

# Current Concerns

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

English Edition of *Zeit-Fragen*

## For a reorientation of Greece

Doing one's duty towards the ideals of freedom and justice until the end

by Mikis Theodorakis

cc. Mikis Theodorakis, the great Greek composer and freedom fighter, approaches the situation in his homeland from his own, internal position. The experience of Greece in the Second World War and the experience of military dictatorship have sharpened the eye and let him differ between EU propaganda and real causal relationships.

Until 2009, there was no serious economic problem. The major wounds of our economy were the enormous expenses related to the purchase of war material and the corruption. For both of these wounds, foreigners are jointly responsible. Germans, for instance, as well as French, English and Americans, earned billions of Euros from annual sales of war material, to the detriment of our national wealth. The German company Siemens, for instance, maintained a special department for buying off Greek stakeholders in order to place its products in the Greek market.

It is obvious that these two big wounds could have been avoided if the leaders of

"In reality, every package deal which charges Greece with tens of billions of euros is fully repaid, while we are burdened with new unbearable interest rates. And since it is necessary to maintain the state, the hospitals and the schools, the Troika is burdening the middle and lower economic strata of society with excessive taxes, leading directly into starvation. A famine took place at the beginning of the German occupation in 1941, with 300.000 people dead in a period of 6 months. Since then, the ghost of hunger has now returned to our defamed and unfortunate country."

the two pro-American parties in power hadn't been eroded by corrupt elements who resorted to excessive loans in order to cover the leakage of wealth (the product of the Greek people's labor) into the hands of foreign countries, resulting in the public debt reaching 300 billion Euros, i.e. 130% of GDI (Gross Domestic Income).

Due to that confidence trick, the foreigners I mentioned before made a double profit: firstly from the sales of the weapons and their products. Secondly, from the interest on the money they lent to the governments and not to the people. (...) the interests on the one billion dollar loan

that Andreas Papandreou received in 1986 from a big European country reached 54 billion Euros and was eventually paid back in ... 2010!

2008

– the big financial crisis in Europe

In 2008 came the big financial crisis in Europe. It was therefore only logical that the Greek economy should be affected. However, our living standards, high enough for Greece to be ranked among the 30 richest countries in the world, remained unaffected. There was an increase, though, in

continued on page 2

## “Eurogendfor” – the private army of the EU, ready to march to Greece



cc. There are articles which the reader can only comment like this: "This cannot be true, I regularly inform myself and usually think I am up to date, but why do I not know about that?" – The following is

one of those: If you think of gender – the synthetic newfangled definition of sex – in connection with Euro-Gender-For, you are on the wrong track. The name is a showpiece of the intellectual power of innovation of the French: Instead of EU rambo troops or Goldman Sachs bodyguards along the lines of Blackwater a "police"-private army has emerged. This

way the Germans from Angela Merkel's faction may deflect the "indignation" that they trigger in the countries of the oh-so-liberal euro-Europe to the French. But at the latest upon arrival in Greece, this spin doesn't work any longer.

In Spain, the public protests increase daily. While the Germans recommend the southerners to get out of bed earlier, to take fewer holidays and to work harder, the wrath of the Greek people unloads on the streets of the country. There is seething unrest and turmoil everywhere, people all over Europe are in fear of civil war-like conditions, triggered by the crisis. That is known in the EU headquarters too and appropriate provisions have already been taken.

For the first time now, the EU's private army, making ready for departure to Greece, is prepared for deployment.

Hardly any European knows this secret force that goes by the name of "Eurogendfor". The command of this more than 3,000-strong special intervention group is located in Vicenza, Italy. Originally the former French defense minister Alliot-Marie pushed the creation of this force after there had been more and more riots in France with street battles and lootings caused by young Muslim immigrants. "Eurogendfor" is everything: police, criminal police, army and intelligence. The responsibilities of these troops are practically unlimited. It is to ensure, in close cooperation with European military personnel, the "security in European conflict areas." Their job is especially to crush uprisings. More and more EU states join "Eurogendfor".

continued on page 2

**"For a reorientation ..."**

continued from page 1

public debt. But public debt doesn't necessarily lead to financial crisis. There are big countries, like the U.S. and Germany, with debts amounting to trillions of Euros. The key is in economic growth and production. In that case, one can borrow from large Banks with an interest rate of up to 5%, until the crisis ends.

That was exactly our position in 2009, when the government shift took place in November and G. Papandreou took over as prime minister.

Mr. Papandreou *could have dealt with the financial crisis (which as I have said reflected the European one) by borrowing from foreign Banks under the usual interest rate of under 5%*. If he had done that, there wouldn't have been the slightest problem for our country. In fact, the opposite would have occurred; *because we were on an economic growth path, our standard of living would certainly have risen.*

However, Mr. Papandreou *had already begun his conspiracy against the Greek people since the summer of 2009*, when he secretly met with *Strauss-Kahn*, with the objective of driving Greece under the domination of the IMF. The information concerning this meeting was released by the former President of the IMF himself.

For the situation to reach that end, the country's real financial status had to be distorted, so that foreign Banks would become nervous and raise the loan interest rates to prohibitive figures.

What followed was the systematic campaign by Mr. Papandreou and the Ministry of Finance throughout Europe that lasted 5 months, during which they tried to persuade the foreigners that Greece was a Titanic about to sink. After each of their declarations the interest rates increased, so that it became impossible for us to borrow any more, giving IMF and the *European*

*Bank* the appearance of being our salvation, when in reality it was the beginning of our death.

**One single signature**

*In May 2010 a single Minister signed the notorious Memorandum, our complete subservience to our lenders. Greek law stipulates, in such situations, that the adoption of such an important agreement must be decided by three fifths of the Parliament.* Therefore, in essence, the Memorandum and the Troika that essentially govern us today, operate illegally not only under Greek but also under European law.

Imagine that with this Memorandum we concede to foreigners our National Independence and our National Property. That is, our harbours, airports, road networks, electricity, water supply, subterranean and underwater wealth, etc., etc. Add to that our historical monuments, like the Acropolis, Delphi, Olympia, Epidauros and such sites, since we have waived all our legal defenses.

*Production has come to a standstill, the unemployment rate has reached 18%, 80.000 shops have closed down, along with thousands of small businesses and hundreds of industries. In total, 432.000 enterprises have shut down.* Tens of thousands of young scientists are abandoning the country, which is every day sinking into medieval darkness. Thousands formerly wealthy citizens are scavenging on rubbish heaps and sleeping on the pavement.

In the meantime, we are supposed to be surviving thanks to the magnanimity of our lenders, the Europe of the Banks and the IMF. In reality, every package deal which charges Greece with tens of billions of Euros is repaid in full, while we are burdened with new unbearable interest rates. And since it is necessary to maintain the State, the Hospitals and the Schools, the Troika is burdening the mid-

dle and lower economic strata of society with excessive taxes, leading directly to starvation. A famine took place at the beginning of the German occupation in 1941, with 300.000 people dead in a period of 6 months. Since then, the ghost of hunger is now returning to our defamed and unfortunate country.

If one considers that the German occupation cost us one million people dead and the total destruction of our country, how is it possible for us Greeks to accept Ms *Merkel's* threats and the Germans' intention to impose on us a new Gauleiter... This time wearing a tie...

And to prove just how rich a country is Greece and how hard working and conscious the Greek people (conscious of their Debt to Freedom and love of their country), I cite as an example the time of the German occupation from 1941 until October of 1944.

When the SS and hunger killed one million citizens and the Wehrmacht was systematically destroying the country, and stealing all its agricultural production and the gold from the Banks, Greeks saved the people from hunger by creating the National Solidarity Movement and a partisan army of 100.000, which tied down 20 German divisions in our country.

At the same time not only did Greeks manage to survive thanks to their hard work, but there was also a large growth in Modern Greek art -especially in literature and music- under the terrible conditions of the occupation.

Greece chose the path of self-sacrifice for the sake of freedom and simultaneously of survival.

That is when we were unnecessarily punished, and we responded with Solidarity and Resistance and we survived. Now we are doing exactly the same thing, with the certainty that the Greek people will be the ultimate victors.

continued on page 3

**"Eurogendfor" – the private army ..."**

continued from page 1

The European governments know exactly what awaits them. The EU has secretly and quietly founded the paramilitary gendarmerie force, so that the EU countries would not be forced to use their own army against their citizens. The *European Gendarmerie Force* can theoretically be used everywhere, where the EU sees a crisis. The *Treaty of Velsen*, which governs the operations of *Eurogendfor*, says so. The motto in the coat of arms is: "Lex paciferat" – translated: "The law will bring peace." It emphasizes "the principle of a strict relationship between the enforcement of legal principles and the restoration of a safe and

secure environment." A 'war council' in the shape of the Ministerial Committee, composed of the defense and security ministers of the participating EU member states, decides about the deployment strategy. *The force can be set in march either on request or by decision of the EU.*

In article 4 of the founding treaty the tasks of deployment are described as follows: "protecting people and property and keeping order in the event of public disturbances." The soldiers of the paramilitary EU force must initially comply with applicable law of the state in which they are stationed and deployed, but: *All buildings and grounds, which are monopolized by troops, are immune and not accessible even for authorities of the state in which the force acts. The EU juggernaut is set-*

*ting national law out of power even in the case of fighting insurgency.*

"Eurogendfor" *is a rapidly deployable paramilitary police force and intelligence.* It combines all military, police and intelligence powers and resources which they may use, according to a mandate of a ministerial crisis team, to combat unrests, riots and political demonstrations in cooperation with large national police and army units on each site. The defense ministry hails *Eurogendfor* on its website: "Police or military: a European gendarmerie promises the solution." •

Source: <http://uhupardo.wordpress.com/2012/03/16eurogendfor-die-privatarmee-der-eu-bereit-zum-abmarsch-nach-griechenland>, 16.3.2012

(Translation Current Concerns)

**"For a reorientation ..."**

continued from page 2

They are threatening to throw us out of Europe. If Europe doesn't want Greece to be a part of it, Greece, for her part, is 10 times more unwilling to be a part of this Merkel- Sarkozy Europe.

Today, Sunday February 12, 2012, I am about to take part in the demonstrations, along with *Manolis Glezos*, the hero who, in the past, took the swastika down from the Acropolis, signaling the beginning of resistance against Hitler, not only in Greece but throughout Europe. Today, our streets and our squares will be flooded with hundreds of thousands of citizens who will demonstrate their rage against the government and against the Troika.

