

Current Concerns

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Sovereign national state and international stability in the current era

by Prof Dr Ilias Iliopoulos*



Ilias Iliopoulos
(picture ma)

When we talk about stability in the international system, we naturally always mean relative stability, because if we want to stay on the ground of historical empiricism and geopolitical facts it is the only possible stability. However, we mean a relative stability, which allows for the existence of – also relative – order. But looked at from a value-conservative point of view, order is, however, relative and deficient, something valuable that is not to be thrown overboard light-heartedly, both domestically and between countries. In all periods of history, from the Greek city-state system to the Cold War era, there have been two premises on which an international order rests: First and foremost, a balance of power, as we have known it since the times of *Thucydides*.

The balance of power guarantees stability, order, and peace.

Seen from a conservative-realist approach to international relations, only the greatest possible symmetry in the distribution of power can seriously guarantee stability, order, and peace, by ensuring a credible mutual deterrent and thereby keeping the relevant actors in the system from crossing the Rubicon. However, the absence of this symmetry, or its lapse, will – sooner or later and in spite of the pious or peaceful intentions expressed by politicians in

“The binding axiom for all actors in an international system, or which should be mandatory for them, is rather to be understood as a *modus vivendi* between them, in the sense of, for example, the agreement ‘*cuius regio, eius religio*’ of the Augsburg Peace Treaty of 1555 or the principle of non-interference of the Westphalian peace. The idea behind this is that of non-intervention of one sovereign actor in the internal affairs of another. This idea has found its best application in the form of the basic principle of national sovereignty, which can look back on a remarkably long period of validity.”

their soap-box oratory – lead to the loss of international stability until, of course, the strained balance is restored at some later date.

Stability requires that no power can believe itself to be in the role of the chosen one

From the point of view of a conservative-realist theory of international relations, the second prerequisite for the stability of an international system is an axiom mandatory for all actors, though not in the fashionable, vulgar-liberal sense of the export of so-called “shared democratic values and beliefs”. One cannot warn strongly enough against this latter, because history shows us that international stability perished each time that a power imagined itself to be in the role of the elect and, alone or with the help of its allies, sought to impose its own ideal of civilisation on all the other participants in the system.

Examples from the ancient world

For instance, you may think whatever you like of ancient *Sparta*, but you cannot disregard one historical fact. It was not the idiosyncratic *Sparta* which would incur the wrath of today’s human rights preachers; it was the politically and socio-economically sophisticated Athens that bears the main

responsibility for the Peloponnesian War and thus for the destruction of the international order of the inhabited world and the system of city-states. Moreover, this was the case precisely because the Athens of that time saw itself as a bastion of civilisation and – according to *Pericles*’ words – as a school or a model for all of Greece.¹ By this conduct, Athens nurtured the fear in other city-states that it would want to force its own values and beliefs on them, and this in turn inevitably led to the emergence of an anti-hegemonic coalition.²

Let us on this occasion recall the fact that Athens acted in this manner at that moment when it believed to have reached the zenith of its power. After the end of the Persian Wars, when it had successfully fended off the Asian danger, it enjoyed the reputation of having crushed the common enemy and of thus having saved the entire free Hellenic world from Asiatic barbarism. Today this kind of expression would of course be simply impossible – and even liable to criminal prosecution – at university or in a schoolbook, due to the neo-Calvinist virtue dictatorship of the post-national left, that is to say political correctness.

It is remarkable that this former “superpower” did not stop at the battering of the

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common enemy, but sought – even then, even Athens – to score politically-strategic points from it. The liberal-democratic naval power Athens eagerly operated the transformation of the Delian League (originally founded to combat the Asian risk) into an institution to ensure Athenian hegemony, an instrument for putting in operation as well as ideologically and politically legitimising the “peace operations” – as they would be called today – undertaken everywhere in the former Hellenic world to safeguard Athenian interests.

Dissemination of EU- and NATO- “values” or military humanism is no guarantee of international stability

Back to the topic of international stability: Each actor of the system has its own constitution. Even the Scottish conservative writer *Walter Scott* knew in his time: “A civilised nation that has long had its laws and has despite all their shortcomings found ways and means to prosper under them, must not be regarded as a young colony, in which you can carry out legislative attempts with impunity.”³

Therefore, when I speak of an axiom mandatory for all actors as the second prerequisite of international stability, I certainly do *not* mean a purportedly missionary “commitment” to the forcible distribution of any EU- or NATO- “values” throughout Europe or even all over the world. Also I certainly do not mean the desire for crusades rediscovered since the international law infringing war of aggression of the New World Order against Serbia. Nor do I mean the from that resulting postulation of a “military humanism” by *Tony Blair*, the *Clinton* clan, the feature pages of the “*Süd-deutsche Zeitung*” and the post-nationalist progressivist licenced fool intellectuals of the neo-Soviet Brussels politburo.

Here a parenthesis is necessary: The supranational bureaucratic elite tend to present their ideological justification of their political or strategic actions as the true cause and aim of these actions. Still, it should be known to everyone that from time immemorial, any stronger international actor with a desire for power has sought after such justification; because “under the guidance of pragmatic motive combinations, the carriers of imperialism striving for power have ever again sought highly diverse forms of a quasi-normative legitimacy, in their own eyes as well as before history.”⁴

States remain key players in the international system

I now come to the binding axiom for all actors in an international system, or which should be mandatory for them. This is rather to be understood as a *modus vivendi*

between them, in the sense of, for example, the agreement “*cuius regio, eius religio*” of the Augsburg Peace Treaty of 1555 or the principle of non-interference of the Westphalian peace. The idea behind this is that of non-intervention of one sovereign actor in the internal affairs of another. This idea has found its best application in the form of the basic principle of national sovereignty, which can look back on a remarkably long period of validity.

Since the end of the Thirty Years’ War in 1648, the national states have been the main actors in the international system and they still remain the main actors, despite all the truly significant international interrelations. Contrary to a widespread mythology, they have not reached the point of no return yet. The massive, systematic, political, economic, military, ideological, and psychological war that has been waged against the idea of the sovereign national state since 1991 on the part of the supranational financial and bureaucratic elites cannot change the crucial role of the national states either.

Sovereign states – protection from the law of the jungle

For the rest, the conservative observer of international relations is aware that the term “sovereignty” could and can never be understood in an absolute sense but always in realistic terms. Nevertheless, the states hold on firmly to their sovereignty because they feel that this will protect them against the stronger one’s application of the law of the jungle in our imperfect international legal system: “The states’ claim to sovereignty reflects their fundamental quest for freedom and for self-determination of their own role in the international community.”⁵

Those who stand for a “post-modern” and post-national progressivist totalitarianism have since 1991 increasingly disregarded this basic principle, and have too easily declared it to be null and void – and they have thereby promoted a new edition of the – in its time so massively attacked – *Brezhnev* Doctrine in reverse. They should consider the following: It is quite easy to destroy a system, but it is very difficult to restore a system, especially a stable one.

The political leaders should always remember the words of the great British conservative theorist *Edmund Burke*: “A bungler who would not dare to dismantle his watch, thinks he is capable of disassembling and putting together again, just as he pleases, a much more important and more complicated mechanism made up of quite different wheels and springs and counterweights as well as of cooperating and divergent forces ... Their ... misled good intentions are no excuse for their hubris.”⁶

Viewed objectively, the threat to international security today is that both fundamental requirements of international stability – balance of power and a binding axiom – are currently not given.

Multipolar international system of the 21st century

In a geopolitical sense there is only one great power left today, which (in the sense of *Carl Schmitt*) is already master of its own economic and strategic metropolitan area, successfully defends this against the outside, and in addition has the means of planetary action, which it does not want to see limited by intervention bans issued by other, regional, great powers: And that is the United States.

Although the US is the only global power, it is not the only great power; it faces larger and smaller regional powers – for this reason the most prestigious American strategic analysts have called the first post-bipolar decade’s international system unimultipolar. They left no doubt that this would be a transitional period of several decades till the estimated five or six power centres constituting the multipolar international system of the 21st century would have achieved their final shape.

For a long time it looked as if particularly the regional, medium-sized powers of Western Europe were aspiring to a role of world power, mainly due to their economic strength. However, we now know that appearances were deceptive. Ironically, as happens so often in history, the end of their Europe-euphoric illusions coincided with their hour of triumph (Maastricht Treaty, 1992). In the decades of the Cold War, France and the Federal Republic of Germany had energetically pursued a “European unification”, each of these countries for strategic-political reasons of its own, some of which they had in common, but some of which were diametrically opposed. The US had strongly backed these endeavours. But it is precisely since the Maastricht Treaty that it became clear that this “European unification” was and remains lightyears away from a truly united Europe of Nations and notably also from a liberal-minded, identity-conscious and strategically independent Europe of Nations.

There has never been a “United Europe” – and neither is it a subject of international law

This unpleasant fact has again been confirmed in South Eastern Europe, the Middle East and the Mediterranean region in the last twenty-five years. In these regions, it were always the United States which waged wars of aggression in violation of international law, or which conducted op-

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erations of destabilisation against independent and sovereign states. There were also Great Britain, Germany and France; from which the first two were competing among themselves for the role of the big brother's more faithful vassal. At the

ing on its assessment of the current situation, have given the privileged status of a special relationship to one middle-sized power at one moment, but declared the other state, which had barely been reunified and become sovereign (?), its partner in leadership a moment later.

For all these reasons, we are already, in the current phase of transition from the

forts calling for new holy war against nationalism (or even an alleged "fascism"!)

"Humanitarian" crusades are wrong and dangerous

Nevertheless, the newly discovered fancy for crusades is not only historically and anthropologically untenable; it is also politically unrealistic and highly dangerous. The new "humanitarian" crusades will share the fate of all previous ones: They will destroy international stability or what remains of it. What we have experienced in the Balkans since 1991 (Iraq, Libya, Ukraine and elsewhere) or what we currently see in Syria is only a prelude; the Western interventionism will bring the West into confrontation with the rest of the world – and finally harm the West itself.

Let me emphasise here a significant point: Ethic-normative ideas are not conceived to be taken and implemented at their nominal value but to establish identity and to be used as a weapon of this identity in the struggle against other identities. If you cannot understand this, you will never be able to capture their inner mental structure nor their outer historical influence.

