

# 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*

## Reaffirming our common security values

Interview with Colonel Alain Bergonzoli, director of the Police Academy of Savatan, Switzerland.

*Jpy. In the following interview, colonel Alain Bergonzoli, director of the Police Academy of Savatan (Valais), expresses himself on diverse security questions Switzerland and the rest of Europe are currently confronted to and describes the foundations of the police formation and the inherently connected human values.*

*During a visit of the Savatan Police Academy premises, located above Saint-Maurice in the Valais, "Current Concerns" had the opportunity to interview the director of this prestigious Academy in which most of the police forces of the French-speaking part of Switzerland and of the German-speaking part of the Valais are trained.*

*Every year, this Academy organises and conducts a school in which police candidates, constables and inspectors are trained to take up their duties in the cantons of Valais, Vaud and Geneva. The Academy is responsible for training 80% of the security forces in Swiss Romandy. Furthermore, several courses for public safety assistants are organised each year, numerous courses of continuous vocational training for people with a direct or indirect connection to the realms of security, justice, health and fire fighting services. The Academy also maintains close relations to the French National Gendarmerie as well as with other police training institutes in Europe. Moreover, it provides its know-how in cooperation projects conducted by Switzerland on all continents.*



Alain Bergonzoli  
(picture ma)

*Current Concerns: Colonel Bergonzoli, what is your assessment of the current security situation in Europe?*

*Colonel Bergonzoli: The evolution of the world, the repetition of the crises, our apparent vulnerabilities*

*in light of the most recent events – in particular during the tragic attacks that hit France, Belgium and Germany these last months – have shocked public opinion. In our Western societies, these events provoked questions and sometimes doubts about the security responses we are able to offer today.*

### Today, violence induced by Islamist terrorism spares nobody

Due to sociological, historical, political and legal factors, the security level is very high in our country: this could lead us to think that these violent phenomena might spare us. However, reality is different. Today, violence induced by Islamist terrorism spares nobody. Lying in the cultural and geographical heart of Europe, Switzerland has to face this new reality, alike its neighbours. We must learn – or relearn – to become resilient; to identify and to name the threats by their name, to shed light on all causes and to be prepared to eliminate a maximum of loopholes.

Security cannot be decreed and can never be entirely achieved. It is built up and consolidated on a daily basis and adapts itself to society transformations, whatever these transformations might be. To be aware of this is a good start for a resilience process.

### The border-guards at the Swiss-Italian borders strictly implement the relevant legal provisions

*Hundreds of refugees and migrants have recently been accumulating in Como, near to the Swiss-Italian borders. In our*

continued on page 2

#### The Director's Word

### "The policeman acts the way he is trained. One must thus train him how he has to act"

#### To serve society and protect the citizen!

This is the difficult yet noble profession to which the Savatan Police Academy prepares engaged men and women.

Today, the police is a necessity. Our social environment is characterized by complex and unpredictable situations. The police officer is at the heart of society, he is at the heart of our society.

To be a good police officer, you must certainly acquire professional skills. But it is not enough to be an expert of the judicial police, community police and rescue police, to be an expert of shooting or of traffic rules ... You must first be able to adapt in all circumstances in every moment of life. The future police officer must therefore acquire the cultural tools essential to his integration into society.

Alongside the expertise provided through education, the future police officer will then receive throughout his training a sum of values like to "know how to be", notably individual responsibility, courage, a sense of common well-being. In short, a real police culture reflecting the "Reflection", *reflexion* before action.

By coating for the first time his uniform, the police candidate, policeman or inspector voluntarily chooses this sum of values that will influence his action. Values that will become, from the very beginning of one's formation at

the Academy of Savatan, those of the candidate himself.

Tomorrow, the responsibility of the future police officer will be reality. Because our fellow citizens express huge expectations on the role, the responsibility and the commitment of policemen regarding safety.

Tomorrow, the future police officer must have the strength to believe in his convictions, to tap into the values chosen and accepted, the strength to act with proportionality and finally the strength to remain human in all circumstances.

Tomorrow, the future police officer will enter the ranks of a constituted corps. A corps in which the principles are always the same: loyalty and "militarity".

Loyalty to his superiors is not an act of concession: it must express itself naturally, with pride and cohesion.

As for the "militarity" it is a source of dedication, availability, cohesion and strength. This is a moral posture that makes the individual go further in the service of people and the homeland.

After his training at the Police Academy, the police candidate, policeman or inspector will then know how to do his craft. But even more so, he will be impregnated with the *reason* for his commitment: *to serve society and protect the citizen.*

Alain Bergonzoli, colonel

**"Reaffirming our common ..."**

continued from page 1

country, some ask for military intervention to ensure a better border control whilst others demonstrate in front of the Federal Palace in Bern in favour of letting these people into Switzerland. Which rules apply here? What is your assessment with regards to this situation?

This situation is the result of the migration phenomena on a European scale. For Switzerland, other choices are available than strictly applying our legal provisions. It is the responsibility of the authorities, however, to adapt the legal provisions if they deem necessary to do so due to the extraordinary circumstances. With regards to the law enforcement forces – in this case the border-guards, who by the way are very well prepared and trained – they shall implement the relevant legal provisions to the letter.

It seems like the appraisals portrayed in the media resemble more to a duel between dialecticians who aim at influencing the legal framework in place. Anyway, we are just at the beginning of these phenomena: we are in a situation, in which an effective training of the law enforcement community is necessary, for they need to apply the law humanly but strictly.

*We will certainly come back to the security situation in Switzerland and in its neighbouring countries. Could you now please elaborate on Savatan's concept?*

The existence of the Police Academy of Savatan is no coincidence. Twelve years ago, three elements fostered the creation of our Academy. On the one hand, there was the political will to unify the police training by certifying it through a Federal diploma; and on the other hand, the lessons learnt during the security engagements within the 2003 G8 Summit in Lausanne. These past experiences have showed the limits of an effective collaboration of police forces, military police and army due to loopholes in the training. Eventually, at the same time, the army and its mountain infantry troops left their former premises and fortifications in Savatan.

**Synergy in terms of security between military and civil police forces**

The above-mentioned elements lead to the idea of "SYNERSEC"; a synergy of civil and military police forces for security. For this reason, the Academy has been training police candidates for the cantons of Valais and Vaud since twelve years, but also the military security agents and transport police and the *Public Security Assistants* (PSA) from the French-speaking part of Switzerland. Since the beginning of this year, Savatan also wel-

comes police candidates from Geneva. A "Rhodanien"<sup>1</sup> Police Academy that thus provides 80% of the basic training in the Swiss Romandy.

*What are your objectives?*

The political authorities have established an agenda for 2020–2022: to create a legal entity for an autonomous Police Academy, gathering the three cantons of Valais, Vaud and Geneva, in partnership with the Confederation. This initiative should also clarify the question of the ownership of the area: acquire a right to the area or to become owner and buying the infrastructure of Savatan and other installations in the lowland.

**Very high professional competences in the field of security**

*What are the challenges of this initiative?*

I can identify two challenges: the first one, with respect to our mission, is that we always need to improve the quality of our formation. In Switzerland, we are thinking about strengthening our basic training by creating a dual training system: a development that would prolong the practical formation process. The second challenge is economic: one must insure that the Academy is cost-efficient. To achieve healthy solvency we plan to offer to the private economic sector good quality formations in the realm of security and also reinforce our collaborations abroad. We dispose of very high professional skills in our country in the domain of security: we must export them! The Police Academy already pursues this with France, Germany, certain countries of central Europe like Rumania, Bulgaria and Poland. Yet, important developmental potential remains unexplored in this domain.

**The fundamental question of values in the centre**

*I would like to hear more about the three domains of Savatan's instructions; I mean the pedagogical, the military and police domains. How do you bind these together? How do you integrate them into the basic training?*

Obviously, these three domains complement each other. We achieved the creation of a coherent concept based on the strengths of each domain, and thereof we place the fundamental question of values in the centre.

Today, police candidates are no longer obliged to do their military service before they integrate a police academy. I personally regret this as the military formation in Switzerland represents a very strong educational base with much added value.

The recent events in France, Belgium and Germany showed how important it was for the security forces to be able to respond adequately and in proportion to any types of threats.

With respect to our *educational doctrine*, our strength is that our approach is very down to earth and applied, based on a precisely written and rigorous planning. We probably enjoy, in our country, the best instruction documents in Europe. Our instructors and teachers are all prepared to the most modern ways of teaching and place the learner at the top of the goals they need to achieve. Due to the excellent level of instruction our candidates get, we can easily heighten the level of expectations set at the beginning of the formation year.

In crisis situations, the foundations of the necessary responses are based on components of *military doctrine*. We have to recognise this and accept it. To deny this could generate a loophole when, for example, a police officer does not have the means to react in an acute crisis situation against a strongly armed and militarised adversary.

**Our formation must be based on substantiated and practical experience**

In the *domain of policing*, we work with direct feedback from experiences on the ground. The times of long classroom and shooting range theories, that actually should have been physical, are over. Our formation must be based on substantiated and practical experience. The development of watch-keeping capacities is essential through the lived experiences of the past and one must be able to analyse problems in a legal, technical, tactical, psychological and ethical manner throughout the entire police candidate school.

One could find Kalashnikovs in the trunk of a car today. The policeman thus has to master the most relevant and subtle intervention tactics. These are tactics and technics that cannot simply be improvised but that one has to learn. The intervention policeman therefore has to be formed in consequence. He has to learn this very specific and complex professional knowledge in a pedagogical environment as near as possible to the operational realities.

**To always be ready to face massive violence phenomena**

*What are these operational realities you mentioned?*

The facts are visible. We have to always be ready to face massive violence phenomena. Fact is that armed delinquents are more and more determined, terrorists who are involved in blind mass-killings, terrorists with selective objectives hitting individuals or facilities. The response to such facts is a rapid and precise response capable to eliminate the threat.

