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# Current Concerns

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

English Edition of *Zeit-Fragen*

## Red Cross: Preparing the Future

To create the political will for compliance with International Humanitarian Law  
Sixty years of the Geneva Conventions and the decades ahead

Statement by Jakob Kellenberger, president of the ICRC, to the conference on the challenges for International Humanitarian Law posed by new threats, new actors and new means and methods of war, organized by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs in cooperation with the ICRC, Geneva, 9-10 November

ev. On the occasion of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Geneva Conventions Switzerland organized an expert conference in co-operation with the International Committee of the Red Cross ICRC on 9 and 10 November this year in Geneva. The Conference topic was: "60 years of Geneva Conventions and the decades ahead". With it Switzerland has again met one of its obligations in accordance with Article I of the Geneva Conventions and the First Protocol which demand all states to observe the International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and further its compliance world-wide.

The Conference was directed to diplomatic representatives as well as experts from the High Convention Parties. In addition, international organizations, NGOs in the field of IHL and scientists were invited to attend. The conference focused on the new challenges confronting the International Humanitarian Law. It dealt with several aspects concerning the developments in the application of IHL since 1949 – in particular with regard to armed conflicts – and whether it required an adjustment to the rules of the International Law. In his introductory statement printed below, Jakob Kellenberger, President of the ICRC, outlines the problems of IHL and the questions raised at the conference.

Check against delivery

Madam la Conseillère Fédérale,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs for having associated the ICRC with its initiative to organise this Conference. The ICRC has cooperated in the design of the programme and in providing background papers for the workshops.

Before addressing the main issues of this Conference, let me stress that the fact we are today examining future challenges to IHL in no way means that the basic principles and rules of this branch of international law are outdated. The principle of humanity, which underlies the treatment of any person in enemy hands and is expressed in numerous IHL rules, regardless of the type of armed conflict involved, remains a bedrock. Similarly, the principle of distinction may not be transgressed. The numerous rules on the conduct of hostilities elaborating on this principle continue to be fundamental for the protection of civilians. In short, the existing principles of humanitarian law must be preserved. No matter what possible developments IHL may undergo in the future, nothing can be allowed to jeopardise or undermine the protections already provided by IHL to persons affected by armed conflict.

Ladies and gentlemen,  
Armed conflicts have evolved enormously over the past 60 years and lines have become increasingly blurred between various parties to an armed conflict, as well as between combatants and civilians. It is civilian men, women and children who have increasingly become the main victims. IHL has necessarily adapted to this changing reality. The adoption of the first two Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions



Staff members of the ICRC help refugees in the province Kunar in Afghanistan. "Yet we still come back to one simple truth: the overriding factor behind lack of compliance is lack of political will by both States and non-State armed groups. Without the requisite political will, even the most refined compliance mechanisms will be little more than empty vessels." (picture © ICRC/M. Naseem Sahar)

"Despite the continuously evolving nature of armed conflict, the biggest threat or challenge to IHL remains the same. It is the too limited respect and compliance its rules and norms enjoy by parties to armed conflict all around the world.

[...] the core reasons for lack of compliance with humanitarian law are lack of political will, lack of prevention and control, and lack of accountability."

in 1977, with the rules they established on the conduct of hostilities and on the protection of persons affected by non-international armed conflict, is just one example. Specific rules prohibiting or regulating weapons such as anti-personnel mines and, more recently, cluster munitions are another example of the adaptability of IHL to the realities on the ground.

The traumatic events of 9/11 and its aftermath set a new test for IHL. The polarisation of international relations and the humanitarian consequences of what has been referred to as the "global war on terror" have posed a huge challenge. The proliferation and fragmentation of non-state armed groups some of whom reject the premises of IHL, have posed another challenge.

IHL has withstood these challenges with its reputation intact, and its adequacy and adapt-

ability as a legal framework for the protection of victims of armed conflict reaffirmed. At the same time it has become increasingly evident that certain issues require clarification. With that, there is a need to seriously envisage the development of IHL in specific areas, and I will come back to this point in a few moments.

The nature of armed conflict and the causes and consequences of such conflict will continue to evolve, and it is essential that IHL continues to evolve too. The crucial question is how exactly it should do so. Our shared reflections during this Conference should go some way towards further exploring possibilities – and constraints – in this regard.

With regard to the themes of the four workshops to be held this afternoon, a few remarks on each of the four: Firstly, what do we actually understand by "new threats"?

For our purposes today, the term "new threats" will be taken to cover both existing threats that may intensify over the next few decades, as well as newly-emerging threats – specifically those which may lead to situations of collective violence, including armed conflict. These may include population growth and urbanisation, the scarcity of natural resources and the growing disparities in the distribution of wealth, ecological risks, failed States and transnational activities of criminal groups, including those using terrorist methods.

In analysing the causes and types of violence that are expected to occur in the future and whether IHL should be adapted as a result, participants will be confronted with a number of challenging questions. What will be the main threats to peace and security in the world in the next few decades and what kinds of armed violence will they result in? How can States, international organisations, humanitarian and development organisations and agencies prepare to meet the needs of people affected by future threats to peace and security, in particular situations of collective violence, including armed conflict? What is the role and importance of international law in this regard and IHL in particular? And will the importance of IHL as a body of law dealing with armed conflict increase or decrease in light of ongoing developments in the types

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### “Red Cross: Preparing the Future”

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of violence with which we will be confronted?

The potential range of “new actors” whose actions have repercussions at the international level is of course vast. While many of these “new actors” have in fact been around for some time, they have called into question – and will continue to call into question – some of the more traditional assumptions on which the international legal system is based.

We will focus today particularly on new actors who are likely to be increasingly involved – directly or indirectly – in situations of collective violence including armed conflicts. The spectrum of these actors is still very broad, encompassing a range of identities, motivations and varying degrees of willingness, and ability, to observe IHL and other international law standards. Certain organised armed groups, private military and security companies, transnational corporations, urban gangs, militias and the huge variety of transnational criminal entities – including “terrorist” groups and pirates – all require scrutiny in this regard.

Identifying and understanding these actors and their characteristics is a fundamental prerequisite to better addressing the challenges arising from their involvement in modern armed conflict. It is also important to recognise how complex the reality is in order to avoid falling into the trap of misleading categorisation that does not serve the interests or increase the protection of people affected by contemporary conflict.

Allow me to remind you that IHL is the *only* legal framework specifically binding non-State armed groups. Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions and the Second Additional Protocol of 1977 both serve to this end, as do a large number of customary IHL rules. Several IHL clarification processes have also been undertaken in this regard.

However, it will be important to examine whether existing rules of IHL are adequate to deal with new non-State actors or whether further regulation is needed. If so, should new legal rules, standards or best practices be developed to better accommodate new actors within the framework of humanitarian law? And, most crucially, how can better compliance with IHL be ensured by non-State actors in armed conflict, who currently have little legal or practical incentive to do so?

I turn now to “*new means and methods of warfare*”, which is the theme of the third workshop. There is no doubt that new technological developments will have an impact on future warfare. Recent conflicts have seen the increasing use of remotely controlled weapons or weapons systems – including so-called “drones” – and of automatic weapons or weapons systems. There is a possibility that in the future weapons systems may become fully autonomous. Automatic and autonomous weapons systems in particular raise certain concerns with regard to compliance with IHL. The current technological capacity to programme such weapons to distinguish combatants from civilians, and military objectives from civilian objects, as well as their ability to respect the principles of proportionality and the precautions required in attack are subject to debate.

It is not only types of weapons that are changing, but also the environments in which they are often used. The debate has been prompted in part by the growing number of military operations conducted in densely populated urban areas, often using explosive force delivered by heavy weapons, which can have devastating humanitarian consequences for civilian populations in such environments.

Another key issue is the increasingly asymmetric nature of modern armed conflicts. Differences between belligerents, especially in terms of technological and military capacities have become ever more pronounced. Compliance with the rules of IHL may be perceived as beneficial to one side of the conflict only, while detrimental to the other. At worst, a militarily weak party – faced with a much more powerful opponent – will contravene fundamental rules of IHL in an attempt to even out the imbalance. If one side systematically breaks the rules, there is a risk

The Conventions protect people and property involved or that are likely to become involved in an armed conflict and limit the right of the parties to the conflict to choose the means and methods of combat. Here are some major points:

- Protection of the physical and/or moral integrity of those persons not participating in the conflict and also of medical equipment, ambulances and hospitals. Parties to the conflict must guarantee that they are cared for and given assistance.
- Right to life, human dignity and individual rights (in particular legal guarantees) for prisoners of war.
- Limits to the choice of methods and means of war (in particular: prohibition of torture or of inflicting any other unnecessary pain or suffering).
- Obligation of the parties to the conflict to distinguish between the civilian population and civilian property on the one hand and military objectives and military personnel on the other.

source: [www.admin.ch](http://www.admin.ch)

### Role of Switzerland

The Geneva Conventions are of particular importance for Switzerland for several reasons.

Firstly, because the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the top international organisation responsible for guaranteeing the application of the provisions of the Geneva Conventions, has its headquarters in Switzerland.