**Aiming for cooperation with Russia**

At this point in time, I have devoted all my efforts to an attempt to dynamically unify the Greek people. I am trying to convince them that *IMF and Troika is not a one-way street, that there is an*

*alternative solution. And that solution is to radically change the course of our nation and turn towards Russia for economic co-operation and the setting up of joint ventures in order to exploit our natural wealth under beneficial terms that will safeguard our national interests.*

As for Europe, I suggest *we stop buying war material from Germany and France. And that we do everything in our power so that Germany pays back the war reparations they owe us and which currently amount to approximately—including the appropriate interest- 500 billion Euros.*

The only force capable of effecting all these revolutionary changes is *the Greek people, unified under a huge Front of Resistance and Solidarity* in order to remove the Troika (the IMF and the European banks) from our country. At the same time all their illegal actions (loans, debts, interest, taxes, privatization of national wealth) should be considered as if they never took place. Naturally, their Greek partners, al-

ready condemned in our conscience as traitors, will have to be punished.

I am totally dedicated, body and soul, to this cause (the unification of the People in one Front) and I believe that I will be proved right in the end. I have fought, gun in hand, against Hitler's occupation. I have experienced the Gestapo's dungeons. I have been sentenced to death by Germans and have miraculously survived. In 1967 I founded PAF (The Patriotic Anti-dictatorial Front), the first resistance organization against the military junta. I fought underground, was caught and imprisoned in the junta's "slaughterhouse". Once again I survived.

I am today 87 years old and it is very possible that I will not live to see the salvation of my beloved country. But I will die with a clear conscience, because I will continue *doing my Duty towards the ideals of Freedom and Justice until the end.* •

(Source: Excerpts from "The truth about Greece" – an open letter to international public opinion by Mikis Theodorakis, 12.2.2012, *mikis-theodorakis.net*)

**Treaty between the Kingdom of Spain, the French Republic, the Italian Republic, the Kingdom of The Netherlands and the Portuguese Republic (hereinafter referred to as the "Parties") establishing the European Gendarmerie Force EUROGENDFOR (Excerpts)**

**Chapter I  
General terms****Article 1  
Object**

1. The object of this Treaty is to establish a European Gendarmerie Force, which shall be operational, pre-organised, robust, and rapidly deployable, exclusively comprising elements of police forces with military status of the Parties, in order to perform all police tasks within the scope of crisis management operations.  
[...]

**Article 3  
Definitions**

For the purposes of this Treaty the expression:

[...]

b. PERMANENT HQ means the multinational, modular and projectable Permanent Headquarters, located in Vicenza (Italy). The role and structure of the Permanent HQ and its involvement in an operation shall be approved by CIMIN;

[...]

g. CIMIN means the High Level Inter-departmental Committee. It is the decisionmaking body governing EUROGENDFOR; [...]

**Chapter II  
Missions, Engagement and Deployment****Article 4  
Missions and tasks**

1. In accordance with the mandate of each operation and operating independently or jointly with other forces, EUROGENDFOR must be capable of covering the full spectrum of police missions, through substitution or strengthening, during all the phases of a crisis management operation.

2. EGF Forces can be placed either under civilian authority or under military command.

3. EUROGENDFOR may be used for:

- performing security and public order missions;
- monitoring, advising, mentoring and supervising local police in their day-to-day work, including criminal investigation work;
- conducting public surveillance, traffic regulations, border policing and general intelligence work;
- performing criminal investigation work, including detecting offences, tracing offenders and transferring them to the appropriate judicial authorities;
- protecting people and property and keeping order in the event of public disturbances;

[...]

**Chapter III  
Institutional and legal aspects****Article 7**

*CIMIN (Interdepartmental Committee)*

[...]

3. The general tasks of CIMIN include the following:

[...]

- elaborating the framework for actions led by EUROGENDFOR or at the request of the EU, the UN, the OSCE, NATO, other international organisations or an ad hoc coalition;

[...]

Source: [www.eurogendfor.eu](http://www.eurogendfor.eu)

**Founding members:**

France (National Gendarmerie)  
Spain (Civil Guard)  
Portugal (National Republican Guard)  
Italy (Carabinieri)  
Netherlands (Royal Marechaussee)

**Further members:**

Romania (Gendarmerie)

**Partner:**

Poland (Military Gendarmerie)  
Lithuania (Viesojų Saugumo Tarnyba)

**Observer:**

Turkey (Jandarma)

## Greece: "So that this may never happen again."

### A movie for our adolescents and for us adults, too

thk. On 10 June 1944 during a so-called "measure of atonement" a German SS division massacred 218 residents of the Greek village of Distomo within two hours. Indiscriminately the innocent people were killed; infants, children, women, men, old men, everyone who was present in the village at this time. As by a miracle the two-year-old *Argyris* and his three sisters survived in this massacre, while their parents and 30 other relatives were murdered in this war crime committed by Germans.

At first *Argyris* is taken to an orphanage in Athens, before he starts on the journey to Switzerland in order to be able to recuperate from the traumatic events in the *Pestalozzi Children's Village* in Trogen. After having taken his A-levels, he left the Children's Village with which he remained connected throughout his life. He then studied at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich and for many years he has worked as a graduated mathematics teacher at Zurich grammar schools. Later, *Argyris Sfontouris* committed himself to the Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit (SHA) and among others served as development aid worker in Somalia and Indonesia.

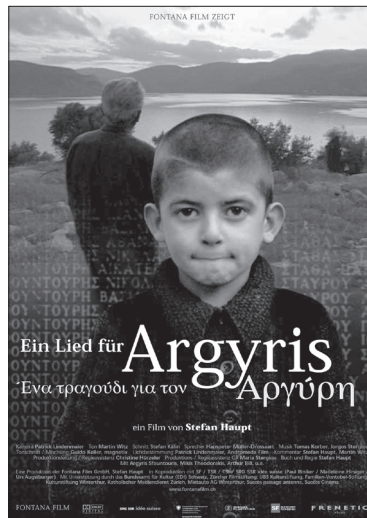
He has dedicated his whole life to the commitment to peace and reconciliation among the peoples: "So that this may never happen again."

In 1994, on the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the massacre, he organized a memorial service at Delphi, dedicated to the theme of war and peace. It was attended by speakers from Switzerland, Germany and Greece. However, no official representative from Germany attended the memorial. To this day *Argyris Sfontouris* has been fighting for the recognition of the massacre as a war crime, and for compensation for the bereaved. To date, official Germany has refused to acknowledge this war crime and justifies it as a "measure in the context of warfare". The lawsuit is now pending at the European Court of Human Rights.

In his film "Ein Lied für *Argyris*" (A Song for *Argyris*) the director *Stefan Haupt* portrayed in detail a personal history and unveiled the entire problems of grief, indignation, reconciliation and justice, which are behind it. Many contemporary witnesses have their say, including also *Mikis Theodorakis*. Relentlessly, the film reveals the crimes of the Wehrmacht and the SS against the civilian population as well as the inhuman attitude of official Germany. There is no way around this film if we discuss in classes the issues of war and peace and the suffering that war causes among the people. In addition to the personal history of *Argyris Sfontouris* essential questions of the peaceful coexistence of peoples are raised. It is a historically well-founded appeal to our youth and the teachers who are teaching them to get ready for the task, to devote their vitality to a more dignified coexistence in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Obtainable (in German and Greek with English subtitles) from Fontana Film GmbH.

E-mail: [info@fontanafilm.ch](mailto:info@fontanafilm.ch)



## The Banks claim a lot of money

Foreign Creditors of Greek State Bonds (retrieved June 2011; in billions of dollars)

Foreign Creditors	Value (Euros)
European Central Bank	49 bio.
FMS (German Hypo Real Estate)	6.3 bio.
BNP Paribas (France)	5 bio.
Dexia (Benelux. France)	3.5 bio.
Generali (Italy)	3.0 bio.
Commerzbank (Germany)	2.9 bio.
Société Générale (France)	2.9 bio.
Groupama (France)	2 bio.
CNP (France)	2 bio.
AXA (France)	1.9 bio.
German Bank (Deutsche Bank/ Deutsche Postbank)	1.6 bio.
Landesbank Baden-Württemberg (Regional State Bank of Baden-Wuerttemberg)	1.4 bio.

(See Spiegel Online „Wer die grössten Griechen-Risiken trägt“. 26/6/2011)

In case of a Greek insolvency the American and British banks would be affected due to the credit default swaps edited by them.

(See Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung "Kursseinbruch der griechischen Bankaktien". 24/10/2011)

cc. The debt conversion to new State securities of Greece which was agreed upon at the end of March would only postpone a collapse. In the future the big banks will better hedge their claims and will collect their interests.

# The war on several fronts against the militia

## On conduct, Confederate constants, competition and corrections

by Commandant (Retd.) Heinz Häsler\*, Gsteigwiler, Switzerland

me. Heinz Häsler is to be thanked that he has summarized the essentials of his military life experience. His importance is immortal. Although this and that might be renewed - provided the inner attitude prevails; however, the main thing is that the Swiss Confederate constants that have characterized and distinguished our military system long since will be retained. The principle of neutrality, or the promise to the neighbors not to start a war, is a meaningful, realistic peace concept with universal validity. Switzerland has always had a militia army to protect itself, never a standing one. It is the citizens who determine the state, not the administration. Since the Middle Ages the citizen in uniform has kept his personal weapon at home. The army had nearly no salaried professional officers, but many were officers on vocation. There has always been a large number of citizens that had been trained militarily to a reliable extend, that were equipped and willing to defend. During 700 years Switzerland has never been occupied due to all of this with the exception of the Napoleonic years, and this way it could develop a unique political system which is much closer to the dimension of the human being and his liberal-social nature than anywhere else.

The internal cohesion of the country must not be underestimated. It is firmly established as a state objective in the Federal Constitution (Art. 2 BV) today, and the militia - besides the teaching of civics at school, which has been impoverished in the meantime - contributes much to that the members of the army get to know the country and the people, that they feel connected and visit parts of the country, they otherwise would never see. This builds and has built life-long friendships.

A people's initiative "Yes to the abolition of compulsory military service" of the Gruppe Schweiz ohne Armee (GSoA, Group Switzerland without army) calls for the abolition of universal conscription. The vote will be in the fall of 2012 or 2013. However, anybody who is committed to mandatory military service recognizes, looking at the whole picture, that we find ourselves in a multi-front war. Big geopolitical players such as high finance or organized crime want to weaken smaller states and to tie back nation states in general, because the latter interfere with the business and the despotism of power.