**"Reaffirming our common ..."**

continued from page 2

*How do you prepare your police candidates to these realities?*

The most important aspect is the transmission of values. In the Police Academy of Savatan values guide all our enterprises, notwithstanding the themes of the instructions. In this sense, our oath's text has a lot to say about this. My role is to ensure that it is understood correctly; how can one put it into practice? What a citizen expects from a future policeman are a steady engagement, keeping one's word, rigor, respect of the hierarchy, respecting and pursuing the mission, making sense of the uniform: the authority "lent" and delegated by the State. A policeman cannot enforce order if not ordered himself.

We of course cultivate values like group cohesion that prevail individualist behaviours. It is an art to reconcile these values without opposing them. One could illustrate this idea with a dish that needs to be salted: too much salt is uneatable; not enough is bland, whereas the just middle gives a delicious result. The pursuit of the balance between all values is our daily preoccupation and priority. This is teamwork.

**The primary meaning of the Police's mission: protect and serve**

*What qualities are required to be a policeman today?*

With a sense of discernment, courage goes back to being the primary quality. To risk one's life to protect the life of others requires self-sacrifice and a very high sense of courage. Some people think that the relational aspect prevails all other qualities. I do not. Let's understand each other well – I do not put these two qualities in opposition. I note, unfortunately, that the recent events proved me right. One must recall the primary meaning of the police's mission: serve and protect. A policeman has to be impeccable in his manner to enforce the laws and, through his behaviour, bring the citizen to immediately understand the meaning of his actions.

*Following the events of Paris, Brussels, Istanbul and Nice, should we rethink the police formation?*

These attacks predict a long and difficult struggle. To combat this phenomenon will take time. Rather than speak of days, we should speak of years. For our society that lives in the immediacy, it will be tiring. The current situation sheds light on the necessity to develop all possible synergies between different police forces. Regarding that point, the German model is interesting: it allows the police forces to rise and achieve a maximum capacity with the availability of centralised resources, al-



*View from the the Police Academy of Savatan with a view of the Rhone valley (Canton of Vaud) westward towards the Lake of Geneva. (picture jpv)*

though respecting the autonomy of the Länder.

**Fighting terrorism necessitates prevention, protection and intervention**

*According to you, what measures should we take to fight terrorism?*

Similarly to violent viruses, the fight against terrorism necessitates three types of measures: prevention, protection and intervention.

As for prevention, Switzerland's federal structure makes the country very efficient. It knows its citizens and their concerns. Detecting people in breach with the society's values is in principle facilitated. Facing a terrorist threat, besides the research of intelligence, it is question of dissuading certain hostile actions by the reinforcing of protective measures. If we have the possibility to rise in the domain of protection, the limit lies in the amount of available workforces able to be engaged durably.

As for intervention, Switzerland is well equipped when compared internationally. For heightening that level we have to question ourselves on the personal equipment, the weaponry, the ammunitions and the reinforcement of the formation in certain specific areas.

*What are you thinking about specifically?*

With regards to the police response, we refer the concept of "first responders". This concept, in breach with another one based on closure (security perimeter, observation etc.) waiting for *specialised intervention groups* like RADD (Rapid Action and Dissuasion Detachment, Vaud), IG (Intervention Group of Romandy) or RAID (Research, assistance, intervention, dissuasion, France).

This concept is certainly the adequate response to the current threat. But there

are many diverse consequences: it obliges us to reconsider the human in his recruiting, in his initial and continuous formations. It requires the equipment and the weaponry to be adapted. It brings us to rethink the territorial meshing of the security forces. It obliges the strengthening of our action culture, with a refocus of hearts and minds towards the prevalence of the mission. Eventually, this concept necessitates a repositioning in the hierarchy, which has to be a hierarchy of decision and action.

**Tomorrow's crises will be of another nature**

*What are the threats to come?*

Today, obviously, other phenomena are threatening the security in our country and the population: cyber-criminality and public disorder.

*Cyber-threats*, or *cyber-criminality* are a reality. They generate tremendous costs and losses in our societies. Tomorrow's policemen, wherever assigned, will have to understand and know how to respond to such attacks affecting citizens, companies and institutions. This necessitates the adapted formation to these realities of the virtual world.

As for *public disorders*, they are, very fortunately, not very frequent in our country. But are we really safe and if yes, for how long? There, an adequate formation of the policeman is also indispensable. Even more particularly because our country does not dispose of permanent security forces dedicated to these types of engagements.

The Police Academy of Savatan with the *Group for order maintenance* (GMO) have understood the necessity to invest time in the personnel and the managers in this always-delicate mission of mainte-

continued on page 4

**"Reaffirming our common ..."**

continued from page 3

nance of public order. In 2003, the Evian Summit or G8 Summit was a perfect illustration of the necessity to professionally prepare the managing of public disorder.

Tomorrow's crises will be of another nature. The public safety professionals know it well: society is never permanently balanced. And it remains the law enforcement force's difficult task to restore social peace, when it is degraded. For the police, using force is a great responsibility.

Hence, I note with satisfaction that the partnership if the Police Academy of Savatan with the *Centre national d'entraînement des forces de gendarmerie* (CNEFG), Saint-Astier, France, is a good example of synergy exchange. Since 2012 now, some courses of our school for the police candidates are held in the CNEFG. This illustrates clearly the common will to develop this kind of formation.

### Learnings from the New Year's Eve in Cologne

*With regards to public disorders, I think of the German example: on the New Year's Eve 2015/16, women were sexually assaulted en masse by a large number of organized migrants in Cologne and other German cities. The police had been ordered not to intervene by the political authorities. Neither when Cologne's Cathedral was attacked with fireworks and soiled with faeces, while inside was held a religious service. Do such events not endanger some fundamental values? Is it also a conceivable situation in our country?*

According to several well informed German newspapers, some 2000 men with mostly North African origins have aggressed 1200 women on New Year's Eve 2015/16 in Cologne, Hamburg and other

German cities. A shocking situation regarding both the amplitude of the offenses committed and the extreme hatred feeling that they express. Yet this situation, that seems unrealistic, sheds light on several challenges that our western societies are facing. Indeed, how to combine active prevention, credible dissuasion and a proportional repression in such a chaotic context?

The stakes are not only connected to security. Neither are they lying in strategic decisions the police forces need to implement. But the stakes are societal. They are based on one single major challenge: promoting the balance and the respect of living together.

The police must now integrate into its thinking – and thus in the formation of its relief – the threats and risks of this type, unimaginable a few months ago. One example: in the whole of Europe this year, the authorities in charge of festive events during summer had to put concrete blocks on roads to diminish the risks of "crazy lorries" (tragedy of Nice).

In Switzerland, we are for the time being certainly spared by these violent phenomena. But nevertheless, we cannot put our heads in the sand: we must prevent and deter. And on a repressive level, we need to have adequate intervention plans to prevent the emergence of a chaotic situation. But it is clear that in some regions of our country, our operational capabilities seem poorly suited to these new types of interventions: as well when it comes to the training of police, as to workforce and equipment.

### The Swiss citizen knows how to mobilise when he feels in danger

*Do you think that the Swiss population is ready to face the current threats?*

Our country has been spared from the two World Wars and enjoys since several

years, an unprecedented period of stability in its history. This has allowed an economic development envied worldwide. We do not endure the social tensions and divisions that suffer many countries around us.

This near-idyllic situation can generate a feeling of eternal peace within our population. The notion of conflict or deteriorating situation becomes completely abstruse. Thus, one might well think that in cases of acute crisis, the citizen would be unable to adopt the right answers and the right postures to face the threat.

However, I think that the Swiss citizen knows how to mobilize, when he feels in danger and it can even become admirably resilient. This however does not mean we should not question ourselves and prepare thoroughly.

Today's threats are everywhere, but the front is nowhere. The opponent is considered to be mutant and hybrid. He is able to act at the heart of our cities, as nothing is able to warn us.

Moreover, today's wars are of a new genre, what justifies that we mobilize opinions and we reaffirm our shared values of defence and protection. It is not a fall-back position, but rather an awakening and resilience posture. A posture that results in a comprehensive approach of security, respectively the state's security and the security of its people. A posture that requires appropriate means on a political, security and military level.

Our country must remember and act.

*Colonel, thank you warmly for this interview.*

(Interview by Jean-Paul Vuilleumier)

<sup>1</sup> "Rhodanien" means the region where the river Rhone flows or its valley.

## Police Oaths

### Oath from Valais

"I swear, in the name of God, to be faithful to the Constitution, to obey my superiors in my service, to accomplish faithfully all duties that are mine and that are imposed by the law the rules connected to my service, to keep the secrets that are confided to me, to refuse any donations that may influence the execution of my duties and to use legal force only to maintain law and order."

### Oath from Vaud

"You promise to be faithful to the Federal Constitution and to the Cantonal Constitution of Vaud. You promise to maintain and defend at all occasions

and by all means, the rights, the freedom and the independence of the country, to provide and to advance one's honour and profit, as well as prohibiting that which could harm or destroy it. You promise moreover to perform your duties with best conscience and to fulfil with zeal, diligence and loyalty the missions that are imposed, to strictly adhere to the law, to maintain and observe a severe discipline, to obey scrupulously and punctually to orders from superiors and eventually to adhere to the absolute secret of things."

(Translation *Current Concerns*)



# Migration on the Swiss South border – rules also apply for migrants

by Dr jur Marianne Wüthrich

In *Current Concerns* No 19 of 30 August 2016 it was explained that the *Swiss Borders Guard* and the *State Secretariat for Migration* are undertaking their challenging task correctly and in accordance with the Swiss legal system and the Treaty of Schengen/Dublin, and that they deal fairly and reasonably with those people who want to cross the Swiss border without valid documents (“Migrants at the Swiss South border – Inventory from the Swiss perspective”). Thanks to Ticino Council of State president *Norman Gobbi* as well as to others in positions of responsibility, who expressed themselves very clearly on this subject – the federal authorities acted with great transparency and unwaveringly rejected allegations

without objective justification – former wild claims have now practically ceased.

