

# Current Concerns

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

English Edition of *Zeit-Fragen*

The alternative to Macron's "Appeal to the citizens of Europe"

## Europe – federal-diverse, constitutional, democratic

by Professor Dr Heinrich Wohlmeyer

On 5 March the Viennese daily newspaper "Die Presse" published Emmanuel Macron's "Appeal to the Europeans" without comment, almost as a good guideline for the European elections. A single letter to the editor was critical of the proposal for a "European Agency for the Protection of Democracy". A broader critical consideration seems to be necessary.

### Macron does not touch financial order

For now: Macron's letter to the Europeans and his request for the support of the European governments seems to be a help seeking "escape to Europe", because internal problems are catching up with him (see Yellow Vests).

For the second: Macron's letter to the Europeans and his request for support from the European governments seems to be a "flight to Europe", because the internal problems are catching up with him (see Yellow Vests).

For the second: Macron does not touch in any sentence the international financial order of which he himself is a child. But this, together with the current trade policy, is one of the driving forces behind the increasing impoverishment of large sections of the population (loss of jobs, good wages and adequate pensions). Although he apostrophises the "crises of financial capitalism", he does not question the system to which he owes his rise.

**Not a word about direct democracy**  
But now to the arguments and proposals:

Its central objective is "to reinvent, in political and cultural terms, the shaping of our civilisation in a changing world". The pivotal points are "freedom, protection and progress". In doing so, he seeks to respond to the concerns and fears of citizens. But he does not say a thing about direct democracy in order to give a voice to the concerned citizens.

One could cynically ask: "Progress where to go?" (en marche ...), protection from what? (From Russia, whose military budget is only slightly more than a fifth of that of the European NATO states and which is not willing to attack?) Freedom through the installation of a political control authority called "Agency for the Protection of Democracy"? The latter is more like a dictatorship opinion in the guise of political correctness.

### France is not a peace power

The international claim to power is being raised vigorously ("no second-rate power" – "Europe as a whole plays a pioneering role"), and for this we must arm ourselves "in harmony with NATO". At the same time, however, the "unique project for peace" is invoked. In this context, those who have a little knowledge of recent history ask themselves why France is still using the Foreign Legion as an intervention force abroad and why it is still using it

for the various regime changes in francophone Africa? Why is France maintaining a costly nuclear bomb programme? Why does it continue to keep the poorly managed overseas territories from the colonial era? And why did it intervene in Libya and Syria, for which we are all paying? Isn't this an inappropriate craving for status?

### The perspective for Europe looks different

Shouldn't we Europeans finally realise that only 6.3% of the world's population live in the EU (4.5% in the euro zone)?

In a realistic way, we can play a role in the world similar to that of the ancient Greeks in the Roman Empire, and even in the loss of political power, we can play a most valued role in thought and culture (remember that the Gospels were originally written in Greek ... and the Hadrian's Library in Athens ...).

The goal cannot be a mishmash, but diversity and its delightful beauty. A diverse "Europe of the Fatherlands", as Charles de Gaulle called it, should be our ideal.

Where is the infectious vision of a Europe that inspires young people, that builds on its Christian-Greek-Jewish-Latin roots, that is proud of its philosophers and state teachers, its polyphonic music, its poets, its scientists and technicians, and that is a model for the whole world in its constitutional-democratic shaping of society? Where is the vision of a Europe that offers Heimat and identification, because it is supported by a common culture that shows unity in diversity (*in necessariis unitas, in dubiis libertas, in omnibus caritas* – in need unity, in doubt freedom, but in all love)?

### The economic treaty – and euro-corset

According to the usual political mainstream, Macron puts the three freedoms (persons, goods, capital) to one side over the diversity of Europe, but the legal every day life of the citizens giving them a home (up to common land register and inheritance rules) is not affected. Instead, additional legal systems are imposed in the form of "comprehensive" international

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Heinrich Wohlmeyer was born in St. Pölten, Lower Austria, in 1936. He studied in Vienna, London and the US. He is an Austrian industrial and research manager as well as a regional developer

and was active in industrial and regional development for over 20 years. He was one of the first to initiate sustainable concepts and created the Austrian Union of Agricultural and Nutritional Scientific Research and the Austrian Society for Biotechnology. Heinrich Wohlmeyer taught at the Technical

University in Vienna and at the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences in Vienna. He initiated the Austrian legislation for balancing expenditure and is the author of countless trade articles, among which focus on CETA-, TISA-, and TTIP- agreements. Today Wohlmeyer operates a mountain farm in Lilienfeld (Austria). Wohlmeyer is married, has three daughters and five grandchildren. His books include: The WTO, Agriculture and Sustainable Development (2002); "Globales Schafe Scheren – Gegen die Politik des Niedergangs" (2006) (Global Sheep Shearing – Against the Politics of Defeat); "Empörung in Europa – Wege aus der Krise" (2012) (Outrage in Europe – Ways out of the Crisis).

**"Europe – federal-diverse, ..."**

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economic treaties and endowed with jurisdiction.

In addition, there is "the euro, which makes the entire EU strong". The reality, however, is rather that the corset of the euro leads to the compulsion of "internal devaluation" instead of the possibility of external devaluation (exchange rate). With their own currency, competitive disadvantages (including those based on a "looser lifestyle") could be largely offset. Now wages and salaries, social benefits and other government expenditure have to be paid. Greece and the Yellow Vests send their greetings. In addition, the ECB's quantitative easing (over 4 trillion euro to date) and the practically unlimited guarantees under the EFSM and ESM have so far been swept away.

The passage "projects that have changed the image of our regions" is particularly suggestive. The deserted peripheral areas, where the Yellow Vests stood up in particular, are a warning (saving decentralised infrastructures, although the social future must be based on decentralisation and intelligent networking in energy policy, ecological, social and economic terms).

As is well known, Macron sees a further "strengthening" in a banking union and a European unemployment insurance system, which amounts to a request for cash from the well-off states.

**EU Treaty provides democracy tradition upside down**

The "Constitution" of the EU (Treaty on European Union and Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union) turns the European legal and democratic tradition upside down. Because legislation is based on the executive power assembled, Parliament only has the right to slow down through its intervention, and the Commission can use the politically composed Court of Justice to undermine resistance. Macron takes all this to heart and is surprised when citizens stand up against this game of elites at their expense. These citizens are being accused by him of "falseness and irresponsibility" because they are endangering the "European project".

**Resolution of the "Forum for Direct Democracy" to discuss the Framework Agreement with the EU**

*The "Forum for Direct Democracy" welcomes the fact that, for the first time in many years, numerous important voices of the left critically question EU policies. For too long, EU criticism has been left to the political right, especially the SVP (Swiss Peoples Party).*



The "Forum for Direct Democracy" supports all efforts to establish long-term, regulated relations with the EU. However, agreements must be within the framework of international law. As a non-EU member, Switzerland cannot subject itself to Union law; the "Forum for Direct Democracy" rejects any compulsion to adopt EU law automatically or recently called "dynamically". Any adoption of EU law must, as before, continue to be decided by the responsible Swiss authority, including a possible referendum.

A future framework agreement must make dumping of wages and eco-dumping impossible. In this respect, the present draft treaty leaves many questions unanswered, as far as is known at all. How is protection of wages monitored, what ecological requirements are still permissible in the working awards and procurement contracts, e.g. to reduce truck journeys?

Another very important concern for the "Forum for Direct Democracy" is that Switzerland should not be involved in the rapidly advancing militarisation of the EU. The Swiss army must not in any way become part of a future European army or intervention force. This would make both the continuation of the current policy of neutrality and a more active peace policy in the future impossible at a time when the arms race of the major powers is escalating.

Unanimously adopted at the annual general meeting on 2 March 2019 in Berne

"Forum for Direct Democracy"

Paul Ruppen

Luzius Theiler

President

Member of the Board

The "Forum for Direct Democracy", founded in 1992 to combat accession to the EEA, organises the ecologically, democratically and socially arguing EU critics in Switzerland. The Forum publishes the EUROPA-MAGAZIN, which twice a year publishes highly esteemed background information on developments in the EU, on the worldwide spread of direct democracy and on the situation of fundamental and human rights.

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The demands made to reassure the citizens for a pan-European basic social security system, equal wages and a minimum wage require trade and financial security, but these are ignored by him. Without them, it is probably just tranquillising pills.

**Alternatives are already being considered**

I therefore wanted to send my "Outlook Manifesto" translated into eight languages to President Macron. Communication is officially controlled by his wife. This may also be one of the reasons why Macron's policy is so over the top.

I have titled one of the last chapters of my book "Outrage in Europe – Ways out

of the Crisis" (Ibera University Press, Vienna 2014): "Standing up for a Europe as 'Light for the World' – federal-diverse, constitutional, democratic, tolerant, solidary and educated, and above all respecting the dignity of the person and realising the human rights".

The prerequisite for this is not only the detachment from old claims to power, but above all the restructuring of the current financial and trade order – even against the resistance of the only hegemon USA – to secure the economic basis of this vision. The latter will be difficult for Emmanuel Macron since it would go directly against the interests of his promoters (doers). •

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

# I appeal to the UN to protect Venezuela from the US attempted coup d'état

Open letter by Prof Dr iur et Dr phil Alfred de Zayas\*, 23 February 2019



Alfred de Zayas  
(picture ma)

cc. On 23 February, Alfred de Zayas, until 2018 UN Independent Expert on the Promotion of a Democratic and Equitable International Order, called upon the United Nations with an open letter. He makes it clear

that the US actions against Venezuela are illegal and appeals to respect the UN principles and international law.

Dear Michelle Bachelet,  
dear Antonio Guterres

As former UN Independent Expert on the Promotion of a Democratic and Equitable International Order (2012–2018) I would like to urge you to once again make your voices heard and make concrete proposals for mediation and peace in the context of the Venezuelan crisis.

The most noble task of the United Nations is to create the conditions conducive to local, regional and international peace, to work preventively and tirelessly to avoid armed conflicts, to mediate and negotiate to reach peaceful solutions, so that all human beings can live in human dignity and in the enjoyment of the human right to peace and all other civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights.

I am particularly worried by the Orwellian corruption of language, the instrumentalisation and weaponisation of human rights and now even of humanitarian assistance.

I look back at my UN mission to Venezuela in November/December 2017 as a modest contribution to facilitate the cooperation between the United Nations and the Venezuelan government and to open the door to the visits of other rapporteurs. See my report to the UN Human Rights Council (<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G18/239/31/PDF/G1823931.pdf?OpenElement>) and the relevant recommendations.

I believe that it would be timely and necessary for both of you to issue a statement reaffirming General Assembly Resolutions 2625 and 3314 and the 23 Principles of International Order that I formulated in my 2018 report to the Human Rights Council. See para 14 of (<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G18/018/46/PDF/G1801846.pdf?OpenElement>)

It would be appropriate to recognise the fact that the government of Venezuela has put into effect some of the recommendations contained in my report – and in the six page confidential memo that I personally gave to Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza upon my departure. (<http://viv.gob.ve/venezuela-onu-medicamentos-alimentos/>) Indeed, first the Venezuelan government released 80 detainees – including Roberto Picón and 23 others whose release I had specifically requested – that was on 23 December 2017, followed by other releases in the course of 2018. Alas, there has been practically no information about this in the mainstream media, although it is easily accessible in the internet. See also the comments of Venezuela on my report (<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G18/262/97/PDF/G1826297.pdf?OpenElement>) in particular paragraph 46 (XVI)

“As a result of this on 23 December 2017, 80 people arrested for acts of violence during the protests in the country were released; and on 1 June 2018, 39 more people were released.”

And paragraph 46 (XVIII)

“In this regard, the Venezuelan Government values the willingness and disposition of the Independent Expert, who was pleased to inform the competent authorities of the requests he received from some relatives of the persons deprived of their liberty. His recommendations were accepted.”

Shortly after my visit Venezuelan authorities met with the UN agencies and made additional cooperation accords, thanks to the valuable efforts Peter Grohmann, the UNDP representative in Caracas.

Now the government of Venezuela has formally asked the United Nations for humanitarian assistance in connection with the current crisis. We must not let them down.

I think that the US should turn over all the humanitarian assistance and medical supplies it has flown into Colombia and have them distributed as soon as possible

with the help of the United Nations and other neutral organisations, including the *International Committee of the Red Cross*.

Another item of information that is sorely missing from the mainstream media is the delivery last week of 933 tons of food and medicines at port La Guaira – coming from China, Cuba, India, Turkey etc. (<https://www.ghm.com.ve/llegaron-al-pais-933-toneladas-de-medicinas/> <https://www.uniradioinforma.com/noticias/internacional/556699/venezuela-recebe-933-toneladas-de-medicinas-y-materiales-medicos.html>)

Moreover an additional 300 tons of medicines and medical supplies provided by Russia arrived by air. (<https://www.dw.com/es/maduro-anuncia-arribo-de-300-toneladas-de-ayuda-humanitaria-de-rusia/a-47576323>)

As I know from my conversations with Venezuelan ministers during my visit in 2017 and the recent conversations I have had with Venezuelan Ambassador to the UN in Geneva Jorge Valero – Venezuela has always welcomed and repeatedly asked for assistance from neutral and friendly governments so as to overcome the adverse human rights impacts of the financial blockade and the sanctions. Such help should be offered in good faith, without strings attached.

I believe that this is the moment for Michelle Bachelet to accept the invitation of the government of Venezuela, extended to her in December 2018, to visit Venezuela personally. Her presence in Venezuela should ban the growing danger of a military intervention by foreign entities. She should endorse the efforts at mediation launched by Mexico and Uruguay at the Montevideo mechanism.

There are ominous parallels with the run-up to the Iraq invasion in 2003 – an illegal war, as Kofi Annan said on repeated occasions (<https://www.nytimes.com/2004/09/16/international/annan-says-iraq-war-was-illegal.html>)

It is obvious to any first year law student that the constant threats against Venezuela are contrary to Article 2 (4) of the UN-Charter. What many do not realise is that the threats, the economic war, the financial blockade and the sanctions violate the principles contained in Article 3 of the OAS Charter

“e. Every State has the right to choose, without external interference, its political, economic, and social system and to organ-

\* Alfred de Zayas, born 31 May 1947 in Havana, Cuba, is an American lawyer, writer, historian and he is a leading expert in the field of human rights and international law. From 2012 to 2018, he was the first UN Independent Expert on the Promotion of a Democratic and Equitable International Order. As the first UN rapporteur in 21 years, he visited Venezuela from 26 November to 4 December 2017.

# Yellow Vests: “The movement is legitimate and democratic”

Interview with Ivan Rioufol, France\*



Ivan Rioufol  
(Bild wikipedia)

After the attack on philosopher Alain Finkielkraut during the Yellow Vest demonstration in Paris on 17 February, “Boulevard Voltaire” wanted to know the opinion of Ivan Rioufol, who had been following the movement from the beginning. How does he see its development?

