

Current Concerns

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

English Edition of *Zeit-Fragen*

Legal aspects between Spain and Catalonia cannot be solved by railroading them through

Serious conciliation negotiations are now indispensable

The conflict between the Spanish central government and the regional government of the Autonomous Community of Catalonia is endless. Both sides refer to legal positions, both governments are supported by a large number of citizens. Both sides argue historically, politically and economically. The international discussion about the problem is divided. It threatens an escalation that can cost many victims. Already many things have fallen out of joint. Nearly 1,000 injured are to be lamented. This is reason enough to get a clearer picture of the fundamental problem and to look for solutions.

km. On 4 October 2017, the broadcaster *RT Deutsch* interviewed¹ the emeritus criminal

lawyer and legal philosopher Prof Dr *Reinhard Merkel* and asked questions about the state and international law. The statements of the scientist from the University of Hamburg are of particular interest because they do not take sides for one of the parties involved but focus on the clarification of legal issues. Without losing sight of the political dimensions and an appropriate way to a solution, the honest dialogue.

The referendum was not legal in terms of constitutional law

At the beginning of the interview, Professor *Merkel* describes the position of the Span-

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Editorial

The broad discussion about the Catalan independence aspirations is on the one hand certainly due to the complexity of the question. Freedom and self-determination additionally affect existential questions of human coexistence, and as a participatory contemporary one is increasingly concerned about whether the parties involved are capable and willing to develop a solution acceptable to the population of all parties by peaceful means. As always in such disputes, one also asks about the real political interests behind the respective statements – for example the EU, which after initial restraint now openly supports the central government. About three years ago, the visitor speaking with the representatives of an independent Catalonia in the streets of Barcelona was told, that the EU and USA (and *George Soros*) would appreciate and financially support such a state – and then heard from representatives of the other side that they too were sponsored by the United States. And why one asks with a view to history, which should never be ignored, has former, after long disputes granted rights of self-determination been cancelled? Such a procedure can only stoke dissatisfaction facing greater rights of autonomy of the Basques for instance. What for?

Beyond all power-political ambitions, the question of the law arises. There is primarily the level of human rights, whose Article 1 (Universal Declaration of Human Rights) maintains the fundamental equivalence and the attachment to reason and humanity in the regulation of our coexistence as an unalterable as anthropological basis.

As the alongside contributions show, questions also arise at the internal level of the constitutional state, as well as various questions from the perspective of international law. And quite apart from this: Beyond natural and anthropological considerations, all positive law – be it national or international law – is formulated by human beings and as such must be able to adapt in principle to new developments.

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The law on self-determination today

by Prof Dr iur. et phil. *Alfred de Zayas**



Alfred de Zayas
(picture ma)

International law is dynamic. It develops through treaties and practice. A progressive development of international law has gradually brought forward the ideal of self-determination of peoples from the early conceptions of autonomy in *Woodrow Wilson*'s famous 14 points via the UN-charter through to decolonisation and to the recognition of the right to secession in the states of the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia which achieved their independence. Pursuant to the precedents created by the unilateral declarations of independence of Slovenia, Croatia, Kosovo etc. the human right to self-determination in the form of secession has been established – however, as a last resort when internal self-determination can no longer be achieved.

Pursuant to the 2010 Advisory Opinion of the *International Court of Justice* on Kosovo, a unilateral declaration of independence does *not* violate international law. The separation of Kosovo from Serbia has established an important precedent in international law that is being invoked by many peoples aspiring to independence, including the Kurds and the Catalans. While recognition is declaratory and not constitutive of statehood, it is in the interest of the international community to welcome de facto States into the United Nations and thus enable them to adhere to United Nations conventions, particularly the human rights treaty system. The elements of statehood are objective: defined territory, population, government and capacity to enter into relations with other States. A new State must be economically viable and observe human rights and international law.

Law on self-determination as preventory international law

Modern international law on self-determination recognizes that self-determination as preemptory international law

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* *Alfred de Zayas* is UN Special Rapporteur on the Promotion of a Democratic and Equitable International Order. This statement is expressed in his personal capacity and not as UN independent expert.

"Editorial

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Interesting in this context would be a look at Swiss federalism: this was and is not a construct of a state-theoretical nature, but has historically emerged from numerous and prolonged disputes of greatly diverse points of view. Today, it grants the individual cantons a degree of self-determination, which no autonomous region in the rest of the world knows. Starting out from the community autonomy over the sovereignty of the cantons from the bottom upwards, the Swiss federalism allows for a subsidiary task division, which delegates to the Confederation only those tasks that the lower levels are not able to cope with on their own. For example, the direct state taxes are the responsibility of the cantons and municipalities, the direct federal tax covers a very small part of the tax burden. Cantonal regulations include, for example, education, social welfare, construction, judicial organisation, police, penitentiary, and others. A large part of the state organisation and administration thus remains with the national communities, which are not simply subject to centralised decisions, but have a great scope of design and influence, and thus have a high degree of self-determination of their immediate living conditions. Of course, these possibilities of a more independent and much more direct organisation of state institutions are additionally strengthened by the direct democracy. It allows not only authorities of the federal entities, but also each individual to participate in the shaping of their own environment. Without these principles, Switzerland would not have been able to settle the decades-long conflict around the canton of Jura democratically. Not by chance the Catalan Prime Minister, Carlos Puigdemont, has asked Switzerland for mediation.

Switzerland cannot be exported – but its experiences can. Without the willingness to cope with the differences of the interests not simply with power politics, but through genuine settlement of interests and in the sense of the greatest possible freedom for the individual parts, Switzerland would not exist today. Additionally, another important experience was that the population in these processes has always shown a fine sense of the importance of such a balance – beyond political ambitions, the awareness of reciprocity and the need for more or less equitable solutions is clearer to all. However, this presupposes a willingness to open and honest dialogue.

Erika Vögeli

"Legal aspects between Spain and ..."

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ish central government that the referendum of 1 October would be "illegal" according to the Spanish constitution as "legally correct": "Like most of the constitutions of the world, the Spanish also does not allow one-sided secession of a part of the population, that is, no breaking up of its own territory. The states are, in the doctrine of international law, as it is sometimes casually phrased, no club of suicidals. And there are a number of good reasons for this – from the defense of manifest economic damage, regularly associated with such a separation of territories for the rest of the population of the central state, to the avoidance of the risk of internal and external instability, also usually associated with it."

If the government of Catalonia nevertheless declares independence, Merkel expects little international support through recognition: "There will not be such recognition, not only because secession is unconstitutional under Spanish law, but also because the states would not allow any international precedents for successful secessions. After all, they could also be affected by it."

The complex view of international law

According to international law, a declaration of independence can scarcely be justified: "Since the states have a considerable interest in the avoidance of secessions, and since they are also the norm grantors of international law, there is rather no international cover for such things." But Merkel restricts: "However, there are two important limitations to this principle. First, there is no explicit prohibition of secessions in international law. Establishing such a ban would be difficult because international law is primarily a legal system between states. For this reason, individual sections of the population within a state are fundamentally not suitable subjects of international law – and therefore no plausible addressees for prohibitions under international law (apart from the universal prohibition of committing crimes under international law). Secondly, the powerful states of the world have sometimes accepted such precedents for secessions, especially when the mother state concerned was not acceptable to them for political reasons." Indeed: "The most recent and most striking example is the immediate recognition of the one-sided separation of Kosovo from Serbia in 2008, which, incidentally, did not have any previous referendum, so it did not have any democratic cover. All major western states, including Germany, have recognised this secession within a few days." Merkel also adds: "This was contrary to international law." – Despite an opinion from the *International Court of Justice* for the UN General Assembly.

Political opportunism bends the law

In another example, Merkel makes clear that political instances are based on political opportunism rather than legal aspects. So would "the West, as is well known, have forgotten its sympathies for secession in the case of Kosovo six years later, in the case of the Crimea and the Eastern Ukraine. Even in this inconsistent attitude one can see that secessions are unfortunately still primarily a matter of sheer power and interest policy, and less an object of legal principles."

"The causa Kosovo," Merkel said, "thus tarnishes the otherwise clear interpretation of international secession law. There are, however, good reasons for not accepting unilateral and conflicting secessions, such as those now undertaken in Catalonia, also in future under international law and not to recognise new state-like structures that have arisen on this path alone."

Central government must take the striving of the Catalans for independence seriously

Merkel, on the other hand, scrutinizes the central government's action against the referendum of the Catalans: "Whether one must reject the referendum as such, as a simple public opinion poll, is another question. And here interesting additional points come into play. The result of the referendum makes it clear that the Catalans will maintain their striving for independence. If they therefore begin to implement this politically, if they de facto take over administrative, police and, above all, fiscal sovereignty, then the central government in Madrid seems to be left with only a military intervention to prevent the illegal seizure. Because of the eminent danger of a civil war which that would evoke, this would no longer be acceptable, even under aspects of international law."

No military violence against independence movement

In this context, Merkel draws attention to an interesting case from Canada: "There is a highly noteworthy verdict of the Canadian *Supreme Court* from 1998 on Quebec's secession aspirations, been holding back by Canada for decades. In this, the court initially denies Quebec's claim to unilateral secession, but on the other hand obliges the central government to enter into an open dialogue with their representatives in the event of the establishment of a clear majority of the population in the secession region. Such a dialogue should not exclude a corresponding amendment of the Constitution from the outset. In any event, the imme-

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diate use of military force by the central government was inadmissible. The decision suggests that a secession must be accepted in the end if the sole means of its prevention is the application of civil-war-like violence. I think that's right."