## What lesson can we learn from this?

It is pleasant that Swiss authorities and politicians have for once remained upright, and calmly and with certainty defended the fact that they abide by the rules of Swiss legislation as well as by international treaties and, of course, also by the provisions of the Geneva refugee convention. Many citizens would wish that Swiss politicians were to answer in plain terms to all sorts of requests and impositions from Switzerland and elsewhere, and that they were to conduct discussions with representatives of major powers on an equal

footing. There is no reason for us Swiss either to apologise abroad for decisions taken by the people or indeed to buckle at once at every slightly more arrogant tone coming from the headquarters in Brussels or Washington. A little more self-confidence would well befit us! That is what we can learn from this matter.

## Abuse of the right of asylum cannot be tolerated

However, the consistent enforcement of the law by the Swiss authorities has led to the emergence of an entirely different problem: Today it seems clear to the persons desir-

continued on page 6

# Are legal vacuums developing in Switzerland? Police calls for broad support by population and policy

*RI.* On the first weekend of September at the Tinguely Fountain in Basel five police officers, who wanted to settle a fight among young people, were attacked. The situation escalated when a 21-year-old repeatedly tried to intervene and was also apprehended by the police. Only with the use of tear gas, the police were able to secure the entire situation.

The police officers are reported to use such means, as they are repeatedly attacked by outsiders, as *Martin Schulz*, spokesman for the Basel Department of Justice and Security, explained (see “Basler Zeitung” from 6 September).

Such events are becoming more frequent. For example, shortly after 10:00 pm on 22 May, approximately 50 people vandalised the area between the Barfüsserplatz and Auf der Lyss in Basel. There the vandals broke many windows and smeared facades. The vandals turned on the approaching police force and attacked them by throwing stones and bottles. Two police officers and a civilian were injured. Fourteen perpetrators were arrested. The Public Prosecutor’s Office has started proceedings concerning breach of peace, criminal damage, assault and violence and threat against authorities and officials (see SPBA press release from 25 June).

## Rise of no-go zones in Switzerland?

Despite many published statistics about a growing “sense of security” in the population, apparently there is a threat that legal vacuums are also emerging in Switzerland (“no-go zones”, see also “the difference between life and statistics”, “Basler Zeitung” from 5 September). The com-

mitted German police officer *Tania Kambouri* has reported on this development in Germany. Kambouri describes how no-go zones arise due to the disintegration of social norms. Part of these social norms is to accept police officers as State Authority. They enforce generally accepted legislation. However, police officers are becoming unprotected game without support of the society. Kambouri describes this using examples from the Ruhr area and the cities of Bremen and Berlin. She highlights possible causes and ways out.

Certain factors favour this negative development: Separation from the state, lack of integration of foreigners, legal vacuums facilitating criminal activities (red light district, drug trafficking, handling of stolen goods, corruption, petty crime), a lack of sanctioning, poor training and lack of police, weak State control (“soft justice”). An additional factor is the crime tourism, caused by uncontrolled borders.

Adding to the situation are the increasing numbers of illegal immigrants (see article above). Apparently they immigrate with the intent to hide in the country. Their actual whereabouts in the country gives rise to the presumption, that they are illegally financed. Already, cases of prostitution, petty crime and drug trafficking have become evident. This is a challenge for the Federal Government. A misguided migration policy cannot be solved on municipal and cantonal level. In certain districts of Basel, several of the above factors are simultaneously appearing. The Safety Director of Basel *Baschi Dürr* explains himself after the events of 3 September: “Once again it has become ob-

vious, that we should not relent in our efforts. We have to have a police presence on the street, to educate and to train the people [the police officers are meant] and to improve the equipment.” Finally, the society is challenged not to accept no-go zones and to take a stand, as the governing Councillor is requesting (cf. “Basler Zeitung” of 6 September).

## Online-petition of the police is asking for support

The *Association of Swiss Police Officers (VSPB)* invites the population to show solidarity with the officials. The trilingual online petition of the Ticinese Association *Amici delle Forze di Polizia Svizzera AFPS* asks for support under [www.art-285.ch](http://www.art-285.ch) for a tightening of penalties for violence and threat to authorities and officials (Article 285 of the Criminal Code). “Only if harsher punishments prevail, will the perpetrators think twice, whether or not to attack policewomen and policemen”, *Max Hoffmann*, Secretary General of the SPBA stated in a press release of the Association by 15 May. The demand includes support of police officers and also the full backing from politicians. Therefore, an adequate migration policy of the Federal Government is required. •

Kambouri, Tania. *Deutschland im Blaulicht. Notruf einer Polizistin* (Germany in the blue light. Emergency call of a COP). Berlin 2015, ISBN 978-3-492-06024-0

Online petition: [www.art-285.ch/il-testo-in-oggetto](http://www.art-285.ch/il-testo-in-oggetto)

Source: press releases of the SPBA at [www.vspb.org/de/medien/aktuelle\\_medienmitteilung/](http://www.vspb.org/de/medien/aktuelle_medienmitteilung/)

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

**"Migration on the Swiss South border – ..."**  
continued from page 5

ing entry that because of their lack of legal entitlement they have practically no means of entering Switzerland. Yet apparently not only food and clothes have been distributed at the Como camp, but also advice has been given as to how they would best be able to achieve their illegal goals. In any case, there have been more and more migrants who untruthfully tell border guards that they intend to apply for asylum. Then, once they are in the country, they seize the first available opportunity of disappearing and travelling to the north – or wherever they want to go – under their own steam.

20 to 40 per cent of those persons who allegedly wanted to apply for asylum have disappeared in the past three months without having been controlled! According to the asylum statistics of the end of July more than 4,800 uncontrolled departures have been registered since the beginning of the year. Most of the migrants are

from Africa. According to the spokeswoman for the *State Secretariat for Migration* (SEM), *Céline Kohlprath*, it is not new that asylum seekers leave without control before their asylum applications are formally fully registered, but that previously there were not so many who had gone to the ground. The federal authorities assume that most of them are on their way to Germany (daily press according to *sda* of 5 September 2016).

The reception centres for asylum seekers are, of course, no prisons. It is true that persons applying for entry at the Chiasso centre are registered as quickly as possible, so that their personal information may be recorded, but in the case of a big run they are brought to other centres of reception and procedure in buses, as a precautionary measure to prevent them from disappearing on the way. Nevertheless, many are apparently successful in doing exactly this, because in Switzerland, as in all democratic states, a person may only be imprisoned if he or she is under suspicion of a criminal act. Switzerland is a free country ...

But what happens when people who move about in our country – 4,800 since the beginning of this year! – abuse this freedom and the rule of law? What are the consequences we must take if some of them not only travel to the North illegally on their search for a job but hatch very different and more sinister plans? These questions must be answered in the near future, not only in Switzerland, but also in the European Union. Fact is, that the Schengen-Dublin system does not work, that it is useless. Fact is also that those national states which have taken the matter in hand, for example Hungary or Austria, are a lot more successful than the *Frontex*, which is supposed to protect the external borders, for example those of the Mediterranean countries. If a huge country like Australia can successfully protect its almost endless external borders against unauthorized access by the sea, should not we Europeans also be able to at least come closer to a solution than we are at the moment? •

## Current Concerns

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Please choose one of the following ways of payment:

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

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

# On the decline of German “mainstream” and the possibility of ethically oriented politics

by Karl Müller

After the victory of the Alternative for Germany (AfD) over the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) at the ballots in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern many commentators dealt with the question why more and more citizens turn away from the political organizations (parties, media etc.) of the “mainstream”.

This article explores the role which the increasing lack of ethics in politics might play in this change of loyalties. Could it be that this reorientation is just a natural response to the lack of ethics in politics? Politics without ethics – could it be just incompatible with the inner voice of conscience?

By nature human beings are inclined to live according to their conscience and if they are less and less able to do so this will have consequences: the person tries to ignore his conscience and becomes more and more fatalistic – or she revolts. Particularly revolting is not easy for many people and the broad protest manifesting itself in many places including the ballots suggests that the violations of conscience are already manifest in many citizens who find it increasingly hard to calm their inner voice down.

The (*Machiavellian*) notion that politics should have nothing to do with ethics but everything with being “successful” in the everlasting power struggles by any means is a fatal error. Political ethics on the other hand, with its influences from both classical and modern natural law as well as Christian Sociology, is not merely some irrelevant pastime of ivory tower pundits, but indispensable for the survival of mankind.

## Unscrupulous US acts

Our conscience is stressed day by day. Just one recent example among many: despite being anything but Anti-US, the “*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*” titled “The war drives Yemen into catastrophe” on 2 September and commented on the situation in the South Arabian country and the daily bombing terror by the Saudi air-force as follows:

“Washington had declared that the fear of the Saudis about Iran establishing a foothold in Southern Arabia was exaggerated. Still the Americans support the air raids by fueling the Saudi bombers, providing intelligence and contributing to ground targeting activities. Washington’s aims are not so much to contain Iran but to improve their relationship with Riyadh, which has been challenged

---

“This natural order of society at the service of the person is indicated, according to the social doctrine of the Church, by four values that follow from the natural inclinations of the human being and which delineate the contours of the common good that society must pursue, namely: freedom, truth, justice, and solidarity. These four values correspond to the requirements of an ethical order in conformity with the natural law. If one of these is lacking, the city will tend towards anarchy or the rule of the strongest.”

---

recently, and keep the lucrative arms sales going. Objections have been made against new arms deals with Riyadh, warning against America jeopardizing her reputation if American weapons are used to break international law. However, *Barack Obama* has just proposed another arms deal with Riyadh worth 1,15 billion dollars and seems unwilling to listen to these voices.”

This lets the voice of the conscience scream. And it gets unbearable if politicians in Europe and Germany keep talking about a “community of values”, the struggle for human rights etc., and the US President is a “Nobel peace prize laureate” on top of that.

## Angela Merkel’s dishonest “C”

On many occasions Chancellor *Angela Merkel*, who chairs both, the German Federal government and the Christian Democratic Union, has declared unconditionally steadfast support of US politics to be German “reason of state”. Her endorsement of such amoral acts as those committed by the US government is of course especially disturbing considering the “C” in her party’s name which bears a strong signal for ethically oriented politics.

