

Current Concerns

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“Foreign Affairs”: “Why Iran should get the bomb” Nuclear balancing would mean stability

by Kenneth N. Waltz

The past several months have witnessed a heated debate over the best way for the United States and Israel to respond to Iran's nuclear activities. As the argument has raged, the United States has tightened its already robust sanctions regime against the Islamic Republic, and the European Union announced in January that it will begin an embargo on Iranian oil on 1 July. Although the United States, the EU, and Iran have recently returned to the negotiating table, a palpable sense of crisis still looms.

It should not. Most US, European, and Israeli commentators and policymakers warn that a nuclear-armed Iran would be the worst possible outcome of the current standoff. In fact, it would probably be the best possible result: the one most likely to restore stability to the Middle East.

Power begs to be balanced

The crisis over Iran's nuclear program could end in three different ways. First, diplomacy coupled with serious sanctions

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Kenneth N. Waltz and “anthropological realism”

ts. The American political scientist Kenneth Neal Waltz was born on 8 June in 1924 in Ann Arbor and is considered a representative of neorealism in international relations. He taught at Berkeley among others, and is currently teaching at Columbia University. From 1987 to 1988 he headed the American Political Science Association. In 1999 the latter honored him with the James Madison Award for “outstanding scientific contributions to political science”. He is a Senior Research Scientist at the Saltzman Institute of War and Peace Studies (see homepage of the institute).

The peculiarity of his approach, also called “anthropological realism”, is that the causes of war between states were not to be searched in the human quest for power. In his pioneering study, “Man, the State, and War” dated 1959 Waltz identified three levels (images) to explain war as a phenomenon in internation-

al politics: the level of the individual, that of the political system and that of the international system. But only at the level of the international system wars can be explained, according to Waltz, and indeed it is the “anarchic structure” of the international system, which makes the origin, the development and management of wars possible at all. According to Waltz, states behave as rational actors whose main aim is to secure their own survival. The bipolar system of the Cold War he considered a particularly stable structure of world politics, whereas he doesn't regard the phase of the single hyper-power USA that has existed since 1990 as a sustainable one, because other states compete against the hegemon. Only a balance of power and a balanced distribution of nuclear weapons were to secure stability, and that's why a proliferation of nuclear weapons should not give cause to worry.

“The very meekest cannot be at peace if his ill neighbour will not let him rest.” (Friedrich Schiller)

Kenneth N. Waltz's plea for the Iranian bomb – Kishore Mahbubani on the West – The Swiss government maxim of perpetual armed neutrality

by Tobias Salander

If three institutions and personalities of major importance from the US, Russia and Asia, who usually take a completely different stance, agree on an absolutely explosive issue, the world is likely to face a real paradigm shift. And as this paradigm shift could prevent a larger, probably nuclear war, it may give us cause to hope. It involves the assessment of the situation in the Middle East, in particular the issue of Israel's and Iran's nuclear capabilities and their threat to world peace. Both Kenneth N. Waltz in “Foreign Affairs”, the flagship of the influential US think tank “Council on Foreign Relations”, and the Russian political scientist Andrei Ilyich Fursov, director of the Centre of Russian Studies at the In-

stitute of Fundamental and Applied Research of Moscow University for the Humanities (MosGU) and a member of the International Academy of Sciences (see Current Concerns No. 37 of 10 September) and last but not least Kishore Mahbubani, formerly Singapore's representative in the United Nations Security Council and brilliant analyst of Asia's relationship with the West, agree in this: that international politics may no longer be measured by a double standard and that no country has the right to claim what it wants to deny others by threatening them with a war violating international law. These assessments are basically similar with regard to international law standards.

The statements by Kenneth N. Waltz in the previous article that Israel's nuclear arsenal, and not the desire of Iran for such, has contributed most to the current crisis and that two nuclear states in a region have not led to less but rather more regional and international stability and that sanctions against Iran must be abandoned, because they are harming ordinary citizens in particular, and that no nuclear state passed on its knowledge to others, that the Ayatollahs of Iran are neither irrational nor suicidal, that nuclear states are more peaceful members of the community than they were before, etc. – all these statements are possibly new and unfamiliar to Western

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could convince Iran to abandon its pursuit of a nuclear weapon. But this outcome is unlikely: the historical record indicates that a country bent on acquiring nuclear weapons can rarely be dissuaded from doing so. Punishing a state through economic sanctions does not inexorably derail its nuclear program. Take North Korea, which succeeded in building its weapons despite countless rounds of sanctions and UN Security Council resolutions. If Tehran determines that its security depends on possessing nuclear weapons, sanctions are unlikely to change its mind. In fact, adding still more sanctions now could make Iran feel even more vulnerable, giving it still more reason to seek the protection of the ultimate deterrent.

The second possible outcome is that Iran stops short of testing a nuclear weapon but develops a breakout capability, the capacity to build and test one quite quickly. Iran would not be the first country to acquire a sophisticated nuclear program without building an actual bomb. Japan, for instance, maintains a vast civilian nuclear infrastructure. Experts believe that it could produce a nuclear weapon on short notice.

"The very meekest cannot ..."

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mainstream readers, but not to Waltz, and neither really new to the *Council on Foreign Relations*. Already in the September/October 2010 edition of *Foreign Affairs* in an article by Mustafa Akyol entitled "An unlikely trio", two major powers in the Middle East were identified as ideal US allies: Turkey and ... Iran. Israel no longer appeared in this analysis as a key player!

No pigeons, but geo-strategists

Even the geo-strategist and presumed realist Zbigniew Brzezinski had repeatedly made comments to the effect that the United States would intercept an Israeli attack against Iran over Iraq, if necessary even by shooting, because the United States were at least no "impotent little babies". Here, the former security adviser to Jimmy Carter and – according to Israeli media – also background advisor to Obama was not about to change into the camp of pigeons; according to statements in his book "Second Chance", the fight against Muslims and Al Qaeda was for him something that no one would talk about any more in a hundred years; quite in contrast to the confrontation between the West and the rising dragon China which in his view was inevitable and might lead to a bellicose conflict. In his book "The Grand Chessboard" he men-

Such a breakout capability might satisfy the domestic political needs of Iran's rulers by assuring hard-liners that they can enjoy all the benefits of having a bomb (such as greater security) without the downsides (such as international isolation and condemnation). The problem is that a breakout capability might not work as intended.

The United States and its European allies are primarily concerned with weaponization, so they might accept a scenario in which Iran stops short of a nuclear weapon. Israel, however, has made it clear that it views a significant Iranian enrichment capacity alone as an unacceptable threat. It is possible, then, that a verifiable commitment from Iran to stop short of a weapon could appease major Western powers but leave the Israelis unsatisfied. Israel would be less intimidated by a virtual nuclear weapon than it would be by an actual one and therefore would likely continue its risky efforts at subverting Iran's nuclear program through sabotage and assassination – which could lead Iran to conclude that a breakout capability is an insufficient deterrent, after all, and that only weaponization can provide it with the security it seeks.

The third possible outcome of the standoff is that Iran continues its current course and publicly goes nuclear by testing a weapon. US and Israeli officials have declared that outcome unacceptable, arguing that a nuclear Iran is a uniquely terrifying prospect, even an existential threat. Such language is typical of major powers, which have historically gotten riled up whenever another country has begun to develop a nuclear weapon of its own. Yet so far, every time another country has managed to shoulder its way into the nuclear club, the other members have always changed tack and decided to live with it. In fact, by reducing imbalances in military power, new nuclear states generally produce more regional and international stability, not less.

Israel's regional nuclear monopoly, which has proved remarkably durable for the past four decades, has long fueled instability in the Middle East. In no other region of the world does a lone, unchecked nuclear state exist. It is Israel's nuclear arsenal, not Iran's desire for one, that has contributed most to the current crisis. Power, after all, begs to be balanced. What is surprising about the Israeli case is that

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tioned in passing that Russia might be divided into three parts on the way to the battle. He also conveyed that Israel was upsetting the long-term plannings of the US Empire.

The realists around Brzezinski and their inner-American opponents, who characterize themselves as neoconservatives and gather around a Norman Podhoretz and the magazine *Commentary*, completely agree on the definition of future major disputes with China and Russia – neither do they have anything to do with international law. Hence in his articles Podhoretz mutatis mutandis speaks of Russian military fascism and Chinese trade fascism, which needed to be controlled, but only in a later act of his fourth world war, which he defines as a play in 5 acts, opened on 9/11, followed by the scenes Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Iran, etc., etc. That Iran must and will be a war theater, whether in the last scene of the 1st act or as a prelude to the 2nd act, since it was necessary to tackle "Islamofascism", as he said, is absolutely imperative for the bearer of the Presidential Medal of Freedom, awarded to him by President George W. Bush; a term that the realists around Brzezinski reject as nonsense. At this very point, concerning the assessment of the following "small" theaters of war, neocons and realists differ in their points of view; they also differ in the question of whether the US as the sole hegemon should proceed

with hard power together with brother in arms Israel, or follow Joseph S. Nye's concept of "smart power", since the US forces are already overstretched.

The heirs of Harold Mackinder's world island concept

In this wrangling over the right tactics to enforce the long-term strategy, i.e. the final showdown with Russia and China, the already 88-year-old neo-realist Kenneth N. Waltz, entirely takes the side of the above mentioned realists. Being a true geo-strategist in the Anglo-Saxon style, he knows the game of "divide et impera". Hence, in an interview in *PBS NewsHour* on 6 July¹ he added for consideration that a nuclear-armed Iran would not only hold Israel in check, but also attach the Sunnis and the Saudis closer to the US, as they would rather place themselves under the nuclear protection of the United States than building their own nuclear weapons. In the background you can hear the Grand Old Man of the geo-strategists, Harold Mackinder, who described the dominance over the world island, namely Eurasia, as a prerequisite for a country's superpower status. This could be achieved by dominating Europe, where the local players such as Germany, France, Poland and Russia would have to be stirred up against each other. It is not only Brzezinski who pro-

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it has taken so long for a potential balancer to emerge.

Of course, it is easy to understand why Israel wants to remain the sole nuclear power in the region and why it is willing to use force to secure that status. In 1981, Israel bombed Iraq to prevent a challenge to its nuclear monopoly. It did the same to Syria in 2007 and is now considering similar action against Iran. But the very acts that have allowed Israel to maintain its nuclear edge in the short term have prolonged an imbalance that is unsustainable in the long term. Israel's proven ability to strike potential nuclear rivals with impunity has inevitably made its enemies anxious to develop the means to prevent Israel from doing so again. In this way, the current tensions are best viewed not as the early stages of a relatively recent Iranian nuclear crisis but rather as the final stages of a decades-long Middle East nuclear crisis that will end only when a balance of military power is restored.

Unfounded fears

One reason the danger of a nuclear Iran has been grossly exaggerated is that the debate surrounding it has been distorted by misplaced worries and fundamental misunderstandings of how states generally behave in the international system. The first prominent concern, which undergirds

many others, is that the Iranian regime is innately irrational. Despite a widespread belief to the contrary, Iranian policy is made not by "mad mullahs" but by perfectly sane ayatollahs who want to survive just like any other leaders. Although Iran's leaders indulge in inflammatory and hateful rhetoric, they show no propensity for self-destruction. It would be a grave error for policymakers in the United States and Israel to assume otherwise.

Yet that is precisely what many US and Israeli officials and analysts have done. Portraying Iran as irrational has allowed them to argue that the logic of nuclear deterrence does not apply to the Islamic Republic. If Iran acquired a nuclear weapon, they warn, it would not hesitate to use it in a first strike against Israel, even though doing so would invite massive retaliation and risk destroying everything the Iranian regime holds dear.

Although it is impossible to be certain of Iranian intentions, it is far more likely that if Iran desires nuclear weapons, it is for the purpose of providing for its own security, not to improve its offensive capabilities (or destroy itself). Iran may be intransigent at the negotiating table and defiant in the face of sanctions, but it still acts to secure its own preservation. Iran's leaders did not, for example, attempt to close the Strait of Hormuz despite issuing blustery warnings that they might do so after the EU announced its planned oil embargo in January. The Iranian regime clearly

concluded that it did not want to provoke what would surely have been a swift and devastating American response to such a move.

Nevertheless, even some observers and policymakers who accept that the Iranian regime is rational still worry that a nuclear weapon would embolden it, providing Tehran with a shield that would allow it to act more aggressively and increase its support for terrorism. Some analysts even fear that Iran would directly provide terrorists with nuclear arms. The problem with these concerns is that they contradict the record of every other nuclear weapons state going back to 1945. History shows that when countries acquire the bomb, they feel increasingly vulnerable and become acutely aware that their nuclear weapons make them a potential target in the eyes of major powers. This awareness discourages nuclear states from bold and aggressive action. Maoist China, for example, became much less bellicose after acquiring nuclear weapons in 1964, and India and Pakistan have both become more cautious since going nuclear. There is little reason to believe Iran would break this mold.

As for the risk of a handoff to terrorists, no country could transfer nuclear weapons without running a high risk of being found out. US surveillance capabilities would pose a serious obstacle, as would the United States' impressive and growing ability to identify the source of fissile ma-

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ves to be an apt pupil of the early 20th century theorist.

Reactions from Israel to Waltz' demand

But what were the reactions to the *Foreign Affairs* article in Israel, a country whose current government – completely in line with the US neo-cons – compares the Iranian president to Hitler and warns against appeasement and a nuclear holocaust, which is in contrast to the military and intelligence establishment around *Meir Dagan*, former Mossad chief, and *Gabi Ashkenazi*, former chief of staff, and many others.

The "Jerusalem Post" of 25 June² contradicts Waltz, point by point, and concludes after some initial irony that Waltz' article was a last desperate and rather pitiful attempt to argue against the international efforts to prevent an Iranian bomb. It was obviously absurd. However, due to the place of the publication of his article and the editorship, and as many of the elite shared some of his views, we might probably hear about it again.

