s feature. The responsible Federal Council expresses it as follows: “The *Gripen E* is the right choice for Switzerland”. We can trust this choice by the specialists. The disappointed and perfectionist ones who want to badmouth the *Gripen E* and still want to procure the best technology without regard to the costs, have to be countered: A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. If the people reject the referendum, the replacement of the *F-5 Tigers* is off the table for a very long time (if not forever).

After these security aspects two economic considerations are to follow conclusively: On the one hand the procurement of the *Gripen* will result in contractually assured offset transactions of about 2.5 billion for the Swiss industry, which are to accrue at 5% in the Italian, at 30% in the French and at 65% in German-speaking parts of Switzerland. On the other hand, the contractual partner of Switzerland is not *Saab* as a manufacturer, but the Swedish government, which has unquestioned advantages regarding warranty and liability. In addition, difficult negotiations with the EU are pending after the last referendum. Because of this it certainly cannot be a disadvantage, to have an allied state at the table with Sweden – because of the *Gripen* procurement.

Therefore the *Gripen Funds Act* must be adopted. •

Source: *Centre Patronal*, Press and Information Service from 19.2.2014 / No 2066

(Translation Current Concerns)

Why we need a new Jean Rudolf von Salis so badly

by Karl Müller

Many people throughout the world, being aware that all they could expect from either of the war parties was just war propaganda, treasured a certain radio program during the Second world war: from February 1940 until the end of the war, Swiss university professor and publisher *J. R. von Salis* reported about the current developments over the Swiss radio broadcast *Beromünster*, week after week. Not without applying his own moral values – and exactly for that reason striving for the truth, as he once put it: “The ultimate goal of my broadcasting was the quest for the truth [...] the ‘world chronicle’ was neither the voice of the government nor that of any political party [...]”

This corresponded to how the then beleaguered Swiss Federal Council, determined to maintain their country’s neutrality and independence by all means, had phrased his mission: “Our commentaries were to be mainly registration of what was going on. We put things on record, quoting reports and omissions from both sides. We remove exaggerations and insults, abstain from voicing immature opinions about the evolving transformation of Europe and the world as it is going on. Under the current difficult circumstances we have to focus on what is possible, that means, on what is essential in order to protect our political independence.”

All this may be read in the book “Eine Chronik des Zweiten Weltkrieges. Radokommentare 1939–1945” (A chronicle of the Second world war. Radio commentaries 1939–1945). And whoever does read this, will ask him- or herself, where we stand today. “The first war casualty of war is the truth.” This sentence is as valid as ever. Since wars don’t start with the first armies fighting each other. They are being prepared a long time in advance.

Anybody trying to get information on what is happening in the Ukraine will have to consider all that. And will wish there were a new *J. R. von Salis* of our time. Somebody who is at the same time knowledgeable and willing to report in an unbiased way on what is going on in this plagued country. An honest political voice, devoted only to what is right, no servant to any power. A profound political-historical voice, able to put local events in a global perspective. A humane voice, empathetic with all victims but never abusing any victim for some politically motivated propaganda. A cautious voice, aware both of what he or she does and doesn’t know, separating the two carefully and never hiding anything.

On 21 February the President of the Ukraine had publicly announced that pres-

idential elections were to take place earlier than planned, that the constitution of 2004, which favoured a parliamentary instead of a presidential democracy, was to be implemented again and that he would appoint a new government of “national trust”. On the very same day the Ukrainian parliament voted in favour of the implementation of the constitution of 2004.

Who could know for sure what made the Ukrainian president do this? Had the president come to the conclusion that things in the country couldn’t continue like before with him and his party? Had the government of the country just lost track, their inner compass? Had the Ukrainian state been pressured from abroad? Were there threats of further violence or a situation like in Syria?

Already in previous weeks it had been striking how reluctantly the state was dealing with violations of the law in the country. Images of police units passively suffering violent attacks went around the world, as well as other images of events that in any civilized country but the Ukraine would have been categorized as severe violations of domestic and public peace. And then came the eruptions and casualties of last week.

Shouldn’t all of those who contributed to the recent escalation, Ukrainians and foreigners, just have paused and ask their own conscience in view of all those casualties, and take responsibility? Doesn’t that apply to the US and EU officials as well?

How much the West had interfered with domestic affairs of the Ukraine, thereby adding fuel to the flames or even igniting it, became evident when the telephone conversation between US assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian affairs *Victoria Nuland* and the US ambassador to the Ukraine, surfaced (see *Current Concerns*, no 4 of 20 February). All those appearances of Western politicians on the Maidan square showed the same.

Meanwhile events in the Ukraine have gained momentum. The parliament declared the current president to be dismissed without any constitutional justification. The representatives of the opposition who had signed an agreement with the president in presence of the German, French and Polish ministers of foreign affairs as well as a Russian official broke that agreement on the very next day. On television they could be watched rejoicing about their breach of promise

Yulia Tymoshenko, favourite of the international financial capital and the US, legally tried and sentenced to be put in jail, was released from prison, again without legal jus-

tification, and styled herself a spokesperson of the “protest”. Two of her fellow party members were made president of the parliament and interim president of the country.

The actual president declared on television that he wouldn’t step down and that gangsters were terrorizing the country and the Ukrainian people. More than 200 offices of his party had been torched. He said the events reminded him of the Nazi putsch in Germany in the 1930ies. At the same time it is this president who is now blamed from all sides to be the only one responsible for the misery of the country.

The Russian minister of foreign affairs urged his EU counterparts to make sure the promises made at the agreement between the president and the opposition on 21 February will be kept. He suggested to stop pretending “that today’s Maidain were representative of the Ukrainian people’s interests”.

