

Current Concerns

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Silk Road of 21st century: “One belt, one road”

by Zivadin Jovanovic, Chairman of the Belgrade Forum for a World of Equals



Zivadin Jovanovic
(picture ef)

Beginning of March I have returned from China where I participated in the International Silk Road Think Tank conference, held in the Chinese Municipality of Shenzhen. The Belt and Road Initiative refers to the proposal by Chinese President

Xi Jinping in 2013. There were 80 think tank participants from about 50 countries of Europe, Asia, Middle East and South America. High representatives of the government agencies from a number of coun-

tries, such as high ranking diplomats were also present (from Israel, Iran, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan, Kazakhstan). Among prominent politicians who participated were *Alfred Gusenbauer*, former Chancellor of Austria, *Roza Otunbayeva*, former President of Kyrgyzstan, and others.

Hosts and organizers were the *Chinese Center for Contemporary World Studies* (CCCWS), the Government of the Municipality of Shenzhen and the Fudan University of Shanghai. The International Think Tank Association of the New Silk Road was established and the Shenzhen Declaration were launched.

Foreign guests also visited Beijing, Chongqing and the district of Dazu, Si-

chuan Province. In Shenzhen (seat of mobile telephone production, 13 millions of inhabitants, next to Hong Kong) a welcome to the foreign participants was accorded by top local Government leaders and high politicians and scientists from Beijing.

Chongqing, with 33 million inhabitants on the Yangtze River, I learned, is the largest city in China, producing 3 million cars and 55 million laptop computers yearly. It plays one of the key roles in connecting Central China regions eastward to the Pacific and South East Asia and westward to Central Asia, the Volgograd region in Russia and Central Europe. This particular connectivity Chongqing – Volgograd region was promoted by pres-



Silk Road

“The name ‘Silk Road’ harks back to the German geographer and colonialist Ferdinand von Richthofen (1833–1905). It stands for a system of trade routes that used to connect China – via Central Asia – to the Middle East and to the Mediterranean and Europe in Ancient Greece and parts of the Middle Ages. Geographically, the path of the historical Silk Road is characterized by deserts, high mountains and steppes, an area that – until the 20th century – was often influenced by alternating political powers. From a geopolitical point of view due to their location and resources the territories along Silk Road have always been of great strategic interest to both regional and big powers – among them Chinese states, antique nomadic people, imperial China, the (Graeco-) Iranian and later, during the Middle Ages, Islamic kingdoms, Russia and Great Britain in the ‘Great Game’ at the turn of the 19th century, the Soviet Union as well as the People’s Republic after Second World War.

Excerpt from: Hannes A. Fellner: “Handel statt Krieg” (Trade instead of war);
in: “Junge Welt”, 7 March 2016 (picture ma)

"Silk Road of 21st century: ..."

continued from page 1

idents of China and Russia – Xi Jinping and *Vladimir Putin*.

The Silk Road is a multidimensional global project and aims at modernizing and expanding fiscal connectivity between China, Asia, Africa and the whole of Europe, economic development of the vast belt along the New Silk Road but at the same time, reinforcing cultural cooperation, understanding and mutual trust among nations and civilizations. It presupposes construction and modernisation of modern roads, railways, air connections, energy, food and industry production, modernisation of Sea transport, facilities and communication, in general. It requires investment of about 900 billion US dollars from Chinese sources. EU is expected to provide additional 315 billion of US dollars in order to be able to fully benefit from the Initiative. So far, according to available information, the EU could secure only 60 billion approaching China for the rest.

The US seem to be unwilling so far to join, or support the Chinese New Silk Road Initiative. The US has not joined the *Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank* (AIIB) in spite of the fact that their closest European allies, including Great Britain, have joined this Bank which already attracted about 60 member countries. Instead, US seem trying to get together all

"Peaceful international cooperation benefiting everybody involved"

"It is not incidental that the current Chinese government uses the name 'Silk Road' for its initiative. It stands for a peaceful, international cooperation benefiting everybody involved, which is based on economic and cultural exchange as defined by the Chinese soft power strategy. 'One Belt Initiative' first and foremost aims at integrating countries and regions along the historical Silk Road such as China, Afghanistan, the northern parts of India and Pakistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan,

Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, the northern part of Iran, Iraq, Syria, into one economic zone. This is meant to be achieved by extension of infrastructure, by simplification and intensification of trade and consolidation of cultural contacts. For instance, the plan stipulates the construction of 8,000 kilometres of train rails for high-speed trains."

*Excerpt from: Hannes A. Fellner
"Handel statt Krieg" (Trade inspite of war); in: "Junge Welt", 7 March 2016
(Translation Current Concerns)*

Asian and Pacific Ocean countries which supposedly have any reservation, or issue in dispute, towards China, to form an alternative integration counterbalancing if not obstructing Chinese Initiative. Not being pleased with EU joining the Chinese Initiative and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. Washington apparently steps up pressure on Brussels to approve TTIP and let it come into force, as possible. Kind of "dead race", for some countries economic for the others geopolitical one, is going on not only among adversaries, but among some traditional allies, too.

Apart from the EU which has primarily economic interests to join the Initiative, the Group "China plus 16" has been established three years ago to cater for

the interests of Central and South East European countries within the Initiative. For various infrastructural projects of this particular Group, for the time being, China has provided 10 billion US dollars. Serbia has been promised 1.5 billion which makes her a rather high ranking partner. Part of that sum has already been engaged in construction of two very important bridges – one over Danube and the other over Sava river, with the rest reserved for modernization of the Belgrade-Budapest railway. It is only the beginning of modernization of the European corridor No. 10, connecting the ports of Piraeus and Thessaloniki in Greece with Central and Northern Europe.

China is also engaged in the construction of the Belgrade-Bar Highway (Montenegro, Adriatic), the thermo-electric project Obrenovac II, while negotiations are under way about the construction of a free zone Industrial Park, the first of that kind in this part of Europe. In all Serb-Chinese joint projects special consideration is given to compliance with the highest EU standards of environmental protection. Some participants in the discussion at the Shenzhen Conference have underlined the importance of connecting "Three Seas" – Adriatic, Black and Baltic. In order to optimize connectivity the Danube River waterway should be improved and modernised.

The Initiative of the New Silk Road ("Belt and Road") is only four years old. Yet, it has already embraced 75 Free zones and Industrial parks in 35 countries along the Belt. They employed about 950,000 persons and provided the tax revenue of over 100 billion of US dollars to the participating countries. New highways, railways, ports and bridges – in addition. Isn't that a promising start of the New Silk Road Initiative, notwithstanding hardships in the global world economy? •

Terrorists in China and in Syria

"A key role in the Silk Road Initiative is played in that region of the country where in the past two of the main routes of the ancient trade route ran north and south of the Taklamakan Desert, namely in the Uygur Autonomous Region Xinjiang. [...] Since the 1990s, there have been repeated riots and terrorist attacks in Xinjiang. These are directed against the Han Chinese in the region. Although ethnic Chinese have been living in Xinjiang ever since the Han period and their percentage has, on average, not changed since the early 19th century and although the People's Republic has been under one of the most advanced minority laws in the world, there is a small number of Uyghurs who perceive Chinese policies as a threat to their ethnic group and strive for their own national independence. [...] The Turkistan Islamic Party (ITP), which was founded by Uigurian Terrorists, has claimed responsibility for several attacks in Xinji-

ang and in other parts of China. It aims at not only the independence of Xinjiang, but the establishment of a Central Asian caliphate. Several interesting circumstances show whose interests ITP serves: After the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York on 11 September 2001, it was added to the United States' terrorist list, but it was taken back off this list as early as in 2004. Today units of ITP are fighting alongside the terror groups in Syria. Like other anti-Syrian forces the ITP is supported by Turkey. So for instance the city Dschisr asch-Schughur, which is situated close to the Turkish border between Idlib and Latakia has been populated by Exile-Uighurians – many of them from Turkey – and has since served as a training camp for the ITP."

*from: Hannes A. Fellner
"Handel statt Krieg" (Trade inspite of war); in: "Junge Welt", 7 March 2016
(Translation Current Concerns)*

On the way to the tax haven

by Myret Zaki*



Myret Zaki
(picture wikipedia)

“It is obvious that only powerful States can presume – by measures which they judge to be good – to reclaim tax receipts which have escaped them, while at the same time profiting from the tax evasion which they offer to foreigners in their own territories.”

This is a quote from the book “Le secret bancaire est mort, vive l’évasion fiscale” [Bank secrecy is dead, long live tax evasion], which was published six years ago. It is presumptuous to quote oneself. Nevertheless, it should be noted that this book offered a very realistic analysis by predicting that the US would reclaim the international clientele of Swiss banks.

In recent years, the following questions were incessantly under discussion in Switzerland: Are the American attacks against banking secrecy part of an economic war, or do they constitute a legitimate battle with the aim to eradicate all tax evasion, especially at American banks? Our oppo-

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“The new Switzerland”, that is what the *agency Bloomberg* calls the US, and they also call them the ‘biggest tax haven in the world’. Although the Swiss banks have paid five billions of fines because they had helped American clients to escape the tax authorities, their biggest loss is that of the migration of the international clientele to a more secure and more stable tax haven – namely the United States of America.”

nents were sincerely convinced that Washington would without fail adopt the global standards of fiscal information exchange. They took into serious consideration that a market of more than 15,000 billions of dollars of tax-free assets – mainly due to Anglo-Saxon financial structures – could be legalized suddenly as if with a conjurer’s wand. Today they must shed their illusions.

US reclaim offshore market

“The new Switzerland”, that is what the *agency Bloomberg* calls the US, and they also call them the “biggest tax haven in the world”. Although the Swiss banks have paid five billions of fines because they had helped American clients to escape the tax authorities, their biggest loss is that of the migration of the international clientele to a more secure and more stable tax haven – namely the United States of America.