**Boulevard Voltaire:** The recent verbal attack on Alain Finkielkraut by Yellow Vests has aroused the suspicion of antisemitism in some journalists and observers. Are the Yellow Vests responsible for the rise in antisemitism?

**Ivan Rioufol:** The Yellow Vests are guilty, if at all, of having allowed to be infiltrated by an antisemitic group. These antisemitic circles are by no means representatives of the “Gilets jaunes”. That would be too easy.

When I hear that some people assert that antisemitism is at the heart of the Yel-

low West movement, it’s “fake news”. That’s not true.

Last week, the newspaper “Le Monde” searched the Facebook accounts of all the Yellow Vest networks and concluded that there was no sign of antisemitism, homophobia or racism anywhere in the key terms.

*We can see that this accusation of antisemitism produces a picture with a Salafi touch. Why is such information disseminated? Is it about undermining the credibility of the Yellow West movement?*

Since 17 November, part of the official discourse has been aimed at undermining the credibility of this movement, which – rightly – is quite disturbing to the government. It is indeed disturbing, since a greater part of the neglected inhabitants is concerned, who are demanding that they can take again their place in history.

Because it was convenient, one wanted to make believe that this part of the population were lepers – there was talk of “emerging leprosy”, and of similarly beautiful terms ... All these statements were put forward in order to stop this uprising.

The more the government tries to silence this revolt, the more it fires radicalism. Of course, I do not justify this one, but the government and many intellectuals are doing everything they can to denigrate the “Gilets jaunes”.

They would also like to express themselves. Unfortunately, they often do it

awkwardly. There are no leaders and no slogans. They allow their own revolution to be taken over by extremist circles. You can’t blame them for that. I defended this movement from the beginning. I think it is legitimate and democratic. It simply asks for democratising democracy. These are not my words, but those of *Laurent Fabius* [President of the Constitutional Council] on the radio.

*How do you see the further development of this movement?*

It all depends on how you look at it. If you measure it against the derailments then the discomfort is certainly present. I feel it too, by the way. I can’t bear the repeated violence which is related with the movement’s infiltration by the extreme left and by the Islamists. On this point, the images speak for themselves.

I do understand that the public is reluctant when faced with the Yellow Vests’ stubbornness to pursue a course of action that does not bring any advantage at the moment. It is now up to them to invent something else. I think they should go back to the roundabouts and the places where they met instead of allowing to be presented distortedly.

But the basic problem remains. It has by no means been resolved. There is an urgent need to tackle an existential crisis. •

Source: Boulevard Voltaire, [www.bvoltage.fr](http://www.bvoltage.fr) from 19.2.2019

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

## “I appeal to the UN to protect ...”

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ise itself in the way best suited to it, and has the duty to abstain from intervening in the affairs of another state. Subject to the foregoing, the American States shall cooperate fully among themselves, independently of the nature of their political, economic, and social systems;

f. The American States condemn war of aggression: victory does not give rights;

g. An act of aggression against one American State is an act of aggression against all the other American States;

h. Controversies of an international character arising between two or more American States shall be settled by peaceful procedures;

i. Social justice and social security are bases of lasting peace ...”

Moreover, they violate numerous articles of Chapter 4 of the OAS Charter,

“Article 17: Each State has the right to develop its cultural, political, and economic life freely and naturally. In this free development, the State shall respect the rights of the individual and the principles of universal morality.

Article 18: Respect for and the faithful observance of treaties constitute standards for the development of peaceful relations among States. International treaties and agreements should be public.

Article 19: No State or group of States has the right to intervene, directly or indirectly, for any reason whatever, in the internal or external affairs of any other State. The foregoing principle prohibits not only armed force but also any other form of interference or attempted threat against the personality of the State or against its political, economic, and cultural elements.

Article 20: No State may use or encourage the use of coercive measures of an economic or political character in

order to force the sovereign will of another State and obtain from it advantages of any kind.”

Dear Michelle Bachelet, dear Antonio Guterres: The world looks up to you in the hope that you can avert even greater suffering to the peoples of Venezuela. They need international solidarity as expressed in the report of *Virginia Dandan*, the then independent expert on human rights and international solidarity. (<https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Solidarity/DraftDeclarationRightInternationalSolidarity.pdf>)

I remain respectfully yours

*Professor Dr Alfred de Zayas,  
Geneva School of Diplomacy*

Source: <https://dezayasalfred.wordpress.com/2019/02/23/open-letter-to-the-united-nations-secretary-general-antonio-guterres-and-to-the-high-commissioner-for-human-rights-michelle-bachelet/> from 23 February 2019.

# Consequences of the bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia with depleted uranium in 1999

First International Symposium in Niš, Southern Serbia, June 2018\*

by Dr phil. Barbara Hug and Dr phil. Niels Peter Ammitzboell

*The University of Niš was the prominent venue of a conference devoted to the issue of international legal responsibility and civil liability for damage resulting from the bombing of Yugoslavia with depleted uranium ammunition. A comprehensive reader containing the lectures held in Niš/South Serbia in June 2018 is submitted.*

The long-planned war to fragmentise Yugoslavia, prepared with the highest military and intelligence precision, lasted from March to June 1999. 19 NATO member states stooped for a dirty, sanguinary operation. It was supposed to be a war that had to be waged for “moral” reasons, according to the fabrications of the merciless Western alliance. In the spring of 1999, no birds sang and the leaves fell brown from the trees. The pictures of the children, who soon after fell ill with leukemia, speak the language of death, these children also wanted to live, but in the name of a perverted “morality” they have to suffer and die.

The significance of the war against Yugoslavia has so far been insufficiently highlighted, although there are a number of courageous and sensible authors who have published both on the strategic preparations for the war and on the motives for the war.<sup>1</sup> *Erich Schmidt-Eenboom* says, for example, that for future times the prospect of a pan-European peace area has been seriously damaged by the Kosovo war, not only materially, but above all in the minds of the people and political elites in Russia.

International legal responsibility – who bears it? NATO as an international organisation, the member states of NATO or both jointly? To whom are claims for compensation to be addressed, who is liable under civil law? The review of the facts and the outline of the numerous consequences of the war also reveal the cancer incidence rates, the increase of which is alarming.

The serious damage to the international community, to the outlawing of war, to peacekeeping and to the legal agreements between states is reflected in the remarks made by the Russian speakers. Russian law professors presented to the audience their concentrated knowledge of the in-

ternational crimes of the NATO alliance without embellishment. The Serbian lecturers were in no way behind them. Very enlightening for the numerous listeners!

Thus *Marija Zekic*, a lawyer from Belgrade, mentioned the cover-up manoeuvres to which UNEP stooped to at the instigation of its Director General, *Klaus Töpfer*. *Bakary Kante* from Senegal, then director of a UNEP division department, had unequivocally pointed out in his report that the next generations living on the bombed land will suffer from carcinogenic diseases, leukemia, and the number of spontaneous miscarriages and deformities of the newborns will be increased. NATO bombing occurred at the time of planting agricultural crops of vital importance for the population – corn, sunflower, soybean, sugar, sugar beet and vegetables. This report was supposed to be kept hidden.

*Slobodan Petkovic*, former general of the Yugoslav army, active in ABC defence, referred to the manual of KFOR: “KFOR, International Brigade, West, Depleted Uranium, Information and Instructions”. Here the soldiers are warned of the radioactive hazards, emanating from the uranium ammunition. “The inhalation of insoluble particles of uranium dust is associated with long-term health consequenc-

es, including cancer and malformations in newborns.

Professor *Radomir Kovačević*, chairman of the Institute of Occupational Medicine, Belgrade, presented on the serious genetic changes in the population of Southeast Serbia that can be found as a consequence of the NATO aggression in 1999.

*Ratomir Antonovic* describes the bombing as a lagging genocide of the people living on the territory of Yugoslavia as well as in neighbouring states. 2019 will be a year of the “epidemic” of cancer. NATO’s plan to drastically reduce the Serbs as an ethnic group would come to fruition. Antonovic is in charge of security management issues at the law faculty of Constantine of the Great University in Niš.

The overwhelming number of acts of war that have been committed against international law by NATO has led to the question of who is liable for the wide-ranging damage caused by the war, in particular the massive increase in the number of cancer cases, and how adequate compensation for the victims and their families can be achieved.

In a kind of pilot study, the lawyer *Srdjan Aleksić* examines the legal possibili-

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*bha/na*. In Serbia there is an evident increase in the diseases, the occurrence of which can be associated to a cause-and-effect relationship with the consequences of the bombing, especially with the use of ammunition with the DU. PhD, Dr *Slobodan Čikarić*, our renowned retired radiologist, one of the most famous therapists in the treatment of malignant diseases, now president of the Serbian Anti-cancer Society and editor-in-chief of the journal “Cancer – Prevent, Discover, Cure”, analyzed the state of the increase in malignant diseases in Serbia. He states that by the monitoring of the progression of malignant tumors in central Serbia in the period from 2001 to 2009, he has come the following conclusions: “We have identified 17 malignant tumors whose raw incidence rate was greater than 10 newly registered malignant tumors annually per 100,000 inhabitants and followed the growth trend of both rates in the mentioned period. In particular, we have identified systemic neoplasms (leukemia/lymphoma) and observed the trend of raw incidence and

mortality rates in the population of both sexes and all ages in central Serbia in the period 2001-2009 ... growth trends of both rates slightly differs in all 17 tumors in the time period 2001-2005 (latent period) ... He states that “... the trend in the number of patients suffering from all tumors was on average 1% and the number of deaths was 1.4% per year, and in the case of leukemia and neoplasms 2.5% per year. But already in 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009, the raw incidence and mortality rate of malignant tumors of all localities in both sexes increased in comparison with the previous four-year period, in the number of patients by 6.6%, and the increase in the number of deaths by 7.8% on average per year. In systemic neoplasms (leukemia/lymphoma), this growth is more drastic and the number of patients affected is 74% and the number of deaths is 139%.”

Analysing the situation in 2014 he concludes that the number of newly registered malignant tumors in Serbia is 2.8 times higher than in the world, which he calls “the Serbian catastrophe”.

<sup>1</sup>During the 1999 war, Serbia was bombed by Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States.”

**"Consequences of the bombing ..."**

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ties for compensation payments. This is raising international awareness of this crime, which can never be masked by "moral" considerations. Morality is characterised by the moral attitude not to harm and to act out of this humane conviction.<sup>2</sup>

Since the plans of the Western War Alliance more often speak of "small regional wars", which must be expected, the war in Serbia can serve as an outsised warning. It was a locally limited war, waged with a devastating effect: the "sustaina-

bly planned" decimation of the population. If one analyses calculates the radioactive-toxic potential of the weapons used, it makes one's blood run cold.

<sup>1</sup> Retrospective and foresighted analyses provided: *Dieter S. Lutz, Erich Schmidt-Eenboom, Matthias Küntzel, Heinz Loquai, Cathrin Schütz, Hannes Hofbauer, Maria Mies, Diana Johnstone, Ramsey Clark, Wolfgang Richter, Mira Beham, Jörg Becker, Norman Paech, Peter Handke, Michel Chossudovsky, Noam Chomsky, Falco Accame, Ralph Hartmann, Gerhard Beestermöller* – (the list is not exhaustive).

<sup>2</sup> The "foreign policy" of the NATO Alliance was thus directly directed against the peace doctrine of the Catholic Church, as it is formulated in the

German Bishops' Conference's 1983 "Justice Creates Peace". For the Catholic theologian *Gerhard Beestermöller* the German Bundestag resolution of 16.10.1998 could bring Catholic soldiers into moral distress. Were they allowed to take part in a war contrary to international law?

Organisation of the conference and editor of the book: *Srdjan Aleksic*, lawyer in Niš, and *Sreto Nogo*, Faculty of Law, Belgrade; 1<sup>st</sup> edition 2018 in Serbian and Russian language, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 2019 in English (100 copies for foreign participants of the conference); ISBN of the Serbian edition 978-86-7746-723-4; electronic version, English, on request at Law Office "Aleksić" Niš, *advokati.aleksic@gmail.com*

Venue of the conference: Niš University Hall

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

### Presentations at the symposium

Prof *Ilija Zindovic*, PhD, Legal Basis for Civil Liability for the Consequences of NATO Bombing

Academician *Juri Golik*, NATO Aggression against FRY Must Be Punished

Prof *Manfred Mohr*, ICBUW, Uranium Weapons I: A Case of Environmental Destruction through War Political and Legal Framework

*Aicha Kheinet*, ICBUW, Uranium Weapons II: NATO Bombing of Yugoslavia – Facts and Consequences

Academician *Sergey Baburin*, Peace Keeping Issues and the Problem of the Responsibility of the Aggressor

Prof *Aleksandr Korobeev*, PhD, Jurisdiction of UN International Court of Justice on the Cases Submitted in Relation to the Countries – NATO Members and Their Use of Force: Analyses of Judicial Practice

Dr *Mirosav Baljak*, Jurisdiction of the European Court of Human Rights

Dr *Konjahn Vladimir*, PhD, About the Question on Establishing the Liability of NATO Countries for the Aggression against Yugoslavia – Reality and Perspectives

Dr *Pilikina Ekaterina Georgievna*, PhD, Criminal Legal Command Responsibility on the Example of NATO Operations against Yugoslavia

*Radomir Kovacevic*, Contamination with Depleted Uranium and Genetic Changes in Population of Southeast Serbia as a Consequence of NATO Aggression against Yugoslavia in 1999

Dr *Margit Savovic*, The Crime that Must Not Be Forgiven

Dr *Yuri Duk*, PhD, NATO Justice and Democracy, Yugoslav Version

Prof *Tatjana Minazeva*, PhD, State Sovereignty as the Power of Law in "Risky Society"

Prof *Luydmila Inogamova-Hegaj*, Problems of National Jurisdiction for Aggression

*Marija Zekic*, Dishonor of the "Civilised Nations"

Prof *Kozukharik Dmitriy Nikolayevich*, PhD, About the Responsibility for Genocide and Aggression against the Yugoslav People

Prof *Hatidza Berisa*, PhD, The Consequences of NATO Aggression of 1999 on the Environment and the Health of People

*Ratomir Antonovic*, MA, The United Criminal Enterprise of NATO Countries against FRY

*Viktor Nuzdic*, The Consequences of NATO Bombing of the Republic of Serbia

*Jovan Nikolic*, MD, Urologist Methods of Rhetoric and Demagoguery in Concealing the Harmful Effects of the Radioactive Ammunition Use

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*Zhao Xiaolin*, PhD, NATO Legal Responsibility for Bombing of Yugoslavia

Prof *Andon G. Kostadinovic*, PhD, The Consequences of NATO Aggression on the Employees' Social and Material Position and Increased Number of Malignant Patients in Our Country Population

*Danilo Kostic*, Civil and Legal Responsibility of NATO Member States for Aggression against FR Yugoslavia in 1999

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# The observance of the peace is imperative and responsible

by Willy Wimmer, former State Secretary in the German Ministry of Defence\*



Willy Wimmer  
(picture ma)

For years now, the currently appointed members of the German Federal Government, headed by the Federal Chancellor, have been prating at every appropriate or inappropriate opportunity about their opinion that, in view of the recognisable weakness of the United States, Germany would have to assume “more and greater responsibility” in the world – despite the world situation most infamously brought about by the West since the German reunification. At the annual war drivers’ Conference in Munich in mid-February, this was, together with the blue EU sweaters worn, still the main motto on which the war drummers in question were able to agree.