"Haaretz" of 24 June³ remains factual, as the paper does most of the time, and gives its readers an accurate summary of Waltz' arguments. However, serious concerns are expressed, such as how Hezbollah and Hamas would respond to an Iranian bomb, but also concerns about the oil price. Even the Arab states might no longer be working towards peace. The "Haaretz" US correspondent's conclusion: "At the end of the day, the world might have to live with a nuclear Iran – there aren't many options, and most of them range from bad to worse. But to develop a happily hopeful approach about the future benefits of the bomb seems like a serious exaggeration."

**Kishore Mahbubani:
What the West could learn ...**

Waltz' article may meet with greater acceptance from a Singapore expert on this subject, who has long been writing against the obliteration of Western interests with Western values. *Kishore Mahbubani*, Dean of the *Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy* at the National University of Singapore and author of the *New York Times* bestseller "The New Asian Hemisphere" will be pleased by Waltz'

somewhat more nuanced view, even if it is still committed to the imperial US global strategy (e.g. that Saudi Arabia is going to rely more on the US in case of the Iranian bomb). Mahbubani has already stated this in a basic article in Spring⁴, whose contents will be briefly reported here due to its importance, i.e. that the greatest threat to humanity today was the West's groupthink, which proved to be unable to recognize the thousands of shades, without which international relations could neither be interpreted nor be shaped towards peace. Western ignorance resulted in staggering from one crisis to the next, according to Mahbubani.

The behavior of the West against Iran would make that clear. After the US had asked Brazil and Turkey to submit an offer to Iran, which the latter accepted, the US inexplicably repealed it – which made *Mohamed El Baradei*, former chairman of the IAEA ask the rhetorical question, whether the West could not accept a "yes" as a response.

As for Iran, Mahbubani adds the consideration that we in the West go along with the idea – however forced upon us – that Iran was a notorious liar, while we in

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terial. Moreover, countries can never entirely control or even predict the behavior of the terrorist groups they sponsor. Once a country such as Iran acquires a nuclear capability, it will have every reason to maintain full control over its arsenal. After all, building a bomb is costly and dangerous. It would make little sense to transfer the product of that investment to parties that cannot be trusted or managed.

Another oft-touted worry is that if Iran obtains the bomb, other states in the region will follow suit, leading to a nuclear arms race in the Middle East. But the nuclear age is now almost 70 years old, and so far, fears of proliferation have proved to be unfounded. Properly defined, the term "proliferation" means a rapid and uncontrolled spread. Nothing like that has occurred; in fact, since 1970, there has been a marked slowdown in the emergence of nuclear states. There is no reason to expect that this pattern will change now. Should Iran become the second Middle Eastern

nuclear power since 1945, it would hardly signal the start of a landslide. When Israel acquired the bomb in the 1960s, it was at war with many of its neighbors. Its nuclear arms were a much bigger threat to the Arab world than Iran's program is today. If an atomic Israel did not trigger an arms race then, there is no reason a nuclear Iran should now.

Rest assured

In 1991, the historical rivals India and Pakistan signed a treaty agreeing not to target each other's nuclear facilities. They realized that far more worrisome than their adversary's nuclear deterrent was the instability produced by challenges to it. Since then, even in the face of high tensions and risky provocations, the two countries have kept the peace. Israel and Iran would do well to consider this precedent. If Iran goes nuclear, Israel and Iran will deter each other, as nuclear powers always have. There has never been a full-scale war between two nuclear-armed states. Once Iran crosses the nuclear threshold, deterrence will apply, even if

the Iranian arsenal is relatively small. No other country in the region will have an incentive to acquire its own nuclear capability, and the current crisis will finally dissipate, leading to a Middle East that is more stable than it is today.

For that reason, the United States and its allies need not take such pains to prevent the Iranians from developing a nuclear weapon. Diplomacy between Iran and the major powers should continue, because open lines of communication will make the Western countries feel better able to live with a nuclear Iran. But the current sanctions on Iran can be dropped: they primarily harm ordinary Iranians, with little purpose.

Most important, policymakers and citizens in the Arab world, Europe, Israel, and the United States should take comfort from the fact that history has shown that where nuclear capabilities emerge, so, too, does stability. When it comes to nuclear weapons, now as ever, more may be better. •

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the West were honest and sincere. Against this background the West would no longer listen or would cast it off as propaganda, when Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's spiritual leader, emphasized that the Islamic Republic considered the possession of nuclear weapons a serious sin both for logical, religious and theoretical reasons. A statement not even acknowledged by Waltz which, however, only confirms what the *Geneva Conventions* demand: that indiscriminately killing weapons – and nuclear weapons do exactly that – are violating international law and hence are prohibited. However, who dares taking or is able to take the nuclear powers, particularly the veto powers of the UN Security Council, to the ICC?

If Iran was bombed, Mahbubani continued, and after this clear statement by Ali Khamenei – which does not serve the interests of the United States, but solely those of Israel, and Mahbubani, who always calls himself a friend of Israel and advocates a two-state solution because this is in the longer-term interest of Israel, emphasizes this – so if Iran was bombed nevertheless, a century of wrath against the West would begin, just like half a century of mistrust prevailed after the Anglo-American coup against Mohammed Mossadegh in 1953. In short: bombing Iran would be a perfect disaster for the West.

... for example from ASEAN and Myanmar

To make it clear to the West that it would be much better off if it perceived the world in a more differentiated manner, Mahbubani quotes two examples: North Korea and Myanmar, which – due to their fundamental nature – are to be briefly presented below:

North Korea has taken a leap towards becoming a "normal" country but the West had difficulties in noticing this nuance. The evidence: Immediately after the failed attempt to launch a ballistic missile that could transport a nuclear warhead, the North Korean government admitted failure in public. New sounds from this insular country – but what was the West's reaction? The US government once again imposed more sanctions. Full stop. However, Mahbubani asks himself, does isolating an isolated country really work?

One wishes, a neorealist like Kenneth N. Waltz would soon attend to the Korean issue!

And as far as Myanmar is concerned: The West always claimed that western sanctions finally forced Myanmar to open. Wrong, says Mahbubani. Western sanctions did not work, but ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) commitment to Myanmar did. This regional organisation forced Myanmar's officials and leaders to attend thousands of meetings. These travels opened their eyes to how far Myanmar was falling behind. Mahbubani refers to the visit of Deng

Xiaoping in the 70s in Singapore, which did not only shock the Mao successor known as Chinese bounceback, but also motivated him to establish special economic zones in China, and this was his epochal performance – the result being today's China as a rising world power.

Mahbubani: A world without western dominance is emerging

But who in the West takes his time to listen to Asians, let alone take them seriously?

Mahbubani quoted the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Najib Razak, who had pointed out that only the paradigm shift of the ASEAN, i.e. the more nuanced perspective, rather than betting on sanctions and isolation instead of constructive engagement and encouragement, has brought Myanmar back into the world community.

Hence, an article by Waltz would no longer be necessary after the US administration has now accounted the fruits of ASEAN's work for itself ... at least according to Hillary Clinton's, David Cameron's and the Western media's pitch.

Mahbubanis quintessence and reminder to us in the West: While the West is languishing, a new world emerges, a world free of Western dominance. The former UN diplomat and university Dean of Singapore doubts however whether the West would be able to recognize this new world

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order, developing day by day before our very eyes.

**Memento McNamara:
"We just lucked out"**

What is, however, the importance of Kenneth N. Waltz's testimony for world peace?

Compliant with international law, Waltz does not admit any privileges to any state. He also does not hide political interests behind faked "humanitarian" values, what has constituted the criticism of the West in recent years by the rest of the world because of its hypocrisy and double standards. Whether a "balance of power" will lead to greater security and peace, has been a hotly debated issue since the rise of Russia and China and their veto concerning Syria. In the Libya issue, both powers had abstained from voting, and the result is known: war, the killing of *Gaddafi*, most recently also the murder of the American ambassador to Benghazi.

The question of whether the proliferation of nuclear weapons would lead to more security is also disputed. Considering the testimony of *Robert S. McNamara*, Pentagon chief during the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Vietnam War, that the world had escaped a nuclear war between the US and the Soviet Union by a hair's

breadth even though *Kennedy*, *Khrushchev* and *Castro* had been rational individuals, and we had therefore consequently "just lucked out" – bearing these statements in mind leaves a queasy feeling behind nevertheless. However: Would the US have thrown atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, if Japan or the Soviet Union, which according to the German Japanologists *Florian Coulmas* had been the actual target of these bombs, or other participating countries had also possessed nuclear warheads? Hardly!

**The malice of the time –
how should we face it?**

Our brave new world is not for the faint-hearted, but must be looked at in a realistic manner – even better if this realism is based on anthropological foundations and the cause of all evil is beneficially not situated in an abysmal wickedness of human nature. A corrective against fanatics who consider themselves chosen and elitist Straussian that consider war the state of nature and lies and exploitation as necessary means to restrain the stupid mass by a self-appointed oligarchy and who reason about the issue, that if someone is already possessing nuclear weapons, he should, of course, make use of them. Blessed is the country that resists on equal terms and can thus prevent an aggressor from pursuing his plans illegal with respect to international law.

This attitude of being better equipped against the malice of the time instead of delivering oneself defenselessly to the greed of insane people has led to the concept respectively the state motto of perpetual armed neutrality in Switzerland. However, the Swiss people have deliberately avoided the development and construction of their own nuclear weapons in the 1960s, even though the physicists of various institutions in this country would probably have been capable of it. Nuclear weapons as offensive weapons are incompatible with a defensive army. However, who wants to deny countries with mineral resources, after painful experiences with imperial powers in the past, to arm themselves adequately? According to Waltz, this is the only way to maintain peace. Dubious under international law? Or compatible with international law? Those who can suggest a better alternative should present it to the world community for discussion! •

¹ www.pbs.org/newshour/rundown/2012/07/among-those-who-study-international.html

² <http://blogs.jpost.com/content/why-iran-should-not-get-bomb>

³ www.haaretz.com/blogs/focus-u-s-a/iran-nuclear-bomb-could-bring-military-balance-of-power-expert-says-1.443447

⁴ Published Financial Times A-List,
20 April 2012 (<http://blogs.ft.com/the-a-list/#axzz1sXCDq56a> and www.mahububani.net/articles%20by%20dean/The%20west%20must%20work%20to%20understand%20a%20new%20world%20order.pdf)

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Does one hand know what the other hand is doing?

Voices from the US urgently claim more rationality in Middle East missions – the troops' security in the Middle East is increasingly endangered – the path of diplomacy after a war is a stony way

In the USA an increasing number of concerned voices emerge from the military, who concede some difficulties with the objectives of the military deployments abroad. High rank officers describe the events in Syria and Iraq and the US commitment as increasingly irrational: it is about supporting those people at one location who one fights as enemies at another one. The "New York Times" as well as "The Nation" report about Iraq where the USA are captured in the contradictions of a proxy war and at the same time are supporting the pro-Iranian, Shiite Maliki government in its fight against the Sunni rebels. In Syria on the other hand, across the border to Iraq, the USA are stirring up the Sunnis living there against Assad – Assad whom they again are insinuating with his relationship to Iran. That innocent people in the countries affected are being victimized is one thing, that US Army Special Forces are becoming a target of the rivalling groups and can rejoice to save their skins is the other.

The incidents in Afghanistan where the US-troops had to suffer the worst loss-

es since Vietnam if not since the Second World War are also very grave. 7% of the aeroplanes of the Marine Corps were destroyed in a single blow by Taliban acting in US-uniforms. Among them were aeroplanes with the most modern electronic reconnaissance equipment. Without adequate aerial cover the Marines in a nearby station are fighting but facing a lost battle.

How difficult is it to manage an orderly withdrawal after a war and what the problems are that a negotiated deal entails is shown in a further article of the "International Herald Tribune". If an exchange of prisoners which should have laid the foundation for talks with the Taliban in Qatar is blocked by the parliament, the hands of the President are tied and the men out in the field are left standing.

The last example shows that diplomacy is an alternative if not the alternative to warfare and irrational tactics; but after years of bloodshed this may take a long time. Let us hope for all those involved in and around Afghanistan that the way of diplomacy will be crowned

with success. The foundation has been laid in the USA, may be because of the catastrophic financial situation of the national finances.

It is said, the Vietnam war was lost because of the inner opposition within the USA, that means on the home front. Should it not better to say: "Thanks" to the home front that ended the meaningless bloodshed and set new energy free for a new beginning between the two states. Thanks to prudent citizens, but also thanks to honest officers, soldiers and war veterans who understood that war does not only devastate a foreign country but also leaves behind an enormous damage in one's own country, especially in the minds and souls of the people involved. As Kishore Mahbubani, diplomat from Singapore and admirer of US-values, US-democracy and the market economy, says: the rest of the world is glad to reach out to the West, but will keep a close eye on it – and highly estimates honesty in international relations. The spirit expressed in US-military circles and US-media gives cause to hope.

Syrian war's spillover threatens a fragile Iraq

by Tim Arango, Baghdad

The civil war in Syria is testing Iraq's fragile society and fledgling democracy, worsening sectarian tensions, pushing Iraq closer to Iran and highlighting security shortcomings just nine months after American forces ended their long and costly occupation here [in Iraq].

Fearing that Iraq's insurgents will unite with extremists in Syria to wage a two-front battle for Sunni dominance, Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki recently ordered guards at the western border to block adult men, even husbands and fathers with families in tow, from crossing into Iraq along with thousands of refugees seeking to escape the grinding war next door.

Farther north, Iraqi officials have another concern, also related to the fighting across the border. Turkish warplanes have stepped up attacks on the mountain hideouts of Kurdish insurgents galvanized by the war in Syria, underscoring Iraq's inability to control its own airspace.

The hardening of the antagonists' positions in Syria – reverberating across Iraq – was made clear Monday at the United Nations when the new special envoy for Syria, Lakhdar Brahimi, gave a bleak appraisal of the conflict to the Security

Council and said he saw no prospect for a breakthrough anytime soon.

The Syrian war's spillover has called attention to uncomfortable realities for American officials: despite nearly nine years of military engagement, an effort that continues today with a \$19 billion weapons sales program, Iraq's security is uncertain and its alliance with the theocratic government in Tehran is growing. Iraq's Shiite-dominated leadership is so worried about a victory by Sunni radicals in Syria that it has moved closer to Iran, which shares a similar interest in supporting the Syrian president, Bashar al-Assad.