Bloomberg speaks of a mass exodus of private assets, away from the jurisdiction of Switzerland, the Bahamas, the Cayman Islands, the Virgin Islands, and Bermuda, to the United States, which offer a completely straightforward real secrecy. Which state could call Washington to order? Also in Switzerland companies recommend their international and their Swiss clients to transfer their assets overseas, be it to Nevada, Wyoming or South Dakota.

This is a quite pragmatic approach: the US has been able to evade the new transparency standards to the enactment of which they themselves have contributed. So for example FATCA, an American law, or the OECD international standards

of the automatic exchange of information, which have not been signed by Washington. Despite the refusal to sign these conventions, the US are by no means on the blacklist of the OECD. So – why should they miss the corresponding benefits? The only legal restriction is that American companies are not allowed to provide active assistance in tax evasion.

Private assets in Switzerland have dropped by half

Nowadays it is very simple to hide your identity behind opaque American structures: If a wealthy Mexican opens an account at an American bank on behalf of a company resident in the Virgin Islands, only the company name is transmitted to the Virgin Islands without the name of the actual holder of the right of disposal ever being passed on to Mexico.

If a resident of Hong Kong hopes to escape the radar of the Chinese authorities it is sufficient that he contributes his wealth to a Limited Liability Company (LLC) in Nevada, which is owned by a trust in the same state. This guarantees him that no tax document which could be exchanged with Hong Kong is issued in the US. Who has anything better to offer? Fact is that foreign private assets that were invested in Swiss banks from 2007 to 2015 in the form of securities have, in accordance with the *Swiss National Bank* (SNB), melted down to half their sum, namely from 1,109 to 516 billion Swiss francs.

Are there any doubts about the survival of the fittest (in tax matters)?

Source: Bilan from 24.02.2016; www.bilan.ch/myret-zaki/redaction-bilan/ira-paradis-fiscal
(Translation Current Concerns)

What is the point of the plans to abolish cash?

by Prof Dr Eberhard Hamer, SME Institute Hannover



Eberhard Hamer
(picture ma)

Formerly the concept of "money" was understood to mean only coins or later notes, which people held in their hands. But meanwhile this kind of cash money amounts only to a few percent of the total money supply. The bulk of what we call money is made up of account balances, account receivables or account payables. This latter "book money" dominates the entire international financial and banking system and is chased around the world billions of times within seconds by a simple click on a computer without anyone noticing. It merely appears as a debit or credit entry in an account.

For the banks deposit money is cheaper than cash. The latter needs to be sorted, counted, transported and secured. Therefore cash causes higher costs for banking system and trade than deposit money does.

Therefore banks and retail have already been promoting the credit card system, which reduces the payment process to a simple electronic direct debit, which is cheaper and makes cash dispensable. Now the suggestion to abolish cash altogether and to begin this process with the 500-Euro note comes up more and more frequently. There are powerful interested parties behind this proposal:

Banks could abolish all their cash machines, their cash departments and cash security, so that they would save substantial costs.

Trade and services would also save money by the prohibition of cash. They would no longer have to count or exchange cash or ensure its transport safety.

Industry and manufacturing have also shifted to using mainly money transfers (book money) because of the hard VAT control conditions.

Central banks as "printers" of money would save entire departments and substantial cost if there were no more cash but only book money.

Yet above all the tax state wants only book money because this would allow tax offices to scrutinize every account of every citizen, every bank and every company, which they cannot do now with savings in cash.

About 70% of the population oppose the abolition of cash because they are used to cash and see this as a freedom category for their revenue and expenditure.

Cash abolition would also cause problems for many of the 42% small enterprises and individual craftsmen because minor services (eg the changing of a switch) would no longer be worthwhile for them if they had to be paid into their bank accounts, and private services (tutoring, singing lessons, babysitting and other) would have to become much more expensive (because of taxes) and would therefore often be no longer worthwhile for suppliers and demanders.

However, the aforementioned objective reasons for or against cash are not the real reasons why central banks and states want to abolish cash – there is a more insidious reason: the all-round control of all payment transactions and the fraudulent preparation of a monetary correction, a currency reform.

In the same way as earlier princes increased the number of gold and silver coins in their mints by the addition of low-grade metal (tilting and rocking), central banks have increased the money supply fifty-fold in recent decades (while real growth only quintupled) and thus generated a huge money bubble, which threatened to burst on several occasions (US subprime crisis, euro crisis), but has been kept afloat by more money flooding.

They have also artificially eliminated the inflation which according to theory inevitably follows money flooding. They achieved this by means of the zero interest rate, and so the devaluation of money caused by the money flood could not yet been detected. The flooded money has served primarily unsound banks to incur debts for their speculation and unsound states to indebt themselves for luxury benefits. So the flood of money was followed by a flood of borrowing and debts where everyone reliable is held responsible for and where central banks make payments without restraint to everyone irresponsible.

This game will not much longer go well. The exchanges and markets are already "volatile". The looming recession would enforce a monetary correction – if the states or their central banks do not withdraw the excess liquidity from the market by means of a currency reform.

This planned currency reform will be considerably cheaper if the central banks no longer have to withdraw old cash and introduce new cash. After the abolition of all cash it will take them only minutes to click on a button of the digital money system, enter the depreciation and so to implement it everywhere.

In this regard cash abolition is the preparation for monetary correction.

However, if cash were to be abolished, the fraudulent background of this measure would become evident to large sections of the population and therefore immediately bring about a critical loss of confidence in the currency (eg Euro). Anyone who was smart would immediately get out of the book currency, change his assets back to traditional currencies like gold and silver and hoard them like that. We have already had this in Hitler's time: If the currency collapsed, gold and silver would remain secure means of payment. And contrary to the prohibition of cash, a ban on gold and silver money has never worked anywhere in the world. The only effect of the cash ban in any country would be an even earlier loss of credibility of the central bank and the collapse of its monetary system.

And the state's and press' justification of the cash ban as being part of the "fight against crime" is not more credible than the US wars of conquest fought under the pretence of "counter-terrorism".

Yet the experiment with a cashless society has a chance nevertheless because all banks have – in their own interest (costs) – already been trying to wean their customers off the handling of cash by means of fees and negative interest rates. But of course this is not the only ongoing action of patronization and deprivation of liberty as well as the asset control of citizens. •

"I suggest that we rely on the ancient source of European democracy: the will of the people"

Extract of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's State of the Nation Address on 28 February 2016



Viktor Orbán
(picture ma)

Ladies and Gentle-
men,

The second and third decades of the twenty-first century will be the decades of mass migration. An era is upon us which we were not prepared for. We thought that something like this could only happen in the distant past or was confined to the pages of history books.

In fact, however, over the next few years more people than ever – multitudes outnumbering the entire population of some European countries – could set out for Europe. It is time to face reality. It is time to separate that which exists from that which we would like to exist. It is time to discard illusions, sophisticated theories, ideologies and utopian dreams.

The reality is that for a long time a world of parallel societies has been evolving with steady persistence, deep beneath the surface in a number of European countries. The reality is that, according to the natural order of things, this is forcing back our world – and with it us, our children and grandchildren. The reality is that those coming here have no intention whatsoever of adopting our way of life, because they see their own as more valuable, stronger and more viable than ours. And why, indeed, would they give it up? The reality is that they will not provide the supply of labour needed by the factories of Western Europe. Facts show that, across entire generations, the unemployment rate is much higher – sometimes several times higher – among those born outside Europe.

The reality is that the European nations have been unable to integrate even the masses who arrived from Asia and Africa gradually, over a number of decades. How could they succeed in doing so now, so rapidly and for such large numbers? The reality is that we are unable to use the Muslim world to solve the demographic problems of an undeniably shrinking and ageing Europe, without losing our way of life, our security and ourselves. The reality is that unless we put our foot down very soon, we will see an unmanageable level of tension between an ageing Europe and a young Muslim world, between a secular and faithless Europe and an increasingly fervent Islamic world, between a Europe which is unable to employ its own trained young people and an underqualified Mus-

"Our place is in the peace camp"

km. On 28 February 2016, the Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán delivered a speech on the situation of the nation in Parliament in Budapest, attracting attention beyond the country's borders. In the first part of his speech he referred especially to the history, the presence and the future of his country. In the second part, which we are publishing here, he dealt with a subject which is currently occupying everybody in Europe: the attempt of millions of people from Asia and Africa to migrate to Europe. Here it is to be added that the first part of the speech is worth reading and shows a politician one cannot understand in the context of those prejudices which are common amongst us. So for instance Orbán impressively declares his belief in a policy of peace, which he refers to in his speech with the following words: "[...] the Hungarians can only be independent, can only live in freedom, can only pursue the path that is predetermined for them by their talent and by their hard work, if there is no great power acting as an enemy [...]. Of course, there are times, and there were such times in our region, when war winds blew, and the policy was reduced to a 'who with whom'. If such rough seasons dawned, we were always left with noth-

ing. We were sickening for these, and it even happened that we got close to the last rites. These are weird times, full of fever dreams. In such times one dreams of hyenas, vultures, which do their rounds over the country, of expellees, deportees, hundreds of thousands displaced to death camps. Therefore, it is an iron law of Hungarian foreign policy, to go for peace. [...] Our place is in the peace camp. [...] It is not of Hungarian interest to join those international actions, which are disrespectful, abusive and which violate the national consciousness of the one or the other country. [...] The autocratic, cocky, on a feeling of moral superiority based policy that is so tempting and often so popular in the Western half of the continent – and sometimes beyond the big pond – is not our policy, is not our way and neither it is in our interest. Peace, cooperation, trade, mutual investments, a regional balance of our interest, to be behind our interests – these are the cornerstones of the Hungarian national foreign policy."