Five years ago, in 2011, Pope *Benedict* reminded his audience in the German parliament of church father *Augustine*. It was he who said: “Justice being taken away, then, what are kingdoms but great robberies?” This sentence is quoted quite often, but many people consider it to be a so-called winged word – not to be taken seriously, but nice ingredient for grand opening addresses. However, Pope Benedict was not in a mood to please the parliamentarians. For, above all this sentence is testimony to the inner voice of conscience, and an alarming call of heart and mind today as it was in the times of *Augustine*, when the Western Roman Empire was crum-

bling and injustice and lawlessness rampant.

## Ethics in politics

Since politics have become a difficult business in today’s world nobody expects politicians to be perfect, not even regarding ethics. In their White paper “In search of a Universal Ethic: A new look at the Natural Law” of 2009 even the *International Theological Commission* of the Vatican extricated politics from the obligation to be ethically perfect. However, in this paper may be read under the subtitle “Natural law, measure of the political order” that the political order (i.e. “the city”) has to comply with natural law: “This natural order of society at the service of the person is indicated, according to the social doctrine of the Church, by four values that follow from the natural inclinations of the human being and which delineate the contours of the common good that society must pursue, namely: freedom, truth, justice, and solidarity. These four values correspond to the requirements of an ethical order in conformity with the natural law. If one of these is lacking, the city will tend towards anarchy or the rule of the strongest.”

Isn’t it rather the case that more and more people, including those in Germany, had to get the impression that the “mainstream” was shifting further and further away from these foundations? Many citizens, including German ones, hope that certain rivaling powers such as Russia or China will somehow stop our power-craving, ethically negligent politicians. The hope for a multi-polar world has many good reasons. And if the future multi-polar world was to be a world of justice, equality and peace than this would be the best we could hope for. But rivaling powers will not suffice to

## Where does the EU drift to?

km. In the years after 1990, after the end of the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc held together by it, the former European Community (EC) put the pedal to the metal. Under the headlines “enlargement” and “deepening”, the former economic community of a few European states (in 1990, there were 12, now there are 28 member states) was to be converted, at a fast pace and in parallel processes, into a political union or even into some kind of a federal state of nearly all European states.

Kick-off was the meeting of the heads of state and government in the Dutch Maastricht, where the treaty named after this city was concluded which was to succeed the Treaties of Rome of 1957. The EC was to be complemented by a currency union and a political union with a common foreign and defence policy and cooperation in domestic and legal policy. All three communities were to be put under a common roof, the European Union (EU). Germany, for example, changed its constitution, completely reformulating its old article 23 – with the idea of a complete integration into a political union of Europe in mind. Already in 1990, the country had renounced the idea of a sovereign nation state in the new preamble of the “Grundgesetz” (Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany).

But the soaring dreams and claims in a global power have now dissolved. Cur-

rency and political union have turned out to be explosive charges and at least the so-called Greek-crisis which became a Euro-crisis has made obvious what could have been noticed earlier: The European Union had not grown under equal terms but had developed enormous centrifugal forces.

Since 2015, the migration question has enormously accelerated this development. This year’s decision of the British citizens to leave the EU was so far the culmination of the past years’ development. The EU of today is presenting a desolate image. Also the states of the former Soviet influence sphere are raising their voices, demanding a different EU.

Thus the “Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung” of 9 September 2016 reported that the Polish government was considering a modification of the European treaties “in order to weaken the EU commission and to strengthen the nation states”. The state’s Premier demanded that the upcoming EU summit in Bratislava should discuss the Polish reform proposals. She added she was not only speaking for Poland but for the complete so-called “Visegrad group” besides Poland including also the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary. The Polish head of government was quoted with the words: “Our goal is to strengthen the position of the national parliaments and to stop the European Commission from

making politics.” The Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs added that the “Visegrad group” would agree that “the situation after the ‘Brexit’ was to be used for a reform of the EU.” Only a few days before, the head of the Polish government party, *Jarosław Kaczyński*, and the Prime Minister of Hungary, *Viktor Orbán*, had argued in a similar direction. It was said that Prime Minister Orbán had called for a “cultural counter revolution” in Europe.

We should avoid judging too quickly on these developments. However, no delight will arise, only because monster EU is not doing well. The “Brexit” has shown that there are also active forces, which are not really concerned about the real European values: freedom and justice, state of law and democracy.

Already the Euro crisis is and was not fully homemade. *Goldman Sachs* is involved, also through its staff. The revolving door between this US multinational bank and the EU institutions is permanently in action.

Additionally: Is it not the NATO, which is much more dangerous for justice and peace in the world than the EU? Why do the states now revolting against the EU not likewise challenge the NATO, of which they all are members?

These are no rhetorical questions. We seriously need to think about answers. The question, which way the peoples and states of Europe want to live together must be deliberated as well. In November 1990, in the middle of the elation about the end of the Cold War and while there was still a Soviet Union, the *Paris Charter* was an attempt to build a foundation, which then was adopted by all member states of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), predecessor of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Too fast this attempt was jettisoned, the “only superpower” was spreading out and the situation in Europe came to a dangerous heat. An EU in chaos is not very helpful in such a situation.

Why not build on the Paris Charter again, the idea of a “Europe of nation states”, the idea of a “common European house”? The idea of a Charter for Europe, giving the relations of all European states from Lisbon to Yekaterinburg a solid base under international law, shaped by the spirit of equal rights, cooperation and solidarity, guaranteeing all involved states sovereignty and self-determination? •

### “On the decline of ...”

continued from page 8

achieve real progress and step out of the eternal vicious circle of power and counter-power.

### Beyond power and counter-power

In addition to that and perhaps most importantly we as citizens need to convince ourselves that the inner voice of conscience, the ethical imperative, may once again gain the power and influence as they should have, before such a new world may indeed become a world of more justice and more peace.

At the end the Vatican paper reminds the reader: “The discovery of natural law responds to the quest of a humanity that from time immemorial always seeks to give itself rules for moral life and life in society. This life in society regards a whole spectrum of relations that reach from the family unit to international re-

lations, passing through economic life, civil society, and the political community. To be able to be recognized by all persons and in all cultures, the norms of behaviour in society should have their source in the human person himself, in his needs, in his inclinations. These norms, elaborated by reflection and upheld by law, can thus be interiorized by all. After the Second World War, the nations of the entire world were able to create a Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which implicitly suggests that the source of inalienable human rights is found in the dignity of every human person.”

Human history knows many political and legal achievements such as the Declaration of the United Nations of 1948. This is encouraging and shows that there may be an ethically sound alternative to the current state of politics. Acting upon this firm belief in our personal lives is the order of the day. •



# TTIP – the legal form of the arbitration

by Dario Rivolta\*



Dario Rivolta  
(picture ma)

In the contracts between individuals a clause is very often introduced which points out which boards of arbitration may be consulted in case of controversy between the parties regarding the interpretation of or a failure to comply with the agreement

by one of the parties. Most often a third office will be called in to assess the case, such as the Chamber of Commerce of the country in which the agreement is being signed, or that of Geneva, Stockholm or another chamber. At any rate, it is always pointed out that the document signed, as well as those arrangements not expressly provided for in the agreement, must comply with the laws of the state in which the work or delivery is provided.

A potential arbitration to solve any conflict between companies or between companies and signatory states is also mentioned in the *Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership* (TTIP), which has been under negotiation for four years between US delegates and officials of the EU Commission (wherever necessary in accordance with the instructions of the European Council). But existing or future laws are certainly not referred to. In other words, this aspect will be the reason for appealing to boards of arbitration and for their decisions, because the treaties aim at protecting the investments. According to the American proposal no appeal should be possible against these decisions, and three arbitrators will be appointed: one for each side and a third selected according to mutual agreement. To date, the European counterproposal is limited to the requirement that the arbitrators should be guaranteed to have no conflict of interest (but need they not to be paid by the customer?) and that there is the possibility of appealing to an arbitration board for its – binding – decision.

Such conditions are not new: Already in the sixties the German government signed similar contracts with about 130 countries in order to protect private (German!) investments. Although these were not all equal to

---

“It is, however, certain that the compulsive avoidance of public courts and the blocking out of local or state laws will objectively restrict any and every constitutional state. The will of the citizens are bypassed more and more often, and the national laws are made subordinate to economic interests and decisions.”

---

each other, they all provided for the option of appealing to an arbitration board and for imposing sanctions and awarding damages to the “victim” in the case of violation of the interests of one party. The purpose of this was to counteract the effects legal uncertainties and the unreliability of some judicial systems, so as to guarantee the interests of those who had invested millions or even billions in this country.

In the currently ongoing negotiations it is also clearly expressed that it will be possible to contest “direct and indirect” expropriation of investments.

In this context it is necessary to think not only of conflicts between private firms or of explicit nationalisation. Every act of a government that carries a risk for earning opportunities envisaged by the investors, or which might diminish these, is a so-called “indirect” expropriation.

A few examples may illustrate this:

- In 2009, the Swedish *Vattenfall* claimed 1.4 billion euros of the German government for losses allegedly suffered due to the environmental measures imposed on the construction of a coal power plant. The lawsuit was canceled as the proposed environmental measures were changed.
- In 2011, *Philip Morris* sued the Australian government demanded and claimed damages. The reason was a new Act of Parliament imposing stricter standards of packaging cigarettes on all producers, with the aim of reducing consumption. The multinational company argued that this restricted

its chances of profit. In 2015, Australia won the dispute only thanks to a formal sophistry, whereupon the claimant announced that it would file an appeal as soon as the *Transpacific Agreement* (TTP) had entered into force.

- In 2012, Ecuador was sentenced to pay \$ 1.7 billion to the *Occidental Petroleum Corp.* because the country had withdrawn its concession for the exploitation of an oil field when the American society had ceded its own rights to a Canadian company without being authorized to do so.
- In 2012, *Vattenfall* demanded once more 4 billion euros of Germany, as compensation for the government’s decision of abandoning nuclear power.
- In 2014, the German energy group RWE demanded arbitration against the Spanish government, because this had cut back on subsidies for renewable energies.
- The same arbitration clause (called ISDS clause) is included in the Pan-American NAFTA agreement (a precursor of what TTIP could be). Due to this clause the American *Lone Pine Resources* demanded 250 million dollars of Canada in 2013 because Quebec had preventively banned fracking in order to protect the waters of the San Lorenzo River. Moreover, Canada lost the legal battle against *Exxon Mobil* and *Murphy Oil*. The Canadian government had dared to enforce that 16% of the profits of licensed resourc-

continued on page 10

## When “fretrade” prevails over the right of states ...

An international tribunal has ordered the government of Canada to pay more than \$17 million in damages to two oil companies following a breach of North American Free Trade Agreement regulations.

