

# Current Concerns

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

English Edition of *Zeit-Fragen*

Federal referendum of 12 February

## Corporate Tax Reform III – by order of the OECD How can the sovereign state of Switzerland deal with it?

by Dr iur Marianne Wüthrich

*This year marks the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the outbreak of the European financial crisis. You remember: The crisis did not come out of the blue. It was imposed on us by the US, which, by means of its unaffordable wars and the virtual dollar trillions it had created on account of these wars, had effected a financial bubble which threatened to burst in 2007/2008. Like in the time of the Vietnam War, the US government transferred its debt to Europe by means of a massive devaluation of the dollar. As a result, the euro, which had been a dubious invention from the start, began to have serious problems, and many euro countries sank into crisis, unemployment and indebtedness, and this has been putting a strain on the EU to this day. Only so much need to be said as a quick reminder.*

What has this review got to do with Switzerland? Well, as a state with a relatively well-ordered financial policy, with low unemployment and its own healthy currency, Switzerland has had to defend itself vigorously for these last ten years so as not to be a pawn to EU and OECD appetites and to be sucked dry by them. The war of the Great Powers US and EU against Switzerland as a business location is in full swing, as they hold on to the mistaken hope that taking the cream off Swiss tax revenues and bank accounts and weakening this small but strong competitor would help them to pull through better.

Today, a fierce fight for the big economic enterprises is taking place around the globe. In the globalised world, large-scale conglomerates are often no longer connected to their country of origin, but rather set up their production sites in the cost-efficient world regions; for their headquarters they choose a state with high political stability and legal security as well as little bureaucracy and low taxes.

### Federal structure and tax privileges today

On the one hand Switzerland is attractive as a location for foreign companies, since it is characterised by high stability, par-

ticularly in politically and economically uncertain times. It is precisely the strong Swiss franc that provides security, but on the other hand this is linked to a high cost of living. To enable the cantons to compete internationally, they have offered a tax package entailing little bureaucratic effort to the 24,000 so-called “principal societies”, which generate their sales largely abroad. These societies include some 11,000 holdings that do not operate in the country, but only hold and manage participating interests in other companies. These companies provide around 150,000 jobs in Switzerland.

The tax-privileged companies pay over CHF 5 billion direct federal tax and approximately CHF1.6 billion cantonal tax on profits. The more than 300,000 non-privileged large, medium-sized and small enterprises, which have to pay full tax on their profits, deliver about CHF 6.3 billion to the cantons (Source: “St. Galler Tagblatt” of 19 January 2017).

### EU and OECD have been exerting pressure on Switzerland for years

The OECD is essentially only an office with around 2,500 employees, which produces statistics, derives “policy recommendations” from these, and sets “standards”. (See <https://www.oecd.org/berlin/dieoecd/>)

These OECD “recommendations” and “standards” are communicated to small states such as Switzerland in an authoritarian manner: either surreptitiously (for example in education and health care), or by way of orders, pressure and the threat of being put onto black and gray lists. For example, one could read the following in the “Neue Zürcher Zeitung” in September 2015: “Since the outbreak of the financial and debt crisis in 2007/08, the political will to tighten global rules has powerfully risen, notably in the large OECD countries. Smaller countries like Switzerland [...] have their doubts about the OECD, but must bow to the power-political realities.”

After the subjugation of banking secrecy, the same procedure is now going on in corporate taxation. For a long time, EU

and OECD have been calling on Switzerland to abolish fiscal privileges. This has already enabled them to keep some companies from settling in Switzerland because they do not know exactly what the legal situation will be in future (legal uncertainty). However, since the abolition of the privileges lies in the competence of the cantons, the Confederation together with the cantonal governments, the political parties, the economic associations and other interested parties have for years now been forced to try and find a solution which will remove the sword of Damocles in the form of black lists from Switzerland and its individual cantons, but which will also be capable of winning a majority with the voters. On 12 February 2017, the sovereign will decide on this matter.

### What the referendum is to bring about – pro and con

We will here restrict ourselves to the essential points of the Corporate Tax Reform (CTR III), which can be understood by everyone.

The core element is this: the Confederation bows to the Great Powers and forbids the cantons to demand less corporate income tax from the foreign principal societies than from local companies. Instead, all companies, both domestic and foreign, will benefit from generous tax deductions for research and development, and the profits from patents will be taxed at a lower rate (see voting brochure, p. 32). These relief measures for all companies are acceptable according to the OECD standards.

*The opponents of this referendum describe the new advantages as “non-transparent tax dodges”, “only understood by a handful of tax consultants and economic attorneys” (voting brochure, p. 35). Anyone who tries to read or even understand the wording of the proposed changes of the law (voting brochure, p. 38-46) must agree with the opponents: there is not a trace of general intelligibility!*

**"Corporate Tax Reform III – ..."**

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The supporters hope that the new tax breaks will ensure that as many domestic and foreign firms as possible will remain in Switzerland and thus preserve or even create jobs.

The opponents of this referendum – this is particularly evident in many readers' letters – are of the opinion that we could easily do without Google, Apple and Co.

The supporters argue that with the departure of a large proportion of foreign companies there would be a major drain on Swiss tax revenues and a perceptible loss of jobs.

**What will most cantons probably change after an approval**

In federalist Switzerland, tax sovereignty lies with the cantons. The Confederation may require the cantons to tax all companies according to the same tax rate. But as to how they implement this provision in cantonal law, this is in their hands, which means that they can reduce the regular tax on profits for domestic and foreign companies on their own initiative in order to motivate them to stay. It is agreed on almost all sides that the majority of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) would benefit from such a tax reduction: and of course, their tax rate would also be reduced. The citizens of the individual cantons will vote on the amendments to the cantonal regulations at the ballot box. In order to keep the cantonal tax receipts from declining too drastically in value, the Confederation wants to give the cantons a hand: their share of direct federal income tax would be increased from 17.0 per cent to 21.2 per cent (voting brochure, p. 34). Overall, according to official figures, the Federal grant would amount to some 1.3 billion annually.

**Debate about the consequences of an aye or a nay to CTR III**

The opponents of this referendum argue that the hole in the federal budget may also be much bigger than the Federal Council would have it today, not to mention the massive losses of cantonal revenues, which cannot be accurately quantified in advance (voting brochure, p. 35).

The Federal Council even confirms this itself: The financial implications of the reform depend on many factors that are not yet known today (voting brochure, p. 31).

The opponents of the referendum therefore warn against future tax increases for the citizens and against the dismantling of state services in case of an aye: a few large companies and their shareholders would win, but the "normal" taxpayers and citizens would be made to pay up (see [www.usr3-nein.ch](http://www.usr3-nein.ch)). However, even the opponents embark on the debate with unsub-

stantiated figures, for example when they catalogue concrete estimated tax increases for the individual communes in the Canton of St. Gallen (in the case of the tax reform being adopted).

The supporters argue that tax losses after an aye to the Corporate Tax Reform III would be only temporary, because new businesses would settle in Switzerland. Moreover, having to pay less tax, domestic firms would be able to invest and produce more domestically. Federal Councillor Ueli Maurer, Head of the Federal Department of Finance, warns: "In contrast to the consequences of a nay, in case of the reform being adopted the losses will be small. [...] In the case of a nay, we immediately lose tax potential as well as jobs, there will be fewer investments and eventually the number of new relocations of foreign firms to Switzerland will fall to zero."

**What next?**

Finally, we will attempt to give a synopsis and show up some possible solutions.

*Synopsis:* Practically everyone agrees that Switzerland will have to abolish the preferential taxation of foreign companies, according to the dictates of the OECD. The intention of taxing all economic enterprises under the same tariff in the future and granting all the same tax deductions is not contrary to fiscal justice. It is also agreed that a "yes" to the tax reform will, at least temporarily, lead to fewer tax revenues in the accounts of the Confederation and the cantons. There is, however, a disagreement about how these losses and also the planned support payments by the Confederation are to be countered. Should corporate taxes be reduced at the expense of "normal" taxpayers? All sense of justice rises up against this measure.

The opponents of this referendum, however, usually do not express their ideas of a more socially compatible solution, like for example chairwoman Anita Fetz (SP Basel City): Under the title "Without alternative? Come off it!" we look in vain for a real alternative: "In politics, we fortunately have the option of returning the parcel to the sender – with the commission to improve it." But how?

*An internal approach to a solution:* We voters might take advantage of the opportunity to reduce our excessive administrative bubbles and public spending ratios in the federation, the canton and the cities. So for example, the federal education and research expenditures have risen from CHF 4.3 billion to over CHF 7 billion between 2005 and 2015, which is 62 per cent more! A considerable part of this money flows into EU research projects, which we could get more cheaply under our own steam. There is also one billion CHF going to the Swiss National Science Foundation – which is more than the total federal contribution to

Swiss vocational training (see "Switzerland as a research and training centre and the EU bureaucracy", *Current Concerns* 26/27 of 5 December)!

The situation is similar in many cantons and cities. In the city of Zurich, for example, the voters almost always accept completely out-of-the-way construction projects with a high majority; so on 9 June 2013, with 73.4 per cent of votes in favour for a primary school for 90 million francs which was to be compatible with the new Curriculum 21 (boasting a triple-gym and "flexibly usable" schoolrooms allowing "modern instruction practices"!)

If we citizens as well as our parliaments were to comb through our various administrative divisions and to agree only to economical and reasonable projects, a lot of public money would become available.

*As a small state, what shall we do? Find allies!* "As an individual, you can not fight back without catastrophic results. That is why we must find partners: states that think as we do." said Federal Councillor Ueli Maurer. Maurer used his stay at the WEF in Davos to establish and cultivate contacts, European ones "in a kind of small G-4 group with the Netherlands, Belgium and Sweden", as well as some outside the EU with Great Britain, Australia and Singapore. Together, such an alliance could make a good defense, for example against new OECD standards.

*Maintaining the strengths of Switzerland:* The fact that Switzerland is still doing well in comparison with other countries is due not to tax cuts and large multinational corporations but to the strengths of our state structure, our small-scale economy and our many active and responsible citizens.

- Federalism and direct democracy: Work is done in the most careful and economical way in the small communes, because the citizens do a lot of voluntary community work, in the municipal councils they decide directly on the municipal budget and they control the administration. We must also increase this control in the cities, the cantons and the Confederation, or to demand it from our parliamentarians, which would be possible thanks to our direct democratic rights.
- Strong SMEs, a dual vocational education and training system and a good primary and secondary school education: Switzerland has by far the lowest unemployment rates and, above all, the lowest rates of youth unemployment in Europe, because its small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), but also many large domestic corporations as well as our state enterprises provide for, main-

## “The suicide of farmers is a warning”

by Olivier Delacrétaz, Lausanne

In February 2016 a report of the “suicide observatory” informed that in France farmers had the highest suicide rate of all professions.

During the last months several cases concerned the Canton of Vaud. It was talked a lot about it in the media. Especially mentioned was the back-breaking burden which goes along with the administration of an agricultural enterprise, but also the modest income, the considerable investments required by smallest modernisations, the chicaneries of and the daily paper-warfare with the authorities, the indifference of politicians from left to right and at last the difficulty to find a wife who is ready to share these stresses and strains. It is left to be added that the farmer doesn't receive any more credit for his original vocation to feed the population. It is comprehensible that all this evokes in quite a few the feeling of having no place in modern society. The most heavily burdened or most sensitive draw a desperate conclusion out of this.

From the mere neoliberal point of view the agricultural production of Switzerland is nonsense. The enterprises are too small to be profitable, even if three or four of them would be merged. The topography of Switzerland is mountainous and often very steep. The weather is uncertain. Despite minimal peasant income the prices are extremely high – compared with those of the Third World. From a pure market economy perspective Swiss agriculture had no future as main source for food supply of the country – it shouldn't even have a past.

The international market for agricultural products is extremely distorted. On the

one hand due to international obligations the government affords only minimal tariff protection to their farmers with reference to the free market. On the other hand a rest of survival instinct reminds them that national defence makes little sense without a high degree of food sovereignty. Therefore, unlike the most elementary laws of the free market, our government supports agriculture artificially with direct payments.

This schizophrenic practice is mostly argued out at the expense of the peasantry which is driven in dangerous economic and human bottlenecks. These are heightened by humiliating relief payments which would not be necessary if the Swiss people would pay a fair price for their food.

As to the internationalisation of trade, the socialists basically agree with the neoliberalists, even if their motives are rather moral than economical: You have to open, to be solidary, you don't have to isolate yourselves. Only the wish for food sovereignty which implicitly refers to a future war reveals an egoism and pessimism which is not compatible with the ideals of the left.

There is also a fundamental incompatibility between all trends of the leftists and the peasantry. The peasant is a proprietor and chief. He is dynastic, because he stands for the maintenance of a strain. He “governs” his enterprise. Briefly speaking: he is fundamentally conservative. Even his openness against technical innovations only pursues the goal to insure the maintenance of his enterprise.

Every single one of these motives is sufficient to let him looking suspicious in

the eyes of a leftist who constantly creates and expands new laws about regional development and nature protection and much more. This certainly concerns a lot of people but especially the peasants.

From a philosophical point of view the deficiency of the peasant lies in the fact that every day he represents the submission of man under the will of sky and earth – in spite of mechanisation, chemistry, biology, genetically modified organisms and informatics. He dares to remind us of the limits of man's will and namely to a society which lives from the left to the right with the delusion of total control. And nobody is willing to accept just this fact today.

Under the pressure of the environmentalists the tendency to state interventionism has once more severely intensified. They worry about the future of our planet, alarmed by the warming of the oceans and the global warming, the demographic explosion, the risks of military and civil atomic power, the continuing extinction of various species. They want to block the further technical evolution of the world at all costs and stay constantly on the brake. On the political level the legal constraint seems to be the only means to react to the severity of the problems and the dramatic of the situation. Thereby they hardly care about the resulting collateral damage in the domain of individual freedom and property – even if this is familial and not speculative.

They join the blind faith that socialists show for laws and administration. They

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### “Corporate Tax Reform III – ...”

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tain and supervise our dual vocational education and training system. 80 per cent of young people in Switzerland (including the foreign youths living here) complete a vocational apprenticeship and so contribute to the preservation of our well-organised state and economic order. It is, however, alarming that because of the increasing deterioration of our school education, more and more school leavers are simply not capable of pursuing and successfully completing a professional apprenticeship – and partly they do not even wish to do so (!). If for this reason alone, the harmful Curriculum 21 must be prevented.

