

# Current Concerns

The international journal for independent thought, ethical standards, moral responsibility,  
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English Edition of *Zeit-Fragen*

## A kick against rubbish

**Remove PISA and Bologna / Withdraw competence from Schneider-Ammann Department / Decision rights on school and education back to the cantons where they are incorporated in the constitution and accessible to direct-democratic control**

by Sandra Buchser

### **PISA: The international alignment of education policies**

The PISA system (Programme for International Student Assessment) has caused several real shock waves since 2000. This seems to be systematic: Where these standardised tests are applied, alleged serious deficiencies in the knowledge of students are often identified. As *Naomi Klein* has pointed out in her book "The Shock Doctrine", such shocks pave the way for profound changes with far-reaching consequences. This happened in the wake of PISA: The bad news was repeated a thousand times in the media that our children (and thus our school system) had allegedly failed fundamentally. The shocking news put great pressure on those responsible to do something very quickly. Accord-

"A widespread and fashionable view is that the United States is a classically imperialist power. ... That mood has been expressed in different ways by different people, from the hockey fans in Montreal who boo the American national anthem to the high school students in Switzerland who do not want to go to the United States as exchange students."

The seasonal diplomat *Thomas Pickering*, quoted in: Nye, Joseph S. Jr.: *Soft power. The Means to Success in World Politics*. New York 2004, p. 127.

ingly, the following "reforms" were characterised by the "inconsiderate and rapid adoption of ready solutions without sufficient scientific and public debate" (Langer, p. 61). But where does the idea come from that our schools and school systems have to be exposed to competition, which has such far-reaching consequences for our students and our established school system? In short

it comes from the US that has exported it to our countries through the OECD.

### **OECD: US turns education forum into educational actor**

To understand this, a glance shall be thrown at the history of OECD<sup>1</sup> (Organi-

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## "Would you like to have a little neuro-linguistic soul-massage about schools and education"?

**School and church as objects of attacks**

by Dr phil. Judith Barben, psychologist

### **Environmental protection as means of manipulation**

In 1980, the German Green Party was founded by representatives of communist, environmental and other groups in the wake of the '68 movement.<sup>1</sup> The former mentor of the Greens, *Rudolf Bahro*<sup>2</sup>, claimed that it was not sufficient to conquer power positions in society. As a matter of priority one should try to achieve a change in the people's minds. A "grand-scale psychotherapy" would be required in order to "unchain" the population "from the restrictive socialization [i.e. of the Christian-Occidental values] internalized down to the deepest layers".<sup>3</sup> Obviously it was not a matter of environmental protection,<sup>4</sup> but ecolog-

ical concerns were only used as a pretext to manipulate the public by artificially generated fears. Bahro's political objective was to "overcome" market economy, democracy and technology<sup>5</sup> and to aim at a new "practice of liberation" and "self-discovery in therapeutic and spiritual groups". In doing so you should also not be afraid of "going through moments of disintegration, of nothingness and of chaos".<sup>6</sup> As a long-term objective Bahro mentioned the establishment of a "eco-dictatorship" with a "Green Adolf"<sup>7</sup> at the top. But for the present one should seek to incorporate also "value-conservative currents"<sup>8</sup> and to gain the support of the media. In this sense he announced: "We need the mass media now, particu-

larly television, as a voice medium of that last Enlightenment."<sup>9</sup>

### **School and church as objects of attack**

School and church have been obstacles for Bahro, because they uphold and promote Christian Occidental values. That is why he had planned the long-term dissolution of the national churches and their replacement by an "invisible church", a kind of mystical natural religion.<sup>10</sup> The schools should be converted into self-realization agencies stripped from studying, since an uneducated, disoriented youth is more easily to be instrumentalized for political purposes. In Bahro's words: "From where

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sation for Economic Cooperation and Development). The organisation was founded in 1961 as the successor of the OEEC (Organisation for European Economic Cooperation). The latter aimed at implementing the Marshall Plan in Europe after the Second World War. Thus it was dominated by the US from the beginning. By selectively applying pressure in the 1980s, it then made the OECD into what it is today: a highly active "player" in the field of education.<sup>2</sup> Urged by the US (under President Reagan) the OECD developed the standardized PISA tests in the 1990s.

How did this happen? In 1983, the population of the United States suffered a shock, more precisely, an education shock.<sup>3</sup> The report "A Nation at Risk: Im-



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perative for Educational Reform" attested the Americans an alarming level of education.<sup>4</sup> The threat not only originated from the technological developments and advances of the Japanese, the South Koreans and the Germans, but also from the underlying skills. Knowledge, learning, information and "skilled intelligence" were the new commodity of international trade (pp. 6f.). The report pursued an economic direction. But there was also a military jargon. The authors, for example, considered the educational plight a result of "unilateral educational disarmament", p. 5) or even as an act of war: "If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war" (p 5).<sup>5</sup> President Reagan declared the improvement of education quality a "priority task of his presidency" (Martens/Wolf, p. 165).

**Federalism added to US blacklist**

The education authority lay with the states, so the central government lacked the competences. The "obstacle" of federalism should be overcome by the creation of external international pressure. For this, the school quality debate was "exported" and shifted to an international level by the OECD. Kerstin Martens, director of the Collaborative Research Center 597 "Transformations of the State" at Bremen University, conducted interviews with OECD staff and thoroughly reconstructed the development:

"By shifting the debate to the international level, the US government hoped to gain more leverage over education as a federal concern, and thereby more power over US States: thus 'for domestic American political reasons, education was jacked up in the OECD. (...) This meant that suddenly there was a huge pressure, politically, on the US Secretary of Education to show results and benchmarks against other countries.'" (Martens/Wolf, p. 165)

**OECD instrumentalized by the US**

The pressure mentioned above was to be generated through comparisons of education systems at international level. The OECD, by then a forum for educational issues without its own initiatives, was earmarked as the instrument. It took over the job of developing indicators that would allow a comparison between the very different educational systems of the countries:

"Thus the US government, particularly the Secretary of Education, played a very active and critical role in pushing the OECD to modify its program on international educational indicators. It hardly hoped to find international improvements of educational performance worldwide, rather 'it was necessary – for purely internal American reasons – to find a support externally, in a sense to export the American debate, in order to avoid considering that the crisis of education was only an American issue.'" (Martens/Wolf, 165f.)

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the 'brain is out' original life energy for resistance may arise."<sup>11</sup> His long-term strategy was: "We must try to modify the political-psychological balance of power in society on the whole, first in favor of its reformist potential. Another objective is certainly not realistic in the short run, which means within the next ten years. In practical terms this means an attempt to extend this reformist potential. So we have to attack south of the Main river and on the Rhine, where Germany is catholic [...]. And within the reformist potential, we must simultaneously try to reinforce the more radical form, the conception of a fundamental structural reform, which must at first get the capitalist reproduction process under control."<sup>12</sup>

**... where Germany is catholic**

Thirty years later, the public realizes with amazement that Bahro's strate-

gy has paid off, point by point.<sup>13</sup> In 2011, Winfried Kretschmann was elected Germany's the first Green "Ministerpräsident", in the predominantly catholic state Baden-Württemberg, situated south of the Main river on the Rhine. Immediately after the election, he drops his "catholic mask"<sup>14</sup> and sets out to destroy the nationwide best (besides Bavaria) school system of Baden-Württemberg and to turn it upside down. In order to deceive the public about the true nature of this conversion process, he uses, in Bahro's footsteps, manipulative psycho-techniques, especially the technique of "neurolinguistic programming".

**"The best method of manipulation I know"**

Neurolinguistic programming, also known as "NLP", is a manipulating process that is often used in political propaganda. "NLP is the best manipulating method that I know," one of its founders notes.<sup>15</sup> The method was amalgat-

ed from various manipulative practices, coming from America's testing laboratories.

The concept of "neurolinguistic programming" implies that the human being is to be "programmed" or rather re-programmed via cognition ("Neuro") by linguistic messages ("linguistic"). According to self-definition, NLP is a "collection of highly effective communication and change techniques", whereby the personality can be changed allegedly "down to the core of its identity"<sup>16</sup>. In NLP, hypnosis plays a central role. The method is suitable to plant unnoticed new ideas as hypnotic messages, and to reverse values.

**Questionable ideology**

The ideology of "neurolinguistic programming" is roughly equivalent to that of Bahro's and is in clear contrast to the consensus of values in our society. A

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**... disregarding the government and democratic institutions**

With the OECD being instrumentalized this way, the idea of an "education crisis" could be imposed on other countries in the world: They also should "realise" that their education system was bad and their children had a correspondingly low educational level, according to the motto: If we are not good, then you must not be either. Conclusion: With the "export" of the US education disaster to an international level, two purposes could be pursued simultaneously: It allowed the US, firstly, to cover up its own educational problems and, secondly, to significantly influence the education policies of both the United States and other countries of the world with the help of the OECD, *disregarding the government and democratic institutions*

**PISA: a "pathological aberration"/ US pressure increases**

The OECD initially refused the US demand to develop indicators to compare education in different countries. For good reasons: "*Concerned about possible abuse, 'they [education department staff, CC] intentionally avoided everything, which could contribute to motivate states to mutual comparisons.'*" (Martens/Wolf, p. 166) (What they meant by "abuse", we now know all too well.) In

1987, the United States even threatened to withdraw from the organisation if it continued to refuse to fulfil its demand. "The fact that the United States walked out of UNESCO [...] showed that this was [...] no joke." (Martens/Wolf, p. 166) The threat had an impact: In 1988, the OECD started the job and began a first Indicators Project (Ines). In 1990, the idea of PISA, i.e. the comprehensive collection of data, was born. For five years, about 300 (!) international scientists worked on the preparation of the PISA study. They were under virtually no control. An OECD staff member said: "*In the OECD the experts had 'lots of freedom (...), much more than in the national administrations, because there is basically no one who would limit the scope of political freedom.'*" (Martens/Wolf, p. 167)

**1995: The OECD seizes control from the governments**

In 1995 national coordinators were appointed in order to spread the "indicator culture" in educational circles (Langer, p. 56). Later professionals were astonished about the fact that PISA had already been rubber-stamped in 1997 despite broad initial scepticism. "*Within a short time the idea of international comparative studies had become standard under growing peer pressure that could not be publicly opposed.*" (Martens/Wolf, p. 167) As a consequence, the OECD increasingly "seized control from the government."