A spokeswoman for *Natural Resources Canada* says in an email the Feb. 20 decision awarded \$13.9 million plus interest to *ExxonMobil* and \$3.4 million plus interest to *Murphy Oil*.

*Michelle Aron* says Ottawa is reviewing the decision and considering its options in consultation with the government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The ruling by the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes follows a 2012 decision on oil projects off Newfoundland and Labrador.

The NAFTA panel previously found that research spending obligations imposed on *ExxonMobil* and *Murphy Oil* breached Article 1106 of the free-trade agreement.

The article prohibits governments from applying performance requirements as conditions of investment.

*ExxonMobil* declined comment and *Murphy Oil* couldn’t be reached.

Source:  
*The Canadian Press as of 6 March 2015*

\* Dario Rivolta is an international political news columnist and an international trade consultant. He is a political scientist with area of expertise in social psychology. From 2001 to 2008, he was a member of the Italian Parliament. He was vice-president of the Foreign Affairs Commission, representative of the Italian Parliament at the European Council as well as at the Assembly of the Western European Union. During this time, he was also responsible for the international relations of the party.

## TTIP increasingly criticized

### Now also from the political side?

km. Acceptance of TTIP, the so-called free trade agreement with the US, is decreasing within the European Union. According to the results of the latest – spring 2016 – Euro barometer survey, acceptance has fallen further in the EU and is on average now down to only 51% of respondents. In 8 countries it is below 50%: in France, Italy, Croatia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Luxembourg, Germany and Austria. The latter two show the lowest approval ratings: Germany just 25% and Austria not more than 20%.

Perhaps this is also due to the fact that in view of upcoming elections there are now renowned politicians from EU member states prominently criticising TTIP. The French State Secretary for Foreign Trade *Matthias Fekl* announced on 30 August that he wanted to apply for the termination of negotiations at the meeting of EU Trade Ministers on 23 September in Bratislava. A few days earlier, the French President *Francois Hollande* had expressed his opinion that the negotiations with the US were deadlocked and unbalanced. The German Minister for Economic Affairs and Energy *Sigmar Gabriel* has declared TTIP “de facto failed”. And on 31 August the Austrian Chancellor

*Christian Kern* criticized not only TTIP, but also called into question the similar agreement with Canada CETA, for which negotiations have already been completed.

Austrian Chancellor initiated an internet survey among members of his party, which is terminated on September 18, and in which also non-party members can take part. The criticism of the agreement is clearly integrated into the questions:

- Should Austria agree to the provisional application of CETA at EU level?
- Should CETA be carried into effect in Austria if it includes the possibility of arbitration against states?
- Should CETA be carried into effect in Austria if this causes European quality standards to be lowered?
- Should future free trade agreements be arranged so as to maintain the high European quality standards (eg for product safety, data security, consumer and health protection, environment and animal protection)?
- Should there be an obligation of the greatest possible transparency for future negotiations on TTIP and other free trade agreements?”

And he added: “We will naturally feel bound to the results of this survey.”

One will have to wait for this. It is interesting in this context that the participants of the G-20 Summit in Hangzhou, China seem to have become “nervous”, so that the “*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*” wrote in its editorial on 6 September that the heads of states and governments were concerned that the “losers” of globalization were increasingly expressing “their displeasure in elections”. And the newspaper added: “The political leadership class is worried by this development because it sees itself being called into question.”

The leaders of the G 20 as well as the EU politicians who are now speaking out should, however, understand that criticism of globalization and of projects like TTIP or CETA does not stem primarily from a utilitarian motivation, i.e. is raised by the “losers”. Very many personalities throughout the world voice these criticisms, because they are very concerned that the current world economic and financial systems and their methods and attending ills, such as blatant injustice and devastating wars, might push all people of the planet into the abyss.

### “TTIP – the legal form ...”

continued from page 9

es were to be used for the search for new deposits. Always in connection with the NAFTA agreement, Canada had to pay the American *Ethil* US 13 billion dollars. The Canadian government had banned the use of the additive for gasoline called MMT, produced by the chemical giant *Ethil*, claiming that it threatened human health.

These are just a few examples of how easy it is for large global corporations to bring a charge against governments with respect to various agreements on “investment protection”. Above all, they make it clear that economic interests are given the preference even over democratic and legitimate laws of governments and parliaments.

The arbitration clause is under discussion since 1959 in a first version, but until 1995 it was applied only in exceptional cases. Since then, and especially since 2000, the use of such arbitration has increased exponentially, so that they are regarded as blackmail by legislators, and so that they have aroused distrust of decisions or laws which may affect the interests of powerful multinational corporations. Only a few countries, including Brazil, have refused to use the ISDS model for trade agreements, and South Africa even announced that it will withdraw from all trade agreements that provide for their use, even those it has already signed.

In the discussion about TTIP the issue of arbitration is not yet clear, and in Brussels it is believed that one will be able to change the clauses in one way or another. But despite the secrecy of the negotiations there are signs that Americans are adamant about keeping to their NAFTA position.

It is obvious that the matter of the arbitration is essential. Even the American bishops, together with the European bishops, have published their own “recommendation” in which they determine, among other things, that the methods hitherto proposed may bring with them “... unlawful benefits for economic interests willing and ready to exploit the rules of arbitration or of judicial systems and to undermine important standards of environmental protection, rights of employees and human rights ... A disproportionate attention to harmonizing or simplifying the regulation of trade and investments cannot be the grounds for endangering proper and appropriate standards of safety, health and environment applied by federal, state or regional organisms locally ...”.

We do not know how this conflict will end and what a possible compromise might look like, if there is one. It is, however, certain that the compulsive avoidance of public courts and the blocking out of local or state laws will objectively restrict any and every constitutional state. The will of the citizens are bypassed more and more often, and the national laws are

made subordinate to economic interests and decisions.

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

## Current Concerns

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

Publisher: Zeit-Fragen Cooperative

Editor: Erika Vögeli

Address: Current Concerns,

P.O. Box, CH-8044 Zurich

Phone: +41 (0)44 350 65 50

Fax: +41 (0)44 350 65 51

E-Mail: [CurrentConcerns@zeit-fragen.ch](mailto:CurrentConcerns@zeit-fragen.ch)

Subscription details:

published regularly electronically as PDF file

Annual subscription rate of

SFr. 40,-, € 30,-, £ 25,-, \$ 40,-

for the following countries:

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

Annual subscription rate of

SFr. 20,-, € 15,-, £ 12,50, \$ 20,-

for all other countries.

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

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

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

# Bologna, Pisa, Curriculum 21

## What have educational reforms to do with cultural hegemony?

by Dieter Sprock

More and more parents throughout Europe are wondering what is going on in the schools in their countries. Their children no longer learn to properly read, write and count, and parents spend hours after their work, to teach them what would actually be the school's task. Private learning aids are booming. Many masters complain about their candidates' lack of apprenticeship entry maturity, who often are not even able to understand an instruction manual or to solve simple arithmetic problems. And the universities are faced with students who often bring along neither the subject-specific nor the mental requirements for studying. The number of drop-outs in most countries is 30 percent and more, in technology subjects it is even significantly higher, up to 50 percent.<sup>1</sup> The economy lacks qualified workers.

The problems are well known. For more than twenty years in many European countries conformist school and university reforms have been following one another where two international organisations act as key players, namely the OECD, responsible for managing the school developments via Pisa, and the EU with the Bologna process at tertiary level.

### How Bologna has changed the university landscape

On 19 June 1999, at the University of Bologna the EU Ministers of Education signed a declaration of intent for the European education area, the so-called "Bologna Declaration", by means of which European Higher Education was adapted to the American Bachelor/Master system.

Also present was a seven-member Swiss delegation, consisting of representatives of politics and science, headed by State Secretary *Charles Kleiber*. This one

signed the declaration as well - against the advice of the accompanying University Rectors - whereby also in Switzerland the conversion to the Anglo-American system was introduced without prior discussion. Just one week earlier the Plenary Assembly of the *Rectors' Conference of Swiss Universities* had declared that the present declaration was unacceptable for Switzerland.<sup>2</sup>

Via Bologna a uniform European educational area was to be created and the duration of study to be shortened. Uniform criteria and methods of quality control, the *European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)*, were to make the achievements in the various study courses and countries measurable and comparable. Thus, mobility and employability of students were to be improved and the competitiveness of European Universities vis à vis global competition was to be safeguarded.

Nothing was achieved. The result has been a market economy-oriented and bureaucratic monster restricting the freedom of teaching and research and transforming universities into economic businesses and students into customers. Financially strong companies are increasingly pushing research in a direction that promises profit. "More competition, more performance, more efficiency - and above all, more Europe [i.e. EU] these are the slogans", *Matthias Daum* writes in *Die Zeit*.<sup>3</sup>

In an interview with the *Sonntagszeitung*, the Zurich sociologist and critic of Bologna, *Kurt Imhof*, speaks of "bulimic learning: guzzeling, vomiting, forgetting". The doctrine was reduced to the mainstream. And the teaching staff was forced to "standardize the knowledge and then to query it via multiple-choice tests." Knowledge, nowadays, was transmitted through a funnel and checked at the end. "Students no longer think outside the box. Due to a lack of time they are no longer able to deal critically with anything and they are increasingly limited to what is current", *Imhof* says.<sup>4</sup>

### How PISA redesigns the "Volksschule" (primary and secondary school) and controls the learning content

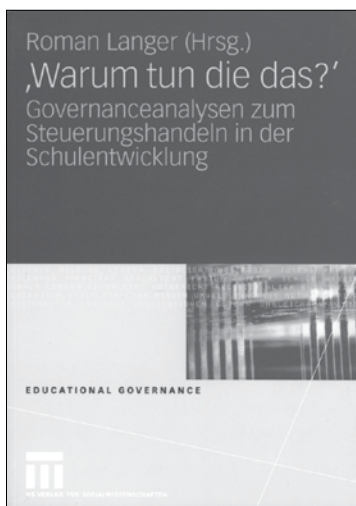
The transformation of the "Volksschule" which, through the propagation of individualising learning methods had its beginning in the late sixties, received a new push by PISA. Fueled by the overwhelming media coverage, the publication of the first test results led at the beginning of this century in some European countries to the so-called "PISA shock".