The EU and US officials wash their hands in innocence, stating that Brussels was “all but delighted” (www.faz.net of 23 February). All of a sudden, however, the US-Secretary of State let his Russian colleague know all that the USA expected all states “to respect the Ukraine’s sovereignty, territorial integrity and free elections”. He emphasized his “determined support” for the proceedings of the Ukrainian parliament to assign a transitional president.

At the same time a new EU association treaty is offered to the Ukrainian government. Urgently needed loans, however, would be granted only on condition of certain measures. These are referred to as “structural reforms”, and anybody knows what that means. *Yulia Tymoshenko* talks about the Ukraine becoming a full EU member state very soon. She claims Poland were backing this demand, in order to “remove Ukraine from the sphere of Russian influence as soon as possible” (www.faz.net of 23 February).

The Israeli daily newspaper “Haaretz” reports Ukrainian Rabbi *Moshe Reuven Azman* to have appealed to the Jews of Kiev to leave the city and the country while this was still possible. The Israeli embassy in Kiev suggested to the Jews not to leave their homes at the moment.

Nobody can predict with certainty what is happening in the Ukraine at present and how events will unfold. On 21 February a US American blogger who prefers to remain anonymous wrote on *Asia Times Online*, a website highly esteemed throughout Asia, that there was only one power

Can Washington overthrow three governments at the same time?

by *Thierry Meyssan*

Washington, which failed in 2011 to bomb Libya and Syria simultaneously, is now engaged in a new demonstration of its strength: organizing regime change in three states at the same time, in different regions of the world: Syria (CentCom), Ukraine (EuCom) and Venezuela (SouthCom).

To do this, President *Obama* has mobilized almost the entire National Security Council team.

First, Advisor *Susan Rice* and Ambassador to the UN, *Samantha Power*. These two women are champions of “democratic” talk. They have for many years specialized in advocating interference in the internal affairs of other countries under the pretext of preventing genocide. But behind this generous rhetoric, they couldn’t care less about non-US lives as shown by Mrs Power during the chemical weapons crisis in the Damascus suburb of Ghouta. The ambassador, who was aware of the innocence of the Syrian authorities, had gone to Europe with her husband to attend a film festival dedicated to *Charlie Chaplin*, while her government denounced a crime against humanity, the responsibility for which was placed upon President *al Assad*.

Then, the three regional co-ordinators: *Philip Gordon* (Middle East and North Africa), *Karen Donfried* (Europe and Eurasia) and *Ricardo Zuñiga* (Latin America).

- Phil Gordon (personal friend and translator of *Nicolas Sarkozy*) organized the sabotage of the Geneva 2 Peace Conference as long as the Palestinian issue is not settled to the US liking. During the second session of the conference, while *John Kerry* spoke of peace, Gordon met with the heads of Jordanian, Qatari, Saudi and Turkish intelligence ser-

“In all three cases, the US narrative is based on the same principles: accuse governments of killing their own citizens, qualify opponents as ‘democratic’; impose sanctions against the ‘murderers’ and ultimately operate coups. Each time, the movement begins with a demonstration during which peaceful opponents are killed, and where both sides accuse each other of violence. In fact US or NATO Special Forces placed on rooftops shoot at both the crowd and the police. This was the case in Daraa (Syria) in 2011, Kiev (Ukraine) and Caracas (Venezuela) this week. Alas for bad luck: autopsies in Venezuela show that two victims, one opponent and one pro-government, were killed by the same weapon.”

vices in Washington to prepare for yet another attack. The plotters have gathered an army of 13,000 men, of whom only 1,000 were given brief military training, to drive tanks and take Damascus. The problem is that the column may be destroyed by the Syrian Army before arriving in the capital. But they fail to agree on how to defend it without distributing anti-aircraft weapons that could later be used against Israel.

- Karen Donfried is the former national intelligence officer for Europe. She has long led the *German Marshall Fund* in Berlin. Today, she manipulates the European Union to hide Washington interventionism in Ukraine. Despite the leak of a phone conversation involving Ambassador *Victoria Nuland*, she succeeded in convincing Europeans that the opposition in Kiev wanted to join them and was fighting for democracy. Nonetheless, more than half of the Maidan rioters are members of the Nazi party and brandish portraits of collaborator *Stepan Bandera*.
- Finally, Ricardo Zuñiga is the grandson of the namesake President of the National Party of Honduras who organized the coups of 1963 and 1972 in favor of General *López Arellano*. He directed the CIA station in Havana where he recruited and financed agents to form opposition to *Fidel Castro*. He mobilized [in Venezuela] to overthrow President *Nicolás Maduro*, accused of being a Stalinist.

The whole process is hyped under the leadership of one *Dan Rhodes*. This propaganda specialist has already writ-

ten the official version of September 11, 2001, drafting the report of the Presidential Commission of Inquiry. He managed to remove all traces of the military coup (power was removed from the hands of *George W. Bush* at about 10am and it was returned that evening; all the members of his cabinet and those of Congress were placed in secure bunkers “to ensure their safety”) so that we remember only the attacks.

In all three cases, the US narrative is based on the same principles: accuse governments of killing their own citizens, qualify opponents as “democratic”; impose sanctions against the “murderers” and ultimately operate coups. Each time, the movement begins with a demonstration during which peaceful opponents are killed, and where both sides accuse each other of violence. In fact US or NATO Special Forces placed on rooftops shoot at both the crowd and the police. This was the case in Daraa (Syria) in 2011, Kiev (Ukraine) and Caracas (Venezuela) this week. Alas for bad luck: autopsies in Venezuela show that two victims, one opponent and one pro-government, were killed by the same weapon.