(see [http://www.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/prime-minister-viktor-orban-s-state-of-the-nation-address](http://www.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-speeches/prime-minister-viktor-orban-s-state-of-the-nation-address))

lim world. This is not happening in a remote part of the world which is therefore no threat to us, but here, in the heart of Europe.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is still not too late for the European elite to understand General De Gaulle's lesson: "Politics must be based on realities. Politics, when it is an art and a service, not an exploitation, is about acting for an ideal through realities." Realities are historical, cultural, demographic and geographical. It is perhaps not too late for us to understand that realities are not limits on freedom. The lesson which we are learning now is that freedom cannot exist in opposition to reality; without reality, the most there can be is political delirium and political intoxication. We may well build our world on our desire for the noblest ideals, but if it is not based on realities it can only ever remain a desire. When one stands in opposition to reality there is neither individual advancement, nor communal advancement; there is only failure, disappointment, bitterness, and finally cynicism and self-destruction. Perhaps this is why one sees so many high-minded, unhappy liberal politicians needlessly reduced to roaming the streets of Brussels.

Whether we like it or not, mass migration waves are never peaceful in nature. Whenever large masses of people seek new homelands this inevitably leads to conflicts, because they want to occupy places where people are already living: people who have made those places their own, and who wish to protect their homes, their cultures and their ways of life.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

History has kicked down the door on us: it has laid siege to the borders of Europe and the security of European cultures and European citizens. Although emergencies do not favour nuanced thinking – and refined feelings even less – it is hardly the migrants whom we should be so angry with. The majority of them are also victims: victims of their countries' collapsing governments, victims of bad international decisions, victims of people smugglers. They are doing what they see as being in their own interests. The problem is that we Europeans are not doing that which would be in our own interests. There is no better word for what Brussels is doing than "absurd". It is like a ship's captain heading for collision who, instead of wanting

"I suggest that we rely on ..."

continued from page 5

to take avoiding action, is more interested in deciding which lifeboats should be non-smoking. It is as if, instead of repairing the leaking hull, we are arguing about how much water should flood into which cabins.

My Friends,

Mass migration can indeed be stopped. Europe is a community of half a billion – five hundred million. There are more of us than the Russians and the Americans combined. The situation of Europe – its technological, strategic and economic development – gives it the means to defend itself. It is a big enough problem that Brussels is not capable of organising the defence of Europe, but it is an even bigger problem that it lacks the intent to do so. In Budapest, Warsaw, Prague and Bratislava it is difficult for us to understand how we have reached a point at which it is even possible that those wanting to come here from other continents and other cultures can be let in without controls. It is difficult to understand the weakening of our civilisation's natural and fundamental instinct for the defence of ourselves, our families, our homes and our land.

But, Ladies and Gentlemen, we really do have something to defend: the co-existence of Europe's free, Christian and independent nations; shared roots, shared values, shared history, geographical and geopolitical interdependence; equality between the sexes; freedom and responsibility; fair competition and solidarity; pride and humility; justice and mercy. We are these things: this is Europe. Europe is Hellas, not Persia; it is Rome, not Carthage; it is Christianity, not a caliphate. When we say this we are not claiming that we are better, but that we are different. To point to the existence of an independent European civilisation does not mean that it is better or worse; it only means that "we are like this, and you are like that".

A few years ago it seemed as though these ideas were obvious to us all. A few years ago it seemed as though there was agreement among us. A few years ago it seemed as though things were in order: as though the hearts and minds of Europe's leaders were in accord with our sense of what is right. One after another they declared that multiculturalism was dead. A few years ago we still believed that they had realised that immigrants arriving in massive numbers could not be integrated into the life of their countries. But in 2015 everything changed. The earlier harmony disintegrated. We went into free fall, back down into the intellectual chaos from which we had struggled to escape. One morning, out of the blue, we woke up to the sound of "Willkommenskultur".

"The way I see it, in Brussels and some European capitals the political and intellectual elite see themselves as citizens of the world – in contrast to the majority of people, who have a strong sense of nationhood. The way I see it, the political leaders are also aware of this. And while there is no chance of them agreeing with their own peoples, they would rather turn their backs on them."

Europe's leaders tell us that we must help. From the highest places we are urged to show solidarity and to offer our assistance.

My Friends,

This is natural. We do not have hearts of stone either. It is also true that we do not have heads of stone. We keep in mind the most important rule when offering help: if we help them here, they will come here; if we help them there, they will stay there. Instead of heeding this rule, Brussels has started to encourage those living in the poorer and less fortunate parts of the world to come to Europe and to change their lives for something different. Every evening, across half the world – or at least half of Europe – people sit at home struggling to understand what can have happened and what lies behind all this. Soon enough every family in Europe will have come to its own explanation – and I don't want to miss out on the chance of pitching in with mine. The way I see it, in Brussels and some European capitals the political and intellectual elite see themselves as citizens of the world – in contrast to the majority of people, who have a strong sense of nationhood. The way I see it, the political leaders are also aware of this. And while there is no chance of them agreeing with their own peoples, they would rather turn their backs on them. As used to be said in this part of the world, "they know what to do, they dare to do it, and they do it".

But this means that the real problem is not outside Europe, but inside Europe. Those who do most to endanger the future of Europe are not those who want to come here, but the political, economic and intellectual leaders who are trying to reshape Europe against the will of the people of Europe. This is how, for the planned transport to Europe of many millions of migrants, there came into existence the most bizarre coalition in world history: the people smugglers, the human rights activists and Europe's top leaders.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To this day, we are admitting without vetting and selection hundreds of thousands of people from countries with which we are at war, on the territories of which

European Union Member States are engaged in military operations. There was no chance of us screening out those who posed a danger to us. Today, also, we have no idea who are terrorists, who are criminals, who are economic migrants, and who are really running for their lives. It is hard to call this anything but madness.

[...]

My Friends,

We must halt the advance of Brussels. They have got it into their heads that they will distribute among us – compulsorily and with the force of law – the immigrants who have been transported to Europe. This is known as "the compulsory resettlement quotas". They have made one such wretched, unjust, irrational and unlawful one-off decision in relation to one hundred and twenty thousand migrants. Contemptuously bypassing and evading the principle of national sovereignty represented by the prime ministers of Member States, they arranged for the adoption of this law in the European Parliament. We dispute this decision, and we are fighting for its nullification in the European Court. It seems that, in Brussels as well as Hungary, eating increases the appetite. Therefore they want to build a system applied to every immigrant and every Member State, which will ensure the compulsory, permanent and continuous distribution of immigrants.

My Friends,

The EU clearly divides into two camps: on the one side are the federalists, and on the other are the supporters of sovereignty. The federalists want a United States of Europe and compulsory resettlement quotas, while the supporters of sovereignty want a Europe of free nations, and will not hear of any form of quota. This is how compulsory resettlement quotas have become the essence and symbol of the times we now live in. This is important in itself, but it also encapsulates everything which we fear, which we do not want, and which has the potential to prise apart the alliance of European peoples. We cannot afford to allow Brussels

Germany needs justice and freedom

by Karl Müller

The current political events and their presentation in the media let people in Germany hardly come to their senses. The headlines are full of them: Elections in three German states; migration attempts to Europe by millions of people from Africa and Asia with the main goal to reach Germany; terrorism and war in Syria and in other countries, permanent attacks against Russia and its policies, increasing polemics and meanness in the public political debate among the Germans themselves.

The citizens of Germany have barely any time to think and get things straight about their origin, their present and their path into the future. Postmodernism and (de-) constructivism in culture and feuilleton sections with their demands for relativity, arbitrariness and sophistical utilitarianism contribute to tearing out the orientation posts along the way. They continue the work begun by the exponents of

Freudo-Marxism who returned to Germany after the war – among others on behalf of US intelligence.

German parties: power instead of values

Holger Steltzner, co-editor of the “Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung”, has made an interesting diagnosis of the German CDU on 6 March 2016. This party had “since long and to a large extent [given up] any conservative position (defense, family, education, gender policy and other things)” and had “lost their market economy compass long ago” even in economic policy. This can also be applied to the other parties whose MPs constitute the “Bundestag”: SPD, Alliance 90/The Greens and even the Left Party. They are all touting for power and therefore join in every activity that promises power. Certainly this does not apply to the majority of members who are active at the parties’ basis. There

might still be an awareness of the values for the sake of which they once became party members: Christian values, civil liberties, social justice, peace, protection of the natural environment and much more. However, the fundamentals are decided at the party leaders’ level.

But who brings someone to political power in Germany?

In the German Basic Law we can read that “All state authority is derived from the people.” But that is not the reality.