Subsequently and in the spirit of the PISA-makers they began to align their education policies for a better performance in the "international comparison" and to coordinate the learning content with the tests. In this way, the learning content was to be standardised, and made measurable and controllable worldwide. "The supposedly neutral PISA-test", says didactics lecturer *Jochen Krautz* in an interview with the "Neue Zürcher Zeitung", "leads to a completely new concept of education. It is no longer about knowledge, but the ability of adaptation."<sup>5</sup>

Closely associated with PISA is the competency orientation. But in the sense of the PISA tests such competence has nothing to do with the notion of competent people whom we all cherish, but leads to an action-oriented trivialisation of the school. The individualising learning methods do not mean individual support, as some well-meaning might have believed, but isolation. They are aimed at the abolition of classroom teaching. Teachers are not supposed to teach students any longer, but to be "facilitators". Accordingly, the new teaching materials are drawn up in such way that students can learn alone with them, supported by the Internet, and correct their results themselves. Teachers are to be replaced by the computer. The digital classroom is no longer just a utopia, although we know not only since *Hattie*<sup>6</sup> that learning success depends essentially on the mediation of a teacher. At all times and everywhere people knew about this and therefore took great care in ensuring to pass on their knowledge and culture to their children.<sup>7</sup> Why did it come to such a break?

### The Seizure of Switzerland and Curriculum 21

In order for this shift of paradigm in Switzerland to be made possible, the elementary schools had to be loosened from their direct-democratic anchoring. The supervision of schools, which until ten years ago was performed by representatives of the municipal and district school care, elected by the people for four years, has been partly transferred to so-called professional "expert bodies for school assessment", none of which is democratically legitimated. The members of the school board, who in line with the Swiss understanding of democracy presided over the schoolhouse as equals, were replaced by principals with extensive decision-making powers. Both were necessary to enforce the totally



### “Bologna, Pisa, Curriculum 21...”

continued from page 11

unpractical reforms imposed from above. A study carried out by proponents (!) of the reforms in the research field “State in transformation” (!) at the University of Bremen describes in surprise how the reformers succeeded in eliminating the “veto players” in Switzerland and in significantly shaping through clever manipulation the domestic debate on the reforms of the education system.<sup>8</sup>

This process resulted in the Curriculum 21. Its purpose is to enshrine the already implemented reforms and to bring into line the schools in default.

#### “Why did they go for PISA?”

In his work “Why did they go for PISA?” Roman Langer, sociologist and assistant professor at the Institute of Education and Psychology at the Johannes Kepler University in Linz considers the question which political constellations and intentions have led to the formation and enforcement of PISA.<sup>9</sup>

He breaks the development down into three phases, starting with the so-called “Sputnik shock”, which the US experienced in the face of the first Soviet satellite in space in 1957, and to which it answered with an education initiative. The second phase began also with a shock, this time triggered by the disastrous results of the national education report, “A Nation at Risk” by the US itself in the early eighties. As a result and under the threat of its withdrawal the federal government urged the OECD to develop international educational standards. They wanted to enforce control over the educational policies of the US states similar to the cantons in Switzerland and the federal states in Germany. The OECD gave in to the pressure. Thus, it became the most important educational actor and invented PISA. The third phase is characterised by the definition of a political and economic strategy for the EU member states through the European Council. Triggered by the “post-socialist globalisation process” and shocked by the results of the first PISA test the German-speaking countries, including Switzerland, took over the educational standards developed in the US and propagated by the OECD, although, according to Langer, the US itself had “made far from uniformly positive experiences” with it. The competency models of the OECD were also adopted without critical examination (Langer p. 62).

#### Internationalisation of education policy

A great number of studies now exist that are concerned with the management of education policy by international organisations such as the OECD and the EU. The University of Bremen has established

a special collaborative research project on this subject, from which also the previously mentioned paper “Soft Governance in Education. The Pisa Study and the Bologna Process in Switzerland” originated.

In their work on “Paradoxien der Neuen Staatsräson. Die Internationalisierung der Bildungspolitik in der EU und der OECD” (“Paradoxes of the New Reason of State. The Internationalisation of Education Policy in the EU and the OECD”)<sup>10</sup> the social scientists Kerstin Martens and Klaus Dieter Wolf examine the growing influence of international organisations on the education policy of the nation states and come to the conclusion that, in recent years, both the EU and the OECD have unexpectedly gained in importance in the field of national education reforms. They were surprised “to find a policy area on the international agenda, which – as part of cultural and educational sovereignty – had hitherto been firmly anchored in the national political systems”. Surprising is also “the degree of shaping power” which both organisations could attain, although “they have no legal responsibility for the educational sector”. According to the authors, their success is attributable to a “manipulation of the balance of power within the states”, in which both organisations use their influence on the political cadres of the national governments to enforce their interests (Martens and Wolf, p. 145f). There is nothing more to add to this.

#### Objection!

If you are willing to take a close look, there can be no doubt about the influence exerted by the two US-dominated organisations, the OECD and the EU, on Europe’s education policy. And it is incomprehensible that the European countries and, unfortunately, even Switzerland are willing to accept American educational standards, although the US – apart from a few elite schools and universities, which do not teach according to these principles – are known for their poor educational system.

The consequences of this misguided policy are all too obvious and have been widely described. Meanwhile, objections have been raised against it in many countries. “Einspruch!” (that is to say “objection”) is also the title of a brochure, published in Switzerland by renowned intellectuals, which has now gone into the fourth expanded edition with a print run of around 10,000 copies.<sup>11</sup>

Parents have teamed up demanding that their children shall be taught again in their schools.<sup>12</sup> And in most German-speaking cantons initiatives against the introduction of Curriculum 21 have already been submitted – with far more signatures than would have been necessary.<sup>13</sup>

Only the voice of politics has been missing so far. With regard to the ap-

proach politics takes in its dealings with critics, Langer speaks of a four-phase-model: Initially, criticism will be ignored and hushed up, then the critics will be vilified as incompetent or driven by improper motives. While some isolated problems are subsequently conceded, they are in the same breath minimized as inconsiderable, and finally it will be alleged that the criticisms are well-known and have long since been refuted (p.64). I leave it to the well-disposed reader to decide what stage we have currently reached.

#### What does all this have to do with cultural hegemony?

Zbigniew Brzezinski, author of “The Grand Chessboard. American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives”<sup>14</sup>, pays particular attention to America’s “cultural domination”, which, he writes, has “been an underappreciated facet of American global power”. America’s mass culture exercises a magical appeal, especially on young people all over the world. “American television programs and films account for about three-fourths of the global market. American popular music is equally dominant, while American fads, eating habits, and even clothing are increasingly imitated worldwide. The language of the Internet is English, and an overwhelming proportion of the global computer chatter also originates from America, influencing the content of global communication.” And finally, America has become a Mecca for young people seeking advanced education. Annually, nearly half a million foreign students flock to the United States, with many of the most gifted never returning home. Graduates from American universities are represented in almost every cabinet around the globe. (Brzezinski, p. 25)

Brzezinski leaves no doubt that America is ready to use these advantages in its favour. American dominance, he writes, “is exercised through a global system of dis-

continued on page 13



# The significance of singing for our souls

by Rita Brügger

Children are fond of music. They like to sing. A children's song accordingly says: "Singing makes us happy – singing makes us full of vim ...". Yet singing means even more and is of utmost importance for several reasons.

## Singing creates companionship

A group of children meets in their holidays. They spend two weeks learning together, keeping house and working in the garden, and sharing their fellowship. They always start their morning by sitting in a circle and singing. They sing traditional folksongs, earnest and funny ones. The small ones do not understand all the texts immediately. Older ones explain what they mean: "... denn der Wind treibt Regen übers Land. Holt die goldnen Garben!" ("... since the wind drives rain across the land. Fetch the golden sheaves!") The children talk about the harvesting of corn today and in former times and what bread is made of.

Singing connects. Something is done together. Everybody is needed. The older children help to provide the sheets of music. The younger ones listen carefully to what the older comrades sing. Each day they can participate a little better. The choral singing sounds good when all the voices are contributing and it makes everyone happy.

## Singing creates joy and pleases the soul

When I was in primary school, it was the same in our class. Every day began with



(picture caro)

singing. We learned traditional songs, hiking songs, "Lumpenliedchen" [funny, often Swiss-dialect songs, editor's note]. We started to sing in different registers and often even in canon. After this vocal beginning of the day in our classrooms, we started to learn. The warm-hearted lesson's beginning – the pleasure in singing – gave us a fresh impetus to read, to write, and to calculate. This made learning easier.

At secondary level, besides the general singing lessons there was also the choir, in which many of us participated. There we sang melodies that were more demanding. We were proud when we were occasionally allowed to perform a song with the choir.

## Singing in family and at work

Many a rehearsed song we soon learned by heart. It was not only at school that we heard these traditional songs, but singing was a tradition also in the family. Proudly our father told us about the past and that he used to sing the "Messiah" in the church choir. One morning we heard him cheerfully singing "Am Brunnen vor dem Tore" ("At the well in front of the gate") in front of the house. This is a wonderful traditional song. When the song "Han ame Ort es Blüemli gseh" ("I saw a floret at a place") sounded on the radio, tears ran down the cheeks of this otherwise quite severe man, because of the emotions evoked by the content and the melancholy melody of the song. Likewise, our mother knew many songs, and sang now and then while she was at work. We sang during the daily washing of the dishes, as it was common in many families. We volunteered all the songs we knew, from "Chumm mer wie go Chrieseli günne" ("Come on, let's go picking cherries") to "Es wott es Frau-eli z Märit go" ("A woman wants to go to the market").