Thus, the EU and its influential member states, want to tap and weaken Switzerland. Germany needs money. The citizens will have to bear the economic millstones apostrophized as rescue packages that will tear up holes with far-reaching impact in the future. France also needs money, just as Italy, but there at least the Mafia has something to offer. Switzerland looks like a safe, naively guarded by erotic bewitchable ladies, poorly and resiliently secured. Those who want to weaken Switzerland in tranches, grind it and thus make it ready for EU-accession, would certainly be disturbed by a healthy army with a strong "we-feeling". Therefore it is necessary to envisage all those in the country, who are not well-connected to the Swiss state model, or whose attachment was turned loose from the outside by promises, enticements and compromises. Even the supposedly "utopian" as the GSoA and internationalist circles in the SP do finally not adhere to the state model with their demand to abolish the army and reject the strategic-interest wickerwork against that power-controlling, direct-democratic and prosperous "special case".

There are also collaborators in the administration, including the VBS. They haven't been replaced yet because the head of the department has enough to do to stabilize the army, which had already had its wings broken by his SVP-predecessors. Likewise, the military cadres and teaching staff, which were educated in the era of federal councilors Ogi and Schmid, were not yet comple-

mented sufficiently by those committed to the state model Switzerland.

Another issue is the so-called professionalism of the recent years. It resulted in senior officers that are actually so-called employed professional officers. They experience military affairs not as citizens, but primarily as employees. They depend on superiors, and their promotion is crucial; for the sake of which one is willing to hold back one's own opinion. This used to be different - and still is - with militia officers. They are neither dependent on the state nor in bondage of the state, but are free to think and speak as they like. For an open word they may risk a stop in promotion, however, that does not jeopardize their profession and their progress.

The professional officers and the army-abolishers in the left-green camp, who promote foreign missions and want to handle international law "elastically" are more than selectively involved in an unholy alliance. In case the army was reduced even further, the professional officer would become dependent on foreign missions, otherwise he would lose his job. The professional officers appear, as that, as natural allies of SP and Greens. These safeguard their jobs, in turn they do not fight back for the preservation of the militia army. Conversely, militia personnel who are primarily committed to the protection of the country, means competition to those employed officers. Competition allows comparisons which are perceived as uncomfortable, even as downright disturbing. To put it bluntly: A militia army, as described by Heinz Häsler, is not the kind of army, which will grant the professional officer a career.

Therefore, but not only therefore the Defense Department is not a reliable factor in the multi-front war for the militia, either. Whereas in former times you could expect to have allies there, reactions are ambiguous, today.

Since some time the VBS has been corroding important contacts with the civilian environment. Two examples may show this, in place of many. The manner in which shooting clubs have been treated during off-duty shootings is no longer reasonable. The screws on safety rules are tightened, nearly supernatural things are demanded from volunteer board members and shooting masters; a higher number of volunteer officials are requested "because of security", but the number of training courses for this function are not enlarged. The supervising shooting officers require pedantic checks. In addition, consultations on this subject which were worded accurately, seriously, and usefully remained unnoticed. The effect is the following: "Those above us, pass the buck to us and leave us alone with it. Actually, the army, not us is now responsible for the fact that the young ones no longer have any routine with the gun." Such sounds can be heard everywhere. The shooting clubs are left powerless. The antennas at the base are not too fine. They perceive correctly. The VBS however, has upset its allies.

Another example: The expensively enhanced M113 armored tracked vehicles will be scrapped, together with their new engines, transmissions, armor, etc. A few thousand francs a year for the storage of the tracked vehicles in ancient plane caverns were allegedly too expensive. Although private persons offer to take over these costs and although vehicles of the same type will remain in use for a long time in more than 80 armies around the globe with much poorer standards, the VBS continues with the scrapping. The arguments are untenable and contradictory. Thanks to the militia principle on the website of the Group Giardino the revealing comments on the VBS statements can be read. The base takes notice and is upset.

continued on page 6

**"The war on several fronts ..."**

continued from page 5

These are just two of unfortunately very many of such examples of feedback. They are among others a result of the "professionalization" of the VBS. They are losing grip on reality and the citizens and they forget that many thousands of people exchange information and evaluate the actions and statements of the department.

However, which way can the population be mobilized in favor of the militia army and against the GSoA initiative, if everywhere those who still adhere to the army are treated carelessly and tactlessly? How can we mobilize those who have just observed how lame the excuses are which the VBS top officials put forward for the scrapping of the M113? How can we preserve the joy over the new combat aircraft from neutral Sweden when the VBS itself appears cheerless? Should we still go on believing them if we know from elsewhere what

their behavior is like? Here, the ranks must be closed, best after having them thinned out, to give the stronger offspring a chance.

Nevertheless, the population adheres to the army – to some extent. But a multi-front war against the GsoA is not bearable: against the salaried professional officers, against the manipulation and disinformation of communication, against untenable information leaks and against the lousy treatment of the militia by the VBS. With PR-tricks and "professionals" we cannot repeat the success of the disarmament initiative. Many shooters are upset. What is necessary is a correction inside the VBS. Only if confidence is regained, we will be able to inflame the "feu sacré" of the militia again. In this sense, the statements of Heinz Häsler are a valuable reference point, which is important in the coming debate on our political system and which we unreservedly recommend to read. He initiates a reflection, which will strengthen the citizens' confidence and their will to get together and shape our political system.



Commandant (Retd.)  
Heinz Häsler

The fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union led to a radical change of the security policy situation after 1991, including that of Switzerland.

The unattainable dream of eternal peace was suddenly announced by many: the credulous, pacifists, system changers as well as representatives of churches and parliament. As one national council-

lor said in the discussion about the 1991 armaments programme: "As far as the eye can see, there is no enemy far and wide". And some media representatives stated that "the army has lost its enemy". The opponents of the army suddenly saw the dawn.

However, the militia had already been confronted with problems starting as early as the 1960s, which it still finds difficult to solve today and which do not help to have their demands heard.

#### Security policy illusions and missed opportunities

The first problem was the attitude of the 1968 generation. They demanded a civil substitute service as an alternative to the loathsome military service. A hard core of this group, however, rejects even that to this day.

In addition: the balance between the two power blocks east and west that lasted decades without being an apparent threat to our country left behind a lack of interest amongst the people with respect to the army. Left-wing circles felt that attempts at securing the army by the government and parliament were unnecessary or at least completely excessive. Today their party

programme even includes the abolition of the army.

It was also they who issued the first calls for the abandonment of the general military service, which in the meantime has been given concrete form by a dangerous initiative. A much cheaper and above all much smaller professional army should replace it, they demand.

Initial doubts as to our militia were also apparent at an early stage in the right wing dominated parliament. In this period of changing values the army unfortunately failed to either get rid of what was outdated or to update things. That was the intention pursued by the Oswald report drawn up by the Swiss military department at the beginning of the 1970s.

Legitimate recommendations in this report to increase efficiency in training and leadership were however initially disregarded. They were not communicated to the people.

In contrast, the army leadership hastened to deal with alterations in the field of the likewise criticised forms. This could be done without additionally burdening the military budget.

#### Excellent achievements in spite of all

The relaxation of discipline was accepted by the army as contemporary and progressive. Commanders and lower-level officers became insecure as a result of a lack of fundamental orientation, construction and support from above. In most cases, they did not dare to intervene decisively in case of mistakes. The appearance of the army soon gave the impression lacking order. The fact that it continued to and still provides excellent services is not apparent in its negligent appearance.

Thus the Oswald report was wrongly made responsible by our citizens for a lack of discipline, disorganisation and disorder in the army. The fault however lay with the leadership.

\*In 1930, Heinz Häsler was born as the son of a mountain farmer and forest guard in Gsteigwiler, Canton of Berne. He completed the teachers' seminary Hofwil in 1950 teaching primary school in Merligen. In 1952, he married Edith Irene Lenz, daughter of a civil engineer. Later he became artillery instructor. He attended the US Army Officers Advance Course in Fort Sill in Oklahoma in 1975. Later he took the lead of the organisation and education department.

He became major general and deputy chief planning of the General Staff Services in 1981. He then took on the command over the field division 3 in 1986 and commanded the field corps 2 as a lieutenant general from 1988 to 1989.

He was chief of the general staff of the Swiss army from 1990 to 1992.

After his retirement he acted as a dialect narrator. His stories are written in the Gsteigwiler dialect. "Der Franzos un ander Gschichti u Gedicht" (The Frenchman and other stories and poems) was published in 1997, "Buobezyt. Heiters un o weniger Schöös us junge Jahren" (Boyhood. Humorous and less cheerful stories of young years) in 2001, "Vo Lliebi u Trüwwi" (Of love and faithfulness) in 2012, published as audio book at the same time, speaker: Heinz Häsler).

The lecture was held at the general meeting of the Group Giardino on 3.3.2012, entitled "Wehrmodell Miliz und Wehrpflichtarmee" (militia defense model and conscription-based army)

**"The war on several fronts ..."**

continued from page 6

In the meantime abroad, in particular in the Third World countries, countless civil-war-like disputes had broken out. Militant groups of different political or religious ideologies and objectives made and continue to make war – against each other or against the official potentates; an inexhaustible topic for the world's media.

Whether freedom fighters, franc-tireurs, rebels or terrorist groups, they were all classified under the term militia. The frequent horrific images of these gun-firing masses of wild soldiers and child soldiers in all the media led to them being equated with our militia.

Ladies and Gentlemen: Our citizens in uniform have really nothing in common with these motley hordes. Nevertheless, together with the hardly convincing appearance of our soldiers in public, the impression was created that such an occasional militia is unable to deal with its previous and future threats.

This opinion was unfortunately suddenly adopted by representatives of trade and industry who for economic reasons are interested in no longer having to release employees from all functions to the army for weeks and months. Whereas in the past business managers and politicians at the top level acted as senior officers, this has become increasingly rare in the course of the years. Many top-class qualified trainees are no longer made available for further training and anyone who wishes to do so is threatened with the loss of their jobs. Even the bosses of medium-sized and small enterprises who until then had accepted absences of their own personal and that of their employees, argue today that economic losses are the main problem of the militia service. It goes without saying that they meet with the agreement of the part of our population that has had a permanently problematic relationship with the army, anyway.

**"All that is far away from us ..."**

There is no doubt that today's affluent society reinforces this attitude. It is true, they say, there is a permanent war going on in many places. But that is happening far away from us. Our security situation is relaxed and things are fine here. Why should we spend our time doing military service?

I don't mind the army, but expenditure only as long as no budget cuts are necessary in other departments of the state, and neither business nor industry will have to make tangible concessions.

It is no longer the question of what army is needed to ensure the security of the people and our country. Today the question is how much is to be spent on the army.

The army's function as laid down in the constitution has become of secondary im-

portance. If it disturbs economic considerations, it can be adjusted downwards until the economy and the state budget can live with it.