About the really existing universalism of human rights

Theoretically speaking, the moralistic human rights universalism declared by the supra-national elite would be conceivable if a world organisation were to be in charge of its implementation, in the context of which all large and small state actors on earth would join together. But this universalism would – theoretically (and ethically!) be acceptable only if a larger regional power or even a world power might, whenever necessary, be punished by direct intervention at the initiative of smaller powers, because it had failed to fulfil the generally accepted ethical and legal principles.

Now we know that during the Cold War the punishment of a great power or even a world power was out of the question – never did the US nor the former USSR have to suffer because of international-law missteps. After the end of bipolarity, the remaining world power has even gone miles beyond this; it simply overrides international legal norms and principles if those do not match its interests, and it does not even care about the appearance of legality.

Here at the latest it should really have become clear that the invocation of any humanitarian or democratic principles only serves as the ethical and ideological legitimisation of very specific power politics, by means of which very real issues

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"Actually, it should be a matter of course to history- and culture-conscious Europeans that there are different political systems in all the diverse corners of the planet – analogous to the historical experience, the geocultural identity, geostrategic position, the geopolitical and socio-economic conditions and co-determinants as well as the political culture of each nation."

same time France – a post-imperial power of middle calibre, could – in its "delusional obsessive" belief (*Brzezinski*) to be a world power – plainly and simply not bear to be absent when the Americans (and the Germans too!) kept order on the old continent or in its periphery.

However, even while listing, it gets noticeable: a "United Europe" has never been existing and still just does not exist. No subject of international law is registered under this name – or, as *Henry Kissinger* is reported to have said analogously: "There is no such number."

To prevent any misunderstandings in advance: I do not share the indignation of subsidised progressivist intellectuals, journalists, and politicians about Europe's seemingly dramatic inability to act as a power and a factor of stability. The rage of professional Europeans is understandable, but it remains the reaction of those who place all bets on one horse that was not even able to run. Moreover, it was to be expected that this horse – or more precisely, the (Brussels) cow – would not run.

Europe and the US

A consistent and integrative political will will never be reached, because too ambivalent are the relations of those Western European powers aspiring to wider areas with the transatlantic world power under whose protection they are building that wider economic area, because the possible political-military and even strategic independence of that area would inevitably lead to conflict with this same world power. In addition, the age-old mistrust among Western European powers is too strong, though well covered up. And the influence of the leading world power on one or the other of the regional powers reaches so far that it might, depend-

ing on its assessment of the current situation, have given the privileged status of a special relationship to one middle-sized power at one moment, but declared the other state, which had barely been reunified and become sovereign (?), its partner in leadership a moment later.

For all these reasons, we are already, in the current phase of transition from the

old to the future balance of power, seeing something other than the dreamed-of-by-many superpower Europe (which even – according to the wishful thinking of subsidised post-national academics – might be the counterweight to the US and so on and so forth). Instead we see the reawakening of the peoples, the beginning of the dissolution of the hybrid, supra national, quasi-state construction of the so-called European Union. Moreover, we see the impressive revitalisation of centrifugal, homebound, national-minded movements, which are conscious of their identity and their history.

About the axiom of an international order

After the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet side, the supra-national financial elite, followed by their subordinate supra-national bureaucratic elites, tried to extend the scope of their ethical and anthropological ideas to the territory of the former enemy and, moreover, to the entire globe.

The Western – in actual fact the supra-national – elite is trying to force through its own systemic-ideological concept (the moralistic human rights universalism, paired with a parliamentary system and its concept of "free" market economy) as the leading axiom of the new, post-bipolar era in increasingly aggressive ways, with all its economic, cultural and political propaganda, and ultimately even by military means.

These aspirations are extremely easy to understand; and as easily understood is the *Ovid* Metamorphosis of those who, only a short while ago, used to denounce any criticism of the "real socialism" as blind anti-communism, but who are now at the forefront of journalistic and "activist" ef-

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of power are to be decided. A small power being brought to its senses about human rights by the initiative – and by the impact force – of a great power, proves nothing. Only the reverse would be the touchstone of a really existing universalism of human rights.

The idea of the nation upholding de-constructivists flout some of Europe’s most valuable heritage

Nonetheless, we must point to the fact that the intellectual representatives of today’s Western post-national progressivist totalitarianism, who pursue the de-con-

struction⁷ of the idea of the nation, flout important anthropological and historical factors, even those belonging to the most precious spiritual heritage of Europe – ranging from the pre-Socratics via Aristotle to Montesquieu and Burke. This would be foolish, but it does seem as though the modern Western power elites and their licenced fool intellectuals believe themselves to be able – and obliged – to bomb through their own oligarchic, post-democratic system (euphemistically called “parliamentary” or – to use even more sophisticatedly – “representative” democracy) all over the world!

Actually, it should be a matter of course to history- and culture-conscious Europeans that there are different political systems in all the diverse corners of the planet – analogous to the historical experience, the geocultural identity, geostrategic position, the geopolitical and socio-economic conditions and co-determinants as well as the political culture of each nation. They would not have encountered this diversity with missionary exhortations to overthrow alleged dictators but with supreme composure, had they only known – to use the words of the American thinker (and US president) of the 19th century, John Adams – that “despots, monarchs, aristocrats, and democrats, Jacobins, and Sans-culottes, equally go into raptures over absolute power”.⁸

It should be equally obvious that, even if all nations on earth were to accept the Western-style supposed “democracy”, this system would come in shapes all different from each other, depending on the level of social develop-

ment, on the historical experiences and conditions of geographical, cultural, socio-economic and strategic-political development. It was the same with Christianity, feudalism, slavery, bourgeois liberalism, fascism, or communism. We have seen the most diverse varieties of each of them.

No one likes to make the bearer of bad news responsible – we have known this ever since Teiresias incurred the wrath of the king Oedipus. Nevertheless, it must be said: The more arrogant the behaviour of the global supra-national elite, and the more massive their global promotion of ideas and behaviour belonging to a post-Christian, post-humanist, to an indeed profoundly degenerate western (sub-)culture, the more impudent and dynamic will be the response of the others, especially of those peoples and communities that would have liked to take the path of the west but will not be able to do so, and will eventually in their disappointment turn against the west as a whole and especially against its humanitarian moralism.

Europe should concentrate on and defend its own identity

Instead, Europe should find the will and courage to bethink itself of and vigorously defend its own anthropologic-ontological, historical, and geocultural identity. It should defend this against Islamic totalitarianism, and also against the cooptation of European national states and identities, indeed of European culture in general, that the supra-national elite is systematically and massively trying to impose on us.

At this point it would be highly appropriate to point to the significant political achievements of the identity-conscious, freedom-loving, nationally-minded political forces and citizens in several European countries, from Finland and Denmark to Slovakia and Hungary – let alone Russia and Switzerland, which are in any case the last bastions of the intellectual and cultural heritage of Christian Europe, yes, even of common sense altogether.

But in particular the British people’s decision in favour of Britain’s withdrawal from the so-called European Union has to be mentioned as an event of epochal significance.⁹ As a historian, I should like to predict that this decision will be the signal for the beginning of the end of that post-national, totalitarian Brussels Leviathan –

and it will one day be recorded as such in the books of history.

Of course, it is to be hoped that the victory of the identity-conscious, liberal, national forces in the UK will be accompanied by analogous successes in the coming year of 2017, as this would then undoubtedly be the nemesis of European history, brought about by its hubris of de-constructing human identity. •

¹ See significantly the famous *Epitaph speech* by Pericles, Thucydides, *Historiai*, II, p. 35-46

² Thus for example, the Spartans, the Corinthians and other Greek city states declared: “We turn to war to liberate Greece.”, see *ibid*, I, p. 124 and IV, p. 85

³ Lockhart, J. G. *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott*. Edinburgh, 1853, vol. 3, pp. 305.

⁴ Kindermann, Gottfried-Karl. *Grundelemente der Weltpolitik. Eine Einführung*. Munich / Zurich, 1991, p. 254

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 170

⁶ Burke, Edmund. *Appeal from the New Whigs*. Works, London, 1854-57. Vol. III, pp. 111.

⁷ In this regard, see the excellent contribution of Dr René Roca “A view on the commemorative year 2015”. In: *Current Concerns* No. 32/33 from 31 December 2015, pp. 1.

⁸ See Kurt Russell. *The Conservative Mind*. 1953, p. 127

⁹ An in every respect excellent analysis of this question comes from Professor Dr Richard Werner and was published in *Current Concerns*; see Werner, R. A. “EU Basics. Your Guide to the UK Referendum on EU Membership”. In: *Current Concerns* No. 15 from 12 July 2016, pp. 1.

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Focussing again on the rights and duties of the national states

For a Europe as a collaboration of sovereign states which respect the right and preserve peace

by Karl Müller

On the way from the Maloja saddle in the Engadine in direction of the Forno glacier, hikers pass a decades-old iconic building of the left-wing alternative scene. It is called Salecina House. There is a giant poster mounted saying: “No borders”. This text also flashes on the Salecina homepage. Some people will say: So what, these are the leftist alternative people. They are not to be taken seriously. They are an insignificant minority.

However, ever since a very high number of migrants have been coming to Europe, “welcomed” by the official policy of the (CDU – Christian Democratic Party) German Federal Chancellor and by the European Union, and ever since border controls, as well as the legal provisions for these controls, were suspended for months, the question is how much influence this minority has and who else is clamouring for “no borders”.

Two interesting books

Publicist *Friederike Beck* has written a book on the subject of this question which she studies thoroughly and well documented. The title sounds a little sensational: “The Secret Migration Agenda. How elite networks want to destroy Europe using super rich foundations, the EU, the UN and NGOs”. (2016, ISBN 978-3-86445-310-6 – in German). But the statements in this book provide a lot of information – and are to be taken very seriously. Chapters are entitled “The great failure of the EU”, “The role of the UN in enforcing the migration agenda” and “no borders – no nation: the boundless agenda of the chaos-foundations”. The subchapters “Abolishing European National States by forming a European centralized State”, “The migration agenda of the United Nations”, “Who is *Peter Sutherland*?”, “The war declaration of the global elite on the nationhood of Europe”, “*George Soros* and his International Foundations network”, “The European Commission and private foundations are acting in concert”, “The fortress of Europe was razed” are particularly worth reading. But it is best yet to read the whole book.