## Hiking songs

I especially remember all the vacation camps with long hiking tours in the mountains. When I am on my way with the rucksack today, it comes to my mind how we used to sing: "Wir wollen zu Land ausfahren, über die Fluren weit – aufwärts zu den klaren Gipfeln der Einsamkeit ..." ("We want to go to the countryside, along the far mead – up hills to the clear summits of solitude ..."). How does the text continue? I ask myself. Wasn't there something about a mountain stream and wind, how I would like to sing it once again! I can't stop thinking about it. Bit by bit, fur-

## "Bologna, Pisa, Curriculum 21..."

continued from page 12

tinctively American design". To a much greater extent than earlier imperial systems, the American "global system emphasises the technique of co-optation". Likewise, it relies heavily on the "indirect exercise of influence on dependent foreign elites". (Brzezinski, p. 25)

It only remains to be hoped that Brzezinski's provocative outspokenness will also give our politicians food for thought.

<sup>1</sup> Schmidt, Mario. "Studienabbrecher. Lasst sie nicht fallen" ("College dropouts. Do not drop them.") <http://www.zeit.de/2014/53/studienabbrecher-studium-hochschule-hochschulpakt/komplettansicht>  
Discontinuations at Swiss universities. <http://educdoc.ch/record/110176/files/Staffpaper11.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Müller, Barbara. *Die Anfänge der Bologna-Reform in der Schweiz* (The Beginnings of the Bologna Reforms in Switzerland) (Bern 2012), p 155

<sup>3</sup> Daum, Matthias. "Sie können das nicht unterzeichnen!" ("You cannot sign that!") <http://www.zeit.de/2012/52/Bologna-Reform-Universitaeten-Schweiz>

<sup>4</sup> Kurt Imholz in an interview with Sebastian Ram-speck and Balz Spörrli in *Sonntagszeitung* 31 October 2009.

<sup>5</sup> Krautz, Jochen, "Den Pisa-Test sollte man abschaffen" ("The Pisa test should be abolished"), Interview with Claudia Wirz in *Neue "Zürcher Zeitung"* from 14 July 2014.

<sup>6</sup> Hattie, John, *Visible Learning* (London, New York, 2009)

<sup>7</sup> Felten, Michael, *Auf die Lehrer kommt es an!* (The Teacher Makes a Difference) (Gütersloh, 2010)

<sup>8</sup> Bieber, Tonia, *Soft Governance in Education, The PISA Study and the Bologna Process in Switzerland*, TranState Working Paper No. 117 (Bremen, 2010). For a German translation, see [www.schulforum.ch](http://www.schulforum.ch)

<sup>9</sup> Langer, Roman, "Warum haben die Pisa gemacht?" ("Why did they go for Pisa?") in Langer, Roman (ed.), *Warum tun die das? Governanceanalysen zum Steuerungshandeln in der Schulentwicklung* (Wiesbaden, 2008), pp. 49-72.

<sup>10</sup> Martens, Kerstin and Wolf, Klaus Dieter in *Zeitschrift für Internationale Beziehungen* 13/2 (2006), pp 145-176, [www.kj.nomos.de/fileadmin/zib/doc/Aufsatz\\_06\\_02.pdf](http://www.kj.nomos.de/fileadmin/zib/doc/Aufsatz_06_02.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> Pichard, Alain and Kissling, Beat (eds.), *Einspruch! Kritische Gedanken zu Bologna, Harmos und Lehrplan 21* (Objection! Critical thoughts concerning Bologna, Harmos and Curriculum 21) [www.elternfuereinegutevolksschule.ch/Eltern\\_fuer\\_eine\\_gute\\_Volksschule/Willkommen.html](http://www.elternfuereinegutevolksschule.ch/Eltern_fuer_eine_gute_Volksschule/Willkommen.html)

<sup>12</sup> [www.lehrplan21-no.ch/media/news/20160210\\_karte\\_ch\\_gegen\\_lp21\\_beiblatt.pdf](http://www.lehrplan21-no.ch/media/news/20160210_karte_ch_gegen_lp21_beiblatt.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Brzezinski, Zbigniew, *The Grand Chessboard, American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives* (New York, 1997).

### "The significance of singing ..."

continued from page 13

ther text passages come to my mind, until I remember the whole song.

I can remember other songs. We used to sing for hours. There was always a very solemn atmosphere at the camp fire when, for example, we sounded the round "Abendstille überall" ("Evening silence everywhere") and felt affiliated with each other.

#### Beautiful texts

At the occasion of the "afternoon for the elderly", seniors can wish for a song to celebrate their birthdays. Each time I am amazed how rich in substance are the texts of the traditional songs they wish for. There are songs which extol nature and the seasons of the year, like "d Zyt isch do, d Zyt isch do, rüefts uf em Nussbaum scho Guggu" ("time has come, time has come – the cuckoo is already calling from the walnut tree") or "Bunt sind schon die Wälder, gelb die Stoppelfelder und der Herbst beginnt" ("Coloured are the forests, yellow are the stubble fields and autumn is beginning"). Others express the beauty of our country with its mountains, lakes, and the old traditions, which have been cultivated over centuries. One of these songs, which always make my flesh creep, is "Luegit vo Bäрге und Tal, flieht scho de Sunnestrahl, luegit uf Aue und Matte ..." ("Look! The sunbeam flees from mountains and valleys. Look at wetlands and meadows ..."). The appealing text and its well-suited melody express the delight in our country and the people who live in it. It is not surprising that many seniors keep the songs in their mind and in their hearts, even if their memory might be getting weaker – they have learnt it by heart and they keep it in their hearts.

#### Historic and cultural assets

When leafing through a songbook, one realises how old the generally known traditional songs are. Sometimes you can recognise this by their language: there are terms which we don't use anymore today, like those in a hunting song from the 16<sup>th</sup> century: "Es taget vor dem Walde, stand uf Kätterlin! Die Hasen laufen balde, stand uf Kätterlin! Holder Buel, hei-a-ho ..." ("It's dawning outside the forest, get up Kätterlin! The hares will be running about soon, get up Kätterlin! Fair leman, hei-a-ho ...")

Regarding content, those songs are a real stock of material for historical studies. Very often there is talk of poverty and orphan boys standing at their parents' grave. In addition, war and mercenarism are topics of the songs. There is the "Jungknab" (the young boy) in the song "Im Aargäu sind zwöi Liebi" ("There are two lovers"), who

leaves his betrothed behind in order to go to war. After his returning home, she has found another sweetheart. How true is the line "im Röseligarte z Mailand hetts no für mänge Platz" ("There is space for many others in the rosary of Milan") from the song "S' wott aber e luschtige Summer gäh" ("There shall be a merry summer"). – This song was created in memory of the battle of Marignano.

#### Yodelling songs

Yodelling is also part of the Swiss singing tradition. In order to learn yodelling, a certain technique is required, and it is not easy to perform. If you have the pleasure of visiting a "Jodlerfest" (a yodelling festival) or of meeting yodelling people, it is worth listening closely to the texts. You can also enjoy this in traditional music broadcasts on the radio. You will marvel at these cultural achievements, at their unique tones and well-tuned melodies. Especially yodelling texts describe the life of the people in the country, nature, festivities, customs and rites. They often deal with friendship and value systems like the song about the "Schacherseppli", who tells about his modest life and in this also radiates a sense of humour, joy, and satisfaction.

#### Songs in other languages

In quite a natural way, we also made our first contacts with other languages through the songs. Since Switzerland is multilingual, self-evidently, songs in French, Italian, and Romansh belong to its treasury of songs. We learnt French numbers playfully while we sang, "Un kilometre à pied, ça use, ça use ... les souliers." ("One kilometre on foot – that is a strain on the shoes ..."), because in each verse one more kilometre was added to the distance we had to march in the song. We also knew Ticino songs like "Vieni sulla barchetta" ("Come with me into the little boat") already as children. Of course we did not always understand the texts, but it was clear that it was one of our songs, like the beautiful Romansh lullaby, "Dorma bain" ("Sleep well") or the well-known "La haut sur la montagne" ("Up there on the mountain").

#### How we sing today

The children growing up today are also fond of singing, as we were. Luckily, there are still teachers that teach them songs with appealing melodies and a rewarding content. If done in a good mood, singing together is very valuable. Children memorise the rimes, which they love so much, and keep them in their souls. I hope that they will also gladly remember these songs when they are old, all the songs they sang or even learnt by heart. They will remain with them like a precious treasure.

This kind of singing is in no way comparable with those contrived stage performances that have recently become popular, where children, accompanied by playback music, hold a microphone in their hand and develop airs and graces as if they were all pop stars. It is only later that they bitterly become aware of the fact that a lot of this has remained dull and superficial.

#### Let us sing more again

My sister, who is Swiss but lives in Berlin, lately wished for a bunch of songs on her birthday. The Swiss guests had no problem in serenading her without rehearsal out of our treasury of songs. Our German neighbours and friends spontaneously sang along when it came to the song "Geh aus mein Herz und suche Freud in dieser schönen Sommerszeit" ("Go out, my heart and look for joy in the beautiful summertime"). The other guests joyfully listened to our Swiss songs, and the birthday child as well as singers and audience were filled with contentment.

Let us sing more again, all the beautiful songs that have come down to us from Switzerland and from all over the whole world! Time after time, you can discover new trouvailles that give you pleasure. I do not want to withhold from the readers what I found in the "Baselbieterlied":

*"Me seit vom Baselbieter und redt ihm öppe no,  
er säg nu: 'mir wie luege', er chönnt nid säge: 'Jo'.*

*Doch tuesch ihn öppe froge: 'witdu für's Recht istoh?'*

*Do heisst's nit, dass mer luege well, do sägen alli: 'Jo!'"*

*("They say of those from Basel, and they slander them a bit,*

*That they always say 'we'll see' and never 'yes, that's it'*

*But if you ask them, 'will you*

*Take a stance for what is right?'*

*They'll never say 'we'll see', but*

*All say 'yes' with face alight.")*

#### \* Baselbieterlied

One talks about the Baselbieter and sometimes speaks ill of him, he only said: "we will see", he was not able to say simply "Yes".