Qualifying opponents as democratic activists is a simple game of rhetoric. In Syria, they are Takfirists [militant Sunni extremists] supported by the worst dictatorship in the world, Saudi Arabia. In Ukraine, a few sincere pro-Europeans surrounded by many Nazis. In Venezuela, young fanatics from good families surrounded by goon squads. Everywhere the false US opponent, *John McCain*, brings his

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interested in Ukraine slipping into a condition of chaos: the USA.

Meanwhile it remains unclear for the citizens in Europe, what is true here. Only one thing is for sure, and that is quite revealing: Fast, very fast indeed, any country can be pushed towards the abyss, even at the very borders of the EU, provided she has lost her inner compass and coherence and can therefore be played around with by power politics.

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European Jihadists in Syria!

A result of European interference?

by Professor Dr Albert A. Stahel, Institute for Strategic Studies, Wädenswil/Switzerland

According to European intelligence services more and more young Muslims are travelling from Europe to Syria and participating in the war waged by the Jihadists (*Jabhat Nusra and Islamic State of Iraq and alSham – ISIS*) against the *Assad* regime. According to official information from London there are already several hundreds of Muslims fighting in the civil war in Syria. The organization that is recruiting young Muslims for this war is called “The Lions of Britain”.¹ Presumably the *Finsbury Park Mosque* in London plays an active role in that. The recruits then fly to Turkey and infiltrate Syria overland. This influx surpasses by number that of those who formerly used to travel to Afghanistan and Iraq. Dozens of them are supposed

to have already been killed in the Syrian civil war.

From France 700 young Muslims are said to having travelled to Syria. They fight there along with the Jihadists. In December 2013 a total of 2,000 Muslims coming from Western Europe arrived in Syria. Last month *James R. Clapper jun.*, chief of the US intelligence services, declared in a hearing in Congress that at present 7,000 foreign fighters from 50 States were fighting in the war waged by the Syrian Jihadists.²

Scotland Yard considers the return of these combat-tested fighters a threat to the security in Europe. In 2013, 24 “Syrian returnees” were arrested. In January 2014, as many as 24 returnees were taken in police custody. *Scotland Yard’s Coun-*

terterrorism Command is afraid that these returnees – due to their radicalization in Syria – could be recruited for attacks in Great Britain.

By taking sides with the adversaries of the *Assad* regime and by interfering in the Syrian civil war, both Great Britain and France have opened a Pandora’s Box without reflecting on the consequences of their policy. By that they potentially enhance the terrorist threat in their States. •

¹ Witte, G.: Europeans are flocking to the war in Syria. What happens when they come home? In *Washington Post*, 30 January 2014

² Witte, G. *ibid.*

Source: www.strategische.studien.com of 17 February 2014

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

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support to true and false on site opponents. Support for opponents rests with the *National Endowment for Democracy* (NED). This agency of the US government falsely presents itself as an NGO funded by Congress. But it was created by President *Ronald Reagan*, in association with Canada, the United Kingdom and Australia. It is headed by the neoconservative *Carl Gershman* and the daughter of General *Alexander Haig* (former Supreme Commander of NATO, then Secretary of State), *Bar-*

bara Haig. This is the NED (actually the State Department), which employs the “opposition” senator *John McCain*.

To this operating group, you must add the *Albert Einstein Institute*, an “NGO” funded by NATO. Created by *Gene Sharp*, it trained professional agitators from two bases: Serbia (*Canvas, Center for Applied Nonviolent Action and Strategies*) and Qatar (*Academy of change*).

In all cases, *Susan Rice* and *Samantha Power* take on airs of outrage before imposing penalties, soon echoed by the European Union, while they are in fact the sponsors of the violence. It

remains to be seen whether the coups will be successful. Which is far from being certain.

Washington is thus attempting to show the world it is still the master. To be more sure of itself, it launched the Ukrainian and Venezuelan operations during the Olympic Games in Sochi. It was certain that Russia would not move for fear of having its party upset by Islamist attacks. But Sochi ended this weekend. Now it’s Moscow’s turn to play. •

(Translation *Roger Lagassé*)

Source: *Al-Watan* (Syria)
www.voltairenet.org of 23 February 2014

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Reconsidering development policy – A feasible way to overcome hunger and malnutrition

by Dr phil Henriette Hanke Güttinger

“*Mordshunger – Wer profitiert vom Elend der armen Länder?*” (*Hunger murders – Who benefits from the misery of the poor countries?*) by Jean Feyder* moves and impresses the reader deeply. In simple language the author outlines the reasons why in today’s world more than a billion people suffer from hunger and malnutrition with all their bitter consequences. Feyder substantiates his statements in a differentiated manner, with expertise and lots of evidence. Hunger – Feyder says in unmistakable clarity – is the result of Western power politics and economic interests. However, he does not only provide the analysis. In a similarly realistic, clear and differentiated manner Feyder points out in what way hunger, malnutrition and starvation can be eliminated. Recent examples from around the world, which he has collected, convince the reader, provide a prospect and spread optimism. Like countless other people, Feyder is honestly, straightforwardly and courageously committed by word and deed for more solidarity, for a decent life for everyone – worldwide.

Looking at the world map in terms of hunger, malnutrition and undernourishment, it is mainly the rural population in Asia, Oceania and Sub-Saharan Africa that is severely affected. But even in Latin America, the Caribbean, the Middle East and North Africa malnutrition is a depressing reality.¹

In 2000, the 189 UN member states agreed on eight *International Millennium Development Goals* (MDGs) in New York. The first objective was to halve the number of people who suffer from malnutrition and hunger by 2015. This goal will not be achieved. On the contrary: The Food Crisis (2007) and the financial crisis (2008) led to a massive tightening of global poverty.

From the high level of self-sufficiency ...