*Peer pressure* as a basis for decisions on national and international level? Why should such an antidemocratic process supplant the democratic evolution of the free school system? Because according to Martens, the PISA performance testing, "cannot be counted as the result of a functional cooperation between states, which would have been made about the intention to bundle resources and work together to improve the quality of education." (Martens/Wolf, p. 168) According to Martens and Wolf, PISA and its consequences are rather a "pathological aberration" (ibid.) of the original indicators project.

By characterizing PISA and the continually recurring testings as "unintended consequences of an attempted exploitation of the OECD" (ibid.), the authors reveal a way to turn back to the interested parties – and that is good. However, from their own research it has become clear that the consequences would have been foreseeable if they had only listened to the critics in the OECD. Secondly, the said exploitation of the OECD has not only been attempted but also carried out and established a de facto monopoly: "The OECD has today a full leadership role in the field of education indicators."<sup>7</sup> (Martens/Wolf, p. 163) This supremacy of the OECD allows the predominant states to formulate competencies to be analysed at their discretion.

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"dogma" of NLP is that reality is not important, because everybody has his or her own reality. A second tenet of NLP states that there are no errors and no failure, and a third says, there is a positive intention behind every behavior. The existence of good and evil is denied by these absurd assertions. If there is no reality, no mistakes and no bad intentions, then there is no benchmark against which right and wrong can be measured. Victims of violence can expect no redress, because the reality of their perception is principally called into question. In addition, criminals can not be punished since allegedly there aren't any bad intentions. Thus the seemingly liberal beliefs reveal themselves as a precursor of violence and despotism.

Another NLP dogma holds that language is not to be used as a medium of communication and understanding, but only as a means of distraction and manipulation. Words are only there to "shape"

psychological states of mind "as if by sound waves".<sup>17</sup>

In NLP language thus lacks any relation to reality. Words become meaningless "hypnotic word shells" that only serve manipulation. In the above example, terms like "community," "chance", "justice" or "future" are misused. These words carry a positive emotional message and have a beneficial effect on the feeling; critical thinking is circumvented. With such expressions, one tries to mislead people, and to steer their thinking into a certain direction which is desired by the manipulator.

**Hypnotic clichés as camouflage**

This is also the case in the red-green radical reform of the Baden-Wuerttemberg school system disguising itself with lulling words such as "Community School" (Gemeinschaftsschule), "house of learning", "individual development", "optimal educational success," "powerful education", "social justice" and similar misleading terms. All these terms

evoke pleasant feelings. "Community" is something beautiful, a "house of learning" evokes connotations of security and a sheltering roof, while the term "individual support" leads to believe that each student would be appreciated and encouraged in his individual situation.

But all these terms are nothing but manipulative clichés. On a purely emotional level they are used to stir public opinion in order to suppress an honest democratic debate. Who would guess that behind the fine-sounding terms there is a school where students are no longer taught and where nothing more is explained to them, where they are no longer educated, nor encouraged to study? A school where there are no more teachers and nor students, but only "facilitators" and "learning partners"<sup>18</sup> In this school nothing reminds us of the traditional school as we know it. The whole scandalous deceptive manoeuvre must be uncovered and the planned "education reform" must be stopped. Be-

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cause it will lead to isolation, elitism, mental disorders, neglect, and, above all, to the incapacity of democratic behavior of our youth – in case it would actually be implemented. •

<sup>1</sup> Wikipedia: Bündnis 90/Die Grünen or Alliance 90/The Greens (download 9.5.2012).

<sup>2</sup> Rudolf Bahro, Economist and a leading party member of the GDR, later on /subsequently a dissident, moved to the Federal Republic of Germany in 1979 and participated in the founding of the Green Party, (cf. Wikipedia: Rudolf Bahro, download 9.5.2012).

<sup>3</sup> Bahro Rudolf. *Logik der Rettung. Wer kann die Apokalypse aufhalten? Ein Versuch über die Grundlagen ökologischer Politik. (Logic of salvation. Who can stop the apocalypse? An Essay on the basis of environmental policy.)* Stuttgart 1987 (in the following: Logic), p. 142, 278.

<sup>4</sup> “Environmental policy, which is nothing more” Bahro criticizes sharply, since it “does not affect the basic identifications, the consensus of the developed countries/peoples is based on.” cf. Bahro Rudolf, *Logic*, page 124

<sup>5</sup> Bahro Rudolf. *Logic*, p. 71, 124, 344, 481.

<sup>6</sup> Bahro Rudolf. *Logic*, p. 263, 289.

<sup>7</sup> Bahro Rudolf. *Streitschrift* (Polemic) Nr. 3/1990, p. 6; cf. also: Berliner Institut für Faschismus-Forschung und Antifaschistische Aktion e. V. (Berlin Institute for Research of fascism and anti-fascist action e v): [www.biff-berlin.de/Bahro.htm](http://www.biff-berlin.de/Bahro.htm) download 17.5.2012.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Wikipedia: Rudolf Bahro, download 9.5.2012.

<sup>9</sup> Bahro Rudolf. *Logic*, p. 315

<sup>10</sup> Wikipedia: Rudolf Bahro, download 9.5.2012.

<sup>11</sup> Bahro Rudolf: *Logic*, p. 161.

<sup>12</sup> Bahro Rudolf. *Krise des Marxismus, Interviews, Reden, Aufsätze. (Crisis of Marxism, interviews, speeches, essays)* Artikel (article). ‘Ed.’ Marxistischer Studentenbund. (Marxist student union) Schwerpunkt 3 (focus 3). Zurich, April 1980, p. 81.

<sup>13</sup> A part of the green elite, it is true, officially distanced itself from Bahro, because he has too openly said what was planned. cf. Wikipedia: Rudolf Bahro, download 9.5.2012.

<sup>14</sup> Kretschmann lässt die katholische Maske fallen. (Kretschmann drops his mask) Katholischer Nachrichtendienst (Catholic Information Service) Kath.Net, 12.4.2011. [www.kath.net/detail.php?id=30994](http://www.kath.net/detail.php?id=30994), download 17.5.2012.

### This is how the game has begun ...

1. First there is a general political-economic climate, a certain constellation of the global system of states, which you might call governance – theoretically as “players’ constellation” – admittedly as a constellation of especially mighty players. [...]
2. Within this international system powerful states take over the position of a hegemony, first of all and above all the USA, then in phase III important EU States; they want to keep the hegemony.
3. The hegemonial states perceive a specific event as shock, because suddenly they become scared of the menacing loss of their political and economic predominance (possibly also: the military one). [...]
4. In the state of shock an international player pursuing his own ambitions in education-policy is at the disposal of states’ governments supplying them with legwork for their reforms (in this case the OECD,

in stage I and III gladly, in state III just reluctantly.

5. On the other hand in state I and III other states are orienting themselves towards the analyses and demands of this international player, in fact without great reservations: They believe the communicated analysis results and interpretations and they assume proposed solutions as sacrosanct. [...]
6. The sixth factor is the domestic political relation of the “shock”-states between their federal government and administration and the federated provincial and states’ governments respectively the national opposition in educational policies. [...]  
(Here are 5 more points. Editor’s note.)

From: Langer, Roman. *Warum haben die Pisa gemacht? Ein Bericht über einen emergenten internationaler politischer Auseinandersetzungen.* In: Langer, Roman (ed.) “Warum tun die das?” *Governance-Analysen zum Steuerungshandeln in der Schulentwicklung.* Educational Governance Band 6. Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, Wiesbaden 2008. Pp. 66f.

<sup>15</sup> “NLP is the best manipulation model I know. Is there a problem with manipulation?”, John Grinder commented, who has pioneered the method together with Richard Bandler. Cf. TV-documentation “Vom Umgang mit der Wirklichkeit” (“Dealing with reality”), 3sat, 30.1.2006.

<sup>16</sup> Stahl, Thies (Founder of the German Society of NLP DGNLP und NLP- training Manager), quoted from: Kobler, Hans Peter. *Neue Lehrer braucht das Land – Kommunikation & Lernen.* (The country needs new teachers – Communications & Learning). Paderborn 1995, p. 20.

<sup>17</sup> Stahl, Thies. *Neurolinguistisches Programmieren (NLP). Was es kann, wie es wirkt und wem es hilft. (Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP). What it does, how it works and whom it helps.)* Mannheim 1992: Die Sprache als Werkzeug (Language as a tool), p. 83.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Bündnis 90/Die Grünen. Moser Sandra. *So funktioniert die Gemeinschaftsschule.* 18.4.2012. ([www.bawue.gruene-fraktion.de](http://www.bawue.gruene-fraktion.de), download 9.5.2012); Fratton, Peter: *Eine lebendige Partnerschaft von Lehrern und Schülern auf gleicher Augenhöhe.* In: Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, *Die Schule der Zukunft: Wie geht individuelle Förderung?* Dokumentation der Anhörung im Landtag von Baden-Württemberg. 20.6.2008. Alliance 90/The Greens. Moser Sandra. *How the community school works.* 18.4.2012. ([www.bawue.gruene-fraktion.de](http://www.bawue.gruene-fraktion.de), download 9.5.2012); Fratton, Peter: *A vibrant partnership between teachers and students on an equal footing.* In: Alliance 90/The Greens. *The School of the Future: How does individual support?* Documentation of the hearing in the state parliament of Baden-Wuerttemberg. 20.6.2008

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#### The totalitarian grip already considers itself to be permanent

What should be the use of these “internationally comparable standards”, i.e. of the international comparison? The PISA consortium in Germany, for example, officially says that the “clients [the participating states, CC] [expect] empirically substantiated control knowledge” (!) (Prenzel, quoted in Langer, p. 63). “Control knowledge”: Who decides where the ship is to be navigated to? Langer puts it this way:

“The states (...) have managed to establish a permanent system that turns the educational system gradually into an accessory for the specific purposes of *maintaining political and economic hegemony.*” (p. 69) The current mess in politics and the economy is certainly not worth being preserved. So it is necessary to intervene in this “development”. For it is man-made.

