

Current Concerns

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

English Edition of *Zeit-Fragen*

If I had been supernumerary – I wouldn't be here today ... No to a barrier-free reproductive medicine

by Sylvia Flückiger, member of the National Council, Swiss People's Party, Canton of Aargau

... and I would not even have been able to defend myself. Human life is a miracle and a gift, the crowning glory of God's creation. We have to be constantly aware of this despite of everything else that we desire. Life is not disposable and we are not entitled to freely experiment with and select it.

At the end of December 2015 a broad non-party coalition called for a Federal referendum against the new Reproductive Medicine Act with 58,112 valid signatures. The new act opens the doors to a boundless and arbitrary reproductive medicine. Parliament has gone beyond the Federal Council's earlier proposal, on

which we voted in June 2015. Widespread arbitrary application of Preimplantation Genetic Diagnosis (PGD) and controversial genetic testing crosses ethical and regulatory boundaries. In this way selection of human beings with disabilities would become commonplace.

Diversity instead of selection

It was the Federal Council's original intention to allow Preimplantation Genetic Diagnosis only for parents with a suspected serious hereditary disease. But Parliament goes much further:

The new law allows analysis of all embryos created outside the womb with all

technically available genetic tests, checking out all possible genetic defects. In the future embryos with Down Syndrome (Trisomy 21) would thus be discarded and eliminated before transplantation into the mother's womb. This means that they would be sacrificed for arbitrary societal desirability.

This would inevitably lead to discrimination against people with disabilities, because they would thus be considered undesirable and avoidable risks.

The revised law also stipulates that per each treatment cycle twelve instead of

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10 reasons for a No to the Reproductive Medicine Act, RMA

cc. 11 month ago, after Article 119 paragraph 2c of the Federal Constitution had been modified and the "reproductive medicine and genetic technology in humans" within the federal constitution had been re-adjusted, the Swiss electors will now vote on the law (Reproductive Medicine Act) on 5 July 2016, which follows this constitutional amendment. Certainly, this bill exceeds the original suggestion by the Federal Council on behalf of the translation of the constitutional provision by far.

By their campaign, the opponents of this law address the dubious global trend towards a reproductive medicine without any ethical limit. To name only one example: In Great Britain embryos are already genetically modified and embryos are being produced that possess the genomes of three parents.

In Switzerland, things have not yet gone as far as that. Nevertheless, the endorsement of the RMA would lead to a dangerous establishment of a selection mind-set that might gradually be extended. Added to this, the correct usage of the PGD-techniques in the field is barely manageable.

1. The RMA leads to unlimited selection

A genetic test provides all possible information about an embryo (among others also sex). Therefore there are also test re-

The endorsement of the revision of this law would fundamentally change our attitude towards life. For that reason, a strong resistance has been established. A non-party committee consisting of 50 members of Parliament from BDP, CVP, EDU, EVP, Green Party, SP, and SVP has amalgamated to the nationwide non-party committee "No to that RMA". This committee assesses the new RMA as extreme, dangerous and uncontrollable. Moreover 19 socially engaged organisations and among them nearly all handicapped-organisations have allied in the committee "Vielfalt statt Selektion – Nein zum Gesetz" (plurality versus selection – No to the law) and further opponents in the committee "PID stoppen" (Stop PGD). Also the Swiss Episcopal Conference ("Im Namen der Menschenwürde nein zur Präimplantationsdiagnostik"; [In the name of the human dignity no to the PGD] from 26 April) and the Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches (SEK) ("Fortpflanzung um der Kinder willen"; [Reproductive medicine for the sake of children] from 26 April) reject the law

sults which should not be used for selection.

Therefore, this technique can and will lead in time to improper selection. This is confirmed by the Federal Council: "From



clearly. In the following, we publish the short line of arguments "10 reasons for a no to the revised FMedG" (source: www.fmedg-nein.ch)

procedurally inherent reasons it can no longer be guaranteed that only embryos with features for serious hereditary dis-

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"10 reasons for No ..."

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eases will be eliminated".¹ For reproductive physicians being faced with numerous desires, the scope of action is becoming dangerously wide. The new RMA is also designed in a manner that independent controls are hardly provided and that reproductive physicians are even able to "control" themselves against payment by the federal government (Art. 12.4). Should the door really be opened to this uncontrollable technology?

2. The RMA definitions are extremely imprecise and broad

Not only does it allow the PGD for couples with a severe genetic disease, it goes much further beyond that, since PGD procedures are available for all couples who make use of in vitro fertilisation (IVF). This can lead to a general test for normality! At no point you can find the meaning of "recognition of chromosomal features, which can harm the development of the embryo" (Art. 5a). Who will be the one to decide which features are relevant for a selection? In addition, it is nowhere put down which genetic diseases are "worthy" for selection.

3. A dangerous development

Global trends on the field of reproductive medicine augur ill. In Great Britain, for instance, the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) has already approved of the genetical manipulation of countless embryos. Also embryos with the genome of three parents are being produced and inserted. In addition to that the list of allowed selection criteria are being extended by dozens of genetic diseases – also by such that enable its carrier to have a good quality of life ...

"If I had been supernumerary – ..."

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three embryos may in future be developed. This would create supernumerary life which could be deep-frozen.

After a maximum of 10 years, the embryos must be exterminated or made available to research. This is against the dignity of human life, which is inviolable.

Demands will ever increase

Some scientists and politicians are already discussing and requesting the production of so-called saviour babies as well as oocytes donation. For some even embryo donation and surrogate motherhood, prohibited in the constitution, are no longer untouchable subjects. At the same time, technical progress has advanced so far that the selection of or influence on var-

The mania for feasibility must be ethically and legally be contained. What is a no-go today, will be possible tomorrow and declared even as natural the day after tomorrow.

4. Ethical and constitutional dam break

The RMA leads to a fundamental change in dealing with human life. For the first time, human life in the initial stage would be evaluated and commercialised. Therefore, the rejection of the Reproductive Medicine Act is not only a matter of human dignity, but also a question of justice. Who has the right to say: "Because you are no 'Top Embryo', you cannot go on living?" Even the Federal councillor Alain Berset points out that the law has an eugenic tendency. Do we as a society really want to follow this path and engage us in such a selection mentality?

5. Solidarity with disabled people at risk

If you systematically start to eliminate embryos, the solidarity with disabled people or those who do not meet the social norm is endangered. It is not acceptable that parents are increasingly susceptible to pressure of justification to do everything technically feasible to "prevent" a child with a disability or illness. Once people with disabilities are perceived as an avoidable burden of society, refusals by the social welfare may be a logical consequence.

6. Countless surplus embryos and risks for women

In order to give birth to a single child by means of a PID process, about 30 embryos on average have to be produced according to the latest statistics.² But there is more to it than that: For the production of over 30 embryos more than 50 egg cells are again

needed. In order to win as many egg cells, women must undertake several treatments and are particularly strongly stimulated hormonally (hyperstimulation). However, hyperstimulation may lead to significant health risks.

A consequence of the new law would also be an accumulation of thousands of supernumerary embryos. According to the law, the embryos should have to be discarded after at least 10 years or should be provided for the use in research and pharmaceutical industry.

7. Business with couples' hope for a healthy child

Different studies reveal that the chances to get a healthy child by vitro fertilisation are significantly lower, when the embryo has been checked on chromosomes beforehand.³ The European Society of Human Reproduction and Embryology (ESHRE) notes that the positive effect of PGD by using Aneuploidy-Screening (chromosome analysis) has not been proven yet. This doubtful method raises false hopes in infertile couples.

8. Prenatal tests: No basis for the unrestricted selection of embryos

The proponents for the new Reproductive Medicine Act argue that it would be better to test embryos using PGD and to weed out, instead of performing an abortion later (after a prenatal test, PND). But the PGD process is anything but safe and risk-free. Follow-up exams of IVF children show that these are more prone to have risks for premature arteriosclerosis, high blood pressure, abnormal heart function and rare forms of cancer at a young age.⁴ The physicians for reproductive medicine rarely inform about these risks.

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ious other properties of our children will soon no longer be taboo. Designer-babies are within our reach.

Human life is a great and fantastic work of God's creation. And it should remain so in future, with all due respect to our wishes and to research. There are limits, and with the present Reproductive Medicine Act, they are clearly being exceeded. Do we want this?

Distinction between valuable and worthless life

Human life begins with the fusion of egg and sperm; followed by a mysterious, yes, by an even incredibly fantastic time of development. By means of screening and genetic testing, the supposedly best embryos will now be selected in the laboratory. A distinction will be made between valuable, worthy to live life and inferior life which is not worth living.

Who wants to be the judge on life and death?

The remaining embryos will be frozen and can be used later for research purposes. This approach devalues not only human life to something which can be manipulated according to desires. It gives false messages to the society. The scanned embryos can be exterminated when abnormalities – for instance a down syndrome (trisomy 21) – become apparent. At the same time, the embryos could be damaged or fatally injured by the measures of investigation. Also, it is not impossible that healthy embryos will be erroneously selected for extermination.

Therefore, a clear No to the selection between precious and inferior life is needed on 5 June 2016 at the ballot box, and a No to more and more arbitrary gene testing as well as a No to this barrier-free Reproduction Medicine Act.

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

CRISPR Cas9 – “We are far from understanding the ‘concert of genes’ in the human genome”

A Moratorium to protect the human genome is needed

by *Dres med Ursula and Walter Knirsch, Zurich*

CRISPR Cas9, this is the acronym of “Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats”. A palindrome may be read forward and backwards such as “Was it a cat I saw?”. Cas9 means CRISPR associated Sequence 9.

Background

A few years ago researchers found CRISPR Cas9 in bacteria and identified it as a bacterial anti-viral immune system. In the process of analysing this defense system it became clear that it constitutes an instrument of gene technology if applied to other cell types. Ever since and increasingly so, CRISPR Cas9 has been used world-wide. Analogous terms for CRISPR Cas9 are genetic scissors, gene surgery, genome editing or precision medicine.

This article deals with the way of function including examples in humans, plants and animals, as well as the risks of this new CRISPR Cas9 technology, especially regarding its socio-political and ethical consequences.

How does CRISPR Cas9 work

The nuclei of all body cells contain our genetic information, encoded in deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) as genes in the chromosomes. The sum of all genes defining our selves is referred to as the genome. By means of CRISPR Cas9 a genetic reprogramming may be achieved here. Metaphorically speaking this may

be compared to a text editing computer programme, which finds certain word groups and exchanges them for others when the button “search and replace” is hit. Similarly, CRISPR Cas9 carries out a search for certain gene domains in the DNA and replaces them with others. CRISPR Cas9 consists of three subunits: (1) a target RNA, equivalent to the genetic sequence which is to be changed, (2) another RNA sequence, connected to the molecular scissors, and (3) the cutting enzyme Cas9. This way CRISPR Cas9 searches the DNA and finds the sequence in question, cuts it out and may replace it by another sequence if wanted.

More than just a new method

This recently developed biochemical-genetic method appears to be an efficient tool to remove, alter or amend certain genetic sequences. Researchers interfere significantly with the genes and therefore the genomes of plants, animals and human (somatic) as well as embryonic (germline) cells by means of CRISPR Cas9. The technology is “attractive” for being easy to perform, fast and cheap.

Long-term consequences of these genes being irreversibly altered may be huge, since this is a massive interference with nature. The risks for future generations are incalculable.

A moratorium for the protection of the genome is therefore necessary. Any uncontrolled tampering with the genome

has to be stopped in order to avoid unforeseeable and possibly lethal consequences for nature.

The Swiss referendum on the Reproductive Medicine Act (RMA) and CRISPR Cas9

A special political relevance of CRISPR Cas9 results from the Swiss legislative proposal on the Reproductive Medicine Act (RMA) which will be decided on in the referendum on 5 June. The so-called germline cells connected with preimplantation diagnostics are especially important here. In humans these include sperm and egg cells as well as embryos. To this day they are protected by law, including the Swiss constitution, and strictly speaking they are not subject of the referendum on 5 June 2016. However, in case the proposed RMA law was to be accepted by the Swiss electorate, a high number of “superfluous” embryos suddenly would become available. Many interest groups would focus on these embryos and they would be interesting as material for CRISPR-Cas9-technology in the long run. In England CRISPR Cas9 experiments with human embryos have already been allowed and from the history of similar law revisions in the last 15 years one may suspect that Switzerland might be pressured into legally accepting universal uncontrolled CRISPR Cas9 procedures on dif-

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The PGD process additionally exacerbates these risks.

It is also wrong to do prenatal tests as a justification for the unrestricted selection of embryos. As with a striking test result during pregnancy a pregnancy conflict may occur all, too frivolous decisions are possible using PGD. The PGD is a technical selection process, where the laboratory decides between “worth of living» and “not worth of living”. Only that embryo is selected which meets the demands and complies with the “standard”.

9. Rather healing than sculling

The medical task mainly involves the prevention and cure of diseases and the alleviation of suffering where no cure is possible. The creativity of science is inhibited by the Reproductive Medicine Act, be-

cause instead of research for new therapies, any disabled and sick people would be sorted out. Not the suffering would be alleviated, but the suffering person itself would be prevented.

10. Draw responsible limits

Even if in some places abroad large selection is done already, this does not mean that we have to commit the same mistakes in our country. A “No” enables a broad social debate on a more restrictive law.

NO to RMA on 5 June 2016

¹ Rexhaj E. et al., Assisted reproduction: a novel cardiovascular risk factor. *Cardiovasc Med* 18 (2015) 115–119. “Fertility treatment and childhood cancer risk: a systematic meta-analysis.” Hargreave, Marie et al.; *Fertility and Sterility*, Volume 100, Issue 1, 150–161, July 2013 see www.srf.ch/sendungen/puls/sendungen (15 Feb. 2016)

² De Rycke M., Bvela F., Goossens V., Moutou C., SenGupta SB, Traeger-Synodinos J., Coonen E., ESHRE PGD Consortium data collection XIII: cycles from January to December 2010 with pregnancy follow-up to October 2011. *Hum Reprod* 30 (2015) 1763–1789

³ Harton G., Braude P., Lashwood A., Schmutzler A., Traeger, Synodinos J., Wilton L., Harper J.C.: ESHRE PGD consortium best practice guidelines for organization of a PGD centre for PGD/preimplantation genetic screening. *Hum Reprod* 26 (2011) 14–24, quotation: “Current evidence suggests that PGS at cleavage stages is ineffective, but whether PGS at the blastocyst stage or on polar bodies might show improved delivery rates is still unclear.” Scott KL, Hong KH, Scott RT Jr., Selecting the optimal time to perform biopsy for preimplantation genetic testing. *Fertil Steril* 100 (2013) 608–614, quotation: “Two of every five that have day-3 blastomere biopsy will be harmed to a sufficient extent to yield them incapable of implanting and progressing to term.”

⁴ Rexhaj E. et al., Assisted reproduction: a novel cardiovascular risk factor. *Cardiovasc Med* 18 (2015) 115–119. “Fertility treatment and childhood cancer risk: a systematic meta-analysis.” Hargreave, Marie et al.; *Fertility and Sterility*, Volume 100, Issue 1, 150–161, July 2013
Further information: www.vielfalt-statt-selektion.ch and www.pid-stoppen.ch

"CRISPR Cas9 – 'We are far from ...'"

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ferent cell types and genetic sequences in future.