And recently, you could hear the argument that if the funding approved by parliament for the army continued to be reduced, we will have to reformulate the function or reduce the number of troops. This attitude is, consciously or subconsciously, already present in today's parliament. The ultimate consequence would be to get rid of the army.

How far this downward path has already been followed is reflected by the motion of the Federal Council to plan an army of 80,000. In the light of today's security policy situation a small Swiss army would easily be sufficient, they say.

This does not answer the question how the people might be protected against assassinations and acts of terror of whatever political or religious activists around the clock and over a long period in case of an escalation.

The protection of our energy infrastructure, from the water reservoirs to the nuclear power stations, the international airports, the control centres of the railways and communications, of the radio and television as well as the government and parliamentary buildings. Who will be able to provide rapid and sustained help to the population in the event of nationwide natural disaster at the countless places where damage has occurred?

**Professional armies – expensive and dangerous for democracy**

The few thousand professional soldiers or the same number of volunteer militia, part of which would hardly be suitable for such services could not be the solution.

Anyway, who would join as a paid mercenary? Hardly women and men in a secure professional position. Just look at Germany. There after only one year of professional army there are not enough soldiers.

Who is available? The unemployed, the work-shy and Rambo characters. Mistrust and suspicion of the people against such a small army, of this new isolated caste, would be the result. And distrust of the government, which would now have absolute power over the army and in operations within the country could count on a military force that would act according to that uneasy principle: he who pays the piper, calls the tune.

Moreover, what would happen to these mercenaries after the retiring from the army, given that all they had learned except was the art of war? The integration into the regular work process would be almost impossible. We have such examples in foreign countries, although they don't like talking about it.

On the financial side, many representatives of a professional army want an army of 30 000 men. Costs for wages, social, health and accident costs are estimated at 100 000 francs each, which in itself means personnel costs of 3 billion francs. And this is a bunch of mercenaries, which is smaller than the spectators in the Stade de Suisse in Berne at a game between Basel and YB.

According to today's VBS budget there would remain no more than 2 billion francs. The creation of the infrastructure and the operation of the new army would need all this in the first year and probably at least half that amount later.

And again: Where would all these troops be stationed, having been recruited from all parts of our country? We have no weapons sites with the ability to accommodate a few thousand families of professional soldiers. In the standing armies in foreign countries, the state provides the appropriate accommodation at the relevant sites.

It cannot be that the Swiss professional soldier will travel daily from all parts of Switzerland to his workplace, to his base and then home again in the evening or that they, like the holidays in the militia, only see their families on weekends. An unsolved problem and one circumvented by the supporters.

What do bands of mercenaries do after completing their training in our country, particularly in times of a relaxation of security policy, as applies today?

Would these isolated foreign bodies be kept out of the sight of the people by being sent to serve in warring countries, where they would be placed under some foreign command?

That would mean the abandonment of permanent armed neutrality.

However, to the delight of those who want to abolish the army and its neutrality.

These few remarks may show what might happen if the prophets of doom demanding a professional army were to win the day.

Ladies and Gentlemen: A band of mercenaries or a marginal volunteer militia cannot and should not form the future of our country's armed forces. They would be the precursor of the complete renunciation of our ability to defend ourselves. I am using this term intentionally.

**No other professional army has by far the standard of the Swiss army**

For our country as independent small state, only a militia army built on the compulsory military service is eligible. Its advantages are obvious: No regular army of the world has an approximately equally high level in civilian education and vo-

**"The war on several fronts ..."**

continued from page 7

cational training with cadres and troops as the Swiss army. The right man at the right place was the traditional saying for the correct use of a soldier in our army. Already at that time and also today, there were more "right" (i.e. well trained) men and women in our militia army than there are "right" – i.e. sophisticated – jobs for them. If, for example, professionally highly-qualified canoneers have been used as projectile carriers at the cannon during an operation, it can hardly be pretended that these soldiers were mentally over-charged.

The routine in military service implicates that many tasks in an army neither correspond to the capacities nor to the intellectual level of our soldiers. On the other hand: The broad civilian knowledge, that cadres and soldiers bring with them, shorten the training periods considerably – even for more qualified military functions. One of the many examples of my own service may show that: On the occasion of an annual meeting of all defence attachés accredited in Switzerland, a visit to the *Pz Trp* school in *Thun* took place. The recruits, having served only the first third of their service, presented cross-country driving and under-calibrated shooting with the cannon of the tank leopard 2. The success rate amounted to one hundred per cent!

Already during the demonstration, an attaché from a third world country noticed somewhat ironically that a drilled elite of young career soldiers was presented. When the recruits were assembled and the platoon leader translated the data concerning their civilian occupation in good English, the Colonel seemed to be confirmed in his opinion. Almost angrily he explained that it was completely impossible to have non-professional soldiers in just one tank platoon that were so excellently trained and who were able to obtain the shown level of capabilities in only a few weeks of service.

Furiously he mounted the bus for the continuation of the journey and was no longer communicative. Therefore it is inexplicable when certain "army experts" claim that our army was seriously limited by the militia in today's strategic and operational surroundings. The comparison with professional military, mostly without a civilian profession, teaches us something else. The most valuable capital of our militia army are the citizens in uniform. Today's army does not make full use of that condition. If the compulsory military service finishes at the age of 30 and the one of the "Durchdiener" (service in a single block) is fulfilled at the age of 19 or 20, the army loses thousands of members who, to a large extent, will only belatedly reach the top of their professional career or the entry into a political position.

**Citizens in uniform – the most valuable capital of our militia army**

I cannot see why the age of the compulsory military service is set so low, realizing at the same time that the demographic development of our people leads to a drawback in the junior military staff and permits only about 50% of the conscripts to carry out their military service.

There are possibilities of adjusting this deficit:

1. The age of conscription can be raised. If army members are still registered as actives for some years after the completion of their "refresher courses", the state will not lose anything. There are arguments that the military knowledge will quickly tend to zero then. I do not accept that argument. Because, for the handling of modern weapon systems and devices in an active service there will be younger people at hand. The many less sophisticated jobs could be fulfilled by these elder soldiers for the moment. A great many of them would be fully fit for the service/operations at the new weapons and devices after some days of service. For example during disaster operations, I prefer a 35 years old experienced excavator driver to a "Durchdiener" who has been taught the use of the same device in some lessons at the recruit school.
2. The fitness rate can be increased. First, by re-introducing the "differentiated service fitness". We started with this in the eighties. Later this was dropped again. The argument was that there were enough newcomers. But today it is not necessary that every soldier gets across the track and field in record time. For members with small physical deficits there are enough other jobs.
3. The uncountable advices for dispense which are issued by certain doctors should no longer be accepted. The future soldier has to be examined by doctors of military examination commissions with respect to his service health fitness differentiated service health included. Wattertight medical criteria have to be fixed, even if that will be somewhat costly. In former times, the quota of service fitness amounted to over 85%, today's quota is 30% less, as a consequence of all those different loopholes.

**Familiarity with country and circumstances**

A further great advantage of our militia army:

In case of defence, natural catastrophes, operations below the war-level, as well as for the protection of civilians our army can count on a high-level knowledge of infrastructure in the country acquired in the course of the active service.

Our troops have not to be equipped like armies of foreign countries which – for whatever reasons – have to serve operations often far away from their country. Our army does not dislocate. It has to comply with the conditions of our country and should therefore not become a mini-copy of some foreign forces.

The dictum of the sixties: "We do not want a small high-tech army in pocket-size", has to regain its meaning. If this insight prevails with the leaders, the troop will train as it always has done in our strong terrain, today the preparations for the objects and facilities to be secured and protected are made up in detail already and can be trained with the troops on the spot.

Equally, the cooperation with the cantonal and municipal instances is clearly defined. In cooperation with the property owners, the army settles the possibility to also use civil facilities, i.e. logistics and many other infrastructure during an active service and this can be trained during refresher courses.

Information about provision co-operate with the staff of small and big companies of meat processing and bakeries, with the result that the entire provision of civilians and army is secured.

The hotels (will) do the cooking for the military staff and unities as their kitchens are unused because of the lack of tourists. This way we can do without further mobile luxury field kitchens for 280 000 francs each. All these possibilities don't seem to be a topic of discussion in today's army.

With regard to acquisitions and other aspects, foreign countries are copied, as well. There are no questions, do we need this, but decisions are justified with: The US army also has it. Like for example – and this for your amusement – the 50 liters water sack in the equipment of our scouts. Upon my question at the event of an army day if there was an intention to parachute over the Gobi desert, an officer answered, it might happen that the drinking water in our country would be poisoned. Oh yes, all rivers, creeks, trenches, reservoirs and sources. At least the scout would be able to survive another 3 to 4 days.

Our militia army has to utilize our country's available resources and to restrict its purchases and its extension to what is necessary.

If high technology is needed, it has to be purchased. With respect to less sophisticated equipment, only the necessary should be respected. In this area, the means must not be wasted for luxury equipment, neither for steps in unknown size into not yet matured technologies, like into a "champion-like" leading and information system that did not generate any usable result for the troops yet. It is no



**"The war on several fronts ..."**

continued from page 8

shame, but a virtue to handle the scarce finances with husbandry, and this is a must for our militia army.

**Shared term of service creates trust and reliability**

Shared term of service and personal structure of the units are additional advantages of the militia army. Prior to the *Army XXI* reform, recruits were listed according to regional criteria in the conscriptions both for the cantonal and federal units. At "Army 95" the troop categories Elite ("Auszug") and First Reserve ("Landwehr") had been dropped. Until their discharge from the draft at the age of 40, military personnel had therefore spent all their time in the same unit. For the sake of better utilization of capacities, redistributions were possible when people changed their professions. Unfortunately, the planners of *Army XXI* did away with this advantage. Officers and men coming from the same region and serving together for many years created strong bonds, a sense of community, since people knew each other from their civil lives. A cannon crew and their commander for instance stayed together for several years. Changes occurred only when a commander or gunner had accomplished their duty. The newcomer was soon integrated. Within a battery a healthy competition was performed. Each group, each crew or unit competed to be the best within their company.

In field division 3 all division commanders were obliged to keep lists of the best specialists for all collectively operated weapon systems, such as rocket tubes, machine guns, the radio unit or the armored personnel carrier guns. These lists belonged to the commando documents and had to be updated at each refresher course. This was perfect planning for a maximal combat capacity of the troops.

All comrades knowing each other from their civil circumstances with their characters and all strengths and weaknesses allowed them, together with a solid military training, to transform into a valuable force for active duty in times of danger for troops and officers. Those service experiences were hot topics in civil life, too. At home in the pub or at the workplace they were criticized, hailed and boasted about.