And secondly, because Switzerland is the Depositary State for the Conventions and as such has well defined obligations such as that of keeping the original version of the Conventions, sending certified copies of them to all the member States and registering any amendments to them.

Finally, the promotion and reinforcement of international humanitarian law constitute a priority objective of Switzerland’s foreign policy.

source: [www.admin.ch](http://www.admin.ch)

that the situation quickly deteriorates into a free-for-all. Such a downward spiral would defy the fundamental purpose of IHL – to alleviate suffering in times of war. We must explore every avenue to prevent this from happening.

Compounding these challenges, civilians have in recent years become progressively more involved in activities closely related to actual combat. At the same time, combatants do not always distinguish themselves from civilians, neither wearing uniforms nor openly carrying arms. They mingle with the civilian population. Civilians are also used as human shields. To add to the confusion, in some conflicts, traditional military functions have been outsourced to private contractors or other civilians working for State armed forces or for organised armed groups. These trends are, if anything, likely to increase in the years ahead. As a result of this, civilians are more likely to be targeted – either mistakenly or arbitrarily. Military personnel are also at increased risk: since they cannot properly identify their adversary, they are vulnerable to attack by individuals who to all appearances are civilians.

IHL states that those involved in fighting must make a basic distinction between combatants on the one hand, who may be lawfully attacked, and civilians on the other hand, who are protected against attack unless and for such time as they directly participate in hostilities. The problem is that neither the Geneva Conventions nor their Additional Protocols spell out what precisely constitutes “direct participation in hostilities”.

In an effort to help remedy this situation, the ICRC issued a substantial guidance document in June this year. Without changing existing law, this document provides the ICRC’s recommendations on how IHL relating to the notion of direct participation in hostilities should be interpreted in contemporary armed conflict. The aim is that these recommendations will enjoy practical application where it matters, in the midst of armed conflict, and better protect the victims of those conflicts.

But various crucial questions remain with regard to the conduct of hostilities. Are applicable IHL rules sufficient to identify under which circumstances explosive force delivered by heavy weapons might be used in densely populated areas, for example? Should a higher standard be required for the

verification of targets and their surroundings or for the issuance of warnings to the civilian population? Perhaps further legal development is required, but if so, how can it feasibly be monitored and enforced?

I turn lastly to the issue of whether existing IHL implementing mechanisms are adapted to actual and new challenges. Allow me first to reiterate one incontrovertible fact. Despite the continuously evolving nature of armed conflict, the biggest threat or challenge to IHL remains the same. It is the too limited respect and compliance its rules and norms enjoy by parties to armed conflict all around the world.

As I remarked during the Ministerial Working Session organised by Switzerland in New York in September, the core reasons for lack of compliance with humanitarian law are lack of political will, lack of prevention and control, and lack of accountability.

It is clear that existing mechanisms provided for in the Geneva Conventions and the First Additional Protocol – namely the system of protecting powers, the formal enquiry procedure and the International Humanitarian Fact-Finding Commission – have not been effective, principally because they are subject to consent by the parties concerned. Several mechanisms within the UN system are also constrained by the fact that decisions are subject to political negotiations between governments. While there has been some progress towards strengthening accountability for violations of humanitarian law – not least through the various international tribunals and the International Criminal Court – the prevailing culture still remains one of impunity.

It is hoped that participants in today’s workshop will share ideas and suggestions on how to improve existing compliance mechanisms or even to create new ones; mechanisms that would in particular take account of the fact that IHL violations need to be stopped as they are happening, rather than *after* they have happened.

Yet we still come back to one simple truth: the overriding factor behind lack of compliance is lack of political will by both States and non-State armed groups. Without the requisite political will, even the most refined compliance mechanisms will be little more than empty vessels.

The fact that this message has been repeated tirelessly – certainly by the ICRC on a

continuous basis – may explain why so much attention is currently being paid to the issue of compliance, at least in fora such as this one. This is of course very positive. *All* genuine initiatives undertaken by States parties to the Geneva Conventions towards strengthening compliance – including by those States not directly faced with compliance issues – must be warmly welcomed, at the very least as a manifestation of positive political will.

Ensuring improved compliance with IHL is something that concerns all of us here today, albeit in different ways. A wide range of actors including States and non-State actors, military forces, legislators and humanitarian organisations each have a particular role to play. The ICRC, for its part, can only contribute one part of what must be a concerted international effort towards achieving this aim.

On the sixtieth anniversary of the Geneva Conventions in August, I gave a speech to representatives of the High Contracting Parties and other invitees, focusing on legal and humanitarian issues that the ICRC considers to be particular challenges – not just today but also in the years ahead. I also outlined what – and how – the ICRC stands ready to contribute in terms of guidance and advice in addressing those challenges.

I highlighted certain areas where the ICRC believes that humanitarian law needs to be clarified, for example related to the conduct of hostilities as I have already mentioned. There are other areas where humanitarian law may need to be developed, where there is either a lack of rules or where the rules are too broad or vague, leaving much to subjective interpretation. This arises particularly in situations of non-international armed conflict, where existing treaty law is at best limited. Conditions of detention and detainees’ right of contact with the outside world are one such area. Procedural safeguards for people interned for security reasons are another. There are various others, including access to populations in need of humanitarian assistance, internal displacement of civilian populations and protection of the natural environment.

To address the humanitarian and legal challenges arising in these areas, the ICRC is now in the final stages of a two-year long comprehensive internal research study. This study aims firstly to explain in simple terms the whole range of aforementioned humanitarian concerns arising in non-international armed conflicts – including the challenge of improving compliance with the law by all parties to such conflicts. On the basis of this, its second aim is to evaluate the legal responses provided in existing law to these humanitarian concerns. Based on a comprehensive assessment of the conclusions of this research, a case will be made for the clarification or development of specific aspects of the law. In the months to come, the ICRC will decide on how to move forward, both substantively and procedurally.

*Through such guidance, clarification and proposals for development, the ICRC hopes ultimately to make a meaningful contribution towards improving compliance with IHL. This is of course in parallel with the daily work of neutral and independent humanitarian action in the midst of armed conflict, speaking with both state and non-state armed groups, urging them to comply with the rules of IHL. This is where the issue of compliance has real urgency: when negotiating humanitarian access to wounded people on the other side of a front line, for example, or facilitating the evacuation of sick and wounded to a safe area.*

In conclusion, let me reiterate that irrespective of any clarification or development that may be necessary in the future, *we each have a responsibility and a role to play in ensuring that the Geneva Conventions, as well as the whole body of international humanitarian law, continue to stand the test of time. I urge States and non-State armed groups who are also bound by their provisions to turn legal provisions into meaningful reality, where it matters, in the midst of armed conflict, to better protect the victims of such conflict.*

Thank you.

Source: [www.icrc.org](http://www.icrc.org)

## The EU and Switzerland Do Not Match

by Dr iur Marianne Wüthrich, Zurich/Switzerland

The way, in which EU Commissioners take office, seems rather strange to the democracy-loving Swiss. As daily papers report, unwanted politicians – both in Germany as well as in Austria – are presently shunt off to a Brussels job; however, they are not shunted to a subordinated office job, where they would not be able to do much harm, but to a post within the European Commission. It is particularly astonishing that the Commissioners despite their powerful position are not elected by the respective national parliaments but are appointed according to a not quite clear procedure. According to a report of the “*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*” of 26 October, Mrs Merkel gives priority to the appointment of the German EU Commissioner, i.e. she grants herself the authority to do so. In Austria, the coalition parties argue and deal a “horse trade”: You will get the post of an EU Commissioner and we commission the head of the Austrian TV channel ORF, “*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*” of 28 October).

Do you really want to join this undemocratic club, Mr Federal Councilor Leuenberger? Do you still want to fool the dumb people into believing that Switzerland could “co-design Europe” as an EU member? Would you perhaps like to become EU Commissioner yourself? Regarding the procedure in other states, this could be a practical possibility.

There are numerous reasons, why the EU and Switzerland do not match or vice versa. Actually, no nation matches this undemocratic, bureaucratized and corrupt giant EU which is so ignorant of its citizens’ interests; in particular small-scale Switzerland with its uniquely differentiated and citizen-oriented state structure does not match. The following statement applies, “Do not join an ailing company.” In the following, some aspects are to be emphasized to make clear, why a significant majority of the Swiss population do not wish to join the EU. We confine ourselves to the two pillars “neutrality” and “direct democracy”. Further substantial state maxims of Switzerland are federalism and the autonomy of communes, combined with the principle of subsidiarity, the militia system in the military and in the communes as well as in the parliaments of the Confederation and the cantons. All these powerful features of the Swiss Confederation are incompatible with an EU membership: The EU needs – as people say – centralized, professional administrative units and no autonomous small-scale communes with numerous active citizens working on an honorary basis.