With regard to Catalonia, this means: "I am afraid that the events in Catalonia could ultimately lead to this problem. Then the concerned parties, including the EU, would be well advised to look closely at the deliberations of the Canadian Supreme Court. In any case, a half-way neutral negotiator will be needed for the negotiations now necessary."

Direct democracy in Austria?

rt. On 20 October the head of the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP), *Sebastian Kurz*, was given the task of forming a government by Austrian Federal President *Alexander Van der Bellen* as his party topped the polls.

The good election result of the ÖVP (31.5%) and the Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ, 26%) in the National Council elections from 14 October has suggested a government coalition of these two parties. A coalition of the ÖVP and the Social Democratic Party of Austria (SPÖ, 26.9%) is considered to be unlikely, because both parties had formed the government coalition even before the election.

The coalition talks of the ÖVP and the FPÖ will be pursued with great inter-

EU is not a suitable intermediary

Merkel doubts whether the EU is suitable for such a mediation. It was partisan. "Maybe there is a way to turn the United Nations." Merkel, however, does not plead for an independent Catalonia: "It is hoped that the Catalans will accept reason before this last step and abandon their efforts, which is also politically and ethically difficult." But he also calls on the Spanish central government: "Madrid, on the other hand, should offer more extensive concessions than before in aspects of Catalan autonomy. [...] Both parties should now engage in serious conciliation negotiations, in accordance with the spirit of the Canadian judicial review of 1998."

est. The FPÖ, under its chairman *Heinz-Christian Strache* promised that the Austrians should take their fortunes into their own hands in the future. Among other things, the FPÖ demands for an expansion of direct democracy according to the Swiss model. Remembering bitter experiences, they demand binding referenda on successful petitions if Parliament fails to implement them, as has happened in many cases before. In addition, youth should be more involved in direct democratic decisions. Citizens should also have the possibility to stop laws adopted by Parliament with the help of veto referenda.

How will the campaign promises be implemented in the coalition negotiations?

Federal order:**self-determination within a state**

The Catalans must, however, know that they have no right to independence: "Of course they can exercise all the democratic possibilities of the formation and articulation of their collective will. But they do not have a right to state independence. True, like all peoples, they have a 'right to self-determination' under Article 1 (2) of the UN Charter. One can even leave open the difficult question of whether they can demand it only as part of the Spanish people or even as a Catalan nation. For 'self-determination' within the meaning of the UN Charter does not mean a right to a state of its own. It means that all groups which can plausibly assert their own identity of cultural, ethnic, religious or other kind have a right to free participation of their own community in the various forms of democratic participation – but only in the legal and geographical boundaries of the legitimate state to which they belong. To this extent, one must therefore distinguish between an 'inner' self-determination, namely, a state-internal from an 'outer' self-determination, namely as a sovereign state of its own. There is a genuine right for ethnic and other groups living in an orderly state only to the first-named, state-internal (participative) self-determination. Only if they are permanently suppressed as a group by the majority in the mother state they can sometime acquire a right to secession."

Isn't that a good argument to think more intensely in the direction of a federal state structure?

¹ <https://deutsch.rt.com/europa/58470-rt-interview-mit-prof-merkel/> of 4 October 2017

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"The law on self-determination today"

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(*ius cogens*) is a right of peoples, and not a prerogative of States to grant or deny. Self-determination is an expression of democracy, as democracy is also a mode of self-determination. However, this right – like all rights – is not automatic, meaning not self-executing. It requires the exercise of effective control, which sometimes can only be obtained by waging a successful war as in Bangladesh in 1971, or can fail as in the case of the Tamils of Sri Lanka in 2009.

The right of self-determination has been and continues to be denied with impunity, similarly as the *ius cogens* prohibition of the use of force contained in Article 2(4) of the UN Charter, is all too frequently violated with impunity, as in the case of the illegal invasion and bombardment of Iraq in 2003, which UN Secretary General *Kofi Annan* correctly denounced as an "illegal war". The violation of the right of self-determination or of the prohibition of the use of force does not diminish the legal force of the norm of international law. It only manifests once again the lack of enforcement mechanisms in the UN system and the fact that war crimes and crimes against humanity often go unpunished.

Territorial integrity is a central principle of international law and international relations, particularly important when it reinforces the peace and stability of the international community. The principle is related to the prohibition of the use of force in Articles 2(4) of the UN Charter, and is reaffirmed in General Assembly Resolution 2625 on Friendly Relations, and resolution 3314 containing the Definition on Aggression. The principle of territorial integrity means that no State can encroach on the territorial integrity of another State, hence is external. But the principle cannot be invoked internal against a people seeking self-determination. Its application is external against outside threats and not internal, as that would be incompatible with Article 1 ICCPR and ICE-SCR and could not justify continued subjugation of minorities or of peoples under occupation. When a people strives for internal or external self-determination, the world community should facilitate its realization and thus prevent a local dispute

from becoming a threat to regional or international peace. In case of conflict between the principle of territorial integrity and self-determination, it is the latter that prevails.

Addressing the aspiration of peoples to self-determination in a timely fashion is an important conflict-prevention measure, as is evidenced by countless wars since 1945 that found their origin in the DENIAL of self-determination. The best way to know whether a population wants autonomy or independence is by conducting a referendum. The United Nations conducted such referenda in Ethiopia/Eritrea, Timor Leste and South Sudan, but only after tens of thousands of persons had perished in war. It would have been preferable to have mediated in a timely fashion and organized referenda with all guarantees and monitoring required.

One hundred-year development

Some antiquated professors of international law want to stop the progressive development of international law, contending that self-determination only applies to decolonisation. Whoever is aware of the one hundred year development of the norm, will shake his head, because law is a living thing. We are not living in the days of the Estonian Declaration of Independence of 1918, the pious pronouncements of the League of Nations, the system of minorities protection... A promising development was Article 3 of the Atlantic Charter of 1941, later enshrined in the Declaration of United Nations of 1942 and Article 1(2) of the United Nations Charter, and Chapter XI of the UN Charter concerning non-self-governing peoples.

What has followed has been a steady development toward letting people decide on their futures by way of plebiscite or referendum. We recall Security Council Resolution 47 on a plebiscite in Kashmir, General Assembly Resolution 194(III) on the right to return of the Palestinians, GA resolution 1514 on Decolonisation (1960), the failed self-determination war of the Igbos for the independence of Biafra 1967–70, the declaration of independence of Bangladesh in 1971 and the Pakistani-Indian War, the entry into force of the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* and the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* in 1976, common Article 1 of which prote-

claims the self-determination of peoples. We saw the establishment of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) by Security Council resolution 690 (1991); the independence referendum and secession of Nagorno Karabakh in 1988, the ensuing wars against Azerbaijan 1992–94, including OSCE mediation; the dissolution of the Soviet Union into 15 republics, the 1991–92 wars and unilateral declarations of independence of Abkhazia and Southern Ossetia, the unilateral declarations of independence of the separatist regions of Yugoslavia, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia through armed conflict.

We also saw the friendly separation of the Czech and Slovak republics in 1993; the Eritrean referendum of 1993; the Quebec self-determination referendum of 1995; NATO's bombardment of Serbia in 1999 and dismantlement of its territorial integrity; the Timor Leste independence referendum of 1999; the Montenegro referendum of 2006, the 1983–2009 failed war of independence of the Tamils of Sri Lanka; the unilateral declaration of independence of Kosovo in 2008 and Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice in 2010; the South Sudanese referendum in 2011; the Crimea referendum in 2014 and reincorporation into Russia; the de-facto separation of Donetsk and Lugansk from Ukraine in 2014; the Scottish referendum 2014; the Kurdistan referendum 2017; the Catalan referendum in 2017 etc. The list of peoples aspiring to self-determination is long, and it is in everyone's interest not to stick our heads in the sand, but to anticipate their needs and propose solutions in a timely fashion.

Henceforth the United Nations, the European Union, the Organisation of American States, the African Union, the OSCE and other international organisations should develop "early warning" mechanisms and offer mediation and good offices so as to solve self-determination disputes before they degenerate into violent confrontation. Self-determination can be exercised as internal self-determination in the form of federalism with a high degree of autonomy, or in the form of external self-determination through secession. A democratic choice through referendum is the civilized way to implement this right which is so essential to sustainable peace. •

USA and Germany opened Pandora's box

Documents prove: double standards based on power politics provoked separatism, extremism and terrorism

by Živadin Jovanovic*



Živadin Jovanovic
(picture ev)

Recent developments in Europe ring a bell, in particular the surge of secessionism (Catalonia) is reminiscent of certain events. Crises of today shed more light on the roles of the EU, the USA and Germany. To what

extent have they been guided by the principles of international law and democracy in the Kosovo crisis? Did they bother to actually read the reports of their own (expensive) missions in Kosovo and Metohija (KDOM, KVM, ECMM) depicting the realities on the ground? To what extent have they been defending the right to self-determination and human rights and to what extent abusing separatism for the expansion of geopolitical interests? As the implementation of long-term strategies takes time, recollections of the past may help to better understand the interests and roles of the EU in the ongoing Kosovo negotiations in Brussels.

Over a longer period of time, the leading members of both NATO and the EU have been supporting the terrorist Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) in Kosovo and Metohija. In 1999 they launched an armed aggression against Serbia (the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia), violating the very principles of international law which EU officials are so eagerly referring to these days. To sum it up, the same countries and supra-national unions whose spokespersons swear to this day that they have always been upholding the same principles and rule-based policies, had dealt the strongest blow to the global legal order and to the United Nations since the end of World War II back in 1999.