It becomes clear that the migration-policy of the top politicians in UN and EU as well as of the German Government is being instrumented to dissolve the nation states in their present form. It also becomes clear that left-wing alternative circles as well as the profiteers of a neo-liberal policy support this program. Actually there is a huge international network

of foundations, associations and societies which promote their political operation of “no borders” and “unlimited” globalisation in close cooperation with and financed by national and international institutions. And unlimited globalisation means that now all people of this world can be shifted around, back and forth, homeless and rootless, but “flexible”. Thus it is shown that the arguments of these circles, although presented as philanthropic, are in fact deeply inhumane.

Perhaps add to this a second book, which appeared in German translation in 2015 and which had already been published in Dutch in 2012. This was written by *Thierry Baudet*, a still quite young scientist and publicist from the Netherlands. The title of the book: “The ongoing Attack on the Nation-State” (2015, ISBN 978-3-86445-222-2 – in German). One does not have to share all the considerations and conclusions of the book, but the first and the third chapters are well worth studying. The headings: “The emergence of the Nation-State” and “The importance of the Nation-State”. The author argues that the current attacks on the sovereign European nation state, especially the accusation that their existence endangers freedom, do not withstand scrutiny, and that the world wars in the 20th century – notwithstanding EU allegations – were not caused by the existence of sovereign nation states.

The National Socialists’ ideas about Europe

On the contrary, the way to the two world wars was led by the warring parties’ imperial ambitions, by their will to dominate other nations and to put an end to sovereign nation states. For example, the passages in which the book reminds the reader of the Nazis’ ideas about Europe are well worth reading, for example the speech by *Joseph Goebbels* on 11 September 1940, titled “the Europe of the future”. He says: “European peoples are becoming more and more aware that much of what happened between them was basically family disputes only – compared with the big questions that have to be clarified between continents. [...] I am convinced that – in 50 years’ time one will not think in the categories of one country – many of today’s problems will disappear.” Or there were *Hitler*’s reflections in a discussion with the Finnish Minister of Foreign Affairs on 28 November 1941, which the protocol quotes as follows, namely that “it is gradually becoming ap-

parent that the peoples of Europe belong together like a big family of nations”. The protocol goes on: “[Hitler] was not one of those willing to leave a very difficult task presented to him to the surrounding world instead. The task of merging the European family had to be solved at once. Given modern military technology, small states could no longer exist independently. At a time when a plane could fly at a speed of 600 km per hour, a large spatial concentration of nations was needed.”

Finally there were the Nazi “theses” for “a new Europe”. There is mention of the “unification of Europe, which is already apparent as a result of compulsory development under the iron laws of history”. And then: “the new European order will largely remove those causes, which have given rise to intra-European wars in the past. The Nations of Europe will not turn against each other as enemies any longer. The age of European particularism will be overcome for ever.”

The actual policy of the Nazis and its results are well known.

The dutch author of the book is convinced that sovereign nation states are needed to guarantee constitutional and democratic conditions, as well as to take into account the citizens’ necessary “sense of unity”. This essentially includes the citizens’ sovereignty in deciding who they want to accept into their nation State, but also who they do not want to accept. “We cannot do without unity” is the title of the book’s last sub-chapter.

The striving of peoples for freedom and equality

Fact is: The development of European nation states is an essential step of adjustment in the struggle for true dignity. Europe’s history shows the striving of its peoples for a stable order of freedom and equality in human community, and against instability, chaos, and imperial heteronomy.

This development was different and unique for each of today’s European nation states and happened at different times. At the same time, it was also the core of a “democratic world revolution” (*Martin Kriele*), which resulted in a public commitment to the state monopoly on legitimate violence, to the separation of powers, to the rule of law and the sovereignty of the peoples in all European States. All the constitutions of the European nation

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states reflect this today – despite different nuances.

It was stony path to get this far.

Taking a look at history: Casting off empires

Towards the end of the ancient European world, the wish of the peoples of Europe had been to cast off the Roman Empire. But the result after three centuries of turmoil was not sovereignty and statehood with free and equal citizens. In its western part, the old empire was replaced by a new one. The German kings took on the task that Rome had attributed to them, namely that of a secular peacekeeping power and as the successors of the Western Roman Emperors. This development reached its peak in the 15th century in the form of the "Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation". The eastern part of the Roman Empire continued to exist for many more centuries. But, with the conquest of Constantinople by the Turks in the 15th century its gradual dissolution also led to the rule of a new empire, the Ottoman Empire in southeast of Europe.

Although around these two empires a few European countries already took the first steps towards developing into nation states in the late Middle Ages, i.e. France, the British Isles, the Scandinavian countries, or a few eastern European dominions – these remained hierarchical corporative states. The princes regarded them as their property, and in spite of the developing princely monopoly on legitimate violence, they were still far from being states under the rule of law and from granting freedom, equality and sovereignty to their own people – let alone to other peoples and states.

Swiss history went its own way. Although they formally still belonged to the "Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation" until 1648, the Swiss strove after more independence from the German kings and emperors and from their bailiffs as early as in the Middle Ages. They formed a kind of confederation with largely independent cantons and were practically independent of the directives of the Emperor in Vienna since the end of the 15th century.

The beginnings of modern statehood

In the centre of Europe the way toward national states did not open up until the middle of the 17th century: with the *Treaty of Westphalia*, with the achievement of religious tolerance and with the new ideas of the time. These, for the first time in history, involved the history and significance of peoples and nations, as well as their rights and obligations.

The "Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation" was only a shell, and it was



replaced by a large number of regional central European absolutist states, whose rulers had the princely monopoly on legitimate violence and laid claim to sovereignty. But for many years there was no national idea, no rule of law and no sovereignty of the people even here.

Eventually all that was left of the central European empire was its heartland, the realm of the Habsburg dynasty, which lasted until the end of the First World War and was only then dissolved into different nation states – but those also according to the directions of others and to imperial specifications.

There was also another great empire, not of Europe but that had reached all the way into Europe, and was finally dissolved during World War I: the Ottoman Empire. As early as in the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century the fragile nation states of Southeast Europe had emerged on its former European territory – but also here the process went on according to the directions of others and to imperial specifications.

There remained only one empire: the Anglo-Saxon one. As before, its claim to power stretched to all continents. And after the turn of the century a new empire had begun to spread and to challenge the British for their role even in Europe: the United States of America.

European States become constitutional states

Nevertheless, all European nation states gave themselves constitutions in the 19th and 20th centuries, and they tried – step by step and with delays – for a state monopoly on legitimate violence, for the separation of powers, the rule of law and the sovereignty of their people. All European nation states have a constitutive people; they have state authority with the mo-

nopoly on legitimate violence and they have an internationally recognized territory with its established borders.

Even though many of these states were created according to the directions of others and did not spring from their own people, each of these states looks back on a long history of cultural traditions and communal identity. Despite of all the differences in details there is (still) in each of these countries a sense of unity that has developed over generations. The peoples have become citizens of their nation states – but each new generation is newly faced with this task.

International law and national constitutions today command all European nation states to respect the rights of their own citizens and the rights of other states and nations, i.e. human rights, the sovereignty of citizens and the integrity of state borders. And no country is obliged to admit everyone who wants to be accepted as a new citizen.

It is the nation states and their constitutions which have become the guarantors of peace and international understanding. But the breakdown of national and international law has for the last 25 years led to new wars in Europe. Nation states that participate in such wars do so not because of their nation statehood and their constitutions, but out of disrespect for the sovereignty of their people as well as disrespect for their own laws – they do so because of their own imperial claims or because they are submissive vassals of non-European imperial powers, notably of the United States of America.

Even the European wars of the 20th century were not the result of the existence of sovereign nation states. Power greedy and unpatriotic leaders tried to live out their imperial delusions, to abuse their peoples and to push them into the abyss of misery. The same is true for the 21st century.

Sovereign national states stand for international relations and cooperation

National identity and consciousness are not contradictory to international understanding and peace, no indeed, these are interdependent. The following applies today as it did yesterday: "An entrenchment in one's own culture, meaning the inner understanding of our culture's universal values, is the condition for having a firm place in this world and in this time. It is also the condition for establishing a respect for other people and their culture, and it is the condition for a productive co-existence among people." (*Annemarie Buchholz-Kaiser: Strengthening human beings*, 2000)

Power always tends to overextend itself when leaders are no longer bound to the will of their people and when they dis-

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Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump

zf. In the recent weeks and months the European leading media have strikingly strong voiced their opinion about the US election campaign of the next presidency. The tenor is as forced into line: Donald Trump is the personification of evil, while Hillary Clinton was not an angel, but in any case she was the better

choice. And if ever anyone is for Trump and against Clinton, then he must stand on the far right. Interesting to note, that now also voices from the rather left located faction have raised their hand and measure the two presidential candidates on their significance for peace in Europe. These arguments deserve atten-

tion. And lead to the question, whose interests and plans those serve who speak out so vociferously against Trump and in favour of Clinton. By the way: Neocon warmongers like former US Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz have decided to vote for Hillary Clinton (Spiegel online from 26.08.2016).