#### PISA: “policy in an autocratic manner” – no legal basis

A large part of the reforms in education is justified by the results of the PISA studies. But PISA is no reliable information about

the education of our students. Already the fact that the PISA managers keep a low profile (Langer, p. 62), is a compelling reason for sitting up and taking notice. Only a few examples of tests were published, the test as a whole was kept back from both the general public and the scientific debate. Why is an honest and open discussion of the tests inhibited? What exactly is examined? How? On what basis? All these questions are not answered by those responsible. On the contrary, Langer sees tangible interests behind the denial tactics and char-

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More on this topic can be found on our homepage ([www.zeit-fragen.ch](http://www.zeit-fragen.ch)) in the documentation “Schule und Bildung Schweiz” (Education in Switzerland) – soon in English

# The green-red “Gemeinschaftsschule”<sup>1</sup> project in Baden-Wuerttemberg

Critical statements voiced before the blindsiding procedure in the Stuttgart “Landtag” (state parliament) on 18 April 2012

by Karl Müller

Prior to the legislative amendment of the Education Act of Baden-Wuerttemberg on 18 April 2012 and the introduction of the so-called “Gemeinschaftsschule”, many critical voices could be heard. *Gerhard Brand*, president of the **German Association for Education and Training (VBE)** in Baden-Wuerttemberg, considered “all other types of school being disadvantaged” and “the work of all other schools devalued”. The introduction of the ‘Gemeinschaftsschule’ would trigger “a severe loss of professionalism accompanied by a decrease in the overall performance levels”. The new school was threatening to introduce a type of lesson, “which exclusively sets on self-oriented learning, or uniquely on teamwork at the group table, where all students are indeed always ‘occupied’; however at the end of the lesson they do not remember exactly why they have actually done what they did. This is especially true for those who usually require special support.”

The **Association of Philologists** in the country was no less critical: “All domestic student assessment studies confirm, that the more differentiated a school sys-

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“The Basic Law’s concept of man is not that of an isolated, sovereign individual; the Basic Law has actually solved the conflict between the individual and the community in the sense of an orientation and bondage of the person towards the community without touching his or her value.”

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tem is, the less comprehensive schools are there in a state, the better is the state’s ranking. A divided school structure benefits all students, especially children from socially weaker classes, or with an immigrant background. The intended one-sided promotion of “Gemeinschaftsschulen” at the expense of all other types of schools is unacceptable.”

The **Association of Cities of the Federal State** complained that “at the moment the compass in the state’s educational policy” was missing. And the Association of Municipalities reiterated: “Ironically, with a blink of the eye the green-red government wiped away all rational arguments concerning education.”

Nothing restrained *Winfried Kretschmann’s* green-red administration

from enforcing their most important political project for this term, the introduction of the so-called “Gemeinschaftsschule”, *uniquely with the power of their majority of seats in the Baden-Wuerttemberg State Parliament*. After all, unlike the reconstruction of the railway station in Stuttgart, the citizens of the country should *not be allowed to vote in a referendum* on this central political project. So from 18 April onwards the rule is that with the beginning of the school year 2012/2013, 40 schools in Baden-Wuerttemberg are to be run as so-called “Gemeinschaftsschulen”. “Gemeinschaftsschulen” are schools that merge the secondary modern and the junior high school courses in one single type of school, including special needs students

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acterizes the “communication behaviour” as follows: “(...) if you represent interests and pursue definite targets, then you advertise a product, that is constant repetition of the same arguments, as pictorial as possible, not aiming at a dialogue. Avoiding dialogue, and skipping, downplaying or defaming critics appear to be appropriate means for those who are of the opinion that you should not ask the frogs if you want to drain the swamps. It may be doubted whether such autocratic policies are still aiming at an emancipated society – at least as a side-effect.” (p. 66). We are not at the mercy of these dishonest manoeuvres, as the OECD has “no legally binding instruments with which it could impose decisions on its member states” (Martens/Wolf, p. 162). Such exertion of influence is neither honest nor democratically legitimated. •

## Literature:

Langer, Roman: “Warum haben die PISA gemacht?” In idem: “Warum tun die das?” Governanceanalysen zum Steuerungshandeln in der Schulentwicklung. Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2008.

Martens, Kerstin / Klaus-Dieter Wolf: “Paradoxien der Neuen Staatsräson”. In: Zeitschrift für Internationale Beziehungen, 13/2 (2006), pp. 145-176. (for a summary in English see <http://www.politikwissenschaft.tu-darmstadt.de/fileadmin/pg/media/papers/martens-wolf.pdf>)

<sup>1</sup> Founding members (1961): Belgium, Denmark, Germany, France, Greece, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Canada, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Austria, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United States, Great Britain. Joined later: Japan, Finland, Australia, New Zealand, Mexico, Czech Republic, South Korea, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia. Since 2010: Chile, Slovenia, Israel and Estonia.

<sup>2</sup> It is known that the EU is an equally active initiator of “education” offensives. Since 1960 it – or more precisely, the European Commission – has been involved in the work of the OECD alongside the states. “European Commission representatives work alongside members in the preparation of texts and participate in discussions on the OECD’s work programme and strategies, and are involved in the work of the entire organisation and its different bod-

ies. While the European Commission’s participation goes well beyond that of an observer, it does not have the right to vote on decisions or recommendations presented before Council for adoption.” [www.oecd.org/pages/0,3417,en\\_36734052\\_36761800\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/pages/0,3417,en_36734052_36761800_1_1_1_1_1,00.html)

<sup>3</sup> Whose goals remain to be seen

<sup>4</sup> Very telling detail: From the onset, the order was not only to determine the level of education of American students, but to compare it with that of other leading nations (“*comparing American schools and colleges with those of other advanced nations*”, report p. 1).

<sup>5</sup> The whole thing sounds like an economic war.

<sup>6</sup> And this is also an interesting detail: In 1984 the US, Great Britain and Singapore left UNESCO, after a resolution had been adopted to reduce the dependence on the four major news agencies AP, UPI, AFP and Reuters (Resolution on The New World Information and Communication Order). What could they object?

<sup>7</sup> Also, the continuation of the quote is very revealing: “[...] and has now outranked other organizations that have addressed this before (such as the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, IEA). This is particularly evident in the fact that the OECD has even taken on the further development of the handbook for the International Standard Classification of Education (known as ISCED) from UNESCO.”

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

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and including a high school course leading to A-levels. But even more important than merging the types of schools is that the Gemeinschaftsschule with its "pedagogical approach" *differs radically from previous ways of teaching.*

The "Gemeinschaftsschule" which has now been established by law as a regular school was the *core of the Greens' educational election manifesto in the parliamentary elections of March 2011.* The "Gemeinschaftsschule" is a *descendant of the anti-authoritarian and anti-education pedagogy of the 68ers and matches the previous "Pedagogy of the Greens".* It was however, "enriched" by *questionable elements of genetics, which smell of NSDAP.* "Individualization" now means for the Greens: the students are equipped – genetically determined (!) – with varying talents and therefore cannot learn the same things.

"Gemeinschaftsschulen" are however also a *huge business for companies such as Bertelsmann, which – having the best contacts into the world of educational politics – want to offer and sell expensive learning materials for the "individualized", "self-directed" learning.* For many years, Bertelsmann has been promoting "new" schools that resolve the existing structures and promise a good profit for the company at the same time.

The green-red government wants to *revolutionize the well-proved three-tiered school system in Baden-Wuerttemberg and introduce the 'Gemeinschaftsschule' throughout the country.* This becomes clear when reading the objectives of the amendment. It states that "The separate classes for students in the structured school system must be overcome." However, the green-red administration in Baden-Wuerttemberg does not want to repeat the problematic situation of the black-green administration in Hamburg and openly top-down-enact the new type of school. Local education authorities must first make the request the new school. The "Gemeinschaftsschule" is praised as a "grassroots school". But the fact is: *The new school is massively privileged by the state government.* The state's *teacher training is to be adjusted to the new school in the coming years.* Locally, the green-red supporters are mobilized. Small communities, whose schools are threatened to be closed down, are lured into believing their school site could be saved if they establish a "Gemeinschaftsschule" – even though the protagonists of

the "Gemeinschaftsschule" are *not explicitly concerned about saving schools close to students' homes.* Most of the media in the country have taken the side of government – against *the people of Baden-Wuerttemberg who still demonstrate massive rejection of the new type of school, as have shown the polls from mid May 2012 showed.*

Principals who had expressed critical concern about the green-red plans – e.g. **60 Baden-Wuerttemberg school principals who did so publicly shortly before the parliamentary elections in 2011** – were reprimanded *after the state elections by the new Secretary of Education.* The green-red government, which prides itself as grassroots-oriented and willing to talk to the people, does not want to get involved in a genuine discussion on education policy, and *definitely not with experts.* The responsible administration, from which there came many critical voices, was flatly *bypassed by the establishment of an executive department whose leadership is in the hands of a party functionary.* And the technique of reprimanding the project's critics who are school principals still continues.

The "Gemeinschaftsschule" is a *sham.* It is extolled as "powerful", "socially just" and "particularly bound to democratic values". The papers of the Ministry of Education distributed for those who want to introduce a "Gemeinschaftsschule" contain guiding principles like "solidarity", "responsibility" and many more beautiful phrases.

#### And what will reality be like ?

Take, for example, the *concept of self-directed learning.* Students in the "Gemeinschaftsschule" should – due to their individuality – *be able to learn autonomously.*

The concept has long been a subject of research. In a meta-meta-analysis ("What works", 2009), *John Hattie, Professor of Education at the University of Auckland, New Zealand, and currently in Melbourne, Australia, collected empirical findings on the factors that influence learning and achievement at school.* Among the factors students, parents, social background, school as an organization, curricula, teaching and teachers, the influence of teachers was by far the most influential factor. Teachers need to be directive, influential and caring and be actively engaged in teaching and learning. *The quality of the teacher-student relationship, the quality of instruction as well as correcting and giving feedback are among the most influential factors.*

- Teachers need to know what they are aiming at with their lesson;
- they must know how to assess the success of their teaching, i.e. know their success criteria ;
- they need to know how well they achieve them.
- The subject matter must be based on prior knowledge and requires targeted instruction.
- Teachers need to know their students' levels and knowledge in order to give adequate feedback and assess progress accordingly.

The crucial factor, which is irreplaceable, is the dedicated teacher,

- who knows his subject and resonates the enthusiasm for the subject and the teaching of a class
- who provides well-structured lessons and knows his children or adolescents,
- who gives clear directions (and contains classroom disturbances)
- while at the same time showing a professional ethic of caring,
- who does not withdraw, but actively and in a committed manner designs the classroom activities
- and who is in close relation with his students.

In the "Gemeinschaftsschule", however, class community is no longer necessary, no more lessons guided by teachers and the teachers are to withdraw largely while the students remain left to themselves and their expensive learning materials: democratic values will thus fall by the wayside.