Switzerland has a unique citizen-orientated state structure, a relatively low level of

public debt and a comparatively healthy economy, as well as a population that is – still! – on the whole enthusiastic and ef-

ficient. So we will surely be able to deal with a Corporate Tax Reform, even if this could lead to temporary losses. •

### EU threatens “non-cooperative tax areas” with blacklist

At the end of January, Switzerland – in addition to 90 other countries – will receive a communication from the EU, according to which by the end of 2017, the EU aims to have examined whether these individual states allow tax privileges for companies that are “harmful” according to the EU Code (“Neue Zürcher Zeitung”, 27 January 2017). Needless to say this announcement comes at the right moment for the supporters of the Swiss Corporate Tax Reform III, the vote on which is scheduled to take place on 12 February. Because this is intended to ban the privileges practiced in many cantons for for-

eign principal societies. This is a catch-22 situation for the opponents of the tax reform, because they are mostly to be found in circles which regularly speak out for an “opening up” of Switzerland towards the EU. In order not to stand up against the EU, they want to draft an alternative proposal to the CTR III if this is rejected, according to their wishes. However, given the fact that there is no agreement among the opponents about the concrete content of such a new draft, it is very unlikely that this will be on the table, let alone be ready for a referendum, in any useful period of time.

## “By no means a gift to the farmers”

### A plea for the federal law on the taxation of agricultural and forestry properties

Interview with National Councillor Olivier Feller, FDP Waadt



Olivier Feller  
(picture ma)

The “Federal law on the taxation of agricultural and forestry properties” aims to mitigate the potentially ruinous effects of a Federal Supreme Court (of Switzerland) judgment of 2 December 2011 on farming families.

Prior to this judgment, if a farmer wanted to sell part of his property as building land, he was required to pay a real estate gains tax according to cantonal law. The same rule applied in accordance with local construction law requiring the farmer to transfer his house and garden to private assets in order to keep occupying it upon his retirement. With this decision, the Federal Supreme Court behaves as though it were the legislator and invents a new income tax for the farmers. In addition to the cantonal real estate gains tax, the federal government could thus increase this capital gain by means of direct federal tax load – as income! (The federal government only recognizes this income tax, no wealth tax that – of course – would be much lower.)

Effectively, this means that a farmer or a couple looking to retire have to pay hundreds of thousands of francs in income tax for their private residence to the federal government despite not even having earned that money.

One can only hope that the National Council will find a compromise in the spring session in order for the Council of States to be prepared to correct its negative decision on 12 December 2016.

#### “The suicide of farmers is ...”

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refuse to acknowledge that the best idea – not to mention the bad ones – is totally changed if packaged in a constitutional article, a law, a decree and at last in directives. By that the lively idea degenerates to a lifeless procedure which decays in the channels of bureaucracy. Totally detached from its original sense it exists only as an end in itself and can hardly be reformed once gotten out of political control.

The never verbalized idea which underlies this development includes that the peasant should stop to try to sup-

#### Federal act on the taxation of agricultural and forestry land (16.031) – a chronology

2.12.2011 Federal Court decision: profits from selling agricultural and forestry land were exempt until a fundamental decision of the Federal Court in 2011 of the federal direct tax (income tax) (FC 138 II 32). In 2011, the Federal Court limited this privilege to lands that are subject to the Federal Act on the rural land rights. The profits from selling reserves of building land from the assets of agriculture and forestry enterprises are fully taxable since then.

14.3.2012: National Councillor Leo Müller issued the motion\* “Taxation of agricultural and forestry land” (12.3172) with 22 co-signatories. The Federal Council was supposed to provide a draft law to the Parliament, stating that agricultural and forestry plots, when transferred from business assets to private assets as well when sold will be charged with an income tax only on the capital cost, as it was the practice before the judgment of the Federal Court 2C\_22/2011 in 2 December 2011.

9.5.2012: Federal Council requests to reject the motion.

16.9.2013: National Council supports the motion.

8.12.2014: Council of States supports the motion.

11.3.2016: Federal Council adopts its message to the Federal act on the taxation of agricultural and forestry land (16.031) and thus implements the motion which was transferred by the Parliament: all real estate of assets from an agricultural or forestry enterprise should benefit from a privileged taxation, as it was until 2011. He renounces to recommend the adoption of the proposal to the Parliament.

27.4.2016: National Council follows its Advisory Committee and accepts the amendment as the First Chamber.

12.12.2016: Council of States follows its Advisory Commission and rejects the law amendment as the Second Chamber.

Spring session 2017: The National Council will discuss it again.

Source: <https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/amtliches-bulletin/amtliches-bulletin-die-verhandlungen?SubjectId=38871>

\* A motion instructs the Federal Council to submit a bill to the Federal Assembly or to take a certain measure. Motions can be submitted by the majority of a committee and, during a session, by a parliamentary group or by an Assembly member. Motions must be accepted by both Councils.

(Translation Current Concerns)

*Current Concerns: Could you briefly explain the problems farmers face regarding the taxation of agricultural lots?*

*National Councillor Olivier Feller:* On 2 December 2011, the Federal Court announced its decision to establish a previously unknown distinction between lots subject to agricultural land law and those that are not. The issue at heart is to determine

ply us with food because you can find always cheaper food elsewhere in the world. He should for once be content with landscape preservation! A status, comparable with that of an employee for parks and gardens would surely fit him very well.

The suicide of farmers is a warning. It indicates a possible death of a modernity which lives and grows in a Hors-sol<sup>1</sup> world rejecting all those who don't want to join it there.

<sup>1</sup> soil less cultivation

Source: “La Nation” No 2059 from 9 December 2016

(Translation Current Concerns)

how to tax the profits made when selling or transferring land from business assets to private ones. When dealing with a lot subject to land law, the real estate transfer tax continues to be applied. What is new is that if a lot is not subject to land law, the entire profit is subject to income tax. This judgment by the Federal Court had the effect of having drastically increased the debts owed from one day to the next. The Waadt canton provides a good example of this. The percentage for a real estate gains tax for a lot not subject to land law used to be 7%, if the period of ownership exceeded 24 years. Since 2 December 2011, such a lot is subject to an income tax rate of 50%, with additional AHV fees.

#### What led to this situation?

In accordance with the principle of the separation of power, the Federal Court is independent. Of course, I do respect its independence. The problem is that, apparently, the Federal Court did not foresee the immediate consequences of its judgment. A farmer, who wants to retire

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## Agriculture and direct democracy (Part 3)

### The people set the course after the Second World War

by Dr rer publ. W. Wüthrich

At the beginning a short resume of parts 1 and 2 of the series of article (of 18 June and 15 August 2016): The years of hardship during First World War and immediately afterwards made policy and population aware on the issues of agriculture. After several referendums, the conditions were created to support farmers and to better secure the food supply. The Federal Government began to plan and to provide. This development culminated in the "Plan Wahlen" during the Second World War. Switzerland was encircled by hostile minded axis powers and managed to produce enough food on their own ground so that no one had to go hungry.

Even after the war, the provision was important. In 1947, the sovereign agreed to new economic articles in the Constitution with the important sentence:

*If the general interest justifies it, the Federal Government is empowered*

"By no means a gift to ..."

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but keep living in his farmhouse at the same time, can be faced with fees of several hundred thousand francs because of his income tax, merely because his residence is transferred from his business assets to his personal assets. This is not only unjust, but it also contradicts the legal security and predictability that is supposed to be ensured by the Federal Court. What is more is that this law came into effect immediately on 2 December 2011 without a transitional period enabling farmers to adapt to the new taxation. In return, it highlights a real institutional problem. Whenever the parliament changes taxation laws, transitional periods are usually provided. That didn't happen in the case of this Federal Court judgment.

In April of 2016, the National Council approved a draft bill that could have enabled a return to the previous tax practice. The Council of States opposed it in December 2016. What do you make of this situation? I was very surprised by the Council of States' decision. On 8 December 2014, it had supported a motion brought forth by my colleague, Leo Müller, commissioning the National Council to present a legislative change to reinstate the previous tax practice. Two years later, the Council of States voted for the exact opposite, i.e. non-occur-



Since 1899, in Switzerland sugar has been produced of indigenous sugar beets. (picture lid.ch)

to legislate if necessary contrary to the freedom of trade,

[...] to maintain a healthy farmer community and a crisis-compat-

ible agriculture, as well as to the strengthening of rural real estate.

In 1952, the Agriculture Act defined the direction for the policy in the following decades. The production should be directed and controlled by a bunch of measures and the farmers receive an adequate income:

Growing premiums should promote agriculture, investment aid facilitate the purchase of machines, the diesel fuel was reduced etc.

The Federal Government decided certain prices for important products such as for example the milk and guaranteed the purchase. The accounting in *model plants* provided the figures to calculate a fair income for farmers. This was calculated after the model of the "parity wage". A farmer should generate an income that was comparable with a skilled trade worker in the industry.

The border control with customs duties and import restrictions belonged to this policy, according to the following procedure: The importation of certain products was free, as long as no similar domestic products were available. If domestic products were offered at reasonable prices, but in insufficient quantities, so the import was limited. If the domestic offer covered the full demand, the import was prohibited. This concept was widely supported. So, intensive discussions had taken place between the *Swiss farmers Association* and the trade associations. *Gerhard Winterberger* had grown up on a farm and was later director of the *Trade and Industry Association*. He is referred

rence. What a contradiction! It is difficult to understand such a turnaround. I sense that in certain circles, there is jealousy towards the enormous support that farmers enjoy with parliament. Furthermore, the federation's financial situation has deteriorated over the last two years. The return to the previous tax practice in no way has to do with gifting anything to the farmers, even if some like to present it that way. In reality, a return to the previous practice would prevent a "tax robbery" that, without any democratic discussion, has been enabled from one day to the other by the Federal Court's judgment in 2011.

*What other opportunities to possibly limit the negative consequences of this Federal Court judgment do you see?*

This dossier will be presented to the National Council again in 2017. The Committee for Economic Affairs and Taxes is going to elaborate on this topic again in its meeting on 20 February and prepare it for further discussion at the National Council's spring session. As a French-speaking correspondent for the Committee, I will, together with others, work towards achieving a fair solution to win the majority in the National Council as well as in the Council of States. It's not going to be easy. But in policy, only battles that are not fought are lost from the start.

(Interview by Jean-Paul Vuilleumier)

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**"Agriculture and direct democracy"**

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to as the "father" of the parity wage (*Schweizer Monat* 1921–2012, p. 121). In the Parliament, the *Farm Bill* was well accepted. The Government parties, all trade associations and all trade unions formed a joint action committee for the proposal. Something similar happened neither before nor afterwards. Eight "war Federal Councillors" stood up for the law and acknowledged and owed the effort of the peasantry in the war. Even Liberals campaigned – entirely against their attitude – for more agricultural regulations. They had experienced that there are situations where you cannot import anything and everything. The Council of States unanimously agreed. In the National Council, there were only eight votes against – by *Gottfried Duttweiler* and *Ring of Independents*. Their supporters formed a Committee "to protect of the interests of consumers" which called for a referendum so that it came to the vote. Despite the unity of supportive organizations, the result was quite close. The *federal law on the promotion of agriculture and the preservation of the farm stand* (Farm Bill) was adopted the 30 March 1952 with 54 percent of the vote.

**Post-war period – first trends for overproduction**

The area under cultivation had almost doubled in the years of war due to the "*Plan Wahlen*". It was important for the Government after the war to continue to promote agriculture and to prevent a strong reduction of arable land. Already in the 1930s, it had come to an overproduction of milk, and quotas for milk were introduced by emergency law for a few years. But after the war many farmers switched again to milk production and the arable land decreased by 10'000 hectares (about 35 percent) – far more than planned. Various reasons were decisive for that. Dairy industry fits better to the hilly landscape in the Swiss plateau and the mountain slopes in the harsh climate of the Pre-Alps and Alps, while cereal can be better cultivated in large countries. In addition, agriculture is labour-intensive and the workers were becoming increasingly scarce in the boom. Further, dairy farming had the advantage for the farmer's family that the income accrues continuously. The Federal Council attempted carefully to control this development. In 1954, he reduced the price of milk as a steering measure around 1 centime per litre while at the same time increased the growing premiums for cereals and crops as an incentive. Thus, the farming income as a whole didn't decrease overall – only in individual cases. A group of farmers

from the French part of Switzerland, the *Union des producteurs suisse UPS* organized the first "March on Berne" on 9 May 1954 where 25,000 farmers took part. There would be more such demonstrations on the Parliament Square in the following decades. In 1961, there were 40,000 farmers who were protesting because the Federal Council set up the milk price only 2 and not as required 4 centimes. There were also consumer protests: When in 1967 the butter and cheese prices once again rose, the consumers of the French-speaking part of Switzerland called for the butter strike. The sales in the shops of Western Switzerland and partly also in the German part of Switzerland went far back (because you could switch to margarine), and the situation was critical. – The media began to speak of a "milk lake" and a "butter mountain" in these years.

Soon after the implementation of the Agricultural Law it became clear that steering the production was not so easy. Also, there were different views on the parity wage. While many farmers rightly understood it as an entitlement for a decent income, it was seen by the staff in the Department of Agriculture also as a tool for their medium-term planning. They tried to reduce the support for the dairy industry (which was inclined to produce abundantly) – and support other areas, however, more, which was not always understood.

After the war, there were more reasons reinforcing the tendency to overproduction. New machines and tractors were introduced on the farms and horses became increasingly rare. Fertilizers have been improved, and one succeeded in breeding cows which produced more milk. In the consolidation of farming meadows and arable land far apart were merged in many areas. Marshy meadows have been drained and the country lanes and roads upgraded. The farms could operate easier and more efficient. In short: the agriculture was more powerful.

Because the Federal Government had committed to the farmers to purchase the milk at a fixed price, it resulted in abundant production. As much as possible was used for making cheese and exported, sticking to a high-quality level as all Swiss products do. The Emmental cheese came to be world renown. Out of the remaining milk mostly butter was produced (which was frozen) or the milk has been processed into milk powder, – often sold at cheapest prices abroad, for example to the Soviet Union, to India and African countries.

**Alternatives to dairy farming – cultivation of sugar beets**

Admittedly the Federal Council had little success after the war applying his policy

to retain arable land. Switzerland became mostly "green" again. – The planners in Berne could still enter some success in their books – by promoting the cultivation of sugar beet.

The conditions were favourable. Experiences existed already since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the Bernese Seeland area sugar beets were grown and processed to home grown sugar at the sugar factory of Aarberg since 1899. The production was, however, small, so that the self-sufficiency rate was only at about 15 percent after the Second World War. It was obvious, to build a sugar factory in the East of Switzerland and to promote the cultivation of sugar beets with federal funds. But after significant initial difficulties and after two referendums this policy should become a success story.

The new sugar factory was supposed to be built in Andelfingen. The planning people in the Department of Agriculture were confident to succeed with their project. National Council and Council of States perceived the project positively and voted in favour with vast majority. The referendum had been taken, and it came to a plebiscite – and to a nasty surprise. On 14 March 1948 the people voted clearly against it with 63.3 percent. The main reasons were more in the psychological field. The whole presentation of the new sugar regime reminded too much of the State-controlled economy during the war, and of which many wanted to get rid. The Federal Council would have prescribed the size of the area under cultivation and the sugar beet prices, organized the production and many things more – as he did during war with all basic foodstuff. To finance all this, the tariffs on imported sugar were supposed to be put up what would have increased the price for consumers. A large majority voted against it. The farmers often returned to more entrepreneurial freedom and wanted to decide themselves what they wanted to grow.