Spread of secessions and expansion of Islamic extremism

The policies pursued by governments of those countries and by supra-national unions thereof during the Yugoslav and the Kosovo crises have provoked the spread of secessions, the expansion of Islamic extremism, Wahhabism and terrorism in Eu-

rope and the rest of the world. Disregarding and violating the principles enshrined in the *Helsinki Final Act*, in the UN Charter and in international conventions and treaties, they have induced a lasting instability in the Balkans as the most vulnerable part of Europe. Presently they want to pressure Serbia into officially recognising the forcible capture of her state territory in the form of an engineered unilateral and illegal secession of Kosovo and erasing it all from track-record "for the sake of her European future", the same Serbia they have demolished, deceived and humiliated. What kind of future could possibly be built upon such foundations?

The genie of separatism and terrorism that the leading countries of NATO and the EU have released from Aladdin's lamp in Kosovo and Metohija back in 1998/99 for the purpose of furthering the geopolitical goals of the USA and some European powers, such as Germany and the UK, for example, keeps spreading over Europe, while the EU and NATO believe they would be able to push it back into the lamp, clear their names and revitalise their dented unity by sacrificing once again the interests of Serbia. The real tragedy for Europe is the misconception that truth is only what the EU commissioners and spokespersons declare to be the truth. The dominance of such reasoning is preventing a genuine understanding of the historical maelstrom that has engulfed the Old Continent!

Strategic reasons for a war against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

"War on the FRY was waged to rectify an erroneous decision of General Eisenhower from the Second World War. Therefore, due to strategic reasons, the US soldiers have to be stationed there." This quote was the explanation given by American representatives at a NATO conference held in late April 2000 in Bratislava, and noted by Willy Wimmer, former State Secretary in the German Ministry of Defense, in his report to Chancellor Gerhard Schröder dated 2 May 2000.

The first point in this report is an explicit US request that its allies (NATO members) recognise an "independent state of Kosovo" as soon as possible, whereas the tenth, last point, reads that "the right to self-determination takes precedence over all others". Should one wonder any further about the present referendum on secession of Catalonia?

Wimmer's report also notes the US declared position at the Bratislava Confer-

ence was that the 1999 NATO attack on Yugoslavia without UN authorization is "a precedent to be invoked by anyone at any time, and which is going to be invoked". This renders any allegations of a principled and rule-based policy utterly dubious, when the aggression executed in violation of the UN Charter is declared to be a precedent, and the unilateral secession of Kosovo directly resulting from such aggression is declared to be "a unique case"?!

Not a single report referred to genocide or related crimes

In the eve of NATO 1999 aggression on Yugoslavia two major international missions had been placed in the Province of Kosovo and Metohija. One was under the auspices of OSCE known as *Kosovo Verification Mission* (KVM), headed by American diplomat William Walker and the other under the auspices of EU known as *European Community Monitoring Mission* (ECMM), headed by German diplomat Dietmar Hartwig. The latter conveyed the often repeated assessment of the leader of KVM and his entourage that: "There is no such thing as high costs to deploy NATO in Kosovo. Any cost is acceptable."

After Kosovo Albanian leadership had declared unilateral illegal secession in 2006, Dietmar Hartwig sent four letters to the German Chancellor Angela Merkel in 2007, urging her that Germany should not recognise such unilateral act. In his letter of 26 October 2007 to Chancellor Merkel, Hartwig¹, among other points, says:

"Not a single report (of CMM) submitted from late November 1998 up to the evacuation (of ECMM, KVM) just before the war broke out (1999), contains any account of Serbs having committed any major or systematic crimes against Albanians, and not a single report refers to any genocide or similar crimes... Quite the contrary, my (ECMM) reports have repeatedly communicated that, considering the increasingly more frequent KLA attacks against the Serbian executive authorities, their law enforcement personnel kept demonstrating remarkable restraint and discipline. This was a clear and persistently reiterated goal of the Serbian administration – to abide to the Milošević-Holbrooke Agreement (of 13 October

* The author is President of the *Belgrade Forum for a World of Equals*, former Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of FR of Yugoslavia (1998-2000)

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1998) to the letter so not to provide any excuse to the international community for an intervention.

In the phase of taking over the Regional Office in Priština, colleagues from various other missions – KDOM, US, British, Russian, etc. – confirmed that there were huge ‘discrepancies in perception’ between what said missions (and, to a certain degree, embassies as well) have been reporting to their respective governments and what the latter thereafter chose to release to the media and the public of their respective countries.

False reports should have prepared the war

This discrepancy could, ultimately, only be understood as part of long-term preparations for war against Kosovo/Yugoslavia. In fact nothing of what the media – and, with no less intensity, political sources, too – have relentlessly claimed, has ever happened until the time of my departure from Kosovo. Accordingly, until 20 March (1999) there was no reason for military intervention, which renders illegitimate any measures undertaken thereafter by the international community.

Certainly the collective behaviour of the EU Member States prior to, and after the war broke out, gives rise to serious concern, because the truth was disrespected, and the credibility of the international community was damaged. However, the matter of my concern and the reason why I write this letter is exclusively the role of the FR of Germany and its role in this war and its political objective to separate Kosovo from Serbia ...”

Germany promoted the division of Serbia

The daily political news reporting over the previous months (before

October 2007) made it progressively more evident that Germany not only supports the American desire to see Kosovo independent, but also actively promotes its separation from Serbia. You are to be considered responsible for this, because according to the German Basic Law the ultimate competence rests with the chancellor. The same holds true for your foreign minister, in particular, who knows perfectly well what is going on in Kosovo, and is presently pursuing your political directives by tirelessly advocating Kosovo’s independence and, thus, its secession from Serbia. Instruct him, rather, to promote a sustainable solution for the Kosovo issue which is in line with international law. Only if all states choose to respect the applicable rights laid down in international law, we can have the foundations for the common life of all nations...

Should Kosovo become independent, it will be perpetuated as the place of unrest...

“A dangerous signal to other ethnic groups”

Contribute to achieving the solution for Kosovo on the basis of the endorsed UNSC Resolution 1244 according to which Kosovo remains a province of Serbia. American wishes and active efforts to see Kosovo secede from Serbia and see Kosovo and Kosovo Albanians achieve full independence, are contrary to the international law, politically deprecated and, on top of all, irresponsibly expensive...

Kosovo’s secession from Serbia guided by ethnic criteria would constitute a dangerous precedent and a signal for other ethnic communities in other countries, including EU Member States, who could rightfully demand the ‘Kosovo solution’” –

Dietmar Hartwig writes in conclusion of his letter to Chancellor Merkel.

Enough said about the “humanitarian intervention” and the concerns for the protection of rights of the Albanian population as the features of the “uniqueness of the Kosovo case”. American Military base “Bondsteel” in the vicinity of the town of Uroševac, surely by a pure chance, happens to be among the largest US military bases outside the USA. Perhaps their anxiety over being potentially spied on from the Serbian-Russian Humanitarian Centre in Niš merely confirms that the “Bondsteel’s” mandate is strictly local, humanitarian and just for a short time?

US, EU and NATO prevent implementation of the Security Council Resolution 1244

It was the USA, the EU and NATO, not Serbia, who froze the conflict following the armed aggression of 1999. They have kept it frozen for the past 18 years by not allowing complete implementation of UNSC resolution 1244. They forced Serbia to fulfil all its commitments insisting on the legally obliging character of the resolution while exempting themselves and the Albanians from any obligation stated therein. They realise that the full implementation of UNSC Resolution 1244 amounted to a preservation of integrity of Serbia, which is exactly what they do not want since it goes against their geopolitical concept of expanding to the East. Especially now, when the West is undergoing a transition from which it may not emerge as mighty as it was during the uni-polar world order.

At present the West demands that Serbia “unfreezes” Kosovo “independence process”. How? By compelling Serbia to sign a “legally binding agreement” with Priština, to recognise the illegal unilateral secession, legalise the illegal 1999 aggression, accept the consequences of violent ethnic cleansing of over 250,000 Serbs from Kosovo and Metohija and essentially assume responsibility for all of that!

¹ Translation of the German quotes from Dietmar Hartwig’s letter by Current Concerns

China – a chance for cooperation

rt. In the eyes of many Western media the *National Congress of the Communist Party of China* (NCCPC) held every 5 years is considered as well staged opera in the tradition of the congresses of Communist parties. Particular reference in this context is regularly made to problems with corruption, possible factional machinations and as icing on the cake then the lack of democracy. New in the repertoire of the mainstream media is the reference to China's growing economic power and perceived intent to blackmail or to intimidate other States. So, as if this would be some completely unknown phenomena in the West. Certainly, there is a lot to criticise concerning the conditions in China. But unfortunately, the reader usually learns little about the country itself, its development as well as its self-image whereas specifically old prejudices are encouraged and new resentments built up.

In recent years many presentations about China have appeared that allow a differentiated view of the country (for example Seitz, Konrad. *China. Eine Weltmacht kehrt zurück*. 2006. ISBN 978-3-442-15376-3). Even with very little insight into the history of the country, a judgement should be made carefully and be differentiated. Most newspaper editors' view without reflection is striking, entirely out of their Western self-understanding and their transatlantic relation-

ship. So, the insinuation that China acts just as ruthlessly as the previous colonial powers (France, Germany, Great Britain or the United States), can lead to dangerous miscalculation. China leads neither a gunboat diplomacy nor it covers half the world with a "global war on terrorism".