People of all ages listened when thousands and thousands of "military specialists" talked about thoughts and memories of their service. Due to the many years of duty, any former serviceman felt a sense of lifelong attachment to the militia army even after his discharge. It wasn't simply the army he had joined, but his fusilier company III/33 or sapper company I/3.

Here I have an invitation to the reunion of former battery Hb Abt 9 comrades. It will take place on April 27<sup>th</sup> this year. I used to serve with them as an officer in battery II. Ladies and Gentlemen, this unit was dissolved at the army reorganization at the beginning of the 1960ies, 50 years ago. For all those comrades the militia didn't end with their last day of the one-year service, nor the sixth refresher course, nay the end will finally be at their graves. Feeling attached to the army for the whole life, and demonstrating that to all other citizens but especially the youth created the trust which this army used to enjoy with the overwhelming majority of the people.

If this rootedness of the militia within the people has decreased over recent years, the zeitgeist and changing circumstances may have contributed to that. But unfortunately, those army planners who were either unaware of the crucial importance of the militia army for the protection of our country or, worse still, ignored it as outdated, have to be blamed, too.

Any militia army without serving politicians from either municipal, cantonal or federal levels due to arbitrarily shortened duration of duty, without any self-employed, experienced craftsmen or workers, no entrepreneurs or industrialists, no farmers owning their farms, and even without family fathers raising their children who would serve all together: such a militia army will find it difficult to maintain the awareness in the people of how unique general conscription and militia actually are.

But now: Just like all foreign armed forces our militia army has to adapt and develop, focussing on changing political security scenarios. Professional foreign armies may perform tactical U-turns within months. Their officers and troops are permanently mobilized. A new doctrine is simply ordered and will be implemented accordingly with new equipment and guidelines.

I spent one whole year 1975 at the military academy of the US artillery. In June the Vietnam war had ended. Up to that point in time the deployment of isolated airborne artillery units had been taught. At the beginning of August the new doctrine for a European War Theatre was established and teaching sessions at the training bases commenced, using totally new strategic, operative and tactical guidelines. New equipment and machinery, reflecting the change from jungle to European climate was available almost simultaneously. Impressive!

The Swiss army cannot compete with that. But actually we don't have to.

Sticking with well-known and proven solutions, adapting and developing them according to our own requirements ...

Military engagement outside our territory is no topic for our militia system, apart from minor peacekeeping elements.

This will be the case as long as we maintain our neutrality. Within our own country our troops can rely on the advantages mentioned above, in any strategic scenario. It is therefore neither necessary nor adequate to reinvent our army in every changed security-political situation and disregard all previous solutions as outdated and obsolete.

Of course we have to keep studying all strategic and operative moves of all foreign armed forces and comparing them to our requirements and capabilities. Strategic or operative exclusiveness would be detrimental. Well-established procedures have to be validated constantly as to whether they should be maintained or need to be improved, and in which areas outdated elements have to be liquidated and replaced by something new if necessary.

Approaching things however, like a certain young planner in charge of the preparation phase of AXXI, one is doomed to failure – this higher staff officer prophesized with smirky arrogance: "In the new army no stone will be left unturned." – We have noticed that, meanwhile.

With great ballyhoo and heavy media presence the new army, a.k.a. *Army XXI*, had been introduced. All the so-called experts were enthused about it. Supposedly the army had found its way into modernity at last. Voicing just the slightest doubt about the new product drew accusations such as "cold warrior" or stick-in-the-mud.

**... instead of copy-pasting whole US army manuals**

Whole chapters of US army manuals had been "helvetized", the module principle was to be introduced among other things, which means that different units are constantly rearranged into different combat formations according to changing aims. Absolutely unsuitable for a militia army. This may be "peanuts", but it sheds some light on how our planners worked.

All of a sudden six new higher sergeant grades appeared, corresponding to the US grade structure, apart from the forager, from the common sergeant up to the chief adjutant. The constable ("Wachtmeister") got a new higher comrade, the Master constable. Finally the corporal grade ("Gefreiter") was divided into corporal and lance corporal, probably the grade of "Obergefreiter" had been discovered in the German Wehrmacht of old days. Nobody was put off by the fact that a certain Adolf Hitler had started his career with this grade in World War I, later to become the "Führer" who led his people and great parts of Europe into misery.

Now: In the meantime the number of *Army XXI* enthusiasts has markedly decreased. Many have secretly already writ-

continued on page 10

**"The war on several fronts ..."**

continued from page 9

ten off this army and now propagate a professional army as a substitute and ultimate solution.

### Unanswered questions and problems of the Army XXI

When planning the *Army XXI* basics and essentials were thrown overboard, despite the damage done to the special case of the Swiss militia army and ignoring the pending financial needs of this new beginning. Examples may illustrate this:

The area of responsibilities of the militia commanders were badly cut by splitting up command and training. A fatal mistake although we are trying to mend it in the meantime.

The mobilization system was dropped. How the army or parts of it would be quickly mobilized is withheld. The first, who would have to assume service were time military, professional military and military term servicer. After how many weeks Recruit School (RS) the latter were capable to participate in an emergency employment would remain an open question. It is estimated to last weeks and months, until the army would be fully operational. Further they babble of raising the armed forces along years. How the necessary additional places for training would be created and where the necessary instruction staff and the militia squads would come from remains unanswered. Furthermore, just the procurement of additional equipment and weapons will consume billions. Who will provide for these funds and when?

In view of the fact that even in today's Army entire brigades do no longer have any armored personnel carriers, doubts must be raised

However, what was it like in previous army organizations: Every military man knew, where he had to join the services for active duty. Each unit owned their own heavy weapons, all their equipment, stored in standard storage sites in the armory. Up to the last Rak-tube glasses it was all there and available at anytime. Throughout the year covering the refresher courses (WK) one infantry regiment was on standby, a battalion within two hours, the others in half a day. Depending on the task partial mobilizations could be initiated under supervision of members of the mobilization spaces, whose chiefs were experienced as former battalion or even regimental commanders. Mobilization was practiced. In the first Army Mission Statement of our army in the mid 80s, the demand was: the

organization of the mobilization must still be improved.

The planners of the *Army XXI* do without it instead of checking, what is to be updated in this organization if at all. There was no reason at all to give up these functioning organization even if you go into details. A replacement for it was not even planned.

The euphoria of creating a completely new modern Swiss army resulted in incomprehensible decisions in the logistics. As a reason for that it was claimed that the previous one was obsolete and no longer of any value; instead a new up to date system was set up. Part of the combat brigades received the Swedish armored personnel carriers. The other part was to be equipped with additional tranches. This process of modernization is known in other armies as well. There is probably no army in the world that is able to equip their armed forces at the same time with new, expensive equipment. However, until this modernization can occur, previous equipment and vehicles have to continue to perform their service. Not so in our *Army XXI* !

In fact we hid hundreds of combat performance upgraded M 113 armored personnel carriers in deserted airplane caverns and let them rot there. But an additional tranche of new armored vehicles is not in sight, because of lack of finances or because the defense priorities have been changed

In these days, the first contingents of M 113 roll, for instance not to the brigades to be left without armored personnel carriers, but to be scrapped. Reasons for this act of stupidity will be provided as follows: "In 10 years, the M 113 would be obsolete anyway", or, even more bizarre: "Because the maximum speed of the combat tank Leopard II is 68 km/h, those of the M 113 is only 64 km/h, that means they can not follow the combat tanks in operation!"

### Material and equipment being squandered

Now I don't want to start moaning about it like Jeremiah again. More facts would be available. One thing can be said: *The Army XXI* has failed.

Even the so-called "cold warriors" noticed this, and even those, who once created this army. It was based on unfulfillable illusions, which were leading to wrong decisions.

Even on top level of the Army a doctrine conference is taking place these days, which indicates that even 10 years after the pompous *Army XXI* startup, the search for basics is still going on.

Note that the head of the security policy of the Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport laconically stated in the last edition of the General Swiss military journal "The tasks of the army have scarcely changed over the last 20 years." But at least, they now try to create a doctrine. Better late than never.

However, it is apparent when looking at the new so-called "head structure" – what a creation of a name – and the associated *Ordre de Bataille*, that neither the law of straightforwardness nor that of the unity in command are taken into consideration. The new structure is complicated and obscure. It divides the army into forces for defense and those for subsidiary operations, so a two-tier army, whose parts can not provide sustained mutual support.

And what is noticed particularly negatively, are the planned changes in command in different areas of operation and even in their escalation, so in crisis situations. Hopefully, the last word may not be spoken yet.

### Our militia army is up to date – if we want it to be

It is not my befit to explain a doctrine or military orders or procurement issues. What I tried to explain here to you today, was that our militia army is based on general military service and is neither an antique nor a discontinued model.

She is topical, because the perspectives are nowhere of such high standing than in Switzerland. But only if you know the available capacity, recognize and incorporate it as a basis for further expansion in the near and distant future. We may assume that the current and future planners of our forces will do this after learning the hard lessons with the *Army XXI*

At the expansion of the army not only the commanders of the army and head of the department are in demand. The Parliament needs to be reminded of their duty as well. That should be possible since there is still a civic majority at present. Our nation would again notice that this majority of our parliamentarians recognize the security of our homeland and their citizens as a top priority.

If so, our militia army based on general military service can get around the curve and move on the chosen path into the future with new strength. This is the firm conviction and the desire of one of the last old "cold warriors".

Thank you for your attention. •

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

# Recession has a devastating impact and many of the working poor fall through the cracks

For increasing numbers of Europeans the social safety net is full of holes

by Liz Alderman

*ab. It is an uncomfortable situation: in proud Europe as part of the first world with the freedom of press and freedom of opinion and 24-hour-tittytainment on all channels you have to take an American newspaper to learn about the social development in our neighboring countries. For example, the "International Herald Tribune" of the 14/15 April makes the rapidly increasing suicide rate among men in their best years of working a topic, as the economic crisis shatters their career plans. The active employees, the diligent – young family men are the ones who make up these statistics. How do we actually deal with our fellow citizens? Where will this path lead us to? If our colleagues of the political left offer the standard response that the people concerned should gain political influence by demonstrating, they must add whether they will face Sarkozy-Merkel's new Response Force as Winkelried's and will protect the citizens against the "Eurogendfor" weapons ... It is not only Greece, Ireland, Portugal, Spain and Italy but also France: It is a deliberately induced impoverishment of the European population against all the analyzes and advice from economists. The response of the governments is as before: either you eat "lead" or you commit suicide.*

Recession bites deeper, and many working poor are now falling through. When *Melissa Dos Santos* leaves her job at the end of each day, she goes home to an unlikely place: a tiny trailer in a campground half an hour north of Paris, where

"... a rising tide of workers into precarious straits in France and across the European Union. Today, hundreds of thousands of people are living in campgrounds, vehicles and cheap hotel rooms. Millions more are sharing space with relatives, unable to afford the basic costs of living".

scores of people who can barely make ends meet are living on a sprawling lot originally designed as a bucolic retreat for vacationers.