The second example is the alleged commitment to democratic values.

After the Second World War it was known that democracy requires democrats and that the citizens need to be citizens. Therefore *the education for democracy was included in the states' constitutions. Schools were assigned an outstanding role in this educational task.*

The core of democratic education is *to develop a social sense and to practice pro-social behavior. This corresponds with the view of man in the German "Grundgesetz", which was formulated by the Federal Constitutional Court as follows: "The Basic Law's concept of man is not that of an isolated, sovereign individual; the Basic Law has actually solved the conflict between the individual and the community in the sense of an orientation and bondage of the person towards the community without touching his or her value."*

The actual contribution of the school to the training and promotion of community orientation and pro-social behavior de-

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# Nato goes to war – expecting everyone to march along

by Karl Müller

*During their Chicago summit on 20th and 21st May 2012 NATO celebrated the way they want to further extend their war alliance in the years to come: not only by large scale incorporation of new member states and internationally unlawful instrumentalizations of organizations such as UN and OSCE, but also by means of joint military operations with non-member states including neutral states. The US as the leading NATO power is mainly interested in maintaining their ability to simultaneously wage wars in every corner of the earth but – being short of cash – without spending money. Quite possibly there will be not only more, but also more devastating wars as compared with the last 20 years.*

In order to figure out what lies ahead one only has to read through the summit final documents a bit more carefully and between the lines. The wars in Afghanistan and Libya will serve as models for future NATO war alliances; in both wars there have been new “coalitions of the willing”, a kind of NATO plus. This will be enormously expanded.

Concerning Libya the “Chicago summit declaration” states that with Operation “Unified Protector” NATO had “...set new standards of consultation and practical cooperation with partner countries who contributed to our operation, as well as with other international and regional organizations.” [emphasis added by the author]

**“The green-red ‘Gemeinschaftsschule’ ...”**  
continued from page 6

depends on various factors. The teachers’ personality, the quality of teacher-student relationship and the opportunities for students to learn and practice pro-social behavior are of great significance. Therefore teacher-guided lessons in the classroom provide the best conditions. Classroom instruction offers the trained teacher the opportunity to develop positive interpersonal attitudes in the child and to guide and promote his social behavior. Learning together with peers offers the greatest possible opportunities to jointly cope with tasks, to learn from each other, to mutually assist each other as a good team and strengthen each other to practice a sustainable social intercourse – which are all qualities that are of priceless value for the entire life. The teacher’s task is to seize and promote positive approaches, to help the children overcome their deficits and shortcomings, and to counter any tendencies of anti-social behavior.

With the European Union, NATO is paying special attention to an entity comprising several NATO member states but also neutral states such as Austria. The summit declaration states: “The EU is a unique and essential partner for NATO. Fully strengthening this strategic partnership, as agreed by our two organizations and enshrined in the *Strategic Concept*, is particularly important in the current environment of austerity; NATO and the EU should continue to work to enhance practical cooperation in operations, broaden political consultations, and cooperate more fully in capability development. NATO and the EU are working side by side in crisis management operations [...]” This may be the only reason why “NATO recognizes the importance of a stronger and more capable European defense.”

## Instrumentalization of international organizations

Both the USA as the leading NATO power and the other NATO states know very well that they are a shrinking minority in the world. Their utilization of the world for their own purposes is no longer accepted by the big “remainder” of this world.

Consequently, NATO plans to exploit international organizations, above all the United Nations and the *Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe* (OSCE). In the summit declaration this sounds like the following: 1. We will continue to enhance our political dialogue and practical cooperation with the UN in line

with the UN-NATO Declaration of September 2008. We welcome the strengthened cooperation and enhanced liaison between NATO and the UN that has been achieved since our last Summit meeting in Lisbon in November 2010, and which also contributed to the success of OUP (*Operation ‘Unified Protector’*).”

What one needs to recall at this point is: It wasn’t the UN as a world community who signed the September 2008 declaration, but just the serving general secretary, bypassing all other UN institutions and by far trespassing his own competencies.

As for the OSCE, NATO states: 1. We continue to work closely with the *Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe* (OSCE), in particular in areas such as conflict prevention and resolution, post-conflict rehabilitation, and in addressing new security threats. We are committed to further enhancing our cooperation, both at the political and operational level, in all areas of common interest.”

## Incorporating non-NATO member states into the corset of NATO war plans

Moreover the attempt to incorporate non-NATO member states into the corset of their war plans gains significance for NATO. In NATO-speak it sounds like this: “NATO has a wide network of partnership relations. We highly value all of NATO’s partners and the contributions

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The Swiss private school entrepreneur Peter Fratton – nota bene **not** a trained teacher or even educational researcher – who acts as promoter of the Baden-Wuerttemberg “Gemeinschaftsschule” movement and who is going to train 56 so-called ‘facilitators’ (learning companions) for these schools in the coming school year, disapproves of all the mentioned factors of good schooling. His wife is said to run an interior design firm that has already pinched exorbitant sums from entire school communities for interior renovation of all classrooms: Tax revenues that are missing elsewhere. In 2008, at the occasion of a hearing of the Greens’ parliamentary faction on the subject “The School of the Future. How does individual promotion work?”, Fratton said that he would oblige the ‘facilitators’ of his schools on the alleged “primal pleas” of students: “Do not teach me anything. Do not explain anything to me. Do not educate me. Do not motivate me.”

It is to be feared that the so-called “Gemeinschaftsschule” will *dramatically*

worsen the problems associated with insufficient education of children and young people. Most likely more such “communities” will emerge, which can only be described as hierarchically organized gangs. *Directed against democracy, a young generation will grow up who is not capable of democratic behavior, because the essential prerequisites are missing.* The “bosses” of such “gangs” may go in for quite a career later on ...

For years, we have been witnessing an *illegitimate School and University International at work*, with PISA and Bologna, with the OECD and the EU. Their goal: “flexible people” with a patchwork knowledge and without regard to national educational traditions. In other words, we are threatened by an advancing wave of conformity and globalization with more than questionable niveau. •

<sup>1</sup> A type of school where ability-mixed and age-mixed groups of pupils learn together, however in an individualized manner, i.e. every one with his own special teaching aids.

# Courage of Conscience

by Hans-C. von Sponeck, Former UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, 24 June 2012

It is almost a decade since *Tariq Aziz*, former Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq, surrendered voluntarily in 2003 to the US occupation forces. In 2011 the American authorities in Baghdad handed an aged and sick man, who had been in their custody for many years to the Government of Iraq. "All persons deprived of their liberty shall be treated with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person." This significant provision in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Art.10/1) should have been applied but, when it counts it does not count, not for Tariq Aziz and other political prisoners withering away in Iraqi jails.

International law itself is once again in custody condemned to the vaults of seclusion and only selectively released when it suits. In any case, death will probably come to Tariq Aziz before the death sentence is confirmed by a court in Baghdad. Many appeals have been around the world, to release Tariq Aziz on humanitarian grounds into the care of his family while the judicial process takes its course and the 'lawfulness of his detention' is determined. These should not be brushed aside by those who can make a difference. Until now, there is no evidence of the 'lawfulness of the detention' of Tariq Aziz. The only evidence I can determine is an old man condemned to a slow motion death in jail. It is the same Tariq Aziz who had cooperated with the United Nations during the years of sanctions to implement a severely inadequate survival programme for

## LETTER TO THE WORLD

My father received a death sentence on the same case Mr. Hamid Hamoud was executed for, I am deeply worried that they would do the same thing for my father. The prime minister's press secretary said early this year that they will execute my father, and now that they have done with formalities, there is nothing to stop them. The world must know what these people have done,

and what I am very sure they will do, god forbid, in the near future.

I asking for your help to let the world know what these people have done, and stop what they are planning to do. Thank you for your support, my family and I are, as always, in your debt.

Yours Sincerely,  
Ziad Tariq Aziz

the Iraqi people. Severely inadequate it was indeed, not because of a dictator's regime but due to the punitive behaviour of two governments that dominated the UN Security Council Iraq sanctions policy.

All of us within the United Nations who had to deal with the Government of Iraq during this period, and this included Secretary General *Kofi Annan*, considered Tariq Aziz a moderating voice in Government and a professional with whom one could negotiate. Tariq Aziz, a hardliner when it came to insisting that Iraq no longer possessed weapons of mass destruction, was at the same time a reliable and straightforward nationalist who had the welfare of his people at heart. Those who disagree are those who probably never met Tariq Aziz. I did. This is why I have been speaking out, year after year, regrettably to no avail. All human rights-minded people should add their voice in support of the moving Open Letter written by *Ziad Aziz*, the son who fears for his father's life.

Former US Secretary *James Baker*, the counterpart of Tareq Aziz in the fateful negotiations of 1991 in Geneva, adamantly refuses to get involved while making it clear that he never was more than a clever functionary rather than a statesman. The present British government takes the position "we are concerned but we do not get involved in Iraq's internal affairs". Iraqi President *Jalal Talabani*, an avowed opponent of the death penalty, argues that not he but Iraq's courts have to decide.

Courage of compassion? There seems none where there should be ample, especially among those who are complicit in having created the human drama that constitutes to-day's Iraq. Maybe there is fear in those quarters that the day will come when the whisper of protest becomes a crescendo of demands for belated humanity for Tareq Aziz and his fellow political prisoners. I hope so! The weight of the public conscience in the 21<sup>st</sup> century should not be underestimated! •

## "NATO goes to war ..."

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they make to the work of the Alliance as illustrated through several partnership meetings we are holding here in Chicago. [...] NATO's partnerships are a key element of Cooperative Security which is one of the core tasks of the Alliance, and the Alliance has developed effective policies in order to enhance its partnerships. Our partnerships [...] make a significant contribution to the success of many of our operations and missions. NATO Foreign Ministers in Berlin in April 2011 approved a More Efficient and Flexible Partnership Policy to enhance the effectiveness of NATO's partnerships. We will continue to actively pursue its further implementation with a view to strengthening NATO's partnerships, including by: reinforcing the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, the Mediterranean Dialogue, the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, and our relationships with partners across the globe, while making full use of flexible

formats; further developing our political and practical cooperation with partners, including in an operational context; and through increasing partner involvement in training, education, and exercises, including with the NATO Response Force. We will intensify our efforts to better engage with partners across the globe who can contribute significantly to security, and to reach out to partners concerned, including our newest partner Mongolia, to build trust, increase transparency, and develop political dialogue and practical cooperation."