But if you ask him once:

"Do you want to advocate for the right?"

He did not say, he will see

All say: "Yes!"

(Baselbiet is the dialect term for the Canton Basel-Country)

<sup>1</sup> This is the German version of the English round "Heigh-ho! Anybody Home." The English lyrics to the song have a different meaning: Heigh-ho! Anybody home. Food and drink and money have I none. Still I will be merry, still I will be merry. cf. <http://mamalisa.com/?t=es&p=1414>. [Editor's note]

# Switzerland's biggest alpine cheese dairy

## An inspiring model for all alpine regions

by Heini Hofmann

*On the coats of arms of the Canton Uri, the Uri-bull is proudly presenting itself on a golden ground which is recognised as a symbol for the sun. However, the spicy alp cheese is the domain of the more quiet producers in the background, the good dairy cows. With the white juice from green grass 200 tons of alp cheese are produced every summer by Uri's alpine farms. The largest alpine dairy is the one on the Alp Urnerboden.*

250 years ago Grison's scholar of nature *Placidus Spescha* succeeded in awakening the alpine confidence by postulating a usage of the Alps, not only as a living area but also as an economic area in order "to increase exports and reduce imports and hereby keep the income and the money within the Alps." Modern alpine economy is the present-day answer to this early message.

### Well-tried Alp tradition

In the Canton of Uri, in the heart of Switzerland, the transhumance still works according to traditional but proven forms of cultivation. While in the northern part of the canton the owner or a family member looks after the cattle according to the Ale-

### At the first cockcrow

*HH.* A traditional legend says why the Urnerboden is actually situated on the Glarus side of the Klausen Pass. Uri and Glarus fought over this lush pasture. Since no agreement was reached, they decided to start running on the date of the equinox at the first cock-crow from Uri and Glarus each a runner towards the top of the pass. Where they meet, the border should be.

Of course, both sides tried to cheat with cock doping. While the Glarner chose a fat cock and fed him hard, the Urner let a puny cock extra go hungry. No wonder: While the latter already crowed at the crack of dawn, the Glarus cock kept calm until noon. Therefore the Uri runner (of rank) had long crossed the top of the pass and had already passed the Urnerboden, when both met.

Thus, the border was set. But the Glarus runner beseeched his competitor, that he might still cede a piece of pasture to him. But the Uri refused. As the Glarner begged further, the Uri let soften: "I let get you as much land as you can carry me back uphill". No sooner said than done. The brave Glarus panting dragged the Uri – until he collapsed and died. Since then, the "Boodä" belongs to Uri ...



*After the curd is cut with harp, the cheese granulation is being checked.  
(picture Alpkäserei Urnerboden)*

mannic tradition, in the southern part of the canton community alpine dairy farming, carried out by employed herdsmen, is more common.

While in other regions the cattle is mostly staying on the same alp throughout the summer, in the lower part of the canton the dairy families travel like nomads from one *Stafel* to another, e.g. at Urnerboden: Here the alp season lasts 14 weeks from mid-June. The first four weeks the families remain on the "Boodä", the lower grazing area, then they go to the upper *Stafels* for seven weeks and at last for three weeks to the Urnerboden, again. That means that they change location three times!

The Uri alpine farmers are organised in two alp corporations and one Alpine cheese cooperative, a kind of self-help organisation. Around one third of the area of the Canton of Uri are Alpine pastures and thus the backbone of agriculture in *Tell's* country. Most of them belong to the alp corporations. Over the last years about 5,700 heads of livestock have spent the summer on one of the 64 corporation alps, together with 8,500 sheep and 1,000 goats.

### No sheltered workshop

The Uri Corporation is convinced that, despite sticking to their principles, the Alpine economy is anything but a sheltered workshop, museum-like in character. On the contrary, it is of vital importance for agriculture and tourism alike and has to keep up with the latest developments in these areas. In response to the changing

environment a kind of squaring the circle is required, namely sensible ecological and economic solutions in line with the market.

Through such sustainable usage and maintenance of the Alpine pastures "furnished" with the livestock, the alp farmers, working at the most beautiful although sweat-inducing work place, create a most notable side effect which is the conservation of the Alpine cultural landscape that nobody would like to do without and which is a boost for tourism. One concrete outcome, materialised Alpine diligence so to speak, is the spicy alp cheese. For its production a pioneering solution has been found, compatible with the tradition on the Urnerboden.

### Switzerland's biggest dairy alp

The Urnerboden, located east of the Klausen Pass at 1,450 meters above sea level, is Switzerland's largest cattle-alp; it comprises around 50 Alpine farms. But on the "Boodä" (lower grazing area) there are not only pastures, but also a small, year-round-inhabited village that politically belongs to the municipality of Spiringen. In winter, when the Klausen Pass is closed, only about 25 people live here, while in summer about 300, along with about 1,200 cows on Alp Urnerboden and up to 700 cattle on the Gems-fairenalp and Alp Fiseten.

We hit on the idea of building a large, powerful Alpine cheese dairy because of the same considerations as those postulat-

### Old traditions

HH. Even today the so called "Betruf" (alpine call for prayers) on the Uri Alps is a fondly maintained tradition. Evening after evening, until the last alp day and in all weathers, the Alpine herdsman calls from a hill the monophonic recitative in a dialectal dyed High German through a wooden funnel, called "Volle". Lyrics and melody vary from alp to alp. And for each alp an alp reeve is determined who is responsible for the compliance of the alp rules. Before the alp procession he must take the traditional oath with burning candles and in front of a crucifix.

Also wild hay making is an ancient custom. From mid-July each "Korporationsbürger" (corporation citizen) may win as much hay as he wants in the steep grassy strips above the pastures belonging to the corporation. An exhausting, dangerous work! The harvest festival of the Alpine herdsmen is the "Sennenchilbi", always on the second Sunday of October in Bürglen, with a worship, flag waving and "Chilbi" dance.

### "Switzerland's biggest alpine ..."

continued from page 15

ed by Placidus Spescha in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Today *Anton Gisler*, president of *Alpkäserei Urnerboden AG*, puts it like this: "Secure jobs in the Alpine farming and in the food industry and thus promoting active transhumance, increase the added value and keep it in the Schächen valley and in the region as well as providing perspectives for regional tourism by preservation of the cultural landscape."

### From nil to a hundred

Project sponsor is the Urnerboden cooperative of Alpine dairy farmers with about

50 farming families; it is supported by the canton and the Corporation Uri. Although this large cheese manufacturing plant is equipped with the latest technology, cheese making remains nevertheless an artisan skill that requires lots of experience and instinctive feeling, and of course also the quality of the (silage-free) milk has to be impeccable.

In 2014, the first year of operation, this big brand-new plant had to accelerate from zero to full capacity immediately. But master cheesemaker *Martin Stadelmann* and his team had everything under control. In short, the new "Ürnerbeedäler" succeeded at the first attempt. The dairy shop for direct marketing, led by *Michaela Jost* (meanwhile the wife of the master cheesemaker) was well received.

But producing cheese is no stroll in the park: The working day in the Alpine dairy Urnerboden starts at 5 o'clock and ends sometimes only at 11 at night. The milk is delivered from the herdsmen themselves. Before being sucked from the cans or tanks, a milk sample must be taken. For the cheesemaking the warmed raw milk is mixed with rennet, then the curd is cut with the cheese harp, so that curd granules are formed. This is followed by extraction, filling, pressing, and salt bathing. The finished wheels are stored to mature in the cheese cellar at 14.5 degrees Celsius and a humidity of 95 per cent. Through intensive care, i.e. turning and greasing up, their colour changes from pale to dark yellow.

### Ambitious goals

The processing of up to one million kilos of silage-free alp milk into Alpine cheese, alpmutschli, alp-raclette, and alpyogurt is planned per alp-period. The

### Grass – milk – cheese

HH. A cow's daily intake consists of approximately 100 kg grass and 50 litres of water (during the winter that changes to 20 kg of hay and 100 litres of water). A lot of fluids are required because a cow produces up to 20 kg of saliva on a daily basis. In order to receive one litre of milk, 500 litres of blood have to be circulating through the udder's gland tissue. A cow's daily milk production ranges from 20 to 35 litres depending on its race, nutrition and the climate it lives in.

Alpine cheese is being produced during the summer months, using fresh milk from cows that feed on savoury grasses and herbs 1400 to 2000 metres above sea level, are able to move around freely and are being milked twice a day. The production of the cheese and its ageing in the cellar also takes place directly at the alp. An ETH study confirming that cheese originating from the alp is healthier, consequently doesn't come as a surprise.

Urn Alpine cheese is a full-fat cheese with a high level of omega-3 fatty acids. A daily ration covers 50 per cent of the daily calcium requirement as well as 25 per cent of the protein supply and additionally contains vitamin A, B2, B6 and B12. Even those unable to tolerate milk sugar (lactose) are able to eat cheese because milk sugar and whey proteins remain within the pressed off whey.

fact that around 600,000 kilos of milk were already processed in 2015, the second alp summer, shows that the target is within reach. The main and prime products accounting for over 90 per cent are a spicy semi-hard cheese to about 7 kg (with sales from a ripening period of 3 months to 1 year) and mutschli (small loaves) to around 1 kilo (with sales from 3 weeks ripening period).

The benchmark of the Urnerboden Pioneers is ambitious: They want to produce the best alp cheese. But judging will be done by target groups and markets: consumers (locals and tourists), wholesale distributors, retailers, gastronomy and direct customers. The first signals are promising. And another likable marginal note: Some independent dairy farmers, in particular those from the upper *Stafels*, continue making their own cheeses, so that – despite the large cheese manufacturing plant having become necessary – a certain product biodiversity and a balance between Goliath and the Davids will remain on the Urnerboden. •

Further information at: [www.alpkaserei-urnerboden.ch](http://www.alpkaserei-urnerboden.ch)

(Translation Current Concerns)



When domestic cattle is lovingly decorated, the relationship between humans and animals is in harmony. (picture Alpkäserei Urnerboden)