### Eternal and armed neutrality

Switzerland is a country, which has successfully kept aloof from wars and military alliances for 200 years and exclusively offered non-violent help like the good services, the ICRC and various humanitarian employments to war and crisis-stricken peoples. It goes without saying that the principle of eternal and armed neutrality is to the belligerent EU as fire is to water or water to fire. The Swiss National Council (represents the Swiss population) can claim high credit for rejecting the participation of Switzerland in the so-called anti-pirate-mission Atalanta recently. As we recently learned from the media, the crew of the German frigate “*Karlsruhe*” caught and arrested seven pirates on the Somalia coast, who had attacked a fish trawler. Swiss soldiers would have probably been on this German warship, if the Swiss Parliament had not refused to involve our country into EU war politics. Just remember: One month ago, the proponents of the employment tried to fool the parliamentarians into believing that it was “most improbable” that Swiss army members could become involved into a military conflict with Somalia. It is not as improbable as it seemed...

If Switzerland were a member of the European Union, the representatives of the National Council and the Council of States could no longer decide autonomously on the participation in Atalanta or similar war employment, but would have to subordinate themselves to Brussels’ orders. Moreover, the people could not at all decide on any further military as-



“The Federal Council has the stronger position, the more its members feel committed to the people and the more they are aware of the fact that in the end the people have the say in Switzerland. In that case the Federal Council will not make any promises to foreign governments which it cannot keep, but will form an alliance with the citizens following the motto ‘We will succeed if all of us work together.’ This restriction of power on the side of the Federal Council tremendously bothers those who wield the power in Brussels.” (picture thk)

signments abroad. Today, about 100,000 signatures are necessary for the voters to submit a popular initiative at any time, e.g. reducing the Swiss army exclusively on national defense and disaster control operations; in a referendum, the majority of the people and the cantons could decide on it. Of course, this would become inconceivable, if Switzerland joined the European Union. The EU does not know any right to place an initiative.

### Direct democracy: The people decide, not the executive

On all three state levels (commune/canton/Confederation), the executive has relatively little power. It is the basis that takes full responsibility and also bears the consequences. In Switzerland, there is no head of state as in France or Germany, who can take important decisions on his own behalf. The seven members of the Federal Council form a cooperative government; they act on an equal basis, have to find solutions and comprises, while at the same time, none of them has more to say than the rest. The President of the Swiss Confederation is *primus inter pares*, his additional tasks are merely organizational and representative, his term of office amounts to only one year, so that he cannot establish a position of power. Therefore, even politically interested Swiss people know for sure the name of the US President or the German Federal Chancellor, but not necessarily the name of the President of the Swiss Confederation. Nothing has yet been decided when the President of the Swiss Confederation *Merz* signs a tax agreement with another state: the National Council and the Council of States can reject the agreement, and if they agree, 50,000 voters have the right to take an optional referendum i.e. a people’s vote on the issue.

The same rules are valid for the governments on the cantonal and communal level: They are always cooperative governments without a head of government being equipped with additional authority. The people are the sovereign in either the Confederation, or the canton or the commune, and they have the final say. Therefore, the attempt of the federal authorities to achieve a strengthening of central power in Switzerland is a long and difficult path: Each shift of authority from the cantons to the Confederation must be

approved in a mandatory referendum; i.e. it must be desired at the grassroots.

This restriction of executive power in Switzerland must not be interpreted as “weakness”. Remarks in some individual media like “We need a strong government” contradict

the principle of direct democracy. The Federal Council has the stronger position, the more its members feel committed to the people and the more they are aware of the fact that in the

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## The EU Propaganda Machine

*The European Union is becoming an ever bigger colossus, one in fact that can hardly be legally assigned to constitutional law, but resembles a late-medieval feudal state, or a state like Saudi Arabia, more than a democracy. To determine what is part of the autocratic wolf and what belongs to the surrounding democratic sheepskins, is the task of constitutional and public law experts. This is a task they have to face. Already in the opening passage of his book “Die Europafalle” (The Europe Trap), Hans-Peter Martin refers to this state of affairs. That the deceit is being veiled by a propaganda campaign fits the character of this construct.*

Excerpt from the book:\*

Each founding father of a Western democracy must feel betrayed in view of the actual state of affairs in the European Union. In Brussels and Copenhagen the uneasiness is rising, as well.

But instead of taking on the challenge of correcting the EU’s construction faults, its drawbacks and problems are being covered up. Propaganda instead of principal reform is the motto. And at the centre we find *Margot Wallström*, the Swedish EU-Commissioner for Communication. Before the EU-parliamentary elections in June 2009, she warned *Hans-Gert Pöttering*, the then acting President of Parliament in a personal letter: “The legitimacy of your parliament and that of the entire European Union is at risk.” The formula she offered: an unprecedented media offensive. “Through our contacts we are going to request radio and television stations to broadcast more EU programmes and subjects”, said Wallström.<sup>1)</sup> The representatives of the EU Commission were going to “design their communication activities ac-

ordingly.” The budget for this campaign amounts to 17 million euro. At the end of her letter, the vice-president of the EU Commission is reassuring the highest representative of the EU parliament: “As you may well see, our envisaged actions are substantial.”

The promotion of TV reporting on the European Union was already put out for tender, and there we can read how this is supposed to take place. When applying, the broadcasters do not only have to state “name, tasks and language skills of the respective personnel, journalists in particular”, but must also describe their broadcasting philosophy and also have to sign on “broadcasting European programmes regularly and at prime times”.<sup>2)</sup> When the plans became known in 2008, the feuilleton of the “*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*” entitled its article “The European Union Buys News Coverage.” The subtitle read: “Amazingly enough and almost unbelievably, the European Union pays for convenient reports.”<sup>3)</sup>

But within Brussels’ political circles hardly anyone is responsive to such criticism. Rather one moves up a gear: Apart from Wallström’s money, the European Parliament had at first made an allowance of 11.3 million euro in the official budget for an “information and communication campaign” round about the 2009 European elections. But at the end the amount was doubled to more than 23.3 million euro<sup>4)</sup>, although performing and financing these elections is the business of the national states. Also the financial means of the fractions “for information activities performed in connection with

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Excerpt from: Hans-Peter Martin. *Die Europafalle. Das Ende von Demokratie und Wohlstand*. ISBN 978-3-492-04671-8, page 23 pp. (Translation *Current Concerns*)

### "The EU and Switzerland ..."

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end the people have the say in Switzerland. In that case the Federal Council will not make any promises to foreign governments which it cannot keep, but will form an alliance with the citizens following the motto "We will succeed if all of us work together."

This restriction of power on the side of the Federal Council tremendously bothers those who wield the power in Brussels. They want a powerful executive with a head of state, a single contact person, who has to decide in essential questions, and not a committee of seven, which has to come to some sort of agreement and whose decisions must conform to the decisions of the parliament and the voters. However, what else does democracy consist of?

In order to meet the conceptions of the European Union, the Federal Council has been trying for years to enforce a state management reform (Staatsleitungsreform): a government with a Federal President, who is to be in office for four years instead of only one and who is to have more competences. So far, both the National Council and the Council of States have wisely rebuffed this unjustified demand. Of course, each change of the state structure would be subjected to the mandatory referen-

dum; both the people and the cantons would the longer the less agree on such a state reform.

### Co-operation for the benefit of the municipality corresponds to human nature

We, the active voters, know the meaning of democracy for human beings: Those who can assist in discussing the problems and can co-decide in their commune, in the canton and in the Confederation are more satisfied, more responsible for the community and have less feelings of powerlessness with regard to the great problems in the world. We, the people, are the sovereign, we have the right and the obligation to shape our country and the world and ensure that life is still worth living for our grandchildren and their grandchildren. It is worthwhile to reread - in this context - the study published by the University of St Gallen, by *Gebhard Kirchgässner* entitled "Die Direkte Demokratie: modern, erfolgreich, entwicklungs- und exportfähig." (Direct democracy: modern, successful, promising and exportable.) [ISBN 978-3-8006-2517-8] In order to give the reader an impression of the extraordinarily alive Swiss democracy, some actual data will follow:

Since the establishment of the Federal State in 1848, the Swiss people could vote

on altogether 559 federal referenda, half of which were adopted, the other half rejected.

Eight constitutional reform drafts failed due to the cantonal majority, i.e. a majority of cantons outvoted the densely populated cantons such as Zurich, Berne and Waadt.

At present, signatures are collected for seven people's initiatives, as for example for the initiatives "Yes to the family doctor medical system" (Ja zur Hausarztmedizin) and "The banking secrecy must be included in the Federal Constitution" (Das Bankgeheimnis muss in die Bundesverfassung). Nine people's initiatives are pending at the Federal Council, for instance the initiative of "International treaties must be presented to the people" (Staatsverträge vors Volk) or the "Landscape initiative" (Landschaftsinitiative). Eight initiatives are pending at the parliament, such as the initiative "Living waters" (Lebendiges Wasser) or "Living in one's own four walls owing to building society savings" (Eigene vier Wände dank Bausparen). Four people's initiatives are finally ready to be voted on, two of which will be decided upon on 29 November: "Against the building of minarets" (Gegen den Bau von Minaretten) and "For a prohibition of war material exports" (Für ein Verbot von Kriegsmaterialexporten). Seven federal laws, adopted by the parliament, are under consideration in the referendum period. This means that a popular vote can be demanded with 50,000 signatures. Two optional referenda are ready to be voted on, e.g. a resolution of the Federal parliaments on the automatic adoption of EU laws intending to implement biometric passports in Switzerland.