Most countries that suffer from serious nutritional problems today are former colonies. For a long time their economic structures had benefitted their coloni-

* Since 2005, Jean Feyder has been the permanent Representative of Luxembourg to the WTO (World Trade Organisation) and since 2007 has held the chair of the committee for the 50 poorest countries. In the UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development) he has been President of the *Trade and Development Board* since 2009.

“Rethinking development policy”

“Lesson No 1: An active role of the state in development

The financial and economic crisis queries the basic principles of the dominant neo-liberal economic model. It shows that the market cannot regulate itself and that market fundamentalism leads to a dead-end and therefore makes government intervention and regulations necessary. [...]

Lesson No 2: Expanding the production capacity – a key question

For its survival and its progress every society needs an economic and political system with which goods can be produced and services can be provided which meet the basic needs of the population. [...]

Lesson No 3: Restoring priority of agriculture

In the fight against hunger and malnutrition any strategy of developing countries, especially the poorest ones, must give priority to agriculture [...]

Lesson No 5: The poor countries must be allowed to protect their markets [...].

Lesson No 7: Regulating the financial sector [...].” (Feyder, pp. 103–114)

al masters and not the indigenous population.

With the political independence after the Second World War, many of these countries put great emphasis on promoting their agriculture and therefore their food security. “Despite their centralist – and thus costly and inefficient – management methods many of them achieved a high level of self-sufficiency” – Feyder writes.²

... to neoliberal dependence and malnutrition

In many cases the independence of former colonies lasted only for a short time. Under the influence of western advisors governments planned the development of their countries and took loans out of the *International Monetary Fund* (IMF), the *World Bank* and other donors for funding. Many projects, however, were massively oversized, caused astronomical costs and massive debt. As *John Perkins*, one of these western councillors describes, this “debt trap” was set up on purpose in order to bring the countries back into western dependency and loot them.³ Indebted this way, governments sought for more loans from the IMF and the World Bank, which in return imposed rigorous structural adjustments on them: deregulation, liberalization, privatization, open markets, and massive austerity measures in the sectors of education, health and agriculture. The consequences of this policy in the countries⁴ were and still are disastrous and led to what *Jean Ziegler* brands as “mass destruction in the Third World”.⁵

Just as intensely Feydar addresses other factors that are responsible for hunger and malnutrition: International agricultural companies, genetic engineering, cultivation of bio-fuels instead of food,

food speculation and “land-grabbing” and the often violent expulsion of small farmers.

Since hunger and malnutrition are man-made we would be in control of ensuring the nutrition of everyone. Knowledge, possibilities and the skills required to do this are nowadays available to a high degree. To anyone of good will Feyder shows in a realistic and understandable manner what might be done and must be done. In the following, some important aspects from the abundance of his considerations will be outlined.

What to do?

Each country has its own, developed culture with its core values. A sustainable development policy has to build on it. In nine “lessons” Feyder gives trend-setting recommendations for sensible development policies that could strengthen the sovereignty of the country and solve the world food problem.

“The problem is less to feed the *world population* but rather to place the latter in a position that they can live on either their home-grown products or on their own work. Or rather that they are not prevented from feeding themselves.” (Feyder, p.149)

Implement the right to food

In 1966, the UN member states committed themselves to the fundamental right of “everyone to be free from hunger”.⁶ The basic right to food implies that each country has to ensure that food is produced and made available in sufficient quantities for the entire population. This would also grant the country’s food sovereignty, which is a

"Reconsidering development ..."

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prerequisite for political sovereignty. However, it does not only apply to the Third World. Even the developed countries would do well to reflect this truism. Argentina,

Thanks to the regulation of agricultural markets, prices secure farmers' livelihood

"Timothy Wise, director of the Global Development and Environment Institute at Tufts University in Massachusetts, writes that the falling price of food is the cause of hunger and about 70 percent of the world's poor people, who live directly or indirectly on agriculture in rural areas, are kept in poverty. The same applies to the milk producers in the American state of Vermont or the rice farmers on the Philippines. A policy that aims at securing profitable and stable prices is so important because it directly affects the income of farmers – and thus their food security and the compliance with their right to food. Thanks to profitable prices, the producers can renew their – moderate – working capital, modernize their resources and increase productivity to meet the basic needs of their families." (Feyder, p. 165)

India, Colombia, Nigeria, Paraguay, Switzerland and South Africa are already familiar with court proceedings that have dealt with the violation of the right to food.

Land reforms

Land reforms in Asia (China, Vietnam, South Korea, Taiwan and Japan) have proven to be extremely effective in the fight against poverty and also provided a significant upswing in economy. China and Vietnam achieved good results by giving village peasants equal access to the ground without the ground becoming their private property.

Boosting agriculture for the nutrition of a country's own people

Food sovereignty implies that agriculture must be particularly encouraged. All ren-

Family farms as the basis of national sovereignty

The UN declared 2014 as the "Year of Family Farming" because it is them that are in a position to guarantee food sovereignty. "One lesson from the food crisis for responsibly acting governments should be to give family farms priority again. The independence from food imports is in the immediate political interest of the states for which it is even a matter of national sovereignty."