There is already some indication that Sunni insurgents in Iraq have tried to coordinate with Syrian fighters to set off a regional sectarian war, Iraqi tribal leaders said.

"Fighters from Anbar went there to support their sect, the Sunnis," said Sheik Hamid al-Hayes, a tribal leader in Anbar Province, in western Iraq, who once led a group of former insurgents who switched sides and joined the Americans in fighting Al Qaeda in Iraq.

In response, the United States has tried to secure its interests in Iraq. It has unsuccessfully pressed Iraq to halt flights from

Iran that traverse Iraqi airspace to ferry weapons and fighters to the Assad government, although *The Associated Press* reported that over the weekend a government spokesman said Iraq would begin random searches of Iranian aircraft.

While some Congressional leaders have threatened to cut off aid to Iraq if the flights do not stop, the United States is trying to speed up weapons sales to Iraq to secure it as an ally, said Lt. Gen. Robert L. Caslen Jr., the American commander in charge of that effort. As regional security deteriorates, the United States is finding it hard to deliver the weapons — especially antiaircraft systems — quickly enough to satisfy the Iraqis, who in some cases are looking elsewhere, including Russia.

"Although they want a strategic partnership with the United States, they recognize the vulnerability, and they are interested in going with the nation that will be able to provide them, and meet their need, their capabilities gap, as quickly as possible," said General Caslen, who oversees a Pentagon office here, under the au-

US Special Forces deployed in Iraq, again

by Tom Hayden

Despite the official US military withdrawal last December, American Special Forces "recently" returned to Iraq on a counter-terrorism mission, according to an American general in charge of weapons sales there. The mission was reported by the New York Times, in the fifteenth paragraph of a story¹ about deepening sectarian divides.

The irony is that the US is protecting a pro-Iran Shiite regime in Baghdad against a Sunni-based insurgency while at the same time supporting a Sunni-led movement against the Iran-backed dictatorship in Syria. The Sunni rebellions are occurring in the vast Sunni region between northwestern Iraq and southern Syria where borders are porous.

During the Iraq War, many Iraqi insurgents from Anbar and Diyala provinces took sanctuary in Sunni areas of Syria.

"Syrian war's spillover ..."

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thority of the American Embassy, that brokers weapons sales to Iraq.

The United States is providing Iraq with refurbished antiaircraft guns, free of charge, but they will not arrive until June [2013]. In the meantime, the Iraqis have collected cold war-era missiles found in a junkyard on an air base north of Baghdad, and they are trying to get them in working order. Iraq is negotiating with Russia to buy air defense systems that could be delivered much more quickly than those bought from the United States.

"Iraq recognizes they don't control their airspace, and they are very sensitive to that," General Caslen said. Each time Turkish fighter jets enter Iraq's airspace to bomb Kurdish targets, he said, Iraqi officials "see it, they know it and they resent it."

Iskander Witwit, a former Iraqi Air Force officer and member of Parliament's security committee, said, "God willing, we will be arming Iraq with weapons to be able to shoot down those planes."

The American military withdrew at the end of last year after negotiations for an extended troop presence collapsed because the Iraqis would not agree to extend legal immunities to any remaining force. Once the Americans left, Iraq celebrated its sovereignty, even as military officials in both countries fretted about the deficiencies of Iraq's military and sought ways to work together that would not require a public debate about immunities.

Iraq and the United States are negotiating an agreement that could result in

Now they are turning their weapons on two targets, the *al-Maliki* government in Baghdad and the *Assad* regime in Damascus.

The US is caught in the contradictions of proxy wars, favoring Iran's ally in Iraq while trying to displace Iran's proxy in Syria.

The lethal complication of the US Iraq policy is a military withdrawal that was propelled by political pressure from public opinion in the US even as the war could not be won on the battlefield. Military "re-deployment", as the scenario is described, is a general's nightmare. In the case of Vietnam, a "decent interval" was supposedly arranged by the Nixon administration to create the appearance of an orderly American withdrawal. During the same "interval", Nixon massively escalated his bombing campaign to no avail. Two years after

the 1973 Paris peace accords, Saigon collapsed.

It is unlikely that the Maliki regime will fall to Sunni insurgents in Iraq, if only because the Sunni population is approximately twenty percent of the population. However, the return of US Special Forces is not likely to restore Iraqi stability, and they may become trapped in crossfire as the sectarian tensions deepen. The real lesson may be for Afghanistan, where another unwinnable, unaffordable war in support of an unpopular regime is stumbling towards 2014. •

Source: *The Nation* from 25 September 2012
<http://www.thenation.com/article/170158/us-special-forces-deployed-iraq-again>

¹ Syrian war's spillover threatens a fragile Iraq,
The New York Times from 24 September 2012

the return of small units of American soldiers to Iraq on training missions. At the request of the Iraqi government, according to General Caslen, a unit of Army Special Operations soldiers was recently deployed to Iraq to advise on counterterrorism and help with intelligence.

So even as the country leans closer to Iran and contemplates buying weapons from Russia, it still seeks the military support of the United States. This is because Iraq is still facing a potent insurgency whose frequent recent attacks have raised questions about the ability of Iraq's counterterrorism forces to face the threat.

In Anbar, said Mr Hayes, the tribal leader, insurgents have created Al Qaeda-affiliated units under the name the *Free Iraqi Army*, to mimic the banner under which Syrian Sunnis are fighting. "They are having meetings and are recruiting," he said. The group also has a Twitter account and a Facebook page.

Similar units have sprouted in Diyala Province, and they have used a call to arms in Syria as a recruitment tool, according to local officials. When fighters die in Syria, local families hold funerals in secret so as not to alert the Shiite-dominated security forces that they have sent their sons to Syria. One such recent funeral was held on the pretext that the fallen fighter had died in a car crash in Jordan, and not, as had actually happened, in fighting in Aleppo, according to a local intelligence officer.

As Western policy makers consider intervention in Syria, they worry that country's war could turn into a full-blown sectarian conflict like the one that engulfed

Iraq from 2005 to 2007. For Iraqis who fled to Syria and are now returning, not by choice but to save their own lives, Syria already is Iraq.

"It's exactly like it was in Iraq," said *Zina Ritha*, 29, who returned to Baghdad after several years in Damascus. Referring to the *Free Syrian Army*, Ms. Ritha said: "The F.S.A. is destroying Shiite houses. They are kidnapping people, especially the Iraqis and the Shites."

On a recent morning, Ms. Ritha and her mother-in-law visited a center for returnees here, where families collect a payment of four million Iraqi dinars, or about \$ 3,400, from the government. For Iraqis in Syria, people at the center said, there is no security. Shiites are attacked by rebels, Sunnis by government forces. And at any time they can be targeted just for being foreigners.

Abdul Jabbar Sattar, a single man in his 40s, is Sunni. After a bombing in Damascus that killed several top security officials in July, his neighborhood endured round-the-clock shelling. He returned to Iraq with one set of clothes, and little money, having been robbed as he fled.

"It's the same situation as it used to be in Iraq," he said. "Everyone is afraid of one another." •

Reporting was contributed by *Duraid Adnan*, *Yasir Ghazi* and *Omar al-Jawoshy* from Baghdad, and an employee of *The New York Times* from Diyalah Province.

Source: *The New York Times*, 24 September 2012

US giving up hopes for “deal” with Taliban

by Matthew Rosenberg and Rod Nordland

With the surge of US troops over and the Taliban still a potent threat, American generals and civilian officials acknowledge that they have all but written off what was once one of the cornerstones of their strategy to end the war here: battering the Taliban into a peace deal.

The once-ambitious US plans for ending the war are now being replaced by the far more modest goal of setting the stage for the Afghans to work out a deal among themselves in the years after most Western forces depart, and to ensure that Pakistan is on board with any eventual settlement.

Military and diplomatic officials in Afghanistan and in Washington said that despite attempts to engage directly with Taliban leaders this year, they now expect that any significant progress will come only after 2014, once the bulk of NATO troops has left.

“I don’t see it happening in the next couple years,” said a senior coalition officer. He and a number of other officials spoke on the condition of anonymity be-

cause of the delicacy of the effort to open talks.

“It’s a very resilient enemy, and I’m not going to tell you it’s not,” the officer said. “It will be a constant battle, and it will be for years.”

The failure to broker meaningful talks with the Taliban underscores the fragility of the gains claimed during the surge of US troops ordered by President Obama in 2009. The 30,000 extra troops won back territory held by the Taliban, but by nearly all estimates failed to deal a crippling blow.

Critics of the administration of Barack Obama say the United States also weakened its own hand by agreeing to the 2014 deadline for its own involvement in combat operations, voluntarily ceding the prize the Taliban has been seeking for over a decade.

The Obama administration defends the deadline as crucial to persuading the Afghan government and military to assume full responsibility for the country, and politically necessary for Americans weary

of what has already become the country’s longest war.

Among the United States’ commanding generals in Afghanistan, from Stanley A. McChrystal and David H. Petraeus to today’s John R. Allen, it has been an oft-repeated mantra that the United States is not going to kill its way out of Afghanistan. They said that the Afghanistan war, like most insurgencies, could end only with a negotiation.

Now US officials say they have reduced their goals further – to patiently laying the groundwork for eventual peace talks after they leave. US officials say they hope that the Taliban will find the Afghan Army a more formidable adversary than they expect and be compelled, in the years after NATO withdraws, to come to terms with what they now dismiss as a “puppet” government.

The United States has not given up on talks before that time. It agreed last month to set up a committee with Pakistan that would vet potential new Taliban interlocutors, and the Obama administration is considering whether to revive a proposed pris-

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The US suffered its worst airpower loss since Vietnam last week and no one really noticed

by John Hudson

The Taliban attack on an air base in southern Afghanistan on Friday [September 14, 2012] drew coverage for the way the insurgents cloaked themselves in US army uniforms to gain a tactical advantage, but few have taken note of the historical proportions of the damage inflicted. John Gresham, at the Defense Media Network, has published a detailed account of the attack on Camp Bastion, in which two Marines were killed, six US Marine Corps jet fighters were destroyed, and two more “significantly” damaged. Those facts were all carried in most reports, but if that just sounds like a typical damage report from a decade-long war, you’re wrong. Gresham explains the devastating damage done to VMA-211, the name of the Marine Corps attack squadron that was most affected last week, noting that it is “arguably the worst day in [US Marine Corps] aviation history since the Tet Offensive of 1968.” Or you could go back even further. “The last time VMA-211 was combat ineffective was in December 1941, when the squadron was wiped out during the 13-day defense of Wake Island against the Japanese.”

He spells out some more of the details of the attack:

Eight irreplaceable aircraft (the AV-8B) has been out of production since 1999) have been destroyed or put out of action – approximately 7 percent of the total flying USMC Harrier fleet. Worse yet, the aircraft involved were the AV-B+ variant equipped with the APG-65 radar and AAQ-28 Litening II targeting pods – the most capable in the force. Given the current funding situation, it’s likely that the two damaged AV-8Bs will become spare parts “hangar queens” and never fly again. A Harrier squadron commander is dead, along with another Marine. Another nine personnel have been wounded, and the nearby Marines at Camp Freedom are now without effective fixed-wing air support. The USMC’s response to this disaster will be a telling report card on its leadership and organizational agility.

It just goes to show how desensitizing a decade of war can be. With casualty counts streaming in the news every day, it’s easy to miss historically devastating milestones that crop up.

Source: www.theatlanticwire.com/global/2012/09/us-suffered-its-worst-airpower-loss-vietnam-last-week-and-no-one-really-noticed/57139/

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German “Wahlalternative 2013” founded

km. A year prior to the next Bundestag elections, the probability has become significantly larger that the next Bundestag will include more than the 6 parties CDU, CSU, SPD, FDP, *Alliance 90/The Greens* and *the Left Party*. The new party *Bundesvereinigung der Freien Wähler* (Federation of Free Voters’ Associations) will nominate candidates that represent the majority of German citizens and their criticizing Euro and ESM as well as their criticism of a deepened European integration (“Federal State of Europe”) far better than the current parliamentary parties.

The *Free Voters’ Associations* who have been shaping German local politics for decades as local and independent party voter communities have already participated as state associations in various Länder elections and won seats in the Bavarian state parliament in the last election for the first time. For quite some time a federal party has been constituted with the aim to participate in national elections, too. Its own basic statement is being formulated (more information at www.freie-waehler.eu).

Now the *Federation of Free Voters’ Associations* is experiencing a major support. In September, numerous personalities from academia, civil society and politics founded a nationwide association

named “Wahlalternative 2013” (Electoral Alternative 2013). This association will not become a political party nor propose candidates for the Bundestag elections but ensure that their main objective arguments are also represented in the German Bundestag. The “Wahlalternative 2013” sees the *Confederation of Free Voters’ Associations* to be their partner party, which is to be supported.

The recent reports in German media on the foundation of the Wahlalternative lack objectivity. The assertion that it was merely a collection of frustrated CDU politicians, is attempting to dismiss the initiative. The fact is, however, that renowned scientists from various disciplines, very committed personalities of civil society and experienced politicians, including those from the CDU, but also from other parties that can no longer support the political course of their parties as far as European policy is concerned, take part in the Electoral Alternative.

One of the two spokespersons of the “Wahlalternative 2013” is *Bernd Lucke*, professor of economics at the University of Hamburg. Professor Lucke was one of the initiators of the appeal of more than 300 German economics teachers opposing the plans to bank financing and banking regulation in the euro countries (see *Current Concerns* No. 29 of 15 July 2012).

The other speaker of the initiative is the longtime editor of the “Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung”, Dr *Konrad Adam*. The MSE owner *Gerd Robanus* is the secretary general. He is also member of the national board of the *Mittelstandsvereinigung* (Small and Medium-sized Business Association) within the CDU. The managing director of the initiative is *Norbert Stenzel*, also owner of a medium-sized business.