A clear No of the people to the RMA proposal is therefore crucial. This would stop any uncritical and uncontrolled use of CRISPR Cas9.

CRISPR Cas9 in somatic versus germline cells

Efforts to potentially learn how to treat genetic diseases with CRISPR Cas9 (to this day there is still a long way to go!) in affected children or adults may be justified, since such specific interference with somatic cells is associated with an "individual risk" only. These changes would not be inherited by the progeny of the patient. Nevertheless a careful investigation of efficacy, possible adverse affects and risks of such potential therapy attempts is required.

Genetic tampering with germline cells, on the other hand, would be given to the next generation and therefore constitutes an unwarranted risk. Potentially it could cause irreversible changes in the human genome, which defines all of us. Long-term consequences might be grave, resulting in massive irreversible damages in the human nature and the sequelae of future generations cannot be foreseen today.

A clear moratorium is needed

International awareness of the grave insecurities and dangers arising from this new technology of CRISPR Cas9, as well as possible social and ethical consequences, is insufficient at present. Some scientists who helped to establish this method are already campaigning for a moratorium. Recently the *Leopoldina*, i.e. the National Academy of Science in Germany, warned: "We are still far from understanding the concert of the genes in the human genome."

A clear moratorium is needed, which should address the currently more or less

uncontrolled practice in several countries in appropriate wording. This moratorium has to make sure that the employment of methods CRISPR Cas9 is safe, transparent and conducted according to ethical standard. Any tampering with the human germline has to remain banned.

Therefore: An international moratorium for the protection of the human genome is crucial. Uncontrolled "access" of the human genome has to be stopped, to prevent potentially fatal and irreversible consequences for the human nature.

There must be no employment of CRISPR Cas9 in human germline cells, until potential risks are entirely clear. Genetic germline changes are irreversible!

Chinese scientists have already experimented on human embryos "left over" from in vitro fertilisation. The results caused tremendous alarm and irritation in the international scientific community. The intended changes occurred only in a small portion of treated embryos. On the other hand, several changes were caused in other parts of the genome that had not been targeted. Such unintended results are referred to as "Off target effects". The gene scissors CRISPR Cas9 seems to cut not only where it is supposed to. Obviously, the hailed precision may fail. Moreover, inherent repair mechanisms of the cell are effective enough to reduce effectiveness of CRISPR Cas9.

So-called "nature-identical" genetic engineering – consequences for agriculture

It has to be stressed that genetic changes due to CRISPR Cas9 cannot be proven afterwards which undermines any post-hoc control. This is important for gene food, which was manufactured using CRISPR Cas9 and which are euphemistically referred to as "nature-identical".

The moratorium therefore has to make sure that food and crops genetically modified by CRISPR Cas9 have to be declared to be genetically modified Or-

ganisms (GMO). This is not the case in a genetically modified mushroom, for instance, which was manufactured by means of CRISPR Cas9 in the US recently. It has already made its way into the vegetable counter and therefore the food chain.

More uncritical employment of CRISPR Cas9 in animals

Mosquitoes, acting as malaria vectors, may be subject to population changes by means of introgression of new genes into their germline using CRISPR Cas9, which render the mosquitoes resistant to the plasmodium species causing malaria. This genetic change prevents the next generation mosquitoes from transmitting malaria to humans. The genetically modified mosquitoes are supposed to eventually replace the non-modified ones in the ecosystem in the course of a "mutagenic chain reaction". Due to their fast reproduction rates, that could be the case within one season. Despite no field trial has ever been conducted there are already researchers calling for a release of such GMO mosquitoes into the wild. Nobody can predict, however, how these mosquitoes might in turn change the eco-system.

There are already dogs rendered more muscular and Cashmere goats with longer hair, thanks to CRISPR Cas9 gene modification. Obviously an economic impetus is driving these efforts. At Harvard Medical School 62 genes have already been altered successfully in pigs.

Conclusion

After the discovery of the DNA double helix (1953) and the design of the polymerase chain reaction method for the sequencing of the genome (1983), CRISPR Cas9 and its employment in the first attempt of Chinese researchers (2013) to edit human DNA seems to be a third "milestone" in risk to develop into a dangerous, if ruthlessly un-reflected technology with nightmarish potentials. A clear moratorium is what we need to prevent that from happening!

No to halving of the Swiss Armed Forces

Referendum against the WEA (“Weiterentwicklung der Armee” – Armed Forces Development)

by Dr iur Marianne Wüthrich

As reported in “Current Concerns”, the National Council rejected a motion to exit from the NATO programme “Partnership for Peace” in its spring session – although neutral Switzerland really and truly has no place in the NATO war exercises directed against the East. Simultaneously the euphemistically named “Armed Forces Development” (WEA) was – after long debates – adopted with a clear margin by both chambers of Parliament in the final vote of 18 March (see Current Concerns No 8 from 12 April 2016).

The “Citizens Committee for our Security – NO to halving of the Swiss Armed Forces” has launched a referendum against WEA with the support of the “Group Giardino” and other citizens groups. The referendum deadline is on 7 July. The Committees are calling for the observance of the constitutional cornerstones of Swiss security policy and thus for an army that must once more be able to protect the territory and the population of Switzerland.

Defense army instead of NATO compatibility

How would you explain that for about 25 years, the Swiss army has not only been reduced in a series of successive stages but has at the same time been and still is being reorganised from scratch? Fact is that after the dissolution of the Eastern Bloc, the US did not set about shutting down the NATO, but rather used the opportunity to involve not only the former Eastern Bloc countries in *Partnership for Peace* (PfP), but also to inveigle the neutral European countries into participating – contrary to its former pledges. The PfP programmes are, in fact, training camps which are intended to prepare the Member States for NATO membership. When the Swiss PfP participation came to the Swiss population’s notice, the matter had long been accomplished and in implementation. Under Federal Councillors *Adolf Ogi* and *Samuel Schmid*, the Swiss army has over the years been rebuilt in all areas so as to be NATO compatible, starting from the commands being given in the English language through to the sorts of fuel used and to equipment and weaponry. Since costly foreign missions and participation in NATO exercises also appertain to PfP members’ duties, savings have to be made at home. The Swiss have also been taught for years that in the “peaceful” Europe of today Switzerland will need only a small force for disaster relief and the like. Given the increasing migrant influx and the risk of terrorist attacks – for example on transport infrastructure (airports, transit routes by road and rail) – this line of argument is not very convincing.

“If the Development of the Swiss Armed Forces (WEA) is to be implemented in the same way as was the reform “Army XXI”, Switzerland will soon be defenceless and not live according to the precept of Armed Neutrality any longer. Fantasies about security through international cooperation will not help. Which foreign country or organisation would agree to stand by a Switzerland that, despite its unique prosperity, is not ready to raise an adequate portion of public expenditure for its own security?”

Dr iur *Carlo Jagmetti*, former Swiss Ambassador to the US, former Lieutenant Colonel on the General Staff in “Wohin steuert die schweizerische Sicherheitspolitik 2016? (Where is the Swiss security going in 2016)” in *Pro Militia* No 1/2016

“What was at the beginning of this Armed Forces Development? It is very important to recall this. At the beginning of this Armed Forces development it was de facto cut in half. Today we have an army of 200,000 men, including the reserve, and the future army will have 100,000 men – and that at a time when the threat around us is getting ever greater and when other states are instead increasing their armies”.

Ueli Maurer, Federal Councillor, *verbatim record Nation Council*, summer session 2015, 18 June 2015

What the Swiss population needs and must exact, is a battle-compatible and easily mobilisable army that is large enough and perfectly equipped in order to protect the country and its population – not a core troop by the grace of NATO.

The Swiss people adheres to armed neutrality and a defense army

Everlasting armed neutrality has extraordinarily deep roots in the entire Swiss population. It has after all been developed and consolidated over centuries, until it was finally acknowledged in writing by the great European powers at the Congress of Vienna in 1815 as an important component of European peace and security.

According to the annual survey of the Swiss population by the ETH Zurich, the principle of neutrality receives an impressive affirmation of over 90% every time. Thus also in 2015 the survey results in “an extremely high popular support: 95% of Swiss citizens are in favour of maintaining neutrality. [...] The strong consensus in favour of neutrality manifests itself across all age groups, all education and income levels, in all three language regions as well as across the political spectrum and irrespective of sex.” (ETH Zurich, “*Sicherheit 2015*”, Security: The Trend of Opinions on Foreign, Security, and Defense Policy, p. 115 – translation by *Current Concerns*)

In addition, citizens have in any referendum on the subject of army matters in recent years clearly declared for maintaining a strong army rooted in the people.

- In a memorable referendum of 26 November 1989 voters rejected the GSoA (Group for a Switzerland without armed forces) demand for the abolishment the army (1), with 64.4 per cent of votes against (at a record high turnout of more than 69 per cent).
- The popular initiative “Save on the army and national defense” was rejected on 26 November 2000 by 62.4 per cent of voters.
- On 18 May 2003, the nation voted with 76 per cent in favour of “Army XXI” and thus for an army personnel of 220,000 persons.
- The Federal popular initiative “For the protection against armed violence”, was launched because supposedly hundreds of suicides and crimes were being committed annually with army weapons (which is not corroborated because infantry rifles can also be bought privately). The initiative was an attack on the relationship of trust between citizen (soldier) and state. For since time immemorial, every Swiss soldier or officer has been keeping his gun at home – and with few exceptions, it is carefully and dutifully handled. On 13 February 2011 56.3 per cent of voters said no to the abolition of this arrangement. “The Swiss will not allow themselves to be disarmed”, said “Blick” in its headline the next day.
- On 21 September 2013 73.2 per cent of voters and all cantons rejected the GsoA-launched Federal popular initiative “Yes

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"No to the halving of the Swiss Army"

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to the abolition of compulsory military service" and so rallied behind the militia army, which is deeply rooted in the people, and to which in principle every male should belong. (cf. FC, Art. 59, see box).

– Today, in the year 2016, responsible citizens are demanding a referendum on the WEA in order to put a stop to the dismantlement of our army, which has been going on for years, and to demand a defense force of sufficient size and equipment to be able to fulfill its constitutional mandate. •

¹ Federal popular initiative "For a Switzerland without an army and a comprehensive peace policy"

Constitutional obligation*FC Art. 2 Aims*

1 The Swiss Confederation shall protect the liberty and rights of the people and safeguard the independence and security of the country.

FC Art. 58 Armed forces

1 Switzerland shall have armed forces. In principle, the armed forces shall be organised as a militia.

2 The armed forces serve to prevent war and to maintain peace; they defend the country and its population. They shall support the civilian authorities in safeguarding the country against serious threats to internal security and in dealing with exceptional situations. Further duties may be provided for by law.

3 The deployment of the armed forces is the responsibility of the Confederation.

FC Art. 59 Military service and alternative service

1 Every Swiss man is required to do military service. Alternative civilian service shall be provided for by law.

2 Military service is voluntary for Swiss women.

3 Any Swiss man who does not do military or alternative service is liable to pay a tax. This tax is levied by the Confederation and assessed and collected by the Cantons. [...]

*Federal Constitution
of the Swiss Confederation*

Main arguments for the referendum

"The 'Citizens' Committee for our Security – No to halving the Swiss Armed Forces' takes the referendum against the alleged 'development' of the Armed Forces (WEA) [...] What are the main reasons why this referendum is necessary?"

Halving of the personnel strength down to 100,000 members of the army

[...] With this fourth reform of the army within 25 years – after *Armee95*, *Armee-XXI*, *Entwicklungsschritt 2008/2011* – the authorised personnel strength would be halved already for the third time – down to a remainder of 100,000 members of the Swiss Armed Forces (AdA)¹. Approximately 24,000 of those would be combat troops. For constant operations during 265 days around the clock, for example to protect vital objects, there would be only left 1,200 AdA for the Swiss territory all over.

Logic consequence: 'WEA' has to be rejected!

Violation of the Federal Constitution

An army that would be halved could not carry out the tasks that it is responsible for and which it is charged of by our Federal Constitution. According to Article 1 of our Federal Constitution the army has to "protect the 'liberty, independence, security'. According to Article 58 the army has got the task to 'defend the country and its population and the civil authorities against threats'.

An army that is halved and consists of 100,000 members of the army, would not correspond any more to the constitutional principle of militia, neither to armed neutrality.

Logic consequence: 'WEA' has to be rejected.

Outdated foundations from 2010 and before

The proposition is supported by outdated documents as the '*Sicherheitspolitischer*

Bericht 2010' (Report on Security Policy 2010). Since then the military and strategic threat situation has degraded also in Europe fundamentally and massively. The Federal Council is trying in vain to make some improvements in the '*Sicherheitspolitischer Bericht 2016*' and to justify by that the proposition 'WEA'. Significant participants in the legislative process by consultation are rejecting the report, for example the *Swiss Trade As-*

sociation [...] and the *Society of Swiss Officers*.

Logic consequence: 'WEA' has to be rejected.

The referendum period runs until 7 July 2016. It is a matter of collecting 50,000 signatures so that 'WEA' has to be submitted to the vote by the people. •

Source: <http://armee-halbierung-nein.ch>

¹ In the early 90ies, there were appr. 800,000 AdA

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

Letter to  the Editor

Referendum for security in uncertain times

In all new projects of the administration the progressive sounding PR word "development" is used but it's describing actualy abolition. So as well in the WEA-Project (Development of the Swiss Armed Forces), which should rightly say "ongoing abolition of the army". In 2003 Swiss people have by their vote on the "Army XXI" approved a size of the army of 220,000 soldiers and voted clearly in favour of the compulsory military service. Nevertheless, the Swiss Armed Forces must currently undertake enormous efforts to deploy, in case needed, just 2300 soldiers on average throughout the year. With this minimum size, the army should not only defend Switzerland, according to the Federal Constitution but also cope with immigrants and refugees and provide protection-, control- and accommodation orders as a result of the increased terror risk.

In 2003 Federal Council and Parliament dropped the alarm forces at the airports of Zurich, Berne and Geneva with 5,000 militiamen off. In a benchmark study of the American military expert *Kevin D. Stringer* the defensive strategy of the Zurich Airport regiment was characterised as the world's finest and most cost-effective. Already in the 1980s military plans, Kloten International Airport

was a preferred topic in big scale exercises simulating air land attack there because of his great start and landing capacities in the back of the NATO defence-lines. At that time, NATO signaled that when the Swiss defence in the Greater Zurich Area would fail, it could suffer heavy, possibly nuclear fire. The airport regiment No 4 in Kloten could readily mobilise 3,400 man 365 days a year within 2–3 hours.

By the WEA, the size of 100,000 soldiers would be reduced to less than halve, of which just about 24,000 soldiers were combat troops. Spread over the whole year one could deploy a maximum of 1,200 men. That would even no longer be enough for the airport and important facilities such as nuclear power plants, dams, etc. remained unprotected.

The people must demonstrate to the Parliament by the WEA referendum until 7 July that it must put the Federal Council and GSoA (Group for a Switzerland without an Army) finally in the constitutional barriers. Signature sheets are available at www.armee-halbierung-nein.ch.

Peter Aebersold, Zurich

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

German media, Russia and the “anti missile shield” – PR and politics

by Dr Heinz Loquai, retired Brigadier General, Meckenheim, first published 7 May 2007

cc. Heinz Loquai was Brigadier General of the German “Bundeswehr” until his retirement. During his engagements with the German Defence Ministry, with NATO institutions and finally as a German representative at the OSCE in Vienna he was closely familiar with NATO politics. In two of his books he submitted NATO’s war on Yugoslavia in 1999, which had violated international law, a profound criticism. This war was not the last breach of international law, it was only a first sinister climax. In fact it is going on up to these very days and one must fear the worst.