Although collecting 50,000 or 100,000 signatures is not easy, thousands of people united in interest groups, parties and associations do not refrain from the effort of standing in cold weather in order to inform and activate the population, on honorary basis and in their free time. Why? One or two hours of collecting signatures mean many vivid and encouraging discussions with fellow citizens. Some people, who first express their doubts and say that those "in Berne act as they like, anyway", gain new strength and realize that if we unite, we are able to shape politics. And with some sheets full of signatures in the bag, the collectors return home a bit more upright and in a lively manner.

An EU membership of Switzerland would have the consequence that most people's initiatives would no longer be permissible, because they would defy some of the thousands of decrees from Brussels. Since the national parliaments of the EU member states have approximately 70 to 80 per cent of the laws forced on them by the EU headquarters, no more referenda could be taken up against them. The expected loss of political rights of the Swiss people is one of the main reasons, why most Swiss want to remain decidedly in their independent state.

### Referendum democracy – slow and economical

In Switzerland, there are no rush jobs in the law-making process. It takes a long time, until a bill or a treaty can be implemented. This is an effect of direct democracy. The differentiated Swiss legislation system could not continue within the EU, which wants to enforce and implement their planned innovations as fast as possible.

In each Swiss civic education textbook, one can reread how a law is developed. First of all, experts are needed, who prepare a bill. Then there is a legislative process of consultation, which means the Federal Council sends out the draft to the cantons, parties and associations for a statement; the individual citizens can also comment on the draft. This procedure is a result of direct democracy: If during the phase of the legislative process by consultation it becomes evident that a law or a treaty encounters refusal by the majority, it is useless for the authorities to further advance the bill in its intended form. Generally speaking, the Federal Council and the United Federal Assembly always keep in mind that the draft may have to pass a referendum in the end. At present we have about a dozen legislative procedures by consultation on a federal level; the latest being a four month legislative procedure about euthanasia, on which all interested organizations and people can comment.

### "The EU Propaganda Machine ..."

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the European elections" were quietly raised by 11 per cent to 56.7 million before the end of the year.<sup>5)</sup> The trick that was used is the following: the increase is done by so-called "transfers of funds" which must be approved of by the president of the budgetary commission and does not need to be dealt with in the plenary session. That is why hardly anyone takes notice of it. All this is part of a cleverly thought-up propaganda strategy, which helps to present the European Union in a much brighter light than fits its political reality. Thus, "some media such as the 'Financial Times' benefit from privileged access to the European Commission, and are in turn purposefully used for the launching of exclusive news before the publication of reports.", describes a longstanding ambassador to the European Union a Brussels custom.<sup>6)</sup> If anyone added up all financial means which are invested into EU-propaganda, he would arrive at horrific sums. They also include the sponsored so-called cultural events serving the enhancement of the European spirit, or the countless festivities attended by EU politicians. All these events included, the EU institutions, in 2008 alone, spent 24 million euro altogether in tax money for the cultivation of their image, – more than the Coca-Cola trust yearly invests into the promotion of its products, worldwide.<sup>7)</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Letter by Margot Wallström to Hans-Gert Pötering of 1 December 2008

<sup>2</sup> Focus of 29 September 2008

<sup>3</sup> "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung" of 30 September 2008, p. 42

<sup>4</sup> Hans-Gert Pötering, *Request for transfer of appropriations C30, to Reimer Böge, Chairman of the Committee on Budgets*, of 27 November 2008, No. 320219

<sup>5</sup> Hans-Gert Pötering, *Request for transfer of appropriations C31, to Reimer Böge, Chairman of the Committee on Budgets*, of 24 November 2008

<sup>6</sup> Gregor Woschnagg, in: *Hinter den Kulissen der EU*, Vienna 2007, p. 69

<sup>7</sup> *Berechnungen von Open European Unionrope*, cited in *DPA-communication* of 26 December 2008



Hans-Peter Martin. *Die Europafalle. Das Ende von Demokratie und Wohlstand.* ISBN 978-3-492-04671-8

## The European Entrapment

km. For almost 15 years, the studied jurist and repeatedly awarded journalist, *Hans-Peter Martin*, has been working as an editor for the *Spiegel*. He is the author of bestselling books like "The global trap: globalization and the assault on prosperity and democracy" (together with *Harald Schumann*) or "Bittere Pillen. Nutzen und Risiken von Arzneimitteln" („Bitter pills. Benefits and risks of medical drugs", together with *Hans Weiss*, *Kurt Langbein* and *Roland Werner*).

In 1999, he was nominated top candidate for the EU elections by the Austrian Social Democratic Party, although no member of the party. Hans-Peter Martin, however, did not conform to the "practices" within the EU Parliament. Instead in 2004, he revealed innumerable scandals within the European Parliament, for example that a great deal of MEPs filed an expense report for Fridays, although they had already left for the weekend.

Thereupon, Hans-Peter Martin was massively attacked and expelled from the Social Democratic Faction of the EU Par-

liament. However, in the same year, he managed to take his seat again in the European Parliament with his Citizen's Party List and 14 percent of the votes. In June 2009, in the latest elections, Hans-Peter Martin's list achieved even 17.9 per cent of the Austrian votes and is represented by 3 out of 18 Austrian MEPs.

His latest book deals with how EU politicians and lobbyists are leveraging out democracy instead of finding an adequate answer to the world finance- and economic crises – after having themselves added fuel to the fire of financial speculations in the past. In the book's blurb we find the warning: "The European Parliament remains to be involved in scandals. The European Court of Justice acquires more and more competences and undermines social rights. The rushed eastern enlargement has a boomerang effect. We, all, will have to pay for the EU waste of billions."

More information about Hans-Peter Martin is available on his website [www.hpmartin.net](http://www.hpmartin.net)



There are a number of good books which have traced the neuralgic points of the European Union in a very precise manner. Above all, its blatant lack of democracy, its magnitude of corruption and its improper dealing with constructive criticism. These books include Bruno Bandulet's book which was published already ten years ago: "Tatort Brüssel" (ISBN 3-7833-7399-7) and Marta Andreasen's book which was published this year: "Brussels Laid Bare" (ISBN 978-0-9554188-1-5).

Including the results of the legislative process by consultation, the Federal Council writes a message, i.e. the project is presented to the parliament. Next, the draft is separately dealt with in the National Council and in the Council of States. Each Council discusses the draft of the Federal Council and includes as many changes as its members desire. If the two chambers cannot agree after three consultations, a conference of agreement with delegates of both Councils is installed. These try to find a compromise. Then both Councils have to vote on the compromise separately. In case of reciprocal agreement, the law or the treaty is adopted by the parliament, if not, the draft is rejected. Moreover, when the Councils have finally agreed, the referendum period of 100 days begins, i.e. the Swiss citizens can collect 50,000 signatures and thus make a referendum necessary.

The whole procedure can take two up to three years, which some politicians criticize as being too slow. Nevertheless, we have to consider that the right of the voters to start a referendum against a law or a treaty entails an extremely careful and economic handling of the law-making process, which is inconceivable in a representative democracy and even more so within the giant EU.

The fact that Switzerland (economically) and the Swiss (in their mood) are much better off than other nations in today's severe financial and economic crisis, cannot be explained with economic arguments alone. It would rather do each country and each municipality in the world good, if their populations watched politics and especially the financial policy of their municipalities as attentively as the Swiss do within the federation, the cantons and the municipalities.

The Brussels leading politicians could learn a lot of the Swiss model particularly within this field – however, not by swallowing the last bulwark in Europe, but by letting the Swiss live according to their will in a genuine democracy. •

# It is Time to Reduce the German Pile of Debt

## All citizens can help

by Karl Müller, Germany

The financial expert of the Liberals (FDP) in the German Bundestag, *Herrmann Otto Solms*, had forfeited his chances of becoming the German Finance Minister when he heralded at a party meeting that tax reductions on the nod were out of question for him. This was quoted by the "Neue Zürcher Zeitung" on 27 October 2009 referring to the formation of the new German Government and the news paper continued: "This contradicted the credo of the moment."