Among the founders and main signatories of the initiative we find the publisher and journalist Dr *Bruno Bandulet*, the professor of economics *Charles Blankart*, the President of the Institute for Economic Research Professor *Ulrich Blum*, the filmmaker and economic journalist *Günter Ederer*, the theologian and philosopher Professor *Herbert Frohnhofen*, the former President of the Federation of German Industries Professor *Hans-Olaf Henkel*, the spokesman for the “Bündnis Bürgerwille” (Alliance for Citizens Participation) Dr *Johannes Hüdepohl*, the professor for constitutional law *Karl Albrecht Schachtschneider*, the former CEO of Thyssen AG Professor *Dieter Spethmann*, the chairman of the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft Soziale Marktwirtschaft* (Association for Social Market Economy) Professor *Joachim Starbatty*, the spokeswoman for

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“UDS given up hopes ...”

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oner swap with the insurgents that would, officials hope, reopen preliminary discussions that collapsed in March, current and former US officials said. Those are both seen as long-term efforts, however.

With the end of this year’s fighting season, the Taliban have weathered the biggest push the US led coalition is going to make against them. A third of all US forces left by this month, and more of the 68,000 remaining may leave next year, with the goal that only a residual force of trainers and special operations troops will remain by the end of 2014.

Bringing Pakistan into the search for Taliban contacts is also an uncertain strategy, US officials said. The details of the new vetting committee have yet to be worked out, and “if we are depending on Pakistan, it comes with an asterisk,” one of the officials said. “We never know whether they will see it through.”

The US shift toward a more peripheral role in peace efforts represents another retreat from Washington’s once broad designs for Afghanistan, where the surge, along with a sharp escalation of night-time

raids by *Special Operations Forces* against Taliban field commanders, were partly aimed at forcing the Taliban into negotiations, making a Western withdrawal more feasible.

For a brief moment, the strategy appeared to be working: preliminary talks, painstakingly set up throughout 2011, opened early this year in Qatar, in the Gulf.

The effort fell apart when the Obama administration, faced with bipartisan opposition in Washington, could not make good on a proposed prisoner swap, in which five Taliban leaders held at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, would have been exchanged for the sole American soldier held by the insurgents, Sgt. *Bowe Bergdahl*.

The trade was to be an initial confidence-building measure that would lead to more serious talks. If it is revived by the Obama administration, it would come after the presidential election, most likely leaving too little time to reach a deal before 2014, some current and former US officials said.

In Washington, “the tone of the whole discussion has shifted to a less US-led approach and toward a more Afghan-led ap-

proach, but one that will be over a longer term,” said *Shamila N. Chaudhary*, a South Asia analyst at the Eurasia Group who served as the director for Pakistan and Afghanistan at the *National Security Council*.

The Americans still hope to play a behind-the-scenes role, she said, but what shape that would take is “not clear.”

“It’s too far in the future,” Ms Chaudhary added.

But the Qatars remain willing to host the talks, and one of the Taliban negotiators still in Qatar said the talks could restart if the prisoner swap took place and the insurgents were allowed to open an office in Qatar, a move the Americans had agreed to.

If those two steps “are implemented and practical steps are taken by the United States of America, talks will resume. There is no other obstruction,” *Sohail Shaheen*, the Taliban negotiator, said in an interview last month with Japan’s NHK World TV. •

Eric Schmitt contributed reporting from Washington, and *Sangar Rahimi* from Kabul.

Source: © *The International Herald Tribune*, 3 October 2012

"German "Wahlalternative 2013" founded
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the "Zivile Koalition" (Civilian Coalition) Beatrix von Storch and many others. Before long, nearly 4000 citizens took the opportunity to sign with their name as a supporter of the initiative.

On its website (www.wa2013.de) the initiators explain why it is no longer an option for them to vote for one of the existing parties of the Bundestag at the coming national election. For the CDU/CSU and the FDP they diagnose a "programmatic arbitrariness". The current opposition parties in the Parliament are no real alternatives to the policies of the government. However, the policy of the German Government was by no means "without any alternative". A text worthy of discussion titled "Die Alternative zum Rettungswirrwarr" (The alternative to the confusion around the euro rescue) can be found on the website of the initiative.

According to the initiators, great similarities in core positions speak for the cooperation with the *Federation of Free Voters' Associations*. The founders write: "A far-reaching agreement on assessing the euro rescue policy, common basic values as the basis of policy decisions and a clear commitment to the pluralistic and democratic foundations of our society is essential." These core positions are discussed in more detail in the founding manifesto of the Wahlalternative (see box). •

Call for founding of the "Wahlalternative 2013"

The Federal Republic of Germany is in the worst crisis of its history. The euro area has proven to be inadequate. Southern European countries impoverished under the competitive pressure of the euro. Whole states are on the verge of insolvency. Structural reforms prove to be impracticable or engulf ordinary people in misery.

In this situation, CDU/CSU, SPD, FDP and Greens know only one answer: more so! The euro may not be questioned, all debts have to be paid, and Germany is the paymaster. Germany guarantees the debt of foreign states, rescues foreign banks and gives unlimited loans to the European Central Bank via the target system. Hundreds of billions of euro have already been mortgaged by the Federal Government, and an end is unforeseeable.

This is excessive and irresponsible. Increased taxes, stagnation and inflation will be the price that we and our children and grandchildren will have to pay for measures that calm the situation only seemingly in the short term.

At the same time democracy erodes. The people's will concerning these decisions has never been ascertained and is not represented by the Bundestag. The Federal Government deprives the citizens through disinformation, sets constitutional bodies such as the Bundestag and the Federal Constitutional Court under pressure and shifts significant decisions to bodies that are be-

yond any democratic control. The order intended by the basic law is slowly devalued and suspended.

We do not want this catastrophe to take its course. Therefore, we call for the foundation of an electoral initiative 2013, committed to the following objectives:

1. In accordance with the Maastricht Treaty, Germany will no longer stand bail for the debts of foreign countries.
2. The uniform euro area is to be abandoned. All states are free to leave the euro area, to reunite in more appropriate currency unions (North and South euro) or to introduce parallel currencies.
3. Essential sovereignty rights of the Federal Republic of Germany can be transferred only after a previous referendum.

The "Wahlalternative 2013" is fully committed to the free and democratic basic order of the Federal Republic of Germany and the peaceful unification of Europe.

Cooperating with a political party that shares our goals, we will be racing for the parliamentary elections in 2013. All other political differences are insignificant in the face of today's challenges.

We citizens have the freedom of choice! Decide against the uniform policy of the established parties. Join us in the foundation of the "Wahlalternative 2013"!



“Paper money – Public finances – Inflation. Did Goethe hit upon a core problem of monetary policy?”

by Dr Jens Weidmann, President of the Deutsche Bundesbank

Opening Speech at the 18th colloquium of the Institute for Bank-Historical Research (IBF) in Frankfurt on 18 September

Dear Dr Reckers
Professor Hüttl
Professor Binswanger
Ladies and gentlemen

I am delighted to be able to welcome you today to the *Deutsche Bundesbank*'s Regional Office in Hesse. The high number of participants shows that the *Institute for Bank-Historical Research* has found a very attractive topic for the colloquium.

The caption for today's event is “Paper money – Public finances – Inflation. Did Goethe hit upon a core problem of monetary policy?”

I could now answer this question posed in the title with a clear yes. Indeed, *Goethe* already analysed the core problem of today's monetary policy based on paper money around 180 years ago, recording it in literature inimitable fashion.

I would like to keep things short, but in order to do justice to the occasion and topic I do not want to leave it at a simple yes, but elaborate on the issues of today's colloquium.

Money and money creation

I wish to begin with a question, which appears trivial at first glance but which, as experience has shown is particularly difficult. What is money exactly? A succinct response from an economist would be: Money is what money does.

As money is defined by its functions, various instruments are fundamentally capable of acting as money, as long as they can be used as a medium of exchange, medium of payment and store of value.

Shells were previously used as money in some countries, for example, as were furs, salt or pearls. Livestock could also serve as money – the Latin word for cattle is “pecus” from which the word “pecunia”, meaning money, is derived.

Concrete objects have served as money for most of human history; we may therefore speak of commodity money. A great deal of trust was placed in particular in precious and rare metals – gold first and foremost – due to their assumed intrinsic value.

In its function as a medium of exchange, medium of payment and store of value, gold is thus, in a sense, a timeless classic. “To gold they tend, on gold depend, all things!” says *Margaret* in the First Part of Goethe's *Faust*.

However, the money that we carry around in the form of banknotes and coins no longer has anything to do with commodity money. Money has no longer been

“Binswanger's thesis is that Goethe was portraying the modern economy with its creation of paper money as a continuation of alchemy by other means. While traditional alchemists attempted to turn lead into gold, in the modern economy, paper was made into money.

Indeed, the fact that central banks can create money out of thin air, so to speak, is something that many observers are likely to find surprising and strange, perhaps mystical and dreamlike, too – or even nightmarish.”

linked to gold reserves since the US dollar was removed from the gold standard in 1971.

In short: today's money is no longer backed by any real assets. Banknotes are printed paper – and the experts amongst you know that the euro is printed on paper made of cotton – coins are minted metal.

That banknotes and coins are accepted as a medium of payment in our daily lives also has to do with the fact that they are the only legal tender. However, ultimately the acceptance of banknotes is based on public confidence that it can use this paper money to make purchases.

In this sense, money is a social convention – it has no intrinsic value which comes before its use; instead, its value is created by its constant exchange and use as money. By the way, this recognition that trust is central, or even constitutive, for the properties of money is very old; it was already discussed in the 4th century BC by *Aristotle* in his “*Politics*” and “*Nicomachean Ethics*”.

In recent times, in particular, many citizens are asking about the origin of money: where do the central banks actually acquire the huge amounts of money that they need to give billions in loans to the banking system as part of monetary policy operations or to make other purchases? Why it is often repeated in this context that central banks have virtually unlimited firepower?

Central banks create money by granting commercial banks credit against collateral or by buying assets such as bonds. The financial power of a central bank is unlimited in principle; it does not have to acquire beforehand the money it lends or uses for payments, but can basically create it out of thin air.

The printing of money is an appropriate image here; from an economic perspec-

tive, the printing press is not necessary, as the creation of money primarily shows up on the central bank's balance sheet, on its accounts.

How does *Johann Wolfgang von Goethe* enter the equation when talking about the creation of money? Why have I widened the discussion further?

Money creation, Goethe, Faust and alchemy

Let me remind you briefly of the “money creation” scene in Act One of the Second Part of “Faust”. *Mephistopheles*, disguised as a fool, talks to the Emperor, who is in severe financial distress, and says

In this world, what isn't lacking, somewhere, though? Sometimes it's this, or that: here's what's missing's gold.

The Emperor finally responds to Mephistopheles' subtle attempt to persuade him

I'm tired of the eternal 'if and when': We're short of gold, well fine, so fetch some then.

To which Mephistopheles replies

I'll fetch what you wish, and I'll fetch more.

In the commotion of the nocturnal masquerade ball, he persuades the Emperor to sign a document – a document, which Mephistopheles has reproduced over night and then distributed as paper money.

Those involved are quite taken by the initial success of this measure. The Chancellor is delighted to announce

See and hear the scroll, heavy with destiny, – [referring to the paper money that has been created]

"Paper money – Public finances ..."'
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– that's changed to happiness our misery."

He reads, 'To whom it concerns, may you all know, this paper's worth a thousand crowns or so.'"

A little later, Mephistopheles stirs up the general elation even further by saying

"Such paper's convenient, for rather than a lot of gold and silver, you know what you've got. You've no need of bartering and exchanging, just drown your needs in wine and love-making."

Those concerned are so overjoyed by this apparent blessing that they do not even suspect that things could get out of hand.

In the Second Part of "Faust", the state can get rid of its debt to begin with. At the same time, private consumer demand rises sharply, fuelling an upswing. In due course, however, all this activity degenerates into inflation, destroying the monetary system because the money rapidly loses its value.

It is very striking that Goethe throws light in this way on the potentially hazardous connection between paper money creation, public finances and inflation – and thus on one core problem of uncovered monetary systems. This is all the more remarkable given that Faust and Goethe are not generally immediately associated with economics, especially not with such central areas of conflicting monetary policy priorities.

The fact that Faust can indeed be interpreted in economic terms has been demonstrated, not least by Professor *Adolf Hüttl*, who used to be Vice-President of the former *Land Central Bank* in Hesse. I am delighted that he is in attendance here today. Back in 1965, he wrote a very insightful article in the *Bundesbank's staff magazine* about "Money in the Second Part of Goethe's Faust".

In the mid-1980s, while teaching in Sankt Gallen, Professor *Hans Christoph Binswanger* – who I am pleased to say is also here today – took a similar line and brought out a book entitled "Money and Magic: a Critique of the Modern Economy in the Light of Goethe's Faust".

Binswanger's thesis is that Goethe was portraying the modern economy with its creation of paper money as a continuation of alchemy by other means. While traditional alchemists attempted to turn lead into gold, in the modern economy, paper was made into money.

Indeed, the fact that central banks can create money out of thin air, so to speak, is something that many observers are likely to find surprising and strange, perhaps

mystical and dreamlike, too – or even nightmarish.

The responsibilities of an independent central bank

If central banks can potentially create an unlimited amount of money out of thin air, how can we ensure that money remains sufficiently scarce to preserve its value? Does this ability to create money more or less at will not create the temptation to take advantage of this instrument to create additional leeway short term, even at the risk of highly probable long-term damage?

Yes, this temptation certainly does exist, and many in monetary history have succumbed to it. Taking a look back in time, this was often the reason for establishing a central bank: to provide those in power with free access to seemingly unlimited financial resources.

However, such government interference in central banking, combined with the government's large demand for funding, often led to a strong expansion in the volume of money in circulation, causing it to lose value through inflation.

In light of this experience, central banks were subsequently established as *independent* institutions, with the mandate to safeguard the value of money, in order to explicitly keep the government from co-opting monetary policy.

The independence of central banks is an extraordinary privilege – it is, however, not an end in itself. Instead, its primary purpose is to use its credibility to ensure that monetary policy can focus unhindered on preserving the value of money.