We may well follow the track of looking back 70 years. In early June 1945, almost 4 weeks after the end of World War II in Europe, it could everywhere be read on the walls and it was intended to be read by the defeated Germans what the victors had formulated on 5 June 1945, a “Declaration regarding the defeat of Germany and the assumption of supreme authority

continued on page 8

“I suggest that we rely on ...”

continued from page 6

to place itself above the law. We cannot afford to allow the consequences of madcap policies to be expanded into those countries which have complied with every treaty and every law – as we have done. We cannot afford to allow them to force us or anyone else to import the bitter fruits of their misguided policies. We do not want to – and we shall not – import crime, terrorism, homophobia and anti-Semitism to Hungary. In Hungary there shall be no lawless urban neighbourhoods, there shall be no street violence or immigrant riots, there shall be no arson attacks on refugee camps, and gangs shall not hunt our wives and daughters. In Hungary we shall nip any such attempts in the bud, and we shall be consistent in punishing them.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We shall not surrender our right to decide who we want to live with, and who we do not want to live with. This is why we must resist those who seek to popularise the idea of the quotas in Europe, and we shall resist them. “A risk is always risky”, as the corny Budapest joke has it, and we must indeed summon up all our courage. We must summon it up because for the greater glory of European democracy we must face up to censorship, blackmail and threats. Books by the Hungarian Justice Minister are being withdrawn from bookshops in Belgium, and the press in some Member States are spreading blatant lies. The tone being used against Hungary is crude, coarse and aggressive. Furthermore, we are also being threatened with financial retaliation, being

accused of ingratitude for the support we receive. They think like the priest in a tale, who was asked to eliminate inequalities in wealth. “Fine”, he said, “let’s share out the work: you convince the rich to give, and I’ll convince the poor to accept”. This is how they imagine things. The reality, however, is that we do not owe each other anything – not a single penny. Weakened, bled dry, uncompetitive and starved of capital after forty-five years of communism, Hungary opened its doors to Western companies. Everyone profited from this: Western companies repatriated as much money from Hungary as the European Union sent here. We are quits, and we have nothing to call each other to account for.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Finally, how shall we stop Brussels’ resettlement quota offensive? I suggest that we rely on the ancient source of European democracy: the will of the people. If it is true that the people do not want the current insane immigration policy from Brussels – and indeed they oppose it – we should make room for their voice, and listen to what they have to say. After all, the European Union is based on the foundations of democracy. This means that we must not make decisions which will dramatically change people’s lives without consulting people and against their will. This is why we are holding a referendum in Hungary. This is not about the quota which has already been decided on, and which is being challenged in court by Hungary; that is the past. The referendum is about the future: we call the citizens of Hungary to battle, in opposition to the new European immigration system’s compulsory resettlement

quotas, which will be on the agenda for March. We believe that, even in its present state, Brussels must not overstep the boundaries of its own conceptions. It must not turn against the European people. The European Union must not be a kind of Soviet Union reloaded. We Hungarians shall not reject Europe, despite all its weaknesses, emaciation and unsteadiness; and we shall not abandon it, despite its current bout of vertigo. We are the citizens of the same historical and spiritual Europe as *Charlemagne, Leonardo, Beethoven, Saint Ladislaus, Imre Madách or Béla Bartók*. Our Europe is built on Christian foundations, and we are proud that it has accomplished fulfilment of human and spiritual freedom. There are many of us in Europe, with many different ways of thinking. There are those who believe in the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity, and there are those who believe in the trinity of God, homeland and family, and the kingdom to come of faith, hope and love. But whatever our personal beliefs, none of us can want our Europe to submit when faced with a torrent of people deliberately channelled towards us, and when faced with aggressive demands for the assertion of different morals and different customs. We do not believe that Europe is doomed to this fate, we do not believe that Europe will choose to surrender the values of a millennium. We do not believe this; but, President Balog, what we know and declare is that Hungary will not take a single step down such a path.

Go for it Europe, go for it Hungary! •

Source: http://www.miniszterelnok.hu/in_english_article/prime_minister_viktor_orban_s_state_of_the_nation_address

"Germany needs justice and freedom"

continued from page 7

by allied powers". It states that from then on "Germany has become subject to such requirements as may now or hereafter be imposed upon her [by the victorious powers]" (emphasis by the author). The fact that the Allies wanted to be in command immediately after the war in Germany and beyond, can still be understood from today's perspective. But why "or hereafter"?

How sovereign is the country?

In the 70 years since 1945, there have been many German attempts to take some steps towards sovereignty. But many of these steps were sham steps; because important circles in Germany had become so closely associated with the victors of the war in the years after the war – in both West and East Germany – that the Allies could equip those Germans who were definitely on their side, with ever more power.

After 1990, the victors from the East, the Soviet Union, withdrew. At that time there were also Germans, especially in eastern Germany, who saw an opportunity in the accession of the GDR to the Federal Republic and the supposed end of the Cold War, to create a truly sovereign, truly free country. They became active and worked, for example, on the draft for a new constitution for all of Germany which the German people should vote on. However, the opposition formulated the new mantra for Germany, which was to be enforced by all means: the "Western integration". Ten years later Angela Merkel tried to expand this into the *raison d'état* for Germany when she became the new leader of the CDU.

So if one or the other had thought that the end of the Cold War meant greater liberties for Germany – and declarations like the *Charter of Paris* of November 1990 had pointed into this direction – things rapidly changed after the end of the Soviet Union by the end of 1991. Now the US as the "only superpower" were striving for a domination of the entire world and prevent any alternative by all means.

But the world has changed

Since then more than 20 years have passed. And the world has once more changed during the last years. The "Grand Chessboard" has dropped its mask in all policy areas, and not only large countries such as China and Russia and their forms of cooperation such as BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India,

China, South Africa) or the *Shanghai Co-operation Organization* SCO but also the majority of countries world wide have begun to claim equity among all states and reject the predominance of a single state. They are calling for a return to the provisions in the *UN Charter*, a true order of international law, for self-determination and sovereignty of all states in the world.

The years since 1990 have proved in many instances that Germany has not become free and fair: Inside there was no real equality of citizens in the west and east of the country. And internationally servitude and injustice have reached from the Euro's introduction to extensive communication control by US intelligence services, and to a German migration policy, which was co-dictated by US speculators and billionaire George Soros.

US attempts to maintain control

The tip of the iceberg of absurdities are the current attempts of US intelligence services and their subdivisions in EU-Europe to track down Russian influence on media and political initiatives. The target is too obvious: This is to prevent that alternatives to the officially prescribed "without alternatives" might arise. One is reminded of the American *McCarthyism* in the early fifties of the last century, when US authorities imagined Communist infiltration everywhere. Now it is Europe's turn.

Freedom initiatives and values debate

However: The change in the world now prompts those circles in Germany again who are striving for freedom and justice and use all their strength in favor of a sovereign German state. One may have a lot of criticism with regard to all these initiatives, many might regard them differently. But this quest for freedom and justice corresponds a lot more with human nature than the corrupt spirit of subservience who has bowed to powerful lords for many centuries.

We should recommend all these freedom initiatives to enter in a careful, thorough and honest debate about the values that matter – the values that correspond to the social nature of man and to human dignity, and to the law that is a manifestation of these values and makes them binding. We must not resign to the fact that in Germany hardly anyone knows the basis of these laws any longer, and that even in the Christian Churches – which next to the Roman law and the European Enlightenment are the main source of them – these fundamentals are at risk of becoming an intellectual minority position in Germany. We are talking here about

modern natural law and its contribution to the freedom and law debate.

Natural law

In his works "Das Naturrecht. Handbuch der Gesellschaftsethik, Staatsethik und Wirtschaftsethik" (Natural law. Handbook of Social Ethics, political ethics and economic ethics – 7th edition, 1984), the Austrian political philosopher *Johannes Messmer* (1891–1984) spoke of the existential purposes of human existence and these are listed as follows, "the self-preservation, including the physical integrity and social respect (personal dignity); the self-perfection of man in physical and spiritual sense (personal development) including the development of his abilities to improve his living conditions and the provision for his economic welfare by securing the necessary property or income; the extension of the experience, the knowledge and capacity for the values of beauty; reproduction by mating and upbringing of children arising from them; the benevolent sympathy for the spiritual and material welfare of others as equal human beings; social connectedness to promote the common good, which consists of ensuring peace and order as well as facilitating the full human nature for all members of society in proportionate share of the goods at their disposal; the knowledge and worship of God and the ultimate fulfillment of human destiny through the unison with him."

"Unity and justice and freedom"

It is worthwhile to go through each of these densely formulated points and think about them. Freedom and responsibility are mutually dependent. Freedom is a right and requires the law to safeguard it. This is also true in political life and for the countries in the world. Working on it that Germany will become free, that the citizens of Germany can practise their right as sovereign of the country, is the perspective for the country and its citizens. To shape this freedom, this sovereignty in orientation towards the values that are valid for all time, and thus practise justice and respect the rights of others, is the *conditio sine qua non*.

One may recall the German national anthem; because it is not just a song to sing, but also a text to think about "Unity and justice and freedom, for the German fatherland! Let us all strive for this purpose, brotherly with heart and hand! Unity and justice and freedom, are the pledge of happiness. Bloom in the glow of this happiness, bloom, German fatherland!"

The West and Turkey – an everlasting double game

by Willy Wimmer



Willy Wimmer
(picture uk)

cc. Since the EU-Turkey summit on 6 and 7 March, EU leading officials and officials of a few EU countries, headed by the German Chancellor, have issued the slogan that a permanent agreement with Turkey in the migration issue would be imminent and would permanently solve the problems of the past months. For more than 30 years Willy Wimmer has been a member of the German Bundestag for the Christian Democratic Union, Parliamentary Secretary at the Ministry of Defense and Vice President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. His analysis explains why the hope of coming to terms with Turkey in order to reach a sustainable agreement on the refugee issue is a chimera. Not only because of the Turkish claims and the contents of the planned programmes, but also because the West is playing false with Turkey: On the one hand they want to keep Turkey as a military ally in the region of the Middle East, on the other hand they have already operated a policy of dissolving Turkey and establishing a Kurdish state for years – at least since NATO's war of aggression against Yugoslavia in 1999, which violated international law. Willy Wimmer fears that Germany is getting involved in an international conflict situation for which it will have to pay a high price, just as was the case after the First World War.

Everyone realizes what Turkey is willing and able to, if he takes a helicopter flight over the seemingly endless country between the City of Diyarbakir and the Iraqi-Syrian border. Up to the horizon cornfields are swaying in the early summer wind. However, this is all only seemingly so, and it is useful to take a closer look. Over and again the foundations of destroyed houses, villages and cities can be detected among the lush green. They testify that here, in the seventies of the last century, the Turkish government in its fight against the Kurds leveled more than 3,000 villages and towns to the ground. Hundreds of thousands of people were deprived of their livelihood and homes this way. This was done with the help of big Kurdish landowners who assisted the Turkish government in Ankara in its fight against the Kurds. It was then in vain,

just as the fight against the PKK is today, however, in those days Ankara had created a vast and deserted maneuvering area against the Kurds in Iraq and Syria. The millions of people who had had to leave their homes could do nothing else but flee to the Turkish Mediterranean coast or to Stuttgart and Cologne.