Obviously, the modern great power China sees its options rather on economic than in military field. In addition, the country relies increasingly on international law and the United Nations, instead of constantly violating law in force.

The hesitant, almost shy reaction of Western countries to the Chinese offer to participate in the "One belt, one road" initiative points rather on power politics considerations than on free-market interest. Real chances of cooperation could be squandered. It could be that some European countries (Macedonia, Hungary, Serbia and Slovakia) instead of using EU loans are building now necessary highways and bridges in their country with Chinese support.

China as an economic engine

It is a tremendous achievement to feed today the Chinese population of 1,390 million people and to increase prosperity. Some decades ago, the country was struck by catastrophic famine with millions of victims. Last but not least by the colonialism of the West in the 19th and 20th

centuries, the Japanese occupation in the 1930–1940 and the subsequent civil war and Mao's devastating economic experiments in the 1960s the country was driven into poverty and held there.

The country's enormous upturn over the past 20 years is more and more recognised internationally. Technicians and engineers from China have caught up in very many areas to global leadership. This applies to the digital domain as well as for aerospace or transportation. The boom radiates globally, other economies could and can benefit from Chinese growth.

As an example, the Chinese Government initiated the downright gigantic project of the new Silk Road (*OBOR – one belt, one road*). It creates a wide corridor of economic trade to land and sea from Asia to Europe. The project involves more than 60 countries and 4.4 billion people. As a result, work and prosperity for many can be achieved. •

Dynamic growth in China

rt. To give an idea of the dynamic development of China a section of the development of the Chinese railway network for high-speed trains will be presented. Western experts estimated 30 years for the expansion of the network. But only a few years later most of the tracks are used.

The second longest train path of this high speed rail network is the track from Beijing (7.7 million inhabitants, indication without agglomeration) to Guangzhou (12 million). It is 2,298 km long and one of the four north-south-axes in the planned high speed rail network. This track at the moment is the world's second largest after the high speed rail of Shanghai (15 million) to Kunming (5 million). The construction costs amounted to about 17 billions of US-dollars. The track is driven with speeds of up to 350 km/h. China there-

with claims to have the most rapid train of the world.

The track thereby goes past the densely populated provinces Hebei, Henan, Hubei, Hunan and Guangdong. Hong Kong (7.3 million) is too connected to this track with a 142 km long rail trail. The high-speed line is operating since the end of 2012 – it's construction started in October 2008! The travel time was shortened from 20 to 8 hours. It is the second north-south-axis after the track from Beijing to Shanghai which got into operation in the Chinese high speed network.

This track was challenging also in constructional terms. The difficult section between Wuhan and Guangzhou consist of 65% bridges and tunnels. A special challenge was the construction of the 4,500 m long Jin-Shazhou-tunnel beneath the Pearl River near Guangzhou.

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CETA put into effect – an affront to democracy

by Jacques Sapir*, France



Jacques Sapir
(picture
Wikipedia)

The free trade agreement between the European Union and Canada, CETA (Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement), was put into effect on 21 September 2017. It is an eloquent testimony to the fact that the EU Member States have

allowed their sovereignty to be taken away from them. New laws are implemented, which are above their own legislation and not subject to any democratic control.

Protection for big private investors

CETA is a so-called “free trade agreement”. But in fact, it challenges the non-tariff measures which various EU states can take to protect their populations from unhealthy food. There is a risk that with CETA these safety requirements will find itself more and more under pressure. This agreement also establishes investment protection rules that entail major hazards. Namely, it includes a clause introducing an arbitration court to protect large private investors [usually multilateral enterprises investing in a foreign country; Ed.] which makes it possible to take legal action against the decision of a single state (or the EU) in case it jeopardises „legitimate expectations on the profitability of the investment“. Therefore, it is a mechanism called the “ISDS clause” (*Investor-state dispute settlement*, Ed.) which primarily serves to protect future profits of investors. This mechanism is a one-way street. In this system a state cannot take measures against a private enterprise, but only the other way round. Therefore, it should be noted that CETA will allow investors to appeal political decisions if they are of the opinion that they are violating their interests. This process, which can prove very expensive for the states, will have already a deterrent effect in the case of the mere threat of a legal trial. Let us recall that in 2011 Quebec shied away from forbidding the component of a certain herbicide on the

grounds of its carcinogenic effect, because Dow Chemical, which marketed the herbicide, decided to bring this case to court. There is also the bias problem. It may be true that this treaty opens up access to public procurement in Canada to European enterprises. In fact, however, the EU market is already open for Canadian companies [via the WTO, Ed]. One glance at the different numbers of inhabitants will tell who the winner is. (Canada 37 million, EU 512 million). Furthermore, we are faced with the fundamental emphasis on free trade or, more precisely, the peculiar interpretation of free trade contained in this agreement. It turns out that this is always biased towards the interests of multinational enterprises, which by no means comply with the interests of consumers and workers.

CETA includes a genuine democratic-political problem

Therefore, the dangers that CETA involves, concern public health and quite obviously sovereignty. It also threatens democracy. When, after a long pause and twisting and turning, the European Parliament voted, the French deputies of four political groups voted against, *Front de Gauche* [Left Front], *EELV* [The Greens], the *Socialist Party* and the *Front National*. An alliance which is not so strange after all, if one recognises the problems which this agreement entails. Actually, it is worth noting that CETA was rejected by the delegations from three of the six founding countries of the *European Economic Community (EEC)* as well as by the second and third largest economic power of the Euro countries. Nonetheless, this Treaty was ratified by the EU Parliament on 15 February 2017. It has, however, still to be ratified by 38 national and regional parliaments within the EU. Even so, it is already considered to be partially applicable. On 21 September 2017, CETA was provisionally put into effect. This applies to areas where the EU is solely responsible. The areas where the consent of the Member States is also necessary are temporarily suspended, such as the issue of arbitration or intellectual property. However, some 90% of the provisions of the Treaty can already be implemented, which represents a genuine democratic problem. In addition, if a state was still to refuse the ratification of CETA now, it would have to be implemented for three years anyhow. It is clear here that everything has been done to formulate and apply this treaty, regardless of the peoples’ will.

This agreement is in no way equivalent to what is usually referred to as a

“free trade agreement”. Essentially, this is a treaty which imposes the norms defined by the multinational companies on the parliaments of the EU Member States. If someone had wanted to show the deepest antidemocratic nature of the EU, he would have had to take the same way. In view of these facts, the advocates of this Treaty are faced with a considerable problem in terms of democracy and legality. In France, it is known that only one of the presidential candidates, namely *Emmanuel Macron*, has spoken openly in favour of CETA. *Jean-Marie Cavada*, one of his most important supporters, has also voted in the EU Parliament to adopt this agreement. Hence, not for the first time in our history one might be reminded by the course of these presidential elections of what *Jacques Chirac* in his time (to be precise, on 6 December 1978) denounced as the “parti des étrangers” (party of foreigners) in his “Appel de Cochin” (named after the same hospital in Paris, where he was staying at the time)...¹

Becoming aware of the dangers of CETA

Nicolas Hulot, before being appointed Environment Minister in the government of *Edouard Philippe* under *Emmanuel Macron*, had made a very clear statement against CETA. In view of this situation, his staying in government means a betrayal of his convictions. On 22 September, the Minister for Ecological and Solidar Transition (sic) expressed his disappointment of the agreement taking effect in a radio broadcast on *Europe 1*. He also admitted that the evaluation committee nominated by Prime Minister *Edouard Philippe* in July had identified several potential risks in the CETA. But *Hulot* added, “The process had already gone so far that it would have been difficult to stop its taking effect – without a diplomatic conflict being triggered with Canada, which we did not want.” The irreversibility mechanism deliberately incorporated into this agreement cannot be demonstrated any better. Let us also remember that the former TV announcer and environmentalist, prior to being appointed Minister for the Ecological Transition, repeatedly expressed that CETA was not “climate-compatible”. Thus, one can easily imagine the size of the toad he had to swallow in this matter ... Since his election, *Emmanuel Macron* has also presented himself as a defender of ecology and our planet by topping *Donald Trump*’s slogan, altering it to “Make the Planet Great Again”. He has reiterated

* *Jacques Sapir*, born in 1954, is a French economist. He has taught at the University of Paris-X Nanterre. Since 1996 he has been a director of the EHESS (Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales) and has been heading the CEMI (Center d’études des modes d’industrialisation). He is an expert in Russian business and strategic issues. Since 2016 he is (foreign) member of the Russian Academy of Sciences. He is the author of a variety of books and articles.

Germany must finally take its East seriously

by Karl Müller

Since the accession of the five East German states to the jurisdiction of the West German “Grundgesetz” (Basic Law) on 3 October 1990, the West German “elites” are operating with prejudices against the people in East Germany. These stereotypes have been aggravated since the elections to the “Bundestag”. But there are also objections.

Unfortunately there are also former East Germans nursing these prejudices. One of them is *Wolf Biermann*, model GDR dissident in West Germany and proponent of the Iraq War in 2003. After the elections to the “Bundestag”, Biermann has accused the East Germans AfD (Alternative for Germany) voters of disregarding democracy and freedom. But this is not the issue here today. This is about an open letter, written by *Angelika Barbe* to Biermann in reaction to his accusation. The German journal *Cicero* has published this letter on 6 October 2017.