Independent monetary policy combined with policymakers with a well-functioning, stability-oriented compass are a necessary – but not a sufficient – condition for preserving the purchasing power of money as well as public confidence in it.

Of course, it is important that central bankers, who are in charge of a public good – in this case, stable money – bolster public confidence by explaining their policies. The best protection against temptation in monetary policy is an enlightened and stability-oriented society.

Conclusion

I will end my overview of Goethe, Faust and paper money here. You have probably noticed that the building we are in reflects, in many respects, the connection between Frankfurt, Goethe, money and Faust, in particular the sculptures and paintings. This type of architectural art was primarily the idea and initiative of Professor Hüttl.

On that note, I would like to turn over to the other speakers, who will speak about the topic of today's colloquium in more detail. I am sure that the combina-

tion of Goethe and money will have many additional interesting insights in store for you this afternoon. Thank you for your attention, and I hope you will find the event both enjoyable and stimulating.

Source: www.bundesbank.de/Redaktion/EN/Reden/2012/2012_09_20_weidmann_money_creation_and_responsibility.html?view=render

National Council sets new standards in agricultural policy

Protection of Swiss agriculture and food security

by Dr iur Marianne Wüthrich, Zurich

Almost unnoticed, the National Council made two noteworthy decisions during the autumn session debates concerning agricultural policy 2014-2017. On the one hand they agreed on discontinuation of the negotiations for the agriculture agreement with the EU, on the other hand they advocated the extension of the Genetic Engineering (GE) moratorium for another three years. It is much to be hoped that the Council of States would join these welcome decisions after some month's time of consideration.

The stimulus for a discontinuation of negotiations in the agricultural sector with Brussels comes from the Romandie. By means of a cantonal initiative the canton Vaud intervened in Federal politics.

The cantonal initiative – manifestation of strong federalist rights of the cantons

Apart from the direct-democratic rights of the citizens, the extensive constitutional rights of the Swiss for contributing to political life also include the right of every single canton to approach the Federal Parliament directly with a proposal. The cantonal initiative provides the can-

tons with an instrument that puts them on the same level with the National Council and Council of States. The procedure with which a cantonal initiative comes about in the single cantons is regulated in the cantonal rights. Sometimes it is the cantonal parliament, which passes a cantonal initiative; however, their submission often is demanded by the sovereign in a cantonal referendum. Their legal basis can be found in article 160 paragraph 1 of the Swiss Federal Constitution.

Federal Constitution Article 160 Right to submit initiatives and motions

'Any Council member, parliamentary group, parliamentary committee or Canton shall have the right to submit an initiative to the Federal Assembly.'

Therefore, the Federal Assembly has to treat cantonal initiatives following the same procedure as parliamentary initiatives are treated by National Council and Council of States.

National Council agrees to the cantonal initiative of canton Vaud

Text of the cantonal initiative, submitted on the 8 February, 2012 (No. 12.300):

Excerpts of the statement by Markus Ritter (Christian Democratic People's Party, Canton of St. Gallen), member of the National Council:

"I am representing here the minority and appeal to you to approve of the cantonal initiative of the Canton of Vaud 12,300. All these discussions about the opening of the agricultural market or rather the elimination of import protections go back to the Doha development round of the WTO launched in 2001 [...] Especially since 2008, since the financial crisis, it has become evident that the international community has other worries than those of more liberalization. One may justifiably say here, in the chamber and to the nation: the WTO Doha development round is dead.

In response to a possible WTO Doha development round, negotiations about an agricultural free trade agreement with the EU were launched by the Federal Council in November 2008, in order to mitigate the impact of the Doha development round. As a result of WTO developments it becomes apparent that this strategy is no longer tenable. The Federal Council in his message on agricultural policy (AP) 2014-2017 [...] rightly pointed out, that the practice facility for the AP 2014-2017 assumes that until

the end of 2017 no further reductions in import protection will come into effect. [...] Seen in this way, it now no longer makes sense to adhere to these various free trade attempts. They rather have to be consistently rejected and the cantonal initiative of the canton of Vaud is to be approved.

For the sake of completeness we have to mention that a great amount of tax revenues from customs duties will be lost for the Confederation, if free trade agreements are implemented. Here we are talking about several hundred millions of Swiss francs. [...]

Seen against this background I would ask you not to continue the free trade agreement in the agricultural and food sector and to follow the Vaud cantonal initiative – with the argument that it does not represent a necessity of foreign policy any longer and that it is neither in the interest of the consumers nor of agriculture and certainly not in the interest of the federal finances."

Source: www.admin.ch
(Translation and Highlighting:
Current Concerns)

Free trade agreements in the agricultural and food sectors. Discontinuation of negotiations:

"Based on article 160 paragraph 1 of the Federal Constitution canton Vaud submits the following cantonal initiative:

The Federal Assembly is asked to require from the Federal Council the immediate discontinuation of negotiations with the European Union about a free trade agreement in the sectors of agriculture and food."

The National Council as the first chamber had to deal with the initiative. The federal Committee for Economic Affairs and Taxation (WAK-N) put forward a motion to the National Council on 15 August 2012 with 14 to 10 votes including one abstention from vote not to comply with the cantonal initiative, i.e. to reject it. A minority (Ritter, Darbellay, Hessler, Hausamann, Müri, Schelbert, Walter) decided to agree to the cantonal initiative. The varied party-political composition of this commission minority is remarkable: CVP (Christian Democratic People's Party – Ritter, Darbellay), BDP (Conservative Democratic Party – Hessler), SVP (Swiss People's Party – Hausamann, Müri, Walter) and GP (Green Party – Schelbert). They agree beyond all party borders that a bilateral free trade agreement with the EU in the vital areas of agriculture and food processing would be evil for Switzerland.

On 26 September 2012 the National Council backed the cantonal initiative from Lausanne with 88 to 78 votes and demanded the immediate discontinuation of the Federal Council's negotiations with Brussels about an agreement on agriculture. This decision comprised almost all parties who are represented in the National Council.

The votes in favour of a discontinuation of negotiations came from CVP with 19 National Councillors, BDP 5, GP 12, FDP/Liberals 7, SP 5, SVP 40.

The Council of States has to make the next move

The cantonal initiative will now be handed over to the Council of States. It had refused a similar attempt of the National Council in March 2012 and supported a motion of its own Committee for Economic Affairs and Taxation (WAK-S) instead which requested the Federal Council to put forward

"National Council sets ..."

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a new negotiation base "with the aim of a gradual and monitored introduction of the agricultural and food free trade with the EU".

It is to be hoped that by the next session the members of the Council of States will have thought about the fact that the contents of the bilateral agreements with the EU have so far never been resolved just as the Swiss authorities fancied – in the meantime it should certainly be known to the public, that the EU always imposes its conditions without taking Switzerland's economic position into consideration! There is only one answer to protect our agriculture and the related companies effectively, namely that of the National Council: Immediate discontinuation of negotiations.

Genetic engineering – no thank you!

Besides, with an impressive number of signatories the National Council has launched a motion for the extension of the GE moratorium for agriculture after its expiry on 27 November 2013: 122 of 200 National Councillors submitted the motion, it was accepted by the Council with 123 yes and only 62 no votes.

Text of the motion:

"The Federal Council is entrusted with the task to create a legal base, so that the current GE moratorium for agriculture will continue to be valid for a limited period of time upon its expiry on 27 November 2013."

From the grounds for the motion:
"After the clear Yes to the national initiative on GE-free agriculture the scepticism of the population has not changed towards genetic engineering. The majority of consumers largely do not wish any genetically modified food.

Swiss agriculture has the constitutional mandate to guarantee 'sustainable production oriented on the market'. Its market chance lies in quality. [...] The plausible, GE-free production is a chance for the market leadership of Swiss high-class products, which may not be jeopardised."

History:

On 27 November 2005 a ban on the use of GMO [genetically modified organisms] in agricultural production, limited for a period of five years, came into force, which was anchored in the Federal Constitution.

The national initiative "for food from GE-free agriculture" launched by environmentalists, environmental organisations and farming organisations was then clearly accepted – with 1,112,400 yes (55.7

percent) against 896,400 no (44.3 percent) votes. Not a single one of 26 cantons rejected it.

This ban was extended on the basis of the *genetic engineering law* (GTG, article 37a) that is from November 2010 to November 2013.

**The Federal Council
has to abide by the decisions
of the parliament and the people!**

Seven years ago, people and cantons unambiguously declared themselves against genetic modification of foodstuff – noxious to our health and the environment. Therefore it is an expression of respect of the sovereign's will that the National Assembly declared itself so clearly in favour of the continuation of the ban.

Now also this bill will be handed over to the Council of States.

Considered against the background of the origin of the GE ban in agricultural production, the statement of Federal Councillor *Schneider-Ammann* must emphatically be rejected. He agrees to the extension only because he gets the possibility to bring the "national research program" to an end, which should serve the regulation of the "*simultaneous cultivation of GMO and conventional crops in the agriculture (coexistence)*". After the statement: "The Federal Council is aware of the complexity of the issue of coexistence", J. Schneider-Ammann explained, how he intended to handle this complexity: He wanted to regulate the details of the "regulation of coexistence at enactment level", that is in bypassing parliament and people. [Emphasizes *Current Concerns*].

That goes too far – a rule of the executive over the people in direct-democratic Switzerland? And this, although 122 National Councillors clearly stated in their motion that they did not want any "coexistence".

From the grounds for the motion: "The current GE moratorium had not led to recognizable problems. *The currently available GM varieties that are in the pipeline include no economic advantage for the Swiss farmers.* The project findings of the *National Research Project (NFP) 59* show this.

On the other hand, the coexistence would lead to additional costs from the current point of view. This contradicts the optimisation of costs which the Swiss food industry must strive for in order to remain competitive in future as well."

Apart from the fact that every kindergarten child knows that the seeds spread by wind and insects cannot be detained by a hedge between two fields. Therefore, we would rather have to speak of a mixture instead of "coexistence" – if we want to be honest ...

Whom does the head of the national economy department represent? Global GE corporations or the Swiss population and the Swiss agriculture?

From the answer of the Federal Council: "*From the point of view of the constitutional law and international administration of justice a moratorium extended several times or for a long term could be problematic.*" Meanwhile the Federal Council considers an adequate extension of the moratorium justified, provided that this gives the opportunity to parliament to check the proposals formulated within the scope of the NFP 59 in a detailed manner and *to complement the regulations about coexistence and GMO-free areas at law level accordingly.*" [Emphasises *Current Concerns*]

The Federal Councillor must urgently be reminded of some constitutional fundamentals:

First the "point of view of the constitutional law" in article 197 paragraph 2 of the Federal Constitution which was determined by the constitutional legislator:

Federal Constitution Art. 197,2

(Transitional provisions following the adoption of the Federal Constitution of 18 April 1999)

**2. Transitional Provision to Art. 120
(*Non-human gene technology*)**

Swiss agriculture shall remain free of gene technology for a period of five years following the adoption of this constitutional provision. In particular, the following may neither be imported nor placed on the market:

- a. genetically modified plants that are capable of propagation, parts of plants and seeds that are intended for agricultural, horticultural or forestry use in the environment;
- b. genetically modified animals that are intended for the production of foodstuffs and other agricultural products.

Secondly, we have to state clearly about the "point of view of the international judiciary" that Switzerland is not subordinate to any such: The Federal Constitution has been issued by the sovereign – it is valid for us at the foremost place.

Thirdly the National Council has just declared itself *against* the so-called *coexistence*, which means it does *not* want to complement the regulations accordingly.

A little more adjustment to the interests of our country and our population and a little less squinting on global economy would urgently be necessary for certain politicians!

The National Council has proved to be a true representative of the people in the areas of the agreement on agriculture with the EU and the GE ban in agriculture. •

The Hungarian Open Air Museum – a delight also in autumn

A visit to the Hungarian Open Air Museum is recommended to all those who want to know how people lived in villages and market towns in Hungary during the last two hundred years.

The residential buildings, which were built according to the traditional village structure, were once the homes of men, women and children with their very different fates, and many of their names are known to us. The items carry the traces both of everyday life and festive events

On the site of almost 60 acres there are 247 exhibition buildings, 5 km walking paths, parks, recreational areas for visitors, located in a beautiful, natural landscape. Information and maps are there for orientation. In the museum guide you will find a map to help you plan your visit. The guards in the buildings can provide information if you want to know more about the museum or the exhibition. Information on current programmes can be found at the entrance to the building.

The museum is divided into seven regional units. The descriptions of the sights are also arranged according to these units in the museum guide. There are not only reports about the exhibitions; next to the description you can always find the explanation of an interesting concept, a tradition or an object.

Visits to the museum cultural experiences can be combined with the pleasure of hiking. The open air museum as part of the Danube-Ipoly National Park is a nature reserve. We ask for your help to save the museum as our ancestors pictured it and as the present staff is trying to preserve it.

The living museum

The aim of the open air museum is not only to convey "preserved" values of rural culture to posterity, it also, and more importantly, wants to show the people of today what part of the traditional knowledge may still be used today and which common cultural values exist. The open-air exhibitions provide visitors with realistic impressions of the dimensions and moods of village life. Not only the furnished buildings that were rebuilt in various kinds of settlements provide an authentic village picture: The farm buildings (barns, press houses, cellars), workshops, mills and religious buildings (churches, Calvary, roadside crosses), and not least the traditionally worked gardens, lawns and fields with typical local plants play their part too. In the vegetable gardens you can sometimes find forgotten

and witnessed the lives and deaths of these people, their work, struggles and loves.

The open air museum shows former village life and thanks to the particular way of its presentation it is capable of providing its visitors with a unique museum experience, through sensuous experiences such as colours, sounds, smells, and even tastes. The permanent exhibition shows the typical characteristics of the Hungarian regions in terms of archi-

tecture, home decor and their way of living and working.