"I grew up in a house; living in a campground isn't the same," Ms. Dos Santos, 21, said wistfully. Her dreams of a more normal life in an apartment with her boyfriend evaporated when they both took minimum-wage jobs — she in a supermarket and he as a Paris street sweeper — after months of searching fruitlessly for better-paid work.

"People call us marginal," she said. "Little by little, it's eating us up."

Europe's long-running euro crisis may be cooling. But the economic distress it has left in its wake is pushing a rising tide of workers into precarious straits in France and across the European Union. Today, hundreds of thousands of people are living in campgrounds, vehicles and cheap hotel rooms. Millions more are sharing space with relatives, unable to afford the basic costs of living.

## Europe's working poor

These people are the extreme edge of Europe's working poor: a growing slice of the population that is slipping through Europe's long-vaunted social safety net. Many, particularly the young, are trapped in low-paid or temporary jobs that are re-

## Increasing suiciderate caused by economic crisis

[...] "Financial crisis puts the lives of ordinary people at risk, but much more dangerous is when there are radical cuts to social protection," said *David Stuckler*, a sociologist at Cambridge University in England, who led a study in the medical journal *Lancet* that found a sharp rise in suicides across Europe, but most profoundly in hard hit countries like Greece and Ireland between 2007 and 2009, coinciding with the downturn. "Austerity can turn a crisis into an epidemic," he added. [...]

In Greece, the number of men committing suicide is up by more than 24 percent from 2007 to 2009, government statistics show. In Ire-

land the number of suicides rose more than 16 percent. And in Italy the total number of suicides motivated by economic difficulties has increased by 65 percent, from 123 in 2005 to 187 in 2010, the most recent year for which statistics are available. [...]

During the financial turmoil, *Mr. Mordaunt* said he considered suicide after a tough-talking banker threatened to seize his home for loan repayments: "Save the sob story. We want our money. If that means taking your family home, we'll do it," he recalled being told. [...]

Source: *International Herald Tribune*, 14/15 April 2012

## Children in Greece

### To relieve the hardship

The collection of food for Greece by the *Greek community of Zurich* was concluded at the end of March, so that the food arrived at its destination before the Greek Easter festival on 15th April. In his sermon the Greek priest *Emmanuel Simantirakis* thanked for the 5 metric tons of food which will help to relieve the hardship a little.

However, the donation activity of the Greek community of Zurich goes on. In view of the difficult situation at present in Greece they need your support, to help the needy children.

The Greek community board of directors has therefore selected two child-care organizations, which they would like to support with your direct financial aid: [www.sos-villages.gr](http://www.sos-villages.gr) and [www.kivotostoukosmou.org](http://www.kivotostoukosmou.org).

For this purpose the Zurich Greek community opened: a new Post Cheque Account named "GGZ helps children in GR"

PC 60-329248-0.

As the organizations depend on your help as quickly as possible, the first phase of this relief operation has to be concluded by the end of April 2012. The collected sum will be published on the web-site [www.kinotita.ch](http://www.kinotita.ch).

We are hoping for a vivid response and thank you all for your aid.

placing permanent ones destroyed in Europe's economic crunch.

Now, economists, European officials and social watchdog groups are warning that the situation is set to worsen. As European governments respond to the crisis by pushing for deep spending cuts to close budget gaps and greater flexibility in their work forces, "the population of working poor will explode," said *Jean-Paul Fitous-*

### “Recession has a devastating impact...”

continued from page 11

si, an economics professor at *L’Institut d’Études Politiques* in Paris.

To most Europeans, and especially the French, this should not be happening. With generous minimum wage laws and the world’s strongest welfare systems, Europeans are accustomed to thinking they are more protected from a phenomenon they associate with the United States and other laissez-faire economies.

But the European welfare state, designed to ensure that those without jobs are provided with a basic income, access to health care and subsidized housing, is proving ill-prepared to deal with the steady increase in working people who do not make enough to get by.

The trend is alarming in hard-hit countries like Greece and Spain, but it is rising even in more prosperous nations like France and Germany.

#### Working poor living in the same condition as in the 19th century

“France is a rich country,” Mr. Fitoussi said. “But the working poor are living in the same condition as in the 19th century. They can’t pay for heating, they can’t pay for their children’s clothes, they are sometimes living five people in a nine-square-meter apartment — here in France!” he exclaimed, speaking of an apartment measuring about 100 square feet.

In 2010, the latest year for which data were available, 8.2 percent of workers in the 17-nation euro zone were living under the region’s average poverty threshold of 10,240 euros, or \$13,660, for single adult workers, up from 7.3 percent in 2006, according to *Eurostat*. The situation is nearly twice as bad in Spain and Greece.

While direct comparisons are difficult because of different standards, the Labor Department estimated that 7 percent of single adult workers in the United States earned less than the poverty threshold in 2009 of \$10,830 in 2009, up from 5.1 percent in 2006.

France fares better than most European countries, at 6.6 percent, but perhaps nowhere is the phenomenon more startling. While the country seems to exude prosperity, the number of working poor is up from 6.1 percent in 2006, and experts predict it will grow.

In France, half the nation’s households earn less than 19,000 euros.

The median monthly paycheck is 1,670 euros, 26 percent above the average for the entire European Union. But the high cost of living and the difficulty many people face in securing affordable housing — home prices have surged 110 percent in the last decade, and most rentals require

large advance deposits —, leaves a growing number out in the cold.

Ms. Dos Santos and her boyfriend, Jimmy Collin, 22, moved to the trailer because they did not want to live with their families and lacked money for a down payment on an apartment. Mr. Collin, a high school graduate with some additional technical training, searched for work for more than six months before landing a minimum-wage contract last year, at 1,375 euros per month, cleaning streets near Parisian jewels like the Eiffel Tower. He gets a small government stipend for low-income earners, but they still found it hard to save after paying taxes and living expenses. The wait for subsidized housing is more than five years.

Ms. Dos Santos, also a high school graduate, jumped at the job at a *Carrefour* supermarket after she failed to find work through one of France’s national employment centers, where counselors meant to handle 120 cases have been overwhelmed lately with up to 500 each. But her boss will not let her work more than 35 hours a week, and she cannot find supplemental jobs.

“It holds people back,” she said.

#### 120,000 people are living on French camping sites

Today, up to 120,000 people are living in French campgrounds, according to *Observatoire des Inégalités*, a social watchdog group. While it is not exactly a new phenomenon, officials say it is accelerating.

And even some people with middle-class jobs are living on the edge.

Bruno Duboscq, 55, a human-resources manager at a small company in central Paris, moved into a recreational vehicle in the parking lot of the *Château de Vincennes*, a splendid 12th-century castle, three years ago when the expense of a small apartment left him with too little money at the end of the month.

“People at work were shocked when they found out I live in a camper,” said Mr. Duboscq, who is near retirement and hopes the extra savings will tide him over when he is no longer working. “It’s getting harder to get by.”

One arctic February evening, as the thermometer dipped to minus 6 degrees centigrade or 21 degrees Fahrenheit, he opened the door to his camper and showed off a small kitchen, a television, two beds and a tiny shower. Living in an official campground would have been better, but at about 30 euros a day, he said, it was too expensive.

Yet Mr. Duboscq is better off than most of his neighbors. “There is more and more misery around,” he said, gazing at a row of snow-swept vehicles outside. “There are many people, especially young people,

living in their cars here,” he said. “They are not well paid, it’s hard to afford an apartment, and the price of everything has risen considerably.”

Many of them are on temporary contracts that employers are increasingly using to replace permanent jobs, which carry benefits and job protections that many employers refuse to take on. Contract labor has surged in the last several years and is set to increase as politicians in France and elsewhere encourage its use as a way to reduce high unemployment. But numerous recent studies by economists and social groups warn that the proliferation of temporary contracts may increase the numbers of those facing in-work poverty, because they pay less and have fewer benefits.

In 2011, temporary contracts accounted for 50 percent of all new hires in the European Union, according to *Eurostat*.

Isabelle Maquet-Engsted, a senior analyst at the European Commission in Brussels, said political efforts to encourage temporary work may only paper over the problems Europe generating solid economic growth and well-paid jobs. “We have signs that things are not going to get better, because the jobs being created are those that carry a higher risk of poverty,” she said.

For those who cannot find work after a temporary contract expires, the situation can become dire.

In the *Bois de Vincennes*, a park behind the parking lot where Mr. Duboscq lives, Jean, 51, an electrician who would only give his first name, warmed his hands recently over a fire in a small oil drum. He used to rent a tiny Paris studio, he said, but moved to a tent hidden in the woods three months ago after a fixed-term job expired and he was unable to secure other lodging.

By day, the forest is a playground for young urbanites. At night, however, it is home to an estimated 200 people, including families with children. Some are French and some are immigrants from Eastern Europe and North Africa.

Like many tent shelters, Jean’s is quasi-permanent. With his neighbors, he shares a rickety table and a shelf stocked with sugar, salt and an old teapot. Strips of meat hung frozen on a clothesline.

“I never dreamed I would be here,” Jean said. “But my contracts ran out, and at my age, it’s getting harder to find new ones.”

Source: *International Herald Tribune*, 2 April 2012

<sup>1</sup> Arnold von Winkelried or Arnold Winkelried is a legendary hero of Swiss history. According to 16th century Swiss historiography, Winkelried’s sacrifice brought about the victory of the Old Swiss Confederacy in the Battle of Sempach (1386) against the army of the Habsburg Duke Leopold III of Austria.

## Adopting the German approach ...

by Jochen Scholz, Berlin

Apparently the German mainstream politician feels an inner urge to subject all other European countries to the German legal system. He cannot imagine another country whatsoever having public prosecutors who are not subjected to the executive. Therefore, in our country there is no legal prosecutor like the Spanish investigating judge *Baltazar Garzón*. For many years he worked without regard to the person until he fell victim to a political conspiracy. I see no other explanation for the following public hick-ups emanating a disgusting stench.

*Carsten Schneider*, SPD "Budgeteer" asked Minister of Finance *Wolfgang Schäuble* (CDU) to defend his civil servants. "Schäuble is violating his obligations as a senior employer". He also urged the Minister of Foreign Affairs, *Guido Westerwelle*, to summon the Swiss ambassador. It could be said in his defence, that he only gathered some experience during his banker apprenticeship and his alternative service. In 1998 he became the youngest MP and neither was he able to significantly "broaden his horizon" in the Budget Committee.