The article below deals with the way German leading media “processed” in a popagandistic way the new missile defence sytem and the Russian reactions to it. They have become the extension of US war policy. And that’s why it is best to call out to them as well: “You can walk out!”

At first there was an awkward silence when at the Munich Conference for Security Policy [in the year 2007] Russia’s President Wladimir Putin had completed his inaugural speech to this select circle. Putin had set out his position to the most important issues of foreign policy to

the point, and unmistakably criticised US substance and style of politics. US Senator John McCain spoke of the most aggressive speech ever delivered by a Russian president since the end of the “Cold War”. Eckart von Klaeden, foreign policy spokesman of the CDU/CSU, judged Putin’s speech as an “undisguised claim to a super power”. With this statement von Klaeden showed once and for all his insufficient powers of political discrimination. [...]

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“Our freedom is not threatened from the outside, from other states, but from inside, from our society and state of mind”

An obituary on retired Brigadier General Dr Heinz Loquai



Heinz Loquai (picture ma)

Heinz Loquai was brigadier general of the German “Bundeswehr”; from 1996 to 2000, he worked as a German representative for the OSCE in Vienna. His area of responsibility was the Balkans. He became well known because of his founded and brave criticism concerning the NATO war against Yugoslavia among other things. He was one of the few who had gone public with war critical insights already in 1999, and who had been engaged for a public debate concerning the background of the aggression war against Yugoslavia, which contravened the principles of international law. Loquai, highly appreciated by his colleagues, had, initiated by the Ministry of Defence, to leave the OSCE in 2000, because he publicly mentioned, that “the Defence Minister [Rudolf Scharping] didn’t tell the truth in what he said concerning the ‘Hufeisenplan’”. The former German ambassador even managed, that Loquai could not once enter the rooms of the OSCE any more – an incredible process. After own thorough investigation and lots of discussions Heinz Loquai had to come to the conclusion that, before NATO war had started, there hadn’t been any case of genocide, which might have justified the attacks on Yugoslavia. Even then, he branded this interpretation as western war propaganda. He

published his insights in two documentations: “Der Kosovo-Konflikt – Wege in einen vermeidbaren Krieg”, (“The Kosovo-conflict – ways into an avoidable war”, 2000) und “Weichenstellungen für einen Krieg. Internationales Krisenmanagement und die OSZE im Kosovo-Konflikt” (“Setting the course for a war. International crisis management and the OSCE in the conflict of Kosovo”, 2003, both Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft).

For his civil courage he got the “Clara Immerwahr Prize” 2001. In his acceptance speech, he said: “Our freedom is not threatened from the outside, from foreign states, but from inside, from our society and state of mind.”

We became acquainted with Heinz Loquai as a courageous fighter for freedom, as a sincere, honest fellow with a high ethos and as a keen thinker.

Since his first lecture in Switzerland in 2001, he has been the guest at *Current Concerns* several times and had been well-known by his substantiated, engaged contributions for the readership of *Current Concerns* ever since. Even his participation in several conferences of “Mut zur Ethik” was an important enrichment to the discussion of the pending issues. His plea, that there is always an alternative to war, runs like a golden thread through his contributions, marked by an honest and sincere love for peace. He could not accept the fact that German policy (again) had taken part in a war of aggression in such a dishonest way. For Loquai the question of war and peace belonged to the existential questions of a human community. It was his aim to find out the reasons of war in order to draw lessons for the future. Conclusion of his

speech in 2001: “Not only do we need an intelligent policy, we are also in need of an honest policy. We need an honest policy, which is aimed at peace, which does not revitalize, but ban war. And I tell you that, as strange as it may sound, even as a former soldier...”

Heinz Loquai had a great appreciation for the Swiss government model that he had got to know by good Swiss friends and associates in the OSCE for many years: “Seen from the outside, this Swiss model – particularly if you look at other countries – would be an export article. It is invaluable, what Switzerland could in an exemplary manner in matter of peace techniques, of democracy for others ... languages, direct democracy, but also to stand up for defence of the own country, I can see equally realized in Switzerland. Keep and use this export article better.”

On 21 February 2016, Dr Heinz Rudolf Loquai died after a long and severe illness at the age of 78 years.

With the following (slightly shortened) reprint of his 2007 published contribution in *Current Concerns*, which is highly relevant today, too, we again let him have his say.

Dr Eva- Maria Föllmer- Müller



"German media, Russia and ..."

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Raising anti-Russian reflexes in order to divert from factual problems

In the "Süddeutsche Zeitung" *Stefan Kornelius*, head of the foreign policy province of this newspaper attacks Putin, "who had decided not to be nice". (12 February 2007). The speech had been an attack to "throw the USA and the West off their guard", he claimed and Putin, he went on, who had "sufficient experience – as had the American Secretary of Defence Gates – from his service to the Soviet Intelligence Service in the art of grimacing and playacting". Putin, who "had grinned sneeringly" had "pushed the others into the defensive".

Berthold Kohler, co-editor of the "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung" knew for certain that Putin "had tried to denounce the Americans as the source of all evil in the world and drive a wedge between the members of the Atlantic Alliance" (12 February 2007). Even two months later *Nikolaus Busse* is still looking back on Putin's speech: President Putin, he writes, can have some glasses of Krim champagne to celebrate his success. "With only one speech he incited more unrest and embarrassment in the western alliance than all Soviet tank divisions were able to in former times. So easy it is to divide the NATO" ("Frankfurter allgemeine Zeitung" of 10 April 2007). *Die Zeit* presents the Russian president as a "yobbo in his oil delirium" shortly after the Munich Conference (15 February 2007).

The commentaries in leading German newspapers confirm what Putin said in his Munich speech about the "Cold War": "And just as any war the Cold War as well leaves behind some ammunition still live" to use an image here. I am talking about the ideological clichés, the measuring with two different measuring rods and other characteristic aspects that are typical of the square way of thinking during the Cold War." The anti Russian reflexes of German media focus on the person of the Russian President in such a spiteful language that is rather typical for a not so very cold war.

A rather small part of Putin's Munich speech was devoted to the intended expansion of certain "elements of the anti missile defence system onto Europe". Putin asked: "Who needs a new step towards something that would surely lead to a new arms race under the given conditions? I gravely doubt that the Europeans themselves have need of such a thing." It is in this context that Putin assessed the "NATO expansion" as a "serious provocation", "which will reduce mutual trust." But already before the Munich Security Conference the plans of the US government to install elements of an American anti missile defence system in Poland and Tschechia were prominent on the German political and media agenda. [...] The

connection with the political debate about the Iranian nuclear programme is evident.

German services: Helping to make a bogeyman out of Iran

On 5 December 2006 Dr *Hans Rühle* raised his voice in the "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung". Who is Dr Hans Rühle? In the 80ies he was head of the planning staff of the Federal Ministry of Defence. In this function he had excellent connections to the BND (Bundesnachrichtendienst = German Intelligence Service) as well as to the CIA and to the US Defence Ministry. In the Defence Ministry CDU member Rühle looked after US interests; he did so very efficiently in this fine-meshed German-American network. Now Rühle is co-working on the composition of the bogeyman Iran. His conclusion: Iran might have the possibility to obtain sufficient weapons-grade plutonium within less than two years in order to build 40 to 50 atomic bombs.

[...] The propagandistic assault is directed against the "rogue state" Iran in order to legitimise the American anti missile program in view of the many critics of this program in Germany [...] and of course it is useful for the composition of the bogeyman image of Iran. By combining "Iranian long range missiles" and "atomic bombs" he creates such a serious threat that in the end not only an American anti missile shield in Europe but a preventive attack on Iran might be justified as well.

Again in the "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung" *Michael Rühle*, head of the planning staff of the political department of the NATO, speaks of a "renaissance" of the "almost forgotten" "anti missile shield" of the USA ("Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung", 9 February 2007). *Nikolaus Busse* explains to the readers of the "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung", what Washington's intention really is, namely "defence against rogue states" ("Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung", 22 February 2007). A few weeks later Busse blames the German political class for not asking the "pivotal question": "Does not Germany need an anti missile defence as well?" ("Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung", 10 April 2007). Needless to say that this is merely a rhetoric question for Busse.

Also "Die Zeit" proved to be a forum for a, however, controversial debate about the American anti missile shield. As one would have expected, co-editor *Josef Joffe* presented himself as the advocate of the American project. Under the headline "Taken in by Putin" Joffe writes that the SPD (German Social Democratic Party) considered the US anti missile plans an affront against Russia: "Technique and range of these weapons prove the opposite" (29 March 2007). Has nobody in the editorial offices realised so far that the issue here is certainly not the "technique and range" of

weapons but a very fundamental political dispute? Did nobody ever raise the question how the USA would react if Russia wanted to install anti missile rockets in Mexico or Cuba? What is the USA's intention if they now push a new round of NATO expansion in direction of Georgia and the Ukraine?

In this context we should take note of a contribution of the "Norddeutscher Rundfunk" with the following conclusion: Retired Airforce Brigade General Dr *Hermann Hagen* said that everything points to the fact that "an anti missile defence system is the most expensive and at the same time the most insecure defence" against a threat by Iranian atomic missiles. But what is this program supposed to serve, really?

NATO as a diplomatic procedure placebo

For the last five years NATO has been dealing with a missile supported defence system for the alliance. The introduction of such a system is basically settled. A so-called feasibility study is supposed to test how this basic agreement can be transformed into a program. This NATO-project must be distinguished from the US national project to install a "National Missile Defence" in Poland and Tschechia for the protection of American strategic facilities (for example the extensive radar facilities in Great Britain and Greenland). The protection of Europe by this defence system is not the main objective but an subordinate objective serving the legitimising of its installation. It is the much more advanced US project, not the NATO plan that has become the topic of political debate and controversial discussion.

Germany is now trying to adopt a mediator position. At first some cautious criticism of Washington's style was to be heard from the foreign affairs office. The German Government took some effort to place the project under the NATO's roof. The argument ran that in this case the necessary consultations with Russia could be made up for within the NATO-Russia Council. Chancellor *Merkel's* original sound: "We prefer [...] a solution within the framework of the NATO and also an open dialogue with Russia on the matter." ("Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung", 14 March 2007). Does this preference, however, open up real chances for a solution of the political conflicts?

Hardly so. For the USA have made it clear several times in the past, that they will grant nobody a say in the decision that concerns US national security. A say in the debate all right but no say in the decision! Russia will not accept this, since it is already dissatisfied with the dummy consultations in the NATO-Russia Council. And neither the Poles or – Tschechs, obsequious vassals of the USA seem eager to assemble under the NATO roof, since both countries expect to gain

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Again German tanks 150 km away from Leningrad?

Berlin is the capital of the Orwellian “Newspeak”

by Willy Wimmer



Willy Wimmer
(picture uk)

Berlin seems to be developing into the world's capital of criminal historical amnesia. Without any sense for the thoughtfulness present in the German people and without concern for our eastern neighbours, they behave as loudmouths again. This is demonstrated by statements from senior German officers in the name of a NATO mission, made on the well-known battlefields in Eastern Europe. But it is going much further. While the political party NPD is judged here by the German Federal Constitutional Court and, facing a ban due to the horrible past, these forces of the past are commanded under broad support from the German Government to the corruption-infected Ukraine at the border of the Russian neighbour. Already in spring 2014, after American mercenaries had stirred up the Eastern Ukraine, sparking a civil war, the West and the Ukrainian leadership unleashed the battalions of the Western Ukraine, reminiscent not only in Russia for the worst of times. After Israeli specialists had been seen in Kiev it was unbelievable who had made a local peace with these ghosts of the past.

Why again German tanks near of Leningrad?

There seems to be a clear line in our country. The horrors of the past are relevant only to as far as they may be useful for the own purposes. Quite opportunistic and certainly a career asset, if one pays atten-

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national prestige and material advantages by their direct co-operation and special relationship with the USA.

It cannot be ruled out that the USA will – finally agree to a debate within the NATO. That way they might supply the German Government with an argument for them to use in home politics. The coalition government could then point to “consultations” with the allies and claim this as a success of the German effort to find a solution. However, this NATO-ization of the project would be nothing but a diplomatic procedure placebo.

Under the NATO roof the USA can even count on greater consent, especially from the countries of the “new” Europe with

tion to the nuances. Why then should the legitimate feelings of others be respected? Particularly if these people belong to our largest neighbouring nation, the Russians. The new decisions of NATO or what seems to be in preparation, are a clear message deliberately playing with the terrible images of the past: Our tanks are again 150 km from Leningrad and thus from the present St. Petersburg. For years, St. Petersburg has spruced up itself, turning into a shining metropolis and a place of longing for cruise tourists and other travellers. The city copes with all that, is full of life and thinks European, because one belongs to Europe and wants to belong to it. For years, the Russian Federation has been targeted by the West's intense agitation. This alone is hard to take. But what kind of a signal is the West giving this city which in World War II became a symbol of suffering like no other city: NATO tanks are brought up at its city borders? Have they in Russia been so wrong about us and others, when the end of the Cold War was heralded together with us, when the division of Europe was over and the people from Neuss and Halle could again embrace each other?

The justifications for the NATO troop build-up are far-fetched and only serve the American idea of supremacy. Without any hesitation, our German soldiers will be sacrificed to this aim.

Berlin is also the capital of the Orwellian “Newspeak”. Anyone who could see the end of the Cold War knows about the mechanisms that have been able to bring about the end of this dramatic conflict. The negotiations and the use of appropriate negotiating structures made it possible. In the subsequent years it was not the Rus-

their anti Russian attitude. The conflicts within the alliance would be whitewashed by formal compromises. Certain imminent rifts within the EU, in particular with respect to a common foreign and security policy will not worry Washington much, since its two bilateral European partners Poland and Tschechia that it has chosen will resist a strengthening of the EU. Neither will American politics bother much about Russia's state of affairs, since they are already planning a new round of NATO expansion towards Georgia and the Ukraine. That way the Nato would expand to former Soviet republics and would cross a red political line. But such “lines” don't mean a limit for the “only super power” when it comes to fencing in potential political rivals. Last not least this is shown by Washington's policy of national anti missile defence. •

sian Federation which has demolished this whole “peace framework” and wrecked it. The United States have obviously seen that nothing is more harmful to their interests on the Euro-Asian continent as a fruitful cooperation between the nations in this territory. With the war against Belgrade, the US have brought war back to Europe and its recent decisions will likely make it grow into a global dimension. It is obvious that in the Russian Federation, however, thoughts of the “Great Patriotic War” are mobilised. Exactly these considerations reveal the fateful direction in which we are moving due to the activities of our own government. Why not use the images of this war for the own actions? Exactly this clearly shows the perversion of the Western approach. It is not even necessary to pull up the historical images of *George Friedman* dating from his Stratfor time, but now there are those forces at the Russian border representing – from a Russian perspective – a highly fateful combination of former allies and wartime enemies.

The Obama war council in Hanover will go down in history

Since time immemorial, the image of a fair – and especially that of Hannover – is connected to the idea of peaceful cooperation. Also here, the Russians have been pulled over the barrel. The cooperation in the WTO is intended to serve the business by more intense cooperation and interconnection of economies, but also the peace.