And why not? Let us assume German responsibility for the world! This goal was already established in the German Constitution, which will be seventy years old this year. One can already imagine hearing the speeches which will be poured out over the German people by the usual state speakers on that day.

## Contribute to peace in the world?

One can already make a bet on one thing now: not a word will be said about the German people’s responsibility to contribute to peace in the world in their own special way. What is the reason for this silence? Well, ever since the brutal attack on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia by NATO in the midst of peace, the

then German Federal Government has made clear that it is no longer prepared to strictly obey its own constitution. “Nato orders – we follow” was from then on the shameful and historically charged leitmotif for that reunited Germany, which owed its state unity to the peaceful reconciliation among the peoples and to the Charter of the United Nations.

## Abuse of history and disregard for international law

More and more commemorative speeches are being made which use the horrific events of recent German history only to misuse and exploit the horrors of the past for new wars, against the will of the German people. Where is the Federal President or the president of the Federal Constitutional Court who, with top German political responsibility, has stood or will stand up for the ban on German participation in wars of aggression? According to the Charter of the United Nations, wars of aggression are all those wars which do not have a clear mandate from the United Nations. But since the spring of 1999, and the hail of NATO bombs on Belgrade, to this day, the respective federal governments have done everything to eliminate the Charter of the United Nations because the United States was and is no longer interested in this Charter because of its plans for world power. “Right is what benefits the United States” – the analogous demand by *Henry Kissinger*, which could be read in the important German newspapers of the 1990s, is still being implemented consistently and with German participation today. What, Dr *Merkel*, is the difference between this and a policy of the past, from which one should not set oneself apart only in speeches, but in reality and in political action?

## As yet, German “Responsibility” means supporting the warring powers

The officials talk a lot about German responsibility and the assumption of burdens in this world, but in truth they only mean helping the more and more weakening warring powers, such as the USA, Great Britain and France, by making more and more German soldiers and German money available to these states for their non-UN Charter wars. A prime example is the enormous increase in the German military budget, not because of correspond-

ing debates in the German Bundestag, but because of the transfer of German state responsibility to the American president. The citizens of the Reich are upset that Germany is seen not as a state, but as a “company”. Yet the befuddlement of the Federal Government in the matter of the Bundestag decision power over military employments as well as the enormous rates of increase for the military budget make clear, how our government is ready to hand over its own responsibility to be left on the hangers in the Nato – and thus the US – wardrobes. No self-respecting company would act in this way.

## The German people adheres to the Constitution and its peace commandment

No, the overwhelming majority of the German people want the Federal Government to observe the constitution with its prohibition of any war of aggression and its commandment to preserve peace and to observe the rules of international law in accordance with the military act, and its demand that Germany only participate in those international organisations that meet these objectives. Our Basic Law can only be complied with if responsibility is assumed in accordance with the Constitution, and not because the masters of state reconstruction lay this duty upon us. Are the Federal Government and the mainstream organisers not aware of the fact that the vast majority of Germans expect nothing more from the government than upholding of the law and respect for state institutions as laid down in the constitution?

Regarding the law and the safeguarding of the legal order, this federal government has made a “madhouse” of our country. If the German people do not restore the constitutional order, in accordance with the same, there will be no need to worry about “assuming German responsibility”. Then we are in foreign hands.

Our experiences dictate Germany’s immediate stand for the adoption of the peace commandment and the prohibition of wars of aggression as specified in German Basic Law, and an annual report on Constitution Day to the plenary session of the German “Bundestag” on the results of these efforts is imperative. This is what the “assumption of German responsibility” looks like – and nothing else. •

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

\* Willy Wimmer was a CDU (Christian Democrats) member of the “Bundestag” from 1976–2009, Secretary of State in the German Ministry of Defense from 1988–1992 and Vice-President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly from 1994–2000. He is co-author of the book “Die Wiederkehr der Hasardeure. Schattenstrategen, Kriegstreiber, stille Profiteure 1914 und heute” (“The Gamblers’ Return. Shadow strategists, warmongers, silent profiteers, 1914 and today”) together with *Wolfgang Effenberger*, 2014, and author of the books “Die Akte Moskau” (“The Moscow File”), 2016, and “Deutschland im Umbruch. Vom Diskurs zum Konkurs – eine Republik wird abgewickelt” (“Germany in Upheaval. From discourse to bankruptcy – a republic is being wound up”), 2018. On 30 January 2019 Willy Wimmer was awarded the Bautzener Friedenspreis (Bautzen Peace Prize).

# The observance of the law on peace would be responsible

by Professor Dr Eberhard Hamer, Hanover\*



Eberhard Hamer  
(picture ma)

74 years after the end of the Second World War, the victorious powers USA and Great Britain have still stationed troops in Germany, and Germany still has to pay the cost of these troops and even the former occupying powers' non-military activities, such as the total espionage carried out by the NSA.

Germany is still a kind of colony with German colonial administrators; our media, our political class and our government are still being controlled by Anglo-Saxons – not necessarily by the current governments of the USA and Great Britain, but by very powerful long-term forces in those countries.

It has now been 30 years since the Soviet occupation ended in the GDR and West Germany took over the GDR. Today there is no country at Germany's borders that shows a warlike or threatening manner.

Why did the troops of USA and Great Britain not follow the example of the Soviet troops and withdraw also?

Germany became formally sovereign in 1990 with the Two-Plus-Four Treaty. Nevertheless, the Western victorious powers still have special rights, for example

- that troops remain stationed in Germany – even with nuclear weapons,
- that members of these troops are still subject to extraterritorial justice, i.e. not German justice,

- that the USA may continue total espionage of the overall German telecommunications
- and that Germany must continue to pay the occupying troops' costs, including those for buildings or the like.

After German reunification, the Soviet Union's dreams of world power burst, but those of the Americans grew. And since then the latter have pursued – and are still pursuing – the policy of “the only world power”, which, according to *Brzezinski's* plans, was to dominate Europe by keeping its central power – Germany – under control. In this way, European politics, its economy and its financial industry are to be kept under American dominance.

All previous US presidents left no doubt about this US claim to supremacy over Germany. But for some years now criticism of the USA has been growing even in Germany. So the following questions are becoming ever more audible:

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\* Prof Dr Eberhard Hamer is founder of the “*Mittelstandsinstitut Hannover*” as well as author and publisher of numerous books, including “Was tun, wenn der Crash kommt? Wie sichere ich mein Vermögen oder Unternehmen?” (“What should we do when the crash comes? How do I secure my assets or business?”), 10<sup>th</sup> edition 2008, and “*Visionen 2050. Wohin steuern wir? Trends und Prognosen für Deutschland und Europa*”, 2016 (“*Visions 2050. Where are we heading? Trends and forecasts for Germany and Europe*”).

## The economic war between USA and Germany is culminating over Nord Stream 2

eh. The US economic war against the German economy, which has been going on for years, began with new attacks right at the beginning of this year:

- 1 The US ambassador in Berlin threatened the companies building the Nord Stream 2 oil pipeline between Germany and Russia through the Baltic Sea with special sanctions. And he even did so in writing!
- 2 Shortly before, the US Senate, the US Government and NATO had called for the Nord Stream 2 pipeline to be prevented “by all means”.
- 3 At the end of last year, the German federal government was given several ultimatums by President *Donald Trump* to stop the construction of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline.

Like his ambassador, the US president did not baulk at explaining the real reasons for his opposition to Nord Stream 2: This would hinder the sale of American oil to Europe, since this is more expensive by one third.

It is true that the German government has made half a billion available in response to this blackmail, in order to enable liquid gas trading with Germany through the construction of a terminal for the purchase of US liquid gas. However, the Americans know that they cannot compete with the prices in Europe and therefore want to use force to prevent any cheaper supply from Russia.

This economic battle over Nord Stream 2 is the culmination of a long-

running economic war between the USA and Germany. The US sees Germany as the economic backbone of EU and euro zone, whose economic power runs counter to the US plans for economic world domination.

The US measures are based on total espionage of Germany. The *Snowden* revelations have publicly uncovered how the US secret services tap and store every e-mail, every page call on the Internet, every telephone call and every industrial computer and have them automatically scanned and sorted by spyware installed in Germany.

Even the Federal Intelligence Service (BND) is obliged to exchange all messages and to pass on even personal data to the NSA. All German data are subject to suspicion-independent monitoring and retention; they are searched for the NSA by US organisations such as *PRISM*, *Tempora* and *XKeyscore* and further processed jointly with the CIA and other authorities. Then the NSA relinquishes such illegal data to interested US companies, and it also mobilises the US Department of Justice and the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) whenever their investigations show any dollar payment “suitable” to damage German competition on the world market by fining them billions.

So far, *Deutsche Bank* has been fined about \$12 billion, Volkswagen more than \$10 billion, and German corpora-

tions overall more than \$30 billion. In addition, wherever German patents and know-how offers were superior to American ones, they were opened up to American competitors, and the government blackmailed foreign customers to award their contracts to US companies. Edward Snowden has described this in detail.

Already in the conflict between *Boeing* and *Airbus*, our government and the European officials exercised remarkable restraint when faced with US blackmail, instead of protesting or making the blackmail public. In the new battle for Nord Stream 2 the behaviour of European and German politicians is ambivalent: *Angela Merkel* has tried to reduce the resistance of Ukraine and Poland to the transit of Russian oil by making high compensation payments to them.

The Eurocrats don't actually want the oil line, because Poland is against it and because US high finance is trying to bludgeon US-dependent EU politicians and organisations into rejecting it. We will see what happens after the recent agreement of the EU governments to make Nord Stream 2 possible after all.

The economic war between the USA and the EU will be decided in the battle of Nord Stream 2. If this were won by Europe, it would gain more and longer term independence from the US.

(Translation *Current Concerns*)



# Direct democracy – ideal path towards a peaceful Germany?

by Karl Müller

*The continued decisions of German politics against the express will of the citizens considerably endanger the country's inner and outer security. Could direct democracy significantly improve the situation.*

At the end of February 2019 the *Zentrum für Militärgeschichte und Sozialwissenschaften der Bundeswehr* ["Bundeswehr" centre for military history and social sciences] published a 340-page research report: "Life after Afghanistan – Soldiers and Veterans of the "Generation Bundeswehr Mission". Results of the social-science long-term supervision of the 22<sup>nd</sup> ISAF contingent" ([http://www.zmsbw.de/html/einsatzunterstuetzung/downloads/20190221forschung\\_sberichtseiffertnesslebensnachafghanistan.pdf](http://www.zmsbw.de/html/einsatzunterstuetzung/downloads/20190221forschung_sberichtseiffertnesslebensnachafghanistan.pdf))

The report was based on comprehensive multiple interviews with more than 1000 "Bundeswehr" soldiers who were deployed in Afghanistan from March to October 2010, a time of numerous hostilities. The soldiers were interviewed the first time a few weeks before the deployment, during the deployment, a few weeks after their return to Germany and then again three years later.

The following result was most cited in the media: "about one fourth (27 per cent) of the interviewees are [...] convinced that the "Bundeswehr" mission was ultimately useless because it did not contribute to any real improvements. Another 26 per cent of the interviewees partially agree with this statement."

## What kind of obstacle is the EU for direct democracy?

km. Anyone demanding direct democracy for Germany's federal legislation has to bear in mind: Many of the laws and regulations passed by the German "Bundestag" – the figures from various studies in previous years vary from 30 to 80 percent – merely transpose EU directives<sup>1</sup> into German law. German politics has contractually committed itself to this with the country's EU membership. The German "Bundestag" must decide according to the EU guideline even if the German government representatives in the EU Council of Ministers were against it, but were outvoted by a qualified majority. Such decisions by qualified majority have increased with each new amendment to the EU treaties – the latest version is the "Treaty of Lisbon", which has been in force since the end of 2009.

In recent weeks mainly German politicians such as Foreign Minister *Heiko*

*Maas*, Defence Minister *Ursula von der Leyen* and CSU politician *Manfred Weber* – top candidate of the German CDU/CSU and the European People's Party (EPP) – have demanded majority decisions in the area of the *Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP)*. If this were to happen, Germany would lose its sovereignty in the question of war and peace. Then, even the possibility of direct-democratic procedures at federal level would no longer enable a German veto if the question arises. Conclusion: Membership of the EU is directed against the sovereignty of citizens. ... And also against peace?

<sup>1</sup> In addition to the "Lisbon Treaty", EU law also includes regulations, directives and decisions. The directives must be transposed into national laws. EU regulations and EU decisions are directly applicable.

## "Useless" mission in Afghanistan

Thus, more than half of the interviewed soldiers deemed the "Bundeswehr" mission in Afghanistan as useless or partially useless. According to the study this means: The mission did not improve the life of the Afghans, at least not in the long run.

Indeed, it is likely that the true percentage is even higher. After all, most soldiers were still on active duty, their employer was the "Bundeswehr" at war and the interviews were made as part of a "Bundeswehr" research project. The report re-

veals that the "Bundeswehr" itself was not to be questioned.

## Germany's freedom was definitely not defended at the Hindukush

In the beginning, the governmental justification slogan was "Germany's freedom is also defended at the Hindukush" – thousands of kilometres from Germany. Then the German government tried to convey the impression that the military mission was essentially a Red Cross mission, that is, main-

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## "The observance of the law ..."

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- whether it is in our interest that our politicians (*Merkel, Maas*) and the media loyal to the government constantly stir up hatred against Russia instead of holding back their American friends,
- why we participate in Nato's war games against Russia (deployment to the east of tanks, missiles and manoeuvres)
- and why we are doubling our arms purchases in the USA, according to American orders, even though no enemy threatens us in Europe.

No repetition of stirring up of hatred against Russia

75 years after war and defeat we should avoid all war songs, war games and hostile conflicts, and in particular we should not again stir up hatred

against Russia, which might then break out uncontrollably into another war. Has our present generation learnt nothing from the Second World War, or is all this a result of fake vassal loyalty to fake friends?

We must surely know that the flare-up of any military conflict between East and West would turn Germany back into a battlefield.

We Germans, in particular, should therefore ensure that the Russia-baiting induced by Nato and media from across the Atlantic Ocean, as well as the reckless concentration of troops in the East, do not become an uncontrolled source of fire.

In Europe, nobody wants war and the majority wants to live in peace, not only with the USA, but also with Russia. No one should have more reason to struggle for peace than the Germans.