**The peoples "No" leads to success**

With the "no" of the people the sugar project wasn't "gone". Following the principle of subsidiarity, communes, cantons, associations and private companies took the business into their hands. They founded the *Swiss Association of Sugar Industry*, which, in turn, formed a stock company, the Federal Government was not involved in, but twenty cantonal governments, associations and trading and industrial companies, as well as numerous individuals. They prepared a new sugar submittal "without federal government", which excluded increasing the price of sugar from the very start. It was unanimously approved in the National Council and in the Council of

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States – which happens quite rarely. Also, no one within the population came up with the idea of taking a referendum. – This political process as it happened is a prime example of the functioning of federalism and subsidiarity, which deserves to be described in a textbook of Political Science: The "no" to the referendum in 1948 led to a solution that was widely accepted. The population in Frauenfeld agreed to build the new sugar factory, and was also ready to contribute financially. In 1974 and 1985 there were two further federal referenda on the expansion of the sugar factory and the expansion of the cultivation of sugar beet. In 1974, the people voted yes, but in 1985 they voted against a project that was overly large. Today 6,000 farmers grow sugar beets on about 20,000 hectares in Switzerland, which are processed in the two sugar factories at Aarberg and Frauenfeld (which today 3,000 employees) to approximately 250,000 tonnes of sugar, which corresponds to a self-sufficiency rate of nearly 100 percent. 85 percent went into the food industry and 15 percent to the retailers. Today in autumn many tractors and trailers highly loaded with sugar beet are seen on the access roads to Aarberg and Frauenfeld. A "gentle fragrance" lets the people know that the sugar processing is running at high speed. Nobody bothers, because the factory simply belongs to the region. – The Swiss sugar was and is a successful project, where the people in the initial phase have provided for crucial turnout.

In other areas of the agricultural policy the development was less straightforward compared to the sugar. Are there alternatives to the official, centrally-controlled and planned agricultural policy, asked some citizens who were close to agriculture and were worried. Mind you: This was done on the basis of the Agriculture Act of 1952, which was accepted by the people, with 54 percent. These forward thinkers suggested a change of direction, astonishing from today's perspective. They also referred to the principle of subsidiarity as the actors in sugar did, according to which the State should take care of things only which the citizens cannot do. And they relied on a tradition that goes far back in the middle ages, when farmers joined together to cooperatives, in order to protect their property.

**Community Floors – Possible alternative to the official agricultural policy**

"More cooperatives and less state" was the motto of this movement. One of the leaders was *Hermann Studler*, long-time agricultural director, therefore Government Council in the canton of Aargau. An

example of a successful municipal mead corporation is the "Markgenossenschaft" Schwyz, which has its roots in the Middle Ages. As in all the Germanic settlements, every settler in the "lands of old" Schwyz had his own house and farm. All the rest of the land, however, remained in communion with all the settlers, and thus constituted the common "Mark" or common land, which was used in common. The "Markgenossenschaft Schwyz" still exists today. It has available a large part of the canton's agricultural land.

Studler was concerned about the unsatisfactory situation of small farms in the fifties, which often did not cover more than five hectares of land. He suggested to them that they should join in local forest and field cooperatives. Today the Swiss farms are much articulately bigger. The following procedure would have been conceivable: small farmers would keep their farm and contribute their land as assets in kind to the cooperative. For this purpose, they would receive one or several shares, which would bear interest, depending on the area. Their income would then be composed of interest and wages as employees of the cooperative. A section from one of the speeches by Government Council Studler:

"From the last report of the Federal Council, it can be concluded that the ideal farm size is between 10 and 20 hectares. However, if one accounts to oneself for the fact that [...] 52 percent of peasant farms are less than 5 hectares and 79 percent are less than 10 hectares, which cannot survive in the long run despite state support. [...] Leaders of farmers pleaded for the preservation of the farms and took a stand for that small farmers could save their existence by getting an additional income. [...] I cannot believe that this is achievable with non-agricultural additional income, but only through the integration of small farms into the agricultural cooperatives in the municipalities. [...]"

The small farm is, by itself, hopelessly uneconomical, and whoever has to look for his income mainly outside agriculture is lost to the peasantry. But I also do not believe that the family business of 10 to 20 hectare can compete with the large companies abroad. [...] Only the community corporations would put an end to the speculation of the soil and the 'sale of the land,' and the agricultural cooperative would allow a large-scale cultivation of the fields with minimal expenditure on buildings and machinery. What remains to be done by hand can be accomplished by small farmers and paid by the cooperative in such a way that they prefer this work to work in the factory or on the site. [...] Even in mountain areas, where agriculture is no longer possible, many things can be used for the better by means of the cor-

poration's cooperative and the communal setting one's hand to the task of the production problems. [...]"

Finally yet importantly, the farmer would become a real member of a cooperative. As long as he only purchases his articles of need cooperatively and delivers individual products to the cooperative society, there are hardly more than mathematical considerations involved. It is only when one person understands the other's worries and tries to help him that the cooperative spirit has entered the peasant village. It will work more wonders than the freedom of the soil and the independence of the individual enterprise." (Studler, Albert, "Politik als Bürger- und Menschenpflicht" (Politics as Citizenship and Human Duty), Aarau 1961, cited in: König, Paul, "Die Schweiz Unterwegs 1798 bis ?" (Switzerland – On the Go, 1798 to ?), Zurich, 1969)

However, the idea of the municipal corporation as an alternative to official agricultural policy could not prevail. Although the local forest and field cooperatives emerges in many municipalities (for example, in forestry), it is not as broadly as then suggested.

The cooperative farming of alpine meadows is prevalent throughout the completely Alpine region. The alpine cooperative in Törbel (VS) has become famous because it has examined and introduced the American Nobel Prize laureate *Elinor Ostrom* in her study "The Tragedy of the Commons".

The idea of a business community has become increasingly widespread more recently. Two, three, or more farmers close together and manage their farms jointly, without joining the properties of the farms resp. being cooperatively combined. Leisure or holidays are more easily to realise.

While some citizens and politicians in Switzerland were thinking about alternatives to official agricultural policy, there were circles abroad, who were concerned about the fact that the Confederation protected the farmers with tariffs and contingents from the cheap products' competition from abroad and wanted to prevent Switzerland from the accession to GATT.

**Australia and New Zealand prevent Switzerland from joining GATT**

In 1947, 23 countries founded the *General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade* (GATT) with the aim of reducing the high trade barriers worldwide. The United States, for example, demanded a 60 percent duty for Swiss watches. The founding members included the highly developed industrialised countries of the West, agrarian countries such as Australia and Brazil, developing countries and a few communist countries

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such as Yugoslavia. Each member had a vote. The treaties could only be amended if all agreed. There had been seven negotiating sessions to the nineties, in which the duties were gradually reduced.

Switzerland has to import almost all raw materials and exported 40 percent of its products and services abroad in the post-war period – similar to today. Therefore, it was interested in an agreement such as the GATT, which would bring about trade facilitations. Nevertheless, this did not happen. In 1947, the voters had agreed to the new economic articles in the Federal Constitution. They – as already stated above – commissioned the Confederation to take measures to protect a healthy peasantry and an efficient agriculture (Article 31, Paragraphs 1 to 3 of the Federal Constitution ["Bundesverfassung"; BV]). For this purpose, the Agricultural Law (1952) provided protective tariffs and quotas, which restricted or prevented imports of imported products. This made an immediate accession to GATT impossible for the time being.

It was the task of *Hans Schaffner*, then Director of the Trade Department, to convince each individual member of the GATT of a derogation for Switzerland. In 1958, he was close to his goal. Almost all of the members agreed to include Switzerland with a special statute. Almost all of them – the agrarian states Australia and New Zealand imposed the veto – and Switzerland was only provisionally accepted and had to renounce the right to vote.

**Accession to GATT  
with special arrangements**

This did not prevent Hans Schaffner from contributing actively within GATT. As the

Federal Council, he chaired the ministerial conference, which organized the *Kennedy-negotiations*. He succeeded in winning over the Director General of GATT, *Arthur Dunkel*, to support the full entry of Switzerland with a special arrangement. On 1 April 1966 the time has come: all members of GATT agreed. Hans Schaffner described this success in the *Federal Gazette*, the Swiss Official Gazette, as follows: "That our partners were willing to do so, it was partly due to the fact that a country of the stature of Switzerland, despite its fixed special type, which does not fit any scheme, would not block the way to GATT. [...] In this sense, the freedom granted to Switzerland for the continuation of its agricultural policy is in a sense restricted. The limitations arise from the fact that our country does not lead an isolated existence, but is closely connected with its economic environment." (Federal Gazette 1966, p. 713) Hans Schaffner is an example of a Federal Council who took a stand for the interests of his country, and did not tire of explaining the "fixed special kind" of Switzerland to his foreign colleagues.

A few months later *Albert Weitnauer*, head of the Swiss negotiating delegation at the GATT, described the events even more precisely at an ambassadorial conference: "The General Agreement is not fully respected by anyone in its wording. In granting exemptions or dispensations from the GATT's obligation, the organisation has always proceeded according to the principle that the stronger each country's economy is, the more stringent it proceeds. Developing countries enjoy a special status, which relieves them of the respect of almost all the provisions of the GATT. The highly developed countries, on the other hand, whose balance of payments is in good order, must make some effort to obtain dispensations from GATT's obliga-

tions according to the *Accord Générale*. Under these circumstances, we recorded it as a success of our trading policy – after contenting ourselves with the status of a provisional member for more than seven years – to achieve a full membership by a decision of the GATT Contracting Parties of 1 April this year. This happened although the Swiss agricultural policy, with its various import restrictions, is by no means compatible with the GATT Statute." (Ambassadorial Conference, 1 September 1966, [www.dodis.ch/30835](http://www.dodis.ch/30835))

Today, we miss a Federal Council, who is as committed to the international scene for agriculture and Switzerland, as did Federal Councillor Schaffner and the then negotiating leader at GATT Albert Weitnauer.

The same happened in other areas: in the foundation of the EFTA (*European Free Trade Association*) from 1960, agriculture was excluded. In 1972, the sovereign agreed with the large free trade agreement between the countries of the EFTA and the countries of the then European Community (EC) with over 70 percent. Here, agriculture was not included, too. This treaty has never been called into question and is still in force.

(Part 4 and 5 of the series of article highlight the reorientation of agricultural policy, which began in the 1970s and was marked by numerous referenda, popular initiatives, and popular votes). •

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# Information bioterrorism – a new form of global manipulation

An interview with Dr Alexander Kouzminov, New Zealand



Alexander Kouzminov (picture ma)

*cc. We call our present age the information age, IT/information technologies are a permanent topic and a self-evidence in modern everyday life and false information – fake news – are lately a big issue in*

*the media. The latter are of course not an invention of the present, rather they are known elements of power politics and warfare. Propaganda and lies are nothing new under the sun. With internet and computers, however, opportunities, extent and rate of spread have increased massively. This is also the context of the remarks of bio-weapon expert Alexander Kouzminov (New Zealand) on the subject of information-bioterrorism.*

*Current Concerns: Mr Kouzminov you mentioned that a state can be weakened or hit, just by creating a scenario of being threatened by a dangerous infective agent, also call imminent pandemia? Could you explain this in a few words?*

*Dr Alexander Kouzminov:* Since the end of the 1990s/ the start of 2000, there appeared quite frightening information

about dangerous viruses, deadly infectious diseases and threats of global pandemics.

### Threats of pandemics – “hot” news stories ...

The key words or headlines, which the media operated in the cases of these pandemics of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) (2002–2003), Avian Influenza A (H5N1) (1997, 2006–2007), H1N1 “Swine flu” (2009), and some other recent once, were: “swine flu will hit the country hard”, “virus could kill millions of people”, “sudden spread of disease”, “virus-killer”, “global epidemic”, “global catastrophe”, “catastrophic consequences” and similar. The “hot” news stories looked like reports from the war-zones, as if the enemy was at your door step.

Mass media especially highlighted, that these and future epidemics of “strange” disease outbreaks would have “an enormous health and regional (and even global) development threat”, present “a major threat to a national interest and security”, that “the risk is still significant”, and that “the impact of the next pandemic will be devastating”.

Such information continued to circulate in mass media despite the fact that there was not one case supported by a laboratory test, in regards to the spread of SARS or Avian flu from one person to

another. This was not carried out even in one country, where such cases could be confirmed.

### ... and the consequences

Such “information bio-attack” reached negative consequences – it created mass circulated panic, fear in the public, and lead to substantial influence over the economies of countries and regions of the world, destabilizing them. It also weakened the economies creating losses (e.g. loss of trade, tourism, and international travel), destabilized government and public services.

### What is information-bioterrorism?

*You called this form of mass manipulation “infobioterrorism”. Could you define this concept? Do you have an actual example?*

I define “information bioterrorism” as a new type of global operational influence over people. I define it as influence over them and manipulation. What’s the purpose? Well, it may have some specific, pre-planned outcomes. Another name for it can be “information biological blackmail”.

The basis of “information bioterrorism” is the use of fear over people. This fear is based on pandemics of very dangerous diseases, for example when a pandemic is a threat that arises from a viral outbreak in animals. The main components and aftereffects of such new form of mass manipulation of a “threat” are:

- *Time factor:* practically immediate and globally-spread panic through electronic means of communication.
- *Vulnerability factor:* helplessness before the threat, due to lack of effective means of defence. This creates panic among the general population.
- *Uncertainty factor:* the lack of factual information about the source of threat and its spread; the side who initiates the threat thereby has a new opportunity for mass manipulation.
- *The lack of control factor:* each person who finds himself “out of control” because he/she is a suspicious object, liable to have the disease, is a threat to everyone else.

### Organised by secret-services carried out as “active operation”

Information bioterrorism (or “information biological blackmail”) is enacted by the means of methods organised by secret

### Dr Alexander Kouzminov

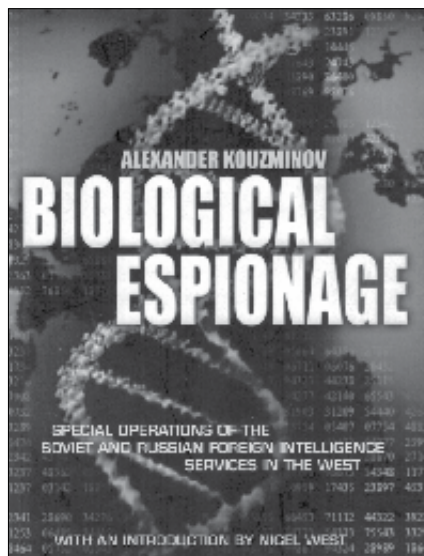
Dr Alexander Kouzminov is a highly qualified and experienced biosecurity specialist.