Everything prospered magnificently, even Düsseldorf's armaments group “Rheinmetall” was working for the Russian armed forces. After everybody had adjusted to a future cooperation even in sensitive areas, the noose was tightened on them in form of sanctions in order to cause the greatest possible damage. Everybody is left speechless, but is powerless when Washington's warmongers whistle. Here, soon there will be a secret agent behind every mosque, but no one dares to ask why it is that we are in a process of complete governmental dissolution? Soon, if the daily provocations do not stop, we won't have to wonder anymore why everything went fatally wrong. The US are playing undauntedly the games known from the times of the Cold War, which are aimed at the enemy – here Russia – to entice him to the one wrong reaction, which would justify the big strike.

Since what happened in the port of Havana in the late 19th century, one knows how to deal with it. The German Government is now supporting this, aware that we

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After the AfD party convention – Germany in a craze for campaigns?

by Karl Müller

On their federal party convention on 30 April, the still young party “Alternative für Deutschland” (AfD, Alternative for Germany) has passed its basic programme. The programme, which has over 70 pages, is starting, after a preamble, with the chapter “democracy and basic values”, followed by the chapter “Euro and Europe” and the chapters “inner security and justice”, “foreign and security policy”, “job market and social policy”, “family and children”, “culture, language and identity”, “school, university and research”, “immigration, integration and asylum”, “economy, digital world and consumer protection”, “finance and taxes”, “energy policy”, “nature and environmental protection, agriculture and forestry” and finally “value preservation before modernisation and new construction”.

All these issues could be reported on; there can, may and should be other opinions; there should be discussions, factual and controversial. But in mainstream Germany, this is not the case. Instead there are dismissive labels like “clumsy populism” (*Gerda Hasselfeldt*, CDU), “confused right wing party” (*Ralf Stegner*, SPD), “reactionary” (*Katrin Göring-Eckardt*, Bündnis 90/Die Grünen). To prevent misunderstandings: this is no advertisement for the

“Again German tanks ...”

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will not survive this perverse practice as a nation. And our alleged allies in Eastern Europe? Finally, with our economic and the American military potential, they can puff up their cheeks to sock it to “the Russians”. How degenerated has Berlin become to approve this behaviour?

After the Washington speech of potential Republican presidential candidate *Trump*, the German Foreign Minister could think of nothing better than to evaluate this speech. After all, Berlin has sufficient experience to fail superbly with that kind of behaviour, being obliged to kowtow later, in case he gets elected, in order improve the conditions. No wonder that Minister *Steinmeier* scourges *Trump*’s speech about making “America first” as the yardstick. Of course, a “Germany first” is unthinkable in Berlin, even if we should be anxious about the “absence of war” on the common continent. In future we would definitely recommend the “Obersalzberg” for meetings like the Hanover meeting. •
(Translation *Current Concerns*)

AfD. This is about requirements of political culture. In Germany, political barbarism is spreading. Just read the comment-sand politicians’ statements in the German media after the convention.

There had been a guest speaker at the party convention: the former President of the Czech Republic, *Vaclav Klaus*. He is not really liked in the EU mainstream because he has his own will, because he has a critical view of the EU and the euro and because he has hesitated for a long while before signing the Lisbon Treaty. On this occasion, *Martin Schulz* (SPD) and *Daniel Cohn-Bendit* (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen) had travelled to the Hradcany Castle in Prague in order to put the President massively under pressure. This is how they demonstrated their understanding of the sovereignty of a state and the independence of a head of state. This Lisbon Treaty was nearly the same as the one rejected in referenda by majorities of the citizens of France and the Netherlands. The EU had widely left the text intact, gave it another name and stopped letting people vote over it – except the Irish, since Ireland is the only EU country where this is mandatory. At first, the Irish had rejected also this text. Then the screws were put on the Irish, also with a massive campaign against the Catholic Church there. Not completely unjustified, but the timing was pretty suspicious. The Irish surrendered and had to say yes.

So this *Vaclav Klaus* was guest speaker at the AfD in Germany. What he said is thought-provoking: mainly not with respect to the AfD but with respect to Germany.

The former President of the Czech Republic said: “The level of demonisation of your party in German politics, in the German media and in the academic and intellectual sphere is absurd and excessive, wrong and fraudulent, but unfortunately effective with many people.” And he further stated: “The brutality of the assaults demonstrates that you are right and that your critics are frightened. These people do not want a plurality of thoughts and no democracy. This is why you have to fight for plurality, which is the basis of democracy and for the justification of various, even controversial views. Your party has to reject the devastating political correctness. It needs to label the current de-democratisation of the German society as the fatal threat to civil freedom in Germany.” And then: “Your congress of today has [...] to say fundamental things. Not all the

details, not all topics and subtopics, not all areas of political discourse, but the frame of party ideology has to be marked very clearly. This includes, for example, saying something about Europe, about migration, about the continuously growing regularisation and manipulation not only of our economy but also of our private life, about the devastating attacks on our traditions, customs, practices and values which are part of us, which we have inherited from our parents and grandparents. You have to describe the hopeless impasse of the current European development and show us a way out.”

It is not relevant here if the AfD has succeeded in this. But *Vaclav Klaus* is starting from an analysis which should make us sit up and take notice. And he characterises a political style of conduct which has lost all decorum and all democratic foundation.

Now the “Bild” newspaper reported on 3 May: “In face of the AfD’s electoral successes, CDU leader *Angela Merkel* was for the first time hinting at a change of course. ‘Bild’ heard: According to participants, *Merkel* said in the CDU headquarters that the party had to come again towards conservative voters at the right of the political centre. It would not make sense to permanently lambast the AfD and its voters. This would only lead to solidification effects.”

A new tactics in view of the disastrous election results of the past months?

However: only one day later, the “Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung” reported that the Chancellor had been misquoted: “[The news agency] *AFP* was told by participants [of the CDU meeting] that the statements cited [by ‘Bild’] had not been made. The CDU headquarter confirmed also: ‘There is no change of course.’”

Thus the upshot is: Just like in some other European countries, the hitherto dominant political circles also in Germany do not really know how to deal with citizens who are no longer willing to follow them. All defamations have failed to prevent that more and more citizens do no longer trust the “lack of alternatives” of current politics and start to look for alternatives. “Cudgel in the sack” towards these positions beyond the “political correctness” is no longer well received. This kind of politics will harm also Germany and bring about severe losses: in reputation, but also in inner peace. Can anyone have an interest in this? •

Fulfil the journalistic professional ethics and the political culture of democracy

by Urs Knoblauch, cultural publicist, Fruthwilen (Switzerland)



When visiting the Book Fair in Leipzig one does not only come across valuable new publications but can also meet with the authors and the interested public. So the book presentation of Uwe Krüger's new book 'Mainstream – Warum wir den Medien nicht mehr trauen' (Mainstream – why we no longer trust the media) gave a current insight into the transatlantic embedded leading media and into the related working conditions of journalists. Uwe Krüger also pointed to the growing number of critical users of media.

Uwe Krüger is a research associate of the Department of Journalism at the University of Leipzig. His doctoral thesis of 2011 'Power of opinion – the influence of elites



on leading media and Alpha-journalists – a critical network analysis' was published in 2013 in the book series of the *Institut für praktische Journalismus- und Kommunikationsforschung* (IPJ).

His newly published book dwells very differentiated on the rightful loss of confidence and the problematic labour- and interdependencies of today's journalism. Likewise, the political and economic involvements of elites and mainstream media are illustrated very clearly. Uwe Krüger gets to the bottom of the alarming mainstream effect, showing "how lobbying networks, confidential background circles, the social background of journalists and the dramatic deterioration of working conditions in the sector, restrict the range of views" (blurb). From the few exclusive journalism schools the suitable candidates are recruited for the mainstream leading media and elite training centres. Serious researching journalists suffer from these conditions, requirements, time pressure and the increasing influence of PR-actors.

If you believe an opinion poll of December 2014 for *Zeit online*, 'then 47 percent of the Germans think that their media report unilaterally. By now many people have the impression that they are reading the same everywhere' (blurb). The fact that people turn more and more away from this largely manipulative media scene and looking for independent and alternative media, is a good sign. Even the

programme advisory board of the ARD ('Consortium' – of the public-law broadcasting institutions of the Federal Republic of Germany) had to admit that, for example in the Ukraine crisis in June 2014, 'the reporting in the German TV channel ARD, *The First*, gave the impression of bias and had a tendency against Russia and the Russian positions' (p. 14). By numerous examples Uwe Krüger's book states the aims and the background of these transatlantic controlled information and political campaign journalism.

Dangerous lockstep of the leading media

Media elites regularly come together in familiar coterie. Furthermore, they are welcomed within the Federal Chancellery and, by the way, 'informed' and oriented on current political issues according to government's wishes. Critical and independent voices are not desired. Numerous media workers who do not drop their professional ethics have to bear the consequences. Especially young journalists are under the burden of great social insecurity. 'According to the Federal Employment Agency about 5,000 journalists and editors in Germany are unemployed.' (p. 49)

In the 'reports of the mainstream media' on the occasion of the Ukraine crisis, former Minister of Culture and pre-

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Letter to  the Editor

Angela and Barack in Hanover

One would think that the meeting of the most powerful man of the world and the most powerful woman of Europe – glamorously prepared by the media – would be a win-win-situation. As our chancellor can well use the praise and support of the highest authority after her disastrous solo run in the refugee crisis. For other European states are registering the German boundless solo run with dismay and scorn. They do not think to commit themselves to contingents. Also at home her popularity is in free fall. The people feel ignored as to existential questions of their future and the communities are moaning because of challenges they can hardly rise to. And there is the presidents "I am proud of the German population" so to speak balm for the German soul.

But *Obama* has also got problems in his domestic policy and would like to get the TTIP contract – very important to the interests of the USA – in the bag at the end of his term of office. In this matter he has got a "reliable" and "strong" partner, our chancellor: so far the flawed win-win-game.

According, however, to the point of view "unveiled" through standards of realpolitik, German domestic and foreign policies are committed to strict guidelines of our transatlantic playmakers. And this regards particularly our chancellor – more than anyone else – is serving these interests, therefore strengthening her position is the very own interest of the USA.

Against this background it seems just spooky when at the same time and place,

outshined by these two shining lights and strangely underexposed in our media, there was an immense demonstration against TTIP: A thunderbolt of 90,000 demonstrating people who came from all parts of the country! Once more, it manifests in a dramatic way the inner turmoil, the instability of our country. And this cleft, the sorrow of the people does not only exist regarding the issue of TTIP, but also regarding the management of the refugee crisis and the consequences for the future of the whole of our country.

*Dr med Horst A. Hoffmann, Kiel,
specialist for children's and
youth medicine, psychotherapist*

(Translation *Curent Concerns*)

Abysses located in reality

Novel by Middle East expert Michael Lüders “Never say anything – NSA”



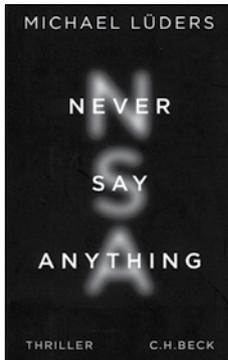
mk/wvb. At least since *Edward Snowden* posted extensive American Secret Service documents on the Internet and took himself under protection by the

Russian Federation, every schoolkid can comprehend that there is something like data preservation, or that every financial transaction is recorded, that flight or other personal data is registered and if there is need, these can be used anywhere by anyone.

Currents of refugees from the Middle East and Africa, set in scene for the media, remind us on a daily basis that war has become almost a common method for politics. We can close our eyes, look away or, if that does not work anymore, ask the question what we possibly could do about it.

In his novel “*Never say anything – NSA*”, *Michael Lüders* is masterfully showing us that we are living in this world too and that each and every one of us has a certain responsibility towards our history and the forthcoming generations.

The protagonist of the novel, journalist *Sophie*, becomes an immanent witness



and almost a victim of a massacre committed in a Moroccan town. After gotten away alive, she starts researching the backgrounds of this brutal attack and gets on to the track of volatile global political power interdependences. As she tries to publish her research in the newspaper, a roller-coaster starts: She is granted highest attention by the world media, but as things are getting hotter, the pro-American editorship tries to sweep it under the carpet and is urging *Sophie* to drop the topic.

In this example, *Lüders* realistically shows how media is manipulated, how people try to force journalists on a politically correct line and, if they cling on to the truth, how they are slowly neutralised and shoved to one side. But *Sophie* keeps on going, she searches and finds ways to publish her research, even if the mainstream media is boycotting her. Things heat up and are getting more and more dangerous for *Sophie*, she is being followed, strange “accidents” happen, she is the target of intelligence actions and attacks.

Middle East expert *Lüders* inserts knowledge in the form of a novel which he might could not publish as a journalist. He is doing so by skillful use of literary design, so that the reader identifies himself with *Sophie*. He feels and suffers with her, mainly because *Sophie* is staying true to herself and her journalistic duty of finding out the truth. This is – despite the abysses that the novel reveals, which are obviously located in reality – a hopeful sight: As long as there are people like *Sophie* and those who still continue to help her, even in the darkest of hours, the world is not yet lost. Even when all techniques of modern surveillance and persecution are used to

pursuit *Sophie*, to make her fall and to get her out of the way.

The reader holds his breath as *Lüders* realistically and clearly displays what is already possible today.

After reading this lecture, nobody can say that federal or intelligence surveillance is no problem because he or she has got nothing to hide. The revelations of *Lüders* get to the substance of every citizen and free human being. Even more clearly as most of the novel takes place in Berlin, a city we are used to, not somewhere “behind Turkey”.

When the reader eventually realises that he is likely to be watched with the common mobile phones and computers, he also sees that he cannot set himself free of the facts described, that he is already in the midst of the same plot and that he has to make a serious decision. And finally he also sees that he cannot close his eyes anymore, against all the propaganda on every media channel.

The book challenges the reader to search for his own solutions, solutions that would lead out of the logic of war. And he even hints to an escape plan: What if we would cooperate with those that we wage war against, with economy, with sanctions, with weapons – what if we would cooperate?

Wouldn't it be possible to see the East from this point of view? To proceed as is, as the novel clearly points out, is a dead end.

To make a long story short, the novel is a must-read, it forces the reader to pick a side. For this, *Lüders*' book is a contribution against turning a blind eye. And last but not least, it is breathtakingly thrilling. •

Michael Lüders. *Never say anything – NSA*. C.H.Beck, München 2016 ISBN 973-3- 406-68892- 8

“Fulfil the journalistic professional...”
continued from page 11

sent professor of philosophy *Julian Nida-Rümelin* criticizes that important questions are not asked and that ‘the journalistic precepts of carefulness and completeness, distance and objectivity are violated’ (p. 17). Therefore, he recommends, ‘In order to have a complete picture, one is well advised to rely not only on the mainstream media, but also to use further sources of information.’ Especially the big media show ‘striking little resistance with regard to an ideologization of Western foreign policy’ (pp. 17). Additionally, *Nida-Rümelin* states in this con-

text: ‘In a developed democracy however, one may expect [...] a certain critical distance towards NATO- and CIA-controlled information.’ (p. 18).