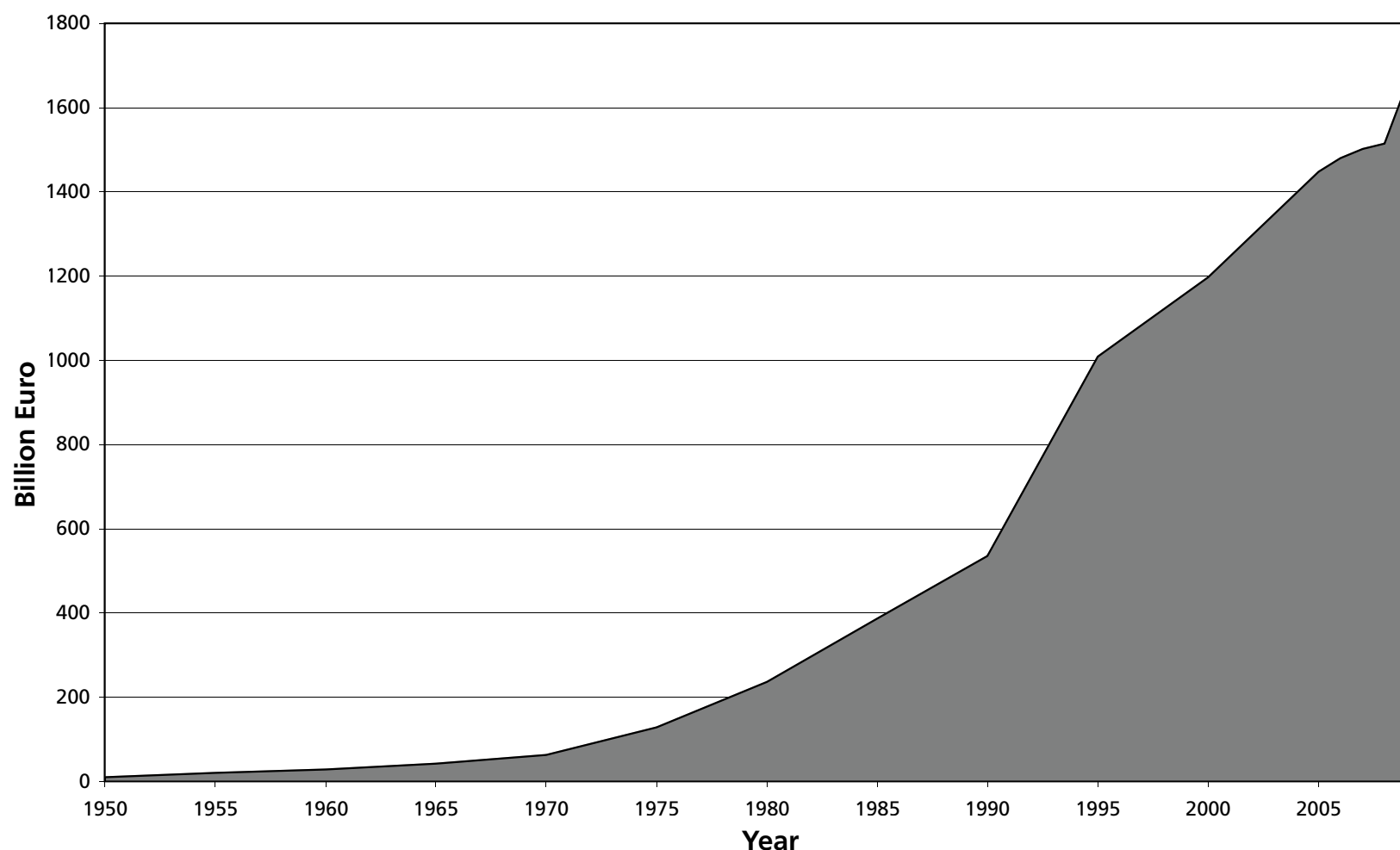
If this is true, it means that the new German Government did not have a good start. And indeed: the coalition agreement<sup>1</sup> talks about a "sustainable need for economy" and a "reliable consolidation of public households", however where the document is expected to be definite, it avoids exact answers. Instead, the new government relies on a strong economic growth, which has to be brought about by several, partly even dubious, measures. These measures are intended to solve the problems of the public households.

All German governments of the past 40 years – regardless of their political party line – have verbally pledged for solid financial politics. Nevertheless, the public debt in Germany has risen almost every year, irrespective of economic growth rates: Since the former GDR and the Federal Republic of Germany reunited, debts have risen from approximately 536 billion euros at the beginning of 1991 to 1.5 trillion euros at the end of 2008. During the 20 years prior to the reunification, the pile of debt of the then Federal Republic rose from approximately 63 billion euros in 1970 to the mentioned 536 billion euros in 1991.

Updates of the current development assume that the state of debt will rise to more than 100 per cent of the gross domestic product expected in 2020 – compared to around 73 per cent<sup>2</sup> this year. And in 2040, debts will be more than 180 per cent of the Economic Value Added (EVA), even if EVA starts to grow distinctly.

While public debts grow, the margins for public expenditure that would directly benefit the citizens is narrowing. The interest rates, too, that have to be serviced, will further increase: from just over 70 billion euros in 2009 to 201 billion Euros in 2020 and 643 billion euros in 2040 – this is more than the total federal budget today<sup>3</sup>.

Even today, Germany no longer meets the stability criteria of the Euro area.<sup>4</sup> An improvement cannot be expected at all, if the present policy is continued – though the new government is verbally committed to these criteria of stability. If we add the fact that meanwhile the majority of the 16 EU coun-



Development of public debt in Germany (in billion Euro).

Source: Federal Office of Statistics (1959–2007), German Taxpayers' Association (2008–2009), Effective: 19.1.2009

tries do not meet the criteria of stability any longer, it becomes clear: The whole concept of a stable European single currency has become obsolete.

Most probably, this will happen to all the other political plans linked with the introduction of the euro. Only a hydrocephalic EU- 'elite' will remain, who puts self-interest before the common weal. Centralistic dictates are more important to it than freedom and democracy.

Only those, who want to weaken Europe, will take advantage, especially all the creditors of the states that collect increasing sums of interests, every year. And these are the big and internationally operating financial institutes.

But why is there still no readiness to take countermeasures?

At present, the rulers of the world pretend that in times of such a big global economic crisis and recession, the delicate plants of a possible recovery should not be killed off by restrictive saving measures. This has been the teachings of the Great Depression that had started 80 years ago, they say. At that time, a British economist, *John Maynard*

*Keynes*, formulated a new theory claiming that in times of collapse of private demand, the state had to take countermeasures in order to revitalise the economy. In such times of crisis the state was allowed to, even had to incur new debts.

But is there not a common responsibility of citizens and politicians that obliges them to reduce the national debt, thus our common debt?

Switzerland has a national debt which is way underneath the German one. Today, it amounts to 45 per cent of the net product – compared to about 73 per cent in Germany. This has something to do with direct democracy in Switzerland – and with a decentralised citizen-orientated tax policy. In Switzerland, the citizens themselves decide in their communes how much money they want to spend and whether the tax rates should go up or down. This leads to more husbandry, to less fiscal evasion and corruption as well as to reasonable decisions. Much more could be added to this subject. The quintessence is this: Citizens who feel responsible for their local commune and who are allowed to shape their commonwealth, become active to reduce na-

tional debt. But even if direct democracy is not yet codified in the constitution: Everybody can start thinking and talking with others about how to save expenses for the state – and in same time for the tax payers and fellow citizens – and commonly and autonomously, i.e. free and solidly united – it is possible to cope with the situation in today's world. And to start definite projects.

<sup>1</sup> The coalition agreement, including 124 pages, entitled "Wachstum. Bildung. Zusammenhalt" (Growth, Education and Solidarity) should be read by as many citizens as possible and be discussed. An extensive analysis of this agreement is important, but cannot be given here.

<sup>2</sup> The information follows an estimation of the German Tax Payers' Association e.V. of early June 2009. In 2008 the total national debt amounted to 65,9 per cent of the GDP.

<sup>3</sup> The figures have been taken from the text of Dieter Meyer: "Die Schuldenfalle. Eine Untersuchung der Staatsverschuldung ab 1965 bis 2025 (mit Ausblick auf den Zeitraum bis 2040)" of 22 May 2009, taken from [www.staatsverschuldung-schuldenfalle.de](http://www.staatsverschuldung-schuldenfalle.de).

<sup>4</sup> According to the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP) the national debt should be lower than 60% of GDP or approaching that value and the annual budget deficit should be no higher than 3% of GDP.

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## The EFTA – an Alternative to the EU

rk. With the undersigning of the Stockholm Convention in 1960 the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) was established. The original aim of this inter-state organization was to abolish custom duties on industrial products traded amongst the member states. The current EFTA members are Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland. Unlike the EU, for example, the EFTA is not a customs union. This means among other things that the individual EFTA states can basically determine their custom duties and other measures of foreign trade policy with non-member states (third states) autonomously.

### The EFTA's Third States Policy

The EFTA-states – Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland – have been negotiating free trade agreements with states outside the European Union since the beginning of the nineties. During a first phase, the EFTA-states thus tried to avoid discrimination against the European Union, which was establishing a pan-European free trade area by means of several "European agreements". In this phase, treaties were mainly concluded with central and Eastern European states. In the middle of the 1990s, the EFTA's focused

on concluding treaties with the Mediterranean countries. The aim was to participate in the Euro-Mediterranean free trade area within the scope of the European Union's Barcelona Process.

Thus the EFTA-states began to extend their free trade policy to potential partners all over the world. The EFTA-states belonged to the first European countries that had start-

ed free trade relations with Asian countries. At the moment the EFTA commands a network of 15 free trade agreements. A series of agreements are ongoing or in preparation (source: Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (seco)).

Rather a magnificent alternative to depoliticise and demilitarise the common European economic area!

### The EFTA's Success Story

In connection with Iceland's plans to join the EU and also speculations about a membership of Norway in the EU questions arose as to the EFTA's significance. Swiss Radio DRS talked to state secretary *Jean-Daniel Gerber* about this issue.