He has extensive track record of work in central government and private sector as a senior advisor, senior analyst, director, chief-executive. Dr Kouzminov has contributed to a number of environmental and biosecurity policy papers within New Zealand and internationally, e.g. UNESCO policy forums, among others, and has several awards from New Zealand central government and international recognitions for his policy development work.

Dr Kouzminov is also an ex-intelligence operative of the Soviet-Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) in 1980–90s, and dealt with intelligence operations with bioweapons related activities in target countries.

He is author of “Biological Espionage. Special Operations of the Soviet and Russian Foreign Intelligence Services in the West” (2005, Greenhill Books) and has over 50 published

works on biosecurity, e.g. bioterrorism, bioweapons, risk control and management, policy approaches.



ISBN 978-185 367 646 8

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services; and is implemented as an "active operation" in target countries. Such an active operation can be determined via the following means:

- "Active operation": this is an activity of a secret service (usually of foreign intelligence), which is aimed at a "Target audience" (an object it wants to influence), and is carried out at the request of an "Interested party" with "Supporters" and "Auxiliary means" to reach required "Planned impacts". "Active operation" is carried out with the support of agents, supporting persons and interested organizations. Usually, secret services conducts "active operations" using "false flags" – that is, it hides its main objectives under the cover of a (politically) neutral organization, or hides its goals under some kind of a falsely crafted problem.

#### **"Interested parties" and their target audience**

During the times of Cold War, "interested parties" were usually the government or its special (secret) services, normally foreign intelligence. Today, the "Interested party" could be: a big conglomerate, pharmaceuticals, bank, private and political groups, lobbyists, etc.

Objects or target audience of an "active operation" may be – governments, high ranking military officials, secret services of the enemy, political parties, banks, companies, etc. as well as ordinary populations, where the aim is to cause some kind of an impact and effect.

- "Executor": This is secret service, as a rule foreign intelligence. Usually, the "Executor" carries out "Active operations" using "false flag", which means that it masquerades the true operation by covering it up with a false story or threat.
- "Supporters": They might be agents of influence and neutral third parties (the latter are not with the secret service); these can help the "Executor" to realize the "Active operations".

#### **Mass media to implement "active operations"**

- "Auxiliary means": Mass media is one of the key ways that an "Active operation" is implemented. The "Executor" uses mass media to achieve the maximum impact on "Target audience/Object of influence". For example, to raise a threat, to spread rumors and false information, etc. all of this is *really for disinformation*, in order to take away the attention from the true operation, to masquerade it.

- "Planned impacts": Information sent out for a specific audience has to be "sharp" that is it's important to influence the intended object. Information is put together purposefully, usually as a threat or a big problem, *as if it's a real problem*. The target audience should never doubt it.

#### **Main stages of the "active operation"**

The approach that is used to carry out the "active operation" is based on a crafted strategy: first the problem, and then its solution.

The main stages of the "active operation", through which "information bioterrorism" can be created, are as follows:

- *Phase 1*: the "Executor" (e.g. secret service), with the help of "Supporters" (e.g. agents) and "Auxiliary Means" (e.g. mass media), throws out false information (in our case, – imminent pandemic) onto the "Target Audience" (e.g. public) with a pretense that it's real.
- *Phase 2*: "Executors", "Supporters" and "Auxiliary Means" accelerate the problem, making it a hot topic (maximum interest needs to be created). Once the false problem is created, it grows like a "snow ball", rolling and rolling independently as though it's becoming legitimate.
- *Phase 3*: the actual task of the operation is realised (secretly) – monetary gains are already there, government stability is undermined (e.g. economic loss), and other unfortunate impacts. For the general target (general population), they are told that the problem is being solved and risks are contained. This is done with side-line information (news stories, etc.). However, the problem is left "hanging", so that the "Executor" can use it again. It would be easy to resurrect it.

In practice, "information bioterrorism" can be realized using these means:

#### **I – Creating a problem**

First, there needs to be a local outbreak of seasonal influenza or some contagious disease, which the interested party can use for its own interests. This of course is *false information*. There can also be a case, that it's a supposed "leak" from a secret military-medical laboratory or army "bio-defence research" centre. Such a situation can be crafted by the "Executor" (secret service) deliberately, to create great interest, awe and fear.<sup>1</sup>

#### **II – Snowballing a problem**

Media ("Auxiliary means", also including "Supporters", e.g. agents of influence) starts to "heat" the public. Front pages of newspaper, TV channels, in-

ternet, social media, – are already there with alarming titles – "highly pathogenic virus", "new contagious disease", "new flu outbreak into a pandemic", "be ready for corpses, flu plan says" – all heightening the threat and scaring everyone! Mass-media and interested organisations issue warning signs/messages like "the disease breaks human-to-human barrier" and "predict" that "the disease would infect up to millions people globally". For example, "A super-flu could kill up to 1.9 million Americans, according to a draft of the government's plan to fight a world-wide epidemic".<sup>2</sup>

#### **III – Problem becomes hot topic**

Health authorities/senior officials/experts/agents of influence express concerns that a virus will mutate into a form that can spread from one human to another and this could lead to a world-wide pandemic, and claimed that an influenza pandemic would likely lead to high rates of morbidity (sickness) and mortality (death). For example, "...the death toll from a human pandemic of avian influenza could be anything from 5 to 150 million".<sup>3</sup> Also, "There is no time to waste. The virus [bird flu] could ignite the next human flu pandemic. I do not need to tell you of the terrible consequences that could bring to all nations and all peoples".<sup>4</sup>

#### **IV – Aggravating a problem and starting to gain planned results**

Soon after *World Health Organisation* (WHO) may announce a new influenza, a public health emergency of international concern, and soon an influenza pandemic alert is raised to five on a six-level warning scale meaning that a pandemic is considered imminent. The governments around the world have little choice, but to respond to the WHO's pandemic declaration by spending billions on drugs, and throw all available resources at fighting the disease, once the WHO has declared the pandemic is under way. This triggers a wave of "panic buying of vaccine and antivirals" by governments around the world, in many cases involving far more money than hundreds of million dollars. Authorised and interested organisations recommend national governments to use a specific antivirals and flu-fighting drug(s) and inform them that an "effective vaccine" is being developed and will be ready to use shortly.

#### **The secret WHO emergency committee**

For example, the *British Medical Journal* (BMJ) highlighted the existence of a secret WHO emergency committee that advised the WHO Director-General on when to declare

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the pandemic. It was claimed that "WHO was being advised by a group of people who were deeply embedded with the pharmaceutical industry, and had a lot of gain by beating this epidemic into a pandemic".<sup>5</sup> The BMJ reported that WHO had, in February 2009 (about a month before the first cases of the 2009 "swine flu" outbreak were reported), amended the definition of the pandemic by removing that pandemic can cause "enormous numbers of deaths and illness", lowering the bar for pandemic announcements.<sup>6</sup>

**V – Achieving results**

What is to be achieved? Weakening of the economies and losses, bankruptcies and threatens to vulnerable businesses (e.g. loss of trade, inbound tourism, international travel, etc.), destabilisation (or even paralysis) of governments and their public services. Production of antiviral drugs and vaccines creates hundreds of millions to billions of dollars. For example, the Council of Europe's report about the "2009 swine flu outbreak" claimed national governments, the EU and the WHO for the "waste of large sums of public money"<sup>7</sup> and for fuelling "unjustified scares and fears"<sup>8</sup> over what the report's author termed a "pandemic that never really was".<sup>9</sup>

This new form of mass manipulation – "information bioterrorism" as a "weapon of mass-manipulation" can become an instrument of big politics, if the "pandemic" threat will be used in the future, deliberately.

**Difference between info-bioterrorism and bioterrorism**

*We think, that there may exist real threats. Not everything is hysteria? How can we distinguish info-bioterrorism from bioterrorism?*

To distinguish informational bioterrorism from bioterrorism is not easy, but possible. In practice, should a suspicious disease event occur, it would be difficult to determine quickly if it was caused by nature, an accident, sabotage, or an act of biological warfare or bio-terrorism. Consequently, the preparation and response to a biological event, whether natural, accidental or deliberate, is identical and would involve the co-ordination of organisations from many sectors (including secret services) who together possess the capability to determine the causes and attributes to a specific source, and also to the organizers of that deliberate action.

However, there are certain differences. I point out the more likely ones.

**Bioterrorism: Deliberate use of deadly-disease causing agents**

*Firstly*, in the case of *bioterrorism*, the causes are always deliberate. They always

contain the deliberate use of deadly-disease causing agents to harm or kill humans, animals or plants. Biological weapons also generally consist of two parts – a *deliberately weaponised agent* and a *delivery mechanism*.

The biological weaponry agents can be deliberately enhanced from their natural state to make them more suitable for mass production, storage, and dissemination as weapons. In this case, laboratory tests can strongly determine the artificial origin of the causative agent. *Biological weapon delivery systems* can take a variety of forms, range from constructed missiles, bombs and spray-tanks on aircraft, tucks and boats to specially crafted devices for assassinations or sabotage operations, – it is hard to enumerate them in this interview.

**Acts of bioterrorism for strategic or military purposes**

*Secondly*, acts of bioterrorism apply in the first instance for strategic or military purposes, political assassination, acts of sabotage to disrupt local infrastructures, such as, for example, the contamination of water and food-processing supplies, the infection of livestock or agricultural produce to cause economic loss, the creation of environmental catastrophes, and the introduction of widespread illness, fear and mistrust among the public, and several other negative effects. In my book, "*Biological Espionage. Special Operations of the Soviet and Russian Foreign Intelligence Services in the West*"<sup>10</sup> and my articles I've written over the years, I write in detail how acts of bioterrorism are prepared and are carried out, and I provide a range of examples.

*Thirdly*, acts of bioterrorism, despite the difficulty in counteracting them, can be effectively contained, using a variety of technical measures of biological control, monitoring and containment, and are relatively easy to prevent with the help of specific measures of secret services.

*Fourth*, in its nature the act of bioterrorism is targeted at a specific geographical region; that is it has a localized spread and effect; and its consequences, as a rule, don't go outside state borders.

**Info-bioterrorism as a form of global influence**

Information bioterrorism – this is a form of global influence. It can be even more effective, from the view of consequences and harm, which it can cause.

*Firstly*, info-bioterrorism, in comparison with an act of bioterror is not and does not apply for strategic or military applications, political assassination, and acts of sabotage – to disrupt local infrastructures, to harm the health of local population, animals, or disrupt the environment of a certain country.

*Secondly*, its organisers and interested organizations, use the potential pandemic threat, in order to reach certain results – I've already mentioned such examples, above.

**Propagation through mass media**

*Thirdly*, in the case of info-bioterrorism, such "threat" is not hidden, as in the case of bioterrorism attack, but in contrast is widely publicized in the mass media. The wider the spread of mass media stories, the better it is for the organizers of "information bioterrorism". However, the organizers of bioterrorism will never tell about their plans.

**Global economic disaster through info-bioterrorism**

*Fourthly*, economic losses from information bioterrorism are quite higher, than the acts of bioterrorism. In the case of bioterrorism, the loss for an individual country – in monetary value – may range from a few hundreds of millions to some milliards of dollars, taking into account the loss for the economy, expenses for the affected infrastructure, loss of exports, expenses for health service, etc. However, in the case of information bioterrorism, the costs are quite different – tens to hundreds of milliards of dollars. For example, economic losses that resulted from SARS outbreaks in 2002–2003 are evaluated by the World Bank as more than \$15 billion in the Asian region alone.<sup>11,12</sup> The SARS cost for the global economy was estimated as about \$30 billion.<sup>13,14</sup> Economic losses from the Avian influenza ("bird flu") pandemic in 2006–2007 were estimated at up to 20 times higher than SARS, and it estimated that it could cost the Asian economy up to \$283 billion.<sup>15,16</sup> The expected world-wide economic disaster would cost as much as \$800 billion if a human pandemic lasts for a year.<sup>17</sup> The same amount was spent by USA in Iraq.<sup>18</sup>

**To earn on the fear of a world catastrophe**

*Fifth*, organisers of bioterrorism do not gain any money. This is because its goal – is first of all to ruin and harm government infrastructure, health of people, farm animals and the environment. However, the organizers of information bioterrorism – yearn to actually gain some monetary value. Their aim is to earn on the fear of a world catastrophe – this is one of the main peculiarities of info-bioterrorism. Its organizers earn huge money – tens of milliards of dollars, for example, through the manufacture and sale of antiviral drugs, vaccines and other protectives means; this is eligible, when the people are told that

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there's (yet another) scary virus, which they cannot stop.

**Who earns?**

The idea of a pandemic and its trade, is actively pushed and continues to develop with surprising persistence in mass media, and even on government websites – for example, on USA websites such as *pandemicflu.gov* or *avianflu.gov*. For example, the USA government puts in millions of dollars to support the idea of a global pandemic, that it may happen, putting hundreds of millions of dollars for the creation of vaccines against these "mass" horrors. For example, *Novartis Vaccines & Diagnostics* has been awarded a \$487 million contract by the US Department of Health and Human Services, a joint venture totalling nearly \$1 billion US in investment, to produce 50 million doses of seasonal trivalent flu vaccine, and up to 150 million doses of monovalent vaccine in preparation for a potential pandemic.<sup>19</sup> For example, as a result of H1N1 "swine flu pandemic" in 2009–2010, the US Government initiated the most expensive national vaccination campaign in American history and purchased at least 160 million doses of vaccine against swine flu, costing \$18 billion.<sup>20</sup> According to the WHO Director-General Dr *Margaret Chan*, vaccine makers could produce nearly 5 billion pandemic flu shots per year in the best-case scenario.<sup>21</sup> The main vaccine produces (e.g. *GlaxoSmithKline*) stands to earn about \$50 billion per year from these vaccine recommendations.<sup>22</sup> In a case of another "pandemic" – the H5N1 avian influenza ("bird flu") in 2006–2007, UN officials (i.e. Dr *David Nabarro*, the UN coordinator on avian and human influenza) claimed that about \$1.5 billion was needed as "a beginning to cope with bird flu and prepare for any possible pandemic."<sup>23</sup>

**New infection agents come and go – inconsistencies regarding swine flu outbreak**

*Very often there a new infection agent "pops up" in the media. Suddenly, it disappears into the "off". This has happened with SARS, bird flu, swine flu, Ebola, Zika. Sometimes one asks himself: "is it man-made or really from nature?" Given your professional experience, what do you think about that?*

Let's look, for example, at examples of outbreaks of H1N1 "swine flu" in USA in 2009. In mid of April 2009, the US Government had reported 47 confirmed human cases of swine influenza H1N1 virus in the USA and 9 suspect cases. Officially, it was then claimed, that the source of the infection – were the pig farms in Mexico. How-

ever, according to data from US *Centres of Disease Control and Prevention* (CDC), most of these cases of infection were not tied to Mexico, neither with the pigs, nor with the infected people. It was actually found, that only 3 people out of the 47 of those infected visited Mexico, and that 40 people were never in contact with those infected. In regards to the two cases of the 2 infected people with "swine flu" in California, CDC reported: "not one child had contacted the pigs, the source of infection is unknown".<sup>24</sup> Earlier, (15 January 2009), the US *Department of Health and Human Services* signed a contract to the value of 487 million dollars with a company *Novartis Vaccines & Diagnostics* in order to create vaccines against bird flu. And another company *Novavax* (Rockville-based, Maryland), produces experimental recombinant virus-like particle vaccines, including the H1N1 swine flu vaccine, which in 2009 were distributed for a clinical trial, on the territory of USA.<sup>25</sup>

**... questions and possible explanations**

One question arises: "Could it be that the 'swine flu' can be caused when different vaccines have been accidentally swapped?" The only explanation for this, is that the contaminated vaccine with the "swine flu" DNA, was spread for use in USA for clinical trials. The manufactured recombinant vaccine, more likely, was already contaminated with the H1N1 virus, which was similar to the "swine flu" virus. This way, it is plausible to assume, that the new recombinant H1N1 virus was "accidentally" slipped into a vaccine batch to use against seasonal influenza.