Hillary Clinton stands for war

by Hannes Hofbauer

Whoever reads the new book of *Diana Johnstone* these days, gets more than just a bad feeling in the stomach. In the US presidential campaign one should not hope on *Hillary Clinton*, who is politically portrayed in Johnstone's work. The former First Lady and former foreign minister is hot striving for power and war, hides this behind vacuous human rights and women's rights formulas, but would make the ideal frontwoman for the US military-industrial complex, the author says. "Queen of Chaos" the Paris-based American Diana Johnstone calls her in-depth researched biography of the Democratic presidential candidate. For years, the now 82 year old scientist has dealt with the wars operated from Washington, particularly, with the NATO attack against Yugoslavia. For two legislatures Johnstone was spokeswoman of the Greens in the European Parliament before she fell from favor there because of her indomitable anti-NATO stance. With the political biography of the soon pre-

sumably most powerful woman in the world she makes the reader look forward to a chaotic future full of lies and wars. Masterfully Johnstone portrays the world of thought of Hillary Clinton, and how she already succeeded as Secretary of State, to collect civil society groups around the globe for US interests. So she recalls the "strategic dialogue with civil society", initiated by Clinton in early 2011, with which she swore the US ambassadors to the three pillars of her policy: "a responsive government, a powerful private sector and a civil society that stands for everything else that happens in the space between the state and industry." Johnstone finds the path of liberal democrats "from equity to diversity", chosen under Clinton's leadership, ideologically groundbreaking. With that they succeeded also in Europe until deep inside in left circles, to declare the class issue obsolete and replace it with the "right to be different". The dominant social doctrine is based

here on the concepts of multiculturalism, the concern for minorities and anti-racism. Therein Johnstone locates a new mantra that Clinton always keeps spelling out when disagreeable governments refuse the economic and/or political obedience to her. While in the case of Saudi Arabia this was (and is) never mentioned, in the case of Yugoslavia or Libya the US under both Clintons pulled the civil society card. The attack on *Gaddafi's* Libya was, according to Johnstone, "Hillary's war". The Pentagon and military leaders advised against an armed encounter in Libya, but the Secretary of State Clinton boycotted all attempts for a political solution. After the lynching of Muammar Gaddafi she let herself be carried away to the Caesar paraphrasing statement: "We came, we saw, he died." Such a brutal contempt for a political opponent is rarely heard in the public. If one follows the reasoning of Johnstone, the US-Russian relations are likely to worsen in the likely case of a Clinton presidency. In this regard Johnstone recalls the critique of the "Queen of Chaos" towards *George W. Bush* in 2008. His then short-term approaching to the Kremlin, which prompted him to the utterance that he had looked *Putin* in the eyes and had seen his soul, Hillary Clinton acknowledged by saying that a "KGB agent had no soul". After reading the book anxiety remains, as the author demonstrates how Clinton aggressively enforced her worldview as Foreign Minister, and there is little hope that this could change as president. •

Johnstone, Diana: *Queen of Chaos. The misadventures of Hillary Clinton*. CounterPunch 2015

Source: www.ossietzky.net

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

"Focussing again on the rights ..."

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regard the commitment to the rule of law and to popular sovereignty. In that case these leaders may slip back into imperial madness even today. But it is not the citizens', not the peoples' madness.

It is therefore part of the duties of citizens that they keep their senses alert, that they do not tolerate accumulation of power in the hands of just a few people and that they actively help fashion the political life of their country. But of course this requires the citizens to be mature, upright and honest, to be aware of their history and culture, to know what is unique for their nation and its very own as well as what they have in common with all people in the world – and to live joyfully according to these conditions.

The European national and democratic state is the sustainable model of statehood in the 21st century. The attacks on the nation-state are not conducive to self-determination, to the rule of law, or to peace.

New imperial ambitions aiming at depriving citizens of their rights of decision and incapacitate and debasing them are hidden behind these attacks. In order to achieve this, these ambitions make use of manifold tools.

The European Union and its institutional framework is one of these tools. The European Union in its present form is not a guarantee of peace and international understanding – on the contrary. The predecessor organizations of the European Union were the brainchild of imperial thinkers at the time of the Cold War. Plans devised by the US intelligence agencies were the starting point. Also in the new Cold War the European Union is to serve imperial plans. This must be prevented.

Peace in Europe can only be made secure with a revival of the European nation states, their sovereignty, their culture and identity. They are prerequisite to an equal and positive cooperation between states in Europe, to the satisfaction of the dignity and the rights of man, and to the exercise of people's duties as citizens. •

Trump, candidate for peace?

by Rainer Rupp

The Anti-Trump campaign can hardly become still more hysterical. Cartoons bring him close to Hitler, in an ill-concealed way a General is threatening with a coup. Reasonable voices argue against, for example the well-known US-Russia expert Stephen F. Cohen, member of the influential US Council on Foreign Relations, who considers Trump a beacon of hope who wants to end the new Cold War in a highly dangerous situation. At the same time public support for the US wars is crumbling.

Donald Trump "is inappropriate for being President", President Obama declared on Tuesday this week at a press conference in the White House after a meeting with Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong. He asked the Republicans in Congress to disavow their presidential candidate: "They [the Republicans] have to ask themselves why they still continue to support him, when they repeatedly must explain in very strong words that, what he [Trump] said, is unacceptable. What does that reveal about your party, when Trump is your standard bearer?"

In fact, the malicious campaign against Trump is assuming increasingly hysterical proportions. The Anti-Trump-media campaign has reached a point that even in Cartoon clips like "The Simpsons" propaganda is made for Hillary and Trump is demonised. For example, Trump is shown with a book as bedtime reading entitled "Great speeches by A. Hitler". Meanwhile the richest man in the world and king of cliquish capitalism promised Hillary to do everything in his power for her by November to drive the voters to the polls.

Also stunning is the long list of the warmongers of the Republican Party's establishment including many leading neo-conservatives, who meanwhile are publicly against the candidate of their party, Donald Trump, stating that they prefer to give their voice to Hillary Clinton.

At the same time, US Marines' ex-General John Allen, former top commander in Afghanistan, threatened with catastroph-

ic conditions for the internal US stability in case Trump would be elected for president.

General Allen, whose promotion to NATO Europe Commander in Chief (SACEUR), has been spoiled at the last minute only by a scandal, declared last Sunday to the US news channel ABC that Trump's choice for President would trigger "an unprecedented civil-military crisis for the country".

But what does this warning of passionate Hillary-supporter Allen really mean, when he says that Trump as president would lead to the breakdown in relations between civil and military leadership? Meanwhile, even the US financial portal "Zero Hedge" asked the legitimate question on the Internet, whether the US General did not threaten here with a military coup?

Fortunately, there are not only warmongers among the geo-strategic US experts and among Republican Party's politicians. For example, a former Republican presidential candidate, the libertarian Patrick Buchanan, praised Trump as a candidate of peace in an article released on the internet last Tuesday, because of his fresh approach to the role of NATO, being free from ideological ideas of the Cold War.

Also Stephen Cohen, who is highly regarded as an expert on Russia in both the US and internationally, called Trump a guarantor of peace with Russia and in Europe. Stephen F. Cohen, professor emeritus of Russian studies at the NY University and Princeton and a member of the influential US Council on Foreign Relations, last Saturday spoke with Smerconish of CNN about Donald Trump, Vladimir Putin, and the new Cold War.

According to Cohen, the media do the American people a vast disservice by simply ignoring the substance of Trump's arguments about NATO and Russia and instead spread the simplistic Clinton smear campaign that Trump is "a Russian agent". This would have "absolutely to stop", says Cohen. "We are approaching a point at all levels comparable to the Cuban missile

crisis and its nuclear confrontation with Russia. There is absolutely no discussion, no debate about that in the American media."

"Then unexpectedly Donald Trump shows up", Cohen continues. "He says he wants to end the new Cold War and cooperate with Russia in various fields and, to the general amazement the media are full of accusations that can still only be described as neo-McCarthyism, that he is a Russian agent, that he is a Manchurian candidate, and that he is a business client of Putin. [...] At present we are in a year of presidential election, where a debate has to take place. But the media do not offer us this today."

With regard to the alleged "Russian threat" in Eastern Europe and Russia wanting to end the independence of the Baltic States, Cohen said: "This is without any proof. None, by all means." He continues: "Let's go back to what Trump has said about NATO. From the very beginning, he said, he wanted to know what mission NATO still has, over 65 years after its foundation. Hundreds of policy experts have asked the same question in Washington since the end of the Soviet Union 25 years ago. Is NATO an organization in search of a mission?"

"That's a justified question. However, we do not discuss it. We do not ask. We just say, oh, Trump wants to leave NATO," according to Professor Cohen.

Nevertheless, how have the voters, the so-called "Central America", reacted to the accusations of the warmongers in both parties that Trump had undermined the security architecture, which had kept peace in the last 65 years? Central America did not react at all. Voters are neither appalled nor shocked. What does this mean? The public support has collapsed, which means the foundation on which Washington gave a war guarantee to dozens of countries in Europe, in the Middle East and in Asia since 1949.

Source: <https://deutsch.rt.com/meinung/39836-trump-kandidat-fur-frieden> from 5 August 2016

(Translation Current Concerns)

Migrants at the Swiss South border

Inventory from the Swiss perspective

by Dr iur Marianne Wüthrich

Reading the headlines about the increasing migration from the Mediterranean towards Switzerland in recent days and weeks one could think that in the years before hardly any immigrants came to Switzerland via Italy. But the fact is that for a long time every summer tens of thousands of refugees and job seekers from Italy wish to enter into Switzerland. Therefore, Switzerland signed already in 1998 a readmission agreement with Italy which has been in force since 1 May 2000. Since 2008 Switzerland is also involved in Schengen/Dublin. However, it is possible for the Swiss border guard corps to reject a greater number of new arrivals to Italy only recently. Not because the Swiss approach became “sharper” or even in some cases violated the right of asylum, as some politicians claim, but because the Italian Government adheres to the rules of the Dublin regime recently and is cooperating with the Swiss authorities.

It is true: The ways of migration from Africa and the Middle East have increasingly arrived before the Swiss border. Why this is so and what doesn't work in Europe as it should, is shown here from the Swiss perspective.

The merciless bombardment of many previously ordered states and their populations into misery and chaos has its impact also on Europe. Under the former Libyan Government for example, gangs could never operate their businesses as easily as today. In times of digital networks it is not easy to see who controls the growing migration flows and from where. But one thing is clear: For the Intelligence Services of the US it will be all right – keep Europe busy...