Even if Iceland and maybe even Norway left the EFTA and joined the EU, this would change nothing about the success story of the EFTA and the EFTA member state Switzerland, state secretary *Jean-Daniel Gerber* said on Swiss Radio DRS.

The EFTA – Switzerland included – had overtaken the EU as to the number of signed free trade agreements. Thus the

EFTA had meanwhile signed treaties with Japan, Canada, and South Korea, which the EU has not yet done. "This proves the EFTA to be very flexible and dynamic", said Gerber.

However: an EFTA consisting only of Liechtenstein and Switzerland would be inconceivable [...], but there might be the possibility of other states – perhaps from central or Eastern Europe – joining the EFTA. For Switzerland, there would be options even without the EFTA; Berne would also be able to negotiate agreements independently.

Source: Radio DRS, 29 July 2009

# Bundeswehr: Marching into the Past

by Hans Wallow, Germany

“We are losing the trust of Afghans by our disproportionate violence”, wrote Lieutenant Colonel *Juergen Heiducoff*, who acted as the military adviser to the German Embassy in Kabul from 2006 until his dismissal 2008. He said so in a letter to Federal Minister *Frank-Walter Steinmeier*. “It is intolerable that our coalition forces and ISAF are now consciously fighting against parts of the civilian population, who were supposed to be the seeds of a new civil society. Western fighter-bombers and combat-helicopters spread fear and terror among the civilian population.” Heiducoff, whom his fellow officers consider sincere and committed, warned against the erosion of the UN mandate under international law and criticized the increasing military leadership’s loss of adhesion in this context. Moreover, the information policy to politicians and journalists, was sugarcoating the military situation, he wrote.

The military leaders and supporting bureaucracy responded as usual: First, by pressure. When the Colonel did not give in to the pressure and continued to write the truth, he was simply excluded of the military briefings in Afghanistan, thus cut off from the flow of information. He, who could claim for himself, to have always done his military duty, was not even allowed, before the Senate of the Federal Administrative, to defend himself with the help of a lawyer against his “relegation”, although the law requires soldiers to always say the truth (§ 13).

## Tough sanctions or penalties for criticism of the Federal Armed Forces (Bundeswehr)

Under no circumstances is the way – how the responsible persons dealt with this brave officer – an isolated incident. Anyone who, in the Bundeswehr, makes use of his fundamental right to freedom of expression, is initially stigmatized as “Nestbeschmutzer” (denigrator of his country) and the conflict is declared an individual problem case. When soldiers take the risk, nowadays, to draw public attention to grievances in the armed forces or the security policy, they will face harsh sanctions or penalties. Only those soldiers who openly defied the new old slavish obedience became publicly known. Typical is the case of the medic Sergeant *Christiane Ernst-Zettl*: She refused – as non-combatant in Kunduz – to do guard and security service without wearing the symbol of the Red Cross, because to do so was forbidden by the international humanitarian law of the Geneva Convention. Military Hospitals are intended to serve exclusively the care to patients.

The ministry promptly hit back: The Bundeswehr in Kunduz was not at war, and outside such a conflict it was not necessary to discriminate between non-combatants and combatants. *Hans-Joachim Giessmann*, a professor at the Hamburg Institute for Peace Research, holds quite a different opinion: “The Geneva Conventions and the rules for paramedics apply very well to the Bundeswehr’s Afghanistan deployment.” German soldiers are engaged in combat operations there. Responding to these abstruse arguments of the military command the ambulance soldier said: “If I am unfortunate, the patients I have on my operating table, may have been wounded before by my comrades and myself.” The stubborn military bureaucracy did not accept this argument, but responded with a transfer for disciplinary reasons and a fine of 800 euros. It justified this by saying that Ernst-Zettl had made her platoon leader insecure and therefore had behaved non-comradely.

## Discredited, degraded, criminalized

Another example of a years-long bullying at taxpayer’s expense is the case of Major *Florian Pfaff*. In 2003 he declined an order to develop a military software that was to support the U.S. attack on Iraq. His conscience forbade him to participate in a breach of the law, said the major. Pfaff was discredited, degraded and criminalized. Today, the faithful Christian says: “It’s not pleasant to stand in front of a psychiatrist in one’s underpants, simply because I wanted to remain loyal to the

law. But apart from these inconveniences you don’t need much courage in a democratic state with relatively independent courts of law.”

That he had acted correctly with his refusal to obey orders on 20 March 2003, was confirmed on 21 June 2005 by the 2nd Military Senate of the Federal Administrative Court in Leipzig, which explained on 130 pages: “The Constitution imposes a binding of the armed forces to respect fundamental rights, but not a binding of the fundamental rights to the decisions and necessities of the armed forces.”

Although courageous Florian Pfaff had been fully rehabilitated by the judges of the Leipzig Court, the leadership of the armed forces refused to promote the well-judged major like his colleagues of the same age groups, because “an officer with a conscience is not fully usable.” Even after two further judgments by two Bavarian administrative courts, which declared this nonsense as null and void, the military bureaucrats did not give in. With almost pathological zeal, they invented a new justification, because the Major had written a book with the title “Man-slaughter as part of the service” The non-fiction book, which is critical of the violation of international law and the constitution by the war policy of the German federal government, however, had been submitted to the ministry by the author before printing. There evidently nobody had read it. But now – after the book’s publication – they did not want to further promote the officer because of his “serious character deficiencies”.

## Conflict with the hardliners in the military apparatus

While Florian Pfaff still is struggling for his rehabilitation and promotion, the pedagogue *Jürgen Rose*, who has been promoted to lieutenant colonel at the age of 37 on the grounds of above average performance, is facing court proceedings that could well lead to his degradation. His conflict with the hardliners in the military apparatus has been going on for over 12 years. It started on 12 October 1997 with the publication of an article in the “Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung”, in which he critically questioned the continuation of the general compulsory military service. Cringe-inducing interviews by a military disciplinary attorney, the Deputy Inspector General of the Bundeswehr and the department head of the Office of Personnel of the Bundeswehr were the result. Since the brilliantly and poignantly writing soldier declared his contribution as a private expression of his private opinion, a direct punishment was not possible. Therefore, the Ministry responded with the tried and tested harassment of several transfers for disciplinary reasons in a row. As a result Lieutenant Colonel Rose, who did performed research in the field of security and defense policy, was often deployed pointlessly and outside of his field of expertise.

After Rose gave a speech against nuclear weapons in the fall of 2002, he was transferred again for disciplinary reasons. He continued to fight with the pen denouncing the U.S. air war doctrine of the 78 day-long Kosovo war as a “crime”. This doctrine classifies the population as a fourth category of targets. Such deliberate bombings of civilian targets are war crimes according to international humanitarian law. In several articles he declared that even the deployment of German Tornados in Afghanistan was violating constitutional and international law. Although Juergen Rose could never be proved wrong factually, a so-called disciplinary fine of 750 euros was imposed on him, followed by another fine of 3000 euros.

## “The original sound of right-wing Freikorps”

Despite of those personal disadvantages the officer, for whom the idea of the “citizen in uniform” must be anchored in an open, pluralistic society as a constitutive part, could not be intimidated so far. He turned against the public statements made by Lieutenant General *Hans-Otto Budde*, who postulated the necessity of the “archaic fighter”. He wrote: “If



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you preach latrine parole from the top, such as the ‘fighter cult’ inspired by the Wehrmacht, we must not be surprised that such shit like Calw or Grossfeld emerges at the lowest level. Everybody knows, the fish begins to stink from the head”. This brought Captain *Daniel Kaufhold*, a member of the Special Forces Command (KSK), to the scene. He called Rose “the inner enemy” who had to be “smashed”. His threatening email ended with the sentence: “You will be observed. Not by the impotent and instrumentalized services, but by a new generation of officers who are ready to act, if the time has come”. Professor *Wolfram Wette* from Freiburg – a renowned military historian of the Federal Republic – said: “There we hear the original sound of the right-wing Freikorps members from the early years of the Weimar Republic, who all of them later joined the Nazi Party or the SS.” The captain was merely rebuked. In former times, an officer like Kaufhold would have been immediately and unhesitatingly removed from service.

Also the retired brigadier Dr *Heinz Loquai* and his family had to suffer from the evil genius of the past. After former OSCE supervisors invalidated the stories of atrocities in Kosovo, spread by the German federal government in order to legitimize the Kosovo war, in the WDR television program “It all started with a lie”, he and his family were terrorized by threats and abuses on the telephone.

Dr Heinz Loquai, who is now a lecturer at the University of Cologne, stuck to his statements. By march 1999 the OSCE had – with 1400 international inspectors on the ground in Kosovo – produced statistics on the number of casualties from December 1998. Allegedly about 200 people had died by force: KLA fighters, police officers, Yugoslav soldiers as well as Serbian and Albanian civilians. There had been evidence for a civil war, but not for a genocide or mass expulsions. Later Dr Lo-

quai wrote two books on this war of aggression against former Yugoslavia: “Der Kosovo-Konflikt – Wege in einen vermeidbaren Krieg” (“Ways into an Avoidable War”) and “Weichenstellungen für einen Krieg” (“Setting the Course for a War”) (Nomos Verlag). As could be expected, Dr Heinz Loquai managed to make some enemies among his former fellow generals with his critical publications. Eventually, the ministry refused to reject the necessary consent to the renewal of his contract as an advisor on negotiations on military confidence-building and security measures in the OSCE and thus prevented that an excellent expert could continue to work actively for peace in Southeastern Europe. Loquai: “In today’s army, I would no longer want to be a member.”