The other possible explanation, is that the laboratory tests were not accurate. There was a mix-up. Perhaps, H1N1 virus strain which contains a vaccine against seasonal influenza – was mixed-up with the 2009-H1N1 "swine flu" viral strain. Perhaps, USA government in this case was too hasty to declare a "dangerous threat", but in fact – deliberately or not deliberately, they announced an epidemic and started to trade with it. Or maybe this "accidental leak" was actually necessary as a trigger mechanism to put into some action an "active operation" to test possible future acts of "information bioterrorism"?

**SARS 2002–2003, for example**

Another example – SARS disease outbreak, 2002–2003. Like the former "global epidemics", there appeared numerous "horror stories" in mass media as if from the war zones. Mass media, senior government officials and international organizations, quickly rushed to inform society, that a worldwide pandemic is coming and will cause hundreds of millions of deaths. There have been no laboratory-confirmed cases of mutation of a causative virus into

a form that can spread from person to person and its mutation to a dangerous form that could lead to a world-wide pandemic.

**WHO and CDC – contradictions regarding the death rate**

Nevertheless, WHO informs, that "total number of those affected across the world is 8,422, and of those 916 people have died, which comes to 10% of the death rate."<sup>26</sup> The WHO info contradicts info coming from CDC, in its SARS" report: "Since 2003, there have not been known cases of SARS reported anywhere in the world".<sup>27</sup>

**Was SARS artificially created...**

I do not exclude a possibility that SARS virus may have been created as a biological weapon in a military laboratory somewhere, and was accidentally or intentionally released from an ultra-secure and/or biodefence lab in Asia. The fact that SARS may have been artificially created, was also reported by authoritative academics and medical doctors.<sup>28,29</sup> Let's look at some facts which may reinforce these plausibility. The SARS virus is not closely related to any of three known classes of coronavirus<sup>30</sup>. Only a computer model, of the "could be virus" was given to the science community. Not one single photograph of the virus from laboratory exists; there's only a published sequence of a mutated / ordinary coronavirus, which does cause a seasonal flu illness.<sup>31</sup>

**...and released accidentally?**

The genetic makeup of the new virus is a combination of two well-known viruses, of which the natural, but not man-made (artificial), combination in the natural environment is impossible. This may be engineered only in a laboratory, and was likely that SARS was an accidental release from a bio-medical military laboratory.<sup>32</sup> More detailed analysis of samples, which were screened in the CDC, using a very powerful analytical molecular tool – *polymerase chain reaction* (PCR), indicated that the new virus is not closely related to any known virus at all, human, mouse, bovine, cat, pig, bird, notwithstanding.<sup>33</sup>

**Other strange peculiarities**

There have also been other strange unexplainable peculiarities that were found.

"Scientists still do not fully understand exactly where or how SARS emerged 18 months ago ...," commented *Washington Post*.<sup>34</sup> Some scientists in the West even offered to decipher SARS "*Systematic and Ribald Scare-mongering*".

I would like to also note, that even the apparently innocent conventional research

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experiments with non-harmful micro-organisms may end in the creation of pathogenic or even deliberately creation of extremely deadly form of pathogens.

For example, in Australia in 2001 scientists accidentally created a deadly virus that, instead of sterilising mice as intended, killed all its victims in the course of genetic manipulating a harmless virus.<sup>35</sup> The virus, a modified mousepox, which does not affect humans, has raised fears that the technology could be used for the development of bio-warfare agents.<sup>36</sup> The virus, that causes polio has been built from scratch in the US conventional lab, using nothing more than genetic sequence information from public databases and readily available technology.<sup>37,38</sup> Another example, – a scientist funded by the US government has deliberately created an extremely deadly form of mousepox, a relative of the smallpox virus, through genetic engineering.<sup>39</sup>

**Mysterious outbreaks of accidentally created deadly agents**

There have been also several incidents since the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention has been signed off in 1972:

- The anthrax outbreak in Sverdlovsk city of the Soviet Union in 1979, – caused by an accidental release of deadly weaponised anthrax spores through a ventilation system of the Sverdlovsk secret biological arms production facility.
- The smallpox virus escaped from a laboratory at the University of Birmingham in England, 1978.
- A mysterious outbreak in the Oblivskaya village, the Volgograd-Rostov region, Russia, July/August 1999, – affected about 700 people (36 died) in total in the region. It was suspected that in the village there was an accidental release of a synthesized virus which was originated in a laboratory.<sup>40,41</sup>
- There were 14 bio-containment breaches in the USA between 1994 and 2004 of dangerous disease agents, according to information from the non-profit, non-governmental organisation, the Council for Responsible Genetics, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA.<sup>42</sup> The agents included AIDS, Ebola virus, West Nile virus, plague, anthrax and tularaemia.
- Three laboratory workers from Boston University, Biosafety Level 4 Laboratory (BSL4), USA, – the laboratory with the highest level of biosafety/security, – were infected with tularaemia between May and September 2004.<sup>43</sup>
- And I could also count three laboratory acquired SARS outbreaks in Singapore

(September 2003), Taiwan (December 2003), and Mainland China (March 2004).

This list may be extended. Fortunately these accidentally created deadly agents did not result in any disease outbreaks (excerpt the Sverdlovsk's and Oblivskaya's cases of cause). But how many similar deadly pathogens may be accidentally and/or deliberately created in conventional and/or biodefence laboratories in a future?

This also raises the worrying possibility that similar approaches may be used by a skilled research-scientist to create dangerous pathogens or resurrect infectious diseases without having to gain access to protected viral stocks.

**Propaganda effects especially people who are not well informed**

*Many people consider themselves as well informed about each and everything and what is beyond this information is labelled conspiracy theory. How to deal with this and explain them they are wrong?*

Propaganda is the main weapon to influence people, especially if they are not well informed. An ordinary human being it appears only has a "surface" knowledge about how real these kinds of threats are, and is used to rely on the opinions of mass media.

**What was formerly considered a conspiracy theory, is now a fact**

What was formerly considered a conspiracy theory, is now a fact.

For example, theory of *Giordano Bruno*, that the Earth is not flat but round, and *Galileo Galilei's* theory that it spins and rotates around the sun, and not the other way around. Bruno was burnt at the stake for his "devilish theory", and Galilei was pushed to publicly denounce his theory. It is necessary to hear another view, however strange or paradoxical it may seem, to talk about the problem and search for truth. It is necessary to bring scientists to the discussion – they are the one who are less influenced by the public opinion, as the nature of academia is the search for truth. It's important to bring philosophers and philanthropists, people from the sphere of education, and not to use propaganda about how to prepare food and how to survive on Treasure Island.

**Good education and parenting – best protection against propaganda and manipulation**

It all starts from school and children's upbringing. Eastern wisdom says "today's children, tomorrow's generation". You have to raise a person to be a creator, not a dumbed-down consumer.

In today's education system, kids are given tests with a "yes" or a "no"

answer. They are not taught how to be creators and to think and solve complex puzzles; they are not given written exercises, not given essays on certain philosophical themes. We are to be used to press the button *Yahoo* or *Google*, and there's the answer! And this is a big dependency, as if we are drug-addicts. Such is the way that people are raised, without one's own opinion, because one's thoughts are formulated by the means of the mass media.

**Manipulation through internet and social media**

Maybe, for someone it is not profitable that people become smarter? This can also be considered as a conspiracy theory. But don't we see, how the education programmes in various countries become somehow diminished, suppressed, weakened? The modern information space is a very comfortable way for a spurt of conspiracy theories. But this is half the problem. Internet and social networks, – are very powerful way to influence a person. These means should be used for good purposes. Otherwise, in the public mind, there will be formed false themes, which would lead people away from the reality. The problem is also that through some "false idea", people would be misled from the source of the problem to some made-up artificial story. This can be made up by an effective operation – through "the Overton window",<sup>44</sup> which also known as the window of discourse, which is the range of ideas the public will accept. It is used by media pundits.

During the past 20 years, the world has become virtual, that is full of information. Let's not be naïve and close our eyes on the fact that the world is in a state of influence with information. Perhaps, there's even information wars, because influence over people with information – is a powerful weapon for mass manipulation. The first victim of such influence is – the truth.

**Only educated persons are able to differentiate between conspiracy and truth**

Today there are in use new technologies in order to manipulate mass consciousness, which were not here previously. Due to them, which are used for total disorientation, people are not even aware of what goes on in the world. And all of this are long-standing operations of secret services, who take part in raising the new generation. Only an educated person is in the position to differentiate between a conspiracy, as such, from the truth.

Lies become political weapon. That is why we need to bring up people with a con-

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scious, alert view on today's world events; a view with a wish to act. In today's world, we simply cannot sit and not do anything. It's not good to be on the side-lines, simply a spectator. Conspiracy theories may become a real threat, if their purpose is to deliberately brainwash people.

We must know what we are fighting for – this will allow us to protect ourselves and the affected populations, to maintain our humanity.

### Real and honest information exchange offers true protection

How can a person escape untruthful information and how is it possible to tell people that they are misled? I think that here the main role can play conferences and forums, like the one which recently happened – "Mut zur Ethik".

Real and honest, direct information exchange is very important. The latter can be done via honest and objective means of mass information, for example, like your publication – newspapers *Zeit-Fragen* and *Current Concerns*. Maybe, we can even think about creating an electronic website, where can be published analytical overviews on current affairs, translated into other languages.

Thank you for the interview, Dr Kouzminov. •

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## Current Concerns

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

Publisher: Zeit-Fragen Cooperative

Editor: Erika Vögeli

Address: Current Concerns,

P.O. Box, CH-8044 Zurich

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E-Mail: [CurrentConcerns@zeit-fragen.ch](mailto:CurrentConcerns@zeit-fragen.ch)

Subscription details:

published regularly electronically as PDF file

Annual subscription rate of

SFr. 40,-, € 30,-, £ 25,-, \$ 40,-

for the following countries:

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Annual subscription rate of

SFr. 20,-, € 15,-, £ 12,50, \$ 20,-

for all other countries.

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

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# Alleged Russian involvement in the US – campaign

## Dubious report of the intelligence services

by Nicola Ferronato, political scientist

On 6 January 2017, the American intelligence services CIA, FBI and NSA published a report of 25 pages (Background information on the “Assessment of Russian activities and intentions in recent American elections: Analytical process and attribution of cyber incidents”\*) condemning the Russian involvement in the American elections. It is claimed that Russia – and its President personally – were to blame for the hacker attacks on the server of the *National Committees of the Democratic Party* (DNC) and the camp of *Hillary Rodham Clinton* (HRC) to support *Donald J. Trump* in his race for Presidency. This article provides a brief analysis of the report and criticises it for its lack of arguments and evidence.

### The report accuses Russia, without listing evidence

The American intelligence agencies are categorical: an entire nation is guilty. “Russia has launched a campaign with hacker attacks to influence the recently held US elections” (p. II), this claimed the introduction of the report as proven. It was obvious for the staff of the American intelligence service that Putin plans “to use again in future elections in other places of the world the knowledge he acquired during these elections[...]” (p. III). This report, written by the Office of the Director of the National Intelligence Agencies (hereafter called “report”) takes into account the analyses by CIA, FBI and NSA, and leaves no doubt of the guilt of Russia and especially of President Putin personally. “We come to the conclusion that the Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered to make an influence campaign with aim of the American presidential election of 2016” (p. II). This is the first direct accusation however remaining unproven. Unfortunately, it really appears that the allegations in this report are based primarily on considerations and opinions. The intelligence services are clear: “Most of the main arguments of this report [...] accord with our assessment of Russia’s behaviour.” No technical clarification is stated at all. This is most embarrassing for three of the world’s most respected intelligence agencies. The report accuses Russia without leading evidence, – according to the model of the CIA report 2002 to the purported weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. The Bush Administration relied mainly on this review of 2002 to legitimise their war policies in the Middle East in the following years. We mustn’t under-

estimate the influence this type of document can have on the foreign policy of the United States. By the 6<sup>th</sup> of January the report shows already consequences. Due to its release the former President Barack Obama tightened his sanctions against Russia. Other government agencies, as well as six Russian citizens were subject to economic constraints. Two buildings of the Russian Embassy in the United States (in Long Island and Maryland’s eastern shore) lost their diplomatic status and the diplomats had to leave the premises just within 24 hours. In addition, 35 diplomats were expelled from the United States with their families for “Suspicion of espionage”.

### Allegations of intelligence services against Moscow seem unfounded

Several other accusations of U.S. intelligence services to Moscow seem so far unsubstantiated. In the report, we read for example, that “Moscow’s campaign against the American elections reflects years of efforts and preparation of the equipment”. Have the Russians then been knowing for years that Trump would compete in the election against Mrs Clinton? A further accusation is that “the Russian secret services had access to the server of the Democratic Party National Committee (DNC) in July 2015 and could use it at least until June 2016. It is however difficult to imagine and little plausible that a hacker could hold open an unlimited access to the server of the DNC, since a cyber-attack isn’t the most discreet of all funds, and that the Kremlin should be this hacker, is even less plausible. The only more or less technical information in this report is the following: “We conclude that the GRU (Russian Intelligence Service) has used ‘Guccifer 2.0’, ‘DCLeaks.com’ and ‘Wiki-leaks’” (p. 2), to announce details suitable to damage the image of the American Government and the Democratic Party. And again, no evidence is given.