With a strategy of double standards, chancellor *Merkel*'s formula of a ‘market-conforming democracy’ (p. 128) or concepts such as ‘humanitarian intervention’, the real political and economic intentions are concealed to the citizens. *Uwe Krüger* refers in this context to the British political scientist *Colin Crouch*, who, with the concept of “post-democracy”, describes a deception of citizens in democratic elections.

Through ‘competing teams of professional PR experts the public debate during election campaigns is controlled in such a way that they deteriorate into a pure spec-

tacle.’ On ‘this political stage real policy is made behind closed doors’, and prepared by networks of elites (p. 132). Citizens have a right to honest information. In a democracy, people need to rely on true information by media and politics. It has always been by means of disinformation, lies and propaganda that wars have been possible. However, it is based on good faith that coexistence in peace is possible. In the field of media and journalism, ethics and civic responsibility for the common good form the essential basis. •

Uwe Krüger. *Mainstream. Warum wir den Medien nicht mehr trauen*. C.H.Beck, München 2016, ISBN 978-3-406-68851-5

Curriculum 21, competencies orientation, self-directed learning: The cantons are in the process of reforming schools fundamentally

Switzerland must not destroy its educational system

by Thomas Dähler

Nobody would maintain that Switzerland's education system is not part of its success story. On the contrary: our elementary school, dedicated to a sound general education, nowadays prepares our children perfectly both for an academic career as well as for a career based on an apprenticeship. It prepares our children for life. But meanwhile the schools in Switzerland are being covered by an unprecedented wave of reforms, which has the potential to destroy Switzerland's successful federalist educational landscape. Switzerland is jeopardising its high level of education based on general education in elementary school and on a dual vocational training system through these numerous reforms – and in the final analysis it is thus jeopardising its economic prosperity and standard of living.

Whether they are technocrats or experts: The troop of reformers invariably justifies its radical transformation of the elementary school with the reorganisation of education which the Swiss voted into the Federal Constitution in 2006, with a yes-proportion of 85 per cent. The cantons' obligation to harmonise their school systems "in the area of school entrance age and compulsory education, of duration and objectives of levels of education and of their transitions as well as of the recognition of qualifications," was incorporated in the Constitution by the popular vote at that time. If the cantons fail to do so, the Federal government is authorised to intervene.

At that time, however, no one suspected that this timid attempt at more similarities in the cantons' school systems would be abused to put the stamp of democratic legitimacy on far-reaching reforms. The German Swiss *Curriculum 21* is just one of the mosaic particles of the profound "reformatitis", although an important one.

School seen as a company

Reorganisation away from traditional humanist education principles to a utilitarian instrumentalisation of education was already initiated in the 90's, when Zurich Government Councillor, Head of the Department of Education, *Ernst Buschor* forced *New Public Management* on school administration in his canton.

He declared the schools to be *corporate identities* and gave priority to "Früh-englisch" (learning English from an early age) which was apparently more useful

then learning a second national language. Curriculum 21 continues in this spirit, which was anchored in Zurich at that time. Teachers are understood as providers of services and parents and students as customers – so this is a kind of school for which supply and demand have become a maxim, as is usual in the industry sector.

Curriculum 21 focuses on competencies and self-directed learning, on examinations and tests, and not on knowledge and subject material. Quite some time ago former SBB CEO *Benedikt Weibel* already criticised the abandonment of the maxim "knowledge is power" as an "education policy going in a very bad direction". Curriculum 21 is oriented towards competencies that are to be acquired through useful knowledge and applicable skills and can be checked and measured by uniform tests. In this way, in the final analysis the schools' educational mandate is falling by the wayside. Teacher personalities with a formative influence, who are concerned about the welfare of their students and who encourage their development, are no longer needed. They mutate to controllers of students, who independently develop, analyse and perfect their level of competencies, in order to be able to mark the right crosses on the test forms.

But a school is not a company. Resistance against the plethora of reforms that obviously do not make schools better is growing. So school harmonisation is turning into a flop.

Numerous cantons have not even joined the HarmoS Concordat. Even the concept of teaching two foreign languages early – in primary school – is crumbling. And in several of the 21 cantons popular initiatives against the Curriculum 21 have been filed.

Even cantons who accept Curriculum 21 subvert it at the same time: In Appenzell, for example, the cantonal assembly backed Curriculum 21 only after the government had stated that it would adapt it to local needs and entirely relinquish self-directed learning – the so-called learning environments. This is a use of Curriculum 21, which might – fortunately – be anything but in the interest of its inventors.



4th extended edition March 2016.

To be ordered by Alain Pichard, arkadi@bluemail.ch

Unclear concept of competence

Outsiders became suspicious as early as when Curriculum 21 was in its early stages of development. Initially teachers and journalists were denied access to the planned contents of curriculum 21. The top-down project was obviously intended to be accomplished without any critical monitoring. Only when of the draft was published could any criticism be offered. The result was a variety of wishes for correction when the legislative process of consultation took place. This ultimately led to the cobbled-up job adopted by the *German-Swiss Ministers of Education*. You can tell from looking at it, that there is patchwork involved: the subjects are treated in quite different ways. The concept of competence is unclear. It covers a mix of knowledge, learning objectives and actual competencies.

"Pupils can do per cent calculations using their calculator" has a completely different dimension than "Pupils are able to classify information and sources of information about the soil as a resource, to draw conclusions for its sustainable use and to evaluate these." While in some subjects contents are quite prescriptive, in

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The “tablet” family

In more and more families conversation at meals is withering away because everyone is busy with an electronic device.

mk. A family of four in a hotel dining room: mother and father, a son about the age of 12, a baby sitting at the table in a stroller. The breakfast takes place very quietly; we cannot hear at the next table anything but the constant blaring of some silly programme for babies. This blaring comes from a tablet that the mother carefully placed in front of the baby. While the baby silently stares at the screen, the remaining members of the family are eating their breakfast, equally soundless. Namely, they do not talk to each other, but everyone stares at their own screen. Sometimes the father talks on his mobile

phone. The mother and son do not take part in that either. They all seem turned off, bored. “All three are lonely together” writes *Moritz Nestor* about a similar “digitised” family (*Current Concerns* No 15/16 2015) and elaborates what it means for infants and for their personal development when they are emotionally abandoned in an irrational, not explicable and tangible world, instead of experiencing relationships and emotional echo in the real world. The neuroscientist *Manfred Spitzer* points to “digital dementia” in this context. At the “Kölner Bildungskongress” “Lernen erfolgreich gestalten” (educational congress in Cologne, “Make learning successful”), he postulates: “It is criminal to put babies before screens, and anybody promoting this makes chil-

dren knowingly stupid.”¹ In an interview Spitzer states, “this is after all about the most valuable companies in the world and their turnover: *Google, Microsoft, Apple, IBM, Facebook*. Since every household is equipped with three computers, the challenge now is that schools and kindergartens also acquire information technology. And this is what I advise against. [...] Computers in schools are learning prevention equipment.”

Question of the journalist: “If the digital media are really so dangerous – isn’t it sensible that children learn to deal with these dangers?”

Spitzer: “No, it hurts them! Alcohol is part of our culture. Alcohol is addictive.

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The German Government advertises computer games for small children

mk. *Dorothee Bär* is a passionate computer game player – and member of the “Bundestag” (Lower House of German Parliament) for the party CSU and a Secretary of State for the Ministry of Transport. She has already organised two LAN parties in the house of the German Parliament. She advocates offensively for “children to be introduced to digital games at the age of three”¹. Last autumn she organised a conference with the topic “Digital games in children’s hands”. At the podium there were only those in favour of this concept. Bär works closely with the representatives of the game industry: in the foundation for Digital Game Culture are the representatives of the union of game manufacturers, ‘Game’ and the Association for interactive entertainment software. Besides them, representatives of the Federal Ministry of Transport and for Family Affairs as well as members of public authorities, are members of this foundation. In this way, there is a tight

weave of politics and the game industry, a weave, which in other areas would lead to an outcry in the media. This foundation can get its way so that the German computer game prize is no longer awarded only for “culturally and educationally valuable computer games”, it is “also real games” will be awarded – killer games. “Culturally valuable” is only a ‘can’-criteria. Even digital games for small children must not be “educationally valuable” in order to get an award.

Bär reveals this about herself, that she engages herself “with great passion, encountering prejudices against computer games”.² For this purpose, she founded the German computer game prize. This was the first step to turn killer games and training programmes in torturing and killing into “culturally valuable” goods. Now it is permitted that this disguise be taken off, now everything can receive an award, the main thing is that it is “well made” – and that means

in this area, as much as possible realistic, naturalistic and brutal.

France takes other steps

By the way: France takes very different steps: “the broadcasting of television programmes for children under the age of three was made forbidden. “Television consumption for infants is highly detrimental”, decided the French media authority, CSA (Conseil supérieur de l’audiovisuel). In addition, for programmes for children at the age of three or older, a required warning has been introduced by the CSA: “Television can impede children in their development. It can cause passivity, speech problems, nervousness, sleep disruption, concentration difficulties and dependency.”³

¹ *Die Welt* from 10. April 2016

² Dorothee Bär. Why computer games are good for Germany. *Focus online* from 12. April 2014.

³ Andrea Hennis in *FOCUS* from 30. March 2009

“Curriculum 21, competencies ...”

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other subjects the contents depend entirely on the ways in which the competence is to be acquired. In the subject “spaces, times, societies”, for instance, the Holocaust is only listed just as one of several events in the “age of extremes”: “The pupils are able to analyse selected phenomena in the history of the 20th and 21st century and to explain the relevance these have today,” it says. Thus it is not about an objective engagement with the Holocaust, as this event is just one of several selected phenomena helping to acquire the skill to classify them historically.

Peter Bonati, who I once met and learnt to appreciate as a lecturer at the Depart-

ment of Higher Education of the University of Berne, considers precisely this imbalance between content and skills as the weakness of Curriculum 21. Bonati thinks a young teacher having little experience will have difficulties in finding the order of the teaching contents he needs to reach the competencies.

Henchmen of the education experts

So Curriculum 21 and the many associated reforms are not simply designed to harmonise the cantons’ school systems, as was specified. Instead, it is more about the transformation of schools into test factories where it is the teachers’ only duty to control whether their pupils and students are working on the given objectives. The teaching staff will there-

by be largely relieved from their educational functions and also from their mission to encourage the schoolgirls and schoolboys to think critically. They are meant to become henchmen to the education experts.

A democratic debate about the functions our society assigns to its primary school is not provided for. If it were not for those citizens who have launched initiatives and collected signatures, our primary school would be transformed without any consultation of the people. But this must not happen. The successful Swiss education system must not be buried clandestinely. •

Source: *Basler Zeitung* from 30 April 2016

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

"The 'tablet' family"

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Do we therefore practice alcohol education in kindergartens and primary schools? No! Because the consumption of alcohol is harmful for the development of young people. And it is also proven that early consumption of media affects them. We know that media consumption up to the second, third birthday leads to developmental language disorders. We know that media consumption in kindergartens significantly adversely affects the educational biography and that it leads to attention problems at school. We know that a playstation in primary school leads to school problems and a massive decline in reading and writing. We know that a computer in the bedroom – shown, for instance, by the *PISA* data – impairs school performance. All this is supported by good scientific studies.²

However, this family practices this atomised media consumption at each meal and exposes the baby to it. The baby seems well provided for, it is always with the parents, it has a child-friendly seating, its parents also take care of its "entertainment". The family does not argue, obviously all agree, at least with regard to how common meals should pass. There is no reason for disagreement since they

do not talk to each other. But is that harmony?

The significance of eating at the family table

Do this parents know what they are doing and what they are missing? Everyone needs relationships, conversation with the fellow human being, the exchange of ideas, responses. How much more does a baby need this? Communal meals at the family table would be the best opportunity. *Alfred Adler* already emphasised how important it is that parents create a good family atmosphere, a friendly conversation for the whole family at the dinner table. The family table is an irreplaceable opportunity for the development of relations and the community in the family. Adler warned against spoiling everything with a bad mood – for example, by talking about problems in school. The child then wishes that the meal was over as quickly as possible. Adler did not know today's media, but what he says about the formation of the community is today still valid, because it belongs to the nature of man. This is not fundamentally changed by the new media. Talking to each other remains indispensable. Adler states: "Speaking establishes significant bonds between people and also creates coexistence. The psychology of speech and language is only

understood if we take the idea of the community as a starting point."³

The country needs new media

Actually, the knowledge of the importance of creating relationships especially with babies should be common knowledge. Obviously it is not. Family scenes like the one described here can be encountered virtually anywhere.

This ignorance could be easily remedied: every day there could be small contributions on this topic to educate parents, on the radio, on television, on Facebook, with Apps. Most parents want the best for their child, many would take the message seriously and draw the consequences. This way, one could make good use of the media. But the mainstream media obviously show little interest in such meaningful information.

Maybe we need to take the initiative ourselves: produce relevant posts, place, maybe even develop a channel. Why not? After all, the revolution of the Internet has meant that more and more people turn away from the mainstream media and start looking for alternative coverage. So why not pick up on such issues? •

¹ *Focus*, 30 March 2009.

² Interview with Manfred Spitzer in *Kölner Stadtanzeiger* from 9 August 2012

³ Alfred Adler. *Kindernerziehung*, Frankfurt/M 1976, p. 70

Letter to  the Editor

Panama

Once again, a little insight into our despicable monetary system was allowed.

The rich get richer and the poor get poorer. A few super-rich control and command the way things should be like in this world. They own the media, and politicians are their puppets. The piles of rubbish are growing, suppression and destruction of nature increases. At certain locations, the oceans are already like slurry. The armament industries balloon. All this happens in the name of money, yield, shareholder value, the unlimited economic growth.

Those who are born today will barely have a chance of becoming a hundred years old, if not a humane monetary system will be installed in the near future. It is high time to reconsider *Leo Tolstoy's* short story "How much land does a man need?" in order to debate his ideas on principles. Otherwise, our world will be uninhabitable in a near future, and it might even go faster if any crazy ruler detonates a nuclear bomb. These ideas may sound too pessimistic. However, if we bring to our minds to what extent our world has changed during the last hundred years – and especially since the Second World War – there is not much time left

to immediately step on the brakes and set up an earth for humans, animals, nature and not for the Golden Calf. This is the more the case, as can be assumed that the world will be rejigged at an even more spanking pace in the future.

Goethe's "Sorcerer's Apprentice": "Oh, here comes my master! Help me Lord, I plead! Spirits I have conjured, no longer pay me heed."

Oskar Meier, Bazenhaid, Switzerland

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

The tunnel-driver

The little volcanic craters, which show out of the soil, reveal the mole's attendance. This intriguing digger feels comfortable where the soil is healthy and fertile.

The tunnel-boring machine at the Gotthard was more than 400 metres long and weighed 2,700 tons. The mole in our meadows and woods is 10 to 17 centimetres long and weighs 60 to 120 grammes. Nevertheless, it wins the race: The tunnel-boring machine needs an hour per metre – in the best case 1.6 metres – the mole makes seven metres in the same time. Of course, the stone at the Gotthard is harder, but that shall not diminish the small digger's performance.

Moles are droll powerhouses. Potent muscles connect both arm-bones and shoulder girdle with the body. This vests an extraordinary arm bar in it. The fore-paws are real excavator shovel – an extra-“thumb”, consisting of sickle-shaped bones – additionally extends the digging surface. The cylindrical body pushes itself like a digger through the soil. The spoil regularly is disposed of. Moles are able to move soil weighing 24 times as much as itself. A welcome side effect of the digging is the optimising of the aeration and loosening of the soil.