There are some questions to be put to his party, the SPD: Why permit such small-time politicians to reproach Swit-

zerland and to bring our country into discredit, this way damaging the memory of *Carlo Schmidt*, *Fritz Erler*, *Willy Brandt* und *Helmut Schmidt* and their work?

"The Minister of Finance is downgrading the dimensions of the conflict." *Joachim Poss*, SPD Fraction Vice-Chairman, told the "Financial Times Germany". For him it was a "clash of civilisations" and "Switzerland was practicing a business model of tax crime and was lagging far behind the requirements of a state of law".<sup>1</sup>

No wonder, here it is again, the image of the "Ugly German", a consequence of practicing an ever more mediocre human resources management. One should remember the disasters of the last century that were partially caused by the idea that the world should "adopt the German approach."

As a result today's lawbreakers are no longer judged by their crimes: The judge-rapporteurs in Stuttgart-Stammheim gave the impression that the Federal State Attorney were conducting the trial against the joint plaintiff *Michael Buback*, – who wanted to know who had killed his father – instead of the terrorist *Verona Becker*. *Michael Buback* is the son of the late attorney general *Siegfried Buback*, mur-

dered in 1977 by members of the RAF. The "German (legal) approach" allows the German government to give instructions to the Federal Prosecutor with respect to his investigations and he is bound to those instructions. So it was up to the Swizz citizens in Wintherthur to prevent that suspected perpetrators could use public stages in order to create new legends.<sup>2</sup>

Switzerland does not need any tutoring, especially not by the Germans, above all; Switzerland of all nations that is the only nation that has developed a state model suitable as a role model for Europe.

*Jürgen Trittin*, Green-Party-Chairman called it a "bottomless scandal". However, this "bottomless scandal" began *early as 13 years ago*, on March 24<sup>th</sup> 1999, when he became *Minister in the Schröder/Fischer-Cabinet*. Stop the thief? •

<sup>1</sup> Quote: Financial Times Deutschland, 2.4.2012, frontpage, "Schweiz schickt die Kaval-lerie" (Switzerland sends the cavalry), m.ftd.de/s=EYNV7f3xNI83\_bwVigRzQ03/artikel/70017202.xml?v=2.0

<sup>2</sup> NZZ Online, 30.3.2012, "Das Schlachtross bleibt im Stall" (The warhorse remains in the stable), [www.nzz.ch/nachrichten/zueroch/stadt\\_und\\_region/joschka-fischer-sagt-auftritt-in-winterthur-ab\\_1.16176138.html](http://www.nzz.ch/nachrichten/zueroch/stadt_und_region/joschka-fischer-sagt-auftritt-in-winterthur-ab_1.16176138.html)

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

## Current Concerns

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

**Subscribe to Current Concerns – The journal of an independent cooperative**

The cooperative *Zeit-Fragen* is a politically and financially independent organisation. All of its members work on a voluntary and honorary basis. The journal does not accept commercial advertisements of any kind and receives no financial support from business organisations. The journal *Current Concerns* is financed exclusively by its subscribers.

We warmly recommend our model of free and independent press coverage to other journals.

Annual subscription rate of  
CHF 40,-; Euro 30,-; USD 40,-; GBP 25,-  
for the following countries:

Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brunei, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hongkong, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Qatar, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, USA

Annual subscription rate of  
CHF 20,-; Euro 15,-; USD 20,-; GBP 12,50  
for all other countries.

Please choose one of the following ways of payment:

- send a cheque to *Current Concerns*, P.O. Box, CH-8044 Zurich, or
- send us your credit card details (only *Visa*), or
- pay into one of the following accounts:

CH:	Postscheck-Konto (CHF):	87-644472-4	IBAN CH91 0900 0000 8764 4472 4	BIC POFICHBEXXX
CH:	Postscheck-Konto (Euro):	91-738798-6	IBAN CH83 0900 0000 9173 8798 6	BIC POFICHBEXXX
D:	Volksbank Tübingen, Kto. 67 517 005, BLZ 64190110		IBAN DE12 6419 0110 0067 5170 05	BIC GENODES1TUE
A:	Raiffeisen Landesbank, Kto. 1-05.713.599, BLZ 37000		IBAN AT55 3700 0001 0571 3599	BIC RVVGAT2B

## Tax dispute with Switzerland

by Erika Vögeli

Since 1936 the financial privacy of the citizens in Switzerland has been protected by the banking secrecy. It means that banks must not give information on the financial affairs of private persons to third parties. A banker offending against this law is liable to prosecution. However this protection does not hold true absolutely. Different regulations of the civil law, the debt enforcement and bankruptcy law, the criminal law, the procedural criminal law and the mutual judicial assistance procedures in criminal matters foresee exceptions in case of probable cause of an offense.

Beyond that the financial centre Switzerland has numerous instruments to avert funds of criminal origin. For example the rules require, that assets may only be accepted, if the contracting party is identified and the origin of the assets is clarified. As compared to international standards, the Swiss rules are very strict. The Money Laundering Act sets the framework.

Since 1944 in Switzerland a tax has to be paid on assets and yield from assets; therefore the financial institutes account the so-called capital gains tax (CGT) of currently 35% on all yields from capital and interest gained etc. and automatically transfers it to the state authorities.

If somebody declares his assets and his yields to the tax authorities correctly, he will pay the ordinary taxes and in response the capital gains tax is either returned or compensated in his tax charges. Thus the incentive for the taxpayer to evade assets or capital gains taxes is omitted.

This regulation has existed for almost 70 years. Now several European and other states are in financial problems. A source of money could be the financial investments of their citizens in other states, for which no taxes in the country of residence are paid. As an obvious solution Switzerland offered to these states a regulation similar to the Swiss CGT, which protects the privacy of the banking customers, but allows the foreign state to enforce its tax claims. With this regulation called "flat rate withholding tax" the bank collects a tax on interest, dividends and other capital gains and refunds it anonymously to the revenue office of the respective state. This solution corresponds with the Swiss constitutional state; it ensures contractual certainty for the foreign banking customers and allows conveying the entitled receivables to the foreign state. It shall not include that the preservation of domestic law – protecting the privacy in the financial sector – leads to citizens

of other states omitting their legal obligations, in this case their tax liability. All that can be settled in reasonable negotiations. This includes the respect of the sovereignty of the other state – a fundamental requirement of any international law. The infringement of national sovereignty rights and the deployment of unfair to illegal methods won't do. It is one thing, if an employee of a bank steals and misappropriates data. In a constitutional state he is sentenced in accordance with the criminal code. It is another thing whether a state buys and uses such unfairly procured data. It is however a different matter altogether, if officials of a State instigate employees of a bank in another state to violate the law, to prompt them and pay them, in order to then use such purchased information against this state and/or its institutes. Breaking the law by a state cannot be a basis of international relations not to mention neighborly relations.

Who violates law and even endorses this acting on his own authority, cannot be taken serious any longer and loses its credibility; relations lose their sustainability and stability, a state loses its foundation.

The response is a resounding no. Not like this! •

## Parents' involvement from the beginning

### German Catholic Parenthood Movement (KED) takes stock after federal congress – Federal Chairman Kastner warns of economization of training and education

German Catholic Parenthood (KED) e.V.

"The KED opposes tendencies that training and education are to be dominated by economic interests," said *Marie-Theres Kastner*, Federal Chairman of German Catholic Parenthood (KED), in her summary at this year's federal congress of KED, which took place from 23 to 25 March 2012 in Erfurt on the topic of "business and school".

"People are no economic resources, but individuals who need a holistic education for a healthy development. This includes a family that offers security and support, as well as a school education providing broad core knowledge, but also promotes inner freedom to question relationships critically and to act according to ethical criteria," Kastner said.

"In no case may education be a tool to make people available at the best possible rate," emphasized Kastner and clarified: "This is ultimately a plea for strengthening professional ethics in business and politics, which often fails as to preventing and managing crises." "After all, our democracy

builds on people who use their knowledge responsibly for the common good.

Kastner made it clear that the KED would quite favor cooperation between industry and schools. In this context, she explicitly praised the offerings by the industry's education organization (or educational institute for industry and commerce) to support the transition from school to work. It was important that there were connectivity options following each educational attainment.

Kastner clarified: "We want to encourage parents to address teaching contents of the schools and to make sure that education will not become one-sided". She called upon all parents to claim their voice in school and policy and to help shaping respective reform processes for the benefit of children. "Questions of the educational concept in regular schools concern the democratic self-image and need to be discussed circumspectly in a broad dialogue among social forces, free from political camp battles," said Kastner.

The KED is a Catholic parents association, which campaigns for a value-oriented, holistic training and education providing equal opportunities in kindergarten and school. The KED organizes an annual federal conference on a current educational topic. This year, the KED together with highly qualified experts addressed the issue concerning the chances and barriers of cooperation between industry and schools. The speakers included Prof Dr *Burkard M. Zapff* (Catholic University Eichstätt-Ingolstadt), Prof Dr *Jochen Krautz* (Alanus University located in Alfter near Bonn) and Dr *Hans-Peter Klös* (Institut der deutschen Wirtschaft Köln). A documentary will be released soon under [www.katholische-elternschaft.de](http://www.katholische-elternschaft.de). •

Source: Press release of Katholische Elternschaft Deutschlands (KED) e.V. from 3.4.2012  
[www.katholische-elternschaft.de](http://www.katholische-elternschaft.de)  
E-mail: [info@katholische-elternschaft.de](mailto:info@katholische-elternschaft.de)

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

# What would the West have to fear from a “colonial Nuremberg”?

About the book “The Language of Empire” by Domenico Losurdo

ts. According to the interpretation of *Norman Podhoretz*, the then editor of the neo-conservative US magazine *Commentary*, the West has been involved since 9/11 in the war against terrorism and against the 60 states with links to the terror network. Podhoretz described in several of his articles that this was the “fourth world war” if we considered the Cold War as the third, and that this war would be lasting for decades in the form of an ancient tragedy in five acts. The fact that every five-act play consists of 20 scenes, and that the wars in Afghanistan and the Iraq have only been the first scenes of Act I, is enough justification for Podhoretz to speak of a world war. The climax and ensuing catastrophe are then the wars against what he calls “Russian military fascism” and the “Chinese trade fascism” – the man who was honored with the “presidential medal of freedom”, the highest civilian US award by *George W. Bush* would not speak of anything less but “fascism”. Just as it had been necessary to reject *Hitler’s* appeasement policy and to sustain the third world war against the Soviet Union for decades, we would have to recognize and address the evil with a long breath today.