### The report could be the work of a beginner

In the report on the alleged Russian cyber-attacks, written by the best news services in the world, about 9 out of 25 pages are devoted to the Russian television station RT (Russia Today). This government-subsidised TV station seems to have also participated in the criminal campaign against the democracy of the United States. One might already wonder why the American intelligence services rate the influ-

ence of RT so high that they present the alleged cyber-attacks against the elections in the same document as if it were the same topic. In reality, there are two different topics, and thus they have to be treated separately. By dealing with such different issues in the same report, traces are blurred, the significance of the text is diminished, and its understanding to the reader is obscured. One could almost say that was intended. It is difficult to recognize the link between RT and this report, especially when we recall its title: “Assessments of Russian activities and intentions in the recent American elections: analytical process and attribution of cyber-incidents”. What criminal act did the station RT make? The secret services accuse him of supporting Trump instead of Clinton. It really seems to be that the management of RT has rather supported Trump than HRC, but what does it matter? The board of directors of CNN, “The New York Times”, BBC and most other international “mainstream” media obviously preferred all HRC. At all, is it not entirely normal for the Russian media to prefer Trump, who announced during the campaign that he wanted to have better relations with Russia, while HRC openly and aggressively called for more direct confrontation and sanctions against Russia? It is ironic and almost funny that the news services express their astonishment that the Russians have their preferences.

To read endless allegations against a TV station in a report, which should be absolutely professional and of the highest standard is disappointing. Looking more closely at the report, it is found that the term “RT” appears 106 times on the 25 pages devoted to “cyber-incidents”. Taking into account the numerous almost empty title pages, the considerable space that this TV station takes in the eyes of the news services is very astonishing. Calculate yourself: 106 divided by 25 yields the number of RT-responses per page. In contrast, the word “cyber” appears in the entire document only 15 times, but the word “Putin” 30 times. To say the least, the report may have come from a beginner: it contains beautiful photos and simplified graphics and uses a simple vocabulary, without any claim to specialist vocabulary. One can legitimately ask whether it is really an intelligence report, or rather „a sensation seeking press statement“ to use an expression by *Julien Assange*.

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**Crass violation of the presumption of innocence**

It is also unfortunate to find that some mass media (such as CNN, The New York Times, BBC, The Guardian) have blindly and without any critical thinking relied on this report, so as to be entitled themselves to strike out against Russia.

However, a number of European media – namely "Le Monde" and "Le Figaro" in France as well as the "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung", "Der Spiegel" and the "Süddeutsche Zeitung" in Germany – have read the report somewhat more critically and make do without the exaggerations to be found in British and American media.

Despite the increased tensions between the US and Russia provoked by the report, the elected president *Trump* does not seem to embark on the level of mere allegations.

He seems rather to count on the presumption of innocence; that is a credit to him. For this principle is recognised in most democracies and is stated in Article 11 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial ..."

Now of course Russia is not a natural person, but a legal person also deserves to be regarded as innocent until the contrary is proved. It is quite possible that the American news services have more reliable evidence than presented in their report. But apparently they do not want to publish it. It is also possible that dilettante cyber attacks originating in Russia and against American targets took place before or during the election period. It is also easily imaginable that American hackers penetrate Russian targets, especially in a world in which digital insecurity is rapidly increasing. It is, however, highly unlikely that the Kremlin and

Putin himself commissioned such attacks. Perhaps we will eventually learn the truth about these stories of "hacks" and "leaks". For the time being, however, we can but speculate about them. In this political contention it is not possible to draw definite conclusions on the basis of emotional arguments. It is conceivable that the three intelligence agencies have tripped themselves up. It is counterproductive to assert that the Russians can influence the outcome of a presidential election in the USA and to imply that Trump is not legally elected. These unre-served claims point to a lack of respect, or at least to a disregard for the democratic system of the US and the people that founded it. •

\* Intelligence Community Assessment (ICA), "Background to 'Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent US Elections': The Analytic Process and Cyber Incident Attribution", 6 January 2017

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

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# What about the mature citizen?

## Contribution to the destroying of books and culture by the “digital revolution”

by Urs Knoblauch, cultural publicist, Fruthwilen

One observes the increasing disposal of books with astonishment. Waste troughs full of “scrapped books” from school libraries are in front of schoolhouses. The books are mostly in good condition, partly almost new and from all scientific fields. “The regular, periodic retirement, for reasons of space,” is stated as explanation. Even three prestigious antiquarian booksellers have had to close in the old town of Zurich. Traditional bookstores are struggling to survive, although book fairs register an increasing number of visitors every year. “Brockenhäuser” (second hand shops) no longer take all books.

Good books are cultural assets. They were written by authors with heart’s blood and great effort, designed by graphic artists, carefully printed by printers in the tradition of *Johannes Gutenberg*, bound and published by publishers. These cultural achievements were financed, nourished and cherished by our ancestors.

Now without any discussion with the citizens, who today also finance the libraries and are clearly against this culture destruction, the book will disappear more and more.

Of course, computers and forms of digitisation are useful work facilities. The “Fourth Industrial Revolution”, with its digitalization, robotising and total surveillance, however, ruthlessly makes its way and deeply engages in social life. “One has to adapt to the times” is the cheap standard answer, and in politics one hears: “We must remain marketable and competitive”. The tried-and-true school tradition with real education and good schoolbooks is gradually transformed and digitised by reformists without leading an open and honest discussion.

This will still more lead to the fact that even high school absolvents are hardly able to read the important books of the humanist tradition any more. Whole schools will be converted for digitisation; books will become a minor matter. “Being modern” in everyday design and contemporary architecture, means bare walls as well, neither bookshelves nor pictures, simply digital. Where are we actually, what is going on, what do we leave to the next generation, and what do we demonstrate to poorer countries?

### Does the mature and analogue reader disturb total surveillance?

Recently, in the German “Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung” of 30 November 2016 there were two detailed articles, which made you listen attentively.



Library of the Heinrich-Heine-University Düsseldorf. (picture ma)

Title: “Notes from Underground”. Subtitle: “The German National Bibliotheca takes leave of the printed book and locks it away, but kids itself with the digitisation. The mature analogue reader, who cannot be monitored, is only disturbing in the ‘knowledge society.’” Author of the excellent article: Thomas Thiel.

The title of the second article, written by *Andreas Rossmann*, is “In the suction of change management”. Subtitle: “Service instead of research: the university library is devoting itself a shrinking cure”. Not only does the tradition-steeped University of Düsseldorf bear the name *Heinrich Heine*, it also has a large and prestigious collection of valuable books, estates, valuable manuscripts and prints. This University and State Library of North Rhine-Westphalia, ULB, is now prescribed to set up a transformation and a “changing process”, which is intended to prune them to “service facilities”. According to the author, in this process “infamous means” are used. The whole enterprise was to be carried out without getting public. The “results acquired” should not be announced “to persons outside the working group”, according to the minutes of the working group. The author of the article describes how the University and State Library, which is part of the “Top Group” of the University Libraries, is to be restructured by the “Struktur AG” working group, headed by the “Prorector for Study Quality and Human Resources Management”. The group had the task to deal with structures, processes, tasks and savings. The results are alarming: “Their recommendations do not only provide that the opening hours are limited until 10 pm instead of midnight, it infringes the core substance:

compound bibliotheca humanities and sciences, in total 850,000 units, is reduced by an ‘offensive segregation’ and about half of it, because it is currently not supposed to be needed, are being pulped – a proposal based on the questionable assumption that knowledge requirements and research development are predictable.” In addition, clear historical obligations are to be ignored, too. “Neither the city nor the land that has brought its old stock into the ULB, not only in order to manage it, but also in order to build upon them and to perpetuate them, recognises this or takes offence at it.” Such procedures and plans must not have any signal effect. “What is going to happen in Düsseldorf is not ‘only’ the university: the foundations of a broad availability of literature for the social, cultural and intellectual discourse are reduced in favour of special science areas, which are smaller, more manageable and cheaper.” This is obviously “modern university policy” not only in Germany!

### Library as a designed “non-book sector”?

Thomas Thiel also depicts similar alarming events in the German National Library in the article.

“The decision of the German National Library (DNB) to block access to printed books which are also available electronically is based on an easily comprehensible argument. The books are used by the reader and it is expensive to have them repaired over and over again. Thus, the DNB is dismissing the core task of a library, to offer a space where books can be borrowed and read.” The DNB wants to

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Letter to  the Editor

## No Curriculum 21 of arbitrariness

You might recall: the country-wide harmonisation of the beginning of the school year was decided years ago, mainly to enable families and, in particular, the children concerned to connect more easily to school while changing cantons. A number of adjustments have been made to the cantonal curricula for this purpose, with the result that the respective annual programmes and specific learning objectives have continued to converge – for example Canton of Zurich: In mathematics, the three-year objectives were transformed into annual objectives in terms of subject matter. Through these harmonisation measures, the many structural differences and hurdles around the school across all cantonal boundaries could be significantly reduced without violating the cantonal educational sovereignty. Today there is much talk of harmonisation in connection with the planned introduction of the new Curriculum 21. I am only wondering which harmonisation is meant. In any case, it cannot be about further cross-cantonal facilitation in everyday school life: there are no concrete learning objectives in terms of subject matter whatsoever, but there are many hundreds of competences, often verbalised in a very spongy man-

ner, in the form of “can do” descriptions. These are intended to register “competences” (not abilities or skills!). But what exactly is meant by “competences”, I have neither found nor got plausible explanations after extensive researches. Thus, their interpretation leaves a huge scope open. But whatsoever is meant by “competences”, it is now to be achieved in so-called four-year cycles, hardly any more structured and certainly no more per school year! Since for me as a teacher, the current Curriculum was and is binding by law, also the reference to the teaching aids cannot convince, which more and more evolve into material collection, proposals and range of topics, the selection and sequence of which are not mandatory for the teachers. In the face of today’s mobile work environment I am already now sorry for the many families who have to find again the connection to the school in a new canton!

No, the new Curriculum 21 is obviously not for the well-being of children and parents; revealingly it has by no means arisen from an everyday school life need at the grassroots – that is, parents, pupils and teachers – but is propagated primarily by politicians, so-called educational experts

and educational administrators. Or, isn’t it on the alleged harmonisation and coercion top down, about something quite different, namely on making the Swiss school and education system in further steps even more compatible with the EU, in order to be able in future to sell it to the international market in the planned framework of the OECD as a privatised country-wide service enterprise? As such it has already thrived with the so-called liberalisation of the electricity market? The international agreements in this direction have already been prepared for the most dreadful. The Bologna reform on education at that time, which was introduced by former Federal Councillor Dreifuss, while ignoring the population, was only a beginning. In order to stop this disastrous development I can only recommend that a clear rejection of Curriculum 21 be expressed in the votings on Curriculum 21, impending in many cantons due to various national initiatives. Our future student generations will thank us! No Curriculum 21 of arbitrariness!

Kurt Scherrer, lic. phil. I, teacher

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

### “What about the mature citizen?”

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be a modern library. “It is in the process of reinventing itself as a content provider with a sense for the disruptive moment. Libraries are thoroughly gutted according to this presently very influential concept. The books are dusted and cleared away in order to give way to a non-book sector, where one can rock and chat on lounge chairs as long as wished. The talk of the end of the book becomes a career ladder for librarians who don not want to be librarians anymore.” The design culture replaces table and chair for the study of books. The author of the article continues, “Reading is still allowed, but once the shelves are gone it will turn to be the most beautiful minor matter. The reader sinks into the frenzy of an aestheticised ambience in which the book receives a place of honour as a display case.” It can be added that similar developments prevail in modern museum design. Of course, methods of change management are necessary for

this! These alarming events make clear that all human scientific findings shall be ignored. The fact is that the personal reading of a paper book, the personal experience of the work, is never to be compared with the digital services, which are also to become the big business. The major damage in the emotional, mental and social development is foreseeable. In this context, two excellent articles were published recently in *Current Concerns*, “Language is more than just communicating” by Dr. *Eliane Perret* and “The Value of Reading” by *Renate Dünki*, *Current Concerns* 29/30 (20-12-2016). They show how reading and reading out in the family, later in school as well as talking about it, make a decisive contribution to the formation of feelings and personality, and to cultural rootedness. What is gratifying is the fact that an educationally valuable school and family book has been reprinted.

It is particularly alarming that the digital revolution and transformation is also accompanied by total surveillance. What happens to the user data? Who decides which books are to be promoted and

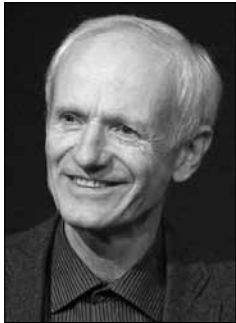
which are “out-dated” and are to be disposed of, who verifies the content and exact wording of the new digital products? The great resistance to the plans of the National Library demonstrates the fact that responsible citizens do not allow this. “The German National Library loosens the digital constraint,” the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* reported on January 25: “Pickets in front of the door and other reactions of displeasure have warned the National Library in recent months that the majority of users still prefer printed matters. In addition, most persons want to decide how they read. The protests against digital compulsion concerned all generations, the DNB in Frankfurt ascertained. The reflections in the house such as how to shape the user regulations in the current phase of upheaval were still “in flow”.

The topic presented here is intended to serve as a thought-provoking idea. The responsible citizen, the common good, culture, politics and democracy are in liability here. Let us protect our book culture and our libraries from the anti-human forces’ grasp. •

# Learning without a teacher

## Abysses of new learning culture

by Christoph Türcke



Christoph Türcke  
(picture ma)

In the early capitalist period, employees themselves had kindly to take food and fuel to the factory, just as they themselves had to provide for their old age and to pay for doctors. Only after long trade union battles the responsibility

for an adequate equipment of the workplace, for participation in old-age provision and health care, for the continuation of payment in case of illness and for further training was gradually placed on the companies.

All these responsibilities are questioned again, since there are those small universal machines, which nowadays almost everyone can carry with him in the briefcase or in the pant pocket. They can as well be operated in a company building as in a private apartment. Living and working space, leisure time and working time are merged again. Why should one award regular employment for jobs not longer requiring fixed collective work-rooms? Why not consider every computer owner as a self-employed person, who is paid as a supplier of work performances instead of permanently appointing him? Who himself defrays the costs

for his infrastructure and his insurances, but who in return is also allowed to freely and independently organise his work and leisure activities – if he just provides his performances as contracted.

This is how the flexible, deregulated world of work runs. Only the world of education still lags behind. There are still fixed common teaching rooms and times, homogenous teaching groups with a fixed range of subjects and a syllabus for whole age groups. And, above all, teachers, exercising and recalling the predefined syllabus with whole groups of pupils at the same time, while each student is supposed to tick differently.

### Children are reduced to their “competence”

An end to all of this, that’s what the neoliberal educational ideology demands. Contemporary lessons should be oriented towards the personal interests and the individual pace of the learners. Teachers are not needed, but learning guides, who are readily at hand, whenever learners get bogged down and need special support. Instead of obliging all learners of an age group or a performance level to acquire certain specialist and technical competencies, a new flexible design of competence is to take place, in which so-called *soft skills*, i.e. capacity for teamwork, social, communicative and media competence are at top priority, and *hard skills*, i.e. specialist and technical competencies, are just acting as their servants.