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ed this statement, be it at the United Nations or on occasion of his journey to the Antilles after hurricane “Irma”. However, it is important to note that his commitment to CETA and his readiness to comply with the rules of the European Union, having been severely delayed because of the issue of hormone-active substances [or “endocrine disruptors”], clearly demonstrates that he uses ecology only as a pretext to show off some communication effects of the most appalling kind. It is crucial to be aware of the scope of the implementation of CETA and its dangers to national sovereignty, democracy and security of the country. •

¹ Haegel, Florence. Mémoire, héritage, filiation: Dire le gaullisme et se dire gaulliste au RPR. In: Revue française de science politique, vol. 40, no. 6, 1990, p. 875

Source: Russeurope from 22.9.2017

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

Mrs Barbe was a GDR dissident, was member of the “Bundestag” for the Social Democrats (SPD) from 1990 to 1994, was later member of the CDU and is now working for the “Sächsische Landeszentrale für politische Bildung” (Saxon State Centre for Political Education). It seems like her letter is a must read for those who wish to understand East Germany better.

In the beginning she is reporting experiences of East Germans turning towards authorities. Remember: The majority of upper level positions in East German authorities are still occupied by West Germans. They came after 1990 and they are still there. Angelika Barbe writes: “Of more than 500 letters we received from citizens in the Saxon State Centre, more than 90% complained that they received no response to their petitions, letters and inquiries, neither from mayors, representatives or heads of district authorities nor from other members of the establishment.” The logical consequence: “They do not feel accepted, feel mocked and are additionally insulted as racists.”

And Mrs *Merkel*, the former East German? “Chancellor Merkel lands with a helicopter [...], lifts off after an hour and does not solve a single problem. In an election arena she gives a house cleaner the advice to put her meagre salary into a Riester pension [a state-subsidized private pension fund], thus proving that she is unaware of the living conditions of the citizens.”

And the (West German) political culture? One cannot speak about political culture in this country. I am missing the anti-totalitarian consensus, I am missing an open exchange regarding controversial topics, I am missing respect for dissenters. A self-appointed caste of self-appointed opinion leaders is using terms like tolerance, later reversing their meaning. Those following the press can daily watch journalists keeping silent about the truth, well aware that the population is also being informed through the internet, is communicating with friends and relatives in West Germany or is having a first-hand experience of affairs (e.g. in Berlin-Neukölln, in Duisburg-Marxloh or in Essen). •

“Since we know servitude, freedom is sacred for us!”

Mrs Barbe writes: “I understand the grief, the anger, the hopelessness, the helplessness, the powerlessness of many of my East German co-citizens in face of their political, legal and social incapacitation and I understand their election decision which was mine, too. If justice is acted in a state in two different ways, society disintegrates. Because equality before the law must be the same for all or else it turns into injustice. The precondition for democracy and freedom is the rule of law.” And finally she cites a transparency shown in Dresden every Monday: “Since we know servitude, freedom is sacred for us!”

...

On 18 October 2017, the Minister-President of Saxony, *Stanislaw Tillich*, resigned from his office and also from his position as head of the CDU (Christian Democratic Union) in Saxony. In the elections to the “Bundestag”, the CDU had suffered a severe defeat which made it only the second strongest party, after the AfD. On 19 October, the *Deutschlandfunk* interviewed the head of the CDU faction in the Saxon Landtag, *Frank Kupfer*. The interview contains a number of interesting passages. For example his response to a question regarding his party’s election blow in Saxony: “Sure there is also a Saxon component. But the main component, I am convinced, is the politics of the Federal Government and especially the refugee politics.” And then: “I have great respect for Minister-President Tillich’s decision to accept the political responsibility. I also hope that there will be rethinking in Berlin.”

And a little later, regarding Angela Merkel directly: “To simply stand there, to defend it all and to say I have done everything right, this is not what the voters expect from her.”

...

Does this mean that there is still hope that elements of political reason also arrive in mainstream? Or will such voices also be shrugged off in the coming years? •

Gert Polli: Europe is under dominance of US secret services

by Rainer Schopf

The book by Gert Polli,¹ former chief of secret service of Austria, was already briefly presented in *Current Concerns* No 22/23 on 12 September 2017. This is now a brief assessment of individual aspects. In his preface, Polli notes that the EU is in a downward spiral, trapped in it, and this is to be ascribed to its own failure. The EU adheres uncritically and at all costs to the transatlantic link. The American National Security Agency (NSA) is the sole beneficiary of this development, which the European elite has not yet been able to admit today. Moreover, the non-critical takeover of foreign policy objectives of the US leads the EU close to a political and economic confrontation with Russia. Geopolitically the EU goes by the US into an economic and political cul-de-sac in which the US declares Russia a clear enemy. As a most prominent example, Polli is stating the factual enforced conformity and control of European secret services under the dominance of Americans. Under the guise of American counter-terrorism, the EU is losing momentum and increasingly denies its own values: "The European Union is fallen into the worst crisis since its existence. It's threatened to decay." (p. 14)

In the foreword, Gert Polli sums up in a striking way what he explains and substantiates on the following pages in detail and comprehensibly to the citizens. Although Polli generally talks about the role of the EU, the question of why Germany has fallen between the fronts is explicitly repeated. The well legible and understandable book is divided into 17 chapters and a detailed appendix.

Airbus and Siemens

rs. Not yet discussed in Polli's book is the recent Airbus scandal. If, in the current bribe affair, European aircraft manufacturer is found guilty before European courts, the financial damage is immense. However, there are now clear indications that the CIA has also informed US courts and is working on an indictment. Airbus would then lose lucrative orders in series to Boeing and forfeit its leading position in the global market.

Siemens has announced to cut thousands of jobs in the turbine business and to completely close down German sites. They are supposed to be partly transferred to the US works in Orlando and Charlotte, because there it is cheaper to produce than in Germany and the US punitive tariffs can be eliminated. Obviously, the former German giant Siemens is bowing under pressure by the US.

Austria and Switzerland

rs. Just a few words on the neutrality of Austria and Switzerland as anchored in their constitutions. Both, like Germany, have long been part of the US surveillance infrastructure in Europe. But what role do the communications intercept stations play in Austria and Switzerland? So far, there has been little public discussion in both neutral countries on the espionage activity of US Secret Services. In Austria, the National Security Agency (NSA) operates at least satellite reconnaissance in Burgen-

land in close contact to Bratislava. The site is known under the name of Königswarte. In Switzerland there is a similar facility in the municipality Leuk on the Valais Plateau. It was founded 2012 by the Signalhorn AG, operated by Swisscom and has now changed its name several times. Scarcely known, as Polli writes, is that there are two separate stations, the smaller ones – completely legal – of the Confederates and the much larger one of the NSA in the service of the US.

Two central topics are supposed to be discussed here:

- The attack of American secret services on the German economy and
- the failure of the German secret services to defend against it.

Industrial espionage

In recent years American courts have massively inflicted fines on German flagship companies such as Siemens, VW and Deutsche Bank among others. Coincidence? Not for Polli. For him, Germany is the preferred destination for American economic espionage, because it is the largest economy in the EU. As a high-tech site, it regularly files the highest number of patents at the European Patent Office (EPO) compared to other European countries. The NSA scandal revealed that German industry was and is under massive economic espionage. Chancellor Merkel reacted to the Snowden revelations with the well-known "spying among friends is not on". On the other hand, the Federal Association of German Industry (BDI) shares the concern that "targeted economic and industrial espionage is committed". (p. 58) All previous German investigations into the NSA affair were petered out, because it cannot be what must not be.

Why were the American attacks possible at all? The formula is relatively simple. German companies are monitored by the American secret services worldwide in their international business. They operate with the usual perks and bribes, as they are also common at Boeing, McDonnell Douglas, Lockheed, and without them a larger contract comes hardly into being. One may be sorry for this corruption, it is not denied even in the US. It is frankly acknowledged that contracts worth multimillions can only be concluded through illegal payments. This is where the US Secret Services come into play. They only uncover the misconduct of German companies via intercepted telephone calls and e-mails. Their findings are passed to American courts, German companies are accused and sentenced to high fines. American

companies remain unmolested in the same crimes, because the German secret services simply lack any reciprocal tool "to convict American companies the same business practice. It is difficult to understand why German intelligence service pays so little attention to this phenomenon of economic espionage large-scale." (p. 69) However, the damage to the German economy is far greater than the draconian financial penalties. The middle and upper management was sentenced to lengthy prison terms, not just the sales management. This bloodletting bleeds out the companies, and it often takes up to ten years for the offspring to be worked in.

Secret services

In the Cold War Germany became a front state and the most important site for US intelligence services in Europe and it has remained like this to this day. Already in the first post-war years the Allied Forces under the leadership of the United States established a nationwide network to monitor all postal and telecommunications traffic. The United States was also the Godfather in the construction of the security authorities. They pursued American interests, not German. They set up an imperative division of intelligence services and police authorities. The emergence of an overly efficient, centrally controlled German authority should be prevented. This has already been committed in 1949. Under this structural decision, German security continues to suffer:

- The intelligence services are strictly prohibited from all police powers,
- The police are prohibited from conducting any intelligence investigations,
- A personal union between secret services and the police is prohibited.