That is why we need a new order of peace for Europe which

- will make Nato function as a defensive alliance again instead of as the spearhead against Russia,
- will force British and US-troops to withdraw from Germany, just as the Russian troops have already done,
- will end the economic and financial war of sanctions against Russia and replace it with a policy of adjustment
- and will reopen free access to the Russian market for our economy, to replace the US and foreign markets lost through Trump's protection and sanctions policy.

Germany can only thrive as a middle power in Europe if we maintain peace both with the East and the West.

We should declare 2020 – 75 years after the last world war – a year of peace!•  
(Translation *Current Concerns*)

**"Direct democracy – ideal path ..."**

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ly helping the Afghans. In 2006, however, when Germany deployed more and more soldiers to the war in Afghanistan, the news magazine *Der Spiegel* ran the title: "The Germans need to learn to kill." How Afghanistan became an emergency."

And then, in 2010, more than 50 per cent of the interviewed German Afghanistans soldiers agreed, completely or partially, with the statement that their mission was "useless".

Since September 2017 the responsible offices have been aware of these results. They are also aware of the results of regular polls among the general population which regularly show that a clear majority opposes the Afghanistan mission as well as other military missions abroad.

**The citizens' will has no political consequences**

To this day, the wide scepticism among soldiers and voters has had no political consequences. Every year the German "Bundestag" extends the Bundeswehr mission in Afghanistan. On 13 February the federal government decided upon another extension of the mission of 1,300 German soldiers. Most likely it will pass the "Bundestag" without much discussion.

*This is the underlying feeling of many Germans: Parliament and government do not care about what the citizens want. There are elections, but after the elections the elected do not act according to the electoral mandate, not only regarding the "Bundeswehr" foreign missions.*

**The citizens' discontent is growing**

This has led to a great deal of discontent in recent years. This expresses itself in many ways. Former responsible politicians and top-level officials like *Willy Wimmer* or *Hans-Georg Maassen* are taking a very critical position today. A very young party like the AfD won more than 10 per cent in the last election to the "Bundestag" and it has representatives in all state parliaments, partly with more than 20 per cent of the votes. In many places in Germany there have been demonstrations, rallies and other events directed against German politics and German politicians. Many citizens have turned their back on mainstream media and now read alternative media, mainly in the internet. Formerly popular parties such as the CDU, CSU and SPD have lost more than 50 per cent of their members in recent years. The total number of party members in Germany fell from 2.4 to 1.2 million between 1990 and 2018. That is just 1.5 per cent of the total population.

**Germany remains in a political tailspin**

But even this does not lead to a change in policy. On the contrary, *many Germans have gained the impression that Germany is a country in decline and that the number of wrong political decisions continues to increase.*

However, the price is not paid by those politically responsible, but by the citizens. Bad politics does not affect politicians; it affects people in the country.

And when it comes to war and peace, bad politics can mean death. Dead German soldiers in Afghanistan are an example.

It would be a miracle if there was a late insight on the part of those politically responsible. But to believe in miracles is not a convincing prospect.

**Direct democracy – a way to get better?**

Here it is discussed whether there could be a change for the better if the citizens were able to decide directly and even in central questions of politics. Is direct democracy the royal road for a peaceful Germany?

Switzerland has had good experiences with its direct democracy. Direct democracy does not promise political paradise on earth. But in any case, it promises more political decisions closer to the citizens and much more lively citizens' sovereignty.

Direct democracy includes the right of citizens to decide directly on political issues and not only to elect individuals and parties. At the federal level, Switzerland has popular initiatives and referenda. The popular initiative is a constitutional amendment. Swiss citizens can collect 100,000 signatures within 18 months, in which case there must be a referendum on the constitutional amendment proposed by citizens. For a referendum, citizens can collect 50,000 signatures within 100 days; then a referendum on a law passed by parliament must be held. In the case of any amendment to the Constitution coming from the Parliament, and in the case of certain laws, a referendum is even obligatory.

**Every country seeks its way**

Each country and its citizens can find their own way to direct democracy.

This includes being aware of the preconditions and to work on them. Readiness for dialogue, objectivity and balance in public discussions, good expertise of the citizen, interest also in the arguments of the opposite side (thus being able to listen to the others!), efforts to find a legislation which all citizens can live with ... and so on – that is needed for direct democracy to succeed. *Direct democracy requires responsible citizens – but it also contributes to making citizens responsible.*

The demand for direct democracy has become louder in many European states. Anyone studying the publications of the

Dresden Institute for Direct Democracy (DISUD) ([www.disud.de/](http://www.disud.de/)) and its congress programmes will easily recognise that there are very serious efforts to achieve more direct democracy in many European countries.

**Germany has good prerequisites**

Germany has good prerequisites for this, too. For all German municipalities and federal states, the state constitutions and municipal codes provide for direct democratic procedures. Some hurdles are still high, but much has been improved in the past 30 years. Germany has had good experience with citizens' petitions and referenda, popular initiatives, petitions for a referendum and referenda. But at the federal level, the constitutional principle that the power of the people can also be exercised by referenda (Article 20, paragraph 2, sentence 2 of the "Grundgesetz") has not yet been implemented in legislation. So far, the responsible politicians have denied the Germans this right – and these politicians will continue to do so unless the demand becomes broader and more sustainable.

The authoritarian state and its subjects are obsolete. But it is no less unworthy to reduce people to work, consumption and having fun. Direct democracy needs the committed awareness of the citizen that they are the real sovereign. •

**Current Concerns**

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# “Critique of Migration – Who Profits and Who Loses”

by Ewald Wetekamp



To tackle the issue of migration especially at a time where political correctness dictates to everyone how to address the issue, is, from this perspective, quite a brave endeavor. Hannes Hofbauer addresses the matter in his book “Kritik der Migration – Wer profitiert und wer verliert” from a historical perspective. Historically, because he does not focus on the time since 2015. He looks at the phenomenon of migration over the centuries and he identifies concerning the causes of such migratory movements, repetitive causal connections. His contemplation opens up an honest view on this historical phenomenon in its manifold manifestations. Due to his extensive knowledge of details, Hofbauer gets to results that may often astonish the reader.

## From global social inequality to work nomads through migration

Already the flap text makes clear what this book is about. As with almost all political issues, spin doctors have developed a narrative to make migration appear in a positive light. Thus, migration is equated with mobility, that in a highly technical world must be nothing but advantageous for the persons in question. Just this connection of migration and mobility conceals that the human being is seen as a work nomad, his value only depends on his manpower and is only seen from a usability perspective. Thus a human being degenerates into an exclusive function of the market spanning the globe. That such a work nomad is uprooted familiarly, socially and culturally is merely an inevitable consequence of a forcefully implemented market scenario.

Voluntarily, no one becomes a work nomad, since Hofbauer clearly states that sedentariness was and is the norm of human social life. He estimates, that cross-border migration lays between 0.6% and 0.9% of the world’s population over the past decades. There were also voluntary migrations. However, these served after completion of the apprenticeship as further training abroad with masters of their trade, sometimes in other countries. However, in the context of forced migration, a reference to journeymen in the last few centuries can only be described as infamous.

## The migrant as his own human capital

The statements of an Italian migration researcher, whom Hofbauer lets speak as *pars pro toto* of the migration advocates and propagandists, are as infamous as they are enlightening. Massimo Livi Bacci

writes in his book “Short History of Migration” in 2015: “To move spatially is an essential characteristic of man, a component of his capital, an additional ability to improve his living conditions”. Western states have been exploiting colonies for centuries. Western industrial nations, or more precisely industrial corporations, are actively preventing people in developing countries from improving their living conditions. And then, for the maltreated man, migration, leaving his family, his home, his culture, should be the solution. The derivation of migration from the ability of man to move spatially is outrageous enough; but calling this so-called “essence of human nature” as “an integral part of his capital,” reveals the market-ideological and capitalist-functional view of man.

## Asylum and migration

Hofbauer makes a point not to mix asylum and migration. Asylum is not about migratory movements for economic reasons that secure livelihoods, but about the reception of politically, racially or religiously persecuted persons. There is no binding right to asylum under international law. Even the *Geneva Refugee Convention* of 1951 does not have an explicit right to asylum, but it obliges the signatory states (by 2018 145 out of 193 states) to grant recognized asylum seekers social security.

## Social inequality increases corporate profits

Based on his thesis that there will be a migration movement as long as there will be a consciously induced global social inequality, Hofbauer goes through history and points out this recurring fact. Using the terms pull and push factors, he describes the unworthy living conditions in the countries of origin and what seems so attractive in the target countries. One has to say “appears”, because once arrived in the destination country, the inhuman exploitation goes on. This time, however, with the effect that wage dumping affects the workforce in the target countries.

By 1973, 14 million foreign workers had migrated to Germany. The author Klaus J. Bade, quoted by Hofbauer, speaks in his book “Europa in Bewegung. Migration vom späten 18. Jahrhundert bis in die Gegenwart” (Europe in Motion. Migration from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century to the present) of the fact that “the employment of foreigners could extremely increase the flexibility of the cost factor labour”. As a result of this flexibilisation of the cost factor of labour, real wages in Germany fell by 1.6% between 1992 and 2012. At the same time, the German social secu-



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rity funds were heavily burdened by the German skilled workers, who had become too “expensive” and were now made redundant and released into unemployment. Thus, the German state used taxpayers’ money to finance corporate profits.

## Attack on subsistence as a trigger of deliberate migration

The destruction of the subsistence economy by war, environmental disasters and economic wars is by far the greatest cause of migration in history. If people can no longer provide themselves and their families with the food they need to survive, migration is the only option that remains besides starvation. In all European countries, the industrial revolution drove people from the countryside to the cities. Increased productivity in agriculture meant that fewer workers were needed. As concurrently wages were falling, rural families were deprived of their livelihoods. They were left with the choice either to move to the industrialising cities or overseas, where white settlers were just beginning to deprive the indigenous population of arable land in North America and Argentina. “In today’s terminology, the consequences of the agricultural revolution of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century would be called the push factor and the conquest of America the pull factor.”

In 1815 the eruption of the Tambora volcano on Java led to an extreme environmental catastrophe. The temperature drop following the eruption led to an agricultural crisis throughout Europe. Food prices rose immeasurably and hunger spread.

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**“Critique of Migration – ...”**

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People emigrated, as far as they could, mainly overseas.

The EU, awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, subsidises the production of agricultural products in its countries with more than one billion US dollars a day in co-operation with other Western industrialised countries. What for? They are waging an economic war just against the developing countries. The unrivalled cheap agricultural products flood the markets in the developing countries, ruin the local farmers after a very short time, force them into ruin and thus ensure that with the disappearance of the farmers, the knowledge about cultivation, rearing and care in agriculture that has been passed on over generations also dies out. Now these countries are on a drip feed of the industrial nations and are thus forced to serve the interests of foreign corporations. On the one hand, their raw materials are being plundered, and on the other, the people themselves, who are regarded as human resources by this market elite, are being plundered, as the cheapest workers in their own country or as low-wage workers forced to migrate to the so-called pull countries.

**“Brain Drain” – destruction of culture, economy and political structures**

Professionals from Poland work as working nomads in Western Europe. As a result, Poland is faced with a striking

lack of qualified employees. The IMF and the World Bank are urging the Poles to recruit the missing workers from Ukraine, while Ukraine is to get the workers from Kazakhstan. And so on! This applies to all countries that allow large companies, acting like to spread in their countries and to subordinate the state system. The IMF and the World Bank are taking on advisory functions.

The consequences for the emigration countries are obvious. The youngest and the most capable leave the country, leaving behind areas with a blatantly unbalanced age structure, areas that will sooner or later no longer be able to survive in dignity. Young medical personnel in particular are leaving Eastern European countries for the West in tens of thousands. Similar things are taking place in Africa.

This applies to all countries that allow large companies, corporations acting autocratically to spread in their countries and subordinate the state system. The IMF and the World Bank are taking on advisory functions here.

But also the immigration countries face insoluble problems, the extent of which today many politicians do not yet want to admit or even ideologically blinded strive for. Let us just take the educational task of schools. Which country will still invest in schools and education when the immigration of labour allegedly will make an expensive school system superfluous? Germany is following precisely this path with its new Immigration

Act. It neglects the education of the next generation and buys human resources all over the world. However, this has nothing to do at all with the humanistic educational tradition of *Wilhelm von Humboldt*.

**No Nations – No Borders**

With the large migration of Islamic migrants from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and other Muslim countries, a direct connection to the wars of the Western War Alliance can be observed. In addition, however, as Hofbauer expressly points out, there was the fact that at the end of 2014 the UN had stopped hunger aid especially for over 1.5 million Syrian refugees without any ado.

Only the size and the background orchestration are new. Germany’s Chancellor, in complete disregard of her oath of office and of constitutional law, not only abolished Germany’s national borders, but also suspended the Schengen regime and the Dublin order, all on her own. *Merkel* thus forced her policies on the states along the refugee route. With her “Wir schaffen das! (We can do it!)” the Chancellor created a so-called welcome culture, readily taken up by many people in Germany. These people volunteered for the care of refugees and migrants, saw the realisation of humanity and charity in the welcome culture, but nobody lost a single word about the unspeakable cycle of shooting, exploiting, escaping and helping.

Where as, others saw it as an opportunity to generate a lot of money within the framework of a newly emerging “social industry”. The provision of housing alone has burdened and continues to burden municipalities with horrendous sums, even where the rented housing has vacancies, since the contracts with the operators have been concluded for twenty years. If one lists all the costs for the migrants, one very soon reaches 47 billion euros, that is 15% of an annual German federal budget.

**An appeal not to put up with**

Hannes Hofbauer discusses many more points. If you want a profound introduction and analysis of the migration problem, we recommend this book. Hofbauer’s book is easy to read, but difficult to digest, as long as you have a heart that makes you aware of your own responsibility. His book is an appeal to initiate processes of change through enlightenment. An appeal not to put up with. Each of us can make our own contribution. This is something every reader should be aware of. •

**Why “brain drain”?**

ew. It has long been a “proven” practice of companies and states, especially industrialised countries, to save themselves the costs of training skilled workers. *Bayer Leverkusen*, for example, closed its affiliated training company in the 1980s and left the training to small and medium-sized companies. If, for example, they had then trained chemical workers, which caused horrendous costs for the training company, Bayer Leverkusen recruited them by offering a “better” hourly wage. The bottom line was an effortless gain for Bayer Leverkusen. But how long can and do the training companies that have been damaged in this way continue to maintain this practice?

What is practised between companies also happens between states: 75% of doctors trained in Mozambique worked abroad in 2000. In the southern Sahara, 28% of well-trained professionals worked abroad. In the last decade,

Ethiopia has lost 75% of its skilled workers due to the push and pull factors. The assertion frequently made by Western politicians and entrepreneurs that this phenomenon is a form of development aid because the skilled workers working abroad would transfer a lot of money to their countries of origin is, of course, far too short-sighted. It is true that in some developing countries the remittances of their relatives from abroad account for up to 15% of their budget, but the loss of development work at home is out of all proportion.