Here at the museum, visitors encounter people dealing with work in and around the house every day. They love to tell how the linen was dyed with indigo, what a corn store is or what it was like to live in a smoke house. In the courtyards, visitors learn more about vegetables and flowering plants in the gardens, but also about field plants or traditional Hungarian domestic animals.



and now rediscovered plants like the Jerusalem artichoke, as well as blackthorn, hawthorn and fustet in blossom; Hungarian wheat varieties grow in the fields, and the terraces of the small upper-Hungarian town remind the visitor of the vineyards of Tokaj. The area around the Sztaravoda stream is part of the Danube-Ipoly National Park. Thus, a remarkable part of the original flora and fauna is preserved in the museum.

As we seek to impart knowledge in an experience-oriented way, we place emphasis on the active participation of visitors in getting to know our exhibitions. It is a very practical kind of knowledge that is conveyed through the exhibitions, events and educational programmes of the museum, a kind of knowledge that our guests can, for instance, apply at home when designing or decorating their surroundings. You will learn about traditional building materials and technologies or about the basics of gardening, the use of medicinal plants, the production of wine or environmentally conscious waste management.

The ancient crafts or the music and dance performances – that everybody can participate in – are entertaining and provide an opportunity for the guests to enrich their own individual ways of expressing themselves. Our festivals revive family celebrations and village festivities of the past that enhance the community and cohesion between the generations.

Easter festivities, whitsun plays, days of architecture, the holy day of the fields, winegrowers' festival and the festival of the new wine on St. Martin's Day are annual events, attended by thousands of visitors. As a response to visitor wishes the museum is partially open even in winter. The outdoor museum also addresses the task of providing a forum for social dialogue. In addition to historical interpretations, the museum wants to play an active role in shaping modern society. In the last decades one of the main areas of activities has been the educational sector. Numerous schools, thousands of students and hundreds of teachers come to see our ex-

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Kondorfa School

In 1826, the master carpenter *Janos Györke* built the post-and-beam building with thatched roof, open chimney and porch. In 1860, the Catholic village school was temporarily located in this building. The teachers also lived here. This institution is a typical example of church schools of the 1880s. All school-age children were taught in one room. They sat at standardised school desks. They wrote on slates with slate pencils, and for a new task they cleaned the slate with a small sponge. At the front on the platform, there is the teacher's desk with a bell next to the board and an abacus as a tool for teaching maths. On the walls we can see pictures and maps, while



"The Hungarian Open Air Museum ..."
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hibitions and the *Klara Csilléry* Education Centre every year. They come in order to apply what they learn about traditional farming lifestyle in their history, literature, art and technology and even in their PE lessons. The museum provides a significant

incentive for lifelong learning. However, our educational activities are not only there for students and schools. Children in traditional village societies acquired knowledge and skills mainly in their families. The knowledge about the environment and the system of values in all areas of private and public life have been handed down from father to son, from generation to generation. Today, with an accelerated pace of life in

the children's satchels hang on hooks.

We enter the other room through a door in the kitchen, where the teacher used to live with his wife and children.

He was also the village cantor. He was well-read, he subscribed to a newspaper and owned books. He only received part of his wages in the form of cash payments. The villagers paid him with milk, butter, eggs and other products. The grain was measured for him in a wooden stave vessel, the bushel. After class, the teacher worked his field just like the other villagers.

The school is now used for the museum educational service. In the former stables of the house a small study room has been set up in which hearing-impaired visitors may get to know the objects of the rural world with the help of visual devices. •

Hungarian Open Air Museum in Szentendre,
museum guide.
www.skanzen.hu
(Translation Current Concerns)

The Eötvös school reform

Thanks to the efforts of the Culture Minister *Jozsef Eötvös*, the Public Education Act which is of extraordinary importance came into force in 1868. Under the new law parents were fined if they did not send their six to twelve-year-old children to school. This was the beginning of compulsory education in Hungary. The law decreed that the children of destitute parents did not pay fees and that every child – including the children of the different nationalities – should be taught in their native language in primary school.

an individualised society, the role model of the family is pushed into the background. In accordance with its mission the outdoor museum also wants to contribute to a learning process in the family that maintains and spreads cultural values. •

Hungarian Open Air Museum in Szentendre,
museum guide.

(Translation Current Concerns)

Psycho-techniques in school and kindergarten infringe fundamental rights

cc. What the US-dominated OECD with its educational programs imposes on Europe and Switzerland via “soft governance” (see Current Concerns No. 25 of 11 June 2012) ever more turns out to be scrap, actually dangerous scrap. Not only that the teaching methods are changing constantly and students are left in the lurch, teaching contents increasingly move away from reality. Suddenly, witches, vampires, wild guys, pirates, and other monsters emerge in kindergartens across the country. Children do no longer play “Müeterlis”(being moms), “Verkäuferlis” (selling) and “Lehrerlis” (teaching) but learn to top witch-pizzas with snakes, magic and frogs’ eyes. They practice witchcraft dancing, magic and witch spells, not just one afternoon, but the things go on for a full term. They make imaginary journeys to the “wild guys”, learn how to stomp and roar,

“We are monsters. We eat what we like and we do as we please.” – For two intensive months. Things are not much different in primary schools. In some cantons of Western Switzerland children are forced to read a book containing sadism portrayed positively. A girl by the name of Irella loves to read cruel stories to her doll “Vamp”, murderous deeds and apparitions, yummy, yummy ... I so much enjoy to see “Vamp’s” body trembling all over. I so much enjoy when she begs me “Stop Irella”. – Isn’t this enough? – Is this the basis of the OECD’s new knowledge-based society? What for are children ushered into a sadomasochistic world of the unreal? To be manipulated more easily as adults? Anyway, this is by no means a skill apt for democracy.

Fortunately, resistance is rising, psychologists and psychiatrists are alarmed. They disclose that such “games” do in-

deed harm children. Manipulative psycho-techniques are behind these games which cut deeply into the emotional life of children. These techniques not only effect the present but also the future thinking, feeling, and acting of children. They have no place in schools and kindergartens as they endanger the children’s mental health. They interfere with fundamental rights. Parents have successfully warded off the psychic rape of their children in public kindergartens and schools. They demand that values are being taught, as the letter of the Vaud parents shows. Now the political sphere is demanded to stop the madness. The facts are clear. The contribution of the “Ökozentrum Langenbruck” serves as an example to demonstrate how children and youngsters can be positively acquainted with real life.

Import from the USA

by Dr phil Judith Barben

Psycho-techniques were developed in American research laboratories. This here is about severe interference of a state institution with parental rights. The basic consensus and value system of our society are being called into question and antisocial behavior is being trained. With this said, does it come as a surprise when a fourth grader declares he felt “happy” kicking a fellow student lying helplessly on the ground without any reason?

Psycho-technical role playing games forced upon children

The new psycho-technical role playing games forced upon children have nothing to do with traditional role playing which children have always enjoyed playing and which promote their psychological development in a positive way. They play “family”, for example, “Kaufladen”, i.e.buying and selling in a shop or “school”. They playfully practice the roles they will take on in their later lives with their playmates. “You are now the father and I am the mother, and she is our baby, our child,” they say to each other. Such constructive role plays enhance their imagination, their ability to cooperate and to develop their language, because they have constantly seek agreement with their siblings or playmates in the progress of the play. Often they in-

corporate helping in the household into their game. Such role-playing can be useful in kindergarten or school, such as a “selling and buying in a shop” game as an introduction of “money” to the topic in Math.

Psycho-techniques are clearly to be distinguished from these meaningful role plays, because “psycho-techniques” are by definition elaborated methods of practically influencing people.¹ In other words, psychological insights are misused to subtly influence and manipulate people. Such methods have been developed in American laboratories since the 50s of the last century, and they have been propagated and disseminated as allegedly psychotherapeutic methods under such names as “group dynamics,” “Gestalttherapy,” “psychodrama” or “humanistic psychology”². However, they are controversial in circles of experts, as they frequently lead to disastrous consequences such as mental breakdowns, hospitalizations, disruption of relationships and depressive crises up to suicide. And this – mind you! – with adults.³

Harmful psycho-techniques

The aim of the above described psycho-techniques is supposedly to uncover “real”, but “buried” emotions and conflicts and to act them out dramatically.⁴

It is claimed that due to this uninhibited acting out of emotions, conflicts were resolved. In fact, the opposite is the case: Negative emotions are practiced and strengthened, interpersonal conflicts are stirred up and exacerbated.

At the beginning of a session, participants are relaxed by “warming-up games”, for example by going back and forth across the room and greeting each other in various ways – with the nose, with the bottom and so on. These exercises can be practiced until one of the participants decides to step on stage as “protagonist” and spontaneously play out a scene or a conflict in his life. For example, in one meeting a participant presented a conflict he had had at the age of five with his father in this way. At that time he would have liked to continue playing with his blocks, but his father wanted him to help him with a job. The leader of the meeting then called on the other participants to join as “auxiliary ego” or as a tyrannical father. The “auxiliary ego” was to support the “protagonist” by shouting at him what he believed were encouraging comments. Whether the father was really so tyrannical was not clarified, reconciliation was no aim. On the contrary, the protagon-

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School psychologists and psychotherapists warn against psychotherapy in schools

There are students with behavioral problems at almost every school. Problems arise when teachers and principals under heavy work pressure and stress label these students as sick and offer them a psychotherapeutic treatment at their school. [...] *Uschi Gersch*, a board member of the Association of Psychological Psychotherapists in the Association of German Professional Psychologists (BDP) says, "It is important that educational psychologists' and psychotherapeutic tasks are clearly separated. Therapy has no place in schools." Psychotherapy was [...] not able to solve all educational and developmental problems. School psychologists have their place in schools as a contact for students and teachers in psychological issues.

From BDP's point of view there might be a great danger of getting rid of troublesome students in this way, of disease mongering and transferring these students to psychotherapists – with the mission "to repair". School psychologists in Germany had the mandate, *Stefan Drewes*, the Chairman of the Section School Psychology within the BDP says, to help creating a school climate in which even the most difficult stages of children's and adolescents' development were successfully overcome by the cooperation between students, parents, teachers and school psychologists [...]

Psychotherapy was a treatment which required, if really necessary, a particular context. School would not be able

to offer this context. The duty of confidentiality for example was not properly regulated by this mixture of social work, school psychology and psychotherapeutic elements. There would also be no free choice of therapists. The existing bond of trust between the therapeutically working educators and the respective students in the context of a school would represent an additional problem. A psychotherapist as a staff member would inevitably face a conflict on how to handle the insights

gained in therapy (if it could be called so) among the staff members and – vice versa – how to handle information given by the staff in the talks with his patients. Additionally, a binding agreement between the patient or his parents and the therapist was missing. •

Source: *Press release of the Association of German Professional Psychologists (BDP)* Nr. 05/12 dated 10.03.2012

(Translation Current Concerns)

Methods of indoctrination prohibited also with adults

cc. Which is most strictly forbidden for teachers at school, namely to expose wards to techniques of manipulation and indoctrination is interdicted for psychologists and psychiatrists who treat adult people even if they go to see them voluntarily. Thus the professional directives for members of the Federation of Swiss Psychologists (FSP) prescribe the following to the psychologists who are members of this association:

"Ethic principles:

[...]

1. Respect of the dignity and the rights of the person

The members respect and protect the fundamental rights, the dignity and the value of all human beings. They particularly respect their right to autonomy and self-determination, to confidence and private sphere. [...]

3. Responsibility

The members [...] avoid inflicting damage and they are responsible for their acting.

4. Integrity

In the practice of their profession the members show integrity in their personal attitude, be it in practice, in science or research. They behave in a respectful, fair and credible way.

Art. 9

The members refrain from any way of influencing their patients ideologically or in any religious manner. [...]

Source: *rules of professional ethics for members of the Federation of Swiss Psychologists (FSP)*

(*rules of professionals conduct*)

(Translation Current Concerns)

"Import from the USA"

continued from page 17

nists should be taken as deeply as possible into his or her emotions.

You can easily imagine that such meetings can lead to severe, even negative emotional reactions afterwards, not just with the protagonist. Therefore, participants are advised not to use the car for a while until emotions have subsided.

Psycho-techniques are prohibited with dependents

Since psycho-techniques are considered therapeutic procedures, they may be applied only with the consent of adults. With dependents (students, pupils, staff) they are generally prohibited, as due to their dependency they cannot approve or reject freely.

Nevertheless, these techniques are used in the course of certain seminars for managers and job applications. In "assessments" employees and job applicants are forced to reveal their inner emotions. Or

they have to solve insoluble problems under time pressure and are then surprised and upset by obtrusive questions. Sometimes they are also called upon to present absurd viewpoints in role-playing games to be ridiculed before the group. These are all undue interferences in the protected personal sphere, as an industrial tribunal in Germany said. The tribunal prohibited employers to apply such methods.⁵

That this is even does even apply more for children, should go without saying. •

days. a report) Ehebald, Ulrich. Der Arzt und die Angebote des "Psychomarktes". (The physician and offers on the psycho market) In: Materialien zur Psychoanalyse und analytisch orientierten Psychotherapie. Band VI (1980), S. 90–123; Mentzos, Stavros. Neurotische Konfliktverarbeitung. Einführung in die psychoanalytische Neurosenlehre unter Berücksichtigung neuer Perspektiven. Frankfurt am Main 1982, S. 287; "Das Elend fing an einem Sonntag an", (The misery started on a Sunday) Coop-Zeitung Nr. 19, 12.5.1994; Tödlicher Unfall in einer Gruppentherapie. (Fatal accident in group therapy) "Neue Zürcher Zeitung", 16.2.1993.

⁴ Kösel, Edmund. Die Modellwirkung von Lernwelten. Ein Handbuch zur Subjektiven Didaktik. (Model impact of learning worlds: handbook of subjective didactics) Elztal-Dallau 1993, p. 116–120.

⁵ Beruf und Chance. Warum muss der Bewerber sein Innerstes nach aussen kehren? Im Assessment Center wird eine erhebliche Persönlichkeitsentblössung erwartet/Bedenken der Juristen. (Work and Opportunity. Why the candidate must turn his innermost outwards? Assessment Centers expect a significant exposure of people's personality/concerns of lawyers). *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, 20.4.1996; see also: Seelenstrip auf dem Weg nach oben. Kaderleute werden vor der Beförderung durch harte Psychotests gejagt. (Soul strips on the way up. Executives are chased through hard psychological tests before promotion) *ZürichExpress*, 24.8.2001.