NATO particularly welcomed their "... meeting in Chicago with thirteen partners who have recently made particular political, operational, and financial contributions to NATO-led operations. This is an example of the enhanced flexibility with which we are addressing partnership issues in a demand and substance-driven way. Our meeting in Chicago with partners provides us with a unique opportunity to discuss the lessons learned from our cooperation, and to exchange views

on the common security challenges we face. Joint training and exercises will be essential in maintaining our interoperability and interconnectedness with partner forces, including when we are not engaged together in active operations. We will share ideas generated at this Chicago meeting with all our partners, within the appropriate frameworks, for additional discussion."

In a footnote these "partners" are listed: Australia, Finland, Georgia, Japan, Jordan, Qatar, the republic of Korea, Marokko, New Zealand, Austria, Sweden, the United Arab Emirates ... and Switzerland.

## More wars in various places

What is the aim? In a cryptic way, the summit declaration answers that question as well: "The Alliance's recent operational experiences also show that the ability of NATO forces to act together seamlessly and rapidly is critical to success." That doesn't mean though that all

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## Federal Councilor Burkhalter – a compliant NATO-helper?

Politicians from left to right have reservations about his approach

*thk.* Whereas the USA's plan to bring Libya down to her knees militarily together with NATO narrowly succeeded, she was hindered by Russia and China from waging a new war of aggression – this time against Syria. As a reaction to this resistance NATO aimed at achieving an involvement of non-NATO-states and international organizations at the summit in Chicago. For this purpose many countries that are not NATO member states trotted up to the Chicago summit and so did Switzerland.

That Federal Councilor *Burkhalter* submissively followed the call to Chicago, delivered a speech there and pleaded the cause of a closer cooperation between Switzerland and NATO seems to have been a put-up job. In his speech *Didier Burkhalter* emphasized, how important a closer cooperation with NATO was: “We are convinced that only a strong partnership will allow us to face new threats in the future. For this reason we welcome the establishing and usage of more flexible forms of partnership with NATO”. Likewise his proposal to intensify the cooperation between NATO and OSCE in 2014 when Switzerland's chairmanship will start originates from the NATO-strategy-box to gain influence on world policy via international organizations and to circumvent the UN if necessary, quite in the sense of *Bill Clinton*.

The unauthorized approach of Federal Councilor Burkhalter unleashed great ap-

prehension and displeasure among Swiss politicians of different political parties and even more among Swiss citizens.

### “PFP was the Fall of Man”

When responding to *Hans Fehr's* the parliamentary question concerning his visit to NATO and how this was compatible with neutrality Burkhalter did not refer to this objection even with one sentence; instead he emphasized that it had been an “excellent occasion to present our values and priorities”. Later in his statement before Parliament he explained that “Switzerland had appealed to the states present at Chicago to join our efforts to achieve a closer observation Humanitarian Law”. In his answer he referred to his speech delivered to NATO. It is obtainable only in English and French. However in this speech there is no sentence of the above mentioned contents, but primarily there is a listing up of the Swiss engagements in the context of NATO-operations that had become possible because of the PFP membership. Exactly the membership in the NATO sub-organisation PFP is considered extremely problematic among politicians from left to right. Switzerland joined PFP as a member in 1996 at the instigation of Federal Councilor *Adolf Ogi* and *Flavio Cotti* in a cloak-and-dagger operation – neither subjected to compulsory nor optional referendum, nor to consultation of Parliament. Actually it should leave this

organization as soon as possible because a membership is not compliant with neutrality and NATO has degenerated to an intervention force of the ailing empire.

That Burkhalter wants to teach NATO a “lesson” in humanitarian law is more than naive and not oriented towards reality. Either he does not know the statutes of NATO or the whole thing is his attempt to blur the closer cooperation with NATO that he is aiming at. Both is not worthy of a Member of the Federal Council and of our country. Burkhalter's positive attitude towards the war-alliance NATO and its wars is more than questionable viewed within this context and cannot be explained by ignorance. Burkhalter's argument that Switzerland would be safer at the side of NATO in the cyber war is ridiculous, if one knows, who launched this cyber war (compare article page 6).

For this reason one cannot be satisfied with Burkhalter's response to Parliament. Obviously strong guardrails are here required that the sovereign will have to set the Federal Council, if Parliament doesn't.

### “NATO goes to war ...”

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“partners” were to be deployed in the same area in future. No, those “partners” would wage wars simultaneously in more than just one place. The USA, this can be read anywhere by now, are shifting their military and armament activities to the pacific area, aiming at China. But in the Middle East, in Africa and the Western part of the Eurasian continent there are “enemies” to be fought, too. Doesn't it come handy then that a country like France revives some neocolonial Mediterranean dreams and has geniuses like *Bernard-Henri Lévy* who wouldn't be satisfied with promoting just one terrible war within two years. Or a country like Germany with their desire for continental dominance and war propaganda of the Green party, playing on emotions. Or the Green EU crew of *Cohn-Bendit*, *Fischer*, *Kouchner*, *Koenigs*, who seem to be so fond of wars in general. All of them can be satisfied and still play their part just as vassals of the power which sets the tone in NATO.

No wonder then that another NATO summit declaration states (“Toward Nato forces 2020”): “Developing greater European military capabilities will strengthen the transatlantic link, enhance the security of all Allies and foster an equitable sharing of the burdens, benefits and responsibilities of Alliance membership.”

Of course this applies to other “partners”, too, including Switzerland: “We are also taking steps to enhance the linkages between our forces, and with partner countries as well. Our operation over Libya showed once again the importance of such connections; as soon as the political decision was taken to initiate the NATO mission, Alliance pilots were flying wing to wing with each other, and with pilots from non-NATO European and Arab partner countries. That was essential to the military and political success of the mission.

We will build on that success through the Connected Forces Initiative. [...] We will link our networks together even more. [...] As much as possible, we will also step up our connections with Partners, so that when we wish to act together, we can.” •

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# Statements from the Federal Parliament Building on the visit of Federal Councilor Burkhalter to NATO in Chicago

## “Switzerland’s alignment move towards the USA is problematic”

Interview with National Councilor Carlo Sommaruga, SP (Socialist Party), Canton Geneva



(picture thk)

*Current Concerns: How do you judge the performance of Federal Councilor Burkhalter at NATO in Chicago? In the last years NATO has emerged to be an imperial war alliance.*

Therefore it is especially inappropriate that a neutral state is represented by a member of the government at the NATO summit. How do you judge that? National Councilor Carlo Sommaruga: It was not the presence of our Federal Councilor for Foreign Affairs that was problematic but the indication of his wish to bind Switzerland more closely to NATO. This contradicts neutrality – even active neutrality – and it opposes Switzerland’s endeavour to strengthen the UN as a world assembly and the Security Council as a place for the development of collective security.

NATO is a military organisation to defend the USA’s strategic interests and those of the countries that ride on the US’s hegemonic wave. Indeed, there exists an alignment move of Switzerland towards the USA and that’s problem.

*Federal Councilor Burkhalter wants to commit himself to a closer collaboration between NATO and OSCE when Switzerland will preside the OSCE in 2014. How do you assess this course of action?*

That is a radical mistake. The OSCE is a place of dialogue and is developing more and more to a universal instrument of our democratic values and human rights. The fact that Switzerland and Serbia share the chairmanship is a living example of that. NATO is a place where power relations are created for the defence of one superpower’s interests.

*How do you assess the cooperation between NATO and Switzerland with respect to the fighting of cyber attacks announced by Federal Councilor Burkhalter?*

Conventional war was the war of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. Cyber war is that of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The viruses *Stuxnet* and *Flame* released by the western powers against Iran are the best examples. To intensify the cooperation with NATO, that is to say with the USA in the field

of cyber defence, obviously means joining the USA’s military strategy. An independent strategy of cooperation with neutral states would make much more sense.

*Didier Burkhalter basically aims at a close collaboration with NATO as he did already in the Defence Committee (Sicherheitspolitische Kommission SIK). What do you say about that, and how can we prevent our country to become an appendage of the US empire and become involved in wars contrary to international law?*

It is important to place the UN in the centre and to commit oneself to the strength-

ening and democratisation of their agencies: to commit ourselves to the defence of the human rights, their defence *everywhere in the world*, in China, in Russia and even in the USA and their allies. The Swiss active neutrality must be retrieved from storage where it has been pushed by Didier Burkhalter after he took office. With that a genuine diplomacy of values can be reactivated, and not one of short-term interests and of seeking shelter with the world power.

Hiding oneself behind a mixture of values and interests means in plain English to give up those genuine values and to adapt oneself to the powerful be it for military or economic interests. •

## “We have no business with NATO”

Interview with National Councilor Jakob Büchler, CVP (Christian People’s Party), Canton St. Gallen



(picture thk)

*Current Concerns: Federal Councilor Burkhalter has made a controversial appearance at the NATO. What do you say as a former president of the National Council’s*

*Defence Committee?*

National Councilor Jakob Büchler: I was surprised that Federal Councilor Burkhalter moved on the political stage as if we were a NATO member. It was also amazed that he took part in Chicago. Moreover, he was in the media and answered questions on Swiss television. That’s all very strange, because Switzerland has no say in NATO decisions. We are not a member, we do not pay anything, so we have no business there.

*Burkhalter said in Chicago that if Switzerland took the OSCE presidency in two years, he would push for a closer cooperation with NATO. It is really amazing that the head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of a neutral state, where 95 percent of the Swiss population want Switzerland’s neutrality to be ensured is chumming up with a military alliance like NATO. How do you assess that?*

OSCE and NATO can not be compared nor do they belong together. OSCE observes elections and observes, whether human rights are being respected, etc. It has nothing to do with war and aggression. NATO is a purely military alliance, which had its origins in the Cold War. Today, NATO is seeking its task. It intends to get Afghanistan in order, a task at which it will not be successful. If one leaves that country in 2014, it will be very difficult to leave it behind orderly or even to democratize it. That will not work. Nobody knows what will happen then. That remains to be seen.