Migrants as victims of the back and forth EU policy

The vast majority of migrants from the South and the East reach Europe via Italy, 93 percent (!) in July – a clear indication of a central control. On the Mediterranean every day hundreds of migrants were reloaded by the *Frontex*¹ from their boats in German, French and British ships and brought to Italian ports, already 95,000 in the first half of the year 2016!²

Since the unauthorised welcoming of the German Chancellor and the ensuing confusion the predominant migrants' route to Europe has changed several times according to the objections of the reality. The Balkan route is now practically closed after several states began to control their borders intensively. In the spring of

Ticino State Council President and Police Director Norman Gobbi on the refugee situation in Como

“I believe it is in the interest of this country, to ensure the legality – but on the other hand, also to receive properly people who apply for asylum. However, this should always be done with good controls, because we know that there are also people among these migrants who try to come to us with purposes that are not entirely peaceful. For example it is an open question as to what happened in Libya with this ISIS supporters or ISIS fighters who have now lost the fight against the Libyan armed forces. What is going to happen to them? Do they come to us as camouflaged migrants? Therefore, we must analyse the situation carefully. [...] Regarding migrating we have to consider what happened already internally with this refugee quota, which is located in Europe. We have signed an agreement on the free movement of persons with the European Union and its member states. This brings a great mobility with-

in the European continent. We cannot continue with filling this kettle, which is almost full.

Not only Switzerland has to solve this problem, but most of all the EU countries. They made a clear statement, as Germany with his ‘Welcome Policy’ last year. They just opened the doors widely. In my opinion that was a great irresponsibility. After that, there were some 500,000 migrants who were not registered in November last year and who are running around in Germany now. We saw the consequences in Cologne or afterwards the other problems in Germany. We are not allowed to just play with the values, with the people values when afterwards the consequences are not tackled properly. It needs to be acted well and properly and to help where it is possible.”

Ticino Police Director Norman Gobbi on 18 August 2016 at 13 o'clock in “Tagesgespräch” on SRF 1

2016, it became known that the way has shifted direction of Brenner, on the Italian/Austrian border. The Austrian Government then resorted to the emergency brake and announced effective border controls up to a border fence on the mountain pass. As *Die Zeit* reported on 13 May, the two Governments agreed – amazingly quickly! – that not the Austrians control entry on the Brenner but the Italian authorities control the departure. For this purpose, Italy deployed 50 policemen and 60 soldiers in addition to the Brenner to bring the migrants to “other locations” “where they could seek asylum”, as Minister of the Interior, *Angelino Alfano*, said. The agreement works: as his Austrian colleague *Wolfgang Sobotka* has already said in May, “the number of migrants attempting the entry to Austria via the Brenner is now going against zero”.³

It is possible to put clear signs, if requested by the decision makers. The crux of the agreement: The migrants are brought to “other locations” as announced, namely towards the Italian/Swiss border, so that this year more people than in the past wish to enter in the canton of Ticino via Como.

Victim of this back and forth are the people who left their country and their family and often had to spend the last family savings, because they were made believe that in Germany or in another foreign country, they would get a good job with which they could feed their fam-

ily at home. Such fabrications must be stopped! How much more human – and how much more independent from overseas – it would be, if we Europeans would use our energy and the envisaged financial resources committed to end the wars so that people will find a professional income and the possibility of a decent life for themselves and their families in their own country.

In times of increasing terror threat the borders are to protect

The *Swiss border guard* corps abides by the law and on the instructions of federal authorities when dealing with immigration. They reacted rapidly and transparently to claims that migrants would not be allowed to enter into Switzerland although they wanted to seek asylum here, (see box “Information on the situation on the southern border”) Switzerland has a long tradition as asylum and protecting power for politically persecuted and no reason to change it (see box “Refugees and asylum seekers in Switzerland”). However, it cannot let travel undocumented migrants through the country. In times of increasing terrorist attacks in various countries of Europe, reliable border controls actually should be welcomed by all political forces in the country and abroad. In this sense, the “*Basler Zeitung*” indicates that due to

"Migrants before the Swiss South border"

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the tense security situation it is indispensable to guard the Swiss South border.⁴

That's why a recent change in politics by the Italian government, that does not permit the new arrivals to disappear into Southern Italy or Sicily and continue their journey north anymore, but registers them and provides them with the opportunity to seek asylum in Italy, is to be supported.

Nevertheless, the Italians are the ones to pick up the tap: 105,687 asylum applications have been filed in Italy within one year (from August 2015 til July 2016), an increase by 50 per cent compared to the same time frame within the previous year. That number still is likely to increase until the beginning of winter, if one is to believe "Neue Züricher Zeitung." The planned *Relocation* of refugees that was promised by Brussels in return still does not seem to be able to get off the ground. The so-called relocation by European Commission President *Jean-Claude Juncker* provides that between September of 2015 and 2017 a total of 160,000 asylum seekers, who already sought asylum in Italy or Greece, will be transferred to other EU member states. However, after less than a year, only 902 and 2,665 asylum seekers respectively have been taken in by both countries.⁵ Juncker already knew that many of the EU member states would object to and resist such an allocation imposed upon them from above. One wonders what would happen, if those Frontex ships filled with migrants were to anchor in a French instead of an Italian Mediterranean harbour. Instead, Paris opted for strict controls at its borders to Italy...⁶

It is worth noting that Switzerland has *volunteered* to participate in the EU's relocation project and will take up to 3,000 Syrian refugees from Southern Europe, in addition to the 3,638 Syrian citizens that Switzerland has granted asylum directly and those 6,358 people that have been accepted provisionally.⁷

Border and people protection versus a world without borders

A lot of migrants that have travelled from the Italian border town of Como to the other side of the border, to Chiasso, and have been brought back to Italy by Swiss border guards, still make multiple attempts and camp out in Como inbetween. There, Swiss aid workers and private volunteers provide them with food and clothes. This, of course, is commendable. However, it is less agreeable that Swiss activists seize this as an opportunity to disparage their own country: a group of social democrat politicians, among them former Federal Councillor *Ruth Dreifuss*

Refugees and asylum seekers in Switzerland

In July 2016, 2,477 asylum applications were submitted in Switzerland, 148 more than in the previous month (+6.4%).

The main countries of origin of asylum seekers in July 2016 were Eritrea with 738 requests, Somalia with 197 requests, Afghanistan with 171 requests, Ethiopia with 168 requests and Nigeria with 146 requests.

At the end of July there were 32,358 asylum seekers during asylum procedures. In addition, 35,039 people from war zones have been incorporated pro-

visionally, a third of them for more than 7 years.

At the end of June 43,300 recognized refugees lived in Switzerland. This number may seem small, but you must take into account, that a large part of the recognized refugees from earlier decades meanwhile have become Swiss citizens and can no longer be counted as refugees.

Source: State Secretariat for Migration, Asylum Statistics in July 2016, www.sem.admin.ch/sem/de/home/aktuell/news/2016/2016-08-11.html

Information on the situation on the southern border (Federal Department of Finance)*

Effective 18 August 2016

"– If a person reveals itself as being calling for protection in Switzerland, he or she has access to the Swiss asylum system.

– In contrast, persons without any valid travel documents, who do not have any application for asylum only intend to transit Switzerland, are in accordance with Aliens Act, expelled from Switzerland by the Border Guard. With regard to the since 2000 existing bilateral readmission agreements with Italy, many are transferred directly to the Italian authorities.

– Switzerland respects the current European rules (Dublin Convention). Therefore Switzerland cannot become a transit country for irregular migration and endeavors to prevent the transit of persons without valid travel documents by different means.

– The Dublin system does not allow asylum seekers to select their destination country themselves. Such a system would not be practicable. The Dublin system however ensures, that for each demand for asylum one country has its jurisdiction and to be

responsible for the protection seekers.

– For a long time Switzerland takes a stand for a solidary European asylum policy. The difficult situation for the concerned people on the southern border clearly shows that no European country can cope with the challenges on his own – neither Italy nor Germany nor Switzerland. In future one has to find sustainable, constitutional solutions, together with the European partners. Thus Switzerland participates voluntarily in the programs of the EU for the redistribution of asylum seekers in order to relieve the heavy loaded states."

* *The Border Guard is subordinate to the Federal Customs Administration and therefore part of the Department of Finance.*

Additional information: "Fragen und Antworten zur Lage an der Südgrenze" (Federal Department of Finance, <https://www.efd.admin.ch/efd/home/themen/zollinfo-suedgrenze.html>)

(Translation Current Concerns)

seeks to "confront" the Federal Office for Migration and Swiss border guards.⁸

In this respect it should be noted that – obviously – all those people who are stranded in Como have to be provided for (which actually would be the responsibility of the Italian authorities but of course, Swiss volunteers are more than welcome to offer their support). However, the social democratic Como travellers, according to *Weltwoche*, seized this opportunity to "further their own political agenda and to polish their own image. They blamed Switzerland for people's misery and criticised the border patrol authorities for allegedly managing the situation in a disproportionately harsh manner."⁹

As *Die Zeit* notes refreshingly matter-of factly in an article that is otherwise

titled "Switzerland shuts down" slightly captiously: "Swiss border guards are only doing what they have been authorised to do for the past 16 years: Those who do not meet the entry requirements are rigorously send back", according to a statement given to *Die Zeit* by the Federal Customs Administration (EZV). In no way is this a change in policy, contrary to what has been assumed by some media outlets, refugee activists and left-wing politicians".¹⁰ A report on a 26 year-old teacher from Ethiopia serves as an example. He registered as an asylum seeker in Italy and for that reason, is eligible to be send back by Switzerland. Understandably, staying in Italy isn't a viable option

New German framework for civil protection

Correctly recognising the signs of the times

Is Germany preparing for a war? Consequences for Switzerland

rl./me. On 24 August, the German Interior Minister Thomas de Maizière proposed instructions to the Cabinet which have been developed since 2012 as part of a “Konzeption Zivile Verteidigung KZV” (Concept for Civilian Defense). The proposals were adopted by the Cabinet. The German Government is very late in meeting its requirement to establish a civil protection concept. It is part of an overall “framework directive for the total defense” (RRGV) which also includes a “Bundeswehr Concept” (KdB).

Is Germany preparing for a coming war? For the first time since the end of the Cold War, not only terrorist attacks and cyber attacks are officially expected but also a war situation. However, the current release of this report must be viewed as part of a comprehensive psychological war preparation. The background of this domestic political step is not least due to the alliance policy of Germany as a “faithful vassal” of Washington.

This has consequences for current Swiss policy.