This separation does not exist in any other country in the world, which is fatal. Also for Gert Polli, this "birth defect" is the cause of the numerous mishaps in Germany, be it the RAF (Red Army Fraction), the NSU (Nationalist Socialist Un-

“No computer can replace a teacher”

Press conference of the “Alliance for a Humane Education” in Stuttgart

by Klaudia Kruck-Schaer

In Stuttgart the “*Bündnis für humane Bildung – aufwach(s)en mit digitalen Medien*” (“Alliance for a Humane Education –awaking to the growing up with digital media”) introduced itself to the media in an extensive press conference on 9 October 2017. Present were the speaker of the Alliance Professor Dr Ralf Lankau (University of Offenburg), as well as Dr Matthias Burchardt (University of Cologne), Professor Dr Paula Bleckmann (Alanus College, Bonn), Professor Dr Edwin Hübner (Freie Hochschule Stuttgart), Professor Dr Gerald Lembke (Dual University of Applied Sciences Baden-Wuerttemberg, Mannheim) and Peter Hensinger (Diagnose Funk). To the alliance also belong Professor Dr Gertraud Teuchert-Noodt (University of Bielefeld) and Professor Dr Dr Manfred Spitzer.

The “Alliance for a Humane Education” is a union of citizens who advocate a humane and democratic education in all public education institutions. The alliance is committed to having all children and young people in the schools personally instructed and cared for, regardless of their parents’ social status and financial power. Renowned scientists from different disciplines, including cognitive research, developmental psychology and pedagogy, have joined the alliance. They oppose the imprudent introduction of digitisation at the schools and, in particular, the “Digitalpakt # D” (digital agreement) initiated by Federal Minister Wanka. This compromises the educational sovereignty of the Federal States and the teachers’ methodological freedom. It encroaches on the decisions of individual school authorities and links the financial budgets with five-year plans and technical presets (cloud computing, WLAN), without being able to prove the benefit of media technology in class.

All statements at the press conference were driven by great commitment, and they

made clear that there is no evidence that the massive use of digital media results in better learning outcomes. “There is no ‘digital education’, the computer can only be an aid,” Peter Hensinger summed up briefly and precisely. Learning happens in relation to another person. The teacher cannot be replaced by a computer and its learning software.

Criticism of “Digitalpakt # D”

According to the words of the Alliance’s speaker, Professor Dr Lankau, the reason for the launch of the alliance was the widespread concern about the comprehensive digitisation of schools following the Education Secretary Johanna Wanka’s initiative of the so-called Digitalpakt # D. In order to express their concern, the alliance initiated the petition “Trojans from Berlin: Digitalpakt # D” on 1 November 2016. This was signed, among others, by many professors, university lecturers and teachers. 1,688 persons have signed this petition on the Internet by now (as of 15.10.2017, <https://bildung-wissen.eu/kommentare/erklaerung-trojaner-digitalpakt.html>). In addition, an open letter was sent to the state ministers of education and cultural affairs and to the Kultusministerkonferenz (“Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder”) on 28 June 2017: “DigitalPakt School as seen by the Ministers of Education: aberration of education policy”.

Clear research results on education and digitisation

During the Stuttgart press conference it became clear that there, scientists had come together who presented and brought together clear research results on the issues of education and digitisation.

It was clearly perceptible that it was the members’ intention that learning was to be the central focus again in all areas of educa-

tion, that the students should again collect the requirements for studying, and that a humane education must be maintained as a prerequisite of a functioning democracy. Professor Dr Lankau quoted the OECD Director of Education, *Andreas Schleicher*, as saying: “We have to consider it as a reality that technology is more damaging than useful in our schools.” Consequently, the pioneering nations of South Korea and Finland have turned back to restricting the use of digital devices in the classroom.

Children are no training robots

Dr Matthias Burchardt spoke on the issue “For Humanisation of Living Conditions”. He emphasised that the participants of the alliance were no “machine breakers”. They had all done research. Digital education had to be developed in a reflected way. The age of the children and the respective school type had to be considered.

Hardly any attention, he said, was given to important findings from the research carried out by the educational sciences: There was a primordial situation in education: Learning meant a human interpersonal relationship. Burchardt pointed out that education and learning are the result of a direct and vital relationship between human beings. Here the foundation is laid for maturity and social responsibility. He continued to explain that digitisation of private and public pedagogical spheres is detrimental to the education of the individual, that it isolates the human being, alienates him from the world and from his fellow human beings. It also surrenders students to control and management by others, and thereby endangers our common culture, our democracy and economy. According to Burchardt, there is a risk that the passing on of knowledge from generation to generation will be disturbed. The acquisition of comput-

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“Gert Polli: Europe is under ...”

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derground) or the fight against terrorism. The police must not investigate in case of state’s protection and the secret services must not seize anybody. In addition, the police is not nationwide organised, but is bound to the federal structure of Germany’s countries. This led to numerous breakdowns in the transmission and coordination of data. It remains to be seen whether the newly established federal police, which emerged from the federal Border Guard, is a symbiosis between secret services and police.

Light and enlightenment in the darkness of the veillings

Germany is between the fronts, writes Polli. It is hardly clear to the citizens how the secret services have become the spearhead of global change. The year 2017 was the year of destiny in security policy. In illegal wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, etc., American drones are controlled by the US-military base Ramstein in Germany. Based in Bad Aibling, the uncontrolled monitoring of the telephones and the internet in Germany takes place. Starting from Leipzig, large American troops are redeployed to enter the war zones and to get close to the border of Russia. “Germany is prepar-

ing for a time in which social unrest is seen as a probable scenario on the part of the government.” (p. 259) With his impressive book Gert Polli brings light and enlightenment to the darkness of the veillings.

It is up to us as citizens not to allow to be forced into a fight against each other, but to enter into an open dialogue in order to resolve the problems that are to come. ●

¹ Polli, Gert R. *Deutschland zwischen den Fronten: Wie Europa zum Spielball von Politik und Geheimdiensten wird*, (Germany between the fronts: How Europe becomes the plaything of politics and secret services) Munich 2017 (Translation Current Concerns)

“No computer can replace a teacher”

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ers, he said, was a compensation for deficiencies. Teachers are to be replaced by machines and devices, and students are to learn in a “self-controlled” manner, which means that students are to optimise themselves cybernetically like training robots. Thereby the computer controls the learner and calculates the next learning step. All the student’s impulses are recorded. The student is therefore put into a new role. The learning process is monitored and controlled. Burchard explained that the digitisation project pursued economic interests, prepared students for the process industry 4.0 and did not serve humanisation of living conditions.

Promises of digitisation will not come true

The promise made by digitisation will not be fulfilled. “Competence orientation” and the “new learning culture” must be revoked in order to allow for good education. The focus needs to be put on a good staffing ratio at schools and on well-trained teachers. “Schools and universities need more staff, good buildings and a renaissance of educational thinking free of technocratic, politic or economic ideologies,” said Burchardt.

Professor Dr *Gerald Lembke* made concrete recommendations regarding the use of digital media in teaching:

“Based on scientific knowledge and to the best of my belief as a scientist and father, it is an erroneous belief that our children become better adapted to life and their future through digital media, smart-phones and tablets in nurseries and primary schools. I am not fundamentally opposed to the use of digital media in educational processes. However, these should be used defensively and as one among other proven pedagogical methods. At the age of up to 12, digital media should definitely not be used in the educational process.”

Teaching children to be responsible in their use of media

Professor Dr *Paula Bleckmann* advocated in Stuttgart, that parents should essentially buy their children mobile phones that are not web-enabled, in order to set them a limit. Ever younger children are given mobile phones, and younger children are particularly prone to develop addictive behaviour. Professor Bleckmann is doing research on the emergence of addiction in relation to digital media and has also published on the subject. She offers teacher training courses on “How do our children become responsible in their use of media?” In the Ortenau-Kreis in Baden-Wuerttemberg, and they are very popular.

In his seminars for further education for parents, Professor Bleckmann is confronted

7 humanist demands of the “Alliance for Humane Education”

“Neither teachers nor pupils should be made to work with digital devices during the lessons.” – This already offers the legal freedom of choice of teaching material.

- 1 Schools and universities in Germany are educational institutions with humanist and democratic traditions. They are thought out by people and not by technical systems and their development cycles. It is necessary to have more teachers, mentors and tutors and not hardware.
- 2 Media and media technology are tools in a pedagogical or (subject) didactical context. They are materials which could be used for assisting in order to support the lesson and the learning. The teachers themselves decide about which teaching materials, with respect to their educational background and according to the basic rights of free learning and teaching materials.
- 3 Neither teachers nor pupils may be forced to use devices of the media- or consumer electronics such as tablets, smart-phones or others. Each child must be able to take part in the lessons and to do the homework without having to use electronic devices and without being disadvantaged.

- 4 Data from and between schools and pupils may neither be recorded nor be evaluated for learning profiles. Pupils are lawfully protected minors, their data, according to German Law must be protected. Here we have legislative backlog demand prior to technical concepts.
- 5 From the perspective of pediatricians, cognitive scientists, representatives of the media impact and evaluation research and of pedagogy, screen media do not support learning in the first years of school. As a result, daycare centers and primary schools must be IT-free in direct pedagogical work.
- 6 The crucial media-competence for educational opportunities like for educational justice are the cultural techniques: reading, writing and calculating. Investment in these cultural techniques and a promotion of reading are sustainable and emancipatory.
- 7 Media technology in the classroom is always to be questioned from an educational perspective and to assess: whether and, if so, when it can (not must) be used age-appropriate.

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

with the parents’ needs: “In the prevention programme ‘Echt Dabei- gesund werden im digitalen Zeitalter’ (Really taking part – growing up healthily in the digital age) we experience the plight of parents and educators at daycare centres and primary schools every day: They see the negative effects on the physical, psychosocial and cognitive development of children, which the ever-expanding consumption of screen media entails. And they ask themselves: How do we balance protection against digital risks against the ability to seize digital opportunities? How will our children become responsible users of media instead of media addicts?”