*What is NATO’s role today?*

Libya has shown us that NATO no longer works as a mere defensive alliance. At the NATO summit in Budapest, where I was invited as a parliamentarian, we were told that Lybia was attacked with 10 000 air strikes and that no soldier had to set foot in this country. What the consequences are, will become clear in the future. Gaddafi left 5000 missiles, ground-air- and ground-ground missiles. They are now in the hands of al-Qaeda or other insurgents, and nobody knows where they will show up, may be in the hands of the “Syrian freedom fighters”. NATO will have to face that some day. So as I said, I do wonder what Federal

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## “NATO-Cyber-Defense” = Digital First Strike? Is Federal Councilor *Didier* a Trojan?

*me.* At the latest NATO conference in Chicago, “Cyber Defense” was a big topic. Hackers intruding foreign computer networks are the latest danger – as was *Usama bin Ladin* at his time. This is why Switzerland, as “one of five privileged non-NATO countries”, was invited to participate in the alliance’s “Cyber Defense” program. The question is now if this program makes sense or if it constitutes a Trojan horse. And even if the program is a Trojan horse and we should thus abandon it: what approach should Switzerland take towards its national “Cyber Defense”? Simply calling the NATO solution wrong does not imply that the problem has been addressed in a reasonable way. Only a few days ago the networks of the Foreign Department EDA were successfully hacked.

### Stuxnet is a US-Israeli first strike weapon

At the conference mentioned, Federal Councilor *Didier* has given a prominent speech, arguing for a participation of Switzerland in the “Cyber Defense” program. Just a few days ago, the “New York Times” published an unveiling preprint of *David E. Sanger*’s book “Obama’s Secret Wars and Surprising Use of American Power” which is to appear soon. It clearly states that the Stuxnet virus had been developed and deployed by order of the US President.

According to international law, the usage of so-called cyber weapons against foreign states is clearly an act of war. Stuxnet, the so-called super worm, has destroyed thousands of gas centrifuges in the subterranean nuclear factory in Natanz. This facility is supposed to enrich Uranium for civil purposes. According to international law, cyber weapons are hence considered to belong to the same category as a nuclear bomb. This was also the reason why *Obama* had pressed for complete secrecy. He wanted to avoid giving other states, hackers or terror organizations a pretext for striking back against the US.

### Stuxnet was tested on Gaddafi’s Uranium enrichment facility

The Stuxnet virus was a product of collaboration between the US secret service NSA (National Security Agency) and specialists of the Israeli cyber unit “8,200”.

The Americans wanted to make use of the there available knowhow and also to integrate the Israelis in order to keep them back from triggering a conventional strike.

The Stuxnet virus was tested extensively. When *Gaddafi* had stopped his nuclear program following the US invasion in Iraq and was consequently removed from the

US black list, he had sold the centrifuges of his secret Libyan nuclear program (*Timmer brothers*) to the CIA. They assumed that the Iranians had similar units, built a model of a nuclear factory somewhere in the US desert and tested the Stuxnet virus there.

Somehow, e.g. through the USB stick of an careless (or bribed or turned around) Iranian nuclear engineer, the virus came to Natanz. According to the “New York Times”, an ill-disciplined Israeli IT specialist caused Stuxnet to become public. He had inserted, on his own authority, a piece of code which was meant to destroy the Iranian nuclear program even further. A bug in the program, however, allowed the worm to gain access to the Internet via the laptop of an engineer. So Stuxnet was suddenly in the Internet and the numerous companies producing anti-virus programs started to deal with it. Also the recently discovered espionage program “*Flame*” could come from the same source. It could be the complementary virus to Stuxnet. It examines Internet telephones, chats, e-mails and other communication, allowing for an assessment of the amount of damage from a cyber-attack. The Stuxnet virus is the weapon; the *Flame* virus is something like the reconnaissance drone that is meant to take pictures of the damage.

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## “NATO not a good partner for Switzerland”

Interview with National Councilor *Ueli Leuenberger*, GPS (Green Party of Switzerland), Canton Geneva



(picture thk)

*Current Concerns: What do you think about Federal Councilor Burkhalter’s visit at the NATO in Chicago?*  
*National Councilor Ueli Leuenberger:* It is not his visit that bothers me. What

bothers me are the explanations about a closer collaboration with NATO (etc.). Of course, I want to know precisely what kind of project that is.

*What bothers you about a closer collaboration with NATO?*

I oppose a closer collaboration with NATO: Switzerland has to be active within the UN. Actually, NATO is not a good partner for Switzerland.

*What is NATO in your opinion?*

In a large part it is still a tool of some big states, especially the US. We saw how they intervened in wars etc., depending on who was in office in the US. I oppose operations of the Swiss Armed Forces abroad, except if it was within the framework of the UN. And in that case it still would have to be discussed. To intensify relations or cooperation with NATO has no priority for Switzerland and is politically wrong.

*So, to your mind we could as well have sent an ambassador as observer to the summit?*

Well, there is indeed the question, what his business was there, actually and whether it was really necessary. But the result has shown that Mr *Burkhalter* would like to give this relationship more relevance. What I do hope is that the matter will also be discussed in the committees concerned, the Defence Committees or the Foreign Affairs Committees and that everybody will put their cards on the table.

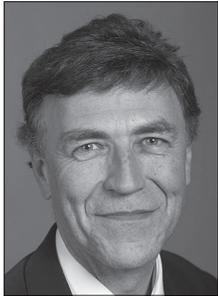
### “We have no business with NATO”

continued from page 10

Councilor *Burkhalter* wants to cause there. The Swiss people do not want to join NATO, the Swiss people want to hold on to their neutrality, and that’s what I want. So there is no flirting with NATO membership, as little as with an EU accession. I was really astounded that he went door-knocking at the NATO.

## “Switzerland definitely has to refrain from cooperating with NATO”

Interview with National Councilor Luzi Stamm, SVP (Swiss People's Party), Canton Aargau



(picture wikipedia)

*Councilor Stamm, the Federal Councilor Burkhalter was at the NATO summit in Chicago and held a speech there. Did that surprise you?*

*National Councilor Luzi Stamm:* No, not really, since the early 90s this has

been the usual behavior of our Federal Council: they are internationalist, EU and NATO-friendly! Joining the Partnership for Peace (PfP) also falls in this category. Acting on his own authority several years ago, Federal Councilor Ogi promised that we would join in. As early as that, a cutting comment was that the difference between the NATO and PfP was as thin as a sheet of paper. At that time even a position paper of the FDP backed the view

to join NATO. The trend in Bern has long been clear: it does not surprise me. Nevertheless, I do by no means approve of that. *In this context, we have to raise the question whether this is compatible with our neutrality.*

A NATO membership is not. Basically, the people's attitude is very different from that of the political leadership. The most recent poll showed that 83 percent of our population is against accession to the EU. Most of the political elite, however, have wanted for twenty years – at least until recently – to join the EU. It is the same with respect to neutrality. The majority of the Swiss people want to keep our neutrality.

*How should Switzerland move on the international stage?*

On the one hand, international cooperation is essential, with all countries, be it Libya, Iran or whoever. But it is a big difference whether we maintain contact in

terms of cooperation or whether we express unilateral sympathy. We must be very careful that our government does not make symbolic gestures, especially in the Middle East. Demonstrative visits to one side in the conflict zones are always a mistake. Political cooperation in terms of contact is right; aligning oneself to one side or the other is a disaster with regard to neutrality policy.

*Should Switzerland not refrain from NATO more decisively?*

Yes, it should. Earlier, during the East-West conflict, there was great sympathy toward NATO and this was quite understandable. But according to the fundamental change of the NATO alliance under international law into an aggressive alliance, we need a clear dissociation. Since NATO has changed its purpose, Switzerland definitely has to refrain from cooperating with NATO. •

### “Nato-Cyber-Defence’ ...”

continued from page 11

Cyber weapons of Russian or Chinese origin, similar to Stuxnet and Flame, have not been identified.

#### Cyber Attacks are acts of war

The implications of the doctrine of cyber-attacks have not been explored with respect to international law. The Americans, for their part, are threatening to respond to attacks from the Internet with conventional weapons, but they are aware that cyber-attacks are acts of war and try to hide them.

Returning to Didier Burkhalter and the NATO program: On the one hand, NATO partners and leading powers construct massive cyber-weapons and deploy them. On the other hand, the same partners invite other countries, including neutral Switzerland, to enter into their partnership in “NATO-Cyber-Defense”. First one is reminded of the proverb “to let the wolf guard the sheep”, then one remembers the NATO program “Partnership for Peace” which is actually a partnership for war.

#### Neutral states and cyber war:

##### Giving the right answers

What is the American intention when they invite Switzerland: Do they want access to our experts? Do they want to make use of our computer infrastructure to start attacks on other countries? Or do they simply want to know about the defense measures of a state like Switzerland, to know about weak spots and to be able to blackmail us more efficiently in case that *Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf* might one day point her “Bündner” horns in Washington (unfortunately an unlikely assumption).

Another question: Is the “NATO-Cyber-Defense” Strategy an appropriate answer to the problems in Switzerland? Of course, our country has to protect itself – not only the national infrastructure, the army, the railroad, postal distribution centers, reservoirs, electricity supplies, rail and air traffic, industrial facilities etc. Also the private economy needs to protect itself (nuclear power stations, banks, transport companies, large bakeries, logistics centers of the retail sector or chemical industry), to name just a few.

Everything that the constitution does not explicitly attribute to the federal state is the responsibility of the cantons. We must leave the question undecided whether the cantons are aware of this problem and whether they consult the necessary experts.

But the first question is whether the NATO program will deliver good answers for the questions raised in Switzerland. If not, the “NATO-Cyber-Defense” program needs to be considered a Trojan horse. And Federal Councilor Burkhalter would be a Trojan as well in that case. If the head of EDA allows to be lured into a terrain that is so dangerous with respect to international law, he is substantially lacking political instinct. The *George Clooney* elegance in the Federal Council does not help here.

Politically we are facing the question: “Who can create the political mental virus protection program that will make Federal Councilor Burkhalter more alert towards such topics, lets him switch on his brain and his heart and dig in his heels.” •

## From a defence alliance to a war machine

### NATO's wars of aggression violating international law since 1999

*thk.* When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991 and thus the Eastern military alliance, the Warsaw Pact, finally fell apart, it would have been only logical that NATO had also abdicated and thus definitively made an end to the Cold War. But nothing alike happened. The opposite was the case. Contrary to *George Bush's* promise that he made to the last Soviet leader, *Mikhail Gorbachev*, not to extend NATO to the East and not to include any former Warsaw Pact countries or Soviet republics into the military alliance, the long-term plans of NATO were very different: expansion towards the East and encirclement of Russia. The number of member states was increased from 16 to 28 in a short time, although the former adversaries had long disappeared from the stage of world history.