At that time we in the west accepted all that because there was an official explanation by the Turkish Government from the perspective of the Cold War. In the fight against godless communism, allied with the Kurds, any means seemed fair. Hence: Away with the Kurds. In the Turkish Republic this attitude has probably not changed to this day. The dimension of the struggles gives evidence of that.

New NATO strategy after the “victory” of the Cold War

However, the NATO war against Belgrade in 1999 was perceived in Ankara as an imaginary mourning bell for Turkey. In contrast to applicable international law, the West began to clean the Balkans from any Russian influence and filleting it to its own taste, bombs on Belgrade included. Especially for a transit country like Turkey it became obvious how the western approach to the Balkans corresponded with the control for oil and gas pipelines.

The then Turkish Prime Minister, Mrs Ciller, undertook a lot in the Balkans, so as not to let it come to the worst. The Turkish government only had just to take a look at their own country and study the consequences of ethnic separation that the United States above all had championed in order to enforce their objectives in the Balkans more easily. If all tribes were counted correctly between Armenians, Kurds and Turks on the present territory of Turkey, twenty-four of them are forming the Turkish Republic. Enough material for Western strategists to reckon with in their schemes. According to the model of the seventies one can assume in the United States, or in other states who are closely allied with the US, that the flows of dispossessed people will be landing somewhere between Flensburg and Passau.

Merkel and the Fata Morgana

Like a mantra, the Chancellor, who is still in office clutching any straw, speaks of a relief of migration development, which can solely be achieved in cooperation with Turkey. One should recommend Berlin to read the newspapers. Numerous full-bodied declarations of intent did we have to accept in recent months. Especially in relation to Turkey: NATO formations in the Aegean were even regarded as a stop

for migratory movements. The ships had not even left the harbour, when Ankara no longer felt bound by its commitments. Not at all would they take back to Turkey those who could be rescued by NATO ships in the Aegean. But why should Ankara behave differently from those who promised the billions, but never paid them to support Turkish assistance? A “bazaar” is nothing compared to how they deal with each other and even label this behaviour a standard of friendly relations. Ankara sees but one thing: In western Turkey they are begging for cooperation in the migration problem and in eastern Turkey they make use of the scalpel intended for Turkey. Incidentally it is used by those who make every effort in the West to use the migration development merely as a side protection for American wars, as will soon be the case in Libya, as well.

Ankara has tried to blow out Syria's light of life, but in the East it hears the mourning bells ringing loudly for itself, for Turkey.

Since the end of World War I, the world has plotted a special destiny for the Kurds. Not even what was conceded to the Azeris between Iran and Azerbaijan, was meant for the Kurds, apart from a very short period.

Lessons from history?

What is happening in this large region, takes us more than one hundred years back in time. There is every reason to once again connect especially us, the Germans, with the fate of this region, and the consequences that are probably meant for us, but will hardly be determined by us. Everything “déjà vu”, is what we might think these days when reading David Fromkin's¹ epochal work about the problems in this great region and searching for insights into questions and findings. “A Peace to End All Peace” was the apt title for the Bible dealing with the recent history of the Middle and Near East. If lessons were correctly learned from this past development, it should become clear what enormous importance this region has for us in Europe; especially since Israel dropped any inhibition of publicly backing Kurdish aspirations to build a new state. This is far-reaching, because in view of all that support which Israel grants the Kurds, the German federal government did not hesitate to send German troops to Kurdish areas.

We saw that before. However, what David Fromkin wrote, and not only him, has fallen into oblivion in Germany. The

50 years ago Mobutu Sese Seko revolted in the Congo – A never ending Kleptocracy?

A “deal” for thirty years – corruption, misery and strategic backgrounds

by Peter Kipfer

In the first part (*Current Concerns* No 32/33 from 31.12.2015) the prehistory of the “independent” Congo, the first turbulent weeks of the Government *Lumumba*, his dastard assassination and the Congo turmoil staged and fueled by the West, has been outlined. It turned out that the old Belgian colonial power, many members of which were on the operating levers of the army, aimed in the same direction as the American administration, which had only one goal in the peak years of the Cold War: Not to allow the empire in the heart of Africa with its indispensable commodities, especially copper, to fall into the hands of the international communism. All means were justified to them to achieve this goal: Intimidation, unleashing the Katanga secession by their straw man *Moïse Tshombe*, murder of Lumumba, fueling the Congo turmoil, involving the UN and murder of its Secretary-General *Dag Hammarskjöld* at the moment when he wanted to come to a substantial agreement with the insurgents (see box). As they realised that *Kasavubu* had certain unpredictabilities and did not come to grips with the Marxist-inspired uprisings, they resorted to the man who appeared to them the most reliable, *Mobutu*. He staged a masterfully prepared and carried out coup, that in the context of the Congo turmoil could only succeed with substantial help of Western intelligence agencies. The fact that the coup came about without bloodshed, has been stressed by the Western media as a merit of *Mobutu*. He deceived the public about his bloodthirstiness and brutal-

ity on which *Mobutu*'s thirty year dictatorship founded – with continuous tacit consent of the West. He was allowed to plunder Congo, as quid pro quo he guaranteed uncompromising loyalty with the Western world, its defense system and its upright anti-communism: a deal that sustained over 30 years.

Empty promises

Mobutu had meticulously planned his coup which he staged in the night of 24-25 November 1965. No shot was fired, everything went smooth. On the next morning, the national radio broadcasted military marches. Then *Mobutu* informed the Congolese in a short speech that the army had seized power, removed President *Kasavubu* and suspended the constitution. At first there was not a single attempt at resistance in the giant country. It is unthinkable that in the confusing Congolese state of affairs, as described in the first section, such a feat could be accomplished without active support from western superpowers. *Mobutu*'s excellent relations with the Belgian army, its secret service and the CIA are well known. Thus the reaction of the western press was unanimous: this was long overdue. The young commander in chief could only be praised for his cold blood and his know-how. This way the West mainly praised itself. Because it was very clear: *Mobutu* safeguarded an upright anti-communist foreign politics and a strict domestic order. This was highly important in the hot phase of the Cold War. In addition the West could be

Dag Hammarskjöld

Dag Hammarskjöld, UN Secretary-General and in charge for the ONUC deployment of UN troops in the Katanga rebellion of *Moïse Tshombe*, died on 18 September 1961 in a plane crash on the border between the Democratic Republic Congo and then Rhodesia (now Zambia). It was a Uno service machine, hired from the Belgian airline, with 15 people on board, all passengers died with the crash. *Hammarskjöld* was on his way to Ndola (Rhodesia) to clarify with *Moïse Tshombe* the extent to which the conflict could be resolved by way of mediation. 2015, more than 50 years after the event, *Ban Ki-moon* commissioned an expert committee to clarify the causes of the plane crash anew. South Africa had handed fresh evidence to the UN which hardened the suspicion of many insiders: The machine had been damaged through manipulation or shot down by fighter aircrafts, there had been an assassination attempt on the Secretary-General coming as mediator. It is unlikely that the authors of the attack can be found and convicted today. They presumably should be found in the same circles that let murder *Lumumba*, fueled the Congo turmoil and helped *Mobutu* to grab power.

sure that *Mobutu* was safeguarding the West's other main interest: a further access to Congo's raw materials, especially copper.

In the beginning *Mobutu* promised a provisional short-term military regime until democracy could be restored. Elections should be held and democratic institutions should be created within five years. Then he would step back as guardian of the law. In reality, *Mobutu* did everything to remove the remnants of the Congolese democracy and to establish himself as dictator. From the beginning *Mobutu* reigned alone and through decrees legitimated only by his will. The principal means to their implementation was a strengthening of the army, its technical build-up and the improvement of its capacities. In this he was supported by the “old guards” of the former Belgian colonial army and the Belgian secret service. Soon also the police became part of the Congolese army, also directly commanded by *Mobutu*. Additional provinces were added to the traditional Congo-

“The West and Turkey – ...”
continued from page 10

Jewish society and especially the American citizens of Jewish faith had welcomed the Central Powers' entry to World War I against the Entente. This was due to the rights that German citizens of Jewish faith had been granted in the German Empire in comparison to other countries' citizens. This had to be changed substantially in the interest of the Entente, however, as the later opened archives in Moscow, showed. The famous “Sykes-Picot Agreement” between England and France was the effective means. The German emperor stood firmly by his Ottoman ally and did not respond to demands directed to him and requesting a “Jewish

homeland” in Palestine. In Germany, you do not have to say more in view of the fact that today German soldiers stay in an area that Israel is openly and bluntly requesting to be formed as an independent state. We could hardly act with A greater historical amnesia is hardly conceivable, so Germany should not be surprised about the consequences.

¹ David Fromkin's book “A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East” was published in 1989. It describes the events which lead to the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire during the First World War. This had drastic consequences for the Middle East which led to a new but rarely acknowledged world war which is still going on, Fromkin says.