So far, politics has refused to enter into a dialogue

Professor Bleckmann heads the study group “Digitisation of Education” within the *Vereinigung Deutscher Wissenschaftler* (Association of German Scientists). This group is exactly concerned with this balance. She thinks that “the fact that our government’s digital education policy lacks precisely this good balance is a disaster. First of all, we need studies in the good tradition of assessing the consequences of technology that compare different digital educational scenarios in the long term. It is negligent to put all one’s eggs into one basket, and moreover – according to the current state of research – into the wrong basket: In this way, a lot of suffering is caused and a lot of money wasted. To prevent this, I

am an active member of the Alliance for Humane Education.”

During the discussion, Professor Lankau and Professor Bleckmann stated that there had been no dialogue with the Federal Government and the relevant bodies so far and that “digital education” was decided in the Federal Ministry for Research and Education in Berlin. If scientists of the “Alliance for Humane Education” were listened to at all in this context, they were always only “alibi critics”. The Federal Ministry of Family Affairs and Education was decisively advised by a group of industrialists, the *Feldafinger Kreis* and the *Scheer Group* led by Professor *August-Wilhelm Scheer*. Professor Scheer is the initiator of the Saarbrücken Manifesto² and a shareholder and chairman of the advisory board of *Scheer GmbH*, an international IT company. Scheer GmbH works closely with the software developer SAP. The educators advising Education Minister Johanna Wanka come from the field of empirical research. The “Institute for Artificial Intelligence” in Ulm is also one of the consulting institutions (www.uni-ulm.de/in/ki/). •

¹ “Echt dabei” is an initiative of the BKK umbrella association, the BKK regional associations and the participating company health insurance funds. The prevention programme was developed by “Media Protect e. V. - Familien stärken im digitalen Zeitalter” (“to strengthen families in the digital era”), which was developed mainly by Professor Bleckmann of the University of Freiburg.

² www.scheer-group.com/Scheer/uploads/2016/11/Scheer_Saarbr%C3%BCcker-Manifest.pdf

Dual vocational training – Success factor for the economic location and for our youth

mw. In his article on page 8, Pierre-Gabriel Bieri describes the dual Swiss vocational training system as a «success factor». This is undoubtedly true, not only from the entrepreneur's point of view, but also from the perspective of the entire social structure, and particularly also for the personal development of the individual young persons who serve and successfully complete an apprenticeship. This means that the great majority of young people – particularly also those from migrant families – are socially well-integrated and attended to in the difficult time of growing up. Last but not least, it is thanks to the dual vocational training that youth unemployment in Switzerland is so low.

In the last few years, however, many training places have remained unfilled despite their great number and variety, and

despite the great commitment of the vocational trainers in the relevant companies. P.-G. Bieri mentions the tendency of many parents and teachers to view academic training as a “better” way to work life as a reason for this development. Enterprises and professional associations might definitely counteract this tendency by means of more active information, as advocated by the author. But another problem with serious consequences must be addressed: as he also notes, elementary schools currently fail to equip all young people with the necessary school basics, and often also with the required attitude towards work. Here we have to start at the lower levels of school, and we must address the problem quickly and thoroughly: for the deplorable deficiencies will even be multiplied by Curriculum 21, which is currently being introduced in the Swiss-

German cantons. Therefore we citizens, and especially the entrepreneurs among us, should put an emphatic end to the bad development of our schools.

An important role in the dual vocational education and training system is played by the apprenticeship companies. Dual vocational training courses belong to the corporate culture, not only in SMEs, but also in most large Swiss companies. This is also the case with STIHL, an internationally active large-scale group which manufactures motor saws and other motor-driven equipment, especially for agriculture and forestry, in Wil and Bronschhofen (Canton of St. Gallen). A conversation with the group leader for vocational training, Jaqueline Brunner, gives a good insight into the valuable work of training companies.

Apprenticeship firms and workshops foster and maintain dual vocational training

Interview with Ms Jaqueline Brunner, STIHL GmbH & Co KG (chain saw production), responsible for training at the branch office in Wil

Current Concerns: I have read in the daily press that you have a training workshop with 47 apprentices, which is to be further developed aiming at more than 60 apprenticeships.

Jaqueline Brunner: Yes, that's right. Currently, there are 52. This year some more youngsters started than completed their apprenticeship.

What are the professions you teach here in Wil?

In our two factories in Wil and Bronschhofen, there are now eight different apprenticeships, and nine starting from next summer: multi-discipline engineers, automation engineers, electricians and computer scientists (4 years of apprenticeship); production-mechanical technicians, logisticians and commercial apprentices (3 years), all with a Swiss Certificate of Qualification EFZ; mechanical practitioners (2 years, with a Swiss Federal Vocational Certificate). Next year, the automotism installer (3 years) will be added. You do not find these professionals a dime a dozen on the market; that is why we train them ourselves. We have a great many plants we developed ourselves, which were built and developed by the principal firm in Waiblingen (D). An external service technician is not able to repair and maintain these – but that is what our internal specialists do.

This impressed me when I read the interview with Mr Zappe (“Wiler Nachrichten” from 18 May 2017) that you can cover your

need for specialists from your own training workshop. Does this work well?

Yes, this summer we were able to hold 10 of our 14 graduates. We had many very good results in the final apprenticeship examinations, and we are, of course, proud when so many want to stay and if we have enough places for them.

As an international company, do you also look for your skilled personnel abroad?

We at the chain saw site are not international in the sense that we regularly look for specialists in the international area, but we need skilled workers who live in Switzerland, who have grown up and trained here. This is why the dual education system is very, very important and right for us and also for Switzerland.

What are your prerequisites for a teenager to serve his apprenticeship scheme at STIHL?

Personally, I think the most important thing is the enthusiasm for the profession: what will I learn here quite generally, and what will my training in this vocation look like in the next 2, 3 or 4 years? The second prerequisite is the educational requirement. In some apprenticeship occupations we have very high requirements, because it is not always easy to find the right learners. At STIHL, however, we also train academically weaker youngsters; we offer 2 young people an apprenticeship place in the two-year attestation training course in the mechanical field each year.

Then there are also personal requirements.

Yes, in addition to the interest in the profession and the school qualifications, this is the third most important prerequisite for me. We have a special STIHL culture; we deal with each other quite openly. So we get to know each other, although we are 900 employees altogether. When you meet, you shake hands. If you come from another company or start your apprenticeship here, you first have to get used to the fact that you shake hands with your co-workers and speak to each other, if briefly. However, this is very nice and makes for a familiar atmosphere. You have to bring along this openness or this personality, in order to feel comfortable here.

In the technical-mechanical field, we have a training workshop. There is very important that you can work well in a group. Some students prefer a small company with few people and where you relate directly to the boss. Then there are others who are better able to learn in a group where there are different learners in different stages of their apprenticeships, where they can support each other and also have a vocational trainer on hand to give help and advice. When it comes to recruiting, it is important to find out whether the individual fits well into our company or whether he can come to terms better in a smaller workshop with fewer people.

"Apprenticeship firms and workshops ..."

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Of course, today we also have the problem that many school leavers do not bring along the necessary school basics, after 9 years of school. This is also a result of school reforms, that many students are no longer introduced to their subjects and guided along by their teachers. Have you also made the experience that the basics are lacking with many school leavers?

Long-term vocational educators repeatedly tell me that knowledge has decreased, especially in the mathematical-technical area. Today the emphasis is on foreign languages, and of course they are important for certain professions, but for some of our professions the technical and mathematical subjects are very important indeed. And we notice, of course, that the one or the other of our apprentices does have a deficiency there. The majority, about 80 per cent, cope very well with the start of their apprenticeship, but sometimes they do have to catch up in some points at the beginning, or they arrange for some additional assignments and learn how to do it. Then there are those who have more trouble at school. In our training workshop, they are very well supported by the professional trainers, who try to show the practical relevance because many youngsters understand the practise better than the theory.

It is also a good support if the vocational schools offer support courses, either in the form of specialised courses or as homework support, where they can go on Saturday morning. We also take the parents on board, because there are also young people who are more at liberty from the beginning of their apprenticeship onwards, and therefore they think that they will have less learning to do now. Together with the parents and the vocational schools and with what the vocational trainers in the company make possible for the learners, we put them back on track just about every time. What is the most important is that the learning young person finds out where to find the missing information, and that he realises that this is part of his education, and all these things will finally come together and form my course of apprenticeship. The learner has to learn, he has to want to learn, and then he will succeed.

Today pupils are often taught only insufficient basic knowledge of the German language as well as the practical subjects. What is your experience in this respect?

Yes, of course German is also very important. No matter what profession, from



Female polymechnic at the lathe. (picture STIHL)

WorldSkills Competition in Abu Dhabi 2017: Young Swiss professional people bring 20 medals

mw. The WorldSkills Competition takes place every 2 years at changing venues. Young professionals up to 22 years of age are admitted as participants.

A total of 38 young Swiss nationals travelled to the WorldSkills Competition in Abu Dhabi. There they competed with around 1,300 participants from 58 countries for four days. With its 20 awards, including eleven gold medals, Switzerland ranks second/third (Switzerland has the second largest number of gold medals, Korea has more medals altogether) in the 2010 WorldSkills, which took place 15–18 October. The first place – and that should really give us who live in the Western world food for thought – is held by China.