A helpful hunter

The volcano-shaped spoil hills are the only visible evidences of the presence of moles. However, they are the reason for the bad record of this helpful animal. They especially drive devotees of sterile (“English”) lawn to desperation. Farmers bewail the soil hills within the grassland that dirt hay and silage and damage the mowers' blades. Although the mole's digging activity loosens and aerates the soil, also voles can inhabit it. Hence, it is not very popular in vegetable gardening and fruit cultivation, as well.

Different from the voles the mole never feeds on roots or tubers. This black companion is not a rodent. It lives on nothing but animalistic food, especially on insects and earthworms; accordingly the presence of the mole shows healthy and fertile soil. The mole not only regulates the population of the earthworms, but also that of cockchafer grubs, wireworms, weevils, and snails that lead to harvest losses.

The extended burrow-system serves the mole as a trap. All three to four hours it patrols the whole burrow-system. There it collects the soil animals, which have entered its tunnel. One part of the preys the mole temporarily stores in its food store. A well-aimed bit paralyses insects and worms. In fertile soils, these pantries are well filled: in one single stor-



*The word “mole” for the hidden digger as a type of a small burrowing mammal dates from the mid-14th century, probably from the obsolete “moldwarp”, literally “earth-thrower”, which is still retained in the German word “Maulwurf”.
(picture caro)*

age 1,200 earthworms and 18 cockchafer grubs were counted that weighed two kilo grammes!

Special features

The family of the moles includes 35 species in Eurasia and Northern America and is a biome of the superlative: the North American star-nosed mole is able to locate its prey optimally, because it is able to smell stereo. The same species has the most sensitive skin area within the entire realm of mammals: The star-shaped snout contains the highest density of nerve endings. The Swiss indigenous mole is a sensitive being, too: By means of different sensory organs, it is able to sense even slightest differences in pressure and air currents within the tunnel system. Even its tail is equipped with an extraordinary tactile sense – the mole uses it like a blind man's stick. In order not to be poisoned by carbon dioxide, the moles' blood contains eminently many red blood cells (haemoglobin). These convey the oxygen from the lung – which is particularly large in the mole – all over the body and reship carbon dioxide in the opposite direction. The silken fur is one of densest of the whole animal kingdom with 200 hairs per square millimetre. Neither soil nor water can permeate it. The hair is flexible towards any direction, which allows the mole to move forwards and backwards within the narrow tunnels. It reaches the speed of until four kilometres per hour inclusive. This race it also wins against the tunnel-boring machine.

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Troxler Commemorative Year 2016

Ignaz Paul Vital Troxler and the Aarau Education Association

How a private educational institution made a decisive impact on the development of democracy in Switzerland

by René Roca, PhD

Ignaz Paul Vital Troxler (1780–1866) was a medical practitioner, philosopher, educator, and politician. His manifold activities consistently reflected a balance of theory and practice. Particularly as educator and politician, Troxler vehemently promoted the establishment and development of public education, especially with regard to the tertiary level. His fundamental pedagogical considerations as well as his own political efforts helped to establish secondary and higher education in Swiss education policy. His work in the Aargau school association was undertaken within this context. Unlike some of his other liberal colleagues, Troxler did not promote an elitist approach, but was instead clearly convinced that good schools are essential to a functioning and evolving democratic state. Only good education allows individuals to become mature and independent citizens.

Troxler – the skeptical Helvetic Republican (1798–1814/15)

As early as the Helvetic Republic (1798–1803) Troxler – barely 18 years old at the time – was actively involved in turning Switzerland into a unified state with a democratic constitution. Later in a biographical note he described the time of the Helvetic Republic:

“My attention [was directed] to the great event of the French revolution and its consequences for my fatherland. I began to feel towards the universal and think on it on my own, I read German and French daily newspapers, my love of freedom was awakened [...]”¹

Troxler adopted the ideas of the revolution with enthusiasm. They became his lifelong guiding principles. Two teachers influenced his liberal convictions. After completing his secondary education in Solothurn he attended the Lyceum in Lucerne where he was instructed on the one hand by *Thaddäus Müller* (1763–1828), who taught rhetoric there from 1789 to 1796 before holding the office of city pastor in Lucerne. Müller was a representative of the Catholic Enlightenment and



*Troxler-Portrait from Iduna Belke, Beromünster 1948.
artist and date unknown.
(picture “Initiativkreis Troxler”)*

supported *Ignaz Heinrich von Wessenberg*, General Vicar of Constance, in his church reform efforts. On the other hand, *Franz Regis Krauer* (1739–1806), who was professor for rhetoric and poetry the Jesuit College in Lucerne as of 1769, also had a strong impact on Troxler’s education. When the Jesuit order was dissolved in 1773 Krauer continued to teach at the newly nationalised Lyceum, where Ignaz Paul Vital Troxler (1780–1866), like Müller, endeavoured to promote modern education as a supporter of the Catholic Enlightenment. Krauer was the one to recommend employing the 18-year-old Troxler as a civil servant of the Helvetic Republic to Governor *Vinzenz Rüttimann*.²

Troxler did become a civil servant of the new Republic and, still a young man, was appointed War Commissioner for the Munster District (Beromunster) as well as Secretary to the vice governor. Later

he accompanied Rüttimann to Berne, the centre of Helvetic power. Troxler however began to recognise the Republic’s Janus face: freedom and equality on paper on the one side, on the other directives and decrees often issued from above in an un-democratic manner and enforced with the armed support of foreign bayonets.

“Although on the outside very successful, on the inside I felt empty and shameful for being so young and inexperienced with governing and helping to determine the fate of a nation. The yearning burned in me again to study and learn, the arbitrariness and duplicity, as well as the erratically diplomacy and politics began to fill me with horror and disgust. I also clearly perceived then the re-emerging, if vague, outlines of the old aristocracy [...]”³

In September 1800 Troxler made a decision. Instead of continuing to pursue a political career,

he went to Jena and Göttingen to study medicine and philosophy. Afterwards he worked in Vienna, his native city of Beromunster and Aarau as a medical practitioner. His first experience with the “re-emerging old aristocracy” took place in Lucerne when he criticised the insufficient medical conditions during an epidemic there. His arrest was immediately ordered, forcing him to flee for the first time to Aarau.⁴

Lucerne teaching years (1814–1821)

Vinzenz Rüttimann, Troxler’s former employer during the Helvetic Republic successfully organised a coup in Lucerne in April 1814 after *Napoleon*’s fall, bringing the aristocracy back to power. In contrast to Rüttimann, Troxler remained loyal to the ideals of the French revolution and Helvetic

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"Ignaz Paul Vital Troxler and ..."

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confederation. He submitted a petition and became a vocal proponent of Swiss national sovereignty. Troxler saw the Lucerne coup – as also that of the other cantons – as a temporary aristocratic-oligarchic consolidation until freedom could be re-attained. From that point on, he endeavoured to bring the confederate traditions of Switzerland together with the ideals of the French revolution. The concept of connecting tradition with modernity was one that remained a determining factor in Troxler's thinking.⁵

In 1819 *Eduard Pfyffer* (1782–1834), as educational policy-maker, reformed the secondary schools (Gymnasium and Lyceum) in Lucerne by transforming them into a small academy and installing new professorships. Pfyffer was successful in engaging Troxler, a former student of the Lyceum himself, as professor of philosophy as well as of World- and Swiss history. This marked the beginning of Troxler's political-educational career, where he imparted theoretical knowledge coupled with the necessary practical relevance. This pedagogical concept became decisive in the future forming of Switzerland. Immediately after entering employment in Lucerne, Troxler published an article in 1819 titled "Fürst und Volk nach Buchanan's und Milton's Lehre"⁶ ("Prince and People in Buchanan and Milton's Thought"). In it Troxler translated and commented on tractates by *George Buchanan* (1506–1582) and *John Milton* (1608–1674) written during the English civil wars of the 17th century.

Buchanan, Scottish humanist and historian, defended peoples' sovereignty and justified tyrannicide. The English poet Milton advocated peoples' sovereignty, the supreme rule of law and limiting royal powers based on religious and legal grounds.⁷ Troxler's essay was primarily directed against the Berne aristocrat *Karl Ludwig von Haller* (1768–1854), who with his major work "Restauration der Staatswissenschaft" ("Restoration of political science") (1816–1834) gave the epoch his name. Haller outlined in it his own concept of peoples' sovereignty. Troxler countered in 1821 by directly attacking Haller's essay "Über die Constitution der spanischen Cortes" (On the Constitution of the Spanish Cortes). This angered the primarily restorative Lucerne government, resulting in Troxler's immediate dismissal on 17 September 1821.⁸

Troxler subsequently returned to Aarau for the second time, taking up his previously interrupted medical practice while searching intensely for further opportunities to hold philosophical lectures. One such fortunate opportunity came in the form of *Heinrich Zschokke* (1771–1848), with whom Troxler had already been in

extended contact, and his "Bürgerlicher Lehrerverein (Civic Education Association)" founded in 1819.

The "Civic Education Association" in Aarau – A "Miniature University"

As a young Canton composed of various regions, Aarau was in need of establishing good educational institutions that would successfully reinforce its coalescence. In order to fulfil this goal, Heinrich Zschokke, senior civil servant *Johann Nepomuk von Schmiel* and the publisher *Heinrich Remigius Sauerländer*, among others, founded the "Gesellschaft für vaterländische Kultur" ("Society for Patriotic Culture") on 2 March 1811. Just two years after its founding, the "Cultural Society" already counted 130 members consisting of representatives from political parties as well as religious leaders from both Christian denominations. Its aim was to "promote all things leading to a more exact knowledge of the history, nature, national power of as well as to scholarship, art and prosperity in the fatherland".¹⁰ In the spirit and tradition of the "Helvetic Society" of the 18th century the cultural society began in 1814 to host general annual assemblies in Bad Schinznach. Moreover, many local branches of the society were established in the various districts of Aarau. Over the years, its activity produced local savings banks, girls' schools, institutes for the disabled and orphaned children as well as many welfare organisations. In particular, the promotion of youth education and development of the school system remained a main concern of the cultural society.¹¹

In 1802 enlightened Aarau private citizens founded a school of higher civic education that developed into the humanist "Gymnasium", which was nationalised in 1813. To Zschokke, however, this in no way meant the completion of the Aargau education system. His concern was to close any respective "gaps" the system evinced over the next years. One such gap was to be filled by a private institute of education: "[...] young people without the actual desire to achieve scholarship may receive instruction in those sciences and fields of knowledge which would be necessary or even highly advantageous to the manufacturer, craftsman, agriculturalist, and anyone who in the future may be employed with dignity as servant of the state".¹²

Under Zschokke's direction a few "scholars holding offices" in the cultural society founded the "civic education association" in order to "augment what is missing through gratuitous instruction".¹³

The education association's aim was to guarantee that young persons from the age of 18 to 30 years old not going to university may receive reliable national political and civic orientation. Already by the be-

ginning of September 1819 a public announcement was issued calling for the first course enrolment. Participants were addressed as "learning fellows" or "comrades" intimating they were no longer pupils or students in the traditional sense but members of a shared cooperative association. With the principle of the cooperative, the association's founders wanted to emphasise deliberately this important Swiss tradition and to establish, for the very first time, an educational institution based on cooperative-democratic fundamentals.

Each learning fellow was assigned a tutor, and if not a native resident, was provided a list of private accommodations to choose from. Forty learning colleagues enrolled for the first semester, which was a great success. Zschokke volunteered a floor in his house in Aarau as a venue.¹⁴

At first, instruction was given only during the winter semester. In the first semester twelve courses were offered, of which each learning fellow was to take at least three. Lectures were held on civic education, history and law, always with reference to Switzerland, as well on the technological and natural sciences. The curriculum developed by Zschokke was headed by the "History of the Swiss Confederation", followed by "Natural Law and Knowledge of the Constitutions and Laws of the Fatherland".¹⁵ In these two courses in particular, attended by many of the learning fellows, basic national political knowledge was imparted and national awareness promoted.

Other courses were public economy (forestry, mining, statistics), police science (welfare, public health and insurance industry), defence and war sciences, road-building and water engineering, chemistry, mineralogy, mechanics, measuring, graphic design, as well as training in writing and holding public speeches. According to Zschokke, his main concern was to impart informed practical knowledge. Defence and war sciences as well as chemistry were dropped early on, as for these too less students enrolled. They were replaced over the years with other courses such as world history, European history, geology, geometry and practical field measurement applications, law of humanity (in the context of Natural Law), international law, constitutional law and church law, and studies in "classical literature of ancient and modern nations".¹⁶ The curriculum concept was, as becomes obvious, far from rigid.

Besides the lectures, which the learning fellows took down and augmented by their own reading material, tutorials were given on, for instance, writing papers or giving "well ordered lectures".¹⁷

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From a methodical-didactic perspective, the decisive elements for the founding members entailed the learning material's essential practical application as well as the teacher's personality. The "civic education association's" curriculum was unique in Switzerland and exceeded this era's imagination of what a learning institution could do. In comparison to the state school, learning fellows enjoyed greater liberties, which with time also needed to be more clearly regulated, for example with regard to visiting the tavern: "No comrade is allowed to visit a tavern before 5 o'clock in the evening and remain longer than 9 o'clock in the evening."¹⁸

At the end, learning colleagues received a certificate documenting the three required courses taken as well as the quality of the comrade's application to his studies and his moral behaviour. In the beginning, the cultural society supervised the education association until in 1823, school policy law was changed and the government placed the private institution it supported, transferring direction to Troxler at this time, under the jurisdiction of the Canton school department.¹⁹

Although the school had enjoyed greater regulatory liberties, there were some disadvantages: a course was organized to fill only one semester and therefore lacked any structure beyond. Registering for the courses was possible with every new semester without having to fulfil any greater obligation.²⁰

Four years after its establishment, serious problems developed with regard to student numbers: While 40 students were enrolled in 1819 the number was cut almost in half to only 21 students. One solution to the problem was quickly found by opening the institution's doors to students

beyond the Canton's borders. Troxler himself provided the second solution.

In the year before, Troxler, as president of the *Helvetic Society*, held his presidential speech – "What is lost, what to be gained" – in which he clearly outlined his educational policy program. His speech equalled a call for a rejuvenation of the spirit of the Swiss Confederation itself and established the basis for his work in the education association from 1823 on. Troxler called for a state to be created which fulfils the fundamental principles of humanity and which is sustained by the powers that formed the Old Swiss Confederacy: "Therefore the state, that great human association, will not be conceived with a different essence than human nature as it develops within each individual."²¹

He continues:

"A truly humane state therefore requires the people's public and free life; and this life can only come into being through the union of what one calls political and civic freedom, in general and in all its parts [...] The power of the nation alone is [its] true source of life."²²

Troxler already formed his political vision in the era of the Helvetic Republic. He wanted to help Switzerland become a unified country under constitutional law. According to his personal view of humanity, human rights were to be formulated on a natural law basis. For him human rights include those that go beyond the mere right to vote. Together with other likeminded individuals, he recognized early on that a federal concept represented an appropriate solution after the painful experiences of the Helvetic era. To Troxler, a federal constitution, created by an elected constitutional council and approved by popular referendum, would be representative of a modern constitution par excellence.²³ This is the goal Troxler was working toward by educat-

ing able individuals through his education association.