It has long been known from the USA that they buy the necessary brains and the necessary professionals in the face of their own ailing educational system all over the world. In the meantime, Germany has overtaken the USA in recruiting skilled workers abroad. The *Goethe Institutes* around the world, which have such a good reputation, play a decisive role in this.

# “Human rights must be lived”

## Peace does not reign, peace must be brought about – Part 2

by Moritz Nestor

*Current Concerns* recalled the seventieth anniversary of the proclamation of Universal Human Rights in 1948 with the editorial in the Christmas edition. 2018 should not pass without commemorating that great day, albeit with a heavy heart – and ashamedly what has become of the hope of 1948. The article ended with the question of humanity: *Where does every human being come from and how can he develop the ability to live what the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948 states in its Article 1: “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.”*

In the summer of 1998, Annemarie Buchholz-Kaiser, historian and psychotherapist, member of the *International Society of Individual Psychology*, organised a fortnight-long interdisciplinary seminar on the significance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights for the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary. From all human sciences there were contributions: On history and social backgrounds, on anthropological and philosophical foundations, on natural law, from psychological and pedagogical perspectives. Annemarie Buchholz-Kaiser declared the seminar under the motto: “To live human rights, that is our contribution as psychologists to the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights”.

One year later, the shocking thing happened: Human rights were turned into their opposite. Human rights, conceived as the protection of the individual from the aggressive state, became the weapon of the aggressive state against the individual. Allegedly, to “protect” the people of the Balkans from the “Hitler of the Balkans”, the self-proclaimed “protectors” threw bombs on the population for their alleged protection. “Human rights and war are like fire and water”, Annemarie Buchholz-Kaiser was outraged.<sup>1</sup>

We live in a bitter reality that mocks everything that the cultures of the world have actually developed in terms of humanity and the protection of life. For many people today’s political life on this “poor planet earth” is quite the opposite of what most people had to live with in 1948 after the horrors of the Second World War: Never again ...

The head of the planning staff in the US Department of State, *George Kennan*, gave the human rights a massive rejection in the same year when the American presi-

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“The state was also declared a system to be controlled among many other systems. It lost its role as the embracing umbrella of law and order for all, under which all live in legal certainty.”

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dential wife proclaimed the Declaration of Human Rights and he referred them to the world of “daydreams”:

*“Furthermore, we have about 50 per cent of the world’s wealth but only 6.3 per cent of its population. [...] In this situation, we cannot fail to be object of envy and resentment. Our real task in the coming period is to devise a pattern of relationships, which will permit us to maintain this position of disparity without positive detriment to our national security. To do so, we will have to dispense with all sentimentality and daydreaming. [...] We need not deceive ourselves that we can afford today the luxury of altruism and world benefaction [...]. We should cease to talk about vague and – for the Far East – unreal objectives such as human rights, the raising of living standards and democratisation. The day is not far off when we are going to have to deal in straight power concepts. The less we are then hampered by idealistic slogans, the better.”<sup>2</sup>*

Did Hitler, Stalin, Mussolini, Mao, Pol Pot and others express it any “better” or “worse”? What pure power politics disparagingly calls “vague” and “unrealistic goals”, we have long known very well. Hitler also despised humanity and charity as “sentimentalism”.

So where do we stand today on the path where a few “try to maintain these differences in prosperity without seriously compromising our national security”? In the beginning, in the middle, or has the collapse of the empire been heralded? *Thierry Meyssan* asked in the Christmas issue: *Where are we actually supposed to be led to?*<sup>3</sup>

They still want to undo everything, dissolve human rights, the state, and so on. Human rights have become a means of warfare, twisted into “humanitarian intervention”. This was and is the credo of the imperial great power politicians of all colours from the twentieth and twenty-first century. Even if they no longer say so, human rights, raising living standards and democratisation are, in Kennan’s words,

“vague and unrealistic goals,” a luxury, sentimentalism, idealistic slogans, daydreaming. “Sober power thinking” means: Even more advantages for a few wealthy people, in a global style.

What influences are we dealing with that are destroying the life of human rights? We know that the world is being covered with a great propaganda machinery since we have been disputing *Bernays*, *Lippmann* and others.<sup>4</sup> Anyone who has experienced the full impact of a press campaign knows what it entails. But he also knows what strengthens you and sharpens your view on social events.

### Abolition of thinking in the service of domination

This is our bitter reality: We live under the domination of an ideology that claims to absorb all sciences into its universal view of the world: There is no difference between animate and inanimate matter, there are only systems. Already the chemical bond of two atoms to a molecule is an information-processing process, a “learning” process. *Bateson* even called this a “spiritual process” in all seriousness. Atoms, molecules, stones, mountains, plants, organs, organism, individual, marriage, family, community, canton, federation, state, economy, science, education etc. – all (learning = information processing) systems, were claimed.<sup>5</sup> This was the starting point: Learning, human thinking is equated with a heating thermostat, which automatically adjusts the heating when a programmed setpoint (equal to “information”) is reached (“info processing” = “learning”).

In the seventies and eighties a whole tree of varieties emerged from this root: Game theory, synergetics, chaos theory, autopoietic (self-regulating) systems, systems biology, socio biology, deep ecology (Gaia theory) up to esoterics and New Age teachings, to name only the most important. Everything based on the assumption that everything in the world is a “system” with “feedback”, a “control loop”.<sup>6</sup> Part of it has been used fruitfully in psychology, for example, and has nothing to do with the other historical strand.

**“Human rights must be lived”**

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The greater part, however, was used as soft-power techniques under US leadership. For this purpose, the Austrian physicist *Heinz von Foerster*, a member of the so-called *Macy Group*,<sup>7</sup> was given his own laboratory financed by the US Army: The *Biological Computer Laboratory (BCL)*, where he wanted to recreate thought processes in the computer.<sup>8</sup> Thus he created the foundations of constructivism: There is no reality, it is only a construction of our brain - degraded to a computer.<sup>9</sup> The highly complicated processes in nature and society were reduced to extremely simple mathematical formulas. From these simple formulas, “models” were produced, which were then calculated by the computer.<sup>10</sup> That was the (constructed) reality or what was left of man when he was declared a machine.

**Controls instead of political self-determination**

The state was also declared a system to be controlled among many other systems. It lost its role as the embracing umbrella of law and order for all, under which all live in legal certainty. Democracy and self-determination are replaced by optimal management, “change management” and “large group interventions”, which are controlled from outside the state structure.<sup>11</sup> The people get “future workshops” as a playground for “participation”. An illusion of democracy as a substitute for the disintegrated real state structure, so that it does not rebel. Democracy, sovereignty, self-determination, government – in short, the democratic constitutional state of the enlightenment with its division of powers was demonised as antiquated. Excluded from statehood, man is increasingly losing his citizenship in all real social areas in which real private and political life always takes place. The state as a community, through which the people living in it form a citizen community, is gradually dissolving. Nationals become members of systems, for example corporations, thus deprived of the protective framework of equality of rights and self-determination in their lives as citizens.

This “new thinking” will gradually “transform” our European societies. This actually is completely alien to us Europeans. It contradicts everything of what it means to be a man and has nothing to do with us as human beings.

**Democracy needs a lived community spirit**

In the thunderstorm of globalisation, it is therefore urgently necessary to return to value-oriented associations, to initiatives and possibilities of direct, not “controlled”

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“In the thunderstorm of globalisation, it is therefore urgently necessary to return to value-oriented associations, to initiatives and possibilities of direct, not ‘controlled’ discussion and encounter from person to person, to regain the political sphere, the good faith, so that people again get their own voice ‘from the bottom up’, and to strengthen existing self-organisation.”

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discussion and encounter from person to person, to regain the political sphere, the good faith, so that people again get their own voice “from the bottom up”, and to strengthen existing self-organisation. What is needed again is the strengthening of families, the revival of schools and education, efforts for drug abstinence from the people, the lost protection of life at all levels, help for self-help and increased reconstruction of self-sufficiency at all levels of culture.

It is not a question of weighing up usefulness, of power or partnerships of convenience, of accumulating votes. Rather, it is about communities built up by people for

rights, but about an inner struggle for them.<sup>13</sup> The struggle for human rights always consisted inseparably of steps towards a far-away coexistence strived for: To set humanity against injustice, to enlighten, strengthen and educate people, so that in the distant future once more humanity can be lived among all people. This distant ideal of lived humanity was hoped for by all those who, in the long history of human rights, continued to encourage the process: That man “in much later times” will “express a sense of community like breathing,” as Alfred Adler put it in his time.<sup>14</sup> For they all knew: Human rights are more than a rational philosophi-

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“It is not a question of weighing up usefulness, of power or partnerships of convenience, of accumulating votes. Rather, it is about communities built up by people for people, about personal shaping of society and culture, about building up and reviving honest, objective encounters from person to person in the political debate – instead of ‘communication’ and ‘controlled democracy’ à la Bernays and Lippmann.”

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people, about personal shaping of society and culture, about building up and reviving honest, objective encounters from person to person in the political debate – instead of “communication” and “controlled democracy” à la Bernays and Lippmann.

**Lived Humanity – a perpetual human task**

*Alfred Adler*, the founder of *individual psychology*, wrote in 1933 in his late work “*Sinn des Lebens*” (What life could mean to you): “It is hard to ignore that humanity knows about this problem and is permeated by it. [...] It lives in us and seeks to assert itself, it does not seem to be strong enough to prove itself despite all resistance.<sup>12</sup> Humanity and human rights have also been formulated by philosophers. But already the example of *Las Casas* shows that it was always about much more than only the mere formal respect of human

cal requirement, they are no automatisms, they do not fall from heaven, they are no extra human entity.

The primary goal of *Annemarie Buchholz-Kaiser*’s educational work in individual psychology was to make this respect for human freedom and dignity, which correspond programmatically with Article 1 of the Declaration of Human Rights, emotionally tangible in human coexistence. To strengthen, to educate, to promote, to renew and to carry on this compassionate humanity anchored in emotional life. The rational demand to respect freedom and dignity needs human feeling and a will in order to be effective among human beings. Thus, it becomes emotionally tangible for children and young people, to enable them to anchor it in their own feelings.

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“The rational demand to respect freedom and dignity needs human feeling and a will in order to be effective among human beings.”

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### “Human rights must be lived”

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So what are human rights in my inner life? What does my interaction (in me and with me) have to do with what I do as a father, teacher, mother, educator, doctor, citizen, etc.? My actions should help to create the conditions for more social connection among us. The hope for the distant goal of a dignified coexistence for all is no cheap optimism.

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“The spirit of man is nothing without the body. But it steers the body, helps to shape it – for better or for worse. Not my brain thinks. I think with my brain. And it is the human spirit – the human feeling and thinking that develops only in an interpersonal relationship – that is the decisive power of production in history.”

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### What is man?

That is why it is of the utmost importance to continue asking: What is man really? The position of individual psychology is: Man is neither a machine nor a reflex-controlled animal. He is endowed with reason, compassion and will. From birth, he actively shapes life with his “creative power” in interaction with his fellow human beings. The spirit of man is nothing without the body. But it steers the body, helps to shape it – for better or for worse. Not my brain thinks. I think with my brain. And it is the human spirit – the human feeling and thinking that develops only in an interpersonal relationship – that is the decisive power of production in history. Any human being could be like that. That can be a human being. How do we come up with the idea of wanting to “digitalise” that?

The task of culture is to make these possibilities, which are inherent in us, blossom. Even the child feels its way into this unknown life, forwards, in the relationship with its parents. It makes its experiences, and each experience is again a step, a conclusion for the next step, a reason for the next experience. So gradually, in the relationship between the parents and their child, a characteristic individual lifestyle is formed, an emotionally deeply rooted image of oneself and the world and how to become happy in it, how to master this life. It is an expression of the community between child and parents. The child itself, with its own creative power<sup>15</sup>, is “an artist to itself”, said *Johann Gottlieb Herder*.<sup>16</sup> It is always oriented towards the

human relationship and its humanisation is a part of this relationship.

Not the: “I only love you if you love me too”. But much more to ward off violence and to guide it. To set limits against mistakes. But not to be the father or the teacher who abuses the child for his own recognition, but someone who can guide the child to become a human being. That is help for self-help.

That I contribute my part to the fact that coming generations should have it bet-

ter one day. Even if I will not experience it – have I not also been able and allowed to harvest the fruits of the seeds that my ancestors planted? But in reverence of the time it took, I also know that we cannot imagine being able to solve the most difficult problem of men in a generation, namely that we understand each other better.

Another principle of individual psychology is that one does not change other people, but oneself. Alfred Adler therefore spoke of the “education of educators”.<sup>17</sup> Education and self-education are the two sides of the same thing. He who wants to educate, he who wants to be effective, takes himself into account.<sup>18</sup> The recognition of man begins with self-knowledge. And self-knowledge is followed by self-education, practice, the formation of a new attitude. Formerly it was termed virtue.

The most important step of man begins with self-education, wrote the Munich individual psychologist *Leonhard Seif* in 1930 on the occasion of the 60<sup>th</sup> birthday of his teacher Alfred Adler, is

“[...] *the step from theory to practice, from self-knowledge to its realisation in everyday life. Which means the serious dismantling of ones aspiration for prestige, the honest willingness to renounce precisely what had appeared to him or her so far as the meaning of life, admiration and pampering, and to allow precisely what had been the most terrible thing to him or her, the active affirmation of the justified demands of living together ('logic of life', Adler) and the criticism of its modes of behaviour, both without*

*feelings of inferiority, without self-pity, without taking oneself and the others tragically, without imagining any more that one's human value is at stake. In short, he or she ought no longer evade the practical test.*”<sup>19</sup>

Then I act as a fellow human being – where I stand, where life has put me. This sheds light on what Annemarie Buchholz-Kaiser meant in 1998 when she said: “To live Human rights, this is our contribution to the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights”.