In any case, curricula only focus on one thing: competencies. In former times, to be competent meant to be responsible for something or to be expert. Nobody can have objections to that. But the current concept of competence is not aimed at that. On the one hand, it is a flattering term. When children can crawl or suck their thumbs, one calls that infant competences. Who can count to five, has the up to five counting competence. There exist just competent children everywhere.

On the other hand, children are thus reduced to their competence, and this means being able to do something. Not having experienced and learned is what counts, but the retrievable skills which are expected at the end of each learning. They should be scientifically exactly definable, producible at any time by means of appropriate didactic tools and verifiable by validated quality control. The German Research Foundation has put

millions into competence modelling programmes. And why does so alarmingly little come out of it?

Because skills are always skills of something. They can only be precisely described by listing the entirety of the contents through which they were acquired. But this is exactly what is to be avoided. Contents are merely to be the lubricants of the acquisition of competence, however, competencies are to stand for their own: as pecuniary behavioural patterns. In mathematics, this partially works. “Mastering the basic arithmetic operations”: This is a relatively precisely described competence.

### Absurd new “German of guidelines”

But what is reading competence? In the third or fifth grade, what does constitute a simple, a demanding, a complex text; when can it be considered as being understood, when as being applied meaningfully, when as being reflected appropriately to the respective level? This cannot precisely be predicted by any competence modelling—and certainly not what exactly is meant by the new social, communicative and media competencies required by microelectronics.

But precisely these soft skills are enjoying a boom. The soft skills have already reached the educational standards of the Conference of Education Ministers for the primary school. It says: “Instead of a dull inert knowledge that the students can only use to narrowly answer defined and known tasks, networked knowledge is to be developed, which can be used to address diverse problems.” For the writing course, this means: After four years, students have “basic spelling strategies. They can transcribe accordingly to the phonetic sound and take into account orthographic and morphemic regulations and grammatical knowledge. They have gained first insights into the principles of spelling. They test and compare spellings and think about them. They get to correct spelling by comparing, looking up in the dictionary, and applying rules. They develop a sense of spelling and self-responsibility towards their texts.”

What a nice German of guidelines. The ten-year-old as a responsible spelling strategist at least by taking into account orthographic and grammatical rules and by being able to look up all the words which he cannot write correctly: The profile indicates all too clearly what is meant with the “inert” and “networked”

*Christoph Türcke, born in 1948, studied Protestant Theology in Göttingen, Tübingen and Zurich. His ordination to the pastor followed in 1972. One year later he began studying philosophy at the University of Frankfurt. In 1985, he qualified as a professor, had a visiting professorship in Brazil and from 1993 until his retirement he was a professor of philosophy at the College of Graphics and Book Art in Leipzig. Christoph Türcke is the first bearer of the Sigmund Freud Culture Award 2009.*

Books by Christoph Türcke (selection):

“Lehrerdämmerung: Was die neue Lernkultur in den Schulen anrichtet”, 2016

“Mehr!: Philosophie des Geldes”, 2015

“Hyperaktiv! Kritik der Aufmerksamkeitsdefizitkultur”, 2012

The text corresponds to a lecture that Professor Türcke gave on 6 November 2016 within the scope of the programme *Wissen/Aula* of the German SWR2.

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knowledge. Knowing how to write correctly is inert and restricted. On the other hand, "taking into account" spelling rules, permanently looking up (in other words: clicking), "testing and comparing" "spellings" (in other words: writing words either this or that way): that is networked, responsible, creative.

**Cloze tests/fill-in-the-gap texts instead of spelling and writing**

So called dictations via cloze tests – so called gap text dictations – are believed to be particularly efficient and fair. "Differences in writing pace are not significant." "The amount of writing is limited, which is especially helpful for weaker writers." "Writing of (almost) surely mastered words such as articles and pronouns is no longer necessary." "Undivided attention can be given to orthography. More complex memory as is required with text dictates does not matter." Here, it is openly stated that a routine of writing, where no spelling or orthography is memorised (a once properly written word is still not a fixed repertoire), is no longer aimed at. The "weaker writers" are deprived of this means of memorising, allegedly in order to not disadvantage them.

That was the logic of the cloze tests from the beginning. Just in the 1970s, when the microelectronic turn began, the cloze test also began its triumph. It hardly gives a rise to fluent handwriting. Why then still handwriting? Its dismantling began – always on the pretext of better integrating educationally deprived strata/strata remote from education. Why plague them with Latin handwriting? A "simplified version of handwriting" was invented, with fewer swings and loops. Has the handwriting since then become better and more fluent? On the contrary. Why, then, should you still insist on cursive handwriting at all? Block letters will also do.

Once again, "those who are less likely to access education" are used as a reason. They are now being taken for too stupid to learn to write contiguously. Finland is pushing ahead and is only teaching its pupils block letters – precisely with the argument that four decades ago already accompanied the introduction of the gap text: one accommodates the "weak writers", does not waste time for stupid motoric exercises but wins even more time for the creative handling of thoughts and contents.

**Connection between writing and thinking is not considered**

What complete misjudging of the connection between writing and thinking! As

if thoughts were clearly arranged in the head and had only to be made accessible to others by means of writing. Even with superb writers it does not work like this, how should it do with children. Thoughts are brought into a clear structure just by oral and written utterances. Writing is a mental sewage plant. When writing down, words, sentences, thoughts are manually arranged, objectified, and fixed on a surface. Writing compels to dwell upon them. Writing is a gesture of devotion. A child learning this devotion has to concentrate like never before motoric skills and attention with considerable endurance, on one point: the tip of a pen. Regular, continuous writing movements demand a high level of coordination and concentration during the phase of learning them. Writing takes apart and puts together at the same time. It creates a feeling for the relationship between the parts and the whole. Or in Nietzsche's words: "Our writing equipment takes part in forming our thoughts".<sup>1</sup>

Where the renounce of handwriting leads to is obvious. In a few years, handwritten block letters will also be "too troublesome" for the children, as has already been the simplified version of handwriting. And the school policy will resemble a physician who will advise people against walking when walking has become too troublesome because they usually go by vehicle. Driving is much more comfortable and faster. So let us alphabetise on the computer from the outset!

This, however, changes the overall attitude to writing. Letters that you can no longer draw yourself are only produced by jerky finger movements with a constant change of view between keyboard and display. The gesture of devotion, which focussed the whole organism in a single point, dissipates into disparate impulses. The process of writing becomes just as bustling as are its surroundings in the deregulated classroom already. Literacy on the computer is fuel for ADHD.<sup>2</sup>

**Ticking instead of thinking**

Are the educational standards for mathematics better in primary school? Not at all. First of all it is not just a matter of learning to count correctly, but rather of "networked" and "process - related competencies", of "solving problems mathematically on your own or collectively, of communicating about understanding and solving tasks, of arguing about whether assumptions are true or not or about mathematical correlations."

This sounds like a major in mathematics rather than primary school. And how does it work with ten-year-old? As follows: "Tina and Esther collect football pictures. Togeth-

er they have got 25 pictures. Tina has got 7 pictures more than Esther. How many pictures does Esther have?" Yes, you have to think about it and to phrase the calculation task before you solve it. However, four possible answers are provided, the numbers 7, 9, 16, and 18. In order to notice that 7, 16, and 18 are out of question you don't have to phrase anything. Number 9 remains. It is enough to mark it. Then you have "solved" the task. Actually, phrasing means ticking. The talk of arguing about mathematical correlations is just pulled over. What is the cloze test in language teaching, is the multiple choice test in mathematics. Filling the gap correctly or filling the correct gap: this has priority for written tests. Gap-filler mentality is being practised.

**Diffuse global flexibility pressure**

The current educational standards prescribe a lowering of levels which they offer like the Emperor's new clothes by the highest level. But they do not do it for fun or to loosen the reins in the beautiful new world of flexibility, but under diffuse global flexibility pressure. The greater the flexibility, the more impalpable this pressure. Is it exerted by clients, supervisors, customers, or are they merely passing it on, because they themselves are under pressure? Does it come from the outside, does it work from within? This is becoming more and more difficult to keep apart. But the more communication is linked electronically, the more noticeable it becomes. Those who do not withstand are thrown off. This threatens countries, companies, individuals equally.

Education policy is promoted by this fear. Only those countries, whose school and university graduates are equipped for microelectronic capitalism will be able to compete internationally. That is the apprehension. And the consequent conclusion is: Those who have practised from the cradle the promising soft skills will be best prepared and will get rid of all the ballast for which there is intelligent software. Mental calculation? Done by pocket calculators. Writing routine? Becoming superfluous by the copying button. Orthography? This is ensured by spell checkers. Learning vocabulary? Stupor. History? Year dates and facts are available at any time with *Wikipedia*. Geography? That is what *Google Earth* is for.

Soft skills push forward in all educational standards. Hard skills such as mental calculation, orthography, memorising are reluctantly dragged along and erode. They are no longer regarded as mental elementary techniques, not as foundation of

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higher achievements, but beneath the children's dignity, who should improve by creative discovery instead of drill. Modelers of competence and education politicians argue like pianists who no longer practice on the piano, because it is not the technique that matters, but the music. In the authoritarian state the school board regularly complained about inefficiency in the schools. Whereas in the neoliberal state teachers' associations protest that school policy run down mental elementary techniques; that drastic decrease of the writing ability is compensated by increasing demand of cloze tests; that the grade point average is pushed up because bad marks have to be justified; that the ever-improving grades are the proof of a constantly growing education level and thus almost being an order to further increasing the numbers of high school graduates.

**Devaluation of the Abitur  
on the way into  
the comprehensive school**

The content of these protests certainly bounce off the school board. They perceive no more than the complaints of representatives of professional associations, who stick to obsolete school diplomas, such as the Abitur. And indeed: the Abitur is an outdated model in a more flexible educational world. It is still too early to simply abolish it. The protest of high school teachers and ambitious parents would be too violent, alternatives are too little developed. But now, the Abitur can already be inflated.

The higher a nation pushes its numbers of high school graduates, the better its position in the international education ranking will be. At the same time, it prepares itself the post-Abiturian era. Inflation always means devaluation. It is nothing special anymore if sixty to seventy per cent of a year pass their Abitur. Conversely: It is unpleasant not to have it. Should a diminishing minority of thirty or less per cent really be excluded? There is growing pressure to prepare this minority and the Abitur in such a way, that the minority can also achieve the Abitur. And thus the Abitur will eliminate itself in the medium-term.

Sooner or later it will be replaced by a new comprehensive school. It should no longer exclude anyone and let everyone find their individual place. Inclusion is the slogan. It comes right from the top like the flexible competence design. The Convention of the United Nations on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities demands that "no child should be left behind", leaving it to the states (of which hardly any carries under 100% of pub-

lic debt) to implement a functional school operation.

**What is at issue with "inclusion"?**

According to the advocates of inclusion, if the state declares to be a member of the UN convention, the state has to provide the money for the implementation of the inclusion. Unfortunately, it is the other way around: because less and less money is available for education, the UN invented the "inclusion". It calls for the dissolution of all special-needs schools and special schools, all gradations between lower and higher schools. This yields enormous savings on buildings, rooms and personnel, especially teachers. Support teachers no longer run their own classes, but are taken over by the regular schools as a mobile intervention service. Wherever normal subject teachers fall short of their limits, because the level differences in the classroom are just too big, they are on the spot and devote themselves to students who do not keep up. Their lessons are reduced to selective repairs – with several children in one class, in several classes, in several schools.

The fact that support teachers without a driving license and their own car would not be able to work at all, that they go from school to school and do not belong anywhere is not a children's disease of the inclusion; it is the structural result of the dissolution of all special-needs schools and special schools. In the system of regular schooling, support teachers are always only guests. Occasionally, they build up a stable relationship to the problem child, but this is structurally not intended. They are always present for hours only.

What's more, many class teachers and subject teachers do quite like that. Where their responsibilities end, and those of the support teacher begin is difficult to define clearly during a specific school day. There are constantly overlappings and sources of friction. The help of the support teachers is paid dearly by means of incessant preliminary and subsequent discussions on the roll adjustment. The same amount of support teachers and class teachers would, however, not solve the structurally unsolved situation between teaching and repair work. It would remove the whole project from its decisive savings effect, i.e. less teachers for more classes.

As much as a Abitur is no longer a Abitur, joint teaching is no longer joint teaching for all – at least if one understands that a certain subject matter is introduced to all members of a class or group; – how to perform addition and subtracting, how to distinguish verbs from adjectives, make a role backwards and so on. However, every specific



ISBN 978-3406688829

learning material sets limits. For one thing, the learning group cannot be of any desired size. On the other hand, it must provide certain minimum requirements: being able to count when it comes to adding; differentiate words, when it is supposed to recognise the peculiarities of a verb and adjective; have that much mobility at its disposal that it can at all give a try to the role backwards. There is no unconditional learning.

In the case of inclusive teaching for all, the commonality includes hardly more than the classroom, the same teaching staff, as well as a few nonspecific headings. When it comes to "counting between 1 and 100", some learn to count in beads, the others add and subtract. With "grammatical foundations", some attempt to recognise the nouns, the others juggle with principal and subordinate clauses. In the case of "common sports", some learn to stretch the knee, while the others learn to make a role backwards.

**No end to exclusion**

There can be no talk of common instruction. Even less so of the end of exclusion. The classroom, that accepts everyone and lets everyone be different, is a space where especially handicapped persons and disabled pupils are constantly being toughly demonstrated their otherness. That others can do better than they may occasionally motivate them, but only as long as they see their chance to compete half-way.

If, however, children that are on account of their disability barred from learning to read and write, tackle equations, hopping and jumping, constantly have to experience the fact that classmates are capable to do this and show them daily what

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they are excluded of, the exclusion has by no means disappeared. It is merely denied, but it is more present than ever. There is no escaping. Inclusion does not tolerate the outside. Other schoolrooms and forms will no longer be considered. All of a sudden, the basic meaning of the Latin word *inclusio* exerts influence. It actually means incarceration.

In the inclusion space all are together, no one can get out, and everyone learns for himself. He is given his own learning material, usually in the form of specially tailored worksheets. While the students fill in the blanks that are left open in the worksheets, the teacher ensures that the noise level in the classroom does not prevail, watches how the students get on

with their sheets and helps when there are questions – or reads the newspaper. He is no longer teacher but learning guide.

**New authoritarian posture**

It is praised as the main achievement of the new learning culture. At last, teachers who accompany and promote each child on its individual learning path. At last, there are no more crammers standing in front of a group and showing them the same facts. Does one not realise how much the work sheets appear like a crammer? They give a frontal lesson to everyone. Mostly, they open up an issue with meagre, woody words only as far as a subject is provided, and then they continue to speak only in the imperative: answer, calculate, tick, fill in. The authoritarian posture does no longer emanate from persons.