"50 years ago Mobutu Sese Seko ..."
continued from page 10

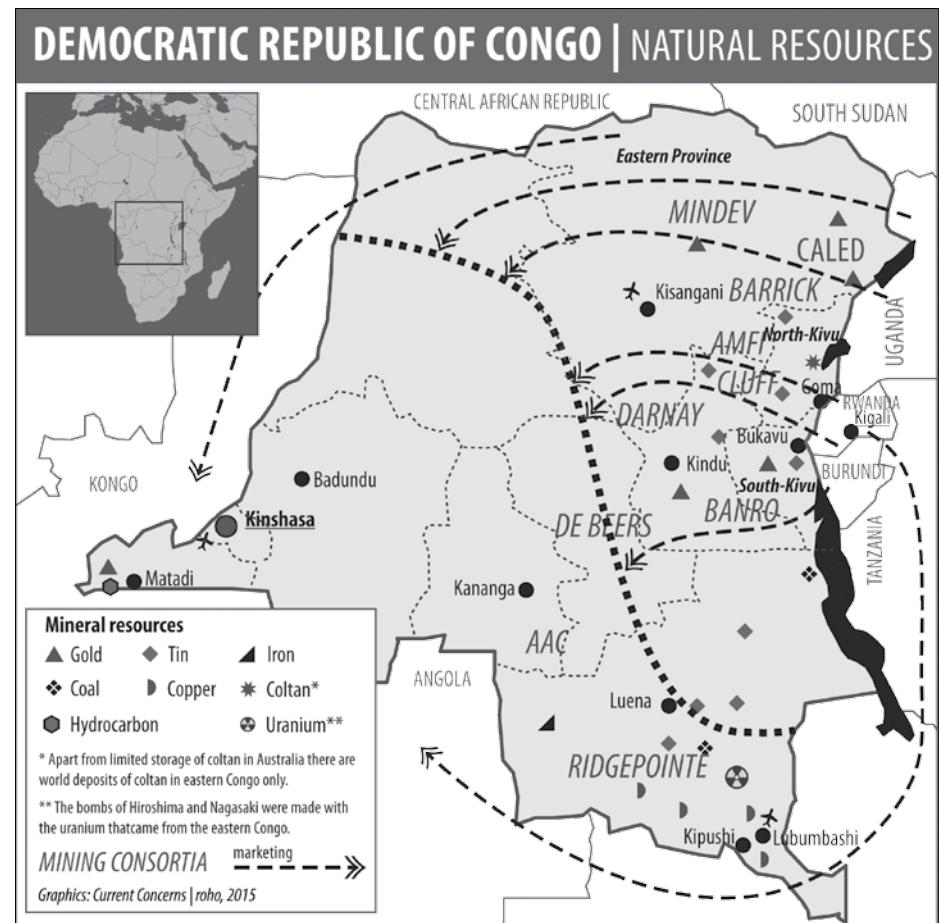
lese provinces. They were controlled by submissive abettors who were permitted to develop their own private kingdoms in remote regions. But the central instrument for Mobutu's rule was the founding of the Congolese Mobutu party, the *Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution* (MPR) in 1967. In the beginning, Mobutu also permitted an oppositional party. But then the MPR became a unity party. Even more so: in 1970, he decreed that the MPR was the highest institution of the Congolese state and hence controlled all other national institutions. This had the effect that there were no such national institutions: they were all taken in by the Party. The leading party committee became the government; the governors became regional party leaders. Each Congolese was a member of the Party, just because he was born in Congo – in fact even the foetus in the mother's womb was already a Party member. So the MPR was, as the formula of the time said, "the Congolese nation in its political organisation". Meanwhile there was no mention of the country electing its own government. Mobutu enjoyed power and he held it for more than 30 years – as a dictator.

Show trials in Stalinist style

Short after his coup Mobutu settled his scores with his opponents in brutally enacted trials reminding of the Nazi "Volksgerichtshof" or Stalinist show trials. Based on highly incomplete and questionable evidence, the main defendants suffered the death penalty for asserted treacherous activities. Their executions were conducted in public. The most repulsive in this series of public executions pertained to *Pierre Mulele*. Mulele was a fellow combatant of Lumumba. After Lumumba's murder he fled to China and there he was taught

Kleptocracy

The term refers to a political regime which lives off the fact to deprive the own people systematically. The more than 30 years of *Mobutu's* dictatorship is a classic example of this kind of dictatorship. The country's mineral resources have been exploited to favourable conditions and leaving it to the Western customer. The regular accruing money from mining rights where led to the private (foreign) accounts of dictators family and his minions and withdrew it thereby the natural flow. It lacked by investments in public interest of the state and where those who generate it under inhuman conditions withdrew systematically and in several respects.



the strategy of guerrilla warfare. Back in Congo he started in 1964 in his home region Kwilu a Maoist guerrilla insurgency which could be suppressed only years later. He himself fled to Brazzaville. After the coup, Mobutu's emissaries persuaded him to return to Congo, promising an amnesty. Immediately when he was back in Congo he was arrested and executed after a short trial. Witnesses reported of cruel tortures he had to suffer during his public execution.

Mobutu's security service "uncovered" so-called conspiracies. In 1966, four officers were executed who were accused of a plot "against national security". On 2 June they were publicly hanged in a central square in Kinshasa. In 1971 and 1974 there were more such show trials, followed with public executions. In 1978 a group of 19 officers were accused of conspiracy of which 13 were suffering the death penalty. These trials served to stabilise his internal power. They were the writing on the wall for certain circles in the nomenklatura, demonstrating the consequences of defying Mobutu's autocracy.

"Authenticity" should conceal sale

The so-called campaign for "authenticity" – with partially grotesque forms – became effective in Congo and lead to a "Zaïrification" and finally an unrestrained Maoist like personality cult of

the "Great Helmsman" ("Le Grand Timonier"), as he wanted to be called. Under the term "authenticity" Mobutu sparked a political movement aiming to reinforce the African identity of the Congo. But the series of measures remained completely on the surface. It began with the name of the river giving the empire in the heart of Africa its name. The river was no longer named Congo, which was an garbled Portuguese form of "Big River", but Zaire, an allegedly authentic articulation. Thus, also the country now was called no longer Congo but Zaire. Simultaneously, the new national currency, the Zaire was introduced, replacing the Congolese franc. State officials and party members were required to wear traditional African clothing, however, the clothing was strongly reminiscent of the Maoist uniforms. Moreover, all Congolese who had a Christian, Arab or Western surname were required to accept an additional Congolese name, leading to confusion and legal uncertainty.

Those perfunctory actions should probably detract more from the real Congolese politics: those politics were not aimed at the preservation of the country and its strength, but geared to subservience to the political and economic interests of the West. In the areas of the economics, the era of "Zaïrification" started.

continued on page 12

"50 years ago Mobutu Sese Seko ..."
continued from page 11

Hasty nationalizations lead to the brink of bankruptcy

There was a wave of nationalizations, starting first with large enterprises. This also included the nationalization of the large copper mine Consortium, the former "Union Minière du Haut Katanga" (UMHK), which was previously controlled by Belgian hands. It was renamed to *Gécamines (Générale des Carrières et des Mines)* and transferred to government ownership which led to strong resentment in the Belgian Government. Also medium and small businesses were nationalized, which attracted a mass emigration of skilled workforces. The operations were conducted by the so-called "acquéreurs", of which only small minority possessed an appropriate professional or administrative qualification. They also brought with them the idea that they can misuse their positions for personal enrichment which is tolerated by the government. Additionally, ambitious giant projects such as the *Inga* dam on the Upper Congo were draining government finances. All this led to a deep alarming economic crisis, of which the country has not recovered, even though Mobutu soon again reversed direction. There was a lack of genuine national sentiments, there was a lack of knowledge and willingness to sacrifice and a lack of identification with the young state which had brought nothing for the population but poverty and deprivation. That was nothing to be amended by regulations.

Those who wanted to be successful in this country did not necessarily had to achieve something, but had to talk and act as devout assistant of the Great Helmsman. This led to the rise in the hierarchy and thus to at least personal success. The price for this was discussed above.

Personality cult after Maoist model

The party sponsored and organized personality cult for Mobutu took on grotesque forms. Party officials and senior officials vied to give at state occasions

poems, songs, dances or performed entire scenes which only had one theme: to manifest their love and devotion to the Great Helmsman. The party devoted substantial resources in order to drive and establish the cult in the population which produced laureates and associated rewards.

All this could not detract from the fact that the Congo as a country was neglected; the majority of the population was unemployed and thus exposed to impoverishment. The wealth came almost entirely from the mining concessions which were not sufficient in the long run, to cover the growing government spending. Moreover, there was almost no investment because of the corrupt system. The members of the nomenclature understood their function as a way to enrich themselves, and managed to transfer their wealth – pressed-off from the population – abroad. They had for this a role-model: Mobutu himself.

The fact that Congo had not to declare bankruptcy during these dramatic times was owed to massive Western financial help and generous loans.

The West turned a blind eye to the human rights situation, mismanagement and systematic corruption. It was important in the years of the Cold War, to have a regime in the heart of Africa, which was politically and militarily a solid ally to the Western Hemisphere. In this context it is hardly surprising that the long-lasting Marxist-inspired movement in the East could only be defeated with the help of the NATO (!).¹ So the danger of the Congo pulling out of from western geopolitical defensive strategy against the Soviet bloc, was banned once for all. The privileged and special position of the Congo, based on geostrategic considerations, did not change until 1989, when the Communist block collapsed and the geostrategic map surrounding Russia was reshuffled. This also led to the fall of the longstanding Congolese Czar. (Continuation and conclusion will follow in a third installment.) •

¹ In 1964, a militant lumumbistic faction under Christophe Gbenye organized an uprising in Katanga. The uprising was put down with diffi-

culty. The decisive factor was the use of NATO troops. Even then it was probably very difficult for NATO to declare this form of forward strategy a "defence case" – but no one seemed to care. It was important to the West, to build a "fortress against communism" in Congo. For this they needed Mobutu. (Cf. Malu-Malu, p.141)

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Jean-Jacques Arthur Malu-Malu, "Le Congo Kinshasa", Paris (Editions Karthala) 2002, ISBN 2-84586-233-4

Current Concerns

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Avoiding damage – stopping the Curriculum 21 project

Three new publications indicate the Curriculum's serious shortcomings

rt. Three new publications confirm the existing criticism of Curriculum 21 and additionally point to necessary orientations in education policy. Citizens and taxpayers hear extremely little about the contents of Curriculum 21 from the public authorities (cantonal educational bureaucracies), and until now the teachers have not been instructed about the actual contents of the new curriculum either. Most of the criticism is confirmed by a look into the Curriculum itself (www.lehrplan21.ch). Listed on many sites (about 350) in intelligible “expert PH-German” you find all that children and young people should be able to do (2300 levels of competence and 363 skills). For interested parents as well as for teachers, it is impossible to gain a picture of when, how, and what should actually be learned. Curriculum 21 has already been analyzed and criticized several times by experienced teachers, educators and educational scientists. They have for long been warning of the negative consequences for future generations associated with the introduction of this curriculum at Swiss schools. Even before its so-called consultation, criticism was so devastating that, in the fundamentals section core elements of the curriculum, such as its competence orientation, have been watered down, and in a nebulous text, called “diversity of methods” even the “Frontalunterricht” (whole class teaching) appeared again! And even then, criticism was so significant that this project should immediately have been stopped! But obviously, despite these well-known serious shortcomings and the resulting costs, one adheres to the “PLAN”.