Concrete proposals

The 70 page “Concept for Civilian Defense (KZV)” from the German Federal Ministry of the Interior of 24 August lists detailed steps of a civil preparation

for war case (see. https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/Broschueren/2016/konzeption-zivile-verteidigung.pdf?__blob=publicationFile). This comprehensive paper presents steps for dealing with nuclear, biological and chemical contamination (p. 28), as well as the labor requirements (p. 59) or the support of the armed forces (p. 60). Among other things, it is suggested

- to warn the population by a “wake-up effect” on the occasion of risk situations via means such as radio, TV, sirens, public address systems, text message and Internet and in the “Deutsche Bahn”;
- to check whether the reserves of smallpox vaccines and antibiotics need to be increased;
- to set up “decontamination sites” in front of hospitals in case of nuclear, biological and chemical attacks in order to treat the wounded outside the hospitals;
- to have one-third of the emergency forces of the Federal Agency for Technical Relief (THW) deployable within 24 hours nationwide and simultaneously;
- to prepare an “overall concept of emergency power” for federal and state governments so that the Federal Network Agency can decide on “shutdowns or on the privileged supply to vital institutions” in a crisis situation;

- to store oil and gasoline at 140 locations, in order to allow “full supply” for 90 days;
- to discuss a “food reserve” in the Federal Government, and to focus on the “autonomy and self-protection capabilities” of the population;
- to keep ready a medicine chest, warm blankets, coal, wood, candles, flashlights, batteries, matches, charged batteries and ready cash reserves (see *Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung* of 21 August).

Use of ABC weapons might be possible

A war with nuclear, biological and chemical weapons is taken into account. According to the concept of the federal government, *Spiegel online* (21 August) states “indirectly an attack on the state territory is no longer excluded”.

A warlike conflict has loomed for some time. The Americans are provoking the Russian Federation until becoming dizzy. The Russians have violated international law in the last 25 years only once, the NATO countries in Yugoslavia, in Iraq, in Libya, in Syria. Coloured revolutions, led by NATO hand, are the standard repertoire. The migration wave of the past months are operations, too – no coincidence.

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“Migrants before the Swiss South border”

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because he has to provide for his family in Ethiopia which certainly is easier to do in Germany or Switzerland than it is in Italy. One is able to empathise with his disappointment. Still, according to his own statement, he’s not a persecuted political refugee who would be able to invoke the right of asylum.

The account of a Swiss activist, distributing flyers in Como and complaining about the fact that by registering in Italy, refugees “forfeit the possibility to decide for themselves where they want to seek asylum”, makes for an equally compelling read (*Die Zeit*, 18 August 2016). It is worth noting that precisely that kind of right is not part of asylum law. “The Dublin treaty doesn’t provide the option to choose a specific destination for asylum seekers. Such a system wouldn’t be feasible.” [emphasis mw] (cf. infobox “Information on the situation at the Southern border”, p. 5).

The young activist does not beat around the bush: “I do not believe in borders [emphasis mw]. The people coming here are my age, but are not allowed to cross over into Switzerland – just because they carry the wrong passport in their trouser pocket. I have been over there a thousand times, even if it was just for a party.” (*Die Zeit*, 18 August 2016) [sic!] Swiss tax payers kindly are to pick up the tap for the livelihoods of both border-sceptic party people as well as those streaming in uncontrolled – not to mention the loss of control concerning the country’s safety. And while the population is gripped by its compassion for the refugees, in reality, it is about something entirely different: the dissolution of the nation-states by wreaking havoc at the national borders, the organisation of a campaign aimed against the border control authorities and trying to goad the migrants into mounting an assault on the border.

Luckily, in Switzerland, it is the people that decide upon legal regulations and the

vast majority is not susceptible to such dangerous ideologies, but insists on appropriate and autonomous solutions to current problems. •

¹ European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union

² “Die Asylanträge türmen sich in Italien”, (Asylum applications pile up in Como) *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* from 20 August 2016

³ “Österreich verzichtet auf Grenzkontrollen am Brenner”, *Die Zeit online* from 13 May 2016

⁴ “Bundesrat Maurers neue Transparenz”, *Basler Zeitung* from 18 August 2016

⁵ “Die Asylanträge türmen sich in Italien”, (Asylum applications pile up in Como) *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* from 20.8.2016

⁶ “Bundesrat Maurers neue Transparenz”, (Federal Councillor Maurer’s new transparency) *Basler Zeitung* from 18.8.2016

⁷ Eidg. Staatssekretariat für Migration, “Humanitäre Krise in Syrien” (State Secretariat for Migration, “Humanitarian Crisis in Syria”), www.sem.admin.ch/sem/de/home/asyl/syrien.html

⁸ “So erschütterte das Flüchtlingscamp Ruth Dreifuss” (As the refugee camp shocked Ruth Dreifuss), *Blick* from 13.8.2016

⁹ “Profiling in Como” (“Profiling in Como”), *Weltwoche* No 33 from 18.8.16

¹⁰ *Die Zeit* from 18.8.2016

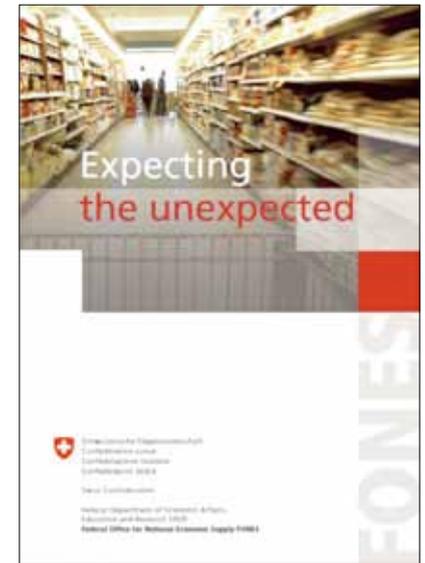
Think of emergency supply

rl. Are you well provided? Are your relatives, your neighbours? An emergency supply can tide you over a difficult time. Via the *Federal Office for National Economic Supply* (FONES) you can get information about a short-termed 7-day emergency supply (Expecting the unexpected. FONES. www.bwl.admin.ch/dienstleistungen/01199/index.html?lang=en) or instructions for handling a possible power supply shortages or blackouts (www.bwl.admin.ch/dienstleistungen/01197/index.html?lang=en).

In addition to the current indications of the FONES, which have meanwhile been updated and are available on “social” media (see box), it is strongly recommended to consult older information. It involves a larger stock and contains proposals how to manage the emergency stock. We recommend, for example, the list of goods from the brochure “Haus-

haltsvorrat – Damit der Fall der Fälle nicht zur Falle wird.” (“Household reserves – So that the worst-case scenario will not become a trap”/not available in English) of FONES in 1997, which applies to a period of 14 days. In this brochure, you will also find suggestions for the rational management of the stock.

(Translation *Current Concerns*)



Alertswiss – an app for the planning of individual emergency plans

cc. In 2015, in cooperation with partner organizations, the Federal Office for Civil Protection (FOCP) launched the system *alertswiss*. There, via a website (alertswiss.ch), everyone interested will find a smartphone app and, via Twitter (@*alertswiss*) and YouTube, current, modern and upbeat information about the today's emergency supply and the behaviour during disasters and emergencies. The newly launched homepage of the Swiss Civil protection focus-

es on an individual emergency plan that everyone one can create himself. Family meeting points, important information, or a list of emergency supplies can be stored on the smartphone. The app is well done, dusted, and fresh. In an emergency, it is vital that both the authorities and the concerned population act quickly and correctly, says *Benno Bühlmann*, Director of the Federal Office.

...but check before a crisis – the *World Wide Web* could also disappear.

“Correctly recognising the signs ...”

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Since the situation in Ukraine was escalated by external interferences (activities of various US foundations, “unknown” snipers, as well as a coup), a military conflict with Russia is systematically being promoted directly in front of the Russian border. Efforts for peaceful solutions (*Steinmeier*, *Hollande*) have so far been made ineffective by Washington and NATO. The German government also follows the guidelines from overseas fully committed to NATO. Thus the government has already been involved in military activities in breach of constitutional law. At the recent summit in Warsaw, NATO member states have now undertaken to “strengthen their civilian resistance against unconventional threats” (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagzeitung* of 21 August). The spiral of escalation is being twisted.

Years of war preparation

For years the German mainstream media have adopted the war policies of the “Atlantics by propaganda.” Russia and especially the Russian president are invariably labelled with negative attributes. The cheapest clichés are being used to establish and consolidate prejudice. In this way solutions through diplomatic channels searching for peace are sabotaged. It is an open secret that propaganda is a prerequisite for the mental preparation of war.

And this propaganda has been increasing steadily in recent years.

Play with fire

With the aim of maintaining the “Grand Chessboard” – despite a debt that can no longer be repaid – certain circles in the USA are leading the world into a war, even if the battlefield should be in Europe for the moment. The USA itself is facing domestic challenges with difficult prospects (public debt, helicopter money, impoverishment). In addition, an unclean presidential campaign makes unthinkable things possible, too. Candidate *Trump* is in opposition to the “business model” of war. Accordingly, he is being demonised. *Hillary Clinton* represents the combination of Wall Street and the military industrial complex.

Switzerland is still within EU- and PfP- dreams

Slowly, Switzerland will wake up from its balmy EU- and PfP- dreams, ensnared by many supposed benefits. The scope of the agreements entered into carelessly will become clear with terror against the background of a possible war. Our country is closely – too closely – allied with the future war alliance.

Switzerland must refuse the military factions

Necessary political, economic and constitutional steps for the country must be carried out, otherwise there will be a rude

awakening. For the policy this can only mean taking the measures necessary so that the country can maintain its neutrality in the union of states. Which political and economic agreements with other states must be made to secure our neutrality? Which precautions will have to be taken for the safety of civilians in view of armed conflicts? Which military measures will be necessary to guarantee neutrality plausibly? But *Didier Burkhalter* must make clear to the outside: Switzerland refuses the war faction. Switzerland will remain faithful to the concept of peace and trade.