The true intentions that the US Empire harboured with regard to NATO were to identify at the latest in the illegal war against Serbia in 1999. As *Henry Kissinger*, the former US secretary of state and military strategist, said in an interview with the *Welt am Sonntag* in September 1999, this war represented the "watershed". He warned to wage wars in the name of "morality" and "human rights" and spoke of the "virtue run amok".

#### Wars of aggression in the name of peace and human rights

At this time NATO had already waged an illegal war of aggression against the UN member state of Serbia without UN mandate and thus committed a severe war crime. It was a war that not only violated in-

ternational law, but also the UN's own statutes. It was only on the occasion of NATO's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in Washington in April 1999 – after the war had already been raging for four weeks – that NATO gave itself a new doctrine, and mutated from a defensive alliance to an offensive alliance without the parliaments of the member countries having a say. Now a war of aggression in the name of "peace" and "human rights" and to "secure key resources and vital interests" was at least compliant with the statutes, but still illegal by international law.

With this step, NATO authorized itself to wage future wars violating the UN Charter and thus also violating binding international law, however without having any international legitimacy. During his term of office, *Bill Clinton* quite frankly took the view that NATO should operate in accordance with the UN whenever possible, but if necessary also without it. Thus, the United States, as the leading power of NATO, claim the possibility to intervene wherever its interests are at stake, even against the international law. A blatant violation of international law and a violation of the word and spirit of the UN. However, there was no sign of resistance from the other member countries.

#### Continuous bombardment to protect the civilian population

Since 1999, NATO has been involved in various wars – from Afghanistan via Iraq to Libya, even if it was not official – and has left behind a human, po-

litical and military disaster in every place.

In the most recent example, i.e. in the war against Libya just like in Afghanistan, NATO showed how it defies international law and does not secure the protection of civilians, as laid down in the UN Resolution 1980. Instead it waged a "full-scale war", in the language of NATO, a true war with all its consequences, in order to secure its own interests. Overall, NATO has carried out 30,000 air strikes in Libya, supporting the rebels militarily. The losses are enormous; the number of casualties amounts to tens of thousands. Knowing that thousands of NATO actions were flown in the war against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in order to bomb the country back into the stone era, as announced triumphantly from the Pentagon – not to mention the weapons that were used and the contamination of whole areas of land with uranium weapons whose consequences are still considerable – one can hardly imagine how terrible the destruction has been Libya.

Similarly to Kosovo or Libya, the US urges for a mission of the war alliance in Syria, supported by NATO countries. Thanks to China and Russia who vetoed against military intervention in the Security Council because they had learned from the consequences of the Libyan resolution, the country has been spared from a large scale NATO bombing so far. This openly manifests the resistance against Western arrogance.

Concerning “International treaties before the people”

## More democracy leads to more self-assertion in foreign policy

*Interview with Dr Johannes Kunz\**

*Current Concerns: What meaning do self-determination and co-decision of the citizens have in our democracy?*

*Johannes Kunz:* The possibility of exerting an active influence on all fields of public life, which in Switzerland is highly developed through the institutions of direct democracy, is absolutely fundamental for freedom, security and prosperity of every individual. In my book I spoke of an optimization of sovereignty, which is being reached by direct democracy in an interplay with general conscription and permanent neutrality. Thus direct democracy is a guarantee for sovereignty and self-determination of our country within the world. Europe that surrounds Switzerland today provides illustrative material what happens if the citizens are limited in co-determination and co-decision. Indeed it is not necessary to say anything else on this issue.

*Is co-determination concerning questions of foreign policy regulated in a satisfactory manner?*

In all democracies foreign policy is the field which is most shielded from the democratic process. It is the field where an internationally very well networked elite in a not easily manageable number of forums pretend to regulate the relations between states and peoples and to ensure that possible conflicts which naturally occur in these relations are settled amicably and peacefully. The truth is, in fact, that the people respectively the citizens of the single states do not have much to say or rather nothing at all. The elites feel that the peoples' say is rather disturbing and obstructive and point out that diplomatic negotiations have to be performed with utmost discretion in order to be successful. Surely the course of the negotiations is damaged by indiscretions and is hardly successful if everybody wants to interfere. Co-determination has to take place on the level of the negotiating mandate. A diplomat who negotiates and is equipped with a mandate which is democratically well-legitimized has an unquestionably strong negotiation position. Thus, more democracy leads to more self-assertion in foreign policy, too. Insofar even in the direct democracy of Switzerland co-determination of the citizens is not regulated in an satisfactory manner.

*As early as in 1965 US senator Wayne Morse said in a TV interview that US foreign policy would have to be determined by the people and that the president was*

*only the administrator of the peoples' will. What do you say about this statement?*

That would be nice. But surely Senator Morse knew already at that time that it is not like that at all. The USA are probably the clearest prove how undemocratic foreign policy in democracies can be performed. Since 11 September 2001 the President has the competence to wage wars almost all over the world in the name of the fight against terrorism. By the way this is the consequence of the lack of general conscription: only professional soldiers are suitable for often senseless war operations. Militiamen would not let themselves be deployed for goals of which they don't see the sense for a longer time. An example is the Vietnam war which was lost by the US and was fought by soldiers recruited under general conscription.

*Does our foreign policy work according to this setting?*

It is clear that the Federal Council, whose position – in contrast to the American President – is not directly democratically legitimated, is to a greater extent just an administrator of the people's will. This is expressed by the collegial nature of the board, which makes the Federal Council the head of the Federal Administration. It has a narrower range of political activity than the American President, because it hasn't got his competence to govern without the parliament and it can't veto decisions of the parliament. In foreign policy the Federal Council has kept a large autonomy, partly due to the reasons mentioned above, but also because of disinterest of a part of parliament and the people who both for decades have left foreign policy to the Federal Council to some extent. For about 20 years, this has no longer been the case.

*To what extent do the people have a say on foreign policy issues?*

For 90 years the Swiss people have been able to voice their opinion on state treaties by means of the optional referendum – this is unique in the world. 20 years ago the Swiss took the referendum on the EEA Agreement and by its rejection prevented the first step towards Switzerland's accession pursued at that time by the majority of the Federal Council and the administration. We might conclude that this instrument of participation is strong enough to block such catastrophic failures. Given the increasingly dense mesh of international treaties and the growing number of mem-

berships in international organizations, which impose more and more obligations on their member states, national standards are increasingly getting into conflict with international obligations, as Switzerland believes that international law is above national law. But international law does not possess the same democratic legitimacy as national law. Nowadays it results from negotiations between experts from different countries, who have been mandated by their (not always) democratically elected governments. The results of such negotiations are contracts, which often enforce changes in the law of the contracting parties. Such legislative changes are subject to the optional referendum in Switzerland and may be rejected by the people. However, this is considered a breach of contract matter internationally because the contract cannot be implemented in the agreed form. With the request for an amendment to an international treaty the same effect results as with a constitutional norm, which forces the law to meet its standard. A constitutional norm may, however, only be created or modified with the obligatory consent of the sovereign – in Switzerland that is the people and the cantons. It is therefore not clear why for an international treaty, which has the significance of a constitutional norm, the same basic democratic requirements should not apply – mandatory referendum and a majority of the people and of the “Stände” (cantons). The existing asymmetry between constitutional norms and international treaty creates the incentive for the government to inject projects that are politically difficult to enforce into the Swiss legislation by way of international treaties, a practice that is the custom within the EU. To prevent such developments in Switzerland which are likely to become reality in the future, the people would do well to maintain their actual involvement in foreign policy by providing for the appropriate constitutional arrangements. That way it also prevents that in future judges will decide whether a constitutional amendment with implications on real or alleged international obligations is possible or not.

*What foreign policy decisions of recent years were of great importance?*

This is a difficult question. Not every decision that is being discussed by the public has necessarily a great import and

## Europe: a continent of nation states

**“I have avoided predictions, because we are dealing with political processes, whose outcome is basically open-ended.”**

*“Incidentally, this is the only long-term chance for Europe: a continent of nation states, which pools its strength where it is appropriate and allows individual flexibility, if it is the wish of an individual country. The different forms of co-operation in Europe and the common currency are instruments of policy. However, we should not attribute an intrinsic value to them beyond their effectivity. That would be ideology, not politics.”*

Thilo Sarrazin:  
*“Europa braucht den Euro nicht. Wie uns politisches Wunschdenken in die Krise geführt hat” 2012, S. 417 (“Europe does not need the Euro. How political wishful thinking has led us into the crisis”, 2012, p.417)*

“The depressive feeling in the spring of 2012 is: The project ‘European Monetary Union’ is developing according to an order of its own, which the statesmen and their advisors hardly understand: They do not determine the policy, but merely respond, and *Angela Merkel*, whose voice is just the kind of the friendly woman’s voice in my car’s navigation system, seems to play the same role. After having driven in the wrong direction, I can hear ‘Make a u-turn, if possible’ and if the deviation has increased, I can hear ‘Please turn left’. If my car has left the mapped terrain, the friendly voice announces: “Your destinations are in the given direction”. In my car I know, that the friendly voice has no influence on the direction of the car, but reports only the current status. I am afraid, that the development of the monetary union might be similar. In a remarkable interview with *Günther Jauch* *Angela Merkel* told clearly, that she was taking more or less short-sighted decisions when it comes to the Euro, just as the situation of the day would require.”(p. 21)

“The Treaties of Rome which laid the foundation for the European Economic

Community (EEC) in 1958, were based on the concept of a common market. This concept means, properly conceived and carried out, that freedom of establishment and equal opportunities are predominant everywhere. The Member States can influence the business competition by good education and training, efficient scientific performance, good infrastructure, reliable public services and by a cost-effective, flexible and corruption-free public administration. In this system of a common market all acting subjects retain their original responsibilities and of course, they are liable for their debts, and no one else does. This applies to all Member States of the Common Market. Even a common currency does not change this regulatory framework and is primarily compatible with the goals of the ECB, which is primarily committed to the steady monetary value.

Of course, all states committed to this treaty have the right to make mistakes and for example run up more debts than are favourable for their community. The citizens have to bear the damage, but they can elect a different government. The damage may also be with the creditor, if the state concerned gets into trouble when servicing its debts. As for companies and private debtors, creditors must even check on public debtors and verify to whom and on what terms they entrust their money.