Jean Feyder, "Mordshunger", p.18

Free trade brings prosperity for all – A myth with deadly consequences

Bill Clinton, former US President, commented in 2010 before the Foreign Affairs Committee of the US Senate as a UN special envoy for Haiti as follows: "From 1981 until last year the United States has followed a policy [...] that we rich countries that produce a lot of food should sell it to poor countries and relieve them of the burden of producing their own food. [...] It was a mistake that I was a party to. [...] I have to live every day with the consequences of the lost capacity to produce a rice crop in Haiti to feed those people, because of what I did." African agriculture was ruined in

the same way as Clinton in 2008 succinctly stated: "We blew it up." (p. 95) Feyder confirms that the United States take "a good part of the responsibility for the current condition of the world agricultural economy." "The global economic and trading system that they pushed through with active support by the *World Bank* and the *IMF* – in both organizations they have veto power just as in the *UN Security Council* – only serves their interests and at the expense of hundreds of millions of inhabitants of developing countries." The consequences are hunger and poverty. (Clinton quoted in Feyder pp. 293–294)

ovations in this area must primarily serve the production of food for the country's own population. Here, the strengthening of the family farms and thus the smallholders is gaining great importance. Even the creation of irrigation systems and the construction of roads as access to local markets serve this purpose. The agricultural policy in Switzerland originally stood in this tradition – with great success – and the government in Berne should recall that today.

From profitability to sustainability

The purpose of agriculture is not high profits and returns. With a careful cultivation management, agriculture should care for the natural resources such as soil and water so that future generations will also find a safe nutritional basis.

Regulate agricultural markets

To free and save the farmers in the Third World from hunger and malnu-

trition, they have to get prices for their agricultural goods that cover their costs and allow them a good life with their families. The prerequisite is that the state must protect the domestic agricultural markets by means of appropriate import duties. In addition, Feyder recom-

Course change in trade policy

ommends "the establishment of public facilities for marketing" and "the creation of a network of storehouses" to be prepared for food crises such as in 2007.⁷ In numerous examples Feyder shows the success of such a policy, which also counteracts rural depopulation as well as urban slums and decay in the cities.

The economy has to serve humanity

"For many years our society was characterized by a growing dominance of the economic and financial sphere and the commercialization of the public area. The current crises query this rule of the market. The market has shown that it is incapable of regulating itself. Instead, it can trigger severe crises that affect the

entire global economy. The current crisis situation now offers the opportunity to reverse this trend, to give back the ancient rights to policy and to play its essential role with regard to the defense of public goods and human rights." (Feyder, p. 297)

Self-sufficiency: a way out of hunger and malnutrition

For Jacques Chirac, former French president, "food self-sufficiency is the first challenge that developing countries have to face. Agriculture has to be rehabilitated, promoted – let's not shy away from the word – protected from the

rampant competition of imported products, which destabilize the economy of these countries." (Jacques Chirac quoted in: Feyder, p. 169)

(Quotations in all the boxes to this article translated by Current Concerns)

dustrialized countries, neglecting food production for their own population. At the same time heavily subsidized food were imported from the US and the EU, which were cheaper than the prod-

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Superficiality and bluff instead of orientation and support

Reflections on the area of studies «Ethics, religions, community – with life skills (ERG)» in the Curriculum 21 (3rd cycle)

by Ursula Richner, retired woman pastor

I am a retired pastor and for years I have been working in pastoral care, in adult and in religious education. I have therefore always observed with great interest not only the development of the Church's work, but also of the religious and ethical education in schools. Now the consultation of Curriculum 21 strongly alarms me: What is planned in the field "ethics, religions, community – with life skills (ERG)" is a betrayal of the existing religious education and it seems highly dangerous to me as regards the development of our youth and thus our society.

Depending on the canton religious education has been organized differently, up to now. This is good and should remain so. In all cantons religious education is of major importance. Since the early days of the public school in the 19th century it was a compulsory school subject within the schools' curriculum. When reading the cantons' articles about the objective of school education this does not come as a surprise. The concern to educate pupils "on the basis of Christian principles to independent and responsible members of the community" is a guideline that all cantons have in common; as an example we may take the above-cited "Law on Education of the Canton of Glarus". To achieve this goal, a well-structured religious and life skills education apart from the usual

subjects at all school levels is required. Schaffhausen formulates in more detail: "Educating good and happy human beings is the goal of our education. Therefore schools together with the parental home, promote the children's religious and moral, intellectual and physical abilities. – In religious and moral education school awakens the respect for creation, the responsibility towards nature, the love of one's fellow human beings, the sense of community and the pleasure in the beautiful.[...]" The Canton of Zurich states: "The elementary school educates to a behavior that is based on Christian, humanist and democratic values. It preserves the freedom of belief and conscience and takes minorities into account."

These are the still valid educational goals carefully thought through by our forefathers, on which we can build and against which we need to examine and pit the new school curricula. Under no circumstances will we allow ourselves to fall behind them. They are based on a view of world and man that is derived from the human being's natural inherent ability for development and relationship.

The following examples present some highlights, how *Curriculum 21* deals with religious education:

For the advanced level, the area of religious instruction is to be found under the heading "Nature, man and society". Here, as already mentioned it is labeled: "Eth-

ics, religions, community – with life skills (ERG)".

The introduction to *Curriculum 21* states: "Learning objectives and provisions for contents are replaced by professional, personal, social and methodological competences to be acquired by the students in the different subject areas".

And further below: [...] "Priorities in the approach to teaching and learning are changing." – It is like that indeed, and the implications for teaching are more serious than we think at first sight. Goals like formation of values, moral and religious education, education to respect the creation or to responsible conduct are to be dropped. Religious instruction, as we wish it and consider it reasonable, as a place where, among other things, the child's religious and humane side is promoted is no longer required. It is only all about the acquisition of specific competences.