This gruesome war rhetoric of a Bush adept – who resorted to pussyfooting under the Obama administration and prefers a smarter soft-power language in order to make Europe’s “Venus-residents” remain on board for the next scenes and even acts of the long war – only now and then makes use of a rougher intonation; this is the case, when the war drums in the Greater Middle East become louder, and that is when the whole Facebook and Twitter scam threatens to be ineffective and reveals too much of the inconsistencies of the West’s war propaganda.

## Clarification of terms

It is the great merit of a philosopher from Urbino, *Domenico Losurdo*,<sup>1</sup> to deconstruct both the above-mentioned hard power and soft power propaganda of the West. It undergoes a deconstruction dedicated to an enlightening and scientific rigor, and not an ideological one, as otherwise is used only too often by intelligence-led university deconstructivists.

“Sapere Aude”, have the courage to use your reason without being guided by someone else. This was the motto of the European Enlightenment formulated by *Immanuel Kant*. And Enlightenment is man’s emergence from his self-imposed immaturity. In this work, which every gen-

eration has to take on anew, we try not to abandon the achievements of our forefathers to the arrogance of power, such as democracy and human rights or human dignity and the relatedness to the other in a social community. In order to walk upright, people need a clear insight into the nature of things, i.e. in the terms that surround us and want to determine our lives. To assist our efforts, the philosopher of Urbino lends us a hand in the best manner of Italian humanists with his book “The language of the empire”.

## Hypnotic empty words to exercise power

Terms that prior to the collapse of the Berlin wall had completely different connotations have apparently become our “very own” vocabulary due to the influence of the mainstream media; everybody makes use of them without questioning them. Just like hypnotic non-words – to borrow a term from neurolinguistic programming, a contemporary manipulation technique – they becloud our minds and even our hearts. Therefore all the more pleasant is the quiet passage that Losurdo grants his readers when he takes them on a tour through the history of the last 2,000 years by means of a number of selected central concepts and allows analogous conclusions by means of using historical examples, which enables us to see things much more clearly. Beginning with the term “terrorism”, he leads the reader to “fundamentalism”, then to “anti-Americanism”, to “anti-Semitism”, continuing with “anti-Zionism” and “Philo-Islamism” and to the “hatred against the West” which he finally examines in the last chapter of the Italian edition. Chapter 8, which was added to the German edition, is entitled: “Obama and Orwell: The language of the empire and newspeak”. In lieu of a final word, we finally find a text entitled “Excommunications done by the candidate for the Empire”.

The central issue that runs through all chapters is the question who is sovereign over the definition of terms. For reasons of lack of space we can only offer the reader a few examples of Losurdo’s mental sharpness – the interested reader is well advised to take two or three days off for reading – a first-class wellness experience, and yet affordable!

## History is written by the victor

As to the major term terrorism, Losurdo puts it as follows: “The current war is directed against terrorism. But what do we

mean by this? There is no effort to provide clarity. The more imprecise the indictment is worded, the easier it can be used unilaterally, and the more indisputable is the verdict that the stronger one passes.” (p. 11)

Is history not always the winner’s history, and does not usually the stronger one win? How does a CIA assassination of a head of state differ from a murder committed by anarchists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century? Is an extra-judicial execution by the Israeli army not also a terrorist act? Losurdo’s conclusion: “A terrorist act does not merely become a legitimate police action or legal action, because the responsible person is an agent of any intelligence or member of a national army, who can easily and in a sovereign manner administer death without putting his life or his integrity at stake.” (p. 18)

## The embargo – the terrorist weapon par excellence

Today, the word “embargo” is a central concept of the so-called “international community”, which Losurdo exposes as Western and therefore blatantly exclusionary word. But does an embargo not represent an instrument of terror against innocent civilians? Losurdo allows the US journal *Foreign Affairs* to speak; it is published by the Council on Foreign Relations, the bastion of the so-called US realists around the hardliner *Zbigniew Brzezinski*. Accordingly, they admit, the embargo was the weapon of mass destruction par excellence; imposed to deny Saddam access to weapons of mass destruction, the embargo on Iraq, and now direct quote of *Foreign Affairs*, “may have contributed to more deaths during the post-Cold War era than all weapons of mass destruction throughout history” (p. 25). According to this US analysis, Losurdo says, the embargo seems to be the terrorist weapon par excellence.

By listing countless examples Losurdo shows how fragmented and incoherent our historical thinking is. Accustomed to judging in categories of good and evil, the good person remains good even if he commits something of which he has just accused the evil person, we often do not see or want to see atrocities that are happening before our eyes committed by the “good”. This is a “masterpiece” of repression or “negationism”. Thus the West has been acclaimed for decades if not centuries for its democratic concept and the concept of equality and human dignity.

### "What would the West have to ..."

continued from page 15

But how did the West deal with the people whom it classified as "subhuman" and against whom they waged a relentless campaign of destruction? We are talking about the Indians and black slaves in the United States. And when the Nazi barbarianism, against whose racism they had set out, was barely defeated, the conglomeration of races was still a punishable offence in over 30 US states.

### From "white" to "western supremacy"

Tirelessly Losurdo lists one example after the other of Western intolerance, hypocrisy, double standards and indolence and shows how the fusion of the terms "West", "white" and "Aryan" resulted in the concept of "white supremacy" and then in "western supremacy" long before Hitler seized power, culminating in a colonial racism and millions of deaths that have not been atoned until today. Losurdo inexorably gets to the bottom of the issue: "Let us ask ourselves a question: Apart from Europe, why do the United States and Canada, Australia and New Zealand belong to the 'Western culture' while Mexico and Brazil are excluded, although they are not in the Asian but in the western hemisphere? How can we explain these inclusions and exclusions? *Huntington* answered quite clearly: 'The Latin American civilization incorporated indigenous cultures, which did not exist in Europe, were effectively wiped out in North America (and in Australia and New Zealand)'. To be precise, not only the culture but also the peoples they represented were wiped out. And the famous political scientist does not disclose this fact: the Puritans that had arrived in North America started out from the assumption that 'the expulsion and/or the extermination of the Indians were the only possibility for the future'. If the genocide allows the inclusion in the West, miscegenation confirms the exclusion: *Toynbee* was not wrong when he warned of continuing 'western race awareness' in the fifties of the last century." (p. 299f).

### The colonialist West in the dock – next to Hitler and Mussolini

The West has applied double standards until today, with the US at the forefront who despite Guantanamo, secret CIA torture flights and prisons and a persistent anti-Islamism in their own country publish human rights reports on every country on earth every year, except of course about itself. Therefore we can understand why at the end of his book Losurdo raises the question, why there

has never been an African or a colonial Nuremberg. In Nuremberg the Nazi thugs were tried by the Allies – just to mention in passing that the findings from Operations Artichoke and Paperclip and many others made by ill-fated Nazi scientists in human trials in concentration camps were used for their own purposes in the Cold War – but there was no action against Mussolini's Italy. Why? Because they would have had to begin in the liberal period prior to Mussolini? And what would this mean for Britain? Losurdo says, "By the way, Mussolini's mustard gas in Ethiopia had been preceded by Churchill's mustard gas in Iraq. Apart from fascist Italy the trial of war crimes would finally have brought the colonial West as a whole to the dock. The absence of a more colonial than an "African" Nuremberg primarily benefitted of England, which could continue its traditional policy in the Middle East, as the 1956 aggression against Egypt (jointly with France and Israel) shows and, moreover, as the close cooperation with Washington in its war policy and humiliating policy toward the Arab people proves." (p. 315)

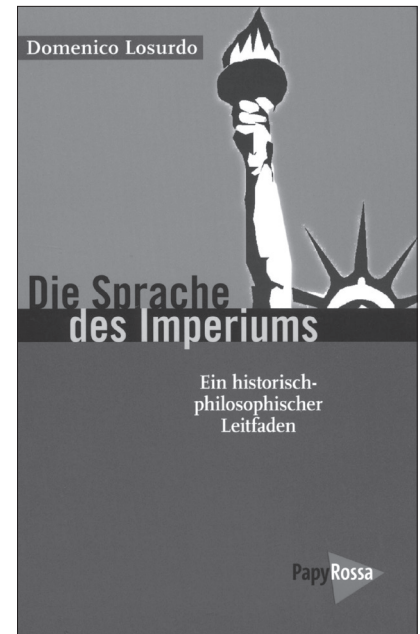
And Losurdo's razor sharp conclusion put in a nutshell: "Due to the sabotage of the colonial Nuremberg, the west could avoid a painful self-critical reflection that imposes itself in the long-term perspective of racism against the colonial peoples." (p. 315)

### Still, it's not too late for the West

Losurdo's work helps to make the readership aware of their role and their responsibility in world affairs. And those who take note of the continuing injustices that befell all those who were marginalized by the 'West' and who did not count among human beings will be able to lend a helping hand in the long-overdue restitution. The first step after realizing our role and responsibility would be to set an immediate halt to the hypocritical and murderous wars that are not waged for noble values, but for selfish interests; then the apology; the reparation payments; and the offer of cooperation – gestures, which will certainly be understood in the "non-Western" world. It is still not too late for the "west" says *Kishore Mahbubani* of Singapore, and the more than 80% non-Westerners still want to cooperate with us. It goes without saying that this must happen in equality and honesty. To start with, we could be more careful in choosing our terms – which is another merit of the book written by Domenico Losurdo. •

<sup>1</sup> Prof Dr phil *Domenico Losurdo* teaches philosophy at the University of Urbino in Italy.

(Translation *Current Concerns*)



*Domenico Losurdo: Die Sprache des Imperiums. Ein historisch-philosophischer Leitfaden. (The Language of Empire. Historical and philosophical guideline) Cologne 2011. ISBN: 978-3-89438-469-2. (Italian original: Il linguaggio dell'Impero. Lessico dell'ideologia americana. 2007.)*

## Current Concerns

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

*Publisher:* Zeit-Fragen Cooperative

*Editor:* Erika Vögeli

*Address:* Current Concerns,

P.O. Box, CH-8044 Zurich

*Phone:* +41 (0)44 350 65 50

*Fax:* +41 (0)44 350 65 51

*E-Mail:* CurrentConcerns@zeit-fragen.ch

*Subscription details:*

published regularly electronically as PDF file

Annual subscription rate of

SFr. 40,-, € 30,-, £ 25,-, \$ 40,-

for the following countries:

Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brunei, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hongkong, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Qatar, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, USA

Annual subscription rate of

SFr. 20,-, € 15,-, £ 12,50, \$ 20,-

for all other countries.

*Account:* Postscheck-Konto: PC 87-644472-4

The editors reserve the right to shorten letters to the editor. Letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of *Current Concerns*.

© 2011. All rights reserved. No reproduction, copy or transmission of this publication may be made without written permission.