¹ Rexilius, Günter & Grubitzsch, Siegfried. *Handbuch psychologischer Grundbegriffe*. (Handbook of basic psychological concepts) Reinbek bei Hamburg 1981, p. 869.

² In reality, these methods do not have anything in common with serious psychotherapy. Competent and experienced psychotherapy requires communication between therapist and client that is characterised by equality and mutual respect. The client will be encouraged in his ability to relate to people and his pro-social values, and is supported and guided to master the tasks in his or her life.

³ Sichrovsky, Peter. Seelentraining. Wie man in sechs Tagen sein Gesicht verliert. Ein Bericht; (Training of the soul: how to lose face in six

Unreal topics threaten the child's mental health

sn. The mediation of unreal contents can have a pathogenic (disease causing) effect on the child's mind by itself: children are dependent on learning from adults. They often do this by identification and imitation.

With the conveyance of unreal contents the child is confronted not only with the untrue, but this will work against its abilities with which the newborn is already equipped, as they have a sense of reality from birth on. Research findings of recent years show that newborns for example come to the world with a certain understanding of physical laws, numbers, speed, etc., corresponding to the real situation.

By unreal topics the image of the world as it really is and the image of the human being as he or she really is, are disturbed. If adults are acting the mediated content out, the effect on the child will be more intense, than by merely reading. A persistent uncertainty concerning the distinction between fantasy and reality, or an excessive preoccupation with unreal thought contents can lead to multiple psychological and cognitive disorders. These include:

1. By the distraction caused by the occupation with unreal characters, children

may develop concentration and learning disorders.

2. A rather shy child can build up fear with resulting difficulties to go to sleep, nightmares, abdominal pain, withdrawal, school anxiety and other symptoms.
3. A dominant child will more likely tend to identify himself for herself with a hero and may play himself or herself above others by means of fantasies of grandeur and power. The identification with the hero may satisfy its dreams of power, which may then become a seductive goal, possibly pursued by the child all through its life. If the child develops these power feelings towards adults, educational problems may arise.
4. A curious child may get lost in ruminations and use a lot of unnecessary time and energy in trying to figure out what the unreal topic is all about, instead of using his or her intelligence for getting to know the real-world.
5. By dealing with unreal contents the child is acquainted with thought patterns that encourage evasiveness. Evasiveness has a disturbing effect on the development especially during puberty, when demands are increasing and this
6. The tendency may provide the basis for an addictive disorder.
7. The unreal world of thought can provide a basis for misidentification and psychosis such as paranoia and megalomania.
7. The children may be encouraged to indulge in oppositional, aggressive and violent behavior and develop social-behavioral problems. Children imitate their role models and may copy their destructive behavior. Aggressive behavior may increase, and aggression-inhibiting factors may be reduced. In addition, other people may be misinterpreted as potentially more aggressive than they actually are, which may cause severe defensive reactions.
8. Fantasies, experience of delusion, and aggressiveness may provide the motivational basis for all degrees of offensive (criminal) behavior. What kind of disorder will develop depends on the personality and environment of the child. The young child is not capable of distinguishing fantasy and reality on its own and relies on the reinforcing of its sense of reality, so that it is less vulnerable to future crisis situations and will not lose its footing.

“Where the Wild Things Are” Theater performance in a kindergarten class – A mother’s report

da. Before the spring holidays *Naomi* comes home, horrified and tells her mother that they are performing a theatre play in the kindergarten in which the boy Max yells at his mother: “I’ll eat you up.” He yells, “I’m Max in wolf’s clothing, and I’m wild. “He stabs his dog with a fork. And when his mother sends him to his room, he yells. “Always those dumb adults who claim to know better.”

Horrified, I looked for the corresponding book and children’s songs on the internet. Under www.evamarlin.ch I find the CD (*Zytglogge Verlag*) and listen to the beginnings of the songs. The first mother’s lullaby is being scoffed, the second Max-song is an aggressive rap song.

What is the picture book “Where the Wild Things Are” by *Maurice Sendak* about? One evening, Max pulls over a wolf’s clothing and noisily causes all kinds of mischief. His mother sends him to bed without supper because of his naughtiness. In his rage a forest grows in his imagination that becomes a vast jungle. There he sees a sea with a ship. For weeks Max travels on this ship until he reaches the land where the wild things are. They roll their eyes, snarl their teeth, roar

their terrible roars and show their claws. But Max is not afraid of them, on the contrary, in his megalomania and power fantasies he tames them with a magic trick. They get scared of him, submit, and grant him the title “the wildest guy of all”; they crown him their king.

Eventually Max gets bored. He feels lonely and longs for someone who really loves him most. So he goes home and gets a warm soup from his mother – as a “reward” for his fantasy journey into the violent counter world of the wild things – So much for the story. Naomi does not want to participate in the theatre. We discuss that she could be the mother because she says that she is the only right thing in the play. She agrees. From May on the play was intensely rehearsed. At first *David* acted Max. When he refused, *Sereina* had to take on the role. From then on Naomi and Sereina had always quarrels. Mid-June, the aggression among the kindergarten children increased continuously. Sereina plagued Naomi, and shot her scrunchy into Naomi’s face as they were sitting in the circle. The teacher confiscated the hair barette without further consequences.

Later also Sereina did no longer want to act Max, and so another boy took the role of Max. The day after the rehearsal David slapped Naomi in her face. Just like that? He said to her: “So, now you have a mess in your head”.

The teacher of the parallel kindergarten class noticed that the children became increasingly restless and aggressive during the months from May until July. During the breaks, there were gross incidents: One boy struck another boy of the parallel-class so hard that he was sent howling to the floor. The two kindergarten teachers talked to their classes lecturing them that no one was allowed to hit someone else. A few days later, another boy hit a girl with a stick and showed the finger, again during break. Naomi saw this and told the other kindergarten teacher about it. She encouraged her to inform her own kindergarten teacher. Naomi’s teacher listened to everything, but gave her colleague the feedback, that Naomi was not telling the truth. She downplayed the aggressiveness in the playground. Children who have a genuine sense of justice, are let down that way.

“Witches” – a topic in kindergarten

ks. The subject “witches” began after the spring holidays, continued up to the end of the school year and was concluded with a witches’ theatre play.

In a letter, the parents were asked before the spring holidays to give the children a book and a dress to be worked on and cut up. The book should become a treasure and magic book.

The kindergarten teacher dressed up as a witch welcomed her children. Some of the children were afraid. They did not know what had happened to their “old” kindergarten teacher. They only calmed down when she showed her face to be recognised. The kindergarten was “decorated” with spiders and spider webs, the baby corner was cleared out, there were no more dolls to play with and there were dresses and scarves ready for dressing up in another corner. According to a statement of the kindergarten teachers, the children should “immerse themselves completely into the subject”. Everything was oriented towards this subject: the children’s work sheets, the handicrafts (witches’ brooms and hats) and a story from a witch book to read to them (“The Little Witch” by Ottfried Preussler). The children addressed each other with their names pronounced backwards (Peter – Retep, Simon – Nomis, ...), they learnt nonsense proverbs by heart (to practise the syllabic separation) and magic charms. For someone’s birthday, they acted out to receive a witch pizza (garnished with snakes and frogs eyes). During handcrafts, if a child asked the kindergarten teacher for scissors, the answer was: “Abracadabra, here are the scissors!”

After the holidays, one of the kindergarten teachers arrived with straw-blonde hair (when before it was dark brown). She told the children: “During the holidays I had a lot of stress, but actually I had to go to the hairdressers, urgently, to get a haircut. Then I met the little witch and I told her about my problem. The little witch an-

swered: ‘No problem, I can do magic. I will say a charm, and your hair will just be cut’, which she did. However, because the little witch did not yet have much practise with her magic, she made a mistake, and now my hair is blonde.” Now, instead of the new haircut the teacher has blonde hair. This occupied the children’s mind very much.

The kindergarten excursion was announced as a visit to a “mysterious hut in the forest”. The children walked into the forest to a hut and found a slip of paper there written by the little witch, saying that she actually lived there, but today, unfortunately, she was not at home.

For the end of the school year event the children practised a witch theatre play. The little witch had visited the “Walpurgis Night” without permission, and now the chief magician, together with the other witches, took counsel how they could punish her for this naughtiness. Actually, the witches had some ideas:

The herbal witch: “I will make her a terribly gruesome tea, which she will have to drink.” The nettle witch: “I will make her walk barefoot through the nettles.”

Other witches: “I will hit her on the head with a stone.” “We can throw the cheeky toad into the fire as a punishment.” “Give her to me, and I will put her in a mud hole up to her neck.”

The children played a witches’ dance with witch drums, and there were green drinks and colour-dyed foodstuff.

Consequences:

Message from the Ministry of Culture of Baden-Wuerttemberg

“On request of the member of Parliament Meister-Scheufelen, the Ministry of Baden-Wuerttemberg informed: ‘Suggestive and therapeutic methods, which target the subconscious of pupils, are not part of the task of schools ...’

‘Therapeutic methods’, according to the Schleswig-Holstein Ministry of education, have no place in school, especially the kinesiological muscle test must not be used.”

Source: www.umweltjournal.de/AFA_familienrecht/14638.php
(Translation: Current Concerns)

“Where the Wild Things Are”

continued from page 19

In the period from May to July Naomi did not report any new incidents but brought a book home with texts and drawings about “Where the Wild Things Are.” The children had been working intensely on the play for two months.

The theater performance was introduced by the kindergarten teacher like this: “Thank you all for coming. Now we will go on a journey all together. This requires courage. Sometimes we will be afraid, but together we can overcome our fear.”

The children acted and sang the lyrics and songs. When they sang the song “We are the wild things” the songwriter who was also there, chanted in four languages, kneeling in front of the children: “We are monsters; we eat what we like, we act as we please ...” The manipulation of the children stomping and roaring like monsters became obvious here. It was repulsive.

A obtrusive boy, ready for fights was allowed to act the screaming seagull on the sea. In the end of the performance he was out of control in such a way that he could no longer sit still and the kindergarten teacher had to grab him and hold him tight.

Naomi was forced by her kindergarten teacher like all the others, to act a savage on the island and sing the aggressive song. The children were taught to make a book on “Where the Wild Things Are”. They had to repeat everything that Max yelled at his mother. They had to write it into the speech balloons. They were asked by the kindergarten teacher, how they would react if mother sent them into their room, because they contradicted. A picture of Max was stamped into the book, and those who wanted could also have their forearms stamped, a tattoo. Naomi and two younger friends were the only ones who came home without a tattoo.

Citizens from the Swiss canton of Vaud struggling against a mentally destructive obligatory reading

In the Canton of Fribourg, due to parents' pressure, the book "Même pas peur" had to be removed from primary school

Lausanne, 17 June 2012

Dear Parents,

Recently our eight year old son received, a book by *Evelyne Reberg* entitled "Même pas peur" ("Not even fear") as compulsory reading from his teacher. The content of this book has shocked us.

Even though two years ago the *Association Vaudoise de Parents Chrétiens* (Vaud Association of Christian Parents) protested against this book and *Jacques Neirynck*, National Councilor CVP called it scandalizing (in "24 heures" of 16 June 2009) – which created more criticism in the media – the Vaud Department of Education, Youth and Culture is forcing our children to read this book in the context of *HarmoS* in several lessons. In the Canton of Fribourg, the book was removed from the curriculum as a consequence of the parents' and teachers' resistance.

For those who have not read it, here is a short summary of the book:

There is a little girl of seven years, *Irella*, an identification figure for first and second grade girls ("with a confused head, dirty, straight hair, large feet"), who is often left alone at home in a house that "resembles a ruin" and is "away from the city, without electricity", in nights that are sometimes as "black as death". She is talking to her doll "Vamp". Her mother is making herself up before she is going to have fun with her friends and we learn that her eyes look like black eyes ("sont au beurre noir"), her face is "pale as a grave" and her fingernails resemble claws. The girl loves to be alone; she can hardly wait for her mother to finally leave the house – a situation our children experience daily, isn't it? While her mother is out, "*Irella* plays all kind of forbidden games", shouting: "Freedom is mine!" She loves to read "terrible stories, murders, appearances, wonderful, wonderful ... I love it when Vamp is trembling all over, I love it when she begs me 'Stop it, *Irella*'". On a Friday 13th, *Irella* sees "a dark gloomy mass wriggling through the lower hall". She thinks it is the Flying Wolf whom she read about in the newspaper. The whole night, the wolf enjoys himself scaring the girl and the doll who are hiding in a bed that is "hardly larger than a coffin". The pictures in the book show the two terrified her-

ones with wide-open eyes, bristled hair and open mouth. *Irella* always pretends that she was not even scared by this fool, this idiot Flying Wolf. Finally her mother comes back and tells her daughter that she is a vampire spending her nights in town, scaring people, and that she had made her daughter pass the initiation exam for vampire children, by hoaxing her into believing the story of the Flying Wolf,. The last page of the booklet tells us the morals of the story: "How stupid these humans are! How fearful they are!"

After we read the book three times, we asked ourselves, as readers, what could be the purpose of this story, and as parents, what kind of values are conveyed by this compulsory reading and why might those responsible for our children's education have chosen it at all.

Here are some of the conclusions we drew from the reading:

1. Fear is belittled; there is nothing wrong with instilling terror in others.
2. A mother can easily make her child do anything wrong (this unrealistic story can be transferred to other, more realistic situations).
3. Negative, bad or extravagant figures (vampires) are depicted in a positive, likeable and real way.
4. The Gothic (sub-)culture¹ is reevaluated (cf. by the description of the mother and the little girl).
5. The book can be seen as a stimulus for extravagant, gloomy, disgusting and mystic reading.
6. Sadism is depicted in a positive way. *Irella* loves to scare her doll even if she begs her in despair to stop; the mother is bragging about her night activities: "I have really made them panic, believe me. If you had seen these car accidents, how people fainted ... and all this crying ..." – which makes the little girl laugh.
7. The language is poor and often insinuates death.
8. The aesthetics are doubtful; we found the drawings uninteresting and ugly; the figures look like the "Addams Family".²

We would like to ask you, dear parents, to check what your children are reading at school. Do not resign! In this context we have to inform you that in some schools the children are not allowed to take the

books home to prevent them from being damaged. So you might have to express some curiosity.