Let's look at the following examples in detail:

From *Curriculum 21* "ERG 1 Me and the community" – this is a topic since time immemorial belonging to religious and life skills education. We always took the opportunity to strengthen the pupils for their living together in the family, in the classroom or in the wider community, to familiarize them with social concepts by means of examples from

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ucts of local small farmers. By describing some impressive examples, Feyder shows how local agriculture and small businesses collapsed. Hunger, malnutrition and depopulation were the consequences. In view of this plight Feyder calls for a change of course in trade policy "to boost agriculture, to reduce dependence on imports, to increase employment and to fight hunger and malnutrition."⁹

Consequences for the developed countries

What conclusions can be drawn for agricultural policies in the developed countries? What is true for the people in the Third World also applies for the developed countries: Healthy foods are an in-

dispensable basis of human existence. This requires that the food production and thus agriculture and in particular the family farms have to be placed under special state protection in order to achieve the highest possible level of self-sufficiency: food sovereignty is the basis of political sovereignty. This also applies to Switzerland. Agricultural policy and regional planning must be aligned accordingly. •

¹ In 2009, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) estimated the number of people who are malnourished at 1.02 billion. Every sixth person on our planet is suffering from acute malnutrition or hunger.

² Feyder, Jean. *Mordshunger – Wer profitiert vom Elend der armen Länder?* Munich 2010, ISBN 978-3-938060-53-7. p. 15 (available in German and French only)

³ John Perkins, *Confessions of an Economic Hit Man*, San Francisco 2004, pp. 22–23

Perkins describes how in 1965 he was enlisted by the NSA (*National Security Agency*) enlisted (pp. 12-16) and then trained as an Economic Hit Man

(EHM). The tasks of the EHM are the following: "We are paid [...] to cheat countries around the globe out of billions of dollars. A large part of your job is to encourage world leaders to become part of a vast network that promotes U.S. commercial interests. In the end, those leaders become ensnared in a web of debt that ensures their loyalty." (p. 16)

Using concrete examples, Perkins illustrates this criminal behavior. So his work as EHM in Indonesia was to establish American dominance in Southeast Asia. This also included the control of the votes of these countries to the UN, military bases, access to raw materials or the control of the Panama Canal. (p. 19)

⁴ Using the example of Ghana and Haiti, Feyder meticulously – and movingly for the reader – outlines the consequences of structural adjustment under the dictatorship of the Washington Consensus. See Feyder, pp. 75-99

⁵ Jean Ziegler, *Betting on Famine: Why the World Still Goes Hungry*, The New Press 2013. See also Michel Chossudovsky, *The globalization of poverty*, Gordon and Breach Pub. 2005

⁶ International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Article 11.2 [UN, 1966]

⁷ Feyder, pp. 164–167

⁸ Feyder, p. 174

⁹ Feyder, p. 174

"Superficiality and bluff ..."

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the Bible or from history. In the *Curriculum 21*, however, the topic has a fundamentally different meaning. Thus, an intended competence will be, for example: "Pupils are able to reflect relationships, love and sexuality and to assess their responsibility." This includes: "a. They are able to reflect their own expectations and demands in their environment in friendships, relationships, partnership, marriage." This goes far beyond the mandate of school, there is great danger of an encroachment on the pupils' personalities. Every pupil must be permitted to discuss the topics of sex education on his own, in his family or in his environment, when he is ready for it and with the persons whom he chooses. School can submit a voluntary offer and lay the physical foundations in biology classes. But love and sexuality belong to the sphere of privacy that has to be preserved and protected.

The same danger is there in the following: "The pupils are able to talk about themselves, about their origin, their belonging and to reflect ideas of their future." That way you will quickly encroach on the pupils. It is not the school's task to make young people talk about themselves via psycho-techniques. Pupils, who, for whatever reason, do not want to talk about themselves, will quickly get into the hot seat otherwise. I am thinking of a girl who, in such a situation, started to talk of a father who actually did not exist ...! She did not want to admit her pain about the missing father to the others!

It is essential the sphere of privacy remain protected. "Me and the community" is and remains an important topic in education. It can and must be taught in a way that the student emerges reinforced from his classes and that he has gained for his role in the community.

As an other example of ERG 3 let us take "Clarifying values and norms and taking responsibility for decisions" and in addition ERG 4 "Recognizing traces and influence of religion in culture and society" and ERG 5 "Dealing with religions and worldviews".

It is evident but from the titles that in these three fields both students and teachers will be altogether unable to cope. While reading it, the whole text feels like pure bluff. We read, for example: "The pupils can illuminate in what way texts and doctrines are embedded in religious and cultural traditions." "Illuminate" actually means "explain, expound, make comprehensible". But you can only do so if you have acquired

knowledge in a particular field. Another example: Only someone who has a solid basic knowledge, from which he can draw further conclusions, can "make ideas, interpretations and teachings of the respective religions accessible in selected religious texts". The Curriculum even wants the students to expound "values and norms" – and furthermore to "check and represent" those values.

Thus, a dangerous hubris is bred while at the same time the young people are immeasurably overburdened. Religious education has the task to give the children support and guidance and to strengthen them inwardly. ERG according to *Curriculum 21*, however, tends to result in leaving unstable adolescents alone and puts them at risk to go socially and emotionally astray. Even in religious education and in life skills lessons you can not avoid solid, well-structured knowledge in order to develop the personality.

I recall: We teachers of religious education had ever and again to remind ourselves and advise modesty in religious instruction. Nowadays, most children do not come to school with any basic knowledge of biblical stories or thorough introduction to their family's faith. We had to lay the foundation, give an introduction to the Old and New Testament, to the life of Jesus, tell about Paul and the early Christians as well as about stages of Church history. We acquainted them with people who lived Christianity, thereby we demonstrated social commitment and Christian values. We organized youth services together with the students, from time to time we also prepared a social activity or arranged interesting encounters. The aim of these lessons was that we wanted to give to the students both a spiritual, intellectual as well as a humane and social knowledge. At that time the lessons were held with many conversations and discussions involving the students and their every day life and their surroundings and taking them seriously.