It comes along as inherent necessity. The learning guide is supposed to provide the necessary acceptance and generate the willingness to complete the forms at all levels. Not without reason the inclusion spaces resemble deregulated open-plan offices.

What here no longer proceeds is a living doctrine, where a person opens up facts to others and shares them through common words, gestures, and mode of contact, as it once began quite elementary between parents and children – look there, a ball, a Teddy, a light beam. From such indications, a common world of facts builds up between parents and children. Whether or not they want, parents are the first teachers and whether or not they want, teachers are the parental extension.

At first, many things are learned for the sake of the teachers. Their praise is longed for. Teachers in turn want to be popular. There is no emotionless learning and teaching. Good teachers understand how to redirect the admiration they receive to the facts they present, thereby objectifying the teaching step by step and gradually cut the cord from them as person.

**On the meaning of showing**

But this only succeeds from the primal scene of teaching – to show. Watch out, now I show you something new: how to draw an "m", how to calculate a root, how to create a vegetable bed. Then, the newly shown has to settle by repetition, variation, application, in small groups, individual work, at school, at home. The showing is the solemn opening, the highlight – the sedimentation and conveying is the indispensable subsequent work, the daily routine. Where nothing is shown, there is nothing to promote. Promoting without showing is a barrel without bottom.

When teachers are degraded to mere companions and supporters, to worksheet appendices, and to mobile intervention service, one takes away the real thing of their profession, the showing. They do not have to put up with that. They do the job at the base. If they simply do not support the new learning culture and insist to be professional showers – what is the school board to do about it? A more constructive strike is hardly imaginable. •

(Translation *Current Concerns*)Letter to  the Editor**Radical school reforms 2006–2016**

In 2006, the people accepted the education article under the slogan "harmonisation", in the opinion that only the start of school and the educational goals would be matched. In the same year, a small project team of experts for "competence orientation" began with the elaboration of the essentials for Curriculum 21. In the same year, the commune of Uetikon am See began planning the "self-organised learning" so that the school could remain in the village. Is all this coincidence? *Honi soit qui mal y pense!* (May he be shamed who thinks badly of it!)

Of course, it was not clear at that time that "harmonisation" was one of three objectives of the economic organisation OECD to "open" the global education market, with the vision of replacing teachers by identical computer programs worldwide one day. With the Pisa shock, the OECD had already launched a global wave of reforms, replacing the traditional education systems with the OECD competence orientation, which, however, led to a downward spiral in the Pisa ranking (example: Finland, New Zealand, etc.) which was leading to even more reforms. Even today, hardly anyone knows that the OECD competence orientation (according to *Weinert*) with "self-organised learning" has been anchored in the essentials of Curriculum 21 as the only "up-to-date" method. This way, classroom teaching, freedom of methods, and teachers are replaced by self-organised, individual learning on the basis of computer programs.

Ten years later: In 2016, the *Schweizerische Lehrerdachorganisation, LCH* (Federation of Swiss teachers), with its guideline "external education financing", paves the way for the global education corpora-

tions into the classrooms. In October 2016, the Federal Minister of Education *Johanna Wanka* announced the "Digitalpact#D": 40,000 schools in Germany are to be equipped with computers and WLAN in the next five years. In "return for financial support", concessions are being demanded that imply a massive interference into the teacher's profession and the self-understanding of teaching. For example, teachers are to be trained for the application of digital media in the classroom. This abridges the focus towards digital media, instead of focusing on the use of "teaching-media" in a broader sense. At the same time, digital technology has been made obligatory during lessons as a media technology (see analogy to Curriculum 21), which is a direct encroachment on the freedom of teaching and methods of teachers.

In 2016, teachers and classroom teaching have been abolished in Curriculum 21 "experimental"-schools, such as the Secondary School Ossingen. "Learning facilitators" and "learners" usually sit in front of computers and tablets. The isolated digital monologue has a particularly devastating effect on the language subjects. In the same year, Switzerland is collapsing everywhere at Pisa, and 20% of school leavers are hardly acceptable because they lack basic knowledge. Coincidence or bad omen?

Neoliberal economisation (privatisation) of education has progressed over the last decade: sales of the global education market are to be increased from 4.5 trillion in 2012 to 6.4 trillion US dollars in 2017.

*Peter Aebersold, Zürich*(Translation *Current Concerns*)

<sup>1</sup> Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Sämtliche Briefe. Kritische Studienausgabe* Sigle: KSB 1986 [1882], p. 172 [All the letters.]

<sup>2</sup> Türcke, Christoph. *Hyperaktiv! Kritik der Aufmerksamkeitsdefizitkultur*, 2012 [Hyperactive! Criticism on the attention deficit culture]

# Plea for a politics with ethics

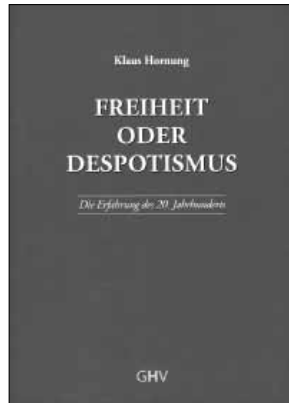
## A remark on current affairs

by Karl Müller

### “Jacobins and Chicago Boys in one”

“Not much noticed by the majority of the contemporaries, nor sufficiently discussed by the relevant sciences, a constitutional change has begun in the European world of states since the end of the last century, the significance of which is still to be foreseen: from the liberal and decisively anti-totalitarian democracy at the end of the Second World War to new forms of controlled political order which make the classical principles of popular sovereignty, division of powers, and protection of personal freedom into waste, or transform them into a different constitutional reality. It operates through formal democratic procedures with general elections, parliaments, elected governments.

However, it is unmistakable that new ruling alliances have emerged in the background, global economic, media and ideological powers, which do not only dominate the means of production, but also the publicly effective ideas, opinions and debates. In continuation of the concept of the “industrial-military complex” having emerged fifty years ago, one could speak of a “politico-economic-ideological-medial” domaine, which not least serves the practice of *political correctness*, in order to keep the people in obedience of the consumption companies. Peculiar emotional sanctions, such as against “racism”, “xenophobia”, and “historical revisionism,” are



ISBN 978-3-87336-495-0

reminiscent of the return of a new medieval age for the conditioning of the masses' behaviour and judgment. The American Conservative *Paul Gottfried* speaks aptly of the postmodern “therapeutic state”, a peculiar development of the totalitarian dictatorships of the twentieth century to new manipulative forms of rule. The following basic principles can be observed:

- the subjugation of the States to agencies of global economic and ideological interests in a strange alliance of ‘Jacobins and Chicago Boys in one’ [...];
- the tendency to abolish the political and cultural boundaries in the boundlessness of a global market and an unstoppable, alternative ‘progress’ that takes the role of a quasi-divine providence;
- the systematic eradication and ploughing up of the historically grown, the destruction of cultures, religions, and ethnic groups into a universal, unified culture of American-‘western’ style [...].”

*Hornung, Klaus. “Freiheitliche Demokratie und totalitäre Bedrohung – Der Konflikt unserer Epoche, in: id.. Freiheit oder Despotismus. Die Erfahrung des 20. Jahrhunderts”, 2015, S. 95f. [Free democracy and totalitarian threat – The conflict of our era, in: id. Freedom or despotism. The experience of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, 2015, pp. 95f]*

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

watch things move, to complain privately and to leave the field of public controversy to others. They need to speak out.

Indeed: The wind of public controversy is rough and it seems that the polarisers and the clever spokesmen of soft-totalitarianism on the various sides are setting the tone (cf. *Current Concerns* No 2 from 24 January 2017; our outgoing German Federal President is one example), that things are reduced to power struggles and that the people are to be sworn to new “leaders”.

### About the Germans

Recently I came across a booklet which goes back to 1944. 70 years later, in 2014, it was also printed in German language: “Instructions for British Servicemen in Germany 1944”. There we can read about the Germans: “The Germans have, of course, many good qualities. They are very hard working and thorough; they are obedient and have a great love of tidiness and order. They are keen on education of a formal sort, and are proud of their ‘culture’ and their appreciation of music, art and literature. But for centuries they have been trained to submit to authority – not because they thought their rulers wise and just, but because obedience was imposed on them by force.” This is a remarkable verdict from 1944, formulated by a war opponent. Was it just war propaganda? Preparation for a planned “re-education”? Or a piece of true diagnosis? And what was it used for? Have the old authorities been simply replaced by new ones – under cover of an “anti-authoritarian” movement? And what is the Germans’ position in 2017?

It is probably true: many Germans are struggling with a self-defined inner orientation. This has a lot to do with German history and how the victors of two World Wars and also the Germans themselves have dealt with their history and the German people. There is still no honest, comprehensive and reliable historiography about Germany and the Germans. Too strongly was it subject to political restrictions – as the other side’s historiography was entangled in opposition and revisionism.

Attempts to write about German history with affection for the country and its people, appreciating their achievements, but also honestly towards their transgressions, are no longer a public issue in Germany. But in these tempestuous times it

Election results during the past four years in nearly all European countries, the few national referenda that were permitted in EU countries, but also the recent US elections have shown that a large number of citizens in the “western” world are looking towards alternatives for the current rulers and their decisions. At the moment it is even possible to find electorate majorities for persons and positions which are not just unsupported by the so-called mainstream, the “establishment” in politics, economy and society, but even strongly opposed.

On the one hand every citizen searching for a path towards a fundamental change in politics can be glad about this. Indeed there are many reasons for a desire to crit-

icize and to change the state of our society, our economic order and our political life.

### Change may not mean improvement

On the other hand, change is no proof for improvement and unfortunately history is full of changes which did not keep their promises. Just recall the radical changes of the past 250 years whose protagonists were busy with lofty ideas, then forgot about any ethics in their relentless power struggles and finally drowned in blood. We should be particularly watchful in times when reason and humanity are faltering.

Now is the time: The tiny voices of reason and humanity which are so numerous in every country are called upon to not just

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**"Plea for a politics with ethics"**

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can do us good to take one step back - and to read.

**Klaus Hornung:  
"Freedom or despotism"**

*Klaus Hornung*, professor emeritus for political science at the University of Stuttgart, will turn 90 this year. He is a Protestant scholar with a conservative-liberal foundation. To this day he speaks out again and again. His so far last book publication which appeared in 2015 has the title "Freiheit oder Despotismus. Die Erfahrung des 20. Jahrhunderts" [Freedom or Despotism. The experience of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.] It contains his selected essays from three decades. the book's preface states about Klaus Hornung, he was "an advocate of an unobstructed ethically founded practical poli-

tics". This is not the right place to relate the book's contents. This is just an invitation to read it: with his explanations on various areas of politics (20<sup>th</sup> century totalitarianisms, German security politics and political education), he shows what honest conservative-liberal thinking is and why this thinking is also today - better: especially today – so important. One example is the essay "Liberal democracy and totalitarian threat - the conflict of our times", which was published ten years ago but is still up to date.

The book's preface aptly formulates Klaus Hornung's central concern "to give a political and philosophical culture of freedom shape and conviction towards old and new despotisms."

**Bernard Sutor: "Political ethics"**

A bit younger than Klaus Hornung is *Bernhard Sutor*, born in 1930, profes-

sor emeritus for political science at Eichstätt University (Germany). In 1991 he has published the book "Politische Ethik. Gesamtdarstellung auf der Basis der Christlichen Gesellschaftslehre" [Political ethics. Overall view on the basis of Christian social ethics]. The cover states: "This book is closing the gap between Catholic social doctrine, its scientific development as Christian social ethics and the issues of current politics. It develops political ethics from the foundations of this doctrine and applies it to the three great areas of politics, domestic politics, economic and social politics and international politics. Thus it gives fundamental ethical orientation for political education." And at the end of his treatise, Bernhard Sutor writes: "So who wants to prove himself as a Christian in politics has to be prepared to enter the daily struggle of groups and powers, to stand up for what he has understood as the better, fairer alternative. He has to do it with prudence and patience and without claiming he was in possession of a superior political truth. [...] Christians may not be religious-political fundamentalists; instead they should make use of all their reason to support the institutional protection of peace and freedom and the increase of social justice. It is this success that love commands Christians to strive for in politics."

**Human dignity, autonomy  
and direct democracy**

It is a pity that positions like those of Bernhard Sutor or Klaus Hornung are currently a miss in public debate. We need them dearly. Currently, protagonists of dubious political positions are even trying to instrumentalise the Pope for their purposes – most likely also in order to dismantle all ethics. The more we have a need for voices publicly supporting ethics in politics.

Ethics in politics also means to respect and to protect human dignity. This is the content of the first article of the German constitution as an obligation for all state power... we just urgently need to discuss and to substantiate the consequences from it. The central consequences are: respect of human rights, state of law and democracy.

But democracy means autonomy and sovereignty, sovereignty of citizens, direct democracy. *Hans Köchler* has presented and derived this in the first edition of this newspaper in this year. A reflection on this and more active steps in this direction would benefit all European states and help solving many problems. •

**Peace building**

"Peace building is a task that goes far beyond the scope of politics. It also comprises the diverse societal relations and forces both in and between states as well as individual behaviour in small groups. A society that is unpeaceful in itself, which cannot regulate its internal conflicts in a controlled and orderly manner, can hardly produce peace-oriented political organs and representatives. This opens up a wide range of possibilities and tasks to contribute individually and socially to the promotion of peace. There is this possibility in family and school, in ecclesiastical communities and groups, in associations and enterprises. There are opportunities for large groups, their associations and institutions, to go beyond national boundaries, to promote communication, cooperation and understanding between peoples and cultures. [...] Peace is not a new object of social cooperation, for which, as it were, new specialists would have to be trained based on the division of labour or new special areas would have to be set up. Peace is, on the contrary, a way of dealing with each other in all social spheres and structures; interpersonal dealings characterised by reason, by striving for understanding, through regular procedures, precisely in conflicts and in the face of ever-threatening violence.



ISBN Nr. 3-506-79090-0

Wherever human interaction is successful in this way, there is social peace. And social peace can develop into a support for political peace.

Needless to say, this requires a corresponding peaceful mind respectively readiness for peace. This is why peace education is possible and indispensable. But even here, contrary to some idealistic and naive ideas, it must be specified what can sensibly be meant by it. It is not an area of pedagogy among others, but the

virtually natural training of communication and cooperation. Children should learn to avoid violence, to seek compromise; to control their emotions; to comply with the rules of the game, to bear a defeat; to respect the differentness of others and cooperate with them. It is a matter of building behavioural dispositions, virtues of conflict (courage) and self-mastery (measure) as well as cooperation (justice), which are necessary for social life always and everywhere, and must therefore continue to be practiced in adult life."

*Sutor, Bernhard. Politische Ethik. Gesamtdarstellung auf der Basis der Christlichen Gesellschaftslehre [Political Ethics. Complete presentation on the basis of the Christian social ethics], 1991, pp. 295.*

(Translation *Current Concerns*)