If you share our opinion on "Not even fear" or other books like "La princesse à la gomme" ("The rubber princess"), do not hesitate to contact us so that we can intervene with *Anne-Catherine Lyon* (member of the Governing Council of the Canton of Vaud, Department of Education, Youth and Culture) and address the directors of the concerned schools to demand an explanation about the benefit of these books for the education of our children and to have this book removed from the list of books for compulsory readings in the Canton of Vaud.

One should think that there are enough positive and buoyant books conveying values (work, endurance, love, kindness, friendship, veracity, justice, delight in exertion) which we can give our children? Why should little children be acquainted with ugliness and be exposed to unrealistic stories of vampires? Why occupy them with this book for weeks, the equivalent of twenty pages in a working book?

Let us not forget that we entrust school with the most precious we have, our children. The first educators are the parents. School has to support parents in this task and must not create confusion in children about what is good and bad.

We are expecting your support.
Don't be afraid to react!

*Joanna and Andrzej Kondraczy,
Lausanne*

This letter to the parents was accompanied by a text proposal for an open letter to *Anne-Catherine Lyon*, the member of the governing council and the heads of school.

Contact address: mempaspeur2012@yahoo.com

¹ Gothic = subculture in the context of Punk and New Wave/Dark Wave, the Black Scene with their fascination with death and self-staging. The name refers to the 19th century Gothic Fiction literature.

² The "Addams Family" is a TV show and the creation of the US comic artist Charles Addams. As a satirical inversion of the ideal of the "American family", the Addams are an eccentric family who enjoys everything grotesque and macabre, never becoming aware that others are finding these things bizarre or scary. (cf. Wikipedia)

Legal protection of children against psycho-techniques in school according to Swiss Federal Legislation

Federal Constitution of the Swiss Confederation of 18 April 1999

Art. 7 Human dignity

Human dignity must be respected and protected.

Art. 11 Protection of children and young people

1 Children and young people have the right to the special protection of their integrity and to the encouragement of their development.

Art. 13 Right to privacy

1 Everyone has the right to privacy in their private and family life [...].

Art. 15 Freedom of religion and conscience

1 Freedom of religion and conscience is guaranteed. [...] 4 No one shall be forced to join or belong to a religious community, to participate in a religious act, or to follow religious teachings.

Swiss Criminal Code of 21 December 1937 (Status as of 1 October 2012)

Art. 181 Coercion

Any person who, by the use of force or the threat of serious detriment or other restriction of another's freedom to act compels another to carry out an act, to fail to carry out an act or to tolerate an act, shall be liable to a custodial sentence not exceeding three years or to a monetary penalty.

School laws

Children are to be educated according to the rules of democracy to be life-affirming and sociably competent humans

ev. In all education and primary schools' laws and in all laws of the different cantons you can find the educational obligation to educate the children to become "positive, industrious and sociable humans" as well as to educate them "according to the rules of democracy, freedom and social justice in the framework of the state of law to responsible humans and citizens" (Law for primary schools, St. Gall, Art. 3).

Of course it is also statutory in the school laws of all cantons that school is to support the parents in their educational efforts. It is obvious that the promotion of grudge against parental orders and resistance against the educational efforts of

the parents is not in accordance with these laws.

Article 2 of the law for primary schools in Canton Zurich stipulates: "The primary school educates the children orientated towards Christian, humanistic and democratic values." Equally self-evident, the school law of the Canton Basel-Landschaft demands: "The educational system is bound to the Christian, humanistic and democratic tradition."

The propagation of sadistic compartments (see example page 21), the breaking of natural inhibition against violence (see pages 19f.), the activation of aggressive feelings by collective shouting (see pages 19f.) or the preparation of negative feelings against women that look somehow unusual (see page 20) are not acceptable. Neither is the allegedly only playful breaking up of inner barriers against violence and lawlessness as they are i.e. trained by pirate games – because the infantile game is always the training and preparation for the real world. This is not a promotion of the democratic sense of civility and not a promotion of the intercultural understanding for people of other countries and cultures, as the UN charter clearly demands.

The following box also points to the respective responsibility of the states in the international context.

Psycho-techniques: An act of violence and of coercion

"A lot of New Age Pedagogy practices are an unlawful attack against the pupils' and students' rights. They are a form of violence and of coercion (§ 249 StGB – German Criminal Code); they impair the health, physical integrity, freedom, the right to self-determination and the state of mind of the persons concerned."

*Source: www.umweltjournal.de/AFA_familienrecht/14638.php
(Translation Current Concerns)*

"Combatting prejudices leading to race discrimination"

To reduce human beings to attributes (of witches) constitutes an infringement of the UN ban on discrimination

ef. There is an international agreement on UN level for the elimination of all forms of race discrimination (*International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, ICERD*). The convention is one of the seven supplementary agreements on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and was adopted as a Treaty by the UN General Assembly on 21 December 1965. It entered into force as the first UN human rights convention on 4 January 1969. Meanwhile 175 states have ratified the Convention (September 2012).

"Art. 7: States Parties undertake to adopt immediate and effective measures, particularly in the fields of teaching, education, culture and information, with a view to combating prejudices which lead to racial discrimination and to promoting understanding, tolerance and friendship among nations and racial or ethnical groups, as well as to propagating the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and this Convention."

Source: www.un.org

Making sensible use of existent technologies and refining them

Preparing children and adolescents for the realities of life

More urgently than ever, it is imperative to introduce our children and adolescents gradually into the realities of life and prepare them in a manner appropriate to their age for the challenges of mankind. A daily look into the newspaper teaches us the great challenges of mankind in the 21st century: the issues of war and peace in a world full of weapons which couldn't be more devastating in their impact; the issue of democracy and how to preserve it in the future; the fair distribution of natural resources, starting with the food up to the mineral resources; the energy issue, how to open up new resources and develop new sources of energy while reducing the environmental impact, so that people will have a planet worth living on 100 years from now; the protection of our landscapes and the careful use of the water, and much more. These are the challenges that we and following generations face. The "Ökozentrum" (ecological centre) Langenbruck provides a sensible and admirable contribution in the framework of its means.

thk. Topics such as magic, pirates, witches and other crazy ideas do not help to solve pending problems. On the contrary, they lead our children away from the people and the human community into a world of fantasy and leave disastrous effects on their mind, leading up to the promotion of racist ideas.

Instead of dealing with daily skills in life, the children and adolescents dream of supernatural forces and abilities which simply do not exist, and which have an ensuing paralyzing and destructive impact on them and the environment. This is unacceptable and despicable for an enlightened society such as ours.

This does not mean that you should deprive the child of its playfulness and its ability to dream; however, we definitely have to raise the question what will become of our children and young people? Will the gift of imagination and the childlike playfulness be guided in a constructive direction or will it ultimately serve the destruction of human values? Do we prefer creative and



The "Ökozentrum" Langenbruck in new outfit. (picture thk)

constructive players in our society, which at an early stage acquire the prerequisites to tackle the upcoming problems as adults and to work on the social progress? Or do we want human beings, whose activities mainly revolve around themselves as we see it all too often today, and which will neither become constructive players in our democracy nor pillars of our society?

Former generations have demonstrated what people are capable of. Since its constitution, the development of the Swiss Confederation places a stunning testimony about how the people, out of a situation of abject poverty, fought for their freedom and created prosperity.

All the more refreshing and forward-looking that there are organizations which have assumed responsibility for the progress in the

ecological field and quietly, but not less efficient, consider the needs of the people on scientific grounds and thus build on the traditions of Swiss creative work and research.

Making existing technologies suitable for everyday use

For 33 years the "Ökozentrum" has been active in the pretty village of Langenbruck, embedded in the Basel Jura Mountains. Research on new technologies is taking place in various areas and particularly the use of and research on renewable energy sources is at the heart of the activities.

The "Ökozentrum" organized an open day on 21/22 September. After a one-year rebuilding phase, it presented its new 200 square meters large and 9 meters tall

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Energy Experience Days

The "Ökozentrum" (ecological centre) Langenbruck provides for planning and implementation of the energy experience day. For its success, however, the support of the staff of teachers is essential. Especially beneficial are accompanying class lessons on energy topics in advance or after the day. The Energy Experience Day is well suited to start the discussion of energy issues.

As the needs of the schools are very different, the experience day is divided into several modules that can be combined freely depending on the students' level of knowledge.

A module consists of one lesson (45 minutes), so that an experience day can be arranged from a half to a whole day.

Examples are:

2–4 modules make a half day (morning or afternoon) for 1–4 classes.

2–4 modules give a full day for 5–8 classes.

The duration of the Energy Experience Day depends on the number of participating groups. The modules can take place simultaneously. Multiple classes / groups rotate within the course.



"Smile" (picture thk)

"Making sensible use of..."

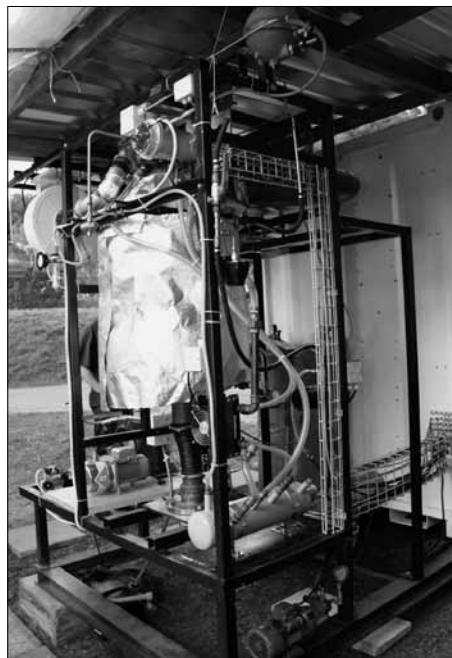
continued from page 23

research facility, which was created according the latest energy saving concepts. 20 employees of the "Ökozentrum" are researching and working there, and they are crucially involved in the development and implementation of new technologies.

Among other things, the electric car *Smile* is assembled in this research facility. In May 2011, the "Ökozentrum" presented this nippy little car to the public (cf. *Current Concerns* No. 20 on 16.5.2011). It was the big crowd-puller that weekend. The development of the *Smile* shows the basic principles of the "Ökozentrum" quite well. As project leader *Mario Vögelei* clearly said: "It is not about reinventing the wheel but making use of existing technologies and to adapt them for everyday use." So the *Smile* was assembled out of several existing components and developed further to a serial-production vehicle.

**Ideas must be focused on
the living conditions of the people**

The field of research of the "Ökozentrum" does not only comprise the further devel-



Aactor!GT (picture thk)

opment of existing things. An aggregate winning residual energy out of so-called lean gas called Aactor!GT was developed and produced in the "Ökozentrum". The use of Aactor!GT is intended to prevent polluting gases from landfills reaching the atmosphere and allows to use the landfill gas to produce energy. Again, existing parts are used; so for example the turbocharger of a car-engine.

The "Ökozentrum" Langenbruck also cooperates with developing nations. A project in Burkina Faso supports the important industrial sector of fruit drying, especially of mangoes. Here, a simple heat pump serves as condensing dryer and gently dries the moisture out of the fruit. The "Ökozentrum" has developed and designed a fruit dryer, which is equipped with a heat pump available on the Swiss market. To sensibly use this drying machine in developing and emerging countries, the countries using it must be enabled to produce the heat pump unit themselves. The project leader of the "Ökozentrum" is very optimistic that this will be successful. Twice a year he travels to Africa, to refine the drying plant with the local people and to adapt it to the needs of the people in Burkina Faso.

Again, this is a principle of the "Ökozentrum". The ideas must be implemented in the respective countries and focused on the living conditions and needs of the people there. This is the key to success.

On the open day you could marvel at these and other projects of the "Ökozentrum", and you could get explanations.

**Raise the awareness of children
and young people for
responsible consumption**

The "Ökozentrum" would like to provide assistance not only directly and efficiently or establish energy efficiency through intelligent projects, but also introduce our children and young people into this field of research in a manner adequate to their age.

The so-called Energy Experience Days are particularly popular among students. Here, school classes are made familiar with the topic of power generation and power supply (see box).



"Drying machine" (picture thk)

Since Spring 2012, both the regional group of Berne and the city of Basel have been offering a city tour called "Global-Consumption" for school classes. Here, the young people should be made aware of responsible consumption. The question: "How is the purchase of a mobile related to conflicts in the Congo?", promises a fascinating debate over the conflicts in our world and their connections to our privacy.

If you visit the homepage of the "Ökozentrum" (www.oekozentrum.ch), you will find even more projects and offers, not only for students, but also for adults. It is worth taking a look.

The work of "Ökozentrum" is innovative and effective, because its selection and design of projects focuses on the respective realities of the people's lives. It is not about reinventing things once again, but about sensibly recombining the existing and checking its suitability for everyday use. It is not about an environmental dogmatism, but about a joint search for solutions and a meaningful development of what has already been created.

Mandate waste lessons for schools

In waste education students learn concretely and practically a responsible approach to handle waste and resources. Teachers trained specifically for this subject visit kindergartens, and classes of 2nd, 5th and 8th grades. Based on games, quizzes and group work they conduct a varied and fun-oriented course on issues such as waste disposal, recycling, littering, conscious consumption and resources. The offer is oriented towards kindergartens and schools whose community participates in waste education. For these classes the teaching is free because it is financed by the commune's waste account or the waste disposal association. The waste is a teaching project of *Pusch*.^{*} The "Ökozentrum" (ecological centre) Langenbruck is responsible for the organization in the regions Zofingen, Solothurn and Laufen.

*For 20 years, the Pusch Foundation has been making children and adolescents aware of a responsible approach to our waste and resources. Environmental teachers provide knowledge on litter, disposal, recycling, and the importance of raw materials and their origin. The offer addresses kindergartens and classes of the 2nd, 5th and 8th grade.