<sup>1</sup> cf. Becker, Jörg & Beham, Mira. *Operation Balkan. Werbung für Krieg und Tod. (Operation Balkan. Advertising for war and death.)* Baden-Baden 2006

cf. Loquai, Heinz. *Der Kosovo-Konflikt. Wege in einen vermeidbaren Krieg. (The Kosovo conflict. Ways into an avoidable war.)* Baden-Baden 2000 see also: Loquai, Heinz. *Weichenstellungen für einen Krieg.* Internationales Krisenmanagement und die OSZE im Kosovo-Konflikt. (*Setting the course for a war.* International Crisis Management and the OSCE in the Kosovo Conflict.) Baden-Baden 2003

<sup>2</sup> Kennan, George. Quoted by Wertz, Armin. *Die Weltbeherrschter.* Erste vollständige Chronik aller US-amerikanischen Operationen in unabhängigen Staaten. (*The world rulers.* First complete chronicle of all US operations in independent states. Updated and expanded new edition. Frankfurt/Main 2017, p. 6

<sup>3</sup> Meyssan, Thierry. Whose debtor is Emmanuel Macron? *Current Concerns* No. 29/30, 6 January 2019

<sup>4</sup> Ulrich Kienzle gives a good overview in the “Preface” and Mark Crispin Miller in the “Epilogue” of: Bernays, Edward. *Propaganda* [1928]. Orange Press 2013;

see also: Tribelhorn, Marc. Meister der Manipulation – wie Edward Bernays mit raffinierter PR-Arbeit unsere Konsumkultur veränderte. (*Masters of Manipulation – how Edward Bernays changed our consumer culture with his sophisticated PR work.*) In: *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 14 July 2018;

see also: Chomsky, Noam & Herman, Edward S. *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* [1988]. New York 2002 [The Consensus Factory. Noam Chomsky and the Media, Documentary 1992]

<sup>5</sup> One gets a good insight into this way of thinking with: Klepsch, Andrea & Gottwald, Franz-Theo (Ed.). *Tiefenökologie (Deep ecology.)* Diederichs. 1995

<sup>6</sup> Creation by Norbert Wiener, co-worker of Bateson at the Macy conferences; cf. Wiener, Norbert. *Mensch und Menschmaschine. Kybernetik und Gesellschaft. (The Human Use of Human Beings – Cybernetics and Society 1955);* 3rd ed. Frankfurt am Main/Bonn 1966 cf. Bluma, Lars. *Norbert Wiener und die Entstehung der Kybernetik im Zweiten Weltkrieg (Norbert Wiener and the Emergence of Cybernetics in the Second World War.)* (= Kritische Informatik, Vol. 2). Münster 2005 [Dissertation University Bochum 2004]

<sup>7</sup> For a quick overview: Wikipedia. *Macy Conferences.* [de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Macy\\_Konferenzen](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Macy_Konferenzen) (accessed 4 February 2019). Foerster, Heinz von; Mead, Margaret; Teuber, Hans Lukas (Ed.). *Protocols 6-10* New York: Josiah Macy, Jr. Foundation [Cybernetics: Transactions of the Sixth Conference. 1949; Cybernetics: Transactions of the Seventh Conference. 1950; Cybernetics: Transactions of the Eighth Conference. 1952; Cybernetics: Transactions of the Ninth Conference. 1953; Cybernetics: Transactions of the Tenth Conference. 1955]

cf. Pias, Claus. *Cybernetics. The Macy Conferences 1946-1953. The Complete Transactions.* diaphanes, Zurich and others 2016;

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“Another principle of individual psychology is that one does not change other people, but oneself.”

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Letter to  the Editor

## Introduction of the electronic health card (eGK) – unsafe health files

The electronic health card (eGK) is to be introduced across the board in Germany as of 2021. From this point on, the health insurance funds must provide each patient with an electronic patient file (ePA). This will make x-ray images, findings, emergency data, medication plans or laboratory data digitally accessible, for example, for treating physicians.

Imagine, with the help of the eGK you have all data on your chip, and thus patients and their physicians as well as health insurance companies and pharmacies would have a complete access to all the data. The insured person can also access the ePA with his smartphone. A private company is to develop a telematics infrastructure (TI) that enables the access of the eGK. Here, too, there is a risk of unauthorised access to sensitive files.

Many citizens are not yet aware of the consequences of introducing the eGK. It can come to a multiple abuse by hackers or professional attackers. The *Chaos-Computer-Club* has already pointed out that the problem with better passwords will not be solved, the system is “perforated”! The problem of liability arises at this point.

90% of the citizens who are subject to social security contributions – health insurance being an essential part of this – are affected. The interests of patients must be safeguarded and protected. Not those of the “actors” who are scrambling to set technical standards. Private insurance companies are also considering creating such a system.

The “attackers” will always keep trying. After all, these are very important and confidential data. How about politicians

setting a “good example” and filling their personal ePAs with sensitive data?

In view of the billions in expenditure the assertion that citizens only have to provide their data on a voluntary basis is nothing more than an appeasement to avoid protests.

There is too much justified criticism about the introduction of the eGK. Many physicians argue that the current system should stand by and that important health information should be stored in paper form.

Jörg Sieg, Gottmadingen (DE)

Informative links:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RIIzrxrxIE;>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=82Hfh1AltiQ>

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

### “Human rights must be lived”

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# Alfred Escher and the democracy movement – Paving the way for modern Switzerland

by Dr rer. publ. Werner Wüthrich

Every year provides an opportunity to recall historical events that have had a significant impact on the economy and politics. This is also the case in 2019: two hundred years ago – on 20 February 1819 – Alfred Escher, for example, was born. Today, his statue stands prominently on a four-metre-high granite pedestal in front of Zurich Main Station. Escher was an influential politician in the Canton of Zurich and in the Confederation, an economic leader and a railway entrepreneur.

One hundred and fifty years ago – on 18 April 1869 – the voters of the Canton of Zurich voted in favour of a new constitution that contained numerous popular rights and was truly revolutionary. The following lines are dedicated to both events.

Alfred Escher (1819–1882)<sup>1</sup> came from an old, influential family of councillors and guilds in the city of Zurich. He was 36 years in the Cantonal Council, 34 years in the National Council, seven years Government Councillor, founder and head of the *Nordostbahn* (the first major railway company in Switzerland), founder and chairman of the board of *Schweizerische Kreditanstalt* (now Credit Suisse, CS), Founder and supervisory board member of the *Schweizerische Rentenanstalt* cooperative (now Swiss Life), president of the management and board of directors of the *Gotthardbahn-Gesellschaft*, responsible as a member of the government for education, co-founder of the *Swiss Federal Institut of Polytechnic* (now ETH) and lifelong member of the school board and many other things – most of them at the same time. Escher was probably the most important and influential economic leader and politician in the history of the federal state.

As a liberal politician, he defended representative democracy and dominated politics like few other politicians before and after him. He became the main opponent of the opposing Zurich democracy movement, which demanded co-determination and popular rights and fought against the “Escher system”.

## Alfred Escher as economic leader and liberal politician

Alfred Escher belonged to the liberal party that determined politics in the years before and after the founding of the federal state in 1848.<sup>2</sup> He was disturbed by the fact that railway construction had hardly begun in Switzerland at that time. Great Britain already had a rail network of



Scene at the south portal of the Gotthard tunnel during the construction works. (Picture exhibition Alfred Escher, catalogue ISBN 3-908225-08-6)

10,000 kilometres. Germany and France were also far ahead. The industrial revolution was in full swing, and new means of transport were essential to transport raw materials such as cotton, grain, iron and energy sources such as coal quickly and to deliver the finished products back to more distant markets. This was particularly important for Switzerland because it had neither raw materials nor large markets where it could sell its industrial products. Tourism was also still in its infancy. The few tourists still travelled through Switzerland and its mountains in horse-drawn carriages. This backwardness had to be made up as quickly as possible – that was Alfred Escher's central concern.

Only – who should take over the direction? In 1848 and in the years that followed, the Confederation only had a budget of a few million francs and first had to set up its own administration. The railways only had an office in the Post and Building Department. It was therefore only natural for Escher that private companies, in collaboration with the cantons and communes, should take over the construction of the railway facilities. The cantons were to grant the licences, which the Confederation approved as the coordination office and supervisory body. The latter, however, reserved the right to buy back the railways at a later date. Escher succeeded in convincing most of the National and Cantonal Councillors of this concept, so that they gave the go-ahead.

From the very beginning, Escher had everything in mind that was needed to set up the railway system. In 1853 he founded the *Nordostbahn*. The Cantons of Zurich and Thurgau and the cities of Zurich and Winterthur each contributed CHF 4 million, private shareholders CHF 6 million and foreign investors CHF 5 million. Just a few weeks later, construction crews began laying the rails from Zurich to Lake Constance. Ten other railway companies were established in other cantons.

Escher realised that the topography of Switzerland required a relatively large number of tunnels and bridges. But the engineers were missing. In 1854 he was significantly involved in the foundation of the Swiss Federal Institute of Polytechnic in Zurich (today ETH) and was also elected to the school council. He invited professors from abroad, so that soon a first group of engineers could be trained. In 1855 already 71 students followed the lessons, in 1860 there were 336.

Because the public funds of the cantons and communes were far from sufficient and Escher and the railway companies did not want to become dependent on foreign banks, Escher founded the *Schweizerische Kreditanstalt* in 1856, which specialised in the issue of securities (shares and bonds). (The savings banks' funds were not suitable for this high-risk business.)

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**Escher as a politician**

Alfred Escher held many political posts alongside the chairmanship of the Nordostbahn and the Schweizerische Kreditanstalt. He spent many years in the city parliament and in the parliament of the Canton of Zurich. As a member of the Government Council, he was responsible for the education system and established a number of reforms. For 34 years he was a member of the National Council and acted as President for several periods. He succeeded with mastery in building up networks that supported him, both in cantonal and federal politics, so that he could quickly push his plans through and implement them. Everything he took in hand succeeded – and, above all, a quickly. Within 10 years he made up leeway in railway construction between Switzerland and the rest of the world, and Zurich became the centre of Switzerland in terms of transport infrastructure and economy during Escher's time. Escher personified pioneering spirit, free enterprise and economic awakening like hardly anyone else. Many of today's large companies were founded during these years. In the years before 1848, Zurich had been much smaller than Basel, Bern or Geneva. That was supposed to change fairly soon.

Alfred Escher was part of the liberal-representative regime of his time. However, one cannot do him justice if one calls him a grabby capitalist or a "railway baron" who has only the stock market price and his profit in mind. Escher was popular, was repeatedly elected to political posts, sang in the church choir of his

church in Wollishofen, and the poet *Gottfried Keller* was a regular guest at Escher's. He undoubtedly had shares in "his" Nordostbahn and "his" Kreditanstalt, but by no means so many that he could have determined as a sole shareholder. In addition, he was rich by birth, and he would not have had to burden himself with the many almost superhuman tasks and public duties. It is well known that he waived his salary as president of the Nordostbahn in difficult years. Nor did he intervene when his Nordostbahn was placing its tracks through the middle of his private garden (today's Belvoir).

**Emergence of an opposing democracy movement**

Although Escher was repeatedly elected to his many posts, a strong opposition grew against the "Prinzimate Escher", against the almost princely power Escher ruled the Canton of Zurich and was able to do almost everything he wanted thanks to his many contacts. This didn't fit into Switzerland's cooperative understanding of the state. Politically, Escher was a typical representative of the liberal-representative regime. In the canton and in the Confederation, he firmly expressed the opinion that regular referendums slowed down political processes, hindered progress and were voted on by the ordinary people without sufficient expertise. And he stuck to this opinion for the rest of his life.

At that time, the cantonal parliament and government were almost exclusively composed of representatives of the Liberal Party, which had dominated the representative democracy in the canton since 1831. The democracy movement, as the opponents called themselves, came



Portrait of Alfred Escher around 1875.  
(picture wikipedia)

from almost all classes of the population: Craftsmen, farmers, teachers, professors, editors, entrepreneurs and working man. They all felt that the principle of popular sovereignty had stunted in the Escher system. The more dominant Escher's influence became, the more the opposition increased. Traditional tensions between the city of Zurich as the centre and the rural regions also emerged.

The various opponents suffered from all sorts of hardships and rightly felt that the government was busy with "major topics" and did not support sufficiently their concerns. It was also disturbing that the population had no say in the choice of routes for the railways. It was decisive for the population and their economic situation throughout Switzerland whether their commune received a railway station or not – or may be later. Conflicts were inevitable.

**The Winterthur local newspaper "Landbote" as the centre of the democracy movement**

The intellectual centre of the democracy movement was the newspaper editorial office of the "Landbote" in Winterthur with its editor *Salomon Bleuler* – the *École de Wintertour*, as it was named in French-speaking Switzerland.<sup>2</sup> Bleuler often fenced with the journalists of the "Neue Zürcher Zeitung", which was affiliated with the liberal government. The city of Winterthur itself belonged to the "rural area" and was often in opposition to the borough of Zurich. *Karl Bürkli*, an early socialist and president of the *Konsumverein* (coop), was the spokesman of the movement there.<sup>3</sup> Workers also participated, but were clearly in the minority.

**The Promoting of Cooperatives as an important postulate in the Zurich Constitutional Council**

The early socialist *Karl Bürkli*, in particular, was vehemently committed to cooperatives. The minutes of Karl Bürkli's speech on the cooperative article circulated as a flyer. He called for state support for cooperatives and the establishment of the "Kantonal Bank" to help craftsmen and farmers and the numerous cooperatives that were being set up to obtain favourable loans.

The cooperative movement – this was Karl Bürkli's hope – would prevail on a broad front against capitalism. However, the cooperatives would not have to be subsidised by the state, but only supported in the procurement of initial capital. For him, the path and long-term goal was the gradual "republicanisation of industry by workers' cooperatives" or the formation of "productive associations".<sup>1</sup> However, he did not win a majority for this – but he did win a majority for the state pro-

motion of cooperatives. According to Bürkli, direct democracy replace class rule with integral popular rule. The people make far fewer mistakes in factual votes than in elections.<sup>2</sup>

The promotion of cooperatives is still a tradition today: in 2012, the voters of the city of Zurich decided by a large majority to promote cooperative housing construction and thus to increase the proportion of cooperative apartments in the city's total rented apartments from an already high 24 to 33 per cent. Shortly afterwards, a popular initiative was adopted in the canton which demanded that a fund be set up to promote non-profit housing construction.

<sup>1</sup> cit. in *Kölz II 2004*, p. 78

<sup>2</sup> Roca, René (Ed.), *Frühsozialismus und moderne Schweiz* (Early Socialism and Modern Switzerland) Basel 2018, pp. 81

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For a long time one could not speak of a democratic party, as there were no structures at all.

In 1865 the Cantonal Parliament laid the constitutional groundwork for a political transformation of the greatest scale, which could almost be described as a revolution.<sup>4</sup> The Canton of Zurich was lagging behind other cantons and the Confederation in terms of popular rights. The liberal constitutional state with individual freedom rights, separation of powers and representative democracy had hardly changed since 1831. The Federal Constitution of 1848, on the other hand, already provided that 50,000 citizens could request by signing a referendum on the question of whether the constitution should be renewed in general. In 1865, the cantonal parliament of Zurich introduced this possibility in the Canton of Zurich, and the people agreed to the new article of the constitution. 10,000 signatures were sufficient to demand a total revision of the constitution. If the people agreed, a further ballot would be held to elect a 222-member constitutional council with the task of drawing up a new constitution. A demanding procedure, not only at that time!