Trade groups and other professional organisations are given the unique opportunity to strengthen the reputation of vocational training in the public view by national and international professional competitions. In Switzerland, the SwissSkills Foundation organises Swiss competitions in more than 70 professions every year, so having since 1953 enabled young professionals to participate in the WorldSkills Competition. (Source: swiss-skills.ch)

The Swiss medallists:

Gold

Cédric Achermann, Altbüron LU, and *Fabien Gyger*, Spiez BE (automation engineer)
Manuel Allenspach, Gossau SG (IT / Software-Solutions)
Marcel Wyss, Grindelwald BE (installer of sanitary facilities and heating systems)
Emil von Wattenwyl, Kehrsatz BE (web design and development)
Beat Schranz, Adelboden BE (electrician)
Simon Furrer, Gunzwil LU (plant electrician)
Sven Bürki, Lanzenneunforn TG (cabinet maker)
Tatjana Caviezel, Uetliburg SG (restaurant service)
Irina Tuor, Breil / Brigels GR (health professional)
Ramona Bolliger, Gontenschwil AG (baker, pastry chef, confectioner)
Adrian Krähenbühl, Niederösch BE (construction and agricultural machine mechanic)

Silver

Marco Michel, Kerns OW (multi-disciplined engineer / automation)
Heiko Zumbrunn, Wittinsburg BL (car body designer, tin smith)
Jannic Schären, Gerzensee BE (electronic engineer)
Sandra Lüthi, Burgdorf BE (decorative painter)
Florian Nock, Turbenthal ZH (carpenter)
Benjamin Räber, Herlisberg LU, and *Nils Bucher*, Sarnen OW (landscape gardeners)

Bronze

Janine Bigler, Lenzburg AG (printing technologist)
Fabio Holenstein, Bazenheid SG (joiner)
Maurus von Holzen, Dallenwil NW (car body designer and varnisher)

Special prize: *Beat Schranz* wins the title "Best of Nation". He scored the highest overall score in the Swiss team with 767 points. (Source: sda)

Success factor vocational education

by Pierre-Gabriel Bieri, Centre Patronal

The Swiss system of vocational education works well. It is being praised in official speeches and some countries envy us. However, our system suffers from the fact that part of society has the tendency to idealise academic education. It is also necessary to emphasise the important role of professional associations in the context of vocational education.

Thousands of unoccupied apprenticeship places

If politics is still arguing about how the system of retirement is to be organised, there is a much greater consensus on the other end of professional life. Everyone in Switzerland praises the merits of vocational education, being close to the working world and its imponderabilities and which prepares most young people efficiently to master a profession and find a job. Federal Councillor *Johann Schneider-Ammann* uses every international forum and official visit to promote the dual vocational education system in Switzerland, which is currently being studied by several other countries, even on the other side of the Atlantic.

This enthusiasm, however, must not be restricted to political speeches. At a time when vocational education is looking for a "Vision 2030", which is currently limited to a catalogue of good intentions, professional training deserves to be understood and promoted at all levels. Even though the Swiss system works well, improvements are still possible. In particular with regard to the attractiveness of vocational training in general and some professions in particular, or with regard to the suitability of young people for the qualifications required.

Not so long ago there were complaints about missing apprenticeship places and pressure was exerted on the companies

to get more involved. It has been realised for some years now, that the situation is more complex and heterogeneous. According to a "barometer" published by the Swiss Confederation, 71,700 young people are interested in finding an apprenticeship in 2017, compared to 66,000 in 2016. The companies themselves offer 79,000 places. But in mid-summer, the media reported more than 11,000 seats that could not be occupied yet.

The vocational education is not a second choice!

The numbers fluctuate, but the reality is that every year numerous apprenticeship places remain unoccupied while some adolescents fail to find a job. It is no surprise that vacancies are found in the technical, mechanic or practical professions, which at first glance appear to be less attractive. In order to attract learners the companies from the sectors addressed need to strengthen their communication in the future. But to explain the disproportion between supply and demand, young people are also to be mentioned who do not correspond to the desired profiles of the training companies. Sometimes, the instructors complain about the weak level of young people leaving compulsory school, or even problems with their behavior.

Another persistent accusation concerns the all too frequently expressed devaluation of the vocational education in the eyes of the pupils. Their parents, their teachers, even the school authorities have the ten-



Cooperation in the Swiss professional training.
(picture STIHL)

dency to idealise the academic education by letting the vocational education appear a second choice. This regrettable attitude particularly affects some of the cantons of West Switzerland, perhaps influenced by its proximity to France. It leads to an additional burden for the high schools, then for the universities, and results in a worryingly high dropout rate of students. Fortunately, today an increasing interest in study courses of the universities of applied sciences ("Fachhochschulen", FH) can be observed, which have a more practical focus. That applies in particular for holders of vocational school-leaving certificate.

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"Apprenticeship firms and workshops ..."

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the attestation apprentices right up to students in the "Berufsmittelschulen" (vocational secondary schools), they are all taught German at vocational school, some additionally English, and at the KV (commercial college) also French. And at the firm, every learner has to be able to write reports or to present something to others. The final examination in their vocational training course includes a presentation with a dossier. There are very big differences. Some of them, I wonder how well they write – perhaps those are the ones who read a lot.

Formerly many apprentices used to have more practical opportunities in their spare time: at home one often had a small workshop; the father had perhaps completed some craft training and imparted some of his skills to his son or daughter, who then learnt to use a hammer or a drill in this way. Today, especially in the urban area, many youngsters have not had these experiences anymore. In the course of their manual training or arts and craft period, they sometimes produce "cool" things from metal and wood, if they have good teachers. There are, however, also those with whom the arts and craft lesson is rather a time to play around.

What would you like primary schools to teach?

During the three years I have been at STIHL, I have been able to get to know a lot of teachers from the higher levels of primary school. Many come to visit us, so as to get some knowledge of the professions that we train. I would like the teachers to continue to invest so much commitment into the career choice of their students. Also, I would like to see more schools make a stand for "Mint" projects [i.e. mathematics, computer science, natural sciences and technology], so that more students will be able to get experience of technical and practical activities, in projects in cooperation with industry and trade, even outside school. •

New journal:

Personale Psychologie und Pädagogik (Personalist Psychology and Pedagogy)

Dear reader, with this issue, the *Institute of Personalist Human Sciences and Social Issues* launches its publication series "Personalist Psychology and Pedagogy". The individual issues will be published in loose succession. The articles are addressed to both laymen and professionals alike.

A personalist point of view in psychology and pedagogy is one of the most pressing challenges of our time: first and foremost, it is a serious struggle for the conception of man. It is our publication's aim to provide an integrated view of the rich knowledge and the wide range of experience – not only in conceptual terms but by focusing on the main question itself: "What is man?"

To us, it is about psychological knowledge of the human nature, both practically as well as theoretically – about man's understanding of himself and his fellow human beings and about his coexistence in all aspects, big and small.

Experience with and knowledge about man and his coexistence shouldn't be limited to universities or the therapeutic consulting room. Everyone should be able to benefit from it – be it for one's personal way of life or to strive for a peaceful coexistence in marriages,

families, school and professional as well as social life.

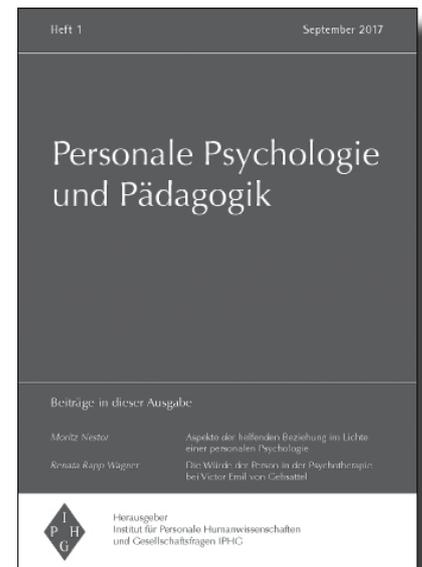
In this spirit, the journal issues are geared towards parents, educators and teachers as well as to all those interested in psychological and pedagogical questions. They are intended to provide impulses and help – both for the daily challenges of an educator's daily work life as well as for shaping doctors', psychologists', psychotherapists', theologians' daily professional practice and that of those in care providing professions who are interested.

The journals' articles are developed from the central question of the "concept of man" (*conditio humana*) and reflect the different areas that the Institute works in: Issues brought up by psychology, pedagogy, psychotherapy, psychosomatics and psychiatrics as well as the foundations of anthropology, cultural anthropology, philosophy, history and economic and social sciences.

By emphasising the term "personalist" in the Institute's name, we consciously link back to those traditions defining man as a being that constantly relates to other human beings (*zoon politikon*), and who possesses a creative and formative ability to shape his own

life and culture. He is capable of reason and will, he can take on responsibility and can help seek honest and in equivalence peaceful solutions for all (*bonum commune*).

Erika Vögeli and Moritz Nestor



The journal can be ordered here:
iphg@gmx.ch

"Success factor vocational education" continued from page 15

The professional associations in the frontline

The enthusiasm for the academic education entails, above all, the risk of provoking a discrepancy to the needs of the industries and companies. These needs, however, are crucial to draw attention to the new generations of useful and interesting career opportunities. The compa-

nies and the professional associations are regularly in need of new talent, more than the "labor market" – an abstract concept. In this sense, it is necessary to emphasise the essential role of professional associations in the organisation of vocational education, which is even more important than that of enterprises, even if they are large. The experts know what they need today, and they are the best to determine what they will need tomorrow.

This role of professional associations, as laid down in Article 1 of the Federal Act on Vocational and Professional Education and Training, should be at the heart of all official speeches and all considerations of the future. •

Source: Press and Information Center *Centre Patronal* from 27 September 2017 (No. 2248)

(Translation *Current Concerns*)