Curriculum 21 completely shifts the basics: The student is made to wisely talk about something, to explain something that he has not at all sufficiently understood and about which he has not yet had the opportunity to acquire the knowledge. In these questions the *Curriculum 21* also means overburdening the teacher excessively. If you worked with adults, you might get to work on the individual levels of the competences step by step. Working with adults you might assume that they bring experience and knowledge in one field or other on which they can then build up their reflections. But we deal with sev-

enth to ninth graders. If we demand from them that they "explain the significance of central figures of the religions, especially Jesus, Mohammed and Buddha, on the basis of tradition, representation and worship ..." (not knowing their lives and doctrines, but having to explain their significance!), we actually do not take them seriously on their level of development. They are accustomed to empty talk, that needs to be neither well-founded nor true, which leads to an unrealistic self-assessment. The diligent, humble student, who considers his answers conscientiously and thoroughly substantiated, is too little appreciated. The loud talkers who can bluff well and can present themselves as know-alls, even if their opinion is completely abstruse, can make a big impression. They are rated as having fulfilled the "expertise" – even without any thorough knowledge!

Exactly the same is true for the lower and middle level. The competences with lofty titles like "encountering religions and worldviews" and "exploring and reflecting basic experiences, values and norms" do not sound different to those described for the upper level. How absurd the requirements are, may be shown by some examples from "nature, man, society", NMG 12 (4–8-year-old children) "1 The students can identify religious traditions and ideas in everyday life, in cultural traces and in social life." Or: They "can tell stories about the life of important characters from different religions (in particular, Jesus, Mohammed, Buddha)." Or: "3 The students can explain religious actions and symbols in a lifeworld context." – What is initiated in primary school will be continued in secondary school. The pupils' level of development is not taken into account in any way!

But where is this going to end? What kind of young people are we going to raise that way? What values do we really want to convey? Do we really want to establish with the help of religious education – social superiority and inferiority, the power-seeker, the bluffer, that can manipulate or be manipulated and does not notice when he is misused for wrong goals? – No thanks! We do not allow this abuse. *Curriculum 21* must be stopped!

I assume that teachers want something else, that by religious education they want to promote the values of the good, of prosocial orientation, of equality and peace. Religious instruction – as far as it has been conceived of in the cantons until now – provides a very adequate framework for this objective. •

What is the use of learning history?

by Stevan Miljevic, teacher, Sierre VS

“Why should I learn this?” is a classic question in the history lesson. There is practically no school year without having at least two or three students wondering why they should stuff their head with such topics. Nobody will blame them, because in a utilitarian society like ours even the adults will not see the point of it. There is a large number of parents who do not bother about the performance of their young in this subject since they think it “is of no use for anything”. Moreover, great thinkers of Educational Sciences have dealt with this question. The fundamental changes in the Western Swiss curriculum (“Plan d’études romand” PER) in the field of teaching history give evidence of that. Although having knowledge of facts did not completely disappear in the curriculum they were largely replaced by historical methods. Today, it is considered more important to determine and to analyze the types and differences of historical sources and to make proposals for a new classification of historical events¹ than knowing how the world around us has developed. In short, lessons in the Western Swiss cantons now put more emphasis on the methods for determining the development of history and less on the historical facts that these methods could teach us. As early as in elementary schools, pupils are trimmed to become little future historians rather than getting to know the results of historians’ work.

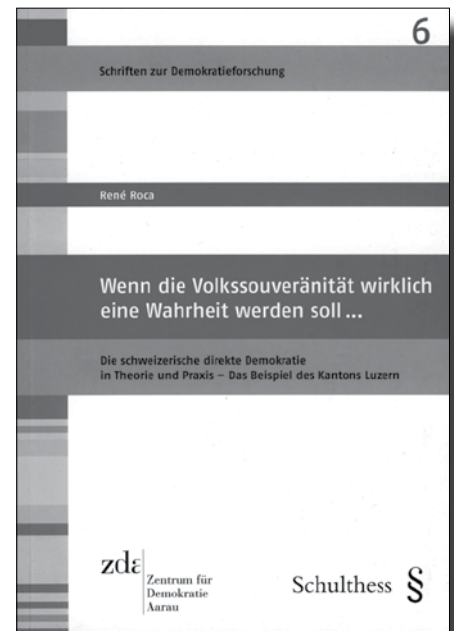
For example, in a summary on the subject of methodology the “Plan d’études romand” determines that the students carry out investigations.² This is not as matter of teaching objectives that are to achieve, but of an approach – and it represents a completely unacceptable violation of the teacher’s freedom to choose the appropriate educational method. This restriction is more than scandalous as – according to a meta-analysis conducted by *John Hattie* (most important current research on the effect of different teaching methods) – teaching which is based on investigations has only a low degree of efficiency (0.31) that is even below the average of the various other methods applied (0.40).³

It seems as if the will to partly replace historical knowledge by historical skills, aims at making this subject an “essential element of literacy, citizenship and the development of a critical mind”.⁴ If even these intentions are laudable, it seems unlikely that the potential replacement of knowledge by working methods really contributes making history an essential element of general education.

While dealing with the analysis of documents and the structure of history does have a certain appeal, it is urgent to give back factual knowledge its necessary role: In conversations with other people questions regarding facts are much more important than any minor issue. The best way not to be in the role of a fool and to integrate in the social environment is to acquire historical knowledge and not skills.

With regard to the civic sense and the critical spirit it must be said that the first can be derived of the latter. Besides the ability to shape one’s thinking freely, citizenship first demands knowledge of the citizen’s personal situation in life as well as possible alternatives. In this sense, history excellently provides the opportunity to discover ideas as they were inherent to different forms of institutional and political organizations existing in different eras, as well as their advantages and disadvantages and the social changes that took place. Only when there is sufficient knowledge about all these aspects, the critical spirit can get in action which will enable the citizen to decide what is right, useful or disadvantageous for him. It is in fact impossible to express an opinion or a judgment about something that one does not know about or understand. Knowledge is a compelling basis for all who want to perform their true duties as citizens. Not the knowledge learned by heart that we do not understand, but such knowledge we have understood and stored. No matter how you look at it, but it is impossible to achieve these goals, if historical competencies are favored in schools.