#### Via the democratic revolution towards pure democracy

In 1867 there came movement into the politics. A committee of 15 distinguished men from all over the canton was formed. On 15 December 1867, they called for four large popular assemblies (Landsgemeinden) – to Zurich, Uster, Winterthur and Bülach. Despite rain and snow, about 20,000 citizens gathered and demanded a total revision of the constitution. Three times as many as the ten thousand signatures requested were quickly collected, and a ballot was held on 23 January 1868. The polling was a high 90 per cent. The people voted clearly with over 80 per cent in favour of the total revision of the constitution and also voted yes to the election of a constitutional council. The message was clear, Salomon Bleuler wrote in large letters in the Landbote: "We want a political regeneration of the canton!"

Now things were moving fast. As early as March 1868, the 222-member Constitutional Council was elected – above all people from the democratic movement. They immediately started to draft a new constitution. A consultation was held throughout the canton, so that everyone could express his or her wishes and concerns. "Referendum and initiative," wrote the Landbote in May 1868, "form the two pivotal points of the political-democratic movement and the decisive demands of the people."<sup>5</sup>



*People's Assembly in Uster 1867 directed against Escher's "system" (picture exhibition Alfred Escher, catalogue ISBN 3-908225-08-6)*

The work of the Constitutional Council was public. Thus the speakers not only spoke to their colleagues in the Council, but also to the public, and the newspapers published minutes and commentaries.

What was new – as Bleuler wrote in the Landbote – was the idea of establishing a pure popular rule in a large, economically well-developed canton. Landsgemeinden had long existed in smaller cantons, and they had proven to be effective. While there the votes and elections took place in one public place (for example on the Landsgemeindeplatz in Glarus) and were voted on publicly, in the large Canton of Zurich this was supposed to take place decentral and secretly in the numerous communes. With the new communication tool of telegraphy, the individual results could quickly be communicated to form an overall result. Such was the plan.

#### Constitution of the Canton of Zurich of 1869

The Constitution contained the following key points:<sup>6</sup>

##### *People's sovereignty and people's rights*

a) While the Constitution of 1831 had still stipulated that the power of the state would be exercised by the cantonal parliament as the representative of the people, Article 1 of the new Constitution read as follows:

"The power of the state is based on the entirety of the people. It is exercised directly by the active citizens and indirectly by the authorities and officials". (Article 1)

b) The people, i.e. the majority of the voting citizens, elect the cantonal government directly (Art. 37). At the level of the districts, the civil servants and the governors are also elected directly by the people (Art. 44) – also the judges. At the communal level, even the clergy and tea-

chers of the elementary school are elected by "community members" and confirmed after six years (Art. 64).

c) The Parliament subordinates to the referendum "all constitutional amendments, laws and concordats" as well as factual votes and financial decisions which exceed CHF 250,000 or CHF 20,000 in the case of annually recurring expenses (Art. 30, 31, 40).

d) Collecting 5,000 signatures, the people have the right of initiative both in constitutional matters and for laws. It can therefore initiate the legislative process and also vote on the final result in an obligatory manner. It therefore had the first word, if it so wanted, and in any case the last (Art. 29).

##### *Social policy*

The Constitutional Council had also done pioneering work in the socio-political field and provided for impressive innovations:

a) Progressive taxation is introduced (Art. 19).

b) A state bank, the Zürcher Kantonalbank, should take greater account of the needs of farmers and craftsmen (Art. 24).

c) Elementary education becomes compulsory and free of charge (Art. 62).

d) The canton shall promote cooperatives as based capacity building and enact laws for the protection of workers (Art. 23).

e) The coalition ban is abolished – a prerequisite for the formation of trade unions. (Art. 3)

##### *Municipal liberties*

The new principles should also be fully applied at communal level. This was stated in Article 51:

"In particular, the communal assemblies are responsible for: supervising the departments of the communal adminis-

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tration assigned to them, determining the annual estimates, approving the annual accounts, approving taxes, approving expenditure exceeding an amount to be determined by them, and electing their respective heads [...].

At the time, this constitution was a truly revolutionary reform. It did not consist of a number of individual demands, but was an overall concept that confirmed liberal achievements such as equality of rights, individual freedoms and separation of powers, and supplemented and combined them with far-reaching popular rights and socio-political innovations. This reform also included economic freedom. Article 21 read:

"The exercise of every profession in art and science, trade and industry is free. Reserved are the legal and law-enforcement regulations which are required for the public good".

**Historic Vote on 18 April 1869**

65 per cent of the voters agreed to the reform. The result was celebrated with firecrackers and public festivals. Constitutional law expert *Alfred Kölz* commented: "In a far-reaching regulation Zurich was the first canton to include economic and social matters in its constitutional law." The newspaper "Landbote" praised the event as the most significant event in the field of newer state institutions. *Bleuler* wrote in the "Landbote" that the new constitution was

*"in a word the first consistent attempt to implement the idea of pure rule of people in a form corresponding to modern cultural conditions and to replace the venerable Landsgemeinde suitable only for small communes by an institution whose cornerstone is the secret ballot within the communities. [...] 18 April introduced this principle into state life of the Canton of Zurich, and we welcome this day with the full glow of joyful trust, based on the deep conviction in the beneficial effect of the new people's rule."*<sup>7</sup>

The great democratic upheaval in the Canton of Zurich came true because the ground was already prepared. Worth mentioning here are similar democratic movements in other cantons at the same time, the cooperative understanding of the Confederation, the tradition of *Landsgemeinde* (rural commune) in a number of smaller cantons, which had functioned well for centuries, and furthermore, earlier approaches to direct democracy in various cantons.<sup>8</sup>

**Persistent political high of the Democrats**

In May 1869 for the first time the government was elected by the people, and change was likely to occur. The liberals, who in the past decades according to the liberal-representative constitution had almost arbitrarily determined political life as representatives of the people, were deselected and replaced by the democrats. Moreover, the democrats provided the two members of the Council of States. Furthermore, the majority of the Zurich representation in the National Council were Democrats. They obtained an absolute majority in the cantonal elections. The "Landbote" changed from an oppositional regional newspaper into a newspaper that was read with interest throughout the canton and also in other cantons. It was one of the very few revolutions that took place democratically and without a single rifle shot. (Almost at the same time, the people of Paris tried to introduce a new order with people's rights. The Commune de Paris of 1871 ended in a bloodshed.)

However, it is striking that Alfred Escher and his "system" – although "big losers" of the historic vote of 1869 and in the following elections – was re-elected to the National Council with a brilliant result in the same year (and again and again thereafter). Furthermore, he was to take on new major tasks at federal level with the construction of the Gotthard tunnel. This shows that discontent was not so much about the person of Escher but about the "system". The people of Zurich wanted to change the structures of the state. At the same time they paid tribute to Alfred Escher and his achievements. The Liberals and Democrats got closer to each other in the following years, they administered the canton jointly and later joined forces to form the Liberal Party (*Freisinnig-Demokratische Partei FDP*). *FDP Switzerland* was not founded until 1894. We can also find the Democrats on the left side of the political spectrum: The *Social-Democratic Party of Switzerland SPS* was founded in 1888.

**Construction of the Gotthardtunnel**

In the 1870s, as president and organiser of the *Gotthard Society*, Escher took final responsibility for the construction of the Gotthardtunnel. The Gotthard contract he negotiated intended construction costs, calculated at CHF 187 million (at that time's value), to be partly covered by public subsidies. Italy contributed 45 million, Germany 20 million and Switzerland 20 million. In addition, shares for 34 million and bonds for 68 million were issued by the Gotthard Society and the *Kreditanstalt*. Escher took a big risk – even the investors (who subscribed for shares or ac-

quired bonds) could not be sure whether they would get their money back – because nobody knew what would be found inside the mountain. These risks were reflected in the stock price of the *Schweizerische Kreditanstalt*. Stocks rose if the construction teams made good progress. Stocks fell in the event of difficulties like water intrusions, strikes of the workers or after cost overruns of 40 million had become known. However, within eight years the construction work was completed on schedule. The construction workers and the engineers trained at the "Poly" (Swiss Federal Institute of Polytechnic) had done an excellent job. The two construction teams, who worked together for years in the 15-kilometer main tunnel with simple machines and tools, met in the middle of the Gotthard with a deviation of only a few centimetres. However, the safety precautions were still inadequate. There were many accidents with numerous fatalities. In 1882, the central north-south link with 62 tunnels, 34 bridges and 10 viaducts was inaugurated – a major event and a celebration for Switzerland and the whole of Europe. Further bold railway projects were to be realised in the following years by entrepreneurs who emulated Escher – such as the Bernina Railway at 2250 m or the Jungfrau Railway at 3500 m.

**Alfred Escher as a political challenge**

The person of Alfred Escher embodied pioneering spirit, private initiative and free enterprise, economic awakening and dynamism, good education at school and at work, technological progress and the courage to tread new paths in banking, while the democracy movement advocated power-sharing, the consistent separation of powers and direct participation and responsibility of the people, laws for the protection of workers, social and regional balance and greater involvement of the concerns of all levels of the population. – Both were powerful attitudes of mind in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, the tensions did not end in class struggle – as Marxist historical view had suggested. Rather, the two currents converged on cooperative soil of the Swiss Confederation, complemented each other in political play and prepared the ground for the development of modern Switzerland.

**Liberal-democratic Economic Concept of Switzerland**

Five years after the adoption of the new Zurich Constitution and after similar revisions in other cantons, the Councillors totally revised the Federal Constitution in 1874. Like the Zurich people, they combined economic freedom with direct de-

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mocracy and developed a coherent, liberal-democratic economic concept for the whole country, which is unique in the world and still applies today. It is based on three pillars:

1. Economic freedom (at that time freedom of trade and commerce), which sees itself as an individual freedom and fundamental right.
2. The principle of economic freedom: It requires that the essential regulatory framework must also be free. In concrete terms, this means that deviations from freedom are possible – but only with an obligatory constitutional vote.
3. Direct democracy: In addition, the people can largely determine the individual concrete cornerstones of the regulatory framework themselves via the constitutional right of referendum and initiative (since 1891) – for example in a factory law at that time, today in agricultural policy or currently in company taxes – and they can also set the course in economic policy themselves (which has happened several times).

The people said Yes on 19 April 1874. This laid the constitutional foundations for the more than 200 economic and social votes that have since taken place in the Confederation (Linder 2010) – on issues of economic order, the world of work, education in schools and professions, industrial policy, social insurance, taxes and finance, agriculture and the environment, banking and monetary affairs, immigration and also on economic contracts with other countries. Countless votes at cantonal and communal level were added. The concept was repeatedly tested and sometimes questioned in principle – for example by the EU, which wants to involve Switzerland even more politically with a framework agreement, ignoring the fact that its centralist behaviour and policy from above do not fit in well with a free economic concept that is based directly on the people.

An overall judgement is possible after 150 years: Today's order is not perfect, but it is impressive, and Switzerland is in an excellent position by international standards – so the highly efficient and impressive kind of economic policy that Alfred Escher initiated may be as good as it is, but it really succeeds if the people think along and share responsibility for it – for which the democracy movement paved the way in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This will be shown in the following by means of a concrete example:

### Railways – private or state-run?

From the very beginning, the "Staatsbähnler" (state railway supporter) in Berne repeatedly demanded that the railways be operated by the state. It was not until 1891, however, that a concrete project was presented, when the private railway companies had almost completed the construction of today's railway network of around 3,000 kilometres: Federal Councillor *Stampfli* proposed in a first step to the Federal Councils to nationalise the *Schweizerische Centralbahn* – the second largest railway company in Switzerland after the Nordostbahn. It covered the Mittelland and led from Basel through the Hauenstein Tunnel via Lucerne to the Gotthard, thus also having a strategic importance in political terms. In addition, the Centralbahn was one of the main shareholders of Alfred Escher's Gotthard Society. There were good reasons to merge the networks of the various railway companies and have them operated by the federal government. Parliament agreed and a referendum was held.

On 6.12.1891 the "Staatsbähnler" together with the Parliament and the Federal Council experienced a nasty surprise. The sovereign voted quite differently than they had hoped. More than 60 per cent of voters and most cantons rejected nationalisation. The results in individual cantons were interesting. The electors of the Canton of Zurich voted against with almost 80 per cent, the Canton of Berne supported with 60 per cent. The four Gotthard Cantons of Ticino, Uri, Schwyz, Obwalden and Nidwalden all voted with over 90 per cent against nationalisation. They were obviously not prepared to give up control of the Gotthard, which had played a central role in their lives and history for centuries. The Canton of Valais even voted against with 95 per cent, the Canton of Schaffhausen with 91 per cent. The reasons may have been quite different. Federal Councillor *Stampfli* was disappointed and resigned. It became apparent that Switzerland was by no means (and still is not) a homogeneous economic area. If Parliament had simply enforced nationalisation, as is customary in a representative democracy, there would certainly have been serious political unrest.

However, the mood changed: just seven years later – on 20 February 1898 – the sovereign agreed with more than 60 per cent to an even more far-reaching bill that would lead to the foundation of the Swiss Federal Railways SBB. The polling was over 80 per cent, in the Canton of Zurich even 89 per cent, which shows the im-

portance of the proposition.<sup>9</sup> Four of the largest private railway companies – the Centralbahn, the Nordostbahn, the Vereinigte Schweizerbahnen and the Jura-Simplon-Bahn and a little later also the Gotthardbahn – were to be sold to the federal government for around CHF 1.2 billion. Contributed to the clear people's Yes had a highly unpopular strike. The employees of the Nordostbahn, which at that time covered almost 40 per cent of the Swiss rail network, went on strike for three days (from 11 to 13 March 1897) and paralysed almost all rail traffic nationwide. All wheels stood still, and the familiar noise in the stations fell silent. (Today strikes are forbidden in rail traffic.)

The mood had changed significantly in just a few years. After the second vote, a large part of the rail network previously built by private companies was sold to the federal government. The Gotthard cantons were still against it – like the Canton of Valais and other cantons in French-speaking Switzerland. But the decision was accepted and the way was clear for the foundation of SBB in 1902. Today, there are still three types of railways: private railways as public limited companies in which private individuals, communes and cantons participate, cantonal urban railways (S-Bahn) and the SBB. Today they are all interconnected in a timetable and tariff association. – The railway system enjoys a high reputation throughout Switzerland, and the Zurich region now has the densest railway network in the world – not least thanks to the man whose statue stands in front of Zurich Central Station. •

<sup>1</sup> Jung, Joseph. *Alfred Escher 1819–1882, Aufstieg, Macht, Tragik*. Zürich 2007, p. 162–287

<sup>2</sup> Guggenbühl, Gottfried. *Der Landbote 1836–1936. Hundert Jahre Politik im Spiegel der Presse*. Winterthur 1936, pp. 125

<sup>3</sup> Schiedt, Hans-Ulrich. *Die Welt neu erfinden, Karl Bürkli (1823–1901) und seine Schriften*. Zürich 2002

<sup>4</sup> Kölz, Alfred. *Neue Schweizerische Verfassungsgeschichte II. Ihre Grundlinien in Bund und Kantonen seit 1848*. Berne 2004 – mit Quellenband, pp. 48

<sup>5</sup> Guggenbühl loc.cit. p. 196

<sup>6</sup> Kölz loc.cit. p. 63–74

<sup>7</sup> Guggenbühl loc.cit. p. 203

<sup>8</sup> Roca, René. *Wenn die Volkssouveränität wirklich eine Wahrheit werden soll ... Die schweizerische direkte Demokratie in Theorie und Praxis*. Zurich 2012, p. 201–207

<sup>9</sup> von Muralt, Leonhard. *Zürich im Schweizerbund*. Zürich 1951, p. 183

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# Jaap ter Haar – “Boris” (“The Ice Road”)

## The miracle of Leningrad in the young adult book

by Dr phil Diana Köhnen



One of the darkest chapters of the National Socialist regime and the Second World War was the siege of Leningrad, now St. Petersburg, by

the German Armed Forces from 1941 to 1944. Only a few people in Germany still know about it, probably least of all the young people.