However, one thing will not work – this is my initial hypothesis: forcing the public debtors to act rationally. First of all, we can hardly determine what would be rational. Different world views and political objectives can also lead to different viewpoints in debt policy, which can not easily be arranged on a scale between ‘right and wrong’. Secondly, an effective supervision of debt behaviour requires an intensity of interference that either deprives the state of its sovereign character, or is ineffective.”(p. 24f.)

“When I published my first book on the euro in 1996, I was still cautiously



optimistic concerning the future of the common currency. However, I saw no major additional opportunities for economic growth and was more cautious in terms of its contribution to further integration. I in my opinion the common currency could succeed only by the following three terms:

1. The ECB copies the German Central Bank Model and abstains strictly from any monetary financing of state debts.
2. There will be no common bailout for the debts of member states.
3. The common currency will not lead to above-average prices and costs in the less competitive countries.

All three conditions were missed gloriously. Unfortunately we are not able to return to the starting point. We have to pick up where we have left off. Throughout this book I emphasized a neutral presentation of facts and correlations. I described risks and the likeliness of their occurrence. I avoided predictions, because we are dealing with political processes, whose outcome is basically open-ended.” (p. 410f.) •

Excerpts from: Thilo Sarrazin, “Europa braucht den Euro nicht. Wie uns politisches Wunschdenken in die Krise geführt hat”

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(Translation *Current Concerns*)

### “More democracy leads ...”

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new developments are often triggered by banal events. For me the rejection of the EEA Agreement remains trend-setting. With a yes, we would have definitely become an EU member, the dynamics would have been impossible to stop. The few people who then led the oppo-

sition, have acquired historical merit for freedom, independence and prosperity of Switzerland. The EEA decision also provides evidence that the people always take the right decision in the end when it comes to existential questions. The Schengen treaty was also important because Switzerland lost the right of a sovereign state to determine who is allowed to settle on its territory. The deci-

sion showed that the people can also be wrong. Direct democracy, if exercised, protects only against abuse of power, not against error. •

\* Dr Johannes Kunz here spoke only in his capacity as a book-author and does notably not represent the view of the FDFA.

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

## Council of States – chamber of ignorance!? I

The Council of States likes to adorn itself to be a “chamber of reflection”; with regard to its Committee for Economic Affairs and Taxation CEAT’s understanding of investor protection, the word “chamber of ignorance” suits much better! A person who - after the Swissair grounding - tries to get a real protection of investors considers the view of the the Council of States’ CEAT as a slap in the face of the investor and his protection because the CEAT lays out the red carpet to enable unscrupulous bankers and financial advisers to continue to cheat the investors for their person-

al advantage - i.e. to put commissions and other benefits into their pockets - without being punished.

The asset management contract is not at all a pass for professional knowledge of the investor; on the contrary, the investor deliberately puts the fate of his assets into the professional hands of his bank.

The members of the CEAT seem to misjudge the purpose of the asset management job, they simply ignore it!

The view of the Council of States’ CEAT is not only far from reality, but downright reprehensible, because it is

complicity in the abuse of investors’ assets entrusted to the banks.

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(Translation *Current Concerns*)

## Council of States – chamber of ignorance!? II The Committee for the Environment as well ...

*ab.* Just like most other communes, we also have a particularly pretty side street across an idyllic small valley section. The place has been furnished by the commune with a small seating area. We all love the track: walkers, dog walkers, elderly people, mothers with prams, bikers - yes, and even vehicle drivers sometimes take this shorter route.

We were horrified to observe last year how the greater use of the seating area by people from the neighboring commune produced an increasing amount of litter in the brook and on the meadow side, something we only knew earlier from neighboring countries in the south. Is Switzerland going to be a waste-land, while it will soon look better in the southern countries? Only because Germany and the EU have accused us to be old-fashioned, stubborn and all so similar to the SVP (a conservative Swiss party)? And those on the EU-green track have sounded their horn for the transition of the world into a self-regulating stage of global economy?

We asked the person responsible for the road service in our commune responsible, a mature personality, whether we should try a small local initiative and address

among others the school. There is a biology teacher there who can perfectly motivate young people and adults. To our surprise, our road master said: “Well, if it had been the young, we would already have done so last year.”

“Yes - but who else does such a thing?”

“Adult drivers - people like you and me.” We were astonished and asked: “How do you know that?” He: “Because last year we asked the regular dog walkers along the track to watch out for those who do that. Soon we had a list of cars, and we would rather keep quiet about their drivers. Slow down – enjoy the ride – have a drink – open the window and throw the can as far as possible into the field or on the brook’s bank!”

“And now?”

“We don’t know how we could tackle it.”

“Environmental education for an adult fun generation giving the children a miserable role model?”

“If you have a good idea, tell me, please!”

So – and now?

There is a course in environmental education and an Institute for Environmen-

tal Decisions (IED) at the Federal Institute of Technology (FIT Zurich), certainly a proud and highly qualified institution. Why don’t they raise their voice, why don’t they intervene? Must they first be budgeted with some state millions for a relevant special project? Don’t they care about the problems of the country? Must they first ask in Brussels, how and whether they may “control” the Swiss in this case? And if they do something, they will certainly start another silly poster campaign that makes everybody angry because it costs tax millions. They would better take a small decision in Parliament instead, which doesn’t let things slide. For example, posters with something like:

**At least do it with  
a bottle deposit ...<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> This phrase reminds of the Swiss Stop Aids Campaign in which posters were issued with a quotation of a song by Polo Hofer “At least do it with a rubber ...” (“Im Minimum en Gummi drum ...”)

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

## Bad habit of “badly-behaved persons” can cost cows their life

*mw.* A few days ago the bad news could be read and heard in all Swiss media: In the last six months six cows in Grenchen had bled to death due to internal injuries, because fragments of aluminum cans had got in their food. The cause for this needless death is beverage cans that people throw away wherever they are: on streets and squares, in other people’s gardens, on meadows and fields. Counter measures for the eradication of such anti-social behavior should be taken immediately.

“In the recent months farmer *Schnyder* has lost six cows – five of them pregnant. After the most recent case of death the cow was examined and the cause of death was found: small, razor-sharp pieces of aluminum in the food which injured the animal internally. The aluminum pieces had got in the food due to careless urbanites enjoying their energy drink, their beer and then just throwing away the can in the meadow.” (Source: *DRS4 news* on June 4, 2012, “Discarded aluminum cans – death sentence for the cows”).

### Fines on throw-away offenders

Politics is requested by veterinarians to put a high deposit on aluminum cans, in order to provide a first remedy for the rampant disfigurement on the environment and the threat to the animals. However, they have not met a response yet: this could not be expected from young people with a tight budget, politicians said. Why not? The essence of a deposit is that the consumer gets his money back if he delivers the can to the right place, instead of “beautifying” the landscape with it. Can our young people not be expected to pack their cans and dispose them properly? Rubbish!

After all, firm measures against polluters have been introduced lately in various Swiss cities. Thus, whoever is caught red-handed by a police officer in Berne is fined with up to 300 francs, where at least five such on-the-spot fines have been imposed in 2011. The offender has to pay 40 francs just for throwing away a cigarette butt or a piece of gum (Source: *sda* of 09/05/2012). Since 2012, a new police regulation is in

force in Zurich according to which littering or leaving waste will be fined with 80 or 120 francs. Operators of snack corners must take precautions to keep public properties clean. During the night, i.e. from 10 pm to 7 am (in the summer 11 pm to 7 am), each kind of disruptive behavior is prohibited (Source: *sda* of 11/24/2011). In the canton of Basel-City even a five-pillar approach was introduced, with the pillars cleaning, prevention, repression, clean events and industry. So far, Basel-City has spent 19 million francs per year for a clean city; with the new concept, the expenditure will be increased by a further 1.4 million – a fair sum from the taxpayers’ coffers. Among others, this money will be used to expand the “graffiti removal force” which is to remove graffiti as quickly as possible (Source: *sda* of 08/09/2011).

### A challenge for parents and schools

It is to be hoped that many “waste disposers” are being caught by the police

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## A Suggestion by Veterinarians

ab. Recently, our vet let us know that he has written a letter to the Committee for the Environment, Spatial Planning and Energy (CESPE) concerning their decision on the waste problem two weeks ago. He did so on his own and on behalf of many of his colleagues – district veterinarians, mature personalities with a lot of experience in life, politics and in their profession.

Their suggestions includes:

1. Charge a painful deposit on all returnable aluminum beverage cans to be returned at a distribution machine. This might motivate people to collect littered cans from the roadside for earning more pocket-money (esp. youngsters and grown-up 68ers).
2. Large cities and towns should start to restrict the excessive "Party Culture". Responsible organization committees for "Saturday night festivals" should receive strict requirements including:
  - a) accurately allocated limited areas, to avoid interference with the residential areas
  - b) sanitary facilities required
  - c) no fights/violence
  - d) deposit on cans
  - e) committees must clean up themselves, without delegating.
3. Improve environment education in schools and educate the next generation to take more care, and to develop a sense of responsibility for general welfare.

Veterinarians are a relevant main-stay professional group in Switzerland with high responsibility. They have not received an answer to their letter from the CESPE committee members, let alone an acknowledgement of receipt.

The stupid decision of the Committee: Refusal to establish a deposit on disposable beverage cans!

### "Bad habit of ..."

continued from page 17

and awarded a stiff penalty. As long as parents and teachers – just for fear of being "authoritarian" – do not call their children and young people to order if they throw away their garbage or set off with spray cans in their free time, there will basically only little change. It begins with some mothers tacitly collecting dirty clothes that their children carelessly drop on the floor. In the schools

the caretakers wipe away heaps of waste in the schoolyard after each break; at the entrances of vocational schools cigarette butts are on the ground, although there are large ashtrays.

Here we are challenged as educators: Some of the basics of developing into a socially competent person are – beside the consideration for the fellow human beings – a caring attitude towards animals, a sparing use of food and other resources and the protection of the environment. Those who do not understand

will either have to clean the schoolyard or pay a stiff fine. This will probably teach them that tax money is not paid to finance their bad behavior. Teachers can take their classes on a free afternoon (not instead of teaching!) and clean a forest or a rest stop together – which will have more impact than any expensive poster campaign. At home, children can learn from their mothers how to operate the washing machine and hang up the laundry – which should also be part of education. •

## Current Concerns

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