Troxler's work in the Education Association (1823–1829)

Paralell to his work as a medical practitioner from 1823–1830, Troxler volunteered at the education association, four years of which, from 1823–1827, he acted as its director. He describes this period as the zenith of his pedagogical activity.

Already in the beginning, Troxler described the significance of the association, now called the "Education Association for Young Swiss Men", as follows:

"The pupil will be directed through his inner motivations, which will awaken his understanding of himself and the world – through the observation, supervision, and influence of his teachers, finally through the (Aarau) public, which in its education and artistic diligence, its prosperity and activity has found no lesser warranty against idleness and brutality, against immorality and debauchery."²⁴

Troxler decided to pursue the enlargement and re-direction begun by Zschokke:

"In 1823 the education association [...] suffered a major change and took on a different form and aim than originally established. A number of new teachers were added to the existing ones; the institution was linked to the Canton state school and could be considered a continuation of it, since the education association to a certain extent replaced the Lyceum, thus filling the large gap between the "Gymnasium" – respectively Canton state school in its actual condition – and the university. The consequence of this was that the education association institute was provided greater scholarship character than the civic association enjoyed, thus transforming into a preparatory middle school for university and life."²⁵

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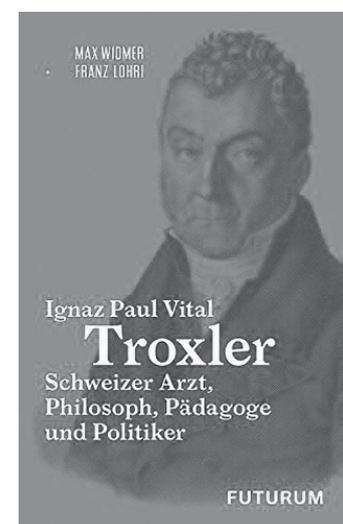
Troxler Commemorative Year 2016

ro. 150 years ago, on 6 March 1866, Ignaz Paul Vital Troxler died (b. 1780). He was physician, philosopher, educator and politician and was outstanding in all of these areas. Various events are dedicated to Troxler during the Commemorative Year: after a meeting at the University of Basel (3-5 March) to the focal points and contexts of his philosophy, a ceremony took place in Aarau on 6 March. On 19 May, a symposium took place in the former monastery St. Urban. The meeting reports and programs are to be found under www.troxlergedenkjahr2016.ch. It is the merit of the Association "Troxler Commemorative Year" and especially of Franz Lohri that the events acknowledge a Swiss personality that has been

forgotten too much, but whose thinking has lost nothing in timeliness and depth.

Within the framework of the commemorative year, the book about Troxler by Max Widmer of *Futurum Publishers* has been launched again. The volume contains Max Widmer's Troxler biography in a new edition with an additional list of sources as well as a study of Franz Lohri about Troxler's varied activities.

Max Widmer/Franz Lohri: *Ignaz Paul Vital Troxler. Schweizer Arzt, Philosoph, Pädagoge und Politiker. Mit einem Geleitwort von alt Bundesrat Kaspar Villiger (Ignaz Paul Troxler. Swiss physician, philosopher, educator and politician)*, *Futurum Verlag*, Basel 2016. ISBN 978-3-85636-249-2



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As seven students followed Troxler from Lucerne to Aarau, the association registered 30 pupils once again. Student numbers continued to increase as "learning fellows" from other cantons became admitted. In addition, courses were now offered year round in summer and winter.²⁶

Troxler felt that "men of young age" were important because in these years, education and personal development, upbringing and self-discipline had the propensity to intersect. Youth, according to Troxler, is a pivotal point in life. It is a time of choosing a career, concomitantly also a time of becoming actively incorporated into human society: as nascent professionals and future citizens. Upbringing and education that correspond to human nature prepare able and responsible individuals for civic life without which the state – as a republic – would not be able to exist.

Troxler radically reformulated the curriculum. In place of the practical courses, he put philosophy at its centre, becoming the heart of education, since practical utility for a future profession was not significant but rather the insight that individual subjects were the vehicles of education and training used by the soul. One's native tongue and philosophy are given exceptional significance in this respect as the "anchor and sail for all education":

"Our reality and the present now, which must guide us in educating according to natural necessity, is our native tongue, and the view to the eternal and divine – no matter how it has been misjudged and distorted – is philosophy. These two, let me call them the anchor and sail for all education, are the ones that have supplanted, perhaps not completely, the prevailing theory of education, yet still succeeded to constrain it to the point of impropriety while ultimately seeking to supplant it."²⁷

As a consequence, Troxler augmented the curriculum with philosophy, philology and the study of classical antiquity. He personally taught natural law and logic, metaphysics, anthropology and morality in the context of philosophical instruction. During his time at the education association, Troxler compiled his philosophical lectures into two major volumes of work, the first was titled "Naturlehre des menschlichen Erkennens, oder Metaphysik" (1828) ("Natural law of human knowledge, or metaphysics"), and the second was titled "Logik, die Wissenschaft des Denkens und Kritik aller Erkenntnis" (1829) ("Logic, the science of thought and critique of all cognition"). Besides philosophy, Troxler also taught world history, human history, and the encyclopaedia of sciences.²⁸

Overall, the course program included 58 scientific disciplines. Extending the course programme therefore involved an increase of the teaching staff. Troxler was able to recruit new teachers, gradually displacing the practitioners and lay teachers. In the winter semester 1823/24 five of the ten teachers employed were political refugees from Germany including *Friedrich List* (1789–1846), an important national economist employed as professor for state economy and state practice in Tübingen until 1822.²⁹

In order to manage the increasing expenses – for instance due to large expenditures building a new library – wealthy students were required to pay tuition.³⁰

When Troxler became director, Cantonal supervision was established. This was no coincidence – the Aargau authorities were very familiar with Lucerne's troubles dealing with this critical spirit. The Canton school inspector as supervising body wrote that it was necessary "to order detailed and uninterrupted supervision [of the education association]. Very proper control could comprise visiting lectures from time to time unannounced on the part of members of the Canton school board, and that annual or half-annual examinations could be arranged".³¹

It is important to note that the education association did not give cause for problems and that it continued to enjoy a great deal of support from the authorities. The official side remarked positively that now they also issued testimonials.

Moreover, Troxler provided the impulse to develop the Swiss schoolbook programme. It entailed a new type of small brochure, which mostly also included an annual report of, or announcements for, papers on education science. Troxler used this framework to reflect on the fundamental principles of pedagogy and commented on current issues of education policy. These programmatic "announcements" often appeared at the end of the semester.

A central aspect of Troxler's theoretical approach was the emphasis on a harmonic relationship between the student and his teacher, where in contrast a blind obedience destroys the learning process:

"Nothing is more contrary to education [Erziehen und Bilden], even more so basically destructive, than command and coercion. Only with free will can the path of moral change be taken, and man learns far more easily than he follows."³²

Certainly, this learning process does need discipline and obedience, as well as the acceptance and appreciation of the teacher's expertise, on the part of the student. Only then does he become independent and free:

"The pupil's will itself must submit to the leadership and guidance of the edu-

cator, which can only lead to respect and love. Those who want to develop morality must have more the heart than those who want to influence the mind. The latter requires the teacher's superiority and extorts the inner purpose. For the former, however, in order for the pupil to feel this need, must become aware of the educator's goodwill and yield to his guidance. This is of greatest importance since it is the only way to become independent. It must be released at some point, at least to engage in private dealings, by leaving school to go out into the world, or to enter university. Having not attained his independence he is nothing more than a freed slave."³³

The learning fellows were between the ages of 18 and 30. Troxler understood this "young age" to be path breaking for establishing political awareness:

"The age of youth is therefore not the end of education, as superficial opinion may lead to this strange assumption. Education, which usually ends at the age of youth, is only a part of the true human education, that being the external one, only the positively visible education. Not contrary to it, but hidden in it, forming its principle and orientation, lies an inner invisible education which should become evident in the youth and active in the adult: his own free self-development. [...] The age of youth is the bridge between being educated and educating one's self."³⁴

This thought is still valid today. Troxler saw the central necessity to keep school completely independent of the state and the church:

"Education is free when it purely strives toward human personal development in all things, and in its striving does not accept or suffer any obstacles toward this goal."³⁵

Troxler considered this free and public education as "an essential requirement and basic condition of the republic".³⁶

Under Troxler's direction, the education association became a magnet for the Swiss of all Cantons, also for foreigners.³⁷ Many learning fellows enrolled for a number of semesters and planned to attend university after concluding their studies. While relations between the Canton state school in Aarau were friendly at the beginning, over time it became a direct competitor due to its equally positive development. Quarrelling ultimately destroyed the amicable atmosphere and Troxler fell out with the director of the Canton state school, Rudolf Rauchenstein. When a vocational school opened in 1826 as well, the education association came under considerable pressure, which was reflected in the decreasing number of enrolments.³⁸

The end of the education association, however, was not characterised by crises

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or dissolution of the school community. When Troxler was called to take the chair in philosophy at the University of Basle, he was forced to cease his instruction at the association in the spring of 1830.³⁹ The political shifts taking place in many Swiss Cantons revealed that the education association had fulfilled an important mission. Practical politics was now being called for.

The Teaching Association's impact and its significance for democratising Switzerland

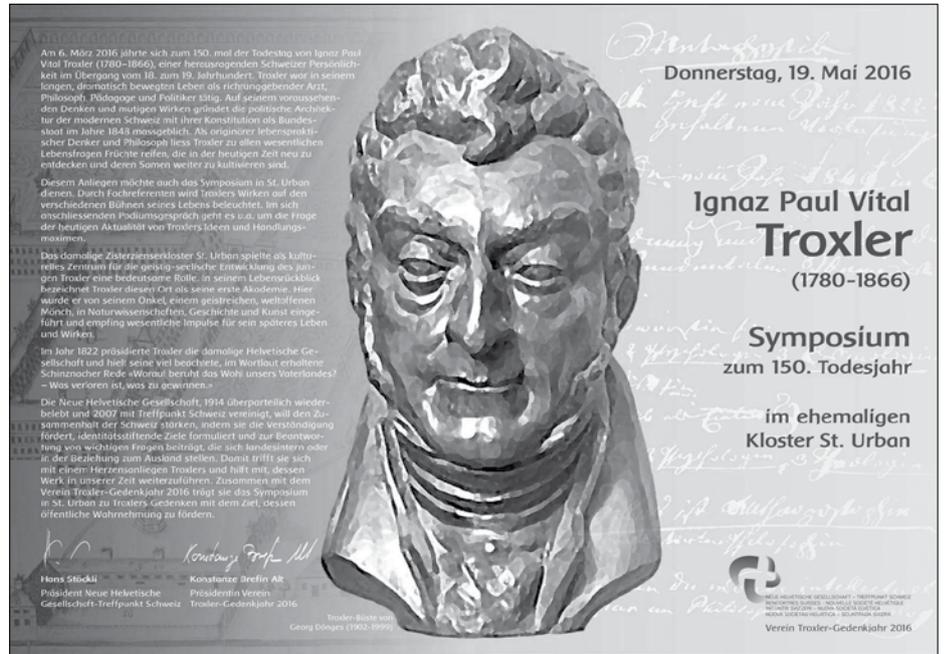
Troxler's personality

The education association would never had the sustained impact on Switzerland it had if Ignaz Paul Vital Troxler had not given this institution distinction. Troxler had an extraordinary military nature. His straightforwardness and trustworthiness were convincing, and in pursuing his projects, he evinced a great measure of personal commitment. With his open and caring demeanour toward youths and his students in particular, he provided them with the enthusiastic conviction that they were an integral part of forming the future. Repeatedly he called them to become politically active and take on the task of making necessary reforms in Switzerland happen.

The great empathy with which Troxler was connected to his students is evident in the speeches given by learning comrades at the end of each semester. These speeches show a deep faith in progress and in the good of mankind, the demand for enlightenment and public education, liberal views on church and state as well as enthusiasm for Swiss history and love of one's country.⁴⁰ Under Troxlers direction an association of Zofinger-friends was founded, which established a pan-confederate union and further promoted the idea of a federal union.

The education association as motor for Swiss regeneration

Troxler's calling to Basle coincided with the beginning of the Swiss Regeneration. As became evident after 1830, the association was one of the most important institutions to provide political impulse in this era. Some of the over two hundred learning comrades played central roles as teachers, civil servant, and politicians during the regeneration era and beyond. They helped to overcome the restoration policies, quenched the leftovers of aristocratic policies in many areas thereby promoting a liberal reformation of Switzerland.⁴¹ Two examples are outlined in the following.



The Example of Canton Aargau
 Canton Aargau also witnessed the will to reform as of 1830, even coalescing into a revolutionary head. When on 27 September 1830 the Aargau government received a petition, it included signatures from *Karl Rudolf Tanner* (1794–1849) and *Gottlieb Hagnauer* (1796–1880), who had both been teachers at the education association.⁴² They represented the core group of the "Lenzburg Association". Later former learning colleagues, such as *Eduard Ignaz Dorer* and the brothers *Johann Peter* and *Kaspar Leonz Bruggisser* followed them. On 7 November 1830, a legendary assembly in Wohlenschwil took place, which Troxler actively supported from his residence in Basle. Out of gratitude for this, he was later rewarded citizenship of Wohlenschwil. This grass roots movement in Canton Aargau culminated in the "Freiämter Sturm" (an assault in the region "Freiamt" near Canton Aargau) on 6 December 1830, which had a revolutionary impact on the Canton, decisively placing it in the camp of Cantons pursuing liberal regeneration.⁴³ The Canton Aargau assembly accepted the demand on 10 December 1830 to install an elected constitutional council to formulate a new constitution. While the constitutional council formulated a new constitution, the population was given the opportunity to influence the process through petition. The new, liberal-representative constitution that finally took effect in 1831 was the first Canton constitution, which was accepted by plebiscite in Canton Aargau.⁴⁴

A few years later Troxler wrote: "History and experience has shown us that only greater and more immediate influence on public issues allows us a more popular direction of the same, guaranteeing a happy development of our general

life. Disbelief and suspicion against the people, shying away from and disregarding the people is the greatest sin a republican can make and represents the actual foundation for church and worldly aristocracy, or better oligarchy."⁴⁵

The example of Canton Basle

The education association also played a crucial role in the democratic development and secession of Canton Basle. It began with the former learning fellow and later solicitor *Stephan Gutzwiller* (1802–1875). In 1830 he was even member of the Grand Council and – dissatisfied with the conditions in his Canton – formulated a petition to the city leaders. The petition was handed to the mayor on 26 October 1830 and triggered a development that led to the separation between Basel-Landschaft and the Basel Stadt. With the support of Gutzwiller, Basel-Landschaft received a liberal-representative constitution, which following St. Gallen even entailed a veto law, the predecessor to the facultative referendum. Basel-Landschaft therefore became a forerunner for the development of Swiss direct democracy.⁴⁶

Barely just settling in Basle, Troxler as usual did not limit his activity to teaching. He supported Basel Landschaft's legitimate claims, in his opinion, against the city and actively helped his former student Gutzwiller. His political activity, however, once again cost him his job.

In other Cantons as well, former learning fellows or teachers of the education association actively supported the revolutionary causes and rural political movements. In this regard, Troxler, together with other former students, also became a key figure in Canton Lucerne's overthrow.⁴⁷ On the whole, as of 1830 a repub-

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lican foundation for a federal state was laid and a movement toward representative democracy initiated which made the further development toward direct democracy possible.