Well-founded criticism of Curriculum 21

Now three new books demonstrate (once more), into which disaster Swiss schools are being maneuvered by the educational bureaucracies of most German cantons, headed by the EDK (Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education):

- The excellent brochure "Einspruch! Kritische Gedanken zu Bologna, Harmos und Lehrplan 21 (Objection! Critical thoughts on Bologna, Harmos and Curriculum 21")", issued by the pedagogues *Alain Pichard* and *Beat Kissling*, assembles opinions and analyzes on the current education policy. The work includes articles by Professor *Walter Herzog*, Professor *Roland Reichenbach*, *Anita Fetz* or *Beat Kapeler* and many others.
 - The publication "Was will uns der Lehrplan 21 sagen?" (What is Curriculum 21 trying to tell us?) by Aargau educational policy maker *Bruno Nüsperli*, offers the possibility of directly experiencing the appalling low level of Curriculum 21. Nüsperli has taken on the task of listing and to commenting the Curriculum's hundreds of "competences".
 - Currently the "Zehn Thesen über die Schule" (Ten theses on school) by Valais Director of Education *Oskar Frey-singer*, published by the Valais Department for Education and Security gained some publicity. Contrary to the technocratic and bureaucratic language of Curriculum 21, ten keystones of humanistic education are presented in a simple and concise form as an important foundation of our school. It becomes absolutely clear that Curriculum

21 has scarcely anything to do with the tasks of the school.

In detail:

“Objection!”

In the brochure "Einspruch" (objection) – that will soon be reissued in an enlarged edition – different voices from the rather left-wing or rather liberal camp are assembled, clearly and distinctly showing that Curriculum 21 is based on wrong assumptions and disregards the child. In addition to many practitioners also scientists point to the shortcomings of the curriculum. For instance, serious deficits from an educational point of view are presented in a concise and substantiated form by the educational scientist Prof. Walter Herzog. The context of increasing "commercialization" of education, in particular by the new curriculum, is indicated by Beat Kissling. A focal point of the curriculum's criticism is its abandonment of the social concept of giving all children the chance of good education. Children from educationally disadvantaged strata of society are disadvantaged.

What it means to deprive individual school subjects as well as the teacher training of their subject-specific substance is demonstrated by the essays of *Daniel Goepfert* and *Laura Saia* among others. As a result the professional level is lowered. In other articles it is clearly shown that the teacher as a “coach” or “facilitator” is no longer able to play his key role in the learning process. The brochure “Einspruch!” can be obtained at arkadi@bluemail.ch.

“What is Curriculum 21 trying to tell us?”

The collection of levels of competence, which Bruno Nüsperli meticulously lists out of the curriculum, makes obvious how the level of education will be lowered due to Curriculum 21. The individual subjects and contents are simplified to the levels of competence, which then can be easily tested with the help of the provided test material (learning-to-the-test). The goal to educate our children and youth humanistically has been ignored by this curriculum. Nüsperli's comments make clear that prejudices and ideologies are also incorporated. Nüsperli is a member of the Aargau Committee for a good school, which is against curriculum 21. The brochure "Was will uns der Lehrplan 21 sagen?" can be obtained from Bruno Nüsperli, Halden 52, 5000 Aarau, bruno@nuesper.li, phone 062 824

continued on page 14

“I can only take responsibility for what I consider as being correct”

Interview with Oskar Freysinger, Head of the Department of Education and Security of the Canton of Valais



Oskar Freysinger
(picture wikipedia)

Current Concerns: As head of the „Department of Education and Security“ of the Canton of Valais you published on 1 March the bilingual pamphlet “10 Thesen über die Schule” (10 theses on school, see page 15). In this pamphlet you present your conceptions of education. What prompted you to choose this approach?

Oskar Freysinger: Since the 60s, education has been dominated by ideologies of the left. All education reforms of the last decades were marked by Marxist thought. It was time that an educational minister, moreover, a trained primary and secondary school teacher with 27-year teaching experience, confronted these dated ideas with one that is comprehensible, based on guiding principles of any successful learning. I wanted to calm parents and teachers and provide a kind of orientation about what guides my work as a governing council.

Critics of your theories claim that you did not underpin this with sufficient evidence broadly enough and that you did not take

into account children with behavioral problems or the integration of foreign students. What do you think?

Why should I broadly support my educational policy principles as department head? Then they would no longer be mine. In addition, I would thereby bring about a lasting quarrel, and either end up with a washy paper or nothing at all. I can only take responsibility for something I consider as being appropriate and that constitutes a foundation of my actions. This pamphlet is not a legal text, nor an action paper with concrete measures, but education philosophical reflections. It seemed to me important to be honest to citizens when it comes to my views of education. The fact that this would trigger a debate I was aware of and this was desired. Children with behavioral problems and foreign pupils are first of all pupils. The ten theses apply to them as to others. Their specific needs must be approached adequately, but do not belong in a general position paper.

So far, there is resistance to Curriculum 21 in 13 Swiss cantons. They ask for cantonal popular initiatives to gain a broad democratic participation in the decisions on this controversial curriculum, which is introduced by cantonal executives without real discussions. In Upper

Valais, the Curriculum 21 currently suspended. How did this happen and why?

I do not consider Curriculum 21 as a monolith which can be imposed on schools as it is. We have had reforms of this kind in abundance and the results are well known. I consider this gigantic work rather as being a catalogue that needs to be adjusted. Anything that enhances the quality of the school is acquired, anything that compromises the tried and trusted is avoided. This requires a slow process, an evolution and not a revolution. A working group is to coordinate certain aspects with the Valais school system and prepare for their acquisition. In no case, however, some basic principles which ensure the high quality of education in my canton are to be questioned. Among other things, the pedagogical freedom of teachers is to be guaranteed, and there needs to be a healthy balance between imparting knowledge and competences.

The French-speaking cantons have already introduced the new curriculum (Plan d'études romand – PER). Are there fundamental differences to the Curriculum 21 of the German-speaking cantons?

The differences are as follows: The plan d'études romand – PER defines the teaching content (Contenus d'apprentissage) which have to be accomplished in the course of compulsory education in French-speaking Switzerland. On one hand, the PER describes what students need to learn, and on the other hand the curriculum allows teachers to decide when and to which extend to situate their subjects within the overall education of the students.

In PER certain expectations/goals are assumed. In PER competencies are recognized in the field of cross-curricular skills.

Curriculum 21, however, describes for each subject or field levels of skills and competences which the students acquire in the course of elementary school. The focus is on the skill (competence as a goal – ability or skills versus knowledge). The Curriculum 21 stands for competency oriented lessons.

Just knowing about this discrepancy between the two parts of the canton, belonging to the same school system, shows that caution is required.

Mr Freysinger, thanks for the interview. •

(Interview Jean-Paul Vuilleumier)

“Avoiding damage – ...”

continued from page 14

26.28 for a fee (single copy CHF 5.- incl. shipping).

“Ten theses on the school”

Oskar Freysinger, Director of Education of the Canton of Valais, an educator himself, knows what he is talking about. In his ten theses, he relies on more than 2,000 years of humanistic tradition of education, not just on 40 years of the US school examination industry. In simple terms, he describes the essential foundations of our school system. No later than at the tenth thesis “subsidiarity before centralization”, the interested reader will understand that curriculum 21 is not compatible with our tradition of humanistic education. The “Ten theses on the school” can be obtained from the Department of Education and Security of the Canton of Valais (www.vs.ch/documents/529400/1673481/10theses-D-BAT_2.pdf/19aae9df-def7-4efb-a1e5-11ebc852061d).

“Curriculum 21 – a costly and counterproductive project”

It becomes clear after reading the three presented brochures: The Curriculum 21 is condemned to failure, both practically and politically. That the educational bureaucracies under the leadership of the EDK continue to insist on Curriculum 21, will immensely increase the damage and the cost. With this curriculum, the Swiss education system is unerringly lowered into a third class education. Thus, the country will deprive itself of its most important resource, namely a good training and education.

It is a logical consequence, that cantons like the Valais suspend the project Curriculum 21. It is also useful that some cantons postpone the introduction. Anyway, one could have neatly evaluated the existing experiences from abroad or the ongoing projects of similar nature. Meanwhile, signature collections for initiatives to prevent the Curriculum 21 are running in 13 German-speaking cantons. Why not decide the introduction of the curriculum by a vote? •

Ten theses about the school

by Oskar Freysinger

1. Education is an art of living, not an exact science.

Our entire pedagogy is based on the Greek *Paideia'* which essentially reflects the relationship between teachers and students. There is no general education, which is equally applicable to all. The dignity of man lies in his uniqueness and the fact that he is irreplaceable. Education must thus obtain the attention and interest of each student as an individual and create the group dynamics of the class.