An exciting and moving book for young people about the German siege of Leningrad in World War II was written by Jaap ter Haar. The Dutch author, who himself witnessed the German occupation of Holland, then fled to France and became a member of the French Resistance, wrote mainly children's and young adult books in his later life. They became world-famous and were translated into many languages. One of them is the book *Boris*,<sup>1</sup> which, from the point of view of the young protagonist Boris and his girlfriend *Nadia* describes humanly responsive the drastic situation of the civilian population in the city.

Boris's father died during one of the food transports by truck across the frozen Ladoga Lake. This lake is the only connection to unoccupied Russia. If it thawed, they still tried to maintain the food supply for the city; the truck sank and Boris's father died, which struck many who took the risk of crossing the lake. The book begins with Boris's memories of his father, and one soon learns that Boris's mother has become ill through the many hard-

ships and suffering. It is Boris who has to pick up the daily small food rations in the soup kitchen for the family. He goes this way together with Nadia, whose father and brother died of hunger. Nadia feels guilty because she picks up four food rations anyway and finally hands them over to Boris for his sick mother. Although it is planned to evacuate all children from the besieged Leningrad, Boris is determined to stand by his mother and not leave the city. One day Nadia and Boris get the idea to buy more food. They know of a potato rental outside the city where they can get potatoes to cook a more nutritious soup for their mothers.

They embark on the arduous journey to no man's land between enemy lines. There Nadia collapses from weakness and exhaustion. German soldiers appear, and Boris is determined to shoot them with his father's army pistol, which he always carries with him. Contrary to expectations, the three German soldiers take care of the children and give them their food ration so that both survive. After a long and controversial discussion, the soldiers decide to take the children back to the Russian lines and accompany them there.

From a piece of cloth, a white flag is made, which they carry in front of them to announce to the Russians that they are coming with peaceful intent. The Russian soldiers approach them with great mistrust, but bring along an interpreter who translates the concerns of the Germans. The children are handed over, but one of the Russian soldiers suggests shoot-

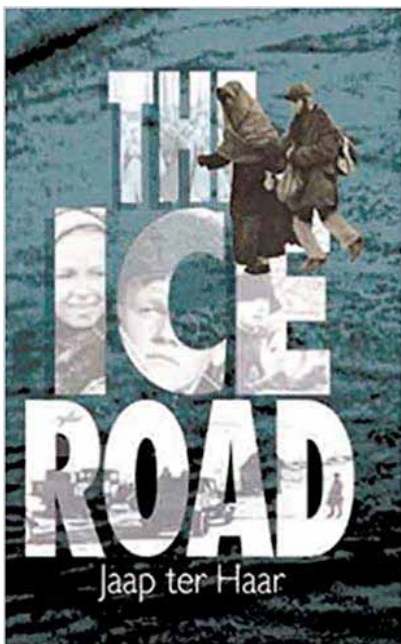
### Jaap ter Haar

dk. Jaap ter Haar was born on 25 March 1922 in Hilversum in the Netherlands. After graduating from high school in 1940, he initially worked as an office clerk. After the German occupation of Holland he moved to France and joined the Resistance. After the Second World War he volunteered for military service in the Royal Navy of the Netherlands. Later he became a correspondent for overseas radio stations. In his spare time he was already active as a writer and finally made writing his main profession in 1954. His books for children and young people became world-famous and were translated into many languages. Beside "The world of Ben Lighthart" his young adult novel "Behalt das Leben lieb"<sup>1</sup> is one of the most widely read books he has written. Jaap ter Haar died on 26 February 1998 in his Dutch home town of Laren.

<sup>1</sup> Jaap ter Haar. "The world of Ben Lighthart" (*Behalt das Leben lieb*) ISBN-13: 978-0440096849

ing the German soldiers because he suspects that they came to spy on the Russian positions. But something unexpected happens: Boris intervenes and asks them to let the soldiers go, because they came in good intention: "Then Boris looked over to the Russian lieutenant. The grimly harshness on his face had given way to an expression of wonder. The soldier who had wanted to shoot had lowered his gun barrel and scratched his feet in the snow. Other soldiers had casted down their eyes. The sergeant stared at Nadia. It was dead silent again. The lieutenant waved to the interpreter. 'Tell them they can go, *Ivan Petrovich!* He hesitated for a moment, as if searching for words. Also tell them that we are grateful to them. It would be bad if all humanity were lost in this war.'" (all quotes translated by *Current Concerns*)

The German soldiers say goodbye, not without leaving a piece of bread and sausage for Boris and Nadia. "Once again Boris felt the familiar pressure of the big hand on his shoulder. Then the commander rose. Slowly he looked around in a circle, with the same troubled smile that Boris had seen on his face before, he beat his heels together and greeted – tight and upright, as the German soldiers are used to. And finally something good happened on this long, miserable day. The young lieutenant of the Red Army adopted an attitude. 'Department stand still,' he shouted. All the Russians stood still. Slowly the



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# How letterpress printing influenced the Zurich Reformation

## Exhibition “Getruickt zu Zürich” – Letterpress and Reformation in Zurich

by Urs Knoblauch, culture journalist, Fruthwilen

On the occasion of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Zurich Reformation and Huldrych Zwingli's (1484–1531) inauguration of the parish office, numerous events will take place in 2019. A popular film is currently being shown in the cinemas, and numerous publications focus on the Zurich Reformation. An exhibition at the Central Library in Zurich shows that without the new medium of letterpress printing and the Zurich printer and publisher Christoph Froschauer (1490–1564) this revolutionary historical development would hardly have been possible. Until 30 April 2019, impressive exhibits will be on display in the exhibition room of the treasury. The exhibition was ceremoniously opened with a music programme, songs and psalms in the “Predigerkirche”. It shows how decisive knowledge, ethics and a thorough education are for cultural development and societal interaction. Especially in view of the increasing secularisation, the relativism of values, far-reaching technical and social upheavals, the question of the necessary transmission of moral and ethical basic values arises.

### Printed scripts and bibles promoted the Reformation

In 1519, Huldrych Zwingli took up his parish office, began preaching the Gospel and developed an active reformatory ministry. During his only twelve years in office as pastor for the people at the “Grossmünster” in Zurich, he set in motion a fundamental change in church and society. The book printer Christoph Froschauer (1490–1564), who immigrated from Bavaria and was able to take over a printing house in Zurich through marriage, became an important collaborator of the Reformer. Zwingli and the book printer also played a leading role on the international stage,

having great public influence on public opinion.

The Reformation also opened up a new major business area with numerous printing houses and book publishers. With almost 800 prints, the Zurich printer was one of the big names in the German-speaking world. Even after Zwingli's death, the company continued to expand, made progress after Froschauer's death, and was taken over by Orell, Füssli & Co. in 1798 after several changes of ownership. From 1780, Orell, Füssli & Co. also printed the prestigious “Zürcher Zeitung”, today's “Neue Zürcher Zeitung”. In this context, the Landesmuseum is showing the exhibition “From the Bible to Bank Notes. Printing since 1519” from 21 February to 22 April.

One of the great achievements of the Reformation was to make the Bible texts accessible through a generally comprehensible translation from Latin and Greek into German. Before the time of the printing press, various albeit little propagated translations existed already. In 1521 the New Testament of Martin Luther (1483–

1546) was published in German, in 1534 the Old Testament followed. It was intended to make an important contribution to more “freedom for Christians,” according to Luther. Especially important, however, was Erasmus of Rotterdam's (1466–

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Froschauer Bible, 1531. Central Library Zurich, Zwingli 304.

### “Jaap ter Haar – ‘Boris’...”

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lieutenant raised his right hand to the fur cap. It was as if he was paying tribute to the three Germans for their courage, their help, their humanity. [...] The snow-covered land no longer lay as blank leaves under the grey sky. The German soldier boots had written a message in the snow.”

Two more years of siege lie before Boris and his fellow citizens, but in Boris an inner transformation has taken place, he has grown up and is no longer full of hatred: “I am changed”, Boris thought again, for he no longer felt hatred and

could therefore think of peace. Just about a week ago he – like everyone else in Leningrad – constantly felt a wild hatred for the Germans. It was this hatred that had often helped him to swallow the tears, and it had given him strength in everything he had experienced: the air raids, the fires, the dead in the snow. But was it possible to rebuild the debris with it? The meeting in no man's land had taught Boris that there were good Germans. [...] Wasn't it a miracle that you could lose your hatred in war? [...] Boris now thought of the Russian soldiers and the German soldiers on the nearby front. ‘Lord, have mercy on them,’ he prayed quietly.”<sup>2</sup>

Boris continues to refuse to be evacuated, although his mother and uncle Vanya aim for evacuating him. His mother finally accepts his decision to stay in Leningrad. Further deprivation, hunger and death of acquaintances are part of everyday life in Leningrad – also for Boris – until the city is finally relieved by Russian troops in 1944 and a train of German prisoners of war passes through Leningrad. •

<sup>1</sup> Jaap ter Haar, Boris, published 1 January 1994 by Harcourt Brace & Co (first published 1966) ISBN-10: 0153022329, ISBN13: 9780153022326; later edition: The Ice Road, published 1 May 2005 by Barn Owl Books, ISBN 1903015383 (ISBN13: 9781903015384)

<sup>2</sup> ibid.

**"How letterpress printing..."**

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1536) bilingual new edition of the Bible in Greek and Latin on which Luther's translation was based. The great humanist Erasmus was a pioneer of humanistic popular education and a pioneer of coexistence in democracy and peace.

**First schools in the monasteries**

The reformers came from religious Catholic orders and universities. Especially in the monasteries, education and research was traditionally a central concern and the first schools emerged from there. In addition to agriculture, they maintained scriptoriums where books were copied by hand and illuminated and manufactured with beautiful illustrations and pictures. In the monastery libraries, the books with the knowledge of the time were accessible to those who were literate. Renaissance scholars had already rediscovered and spread the treasures of the Orient. The Reformation contributed to further cultural development by making the Bible texts accessible.

With the Reformation and in the spirit of the early enlightenment, the need for schools and education for the population took centre stage. According to the Reformers, Protestants were to regard the Bible as God's word, worship it and read the texts, especially in the families. The Bible was to become the only guideline for religious doctrines. "Sola scriptura", this was one of the demands that contradicted the Roman Catholic papal church and its doctrine. Regarding the revolutionary spread of the Reformation, the illustrated pamphlets were



Huldrych Zwingli, single-sheet print by Augustin Fries, Zurich around 1545. Central Library Zurich, PAS II 25/30

decisive for the illiterate population. They clarified the contents of the Bible as well as the serious transgressions and the display of power of the Papal Church, the sale of indulgences and the Pope's claim to authority.

**Access to the Bible for all people**

Without the invention of letterpress printing with movable types, the phenomenal technical realisation and book production by Johannes Gutenberg (1400–1468) and the printing press developed by Froschauer's pioneering work, the Reformation would not have been able to assert itself as quickly. Martin Luther, Huldrych Zwingli and numerous early enlightenment philosophers and reformers were concerned with translating the Latin and other foreign-language Bible texts into everyday language and thus making it accessible to everyone. Reading, however, had to be learned first. Thus, building schools became a central task for all. This led to the democratisation of education and the empowerment to help shape social institutions and the common good.

The destruction of the cultural assets of the Roman Catholic churches, the violence, murder and manslaughter of non-believers and heretics became a dark chapter of the revolutionary reformation movement. There were regional differences in the destruction of the churches and cultural assets. They were in the context of the power politics of the time, the personalities of the reformers, historical circumstances and the population. Thus, Erasmus of Rotterdam, who was in exchange with Martin Luther, with his reform concept tried a conciliatory way and a non-violent dialogue without iconoclasm and murder. The increasing violence of the Reformation, however, generated massive counter-violence. More far-reaching social demands and large peasant revolts arose which were crushed bloodily. The reformers usually took sides with the ruling political forces. This led to numerous religious secessions, such as the Anabaptists, who refused to follow Luther and Zwingli. For example, they practiced adult baptism and advanced social forms of living together. Until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century their civil disobedience was brutally crushed and suppressed, without entering into any dialogue.

**Exhibits in the treasury of the Zurich Central Library**

The exemplary exhibition distinctly illustrates the connection between letterpress printing and the reformation. The exhibition gives an insight into the range of publications of *Offizin Froschauer*, its iconographic design and implementation of the theological themes as well as the emerging censorship. On display are some unique and rarely presented documents such as Froschauer's portrait from 1556, the Einsiedler-Codex used

by Zwingli with handwritten remarks by the reformer, and *Heinrich Bullinger's* coloured Reformation chronicle with a sheet on the "First Zurich Disputation" (1523). Scenes from the short feature film "Zwingli's Erbe" (Zwingli's Heritage) (2018) will also be shown. The valuable objects, books, prints and paintings will be supplemented by the presentation of typographic and book-binding techniques, tools and good explanatory texts.

**Recollection on Christian tradition needed**

The accompanying more than 400-pages publication "Buchdruck und Reformation in der Schweiz", edited by Urs B. Leu and Christian Scheidegger, contains research contributions not only on Zurich, but also on Basel, Berne, Geneva, St. Gallen and Chur. Urs. B. Leu, for instance, reports in his interesting contribution "Reformation as a mission", and that "the Zurich printer was regularly to be found at the *Frankfurt Book Fair* in spring and autumn and used to travel via Basel and Strasbourg". Froschauer's books helped "lay people to acquire basic theological knowledge and read the Bible".

Especially today, a reflection on the roots of the Christian tradition and the European cultural substance is urgently in need. Libraries with a rich treasure of books refer to the question of the meaning of life, the unifying human values, a universal ethics and ways to peace on earth across cultures and religions.

The exhibition is open Monday to Friday 1-5 p.m., Saturday 1-4 p.m. Diverse evening lectures. Free admission to guided tours and events. Information: Tel. +41 44 268 31 00

[www.zb.uzb.ch](http://www.zb.uzb.ch)



Christoph Froschauer the Elder, painting by an unknown painter, 1556. Orell Füssli, Graphische Betriebe AG, Zurich.