Strengthen prudent political forces

Before the Second World War a prudent Federal Councillor *Giuseppe Motta* led the country out of some political commitments that could have become dangerous for the country. At that time a domestic political alliance between the wings of the parties in the National Council allowed the preparations for war.

Even today, it is important to find ways to secure the future in case of a possible armed conflict, but also to free up space for peace diplomacy and possible good services. For this purpose, not only all politicians from the various political camps are required to act, but also all civilians. Switzerland has latitude, heritage and tasks. There are enough to run after. A role model obliges.

“He would rather put his money into a crate...”

About the ethical cooperation banking association’s responsibility

by Georg Koch

Should cooperation banking associations give in to the artificially produced merger pressure? What were the concerns and ideas of the founders Friedrich Wilhelm Raiffeisen and Hermann Schulze-Delitzsch?

The merger wave among the Raiffeisen banks in Germany, Austria and Switzerland does not come to an end. While in 1986 there were still 1229 independent Raiffeisen banks, the number has diminished over the years to only 292 autonomous cooperatives by now. The reasons given for this are the high amount of the required total assets and the increasing bureaucracy necessary due to US-requirements demanding a larger staff.

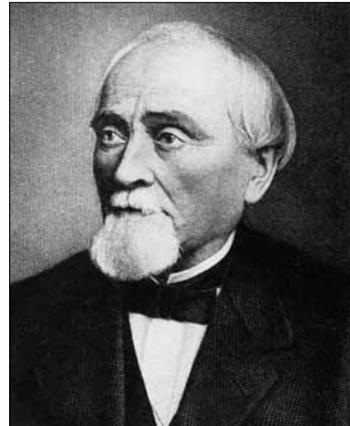
Nevertheless, the Raiffeisen- and Volksbanken still enjoy the confidence of customers and cooperative members and that is why economically they are still very successful. Less well received is that in many places large bank-style stately buildings were created with their money, which is diametrically opposed to the modesty of Raiffeisen’s founder. Although even in rural regions the number of cooperative members has increased to more than 4500 and many non-members join as customers, Raiffeisenbank Switzerland still advertises with the slogan: “Proximity to the customer is both ideationally (business philosophy) and geographically founded. Normally the bank manager and the staff know their customers personally.”¹ In order to rethink further planned mergers and to preserve this business philosophy it seems more than appropriate to reflect on the thoughts of the cooperative banks’ originators Friedrich Wilhelm Raiffeisen und Hermann Schulze-Delitzsch about the question of size and lending policy.

When the stronger holds sway over the weaker by means of money...

Both Raiffeisen and Schulze-Delitzsch did not view their cooperatives as utilitarian organisations of advantage for their customers. They both wanted to raise social peace within their country by their respective cooperative movements. Raiffeisen was convinced that Christian charity was a crucial basis to alleviate social hardships and to promote social welfare. Cooperative associations and co-



Friedrich Wilhelm Raiffeisen
(picture ma)



Hermann Schulze-Delitzsch
(picture ma)

operative labour were to function as a school for moral improvement of public spirit in order to ensure self-help by solidarity union.

As early as 1866 Raiffeisen lamented in his work “Die Darlehnskassen-Vereine als Mittel zur Abhilfe der Noth der ländlichen Bevölkerung sowie auch der städtischen Handwerker und Arbeiter”², that after the unfreedoms of status law (the so-called “Ständerecht”) and guild coercion money was now ruling the world. “Money has become an insurmountable power, eliminating all obstacles. As formerly physical violence, money now enables the stronger to dominate the weaker. Besides political powers globally governing world powers are emerging, which are collecting vast treasures and are therefore exerting unlimited influence. It is this influence, which more and more undermines the people’s wealth, destroys the lifeblood of a healthy life among the people and threatens not only the good continuation of society, but also that of states and thrones.”³

Raiffeisen saw the solution to the problem neither in a “top-down rescue” (by the government and so on) nor in a communist revolution. His solution, successfully tried and tested by now all over the world, were voluntary cooperative associations for mutual self-help. “As in former times, neighbours have to associate today very closely and intimately in mutual protection and defence, in order to free themselves by their joint forces, i.e. to break the baleful influence of the usurious money power, so as not to waste their forces vainly on the latter, but to use them in a fertile and beneficial way for the sake of the family. We have to establish guilds again, but guilds that are emerging in a natural and liber-

al way from the true needs of the people, according to their peculiarity. Only such associations will take firm roots among the population and be of enduring existence.”⁴

Cooperatives have a political-moral duty

Schulze-Delitzsch, too, was concerned about the hardship of the people. He also fought against economic privileges that were undermining political equality and thereby continuing suppression and discrimination by means of the former status law. According

to Schulze-Delitzsch cooperatives have both a materialistic and a moral political task: “‘Funds and education’ – ownership of the exterior working materials and bodily, intellectual, and ethical valour – these are the factors, to which the success of modern society is linked. It is our task to provide them to the workers to a larger extent, than has hitherto been the case. [...] Again, it is our free associations, in which our artisans and labourers join together, in order to achieve their objective. Joining together in our worker’s associations, our artisan societies, and learning societies, the people, powerless in their isolation, become a mighty force. These, the true ‘guilds of our time’, are destined to realise the great principle of free labour in its full extent, the complete naturalisation of the workers in state and society. To associate firmly, to exercise one’s foresight and energy, independence and stirring intervention in the nearest field of daily life, in household and professional life, this is where we have to start, from here everything else has to begin. This is the pre-school of self-government and autonomy in state and community, a nursery from which free men, diligent people, and brave citizens will emerge, the seed, out of which the salvation of our fatherland will grow!”⁵

Already at the time, Schulze-Delitzsch saw in their mutual support, a guarantee for personal self-fulfilment: “By incorporating their members into a powerful community, they leave the greatest possible leeway for individual demeanour, for the individual character of each. It is precisely by this solidarity, by this responsibility of each for all and all for each that they provide for the individual the secure basis for personal recognition; mutuality is the best safeguard for the individual’s

“He would rather put...”

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independence. [...] But it is not only the solidarity of obligations, which manifests itself in this commitment – no, it is most notably the solidarity of right, which is the actual keystone of the organisation, which has the effect that the free personality will not be submerged by the collectivity, but find the best support in it.”⁶

The credo of Schulze-Delitzsch was: “Whosoever asks for the support of another, and be it the state, gives him the sway, the supervision over himself and relinquishes his independence. That would be the surrender of oneself, a despairing of one’s own forces, which would be all the more amiss, all the more unfounded, as evidence has been provided by cooperatives that workers, once properly engaged, are indeed able to help themselves, and do not stand in need of outside support.”⁷

Education for cooperative members

In order to foster and preserve this solidarity, Schulze-Delitzsch wanted first of all to encourage and promote cooperatives for educational purposes. “Such associations coalesce, in order to provide educational means to their members, which are not available for them, when they are isolated. One debates, one exchanges views, provides teaching material, inspiring lectures are being held. In this way one tries to improve the understanding of the individuals, by gauging them with each other; funds are being raised, to acquire books and periodicals, to ensure joint lessons and advanced training schools, and no one will fail to recognise the pleasant things which have already been achieved in this field.”⁸

In 1889, as a Prussian representative, Schulze-Delitzsch participated in significant way in the development of the first Prussian cooperative act. Furthermore, he encouraged the forming of diverse cooperatives in the following domains: advance disbursement-, credit- and loan-societies, people’s banks, commodity societies, consumption societies, health insurance funds, and cooperatives for joint businesses. The main policy of these cooperatives he summarised in the following way:

“1. Those for which the cooperative takes care with regard to any necessity in business and acquisition, must be members and promoters of the entire enterprise, bear their profits and losses, because this is the only way social self-help can be organised in our associations.

2. They shall not only participate in the case of losses or profits of the associative business, but also in the conduct and administration of the latter. This is the cognitive part of the business tasks; they are to take administrative functions as well as

the participation in decisions of the association, which leads to the fact that even sovereign decisions come from the whole body of the members.

3. The formation of the funds required for the associative business is done by cash deposits of members, which gradually must be brought to shares of the corresponding value by continuous contributions and attributions of individuals’ profit shares (dividends), as scope and risk of the company – the financial circumstances of the members – require.

4. In order to find a solid footing for the loan it is in any case necessary that all members hold the responsibility for the joint liability of the association’s debts;

5. Finally cooperatives cast off the principle of exclusivity otherwise prevailing in business. Cooperatives do not make sure some few get the benefits of the company, but on the contrary extend it to as many as possible. The conditions of access are accordingly regulated in such a way and so generally held that they can be fulfilled by any regular, industrious worker, who has the sincere will to help himself, because its purposes can be achieved most easily and most completely for all through numerous participants in the association.”⁹

In order for Schulze-Delitzsch’s admission criteria for the cooperatives to be fulfilled, an examination of the interested person’s readiness to cooperate, his abilities, and his willingness for collective liability is required. The admission committee must know the person, a pure written application would not do.

Responsible choice of the cooperative’s members

For Raiffeisen it was also of great importance that cooperative members were chosen very responsibly. Cooperatives, which had grown too big, were to be subdivided. As he wrote, “Board members and executive directors did not collectively have the necessary knowledge of the circumstances of their members.”¹⁰ For loan associations the precept was established “to keep the associations’ area of operation – irrespective of its viability – as small as possible. It has emerged to be appropriate not to expand an association over the limits of a parish. So only parishioners are to be joined to an association in question and only when one parish is too small several parishes are to be joined together in a greater area of operation. [...] Only in this way is it possible for the association to discharge its task, which is to influence positively the ethical and material conditions of their members.”¹¹

On the selection of the cooperatives’ board members Raiffeisen was also very explicit: “Reliability of character and a charitable disposition are the main requirements for the administrative body.”¹² In

order to manage the risk that well-known persons could because of personal entanglements be inconsiderately trusted, the solvency of debtors and guarantors were also to be revised every three months.