The topicality of Troxler’s thought

“It is the free, noble, republican spirit [...] which lives in the society of patriotic culture, and applies its interest towards the common public interest, which recognises that those who desire freedom must want the rule of reason and thus places all weight on spiritual and moral development.”⁴⁸

Troxler’s quote from the education association’s sixth announcement summarises his anthropological approach as well as his personalist view well. For Troxler, fighting for and securing political freedom meant that all citizens be provided comprehensive education and spiritual-moral enhancement. This view, which is deeply informed by Enlightenment thought, had to assert itself against utilitarian tendencies in the 19th century.

After his dismissal from this Basle professorship, Troxler returned once more to Aarau. Because of his great support of the Aargau regeneration and and the people’s assembly in Wohlenschwil, Troxler received honorary citizenship, making him eligible for election to the Great Assembly, which occurred in 1832. As member of the Great Assembly Troxler diligently formulated the new Aargau education law. It encompassed the essence of his pedagogical views, which to date are expressed in the law’s preamble:

“The Great Assembly of the Canton Aargau, supported by §§ 28–35 and 38 of the Canton constitution, with the purpose to provide schools to the Canton Aargau, in which youths are educated to honor the divine and respect one’s fellow men and environment, to become independent and responsible citizens, to become active and mature members of the society, in which youths are capable of developing their creative skills and where they become acquainted with the world of knowledge and work.”⁴⁹

The Curriculum 21 nowadays represents a controversial reform that takes us backward in educational policy. A change of paradigm is to ensure that a humanist educational ideal – as developed and promoted by Troxler and others – is abandoned and be replaced by an orientation toward “competencies”, which merely involves and fails to go beyond a utilitarian application of knowledge.⁵⁰

The current discussion would be given more breadth and depth in scope if more consideration would be given to those early thinkers of public primary, secondary and higher education such as Pestalozzi⁵¹ as well as Troxler and their pedagogical concepts. •

¹ Troxler, Ignaz Paul Vital: Einige Hauptmomente aus meinem Leben (1830), in: Rohr, Adolf (Hg.): *Ignaz Paul Vital Troxler (1780–1866). Politische Schriften in Auswahl*, Volume I, Berne 1989, p. 389.

² cf. Roca, René: Ignaz Paul Vital Troxler und seine Auseinandersetzung mit der Helvetik. Von der repräsentativen zur direkten Demokratie, in: Arletaz, Silvia et al. (ed.): *Menschenrechte und moderne Verfassung. Die Schweiz im Übergang vom 18. zum 19. Jahrhundert*. Akten des Kolloquiums an der Universität Freiburg/Schweiz, 18.–20. November 2010, p. 97–106.

³ Troxler, Hauptmomente, p. 390 ff.

⁴ Vgl. Furrer, Daniel: *Ignaz Paul Vital Troxler (1780–1866). Der Mann mit Eigenschaften*, Zurich 2010, p. 9f.

⁵ cf. Rohr, Adolf: Einleitung zu Troxlers politischem Schrifttum, in: Rohr, *Troxler*, Volume I, p. 24.

⁶ cf. Troxler, Ignaz Paul Vital: Fürst und Volk nach Buchanan’s und Milton’s Lehre, in: Rohr, *Troxler*, Volume I, p. 24–33.

⁷ cf. Rohr, *Troxler*, Volume I, p. 33–38.

⁸ cf. Roca, René: *Wenn die Volkssouveränität wirklich zu einer Wahrheit werden soll ... Die schweizerische direkte Demokratie in Theorie und Praxis – Das Beispiel des Kantons Luzern*, Zurich 2012, p. 92 f.

⁹ Ort, Werner: *Der modernen Schweiz entgegen. Heinrich Zschokke prägt den Aargau*, Baden 2003, p. 250.

¹⁰ Zweckartikel der Gesellschaft für vaterländische Kultur, quoted from Drack, Markus T.: *Der Lehrverein zu Aarau 1819–1830*, Aarau 1967, p. 12.

¹¹ cf. Drack, *Lehrverein*, p. 11–18.

¹² Zschokke, quoted from Halder, Nold: *Geschichte des Kantons Aargau 1803–1953 in zwei Bänden*, Volume I: Gründung, Aufbau, Festigung 1803–1830, Aarau 1953, p. 318.

¹³ quoted from Halder, *Geschichte*, p. 318.

¹⁴ cf. Ort, Werner: *Heinrich Zschokke 1771–1848. Eine Biographie*, Baden 2013, p. 441.

¹⁵ cf. Drack, *Lehrverein*, p. 30 f.

¹⁶ quoted from Drack, *Lehrverein*, p. 31.

¹⁷ cf. Ort, *Zschokke*, p. 441 f.

¹⁸ quoted from Ort, *Schweiz*, p. 245.

¹⁹ cf. Halder, *Geschichte*, p. 318.

²⁰ cf. Ort, *Schweiz*, p. 245.

²¹ Troxler, Ignaz Paul Vital: Was verloren ist, was zu gewinnen. Rede in der Versammlung der Helvetischen Gesellschaft, 8 May 1822, in: Rohr, *Troxler*, Volume I, p. 45.

²² Troxler, *Rede*, 8 May 1822, p. 47, 60.

²³ cf. Roca, *Troxler*, p. 63.

²⁴ Troxler, quoted from Halder, *Geschichte*, p. 319.

²⁵ Troxler, quoted from Drack, *Lehrverein*, p. 54.

²⁶ Furrer, *Troxler*, p. 341 f.

²⁷ Troxler, Ignaz Paul Vital: Neunte Anzeige des Lehrvereins zu Aarau, 1826, quoted from Spiess, *Troxler*, p. 314.

²⁸ cf. Drack, *Lehrverein*, p. 75.

²⁹ cf. Ort, *Zschokke*, p. 442.

³⁰ cf. Drack, *Lehrverein*, p. 58–60.

³¹ quoted from Ort, *Schweiz*, p. 248

³² Troxler, Ignaz Paul Vital: Fünfte Anzeige des Lehrvereins zu Aarau, 1824, quoted from Rohr, *Schriften*, p.121.

³³ Troxler, *ibid.* p. 121 f.

³⁴ Troxler, Ignaz Paul Vital: Siebente Anzeige des Lehrvereins zu Aarau, 1825, quoted from Spiess, Emil: *Troxler*, p. 313.

³⁵ Troxler, quoted from von Wartburg, Wolfgang: *Die grossen Helvetiker. Bedeutende Persönlichkeiten in bewegter Zeit 1798–1815*, Schaffhausen 1997, p. 256.

³⁶ Troxler, Ignaz Paul Vital: Achte Anzeige des Lehrvereins zu Aarau, 1825, zit. nach Rohr, *Schriften*, p. 129.

³⁷ Von Wartburg, *Troxler*, p. 253–256.

³⁸ cf. Halder, *Geschichte*, p. 321.

³⁹ cf. Ort, *Zschokke*, p. 443.

⁴⁰ cf. Staatsarchiv Aarau: Archiv des Kantonsschulrates, Lv. Akten (Akten des Lehrvereins 1823–1830); Matrikel- und Protokollbuch des Lehrvereins 1823–1830.

⁴¹ cf. Drack, *Lehrverein*, p. 147–167: Liste aller Schüler.

⁴² cf. Drack, *Lehrverein*, p. 143–146: Liste aller Lehrer.

⁴³ cf. Drack, *Lehrverein*, p. 103 f.

⁴⁴ cf. Halder, *Geschichte*, p.351–355.

⁴⁵ Ignaz Paul Vital Troxler, “Ein wahres Wort über das jetzige Vaterland, mit Rücksicht auf eine Schmähschrift namenloser Verläumder, 1839”, in A. Rohr, *Troxler*, Volume II, op. cit., p. 468.

⁴⁶ cf. Roca, René: Die Einführung des Vetos im Kanton Baselland. Ein wichtiger Schritt für die Entwicklung der direkten Demokratie in der Schweiz, in: *Baselbieter Heimatblätter*, Nr. 1/78, Liestal 2013, p. 1–12.

⁴⁷ cf. Roca, *Volkssouveränität*, p. 111–134.

⁴⁸ Troxler, Ignaz Paul Vital: Sechste Anzeige des Lehrvereins zu Aarau, 1824, quoted from Rohr, *Schriften*, p. 125.

⁴⁹ Schulgesetz vom 17. März 1981 (Stand 1. Januar 2011), Kanton Aargau, 401 100 (www.gesetzes-sammlungen.ag.ch).

⁵⁰ cf. www.lehrplan.ch.

⁵¹ cf. Brühlmeier, Arthur: *Menschen bilden. 27 Mo-saiksteine: Impulse zur Gestaltung des Bildungswesens nach den Grundsätzen von Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi*, second, minorly modified edition, Baden 2008.

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Direct democracy in the 19th century

cc. Direct democracy is an integral part of the political culture in Switzerland as in no other country, but historically still little explored. For this reason, the *Research Institute Direct Democracy* (www.fidd.ch) was founded which wants to close the research gaps with scientific conferences, publications and presentations.

On 17 October 2014, the first scientific Conference of the Research Institute was held in Schwyz under the title "Contributions of Catholicism to modern Switzerland". The meeting was devoted to the latest findings of democracy – and education research in two subject areas. Based on the panel "Catholicism and Direct Democracy", and "Catholicism and Education", the speakers from the fields of history, history of the Church (theology) and education presented their research results. So the topics underwent an interdisciplinary approach and lit up new aspects of research. The speakers could show that Catholicism contributed important and fundamental elements to the development of modern Switzerland, especially as regards the direct democracy as well as elementary and secondary schools.

The research results are gathered in the present volume. Thus, it establishes a new scientific series that wants to publish contributions to the study of democracy. Volume 2 will deal with the theme of "Liberalism and Modern Switzerland"

and volume 3 is dedicated to the early Socialists. This actual trilogy illuminates the emergence and development of direct democracy in Switzerland from different political perspectives. It will be a basis for further research questions and projects, such as theoretical questions about direct democracy.

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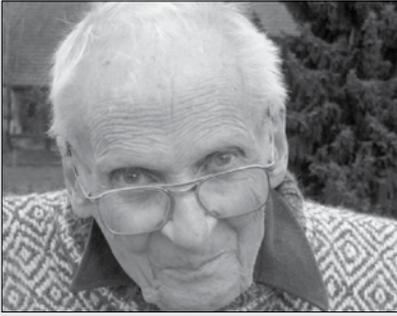
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In memory of Professor Dr Hans-Georg Bandi

by René Roca*



*Professor Dr Hans-Georg Bandi
(picture University of Berne,
Institute for archaeological sciences)*

On 5 February 2016 Professor Dr *Hans-Georg Bandi* died at the great age of 95 years. He was full professor of prehistory and paleo-ethnography at the University of Bern from 1956 to 1985, and he carried on his research and taught with great commitment. In 1993 he received an honorary doctorate from the University of Neuchâtel (see also the obituary notice of his scientific achievements by Professor Dr *Albert Hafner* of the University of Berne).

I met Professor Bandi in connection with the dispute over Switzerland's conduct during the World Wars and over the reports of the Bergier Commission. He was co-initiator and co-president of the "Arbeitskreis Gelebte Geschichte – AGG" (Living History Working Group).

What was the purpose of this "working group"?

From the mid-1990s on, Switzerland was attacked ever more insolently by the United States (Clinton administration and World Jewish Congress, WJC). It was about the role Switzerland had played during the Second World War. So Switzerland was for example held to be responsible for making the war last longer. When the Federal Council as well as several Swiss parliamentarians gave way more and more to this massive pressure, increasing protest was raised by the population. Much of what occupies Switzerland today and is increasingly driving it into a tight spot (eg "financial center", to name just one keyword), has its roots in that time. Courageously then Professor Bandi joined up with other like-minded contemporary witnesses of the time of active duty and began, by means of publications, to make a stand against the increasing vilification of our country and the inadequate correction thereof by the Federal Council. The positive re-

sponse these protests triggered caused Professor Bandi to establish the association "Arbeitskreis Gelebte Geschichte — AGG" (Living History Working Group) at the end of the year 1998. The association soon had about 500 members. Thanks to his large network of contacts Professor Bandi was able to win many personalities for the society, who had been bearers of responsibility during the World War and at the postwar time; these included senior diplomats, government officials, business leaders, historians, military commanders (among others corps commanders, staff officers, major generals) and parliamentarians. They all had profound in-depth knowledge of the real situation of our country, the political, military and economic facts and connections as well as the mood of the population.

The Bergier Commission, which was created due to an urgent federal decree in December 1996, was commissioned by the Federal Council to carry out a full investigation of Switzerland in WW2. Government and parliament even partly suspended banking secrecy and data protection in favour of the Commission and granted the historians exclusive access to sources of public and private institutions and companies. Most of the sources they had used were then again "sealed", rather than being deposited in the Federal Archives where they would be available for free research and the review of the Bergier Commission results, as was urged by Professor Bandi and the AGG. In view of national policy, this was an incredible process and simultaneously a low point in Swiss historiography! In this way the – officially privileged – historians of the Bergier Commission took a role that was not due to them, namely that of being the judges. The truths sanctioned by them became the guidelines for laws or judicial decrees, and it was in their power to force politicians' hands (see the Federal Council of the time!) However, historians' judgments may not be based on power but must rely on science and the attempt at finding the truth.

Even though Professor Bandi and the AGG urged that contemporary witnesses should be questioned, this request was rejected by the Federal Council. The Bergier Commission wanted to exclusively rely on documentary sources. To counter this, the AGG released their own publications and pointed out that, "it is unacceptable that both among the younger generation in Switzerland

as well as all around the world the impression of a greedy and selfish Switzerland at the time of world War II is cemented due to the one-sided Bergier reports and the self-destructive tendencies of our mass media. Nor should the Swiss people simply skip over to the agenda and thus historical facts are allowed to become caricatures. [...] Do not allow Switzerland to be slandered, in contradiction of provable facts, and more harm to be done internationally to the reputation of our country. By all means, the war generation has no cause to be ashamed that, with great sacrifices, it succeeded, to spare our country the war!"

Under the title "Switzerland extorted" the Working Group in 2002 published impressions and evaluations of contemporary witnesses – a valuable collection of documents. The AGG thus counterbalanced the work of the Bergier Commission, which brought to light nothing decisively new, but only accused the active service generation and compliantly supported unobjective foreign attacks. In 2005 the second major publication of the AGG followed: "We take stock".

Professor Bandi and the AGG created lasting values with the publication of books and articles, and it will be our task to continue work on the corrective to the "results" of the Bergier Commission. It was notably Professor Bandi who contributed decisively in order to convey a realistic picture of Switzerland during the Second World War to the younger generations. The working group was disbanded in 2008. Its extensive archive of correspondence and publications with the Swiss and the American Press was – what a contrast to Bergier! – placed in the Library Am Guisanplatz, the former Federal Military Library, so as to be available for historical studies.

Two years I last met Hage – that is what I was allowed to call him – in Berne. We went to the Federal Archives together and looked at files of the Second World War. I will never forget the meetings and conversations I had with him. Hage will remain engraved on my memory as an honest historian and a courageous, upright contemporary witness. With others, I will carry on with his legacy.

**René Roca has a doctorate in history, he is a high school teacher and head of the Research Institute of Direct Democracy (www.fidd.ch)*