## Majority of the German population rejects foreign missions

In the described cases the soldiers – from staff sergeant to brigadier general – were consistently considered to be qualified above average academically as well as in their characters by their direct superiors and comrades. Like the vast majority of the German population, they judge the Bundeswehr missions abroad critically or reject them. The soldiers are – in their persistence to comply with the law – upright citizens, not troublemakers. But usually they are pretty isolated. The growing lack of public interest towards the staged policies and the public rejection of military deployments favors a dangerous development of the Bundeswehr to a state within the state, which in fact it is already. How blind to the realities must the public control bodies (parliament, judiciary, press and intellectuals) be, not to recognize the structure behind the individual cases. There is still time to stop the Bundeswehr’s march into a neo-feudal intervention army.

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

## Children Need to Be Guided by Values

by Dr phil. Elisabeth Nussbaumer

If the powerful leaders of the world stuck to the values of Human Rights, there would be no wars of aggression, and if the well-being of mankind were an internally felt criterion of action, the economic development would not go into a direction where society will be divided into 80 per cent poor and 20 per cent rich people. The brutal thug, who with his feet, kicks a defenceless victim into the head – would he have to justify his actions before his own conscience, he would not be a thug and therefore there would not be these victims turned into invalids or beaten to death by brute force.

In order to live together on our earth in human dignity it is absolutely necessary that the orientation on ethical values takes centre stage. The world needs citizens, who feel responsible for ethical and communal values. For the future it is therefore essential, that parents pass on to their children a sustainable inner orientation on ethical values.

To be able to achieve this goal, parents have to be a role model for their children, in the first place. They must be a living example, showing that they hold on to values like respect for humans and animals, consideration of weaker fellowmen, honesty, humili-

ty, diligence, decency etc. At the same time, the children need guidance on how to orientate themselves by these values. On their way into life, they need clear directions. One has to tell them, what is right and what is wrong, what is allowed and what is not. In doing so fathers are particularly important. They are the moral authority for their children! The fathers have to communicate to them, that in their lives they will have to watch the lighthouses like the captains of ships, if they do not want to run up onto a reef and shipwreck.

A short while ago I experienced an example of how a mother started early to teach manners to her little daughter: On a visit at her house, I was received at the door. We greeted each other cordially. Then the three year old little daughter came running to see who had called. When she saw me, she turned around and – before I knew it – she disappeared. She ran to her cassette recorder and had already turned it on to go on listening to her fairytale cassette. The mother went up to where she sat and turned the recorder off, telling her little daughter: "You forgot something." The little one looked up, puzzled, then got up, extended her hand to me and said "Hello!"

A third grader makes the experience that his father appreciates honesty: In the evening, he is questioned by his father: "And, how was it like at school, today?" A little sheepishly, the boy replies: "I had to do an extra exercise. During recess, Jens and I quarrelled, and we beat each other. Therefore we both received a punishment." The father says: "That the two of you fought, is no good, but it makes me happy that you are honest now! After dinner we are going to dispose of the garden rubbish. There you can tell me what the trouble was, why you quarrelled, and together we can think of a better way of settling the disagreement with Jens next time without fighting."

If educators are themselves aware of their inner ethical and social values, they will notice many things, which they want to pass on to their youngsters for their lives. The following example describes a situation, in which parents demand from their children the consideration of values. A 9 year old boy and his 7 year old sister made fun of a disabled sick neighbour. The attentive mother had noticed this. Worried about this lack of compassion, she discussed the affair with her husband, and together the parents worried about

how to sustainably influence their offspring and teach them that their behaviour was callous and ruthless. They wanted to teach the children to put themselves into the position of this woman, to realize how it felt and to develop sympathy. The father spoke to each child individually, very seriously and told them clearly, that their behaviour was offensive and intolerable and that they both, father and mother, would never again condone such behaviour.

The deep dismay of both parents and their anger at their callousness was conveyed very clearly. This way they succeeded in making their children backpedal and reflect their behaviour. The girl cried and the boy could not go asleep at night. The next day, the mother visited their neighbour with each of the children, separately. Each one – face to face with the woman – gave a heartfelt apology. The sternness, with which the parents had imparted their feelings of sympathy to their children, will leave its mark. With their reaction the parents lived and epitomized values for their children. Such an experience will stick in the memory and in the mind of the young adults and will have the effect that they begin to orientate themselves by these values. •

## More Than Ever – Young People Need Positive Role Models

### Opposing the US dominated globalized youth "culture"

pb. In the past 25 years a gigantic global industry developed – a globalized youth culture modeled on the American model, including music and the video clip industry, clothing and sports articles, films and the advertising industry.

#### Political instrumentalization of youth "culture"

These industry branches were instrumentalized by politics in order to spread the so-called American way of life all over the world. Thus, *Zbigniew Brzezinski*, security advisor of US President *Jimmy Carter* from 1977 to 1981 and again advisor to the *Obama* administration today, wrote in his book "The Grand Chessboard. American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives" (ISBN 0-465-02726-1) that the "cultural domination [...] of the American global power" was often underestimated. America's mass culture exercised a magnetic appeal, especially on the young people all over the world: "American television programs and films account for about three-fourths of the global market. American popular music is equally dominant, while American fads, eating habits, and even clothing are increasingly imitated worldwide. The language of the Internet is English, and an overwhelming proportion of the global computer chatter also originates from America, influencing the content of global conversation." (Brzezinski 1997, p. 25) Brzezinski additionally claims that America – with its control over the global communications systems – can exert a massive influence that is hard to comprehend. This statement is mentioned in line with US technological superiority and the worldwide presence of the US military forces.

We can thus deduce that the development and contents of youth culture are neither left to chance nor are they simply the result of skillful free market considerations. Rather this whole scene is also strongly utilized in order to wield influence on the geopolitical rules.

#### Destruction of fundamental values by the music scene

Even the then new music styles of the 1960s and 1970s had obviously aimed at attacking certain social standards. Thus, for example, sexual contents or texts on drugs could be found in song texts or films for young people in an unprecedented manner.

Socio-critical and political contents were exploited commercially, although there were quite positive attempts to be seen, too, as for example in the successful songs about the Vietnam War by *Bob Dylan* or *Joan Baez*.

"Today video games offer a completely different type of play than my generation engaged in as kids. When I was little and playing cops and robbers, I said, "Bang, bang, I got you, Jimmy." Jimmy said, "No you didn't." So I said, "Well, bang, bang. Now I got you." Again he argued that I didn't. So, I smacked him with my cap gun, and after he went crying to his mother I got in big trouble. Along the way I learned one of life's important lessons, a lesson that usually had to be taught over and over again: Jimmy is real, Sally is real, and Fido is real, and if I hurt them, I'm going to get into big trouble. [...]"

The purpose of healthy play is to teach the young how not to inflict serious harm upon their fellow species. [...]"

Gradually a variety of musical styles developed, which were used as socio-political instruments. Just think of the Punk scene, which – derived from the unemployed youth's world of big English cities – was promoted to a movement of bogeys of the middle classes and produced numerous violent by-products.

The Hip Hop style produced an unprecedented conglomerate of violence, crime, drugs and pornography. Sex&Drugs&Rock'n'Roll of the 70s cannot be compared with it. The "stars" of this Rap and Hip Hop scene and their harsh tone and violent texts beat everything the music scene had experienced so far. The exponents sometimes came from a criminal environment. Without further ado, the music "idol" may at the same time be a cheered identification figure, a drug dealer, a killer, a porn actor or a pimp!

Hip Hop is however more than a music style; Hip Hop is a way of life and a kind of behavior. In the past fifteen years, a considerable part of youth all over the world was attracted by this style, and variants depending on different social and cultural characteristics developed in many countries and language regions. They range from things such as skateboards, basketballs, ghetto blasters and various dance styles, which were the typical features in the beginning, up to graffiti on railways, house walls as well as drug abuse, later on. Gang wars and promiscuity eventually became an apparent "normality".

The fashion industry came out with its own attributes: boys with baggy pants, caps etc.; girls with sexually provoking clothing, which were not only part of the outfit, but also characterized the perception of women in these groups. This vast subculture increasingly adopted arrogant, boastful styles, influenced by an excessive evil lifestyle prop-

The video game industry says that the images on the screen are not real people. This is true, but puppies and kittens are not real human beings either, and we know that the way a child treats a puppy or a kitten predicts how they will treat real people. Think of a puppy as a virtual human that is used to teach kids how to interact with real people. What if you awarded a child with a cookie every time he made that puppy cry in pain? Would you consider that sick?"

Source: *Dave Grossmann / Loren W. Christensen. "On Combat". Quoted in: Hänsel, R. und Hänsel, R. (Editors) "Da spiel ich nicht mit! Eine Handreichung für Lehrer und Eltern". Donauwörth, Auer-Verlag, 2005, p. 32f.*

aganda that idolized aspirations for power, ill-gotten wealth, use of any kind of violence and primitive sexism!