Raiffeisen already warned the cooperatives against one of the causes of the still lasting financial crisis. He clearly rejected the questionable trading in securities. Accordingly, Raiffeisen would surely not have agreed to the Raiffeisen-group’s acquisition of the Notenstein private bank in Switzerland, which earns its money by so-called structured financial products (as honourable as the intentions behind them might have been). His fellow feeling with the hard working population forbade such enterprises. “The rural population wants nothing to do with securities, even if they were the safest government bonds. [...] Once investment of funds in such papers had been introduced in the countryside, it would be difficult – if not impossible – to observe the limits. Papers of hoax companies could then easily be introduced as well, which could cause unpredictable damage. The farmer, more than anybody else, has to eat his bread in the sweat of his brow. His sweat beads are attached to the earnings he can arduously spare and put aside. He feels it [...] and wants to invest his savings due to innermost conviction with utmost safety. He knows the men who chair the association. Their character and their wealth provide him a security, which he himself is able to estimate, something impossible with foreign papers and distant savings banks. [...] He would rather put his money into a crate or any other save hiding place.”¹³

¹ https://www.raiffeisen.ch/web/raiffeisen_organisation

² Raiffeisen, Friedrich Wilhelm. Die Darlehenskassen-Vereine als Mittel zur Abhilfe der Noth der ländlichen Bevölkerung sowie auch der städtischen Handwerker und Arbeiter. Praktische Anleitung zur Bildung solcher Vereine, gestützt auf sechszehnjährige Erfahrung, als Gründer derselben. Neuwied 1866, quotations from the 8th edition. Neuwied 1966

³ loc. cit., p. 109

⁴ loc. cit., p. 110f.

⁵ Schulze-Delitzsch, Hermann. Die nationale Bedeutung der Deutschen Genossenschaften. Berlin 1865, p. 14f.

⁶ loc. cit., p. 4

⁷ Schulze-Delitzsch, Hermann. Capitel zu einem deutschen Arbeiterkatechismus. Sechs Vorträge vor dem Berliner Arbeiterverein. Leipzig 1863, p. 123

⁸ loc. cit., p. 126

⁹ loc. cit., p. 128

¹⁰ Raiffeisen, Friedrich Wilhelm. Die Darlehenskassen-Vereine als Mittel zur Abhilfe der Noth der ländlichen Bevölkerung sowie auch der städtischen Handwerker und Arbeiter. Praktische Anleitung zur Bildung solcher Vereine, gestützt auf sechszehnjährige Erfahrung, als Gründer derselben. Neuwied 1966, p. 37

¹¹ loc. cit., p. 37

¹² loc. cit., p. 55

¹³ loc. cit., p. 74

Responsibility for the whole

“Isenthaler Wildheuer und Wildheulandschaft” (Isenthal wild haymaking and landscape of wild hay harvesting) awarded the Landscape of the Year 2016 by the ‘Swiss Foundation for Landscape Conservation (SL-FP)’

by Urs Knoblauch, cultural publicist, Fruthwilen TG

The species-rich dry grassland and wild hay are part of our impressive natural and cultural heritage. Anyone who has admired the splendour of alpine flowers, will also have given thought to the preservation and maintenance of these natural wonders. Switzerland is worldwide on top with its diverse wild hay grasslands and its care and therefore bears international responsibility. Here, the canton of Uri is particularly committed to responsibility. These species-rich Alpine grasslands are one of 39 endangered cultural landscapes of Switzerland.

The contribution of wild haymakers to nature, cultural property and to the common good

That the *Swiss Foundation for Landscape Conservation (SL-FP)* awarded this year’s prize the wild haymakers in the area of Lake Lucerne is very deserving. For centuries, the wild haymakers carry on this cultural tradition in the extremely dangerous mountain and Alpine landscapes. It requires quite a bit of force, trained skills and often quite some courage that the men – often with the help of women – can accomplish their work on the steep meadows and rock banks. This enables them to provide the necessary hardship hay for the cattle in the Alps or for year-round home operation or to bridge cold spells. The game benefits as well from the wild haymakers. Up here in the Alps every two to three years there is sporadic mowing, depending on the available working capacity, vigor and weather conditions. The transportation is in the beautiful looking Tristen (hayracks) which are stored directly in nature, or as heavy hay bales in nets. They are transported in simple rope constructions which are rich in ideas and over one hundred years old.

1,000 scythe-mown hectares

Hay making is part of an admirable and daring agricultural culture that includes a rich Alpine lifestyle of mutual aid. For generations interelligent techniques, practices and emotional experiences are passed on to the families and cooperatives. The oldest award winner of the *Swiss Foundation for Landscape Conservation* was 89, the youngest 16 years of age. “Astonishingly, in Switzerland more than 1,000 hectares are still mown with a scythe. Thereby valuable small structures such as anthills, stones



(picture Mary Leibundgut)

and bushes survive; small animals such as lizards, grasshoppers, or wild bees can also get to safety in time“. This can be read in one of the numerous information sheets of the foundation (and various nature conservation organizations) (Bafu, www.umwelt-schweiz.ch/publikationen). Thus, the wild haymakers contribute not only to food security but also to the important biodiversity of flowers and grasses as well as to stabilize the soil for avalanche control and to a valuable cultural asset. The more and more mechanical aids, hay blowers, bar mowers and sometimes even helicopters are used today as necessary relief for the demanding and dangerous work. Adequate financial support is absolutely necessary especially for this kind of agriculture. It is modest, measured at the income opportunities in the lowlands. “Decisive, however, is the factor of the existing workforce, the inner attitude and the public appreciation of the wild haymaking”, writes *Raimund Rodewald*, current CEO at SL-FP.

Speaking to the wild haymakers and peasants it becomes clear how they are connected with faith in God with nature for their life tasks and feel responsible for the whole of human coexistence. With the traditional religious “Betruhen” (traditional prayer texts) that the Alpine people sing in the evening through a wooden funnel and thus also connecting with each other over the valleys with the gorgeous wayside crosses and chapels. They are

asking for God’s help with the many existing dangers.

Impressive symposium, ceremony and award ceremony

The small mountain village of Isenthal is located in the canton of Uri at 778 metres above Lake Uri. Yet, the extremely steep ascent on foot, the trip by car or mail van through the picturesque rocky and forest landscape with imposing and dizzying views of the Lake Uri, is an imposing experience. In this pristine mountain nature of historic Switzerland the residents have come together to form a Confederation. This interaction is recorded in the Federal Charter of 1291. Independently, modest and in mutual help they mastered the constitution of the direct democracy and the common good. For long, there was no road to Isleten and Isenthal. The access was possible only by boat via Flüelen. Only in 1901, at the opening of the steamship station and with the help of vigorous Italian foreign workers the steep winding mountain road was built to Isenthal, through rocks and forest.

Up there the interesting and well-attended symposium of the *Swiss Foundation for Landscape Conservation (SL-FP)* was held on 12 August 2016, headed by Raimund Rodewald. At the beginning, a few days before fatally injured wild haymaker was commemorated. Numerous speakers from the municipality, the can-

"Responsibility for the whole"

"continued from page 15

ton of Uri (Councillor *Heidi Z'graggen*), the federal government (Department of Agriculture) as well as professional organisations and representatives from South Tyrol acknowledged the hay making and gave valuable insights into the important cultural task of use and protection of the mountain landscapes. Historian *Michael Blatter* contributed with an excellent lecture on the history of wild haymaking. The field botanist *Mary Leibundgut* gave an impressive photo report on the work during hay making. It became clear how geographical and topographical characteristics are reflected in the cultural coexistence.

With a panel discussion, accompanied by an aperitif with local cheese, smoked mear and wine offered by the corporation Uri and a good conversation the meeting was ended. Saturday, there was the ceremony on the Alp Gitschen at 1,600 metres which is accessible by cable car. In beautiful summer weather, the award ceremony took place for the 30 wild haymakers. Again, the injured wild haymaking comrade was commemorated with a short memorial mass. At Alphorn sounds, speeches and an original laudation by the wellknown filmmaker *Fredi Murer* who is enrooted in central Switzerland. Together with the winners the many visitors enjoyed the unique natural beauty of Alp Gitschen. The conversation with these wise and responsible-minded wild haymakers and their families was a special treat. In the afternoon, interested visitors had the opportunity to follow the preactical work on the ground and to lend a hand. The event was made possible by the canton, the community, the corporation, sponsors, and donors and was festively completed with a lunch. A lasting and shared experience of lived responsibility for the whole.

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

Swiss Foundation for Landscape Conservation honours cultural landscapes

uk. Every year since 2011 the *Swiss Foundation for Landscape Conservation* (SL-FP) honours a special cultural landscape of Switzerland. The Foundation was founded in 1970 with the purpose of "preservation, maintenance and enhancement of landscapes worth protecting". DDr h. c. *Raimund Rodewald* is the current managing director and publishes repeatedly excellent publications on the subject. (In *Current Concerns* No 29, 2012, he has reported on the terraced landscapes.)

The Foundation was already able to realize numerous valuable projects and thus to draw the attention of the public onto the nature and landscape protection and their diversity. "Its aim is to safeguard the natural and cultural values of the landscape, promote it and, restore it where necessary. For this it advocates in particular through advice, expertise, training, project work, publications and other appropriate ways." This concern is particularly valuable especially in the context of major structural changes and construction. The Foundation is a private non-profit organisation and works closely together with the authorities and organisations that deal with spatial planning, nature protection, townscape and

monument protection, tourism and others. Its concern and that of many other organisations is necessary and is broadly supported.

In 2013, the popular vote on the *revision of the Swiss Spatial Planning Act* expressed the joint responsibility of the Swiss people; the popular vote was adopted with almost 63%. Still, in the Annual Report 2015 of the SL-FP *Kurt Fluri*, National Councillor and President of the Board of the SL-FP, has pointed out: "The loss of cultivated land is unrestrained and the loss rate due to the current construction boom is probably still higher than in the years between 1979/85 and 2004/09. Within 24 years, [...] approximately 54,000 hectares of arable land have been converted to urban areas." End of 2015, again, 30,000 hectares were added by further "exploitation tasks, a total of 84,000 hectares of arable land, which matches the area of the Canton of Jura". In addition, more and more people live in big cities and the direct relationship to nature and agriculture gets lost. Fluri points out that the main reason for the loss of cultivated land is the spread of urban areas, mainly by home and road construction.



*The hay is wrapped in nets and transported to the valley in bales.
(pictures Mary Leibundgut)*