Who considers education to be an exact science is in danger of depriving the relationship between teachers and students of their human dimension. So the student runs the risk to be deprived of his identity as a thinking and sympathetic subject and to degenerate into a mere "basin" of knowledge, or at worst a pseudo-scientific test object.

A human and individual relation, however, creates a positive learning environment for each student. One must take care, however, not to make the groups too heterogeneous because they are then uncontrollable. By a certain degree of homogeneity in the class each student can move forward at an adequate pace without having to feel overloaded or being demotivated.

2. Schools must convey.

The school has to fight ignorance and to promote every student's *will to work*. The student needs to understand that success is the result of his effort. He must integrate this relation into his memory as early as possible so that already as a child, he understands that he is the architect of his own fortune! To do this, he must develop his skills and talents in an active learning process. Luck is sometimes helpful – effort always pays!

In this sense, any effort at school – whether intellectual, athletic or artistic – contributes to developing strong and self-confident personalities.

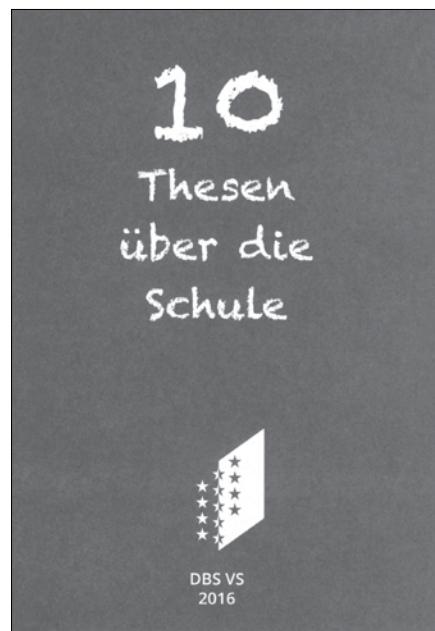
At the same time, the *long term memory* must be trained, since it forms the basis for a person's individual culture. We must avoid a premature specialization, for it restricts the child's intellectual development at an age where its personality must be comprehensively formed.

There is no greater disrespect towards students than asking too little of them in the name of a misunderstood equality. Leveling down is unjust for all – for the high-achieving and low-achieving: it fools the latter because their deficits are concealed or denied and thus prepare a rude awakening for them. Minimum demands will free them of taking an effort to increase. The strong, however, are de-

prived of a healthy challenge and condemned to mediocrity. A harmonious society, however, is not characterized by average or anxious citizens, it consists of motivated and active people who are always trying to outdo themselves. Only the one who shows no commitment is really weak, and only the one who does his best is really strong.

Marks must not be used for an arbitrary selection, they serve as an indicator and an educational tool. They are preferable to linguistically formulated, inevitably subjective assessments since numbers have the advantage to be precise and objective.

Failure is certainly painful, but does



not mean any shame or disgrace. Repeating a school year is an educational tool designed to motivate students and to show them where their shortcomings are. So the students should be able to adapt their behavior as well as their learning techniques to quickly return on the path of success. Assessments must be made on the basis of objective knowledge acquisition and not based on sophisticated mathematical calculus. They must be easy and understandable.

3. Lessons must teach content.

During the first years of school, the child must also acquire learning techniques. However, school does not primarily serve this purpose. Above all it has to ensure that the students *learn things*. The school is intended to provide knowledge which is a fundamental condition for the acquisition of competences. Without an own, patiently acquired knowledge the human being lacks orientation and culture. You

can certainly find a lot of stuff on the Internet today but this mass of information is unstructured and confusing, it is not sorted according to importance and quality. If the student has not learned to arrange and rearrange his own thoughts in constant exercise, there is no orientation in the mess of electronic media. He needs a critical capacity for thought, enriched with a certain knowledge that allows him to insert new knowledge in his already existing scheme of thinking.

It is time to rehabilitate a certain degree of *memorization*. Apart from the fact that it represents a cerebral exercise, it is essential for independent thinking. What is in our heads belongs to us and cannot be taken away. To master the multiplication tables (mental arithmetic), knowing some key data of human history, the names of the most important cities in the world and to be able to find them on a map is an essential tool. In addition, general knowledge – poems, songs, idioms, readings, behaviors – are based essentially on our memory. It enriches our mind and our soul, it allows us to think independently, facilitates the life of society and strengthens our ability to communicate.

4. The quality of schools depends on the quality of teachers.

The teacher is the most important conveyor of knowledge. The *connection between teacher and student* is as old as civilization itself and has not fundamentally changed. This connection can only bear fruit if the teacher has the skills to fulfill his mission. That is why a good education is so important. This training must optimally prepare him for his specific role as educator and teach him to guide a class, without neglecting the theoretical tools. The theory depends on his knowledge in the fields of psychology and didactics. It is obvious that the knowledge acquired by the teacher during his studies is an essential prerequisite for a successful education.

Teaching is understood as something comprehensive, that is fed primarily by the personality of the teacher which is based on knowledge as well as on human and intellectual skills. The student must address the teacher with respect. The teacher should be a role model that the student follows and strives to surpass.

5. There must be a return to the basics.

A person's knowledge is based on two pillars: the *mother tongue and mathematics*. There are no humanities without language and no exact or technical sciences without

"Ten theses about the school"

continued from page 15

mathematics. By constructing these two pillars solidly, we create a strong foundation for the entire framework of knowledge. The schools' expanding of learning areas and fields of research are rewarding, but this must not happen detrimentally to the basic subjects. The latter are the educational backbone and prepare the ground for all other areas of knowledge. Not only does in particular the reading of literary works transform abstract characters into pictures, it also allows us to fathom the recesses of the human psyche. Thereby, the student develops his empathy – a virtue that is in danger to be extinguished by the huge amount of evanescent virtual images, he is exposed to in the modern media environment. Dealing with crucial literary works the student not only discovers the radiant beauty of linguistic expression, but also the complexity and tragedy of human destiny. Due to the deep insight into human nature, the appreciation, and the empathy, the reading student is inspired to encounter the fellow indulgently and favourably. The world of novels is not a creation of imagination isolated from reality, but it is the key to its exploration.

6. The dignity of schools must be respected.

School need to *keep up with the times, but at the same time keep a certain distance to trends*. This is the only way schools are able to retrieve their dignity. Schools are not a market in which traders sell their products to the customers. Students are not customers, who have to be satisfied – they are humans who need to be educated, trained and instructed. This is the moral and intellectual obligation of pedagogy, far away from all materialistic intentions. Without this assignment, the school will degenerate into a knowledge-bourse, a "diploma factory" or, at worst, a day nursery, where stressed teachers supervise uneducated children and young people after a fashion.

7. The objective justifies the means and not the other way around.

Making the students familiar with IT-tools and the internet is desirable and neces-

sary, but this must serve the actual knowledge acquisition. The means – as enticing and entertaining as they may be – are not to be confused with the aim of the learning process: the acquisition of deepened knowledge and extensive information. It is essential to return to the basics and establish a *meaningful relation between form and content* in a world in which the forms increasingly replace contents. School is the best place for this. Too often teaching materials determine the educational contents. However, they are not the target, but only the means intending to facilitate the teacher's tuition in the classroom.

8. The school is also a school for life.

The school is not a playing field for absolute relativism, even if it primarily serves to master critical thinking. Only through the development of moral consciousness and generally applicable measures of value, can the individual grow, become more human, and live in accordance with himself and with his fellows. An education without values serves merely to spread of nihilism. Furthermore, the denial of values usually causes despair and can lead to suicide, drug use, violence or apathy.

A *moral conscience* evolves only when we learn how our civilization has risen and grown. Knowing how it has developed allows us to ensure its survival. It is only possible to be increasingly more open for belief systems and values different from ours, if we have internalized our own culture's values. If we do not know our own roots, we can neither understand nor accept those of others.

9. The school promotes languages.

In a world where the distance between the countries, peoples and cultures is decreasing, one cannot help but acquire diverse means of expression and communication. To master one or several languages fluently means to adapt to this new reality. The canton Valais has been so fortunate as to be a bilingual canton. For this reason, the teaching of the two cantonal languages is given priority, without neglecting the simultaneous or subsequent acquisition of additional languages. The better command a person has of classical or modern

languages, the clearer and more accurately he can formulate his thoughts. In addition, each new language is a bridge to other forms of thought and different ideologies.

10. Subsidiarity must precede centralization.

Although the structure and activities of the school administration only have an indirect influence on the actual educational work, they are nevertheless of central importance. Due to the political nature of Switzerland and the specific geographical situation of the Valais, subsidiarity and decentralization are most suitable for the organization of the school. Daily decisions must be made as pragmatically and close to reality as possible. To this end, a large part of the responsibility is to be transferred to school boards and school centres. Moreover, the information flow should be simplified as much as possible. Structures should be exempt from all burdens that are not needed for instruction in and administration of schools and bureaucracy as well as administrative cooperation limited to the essentials. Training must take place in the classrooms and not in the offices of the administration. Accordingly, the administration should not be a yoke but a prop.

¹ Wikipedia: *Paideia* (Greek "education") is a key concept for understanding the ancient culture and a central value term. On the one hand, it stands for the intellectual and ethical education and training as a process and on the other for knowledge as a possession and output of the education process. It means not only the education of children, but the focus of people to think of the relevant and the training of the *Arete* [efficiency]. Only through the correct *Paideia* the soul achieves its "ultimate level". The term is derived from the education of the child, but means the education received by a young person which characterizes him throughout his life. [...] *Paideia* means on one hand the process of raising children and on the other hand the result of this education process, namely the knowledge. The gymnastic part of *paideia* refers to the physical regularity (*symmetria*) and the musical and philosophic part of *paideia* refers to the mental and spiritual harmony (*kalokagathia*). Later *paideia* is as synonymous for civilization and culture and at the same time the term for an education that distinguishes the civilised people as opposed to the barbarians.

(Translation *Current Concerns*)