To sum up one may say that many ranges of our young people's lives are shaped by such "models" coming from the music scene. They hit the kids' emotional life at a time, in which important values for peaceful, happy and constructive living together should normally develop, and at a time, in which the human mind is most unstable, sensitive to influences of all kinds – in adolescence.

#### Returning to basic values – teaching positive models

Legal measures are absolutely imperative regarding these criminal excesses of the youth music scene, which beside other intolerable hotbeds, such as computer "games" appeal to the young people to use violence. In addition, fighting the described influences on our youth is primarily a human task at school and at home: We face the question, how we can work preventively with regard to violence, crime, drugs, sexual irritations or the inability to deal with inter-human conflicts. Co-operation of lawyers, politicians, parents and other educators is extraordinarily important. The shared commitment and knowledge about the respective observations, facts and experiences, but also to share knowledge about efforts and problems are of central importance. More than ever, young people need positive role models for orientation. They do want to orient themselves by these models. We must convey a humane attitude to life to them. What we need is not new, just a return to basic values which we still know.

There are different possibilities – as numerous as there are various personalities. We cannot recommend general recipes, commu-

nication concepts or therapeutic settings; neither is it primarily a scientific work for experts only. It is, as said before, a human task, a question of feeling and sympathy for the complex world of a young person. So everyone, whether parents, teachers or simply fellow citizens, can try to start an honest and dialogue on an equal basis on the topic of juvenile everyday life, seizing on their concerns, conceptions, fears and needs and at the same time discussing inherent destructive and harmful phenomena. More than ever before, it takes the adults' clear statements and frankly expressed attitudes. Sometimes it may be necessary to "hurt" a young person by condemning his aggressive behavior, for example, and demanding another constructive-minded solution. Unpleasant or aggressive behavior requires a clear, straightforward reaction of adults, who leave it open to the participants in the conflict to develop their own more helpful solution.

It is really necessary today, in this world of entertainment industry, to offer a moral orientation on a constructive basis. That means to present better models for peaceful conflict resolution or models for a friendly behavior towards classmates, the other sex or the older generation. In addition, we must have the courage to take a clear stand against any form of violence and drug abuse.

The effects of destructive idols of the music scene must fade away primarily by our setting a good example. By disqualifying, forbidding and attacking their identification figures we run the risk that the young people no longer listen to us or adopt an unproductive defensiveness. If we discuss with them they certainly expect us to supply useful suggestions and convincing models.

The so-called Gangsta Rap does no longer play an important role in the Swiss music scene. On the contrary, there are attempts to take up important topics of young people in a positive sense by the help of rap music. Well-known rappers have repeatedly tried to tackle deep anxieties like youth unemployment, violence or alcohol and drug abuse by means of their music. They do so in cooperation with youth organizations or in workshops and thus try to help young people to find better solutions for their problems.

#### Young people's commitment – some examples from school

A teacher reports: In the context of a project week our school prepared a meeting, which intended to show as many music and dance styles from different countries and cultures

## Vegetable Cultivation in Sweden Is Changing

### Small-scale farming and quality are gaining new reputation.

ch. If local Swedish market gardeners succeed in casting off the official farmers association's pressure that has been forcing them into industrial mass production, entirely new options open up to them. Vegetable gardeners and farmers that committed themselves to small-scale local production have seen hard times. As they were unable to meet the EU's disproportionate demands, e.g. with respect to stables and production facilities, many of them had to give up.

The agricultural policy did not support small-scale farming and food-producing. Only big farms benefited from national subsidies. Also, the large meat and milk processors were not interested in collecting a small number of animals for slaughter or small quantities of milk. Small local market gardeners, who tried to sell their vegetables to big grocery chains, were treated with disdain.

But now a radical change seems to be occurring. Farmers' markets, where local producers sell their products directly, are enjoying enormous popularity. Here you find everything from fresh vegetables, fruit, bread, crisp bread, fish, meat, sheep skins, and wool up to handcrafted articles. Farm shops are springing up like mushrooms. The demand for locally grown vegetables is so big that it cannot be satisfied at present, as the example of Katarina E. shows.

Slowly, small farm butcheries and dairies are beginning to reappear, next to the farms' own superior processing of a large variety of foodstuffs. Amongst other things, this development is a result of the untiring efforts made by the *Swedish Small Farmers Association*. By dint of their steady detail work they have influenced politicians and the proper authorities in such a way that the production requirements for small-scale agricultural production and processing have become reasonable. Small-scale and environment-friendly agriculture and market gardening is definitely being valued by a growing number of consumers.

#### A small but blessed piece of land

The example of Katarina E. At medium age, Katarina E. switched from secretarial work to vegetable cultivation. She went to an agricultural college and decided to cultivate vegetables by means of organic farming. After finishing her training, she found no job in this field, so she decided to establish a small enterprise of her own. She leased some hectares of land outside a town in Southern Sweden and started to grow vegetables. During the first two years she sold her vegetables on markets and



Small-scale and environment-friendly agriculture and market gardening is definitely being valued by a growing number of consumers. (picture thk)

to vegetable sellers. But at the same time she started selling packages of vegetables directly to subscribers. This way of selling vegetables panned out so well, that she now has 200 subscribers, two employees, and two trainees, as well as the assistance of her mother and her daughter. Katarina has enlarged the area under cultivation to 2.5 ha. She cultivates potatoes, carrots, maize, beans, and salad. She also has no lack of flowers, and she grows some herbs and medicinal plants. She breeds all her plants herself. She cultivates vegetable saplings from seeds, and the space needed is leased in greenhouses.

The various seasonal harvest-fresh vegetables are packed into boxes. A letter informing about the contents about vegetable cultivation is added to each box. Each customer receives a package once a week from about the middle

of June to the end of September. He or she is also welcomed to visit Katarina once a season to see where his/her vegetables grow and to learn how they are produced.

Katarina sells part of her vegetables to a school, to some restaurants, and one vegetable retailer.

Her acreage is partitioned so as to allow a seven years' crop rotation. All work is done by hand, except the cultivation of potatoes, where a tractor is used as an aid.

Katarina says it is interesting to cultivate organic potatoes, for as a rule, potatoes are surely the most sprayed crop in Sweden. They are sprayed against weeds and leaf rot, and finally, even the haulm is sprayed. The Swedes scarcely believe that potatoes are treated this way. Katarina has been cultivating organic potatoes without using any sprays for six years,

and they have always turned out well. She is clearly aware of the great and growing interest in high quality food. People are prepared to pay a little more for vegetables cultivated in an environmentally compatible way.

Katarina hardly had to advertise her products. She has managed to generate a few jobs on her 2.5 ha without any financial backing. By contrast, the national Swedish and also the European Union's agricultural policy is geared to form ever bigger units to "stay profitable" and "be able to compete". Katarina proves that the opposite is the case. Increasing numbers of consumers appreciate small-scale, environment-friendly agriculture and local small-scale vegetable cultivation. The demand is so great that it cannot be satisfied at present. •

Source: *Småbrukaren*, No 3, 2008

#### "More Than Ever – Young People ..."

continued from page 7

as possible. Many pupils from the Balkans attend the school. Some wanted to show a Serbian dance, others a dance from Kosovo. The accompanying music was a problem; a boy from Serbia could play the accordion. However, he only played the music of Serbian dances. They thought carefully about the problem, looked for solutions and discussed them.

After some hesitation, a girl said that the two dances were so similar that they could all easily learn the same dance to the same music. From then on, the common performance was top priority! On the evening of the concert, Serbs, Kosovo-Albanians, Turks, Swiss students, parents and teachers danced to the tune of the accordion, on the stage and across the marquee, some in the traditional costumes of their homelands – and it was a great atmosphere and an unforgettable event.

One class with their teacher designed posters on the occasion of the "International Day of the Red Cross". They developed an interesting exhibition on *Henri Dunant* and the history of the Red Cross and international law. The posters were on exhibition for several weeks in the school building and everyone could intensively study their contents.

Two girls had the idea to write a theater play on war. Without any help, they wrote a

complete play about the injustice and misery of war showing that the civilian population, i.e. innocent people, had to suffer most. Students from several years learned their roles in a project week which they had organized for this purpose only. They painted the set, organized the necessary stage properties and costumes and presented their play to the public on the occasion of a concert of the school band. For ten days, an entire school community raised money for the Red Cross projects "Schools for Iraq". They made cakes, organized a bazaar and donated their pocket money. The sum they raised amounted to 2934 Swiss Francs.

It must likewise be part of our pedagogical work to make the young people experience and learn responsibility and empathy for the things going on in our world in order to offer them a sound alternative to exaggerated hedonism and admiration of false idols. An active community spirit and an active participation can show us a way out of the crisis of identity and values.

Even if the problems for and with today's youth may be enormous, there are many possibilities to develop constructive ways together. Even if a young man or woman struggles with everyday problems and even if many of them already suffer from huge emotional deficits, each child and each adolescent responds to humane opportunities in his own way. •

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