Finally, there is at least another, unfortunately mostly neglected area which can be practiced in history lessons: memory training. We must stop thinking that a subject is important just because of its immediate content. Indirectly, it may still have another advantage. On one hand it is the mechanism that enables the acquisition of knowledge which is essential for the acquisition of a good education, of a critical spirit as well as a good practice of one’s civil rights and obligations. On the other hand, it is important to be able to remember certain things in everyday life. If this memory capacity is not trained and the school is satisfied to teach the students the use of “tools”, a deficiency will gradually occur. History and geography are typical subjects in which the students can train their memory through the learning of facts, data and further expertise. If this dimension is missing in school, it will lead to the



The work of Dr phil René Roca is a profound study on the basis of the “personales Menschenbild” (personalist concept of man) and an effective and beneficial antidote to constructivist falsification of history. ISBN 978-3-7255-6694-5

reduction of people’s long-term memory capacity. Even more so especially as it is not the majority of our contemporaries who practice memory exercises by themselves. If the student makes an effort to memorize facts and figures, he also learns to find pleasure in the effort: repeating knowledge in order to remember it is not the most interesting of all occupations. But through this monotonous memorization the gates of success are opened for the students (provided that the evaluation wants to check this kind of knowledge). This success gives satisfaction with the work done, a satisfaction that you experience much less in tests which require little effort, such as those which relate exclusively to skills competencies and require no monotonous work in preparation.

Finally, it should be noted that, even if the historical scientific approach is not uninteresting, it is particularly the acquisition of knowledge that must be encouraged in the curriculum, since it is much more useful for the students’ development – whatever people may say. This point is by no means insignificant but of utmost topicality, as the new history teaching books are in planning. We hope that the people whose task is to write these books become

Curriculum 21

The end of the practical home economics?

by Elisabeth Willi, Gockhausen

“Madam, will we sometime make pasta or pizza ourselves, or a cake?” This is what my students asked me after I had introduced the subject home economics and showed them around the school kitchen. Of course, we prepared all these and many more dishes, and it was all home-made. Even the less quick students and those lacking concentration worked

joyfully when it came to cooking. You learn techniques, you have to work together and in the end you sit together comfortably while eating and talking. That is something a lot of the students barely know from home. In this subject the students do not like to have too much theory, they want to actively do something.

“What is the use...”

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aware of this issue and do not – as happened some years ago in mathematics⁵ – prepare a completely constructivist book (that is focused entirely on historical skills and competencies) which is totally useless and of no use for anyone who wants to enable the students to unfold and develop.

Source: stevanmiljevic.wordpress.com

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

¹ *Plan d' études romand, Cycle 3, version 2.0*, 27 May 2010, “Mathématiques et Sciences de la nature – Sciences humaines et sociales”, p. 86–93

² <http://www.plandetudes.ch/documents/10136/19192/Cycle+3+web+CIIP/75420548-b10b-4a5b-af1c-dd7d27b70ca5>, p. 15 as of 2 January 2014

³ <http://visible-learning.org/hattie-ranking-influences-effect-sizes-learning-achievement/>, as of 2 January 2014

⁴ http://animation.hepvs.ch/vs/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=95&catid=24&Itemid=145, as of 2 January 2014

⁵ <http://www.arle.ch/cycle-dorientation/mathematiques/255-methode-qui-fache-enseignants-maths>, as of 3 January 2014

Curriculum 21 thoroughly turns all this upside down. The subject will be renamed into “economy, labor, household”. The conclusion that the inter-cantonal center for teaching materials drew of the available teaching materials reveals what it could be about: “In the Department of economics, labor, household there is a great need for action because the claims of *Curriculum 21* cannot be fulfilled with the existing teaching materials. New developments are needed; at best some parts from existing teaching materials of the series *Perspective 21* (Consumption, Working world) can be further developed.”

The popular teaching tool “Tiptopf” or another cookbook can no longer be found on the list of teaching materials. The practical part is to be reduced to a minimum. In a nutshell, this is all about getting the students on the correct course of consumption: of course, consciously and sustainably. They will not learn how to prepare something. Is *Beat Kappeler* right when he writes in the “Basler Zeitung” of 10 October 2013 that “the children only get to know the passive side (of the economy), so how to buy, to eat, to rent, to throw away – but at no point how to produce.”

The first minimum goal of *Curriculum 21* points in the new intended direction: students can “formulate health-promoting opportunities for action in everyday situations, try them out and reflect on their experiences (for example, daily fluid intake and use of sugary drinks, or increase of physical activity during the day).” Shall the practical cooking be abandoned? Correspondingly, the second minimum goal is that the students “can design food and drinks according to the situation and make use of a large choice of variants”. Or, they “can analyze local and global effects of their individual decisions in the choice of food (for example, meat, fish, vegetables, fruits).” That means students are no longer allowed to do practical work.

The subject home economics was introduced in Switzerland after the First World War to fight poverty and feed the Swiss population in a healthy way.

The ideas of the planners of *Curriculum 21* will soon lead to conditions like in the USA: No one does the cooking himself any more; they live on convenience food or barbecues. Eating together at the family table is replaced by self-service from the refrigerator. Where are the common conversation and the bond between husband and wife, mother and children, the family, whoever it may be composed of? People do not feel at home and like to eat in places where there is no good, healthy food that has been made with love.

Do we really want that?